

Enemy and Ancestor:  
Viking Identities and Ethnic Boundaries in England and Normandy, c.950  
– c.1015

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I, Katherine Cross, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed

## **Abstract**

This thesis is a comparison of ethnicity in Viking Age England and Normandy. It focuses on the period c.950-c.1015, which begins several generations after the initial Scandinavian settlements in both regions. The comparative approach enables an investigation into how and why the two societies' inhabitants differed in their perceptions of viking heritage and its impact on ethnic relations in this period. Written sources provide the key to these perceptions: genealogies, histories, hagiographies, charters and law codes. The thesis is the first study to juxtapose and compare these sources and aspects of Viking Age England and Normandy.

The approach to ethnicity is informed by the social sciences, especially Fredrik Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. The emphasis here is on ethnic identity as a social construct and as a product of belief in group membership. In particular, this investigation treats ethnic identity separately from cultural markers such as names, dress, appearance, and art. In doing so, it presents a new perspective in discussions of assimilation after Scandinavian settlement.

For the purpose of analysis, 'ethnicity' has been divided into three strands: genealogical, historical and geographical identity. Sources from England and Normandy are compared within each of the three strands.

The thesis demonstrates the development of a single 'viking' group identity in Normandy, which was defined in distinction to the Franks. In England, on the other hand, 'viking' and 'Scandinavian' identities held various meanings and were deployed in diverse situations. No single group laid exclusive claim to viking heritage, nor completely rejected it. Ultimately, it is argued that viking identity was used as a tool in political and military conflicts. It was not an expression of association with Scandinavian allies, but most often was used as a more local means of distinction within England and Normandy.

## Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgments	7
Abbreviations	9
Note on Terminology	10
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>11</b>
 <b>Part I: Genealogical Identity</b>	 <b>47</b>
Chapter 1. Genealogical Identity in Normandy	51
I. Frankish royal genealogy	51
II. Royal genealogy and origin myths	56
III. Royalty and aristocracy	60
IV. Dudo's <i>De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum</i> as genealogy	69
V. Dudo's <i>origo gentis</i>	76
VI. Conclusion	83
Chapter 2. Genealogical Identity in England	85
I. English royal genealogy	85
II. West Saxons and Scyldings	96
III. <i>Origo gentis</i>	99
IV. Aristocracy and genealogy	101
V. Æthelweard's family history	105
VI. Æthelweard's English origin myth	113

VII. Conclusion	116
<b>Part II: Historical Identity</b>	<b>119</b>
Chapter 3. Historical Identity in Normandy	123
I. Norman history and hagiography	123
II. Saints crossing boundaries: the translations of St Audoenus	126
III. Divinely-directed conquest: the prophecies of St Romanus	136
a. Dating the <i>Vita Romani</i>	137
b. Romanus's viking prophecies	142
IV. Ruin and restoration: the Fécamp Chronicle	151
V. Conclusion	157
Chapter 4. Historical Identity in England	162
I. Saints and vikings	162
II. Exemplary martyrdom: St Edmund of East Anglia	166
III. Defending the kingdom: St Neot	175
a. Dating the Lives of St Neot	176
b. St Neot, Alfred and Guthrum	181
IV. English and Danish in the north: St Cuthbert	185
V. Conclusion	192
<b>Part III: Geographical Identity</b>	<b>198</b>
Chapter 5. Geographical Identity in early Norman charters	202
I. Norman ducal charters	202
II. Ducal self-presentation	209

a. Rulers of Normandy	210
b. Counts of Rouen	213
c. King and duke	218
III. Territorial range of ducal authority	223
IV. Origins of ducal authority	228
V. 'The kingdom won by the sweat of battle'	236
VI. Conclusion	240
Chapter 6. Geographical Identity in English royal diplomas	243
I. The Danelaw	243
II. Tenth-century royal diplomas	249
III. Royal and imperial authority	254
IV. Origins of royal authority	265
V. Territorial range of royal authority	272
VI. Conclusion	277
<b>General Conclusion</b>	<b>279</b>
 Bibliography	 300

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## Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum quotquot tot orbe coluntur</i> (Antwerp and Brussels, 1643-1940)
ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
ASC	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Quotations are taken from the various volumes of <i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition</i> , ed. by David Dumville and Simon Keynes (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983- ). Translations are given from <i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles</i> , trans. by Michael Swanton (London: Phoenix, 1996; rev. ed. 2000).
ASC A	<i>Volume 3. MS A</i> , ed. by Janet M. Bately (1986)
ASC B	<i>Volume 4. MS B</i> , ed. by Simon Taylor (1983)
ASC C	<i>Volume 5. MS C, A semi-diplomatic edition with introduction and indices</i> , ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (2001)
ASC D	<i>Volume 6. MS D</i> , ed. by G.P. Cubbin (1996)
ASC E	<i>Volume 7. MS E</i> , ed. by Susan Irvine (2004)
BHL	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i>
BSAN	<i>Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie</i>
Christiansen	<i>Dudo of St Quentin: History of the Normans</i> , trans. by Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998)
EHD	<i>English Historical Documents</i> , ed. by David C. Douglas, 10 vols (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953-1977; 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Methuen, 1979- ), I: <i>c.500-1042</i> , ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (1979)
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
EME	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
F	<i>Recueil des Actes des Ducs de Normandie (911-1066)</i> , ed. by Marie Fauroux, <i>Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie</i> , 36 (Caen: Caron, 1961)
HSC	<i>Historia de Sancto Cuthberto</i> , ed. by Ted Johnson South (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002)
Lair	Dudo of Saint-Quentin, <i>De Moribus et Actis Primorum Normanniae Ducum: Auctore Dudone Sancti Quinini Decano</i> , ed. by Jules Lair (Caen: Le Blanc-Hardel, 1865)
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
S	<i>The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters</i> < <a href="http://www.esawyer.org.uk/">http://www.esawyer.org.uk/</a> > [accessed 19/05/2013]
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
VPSN	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition</i> , ed. by David Dumville and Simon Keynes (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983- ): <i>Volume 17. The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti</i> , ed. by David Dumville and Michael Lapidge (1985)

### **Note on Terminology**

The term ‘Viking’ has developed an ethnic usage in modern historiography, which stems from contemporary sources that refer to Scandinavian raiders as, for example, *‘ferox gens’*. This idea of raiders as an ‘ethnicity’ in themselves is a development I wish to investigate. Therefore, in order not to confuse separate issues, I retain a more specific use of the word ‘viking’, to mean raiders and armies intent on gaining tribute, slaves and plunder. As such, it is spelt with a lower-case ‘v’. In this usage, it is closer to the Old Norse word from which it stems, *vikingr*, and the Old English word used by contemporaries, *wicing*, which was used to translate the Latin *pirata*. In using ‘Viking Age’ I follow the bulk of the historiography in referring to the period when Scandinavian vikings were active, roughly c.750-1100.

See Christine Fell, ‘Modern English “Viking”’, *Leeds Studies in English*, 18 (1987), 111-23; Christine Fell, ‘Old English *Wicing*’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 72 (1986), 295-316.

‘Normans’ presents a similar problem: for ease of understanding, I have used this term to apply to viking leaders and Scandinavian immigrants in the land granted to Rollo and his companions after 911. I have referred to Rollo and his successors as ‘dukes’ for similar reasons, although this title was not used until later. These issues are discussed further in Chapter Five.

## Introduction

After Edward the Confessor's death in 1066, three men claimed the English throne: William of Normandy, Harold Godwineson and Harald Hardrada. Teachers and historians alike present these claimants as Norman, English and Norwegian respectively.<sup>1</sup> But Viking Age identities were not this simple. The conflicts of 1066 were one focused moment in a long history of shifting ethnic relations, which were perceived differently by various participants. Had he been asked, Harold Godwineson would probably have identified William as *Francus* rather than *Normannus*, reserving that label for Harald Hardrada.<sup>2</sup> Had the claimants in 1066 been asked who among them was of viking blood, the distinctions would have become even more blurred. Scholars have called Harald Hardrada 'one of the last of the Vikings': prior to becoming king of Norway, he was a Varangian mercenary and raider in Russia and Byzantium.<sup>3</sup> Harald Hardrada attacked England near York because it had been the centre of a tenth-century viking kingdom, and he probably expected the people there to be more receptive to his rule.<sup>4</sup> But William the Conqueror also called himself *Normannus* because of his viking ancestors. William traced his descent and ducal authority from his great-great-great-grandfather, Rollo the viking; the people he ruled over were still called *Normanni* because of their viking origins.<sup>5</sup> Even Harold Godwineson, renowned as the last 'native'

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<sup>1</sup> R. Allen Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1969; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1985), pp.1-5, 118.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Harris, *Race and Ethnicity in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p.136; Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity, 1066-c.1220* (Oxford: OUP, 2003), pp.32-34. See e.g. ASC C 1066, which uses 'Normenn' for Norwegians; ASC D 1051-52, which uses 'frenciscum' and 'frencisra manna' for Normans.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Crawford, 'The Vikings', in *From the Vikings to the Normans, 800-1100*, ed. by Wendy Davies (Oxford: OUP, 2003), pp.41-71 (p.69); Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: OUP, 1943, 1971; repr. 2001), pp.427-28.

<sup>4</sup> Lucien Musset, *Les invasions: le second assaut contre l'Europe chrétienne, VIIe-XIe siècles* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1971), pp.138-39; M.K. Lawson, *The Battle of Hastings 1066* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002), p.37.

<sup>5</sup> See the statements of William's chaplain and biographer: *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, ed. by R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp.72-73, 116-19.

Anglo-Saxon king of England, was half Danish:<sup>6</sup> his mother was from Denmark and closely linked to the family of Swein Forkbeard and Cnut the Great. But it was by promoting his status as a leading Englishman that he became king.<sup>7</sup> Each claimant to the English throne shaped his identity by either emphasizing or downplaying his Scandinavian heritage. For each man, Scandinavian – specifically viking – identity aligned him with a different group of supporters. A claim to viking identity was a potent, but precarious, force in England in the eleventh century. Many people who lived in England believed their ancestors to be Scandinavian vikings – but many considered vikings to be their nation's enemies.

Viking identity was used politically in northern Europe throughout the Viking Age. During the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, the actions of vikings – sea-borne Scandinavian raiders – profoundly altered the political, social and cultural landscape of the medieval world. Through viking activity and Scandinavian settlement, the histories of the British Isles, the Frankish Empire, and the Scandinavian countries of Denmark and Norway became interlinked. These interlinked histories created the situation in 1066. However, interpretations of the viking past developed differently in the various regions. Thus the meaning of Scandinavian heritage and its relevance to identity appeared differently to the inhabitants of England and Normandy. William the Conqueror and his men proudly claimed viking roots. Harold Godwineson preferred to emphasize the English side of his identity, while Harald Hardrada believed the inhabitants of northern England to be sympathetic to the viking past, in preference to southern rule. Why and how did viking identity come to mean such different things in England and Normandy?

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<sup>6</sup> Ian Walker, *Harold: the Last Anglo-Saxon King* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997); Lawson, *Battle of Hastings*, p.13.

<sup>7</sup> *The Life of King Edward*, ed. by Frank Barlow (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1992), pp.48-49, written by a supporter of the Godwinesons, calls Harold 'a true friend of his race and country' ('amicus[que] gentis sue et patrię').

In order to answer this question, we need to look at identities in England and Normandy comparatively. The two regions were affected by similar events in the First Viking Age: a period of raids followed by conquest and settlement. However, because different historians have studied the two regions, the experiences of their inhabitants have often appeared dissimilar. The particular processes which led to England and Normandy's divergent histories in the tenth century cannot be identified without comparison. In this thesis, I aim to distinguish some of the different forces on identity in England and Normandy. These forces transformed viking identity to such a degree that the Norman Conquest of England is regularly presented – by historians as it was by contemporaries – as a clash between two ethnically distinct peoples.<sup>8</sup>

### **England and Normandy in the Viking Age**

The polities of 'England' and 'Normandy' formed as a result of viking raids and settlement during the ninth and tenth centuries. Over this period, vikings from Denmark and Norway attacked the British Isles and the Frankish Empire in a series of increasingly severe assaults. The raiders took similar approaches on either side of the channel – indeed, they were sometimes the same bands of men.<sup>9</sup> Annalists in Francia and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms attempted to record the movements of viking armies abroad, but their information was limited by distance, and so their accounts somewhat obscure the degree to which these were unified expeditions. Because the raiders and settlers themselves made very few written records of their activities, we must rely on English and Frankish annals for a chronology of events.<sup>10</sup> It will be useful to outline the series of raids and settlement, before addressing issues of identity in more detail.

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas, *English and the Normans*.

<sup>9</sup> J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Vikings in Francia*, The Stenton Lecture 1974 (Reading: University of Reading 1975), p.3.

<sup>10</sup> R.I. Page, *'A Most Vile People': Early English Historians on the Vikings* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1987), pp.4-6 surveys the few accounts of viking expeditions on rune-stones and in

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that vikings first came to England in around 787, when three of their ships attacked Portland, and the local reeve was killed. In 793, another group of vikings attacked the monastery of Lindisfarne in the north. Raiders from Denmark and Norway did not seriously trouble the English coastlines again until 835, but thereafter reports of viking activity fill the pages of the Chronicle. In 865 the ‘Great Army’ arrived in England, and this force seemed intent on conquest. They were successful in three of the four Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: only King Alfred and the West Saxons mounted an effective resistance. In the 890s another ‘Great Summer Army’ arrived, and combined forces with those settled in England. However, Alfred again repulsed them, and they dispersed, some to the Danish parts of England and some to Francia and the Seine valley.

Frankish interest in Denmark had increased after Charlemagne’s conquest of neighbouring Saxony. Frankish annals began to depict Danes as a threat, but also as allies of the Frankish rulers. Attacks of pirates from Denmark and Norway along the coast of Frisia began soon afterwards. The *Royal Frankish Annals* mention attacks of vikings in Flanders, the Seine and western Poitou in 820, and they appear in the annals increasingly thereafter.<sup>11</sup> Sometimes viking forces were deployed following dynastic disputes in Denmark, and sometimes, as in the 830s and 840s, they took advantage of civil war in Francia. Much viking activity focused on the Seine valley, which gave access to Rouen, a number of wealthy monasteries, and Paris. Viking forces attacked Paris in 845 and 885, but here they met formidable Frankish defences. In the second

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skaldic poetry. He discussed the problems of interpreting these sources in *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myths* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), pp.9-39.

<sup>11</sup> Janet Nelson, ‘The Frankish Empire’, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings*, ed. by Peter Sawyer (Oxford: OUP, 1997), pp.19-47 (p.22). Walter Vogel, *Die Normannen und das fränkische Reich bis zur Gründung der Normandie (799-911)* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1906), gives the most detailed chronology.

half of the ninth century, the same 'Great Army' which troubled England attacked targets in Francia too.<sup>12</sup>

Historians have ascribed greater importance to the viking attacks in the history of England than that of Francia. With knowledge of later events, they have identified the indirect, but nevertheless pivotal role of the vikings in the formation of a single English kingdom. Viking forces effectively destroyed all Anglo-Saxon kingdoms except Wessex, whose royal dynasty would go on to become kings of all England. Viking activity in Francia, on the other hand, has been studied in the context of the decline of the Carolingian Empire. Carolingian historians identify vikings as one group among several who attacked the Empire; these invaders in turn represented only one of various problems which beset the Carolingians.<sup>13</sup> Research into the vikings in Francia has been the domain of Carolingian historians, and thus looked backwards, in contrast to English research, which has tended to look forward to the events of the eleventh century. However, we should also view the impact of the vikings in Francia in terms of the subsequent fragmentation of power. As David Bates had pointed out, the different responses to similar viking incursions in England and Francia contributed to these regions' contrasting tenth-century development. Alfred and his successors centralized English resistance to viking attackers, whereas in northern France local magnates organized effective defence.<sup>14</sup>

Participants and victims experiencing these events were less likely to draw distinctions between England and Francia. Vikings operated in both theatres, travelling across the Channel according to the best opportunities. They attacked similar targets which they identified as centres of moveable wealth: trade emporia, towns and

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<sup>12</sup> Simon Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia and Anglo-Saxon England to 911', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II, c.700-c.900*, ed. by Rosamund McKitterick (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp.190-201 (p.197).

<sup>13</sup> Simon Maclean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the end of the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp.2-3, 17-18; Musset, *Les invasions: le second assaut*.

<sup>14</sup> David Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (London: Longman, 1982), p.4.

monasteries. Vikings in both regions also followed parallel tactics. As well as plundering, they imposed tribute or 'Danegeld' on the people of England and Francia. For these reasons, the inhabitants of England and Francia suffered broadly the same magnitude and nature of destruction. The church endured particularly heavy losses. For example, in Normandy, the bishops of Bayeux and Coutances were both killed by vikings, and the bishops of neighbouring dioceses fled: of the seven bishoprics in Normandy, only the archiepiscopal see of Rouen continued in an unbroken succession throughout the tenth century.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the archbishopric of York survived throughout the Viking Age, but other northern and eastern dioceses in England were deprived of bishops from the 860s to the late tenth century.<sup>16</sup> The disruption to ecclesiastical life in both archdioceses led to the loss of documents and a sharp decline in literate education. From the perspective of either invaders or victims, viking raids on England and Francia were comparable processes.

In both England and Francia, raiders soon turned into settlers. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that a viking army first overwintered on Thanet in 851. From this point onwards, established viking armies actively involved themselves in Anglo-Saxon political affairs. During the 860s and 870s, vikings eliminated the ruling dynasties of Northumbria, East Anglia and Mercia. At first, they established puppet rulers, but it was not long before the armies constructed permanent settlements and viking rulers took direct control. The Chronicle reports that, in 878, Alfred defeated a force at Edington, and received 'the king Guthrum' in baptism afterwards. This same army in 880 continued into East Anglia, 'and settled that land, and divided it up'. Meanwhile, another part of the army, led by Halfdan, had in 876 settled in Northumbria, as the

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<sup>15</sup> Lucien Musset, 'L'Exode des Reliques du Diocèse de Sées au Temps des Invasions Normandes', *Société Historique et Archéologique de l'Orne*, 88 (1970), 3-22 (p.3).

<sup>16</sup> Julia Barrow, 'Survival and Mutation: Ecclesiastical Institutions in the Danelaw in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by Dawn Hadley and Julian Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp.155-76 (pp.157-61).



Chronicle reports: ‘Halfdan divided up the land of Northumbria; and they were ploughing and providing for themselves’.<sup>17</sup> The Danes of Northumbria established a capital at York. In addition, areas of Mercia were settled by Danish armies, but here political power was more fragmented. Brief references in the Chronicle imply that Danish *jarls* and *holds* ruled the ‘Five Boroughs’ (Nottingham, Lincoln, Leicester, Derby and Stamford) and surrounding regions.<sup>18</sup> The Chronicle gives a few names of Scandinavian rulers in the subsequent period; coins provide evidence of others. The political history of the Danish regions remains sketchy for the period until their conquest by the West Saxons, but it seems that the viking dynasty based in Dublin took control of York in the second decade of the tenth century. Even more obscure is the history of north-west England. Toponymic evidence demonstrates that this region was settled by Norwegians sometime after the Danish conquests. But their political impact remains unclear.<sup>19</sup>

The one remaining Anglo-Saxon dynasty, the kings of Wessex, soon attempted to conquer these regions. Edward the Elder and his sister Æthelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, subjugated East Anglia and the Five Boroughs (except perhaps for Lincoln) by 920.<sup>20</sup> West Saxon ambitions in Northumbria were more difficult to realize. According to the Mercian Register, Æthelflaed received the submission of the ‘York-folk’ (‘Eforwicingas’) before her death in 918.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, the Chronicle reports that in 920 all the peoples of the north, including ‘all those who live in Northumbria, both English

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<sup>17</sup> ASC A: ‘se cyning... Godrum’; ‘7 gesæt þæt lond 7 gedælde’; ‘Healfdene Norþanhymbra lond gedælde 7 ergende wæron 7 hiera tilgende’.

<sup>18</sup> Dawn Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.56. *Jarls* and the lower-ranking *holds* were Scandinavian terms for hereditary landowners.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Phythian-Adams, *Land of the Cumbrians: A Study in British Provincial Origins, AD 400-1120* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp.109-29; David Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100: Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp.249-55.

<sup>20</sup> Hadley, *Vikings in England*, pp.54-61; Rollason, *Northumbria*, pp.257-58.

<sup>21</sup> ASC B/C.

and Danish and Norwegians and others’, chose Edward ‘as father and lord’.<sup>22</sup> These submissions conferred little practical control. Æthelstan, Edward’s son and successor, achieved the first real West Saxon dominance north of the Humber. In 926, he made an agreement with the Scandinavian king of York, Sihtric, whom his sister married on the same occasion. The following year, Sihtric died, and Æthelstan took control of York, expelling the viking claimant Guthfrith. However, not only did Æthelstan hold limited power in the north, but the viking king Olaf Guthfrithson took control of York upon his death, and even extended his power over the Five Boroughs until 942. Edmund (939-46) and his successor Eadred (946-55) both continued to struggle for control of York in competition with a number of Scandinavian kings.

The changing allegiances of the people of York in this period suggest that they had no preference for a ‘Danish’ or ‘English’ ruler. Moreover, the role of the archbishop of York held pivotal importance, which Scandinavian kings recognized: the Chronicle presents Archbishop Wulfstan I determining the allegiance of the Northumbrians. York fluctuated between West Saxon and Norse rule until the expulsion – or murder – of the last viking king of York, Eric, in 954.<sup>23</sup> Thereafter, the West Saxon dynasty ruled the regions the Danes had settled until Swein’s conquest of 1013, but the majority of immigrants seem to have remained in England. The Chronicle states that, after Edward took over Bedford, some of the inhabitants led by Jarl Thurcytel left for new opportunities in Francia.<sup>24</sup> In general, however, the West Saxons simply replaced Norse political authority and left the populations otherwise unaffected.

Viking armies in Francia also established settlements. The first of these were temporary, and resulted from a series of royal grants in Frisia to Danish vikings. Louis

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<sup>22</sup> ASC A 920: ‘ealle þa þe on Norþhymbrum bugeað, ægþer ge Engliſce ge Deniſce ge Norþmen ge oþre’; ‘to fæder 7 to hlaforde’.

<sup>23</sup> Rollason, *Northumbria*, p.213. Eric is normally identified as Eric Bloodaxe, but this has recently been challenged: Clare Downham, ‘Eric Bloodaxe - axed? The Mystery of the Last Viking King of York’, *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 1 (2004), 51-77.

<sup>24</sup> ASC A 920 [916].

the Pious began the tradition in 826, when he granted Harald Klak the county of Rüstringen to use as a retreat, should he lose out to another Danish king again.<sup>25</sup>

Subsequent rulers made similar grants throughout the ninth century, more usually with the purpose of employing one viking to defend the Frisian coast and border from other viking raiders.<sup>26</sup> These viking leaders held their benefices personally from the king and accordingly they only established temporary authority over them. While they probably brought followers with them, there is no indication of permanent settlement from Scandinavia.<sup>27</sup> However, these Frisian precedents may later have inspired Charles the Simple to follow a similar strategy in granting territory as a means of defence.

In the West Frankish kingdom, vikings followed a pattern of settlement more like that in England. First, raiders began to establish semi-permanent bases over the winter. The Annals of St Bertin report that an army camped on the isle of Noirmoutier at the mouth of the Loire in 843, and ‘brought their households over from the mainland and decided to winter there in something like a permanent settlement’.<sup>28</sup> A viking army wintered on the Seine for the first time in 851. Just as in England, vikings became an established feature of the Frankish world, and exerted their influence over political divisions in the kingdom: at times they joined forces with the king’s enemies, such as the Bretons or the pretender Pippin II.<sup>29</sup> Frankish kings sporadically resorted to a policy of employing vikings against others, in return for territory as well as money. Often, ‘grants’ of land constituted recognition of existing viking control in a particular region.

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<sup>25</sup> Nelson, ‘The Frankish Empire’, p.23.

<sup>26</sup> Simon Coupland, ‘From Poachers to Gamekeepers: Scandinavian Warlords and Carolingian Kings’, *EME*, 7 (1998), 85-114; Stéphane Lebecq, ‘Les Vikings en Frise: Chronique d’un Échec Relatif’, in *Les fondations scandinaves en Occident et les débuts du duché de Normandie: Colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle (25-29 septembre 2002)*, ed. by Pierre Bauduin (Caen: Publications du CRAHM, 2005), pp.97-112.

<sup>27</sup> Lebecq, ‘Les Vikings en Frise’, pp.110-12; Coupland, ‘Poachers to Gamekeepers’, pp.111-12; see further *Vikings on the Rhine*, ed. by Rudolf Simek and Ulrike Engel (Wien: Fassbaender, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> *The Annals of St-Bertin*, trans. by Janet Nelson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p.56; *Les Annales de Saint Bertin*, ed. by Félix Grat, Jeanne Vielliard and Suzanne Clémencet (Paris: Klincksieck, 1964), p.44: ‘Pyratē Nordomandorum... conuectis a continenti domibus, hiemare uelut perpetuis sedibus statuerunt’.

<sup>29</sup> Coupland, ‘Vikings in Francia and Anglo-Saxon England’, p.197.

Viking raiders on the Seine began to settle permanently from the end of the ninth century, but it was not until after the army's defeat at Chartres in 911 that they made an agreement with Charles the Simple.<sup>30</sup> Charles and the viking leader Rollo convened this agreement, commonly referred to as the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte, at some time between 911 and 918. Flodoard of Reims reports that two further grants of land were made to the Seine vikings, in 924 and 933. These territories, under Rollo and his family's leadership, would become Normandy.

As in England, Scandinavian settlers in northern France competed for control with local and neighbouring rulers. Viking raiders also became settlers on the Loire, whence they took control of Nantes in 919 and then the rest of Brittany in 931.<sup>31</sup> They seized this territory by force from its Breton rulers, and the Franks did not attempt to reconquer it. Indeed, the viking leader, Rögnvaldr, made agreements with Frankish rulers in 921 and 927, which affirmed his position in Nantes.<sup>32</sup> However, the viking occupiers in Brittany achieved no organized administration or mercantile centre, and their dominance lasted only eighteen years. In 937, Count Alain of Brittany, with the assistance of King Æthelstan of England, drove the viking army out for good. It is unclear whether any of the army remained behind in Brittany under Alain's rule.

To the east, Frankish rulers did attempt to seize control of the Seine valley and the northern coast from its viking rulers. In 942, Count Arnulf of Flanders had Rollo's son William Longsword assassinated, probably because of William's expansionist aims. William's son, Richard I, claimed power in his place, but he was still a child. Other

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<sup>30</sup> Jacques Le Maho, 'Les Normands de la Seine à la Fin du IX<sup>e</sup> Siècle', in *Les fondations scandinaves en Occident*, ed. by Bauduin, pp.161-79 (pp.173-76) ; *idem*, 'Les premières installations normandes dans la basse vallée de la Seine (fin du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle)', in *La progression des Vikings, des raids à la colonisation*, ed. by Anne-Marie Flambard Héricher (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 2003), pp.153-69. Le Maho uses the evidence of place-names to propose that vikings occupied sites abandoned by earlier inhabitants of the Seine valley during the raiding period.

<sup>31</sup> Joëlle Quaghebeur, 'Norvège et Bretagne aux IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> Siècles: Un Destin Partagé', in *Les fondations scandinaves en Occident*, ed. by Bauduin, pp.113-31; Neil Price, *The Vikings in Brittany* (London: Viking Society, 1989).

<sup>32</sup> Price, *Vikings in Brittany*, pp.44-45.

viking leaders, such as Sihtric Sihtricsson from York, arrived in Normandy during these years. In 944, Louis IV d'Outremer seized his opportunity to take control of Rouen, while Hugh the Great, duke of the Franks, attacked Bayeux. But they were unsuccessful. Louis insisted on Hugh's submission to him; then a viking chief named Harald, who had recently established himself at Bayeux, captured Louis and handed him over to Hugh.<sup>33</sup> According to Dudo of St-Quentin, Harald (whom he called the king of Dacia) helped Richard re-assert his authority in Rouen.<sup>34</sup> Flodoard instead credited Hugh the Great with providing assistance to Richard against Harald. Either way, the dynasty of Rollo overcame the crisis and re-established itself in Rouen. Their success after the crisis of the 940s made Normandy the longest-lasting state to result from the viking raids.

From the perspective of Scandinavian settlers, the establishments of communities in England and Francia were similar processes. At first, viking bands created winter bases for extended raids. By the last quarter of the ninth century, they were intent on settlement and conquest. Vikings seized control in Brittany and Normandy, and northern and eastern England. The Bretons soon expelled the vikings, but the new rulers of Normandy made an agreement with the French king, just as Guthrum made an agreement with Alfred in England. In Normandy at least, vikings seem to have brought their households with them: evidence for the presence of Scandinavian women in England suggests a similar process.<sup>35</sup> Several waves of immigration arrived in both regions. Indeed, many of the vikings who settled in the Cotentin area of Normandy seem to have come via the British Isles.

Research agendas for the two regions, however, have focused on different aspects of Scandinavian settlement. Chris Wickham and David Bates have both drawn attention to the 'national' historiographies that, on the whole, continue to deal independently with

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<sup>33</sup> Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, pp.13-15.

<sup>34</sup> Lair, pp.239-45; Christiansen, pp.114-19.

<sup>35</sup> Jane Kershaw, *Viking Identities: Scandinavian Jewellery in England* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp.245-47.

their own regions.<sup>36</sup> Historians of viking England have paid little attention to leaders and rulers, instead asking questions primarily about the nature and scale of settlement.<sup>37</sup> The evidence of place-names, the statements of law codes and the identification of Scandinavian elements in Domesday Book encouraged conclusions about long-term change rather than the fast-moving transfer of political power. The different polities which viking armies and rulers established in England – the kingdom of York, the Five Boroughs, Guthrum's kingdom of East Anglia – are often treated as one.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, historians of Scandinavian settlement in Francia have focused on political history, so that the names of Rollo and his successors remain central to any account of Normandy's origins.

Because of its enduring success, Normandy has outshone other viking settlements within Francia. Indeed, I have limited the Frankish part of the comparison to Normandy because it was the only viking settlement in Francia that endured for a significant period and from which sufficient evidence survives. However, the general historiographical focus on Normandy has encouraged historians to characterize its development as both unique and inevitable. Yet Normandy's early development resembles the establishment of Scandinavian rulers in England. Although historians dispute the numbers of settlers, both migrations may be characterized as elite takeovers. Existing inhabitants remained and found methods of accommodation. The archbishop of Rouen negotiated with Rollo

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<sup>36</sup> Chris Wickham, *Problems in Doing Comparative History* (Southampton: University of Southampton Centre for Antiquity and the Middle Ages, 2005), pp.2-7, 18; David Bates, 'Britain and France in the Year 1000', *Franco-British Studies*, 28 (1999), 5-22 (p.5, n.1; p.19).

<sup>37</sup> Dawn Hadley and Julian Richards, 'Introduction: Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Scandinavian Settlement', in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. by Hadley and Richards, pp.3-15 (p.5). For a long time, the only exception was Alfred Smyth's research into the ruling dynasty of Dublin and York (Alfred Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles 850-880* (Oxford: OUP, 1977)), but his reliance on later literary sources was criticized; Clare Downham has more recently investigated this dynasty through contemporary evidence: *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: the Dynasty of Ívarr to AD 1014* (Edinburgh: Dunedin, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Lesley Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', in *Edward the Elder, 899-924*, ed. by Nick Higham and David Hill (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.128-43 (p.133).

to spare the city in the late ninth century.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, the archbishop of York and the community of St Cuthbert played essential roles in the creation of new societies in Northumbria. Neighbouring authorities also began to interact with viking settlers through the church. Letters between Archbishop Hervey of Reims, Pope John X and Archbishop Wito of Rouen testify to the concern of the Christian authorities to integrate the viking princes into their world.<sup>40</sup> Pope Formosus, in the 890s, had raised similar concerns with the English bishops.<sup>41</sup> For those experiencing it, therefore, the processes of settlement by Scandinavians in Normandy, Northumbria, East Anglia and the Five Boroughs were comparable in many ways.

Moreover, the history of the Norman principality from the mid-tenth century has been viewed as an example of the rise of territorial principalities within France, rather than as a specifically Scandinavian society. David Bates set the agenda by proposing that ‘eleventh-century Normandy must be analysed entirely in its French context’.<sup>42</sup> More recently, there have been some successful attempts at integrating the Frankish experience with other areas assaulted by vikings and settled by Scandinavians.<sup>43</sup> This thesis continues along that route. Comparison with the areas settled by Scandinavians in England will highlight those characteristics attributable specifically to processes of settlement and cultural interaction.

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<sup>39</sup> Dudo (Christiansen, p.35; Lair, pp.151-53) states that this took place in 876; Le Maho, ‘Les Normands de la Seine’, pp.176-79, and ‘Les premières installations normandes’, pp.165-67, suggests that this agreement must have been made later, around 898.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Epistolae Ioannis Papae IX’, in *Sacrosancta Concilia ad Regiam editionem exacta...*, ed. by Philippe Labbé and Gabriel Cossart, 16 vols (Paris: Societas Typographica Librorum Ecclesiasticorum, 1671-72), IX, cols 483-94. The Pope concerned was in fact John X: Eleanor Searle, ‘Frankish Rivalries and Norse Warriors’, *ANS*, 8 (1986), 198-213 (p.204, n.26).

<sup>41</sup> *Cartularium Saxonicum*, ed. by Walter de Gray Birch, 3 vols (London: Whiting, 1885-99), no.573 (II, p.214); trans. EHD, pp.890-92. The second part of this letter is a post-Conquest forgery supporting the claims of Canterbury to primacy over York, but the first half appears to be genuine.

<sup>42</sup> Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p.xviii.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. *Les fondations scandinaves en Occident*, ed. by Bauduin.

The essential comparability of Normandy with viking settlements in England, which has often been suggested, forms the background to this thesis.<sup>44</sup> Some scholars have successfully used material from one region to shed light on the other.<sup>45</sup> However, this is the first full-length comparative study of viking settlement in the two regions. Comparison between any of the aspects of settlement raised above would reveal a great deal about both societies and the process of migration in the Viking Age. I have chosen to focus on one aspect of post-settlement assimilation. The tenth-century inhabitants of England and Normandy accepted vikings, who had terrorized them in attacks, as neighbours and rulers. This comparison highlights their divergent strategies for doing so.

### **Assimilation and identity after viking settlement**

Historians of England and Normandy draw especially contrasting pictures of the processes of assimilation which followed viking settlement.

Interpretations of early Normandy have separated broadly along ‘Scandinavian’ and ‘Frankish’ lines.<sup>46</sup> After the Second World War, French historians began to abandon long-held views of the Scandinavian character of Normandy in favour of institutional, cultural and social continuity with the Carolingian past.<sup>47</sup> According to these researchers, viking settlers in Normandy rejected Scandinavian culture and rapidly assimilated into the Frankish world. There remain few archaeological traces that are

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<sup>44</sup> Lucien Musset, ‘Pour l’étude comparative de deux fondations politiques des Vikings: le royaume d’York et le duché de Rouen’, in *idem*, *Nordica et Normannica: recueil d’études sur la Scandinavie ancienne et médiévale, les expéditions des Vikings et la fondation de la Normandie* (Paris: Société des études nordiques, 1997), pp.157-72; Frank Stenton, ‘The Scandinavian Colonies in England and Normandy’, *TRHS*, 4<sup>th</sup> ser., 37 (1945), 1-12.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Gillian Fellows-Jensen, ‘Les noms de lieux d’origine scandinave et la colonisation viking en Normandie: Examen critique de la question’, *Proxima Thulé*, 1 (1994), 63-103.

<sup>46</sup> Michel de Bouard, ‘De la Neustrie Carolingienne à la Normandie féodale: Continuité ou discontinuité?’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 28 (1955), 1-14.

<sup>47</sup> Pierre Bauduin, *La Première Normandie (Xe –XIe siècles): Sur les frontières de la Haute Normandie: Identité et construction d’une principauté* (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2004), pp.25-27; see also the Preface by Régine Le Jan, pp.9-10. Henri Prentout, *Essai sur les origines et la fondation du duché de Normandie* (Paris: Champion, 1911), presents the case for Scandinavian impact. The most influential post-war interpretations were made by Lucien Musset (in particular *Les invasions* and the studies collected in *Nordica et Normannica*, among hundreds of articles on these subjects) and Albert d’Haenens, *Les Invasions Normandes, Une Catastrophe?* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970).



demonstrably Scandinavian.<sup>48</sup> It is claimed that the Old Norse language rapidly died out. The centres of population, diocesan and county structures remained the same as they had been in Carolingian times – there was simply a change of personnel at the elite levels.<sup>49</sup> The ‘Frankish’ school of thought still currently dominates, although more recent research has nuanced the certainty of these conclusions and cast more light on the process of settlement.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the findings of these studies do not link directly to the scale of migration: Bates argued for a significant number, though still a minority, of Scandinavian settlers in Normandy, attributing the lack of Scandinavian characteristics to the processes of assimilation.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, a few voices maintain that Scandinavian elements persisted. Notably, Eleanor Searle proposed that Scandinavian kinship structures underlay the foundation and expansion of Normandy.<sup>52</sup> However, others pointed out that Frankish society may have been built upon similar patterns of kinship.<sup>53</sup> Lesley Abrams has recently taken another angle on the Scandinavian impact, with particular focus on language. She has emphasized that Norse-speaking immigrants had diverse experiences across Normandy,

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<sup>48</sup> Laurent Mazet-Harhoff, ‘The incursion of the Vikings into the natural and cultural landscape of upper Normandy’, in *Viking Trade and Settlement in Continental Western Europe*, ed. by Iben Skibsted Klæsøe (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2010), pp.81-122 (pp.82-84) gives an overview of the Scandinavian finds relating to Normandy, but also suggests that the scarcity of finds results from a lack of excavation. Lesley Abrams, ‘Early Normandy’, *ANS*, 35 (2013), 45-64 (pp.48-51) discusses further reasons for the low survival of evidence displaying ‘Scandinavian’ characteristics.

<sup>49</sup> Lucien Musset, ‘Gouvernés et Gouvernants dans le Monde Scandinave et dans le Monde Normand’, *Recueils de la Société Jean Bodin*, 23 (1968), 439-68; *idem*, ‘Les Domaines de l’Époque Franque et les Destinées du Régime Domanal du IXe au XIe Siècle’, *BSAN*, 49 (1946), 7-97; *idem*, ‘Monachisme d’Époque Franque et Monachisme d’Époque Ducale en Normandie: Le Problème de la Continuité’, in *Aspects du Monachisme en Normandie (IVe-XVIIIe siècles)*, ed. by Lucien Musset (Paris: Vrin, 1982), pp.55-74; Jean Yver, ‘Les Premières Institutions du duché de Normandie’, in *I Normanni e loro espansione in Europa nell’alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1969), pp.299-366; More recently, Felice Lifshitz, ‘La Normandie carolingienne: essai sur la continuité, avec utilisation de sources négligées’, *Annales de Normandie*, 48 (1998), 505-24.

<sup>50</sup> See especially the studies in *La Normandie vers l’an mil: études et documents*, ed. by François de Beaupaire and Jean-Pierre Chaline (Rouen: Société de l’histoire de Normandie, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, pp.15-24.; Abrams, ‘Early Normandy’, p.48. Else Roesdahl, ‘What may we expect? On the problem of vikings and archeology in Normandy’, in *La progression des Vikings*, ed. by Héricher, pp.207-13 (pp.208-09), asks why the situation in Normandy should be so different from other areas, and suggests possible cultural dynamics that might have been causes.

<sup>52</sup> Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988); Searle, ‘Frankish Rivalries’.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Gelting, ‘Predatory Kinship Revisited’, *ANS*, 15 (2003), 107-20 (p.107); see the review by David Bates in *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 1045-47.

which were obscured by later sources created after the triumph of Rollo's family.<sup>54</sup> This family's assimilation and political dominance may therefore have created the anomalous situation in Normandy. No one would deny that the vikings' seizure of power in Normandy must have had considerable contemporary repercussions, but it has proved difficult to identify a specifically Scandinavian impact. Cultural contact exerted pressure in one direction only: by the end of the tenth century, the immigrant vikings had assimilated to Frankish culture.

The Scandinavian influence on England, though no less controversial, is generally considered to be more significant. For most of the twentieth century, the question of scale has focused the debate.<sup>55</sup> In support of mass migration from Scandinavia, scholars attributed distinctive features of northern and eastern England to the viking period. Later references to the 'Danelaw' were supplemented with investigations into the Scandinavian origins of legal, administrative and social institutions and terminology. Frank Stenton presented this view at length, drawing especially on linguistic evidence in support of two waves of migration. Philologists pointed to the predominance of Scandinavian elements in place-names (and personal names) as evidence of dense Scandinavian settlement and linguistic influence. Place-names derived from Old Norse elements map convincingly onto the regions where written sources state that viking armies settled – the north and east of England.

In contradiction to this view of mass migration, in his *Age of the Vikings* of 1962, Peter Sawyer argued for minimal levels of Scandinavian settlement. Sawyer dismissed the reliability of contemporary written sources, claiming that they greatly exaggerated the size of viking armies; he asserted, furthermore, that the settlers were all members of

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<sup>54</sup> Abrams, 'Early Normandy'.

<sup>55</sup> Hadley, *Vikings in England*, pp.3-6; Hadley and Richards, 'Introduction', p.4; Simon Trafford, 'Ethnicity, Migration Theory and the Historiography of the Scandinavian Settlement in England', in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. by Hadley and Richards, pp.17-39 (pp.18-21) gives a useful overview of the debate.

these armies, and rejected the idea of an unrecorded secondary migration.<sup>56</sup> Opinions divided according to the nature of the evidence each scholar privileged, but it was clear that both arguments required refinement. For example, Sawyer significantly rethought his position in the light of advances in place-name studies: he credits the work of Gillian Fellows-Jensen in convincing him that there continued to be new Scandinavian settlements in the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, local studies indicated that not only the density but the patterns of settlement varied in different regions.<sup>58</sup> However, the question of Scandinavian impact remained bound up with the issue of the scale of settlement.<sup>59</sup> Scholars on all sides of the debate presented Scandinavian linguistic, cultural, administrative or legal influence (or lack thereof) as evidence of mass (or minimal) migration.

In the last twenty years, researchers have moved away from the issue of scale to examine the process of settlement and acculturation. In doing so, they have recognized the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative projects. Dawn Hadley and Julian Richards' edited volume *Cultures in Contact* drew together researchers in many different disciplines to suggest new avenues of research and to produce a more complex view of accommodation and integration in the British Isles. New archaeological evidence added further material for this approach. The Coppergate excavations at York between 1979 and 1981 revealed 40,000 objects, which sparked a re-interpretation of the 'viking capital' of York. Since its inception in 1997, the Portable Antiquities Scheme has recorded small finds from around the country, increasing the artefactual

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<sup>56</sup> Peter Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings* (London: Arnold, 1962; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1971). Sawyer's work was matched by similar re-interpretations of the viking period in Francia by Lucien Musset and Albert d'Haenens: see Albert d'Haenens, 'Les Invasions Normandes dans l'Empire Franc au IX<sup>e</sup> Siècle', in *I Normanni e loro espansione*, pp.233-98 (esp. pp.240-41).

<sup>57</sup> Sawyer, *Age of the Vikings*, pp.vi, 148-76.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. Lesley Abrams, 'Scandinavian Place-Names and Settlement-History: Flegg, Norfolk and East Anglia in the Viking Age', in *Vikings and Norse in the North Atlantic: Proceedings of the Fourteenth Viking Congress*, ed. by Andras Mortensen and Simun Arge (Torshavn: Foroya, 2005), pp.307-22.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Bryan Ward-Perkins, 'Why did the Anglo-Saxons not become more British?', *EHR*, 115 (2000), 513-33; Trafford, 'Ethnicity, Migration Theory', suggests why this issue has been discussed more profitably for the Anglo-Saxon settlement.

evidence of Scandinavians in England exponentially.<sup>60</sup> Research into these discoveries has produced sophisticated analyses of the Scandinavian contribution to material culture.

In response to their findings, researchers have coined the term ‘Anglo-Scandinavian’ to refer to the culture and society of Danish-settled areas of England in the Viking Age. Different types of evidence reveal a complex process of acculturation between migrants and ‘natives’, which resulted in the creation of new forms of societal organization and display. For instance, stone sculpture from northern England bears great resemblance to contemporary Scandinavian styles, but includes elements from an Anglo-Saxon background.<sup>61</sup> Stonework artists in England developed new types of monument out of this fusion.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, women’s brooches made in East Anglia and near Lincoln followed Scandinavian fashions, but used Anglo-Saxon forms and fittings. Moreover, there are a number of ‘Scandinavian’ brooch types and styles found only in England.<sup>63</sup> Research into these aspects of material culture and social organization implies that the interaction of Danish settlers and Anglo-Saxon inhabitants created a new culture of fusion, in contrast to the one-sided assimilation of vikings in Normandy.

In the definition of ‘Anglo-Scandinavian’ society, several scholars have introduced the concept of identity.<sup>64</sup> They have interpreted these cultural products as deliberate assertions of ethnic identity, which demonstrated their users’ links to Scandinavia but also connection to their immediate local regions. In their introduction to *Cultures in Contact*, Hadley and Richards state that ‘an important aim of this volume is to open up

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<sup>60</sup> Kershaw, *Viking Identities*, p.2.

<sup>61</sup> David Stocker, ‘Monuments and Merchants: Irregularities in the Distribution of Stone Sculpture in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire in the Tenth Century’, in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. by Hadley and Richards, pp.180-212; Phil Sidebottom, ‘Viking Age Stone Monuments and Social Identity in Derbyshire’, *ibid*, pp.213-35.

<sup>62</sup> Richard Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England* (London: Collins, 1980), pp.85-100.

<sup>63</sup> Jane Kershaw, ‘Culture and Gender in the Danelaw: Scandinavian and Anglo-Scandinavian Brooches’, *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 5 (2009), 295-325; Kershaw, *Viking Identities*, pp.222, 229-36.

<sup>64</sup> Lesley Abrams, ‘Diaspora and Identity in the Viking Age’, *EME*, 20 (2012), 17-38; Kershaw, *Viking Identities*; Matthew Innes, ‘Danelaw Identities: Ethnicity, Regionalism and Political Allegiance’, in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. by Hadley and Richards, pp.65-88; Dawn Hadley, ‘Viking and Native: Rethinking Identity in the Danelaw’, *EME*, 11 (2002), 45-70.

new interdisciplinary dialogue’, before listing the types of evidence used: ‘documentary, archaeological, artefactual, and linguistic evidence’.<sup>65</sup> Note that this list does not include literary material. Indeed, medieval written sources contain no equivalent to the new term ‘Anglo-Scandinavian’. Sawyer’s comments on the written sources, despite the criticism they received, have taught researchers of the viking impact a general wariness in the use of literary texts. But this discrepancy between the ‘identity’ expressed in material culture and in texts at least needs elucidating. Moreover, these studies rarely entangle their research with discussions of the contemporaneous development of a unified English identity, which, in contrast, classify texts as their primary sources of evidence. The relationship between a developing English identity and the posited ‘Anglo-Scandinavian’ identity deserves consideration. Literary sources therefore provide an opportunity to investigate ethnic relations across England.

The absence of literary studies from the agenda constitutes the major difference between approaches to identity in England and Normandy. In contrast to the focus on Scandinavian material culture in England, it was literary sources that sparked modern interest in Norman identity. Successive eleventh- and twelfth-century historians produced texts devoted to the Norman people as a distinct group. Dudo of St-Quentin, William of Jumièges, William of Poitiers, Robert of Torigni and Orderic Vitalis, as well as a number of anonymous monks, detailed the exploits of the Norman *gens* and attributed their achievements to their distinctive Norman character. These histories led modern scholars to an appreciation of the constructed nature of Norman identity. In 1976, R.H.C. Davis referred to the enigma of ‘The Normans and their Myth’: from the eleventh century to the present, historians viewed the Normans as a distinct and united people, but what that meant and who it included was never constant.<sup>66</sup> Davis thus recognized Norman identity as a creation of the inhabitants of Normandy. It was an

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<sup>65</sup> Hadley and Richards, ‘Introduction: Interdisciplinary Approaches’, p.3.

<sup>66</sup> R.H.C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), pp.12-14.

extreme example of the general truth that ‘What no nation can be without is an image or myth with which it can identify itself... it is usually flexible and capable of being gradually transformed’.<sup>67</sup> Subsequent researchers investigated in detail how historical texts created this identity.<sup>68</sup>

Historians of the medieval period increasingly came to recognize that *all* identities are constructed by those who use them, and *all* identities continue to mutate over time. In this respect, Normandy was not unique, though many clung to the suggestion that it was an extreme example.<sup>69</sup> Rather, in the texts of Norman identity we are able to view the process more clearly than in most cases. This base of literary sources makes Norman identity a useful comparison with Scandinavian identity in England.

Norman historians created a strong narrative of the origins and characteristics of the Norman people. They attributed the Normans’ success as conquerors in England, Sicily and the Levant to their *Normanitas*, which flourished among not just the dukes but the entire people. The earliest of these histories, which subsequent historians followed, was Dudo of St-Quentin’s *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum*. Dudo devoted much time and emphasis to the viking past, describing how Rollo the viking leader became the first of the Norman dukes. Moreover, the collective name he used – *Normanni* – was the same word that their neighbours used for viking raiders throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. This word came from the Old Norse for ‘North men’, a fact which demonstrates the deliberate identification of the inhabitants of Normandy with vikings. Again, however, the development of Norman identity has been viewed in isolation from the identities of the Normans’ neighbours, the Franks. The effect of the

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<sup>67</sup> Davis, *Normans and their Myth*, p.49.

<sup>68</sup> Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911-1154* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005); Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories: Propaganda, Myth, and Subversion* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001); Cassandra Potts, ‘*Atque unum ex diversis gentibus populum effecit*: Historical Tradition and the Norman Identity’, *ANS*, 17 (1995), 139-52; G.A. Loud, ‘The *Gens Normannorum* – myth or reality?’, *ANS*, 4 (1982), 104-16.

<sup>69</sup> Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, p.2; Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p.3.

Normans on Frankish identity has been assumed to be minimal, because Norse culture seems to have had little influence in France. Yet the Normans did not forget their viking roots. While Scandinavian culture may have declined, there remained a specifically ‘viking’ element in the texts of Norman identity.

These differing pictures of assimilation and identity in England and Normandy present a clear problem. Settlers in Normandy rapidly assimilated to Frankish society, whereas settlers in England developed their own ‘Anglo-Scandinavian’ culture, which was full of Norse forms and elements. Yet contemporaries spoke of ‘Normans’ as a people, but no comparable term existed in England. The texts of Norman identity described how they, as a people, had come from Scandinavia and terrorized Francia in years of viking raids. In tenth-century England, on the other hand, no one produced texts identifying with vikings, not even in the Anglo-Scandinavian milieu of north-east England. Culture and identity appear to have been disconnected.

The key question addressed in this thesis is: how did identities in England and Normandy develop as a result of Scandinavian settlement? Identification with vikings and Scandinavian origins cannot be mapped onto the persistence of Norse culture. Nor was there a simple connection between the creation of a new ethnicity (such as Norman identity) and the creation of a new culture (such as the Anglo-Scandinavian culture discerned in northern England). Given that the creation of identities was not the result of a general expression of cultural distinctions, we should ask who manipulated identities in England and Normandy. The dominant political authorities present a striking difference. The Norman dukes originated as a viking dynasty, whereas the West Saxon kings took dominance over all England by conquering regions from viking rulers. Were the identities of ordinary people determined by the holders of political power?

### **Concepts of ethnicity and identity**

Fredrik Barth's ideas about ethnicity will help us address these questions. Barth's approach reoriented the focus of intergroup relations on the 'ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses'.<sup>70</sup> Barth demonstrated that ethnicity occurs when culturally distinct groups come into contact and become aware of their difference. An ethnic group cannot be identified by objective cultural or biological criteria; rather, it is an 'imagined community', like the nation.<sup>71</sup> Ethnic group identity is based on perceived similarity among group members, and perceived distinction from those outside the group who do not share characteristics or interests. Only the cultural elements they use to distinguish membership of each group are relevant to identity.

Social scientists, argued Barth, should focus on the *meanings* given to cultural symbols and practices, in order to understand the functioning of ethnic relations.<sup>72</sup> This approach has influenced researchers beyond Barth's own discipline of anthropology. Archaeologists, in particular, have engaged with its implications, leading to a rejection of the idea that 'ethnic entities' found in the historical record can be mapped onto archaeological cultures.<sup>73</sup> The development and transmission of cultural forms – political institutions, hairstyles, artistic techniques, games, legal procedures, moral values, songs, stories – operate separately from ethnic relations. Only some of these forms will become relevant: those used to distinguish group members and to define the boundary between ethnic groups.<sup>74</sup>

This insight provides a useful perspective on viking identities in England and Normandy. If we follow Barth's approach in our analysis, we may separate ethnic

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<sup>70</sup> Fredrik Barth, 'Introduction', in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, ed. by Fredrik Barth (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969; reissued 1998), pp.9-38 (p.15).

<sup>71</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983; repr. 1998), pp.15-16.

<sup>72</sup> Barth, 'Introduction', pp.14-15.

<sup>73</sup> Siân Jones, 'Historical categories and the praxis of identity: the interpretation of ethnicity in historical archaeology', in *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge*, ed. by Pedro Funari, Martin Hall and Siân Jones (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.219-32 (p.228).

<sup>74</sup> *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, ed. by Barth, pp.6, 38.



identities from the ‘cultural stuff’ of Scandinavian language, metalwork, stone-carving, agrarian organization, law and literature. Only some of these cultural forms and practices will have been relevant to mediating the boundaries between immigrant and native in areas of Scandinavian settlement. As the original problem – why did ‘Norman’ identity emerge in the region which rejected Scandinavian culture? – demonstrates, the relationship between ‘cultural stuff’ and ethnicity was not a simple one. Consequently, the historian with an interest in ethnicity must investigate perceived identities separately from cultural transmission. Only then may we consider the relationship between Scandinavian identity and Scandinavian culture.

Historians of the Viking Age have rarely applied Barth’s ideas to their field of study. Hadley has demonstrated that the paradigms of ethnicity generally used in all areas of viking studies are now outmoded.<sup>75</sup> Although recent interdisciplinary research has raised interest in issues of identity, research in different disciplines is often conducted against the background of contrasting theoretical frameworks. Projects analysing DNA samples either of medieval burials or current populations have been used as evidence of migration and ancestry.<sup>76</sup> Results from these kinds of studies may be helpful in mapping the movements of particular genetic characteristics. Yet they tell us nothing about perceived, and therefore socially real, identities.<sup>77</sup> Recognition of the complex connections between genetic relations, culture and ethnic identities, and the multifarious possible approaches, has stimulated increasing interest in these areas. This has extended to dealing with conflict and ethnicity among vikings, although this has so far been ultimately a project of categorization.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Hadley, ‘Viking and Native’, especially p.70.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. Georgina Bowden, Patricia Balaresque, Turi King and others, ‘Excavating Past Population Structures by Surname-Based Sampling: The Genetic Legacy of the Vikings in Northwest England’, *Molecular Biology and Evolution*, 25.2 (2008), 301-09.

<sup>77</sup> Hadley, ‘Viking and Native’, p.69.

<sup>78</sup> Clare Downham, “‘Hiberno-Norwegians’ and ‘Anglo-Danes’: Anachronistic Ethnicities in Viking Age England”, *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 19 (2009), 139-69, for discussion.

Modern concepts of ethnicity have exerted a slower impact on viking studies because the field has fallen between two discussions of ethnicity in the medieval period. The first is the debate over the ‘ethnogenesis’ of barbarian peoples in the fourth and fifth centuries. The discussion hinges on the transition from the universal aims of the Roman Empire to the language of ethnicity that prevailed in the following centuries. In doing so, it has problematized the relationships between identity, solidarity, organization and status, raising issues that need addressing in all historical periods. Investigation into barbarian ethnic groups has emphasized the fluid nature of identities, which enabled individuals to switch between different warleaders. Students of the ‘ethnogenesis’ school proposed that these leaders and elites constituted the ‘Traditionskern’, as holders of ethnic traditions; their followers, from disparate backgrounds, then associated themselves with these ethnic traditions.<sup>79</sup> However, the methodology of the proponents of ‘ethnogenesis theory’ has been criticized. Furthermore, evidence from the period shows that ethnic identities among non-elites could be maintained while fighting in a different group: the ethnogenesis model makes little allowance for minority or oppressed groups.<sup>80</sup>

The debate foregrounded the understanding that ethnic identity is open to change. Opinions collide over whether ethnicity is a determinant of human action, or whether it is ‘instrumental’ and employed for personal gain. The former proposal should be distinguished from the suggestion that ethnicity is ‘innate’ and impossible to change. The real issue is of the strength of attachment, and the existence of constraints on action. Historians generally recognize that ethnic identities are subjective and fluid – over a

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<sup>79</sup> Herwig Wolfram, ‘*Origo et religio*. Ethnic traditions and literature in early medieval texts’, *EME*, 3 (1994), 19-38; *Strategies of Distinction: the Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800*, ed. by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998). These historians draw on ideas from Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen Gentes* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1961).

<sup>80</sup> Andrew Gillett, ‘Ethnogenesis: A Contested Model of Early Medieval Europe’, *History Compass*, 4 (2006), 241-60 (247-52); Peter Heather, ‘Disappearing and Reappearing Tribes’, in *Strategies of Distinction*, ed. by Pohl and Reimitz, pp.95-111.

long period of time, it is impossible to demonstrate otherwise. However, for individuals, the extent to which identities are subjective and fluid will vary from situation to situation. We should not dismiss the importance of the emotional significance of identity, and the strength of social pressure to conform.

The second important discussion of medieval ethnicity relates to the later middle ages and the concept of frontier.<sup>81</sup> This concept has illuminated conflicts and contacts on the edge of Christendom. Inspired by Frederick Turner's depiction of the American frontier, Bartlett has drawn together the 'frontier experience' of expanding medieval Christian society as a unitary process that was important in the development of early-modern Europe.<sup>82</sup> Focus on the frontier complements Barth's interest in boundaries. Historians of Muslim and Christian Spain, to give a notable example, have explored instances of ethnic and cultural conflict through this concept.<sup>83</sup> They have provided many examples of cultural exchange (and other kinds of interaction such as economic networks) across ethnic boundaries.

'Frontier' has variously been understood as a distinct political boundary or as a transitional zone. Explorations of specific situations using either concept have emphasized how political, ethnic, cultural and economic boundaries rarely correspond. A frontier society can be imagined as a 'middle ground' where cultural exchange could take place and accommodations to differences evolved through necessity. The interaction between central authorities and frontiers has also suggested reasons for the construction of boundaries, and their relationship to power.<sup>84</sup> The insights from frontier societies may be deepened with reference to English and Norman societies, both of

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<sup>81</sup> *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700*, ed. by Daniel Power and Naomi Standen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. by Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

<sup>82</sup> Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin, 1993), esp. pp.197-242.

<sup>83</sup> Robert Burns, *Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: Societies in Symbiosis* (Cambridge: CUP, 1983); Thomas Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages* (Boston: Brill, 2005), pp.165-93.

<sup>84</sup> Daniel Power and Naomi Standen, 'Introduction', in *Frontiers in Question*, pp.1-31 (pp.10-11, 22-25).

which can be seen as frontiers between Christian Europe and the pagan Scandinavian world.

Scholars involved in both discussions recognize ethnic identity as a ‘situational construct’.<sup>85</sup> The same individual is able to present himself or herself as a member of various groups, depending on context. In particular, ethnic identity arises *for* something, in the pursuit of a political purpose or material benefit. Ethnicity is in this way relative: the group identities of others are recognized in a way that relates to the identity of the perceiver, and vice versa. The views of the outsider and the insider are different, but dependent, facets of identity. Frequently, individuals may manipulate their behaviour based on externally-recognized characterizations of ethnicity. Barth’s work refuted the idea that ethnic groups with distinctive cultures emerged in isolation, proposing rather that ethnicity is constructed only in relation to others – through contact. Studying a single ethnic group is therefore of limited usefulness, as this approach disregards both the purpose and the negotiation of ethnicity.

Contributions to both ‘ethnogenesis’ and frontier debates have been built on the basic assumption that ethnic groups are real and active entities. The Vienna school in particular, with its concentration on the ‘Traditionskern’ theory, has emphasized continuity of an ethnic core, tracing the existence of groups back to their origins. The ‘ethnic traditions’ held by this ‘Traditionskern’ were simply more of the ‘cultural stuff’ Barth distinguished from ethnic groups and boundaries. However, the assumption that groups are real entities has been challenged within the social sciences in recent years. Rogers Brubaker has pointed out that ethnic groups are not bounded or internally homogeneous, and their members do not share the same interests and actions.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Patrick Geary, ‘Ethnic identity as a situational construct in the early middle ages’, *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 113 (1983), 15-26.

<sup>86</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp.7-27.

Ethnic groups, as Barth, preceded by Weber, stressed, are constituted by members believing they exist: they do not function as organizations and communities in themselves. Therefore, it is not enough to separate group identity from cultural production; it is also necessary to separate the discourse of group identity from actual social and political organization. This approach is essential if we are to understand *why* people believe in ethnic groups. As Brubaker has emphasized:

...we cannot rely on common sense here. Ethnic common sense – the tendency to partition the social world into putatively deeply constituted, quasi-natural intrinsic kinds – is a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things *with*; it belongs to our empirical data, not to our analytical toolkit.<sup>87</sup>

In other words, the focus of this investigation is not real social groups: it is the belief in group membership, and the effect that belief had on action. Our sources' statements about ethnicity constitute the data examined in the following six chapters. They are not factual reports of ethnic groups but participants in the discourse of identity.

Thus studies which trace the development of a particular identity - the 'emergence' of the English or the Normans, for example – risk confusing their own analytical concepts with the categories of the societies they investigate. Instead of taking this approach, in this thesis I analyse the changing significance of viking and Scandinavian identities during the tenth and eleventh centuries, in order to investigate the forces which transform historical events and processes into focuses of ethnicity. The investigation goes beyond the statements of texts about identity, for the sources themselves had a role to play in manipulating ethnicity.

Consider the distance between anthropological usages of 'ethnicity' discussed here and medieval concepts such as *gens*. Early medieval writers used the term *gens*, most

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<sup>87</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p.9.

often translated as ‘people’ or ‘race’, in a variety of contexts, more or less loosely. Distinctions between peoples were usually described as some combination of origins, customs, laws, language, dress and religion. Around 900, Regino of Prüm stated that ‘the various nations of peoples differ in their descent, customs, language and law’.<sup>88</sup> Notably, the physical appearance of different peoples, now of central importance to everyday concepts of ethnicity, was not often invoked as a mark of distinction.<sup>89</sup> However, the problem is not solved by taking the medieval concept as the focus of analysis. To begin with, this was not a concept available to all equally and therefore can only have had a limited effect on perceptions. The learned construction of this term owed a lot to the story of the tower of Babel, rather than contemporary experience. Consequently, as Patrick Geary has pointed out, the distinctions drawn in practice bore little relation to formally articulated criteria.<sup>90</sup>

Given the general recognition that ‘ethnic’ groups are culturally constructed, and relate to various customary and biological categories, there is no particular reason why they should be formed around the same kinds of categorizations across cultures. Scandinavian culture had long been somewhat removed from that of Christian Europe, and migrants would have had their own ideas about social organization. Scandinavians would not necessarily have formed *gentes* in the same way as in the rest of medieval Europe. Finally, it should be acknowledged that medieval ideas about people-groups were flexible and indeed changed over time.

Ethnicity may be said to be a *type* of group bond, based on similarity and identification, rather than a clearly defined cross-cultural concept of analysis. Even

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<sup>88</sup> *Reginonis Abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon*, ed. by F. Kurze, *MGH*, SS rer. Germ. 50 (Hanover, 1890), p.xx: ‘diversae nationes populorum inter se discrepant genere moribus lingua legibus’. On Regino, see *History and politics in late Carolingian and Ottonian Europe: the Chronicle of Regino of Prüm and Adalbert of Magdeburg*, ed. by Simon Maclean (Manchester: MUP, 2009).

<sup>89</sup> Robert Bartlett, ‘Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31 (2001), 39-56 (p.53); Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: OUP, 1984), p.302; Thomas, *English and the Normans*, p.348.

<sup>90</sup> Geary, ‘Ethnic Identity as a situational construct’, pp.19-24.

scholarly usage of 'ethnicity' is characterized by ambiguity about the exact meaning of the term. Malešević has called ethnicity 'as untidy a concept as can possibly be', and Weber stated that the concept 'dissolves if we define our terms exactly'.<sup>91</sup> The widening of 'ethnicity' to reflect how groups are formed around a variety of categorizations, not just biological, has led to difficulties in its application. It is unclear whether it refers to *any* group identity: if not, it is difficult to know how to define what is 'ethnic'. If we try and deconstruct any definition or criteria for ethnicity, we are left with various sources of identity, none of which is necessary or sufficient.<sup>92</sup> Some kinds of identity, such as gender, have not often historically led to the formation of groups (there are exceptions, particularly within the last century). Others, such as religion, have frequently led to group-formation, often encouraged by organizational structures. In any society we will find multi-layered and overlapping group identities. Rather than starting with an ill-defined notion of an 'ethnic group' and trying to deconstruct what categorizations and criteria form its identity, therefore, it will be more useful to discern the sources of group identity, and to see how they overlap and interact. In this way, we take categorizations that we *can* define as analytical tools.

Therefore I have chosen to consider three aspects of ethnicity which were especially relevant to English and Frankish society in the Viking Age. In these societies, history, genealogy, and geography were the most commonly invoked sources of group identity. Religious identity surpassed all of these, but it infused every ethnic discourse to the extent that it is not desirable to address it separately. Other aspects, such as language, were of secondary importance in ethnic group-formation (Old Norse and Old English

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<sup>91</sup> Siniša Malešević, *The Sociology of Ethnicity* (London: Sage, 2004), p.6; *Ethnicity*, ed. by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (Oxford: OUP, 1996), p.40 (see also p.15).

<sup>92</sup> E.g. *Ethnicity*, ed. by Hutchinson and Smith, pp.6-7.

were mutually intelligible, for example).<sup>93</sup> The three I have chosen represent the sources of large group identities that were politically important and tied people together in these societies. Furthermore, they also appear to have been the kinds of identities that were perceived as leading to different innate and behavioural characteristics.

This investigation's analysis of the literary aspects of written sources focuses discussion on perceived identities, following these three strands. Research into material and linguistic evidence has illuminated complex processes of cultural interaction in regions of Scandinavian settlement. However, since socially relevant identities are subjective, dependent on perceptions, and not directly correlated to culture, this evidence is difficult to interpret in terms of intergroup dynamics. Written evidence expresses opinions and provides insight into mentalities, and can therefore increase our understanding of how identities were perceived and activated. Through its focus on literary sources, this study will complement work on cultural interaction and offer some possibilities of interpretation.

### **A comparison of identity in England and Normandy, c.950–c.1015**

Placing England and Normandy in comparative perspective helps bridge the historiographical divide between them, and raises new questions about ethnicity in each region. Such comparisons have often been suggested but rarely attempted. For example, Janet Nelson has highlighted how images of the viking 'Other' developed in the Viking Age, but individual Danes took part in political life and behaved as integral members of these societies. She states that 'The ninth century saw both the first construction of the Viking Other, and the beginning of its end, through economic, social and political contacts, through recognisably similar rites and relationships. Comparing evidence from

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<sup>93</sup> Matthew Townend, *Language and History in Viking Age England: Linguistic Relations Between Speakers of Old Norse and Old English* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp.181-89. See further Thomas, *English and the Normans*, pp.377-90.



England and the Continent seems a promising approach – though it must be said that few have seriously tried it’.<sup>94</sup> I hope in this thesis to make a serious attempt at comparison. Political actors in England and Normandy used images of vikings as ‘Others’ – or enemies – in order to buttress their own authorities. However, they also used images of vikings as ancestors. These dual identifications made vikings especially useful in the negotiation of identity.

The investigation spans the years c.950-c.1015, in which period the political authorities of England and Normandy were comparable. Although their populations were mixtures of long-term inhabitants and immigrants, both societies were unified under single leaderships – at least in theory. Moreover, in this period, writers showed significant interest in the viking past, which arose from its perceived relevance to their contemporary situations.

The study begins around 950 AD. In the 940s, the viking societies of Normandy and York both went through political crises. Louis IV and Hugh the Great invaded Normandy and exiled the infant Richard I; Eadred violently asserted his dominance over the Northumbrians who had chosen the Norse king Eric. These crises had opposite outcomes for the viking rulers. Richard I established himself as the sole ruler of the principality of Normandy, although it remained within the French kingdom. On the other hand, 954 marked the expulsion of the last viking king of York. From that point forwards the English king ruled all of the former Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, including Danish-settled areas. Therefore, we compare England with Normandy: each region was ruled by one dynasty, and contained populations descended from a mixture of Scandinavian settlers and pre-viking ‘natives’.

The comparison ends in c.1015. By this point, ethnic relations were very different in the two regions. In Normandy, Dudo of St-Quentin composed his *De moribus et actis*

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<sup>94</sup> Janet Nelson, ‘England and the Continent in the Ninth Century: II, the Vikings and Others’, *TRHS*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 13 (2003), 1-28 (p.13). See also Roesdahl, ‘What may we expect?’, p.210.

*primorum Normanniae ducum*, and thereby established the history of the Normans' origins which would dominate future historiography. In England, the kingdom formed in the tenth century remained united, but the West Saxon dynasty of kings was threatened. In 1016, England was conquered by Cnut, and a new chapter of English-Danish relations began. Therefore, the comparison concludes before Cnut's conquest and the divergent fates of England and Normandy.

The period under consideration began almost 100 years after the initial Scandinavian settlements. Identities were flexible and open to reformulation; they could be manipulated according to political advantage. The difference between 'vikings', 'English' and 'Franks' was asserted at a societal level. Individuals, many of whom had mixed heritage, found themselves able to associate with different groups more freely.

This thesis frequently highlights the similarity between the actions of the English kings in manipulating ethnic relations and those of the Norman dukes. This pairing of secular rulers is partly a result of the extant written material, but the survival of this evidence results from the comparability of their actions. English kings and Norman dukes followed similar strategies in the presentation and establishment of their authority. In addition, they both concerned themselves with their subjects' identities as a means of ensuring loyalty. Much of this comparison, therefore, juxtaposes the actions of a 'native' dynasty with an 'immigrant', Scandinavian dynasty. Their parallel achievements demonstrate that successful rule was not 'ethnic'. More importantly, the comparison allows us to investigate the extent to which a medieval ruler actively determined his subjects' ethnicity.

Rather than the kinds of questions posed in this thesis, most comparative historians have been interested primarily in economic and social history. Marc Bloch championed the importance of comparisons, and suggested methods which he employed in his own

works.<sup>95</sup> More recently, Chris Wickham has demonstrated the value of comparisons across early medieval Europe for showing common trends and particular features of each society.<sup>96</sup> In carrying out these kinds of comparisons, they modelled each society by its essential characteristics, and restricted the comparison to particular features. In this study, England and Normandy are both modelled as mixed societies of immigrants and ‘natives’, each unified under one ruler and participant in a wider political world. The processes of viking raids and settlement have been shown to be broadly similar in both societies. The impact of Scandinavian culture, however, differed considerably, making little progress in Normandy but resulting in a fusion of Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian styles in north-east England. These models provide the background for the comparison itself, which investigates the more complex differences that occurred in the development of identity.

Wickham has proposed a useful method in approaching historical comparisons. He employs Carlo Ginzburg’s concept of ‘*spie*’, or ‘clues’, in order to focus on comparable elements that illuminate reasons for difference.<sup>97</sup> Wickham used the example of a comparison between northern France and southern England in the period c.875-1025 to demonstrate his method. Wickham stated that the history of France in this period was characterized by increasing political disunity, whereas in England political power became strongly centralized. He chose two structural elements to investigate this difference: royal land-grants and aristocratic local power. The differing patterns of these elements in France and England advance towards an explanation of their differing political trajectories.

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<sup>95</sup> Marc Bloch, ‘A Contribution Towards a Comparative History of European Societies’, in *idem, Land and Work in Mediaeval Europe*, trans. by J.E. Anderson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), pp.44-81.

<sup>96</sup> Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford: OUP, 2005).

<sup>97</sup> Wickham, *Problems in Doing Comparative History*, pp.12-15. For the original idea, see Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method’, *History Workshop*, 9 (1980), 5-36.

In this thesis, I apply a similar approach. However, the problem addressed here – why did viking identity develop differently in England and Normandy? – is not structural, although it undoubtedly relates to the issues of political structure raised by Wickham. The problem of social identities, as discussed, hinges on people's beliefs. The *spie* employed, therefore, should be clues to the creation and manipulation of those beliefs: in what contexts was the viking past invoked in an identitarian sense? When we have answered this question, then we can ask *who* used it in this way and for what purposes. Our *spie* should thus illuminate different aspects of identity, so that we can isolate when the viking past was or was not used.

I have already delineated three sources of identity in discussing the definition of ethnicity: genealogical, historical and geographical. These three sources of identity now become *spie* through which we examine the uses of viking and Scandinavian identity in England and Normandy. The structure of this thesis is based around these *spie* for each society in turn.

Chapters One and Two discuss genealogical identity in Normandy and England respectively. The concern for identity inherited from ancestors was displayed through the production of genealogies and origin myths tied to the heritage of ruling houses. Investigating these sources shows the perceived relationships of Scandinavian migrants and their host peoples in the distant and more recent past.

Chapters Three and Four concentrate on historical identity. Histories written in this period dealt with the recent past of the viking invasions and wars between Frankish, English and Scandinavian armies. Rewritings and reinterpretations of these events can be related directly to contemporary concerns about ethnic identity and heritage in the societies for which they were produced.

Finally, Chapters Five and Six constitute an examination of geographical identities. They discuss which regions within England and Francia were perceived to bear the

effects of viking raids and settlement, and how these effects related to social identities.

To what extent did contemporaries perceive such areas to be socially, politically and culturally distinct, and what relationship did such distinction bear to the viking past?

Throughout the thesis, I refer to the ‘inhabitants’ of England and Normandy. But which inhabitants created and used written texts, given the low literacy levels of the tenth century? First, the producers of texts were members of the clerical and aristocratic elite, who could write and who could afford to manufacture books. For this reason, and more importantly by virtue of their elevated social status, they exerted greater influence over ethnic identities. Moreover, they operated on a wider level, whereas those with less political power would have been more concerned with local group-identities. Second, the audiences of these texts were not as restricted. The sources used in each section held relevance for audiences beyond their immediate literate readers. Genealogies created a visual impact at least as important as their textual content. Moreover, they seem to have related to a wider oral literature. Hagiographic narratives were transmitted to devotees on pilgrimages and festivals. The charters used in the final section were produced in public contexts such as the English *witenagemot* and accompanied ceremonies of land transfer. Royal, aristocratic and clerical elites ultimately determined the presentation of ethnic relations in writing, but they did so because these texts influenced many more people.

In each section, the sources used exemplify how identities were constructed, manipulated and disseminated throughout society. As Walter Pohl has argued, a text cannot be treated ‘as evidence for the natural existence of ethnic communities’. It may be a reflection of contemporary perceptions of group identities, and at the same time ‘part of strategies to give shape to these communities’.<sup>98</sup> Medieval writers may not have thought of their actions in those terms, perhaps, but they participated in the assertion of

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<sup>98</sup> Walter Pohl, ‘Telling the Difference: signs of ethnic identity’, in *Strategies of Distinction*, ed. by Pohl and Reimitz, pp.17-69 (p.21).

ethnic narratives for political gain. The viking past and present offered compelling material for these ethnic narratives. Modern historians of Scandinavian settlement frequently invoke Maitland's famous caution, 'we must be careful how we use our Dane',<sup>99</sup> we should keep in mind that these medieval writers were just as careful.

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<sup>99</sup> Frederic Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: three essays in the early history of England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1897; repr. 1987), p.139.

### **Part I: Genealogical Identity**

‘Ethnic groups’ have been defined as those with a belief in a shared past or in common origins.<sup>1</sup> Medieval writers, too, often expressed ethnicity in terms of inheritance and descent, although they perceived identity to be transmitted genealogically rather than strictly ‘biologically’. The deeds and qualities of ancestors, deemed to shed light on the characters of their descendants, were recounted in literary texts; they were recalled in poetry, as a celebration of illustrious forebears. Numerous reminders were composed of the need to honour one’s ancestors, continue their practice and retain group solidarity through identification with them. These attitudes were present in pagan belief – Radbod, king of the Frisians, refused baptism on the grounds that his ancestors would not be with him in Heaven – and also in Christian exhortation: Alcuin frequently admonished the recipients of his letters to dress according to ‘the practice of our ancestors’ in contradistinction to pagans.<sup>2</sup> Celebrations of ancestors general and specific expressed ethnic identities among their descendants. However, Susan Reynolds has pointed out that the idea of common descent, and associated narratives, were ‘more often the result than the cause of social and political solidarity’.<sup>3</sup> That is, the production of genealogies reflected current societal realities, and belief in common ancestors arose within groups *after* they perceived their common identity.

These first two chapters explore how the inhabitants of tenth-century England and Normandy used genealogy to explain the ethnic relations of their contemporary societies. Statements of descent represented relationships between peoples, rather than

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<sup>1</sup> Falko Daim, ‘Archaeology, Ethnicity and the Structures of Identification: The Example of Avars, Carantanians and Moravians in the Eighth Century’, in *Strategies of Distinction*, ed. by Pohl and Reimitz, pp.71-93 (p.75).

<sup>2</sup> *Vita Vulframni Episcopi Senonici*, ed. by Wilhelm Levison, *MGH*, SS rer. Merov., 5 (Hanover and Leipzig, 1910), 668; Richard Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: from paganism to Christianity, 371-1386 AD* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p.406; *Alcuin of York c.732 to 804: his life and letters*, trans. by Stephen Allott (York: Ebor Press, 1974), p.19; *Alcuini sive Albini Epistolae*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, *MGH*, Epp. 4 (Berlin, 1895), 43: ‘antecessorum nostrorum consuetudinem’.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Reynolds, ‘What do we mean by “Anglo-Saxon” and Anglo-Saxons’??’, *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985), 395-415 (p.405).

simply elaborating a single identity. Genealogies of the inhabitants of early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, for example, demonstrated that they were descended from different sons of Woden, and thus were separate branches of the same family. At its widest, this tendency led to the tripartite division of the world into Asia, Africa and Europe being linked by descent to the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth respectively.<sup>4</sup>

Medieval genealogists relied on the Bible not only for information about the first generations on earth, but also for their models. The genealogies in the Gospels connected Christ to David generation by generation, thereby demonstrating the importance of ancestry for an individual. Similarly, the separation of the Twelve Tribes of Israel in the Old Testament indicated how genealogies could express distinctions and connections between peoples. However, it is possible that Anglo-Saxon, Frankish and Scandinavian societies had their own, oral, traditions of genealogy before Christianization.<sup>5</sup> The relative importance of these traditions in England and Normandy is discussed below.

Genealogy was closely linked to origin myths, which also referred to contemporary ethnic relations. An origin myth for a people that no longer existed would cease to be recounted, since the motive for recounting the narrative was to explain the existence of contemporary groups. Individuals within such histories were representative of group identities currently important in the perceptions of writers and audience. Genealogies of royal families often counted the generations back to a 'founder ancestor' of the whole *gens*, while *origines gentium* recounted the actions of this founder ancestor.

Origin myths have been used to discuss the actual pasts of Germanic peoples but, given their fluid nature and the chronological distance at which they were usually

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<sup>4</sup> Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts'.

<sup>5</sup> Hermann Moisl, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition', *Journal of Medieval History*, 7 (1981), 215-48.



written, they are extremely unreliable as evidence of the events they describe.<sup>6</sup> The designation of ‘myth’ is perhaps a little misleading, since it implies a separate genre from other forms of history. In fact, we know of these *origines gentium* from their places in conventional histories such as Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* and Jordanes’s *Getica*, in which they are not treated differently from other historical events.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, as we shall see in these chapters, writers continued to create such tales as ethnic relations developed.

These chapters examine the development of genealogically-focused identities in England and Normandy by discussing how genealogical texts and origin myths reflected Scandinavian immigration. Anthropological studies show that genealogies in oral societies change to suit new political and social realities.<sup>8</sup> New links between genealogies are forged to represent new contemporary relationships, while more remote generations which have lost their relevance are discarded. This process of moulding genealogies to contemporary situations may occur more rapidly in an oral tradition, but it may usefully be applied to the medieval world.<sup>9</sup> Considering how manuscripts were copied and texts adapted, there was ample opportunity for superfluous elements to be omitted or changed. We shall see that, in the partially literate societies of tenth-century England and Normandy, a similar process took place. Ancestral relationships elucidated in genealogies and myths of origins mapped on to contemporary ethnic relations as perceived by their compilers.

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<sup>6</sup> Wolfram, ‘*Origo et religio*’; Walter Goffart, ‘Does the Distant Past Impinge on the Invasion Age Germans?’, in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Andrew Gillett (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), pp.21-37.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550-800)* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Laura Bohannon, ‘A Genealogical Charter’, *African Journal of the International African Institute*, 22 (1952), 301-15; *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. by Jack Goody (Cambridge: CUP, 1968); Jean La Fontaine, ‘Descent in New Guinea: an Africanist View’, in *The Character of Kinship*, ed. by Jack Goody (Cambridge: CUP, 1973), pp.35-51.

<sup>9</sup> David Thornton, ‘Orality, Literacy and Genealogy in Early Medieval Ireland and Wales’, in *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed. by Huw Pryce (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp.83-98 (pp.85-89).

However, we need to build power into this analysis of genealogical production. Genealogists in England and Normandy adopted different strategies to explain relationships between ‘natives’ and Scandinavian immigrants. These differences principally reflect the different power structures of England and France. We begin, therefore, by discussing the Frankish tradition of genealogy from which the Norman narrative emerged.

## Chapter 1

### Genealogical Identity in Normandy

#### I. Frankish royal genealogy

The first genealogical writing in early medieval Francia concerned the lineages of kings. A few genealogies of the Merovingian dynasty survive within literary histories, including Gregory of Tours' *Histories*, Fredegar's Chronicle, the *Liber Historiae Francorum* and later works which follow these texts. Separate genealogical lists of the Merovingians appear in at least three other manuscripts. The lists begin with Chlodio or his purported father, Pharamund, and extend to Clothar or his son Dagobert I.<sup>1</sup> Carolingian genealogies are much more numerous and diverse. The first genealogies were compiled in the reign of Charlemagne, and were then updated, extended and interpolated (most notably by the monks of St-Wandrille, Fontanelle, to include their patron) during the reigns of Louis the Pious and his sons; many examples from this stage of composition are extant.<sup>2</sup> From this period onwards, genealogical information was taken from these sources and changed into new forms. For example, a poem in honour of Charles the Bald is closely adapted from the genealogical texts.<sup>3</sup> However, the genealogies do not appear to have been updated with new information until the production of a text that took its final form under King Lothair (954-986).<sup>4</sup> After this, the same information was employed in different ways, such as the production of sketched family trees.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Regum Francorum Genealogiae*, ed. by Georg Pertz, *MGH*, SS, 2 (Hanover, 1829), 304-14 (p.307); *Catalogi Regum Francorum Praetermissi*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH*, SS rer. Merov., 7 (Hanover, 1920), 850-55.

<sup>2</sup> *Regum Francorum Genealogiae*, pp.308-13; *Genealogiae Karolum*, ed. by Georg Waitz, *MGH*, SS, 13 (Hanover, 1881), 242-48.

<sup>3</sup> *Regum Francorum Genealogiae*, pp.312-13.

<sup>4</sup> *Genealogiae Karolum*, p.247.

<sup>5</sup> *Regum Francorum Genealogiae*, p.314; *Genealogiae Karolum*, p.248; Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *L'Ombre des Ancêtres: Essai sur l'imaginaire médiéval de la parenté* (Paris: Fayard, 2000), pp.112-17 describes the earliest family tree sketches; see also her *L'Arbre des Familles* (Paris: Martinière, 2003).

All these texts in their varied forms were scholarly, historical, and Latin. Probably following biblical models, they began with the most distant ancestor and ended with the most recent descendant, written in the form ‘*x genuit y*’. There can be little suggestion that these genealogies were orally transmitted or held any kind of ‘folk memory’: they were produced by literate clerics who were familiar with historical works, and were intended for educated audiences. For example, they contain references to the Trojan origins of the Franks, but these were not explained. Some women are mentioned in Carolingian genealogies, but all these texts focus on a single male line.

Although produced by clerics, these texts seem to have originated at the royal court. The manuscript contexts of genealogical lists, in particular, demonstrate their political and propagandist importance. In these cases, genealogical information was added to a regnal list and, in several examples, the reign lengths were also maintained.<sup>6</sup> The courtly genealogist’s primary purpose appears to have been the presentation of royal power and dynastic legitimacy.

The earliest genealogies and associated regnal lists appear in manuscripts containing law codes, generally the *Lex Salica* and the *Lex Alamannorum*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 4628A presents a good example of this relationship. The genealogical regnal list of Merovingian kings precedes the two prologues to the *Lex Salica*, and constitutes the original beginning of the manuscript, a collection of legal material.<sup>7</sup> By prefacing a law code with such a text, the compiler of this manuscript established that the law derived from the rightful kings; conversely, the kings named in the genealogy were justified by their

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<sup>6</sup> E.g. *Catalogi Regum*, p.853.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Goffart, ‘The Supposedly “Frankish” Table of Nations: An Edition and Study’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 17 (1983), 98-130 (p.102).

ability to make law.<sup>8</sup> In this context, the transfer of power was as important as biological descent. In fact, all the manuscripts containing the Merovingian regnal lists alongside law codes date from the end of the eighth century or later, and thus were compiled under the Carolingians. It seems that they became attached to the *Lex Salica* during or after the Carolingian reorganisations of the law code. Moreover, emphasis on particular Merovingian kings was added into the longer, Carolingian prologue to the Salic Law.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, Merovingian genealogies survived because the Carolingians found them useful.

Carolingian compilers reworked the Merovingian genealogies to show their new dynasty's ascent. In the Paris manuscript, Pepin, the first Carolingian king, was added onto the end of the genealogical regnal list, but without any family association. However, Pepin was not merely a later addition. The regnal list was followed by an elaborated version of the same information in narrative form, entitled '*Item de Regibus Francorum, quomodo regnaverint*'.<sup>10</sup> The '*De Regibus Francorum*' narrative was developed from the preceding genealogical regnal list, and thus it relates the succession of Merovingian kings. '*De Regibus Francorum*' ends with Childeric's burial place, the final detail before Pepin's reign in the preceding list. The adaptor added many details about the mayors of the palace to the narrative section, demonstrating their established role in exercising royal power. The compiler of '*De Regibus Francorum*' represented the history of the Merovingian line as a preliminary to the Carolingian dynasty, thereby justifying their usurpation of authority.

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<sup>8</sup> David Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. by Peter Sawyer and Ian Wood (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1977), pp.72-104 (p.75); Karl Giesriegl, 'Autorität, Chronologie und Gesetzgebung. Königskataloge in fränkischen Leges-Handschriften', in *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard Corradini and others (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), pp.205-18.

<sup>9</sup> *The Laws of the Salian Franks*, ed. by Katherine Fischer Drew (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), p.171.

<sup>10</sup> *Catalogi Regum*, pp.853-55.

The Carolingians also justified this usurpation by sponsoring the production of texts relating the descent of their own lineage. To begin with, they created a dynastic identity distinct from that of the Merovingians. The holiness of their ancestors, St Arnulf in particular, was the focus of the early parts of the genealogies; the first account of Carolingian descent is given in a semi-hagiographical work concerning St Arnulf. The inclusion of particular ancestors implied that living descendants had inherited certain qualities from them, which fitted the Carolingians for kingship. From the late ninth century onwards, descent from Charlemagne was in itself considered illustrious.<sup>11</sup>

The genealogies were produced from existing historical information as symbols of royal legitimacy and stability. The earliest Carolingian genealogy, which all subsequent texts follow to some extent, derived from Paul the Deacon's *History of the Bishops of Metz* (784). Paul traced the descendants of St Arnulf of Metz down to the children of Charlemagne, which was already an illustrious lineage.<sup>12</sup> In this particular case we can see the hand of the royal court more clearly. The *History of the Bishops of Metz* was commissioned by Bishop Angilram, head of the Carolingian royal chapel.<sup>13</sup> The influence of Paul's Carolingian patrons is displayed in his treatment of St Arnulf and the emphasis on his descendants.<sup>14</sup> Through Arnulf, Paul justified the Carolingian usurpation of kingship: 'from his progeny men so vigorous and brave would be born, that, not unmerited, the kingdom of the Franks

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Dutton, 'Karolus Magnus or Karolus Felix: The Making of Charlemagne's Reputation and Legend', in *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith and Crusade*, ed. by Matthew Gabriele and Jace Stuckey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp.23-37.

<sup>12</sup> *Pauli Warnefridi Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*, ed. by Georg Pertz, *MGH*, SS, 2 (Hanover, 1829), p.265.

<sup>13</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), pp.67, 124-25.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Goffart, 'Paul the Deacon's "Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium" and the Early Design of Charlemagne's Succession', *Traditio*, 42 (1986), 59-93. Goffart reads the entire work as an allegory for Carolingian achievement and succession, focusing on the move to a lineage based on primogeniture.

would be transferred to his lineage'.<sup>15</sup> It was the personal qualities inherited from their ancestor that made the Carolingians fit and deserving to rule. Paul also stressed the ancient origins of the line by explaining that Arnulf's son's name, Anschisus, derived from Anchises, father of Aeneas: 'For the *gens* of the Franks... draw their origin from the Trojan line'.<sup>16</sup> The entire *gens Francorum* were seen to share in these origins: nevertheless, the reference was probably intended to evoke noble, if not royal, lineage.

This, however, was not specific enough for the genealogist borrowing from the text, who took several further details out of context to link the Carolingians to royalty.<sup>17</sup> The other genealogical information Paul provided relates to one of Arnulf's predecessors as bishop, Agiulf, who was said to be succeeded by his 'nepos', Arnoald.<sup>18</sup> The Carolingian genealogist seized on these details and made Arnoald the father of Arnulf, transferring the details relating to Agiulf onto Arnoald. The reason behind this was clear: Agiulf was said to be the son of a Merovingian princess, Blithild. A focus on personal qualities meant that the maternal side was relevant, as we might expect from more biographical works. By transferring these ancestors to Arnulf, the genealogist supplied the Carolingians with a royal bloodline as well as a saintly one.

Later Carolingian genealogies, which show a more complete family tree, were composed in response to dynastic concerns. From the beginning of the tenth century, Carolingian kings emphasised their royal bloodline more strongly, doubtless because of the rise of the Robertians. The kings' charters referred to their ancestors more often, and Louis IV's

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<sup>15</sup> *Pauli Warnefridi Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*, p.265: 'ut de eius progenie tam strenui fortesque viri nascerentur, ut non inmerito ad eius prosapiam Francorum translatus sit regnum'.

<sup>16</sup> *Pauli Warnefridi Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*, p.264: 'Nam gens Francorum... a Troiana prosapia trahit exordium'.

<sup>17</sup> *Genealogiae Karolum*, pp.245-47.

<sup>18</sup> *Pauli Warnefridi Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*, p.264.

epitaph laid great weight on his royal blood.<sup>19</sup> The new Carolingian genealogy down to Lothair IV, which describes relationships and titles in detail, is best understood in this context.<sup>20</sup> The compiler of this text pursued the descendants of brothers and sisters as well as the line from which kings and queens were drawn. In doing so, he (or she) ensured that there were no rogue claimants to the throne. The segmentary lines of descent are followed until the line runs out: they end in a bishop or virgin saint, or a childless death, or only illegitimate children, and the genealogist explicitly states that there ended the line of succession. He traced descent from each of the sons of Louis the Pious in detail (though only through the male lines) until, in each case, he could say that ‘finem fecit illi successioni’ or ‘illa successio deperiit’.<sup>21</sup> There could be no doubt, following this detailed explanation, that the descendants of Charles the Bald were the rightful heirs to the kingdom. Thus the genealogies emphasized that the central royal line was the sole true source of succession.

## **II. Royal genealogy and origin myths**

But Frankish royal genealogies were more than justifications of rule. They were not only produced at times of dynastic insecurity, but copied in a variety of contexts throughout the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. The contexts in which genealogical information was deployed – particularly in relation to law and history – demonstrate that genealogies were used for much more than legitimizing royal claimants: they were a useful way of conceptualizing the history of the entire Frankish people. The prologue to the *Lex Salica* begins by invoking ‘the whole Frankish people’ and focuses primarily on the *gens*: the

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<sup>19</sup> Andrew Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1981), p.5.

<sup>20</sup> *Genealogiae Karolum*, p.247.

<sup>21</sup> *Genealogiae Karolum*, p.247.



kings of the Franks are shown to reflect the general virtues of the people and are used to give the authoritative history of the law.<sup>22</sup> The genealogies located the source of law-making authority in time, and displayed the origins of that authority.

Carolingian genealogies usually appear in historical and narrative manuscript contexts. They followed the standard chronological direction of history-writing by beginning with the most remote ancestor and tracing the line to the most recent descendant. In several instances continuations took the form of annals rather than following the format of the preceding text.<sup>23</sup> The descent from parent to offspring provided a framework for the passing of time on which to hang important changes in the history of the Franks, such as the conversion to Christianity or the subjugation of another people. Thus, in narrating the descent of kings, the genealogist also represented the history of the Frankish people.

A number of short texts associated with genealogies further highlight how royal descent was equated with the formation of ethnic groups. For example, two manuscripts of the Merovingian genealogy contain one such text immediately preceding the Frankish royal genealogy.<sup>24</sup> This text, generally known as the Frankish Table of Nations, lists the descent of various Germanic peoples from three brothers. In both manuscripts, the table follows a genealogy of 'kings of the Romans': this section has been added on to the beginning to give the Table of Nations the appearance of a more extensive genealogy.<sup>25</sup> The Table presents the Franks as brothers of the Romans, Britons and Germans, all sons of Istio. Their cousins are other Germanic peoples, and thus the Franks are positioned in a political community by means of genealogy. In one ninth-century manuscript (St Gall 732), the Table equates the

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<sup>22</sup> *Laws of the Salian Franks*, p.171.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. Munich 18628, St Gall 799 and Zurich C 129: *Genealogiae Karolum*, p.246.

<sup>24</sup> St Gall Stiftsbibliothek 732 and Paris, BN lat.4628A.

<sup>25</sup> Goffart, 'The Supposedly "Frankish" Table of Nations', studies all the known manuscript versions of this text in depth.

descent of kings and peoples by its title, '*Generatio Regum*'. The juxtaposition of this text with the Merovingian genealogy invites a similar interpretation for the Frankish kings – they too were representative of the people-group. Royal descent had direct relevance to ethnicity.

More comprehensive items listed how the various peoples of the world got their names, usually from a founder ancestor or king. Several such items are collected together in Lambert of St Omer's *Liber Floridus* (c.1120). One of these, entitled '*Nomina a regnis et regibus vel a situ regnorum gentibus imposita*', follows a simple pattern: 'Frigia a Friga. Dardani a Dardano. Danai a Danao... Saxones a saxo'.<sup>26</sup> Such connections show the widespread assumption of the equivalence of royal and ethnic identity. Although elsewhere we find an eponymous founder ancestor for the Franks ('Francio' in Fredegar's *Chronicle*), in this particular list their name is given a different kind of source: 'Franci a ferocitate'.<sup>27</sup> The character of the Frankish people beyond their royal family often figures in accounts of their origins – a symptom of the importance of the aristocracy as well as the king.

These discrepancies in accounts of Frankish origins were widespread, but rarely problematic to compilers and readers. As early as the 820s or 830s, Freculph's *World Chronicle* recorded two different origin myths. One account reports that the Franks came originally from the isle of Scandza, clearly following Jordanes's *Getica*. Many national histories of this period did the same: these conventional origin stories positioned ethnic groups within a political community.<sup>28</sup> Freculph's other origin myth was the well-known tale of the Franks' Trojan origins, and their descent from Priam and Antenor. The earliest

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<sup>26</sup> *Lamberti S. Audomari Canonici Liber Floridus*, ed. by Albert Derolez (Ghent: Story-Scientia, 1968), pp.99-100 (fol.49).

<sup>27</sup> Richard Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), p.12, gives various etymologies for the name of the Franks.

<sup>28</sup> Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines Gentium* and the Community of the Realm', *History*, 68 (1983), 375-90 (pp.378-79).

appearances of this myth are in the *Liber Historiae Francorum* and Fredegar's *Chronicle* where, in light of the differences in their accounts, they seem to be independent of each other. Gregory of Tours did not mention the myth: it seems to have been a learned creation of the seventh century, and was referred to increasingly often after this period.<sup>29</sup> Like all origin myths, the inception of the Trojan story probably arose as a way to negotiate ethnic relationships. In this case, it is likely that the Franks' relationship to Aeneas, the founder of Rome, demonstrated their contemporary relationship with the Gallo-Roman inhabitants of Francia.<sup>30</sup> It also established the Franks' relationship with the Roman Church.<sup>31</sup>

Because they forged the Merovingian link through Blithild, genealogists could spell out Carolingian descent from Priam and Antenor, generation by generation. The genealogy down to Blithild, daughter of Clothar, acted as a preface to the Carolingian line. The inclusion of the Merovingian lineage was more historical than justificatory. For the Carolingians, it was not the best way to emphasize their right to rule: the usurpation was too obvious. However, it enabled them to link their lineage back to Priam, so that it might represent the descent of the Franks more widely.

Genealogies connected the people of the present directly to the distant past. By counting through the generations, the transmission of Trojan/Roman, sacred, or Germanic/Scandinavian heritage could be seen, focused and without dilution. Famous names in succeeding generations, such as Clovis, added to that heritage. The moment of

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<sup>29</sup> Gerberding, *Rise of the Carolingians*, p.20; Ian Wood, 'Defining the Franks: Frankish Origins in Early Medieval Historiography', in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan Murray (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1995), pp.47-57 (pp.51, 53); Matthew Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), pp.227-49 (p.248).

<sup>30</sup> Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans?', p.248, where he also suggests the alternative view that it may have arisen earlier as part of an alliance between Franks and Roman leaders.

<sup>31</sup> The Merovingian dynasty were said to derive their name from an ancestor, Merovech, whose name appears in their genealogies: an earlier origin story appears to have been that Merovech's father was a sea monster, a Quinotaur: Wood, 'Defining the Franks', p.49.

origin, however, was especially important, as it demonstrated the distinction of the people-group from others. Genealogy showed that this distinction had not been eroded.

### **III. Royalty and aristocracy**

With the ascent of the Carolingian dynasty, the connection between royal lineage and Frankish people became even stronger. The Carolingian usurpation of power and title from the Merovingian kings somewhat eroded the distinction between royalty and aristocracy. Carolingian rulers presented themselves in genealogy as they did in history: as the leaders of the Franks, rather than as a distinct race of kings.<sup>32</sup>

The equivalence of Carolingian and Frankish descent was aided by the fact that the ethnic identity of the Franks was in many respects identified with the aristocracy. The stories the Franks told about themselves emphasized aristocratic, warrior virtues. The Salic Law preface opens with a list of Frankish characteristics: ‘strong in arms, weighty in council, firm in the compact of peace, pure in body, distinguished in form, brave, swift, and austere’.<sup>33</sup> The development of Frankish origin legends over time maintained this emphasis, and Frankish identity continued to be performed with reference to other peoples such as the Gauls. A chronicler of around 1200, for example, claimed that French serfs must be descended from Gauls as the conquering Franks would not have lowered themselves to pay tribute.<sup>34</sup>

However, the third Frankish royal dynasty, the Capetians, did not produce a genealogy during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Frankish scholars continued to copy Carolingian genealogies, but did not join the Capetians to them by ties of blood (despite their ancestral

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<sup>32</sup> McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p.114.

<sup>33</sup> *Laws of the Salian Franks*, p.171.

<sup>34</sup> Reynolds, ‘Medieval *Origines Gentium*’, p.380.

links to the Carolingians). The two reasons identified for the production of royal genealogy failed the Capetians: they could neither legitimize the transfer of power in this way, nor could they represent the Franks as a whole. Contemporaries perceived 987 to mark the end of the Carolingian dynasty, and continued to consider Hugh Capet as a usurper.<sup>35</sup> King lists did include the Capetians, but their lineage was not glorified in the way of earlier kings, and genealogical links were not made with their predecessors.<sup>36</sup> One of the reasons for this was that the Capetian links to the Carolingians were not unique. From the mid-tenth century onwards, local aristocracies had begun to emphasize their own links to the Carolingian family.<sup>37</sup> Carolingian blood had become a mark of nobility, not a guarantee of royalty. For this reason, Carolingian genealogies continued to be seen by the Frankish aristocracy as representative of their history. Capetian power, on the other hand, was weak and they were no longer seen as unifying figureheads. It was in this context that aristocratic genealogies began to be produced.

Aristocratic families in northern Francia began to record genealogies in the middle of the tenth century. Unlike the royal genealogies, these texts have received considerable scholarly attention, and have been discussed particularly in relation to evolving conceptions of family and nobility.<sup>38</sup> Duby listed those texts produced in France before the end of the twelfth century which he considered to be strictly genealogical: they related to the counts of Flanders, Vendôme, Anjou, Boulogne, Angoulême, Nevers and Guîmes.<sup>39</sup> He concluded

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<sup>35</sup> Lewis, *Royal Succession*, p.17.

<sup>36</sup> Lewis, *Royal Succession*, pp.106-09; Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', pp.96-102 on king-lists.

<sup>37</sup> Lewis, *Royal Succession*, p.34.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Bisson, 'Nobility and Family in Medieval France: A Review Essay', *French Historical Studies*, 16 (1990), 597-613 (pp. 602-06); Georges Duby, 'Remarques sur la littérature généalogique en France aux XIe et XIIe siècles', in Georges Duby, *Hommes et Structures de moyen âge* (Paris: Mouton, 1973), pp.287ff.; Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Those of My Blood: Constructing Noble Families in Medieval Francia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> Duby, 'Remarques sur la littérature généalogique', p.289.

that the phenomenon originated with the higher aristocracy in the north and west of the French kingdom, primarily with the counts of Flanders and Anjou, only becoming more widespread after 1160. Duby dismissed the texts produced at the Norman court because they contain considerable differences from the other aristocratic genealogies. This is certainly the case, but these differences require further examination. The texts of Norman lineage identity emerged from the same context as the genealogies of their neighbours, and shared common features. We shall investigate how and why they differed in the final section of this chapter.

The northern French aristocracy produced their own genealogies as a response to diminished royal authority. Counts and dukes had increased in power during the late Carolingian period, to the point that Hugh Capet rose from being Duke of the Franks to becoming king. However, royal authority weakened in comparison and the royal principality shrank to an area around the Île de France.<sup>40</sup> The higher aristocracy now wielded effective local power. As they endeavoured to make this hereditary, they cultivated their lineage identities through the production of genealogies. These genealogies' general qualities were twofold: they charted the patrilinear transfer of power and noble identity; and they were related to the Carolingians as a method of establishing nobility and Frankishness.

Aristocratic genealogies were modelled on Carolingian royal genealogies. In the 950s, a monk named Witger of Compiègne produced a genealogy for the Counts of Flanders – the first of its kind.<sup>41</sup> Witger's text mirrored the Carolingian genealogy in form and content. He wrote in continuous prose, elaborating each generation with a few details relating to his subject. He emphasized the qualities, particularly the Christian virtues, of the counts. The implication is clear, and occasionally made more explicit, that these qualities passed

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<sup>40</sup> Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843-1180* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn 2000), p.162.

<sup>41</sup> *Genealogiae Comitum Flandriae*, ed. by L.C. Bethmann, *MGH*, SS, 9 (Hanover, 1851), pp.302-04.

through the family line: they are described as innate (*'indolis'*), often physical (*'vultu decorum'*), and following the example of the father (*'exemplo patris'*). But it is in his selection of family members that the text bears greatest resemblance to the royal genealogies. The central theme of the text is the transfer of the comital title from father to son, Baldwin I to Baldwin II, to Arnulf, to Baldwin III. The descent of the Counts of Flanders appeared to be a straightforward transmission in a single vertical line. Witger referred to a brother, Adelulf, but swiftly followed this reference with an account of his premature death. Just as in the Carolingian genealogy, alternative lines of descent were closed off.

The women in the genealogy were the mothers of the counts of Flanders, whose status Witger highlighted: no daughters or sisters were mentioned. The wives of the first two Baldwins were the daughters of kings, while the wife of Baldwin III, Mathilda, was explicitly described as *'befitting his nobility'* (*'nobilitati suae condignam'*). Mathilda was the daughter of another count, as was Arnulf's wife Adela. In Adela's case, her nobility was established not only by her father, but through her descent from two Capetian kings of the Franks, although these relationships were not given in detail. This concern for the descent of the counts' mothers demonstrates the belief that personal qualities were passed down the maternal as well as the paternal line. The ethnic identity presented is Frankish – connections to Frankish kings were emphasized, and others were omitted. Unsurprisingly, Witger ignored Judith's previous marriages to the Anglo-Saxon kings. Moreover, he did not even name the Anglo-Saxon princess whom Baldwin II married (*Ælfthryth* of Wessex). He described her as royal, rather than foreign, from *'the noblest line of the kings across the sea'* (*'de nobilissima progenie regum ultramarinorum'*).

The text describing the Counts of Flanders is of similar length to the Carolingian genealogy which accompanies it, despite covering only six generations to the Carolingian fourteen. Much of the text is given to lavish praise of Count Arnulf and his son Baldwin III. The length was more symbolic than substantive: a lengthy lineage spoke of a noble family. Witger even spent time praying for the production of further generations. For similar reasons, twelfth-century genealogies added three additional generations at the remote end of the Flemish genealogy.

This pattern continued as more aristocratic genealogies were produced in the eleventh century. In most cases – Normandy was here again the exception – the genealogies were embellished into histories. In *Flandria Generosa*, written in 1164, various genealogies of the counts of Flanders (the genealogy written by Witger and those found in the Liber Floridus) were developed into a full historical narrative. Ganshof has called it a ‘chronique nationale’ for the county of Flanders.<sup>42</sup> Genealogy and history were closely related in this case, just as they had been for the Merovingian and Carolingian royal lines.

As well as being modelled on royal genealogies, the aristocratic versions actually stemmed from them. Witger’s text was, indeed, primarily a royal Carolingian genealogy copied from those that have already been discussed, with the line of the Counts of Flanders as an offshoot. The royal ancestor of the Counts, Judith, is highlighted in the Carolingian genealogy and cross-referenced to the next page, where the ‘*Sancta Prosapia*’ of the Counts of Flanders begins from her. This female linkage itself was no innovation: after all, the Carolingian line’s royalty was also established as stemming from the daughter of a Merovingian king. This connection occurs in the first line of Witger’s royal genealogy,

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<sup>42</sup> Léopold Genicot, ‘Princes Territoriaux et Sang Carolingien: La Genealogia Comitum Buloniensium’, in *idem, Études Sur Les Principautés Lotharingiennes* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1975), pp.217-306 (p.221).



mirrored by Judith's marriage to Baldwin in the first line of his comital genealogy. The difference from previous royal genealogies, here, is that the Carolingian genealogy was continued, and the Flemish line delineated in parallel. The Counts of Flanders did not take over from the Carolingians, but were presented as a branch of their family. Moreover, because the text begins with Count Baldwin's marriage to Judith, the counts' nobility and title appeared to arise from their Carolingian heritage. Witger's text thus produced a legitimating lineage of power for the Counts of Flanders, but one that was dependent on royalty. The continuing legitimation of the dynasty derived from their Carolingian origins.

Aristocratic genealogies written in the eleventh century also emphasized their links to the Carolingians. It is unlikely that later texts were directly influenced by Witger's Flanders genealogy, because this was not copied but retained at Saint-Bertin. Rather, they reflect the prestige associated with Carolingian ancestry at this time, and the general belief that the aristocracy descended from royal origins. Adalbero of Laon wrote in a work addressed to King Robert in the 1010s that 'The pedigrees of nobles descend from the blood of kings'.<sup>43</sup> The late-eleventh-century genealogy of the counts of Boulogne, which Genicot has studied in detail, began from Priam, and recounted the genealogies of the Frankish kings down to Louis V and the end of the Carolingian dynasty.<sup>44</sup> The genealogy of the counts of Boulogne followed, stemming from Louis's uncle Charles, Duke of Lower Lorraine. Some manuscripts contain, in addition, a long passage explaining how power transferred to Hugh Capet and his son Robert and a brief Capetian genealogy. This section was largely disconnected from the rest of the genealogies, however, and it was made clear that it was Carolingian blood which flowed in the veins of the counts. This genealogy, which related

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<sup>43</sup> Adalbéron de Laon, *Poème au Roi Robert*, ed. by Claude Carozzi (Paris: Société d'Édition 'Les Belles Lettres', 1979), p.2: 'Stemmata nobilium descendunt sanguine regum'.

<sup>44</sup> Genicot, 'Princes Territoriaux et Sang Carolingien'.

also to the counts of Namur, became quite widespread. Other examples followed suit: Carolingian heritage was thus one of the markers of Frankish nobility in the late tenth and eleventh centuries.

These genealogies, therefore, were statements of aristocratic power, but not a power independent of royalty. As in each case the line descended from the Carolingian family, so the principality appeared to pass from royalty to prince like an appanage. The origins of each lineage thus defined them as offshoots of a greater, royal house. Even after the kingship had passed to the Capetians this was the case. The genealogy of the Counts of Namur and Boulogne even included the new royal line, despite there being no significant family connection to be made.

The relationship with Frankish royalty established that these texts all concerned Franks. Although they were dynastic in the model of the royal genealogies, the aristocratic lineages could not match the kings in one respect: they did not represent a larger group. Witger's genealogy of the counts of Flanders referred to the churches they patronized, to their *fideles*, and to the poor they helped.<sup>45</sup> But the relationship of the counts to all of these people was one of power and affection, nothing more. The genealogy stressed the aristocratic identity of the counts, in distinction to the people over whom they ruled. The connections to royalty confirmed the counts' status, and established that they were Franks too. The origins of the comital title and of the family could be traced back to the Carolingian royal family – no further origins were required. Witger could have included a longer Carolingian genealogy, which went back to Priam, but this would not have suited his purpose. The aim was to show the Counts of Flanders as a noble lineage of Carolingian stock, not to give a history of the

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<sup>45</sup> He called Arnulf the Great 'ecclesiarum Dei perfectissimus reparator, viduarum orfanorum ac pupillorum piissimus consolator' and described Baldwin his son as 'Deo dilectum suisque fidelibus per omnia carum, comitem nobilissimum, exemplo patris ecclesiarum Dei amatorem'.

Franks. As we have seen, any hint of foreign influence was downplayed. The later genealogy of the counts of Boulogne did include the entire royal genealogy from Priam, but not in every version: this section was omitted in five of the manuscripts. The essential ancestor to include was Charlemagne, whose legend and cult was increasingly popular.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the inclusion of the reference to Trojan origins in some manuscripts testifies to its ongoing vitality as a symbol of Frankishness.

The identities of noble lineages developed as aristocratic power became fixed on geographically-defined patrimonies and tied to inheritance. Georges Duby and Karl Schmid posited that, from around the year 1000, a change took place in how families organized themselves, beginning with the aristocracy and trickling down to lower nobility and knightly families over the next two centuries.<sup>47</sup> Prior to this, Frankish families are said to have been made up of large kin groups bound by horizontal ties, referred to as *Sippen*. However, in response to the localization of power, the custom of primogeniture became dominant in order to preserve the family's position and wealth intact. In this way, it has been claimed that the family was reorganized into a patriline, characterized as a *Geschlecht*.<sup>48</sup> To an extent, the genealogies appear to support this view, as they present the transmission of power and blood down a single male line. However, the practice of inheritance and the conception of family are two distinct things, as Bouchard has pointed out.<sup>49</sup> We need to distinguish what the family was evoked *for* – a question answered by different kinds of texts. The consciousness of patrilinear descent found in the aristocratic genealogies mimicked that of the Frankish kings because these texts presented their power

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<sup>46</sup> *Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Gabriele and Stuckey.

<sup>47</sup> Bisson, 'Nobility and Family'; see especially Karl Schmid, 'Zur Problematik von Familie, Sippe und Geschlecht, Haus und Dynastie beim mittelalterlichen Adel. Vorfragen zum Thema: "Adel und Herrschaft im Mittelalter,"' *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 105 (1957), 1-62.

<sup>48</sup> Lewis, *Royal Succession*, pp.3-4; R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp.66-70.

<sup>49</sup> Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p.60.

as analogous to royal power. Title and inheritance were reflected in this kind of text, while relationships and experience came from a different kind of family grouping. Qualities were inherited, but bonds of affection could be horizontal.

These conceptions of family coexisted, but were documented for different purposes. The extent to which the genealogy of the Counts of Flanders manipulated the family tree is shown through comparison of their genealogy with a slightly later text. The genealogy composed by Witger in the 950s was a political document, and highly selective in its presentation of the comital line. An eleventh-century note included by Bethmann in his edition of the Flanders genealogy highlights how far this patrilinear ‘bloodline’ differed from the real experience of family.<sup>50</sup> The note explains the reciprocal adoptive relationship between Count Arnulf and his brother Adelulf’s family. The connections here had nothing to do with a father’s identity. Arnulf and Adelulf had the same mother and, later, the men of each family acted as fathers to other men’s sons through necessity.<sup>51</sup> The note appeared on the back of a charter: it was apparently deemed necessary information in a context relating to inherited property.<sup>52</sup> Witger excluded these kinds of details from his genealogy. He was concerned with patriline and the transmission of comital power, and aimed to show this as simply as possible. He omitted the fact that Adelulf had sons, since he aimed to show Arnulf and his lineage as the only heirs of Baldwin II.

Despite the production of genealogies presenting simple patriline, the French aristocracy were not organized into distinct kinship groups. The ubiquitous claim to Carolingian descent in itself demonstrated their family relationships, as well as classifying them as Franks and as members of the nobility. More immediately, marriages to women of

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<sup>50</sup> *Genealogiae Comitum Flandriae*, p.304.

<sup>51</sup> The note described Adelulf as the ‘uterinus frater’ of Arnulf, although Witger’s genealogy specifically said that Baldwin married a foreign princess and had these two sons ‘ex ea’.

<sup>52</sup> Genicot, ‘Princes Territoriaux et Sang Carolingien’, p.220, n.14.

suitable heritage meant that a network of relationship rapidly established itself across the Frankish noble class. Indeed, this network soon led to problems in finding a spouse outside the permitted degrees of consanguinity.<sup>53</sup> The northern French aristocracy were bound together through many ties of marriage and kinship, however much they produced documents purporting to display clear and distinct lineages. By the mid-eleventh century, no one was more implicated than the Normans, despite their claims to independent descent.

The Norman dukes, however, commissioned the production of a text that presented their lineage as a patrilinear genealogy reflecting the inheritance of power over Normandy. Dudo's *De moribus* is a lengthy and complicated history but, at its core, it is a genealogy in the pattern of other Frankish territorial princes.

#### **IV. Dudo's *De moribus et actis primorum normanniae ducum* as genealogy**

Dudo of Saint-Quentin's history of the Norman rulers, *De moribus et actis primorum normanniae ducum*, is a complex and idiosyncratic text, but essential to understanding the origins of Normandy.<sup>54</sup> Written between 994 and c.1015, the *De moribus* was the first text of sizable length to have been produced in Normandy after the viking conquest of 911.<sup>55</sup> It served as a base-text for future Norman historians including William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, and thus it is often our only authority for the events of the

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<sup>53</sup> Ryan Patrick Crisp, 'Consanguinity and the Saint-Aubin Genealogies', *Haskins Society Journal*, 14 (2003), 105-15; Constance Brittain Bouchard, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *Speculum*, 56 (1981), 268-87.

<sup>54</sup> Lair; Christiansen.

<sup>55</sup> Recent evidence and arguments have demonstrated the likelihood that Dudo wrote the majority of his text in the earlier part of this period: Felice Lifshitz, *Viking Normandy: Dudo of St Quentin's Gesta Normannorum* <[http://www.the-orb.net/orb\\_done/dudo/dudintro.html](http://www.the-orb.net/orb_done/dudo/dudintro.html)> [accessed 10/02/2013]; Mathieu Arnoux, 'Before the *Gesta Normannorum* and beyond Dudo: Some evidence on early Norman historiography', *ANS*, 22 (2000), 29-48 (p.41). Traditionally, the *De moribus* has been dated after 1015, since Dudo appears in a charter of this date (F18) without the title of *decanus* ascribed to him in the *De moribus*. The date 911 is, of course, the generally accepted date of the 'Treaty of St-Clair-sur-Epte', by which Charles the Simple granted land to Rollo and his companions.

first Norman century.<sup>56</sup> Dudo claimed that he was commissioned by the Norman dukes Richard I and Richard II, and received his information from members of the ducal family. However, the essentials of his account have long been dismissed as untrustworthy: even the early Norman historians queried his reliability.<sup>57</sup> Henri Prentout's lengthy study of 1915 demonstrated the historical inaccuracy of much of the *De moribus*, and David Bates considered that such studies 'have consigned Dudo's opinions to an oblivion from which they will surely never return'.<sup>58</sup> More recently, however, historians and literary scholars have begun to explore the *De moribus* as a rich text which gives us insight into the mentality of its context of composition. As interests have turned more in this direction, several studies have explored the text in relation to the early Norman province's place within Frankish and Scandinavian cultures.<sup>59</sup> In particular, the *De moribus* provides valuable and rewarding evidence for the Norman ducal family's self-perception, and the image they wanted to present to their neighbours.

Scholarly opinion on the *De moribus* has been divided among those who see it against a background of Norse saga-type literature, those who note the Carolingian models, and those who emphasize the classicizing elements in the text. Narrative material in the text may have been in oral circulation and some of it originated in a Scandinavian milieu in early Normandy. However, Dudo of Saint-Quentin came from a Frankish educational

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<sup>56</sup> *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*, ed. by Elisabeth van Houts, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) includes six later adaptations, including that of Robert of Torigni, who added in passages of Dudo's text which William of Jumièges had omitted.

<sup>57</sup> For example, William of Jumièges emphasized that he did not repeat certain parts of Dudo's history of Rollo, because he considered them 'merely flattering' ('penitus adulatoria'): *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, I, 6-7.

<sup>58</sup> Henri Prentout, *Étude Critique sur Dudon de Saint-Quentin et son Histoire des Premiers Ducs Normands* (Caen: Poisson, 1915); Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p.11.

<sup>59</sup> See especially *Dudone di San Quintino*, ed. by Paolo Gatti and Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Trento: Università degli studi di Trento, 1995); Leah Shopkow, 'The Carolingian World of Dudo of Saint-Quentin', *Journal of Medieval History*, 15 (1989), 19-37; Felice Lifshitz, 'Translating "Feudal" Vocabulary: Dudo of Saint Quentin', *Haskins Society Journal*, 9 (2001), 39-56; Eleanor Searle, 'Fact and Pattern in Heroic History: Dudo of Saint-Quentin', *Viator*, 15 (1984) 119-37.

background and culture: his origins lay in the Vermandois and he dedicated the work to his patron, Adalbero, bishop of Laon.<sup>60</sup> The techniques and pretensions of Dudo's work reflect his Frankish education – and possibly audience.<sup>61</sup> Although it is long, complex and full of unusual words and turns of phrase, the *De moribus* seems to have been popular. The work itself still exists, in various forms, in fifteen manuscripts.<sup>62</sup> Shopkow has speculated that it was aimed at a Frankish audience, and certainly it would have been inaccessible to many in the Norman realm. However, Mortensen's suggestion that the *De moribus* was intended as a school text seems convincing. Dudo even referred to the recipients of his book as 'Norman academies' and 'Frankish high-schools'.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the *De moribus* contains deliberate responses to its Frankish equivalents – such as genealogy.<sup>64</sup>

Lineage is central to the *De moribus*, giving the work its structure and narrative drive. While Dudo set out to write a history of the first dukes of Normandy, his focus was firmly centred on Richard I, his original patron, to whose life and acts half the work is dedicated. The earlier sections of the history provide a genealogy of Duke Richard and explain how he came to achieve his power and greatness. His life is prefigured from the prefaces onwards, and the Norman achievement hinted at by Dudo in prophetic passages addressed to Rollo and William, Richard's father and grandfather, reaches its culmination in the life of Duke Richard.

Dudo followed the model of genealogy that demonstrated the royal succession. The family identity passed from father to son. Although many of the Norman dukes had several

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<sup>60</sup> Lair, p.115; Christiansen, p.3.

<sup>61</sup> Shopkow, 'Carolingian World', demonstrates that Dudo received a Carolingian education.

<sup>62</sup> Gerda Huisman, 'Notes on the Manuscript Tradition of Dudo of St Quentin's *Gesta Normannorum*', *ANS*, 6 (1983), 122-35.

<sup>63</sup> Lars Boje Mortensen, 'Stylistic Choice in a Reborn Genre. The National Histories of Widukind of Corvey and Dudo of St Quentin', in *Dudone di San Quintino*, ed. by Gatti and Degl'Innocenti, pp.77-102 (pp.100-01); Christiansen, p.7; Lair p.120: 'Northmannica... gymnasia'; 'scholis... Franciscis'.

<sup>64</sup> Mortensen, 'Stylistic Choice'.

children, Dudo presented single, outstanding sons as the clear inheritors of the title. Other siblings he omitted or passed over with only a casual mention.<sup>65</sup> The structure of the work followed the patriline without hesitation, and ignored other family members. Dudo streamlined the Norman ducal family just as the Frankish aristocracy did, in an effort to prevent the division of their possessions among several sons. Genealogy produced in this way was thus linked closely to title and office as these became inherited attributes.

This genealogy was the structuring principle of Dudo's text. Each book focused on one Norman leader as its subject, but it is more than serial biography. The family connections between Rollo, William and Richard were emphasized, foreshadowed, and provided strong links between the sections of the work.

The first book of the history is dedicated to Hasting, a viking leader contemporary with Rollo but with no family relationship. Yet this brief section occupied an important place within the formation of the lineage identity. Dudo used the deeds of Hasting to display the nature of the Danes (or Dacians, as he called them), firmly establishing the background from which the Normans came. He set up the viking activities of Hasting as a foil to the viking Rollo, to whom he dedicated the second book. Dudo showed that Hasting behaved in every way opposite to Rollo, both in terms of his disregard for the holy places of Francia and his willingness to submit to the king for money. Rollo's virtues were thus emphasized in comparison: when he finally converted, this act seemed all the more honourable in contrast to Hasting's earlier false baptism. The Dacians stated that Hasting, who came from

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<sup>65</sup> For example, Richard I is the only son of William Longsword mentioned, and his mother is not even named. One of the introductory poems to the work is addressed to Richard II's uncle, count Rodulf, who was not William Longsword's son, but also the son of this unnamed woman, usually called Sprota. Richard I's children are recorded: although he had none by his first wife, Emma, he had two sons (Geoffrey and William, named) and two daughters (unnamed) 'ex concubinis' (Lair, p.289; Christiansen, p.63); Dudo wrote that after Richard's marriage to Gunnor, 'in the course of time he begot five male and three female children on her' (Christiansen, p.164; Lair, p.290: 'ex ea processu temporis quinque masculinae proles pignora, femineaeque genuit tria'). Some of their names have been added in two of the manuscripts but were not originally by Dudo.



the ‘same nation’, ‘was marked out by a good omen, and he made a good beginning; but he was fated to die a bad death in the end’.<sup>66</sup> Hasting’s origins contributed to Norman identity and demonstrated the Normans’ viking background, and this explains his place in the *De moribus*.<sup>67</sup>

Rollo, as the founder of the Norman dynasty, occupies a much more significant section. Throughout the second book, Dudo inserted metrical passages which provide prophecy about Rollo’s offspring achieving greatness, as well as the viking leader himself. He predicted that, with the commingling of Francia and the Dacians, ‘then will she [Francia] breed and give birth, and pregnant, bring forth | Kings and archbishops, dukes also and counts, nobles of high rank... And they will rejoice in new and continuing progeny’.<sup>68</sup> Such a claim so early in the narrative provides a firm indication of where it leads. Given that peace and greatness will be achieved by the flourishing of Rollo’s lineage (as well as his conversion), it is appropriate that we follow this lineage throughout the history. The fate of Normandy itself – the land Rollo demanded as ‘a perpetual possession for the progeny of his progeny’ – is inextricably linked to the lineage.<sup>69</sup>

The interests of the dynasty were safeguarded as the narrative continued into the book concerning William Longsword. With this aim, Dudo frequently employed metrical passages to prophesy and exhort his characters. William’s desire to become a monk, though laudable as it showed his Christian fervour, presented a danger to the all-important patriline. While we know that William became the father of Richard, as did Dudo, at the critical

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<sup>66</sup> Christiansen, pp.36-37; Lair, pp.154: ‘ista gente’, ‘bono omine auspicatus est, bonoque initio coepit; sed malum finem exitumque sortitus est’.

<sup>67</sup> See further Frederic Amory, ‘The Viking Hasting in Franco-Scandinavian Legend’, in *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones*, ed. by Margot King and Wesley Stevens, 2 vols (Collegeville: Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, 1979), II, 265-86.

<sup>68</sup> Christiansen, p.28; Lair, p.144: ‘Gignet producents, expurget, proferet ingens | Reges, pontificesque, duces, comites, proceresque... Atque novo quorum, gaudebunt, perpete foete’.

<sup>69</sup> Christiansen, p.47; Lair, p.167: ‘in sempiternum per progenies progenierum possessionem’.

moment he interjected: 'Cease keeping the vows! For you and for us there is need for | Your seed; for to you is a brilliant duke to be born'.<sup>70</sup> Later in the book, Dudo exhorted William again, to abandon fear for his chastity and father children, just as his counts implored. William's desire for chastity would not be affected, he reasoned, because he indulged in sexual activity for a higher reason: 'for the sake of preserving the succession by hereditary right'.<sup>71</sup> The propagation of the patriline thus became a virtue in itself.

Dudo used this virtue and the value inherited from a strong lineage to justify the position of duke of the Normans. For this reason, the final, longest book, concerning Richard I, continued to stress the language of kinship. The theme of genealogy continued throughout Richard's life, as Dudo reflected back on his ancestors. Richard was introduced as the legitimate heir to Normandy precisely because he had 'sprung from the most celebrated seed of a brilliant and most noble stock'.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, much of the book concerns Richard's childhood, and as an individual personality he is largely absent from these sections. Rather, the qualities inherited from his ancestors were emphasized: Dudo interspersed these early chapters with metrical sections praising Richard's parents and grandparents. Richard was above all 'famed for his ancestry'.<sup>73</sup> It was also kinship that acted as a motivation for those who helped Richard. Count Bernard of Senlis explicitly alluded to his affection for his 'best-beloved nephew' as the reason for providing help, while king Harald of Dacia acted 'on account of his love for his relation Richard'.<sup>74</sup> Dudo showed the wider kin group protecting the interests of the ducal patriline.

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<sup>70</sup> Christiansen, p.58; Lair, p.180: 'Desine vota; necesse tibi nobisque fueris | Semine; namque tuo nascetur dux luculentus'.

<sup>71</sup> Christiansen, p.63; Lair p.185: 'geniali jure conservandae successionis'.

<sup>72</sup> Christiansen, p.94; Lair p.218: 'insignissimo luculentae et nobilissimae prosapiae semine exortus'.

<sup>73</sup> Christiansen, p.105; Lair, p.230: 'insignis prosapiae'.

<sup>74</sup> Christiansen, p.111; Lair p.235: 'ille nepos meus dilectissimus'. Christiansen, p.114; Lair p.239: 'ob amorem Ricardi, sui propinqui'. Dudo presents Harald as a king, but he may in reality have been a viking ruler of Bayeux: see Introduction. See Christiansen, p.200, n.248 on Bernard's identity.

Dudo, unlike Witger and the genealogists of other noble houses, studiously avoided making too much of the Norman dynasty's royal connections, even though he referred to a number of royal marriages. For example, Dudo claimed that Rollo married Gisla, supposedly the daughter of Charles the Simple, but he portrayed her in a negative light.<sup>75</sup> He told a story in which Gisla received two male visitors from Charles without telling Rollo. The visit became a source of shame for Rollo, and ultimately disrupted the relationship between the Norman leader and the Frankish king. Most importantly, William Longsword, Rollo's successor as Norman ruler, was not Gisla's son, and therefore she made no contribution to the Norman lineage.<sup>76</sup>

In his final book, Dudo showed the Norman dynasty achieving a new strength and independence from the Franks. Richard I's first wife, Hugh the Great's daughter Emma, was not the one to provide him with an heir, but it was a 'heavenly girl... of Dacian lineage' who produced the 'true heir to the dear line'.<sup>77</sup> Thus the culmination of the genealogical progress was not the individual duke, but the independence of the Norman lineage on both sides. Dudo had the Norman nobles specify that God led them to this point 'so that an heir to this land might be born to a Dacian father and mother'.<sup>78</sup> Gunnor, Richard's second wife and Richard II's mother, was still alive at the time of writing and probably one of Dudo's patrons. But this was more than personal praise. After all, Dudo did not shy away from naming the children of Richard I's concubines.<sup>79</sup> In other aristocratic genealogies, women were used to link the family to the Carolingians and other lines of royalty and nobility.

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<sup>75</sup> Janet Nelson, 'Normandy's Early History since *Normandy Before 1066*', in *Normandy and Its Neighbours, 900-1250: Essays for David Bates*, ed. by David Crouch and Kathleen Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp.3-15 (pp.9-12), summarizes the reasons for scepticism about this marriage.

<sup>76</sup> He was the son of Poppa, Rollo's first wife according to Dudo (daughter of the chief Berengar, probably of Rennes), and according to the *Planctus* he was the son of a Breton concubine.

<sup>77</sup> Christiansen, p.139; Lair, pp.264-65: 'coelestis virgo... stirpe Dacigena'; 'Nascetur haeres germinis almi'.

<sup>78</sup> Christiansen, p.164; Lair, p.289: 'ut patre matreque Dacigena haeres hujus terrae nascatur'.

<sup>79</sup> Christiansen, p.163; Lair, p.289.

Dudo, on the other hand, presented Richard I's second wife Gunnor as the ideal bride and mother because she was *not* a member of another lineage: through her, the Norman dukes could continue with purely Norman blood.

In practice, of course, the Norman dukes used marriage in much the same way as other nobles. Eleanor Searle has suggested that the marriage of Richard I to Gunnor was used to unite two previously distinct groups of Scandinavians in Normandy.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, later generations of Normans did involve themselves in marriages with the houses of Flanders and the Breton counts: notably, William the Conqueror was married to Matilda of Flanders, whose mother Adela's first husband was William's uncle, Duke Richard III. In his presentation of the marriage to Gunnor, however, Dudo was making a point about the independence of Norman power and the distinctiveness of Norman ethnicity.

#### V. Dudo's *origo gentis*

Also unlike the genealogies of their neighbours, the history of the Norman dukes represented a distinct ethnic group. Through tracing the formation and movement of the family of the Norman dukes, Dudo provided a past for the entire Norman people. In this, they were just like the Frankish royal family whose ancestors structured the Frankish past. This was only possible because the Norman dukes came from parallel, rather than identical, origins.

In describing the Normans' ethnic background, Dudo fitted them into a familiar narrative of ethnogenesis. His discussion of the origins of the Danes was derived from literary works, primarily those relating to the Franks. For instance, Dudo's first line of prose was derived from Paulus Orosius, Jordanes and Isidore: standard works of history

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<sup>80</sup> Searle, 'Fact and Pattern', pp.133-37.

and geography.<sup>81</sup> By presenting the Normans as a *gens* comparable to the Franks, Saxons and Lombards, Dudo boosted their claim to greatness; by including similarities and connections with the Franks, he cemented the Norman place in the contemporary political sphere.

Dudo introduced the Dacians, the ancestors of the Normans, as one group among many Germanic peoples:

...there dwell savage and barbarous peoples, which are said to have sprung forth in various different ways from the island of Scanza... For there lies the region of the great multitudes of Alania, the exceedingly fertile site of Dacia, and the far-extended reaches of Getia... And wild peoples, warlike and 'foreboding Mars' inhabit this extensive corner; that is, the Getae (also called Goths), the Sarmatians, and the Amacsobii, the Tragoditae, and the Alans, and many other people who dwell in and cultivate the Maeotid Marshes.<sup>82</sup>

Dudo's geography was confused, but it allowed him to draw the connections he needed. The ideas of Germany as 'germinating' many nations, and of many peoples emerging from Scanza, both taken from Jordanes, were common concepts in other national histories.<sup>83</sup> This first chapter linked the Dacians to a number of other Germanic peoples, notably the Alans, a combination also made by Abbo of Fleury in the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*.<sup>84</sup> Dudo explicitly compared the customs of the Dacians to those of the Getae, 'who are also called Goths', the barbarians considered responsible for the fall of Rome. This identification of

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<sup>81</sup> Christiansen, p.182, n.60.

<sup>82</sup> Christiansen, p.15, Lair, p.129: '...commorantur ferae gentes et barbarae, quae ex Canza insula... diversitate multimoda dicuntur prosiluisse... Est namque ibi tractus quam plurimis Alaniae, situsque nimium copiosus Daciae, atque meatus multum profusus Getiae... Quos protense anfractus amplitudinis furentes incolunt populi, praemonente Marte bellicosi scilicet Getae, qui et Gothi, Sarmatae et Amacsobii, Tragoditae et Alani, quamplurimaeque gentes, Meotidibus paludibus excolendo commorantes'.

<sup>83</sup> Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines Gentium*', pp.378-79.

<sup>84</sup> Abbo of Fleury, *Life of St Edmund*, in *Three Lives of English Saints*, ed. by Michael Winterbottom (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1972), pp.65-87 (p.73). See further Chapter Four.

Geats and Goths was also common, and the comparison may be considered shorthand for a Germanic barbarian background.

In casting the Dacians as barbarians, Dudo was not being derogatory, but aligning them with Frankish origins. A number of hints in these early passages associated them with the origin myth of the Franks. The Germanic peoples were located in the ‘Maeotid Marshes’, or Sea of Azov, just where the *Liber Historiae Francorum* indicated the Franks escaped after their flight from Troy.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Dudo picked up on this Trojan origin – the very beginning of the Frankish story in the *Liber Historiae Francorum* – and applied it also to the Danes:

And so the *Daci* call themselves *Danai*, or Danes, and boast that they are descended from Antenor; who, when in former times the lands of Troy were laid waste, slipped away through the middle of the Greeks and penetrated the confines of Illyria with his own men.<sup>86</sup>

It has been noted that this passage makes little sense, given that ‘*Danai*’ refers to Greeks and Antenor was a Trojan.<sup>87</sup> But Dudo’s aim was achieved. By indulging in a little word-play, he was able to make the Danes share a common ancestor with the Franks: Antenor.

Dudo did not invent the suggestion that the Danes and the Franks were related. The connections, etymologies and identifications that he included were drawn from a common collection that could be emphasized when appropriate. This might well be when an alliance was formed, as in Ermold the Black’s poem to Louis the Pious. Ermold claimed, on the

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<sup>85</sup> Christiansen, p.15; Lair, p.129; *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, *MGH, SS rer. Merov.*, 2 (Hanover, 1888), 215-328 (pp.241-43).

<sup>86</sup> Christiansen, p.16; Lair, p.130: ‘Igitur Daci nuncupantur a suis Danai, vel Dani, glorianturque se ex Antenore progenitos; qui, quondam Trojae finibus depopulatis, mediis elapsus Achivis, Illyricos fines penetravit cum suis’.

<sup>87</sup> Christiansen, p.183, n.75.

occasion of Harald Klak's baptism, that the Franks derived their ancestry from the Danes.<sup>88</sup> Dudo's purpose was similar. He too sought to define the relationship between the Normans and the Franks through an ethnic connection.

Thus Dudo drew on what he knew a genealogy should contain as he produced his history. He presented the Normans as the leaders of a people comparable to the Franks by using recognizable details and patterns from myths of ethnogenesis.

However, the Normans' relationships with the Franks could be problematic. To counter this, Dudo also stressed the Normans' distinctiveness from the Franks: they were a different branch of the same family. The viking heritage of the Normans was one way in which he maintained this distinctiveness. The Normans would never be merely Franks, because their viking ancestors made their difference inherent. Their viking origins were dramatized through the person of Hasting, and continued to be important throughout the *De moribus*. Dudo even contrasted their viking heritage favourably with Frankish connections. In one episode, the loyalties of William Longsword, the son of a Frankish mother, were called into question by a magnate named Riulf. Riulf claimed that William was too much of a Frank, for he 'was begotten on the noblest stock of the Frankish race, has procured Frankish friends for himself... he wants to give the land which we own to his own kinsmen to be possessed by their heirs'.<sup>89</sup> William needed to demonstrate his worth like a viking, to prove himself a man of the north and not a Frank. He found men 'who made their act of association, fealty and support in the manner of the Danes', rejecting Frankish conventions, and descended upon his enemies 'as the wolves attack sheep'.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *Carmina in honorem Hludovici*, ed. by Ernest Dümmler, *MGH, Poetae*, 2 (Berlin, 1884), 5-79 (p.59): 'Unde genus Francis adfore'.

<sup>89</sup> Christiansen, p.64; Lair, p.187: 'nobilissimo Franciscæ stirpis semine genitus, Francigenas amicos acquirit sibi... Terram autem quam possidemus parentibus suis in hæredem suorum possessionem dabit'.

<sup>90</sup> Christiansen, p.67; Lair, p.190: 'qui... iudiciumque foederis fideique, et adiutorium, more Dacorum, facientes'; 'ut agnos lupi'. See Conclusion for discussion of wolf imagery.

Although Normandy still maintained some links with Norway and Denmark, it is unlikely that this text was intended for or accessed by a northern audience (although Saxo Grammaticus knew it later).<sup>91</sup> The Scandinavian and especially viking origins of the Normans expressed their relationships with their neighbours: Franks, Bretons and English. In order to align the Normans with both Franks and Danes, Dudo's text contained a number of passages which functioned as origin myths for the Norman people. The detailed description of their background in Dacia and Scanza linked them to other Germanic tribes, particularly the Franks. Dudo then provided reasons for viking activity at this specific time – a combination of overpopulation, Scandinavian custom, and increased royal power. These, too, he described in 'ethnic' terms: it was the character, culture and social organization of the Danes which drove their young men abroad.

The separation of the Normans from their Danish ancestors required a further origin myth, which was provided by a vision Rollo received. The vision was given the weight of an origin myth throughout the text, and was the passage which later historians seized upon to fulfil this function in their own works.<sup>92</sup> Rollo's prophetic dream is worth quoting at length:

...and one night, while sleep was gently creeping over his drowsy limbs from the jaws of Lethe, he seemed to behold himself placed on a mountain, far higher than the highest, in a Frankish dwelling. And on the summit of this mountain he saw a spring of sweet-smelling water flowing, and himself washing in it, and by it made whole from the contagion of leprosy and the itch, with which he was infected; and finally, while he was still staying on top of that mountain, he saw about the base of it many thousands of birds of different kinds and various colours, but with red left wings, extending in

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<sup>91</sup> Karsten Friis-Jensen, 'Dudo of St-Quentin and Saxo Grammaticus', in *Dudone Di San Quintino*, ed. by Gatti and Degl'Innocenti, pp.11-28; *Saxonis Gesta Danorum*, ed. by Jørgen Olrik and Hans Raeder, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Levin and Munksgaard, 1931), I, 10.

<sup>92</sup> See the variant in *The Annals of St Neots: VPSN*, pp.73-75.



such numbers and so far and so wide that he could not catch sight of where they ended, however hard he looked. And they went one after the other in harmonious incoming flights and sought the spring on the mountain, and washed themselves, swimming together as they do when rain is coming; and when they had all been anointed by this miraculous dipping, they all ate together in a suitable place, without being separated into genera or species, and without any disagreement or dispute, as if they were friends sharing food. And they carried off twigs and worked rapidly to build nests; and furthermore, they willingly yielded to his command, in the vision.<sup>93</sup>

Dudo immediately followed the dream with an explanation of its meaning. Only a Christian prisoner (who was ‘tinged with a divinely inspired foreknowledge’) was able to interpret it.<sup>94</sup> Dudo seems to have been inspired by the interpretation of dreams by Joseph in the Bible, and also the vision of Constantine.<sup>95</sup> The latter was particularly relevant as a prophecy of imperial power and military victory. Constantine’s vision of being cleansed from leprosy was employed in the Donation of Constantine to symbolize the emperor’s baptism, and so it symbolized Rollo’s baptism in the *De moribus*.<sup>96</sup>

The symbols in the dream were explained by the Christian prisoner. Much of the dream concerned the achievements of Rollo and his successors in building a new Church from the

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<sup>93</sup> Christiansen, pp.29-30; Lair, p.146: ‘...quadam nocte, soporifera lethei malis quiete per membra leniter serpente, videre videbatur praecellentissimis quodam praecelsiore Franciscæ habitationis monte se positum: ejusque montis in cacumine fontem liquidum et odoriferum, seque in eo ablui et ab eo expiari contagione leprae et prurigne contaminatum; denique illius montis cacumine adhuc superstes, circa basim illius hinc inde et altrinsecus, multa millia avium diversorum generum, varii coloris, sinistras alas quin etiam rubicundas habentium, quarum diffusae longe lateque multitudinis inexhaustam extremitatem perspicaci et angustato obtutu non poterat comprehendere; caeterum congruenti incessu atque volatu eas sibi alternis vicibus invicem cedentes, fontem montis petere, easque se convenienti natatione sicuti solent tempore futurae pluviae abluere, omnibusque mira infusione delibutis, congrua eas statione sine discretione generum et specierum, sine ullo contentionis jurgio, mutuo vicissim pastu quasi amicabiliter comedere; easque deportatis ramusculis festinanti labore nidificare: quin etiam suae visionis imperio voluntarie succumbere’.

<sup>94</sup> Christiansen, p.30; Lair, p.146: ‘praesagioque divinae inspirationis aspersus’.

<sup>95</sup> Victoria Jordan, ‘The Role of Kingship in Tenth-Century Normandy: Hagiography of Dudo of Saint Quentin’, *Haskins Society Journal*, 3 (1991), 53-62 (p.54).

<sup>96</sup> Christiansen, p.188, n.134. *Constitutum Constantini*, ed. by Horst Fuhrmann, *MGH*, Fontes iuris, 10 (Hanover, 1968), 69-74; trans. in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. by Paul Dutton (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 1993), pp.13-19. See Paul Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), p.37.

pagans they would convert, and in restoring ‘devastated cities’.<sup>97</sup> These aspects drove Rollo to strive for such goals throughout the book. But the other aspect of his greatness, that ‘men of different kingdoms will kneel down to serve you’, is of particular relevance to the formation of the Norman people.<sup>98</sup> For this is what was signified by the birds who ate together ‘without being separated into genera or species’. The Normans, the dream prophesied, were a people made up of many others. Their unifying feature was allegiance to one leader, to Rollo and afterwards his descendants. From this dream onwards, therefore, the definition and fate of the Norman people was aligned to the fate of this one dynasty.

There is no recorded tradition of Rollo’s dream before Dudo’s text was written.<sup>99</sup> Although this could be because of the sparse historical record coming from tenth-century Normandy, it has the mark of being Dudo’s creation. The symbols and their explanations were derived from literary models. Moreover, the dream is typical of the *De moribus*. In the previous chapter, Dudo used a dream to instruct Rollo to go to England.<sup>100</sup> This dream was also interpreted by a Christian as a prophecy of baptism. Although he generally used it in metrical passages, prophecy was a standard technique for Dudo in the *De moribus*.

Throughout the work, Dudo referred back to the dream to explain the trajectory of the Norman story. It was first used as a motivation for Rollo, keeping him on track towards his true purpose. When Rollo and his band seemed to be deviating from the future for which readers knew he should be aiming, Dudo reassured them that ‘he still remembered the vision that had told him to set out for Francia’.<sup>101</sup> It continued to be a signpost, as Dudo

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<sup>97</sup> Christiansen, p.30; Lair, p.146: ‘vastatarum urbium [moenia]’.

<sup>98</sup> Christiansen, p.30; Lair, p.147: ‘tibi homines diversorum regnorum serviendo accubitati obedient’.

<sup>99</sup> An extract from the *De moribus* referring to Rollo’s dream appears in the Fécamp Chronicle, composed c.1000, but it is taken from Dudo’s text: see Chapter Three.

<sup>100</sup> Christiansen, pp.28-29; Lair, pp.144-45.

<sup>101</sup> Christiansen, p.32; Lair, p.148: ‘memor semper visionis monentis ad Franciam proficisci’.

connected Rouen with ‘the mount of the church, where you saw yourself joyful’.<sup>102</sup> And he even made Rollo’s men, all fully aware of the dream, become participants in its unravelling, knowingly placing in their mouths the suggestion that ‘perhaps the interpretation of your vision directs us to this very country’.<sup>103</sup>

The importance of the dream is demonstrated by its reappearance at the end of the work, which firmly established it as the root of dynastic and Christian power in Normandy. When chronicling Duke Richard I’s admirable qualities and actions towards the Church, Dudo reminded his readers of the journey that brought them here. Once again, the prophetic dream was presented as a motivation. Richard saw that he should build an even greater church at Fécamp, ‘for this is the hill on which my grandfather saw himself standing, through the salutary mystery of the holy vision’.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, Richard’s knowledge of the vision implied that it had passed into oral family legend by this time. It was soon to be known much more widely.

## VI. Conclusion

Dudo’s *De moribus*, when viewed as a primarily genealogical text, reveals the lineage which the Norman dukes wished to display to their Frankish neighbours. It presented the Norman dukes in a recognizable context of Frankish traditions of genealogy and ethnography. The genealogy of the royal lines had long been used to define ethnic identity in Francia, and the Norman lineage followed suit. The dukes became figureheads for the Norman people, who were linked to both Franks and Scandinavians. However, the ducal lineage presented by Dudo was separate from that of other families, and so the Norman

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<sup>102</sup> Christiansen, p.35; Lair, p.153: ‘En mons ecclesiae, quo te gaudere videbas’.

<sup>103</sup> Christiansen, p.36; Lair, p.153: ‘Forsan interpretatio tuae visionis vertetur in finibus istis’.

<sup>104</sup> Christiansen, p.165; Lair, p.290: ‘Hic namque mons est in quo meus avus se stantem... salutifero divinae visionis oraculo conspexit’.

people were clearly defined as a distinct ethnic group. Like other powerful nobilities, they copied the tools of royal power, such as the cultivation of lineage identity, to secure their families' positions. However, instead of demonstrating how their territory and title descended from royal power, the Norman dukes claimed independence.

They did so by embracing, rather than rejecting, their viking origins. The establishment of their family's authority over Normandy was generally associated with a grant from Charles the Simple, but the importance of this concession could be diminished by the assertion that they had conquered it themselves. Moreover, their viking origins lingered in the minds of their Frankish neighbours: Richer of Reims referred to the Normans as 'pirates' throughout his tenth-century history.<sup>105</sup> While used by others as an insult, viking roots were transformed by Dudo and the Norman dukes into a source of independent identity. This strategy was so powerful that, from the end of the eleventh century, other Frankish magnates also created narratives of conquering heroic ancestors, some of whom were even vikings.<sup>106</sup> Dudo's genealogy now provided a new model for the shaping of a lineage.

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<sup>105</sup> Richer of St-Rémi, *Histoires*, ed. by Justin Lake, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>106</sup> Jean Dunbabin, 'Discovering a Past for the French Aristocracy', in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. by Paul Magdalino (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), pp.1-14 (pp.5-7); Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p.29.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Genealogical Identity in England**

#### **I. English royal genealogy**

There was a long tradition of genealogy in Anglo-Saxon England, which was distinct both from continental practices and from the genealogies of the Anglo-Saxons' Celtic neighbours.<sup>1</sup> All genealogies produced in England before the Norman Conquest recorded royal lineages, but these were produced in greater quantities at an earlier date than Frankish texts. The tradition may have been influenced by the Anglo-Saxons' neighbours in Ireland, who were also prolific genealogists in the early medieval period, but they, unlike the English, recorded the lineages of important aristocratic families.<sup>2</sup> Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies differed from continental traditions in that they were vernacular and retrograde, beginning with an individual king and working backwards to his ancestors. Moreover, because of the nature of early Anglo-Saxon England, the earliest genealogies appear in collections, expressing the relationships between monarchs of several different kingdoms.

These vernacular Anglo-Saxon genealogical texts appear to have arisen from courtly, rather than purely clerical origins. Whereas the earliest Frankish royal genealogies seem to have been constructed by clerics inspired by Biblical genealogies, Anglo-Saxon lineages may well have been transmitted orally before they were written down.<sup>3</sup> For this reason, scholars have applied anthropological insights about the use of genealogies in oral societies to Anglo-Saxon texts, but much less often to Frankish genealogies.

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<sup>1</sup> The most complete study of the Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies is Kenneth Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *PBA*, 39 (1953), 287-348; see further David Dumville, 'The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *ASE*, 5 (1976), 23-50; David Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical List: manuscripts and texts', *Anglia*, 104 (1986), 1-32. Léopold Genicot, *Les Genealogies*, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental, 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975), provides an overview of different European genealogical traditions.

<sup>2</sup> Genicot, *Genealogies*, p.16; David Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', pp.76-77, 103.

<sup>3</sup> Moisl, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies and Germanic Oral Tradition', argues for a pagan oral origin; Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', pp.76, 96, doubts this, suggesting that genealogies were compiled by clerics for royal candidates they supported. The idea of descent from Woden, however, must have a non-Christian origin.

Anthropological studies of orally-kept genealogies demonstrate that they change over time to reflect current social and political groupings.<sup>4</sup> However, the malleable nature of genealogical texts in written form, as demonstrated by their different manuscript versions, indicates that similar perspectives may apply to a partially literate society, too.<sup>5</sup> Compilers of royal genealogies continued to adapt their texts to suit contemporary political relationships.<sup>6</sup>

Genealogical information first appeared in Anglo-Saxon England integrated into historical texts. In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, Bede included a short list of the ancestors of Hengest and Horsa, the first Anglo-Saxon chieftains, in which he claimed they were descended from Woden. This genealogy is also found in the Old English version of Bede's *History*, which was translated in the ninth century. There is a great deal more genealogical material throughout the 'common stock' of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The writers of later texts employed this information in their work: Asser's *Life of Alfred* and Æthelweard's *Chronicon* both elaborate on material from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The *Historia Brittonum* in its various redactions also contains a great deal of genealogical material. The English royal genealogies in the *Historia Brittonum* again display agreement with the texts written in England, and provide a parallel to its extensive British genealogies. The relationship between these historical texts and separate genealogical lists has been debated without conclusion; whether or not one derived from the other, they contain a high degree of agreement.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Thornton, 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy', p.85. Particularly influential has been the concept of a genealogical 'charter' which validates contemporary relationships: see Bohannon, 'A Genealogical Charter', and further discussion in Jack Goody and Ian Watt, 'The Consequences of Literacy', in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. by Jack Goody (Cambridge: CUP, 1968), pp.27-68 (pp.31-33). I.M. Lewis, 'Literacy in a Nomadic Society: The Somali Case', *ibid.*, pp.266-76 discusses the relationship between orality and literacy in the manipulation of genealogies.

<sup>5</sup> Thornton, 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy', pp.86-89.

<sup>6</sup> See Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists' for the 'propagandist' nature of genealogical texts.

<sup>7</sup> David Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List and the Chronology of Early Wessex', *Peritia*, 4 (1985), 21-66 (pp.33-54); Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp.288-97. R.I. Page, 'Anglo-Saxon Episcopal Lists (Parts I and II)', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 9 (1965), 71-95 (pp.84-85),

Several manuscripts also contain genealogical material as separate items. These lists and prefaces were frequently combined in manuscripts with each other, and with the historical texts mentioned above, despite this resulting in repeated information. Let us briefly review their manuscript contexts. The most common text is the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List, found in seven different manuscripts. During the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, it was used as a preface in three manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (A, G and B), and later in the eleventh century as an additional preface to the Old English Bede. In two later manuscripts (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 383 and Rochester, Cathedral Library MS A.3.5 – the *Textus Roffensis*) it was associated with the laws of the Anglo-Saxon kings. A further fragmentary manuscript preserves the same text alongside a unique copy of a genealogy of the East Saxon kings. Additional genealogical texts, notably the ‘Anglian collection’ of genealogies, were copied into encyclopaedic collections alongside episcopal lists and similar material. Three further surviving manuscripts contain such collections. These collections included several texts representing the same royal houses. The first volume of the *Textus Roffensis*, which combined legal texts and encyclopaedic lists, preserves four different West Saxon royal genealogies, alongside the ‘Anglian collection’.

The earliest surviving genealogical texts used lineages to display the relationships between Anglo-Saxon royal families, and at the same time to distinguish them from one another. Apparently first compiled in the eighth century, the ‘Anglian collection’ of genealogies contained lists of the ancestries of the ruling families of the Anglian kingdoms (Deira, Bernicia, Mercia, Lindsey and East Anglia) and that of Kent.<sup>8</sup> The Anglian lists were always presented together in this collection; the only other contexts in which we find the same information are Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, the Anglo-

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debates the relationship between Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* and episcopal lists, which may provide a parallel situation.

<sup>8</sup> Dumville, ‘Anglian Collection’, pp.39-40, 45, 50.

Saxon Chronicle, and other narrative histories which clearly drew upon these texts.<sup>9</sup> The lists presented different dynasties for the different kingdoms, each including royal ancestors of particular relevance for the people over whom they ruled.

While demarcating boundaries, the lists also indicated similarity between the different peoples. The presentation of the ‘Anglian collection’ – the ancestry of each dynasty in parallel and of similar length – implied that these royal lineages represented analogous pasts. The collection was still copied after the respective kingdoms were united under a single dynasty; it now suggested that they had always been parts of a single whole. Moreover, the various royal lineages all traced their ancestry back to the same ancestor, Woden. Given that in Christian England it was not acceptable to consider Woden truly a god, it was possible to give him mortal ancestors. A development of the eighth or ninth century thus added a further stretch of the genealogies, beyond Woden back to Geat, who was another ancestor worshipped as a pagan god, according to the *Historia Brittonum*, Asser, and one of the West Saxon genealogical lists in the *Textus Roffensis*.<sup>10</sup> However, any comment on Woden or Geat’s divinity was generally accompanied by a disclaimer indicating that such beliefs were foolish and wrong. The addition of Geat emphasized the relationship between the different genealogies in the Anglian collection, especially given their layout on the page. Dumville has hypothesized that, originally, the generations beyond Woden to Geat were only written once, at the bottom of the page, drawing together all the separate lists.<sup>11</sup>

However, subsequent scribes misread this layout and added the generations only to the line of the royal house of Lindsey, giving us the texts we have in Cotton Tiberius B v (1)

<sup>9</sup> There are also occasional references in other narratives; e.g. *Felix’s Life of Guthlac*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: CUP, 1956; repr. 1985), pp.74-75: ‘Huius etiam viri [Guthlac’s father] progenies per nobilissima inlustrium regum nomina antiqua ab origine Icles digesto ordine cucurrit’.

<sup>10</sup> *The Historia Brittonum: 3. The “Vatican” Recension*, ed. by David Dumville (Cambridge: Brewer, 1985), pp.82-83; *Asser’s Life of King Alfred*, ed. by William Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904, repr. 1959), p.3; *Textus Roffensis: Rochester Cathedral Library Manuscript A.3.5*, ed. by Peter Sawyer, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile* 7, 11, 2 vols (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1957-62), I, f.101r; Sisam, ‘Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies’, pp.309-11, 313-14.

<sup>11</sup> Dumville, ‘Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists’, p.90.



and Cotton Vespasian B vi. Perhaps the scribes' confusion arose because this genealogical relationship no longer had political relevance; it supplies us with an example of how written genealogies retain information longer than oral versions.

Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies were also used to give information about the past of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. The linear, selective, and masculine nature of the genealogies indicates the importance placed on certain lines of descent over others, as a means of connection with significant individuals of various descriptions. Ancestors were an important way of exploring and expressing identity; distinguishing between historicity and myth was not a primary concern of the genealogists. The distinctions contemporaries made were different from those historians have tended to stress: the Christianity or paganism of their ancestors was clearly of much greater significance than their chronological placement.

The creation of a single English kingdom was accompanied by a proliferation of genealogical texts relating to the West Saxon dynasty, a process which began with Alfred the Great and continued throughout the tenth century. In contrast to the genealogies of other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the forms in which West Saxon genealogies were presented were very varied, and frequently updated. A West Saxon genealogy has been added to all but the earliest manuscript of the Anglian Collection (Vespasian B vi). These West Saxon genealogies attached to the end of the Anglian collection mirrored it in presentation: just like the others, the West Saxon list had Woden at its remote end, and corresponded in length, terminating at Ine. The scribe of Cotton Tiberius B v added two further texts relating to the West Saxon kings, and in the *Textus Roffensis* we find an additional three West Saxon genealogies. The multiplication of lists relating to the West Saxon kings demonstrates the growth in the dynasty's importance and the recognition of them as kings of the entire English people. The latest, unique list in the *Textus Roffensis*, begins: 'Ðis ys angel cynnes cyne cynn þe

her ge mearcod is', thus explicitly denoting the West Saxons as kings of the nation of the English.<sup>12</sup> This assertion of their superiority was especially necessary in manuscripts which contained the Anglian collection. As this collection demonstrated West Saxon affinity with other English kingdoms in the past, so the addition of lengthy and increasingly elaborate lists expressed the enhanced status of this royal house over all others.

Prominent West Saxon genealogies probably superseded texts recording the lineages of other royal houses, which may well have been composed in oral and written forms at an earlier date. The chance survival of a fragmentary manuscript containing three East Saxon genealogies suggests the disappearance of such texts. The manuscript, British Library Additional 23211, is the only witness to East Saxon genealogy; as it is merely a fragment it is unclear whether it was attached to any other lists originally.<sup>13</sup> It is presented in exactly the same format as those we find in the Anglian collection, and with similar rubrics. Next to it, attached as if comparable, is a prose text known as the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List, discussed further below. The juxtaposition of texts in this manuscript, which probably dates from the late ninth century, indicates that in this period the sons of Æthelwulf recognized their neighbouring kingdoms. Yet the isolation of the example testifies that this recognition did not last. The two texts sit uncomfortably together: the expanded and elaborated West Saxon List speaks of a considerably more developed sense of history, and of succession that was both political and biological in nature.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Textus Roffensis*, I, fols 101r-101v.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Yorke, 'The kingdom of the East Saxons', *ASE*, 14 (1985), 1-36 (pp.3-4).

<sup>14</sup> Genealogies of other royal houses continued to be removed from the historical record. The genealogies of the Northumbria kings Ida and Ælle were removed from the A Chronicle at Christ Church, Canterbury in the early eleventh century: Scott Ashley, 'The Lay Intellectual in Anglo-Saxon England: Ealdorman Æthelweard and the Politics of History', in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. by Patrick Wormald and Janet Nelson (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp.218-45 (p.236, n.65).

In copying these lists, scribes made a surprising number of mistakes. The rubrics of many lists are missing or even incorrect, while lines of information were frequently missed or misplaced. Such carelessness suggests that the information contained in these lists was not well-known outside their manuscript context, nor was their accuracy deemed particularly important. Rather, as Stodnick has written, their importance was ‘iconic’ rather than in the detail.<sup>15</sup> It was significant that genealogies were included, that this knowledge appeared to be available, and was presented as a collection. Moreover, compilers of encyclopaedic collections saw them as something that they *should* include. Perhaps that is why we find additions of supplementary lists, and the creations of new lists from existing texts. However, genealogies always referred to certain key ancestors clearly. Famous kings, important founder ancestors, and more remote names loaded with meaning and status, such as Woden, were always correctly identified by genealogists.

The impetus for the production of so many genealogical texts relating to the West Saxon dynasty came from the monarchs of the emerging kingdom of England. Manuscripts containing genealogical texts were produced at centres across Wessex and Mercia during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Several of these manuscripts were produced at Winchester, or at ecclesiastical institutions patronized by the West Saxon kings.<sup>16</sup> One of these, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183, seems to have been produced at Glastonbury Abbey in the early tenth century, and then donated to the Community of St Cuthbert by King Æthelstan in 934 or 937, as recorded in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*.<sup>17</sup> The frontispiece of the book, a full page picture of a king

<sup>15</sup> Jacqueline Stodnick, ‘Old Names of Kings or Shadows: Reading Documentary Lists’, in *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Catherine Karkov and Nicholas Howe (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 2006), pp.109-31 (p.131).

<sup>16</sup> The following manuscripts have Winchester connections: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 173 (the Parker Chronicle); London, British Library Additional MS 34652 (a copy of the Parker Chronicle); London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B v (1), ff.2-73 and Cotton Nero D ii ff.238-41 (a miscellany).

<sup>17</sup> This volume may confidently be identified as the ‘sancti Cuthberti uitam metrice et prosaice scriptam’ referred to in HSC, p.64 (these items occupy most of the manuscript; see M.R. James, *A Descriptive*

holding a book and bowing to a tonsured saint, may represent this act. The manuscript contains the West Saxon genealogy presented alongside the Anglian collection; the export of this united collection to the northern community would have reinforced the incorporation of Northumbria into the English kingdom. In this way, the West Saxon view of the English people spread from their centre to the northern periphery.

Alfred seems to have begun this promotion of the dynasty. Several texts associated with his programme of literary production privileged genealogy and linked royal lineage to the unity of the Anglo-Saxon people. The ninth-century translation of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* into Old English has traditionally been associated with the circle of Alfred, although it appears to have had a Mercian link as well.<sup>18</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle can more securely be seen as an Alfredian court production.<sup>19</sup> Despite its emphasis on Wessex, the compilers of the Chronicle included genealogical information relating to the royal families of all the English kingdoms. The Chronicle was constructed as an English history, tracing the connected histories of the Anglo-Saxon peoples since their arrival in Britain. As such, it testifies to a unifying sense of identity among the English. As in most narrative texts, genealogical material was used to establish the identities of such individuals: in the case of the Chronicle, to establish royal status. The early annals of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are replete with genealogical information relating to kings and claimants to the thrones of the various

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*Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, 2 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 1909-12), I, 435-38). David Rollason, 'St Cuthbert and Wessex: The Evidence of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Ms. 183', in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200*, ed. by Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), pp.413-24, agrees with the identification but demonstrates that the book did not reach Chester-le-Street as early as the HSC suggests. Simon Keynes, 'King Æthelstan's Books', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), pp.143-201 (pp.180-85; this article includes a reproduction of the frontispiece).

<sup>18</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Old English Bede', *PBA*, 48 (1962), 57-90.

<sup>19</sup> Janet Bately, 'The compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 60BC to AD 890: vocabulary as evidence', *PBA*, 64 (1978), 93-129 and *eadem*, 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Once More', *Leeds Studies in English*, 16 (1985), 7-26; Cecily Clark, 'The narrative mode of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle before the Conquest', in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge: CUP, 1971), pp.215-35; Anton Scharer, 'The writing of history at King Alfred's court', *EME*, 5 (1996), 177-206 (pp.178-85).

kingdoms. The purpose of these genealogical statements was clearly to establish the basis of the individual's claim, and usually to support it.<sup>20</sup>

Such genealogical descriptions continue in the Chronicle until 855, under which year the full pedigree of Æthelwulf back to Adam and Christ is enumerated. After this, no more ancestors beyond immediate parents are included in descriptions of kings and single figures. The Chronicle produced in the reign of Alfred had established his right to rule in the pedigree of his father. As it was updated in succeeding years, the direct succession of the descendants of Æthelwulf meant that genealogy did not need to be called upon any further to establish legitimacy. Moreover, the viking destruction of the royal lines of neighbouring kingdoms meant that the Chronicle now concerned itself only with the royal house of the West Saxons.

The 855 pedigree has a sense of being the final word on the subject of genealogy. It contains more generations than any other genealogical text dating from the Anglo-Saxon period. This extensive lineage was probably a source of status in itself: in oral societies, it has been observed that royal pedigrees tend to be longer than those of their subjects.<sup>21</sup> Firstly, Æthelwulf's pedigree contradicted earlier genealogical notes relating to the West Saxons in the Chronicle as it contained several further generations in between Æthelwulf and Cerdic. Secondly, the pedigree was lengthened at the remote end, in what appears to have been a novel development at this point: the Chronicle is certainly the earliest text in which we find these remote generations recorded.<sup>22</sup> This new section of the West Saxon pedigree went all the way back to Adam, and thus God ('et pater noster id est Christus'). Such an origin was unprecedented in all the Chronicle's genealogical entries, and the lengthened pedigree established Æthelwulf's

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Bredehoft, *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp.14-38.

<sup>21</sup> Thornton, 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy', p.89.

<sup>22</sup> Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp.315-16: several names have dropped out of the Parker manuscript here, and manuscripts B and C are closer to the original of the 'common stock'.

right to rule on a number of levels. In comparison, the genealogies of earlier kings now appear somewhat petty.

A similar text known as the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List elevated the dynasty through a more immediate visual impact. With the exception of one manuscript discussed above (BL Additional 23211), the Genealogical Regnal List always acted as a preface or complement to a main text. The historical texts with which it circulated are those associated with the court of Alfred – the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Old English version of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*. These are precisely the texts for which Sarah Foot has emphasized the importance in the development of an ‘English’ identity under Alfred.<sup>23</sup> The Genealogical Regnal List is attached to the Chronicle in three manuscripts, including the earliest Parker manuscript. This connection suggests that it had been associated with the Chronicle since its first dissemination around 892.<sup>24</sup> Like the lists discussed by Stodnick, the Genealogical Regnal List had iconic importance. Although much of the same information could be found within the Chronicle, the Genealogical Regnal List was presented as a separate text, fitting onto one page in the manuscript of the Parker (A) Chronicle. It was presented in a similar position in a manuscript of the Old English Bede, in which it was inserted after the main preface to the text. Its appearance at the beginning of these texts indicated the centrality of the West Saxon dynasty to English history. Æthelwulf, his ancestors and his descendants, were established as the central actors who structured the following historical narratives. The presentation of the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List alongside these histories strengthened the claim of Æthelwulf’s descendants to be kings not only of the West

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<sup>23</sup> Sarah Foot, ‘The Making of *Anglecynn*: English Identity before the Norman Conquest’, *TRHS*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 6 (1996), 25-49, (pp.32, 35-41). George Molyneaux, ‘The *Old English Bede*: English Ideology or Christian Instruction?’, *EHR*, 124 (2009), 1289-1323, has an alternative view of the Old English Bede, but he suggests (p.1305) that the traditional association with Alfred was what suggested the inclusion of the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List in CUL, Kk.3.18 (2004) – earlier manuscripts of the Old English Bede do not include this genealogical text.

<sup>24</sup> Simon Keynes, ‘Manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume I: c.400-1100*, ed. by Richard Gameson (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), pp.537-52 (pp.537-38).

Saxons, but of all the English people. Moreover, the List's relationship with the text was reciprocal: the presence of the genealogy also gave the texts the appearance of 'official' history.

The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List also circulated with the laws of Alfred and Ine. The two manuscripts containing both these texts are of a later date, dating from c.1100 and around 1120 respectively (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 383 and the *Textus Roffensis*). Alfred had justified his law-making with reference to his famous predecessor Ine, and thus showed that his was a continuation of justice previously established. With the addition of the Genealogical Regnal List, the legitimating bond was strengthened further, in expressing both legal succession and biological inheritance from Ine. Conversely, the information in the Preface about the kings' right to rule was reinforced by its practical application in legislation.<sup>25</sup>

Thus it seems that the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List can be considered propagandist in nature. Emphasising the legitimacy of Æthelwulf and his sons, it circulated with precisely those texts which had a relevance to the whole of the English people and claimed that they were one people – now united under West Saxon rule. Furthermore, the Genealogical Regnal List, itself in English, circulated with English language texts that were largely secular in content. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle concentrated primarily on the deeds of kings; the translator of the Old English Bede omitted much of the ecclesiastical matter, such as the dispute over the dating of Easter. This implies that the circulation of the Genealogical Regnal List was intended for a lay as well as clerical audience. Of all the genealogical texts, it probably made the widest impact.

The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List differs from the main text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but generally agrees with the full pedigree of Æthelwulf found in the

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<sup>25</sup> Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', pp.74-75.

annal for 855, against the rest of the Chronicle. Moreover, from internal evidence, it seems that the Genealogical Regnal List was produced at the time of Alfred, although an earlier version may have existed ending with Æthelwulf, his father.<sup>26</sup> The Genealogical Regnal List gave a full pedigree for Æthelwulf back to Cerdic, and then added subsequent kings below. The manuscripts all derived from a common source down to the name of Alfred, although three of them contain later continuations. The two West Saxon genealogies produced for Alfred arose from the same chronological period and followed the same scheme. Both were part of a literary programme by which Alfred promoted the unity of the English people under one ruling dynasty.

## II. West Saxons and Scyldings

The two texts did not cover the same ground, however: the genealogy given for Æthelwulf in 855 related many more generations further back into the remote past than any previous genealogy, including the Genealogical Regnal List. Æthelwulf's pedigree traced the family back to Adam and its ultimate origins. The distant generations also included new key ancestors who provided additional qualities for the ruling family.

The additional generations in the pedigree of Æthelwulf indicate the new ways in which the West Saxon kings presented themselves to their subjects. The claim to descent from Adam does not really tell us a great deal about the ethnic identities of the English people. Everyone, including semi-human species such as giants, was considered to be descended from Adam. Descent from Adam was not intended to demonstrate ethnic or royal identity, but gave a Christian interpretation to the entire genealogy, despite its incorporation of pagan gods such as Woden and Geat. The addition of the biblical generations from Adam to Noah made a clear statement of Christian belief; the

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<sup>26</sup> Dumville, 'The West Saxon Genealogical List', p.1.



inclusion of figures previously revered as gods then became an assertion of these individuals' historical, mortal natures.

At the same time as adding biblical ancestors, the pedigree of Æthelwulf added several further links apparently drawn from Germanic or Scandinavian legend. The divide between Geat and Noah was bridged by a series of names familiar from *Widsith* and *Beowulf*. The figure who joined the two traditions was Scaef, who retained his Germanic name, but was said to have been a son of Noah born in the Ark. Six generations below Scaef is Scyldwa, later called Scyld in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. Æthelweard omitted the generations between Scaef and Scyld, perhaps because he knew of a connection between them.<sup>27</sup> The associated names of Scaef and Scyld also appear in the opening lines of *Beowulf*. From these latter two texts, it is apparent that these figures were believed to be Danish. There has been some disagreement over the precise relationship of Scyld in the West Saxon genealogies and Skjöldr in later Old Norse genealogical material. Certainly, we cannot use the Old Norse material as evidence for belief in late ninth-century England. However, it seems very likely that the Chronicle compiler believed Scyld or Scyldwa to have been an ancestor of the Danish kings. The genealogy is the earliest reference to 'Scyldings', but all other early uses refer to Danes. As well as the evidence of *Beowulf*, which describes the Danish kings as 'Scyldings' throughout, the tenth-century *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* uses the term *Scaldingi* for the Danes who came to England.<sup>28</sup> Thus the genealogist of the West Saxon kings wanted to credit them with ancestors who established their English royalty (Woden and Geat) but also their Danish royal origins (Scyld).<sup>29</sup>

This does not establish conclusively that Danes in England held such a belief. Old Norse genealogies containing Skjöldr all date from much later and some were

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<sup>27</sup> Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', pp.317-18.

<sup>28</sup> HSC, pp.48, 50.

<sup>29</sup> Alexander Callander Murray, 'Beowulf, the Danish invasions, and royal genealogy', in *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. by Colin Chase (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp.101-11.

influenced by the Anglo-Saxon lists.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, references in Old Norse sources to the Scalding dynasty all date from the twelfth century onwards. However, Roberta Frank's evidence from skaldic poetry indicates that the Old Norse equivalent, *skjöldungr*, was used politically in relation to the Danish kings of England in the first half of the eleventh century.<sup>31</sup> Although there was not a clear dynastic content to the word in these verses, Frank has suggested that Cnut's skalds used this title to demonstrate his continuity with earlier generations of viking conquerors. Taking the evidence of the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, this would appear to relate more specifically to the dynasty of Ívarr and Halfdanr. Indeed, Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Knútsdrápa*, also composed for Cnut, opens with reference to Ívarr's conquest of York in 867.<sup>32</sup> Thus, although later traditions may diverge, at the time of this genealogy's composition it seems that the West Saxon kings looked back to ancestors who established their royalty in a way that was convincing not only to the English peoples but also to the Danes in the northern kingdom.

Although they did not have a written genealogy of the northern kings, as they did for other Anglo-Saxon dynasties, Alfred and his successors were demonstrating their relationship to these Danish rulers. The inclusion of Scyld during the ninth century suggests that, although Alfred's kingdom had never been united with the regions ruled by Danes, members of the West Saxon court saw the English and Danish kingdoms as a single political community. Historical traditions emphasized Alfred's encounter with Guthrum of East Anglia, but the genealogies suggest his interest in Ívarr and York.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Anthony Faulkes, 'The Earliest Icelandic Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *Saga-Book*, 29 (2005), 115-19. The poem *Ynglingatál* may have originally been composed earlier than the twelfth- and thirteenth-century contexts it is found in but, given the general approach to genealogy taken here, we cannot expect it to represent the ninth-century genealogy accurately at such a late date.

<sup>31</sup> Roberta Frank, 'Skaldic verse and the date of Beowulf', in *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. by Chase, pp.123-39 (pp.126-27).

<sup>32</sup> Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Knútsdrápa*, ed. by Matthew Townend, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c.1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), II, 651.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter Four.

The lengthened pedigree including Scyld influenced later compilers, who employed material from it in other contexts. Genealogical lists in the *Textus Roffensis* and Cotton Tiberius B v appear to be abstracted from the Chronicle entry of 855, thus providing a lengthy pedigree for the West Saxon dynasty in contrast to those of the Anglian collection. Other narrative texts employed the Chronicle pedigree for aims more akin to that of its original context, illuminating the identities of individuals through reference to their origins. Alfred's biographer, Asser, used it in his *Life of Alfred*, completed during the king's lifetime. Asser began with the genealogy, so that it acted almost as a preface to the biography, introducing Alfred by his royal blood. Asser's use of the extended pedigree including Scyld provides further evidence that this was the version promoted by Alfred's court.

### III. Origo gentis

The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List did not include these remote sections of the West Saxon genealogy, but instead emphasized the importance of Cerdic. The List began with the arrival of Cerdic in Britain, and gave his pedigree back to Woden. The compiler of the List established the legitimacy of virtually all subsequent kings with the phrase 'his family goes back to Cerdic' ('pæs cynn gæð to Cerdice'). Cerdic was also referred to repeatedly throughout the relevant entries in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Descent from Cerdic conveyed royal status and the right to rule, because he was considered to be the first of the West Saxons to arrive in Britain, and the first king of the West Saxons. The importance of the founder of each dynasty was, indeed, unintelligible without knowing the origin myth. Whether a genealogy related ancestry back to Adam, or only to Woden or even Cerdic, the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain was a crucial turning point.

Cerdic's role as founder appears to have grown in importance as his arrival on the shores of Britain grew more distant in time. The West Saxons, according to Bede, had originally been called the Gewissae, allegedly from Cerdic's ancestor, Gewis. However, Gewis was not referred to very often and no recorded deeds are associated with him. As time wore on, Cerdic superseded him. Something similar occurred with the other Anglo-Saxon royal lines: the East Anglian dynasty of Wuffings, for example, originally traced their ancestry back to a pre-migration figure, Wuffa, while the Mercian kings were said to be descended from Icel. However, the genealogies are the only records the Anglo-Saxons made about their history before the migration to Britain, apart from literary material that is not situated chronologically. By the time they came to write down their own histories, the Anglo-Saxons equated their origins as a people with their ancestors' arrival in Britain.

Accounts of Anglo-Saxon origin myths in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, or later versions of these always contain genealogical material. The story of Anglo-Saxon origins stems from Bede's narrative of the arrival of Hengest and Horsa. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle elaborated to include the origin myths of the different Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, but they follow the same patterns, indicating the essential similarity of the various peoples. Just as the genealogical lists expressed political relationships, so did the genealogical information in these sections of the Chronicle. For instance, the Chronicler and Asser described the first Jutes of the Isle of Wight as relations of the West Saxon kings. In both accounts, they received the Isle of Wight from the West Saxon kings. This reflects the conquest of Wight by Caedwalla in 686: the dominance is cast back into the earlier period and expressed by a family relationship.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Barbara Yorke, 'The Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the origins of Wessex', in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. by Steven Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp.84-96 (pp.89-90).

In general, genealogical texts focused on West Saxon ancestors in the later ninth and tenth centuries, but there was one exception: Hengest and Horsa, the ancestors of the Kentish royal family, continued to enjoy prestige and importance as the first Anglo-Saxons who arrived in Britain. However, they were no longer linked directly to Kent but to the English as a whole. For example, the recension of the *Historia Brittonum* made for King Edmund by an English adapter in 944 omitted most of the Anglo-Saxon genealogies found in the earlier versions. The compiler included only the lineage of Hengest and Horsa.<sup>35</sup> Immediately afterwards, he measured the passage of time between their arrival and the beginning of Edmund's reign, thus linking the earliest invaders directly with the current king. The *Historia Brittonum* as a whole related to the conflicts and contacts between the Anglo-Saxons and the Britons; despite being thoroughly reworked by an Anglo-Saxon editor, the text continued to be preoccupied with these relationships. Thus the genealogy which was included was the one which related to the most significant historical event in these relations, the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons. As such, it defined the *Saxones* as one people, now headed by King Edmund. Because the origin myth of the Anglo-Saxons was at root a narrative of conflict with the Britons, the primary ethnic boundaries it constructed were those between English and British. It was not until the tenth century that an English writer, Ealdorman Æthelweard, connected the origin myth to the Danes, as discussed in the second half of this chapter.

#### IV. Aristocracy and genealogy

The proliferation of genealogical texts in the tenth century demonstrates growing interest in ancestry and descent. From its wide variety of contexts and applications, it is clear that genealogical material was used for various purposes and by different people. While we can identify West Saxon royal power behind the production of many of these

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<sup>35</sup> *Historia Brittonum*, ed. by Dumville, p.83; pp.4-6 for dating and origins of this recension.

texts, genealogical information was not controlled by the royal families, and it had a much greater significance than merely explaining the origins of the king.

In England, unlike in Ireland, there was no learned group whose responsibility it was to maintain genealogies.<sup>36</sup> To some extent, this role was played by clerics, who were the compilers and scribes of the manuscripts, and whose religious institutions maintained them. While much discussion about the origins of the genealogies has assumed an origin in the pagan, Germanic past, manuscript evidence rather suggests that ecclesiastical concern for kingly legitimacy was behind the production of many of these later texts. However, the most accomplished tenth-century genealogist, Æthelweard, was a layman, so clerical involvement was far from an official or exclusive role. The interpretation of genealogical information, often presented in unglossed lists, was open to anyone who had access to it.

Distant ancestors like Cerdic may have been seen as the ancestors not only of the kings, but of the entire West Saxon aristocracy. The successive kings from Cuthred to Beorhtric whom the West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List (and the corresponding entries in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) merely claims were descended from Cerdic, without having any apparent relationship to each other, hint at a large pool of possible æthelings. Each family may have maintained its genealogy back to the dynastic founder, but we have no written record of these, because they served no purpose after the reign of each of these kings. This relationship to the founder of the dynasty may have applied to the aristocracies of other English kingdoms. This suggests a further reason that the genealogical regnal lists of several other kingdoms continued to be transmitted for a long time after the dynasties had died out and the kingdoms had ceased to have any separate existence. It is likely that the aristocracies of these regions continued to use these texts as a source of information about their ancestors.

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<sup>36</sup> J.E. Caerwyn Williams, *The Court Poet in Medieval Ireland*, Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture 1971 (London: OUP, 1971); Thornton, 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy', p.83.

However, production of genealogical texts aided the strength of the ruling dynasty to the exclusion of others. The pedigree of Æthelwulf was composed in its final form in the reign of Alfred, as an assertion of the permanent establishment of the dynasty. Alfred's brothers, father and grandfather had all been king before him. By the tenth century it was increasingly unlikely that anyone outside the direct descent from Æthelwulf would become king. In such circumstances, written claims to rule were unlikely to be necessary – indeed, would appear subversive – and so were not produced. While genealogical production was linked to royal power it would have been impolitic to produce new aristocratic patrilineages back to the founding ancestor.

The West Saxon kings appear to have prevented the formation of strong aristocratic lineages. Many ealdormen, like Ealdorman Æthelweard, seem to have originated from branches of the West Saxon royal house, but they did not establish separate lineages. Hart has demonstrated this for the family of Ealdorman Æthelstan 'Half King', who in the mid-tenth century 'at the height of his power governed in virtual autonomy a province the size of Normandy', in the shape of the ealdormanry of East Anglia.<sup>37</sup> Although his son, Æthelwold, succeeded him as ealdorman, the family had little influence by the reign of Æthelred. As the title of ealdorman remained a royal appointment, rather than a hereditary office, English kings could dilute the influence of any family or individual whose local support grew too great.<sup>38</sup> English kings in the later tenth century may have been particularly concerned about local rulers of Northumbria. Edgar and Æthelred appointed men from eastern England to the ealdormanry of Northumbria, and arranged for the archbishopric of York to be held in plurality with a

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<sup>37</sup> Cyril Hart, 'Athelstan "Half King" and his Family', in Cyril Hart, *The Danelaw* (London: Hambledon, 1992), pp.569-604 (p.569).

<sup>38</sup> Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Arnold, 1989), pp.156-59 (the house of Bamburgh provides an exception in the far north); Charles Insley, 'The Family of Wulfric Spott: an Anglo-Saxon Mercian Marcher Dynasty?', in *The English and their Legacy, 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. by David Roffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), pp.115-28.

southern see; Whitelock suggested that they were chosen as suitable because of their experience in areas of Danish settlement, but also to avoid candidates with too much personal support locally.<sup>39</sup>

West Saxon kings were assisted in this policy by the dynastic discontinuity of Anglo-Scandinavian rulers in northern and eastern England. We know very little about most of these rulers: many are bare names in chronicles or are only known to us by examples of their coinage. Hadley has described the resulting picture as ‘a bewildering catalogue of rulers’.<sup>40</sup> Three Scandinavian ‘kings’ seem to have ruled East Anglia before its conquest by Edward the Elder but, apart from Guthrum, we know little of them. Scandinavian rulers dominated the kingdom of York for a much longer period but, in any circumstances, dynastic continuity would have been difficult to achieve against the disruption of periods of direct West Saxon rule. In addition, the number of kings of York in the period 876-954 not only makes a chronology difficult to construct but testifies to significant disputes over the kingdom, which resulted in a frequent turnover of rulers. The clearest attempt to construct a chronology has been made by Clare Downham, who has argued that York and Dublin were both ruled by the dynasty of Ívarr throughout this period.<sup>41</sup> Ívarr may be identified with the Hinguar of the *Passio Eadmundi* with reasonable confidence.<sup>42</sup> Many of Downham’s identifications, though plausible, remain unproven, as they are generally based on the coincidence of names between the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle or coinage and the Irish annals. Her thesis represents a possible example of a Scandinavian dynasty asserting control over York over some eighty years. However, the behaviour of the descendants of Ívarr as

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<sup>39</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, ‘The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries’, in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture, Presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. by Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1960), pp.70-88 (pp.73-76, 78-79).

<sup>40</sup> Dawn Hadley, ‘“Hamlet and the Princes of Denmark”: Lordship in the Danelaw, c.860-954’, in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. by Hadley and Richards, pp.107-32 (p.107).

<sup>41</sup> Downham, *Viking Kings*.

<sup>42</sup> Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, p.202. See Chapter Four.



described by Downham suggests that this was a disparate kin-group of competing individuals. Indeed, she claims that ‘dynastic infighting’ was the major weakness of the kingdom of York, resulting in its permanent conquest by West Saxon kings.<sup>43</sup>

Of more relevance for a discussion of ethnicity is the fact that there is no evidence for the cultivation of the lineage of Ívarr in England. Downham has identified the kings of York as various descendants of Ívarr, who were apparently related as cousins. The relationship to one renowned ancestor would bear comparison with Anglo-Saxon identities, but contemporary references to descent from Ívarr were minimal, and are only found in Irish sources.<sup>44</sup> The Scandinavian kings of York do not seem to have patronized any form of written document and so we are unlikely to find comparable evidence to that of the West Saxon kings and Norman dukes. It may be that a dynastic identity was fostered through stone sculpture or coinage.<sup>45</sup> Downham presents the evidence of coinage as the sole example that kings promoted their lineage in York. However, the images she has associated with their dynasty – Thor’s hammer and a sword – may more readily be taken as symbols of kingship more generally.<sup>46</sup> The lack of dynastic promotion among the Scandinavian kings of England meant that later West Saxon kings were not troubled by members of rival royal lineages, nor local loyalty to them, once the last king of York had been expelled in 954.

## V. Æthelweard’s family history

Ealdorman Æthelweard, the author of a Latin chronicle in the late tenth century, expressed aristocratic interest in genealogy that did not present a challenge to royal authority. Æthelweard may confidently be identified with the ealdorman of that name, apparently responsible for the south-western provinces, who witnessed royal charters

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<sup>43</sup> Downham, *Viking Kings*, p.135.

<sup>44</sup> See Benjamin Hudson’s review in *Speculum*, 84 (2009), 703-05.

<sup>45</sup> Sidebottom, ‘Viking Age Stone Monuments’, pp.232-33.

<sup>46</sup> Downham, *Viking Kings*, pp.119-20.

between 973 and 998.<sup>47</sup> He also appears in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under the year 994, as a negotiator for Æthelred with the viking Olaf Tryggvason, an episode which resulted in the treaty known as II Æthelred, where Æthelweard's name is also recorded. In writing his *Chronicon*, Æthelweard began his history from Creation, before focusing on Britain and the arrival of the English. The narrative ends in 973, but the contents page includes two further chapters, on Edward the Martyr 'et de nece ipsius' and Æthelred 'et de actibus eius'.<sup>48</sup> No trace of these sections remains – they were probably never completed – but the chapter-list indicates that Æthelweard wrote during the reign of Æthelred. Since he referred to Arnulf of Flanders as if he were still alive, we may deduce that the prologue at least was written before 988, when Arnulf died.<sup>49</sup> In this prologue, Æthelweard addressed his work to his relative Matilda, whom he also addressed directly later in the narrative.<sup>50</sup> He defined the scope of his work as a clear explanation of the English side of 'our common family and also about the migration of our nation'.<sup>51</sup>

Frequently, scholars have considered Æthelweard's *Chronicon* as purely a translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle into Latin – a Latin that is convoluted and sometimes incomprehensible. William of Malmesbury was of the opinion that 'as for Æthelweard, a distinguished figure, who essayed an edition of these Chronicles into Latin, the less said of him the better; I would approve his intention, did I not find his language distasteful'.<sup>52</sup> Until recently, this 'hermeneutic style' provided the sole interest for modern scholars of the text beyond its witness to a now lost version of the Anglo-Saxon

<sup>47</sup> *Chronicon Æthelwardi: The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (London: Nelson, 1962), p.xv. A charter of 997 (S891) called him 'Occidentalium prouinciarum dux'.

<sup>48</sup> Eric Barker, 'The Cottonian Fragments of Æthelweard's Chronicle', *Historical Research*, 24 (1951), 46-62 (p.53).

<sup>49</sup> *Æthelweard*, p.xiii, n.2.

<sup>50</sup> *Æthelweard*, pp.1-2, 39.

<sup>51</sup> *Æthelweard*, p.1: 'communis prosapiae, generis quoque et migratione'.

<sup>52</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. by R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), I, pp.14-15: 'Nam de Elwardo, illustri et magnifico uiro, qui Cronica illa Latine aggressus est digerere, prestat silere, cuius michi esset intentio animo si non essent uerba fastidio'.

Chronicle.<sup>53</sup> More recently, however, studies by Wojtek Jezierski and Scott Ashley have emphasized Æthelweard's role as author, and the *Chronicon* as a creative work with its own independent value.<sup>54</sup> Seeing Æthelweard, to use Ashley's words, 'less as a slave to his sources and more as a conscious manipulator of them', allows us to appreciate the secular, aristocratic view of history and genealogy presented in his pages.<sup>55</sup>

Æthelweard had a significant interest in his own family history, and a considerable amount of information appears to have been available to him. Not only did he display familiarity and pride when relating his family tree, but he expected his relative Matilda, to whom he was writing, to be able to fill in the gaps. Æthelweard lamented his ignorance over the fate of the second sister that Æthelstan sent to Otto, and told Matilda that 'it is your task to bring information to our ears, for you have not only the family connection but the capacity, since distance does not hinder you'.<sup>56</sup> Thus links of kinship were acknowledged and maintained across time as well as space. They were simply not written down so frequently when they were not being used to justify royal power.

Ashley has argued that 'the hegemonic cultural presence of the Alfredian royal lineage' prevented aristocracy from emphasizing the identities of their own lineages.<sup>57</sup> Certainly, Æthelweard identified himself so closely with the royal family in this text that he gave no distinct information about his own branch of the family, but borrowed everything from the royal lineage. In this respect it is significant that Æthelweard did not recount his closest relatives, his father and grandfather. Thus Æthelweard left his family connection vague, and did not identify himself as royal. He used the genealogy of the royal family to represent his own, but did not claim to be 'throne-worthy' himself.

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<sup>53</sup> Michael Winterbottom, 'The Style of Æthelweard', *Medium Ævum*, 36 (1967), 109-18; Michael Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', *ASE*, 4 (1975), 67-111; L. Whitbread, 'Æthelweard and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *EHR*, 74 (1959), 577-89.

<sup>54</sup> Ashley, 'Lay Intellectual'; Wojtek Jezierski, 'Æthelweardus Redivivus', *EME*, 13 (2005), 159-78.

<sup>55</sup> Ashley, 'Lay Intellectual', p.219.

<sup>56</sup> *Æthelweard*, p.2: 'uestrum hoc opus est innotescere auribus nostris, quae non solum affinitate sed et potestate uideris obpleta, nulla intercapedine prohibente'.

<sup>57</sup> Ashley, 'Lay Intellectual', p.237.

As discussed above, Æthelweard's information came from a culture that preserved genealogies in interacting oral and literary forms. He claimed that he had learned of his relationship with Matilda from his parents, proceeding to explain their family links in detail. His prologue includes an intricate account of the intermarriages of the Saxon and West Saxon royal families. His detailed knowledge extended in several directions, tracing the descendants of various individuals, rather than simply their own relationship. Æthelweard was exceptional in that he included several branches of the family, including those of his female relatives. It was, after all, through Eadgyth that he was related to Matilda herself. From his explanation we can see that women were the ones who connected the family with others further afield; the women Æthelweard refers to in his prologue were all sent abroad to marry. However, there is no suggestion in his discussion that Matilda was any less English in deriving that origin from a female ancestor.

In this respect, Æthelweard's *Chronicon* contrasted with other texts listing patrilinear genealogical information and also expanded considerably on any possible written source material. Thus both the extent of his knowledge and the way he presented it demonstrate that Æthelweard was, as he claimed, using the genealogical memory cultivated by his family. Moreover, his view of the preceding generations structured the way he thought about the past and constituted an organizing principle for his work.<sup>58</sup>

Æthelweard may have had a particular reason to have known the intricacies of his family relationships. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that in 957 King Eadwig was forced to divorce his wife Ælfgifu, who was apparently Æthelweard's sister, for reasons of consanguinity.<sup>59</sup> Based on Æthelweard's evidence, the closest common ancestor of the two was seven generations back, but the *Life of Dunstan* suggests another reason

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<sup>58</sup> Elisabeth van Houts, 'Women and the Writing of History in the early middle ages: the case of Abbess Matilda of Essen and Aethelweard', *EME*, 1 (1992), 53-68 (p.68); Jezierski, 'Æthelweard redivivus', pp.176-77.

<sup>59</sup> ASC C/D 957; Ashley, 'Lay Intellectual', pp.225-26.

that consanguinity might have been a problem: Eadwig was rumoured to have been involved also with Ælfifu's mother.<sup>60</sup> Only a few years previously, the 948 Synod of Ingelheim had decreed that all Christians should have lists of their ancestors in order to avoid such forbidden marriages.<sup>61</sup> By the twelfth century, this practical reason does seem to have been the motivation among the nobility for drawing up lists of ancestors; although few examples from the tenth century remain, the synod's decree indicates that such documents were expected to be produced. We do have tables from the ninth and tenth centuries indicating the prohibited and permitted degrees of consanguinity.<sup>62</sup> These tables stretch back seven generations, so a significant degree of knowledge about a couple's genealogy would have been necessary for them to have been any use.

Furthermore, Æthelweard's relationship to the royal family of the West Saxon dynasty meant that much of his information was available in genealogical king lists and in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which he used extensively in writing his own *Chronicon*.<sup>63</sup> Yet Æthelweard's interest in genealogy does not seem to have been born out of a desire to aggrandize himself or his authority.<sup>64</sup> His history, based around a genealogical framework and impetus, sought to establish an identity for himself and for his cousin Matilda's English side of the family. The ease with which he connected his ancestors to a chronological history associated with the West Saxon kingdom demonstrates that Æthelweard thought of his own genealogy in exactly the same way as he saw that of the royal family. Æthelweard's attitude reveals that members of the English aristocracy, at least, had a perception of their own descent that was closely modelled on that of the royal family.

<sup>60</sup> B, *Vita Dunstani*, in *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, ed. by Michael Winterbottom and Michael Lapidge (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp.1-109 (pp.66-69).

<sup>61</sup> Bouchard, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages', p.272.

<sup>62</sup> Klapisch-Zuber, *L'Arbre des Familles*, pp.32-35.

<sup>63</sup> Eric Barker, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Used by Aethelweard', *Bulletin of the Institute of History Research*, 40 (1967), 75-91.

<sup>64</sup> Patrick Wormald, 'Æthelweard (d. 998?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8918>> [accessed 24 July 2013]. Ashley, 'Lay Intellectual', pp.224-25, for Æthelweard's power deriving from his links with the royal family.

The pedigree of Æthelwulf presented by Æthelweard constructed social identity, rather than the political power of a particular family. Æthelweard omitted the pedigree beyond Scaef to Adam. It has been suggested that Æthelweard was using an earlier version, as his pedigree of Æthelwulf is considerably shorter than that found in the Chronicle.<sup>65</sup> However, we do not have any evidence of such a version, and it is more likely that he simply chose not to include the genealogy further than Scaef. Æthelweard associated Scaef with a mythical origin which could not be reconciled with being born on the Ark. Moreover, genealogy was a central interest of Æthelweard's as he composed his *Chronicon*, and he had investigated various lines of research. He would certainly have been aware that Æthelwulf's genealogy existed back to Adam.<sup>66</sup> Æthelweard was more than a translator, especially when it came to genealogy, and he was clearly engaging with his original text here. His omission of the biblical sections probably related to his focus on his own family history, and a particular branch of Matilda's. Adding ancestors back to Adam would have universalized his narrative, rather than presenting a specifically English history.

Instead of completing the pedigree back to Adam, Æthelweard elaborated the story of Scaef, explicitly tying him to his Danish origins. He related that

This Scaef arrived with one light ship in the island of the ocean which is called Skaney, with arms all round him. He was a very young boy, and unknown to the people of that land, but he was received by them, and they guarded him with diligent attention as one who belonged to them, and elected him king. From his family King Æthelwulf derived his descent.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Daniel Anlezark, 'Scaef, Japheth and the Origins of the Anglo-Saxons', *ASE*, 31 (2002), 13-46 (pp.19-20).

<sup>66</sup> Ashley, 'Lay Intellectual', p.233.

<sup>67</sup> Æthelweard, p.33: 'Ipse Scef cum uno dromone aduectus est in insula oceani que dicitur Scani, armis circumdatus, eratque ualde recens puer, et ab incolis illius terrae ignotus. Attamen ab eis suscipitur, et ut familiarem diligenti animo eum custodierunt, et post in regem eligunt; de cuius prosapia ordinem trahit Aðulf rex'.

Perhaps Scaef's identification with the 'ark-born son' of Noah is related to this tale of his arrival in a boat. We do not find this exact narrative independently elsewhere but, despite a dislocation by a generation, it clearly derives from the same origins as *Beowulf*'s king Scyld Scaefing, whose unknown family 'had adventured him over seas, alone, a small child'.<sup>68</sup> Although Æthelweard associated these origins with Scaef, he did give him a son named Scyld. In *Beowulf*, Scyld Scaefing and his son Beowulf were immediately identified as Danish; Æthelweard, in his genealogy, upheld this identification, and emphasized the Scandinavian origins (the island of Skaney). The single manuscript witness to *Beowulf* dates from around the year 1000, and thus indicates English interest in the Danish heroic past at this time. Æthelweard's expansion of the genealogy also testifies to such an interest. Æthelweard sought to connect his own family history to that of the Danes whom he encountered in England. What began as an expression of political relationship between ninth-century West Saxon kings and the new Danish elite of that time was still – or once again – relevant in the late tenth century. It is tempting to attribute Æthelweard's interest in Danish heritage to his involvement negotiating with viking leaders in the 990s. However, it is likely that he wrote his *Chronicon* in the early 980s: in fact, he specifically stated that no viking raids had troubled England since the Battle of *Brunanburh* in 937.<sup>69</sup> Rather, in his pedigree of Æthelwulf, Æthelweard sought to make sense of everyday contexts in which he saw English and Danish interaction. The genealogy presented a reasonable explanation for the interconnected social relationships between Anglo-Saxons and Danes within England.

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<sup>68</sup> *Beowulf*, trans. by Michael Alexander (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p.52; *Beowulf: An Edition*, ed. by Bruce Mitchell and Fred Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p.49, ll.45–46: 'þe hine æt frumsceaft forð onsendon| ænne ofer yðe umborwesende'. Murray, 'Beowulf, the Danish invasions, and royal genealogy', p.108, presents an explanation for the different attribution of the same description, to Scyld in *Beowulf* and Scaef in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*. He suggests that the two authors interpreted the annotation to a common genealogical source as applying to different individuals because it was attached to 'Scyld Scaefing'.

<sup>69</sup> *Æthelweard*, p.54; Ashley, 'Lay Intellectual', p.221.

Æthelweard had a relatively positive view of the Danes, notwithstanding some of the later content of his *Chronicon*. He obviously knew people who spoke Old Norse and was particularly interested in Scandinavian religion, although disapproving.<sup>70</sup> Others were more hostile, and this may be reflected in their reluctance to include Scaef, an explicitly Danish figure, when they copied the genealogies. In particular, Scaef's role as the connecting link between the Scandinavian and biblical sections of the genealogy, appears to have been contentious. Asser, a much earlier witness to Æthelwulf's pedigree, preferred 'Seth' to 'Scaef', although he also included Seth son of Adam several generations back. Sisam has suggested that this may merely be a scribal mistake related to Japheth, who was believed to be the son of Noah from whom the Europeans were descended.<sup>71</sup> Æthelweard's near-contemporary, Byrhtferth, using Asser's text, changed 'Seth' to 'Sem', a different son of Noah, in his *Historia regum*.<sup>72</sup> Much as Æthelweard appears to have rejected the textual evidence against his knowledge that Scyld was the son of Scaef, Byrhtferth (and perhaps Asser before him) attempted to reconcile the genealogy with the biblical history with which he was familiar. A later list of the West Saxon genealogy, found only in the *Textus Roffensis*, solves the problem differently, by simply including both figures: this section runs 'Ða wæs noe. Ða wæs sem. Ða wæs scyf. Se wæs in tham arken geboran'.<sup>73</sup> Such differences indicate that the connection of Scandinavian and biblical descent was viewed with suspicion. We can perhaps associate Æthelweard's version of the genealogy with his position as a powerful layman who interacted with Danes in political life. Byrhtferth, on the other hand, was a well-

<sup>70</sup> For Æthelweard's knowledge of some Old Norse see below and other examples in the text such as Ealdorman Æthelwulf's body taken 'in loco qui *Northuuorthige* nuncupatur, iuxta autem Danaam linguam Deoraby' (*Æthelweard*, p.37); Townend, *Language and History in Viking Age England*, pp.110-28.

<sup>71</sup> Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', p.316; See e.g. *Historia Brittonum*, ed. Dumville, p.71.

<sup>72</sup> *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, RS 75, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1882-85), II, 69.

<sup>73</sup> *Textus Roffensis*, I, f.101r. For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Anlezark, 'Scaef, Japheth and the origins of the Anglo-Saxons', but it is worth noting that the text referred to here is a West Saxon genealogy and not an Anglian one as he assumes.



educated monk of Ramsey abbey, presumably less willing to tolerate inconsistencies with Scripture. Moreover, his *Historia regum*, in which the genealogy occurs, is virulently anti-Dane, and he may well have been reluctant to associate the kings of England with Scandinavian origins.

## VI. Æthelweard's English origin myth

Æthelweard continued his claims to Danish ancestry in his version of the English origin myth. Like other versions, this late tenth-century adaptation of the Chronicle account of the *adventus saxonum* concentrated on Hengest as 'the first earl of the English people and their leader out of Germany'.<sup>74</sup> But Æthelweard elaborated some new aspects relating to English origins, such as the genealogical information. The names in Æthelweard's genealogy of Hengest and Horsa differ from those given by Bede: he amalgamated Bede's 'Wehta' and 'Witta', and inserted 'Withar', which corresponds to the Old Norse divine name *Viðarr*.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, in his pedigree of Æthelwulf, 'Bældæg' became Balder, or the Old Norse *Baldr*.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, Æthelweard was very interested in descent from Woden. While this may have been a 'convention' for Bede, Æthelweard clearly connected Woden with the Oðinn worshipped by Danish neighbours in England, and sought to explain how the English were descended from him.<sup>77</sup>

Æthelweard's elaboration of the genealogies was matched by his elucidation of details in the Anglo-Saxon origin myth. Again, he related the details of the Anglo-Saxons' distant past to contemporary Danes. Æthelweard added nothing to Bede's explanation of the land of Old Saxony, even though he was writing to a Saxon relative.

<sup>74</sup> *Æthelweard*, p.18: 'primus consul et dux de Germania... gentis Anglorum'; see Jezierski, 'Æthelweard redivivus', pp.166-67 for Æthelweard's use of the origin myth to construct one English people.

<sup>75</sup> Townend, *Language and History in Viking Age England*, pp.121-27 demonstrates that Æthelweard used Scandinavian sources for these details.

<sup>76</sup> *Æthelweard*, p.xxxvi; cf. Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*, trans. by Jesse Byock (London: Penguin, 2005), p.7, where he makes the same change: 'Beldegg, we call Baldr'.

<sup>77</sup> Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', p.79, described Bede's use of Woden as merely a 'convention'. On Æthelweard's interest in Woden, see Audrey Meaney, 'Æthelweard, Ælfric, the Norse Gods and Northumbria', *Journal of Religious History*, 6 (1970), 105-32 (pp.105-108).

Rather, he preferred to focus on ‘Anglia uetus’, the original home of the Angles, which he located among the Danes. As in his versions of the genealogies, Æthelweard displayed his familiarity with the language of the Danes by including Danish place-names; he explained that ‘Anglia uetus’ ‘has as its capital the town known in the Saxon language as Schleswig, but by the Danes as Hedeby’.<sup>78</sup> This familiarity appears to have come through contact with the Danes; the other example of such an association being drawn with the lands around Hedeby is in the reported account of Ohthere the Dane’s travels in the *Old English Orosius*.<sup>79</sup> Æthelweard, however, alluded to what ‘the common people say’, rather than copying from Ohthere.<sup>80</sup> In this passage, Æthelweard not only displayed a familiarity with the area that had not been present in any previous account of Anglo-Saxon origins, but actually changed Bede’s narrative in a small but significant way. Bede had claimed that the old land of the Angles had been deserted from the migration up to the present day, thus depicting a wholesale migration of an entire people. Æthelweard, on the other hand, omitted this passage and displayed its falsity by relating the contemporary names for its capital – which was, of course, a busy emporium during the Viking Age. In doing so, he revealed that the land of ‘Anglia uetus’ was not deserted by the migration, but remained a site of continued activity. This raised the suggestion that those currently living in ‘Anglia uetus’ were related to the pre-migration Angles.

Æthelweard used both terms *Angli* and *Saxones* for his pre-migration ancestors, so that in a connected passage, he made this area the domain also of the Saxons.<sup>81</sup> The Britons are said to have asked the Saxons for help because ‘they had heard that in those

<sup>78</sup> Æthelweard, p.9: ‘Porro Anglia uetus... habens oppidum capitale, quod sermone Saxonico Slesuic nuncupatur, secundum uero Danos, Haithaby’. Townend, *Language and History in Viking Age England*, p.119.

<sup>79</sup> *The Old English Orosius*, ed. by Janet Bately, EETS, SS, 6 (London: OUP, 1980), 16: ‘on þæm landum eardodon Engle, ær hi hider on land coman’. Although they appear to be his own words, it seems most likely that this was an addition from the English scribe/recorder.

<sup>80</sup> Æthelweard, pp.6-7, 9: ‘quæ nunc uulgo...nuncupatur’.

<sup>81</sup> Ashley, ‘Lay Intellectual’, pp.231-32, argues that Æthelweard used ‘Angli’ to denote the converted ‘Saxon’ people.

days the nation of the Saxons was active in piracy in the whole coastal stretch from the river Rhine to Donia, which is now called Denmark by the common people...'<sup>82</sup> Again, the link with the homeland of the Danes was reinforced. The similarity went even further than this: the behaviour of the Anglo-Saxons in this distant past was essentially the same as that of the vikings: they were 'active in piracy' ('esse piratico in opere') in those times, a phrase we might equally associate with Danish vikings (and indeed *piraticus* was a common description).

In an earlier period, before the Viking Age, the Anglo-Saxon origin myth had indeed stimulated a feeling of relationship with the continental Saxons. This manifested itself in missions to the still-pagan Saxons, notably the mission of Boniface. In one of his letters of 738, Boniface appealed to the Anglo-Saxons to pray for the conversion of the continental Saxons. They should be concerned, he stated, because they derived from the same origin as the Saxons: 'Have pity on them, because their repeated cry is: "We are of one and the same blood and bone"'.<sup>83</sup> But by the later tenth century, this relationship was no longer being emphasized in the same way. Æthelweard's *Chronicon* is one place where we might expect to find it retained, given his Saxon recipient, but he barely alludes to their common origin in this respect.<sup>84</sup> One reason for this might be that he was familiar with the origin myth current among the Saxons, as recorded in Widukind's History: this reversed the story of migration, so that Saxons came from England.<sup>85</sup> As

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<sup>82</sup> Æthelweard, pp.6-7: 'Nam illis diebus agilem audierunt esse piratico in opere gentem Saxonum in tota maritima a Rheno fluuio usque in Doniam urbem, quae nunc uulgo Danmarc nuncupatur...'

<sup>83</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany...*, trans. by C.H. Talbot (London: Sheed and Ward, 1954), p.96; *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. by Michael Tangl, *MGH*, Epp. sel., 1 (Berlin, 1916), p.75: 'Miseremini illorum, quia et ipsi solent dicere: "De uno sanguine et de uno osse sumus"'.  
<sup>84</sup> On connections between England and Ottonian Saxony in the tenth century, see Karl Leyser, 'The Ottonians and Wessex', in Karl Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Carolingian and Ottonian Centuries*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1994), pp.73-104. However, the arguments I put forward here stand in contrast to Leyser's view of Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, which he described as an expression of 'community' between Anglo-Saxons and Old Saxons (p.84). Yet, as explored above, Æthelweard specified that he presented the English side of Matilda's family in distinction from her Saxon ancestors and he rewrote the origin myth to omit Saxon ancestry.

<sup>85</sup> *The continental Saxons from the migration period to the tenth century: an ethnographic perspective*, ed. by Dennis Green and Frank Siegmund (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), p.344; on Æthelweard's knowledge of this text, see van Houts, 'Women and the Writing of History', p.65.

the belief in a special mission to their Saxon cousins was no longer relevant, a similar belief in the need to evangelize the Danes may have arisen. We have little comparable written evidence for English mission to Scandinavia in the tenth and eleventh centuries, although it is apparent that it did happen.<sup>86</sup> The perceived relationship with the Danes may be one explanation for this missionary activity.

## VII. Conclusion

At its remote end, genealogical information was linked to the myths of origins which helped define a people-group in the early middle ages. Æthelweard's *Chronicon* reflects the tenth-century view, found elsewhere in genealogical texts, that the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes were related and came from the same origins. This connection was created under Alfred, who made a treaty with Guthrum, in order to reflect desired political relationships. Æthelweard elaborated the connection, which he applied to himself as well as the royal house, when it became politically relevant once again. He would certainly have identified some, if not all, of the viking attackers of the late tenth century as Danes. But Æthelweard may also have identified a Danish element in the existing population of England, particularly in the regions of Northumbria and East Anglia. His generalization of the Danish connection in the origin myth, which applied to the whole people, suggests that the Danish and Anglo-Saxon populations within England had come to be perceived as different branches of the same ethnic group. However, the viewpoint was more nuanced than this. The Danes were equated not with contemporary English people, but with the Anglo-Saxons of the past. They behaved as pirates, and they had not undergone the civilising process of Christianity. In this way, the view of the Danes we find in Æthelweard's *Chronicon* is similar to that of a nineteenth-century anthropologist looking at supposedly 'primitive' peoples as

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<sup>86</sup> Lesley Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', *ASE*, 24 (1995), 213-49, esp. p.216.

‘contemporary ancestors’. This attitude has been frequently overlooked because it is often retained in modern historians’ discussions of ‘pre-Christian’ society.

In view of this, it is not surprising that we find hints of alternative origin myths giving the Danes a more prestigious role. Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*, an Anglo-Norman vernacular history, appears to record one such myth. Although much of Gaimar’s narrative was derived from written sources such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the *Life of Dunstan*, there are many elements that do not originate in a prior written source. The *Estoire des Engleis* gave the Danes a pre-history in northern England, including the story of Haveloc, which is found elsewhere in parallel but independent sources.<sup>87</sup> Gaimar used these narrative elements to argue against the importance of Cerdic. He reported that Cnut negotiated with Edmund Ironside by subverting the well-established West Saxon origin myth:

Our Danish ancestors, I’ll have you know, have been ruling here for a very long time. Almost a thousand years before king Cerdic came to the throne, Danr was king. Cerdic was your ancestor, and king Danr was mine. A Dane held the land in chief from God. It was Mordred who granted Cerdic his fief; he never held in chief, and your family is descended from him...<sup>88</sup>

Of course, this text, written in 1136-37, dates from much later than those we have been examining. However, it is a witness to a local Lincolnshire legend that provided a very different view of Danish origins in England, reminding us that the written accounts of Anglo-Saxon origins were partisan creations that presumed to represent subjects who may not have been willing. Nevertheless, the importance of descent from an original founding king remains unquestioned in this text. The West Saxons may not have been

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<sup>87</sup> Scott Kleinman, ‘The Legend of Havelok the Dane and the Historiography of East Anglia’, *Studies in Philology*, 100 (2003), 245-77.

<sup>88</sup> Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. by Ian Short (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp.234-37, ll.4315-4324: ‘e bien sachez loi[n]gtenement| l’urent Daneis nostre parent:| prés de mil anz l’out Dane aince[i]s| ke unc i entrast Certiz li reis.| Certiz, ço fu vostre ancïen,| e li reis Danes fu le mien.| Daneis le tint en chef de Deu,| Modret donat Certiz son feu:| il ne tint unkes chevalment,| de lui vindrent vostre parent’.

successful in imposing the superiority of their dynasty over all, but the assumptions which underlay that claim, the centrality of royal ancestral descent, were accepted as a powerful source of identity and difference.

## **Part II: Historical Identity**

Identities were forged around the shared past of recent events as well as legends of distant ancestors. Belief in any group is strengthened by reference to its past: the group's existence as a real entity is reinforced by an emphasis on its continuity over time. Moreover, the perception of shared experience reinforces the similarity already felt by group members. Even in modern scholarship, with recognition of the constructed nature of identities and the virtualness of groups, the evolution of a particular group identity most often forms the starting point for research. The movement of 'peoples' over a long chronological period has been rightly criticized as a model of historical processes, but it is so well-established that it has been difficult to cast off completely.<sup>1</sup> A similar idea was ubiquitous among medieval historians.<sup>2</sup> Having begun with an origin myth relevant to contemporary identities, a history would then proceed with the same groups throughout the text. Furthermore, individuals, especially kings, continued to be used within the narrative as representative of larger groups. In the records of recent events, we can ascertain moments when identity boundaries were tested or reinforced.

Historical writing of all kinds encouraged identification with particular groups. National histories in particular moulded the identities of their readership. Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* influenced English identity across several centuries of political disunity: the *Historia ecclesiastica* did not merely reflect the situation as Bede saw it, but led his readers to think of themselves as English.<sup>3</sup> Medieval writers produced national histories whenever they perceived ethnic groups to lack such

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<sup>1</sup> See the various viewpoints in *On Barbarian Identity*, ed. by Gillett, and Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp.13-22.

<sup>2</sup> The development of particular national identities in medieval historiographies is explored in Webber, *Evolution of Norman Identity*; Foot, 'The Making of *Angelcynn*'.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald with Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp.99-129; Goffart, *Narrators of Barbarian History*, pp.325-28.

narratives. Widukind of Corvey, for example, wrote his *Res gestae saxonicae* in the tenth century, aimed primarily at a Saxon audience.<sup>4</sup> Other historical genres similarly appealed to their readers to identify with the past, and smaller communities were also shaped in this way. *Gesta abbatum*, for instance, narrated the past of individual monasteries in order to define the identity of the present communities.

Hagiographical writing was especially suitable for the crystallization of group identities in opposition to each other. Hagiography – the lives, passions and miracles of the saints – provided a pre-defined dichotomy of good and evil, represented by the saint and his demonic or human persecutor.<sup>5</sup> Because these texts were intended to recruit adherents to the cults they supported, they encouraged their audiences to relate to their saintly protagonists and their followers. Hagiographical texts exhorted devotees to protect the rights and possessions of the saint against enemies who might encroach upon them, thus continuing the dichotomy of good and evil into their contemporary relations.

Episodes of conflict hardened these distinctions. Representations and commemorations of conflicts are an integral part of giving violence its meaning. This is certainly true of supposedly ‘ethnic conflict’ which, Brubaker has argued, should rather be considered ‘ethnically framed conflict’.<sup>6</sup> As he has demonstrated, violent dispute only becomes ‘ethnic’ when it is interpreted as such, whether this is by participants, victims, observers – or historians. Interpretations of conflict as ‘ethnic’ not only impose meaning on a past event, but may mobilize belief in group identity and even lead to

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<sup>4</sup> Mortensen, ‘Stylistic Choice in a Reborn Genre’, pp.92-93.

<sup>5</sup> A summary of methodological approaches and recent work can be found in Claire Watson, ‘Old English Hagiography: Recent and Future Research’, *Literature Compass*, 1 (2004) ME 100, 1-14; E. Gordon Whatley, ‘An Introduction to the Study of Old English Prose Hagiography: Sources and Resources’, in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. by Paul Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp.3-32. For Latin saints’ lives, see Lynda Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997), pp.1-25. Felice Lifshitz, ‘Beyond Positivism and Genre: “Hagiographical” Texts as Historical Narrative’, *Viator*, 25 (1994), 95-114, emphasizes the historiographical nature of hagiographical texts; however, I believe it is useful to retain the distinction.

<sup>5</sup> Mechthild Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of the Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp.71-74.

<sup>6</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p.9.



further conflict. In an early medieval context, research into feud has highlighted the importance of narrating events as an integral part of the dispute, and a way to keep the temporarily dormant feud alive. Hagiographies and histories presented conflict from the viewpoint of one side, in contrast to the enemy. Audiences were thus led to identify two sides of a past conflict with significant cultural and social distinctions. Accounts of viking raids and wars, therefore, presented Scandinavian raiders in opposition to existing inhabitants of England and Normandy. Historians led their readers to identify with either the victorious conquerors, or the humble and wronged victims of violence. Hagiography provided models for either, in the form of Christian victory or Christian martyrdom.

The next two chapters explore how inhabitants of England and Normandy in the tenth and early eleventh centuries perceived the viking past. Historians and hagiographers looked back on the viking raids and wars which afflicted Francia and England in the ninth century, and the subsequent Scandinavian conquest and settlement of certain regions. These writers imposed their own interpretations on the earlier conflicts. Rather than being evidence of dramatically different events, their different interpretations reflected contemporary ethnic relations in England and Normandy.

However, they also *shaped* ethnic relations by depicting a certain view of the past. Their narratives led readers and listeners to identify the effects of the viking wars and conquests in their own relationships. Just as origin myths represented contemporary political and social entities, so the history of the recent past was written to explain the situations of its readers. Moreover, historical views of the viking past were, at this time, most usually presented in hagiographical texts, and thus led their audiences to identify with the ‘good’ side of the saint.

Hagiography spread these narratives widely. The deeds and miracles of the saints were celebrated on their feast days, and the laity seem to have attended some of these

occasions. Pilgrims came to visit the shrines of the saints and benefit from the *virtus* of their relics. The saints became the subjects for sermons and homilies, which were delivered to laypeople as well as religious.<sup>7</sup> Ecclesiastical networks and their patrons thus exerted the strongest influence over how the past was interpreted and applied to ethnic relations. In Normandy, the dukes took the lead in patronizing monasteries; in England, the kings of the West Saxon dynasty, often in partnership with politically powerful members of the monastic party, supported key religious institutions. Monastic interests and secular rulers combined in each region to produce very different narratives of the viking past.

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<sup>7</sup> On the cult of saints generally, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Simon Yarrow, *Saints and Their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006). On sermons and their audiences, *The Old English Homily and its Backgrounds*, ed. by Paul Szarmach and Bernard Huppé (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), esp. Milton McC. Gatch, 'The Achievement of Ælfric and his Colleagues in European Perspective', pp.43-63; Charles Wright, 'Old English Homilies and Latin Sources', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. by Aaron Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp.15-66 (pp.37-42); David d'Avray, 'Method in the Study of Medieval Sermons', in *Modern Questions about Medieval Sermons*, ed. by Nicole Bériou and David d'Avray (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull' Alto Medioevo, 1994), pp.3-29 (pp.8-17).

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Historical Identity in Normandy**

##### **I. Norman history and hagiography**

Norman identity has been viewed primarily as a construction of Normandy's strong tradition of historical writing.<sup>1</sup> Dudo of Saint-Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum*, discussed in Chapter One, is usually seen as the starting point of Norman historiography. In recent years, historians have emphasized the uses of Dudo's rich history as a witness to the view of the past in Normandy around the year 1000.<sup>2</sup> He described the viking past in unabashed detail, as an essential part of the Normans' ethnic inheritance. Moreover, he positioned the Normans in relation to other peoples: the Franks, the Bretons, and even the English.<sup>3</sup> Dudo's history testified to and moulded the identification of the Norman ethnicity as a people who emerged from Scandinavian roots through conflict and co-operation with those around them in northern France.

Dudo's history was shaped by and for the ducal family. Much of the material may well have been told directly to Dudo by Richard I, Gunnor, Archbishop Robert and Count Rodulf, stories moulded into shape by oral circulation between generations. Dudo's history had to please Duke Richard II, and so we can be sure that it is the ducal view we are hearing. Dudo did have considerable literary pretensions, however, and much of the *De moribus* is literary invention and embellishment. Moreover, as Albu has pointed out, the lifetime of Dudo's informants is actually the period which he rather

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, *Normans and their Myth*; Albu, *Normans in their Histories*; Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997); Webber, *Evolution of Norman Identity*.

<sup>2</sup> Searle, 'Fact and Pattern'; Shopkow, *History and Community*, pp.68-83, 174-89; Emily Albu, 'Dudo of Saint-Quentin: The Heroic Past Imagined', *Haskins Society Journal*, 6 (1994), 111-18.

<sup>3</sup> It is unclear exactly which English kings Dudo referred to in the episodes concerning Rollo in England. Christiansen suggested that some passages discussing Æthelstan were actually referring to Guthrum using his baptismal name. Certainly, this would make more sense in terms of chronology, but Dudo's dates are notoriously flexible. The *De moribus* presents us with an unfamiliar external view of the English; it also provides evidence that the Norman dukes laid claim to England from the very beginning of the eleventh century.

neglects, suggesting that he did not rely on them as much as he implied.<sup>4</sup> Whatever their level of input, these informants seem to have narrated their collective family history rather than their own lived memories.

However, the historical narrative of the *De moribus* was not the only historical text produced in early Normandy, nor did it take a radical new line.<sup>5</sup> The dukes did not commission Dudo, who originated from the Vermondois, because Normandy was devoid of historians. There may well have been oral historians at the time: Searle has emphasized the similarities of Dudo's history to Norse sagas, and we know that both Norse skalds and Latin poets were present in Rouen.<sup>6</sup> Monks living in Normandy also recorded the events of the early principality. In the years around the publication of the *De moribus*, several restored monastic houses around Rouen produced historical texts dealing with both the distant Merovingian past and also more recent events. These texts show (sometimes very strong) similarities to Dudo's narrative. In a number of cases, this was due to direct influence from Dudo, and all these texts demonstrate the evolution and dominance of a similar view of the past.

All historical writing between 911 and the 1020s emerged from a few monastic houses, closely associated with the Norman dukes. The earliest refoundation was at St-Ouen in Rouen, in the time of Rollo, whom later tradition credited with a central role in the return of the monks. His son, William Longsword, re-established Jumièges before 943, and such was his association with the monastery that the *Planctus* composed on his death implied he had wished to become a monk there.<sup>7</sup> St-Wandrille at Fontenelle was rebuilt by a monk of Ghent, Mainard, in 960, with the aid of Richard I, who then sent

<sup>4</sup> Albu, *Normans in their Histories*, p.21.

<sup>5</sup> Arnoux, 'Before the *Gesta Normannorum*', p.30.

<sup>6</sup> Searle, 'Fact and Pattern'. The Icelandic poet Sigvatr Þorðarson refers to his time in Rouen in his *Vestrfararvísur* (dating probably from the 1020s): ed. by Judith Jesch, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas I*, II, 617. The poet Warner wrote Latin poetry at the court of the archbishop in the 990s: see Warner of Rouen, *Moriuh: A Norman Latin Poem from the Early Eleventh Century*, ed. by Christopher McDonough (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1995), pp.5-6.

<sup>7</sup> *The Planctus for William Longsword*, ed. by Robert Helmerichs (1999-2002), <<http://vlib.iue.it/carrie/documents/planctus/planctus/>> [accessed 21/06/2013], verses 5 and 6.

him to complete a similar task at Mont-Saint-Michel.<sup>8</sup> An earlier attempt in 944-53 by Gerard of Brogne had failed because of aristocratic opposition: the eleventh-century *Miracula Sancti Vulfranni* report that the Norman nobles were unwilling to return the land they had taken from the monastery.<sup>9</sup> The support of the dukes was necessary in re-establishing the monasteries, not least to coerce their followers into restoring the patrimony. Richard I also built a great church at Fécamp next to the ducal residence, and established a house of canons there in 990.<sup>10</sup> These communities began to produce various kinds of records of their foundations.

Apart from Dudo's *De moribus*, historical writing in Normandy was generally hagiographical, and related to the history of the institutions in which it was composed. The equivalent hagiographies and chronicles of Normandy's ninth- and tenth-century neighbours presented an image of viking destruction that was catastrophic to ecclesiastical life.<sup>11</sup> Although this narrative of mass monastic exodus in the face of viking terror has been disputed, tentatively by Lucien Musset and, more recently and more assertively, by Felice Lifshitz, it was already well-established in the tenth century.<sup>12</sup> This was the narrative which the inhabitants of the Norman duchy inherited in monastic texts and historical memory. Thus, looking back at the histories of its institutions and people, the church confronted the new Norman dukes and people with their viking past in their earliest encounters.

In this chapter, I shall examine three sets of texts which dealt with the inherited narrative of disruption and turned it to the use of the Norman dukes. The first, the

<sup>8</sup> Musset, 'Monachisme d'Époque Franque', p.57.

<sup>9</sup> *Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfranni*, ed. by J. Laporte, in *Mélanges. Documents publiés et annotés par Dom. J. Laporte et al.*, 14<sup>th</sup> ser. (Rouen: Société de l'Histoire de Normandie, 1938), 1-87 (pp.28-30). See Chapter Five.

<sup>10</sup> F4, F9.

<sup>11</sup> Delphine Planavergne, 'Les Normands avant la Normandie: Les invasions scandinaves en Neustrie au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle dans l'hagiographie franque', in *Les fondations scandinaves en Occident*, ed. by Bauduin, pp.37-52 (pp.39-40).

<sup>12</sup> Musset, 'L'Exode des Reliques'; Felice Lifshitz, 'The "Exodus of Holy Bodies" Reconsidered: The Translation of the Relics of St. Gildard of Rouen to Soissons', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 110 (1992), 329-40.

*Translationes Sancti Audoeni*, were produced at the urban monastery of St-Ouen in the early eleventh century, and record several translations of the city's patron, St Audoenus. The second are the earliest *Vitae Sancti Romani*, composed in the mid-tenth century in an effort to promote Audoenus's predecessor, Romanus, as a saint. Finally, I turn to a monastic foundation chronicle, composed at Fécamp around the year 1000 from a combination of hagiographies and Dudo's *De moribus*. The dates of composition of all texts from the early Norman principality are disputed, but those examined here appear to be the earliest to deal with these issues.

In these texts, the church's concerns were matched by those of the Norman ducal family, who exerted their own influence through patronage and preferment. In their assertion of control over the Norman church, the construction of historical narratives was necessary. We view through these historical narratives their desired relationship with the people over whom they exerted secular and spiritual authority.

## **II. Saints crossing boundaries: the translations of St Audoenus**

The most pressing problem when re-establishing the church in Normandy was the absence of the saints. During the viking disruptions, many communities, especially those along the Seine at St-Ouen, St-Wandrille and Jumièges, had fled elsewhere to safety, along with their most holy relics. These relics provided a centralizing sense of community for the scattered monks: we find a distinct community of St-Wandrille present in their sheltering monastery of St-Pierre of Ghent as late as 952.<sup>13</sup> The monks carrying the saints' bodies produced texts authenticating the relics and recording their miracles. These texts recorded the travels of the saints, some of which are corroborated by similar initiatives from those who housed them on their travels.<sup>14</sup> These translation

<sup>13</sup> Musset, 'Monachisme d'Époque Franque', p.57.

<sup>14</sup> Canon Legris, 'L'Exode des Corps Saints', *Revue Catholique de Normandie*, 28 (1919), 125-36, 168-75, 209-21, provides an overview of the translations; Anna Trumbore-Jones, 'Pitying the Desolation of

narratives used a shared language to describe the Norman terror from which they were fleeing. The vikings fitted into the tradition of pagan destruction found in *translationes*. Texts from across northern Francia and Aquitaine contained similar descriptions, but their conventional nature meant that, in southern Francia, these roles were filled just as often by Muslims.<sup>15</sup> The image of viking persecutors of the saints was transmitted throughout Normandy and the surrounding regions by these narratives of transportation. Moreover, these translation accounts provided information about the past across the ‘caesura’ of the viking conquest. In their search for saints, the Normans encountered a well-travelled image of themselves as the enemy.

The Norman dukes needed to deal with this problem in order to reinvigorate the church. The cult of the saints was an important aspect of the Neustrian church in the Carolingian period, among both ecclesiastics and laity. Venerating the saintly patrons of their monasteries bound monastic communities together. Miracle collections testify to the popularity of the saints among the laity, and their reliance on particular institutions to facilitate access to that holy power. The aristocracy, in particular, displayed their piety through gifts to those saints whom they particularly favoured – or who favoured them. For the main reason that the ducal family were eager to restore the saints to Normandy was their belief in the power of saintly patronage. St-Denis’s relationship with the Carolingian kings provided a powerful example, and one with which Archbishop Hugh, who came to Rouen from St-Denis, would have been very familiar.<sup>16</sup> Doubtless strongly encouraged by the monks and clergy of Rouen, Rollo and his

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Such a Place: rebuilding religious houses and constructing memory in Aquitaine in the wake of the viking incursions’, *Viator*, 37 (2006), 85-102, considers similar narratives written for Aquitaine.

<sup>15</sup> Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978; rev. ed. 1990), pp.10-15 on *translationes*, and pp.84-85, 131 on the pervasiveness of vikings and Muslims as the background to translations; pp.75, 114 for the translation of Mary Magdalene to Vézelay, which demonstrates the interchangeability of Normans and Saracens in many such texts.

<sup>16</sup> ‘*Acta Archiepiscoporum Rotomagensium: Study and Edition*’, ed. by Richard Allen, *Tabularia ‘Documents’*, 9 (2009), 1-66 (p.38); see Gabrielle Spiegel, ‘The Cult of St Denis and Capetian Kingship’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 1 (1975), 43-69, for the alliance of St-Denis with Frankish royalty throughout the medieval period.

descendants wanted to harness the power of the saints by restoring them to their city. They also recognized the political advantage lent by partnership with the church. Rollo probably embarked on this partnership very soon after his conversion; Dudo certainly saw it as an essential part of the process. He presented Rollo taking the initiative, asking Bishop Franco ‘which churches within his land were held in greater respect, and which should be called the more powerful for the merit and protection afforded by the saints’.<sup>17</sup> The historical Rollo did not take much longer than this to recognize the power of the saints.

The first saint whose support the Norman dukes cultivated was St Audoenus, who was an early Merovingian bishop of Rouen and patron of the episcopal monastery of St-Ouen. Through possession of this important position, he was considered the patron of Rouen in general. Audoenus was also one of the few saints of Rouen who was well-known further across Francia.<sup>18</sup> The monks of St-Ouen had fled, with the relics of their patron and four other saints, during the viking invasions. The initial flight probably occurred in the face of a viking attack in 872, according to a charter of Riculf, archbishop of Rouen.<sup>19</sup> The *translatio* examined below states that Audoenus returned to Rouen in 918. Guillot has questioned whether this date is accurate, proposing that his relics were returned some years later, but the monastery of St-Ouen seems to have been

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<sup>17</sup> Christiansen, p.50; Lair, p.170: ‘quae ecclesiae veneratiores in sua terra haberentur [sciscitatur], et quae potentiores merito et patrocinio sanctorum dicerentur’.

<sup>18</sup> Legris, ‘L’Exode des Corps Saints’, p.129.

<sup>19</sup> *Translatio Secunda Sancti Audoeni* (BHL 757), AASS, August IV (1752), pp.823-24, ch.18; Legris, ‘L’Exode des Corps Saints’, p.133, thought the relics were taken to Gasny in 841; Philippe Lauer, ‘Les Translations des Reliques de Saint Ouen et de Saint Leufroy du IXe au Xe siècle, et les deux abbayes de la Croix-Saint-Ouen’, *Bulletin Philologique et Historique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques* (1921), pp.119-36 (p.127), used the Rouen annals to claim that the relics were taken from Rouen twice during the ninth century (in 841 and in the 870s), but this seems to be based on a misreading of the *translatio*; this is corrected by Felice Lifshitz, ‘The Migration of Neustrian Relics in the Viking Age: the myth of voluntary exodus, the reality of coercion and theft’, *EME*, 4 (1995), 175-92 (p.179), to show that they were at Gasny in 872, but returned by 876, and were taken to Condé at some point after this; a charter of Riculf, Archbishop of Rouen, dating from 872 records that the relics had been removed to Gasny ‘causa metus Nordmannici’: it is printed in Jean-François Pommeraye, *Histoire de l’abbaye royale de St-Ouen de Rouen* (Rouen: Lallouant et de Mesnil, 1662), pp.399-400 and see further Cassandra Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), p.21.



reinhabited early in the tenth century.<sup>20</sup> Coins were being struck in the name of St Audoenus by the 940s, which indicates that the monastery was functioning by this point.<sup>21</sup> If the monks had returned, they had undoubtedly brought their patron with them.

Two *translationes* of St Audoenus recounting these events were written in the early eleventh century.<sup>22</sup> They appear to have been written by two different authors, at different times: the second summarizes the first at its opening, indicating that it was conceived as a separate text rather than a continuation (chs 17-19). This summary differs in an important matter of detail. The first *translatio* follows the relics of St Audoenus, St Nicasius, and his companions on their enforced exile from Rouen, stating that St Audoenus was taken to Condé-sur-l'Eseaut while Nicasius and his companions went to 'Wanbasio'.<sup>23</sup> The second *translatio*, however, states that Audoenus went to 'Wadiniacum' (Gasny, a detail taken from the 872 charter), and that all four saints' bodies were then taken to Condé. The difference in accounts reveals that the *translationes* were written by two separate authors, party to different information. The second *translatio* refers back to the time of Richard I, so it was written after his death; Arnoux suggests before 1001.<sup>24</sup> However, the reference to 'Robert the Dane', who was deceased at the time of writing, provides a further clue. Although van Houts has identified him as an unknown son of Richard I and Gunnor, he was probably their son

<sup>20</sup> Olivier Guillot, 'La conversion des Normands peu après 911: Des reflets contemporains à l'historiographie ultérieure (Xe-XIe s.)', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 24 (1981), 101-16, 181-219 (pp.216-17); Lauer, 'Les Translations de Saint Ouen et de Saint Leufroy', pp.130-32; but for an argument in favour of 918, see Lifshitz, 'Migration of Neustrian relics', pp.179-81.

<sup>21</sup> Francoise Dumas, *Le Trésor de Fécamp et le Monnayage en Francie Occidentale Pendant le Seconde Moitié du Xe siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1971), p.100, n.2.

<sup>22</sup> *Translatio Prima Sancti Audoeni* (BHL 756), AASS, August IV (1752), pp.820-22; *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*.

<sup>23</sup> Pommeraye, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Ouen*, pp.379-80 notes that the Livre Noir of St-Ouen identifies Wanbasio as Vanbase, in Luxembourg, a priory of the abbey, given by St Audoenus during his lifetime. It was from here that St Nicasius's relics were recovered by a monk of St-Ouen in 1032 (Samantha Kahn Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp.17-18).

<sup>24</sup> *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*, ch.20; Arnoux, 'Before the *Gesta Normannorum*', p.36.

Robert who became Archbishop of Rouen in 989, and died in 1037.<sup>25</sup> Thus the second *translatio* is more likely to date from the period after 1037. It continues the same narrative as the first *translatio*, but we can see that the monastery's sphere of influence had enlarged by this point.

The *translationes* claim that it was Rollo himself who was the prime mover in recovering the relics of St Audoenus. The second *translatio*, summarizing, states that it was Rollo who, having converted and restored peace, also restored Audoenus to 'propriae ecclesiae Rothomagensi'. The first *translatio* took this restoration as its main theme. Firstly, it states that it was Rollo's action which motivated and legitimized the transfer of the relics back into Normandy. The desire came from the people of Rouen, who missed their saint and needed him to combat the drought they were suffering (ch.4); the information required was passed on to Rollo by Archbishop Franco (ch.5); but it was Rollo himself who persuaded the king, somewhat aggressively, that the relics should be returned to Rouen, 'ad propria' (ch.6). Secondly, it was Rollo who physically brought the relics back into the city – an action which the saint himself endorsed and required. At a certain place one mile outside the city, the bier on which the saint's body lay became immovable (ch.8). It was only once Rollo had restored the rights and properties of the saint, and had pledged himself as the monastery's protector, that the body could again be moved (ch.10). Rollo bowed his neck and took the bier upon his shoulders, becoming the first to bear Audoenus into the city (ch.11). Rollo's conversion and absolution was completed through this action, for Rollo's particular sins were outrages against the saints themselves, and had caused the exile of Audoenus in the first place.

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<sup>25</sup> *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, I, p.130, n.1; Jacques Le Maho, 'Après les Invasions Normandes', in *L'abbaye Saint-Ouen de Rouen, des origines à nos jours*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Chaline (Rouen: Société de l'histoire de Normandie, 2009), pp.25-32 (p.32, n.9). Robert's close association with St Peter of Chartres makes it likely that he was buried there, as the *Translatio* states 'Robert the Dane' was.

In emphasizing Rollo's central role, the text dealt directly with the problem facing the Norman dukes in their encounters with the saints: their activities and those of their ancestors were responsible for the exodus of holy bodies to begin with. The first *translatio* opens with an account of the viking desecrations. The author, in common with his contemporaries and predecessors, described an invasion of a people: 'an army of the faithless and most cruel people of the Danes' ('perfidae ac crudelissimae gentis Danorum exercitus'). It appears at first that the author identified with the Franks, stating that the Danes devastated 'the places of our home' ('habitationis nostrae loca'). However, this could rather be read as referring to the places which the Normans would later inhabit as their own, since the author generally referred to the Franks as 'Galliae populum' in his narrative, as opposed to the inhabitants of Normandy. Nevertheless, he did not vilify the Franks, despite claiming that the viking invasions were a punishment for their sins. Instead, he likened them as a people to Israel (ch.2), a comparison he later also drew for the Normans (ch.9). The account established that the Danes were responsible for destruction in Francia generally (ch.1), and Normandy specifically (ch.2): the monastery of Jumièges and the city of Rouen were singled out as having been attacked. Thus it was the Danes who caused the monks to flee, with St Audoenus, 'rabiem metuentes gentilium', a phrase which echoes the 'causa metus Nordmannici' of the earlier charter.<sup>26</sup>

The *Translationes Sancti Audoeni* made no attempt to disassociate the Norman dukes from this past. The first *translatio* claimed that Rollo took part in the worst of these activities, and explicitly stated that he destroyed churches and massacred Christians. The characterization of Rollo as 'trusting in his warlike strength ... just like a lightning-bolt invading the borders of Gaul' would not have been wholly negative, however: it presented the Norman leader as heroic and strong, a formidable force against the Franks

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<sup>26</sup> Pommeraye, *Histoire de l'abbaye de St-Ouen*, p.399; the author of the second *translatio* also evokes its phrasing by explaining that the body was moved once more 'ob metum infandorum gentilium'.

(or Gauls).<sup>27</sup> Once he had become a Christian, Rollo's activities related to the destruction he had wrought. The writer of the *translatio* stated that the newly-baptized Rollo, 'regretting all of his past evils', dedicated himself to 'the restoration of the churches of God which he had destroyed'.<sup>28</sup> The heathen destruction of Rollo's past could not be ignored, so instead it was used to emphasize the completeness of his conversion. Rollo at the moment of conversion was described as 'just like Constantine' ('uti Constantinus'), an association made implicitly by Dudo in his account of Rollo's dream.<sup>29</sup> Just like Constantine, Rollo's leadership was successful because of his conversion to Christianity, and like the Roman Emperor he brought about peace and unity through that conversion. Rollo's ferocity only helped in this image: his demands to the king threatened a disturbance to the peace which he had created. In this way, the *translatio* transformed Rollo and the Normans from the cause of saints' exodus to the facilitators of their return home.

The narrative of Rollo's conversion, and the importance ascribed to it here, strongly recall Dudo's account. As well as the comparison to Constantine, there are points of similarity in factual detail (such as his marriage to Gisle) and in the characterization of baptism. As Oliver Guillot has demonstrated, it appears that Dudo's text influenced the writer of the *translatio*.<sup>30</sup> However, it is far more than simply a copy – there are few direct borrowings – and thus demonstrates the currency of Dudo's view at the turn of the eleventh century.

A key development beyond Dudo's narrative is the emphasis in this *translatio* on Rollo's followers as well as the viking leader himself. The author stated that God took pity on the Franks and subdued 'the fury of the raving heathens' ('debaecchantium

<sup>27</sup> *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, ch.2: 'bellicosa fretus virtute... velut fulgur fines irrumpens Galliæ'.

<sup>28</sup> *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, ch.3: 'praeteritorum poenitens malorum totum se contulit ad ecclesiarum Dei, quas destruxerat, restaurationem'.

<sup>29</sup> Christiansen, pp.29-30, Lair, p.146.

<sup>30</sup> Guillot, 'La conversion des normandes', pp.208-17.

furorem... gentilium') through the conversion of Rollo; he was baptized alongside his army; and Christians rejoiced not only at 'the conversion of so great a duke' but also for 'the salvation of the heathen people'.<sup>31</sup> The conversion of the Danes who accompanied Rollo was described at length (ch.12). The author invoked the words familiar from ecclesiastical accounts of viking attacks as the characteristics of the Danes in the past. Now converted, the Danes were said to turn from vicious, heathen enemies into the opposite, virtuous and peaceful Christians:

And the Danes who were now there were turned from wolves into lambs, not, as formerly, gaping with bloody jaws at their prey but, together with the others, venerating the precious relics of the saint, just as the prophet said, the lion will eat chaff with the ox. Nor did they thirst for human blood in bestial madness, nor did they examine the entrails of sheep for divination, in the manner of heathen sorceries; but they embraced brotherly love from the heart, and, detesting foolish playthings and incantations of idols, they willingly requested intervention from the saint.<sup>32</sup>

The transformation of the Danes bonded them with the Christians around them. By juxtaposing their previous pagan state with their new Christian identity, the author dramatized the conversion of the Norman people and stressed its completeness. There is an unusually direct reference to their previous religion, but this was now replaced by the veneration of St Audoenus.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, this account of the Danes' conversion melded them with the other inhabitants of Rouen, who had requested the return of St Audoenus. It depicted the converted Danes worshipping 'together with the others', and in doing so

<sup>31</sup> *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, ch.3: 'pro tanti ducis conversione & gentilium salute'.

<sup>32</sup> *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, ch.12: 'Aderant ibi & Dani jam ex lupis facti agni, nec ut olim praedae cruentis rictibus inhiantes; sed una cum aliis pretiosas Sancti reliquias venerantes, juxta quod propheta, Leo, inquit, & bos simul comedent paleas. Nec enim ulterius belluina rabie humanum sitiunt cruorem, nec more gentilium sortilegorum, vel in extis pecudum rimantur divinationem; sed geminam ex animo complectuntur dilectionem, & inepta execrantes ludicra, & idolorum naenias, sanctorum pronixe expetunt interventionem'.

<sup>33</sup> The contemporary Norman poet Warner refers to vikings divining using the entrails of animals (Warner of Rouen, *Moriucht*, ll.147-48 and 190-94, with comments on pp.150-51).

they fulfilled the prophecy that the lion of Danish fury would live peacefully alongside the ox of the frightened Rouennais; furthermore, their rejection of paganism was coupled with ‘brotherly love’. The text took the general point that it was Christianity which bonded the new Danish people with the previous inhabitants of the Seine valley, and applied it more specifically to St Audoenus.

The *Translatio Secunda Sancti Audoeni*, written slightly later in the reign of Richard II, presents the other side of the relationship between Audoenus and the Norman dukes. Whereas, in the first *translatio*, Rollo had pledged to be the saint’s benefactor and special protector, in this second account it was the saint himself who insisted on the connection. The *translatio* relates how Audoenus appeared to Duke Richard I in a dream and castigated Richard, physically and verbally, for protecting his sanctuary in Rouen insufficiently. In doing so, he reminded Richard of his people’s viking past and Christian conversion. At the time of the vision, Richard was building himself a stronghold in Bayeux. Audoenus accused him of growing in wealth at the expense of the church: ‘your ancestors, erupting from outside and barbarian nations, had gained these spoils and resources by burning and despoiling...’<sup>34</sup> Audoenus’s words to the duke explicitly recalled the translations of saints out of Normandy during the viking period, and laid the blame for this squarely at the Norman dukes’ feet. He said,

My monks, forced by hunger, even stripped off my golden vestments, and they suffered much hardship on their pilgrimage, carrying me off with them in flight, on account of their fear and the rapacity of the cruel pagans.<sup>35</sup>

Audoenus’s message to Richard was clear: he must guard and honour the saint appropriately, for he and his ancestors had sinned greatly against him. Audoenus even

<sup>34</sup> *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*, ch.22: ‘tui vero antecessores ab exteris & barbaris nationibus erumpentes, praedando & facultates... depraedando & incendendo abstulerunt’.

<sup>35</sup> *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*, ch.23: ‘Insper etiam vestimentum meum aureum monachi mei, famis compellente inedia, detraxerunt, & multarum incommoda egestatum in sua peregrinatione & fuga me secum ferentes ob metum & rapacitatem crudelium paganorum pertulerunt’.

threatened him with ‘the torments of eternal hell’ (‘aeternae... tormenta gehennae’) unless he built an appropriate church for him and his companion saints. In response, Richard granted two properties to St-Ouen and promised lights for the two altars in the church. The preceding story acted as an explanation and a record for these gifts.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the stated connection between Audoenus and Duke Richard also applied to successive Norman dukes. The community at St-Ouen was just as invested in the narrative of viking conversion as the dukes were: it allowed them to emphasize the obligations of the dukes towards their saint and church.

These obligations were raised when the monks felt under threat. In this text, the threat appeared from outside Normandy, in the shape of the Franks. The reason that Audoenus appeared to Richard was an attempt at *furta sacra* by two Frankish monks.<sup>37</sup> The *translatio* clearly defined Franks against Normans, as an alien presence in Rouen. Had their attempt at theft been successful, the author stated, it would have been ‘an irretrievable loss and an insufferable sorrow to us, or rather, a national calamity (*iustitium*) for the entire Norman people’.<sup>38</sup> This passage demonstrates that Audoenus’s relics were more than a possession of the monks of Rouen. Their presence in the duchy linked the saint with the whole population, the Normans. They therefore needed to be defended from Franks who came to steal them and now posed the threat in place of the vikings. The passage set up ‘the entire Norman people’ in opposition to the Franks, united through the patronage of St Audoenus and the protection of the dukes.

Together, the *translationes* show how the viking past was used in the reciprocal relationship of duke and church. Successive Norman leaders courted the support of St

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<sup>36</sup> The text functioned in this sense like a charter, and even mimicked one in some respects: the threat of hell worked like the *sanctio* clause. See further Marjorie Chibnall, ‘Charter and Chronicle: The Use of Archive Sources by Norman Historians’, in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to C.R. Cheney on his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, ed. by C.N.L. Brooke and others (Cambridge: CUP, 1976), pp.1-17.

<sup>37</sup> See generally Geary, *Furta Sacra*.

<sup>38</sup> *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*, ch.20: ‘nobis irreparabile damnum & intolerabilem luctum, immo potius totius Normanniae genti iustitium’.

Audoenus and presented themselves as his primary protectors, who had redirected the ferocity which had caused him to flee. The monks of St-Ouen repeated the same narrative, reminding the dukes that their power in Normandy was the gift of Audoenus. This partnership deflected challenges to the central authority of the dukes and Rouen from divisions within Normandy: the shared devotion of ducal subjects to Audoenus cohered Danes and natives, inhabitants of Rouen and Bayeux. Moreover, this devotion defined Normans against outsiders – Franks – who threatened to deprive them of their patron.

### **III. Divinely-directed conquest: the prophecies of St Romanus**

The tenth-century Normans, faced with such a large number of saints in exile, also followed other strategies. While the most distinguished saints were missing from Normandy, the relics of several more insignificant saints had been left behind when the monks departed. The newly Christian settlers used these saints to assert continuity with the region's past, and to lend spiritual authority to their nascent rule over the region's inhabitants. Originally they may have been of lesser status than saints such as Audoenus, but they held the advantage of being physically present in the principality. The issue of status, after all, could be dealt with through the promotion of these saints by ecclesiastical institutions and their writers of hagiography.

One of the saints whose relics remained in Rouen was Romanus, a Merovingian bishop of the city. Romanus's cult seems to have appeared for the first time in the new Norman province. He was mentioned briefly as the predecessor of Rouen's patron, Audoenus, in the eleventh-century Fontenelle episcopal list, but he does not appear in a ninth-century copy from St Aubin.<sup>39</sup> In the 840s, the people of Rouen convinced the monks of St Medard of Soissons to accept Romanus's head in place of St Gildard's:

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<sup>39</sup> Felice Lifshitz, *The Norman Conquest of Pious Neustria: Historiographic Discourse and Saintly Relics, 684-1090* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1995), p.115, n.38.



Romanus was clearly not so dear to them at this time.<sup>40</sup> However, by the mid-tenth century he was receiving much greater reverence. A series of coins bearing his name gives an indication of his exalted status in tenth-century Rouen. Duke Richard I had conceded the right to mint coin to Archbishop Hugh, though not to his successors.<sup>41</sup> The St Romanus coins are from this same period, and produced in the same workshop as those of the duke. Because of the similarity with the ducal coinage, the earliest types of these coins can be reliably dated to c.970 and c.980 respectively.<sup>42</sup> They contain the legend ‘SCE ROMANE’, in the vocative, which seems to indicate that they were made in the name of the saint, rather than of an institution as Dumas implies. This coinage calls to mind the East Anglian St Edmund Memorial Coinage, discussed in Chapter Four, as well as those coins issued in the name of St Peter and St Martin at York and Lincoln. The parallel cases reveal similarity in method: the viking rulers of Rouen, like the viking rulers in England, sought to legitimize their rule through an alliance with the church and a saint who was their special associate. St Romanus’s rise from obscurity to prominence was a result of this strategy. As part of the promotion of Romanus and encouragement of his cult, the archbishop of Rouen commissioned the first *Vita Romani*, from a certain Fulbert.

#### a. Dating the *Vita Romani*

Fulbert’s *Vita Romani* was largely unknown to modern scholarship until Felice Lifshitz completed her study of Romanus’s dossier.<sup>43</sup> Although it now exists in only two manuscripts, the many other texts Lifshitz has surveyed which depend on it reveal a much wider medieval circulation. Lifshitz concluded that the *Vita Romani* was

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<sup>40</sup> Lifshitz, ‘The “Exodus of Holy Bodies” Reconsidered’; Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.117; the text of the *Translatio* is in Felice Lifshitz, ‘The dossier of Romanus of Rouen: The political uses of hagiographical texts’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1988), pp.349-55.

<sup>41</sup> Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p.31.

<sup>42</sup> Dumas, *Tresor de Fécamp*, pp.98-100.

<sup>43</sup> Lifshitz, ‘The dossier of Romanus’.

composed by Fulbert in the mid-tenth century, probably in 943. If we accept this date, then the *Vita Romani* was one of the earliest literary products from Normandy and, alongside the *Planctus* of William Longsword, the earliest Norman text to refer to the viking period. Fulbert had previously been identified with either of two Fulberts who were active in the mid-eleventh century.<sup>44</sup> More recently, several scholars have disputed Lifshitz's dating of Fulbert's *Vita*, and even returned to these identifications.<sup>45</sup> However, Lifshitz's argument is the only one to make sense of all the internal, contextual and manuscript evidence, a conclusion also reached recently by John Howe.<sup>46</sup>

The *Vita Romani* is related to several other texts in content and authorship. It is only through assessing the arguments for these texts' dates of composition that a conclusion regarding the date of Fulbert's *Vita Romani* can be drawn.

Firstly, the same Fulbert also wrote the *Vita Secunda Aichardi* for the monks of Jumièges. In each case, the author identified himself as 'Fulbertus peccator' in the first line of the preface. Indeed, the prefaces are so similar as to leave us in no doubt that the author is the same person. They both contain numerous examples of similar phrasing, and describe Fulbert's reluctance to write the *vita* until convinced, in the case of the *Vita Secunda Aichardi* by a vision of an old man, and in the case of the *Vita Romani* by an unnamed friend.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Fulbert's treatment of demons in the main text of the *Vita Secunda Aichardi* is echoed in the *Vita Romani*, especially on one striking point of

<sup>44</sup> *Vie de Saint Achard*, in Jacques de Guyse, *Histoire de Hainaut...*, ed. by le Marquis de Fortia, 16 vols (Paris 1826-38), VIII, 40-139 (pp.70-71).

<sup>45</sup> Nancy Gauthier, 'Quelques hypothèses sur la rédaction des vies des saints évêques de Normandie', *Memoriam Sanctorum Venerantes: Miscellanea in Onore di Monsignor Victor Saxer* (Vatican: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1992), pp.449-68 (p.454); Jacques Le Maho, 'La production éditoriale à Jumièges vers le milieu du Xe siècle', *Tabularia 'Études'*, 1 (2001), 11-32 (pp.31-32).

<sup>46</sup> John Howe, 'The Hagiography of Jumièges (Province of Haute-Normandie)', in *L'Hagiographie du Haut Moyen Âge en Gaule du Nord: Manuscrits, textes et centres de production*, ed. by Martin Heinzelmann (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2001), pp.91-125 (pp.105-07).

<sup>47</sup> The prefaces repeatedly use certain distinctive phrases: for example, they describe the work as 'tantam operis/oneris sarcinam', the author's reasoning for not taking it on is 'non irrationabiliter', he is addressed by his challenger, 'motu indignationis', both times with several questions beginning 'usquequo'. While there is always the possibility that one text was a close copy or later forgery, nothing leads us to this conclusion. The preface to the *Vita Secunda Aichardi* is printed in Laurentius Surius, *De Probatiss Sanctorum Historiis*, 6 vols (Cologne, 1570-75), V, 239-40; the *Vita* is in *Vie de Saint Achard* (=BHL 182).

detail. Both works refer to the idea that demons convened a council, in which they would give account of their evil-doings and receive appropriate reward.<sup>48</sup> This identification relates Fulbert to a monk of Jumièges who earlier wrote two texts, the *Vita Prima Aichardi* and the *Vita Hugonis*.<sup>49</sup> Fulbert's *Vita Secunda Aichardi*, as he stated in the preface, was based on this earlier Life. The date at which this Jumièges author was active thus must have been prior to Fulbert's time.

Lifshitz, with Howe now in general agreement, has put forward a detailed argument for a mid-tenth century composition date for Fulbert's *Vita Romani*. She believes the *Vita Prima Aichardi* and *Vita Hugonis* to have been written by members of the Jumièges community in the second half of the ninth century.<sup>50</sup> Fulbert, she has argued, then wrote the *Vita Romani* (and presumably the *Vita Secunda Aichardi*) in the 940s, after William Longsword's restoration of the monastery of Jumièges. Fulbert, in this interpretation, wrote while the archbishop of Rouen was still abbot of St-Ouen, as was the case until the time of Archbishop Robert.<sup>51</sup> Fulbert depicted Romanus as inhabiting a monastery, surrounded by 'brothers', and so it is reasonable to assume that that was the situation with which he was familiar. Yet Lifshitz has described Fulbert as 'a thoroughly Romanized Frank', who may have come first to Jumièges with the monks of St-Cyprian of Poitiers installed there by William Longsword.<sup>52</sup> This would explain his interest in Aichard's life in Poitiers.

<sup>48</sup> *Vie de Saint Achard*, p.92; Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.248.

<sup>49</sup> *Vita Aichardi* (BHL 181), ed. by Joannes Perierus, AASS, Sept V (1755), pp.85-100; Joseph Van der Straeten, 'La vie inédite de S. Hugues, évêque de Rouen', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 87 (1969), 215-60 (pp.232-60) (=BHL 4032a).

<sup>50</sup> Van der Straeten claims that they were written in exile: Joseph Van der Straeten, 'L'Auteur des Vies de S. Hugues et de S. Aycadre', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 88 (1970), 63-73 (pp.69-72); also Van der Straeten, 'Vie inédite de S. Hugues', p.228. On the other hand, Howe argues that they must have been written before the community's departure: Howe, 'Hagiography of Jumièges', p.101, but cf. pp.124-25. Lifshitz, in a position which reflects her general argument for continuity, argues that there was a small community at Jumièges throughout the late ninth century: Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, pp.125-29.

<sup>51</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.188.

<sup>52</sup> Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', p.94.

An alternative model for the composition of these texts, put forward by Jacques Le Maho, asserts that the two Jumièges *vitae* of Aichard and Hugh were written by a St-Cyprian monk after Jumièges's 942 restoration.<sup>53</sup> These, he has claimed, were some of the earliest products of a refounded Jumièges scriptorium, alongside the *Planctus* for William Longsword. Given this date for the composition of the *Vita Prima Aichardi*, Le Maho reasoned that Fulbert must have been active considerably later, especially given his scathing opinion of this first *Vita*. He claims that the Fulbert who was author of the *Vita Secunda Aichardi* and the *Vita Romani* was an archdeacon of Rouen cathedral who is attested in various documents of the time of Archbishop Maurillus (1055-1067). Le Maho's argument rests on the Poitiers interest of the *Vita Prima Aichardi*, which he considers could only have been written by someone who knew the area well. However, it involves a revised dating of an important manuscript in which the earliest *Vitae* of Hugh and Aichard appear, Rouen BM MS 1377 (U 108), which is generally seen as late ninth century.<sup>54</sup> Gauthier has also asserted that the *Vita Romani* is more likely to be eleventh-century, but neither of them have addressed some of Lifshitz's central arguments.<sup>55</sup>

The second group of texts related to Fulbert's *Vita Romani* involves an alternative, shorter, version of the *Vita* (BHL 7312), which exists in several copies. This *Vita* is associated with a letter from Gerard, 'pater cenobitarum', addressed to Uuigo or Hugo, archbishop of Rouen.<sup>56</sup> In the letter, Gerard stated that he enclosed an abbreviated version of the Life of St Romanus which he procured for the archbishop. This original version, he says, was 'written in a historical style' ('hystorialiter est stilo depicta'), and

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<sup>53</sup> Jacques Le Maho, 'Autour de la renaissance monastique du Xe siècle en Normandie: les Vies des saints Aycadre et Hugues de Jumièges', in *Livrets, collections et textes, études sur la tradition hagiographique latine*, ed. by Martin Heinzelmann (Stuttgart, 2006), 285-322 (pp.321-22); Le Maho, 'La production éditoriale'.

<sup>54</sup> Howe, 'Hagiography of Jumièges', p.60; Van der Straeten, 'L'Auteur des Vies', p.73.

<sup>55</sup> Gauthier, 'Quelques hypothèses', p.454; Le Maho, 'La production éditoriale', p.24.

<sup>56</sup> Lifshitz presents a transcription and translation of the letter in 'Dossier of Romanus', pp.362-66.

he sent an ‘abridgement, like it in style’ (‘hanc digestam stilo illius ad instar vobis transmittō’). Furthermore, he refers to a metrical *Vita Romani*, which may be the metrical version still in existence (BHL 7310).<sup>57</sup> Lifshitz and Le Maho agree that this letter is addressed to Archbishop Hugo (or, potentially, his predecessor Wito), and there is no eleventh-century bishop to whom it could be addressed. Lifshitz identified Gerard as the reformer Gerard of Brogne (fl.919), who died in 959, thus overlapping with the episcopal reigns of Wito and Hugh.<sup>58</sup> Le Maho disagreed on the identification of Gerard, instead proposing Gerard, abbot of Saint-Crépin of Soissons around 960, but accepted the same dating of this version.<sup>59</sup> BHL 7312 was, therefore, written in the mid-tenth century. However, Le Maho maintains that Fulbert’s version was written around a century later.

Ultimately, the disagreement over the date of Fulbert’s text comes down to its relationship with Gerard’s version. Lifshitz sees Gerard’s *Vita Romani* as an abbreviation of Fulbert’s text, which must therefore have been written at some point prior to 959. On the other hand, Le Maho and Gauthier imply that Fulbert expanded Gerard’s version in the eleventh century, and that the original *Vita Romani* is completely lost.

Lifshitz’s identification of Fulbert’s *Vita Romani* as the original is much more convincing. Most of Fulbert’s text is identical to Gerard’s, but many passages continue for longer and include more dialogue (perhaps the way they were written could be described as ‘hystorialiter’). It seems that Gerard, considering such passages extraneous, removed them, but retained the main points of the narrative. Any idea that Fulbert

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<sup>57</sup> Lifshitz, ‘Dossier of Romanus’, pp.46, 57-58 seems to identify BHL 7310 with Gerard’s metrical *Vita*, but in *Pious Neustria*, p.163, she asserts that the original metrical version is lost and that BHL 7310 is a later version produced at St-Ouen.

<sup>58</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, pp.159-63.

<sup>59</sup> Jacques Le Maho, ‘La Réécriture Hagiographique au Xe Siècle: Autour des *Libri Gerardi* de la Cathédrale de Rouen’, in *La Place de la Normandie dans la Diffusion des Savoirs*, ed. by Jean-Paul Hervieu, Emmanuel Poulle and Philippe Manneville (Rouen: Fédération des sociétés historiques et archéologiques de Normandie, 2006), pp.23-55 (pp.25-28).

instead embellished Gerard's text can be dismissed if we compare the case of the *Vita Romani* with Fulbert's other known text, the *Vita Secunda Aichardi*. This is a longer version of the *Vita Prima Aichardi*, but Fulbert's approach is far more thorough than mere embellishment. Although he adhered to the original structure, Fulbert completely rewrote the *Vita Aichardi*. Moreover, in his prefaces to the two works, Fulbert clearly stated that he had rewritten the *Vita Aichardi* from an earlier version, and that he composed the *Vita Romani* because no Life of the saint existed. Given these considerations, as well as those detailed by Lifshitz, it is difficult to accept a later dating for the text.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, Lifshitz's dating of Fulbert's *Vita Romani* to the 940s-950s should continue to be accepted.

#### **b. Romanus's viking prophecies**

Fulbert's *Vita Romani* opens with a lengthy preface, which is addressed to 'Dominis et confratribus suis sancte Rothomagensis ecclesie matris filiis', implying that Fulbert was a clerk of the cathedral, or perhaps a monk of St-Ouen (pp.234-36). Fulbert's desire that his work should not be spread outside the community ('extra domesticos parietes'), lest his poor work reflect badly on them all, suggests the latter. The *Vita* begins by describing the advent of doctors of the church, followed by a brief history of the Frankish people and their conversion (pp.237-39). Romanus's aged parents were both informed of their son's forthcoming birth by an angel, and his mother foresaw Romanus's influence spreading light across Neustria (pp.240-42). When he had grown, Romanus reluctantly became bishop of Rouen at the king's command and the election of the people after an angelic oracle instructed them (pp.243-47). After this, the narrative is occupied with Romanus's miracles in Rouen. Many of these involved expelling the demons of paganism: firstly, he drove demons out of an ancient

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<sup>60</sup> Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', pp.3-10.

amphitheatre (pp.248-52); then he sent back a flood into the Seine (pp.252-53); and he cast evil spirits out of a pagan temple (pp.254-55). Thereafter follow miracles which occurred in Romanus's monastery and in his personal hermitage (pp.256-63). The *Vita* finishes with Romanus's death, and records that he was buried on 23<sup>rd</sup> October in his own oratory, one milestone from the city in the church of St Gildard (p.267).

Fulbert's *Vita Romani* deals with the exodus of holy bodies differently from the *translationes* of St Audoenus. Although Fulbert reported that Romanus lived under Clothar I (c.511-61), he referred to the viking invasions in two prophetic passages in the middle of the narrative. The first of these dealt with saints fleeing from the future Normandy, while the second predicted the subjugation of the inhabitants of Rouen to pagan overlords.

It is noteworthy that the *Vita Romani* mentions this exodus at all, since Romanus's body remained in Rouen throughout the period. Romanus's head was taken to Soissons in the 840s, and kept there until 1090, when it was returned to Rouen. However, at no time was this translation associated with the Northmen.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, Fulbert did not mention it in his *Vita*. Rather, he implied that the intact body of Romanus remained in its original resting-place, in the church of St Gildard just outside Rouen. Seemingly in contradiction to this, however, in the prophetic passages, Fulbert invoked the familiar connection between the departures of the saints in the ninth century and the coming of the vikings, and he explicitly included the bones of Romanus within this mass exodus – and eventual return. Fulbert included Romanus in the prophecy because the alternative, to admit that Romanus's relics had been left behind because he had not been considered sufficiently important to save, would have greatly undermined his hagiography. The mention of the departure of saints' bones before advancing viking raiders demonstrates

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<sup>61</sup> Lifshitz, 'The "Exodus of Holy Bodies" Reconsidered'.

how widespread and conventional such connections had become by the mid-tenth century.

The first prophetic passage occurs during Romanus's first great miracle: expelling the demons from a pagan temple in an ancient amphitheatre outside Rouen, which also doubled as brothel. As Romanus cast out the demons, Fulbert made their leader threaten the saint with retaliation:

Indeed on this day of iniquity you cast us forth from our seats. So will I also rouse against you a nation from the extreme ends of the sea and the unknown islands, which will compel your people, ejected as well from their own dwellings, to seek seats in an outer region, or to serve foreign lords in their own homes. But that will not be the end of the calamity. For I will also bring it about that your bones and those of other slaves of God, removed from their own seats for fear of that overcoming nation, will assume an unwilling pilgrimage of exile and, carried all through alien territories, seek new seats for themselves.<sup>62</sup>

In characterizing the invading vikings as tools of supernatural forces, this passage is typical of the general Frankish interpretation of these events. However, there is a significant difference: Fulbert presented the vikings not as the scourge of God, but as a diabolical attack. This removed the blame which other narratives placed on the inhabitants of Francia and their sins. The vikings were no longer presented as a divine punishment, but received a new demonic guise. This would hardly have been flattering to the Christian Norman elites who traced their ancestry to vikings. Romanus's response to the demon addressed that problem by subverting the demon's prediction, which matched the narratives of earlier *translationes* and external chronicles. By placing these narratives in the mouth of a demon, Fulbert to a certain extent devalued them. The man

<sup>62</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.250: 'Tu quidem inique hodie a sedibus nostris exturbas, suscitabo et ego tibi gentem aduersam ab extremis finibus maris et ignotis insulis, que tuos quoque a propriis laribus eiectos, externe regionis sedes querere, aut certe intra proprios lares externis Dominis famulari compellet. Sed ne in hoc calamitatis terminus herebit. Nam et ego ossa tua et aliorum seruorum Dei pro metu superuenture gentis a sedibus propriis remota, inuitam exilii peregrinationem assumere, et girouaga deportatione faciam per alienas regiones sedes sibi querere'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', pp.257-58.



of God, Romanus, was the one who knew the full story, and those who did not recognize it were by implication as blind to the truth as the demon. He responded:

And even though that nation first hasten to penetrate lands that do not belong to them, nevertheless by its own will shall it finish with a better end, since it will soon renounce you and your world and be imbued with lordly sacraments. Moreover, that place which that nation will pervade with barbaric cruelty will be for it the effective cause of that hoped-for salvation, since the name of Christ which it would otherwise never have heard will it soon hear there, and having heard it, will faithfully believe, and having believed will magnificently worship, and thus will it become a chosen lineage, from an adulterous nation, a holy nation, a purchased people, announcing the virtues of him who called it out of the darkness into his marvellous light, who at one time were not a people, but are now a people of God, who once had not obtained mercy, now however have obtained mercy...<sup>63</sup>

Romanus's response presented a history which privileged the Scandinavian ruling elite of the new Norman province. In reaching their new position, they became 'a chosen lineage... a holy nation, a purchased people' (that is, purchased by the blood of Christ). Essentially, however, Fulbert stressed that they came to this new position on their own terms. It was not the Frankish inhabitants of Neustria, their conquered subjects, who converted them, but the land itself: 'that place', said Romanus, 'will be for it the effective cause of that hoped-for salvation', because there the vikings would hear about Christianity. Fulbert glossed over the fact that they must have received the

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<sup>63</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.250: 'Et ut cumque erratica intentio ipsius festinet ad peruadendas sedes aliene hereditatis, hec ipsa tamen ipsius intentio meliori exitu consummabitur, quia tibi a seculo tuo renuntiatura mox dominicis imbuetur sacramentis. Locus autem quem barbarica feritate peruasura est illi erit effectiua causa insperate salutis, quia Christi nomen quod alias necdum audierat ibi mox audiet, auditumque fideliter credet, et creditum magnifice recolet, et ita fiet de gente adultera genus electum, gens sancta, populus adquisitionis, annuntians uirtutes eius qui eum de tenebris uocauit in ammirabile lumen suum, qui aliquando non populus, nunc autem populus Dei, qui non consecutus misericordiam, nunc autem misericordiam consecutus'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', pp.258-59. I have slightly adapted Lifshitz's translation to reflect the fact that this passage (*gens sancta... misericordiam consecutus*) is a quotation from I Peter 2.9-10.

faith from the Franks, laying the emphasis on the land alone.<sup>64</sup> Thus the connection between the Norman people and the land of Normandy was presented as part of the divine plan, ordained from long ago.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Fulbert wrote that the Norman people would convert and morph into ‘a chosen people’ not by the imposition of Christianity, but by ‘its own will’. This stands in contrast to Fulbert’s brief introductory history of the Franks at the beginning of the *Vita*, wherein he stated that ‘military force compelled [Clovis] to become, from a pagan, a Christian’.<sup>66</sup> A number of parallels appear between the origins of the Franks and the prophecy of Norman origins, but in this respect the Normans emerged not only as independent, but also as superior.

Fulbert’s view of history was shaped around ethnic groups. This was established early on in the *Vita Romani* by his recounting of Frankish origins. He said that ‘a certain folk came out of Sicambria’, the Franks, and described their characteristics through their conflict with the Romans.<sup>67</sup> These two groups were then placed in relation to ‘violent peoples’ and ‘unknown peoples’ outside the Roman Empire. Fulbert’s view of these various peoples was hierarchical: the Franks and Romans joined in ‘the friendship and society of the kingdom’, and it was by the military superiority of the Franks that the Empire could be extended; the Franks subjugated the ‘violent peoples’, on the other hand, ‘on whom they imposed rights and laws, with indomitable fierceness’, while the ‘unknown peoples’ were also placed in a power relationship, ‘they made their tributaries

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<sup>64</sup> On the silence of eleventh-century historians about Frankish evangelism to the Normans, see Guillot, ‘La conversion des Normandes’, p.219.

<sup>65</sup> The parallels between this passage and the early eleventh-century *Vita Taurini* suggest that Fulbert’s text was known to its author, Deodatus. In this text, Taurinus argues with a demon which he casts out from a pagan temple in Evreux; the area is devastated, but an angel predicts its restoration; this devastation means that the people lose knowledge of the place of the tomb. Herrick reads this as foretelling the arrival of the vikings: *Imagining the Sacred Past*, pp.60-61, 63-66, 73.

<sup>66</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.238: ‘quem de pagano christianum fieri fors bellica coegit’; trans in Lifshitz, ‘Dossier of Romanus’, p.239.

<sup>67</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.238: ‘a Sicambrie partibus gentem quandam aduenisse’; trans. in Lifshitz, ‘Dossier of Romanus’, p.239.

and subject to their imposts'.<sup>68</sup> Fulbert was surprisingly vague about Romanus's ethnic background, merely saying that he came from 'the royal blood of those peoples', but the impression given is of an individual born into an ethnically diverse society.<sup>69</sup>

Fulbert viewed the origins of the Norman people in a similar way. Unlike the other narratives discussed in this chapter, Fulbert's *Vita Romani* described the actions of an entire people, rather than its leaders. Unusually, he did not mention the dukes at all, but ascribed all the actions he recounted – even the return of relics – to the Norman people as a whole. He described the result of the arrival of the vikings as an ethnic conflict between two distinct peoples – the Scandinavians, 'that nation whom you say will be the exterminator of our people', and 'our people', the Neustrian Franks.<sup>70</sup> Those Franks were the direct descendants of the sixth-century inhabitants of Neustria, and Fulbert's demon was supposed to provoke his listeners through their emotional connection with their descendants. Even after the conversion of the newcomers, in Fulbert's view, the distinction between peoples was maintained. Ethnic distinctions would be reproduced in the stratification of society, with Scandinavian conquerors continuing to rule over the subjugated Neustrians. Conversion did make a difference, but it was simply that these 'foreign lords' began to rule justly, rather than continuing to oppress their subject people. Fulbert made this clear in the second prophetic passage, in which Romanus again prophesied the coming of the vikings to the people of Rouen. After driving back the waters of a terrible flood, he explained:

Those waters are merely a foretelling of the piratical army of enemy nations that will one day come against you, who will completely subjugate with an unheard-of savageness the occupied

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<sup>68</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.238: '...composito federe in amicitiam et regni societatem ex senatus consulto receperunt... Nam gentes indomita feritate tumentes perdomuerunt, quibus iura et leges imposuerunt... hos inquam uectigales et tributarios sibi fecerunt, atque ita sociis signis adiuti, gentibus ignotis Romane potentie terrorem infuderunt'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', p.239.

<sup>69</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.238: 'horum regio sanguine'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', p.239.

<sup>70</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.250: '[Sed quid tibi et] gente huic de qua futurum gentis nostre exterminium [tanto faustu comminaris?]'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', p.258.

boundaries of your territory, and subject your descendants to their dominion for a while... that nation about which we are speaking, until now still in the grip of the error of heathendom, as soon as it shall hear the name of Christ, will take up the worship of the Catholic faith, and go on to foster its subjects in great peace.<sup>71</sup>

In this passage, the ethnic distinction was maintained between conquerors and subjects. Fulbert saw the society around him as one people's triumph over another. The Frankish ethnicity of the subject people was reinforced by the connection drawn with the distant, Merovingian past: Fulbert's contemporaries were the descendants of Romanus's flock. Likewise, the Scandinavian conquerors ruled over them as a separate group, who had grown peaceful through their conversion. Fulbert employed the viking association with the sea, but the waters in this prophecy seem to represent the paganism of the vikings rather than people themselves, who did not retreat.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, Fulbert again emphasized the link with the land of Normandy, 'the occupied boundaries of your territory' implying that the province had been a distinct unit already, just waiting for the Normans to arrive.

This image of 'a chosen people', become just rulers through conversion, was powerfully employed to counter the demonic narrative of the exodus of holy bodies. In his response to the demon in the amphitheatre, Fulbert made Romanus retort:

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<sup>71</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.253: 'Aque iste prelocuntur uobis aduersarum gentium quandoque piraticum superuenturum exercitum, qui uestre huius regionis fines occupatos, inaudita feritate perdomabit, et posteros uestros per tempus et per spatium temporis, suo subiugabit dominio... quoniam gens illa de qua loquimur gentilitatis errore adhuc detenta, mox ut Christi nomen audierit, catholice fidei cultum arripiet, et populum sibi subiectum multa in pace confouere persistet'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', pp.264-65.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. discussion of the associations of vikings, Anglo-Saxons and the sea in *The Battle of Maldon* in Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, pp.158-59, 171-72, 178-84.

Truly as soon as that nation, reborn in Christ, has been imbued with lordly sacraments, it will bring back our bones with highest veneration to the proper seat, from whatever lands it shall hear they have been translated to.<sup>73</sup>

The viking conquerors were thus presented as the saviours of the saints, and the agents of their return to Normandy. Through two passages of prophecy, Fulbert transformed the familiar narrative of vikings driving the saints from Normandy. The original fault was made to appear with the forces of evil, embodied in a demon, rather than with the vikings themselves or with the sins of the Franks. The arrival of the vikings was part of God's plan, but it was for the sake of the salvation of the Scandinavian raiders themselves, rather than for the good of Frankish souls. The new people, the Normans, in Fulbert's narrative were the 'chosen people' who assured the saints of the 'highest veneration' in their own lands. They were no longer the enemies of the saints, but their rightful patrons and supporters.

The prophetic passages in the *Vita Romani* convey an understanding of ethnicity in Normandy that came from the new settlers, but was also acceptable to those who traced their roots back to Frankish origins. In their superior position, the vikings were shown as a ruling elite, who steered the destiny of the principality through their good government. The previous – Frankish – inhabitants were shown as subordinate, but not in conflict with the newcomers. This early narrative, therefore, distinguished between settlers and natives of Normandy, and related this ethnic distinction to the stratification of society. The Scandinavian migrants' association with Romanus was intended to cement their authority over the conquered Neustrians, and so the *Vita* presented a narrative of reconciliation, if not yet ethnic integration.

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<sup>73</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.250: 'Gens sane ista mox ut in Christo regenerata dominicis fuerit imbuta sacramentis, ossa nostra de cunctis terre partibus ad quas translata esse audierit, summa cum ueneratione ad sedem propriam reportabit'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', p.259.

Although the actions of successive dukes and archbishops made Romanus into a popular saint in Rouen, the prophetic passages referring to the viking invasions did not become a popular or an essential part of Romanus's cult. The various texts adapted from Fulbert's *Vita* – the metrical version and abbreviation made by Gerard, and the offices from Rouen and Fécamp – were all produced swiftly after the original composition, and further texts were added to the dossier in the later middle ages. However, none of these adaptations contain the prophecies examined here. Lifshitz suggested that Gerard omitted the mention of Romanus's resting place at Rouen, which is found in the original text, because he knew of the claim of the monks of Soissons to Romanus's head, and sought to be diplomatic.<sup>74</sup> We may apply similar reasoning to his omission of the prophetic passages from his abbreviation and metrical *vita*: they state that relics such as Romanus's head would be sought out and returned to its rightful home of Rouen. Moreover, Gerard of Brogne, if he was the author of these texts, was himself responsible for the continued absence of the Fontenelle saints from Normandy, as he was the force behind their 944 translation to Ghent.<sup>75</sup> Once the anxiety over the loss of Normandy's saints had passed, these prophecies were no longer necessary. Moreover, the image of a stratified ethnic distinction did not last long, but was replaced by the unity found in the *Translationes Sancti Audoeni*.

The prophecies in the *Vita Romani* were created in response to a specific need at the time of the text's composition. The prophecies brought in themes of ruin and restoration, the departure and return of saints, presenting the Norman vikings as the restorers of Christian peace. The establishment of Romanus's cult was also a response to this need – a physically present saint to replace those in exile – but continued to be useful in the context of ecclesiastical politics at Rouen.

<sup>74</sup> Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', p.57.

<sup>75</sup> *Une Translation de Reliques à Gand en 944: Le Sermo de Adventu Sanctorum Wandregisili, Ansberti et Vulframni in Blandinium*, ed. by Nicolas-N. Huyghebaert (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1978), esp. pp.cvi-cxxx, 24-26.

#### IV. Ruin and restoration: the Fécamp Chronicle

Dudo also used the tool of prophecy in his narrative of Norman origins and conversion. As discussed in Chapter One, Rollo's prophetic dream became an origin myth for the Norman people: it was an allegory of how diverse individuals were combined into one ethnicity under the rulers of Rollo's dynasty. The dream, interpreted by Rollo's Christian prisoner, demonstrated that before this could happen, Rollo and his followers needed to convert to Christianity and reconstruct the Norman church. The vision presented the Norman future as a divinely-ordained plan, in the same way as did the prophecy of Romanus.

As part of this divine plan, Rollo's vision emphasized the restoration of the places which the vikings had destroyed. Introducing Rollo, at the beginning of the second book of the *De moribus*, Dudo was explicit that this primarily meant the church. He stated that God, seeing the terror waged on the church by the Danish heathens, ordained that they should be the ones to save it:

...that where it had been lamentably afflicted, there it should vigorously come to life; and by those who had prostrated it headlong, it should be raised up to heaven; and by those whose actions made it of no account, by their gifts it would be restored; and by those whose hordes had trampled it down it should be adorned with gold and gems; and by those who had robbed them down to their rags, it should be elegantly decked with robes.<sup>76</sup>

Norman benefactors, led by Rollo, were in this way equated with viking pillagers, exemplified by Hasting. Usually, Dudo portrayed Hasting as the heathen ravager of churches, in contrast to Rollo as a 'good' pagan, who instinctively respected holy places

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<sup>76</sup> Christiansen, p.25; Lair, p.141: 'ut unde fuerat flebiliter afflicta, inde esset viriliter vegetata; et quibus in praeceps lapsa, his coelo tenus exaltata: quorumque actu floccipensa, horum munere refecta: quorum frequentia conculcata, horum auro gemmisque ornata: quorum praedatu pannosa, horum dono compte palliata'.

(such as Jumièges, which he refused to attack), even before his conversion.<sup>77</sup> However, this passage made explicit the underlying logic of the *De moribus* and the inclusion of Hasting. Hasting and Rollo were not opposites, but part of the same people-group: the Normans could trace their heritage to Hasting just as to Rollo. The attacks on Francia and its church, exemplified by Hasting, were as necessary as the restoration that would take place under Rollo, his successors and their followers.

As a history of the Norman principality more general than the hagiographical texts examined above, Dudo's narrative emphasized the refoundation of churches and monasteries rather than the restoration of saints' bodies to particular foundations. He linked ducal patronage very closely to conversion. Upon his baptism, Rollo asked the bishop Franco which churches and saints were the most powerful and held in greatest reverence. The churches which Dudo had Franco name correspond to those which had enjoyed ducal patronage and support: the churches of Rouen, Bayeux and Évreux, and the monasteries of Mont-Saint-Michel, St-Ouen and Jumièges. The gift to St-Denis, meanwhile, demonstrated to their new neighbours as well as their subjects that the Normans were now Christian benefactors.<sup>78</sup> St-Denis was well chosen: it was closely associated with the Carolingian, and later the Capetian, monarchs.

These narratives of refoundation tied Norman Christianity to the viking past. It was common in Francia for endowments of monasteries to be presented as restorations, since a history of there being a church in a given location assured the sanctity of the site.<sup>79</sup> However, it was less common for those who presented themselves as the architects of the restoration to also align themselves with the original seizers of church land.

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<sup>77</sup> Christiansen, p.35; Lair, p.152.

<sup>78</sup> This gift was confirmed by Richard I in a charter of 968 (F3).

<sup>79</sup> Amy Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp.45-50.



This narrative was applied to a particular institution most clearly in the case of Fécamp. The dukes of Normandy built a palace at Fécamp, alongside which Richard I added a large church dedicated to the Holy Trinity and a house of canons.<sup>80</sup> Richard I was both born and buried at Fécamp, sealing the connection with the ducal family. The strength of this connection explains the space devoted to Fécamp by Dudo, who included a poem about the monastery in the *De moribus*. Dudo's account of Richard I's construction of Fécamp is found in a contemporary chronicle from the monastery itself. This chronicle recounts the history of the monastery from its foundation as a Merovingian nunnery to the grants of property made to the new house of canons by Richard I in 990. However, the chronicle was not composed immediately after Richard's foundation of Fécamp, as it refers to him as 'Richard of pious memory' ('pie memorie Richardus', ch.8) and he died in 996. Because it makes no reference to the Benedictine reform of the house under William of Volpiano in 1001, it is safe to conclude that the chronicle was composed before this date.<sup>81</sup>

The foundation chronicle was composed to emphasize continuity with the previous religious houses at Fécamp. The first three chapters of the chronicle are derived from three associated saints' lives, which were culled for information about the Merovingian nunnery. Thus from the beginning the new male house, built by Richard I on the same site, traced its continuity with the Merovingian foundation. After explaining the origins of religious life at Fécamp, the author of the chronicle began to describe the viking raids in the Seine valley: this section set up the need for restoration by Richard I. The chronicler states that the activities of the 'most savage Danish people' ('seuissima Danorum gens'), directed against Christians, caused the nuns to flee and Fécamp to fall into ruin. As noted above, Dudo's lengthy narrative in the *De moribus* develops a contrast between Hasting, the violent viking who desecrates churches, and Rollo,

<sup>80</sup> Pierre Bouet, 'Dudo de Saint-Quentin et Fécamp', *Tabularia*, 2 (2002), 57-70.

<sup>81</sup> Arnoux, 'Before the *Gesta Normannorum*', p.31. The text is edited at pp.43-46.

warlike but with an innate respect for Jumièges as a place of God. The Fécamp Chronicle, in common with other brief accounts of translations and foundations, does not mention Hasting at all but lays all the blame with the Northmen in general and Rollo in particular. The same message is condensed into one character, who stood for the past of the Norman people in general.

The ruin of Fécamp is described in a manner familiar from hagiographical accounts: ‘it became a habitation of wild animals, where formerly it had been an ornament of Christianity’.<sup>82</sup> The pitiable state of the place is said to have continued throughout the reign of William Longsword, with walls overtaken by trees. This description was conventional: Dudo used similar phrases in his description of Rollo’s first view of Rouen’s ‘walls broken down everywhere’, and the eleventh-century *Translatio Severi* gives a similar account of Sever’s church in western Normandy: ‘it was in the middle of the forest undergrowth and near the haunts of wild beasts’.<sup>83</sup> These descriptions used a language shared with other areas supposedly devastated by the viking invasions: the Chronicle of Nantes, for example, has a strikingly similar account of the city, ‘for many years deserted, devastated and overgrown with briars and thorns’.<sup>84</sup>

However, the Fécamp Chronicle emphasized that the memory of the monastery was preserved by the local people. Using a popular origin story, the Fécamp chronicler said that God himself had indicated the site destined to serve him by the presence of a beautiful stag.<sup>85</sup> After mentioning the murder of William Longsword, the chronicler inserted a long extract from Dudo’s *De moribus* on Richard I’s resolve to build a great

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<sup>82</sup> Ch.4: ‘fieret ferarum habitatio qui fuerat prius chisticolarum ornamentum’.

<sup>83</sup> Christiansen, p.35; Lair, p.153: ‘murosque hinc inde disruptos’; *Translatio Severi*, in *Texte français et latin des vies des Saints du diocèse de Coutances et Avranches...*, ed. by E.A. Pigeon, 2 vols (Avranches, 1892-98), II, 56-77 (p.57): ‘inter silvarum fruteta ferarumque latibula’.

<sup>84</sup> *EHD*, p.345.

<sup>85</sup> See Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*, pp.57-65 for foundation legends concerning divine revelation of a future site through animals, and pp.60-63 for deer specifically. Fécamp Chronicle, ch.5: ‘de cuius initio sicut ab antiquis audiimus ipse auctor et redemptor humani generis prescius sibi in ipso loco futuri seruitii grande miraculum ostendere est dignatus in forma cuiusdam spetiosissimi cerui’.

church on the site. Thus, the narrative of Scandinavian desecration and subsequent reconstruction by the Norman dukes was built into the community's history.

The section taken from Dudo's *De moribus* contains a reference to Rollo's prophetic dream, in which Richard explained his desire to build a grand church on the site, stating, 'for indeed here is the mount on which my grandfather Rollo saw himself standing and washing himself in the fount of salvation, in his prayer of divine vision, and he saw himself to be healed from the leprosy of his sins which infected him greatly'.<sup>86</sup> Incidentally, this reference provides conclusive evidence that this section was taken from Dudo's history for the Fécamp Chronicle, and not the other way around, as it harks back to the earlier passage. It also provides us with evidence for knowledge of Rollo's dream outside of Dudo's history, perhaps even before that history was finished. The author of the Fécamp Chronicle may well have been Dudo himself, as Arnoux has argued, or it may have been a canon at Fécamp working contemporaneously with the ducal chaplain.<sup>87</sup> It gives just enough information that the chronicle's author need not have assumed knowledge of the story of Rollo's dream among his readers. In the Fécamp Chronicle, the reference to the prophecy is included in order to link Richard I's actions back to the desecration wreaked by Rollo. Both the abandonment of Fécamp and its glorious restoration connect in this way to the Norman ducal family. Moreover, the repeated reference to the prophecy further embedded the idea that Scandinavian raiders were destined by God to conquer Normandy.

An emphasis on restoration was a key part of the Norman dukes' early ecclesiastical policy. All of the early monastic foundations were built on the sites of previous houses, and attempts were made to restore their original patrimonies. Moreover, there were even attempts to rebuild according to Carolingian fashions and plans. Musset's investigation

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<sup>86</sup> Ch.8: 'hic namque mons est in quo meus auus Rollo se stantem seque ablui fonte salutifero diuine uisionis oraculo conspexit et a lepra uiciorum qua infectum se sommo cernebat expiari'. Cf. Christiansen, pp.164-66; Lair, pp.290-91.

<sup>87</sup> Arnoux, 'Before the *Gesta Normannorum*', p.41.

into this phenomenon considered it a matter of continuity between the Carolingian province and the Norman principality.<sup>88</sup> But the attendant point is that this restoration was carried out deliberately by the Norman dukes, aristocracy and religious communities. They emphasized, rather than understated, viking disruption, and deliberately presented each foundation as a repair to the damage done in this period. Similar narratives could be found throughout Francia, where the destruction of churches was frequently blamed on pagans, be they Northmen or Saracens, or merely on abandonment by the dissolute and disinterested Christians of a former age. In many cases, as perhaps for some religious houses in Normandy, the narratives of destruction were dreamt up as a way of explaining movement to a new site, translations of relics, or connection to a powerful new patron.<sup>89</sup>

The difference in Normandy was that these pagan destroyers were not invoked as faceless monsters, but as the close ancestors of the restorers. The act of restoration required the preceding ruin – and foundation narratives such as that composed at Fécamp attributed both to the same people. These writers explicitly stated that the Normans were restoring what they themselves had destroyed. As Cassandra Potts has explored, the Normans emphasized the dramatic nature of their conversion through these actions.<sup>90</sup> In doing so, they created a collective history for the people of Normandy. The dukes promulgated this idea in texts commemorating their gifts and foundations, and thereby reiterated the connection of their people to the vikings who were said to have devastated the region.

As was the case with the return of relics, it was by fully acknowledging the past as found in monastic narratives that the Norman dukes were able to assert their control over the church in their new province. The Norman church told the story of a people

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<sup>88</sup> Musset, 'Monachisme d'Époque Franque'.

<sup>89</sup> Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*, pp.48-50.

<sup>90</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival*, pp.14-35.

saved by God and the saints. In their devotions, the subjects of the Norman dukes took on this narrative, extended from the rulers to the whole populace, rather than a narrative of a conquered people.

## V. Conclusion

These texts display a surprisingly unified view of the viking past. They recall how viking raiders without internal distinctions attacked the Frankish people and church. In Normandy, these raiders became conquerors, who subjugated the people of Rouen and the surrounding area through force of arms. For most of this characterization, the authors of these texts took their lead from previous traditions and accounts written elsewhere in Francia. However, it was only in Normandy that vikings were seen as restorers as well as destroyers. No texts produced in Normandy after 911 presented vikings primarily as the scourge of the church. References to viking destruction were always matched by narratives of Norman restoration.

This consensus emerged because the production of all such texts was linked to the ducal family. The monasteries where literary activity took place were those restored and patronized by successive Norman leaders: St-Ouen, Fécamp, Jumièges. We also find evidence that the dukes promoted the cults of these saints: the mint established in Rouen to produce ducal coinage was also responsible for the production of coins in the names of Saints Audoenus and Romanus. Institutional links also testify to the closeness between the ducal family and the writers of these texts. As the dukes gained a firmer hold on the Rouen see, one of their own family, Robert, became archbishop. It was during his episcopate that the first *translatio* of Audoenus was composed. Likewise, the ducal palace was situated at Fécamp, and the monastery there, built by Richard I in his birthplace, would become the family mausoleum. The textual borrowing between Dudo and the author of the Fécamp Chronicle identifies the latter text as similarly a product of

ducal propaganda. The narrative of destruction and restoration found in these texts may therefore confidently be identified as emanating from the ducal household.

The dukes presented themselves as viking descendants, and thus as destroyers of the church, but ultimately responsible for the peace that enabled its reconstruction. Because of the prevalence of viking destruction in monastic narratives and especially translations, this period could not be ignored. But neither did the dukes disassociate from it: they deliberately identified with the viking past. Emily Albu has suggested that this maintenance of a Scandinavian character was designed to convey a threat to the Normans' neighbours.<sup>91</sup> Their association with vikings of the past meant Normans were believed to be innately ferocious and able to summon Scandinavian reinforcements. Within the monastic narratives of ruin and restoration this viking heritage had a more immediate force. The ferocity of pagan vikings was rechanneled after conversion into the quality that made Rollo and his descendants capable leaders. Their formidable nature was now employed to bring about peace in Normandy, and thus enable the return of the saints. The peace the Norman dukes established was shown to have removed vikings from Francia completely, and enabled the restoration of the saints, their patrimonies, monastic communities and the buildings of the church.

Hagiographical accounts such as these provided a historical narrative with which readers could identify. They told a story of local significance, whether focused on one monastery such as Fécamp or a wider community like the city of Rouen. The local audience was drawn to empathize with the followers of the saints, both the inhabitants of Rouen in the distant past under Romanus, and the dukes who patronized Audoenus and Fécamp in more recent years. The two threads, of Scandinavian converts and long-term residents, were drawn together through devotion to the saints and their foundations. Unlike Frankish accounts, Norman texts did not represent the viking arrival as God's

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<sup>91</sup> Albu, *Normans in Their Histories*, pp.7-9.

response to Frankish behaviour. Elsewhere in Francia, turmoil at the hands of the vikings was presented as divine punishment for Frankish sins. Although Dudo and the author of the *Translatio Prima Sancti Audoeni* confirmed this view, they did not develop it. Rather, the process of ruin and restoration, in these texts, benefitted the vikings themselves. God called them to Normandy in order that they would hear the name of Christ and be saved. The process also aided those over whom they ruled. The people of Rouen were provided with God-fearing rulers who were also formidable warriors, ready to protect their interests.

These narratives presented the dukes at the head of a Norman people. The earliest of them, the *Vita Romani*, distinguished that *gens* from the Neustrians who already inhabited the area around Rouen. The prophecy spoken by Romanus describes the Scandinavian people as enemies and rulers of the citizens of Rouen. Christianity brought about their transformation into good rulers, but they continued to be distinguished from those over whom they ruled. This kind of narrative was also implicit in the Fécamp foundation chronicle, which employed monastic commonplaces about a violent conquering people persecuting the 'Christian people'. Again, Rollo's conversion changed things in his ruling style rather than his ethnic identity. However, this narrative focused primarily on the ducal family and so the role of other Scandinavian settlers was left unelucidated. As in Dudo's *De moribus*, the trajectory of the Norman leaders represented an entire people.

Also as in the *De moribus*, increasingly the dukes were presented as forging peoples together, all their subjects becoming one ethnicity. This may be seen in the latest narratives examined here, the *translationes* of St Audoenus. The *translationes* likewise focused on the ducal family as rulers. However, the author of the first *translatio* described the conversion of Rollo's Danish followers, who became one with the existing citizens of Rouen through their veneration to St Audoenus. This solution may

have been suggested by the language of the earliest monastic accounts of vikings despoiling the church: they contrasted the barbarian Northmen with the ‘Christian people’ of the lands they attacked. In becoming Christian, therefore, the Northmen could be seen to unite with those they conquered. Except for the *Vita Romani*, which alluded more generally to a ruling class, it was explicitly the figures of the dukes who enabled this unification.

The transformation into Normans was negotiated through relationship with the Frankish people. This relationship was the motor that drove ethnic narratives. Ducal authority in these texts was limited by the king and other nobles, not the duke’s subjects. These narratives hint at enmity: the second *translatio* of Audoenus, in particular, contrasts the interests of Frankish monks to those of the Normans. Yet it seems that these identities were formed as much through allegiance to princes as place of origin. Most of the monasteries which the Norman dukes refounded were peopled by monks from elsewhere in Francia. While the Norman dukes were demonstrably interested in the restoration of the churches which had been destroyed or vacated in the ninth century, they do not seem to have been concerned with restoring the original communities. Fécamp was established as a male house where previously there had been a nunnery, and was reformed by William of Volpiano from 1001. After this, William became the abbot of Jumièges but, even at its 942 refoundation, Jumièges had been populated by Martin of St-Cyprian, Poitiers, and his monks. As we have seen, it has been suggested that Fulbert, the author of the *Vita Romani*, was one such monk. Like Dudo, these monastic authors wrote for the Norman dukes but may also have had Frankish allegiances.

This complex relationship between the Normans and Franks is reflected in the production of Norman hagiography concerned with the distant past. The *Vita Romani* is one example of this: the *Vita Aichardi* by the same author, and the *Vitae* of Vigor,



Taurinus and Nicasius, were also concerned with the era of the conversion of the Merovingian Franks.<sup>92</sup> The production of these texts emphasized the similarities of the contemporary situation with the distant past, although only the *Vita Romani* made these comparisons explicit. Parallels with the Franks arriving in Gaul and their conversion through the agency of these saints suggested the innate similarity of these peoples' histories. The Normans in this view were, in a sense, the successors of the Franks and their superiors, who inherited the land which the Franks had been too sinful to retain.

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<sup>92</sup> For the latter three Lives, see Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past*.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Historical Identity in England**

#### **I. Saints and vikings**

The recent past of viking invasion remained a potent memory in tenth-century England. However, it was not until the last quarter of the century that new histories of the period were produced.<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle continued to record contemporary events, but much more sparsely and unevenly, particularly from the middle of the century. The ninth-century Chronicle's terse record of events remained the standard narrative of viking history, and formed the basis of many later accounts, such as Æthelweard's *Chronicon*.<sup>2</sup> These accounts elaborated its sparse details with new interpretations of the viking conflicts and their effects.

The ninth-century annals in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle focused overwhelmingly on conflict with the viking armies. Even though the writers were working in the midst of viking attack, they described the actions of their enemies in terms of facts, not invective. A formula emerged in the Chronicle for the description of conflict with the vikings, so that in each case the same information was replicated: how many ships arrived, where the battle was fought, who was killed, and who 'controlled the battlefield' ('wælstowe gewæld').<sup>3</sup> Sometimes, the ninth-century chroniclers sought to downplay the threat posed by the vikings, in contrast to their later successors. The section of the Chronicle covering the years 892 to 896, which was originally written as one text, minimized the effects of the viking armies on the English people:

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<sup>1</sup> On the background to this textual production, and the creation of a common past, see Sarah Foot, 'Remembering, Forgetting and Inventing: Attitudes to the Past in England at the End of the First Viking Age', *TRHS*, 6<sup>th</sup> ser., 9 (1999), 185-200.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the surviving manuscripts of the Chronicle were made during the tenth or early eleventh century: MS A was updated throughout the tenth century; MS B probably copied 977-79; MS G copied between 1001 and 1013. See introductions in *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, trans. by Swanton, and the various volumes of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, ed. by David Dumville and Simon Keynes (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983- ).

<sup>3</sup> Alice Cowen, 'Writing Fire and the Sword: The Perception and Representation of Violence in Viking Age England' (unpublished doctoral thesis, York University, 2004), p.48; e.g. ASC E 837, 999.

The raiding-army, by the grace of God, had not altogether utterly crushed the English race; but they were a great deal more crushed in those three years with pestilence among cattle and men, most of all by the fact that many of the best of the king's thegns there were in the land passed away in those three years.<sup>4</sup>

Other contemporary texts from England, including those into which the voice and opinions of the author intrude further, were similarly understated. Asser, writing his biography of Alfred at the end of the ninth century, was more interested in the development of Alfred's character than military details. In fact, he apologized for his tendency to 'veer off course' ('circumferamur') when he paused in his main narrative to insert Chronicle passages.<sup>5</sup> Those who had experienced the conflicts of the ninth and early tenth centuries did not demonize their enemies, nor did they wish viking destruction to appear catastrophic for the English. Both of these trends developed with chronological distance from the events.

The main outlet for addressing the viking past in the tenth century, and the only place where we find original composition, was in hagiography. There was a considerable amount of hagiographical composition in the late tenth century, including the Lives of Oswald, Ecgbwine, Swithun, Dunstan, Æthelwold, Wulfstan and the Passion of Æthelberht and Æthelred, not to mention the work of Ælfric. Yet there is very little reference to the Danes in any of these texts. The viking past featured in the hagiographies of three saints, whose legends are examined in this chapter. Often still using the Chronicle as a basis of historical evidence, hagiographers elaborated episodes of viking aggression and English response. These texts produced a new and influential

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<sup>4</sup> ASC A 896: 'Næfde se here, Godes þonces, Angelcyn ealles forswiðe gebrocod, ac hie wæron micle swiþor gebrocede on þæm þrim gearum mid ceapes cwilde 7 monna, ealles swiþost mid þæm þæt manige þara selestena cynges þena þe þær on londe wæron forðferdon on þæm þrim gearum'.

<sup>5</sup> Asser's *Life of Alfred*, p.19; *Alfred the Great*, ed. by Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p.74.

vision of the ninth-century conflicts, which transformed the events they described into ethnic conflicts.

Vikings played central roles in the pre-Conquest narratives of three saints, which were all written in the mid- to late tenth century. They appeared as the killers of St Edmund of East Anglia, first in Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* and then in Ælfric's English version; the Cuthbertine community presented them as major actors in a number of St Cuthbert's posthumous miracles in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*; and, finally, they featured in the anonymous *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, which also involves posthumous interaction of the saint with the vikings. These texts present strikingly similar images of vikings as hagiographical villains in opposition to the Christian community.

In each case, the texts considered here rewrote ninth- and early tenth-century events and attached them to the cults of saints who were already venerated. Cuthbert was commemorated by three existing Lives when the *Historia* was compiled, and was venerated on the continent as well as in northern England.<sup>6</sup> Although Neot and Edmund both died in the ninth century, these texts appear to be the first hagiographical works concerning them. However, they had both been the subjects of cults of some sort for around a century before the texts were composed. The emphasis on viking aggression found in these hagiographies was an added focus to existing cults. Even in the case of Edmund, who was killed by vikings, there is evidence to suggest that other qualities, such as his royal status, had been equally important in the early stages of his cult.<sup>7</sup>

There were other saints killed by vikings, but this in itself did not guarantee holy status. John Blair's handlist of Anglo-Saxon saints adds four more martyrs of the vikings to the list, but only two of these, Beocca and Edor of Chertsey, who may have

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<sup>6</sup> Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints*, pp.71-74.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. those described in David Rollason, 'The cults of murdered royal saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE*, 11 (1983), 1-22.

been the recipients of a local cult, were killed in the ninth century.<sup>8</sup> The others, Ælfheah and Eadnoth, were victims of the raids of the early eleventh century.<sup>9</sup> The saintly qualifications of both were called into doubt later in the century, when the characterization of vikings as the natural enemy of Christianity was less accepted.<sup>10</sup> Lanfranc, doubting that the archbishop's refusal to pay a ransom really qualified him as martyr, had to be convinced of Ælfheah's holiness. According to Anselm's biographer, Eadmer, he even stressed that it was 'the words of the English' which labelled the vikings as 'the pagan enemies of God'. Anselm managed to convince him, however, by explaining that by standing up to his 'pagan persecutors' and trying to convert them, Ælfheah acted as a witness of Christ.<sup>11</sup> Lanfranc then commissioned a *Life of Ælfheah*, which further justified his claim to martyrdom on more conventional grounds.<sup>12</sup> Of all the victims of the vikings, only Edmund was the recipient of a pre-Conquest hagiography.

Similarly, most accounts of relics being moved through fear of viking attack were written in a later period. It is well known that the community of St Cuthbert left Lindisfarne with the relics of their saint and travelled around northern England during the late ninth century, until settling at Chester-le-Street (and eventually Durham in 995). This period of wandering is generally seen as a flight from viking attackers, who raided Lindisfarne in 793 and perhaps again in 875, and thus equivalent to those reported in

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<sup>8</sup> John Blair, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints', in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: OUP, 2002), pp.495-565; John Blair, 'The Chertsey resting-place list and the enshrinement of Frithuwold', in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. by Steven Bassett (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp.231-36, cites a thirteenth-century Chertsey cartulary that he believes may indicate a continuing cult, revived by the invention of the relics by Æthelwold (963-84) – a similar period to the hagiographies examined here.

<sup>9</sup> Eadnoth (killed at Assandun, 1016): Blair, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints', pp.528-29; Ælfheah (killed by his captors at Greenwich): ASC E 1011-1012.

<sup>10</sup> Christine Fell, 'Edward King and Martyr and the Anglo-Saxon Hagiographic Tradition', in *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, ed. by David Hill (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978), pp.1-13 (p.8); *The Life of St Anselm by Eadmer*, ed. by Richard Southern (London: Nelson, 1962), pp.49-54.

<sup>11</sup> *Life of St Anselm*, p.51: 'ut verbis utar Anglorum'; 'inimici Dei pagani'; p.52: 'paganis persecutoribus'.

<sup>12</sup> *Vita Elphegi* (BHL 2518-19), ed. by Daniel van Papenbroeck, AASS, Apr. XIX (Antwerp, 1675), pp.631-41.

Normandy. However, the earliest record of this wandering, which comes from the community itself (in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*), does not mention the viking invasions. It was not until the twelfth century that this connection was made explicit.<sup>13</sup> Unlike in Francia, where the viking threat to saints rapidly became a hagiographical commonplace, the desecration of shrines in England was a much later narrative development.<sup>14</sup> In pre-Conquest texts from England, the posthumous interaction of saints with viking invaders was limited to the activities of Cuthbert and Neot.

Thus the viking connection was not a general feature of late Anglo-Saxon hagiography. The three cases considered here are the only ones to deal with this aspect of the past. The unity of the depictions of vikings as the adversaries of Edmund, Cuthbert and Neot, and their roles within the hagiographies, arose from the geographical and institutional contexts in which they were written. In particular, the West Saxon dynasty influenced these narratives of the viking past and therefore the presentation of ethnic identities.

## **II. Exemplary martyrdom: St Edmund of East Anglia**

Hagiographical models led to the events of the ninth century being depicted as a religious conflict. The saint was aligned with the community which venerated him, while his persecutors were placed in opposition. In order to establish a saint's holiness, hagiographers made explicit and implicit parallels with established saints. The passions of the Roman martyrs, which delineated a struggle between Christians and pagans, were well-known in tenth-century England, and the conventions of these narratives were

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<sup>13</sup> HSC, p.99; Ted Johnson-South, 'The Norman Conquest of Durham', *Journal of the Charles Homer Haskins Society*, 4 (1992), 85-95. There are examples of contemporary fear, however: a 1001 charter of Æthelred to Shaftesbury abbey (S899) granted the *cenobium* of Bradford-on-Avon for the protection of the relics of the saints (including his brother, Edward the Martyr), so that 'aduersus barbarorum insidias ipsa religiosa congregacio cum beati martiris ceterorumque sanctorum reliquiis ibidem Deo seruiendi impenetrabile optineat confugium'.

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter Three.

employed to establish the sanctity of more recent holy men and women.<sup>15</sup> Accordingly, native English saints were placed in similar situations and endowed with similar characteristics to the Roman martyrs, while their enemies were made to resemble the persecutors of the early Christians.

Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* exemplified this approach to hagiography. The text was composed at the request of the monks of Ramsey, where Abbo was a visiting teacher between 985 and 987.<sup>16</sup> The abbey was founded as a Benedictine house in 966 and, after Abbo's time there, it became a centre of historical production.<sup>17</sup> Gransden has suggested that Abbo wrote the *Passio* as an example for the monks of Ramsey.<sup>18</sup> As claimed in the preface, Abbo's text was the earliest testimony of Edmund's martyrdom, although it was composed over a century after Edmund's death in 869. There is evidence of local veneration in East Anglia soon after his death, and the cult centre was established at Bury St Edmunds.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, it was the monks of Ramsey who eventually commissioned his *Passio*. Abbo's preface, addressed to Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, makes it clear that the text was intended for a much wider audience than the people of East Anglia. If so, the intention was successful, as Edmund became widely venerated throughout England and the Continent.<sup>20</sup>

The *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*'s dedicatory letter explains that Abbo had been called upon to write the work when at Ramsey. He wrote that he had learned of the story from

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<sup>15</sup> Alan Thacker, 'In search of saints: the English church and the cult of Roman apostles and martyrs in the seventh and eighth centuries', in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West. Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, ed. by Julia Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp.247-77; Christine Rauer, 'The Sources of the *Old English Martyrology*', *ASE*, 32 (2003), 89-109.

<sup>16</sup> Marco Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1987), pp.40-45.

<sup>17</sup> *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: the Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgbine*, ed. by Michael Lapidge (Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), p.xviii (see n.13 for his refutation of the commonly-used date 969). Abbo's pupil Byrhtferth produced a considerable number of historical works: pp.xxx-xliv.

<sup>18</sup> Antonia Gransden, 'Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*', *Revue Benedictine*, 105 (1995), 20-78 (p.40).

<sup>19</sup> Susan Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), pp.211-33; Antonia Gransden, 'The legends and traditions concerning the origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *EHR*, 100 (1985), 1-24.

<sup>20</sup> Anthony Bale, 'Introduction: St Edmund's Medieval Lives', in *St Edmund, King and Martyr: Changing Images of a Medieval Saint*, ed. by Anthony Bale (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), pp.1-25 (p.11).

King Æthelstan, who in turn had heard it from Edmund's armour-bearer, an eyewitness. Abbo then described the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain (ch.1), and the landscape of East Anglia (ch.2), before focusing on King Edmund, whom he described as a Saxon (ch.3). Here, highlighting a theme he would return to throughout the text, Abbo presented Edmund as the perfect Christian ruler (ch.4).<sup>21</sup> Next, he introduced the Danes and their leader, Hinguar, and stated that they were sent by the devil to try the holy Edmund. Abbo took the opportunity to describe the evil characteristics and habits of the Danes, which were demonstrated through their activities in Britain (chs.5-6). The main scene of the martyrdom then begins. Abbo described how Hinguar sent his messenger to Edmund with the proposal that he should pay tribute and submit to him as a sub-king (ch.7). Edmund, after consulting with his bishop, sent back a messenger rejecting the offer (chs.8-9). At Hinguar's arrival, Edmund threw away his weapons, and was seized, before being tortured and shot with arrows. Perceiving that Edmund would not give up his faith, Hinguar ordered him to be executed (ch.10). The Danes departed, taking the king's head and throwing it into the forest to prevent an honourable burial (ch.11).

After the Danes had left, the few remaining Christians returned from hiding and sought to rejoin the head to the body. Edmund's head was miraculously enabled to talk, calling 'Here, here, here!' to draw them to it. They found the head guarded by a wolf, whose hunger was held in check by God (ch.12). After this, Abbo narrated Edmund's burial, followed by accounts of miracles demonstrating the sanctity of his body, most notably its incorruption (chs.13-17).<sup>22</sup>

The *Passio Eadmundi* placed viking invaders in the roles of villains characteristic of hagiography. They are presented as persecutors, judges, executioners and tyrants, in descriptions that owed more to the trials of the early Roman martyrs than warfare in Anglo-Saxon England. For example, in the *gesta martyrum* the judge played an

<sup>21</sup> Mostert, *Political Theology*, explores Abbo's views in detail.

<sup>22</sup> Abbo of Fleury, *Life of St Edmund* (hereafter Abbo).



essential role in eliciting the confession of faith from the Christian.<sup>23</sup> In the *Passio Eadmundi*, the exchange of messengers and the ensuing torture deviated slightly from the conventional format, but functioned in the same way. Abbo recalled the *gesta martyrum* through the language of Roman law.<sup>24</sup> In the next section, Edmund was explicitly compared to Christ, while the ‘tyrannus’ Hinguar was called ‘Pilatum praesidem’.<sup>25</sup> By transforming vikings into such hagiographic villains, Abbo’s *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* opposed the pagan Scandinavians with the Christian English. Abbo depicted Edmund, the former king of East Anglia, as a martyr for the Christian faith. Edmund’s qualities of Christian kingship were highlighted by the tyranny and impiety of his adversaries. To achieve this contrast, Abbo presented the war in which Edmund died as a religious conflict, and his enemies as demonic villains.

This characterization of Edmund’s viking enemies was attributed to their ethnicity. Abbo’s introduction established that the evil actions of Hinguar and his companions could be seen as representative of Danes more generally. He introduced Edmund’s persecutors with a detailed explanation of what it meant to be a Dane:

These, it is certain, are so cruel by their natural ferocity that they are unable to be softened by the ills of men: indeed, since people among them feed on human flesh...<sup>26</sup>

He thus presented evil as an intrinsic attribute of the vikings, although his description verged on denying them human status at all. This evil emerged from the Danes as natural and unchangeable, demonstrated and reinforced by wicked behaviour such as cannibalism.<sup>27</sup> Abbo stated that they came from a distant, foreign land in the north, which in itself was an explanation for their difference:

<sup>23</sup> Lucy Grig, *Making Martyrs in Late Antiquity* (London: Duckworth, 2004), pp.59-78 (esp. p.69).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Abbo, p.77: ‘forensibus causis intersunt’.

<sup>25</sup> Abbo, p.78.

<sup>26</sup> Abbo, p.72: ‘quas certum est adeo crudeles esse naturali ferocitate ut nesciant malis hominum mitescere, quando-quidem quidam ex eis populi uescuntur humanis carnibus...’

<sup>27</sup> Abbo refers to the Danes as *Antropofagi*, who were normally situated in the East, but Abbo’s connection of Danes with Scythians might imply that this detail is ultimately derived from Pliny or

...since they came steeled with the cold of their own wickedness from that corner of the earth where he [Lucifer] placed his seat who, through elevation, desired to be equal to the Most High.<sup>28</sup>

This link with the devil was maintained throughout the *Passio*. Hinguar, Edmund's persecutor, in particular, and the Danes in general, were frequently referred to as the 'satellites' or 'instruments' of the devil. Abbo only just stopped short of characterizing them as demons themselves. Instead, he emphasized the physical link with Satan, which made them innately predisposed to act maliciously. When Edmund addressed Hinguar with the words 'son of the devil, well do you imitate your father', the audience were reminded of inheritance through both nature and nurture. Abbo's words reinforced the moral implications of ancestry.<sup>29</sup>

The Danes' demonic inheritance resulted in paganism. Abbo made this, too, a function of their ethnic make-up, not a choice or an error. The Northmen, he wrote, 'follow the Antichrist more than all other peoples' and, in consequence, were driven to behave as viking raiders against Christians: 'and most greatly the Danes, who, too close neighbours with the western regions, engage in piracy around them with frequent raids'.<sup>30</sup> Abbo went so far as to claim that the Danes sought to convert Christians to devil-worship: however, there is very little evidence that Danes did encourage others to

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Herodotus: the positioning of dog-headed cannibals in Scandinavia can be seen on the Hereford Mappa Mundi and in the ninth-century correspondence between Rimbert, missionary to the north, and Ratramnus of Corbie: see Robert Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp.97-100. In medieval Europe, cannibalism was used to suggest the semi-human status of minority groups: Bettina Bildhauer, 'Blood, Jews and Monsters in Medieval Culture', in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. by Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp.75-83; Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.139-73.

<sup>28</sup> Abbo, p.71: 'Nec mirum, cum uenerint indurati frigore suae malitiae ab illo terrae uertice quo sedem suam posuit qui per elationem Altissimo similis esse concupiuit'. The significance of the far north in the Anglo-Saxon world is explored in Irmeli Valtonen, *The North in the Old English Orosius* (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Abbo, p.76: 'Bene, filius diaboli patrem tuum imitaris'.

<sup>30</sup> Abbo, p.72: '...quae antichristum, [ut legimus,] secuturae sunt ante omnes gentes...'; '...maxime Dani, occidentis regionibus nimium uicini, quoniam circa eas piratycam exercent frequentibus latrociniiis'.

take up their religion. His statement merely served to emphasize the religious nature of the war between Christians and vikings.<sup>31</sup>

The viking persecutors in the *Passio Eadmundi* were constructed in this extreme way in order to highlight the opposite qualities of their English victims. The primary purposes of the text, as a hagiography, were to convince of Edmund's sanctity, imbue him with the qualities of martyr and promote his cult more widely. Abbo also moulded Edmund as his ideal of Christian kingship.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps because it was intended as a model text, the vikings in the *Passio* were placed in several of the standard roles for hagiographical persecutors: they were in turns tyrants, judges and executioners. In contrast to each of these roles, Edmund was made to display the correct exercise of God-given power.

In pursuit of these goals, Abbo made Edmund a representative of the English people. This was conveyed by his concern for his subjects and his country. Edmund's speech to Hinguar's messenger outlined his qualities as king, chief of which was that he did not want to outlive his subjects and fail in his duty. Furthermore, the importance of the nation was tied to the land, as he exclaimed: 'if only those who presently lament living, lest they perish in bloody slaughter, might be preserved amid the sweet fields of their homeland, even if I should fall in death'.<sup>33</sup> Although Edmund had been king of East Anglia only, Abbo extended the significance of his words and sanctity to include all the English people. He glossed over the fact that East Anglia was a separate kingdom from Wessex and the rest of England – and this was done far more easily when Edmund was

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<sup>31</sup> Abbo, p.72; Simon Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath or the People of God's Wrath?', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 42 (1991), 535-54 (pp.546-47).

<sup>32</sup> Mostert, *Political Theology*, pp.157, 165-67, 170-71, 173.

<sup>33</sup> Abbo, p.75: 'Et utinam inpresentiarum uiuendo quique gement ne cruenta cede perirent, quatinus patriae dulcibus aruis, etiam me occumbente, superstites fierent...'

placed in opposition not to other English kings, but to ‘a barbarian foreigner with drawn sword [who] threatens the old occupants of our kingdom’.<sup>34</sup>

In these depictions, Abbo appealed to the shared experience of Christians as victims of the vikings, ‘as those who have experienced the savagery of the northern peoples have learned all too well, having suffered to their cost the throw of the falling die against them’.<sup>35</sup> This passage would have increased in relevance in the years following the text’s composition, as Danish attacks increased in severity. Abbo’s words reminded those Christians who suffered or feared Danish attack in the decades around 1000 that they were enduring the same process as the people in the *Passio Eadmundi*. Christians, in Abbo’s text, were English, and the *Passio* solicited their identification with Edmund and his people.

Ælfric of Eynsham continued the process of moulding Edmund into a pan-English saint by rewriting his *Passio* in Old English rhythmical prose. This act of translation defined the audience more narrowly as English speakers. The *Life of Edmund* formed part of Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints* collection, which was composed probably in the 990s, and was prefaced with his aim of spreading knowledge of these saints to the laity of ‘angel-cynn’.<sup>36</sup> Ælfric developed Abbo’s appeal to Englishness, upholding Edmund as one example, alongside Cuthbert and Æthelthryth, of how ‘the English nation is not deprived of the Lord’s saints’.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, he used Edmund to demonstrate God’s favour on the English.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Abbo, p.75: ‘Ecce barbarus aduena districto ense ueteribus nostri regni colonis imminet’.

<sup>35</sup> Abbo, p.72: ‘sicut plus aequo didicere, perperam passi aduersos iactus cadentis tesserae, qui aquilonalium gentium experti sunt seuitiam’.

<sup>36</sup> Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints: being a set of sermons on saints’ days formerly observed by the English church*, ed. by Walter Skeat, 2 vols (London: Trübner for EETS, 1881-1900), I, 4. Peter Clemoes, ‘The Chronology of Ælfric’s Works’, in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Clemoes, pp.212-47 (p.244).

<sup>37</sup> Ælfric, *Life of St Edmund*, in Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*, II, 314-35 (pp.332-33): ‘Nis angel-cynn bedæled drihtnes halgena’.

<sup>38</sup> Malcolm Godden, ‘Apocalypse and Invasion in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E.G. Stanley*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, Douglas Gray and Terry Hoad (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pp.130-62 (p.138).

Ælfric considerably abbreviated the narrative and, noticeably, he omitted Abbo's vitriolic description of the background of the vikings. Rather than discuss their devilish heritage and northern origins, Ælfric restricted his explanation to the fact that the vikings, in harrying and slaying, were acting 'as their custom is'.<sup>39</sup> In employing this phrase, he, like Abbo, expected his audience to have experienced such behaviour, thus relating Hingwar and Hubba to the forces assailing England in the 990s. Furthermore, he presented the Danes as a group distinct in custom from his English audience. Although in cases like this Ælfric's text was less explicit than the Latin *passio*, by placing the Danes in the same roles of judges, torturers and tempters he implied that they were the devil's representatives. His description of Hingwar and Hubba as 'associated by the devil' is made comprehensible in this context: they were both carrying out the work of the devil in their separate raids.<sup>40</sup> The opposition between Christian English and pagan viking remained essential to the narrative.

Through its dissemination and Ælfric's translation, Abbo's text became the standard narrative of Edmund's death and the origin of his cult; however, it seems that he made significant changes to earlier traditions. Previous manifestations of Edmund's cult appear to have been restricted to East Anglia. Earlier mentions of Edmund's death in West Saxon sources, such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, imply that he was killed in battle, not in the way described by Abbo, and thus indicate a different emphasis earlier in the development of the cult.<sup>41</sup> The earliest evidence of a cult is the 'St Edmund memorial coinage', which was minted in East Anglia in the period between Danish settlement in 880 and the West Saxon conquest in 917. There were several different

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<sup>39</sup> Ælfric, *Life of St Edmund*, pp.316-17: 'swa swa heora gewuna is'.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*: 'geanlæhte þurh deofol'.

<sup>41</sup> ASC A 870 [869]: 'þy wintra Eadmund cyning him wiþ feaht, 7 þa Deniscan sige namon, 7 þone cyning ofslogon' ('that winter King Edmund fought against them, and the Danish took the victory, and killed the king'). Æthelweard adapted this passage to recognise Edmund's sanctity, but not to expand on the circumstances of his death.

styles, all bearing a variant of the inscription SCE EADMUNDUS REX.<sup>42</sup> This inscription, in the vocative, indicates Edmund's acceptance as a powerful intercessor, calling upon his status as king. Parallels may be drawn by coins minted by Scandinavians elsewhere in England, especially the St Peter coinage of York and the St Martin coins from Lincoln. That St Edmund would be chosen in East Anglia suggests that he was already perceived as particularly powerful in the area, given the high status locally of the saints chosen elsewhere (they were the patrons of the cathedrals). The similarity with the Romanus coins minted by the Norman dukes, on the other hand, suggests the possibility that the Danish rulers promoted his cult in their local area. This veneration, however, may have had more to do with his status as king of East Anglia than his death at the hands of the vikings.

Furthermore, the fact that veneration for Edmund arose when the East Anglian kingdom was under Danish rule implies that his cult had not yet acquired the anti-Danish connotations emphasized by Abbo. It is important to remember that those Danes in power in East Anglia, led by Guthrum and then Eric, were not the same group who had been responsible for Edmund's death, and their seizure of power did not occur until a decade after he had been killed. Abbo and Ælfric's parallels between the Danes led by Inguar and the vikings contemporary with their texts were thus an important re-interpretation of events that overwrote the earlier history of the cult. Moreover, Abbo stated that Hinguar and his vikings went back to their ships and left East Anglia after the death of Edmund, and that the Christian community could then re-establish itself. He made no mention of Guthrum and the other Danish rulers. Abbo's simplistic construction of Danes and English as enemies completely bypassed those Danes who may have had the greatest impact on East Anglia.

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher Blunt, 'The St Edmund Memorial Coinage', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 31 (1969), 234-55.

Edmund's role as a representative of the English in Abbo's and Ælfric's texts reflected the view from Wessex, not East Anglia and the cult's origins. There is little indication that Abbo utilized any native East Anglian tradition. Although he referred to the role of the local people in the early stages of the cult, Abbo seems not to have used local information. He reported that his story came from the Wessex court, told to 'gloriosissimo regi Anglorum Aethelstano'.<sup>43</sup> Abbo wrote while staying at Ramsey, Bishop Oswald's Benedictine foundation, and not at the cult centre of Bury St Edmunds. In fact, there was no real attempt in the text to promote Bury as the holders of the relics. Abbo depicted Edmund's sanctity as applying to all of the English people, not tied to one place. The relevance of the text to the English was apparent from the beginning of the text, where Abbo called upon the Anglo-Saxon origin myth.<sup>44</sup> His version was not specific to East Anglia, but presented the region as one province in the unified land of the English people.

### **III. Defending the kingdom: St Neot**

The cult of St Neot at nearby Eynesbury (Huntingdonshire) also established a narrative of one English kingdom attacked by vikings. Like Ramsey, Eynesbury was a monastic house newly founded by one of the most prominent Benedictine reformers, in this case Æthelwold.<sup>45</sup> The hagiography produced there displayed a similar view of the viking past, but concentrated instead on King Alfred's victory over the viking force led by Guthrum.

The two earliest surviving hagiographies of St Neot, one in Latin and one in Old English, both contain the saint's admonitions to King Alfred, including a prophecy that

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<sup>43</sup> Abbo, p.67.

<sup>44</sup> Just as Fulbert's *Vita Romani* opened with a history of the Franks, so Abbo's *Passio Eadmundi* opened with a brief history of the Anglo-Saxons, thereby implicitly comparing the events it described with that earlier invasion.

<sup>45</sup> VPSN, p.lxxxvii: according to the *Liber Eliensis*, Eynesbury was founded with monks from Ely and Thorney between 975 and 984 by St Æthelwold.

his kingdom would be overrun by vikings; and they both contain an account of Neot's appearance to Alfred before battle, promising that he would lead the English to victory. They also relate the story of Alfred burning the cakes, which would later become famous because of its interpolation by Matthew Parker into Asser's *Life of Alfred*; the earlier of the two is the first witness to this legend.<sup>46</sup> They were both written in the late tenth or early eleventh century, but their relationship is not clear.

#### a. Dating the Lives of St Neot

Both hagiographies were long considered post-Conquest productions, until research by Michael Lapidge on the Latin *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* and Malcolm Godden on the Old English Life of St Neot established that each of them was written in the early eleventh century.<sup>47</sup> Previously, the Old English Life, which is in the form of a homily, was assigned to the twelfth century on grounds of language.<sup>48</sup> However, Godden has shown that later features in the English are merely a result of the date of copying, in similarity to the other texts in the manuscript, which are mostly by Ælfric. Godden has demonstrated that, behind these later amendments, the expression and phrasing of the Life show such similarity with other Old English homilies that it must have been composed in the opening years of the eleventh century (after 1004, to allow influence from Wulfstan's writings, or after 1014 if we believe that the influence came from the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* specifically).<sup>49</sup> On the basis of the text's mention of Bishop Ælfheah, whom he identified as Ælfheah the Bald of Winchester (934-51), Godden

<sup>46</sup> *Alfred the Great*, ed. by Keynes and Lapidge, pp.197-202, presents discussion and translations of all the earliest records of this legend.

<sup>47</sup> VPSN, pp.lxxv-cxxiv; Malcolm Godden, 'The Old English Life of St Neot and the Legends of King Alfred', *ASE*, 39 (2010), 193-225.

<sup>48</sup> 'The Old English Life of Seinte Neote', in *Early English Homilies from the Twelfth Century MS Vesp.D.xiv*, ed. by Rubie D.N. Warner, EETS, OS, 152 (London: Trübner, 1917 for 1915), 129-34; Mary Richards, 'An Edition and Translation of the Old English Life of Seinte Neote' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Wisconsin University, 1971).

<sup>49</sup> Godden, 'Old English Life of St Neot', p.209; *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1939; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 1976), pp.35-36.



argued that the Life was written before around 1020, after which date ‘St Ælfheah’ would always refer rather to Ælfheah of Canterbury.<sup>50</sup>

The *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* is difficult to date with this degree of precision, but it seems to have been composed in the late tenth or early eleventh century. It must have been written following the foundation of the priory at Eynesbury (modern St Neots) sometime after 975. Although Neot lived in Cornwall, the *Translatio* which follows the *Vita Neoti* (probably by the same author) tells of the translation of his relics to Huntingdonshire.<sup>51</sup> Throughout the text, there are strong associations with Eynesbury, indicating that it was written there. The *Translatio* narrates the movement of the saint’s relics to Eynesbury, and Bishop Æthelwold, the priory’s founder, is given a role in Neot’s life, however anachronistic this might be. Neot is said to rest at *Eanulfesbyrig* (Eynesbury/St Neots) in the second Resting Places list, compiled in 1013 or slightly later.<sup>52</sup> This casts doubt on William of Malmesbury’s suggestion that the relics were moved to Crowland during the years of viking turmoil in the early eleventh century.<sup>53</sup> Viking attacks later became a common reason to claim relics of rival houses, and all the evidence for the presence of Neot’s relics at Crowland dates from the early twelfth century. Orderic Vitalis reported c.1115 that the relics were moved to Crowland by Osketel, who witnessed charters in 1012 and 1022-23.<sup>54</sup> However, shortly after the monastery’s refoundation as a cell of Bec in 1080, Anselm had inspected the relics at

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<sup>50</sup> Godden, ‘Old English Life of St Neot’, pp.194-202, 206-07. Godden’s conclusions have recently been disputed, in favour of twelfth-century composition, by George Younge, “‘Those were Good Days’: Representations of the Anglo-Saxon Past in the Old English Homily on Saint Neot’, *The Review of English Studies*, NS, 63 (2012), 349-69.

<sup>51</sup> VPSN, p.cii.

<sup>52</sup> David Rollason, ‘Lists of saints’ resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England’, *ASE*, 7 (1978), 61-93 (p.90).

<sup>53</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ed. by Rodney Thomson and Michael Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), I, 486-87.

<sup>54</sup> VPSN, p.lxxxix; *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. by Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969-80), II, 342-43.

Eynesbury and declared them complete.<sup>55</sup> It appears that, in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, there was some competition over the possession of Neot's relics.

However, it seems that the *Vita Prima* was produced before this rivalry began. Its style, which resembles the late Anglo-Saxon 'hermeneutic style' and includes lines of verse integrated into the narrative, places it decisively before the Conquest, as Lapidge has shown. Therefore it cannot have been written after the refoundation of St Neots as a cell of Bec in 1080.<sup>56</sup> This is borne out by internal evidence, as there is no mention of Bec or Anselm's inspection of the relics, which surely would have been included had it been written out of competition with Crowland. We are left, then, with composition at St Neots, from 975 at the earliest, and the latest date being either the 1020s if we accept Orderic's evidence of translation to Crowland, or any time before the Conquest if Crowland's claim is considered to be a later development. The context of its composition is thus close in time to the other texts we have examined, and also to the Old English Life.

The relationship between the Old English Life and *Vita Prima* is unclear, but suggests a date in the early part of this period for the Latin text, too. Neither is a straight translation of the other: the Latin *Vita* is much longer and includes considerably more detail regarding Neot's interactions with Alfred, while the Old English Life includes a miracle performed by Neot in life, which does not appear in the *Vita Prima*. Moreover, there is a later Latin version of the *Vita*, composed after the Conquest, which (following Godden and Lapidge) we may call the *Vita Secunda*.<sup>57</sup> Godden has argued that the *Vita Secunda* shows similarities with the Old English Life which the *Vita Prima* does not contain: the *Vita Secunda* includes miracle stories related to Neot's life in Cornwall

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<sup>55</sup> VPSN, p.xc.

<sup>56</sup> VPSN, pp.xcvi-ci.

<sup>57</sup> *De S. Neoto Confessore in Anglia*, ed. by Guilielmus Culperus, I, July VII (1731), pp.314-29 (BHL 6052; hereafter Vita II), ch.1 opens with a reference to England, 'priusquam debellata triumphali Nortmannorum subjugaretur ditioni'.

which resemble passages of the Old English Life, and which have no parallel in the *Vita Prima*. Godden therefore suggested that all three texts were based on an earlier, now lost, *Vita Neoti*. This represents a return to an earlier view of the texts.<sup>58</sup> Lapidge, however, presented the *Vita Prima* as the first life, on which both the Old English Life and the *Vita Secunda* were based.

In support of Lapidge's view we may emphasize that the narrative of the *Vita Secunda* itself closely follows that of the *Vita Prima*, and there are numerous verbal parallels which seem to indicate that the *Vita Prima* was the source-text.<sup>59</sup> These verbal parallels even relate to the metrical sections of the *Vita Prima*, which suggests that the author of the *Vita Secunda* relied directly on this text, and not a common source as Godden suggested: it is unlikely that the author of the *Vita Prima* would have used the same phrasing as a source so often in composing verse. Moreover, the Old English Life also matches the structure of the *Vita Prima* at some points in the narrative – particularly the episodes involving King Alfred. It is the presence of additional material in the Old English Life and the *Vita Secunda* that poses the problem.<sup>60</sup>

Both the *Vita Secunda* and the Old English Life claimed that Neot's relics rested in Cornwall, and made no mention of the translation to Eynesbury. In fact, the *Vita Secunda* actually stated that Neot's miracles continued at that site up till the present day.<sup>61</sup> We may therefore conclude that this text was not written at Eynesbury or Crowland. Lapidge proposed a south-western origin, perhaps Glastonbury, given its

<sup>58</sup> Mary Richards, 'The Medieval Hagiography of St Neot', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 99 (1981), 259-78.

<sup>59</sup> VPSN, p.cxiii. Younge, 'Those were Good Days', pp.354-58, presents more evidence that the Old English homily and Vita II were independently based on the *Vita Prima*.

<sup>60</sup> Godden gives an additional argument, based on the *Vita Prima*'s use of the phrase 'uno integro lustro annisque duobus' for seven years; he argues that the Old English Life's 'seven times' could not have been derived from this phrase ('Old English Life of St Neot', pp.203-04). However, this discrepancy could perhaps be explained by a correction or annotation in the manuscript used by the Old English hagiographer. The discussion above must suffice, as there is not enough space for a full comparison of the texts here.

<sup>61</sup> Vita II, ch.46.

prominence in the text.<sup>62</sup> The author may have denied that the relics were in eastern England, or been unaware of it: it is possible, perhaps, that he used a manuscript copy of the *Vita Prima* which lacked the *Translatio*. Similarly, Godden has suggested that the Old English Life was composed somewhere Neot's festival was celebrated in the West Country, such as Glastonbury, Exeter, Crediton or Sherborne.<sup>63</sup> The south-western origins of both the *Vita Secunda* and the Old English Life may suggest the reason why they include the miracle stories that the *Vita Prima* does not. It is likely that a collection of miracles performed by St Neot in Cornwall and at Glastonbury circulated independently in the south west, either in written or oral form. The authors of the Old English Life and the *Vita Secunda* then separately incorporated some of these into the relevant sections of their narratives, which were otherwise derived from the *Vita Prima*. This explanation would account for the fact that their miracles in each of these texts are different, but are similar in theme and show Celtic influence.<sup>64</sup>

The different narratives found in the two early texts may most usefully be viewed in relation to their places of composition. The differing depictions of Neot's interactions with viking forces in England, in particular, display the different concerns of hagiographers in east and west England during Æthelred's reign.

These different concerns are particularly clear regarding the characterization of the conflict between Alfred and the vikings. The Old English Life is more critical of Alfred: it contains a passage emphasizing that 'he immediately took to flight in terror and abandoned all his soldiers and his chieftains, and all his people, his treasures and treasure-chests, and looked to his own safety'.<sup>65</sup> The hint of criticism in the Old English

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<sup>62</sup> VPSN, pp.cxiv-cxv. Richards, 'Medieval Hagiography of Neot', p.273, proposed Exeter.

<sup>63</sup> The Old English Life was written for delivery on Neot's feast day: it opens by referring to 'þyssen halgen, þe we todæg wurðigeð' (p.129). Godden, 'Old English Life of St Neot', p.211.

<sup>64</sup> In fact, Godden, 'Old English Life of St Neot', p.205 makes a similar suggestion, as does Younge, 'Those were Good Days', p.358. Moreover, the author of the Old English Life refers to his sources as 'books' in the plural (p.129).

<sup>65</sup> 'Old English Life of Seinte Neote', p.132: 'he sone forfyrht fleames cepte, 7 his cæmpen ealle forlet, 7 his hertogen, 7 eall his þeode, madmes 7 madmfaten, 7 his life gebearh'. This passage (translated in

Life of Neot may be contrasted with the favourable picture Abbo painted of Edmund, who was willing to die for his people and country. The issue of the king's role in defending his kingdom was clearly topical. However, the author of the Old English Life of St Neot was largely unconcerned with the viking enemies of King Alfred, describing them briefly as 'Guthrum, the heathen king, with his bloodthirsty army'.<sup>66</sup> The *Vita Prima* author, on the other hand, spent considerable effort elaborating on their characteristics. The conflict between Alfred and Guthrum, the viking leader, is the main theme of the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*. In devoting the majority of the text to the development of this conflict, the hagiographer emphasized the distinction between Christian English and pagan Dane, and encouraged his audience to identify with the former group.

#### **b. St Neot, Alfred and Guthrum**

The *Vita* begins with an account of the early life of Neot in Glastonbury abbey (chs.1-4) and then as an anchorite in Cornwall, where he ultimately founded a monastery (chs.5-7). According to the *Vita*, King Alfred heard of Neot's reputation and visited him in Cornwall, where he received admonition from the living Neot on two occasions. As a result, Alfred sent alms to Rome for the *schola Anglorum*. Neot also prophesied his own death and the arrival of the pagan armies (chs.8-9). After Neot's death (ch.10), the narrative moves to the invasion of the pagan king Guthrum. Guthrum's army was so vicious and successful in conquest that Alfred was forced to flee to Athelney, where he stayed with a swineherd and was scolded by the swineherd's wife for allowing the bread to burn (chs.11-12). The rest of the *Vita* concerns Alfred and the English regaining power at the battle of Edington in 878. Alfred reassembled his troops and, after two

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*Alfred the Great*, ed. by Keynes and Lapidge, pp.198-99) contradicts the reference in the *Vita Prima* to Alfred's treasures being with him in hiding: VPSN, p.125: 'thesaurorumque locula custodiri locupletaria'. On the depiction of Alfred, see Godden, pp.212-13.

<sup>66</sup> 'Old English Life of Seinte Neote', p.132: 'Guðrum, se hæðene king, mid his wælreowen here'.

nocturnal visions of Neot, succeeded in defeating and converting the pagan forces (chs.13-17). The *Vita* ends with the peaceful completion of Alfred's reign (ch.17). It is followed by a *Translatio* and miracle collection, probably by the same author (chs.18-23).<sup>67</sup>

The earliest mention of Neot occurs in Asser's *Life of Alfred*, which suggests that the connection with the West Saxon king was a long-standing one.<sup>68</sup> Although there are a few chapters in the *Vita Neoti* describing the life of Neot at Glastonbury and in Cornwall, the major part of this text was concerned with the saint's relationship with Alfred, during life and after death. In fact, the *Vita* ends with the death of Alfred, rather than that of Neot. However, although Alfred was a central focus of the text, Neot's spiritual superiority was clearly demonstrated. Neot not only exhorted Alfred to good, but rebuked him for sinful behaviour. Mary Richards attributed this aspect of Neot's hagiography to Celtic influence.<sup>69</sup> The text developed Alfred's role to an unusual degree, while his reputation would have enhanced that of Neot.

The *Vita* describes how, when Neot's prophecies came to pass, Alfred had to learn patience and humility before being given aid to overcome his enemies.<sup>70</sup> The tale of Alfred burning the cakes while staying with a swineherd, which later became a popular legend about the king, appears at this point in the *Vita*. This legend laid emphasis on the moral and spiritual improvement of Alfred through Neot's intervention. However, the activities of the Danes were not depicted as a punishment on a sinful king. Alfred was always shown as receiving God's favour, and his sufferings were evidence of God's care:

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<sup>67</sup> VPSN, p.cii.

<sup>68</sup> Asser's *Life of Alfred*, p.55; see VPSN, p.lxxxvi. A section of the *Annals of St Neots*, derived from the *Vita Neoti*, was interpolated into Asser's *Life of Alfred* by Matthew Parker, but this reference appears to be genuine, and probably inspired the insertion: see *Alfred the Great*, ed. by Keynes and Lapidge, p.201.

<sup>69</sup> Richards, 'Medieval Hagiography of Neot', pp.266, 274.

<sup>70</sup> The emphasis on royal humility resembles a similar emphasis in Æthelred's diplomas, discussed in Charles Insley, 'Charters, Ritual and Late Tenth-Century English Kingship', in *Gender and Historiography: studies in the history of the early middle ages in honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. by Janet Nelson and Susan Reynolds with Susan Johns (London: IHR, 2012), pp.75-89.

For from him [Neot] he had received what he held faithfully in his grateful heart: for the apostle says, ‘He whom the Lord loves, he chastises; and he scourges every one of the sons whom he receives’.<sup>71</sup>

Just as Edmund’s death had been transformed into martyrdom, part of the divine plan, so Alfred’s defeat and suffering were depicted hagiographically as evidence that Alfred had a special importance to God and St Neot.

After these sufferings had been recounted, the author narrated Alfred’s recovery and defeat of the Danes, in which he was directed and led at every stage by Neot. The focus was on Alfred’s vision before the battle of Edington in 878, an incident which is better known from its inclusion in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, discussed below. This episode is more developed in the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, however, in which Neot is said to have made two appearances to Alfred, in addition to his original prophecy during his life.

The hagiographical context again provided models for the *Vita Neoti*. Guthrum, the viking leader and Alfred’s enemy, took on the role of villain. Guthrum was depicted in the text as a vicious pagan, in the same florid language used in Abbo’s *Passio Eadmundi*. Like Hinguar, he was characterized as ‘tyrannus’.<sup>72</sup> This typical description of a persecutor in martyrological literature was particularly appropriate in texts arguing against the right of Danish leaders to rule any part of Britain. The paganism of the vikings was also emphasized – although in this case, Guthrum was eventually converted. Guthrum was introduced as one ‘cruelly tangled in the deception of idols’, who ‘pulled down all the holy places, he trampled on them’, and in his actions ‘blasphemed everything holy’. He was identified as an enemy of God, ‘with his soul hastening to

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<sup>71</sup> VPSN, p.126: ‘Ab ipso enim conceperat memori quod pectore credens tenebat: ‘Quem,’ namque inquit apostolus, “Dominus diligit, castigat; flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit” (Hebrews 12.6)’.

<sup>72</sup> VPSN, p.124.

perpetual destruction'.<sup>73</sup> Guthrum's conversion fulfilled Neot's earlier prophecy to Alfred, in which he predicted that his victory over the pagans would be so complete that he would restore them to God.<sup>74</sup> The extent of their paganism was emphasized in order that this appeared a striking measure of Alfred's success. Alfred achieved saintly qualities through Guthrum's conversion. He was compared to the martyr Stephen, 'entreating the Lord for his stoners – by whose prayers even Saul was changed into Paul'.<sup>75</sup>

Guthrum played a prominent role as leader of the Danes in the legend of St Neot. One chapter of the *Vita Neoti* even reported the speech Guthrum made to his army before battle. The demonization of Guthrum would have had special relevance to the eastern audience of the *Vita Prima Neoti* and the community at Eynesbury. Alfred and Guthrum's 878 agreement, which saw Guthrum placed as ruler over East Anglia, is not mentioned in the *Vita Neoti*. Rather, Guthrum's conversion was described as the condition that meant Alfred allowed him to go home. The hagiographer followed the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the events of this chapter, and so the change must have been a deliberate one. The *Vita Neoti*'s details of Guthrum's surrender and conversion match those given in the Chronicle – that Guthrum came to Alfred at Athelney, three weeks after his defeat, and brought thirty companions for baptism.<sup>76</sup> However, rather than following the Chronicle's account of Guthrum's settlement and rule in East Anglia, the *Vita Neoti* stated that, on their surrender, the Danes 'promised by swearing oaths that their prince would be a worshipper of the holy and indivisible Trinity, and likewise that

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<sup>73</sup> VPSN, p.124: 'idolorum crudeliter irretitus errore'; p.125: 'sancta omnia loca destruxit, conculcauit' (compare Alcuin's description of the sack of Lindisfarne, below); pp.128-29: 'cunctaque sancta blasphemare; quippe animo ad perpetuum festinanti'.

<sup>74</sup> VPSN, p.128.

<sup>75</sup> VPSN, p.132: 'quasi alter Stephanus pro suis exorans Dominum lapidatoribus – cuius etiam precatibus Saulus commutatus est Paulus...'

<sup>76</sup> The Old English Life contains 'thirteen' in error for 'thirty' in this passage (p.133), which suggests that the author did not consult the Chronicle directly, but misunderstood his or her Latin source. However, it does contain the detail that Guthrum stayed twelve days with the king, found in the Chronicle but neither of the two Latin *vitae*.



they would cross over the sea to their own country from where they had landed'.<sup>77</sup> The hagiographer emphasized this again later in the same chapter, describing how the newly Christian Guthrum 'went over the sea to his own kingdom with his companions', in contrast to King Alfred, who held 'the throne of the kingdom'.<sup>78</sup> The hagiographer chose to ignore the Chronicle entry for the year 880, which stated that 'the raiding-army went from Cirencester into East Anglia, and settled that land, and divided it up'.<sup>79</sup> The claim that the Danes went back to their own kingdom appears in the Old English Life and the *Vita Secunda* as well.<sup>80</sup> East Anglia and the northern provinces of England are not mentioned in any of these texts; they all implied that the Danes departed back to Denmark, and that Alfred united the English peoples under his rule.

#### **IV. English and Danish in the north: St Cuthbert**

A very similar episode occurs in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, a text produced by the community of St Cuthbert in northern England. This text, while including a summary of St Cuthbert's life, deals with the patrimony of the community before and after his death. The descriptions of gifts and thefts of land are supplemented by miracle accounts, which explain the circumstances of the transactions and indicate the severe consequences of disrespecting the property of St Cuthbert. They are generally presented chronologically, with some inconsistency, covering the period from the time of Cuthbert to King Cnut. The narrative is at times disjointed, and the latter parts of the text (from chapter twenty-six onwards) mimic charters. Finally, a miracle account concerning King Guthred has been added at the end, out of place chronologically.

<sup>77</sup> VPSN, p.132: '...iureiurando spoponderunt eorum principem sancte et indiuidue Trinitatis fore cultorem, et perinde ad propria unde huc appulerant se transfretaturos'.

<sup>78</sup> VPSN, p.133: 'ad propria transfretauit regna cum sociis'; 'regni solio'.

<sup>79</sup> ASC A: 'Her for se here of Cirenceastre on Eastengle 7 gesæt þæt lond 7 gedælde'.

<sup>80</sup> 'Old English Life of Seinte Neote', p.133: '7 he twelf dages æfter þan her on lande wunede mid mycelre blisse, 7 syððen gesund gewende mid his herelafe to his agenen earde mid ealre sibbe'; Vita II, ch.65: 'suam cum suis recessit in patriam'.

The unusual nature of the text has led to considerable discussion about its dating and composition. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* was clearly drawn together from a diverse range of sources, including Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, land charters, and probably oral tradition. However, the disagreement lies in whether this compilation occurred at one time, in two stages, or over a long period. The different models are outlined by the *Historia*'s editor, Ted Johnson South, and also by Sally Crumplin.<sup>81</sup> Johnson South argues for a later, eleventh-century date of composition for the text; however, Crumplin has effectively argued against this model of composition, which is based largely on the thematic unity of the text. As she has demonstrated, this unity does not require a single author, but is a reflection of the ongoing concerns of the Cuthbertine community. A continuous process of composition explains the disjointed narrative (resulting in repetitions and chronological inconsistencies) and changes in style, as well as the evolving attitudes to the Danes and West Saxons found in the text. Crumplin's theory suits the structure of the text, and also helps to explain the move from Danes as protectors in the early part of the text, to enemies in the later sections, as a reflection of the changing loyalties of the community in the mid-tenth century.

The *Historia* shows a definite moment of change, as the community was adopted by West Saxon patrons after having previously benefited from the support of the Danes. From chapter 15 onwards, the focus of the *Historia* was no longer solely on the Cuthbertine community, but expanded to include the West Saxon dynasty. Local history was now contextualized by connections to the West Saxon kings, whose deaths and successions were carefully recorded. The text identified support for the West Saxon kings with support for Cuthbert: for example, Ealdred son of Eadwulf allied with Elfred, a 'faithful [man] of St Cuthbert' because he 'was a favourite of King Edward, just as his

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<sup>81</sup> HSC, pp.25-36; Sally Crumplin, 'Rewriting History in the Cult of St Cuthbert from the Ninth to the Twelfth Centuries' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of St Andrews, 2005), pp.34-41, 61-70.

father Eadwulf had been a favourite of King Alfred'.<sup>82</sup> The *Historia* particularly emphasized the devotion of Alfred as the king who first pledged loyalty and protection to Cuthbert. By the time of the *Historia*'s composition, Alfred's reputation as the vanquisher of the Danes appears to have been well-developed already.

The *Historia*'s transfer of allegiance to the West Saxon kings was effected by Cuthbert's appearance to Alfred before the battle of Edington in 878. This episode bears great similarity to the parallel episode in the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* and the Old English Life of St Neot. In the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, Cuthbert promised in the vision to help Alfred against the Danes, and in return Alfred and all his descendants pledged devotion to the saint. This section of the text has been regarded by some as an interpolation made after 1016, since the extant manuscripts mistakenly name the battle-site as *Assandune*, the site of Cnut's 1016 victory. However, Crumplin has argued that the confusion was in fact with Alfred's 871 battle at Ashdowne, and there are sufficient references to the episode later in the text for the idea that this section was added later to be dismissed.<sup>83</sup> Luisella Simpson has also demonstrated the likely mid-tenth century context for the miracle.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the miracle is referred to in the early sections of the *Historia regum*, composed by Byrhtferth of Ramsey around 1000.<sup>85</sup> Thus, regarding the episode as an eleventh-century interpolation in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* requires us to consider it an interpolation in the *Historia regum*, as well. For all these reasons, it is safer to assume the mistake of a later copyist than a later date for composition.

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<sup>82</sup> HSC, pp.60-61: 'Elfredum sancti Cuthberti fidelem'; 'erat dilectus regi Eadwardo sicut et pater suus Eadulfus dilectus fuit regi Elfredo'.

<sup>83</sup> Crumplin, 'Rewriting History', p.40.

<sup>84</sup> Luisella Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*: its significance for mid-tenth century English history', in *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community*, ed. by Bonner, Rollason and Stancliffe, pp.397-411; HSC, pp.90-94.

<sup>85</sup> *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, II, 83.

There are numerous similarities between the accounts found in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* and the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*: in each case, the saint is said to appear to Alfred one night while he cannot sleep, to reveal his identity to a doubtful Alfred, and then predict his victory in battle against the pagans. However, there are considerable differences of emphasis in the two texts, and there do not appear to be any textual parallels. The only clear written source for this section of the *Vita Neoti* is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and there is no textual precursor for the Cuthbert episode.<sup>86</sup> Yet it stretches credibility to believe that two such similar episodes arose independently. Roger of Wendover, writing his *Flores Historiarum* in the thirteenth century, certainly saw the two as one incident: he combined the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* with William of Malmesbury's account of Alfred's vision of Cuthbert, and so both saints appear in his version of the episode.<sup>87</sup>

The incidents' similarities in content, but differences in style and presentation, might best be explained by a common, perhaps orally transmitted, source for the narrative. Because the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* was previously considered an eleventh-century text, the episode has usually been presented as secondary to, if not derivative of, the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*.<sup>88</sup> Johnson South considers both stories to have originated in the West Saxon court in the tenth-century, perhaps with Æthelstan, as the West Saxon kings attempted to consolidate their rule in the north and east of England.<sup>89</sup> This theory explains the emphasis on Alfred and his descendants, and the presence of a similar narrative in two separate areas, associated with two different cults. Furthermore, both saints were also associated with the kings of Wessex in other ways: the legend of Neot developed to make him a brother of Alfred, while the community of Cuthbert created

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<sup>86</sup> VPSN, pp.cv-cviii.

<sup>87</sup> Roger of Wendover, *Chronica sive Flores Historiarum*, ed. by Henry Coxe, 5 vols (London: English Historical Society, 1841-44), I, 330-33; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, I, 312-13, 408-11 (and cf. *Gesta Regum*, I, 182-83); VPSN, pp.cxix-cxx.

<sup>88</sup> E.g. Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints*, p.78.

<sup>89</sup> HSC, pp.90-94.

links with successive West Saxon kings. However, the Alfred incident, though similar in essence, developed independently for Neot and for Cuthbert. When each text was composed, the narrative changed to reflect local concerns as well as those of the West Saxon kings. But both emphasized that the West Saxon kings, represented by Alfred, were the rightful Christian rulers, and associated the Danish leaders with paganism and destruction.

Many of the differences can be explained by the incident's role in each text. The *Vita Neoti*'s concern was to demonstrate the victory of Christianity against the forces of paganism. In the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, the appearance of Cuthbert facilitated a bargain between king and saint which established new, reliable protectors for the community. In return for victory in battle, Cuthbert demanded the loyalty of Alfred and urged him, 'be faithful to me and to my people'.<sup>90</sup> Cuthbert explicitly granted Alfred power over 'tota Albion' and made him 'rex totius Britanniae', titles which Æthelstan and his successors used in their charters.<sup>91</sup> It was a hereditary right. From that moment forth, the West Saxon kings became Cuthbert's protectors, and their enemies the Danes were now Cuthbert's enemies too.

The compilers of the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* used miracles several times to demonstrate who currently received St Cuthbert's favour. Earlier sections of the text, before Alfred's vision, are ambivalent about the Danes (or Scaldings, as they are sometimes called), and demonstrate the co-operation and negotiation that took place between them and the community.<sup>92</sup> In an early section, Ælle, an Anglo-Saxon king of Northumbria, 'made good promises to the holy confessor but acted badly' in taking the possessions of St Cuthbert.<sup>93</sup> In this episode, Ubba, the 'duke of the Frisians... with a great army of Danes' ('dux Fresciorum cum magno Danorum exercitu'), was the

<sup>90</sup> HSC, pp.54-55: 'Esto fidelis mihi et populo meo'.

<sup>91</sup> Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode', pp.400-02; HSC, p.93.

<sup>92</sup> See Chapter Two for discussion of 'Scaldings'.

<sup>93</sup> HSC, pp.50-51: '...bene promisit sancto confessori sed male egit'.

instrument of God and St Cuthbert, and exerted revenge on the Northumbrian king. But he was not exempt from Cuthbert's anger, for, although he was permitted to ravage all England, he received divine revenge when he finally devastated the lands of St Cuthbert.<sup>94</sup> Co-operation with the Danes could go further: the community received oaths and engineered the placement of Guthred as king.<sup>95</sup> In these earlier sections, there was no mention of the kings of Wessex, and the ethnic origins of the various kings appear to have made little difference to how they were depicted. If anything, the Danes were presented as Cuthbert's best protectors. However, from the time of Alfred onwards, the kings of Wessex were shown as the rightful rulers of all England (or even Britain), and the Danes as the pagan enemy.

A miracle said to occur during the reign of Edward the Elder (899-924) painted the viking Onlafbald, a warrior of king Rægnald, as just such a pagan enemy.<sup>96</sup> The compiler presented Onlafbald unambiguously as the enemy of the community of St Cuthbert.<sup>97</sup> He was associated with the devil, exactly like Hinguar in the *Passio Eadmundi*: he was called 'son of the devil' ('filius diaboli') twice in this short passage, while he had a 'diabolical heart' ('diabolicum eius cor') and, finally, it was the devil who dragged him into Hell. Onlafbald's wickedness was displayed through his paganism, which caused him to blaspheme St Cuthbert. The author of the *Historia* even included the names of the pagan deities, having Onlafbald pronounce: 'I swear by my powerful gods Thor and Odin that from this hour I will be the bitterest enemy to you all'.<sup>98</sup> As in Abbo's *Passio*, religion was presented as an uncrossable divide between the community and the pagan Danes. Furthermore, the pagan enemy was depicted as

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<sup>94</sup> HSC, pp.50-53.

<sup>95</sup> HSC, pp.52-53.

<sup>96</sup> HSC, pp.60-63.

<sup>97</sup> HSC, pp.60-61: 'Et hic filius diaboli inimicus fuit quibuscunque modis potuit Deo et sancto Cuthberto' ('And this son of the devil was an enemy, in whatever ways he was able, of God and St Cuthbert').

<sup>98</sup> HSC, pp.62-63: 'Iuro per meos potentes deos Thor et Othan, quod ab hac hora inimicissimus ero omnibus uobis'.

receiving divine revenge for his actions. At the end of this chapter, the compiler recorded that Onlafbald died after the community begged God and Cuthbert to seek revenge. At the end of the next chapter, king Rægnald was similarly said to have received divine revenge for his outrages against St Cuthbert, dying in battle against the English, ‘and of the things that he had stolen from St Cuthbert he took away with him nothing except [his] sin’.<sup>99</sup> The reader was left in no doubt that the arrogant, blasphemous pagan king and his followers were enemies to the Christian community, in contrast to the pious, protective kings of Wessex.

The divide between Christian and viking was depicted in a way appropriate to the hagiographical context, but there are noticeable differences from the narratives of Abbo and the anonymous author of the *Vita Prima Neoti*. Most importantly, the association of Alfred and the West Saxon kings with the community is not depicted as a natural connection, but one earned through the patronage of the saint. Cuthbert helped them because they supported him, not because they were the natural rulers of Northumbria. Indeed, the title ‘rex totius Britanniae’ implied that this new realm included several peoples.<sup>100</sup>

A sense of Christian community against the Danes, rather than explicitly English ethnicity, emerges from the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*. The differences from the presentation of the English in Abbo’s *Passio Eadmundi* and the *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* may be explained by the likely earlier date of the *Historia*’s compilation, but they also reflected the different situations of East Anglia and Northumbria. The Northumbrians maintained political independence from the rest of England for a much longer time, and the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* reflects the West Saxon kings’ respect for their identity: however, they clearly rejected any Danish elements through the intercession of St Cuthbert.

<sup>99</sup> HSC, pp.62-63: ‘nichilque de his quae sancto confessori abstulerat secum praetor peccatum tulit’.

<sup>100</sup> Simpson, ‘The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode’, pp.401-02. See Chapter Six.

## V. Conclusion

All of these hagiographical texts show an approach to writing about conflict with viking invaders different from earlier representations. Their depictions of the viking enemy at first appear to have more in common with continental than with insular traditions. The only writer concerned with England who had used similar ideas and language previously was Alcuin, in his letters. His concern for the fate of Lindisfarne was expressed through heightened emotion, and the presentation of events as a pagan attack on Christianity, with phrases that are echoed in the *Vita Neoti*:

Now I am away your tragic sufferings daily bring me sorrow, since the pagans have desecrated God's sanctuary, shed the blood of saints around the altar, laid waste the house of our hope and trampled the bodies of the saints like dung in the street.<sup>101</sup>

In this respect, it is noteworthy that Alcuin wrote from the court of Charlemagne, rather than his home kingdom of Northumbria. His view of the situation was therefore conditioned by an imperial Frankish experience of paganism. He viewed the viking attacks as a punishment for the sins of the English as a whole.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, the Carolingians placed the vikings within a wider framework of barbarian attacks on their Christian empire.

Alcuin may have directly influenced Abbo, or at least they were following similar ideas concerning viking attack. Abbo used the same Biblical verse quoted by Alcuin on the arrival of the vikings:<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *Alcuin of York*, p.36; *Alcuini Epistolae*, p.57: 'Sed versa vice vestrae tribulationis calamitas licet absentem multum me cotidie contristat, quando pagani contaminaverunt sanctuaria Dei et fuderunt sanguinem sanctorum in circuitu altaris, vastaverunt domum spei nostre, calcaverunt corpora sanctorum in templo Dei quasi sterquilinum in platea'.

<sup>102</sup> Coupland, 'Rod of God's Wrath'; on Alcuin's development of this view, see Mary Garrison, 'Divine Election for Nations – a Difficult Rhetoric for Medieval Scholars?', in *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c.1000-1300)*, ed. by Lars Boje Mortensen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), pp.275-314 (pp.300-07).

<sup>103</sup> See Coupland, 'Rod of God's Wrath', p.537 for further usages of this scriptural quotation.



In us is fulfilled what once the prophet foretold: 'From the North evil breaks forth, and a terrible glory will come from the Lord'.<sup>104</sup>

Abbo, however, adapted the verse slightly, so that Edmund's viking persecutors appeared to be the authors of evil themselves. Now, instead of God sending evil from the north, he claimed that 'from the north comes all evil', indicating that Edmund was being tried by the devil's instruments rather than punished by God.<sup>105</sup> This change was necessary for a text glorifying a dead king – he could not be held responsible for his fate. Similarly, the *Vita Neoti* emphasized Alfred's victory, and his earlier sufferings were not presented as a punishment, but were an indication of God's special care.

Hagiographers elaborated on events that had been recorded by little more than geographical markers in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and depicted them as catastrophic. Hinguar's rampage in East Anglia was a litany of chaos and destruction, comparable to Guthrum's slaughter and desecration of holy places.<sup>106</sup> It was necessary to emphasize the power of the viking forces in order to explain Edmund's martyrdom and Alfred's period of retreat. In each case, the kings reached these points because their people had been so overwhelmed by the vicious armies that they had no defence except themselves. In turn this made the eventual Christian victory over the vikings appear more impressive. Alfred's revival of his forces was only possible through the aid of God and the saint, demonstrating that his defeat of the Danes was done with divine favour. Edmund, as a martyr, achieved a moral victory, refusing the temptation to submit to Hinguar despite the urging of his bishop and the extremities of his torture.

However, the viking impact was only temporary. The aims of the Danes were limited to greed and senseless destruction and they were shown to depart once these desires

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<sup>104</sup> *Alcuin of York*, p.40; *Alcuini Epistolae*, p.55: 'In nobis impletum est, quod olim per prophetam praedictum est: "Ab aquilone inardescunt mala et a Domino formidolosa laudatio veniet" (Jeremiah 1.14; Job 37.22)'.

<sup>105</sup> Abbo, p.72: 'ab aquilone uenit omne malum'; Coupland, 'Rod of God's Wrath', pp.537-38.

<sup>106</sup> Abbo, p.73; VPSN, p.125.

were sated. Even in the *Passio Eadmundi*, with the king murdered and the land in ruins, they were shown departing to their ships as pirates rather than conquerors. Similarly, Alfred's victory in the *Vita Neoti* resulted in Guthrum's conversion and departure across the sea 'ad propria regna'.<sup>107</sup> The aftermath of this destruction led to a revival for the Christian people, a calm after the storm. Abbo related how, 'with however small a peace having been restored to the churches, the Christians began to rise up from their hiding-places' and could then find Edmund's head and bury the saint.<sup>108</sup> The depictions of Danes were thus restricted to images of foreigners and invaders; they had no enduring relationship to the English people beyond the period of suffering. At no point in the *Passio Eadmundi* or *Vita Neoti* was the settlement of the Danes acknowledged. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, on the other hand, dealt extensively with the settlement and land-ownership of the vikings, and the army which settled in Northumbria was contrasted positively with those who settled in Mercia and Sussex.<sup>109</sup> However, in Alfred's vision of Cuthbert, the West Saxon king gained 'all Albion', and the following chapters detail the community's recuperation of the land which they had lost to the Danes, 'sicut iustum erat'.<sup>110</sup>

As subjects of hagiography, inhabitants and invaders were divided by religion. Previously, this had been seen as a mark of difference (the ninth-century Chronicle regularly describes Danes as 'heathen'), but conversion was possible and encouraged.<sup>111</sup> In the early sections of the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, it was possible for the Danes to show loyalty to St Cuthbert; but later, their paganism and the way in which it caused them to blaspheme the saint was asserted. In the *Vita Neoti*, the author, working from the Chronicle, described the conversion of Guthrum and his Danes to Christianity.

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<sup>107</sup> VPSN, pp.132, 133.

<sup>108</sup> Abbo, p.80: 'quantulacumque redditae ecclesiis pace, coeperunt Christiani de latibulis consurgere'.

<sup>109</sup> HSC, pp.52-53.

<sup>110</sup> HSC, pp.62-63.

<sup>111</sup> E.g. ASC A 832, 851, 855, 865.

However, the impact of the conversion as a victory for Alfred was only so great because the Danes – whom he described as ‘pagans’ and ‘barbarians’ throughout – were so intimately associated with heathenism.<sup>112</sup> Now, religious difference was depicted as an essential characteristic of viking nature, which solidified the religious into an ethnic divide, and provided a reason for conflict. In these texts, the villains may have been labelled ‘Danes’, but this carried with it the implications of paganism.

The presentation of these narratives in three different hagiographies suggests several implications for identity in tenth- and early eleventh-century England. Firstly, they demonstrate to us the realms of possibility and acceptability for an author describing conflict between vikings and the English. Abbo may have been a visitor from Francia, but the popularity and influence of his work show that his interpretation of the past was approved of in England. Ælfric’s Old English version of the *Life of Edmund*, while significantly adapted in some ways, maintained the binary divide of good and evil between Christian and viking. Each of the texts demonstrates that equating vikings with hagiographic villains was a credible and potent technique. The hagiographies clearly distinguished the two groups and demonstrated that allegiance to a Danish heritage excluded the possibility of being a good Christian. Being a good Christian, conversely, was in each of these texts equated with loyalty to England and its West Saxon kings.

These hagiographies all presented a West Saxon viewpoint. In the cases of Cuthbert and Neot, Alfred and his descendants were given central importance. Even the texts describing the martyrdom of Edmund emphasized the community of the English promoted by the West Saxon dynasty. It seems likely that the West Saxon kings

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<sup>112</sup> William of Malmesbury, recounting the episode, did acknowledge Guthrum’s rule over East Anglia, but his conversion appears little more than a political submission, his pagan cruelty an inescapable fact: *Gesta Regum*, I, 184-85: ‘Verum, quia non mutabit Ethiops pellem suam, datas ille terras tyrannico fastu undecim annis proterens’ (‘But the Ethiopian will not change his skin, and for eleven years he was a proud tyrant oppressing the lands entrusted to him’).

encouraged and transmitted these narratives associated with cults they patronized.<sup>113</sup>

The interest of the kings in Cuthbert can be traced most clearly, from Æthelstan onwards, and the success of the connection is demonstrated by Abbo's reference to Cuthbert in his preface to the *Passio Eadmundi*. The partnership of the West Saxon kings with these communities was not a one-sided process. Simpson has shown that locating the origins of patronage in the past, with Alfred, legitimized the connection for the Cuthbertine community.<sup>114</sup> Half a century later, a similar narrative was used by the author of the *Vita Neoti* to establish a local cult for his saint, benefiting from and contributing to the developing reputation of Alfred. This formulation of the past implied these areas had been loyal to the West Saxons since the time of Alfred, rather than the actual conquests of Edward the Elder and Æthelstan.

These were not the only saints patronized by the West Saxon kings, but they all had specific qualities that suited them for association with the viking past. Most importantly, they were venerated in specific areas: those which had been under Scandinavian rule and which had been most affected by Danish settlement. The rightful exercise of power around Durham, and the competition between various claimants, including Scandinavians, is one of the main themes of the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*. Whereas this text negotiated the transfer of authority and allegiance, the hagiographies of Edmund and Neot denied that the Danes ever wielded significant power in England. This may be because East Anglia, where these cults were based, was not ruled by Danes for such a long time. Furthermore, West Saxon influence and then conquest of the area occurred much earlier in the tenth century. Overwriting the viking history of East Anglia may therefore have been a more rapid process than in the north. The West Saxon

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<sup>113</sup> David Rollason, 'Relic-cults as an instrument of royal policy c.900-c.1050', *ASE*, 15 (1986), 91-103, esp. pp.95-96, deals with the acquisition of northern saints' relics by West Saxon kings as an expression of political dominance.

<sup>114</sup> Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode', p.407. Rollason, 'Cuthbert and Wessex', p.417, emphasizes, however, that the impetus for the connection came primarily from the West Saxon monarchs.

interest in all of these cults, however, responded to their earlier histories of Danish rule and settlement. These narratives were aimed specifically at those communities likely to present an alternative to the West Saxon view of ethnic conflict.

### **Part III: Geographical Identity**

Geographical identity is also a focus of ethnicity. Handelman views 'permanent territorial boundaries' as the force which makes ethnicity into a community, and Hutchinson and Smith include 'a link with a homeland' as one of their six main features of ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> The importance of place to a nation is not a purely modern phenomenon. The idea of the 'homeland', or *patria*, appears as a strong motivation, full of emotional ties, in medieval literature. The histories of Franks, Anglo-Saxons and other barbarian peoples usually began with a story of migration, which introduced the land of arrival as a defining feature of the ethnic group. Thus the English were the Saxons of Britain: the land they inhabited united the various Anglo-Saxon tribes and distinguished them from the Old Saxons across the sea. In textual representations, classical and biblical precursors added layers of meaning to the concept of a people's homeland.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the Promised Land of the Hebrews made a homeland an essential aspect of a Christian people's ethnic identity.

Regional identities were particularly strong in the early medieval world, in societies in which long-distance communication was slow and mass communication infrequent. But the difference between a national and a regional homeland was simply one of scale. In both cases, identities operated as ethnicities focused on geographical location. In certain contexts, geographical identities could relate to larger geographical units, as well: in conflicts with pagans or Muslims, medieval writers invoked Christendom as a place as well as a concept. Numerous geographical identities could therefore overlap, relating to small regional units such as villages, through counties, valleys and cities to whole countries and continents. Geographical identities illustrate particularly clearly

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<sup>1</sup> Don Handelman, 'The organization of ethnicity', *Ethnic Groups*, 1 (1977), 187-200 (p.197); *Ethnicity*, ed. by Hutchinson and Smith, pp.6-7

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989; repr. University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

how individuals perceived themselves to be members of several ethnic groups, which were employed in different situations.

These last two chapters explore identities determined by geographical limits in Normandy and England. During the tenth century, the political boundaries of the Norman duchy and the English kingdom were reshaped, as Norman rulers received land from the French king, and English kings expanded their territory into areas dominated by Norse leaders. In the second half of the tenth century, these borders became more fixed. As part of this process, boundaries between peoples were drawn geographically. Writers brought the idea of the homeland into line with the newly defined territories. However, existing regional loyalties continued to attract allegiance.

Among the overlapping geographical identities present in England and Normandy, these chapters investigate the perceived effects of viking raids and conquests on geographical boundaries between peoples. Those who lived in certain areas were depicted as undergoing particularly harsh suffering; other regions were identified as having been conquered and governed by Norse rulers. Subsequent writers interpreted these events in relation to the people who lived there in the following decades.

In order to investigate the development of these regional identities, we need to turn to the documents which dealt with land: charters. Charters show how the Normans, the English and their neighbours perceived and negotiated land ownership and occupation. They demonstrated authority over territory in wide and narrow terms. Moreover, ownership of cultivated land included authority over the person who maintained it and the peasants who resided there. Charters also had to justify the process of land transfer in legal terms. This often entailed a narrative explaining the history of a property's ownership, or it might be a more general account of how the property was held. These explanations defined the legal and acceptable terms by which land was owned and inhabited. Social historians have used charters to reconstruct the law and custom of

land-ownership in medieval societies, and to illuminate further the relationship between landed property and power.<sup>3</sup> In these approaches, charters are sources of information for structuralist analyses of social relations. In addition, charter studies have increasingly explored the oral contexts and rituals of land transactions, and thus what these documents reveal about literacy.<sup>4</sup> The resultant understanding of the social contexts of charters has enabled new attempts at literary analyses of these documents, although there is still work to do to integrate the different approaches.<sup>5</sup> The literary choices of charter draftsmen have further potential to increase our understanding of social relations.

Charters utilized a specific rhetoric of authority, which is the element that will tell us most about identity.<sup>6</sup> The language, concepts and narratives employed in documents reflected and constructed ethnicity no less than did literary texts. Firstly, draftsmen employed formulaic terms for land, the people who lived there and those who held authority over it. These terms, often repeated, defined communities legally. However, they were not inflexible, but changed according to the draftsman's preference, the particular situation and current fashion. Moreover, they reflected local differences in terminology and custom. Therefore, the language of charters reproduced various perceptions of regional communities, but also played a role in the definition and maintenance of group identities. Secondly, charter draftsmen interpreted land transactions in general terms. The charters of the Norman Duke Richard II and the

<sup>3</sup> See in particular *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), esp. Chris Wickham, 'Property Ownership and Signorial Power in Twelfth-Century Tuscany', pp.221-44.

<sup>4</sup> *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Warren Brown, Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes and Adam Kostó (Cambridge: CUP, 2013); Susan Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), pp.36-62; Charles Insley, 'Rhetoric and Ritual in Late Anglo-Saxon Charters', in *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Marco Mostert and P.S. Barnwell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp.109-21.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Petra Hofmann, 'Infernal Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Charters' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of St Andrews, 2008); David Johnson, 'The Fall of Lucifer in "Genesis A" and Two Anglo-Latin Royal Charters', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 97 (1998), 500-21.

<sup>6</sup> On the definition and legal expansion of the territory of Normandy, see Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*.



English royal diplomas of King Æthelred II included lengthy preambles which established the origin and nature of their jurisdiction over the land concerned. The royal and ducal administrations used these preambles to impose particular interpretations of their actions, which would be preserved and replicated by the beneficiaries. Therefore, charters promoted the kings' and dukes' views of ethnic relations in the regions under their jurisdiction. In these two final chapters, I focus on the texts of charters, but it should be noted that, in their associated rituals, their views of geographical identities were presented to a wider audience.

The geographical claims of English kings and Norman dukes differed in scope; so, too, did their perceptions of their subjects' identities. Norman dukes defined their subjects as a single group, defined by their land and obedience to their authority. The English kings, however, asserted imperial ambitions across all Britain. Viking conquests and past rulers lurked in the background of both rhetorical programmes. While Scandinavians were infrequently mentioned in charters, the viking conquests were a crucial backdrop to Norman claims to authority; in England, they provided an expression of regional distinctiveness in the north and east.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Geographical Identity in Norman ducal charters**

#### **I. Norman ducal charters**

The formation of Normandy has long been equated with Charles the Simple's initial grant of land around Rouen in 911. This strong association, as with so much concerning the early history of Normandy, derives from Dudo's interpretation. In the *De moribus*, Dudo presented Normandy as a land which Rollo claimed whole. According to Flodoard, on the other hand, the Seine vikings received two further grants of land: Maine and the Bessin in 924, and then 'the land of the Bretons that was located along the sea-coast', usually interpreted as the Avranchin and Cotentin, in 933.<sup>1</sup> These grants eventually became a single principality with clear boundaries, although Maine was ultimately not included. Rollo and his descendants created a territorial unit out of a collection of counties which had not previously been recognized as distinct: Ademar of Chabannes called it 'Normandy, which was formerly called the frontier of France and Brittany'.<sup>2</sup> A century later, *Normannia* was a recognized territorial entity with defined linear borders.<sup>3</sup> The name *Normannia* came from its people, the *Northmanni*; but by the mid-eleventh century, the inhabitants were also called *Northmanni* because they lived in *Normannia*.<sup>4</sup> In terms of identity, people and territory had become inseparable.

According to Dudo, Rollo's first actions as Christian ruler of Normandy were to bestow estates from his new land on churches and counts. Dudo specified that he carried this out 'by word of mouth'.<sup>5</sup> Under the earliest dukes – Rollo and William Longsword – there was no tradition of recording property grants in writing. Their descendants

<sup>1</sup> *The Annals of Flodoard of Reims 919-966*, trans. by Steven Fanning and Bernard Bachrach (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004), p.23; *Les Annales de Flodoard*, ed. by Philippe Lauer (Paris: Picard, 1905), p.55: 'terram Brittonum in ora maritima sitam'; Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p.9; Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*, pp.29, 81.

<sup>2</sup> Ademar of Chabannes, *Chronicon*, ed. by Georg Waitz, *MGH*, SS, 4 (Hanover, 1891; repr. 1968), 127: 'ea Normannia, quae antea vocabatur marcha Franciae et Britanniae'.

<sup>3</sup> Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*, pp.75-76.

<sup>4</sup> Davis, *Normans and their Myth*, pp.57-58.

<sup>5</sup> Christiansen, p.51; Lair, p.171: 'coepit metiri terram verbis suis comitibus, atque largiri fidelibus...'

found it necessary to formalize their gifts to churches in written charters. Indeed, a 1025 charter of Richard II, which confirmed all the gifts that his ancestors and followers had given to Jumièges, emphasized that previous grants had been oral because his predecessors had not been accustomed to write down such actions.<sup>6</sup> The first written documents were produced under Richard I, who was also the first of the Normans to attest the charters of the French king. The process of writing the charter and having it marked by witnesses probably became familiar to him in this way.

This chapter analyses all the extant charters produced in Normandy before 1027. This includes fifty-five charters of the reigns of Richards I, II and III, in which the dukes donated or confirmed property transfers, gave concessions or influenced the government of a religious house, or simply attested a charter as witnesses.<sup>7</sup> These documents are supplemented by a small number of charters which did not involve the dukes, but related to properties or beneficiaries within Normandy. I have considered this collection within the context of other charters produced nearby – at Mont St Michel, Chartres and by the kings of France – in order to better understand the characteristics specific to Normandy, and the ways in which the Normans followed Frankish practice.

The term ‘charters’ should here be understood to apply to all of these documents.<sup>8</sup> During the tenth and eleventh centuries, throughout France, the distinction between public and private acts became less clear-cut. In her discussion of Norman charter production, Cassandra Potts has built on the analysis in Marie Fauroux’s edition of the

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<sup>6</sup> F36 (1025): ‘Hec consensu et astipulatione genitoris mei supra nominato loco data sunt, sed minime propriis cartulis descripta’; cf. F53 (1025-26): Rollo ‘sed propriis cartulis ad notitiam futurorum minime descriptis’; William Longsword ‘simili modo absque cartarum notamine concessit’.

<sup>7</sup> All of these charters are published in *Recueil*, ed. by Fauroux: references are given in the form ‘F36’. Dates are given where available, but most are undated – further details on the dates of individual charters can be found in the *Recueil*.

<sup>8</sup> On public and private acts generally, see Olivier Guyotjeannin, Jacques Pycke and Benoît-Michel Tock, *Diplomatique Médiévale* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), pp.103-04; Léopold Genicot, *Les Actes Publics*, *Typologie des Sources de Moyen Âge Occidental*, 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1972).

early ducal charters.<sup>9</sup> She established that Richard II's charters, with which we are primarily concerned here, display a number of characteristics that those produced under later Norman dukes no longer contained. In particular, many of Richard II's charters resembled public diplomas, enacted simply by the cross of the duke. These public acts were direct assertions of ducal authority. The dukes played a role in determining the content of these documents, and the statements they contained had implications for ducal behaviour. However, charters produced in this period were also influenced by others with concerns in the transactions. Many were more akin to private charters, with full witness lists. The variety of forms stemmed from the experimental nature of the first Norman documents.

The early charters are remarkably unformulaic, but bear various similarities to Carolingian royal diplomas, as Potts has demonstrated. Certain characteristics are reminiscent of the charters of Carolingian kings, such as the phrase *divina propitiae clementia* in the ducal title, the frequent use of devotion formulas and the imposition of fines as well as spiritual sanctions.<sup>10</sup> The lengthy preambles also have more in common with charters of the ninth and early tenth centuries than those of Lothair IV and Robert II. The notaries who drafted Norman charters probably found models in charters from the archives of their ecclesiastical institutions, either re-established Norman monasteries or the houses from where clerics came to Normandy, such as St-Cyprien of Poitiers.

Often, charters were drafted in beneficiary institutions, as memorials to the donations they record. Most clearly, one charter of Richard II's reign (F42), recording gifts to St-Ouen, was signed by a notary describing himself as 'Bernerius sacerdos et monachus', who stated that he prepared the charter in the presence of his abbot, Henry (1006-1033). In another case, an exchange between the abbeys of Jumièges and Bourgueil (F14bis),

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<sup>9</sup> Cassandra Potts, 'The Early Norman Charters: a New Perspective on an Old Debate', in *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Carola Hicks (Stamford: Watkins, 1992), 25-40 (p.29).

<sup>10</sup> Potts, 'Early Norman Charters', p.32.

many monks attested the transaction. This record of the transaction between the two abbots, although described as a concession of the duke, was clearly made at Jumièges. Finally, it is possible to associate certain charter formulae with particular monasteries. Charters produced for Mont-St-Michel, for example, display similar elements in the *arengae* and *sanctiones*. The openings of the *arengae* found in two charters of 1015 and one of the mid-1020s (F16, F17 and F49) are virtually identical, and the same *arenga* is found in a further six charters in the Mont-St-Michel cartulary, which record non-Norman donations.<sup>11</sup> Potts determined that it was ‘almost always’ the case that documents were produced by the clergy of beneficiary institutions.<sup>12</sup> She claimed that this decentralized production led to the diverse nature of charters from the eleventh century. Exceptions, however, may be found in the charters of Richard II’s reign.

Some charters produced under Richard II seem to have been drafted by individuals within the ducal retinue. The scribes of the charters were named infrequently, but they provide a few clues to how charters were produced. Of the eight occasions on which notaries were named in grants from Norman benefactors, one notary is known to us: Dudo of St-Quentin. In one charter (F13) he described himself as Richard II’s *capellanus*, indicating a formal position within the ducal household. Witnesses appear in some documents identified with various other offices of the household such as *cubicularius* and *procurator* (F15), *camberarius* and *hostiarius* (F44). In another charter (F18), Dudo described himself as *cancellarius*, as did another notary, Hugo, in 1025 (F34). The use of *cancellarius* suggests that the Norman notaries may have followed the practice of the royal household. In 1006, the Norman notary (‘Wido notarius’) seems to have been working alongside the royal notary to produce a pair of charters which

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<sup>11</sup> *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. by Katharine Keats-Rohan (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), p.39. Heinrich Fichtenau, *Arenga: Spätantike und Mittelalter im Spiegel von Urkundenformeln*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband 18 (Graz-Cologne, 1957), is the classic study of preambles; see more generally Herwig Wolfram, ‘Political theory and narrative in charters’, *Viator*, 26 (1995), 39-51.

<sup>12</sup> Potts, ‘Early Norman Charters’, p.29.

contain much shared phrasing.<sup>13</sup> Many of Richard II's charters contain common elements: from such evidence, it has been adduced that he began to cultivate a chancery, perhaps in imitation of the royal chancery.<sup>14</sup> The degree of organization is not clear, however, and between Richard's death and the reign of William the Conqueror the duty of producing charters passed back to beneficiary monasteries. Nevertheless, Richard II oversaw the production of a considerable number of his own charters.

Still, the presentation of Norman charters, like their content, retains more similarity with Carolingian than with Capetian royal charters. Several charters are written with the first and last line in stylized, elongated script, and the rest in diplomatic minuscule.<sup>15</sup> This presentation may be observed in the original copy of a charter produced by Dudo (F13): Dudo's hand may be seen in the first and last lines, but the remainder of the text was copied in another hand.<sup>16</sup> This document also indicates the distinction between notaries, who drafted the text, and the scribes who actually wrote it down.

Dudo's appearances also demonstrate the occasional personal attachment of the notary to the donor. In both charters drafted by Dudo, he was closely associated with Count Rodulf of Ivry, Richard I's half-brother. Dudo acted as notary (F13) for a gift from Rodulf, and later Rodulf sponsored Dudo's gift to St-Quentin of properties held in benefice from Richard I (F18). Rodulf also features in the *De moribus*, in which Dudo described Rodulf as the *relator* of the narrative, and dedicated an introductory verse to him.<sup>17</sup> We may therefore suppose that Dudo maintained a closer relationship with

<sup>13</sup> Potts, 'The Early Norman Charters', p.37; F9; 'Charta regis Roberti pro Fiscannensi monasterio', in *Gallia Christiana*, 16 vols (Paris, 1715-1865), XI, *Instrumenta*, cols.8-9.

<sup>14</sup> Fauroux (*Recueil*, pp.41-43) proposed this idea, which has been developed by Potts ('Early Norman Charters', p.33) despite Emily Zack Tabuteau's claim (*Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p.8) that it is 'beyond dispute' that there was not an 'organized chancery' before 1066. Yet it must at least be recognized that Richard II produced charters as donor, and that they were not all produced by beneficiary institutions during his reign.

<sup>15</sup> Potts, 'Early Norman Charters', pp.30-31.

<sup>16</sup> Marie Fauroux, 'Deux autographes de Dudon de Saint-Quentin (1011, 1015)', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 111 (1953), 229-34.

<sup>17</sup> Christiansen, p.11; Lair, p.125.

Rodulf than with Duke Richard II, and that he turned his hand to producing charters because of this relationship. In this case, as in the charters drafted by ducal *cancellarii*, the production of the charter, and thus much of its expression, came from the donor.

Norman charters in this early period were records of transactions rather than deeds themselves. Indeed, Tabuteau has suggested that they were primarily aids to memory.<sup>18</sup> Internally, they do not describe themselves as providing proof, but contained elements which would allow the truth to be discerned in the case of a dispute, such as the names of witnesses. One charter (F14) demanded that the transfer should be told ‘to our sons who will be born and grow up, so that they will tell their sons what is to be believed’.<sup>19</sup> Another recorded that young boys were taken to a boundary place and beaten so that they would remember the spot well (F10).<sup>20</sup> Charters often contained long narrative descriptions of the circumstances of a transaction, but these were more than aids to memory. Narratives contained in charters might be expected to outclass contrary recollections: over the course of time the documents’ narratives would become embedded in memory, too.<sup>21</sup> Documentary evidence in this form bolstered claims to land by asserting a single view of events.

Thus early Norman charters were also political statements.<sup>22</sup> In his recent study of late Carolingian royal diplomas, Geoffrey Koziol proposed that ‘any given diploma was issued in order to institute, publicise, and memorialise a crucial alteration in the political regime’.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, documents produced in Normandy recorded acts which embodied new political realities and relationships. One of the very earliest charters, which records

<sup>18</sup> Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, pp.211-20.

<sup>19</sup> F14: ‘id ad memoriam futurorum clavibus fidei quem scripturae fideliter est committendum neque id filiis qui nascentur et exurgent, ut et ipsi narrent filiis suis credendum’.

<sup>20</sup> For a legal-historical precedent, see *Lex Ribuaria*, ed. by Franz Beyerle and Rudolf Buchner, *MGH, LL nat. Germ.*, 3.2 (Hanover, 1954), p.116.

<sup>21</sup> Sarah Foot, ‘Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record, or Story?’, in *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Elizabeth Tyler and Ross Balzaretti (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 39-65 (pp.63-65).

<sup>22</sup> Wolfram, ‘Political Theory and Narrative’, p.42: diplomas were ‘total symbols of lordship’.

<sup>23</sup> Geoffrey Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas: The West Frankish Kingdom (840-987)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p.3.

Richard I's 990 donation to Fécamp, provides a suitable example (F4).<sup>24</sup> This document recorded the ceremony by which Richard not only gave a donation of property to the monastery he had constructed, but also cemented the new relationship between duke and church. It represented the ceremony for future readers, expounding Richard's Christian duty as duke and the heavenly reinforcement of his authority. Koziol considered this charter to be 'so loaded with the high rhetoric of princely power that it should really stand as the foundational act not for Fécamp but for ducal authority in Normandy'.<sup>25</sup> But it also introduced the episcopal hierarchy of Normandy. The text introduced the role of the new archbishop of Rouen, his son Robert, who consecrated Fécamp and twelve churches belonging to it. Moreover, for the first time, the charter stated that the seven suffragan bishops of his archdiocese were present as witnesses showing agreement. Thus this charter – the first of a Norman donor for a Norman beneficiary – established ducal influence over the entire archdiocese of Rouen in partnership with the monastic and episcopal church.

The beginning of charter production was itself a pivotal element of the rhetoric of power. Richard I and Richard II established a tradition of charter production as a deliberate demonstration that they belonged within the Frankish community and its Christian traditions. No doubt the monks of the monasteries they patronized, who came from all over Francia, encouraged them to produce documents detailing their gifts and relationships. By participating in the production of documents for external monasteries, the dukes also demonstrated their culture, piety and authority to their neighbours, who might attest their transactions. As we shall see, from the late tenth century onwards, the Norman rulers extended their authority beyond their powerbase of Rouen over the other areas to which they laid claim.

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<sup>24</sup> On this charter, see David Douglas, 'The First Ducal Charter for Fecamp', in *L'abbaye Benedictine de Fecamp* (Fécamp: Durand, 1959), pp.45-56.

<sup>25</sup> Koziol, *Politics of Memory*, p.46.



Through these documents and the transactions contained within them, the dukes demonstrated that they were rulers of a people and a territorial unit that were coterminous. They made this strategy effective by convincing the inhabitants that the ducal family were their best protectors and held a shared identity based upon the land in which they all resided. The dukes also had to convince their neighbours and those at the boundaries of their territory. In particular, they needed to negotiate their relationship with the French king. In these documents, Richard II presented people and land as distinct from the Franks under his authority.

This chapter examines how the territorial principality of Normandy was constructed and identified with its people. Firstly, the language used to present Norman rulers and their subjects in charters is analysed. Secondly, it explores how the acts recorded in the charters demonstrated the geographical extent of Normandy. Thirdly, we turn to the ideology of authority which these documents expressed and embodied. Finally, the question is raised of how this construction of a territorial principality related to the ducal emphasis on viking history explored in Chapters One and Three.

## **II. Ducal self-presentation**

Charters were a method of ducal self-presentation. These documents were usually composed in the voice of the duke, either carrying out an act himself or confirming that of another individual. While the duke himself did not compose them, he did certify them with his name, a cross or monogram; he may also have used a seal.<sup>26</sup> The text of each charter was therefore explicitly ratified by the duke himself as his own words. Moreover, early Norman charters were not formulaic but were readily adapted to each particular situation. For this reason, these documents were especially useful in the duke's presentation of himself in his immediate context.

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<sup>26</sup> Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p.220.

### a. Rulers of Normandy

The Norman dukes expressed the extent of their authority through various formal components of the charter. The most direct was the titles they used in the *intitulatio* at the beginning and signature at the end of the document. The title – *dux*, *comes*, *marchio*, *princeps* – showed the nature of the benefactor's authority in his and his subjects' eyes.<sup>27</sup> However, the titles used by Richard I, Richard II and Richard III for themselves and their predecessors varied not only between charters but even within the same documents. For example, in a 1006 charter for Fécamp (F9) Richard II was introduced as 'comes and patritius' and later in the document referred to as 'comes' and 'dux'; various combinations of these titles were used in many documents (see for example F24, F47, F49). There has been much debate about the Normans' titles and where this positioned them within a hierarchy headed by the king of the Franks. However, Helmerichs has explored the Normans' early use of titles in detail and concluded that they do not reflect clear-cut legal definitions, and nor can we mark a transition between *comes* and *dux*.<sup>28</sup> The choice of title may well have been down to the context of the individual transaction and other parties involved. Often, it seems that the notary preferred to use a combination of titles (in one of his charters, Dudo spoke of 'ducis et marchionis praepotentissimi, et patricii almiflui', F13), presumably to emphasize Richard's status.<sup>29</sup>

In contrast to the diversity of titles employed in early Norman charters, the associated identifiers were remarkably stable. While it was most usual for titles to be

<sup>27</sup> Ildar Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Authority in the Carolingian World (c.751-877)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp.102-03 reflects on Wolfram's concept of the *intitulatio* as both *Selbstaussage* (self-statement) and *Fremdaussage* (external statement): Herwig Wolfram, *Intitulatio I: Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, Ergänzungsband 21 (Wien: Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1967), 12-25.

<sup>28</sup> Robert Helmerichs, 'Princeps, Comes, Dux Normannorum: Early Rollonid Designators and their Significance', *Haskins Society Journal*, 9 (2001), 57-77; Karl Werner, 'Quelques observations au sujet des débuts du "duché" de Normandie', in *Droit privé et institutions régionales: Études historiques offertes à Jean Yver* (Paris: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 1976), pp.691-709.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. to the titles Dudo used in the *De moribus* (Lair, p.276): 'Marchio duxque, comes mirabilis...'.

used alone or in combination, they were also frequently attached to an identifier indicating the region and people over whom authority was exercised. In the case of Richards I, II and III, the identifier was usually *Nor(th)mannorum*. This identifier is added to titles in almost half of the charters dating from their reigns – thirty different documents. It presented them as rulers of a single people. No charter refers to any other people under their authority. This stands in contrast to Dudo's frequent claims in the *De moribus* that Rollo and his descendants were rulers of both Normans and Bretons.<sup>30</sup> The designation as rulers 'of the Normans', however, was not restrictive. There was no other term used for the people who inhabited Normandy, and no one else claimed jurisdiction over them. Using such titles in charters reinforced the extension of *Normanni* to include everyone within the regions under discussion in a given transaction. Thus, *Normanni* referred not only to Scandinavian elites, but all the inhabitants of the area the dukes ruled. The name may originally have derived from the settler Scandinavian elite but, by the early eleventh century, it had extended to all the subjects of the Norman duke.

A small number of charters refer to the dukes as leaders of a territory rather than a people: *Normannia* or *Normannica*. These are some of the first occurrences of this name for the principality.<sup>31</sup> In some cases, it may be a later emendation, added when 'Normandy' had become a more commonly-used name (as in the dowry of Judith, which is headed 'Dotalitium Judithae, comitissae Normanniae').<sup>32</sup> However, 'Normannia' is included twice in an original 1014 charter for Notre Dame de Chartres (F15). In his charter of 1015 (F18), Dudo used the title 'dux Normanniae' in opposition to 'rex Francorum': 'Normannorum' would have been a more obvious parallel, and thus we may assume that the geographical designation was well understood, if not already in common usage. *Normannorum* and *Normanniae* were attached to titles seemingly

<sup>30</sup> See Christiansen, pp.49, 58-59, 60-63, 84; Lair, pp.168-69, 181, 182-85, 208-09.

<sup>31</sup> *Normannia* appeared on the ducal coinage in the second half of the eleventh century: Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p.57.

<sup>32</sup> F11; the title in F1 is probably also late.

interchangeably. Richard I's charter for the monastery he founded at St-Taurin (F5) uses both 'dux Normannie' and 'Normannorum princeps'.<sup>33</sup> In this sense, people and territory were treated as coterminous.

*Normannia* appears as a geographic term in two further documents (F14 and F52). The original copy of Richard II's confirmation audit for St-Wandrille (F52) describes the monastery as 'in Normannica provintia'. Similarly, a document recording the exchange of properties between Jumièges and Bourgueil describes Longueville, the property acquired by Jumièges, as 'in Normannia sita' (F14). It was described as such before the transfer of ownership from Bourgueil: *Normannia* was unambiguously a geographical designation, applicable even to properties outside the dukes' control. Longueville (*Longuavilla*) was exchanged for Tourtenay (*Tortiniacus*), Jumièges' property 'in Aquitaniae regno locata'. *Normannia*, we may note, was not described as a *regnum*, which perhaps reflects its novelty as a territorial entity and its unclear status within the kingdom of France.<sup>34</sup> This record of the exchange was preserved in the cartulary of Bourgueil (the version recorded at Jumièges, F14bis, differs in presentation, though the underlying transaction is the same). Thus, *Normanni(c)a* was a geographical term understood and used within and outside the area to which it referred. The title *Dux Normanniae* did not refer simply to Richard's personal identity, but to the region he ruled over – which gained its name from his people. A charter of Drogo, count of the Vexin, from 1024, recalled that St Wandregisus had founded St-Wandrille 'in Normannorum prouincia'.<sup>35</sup> The Northmen were now so closely linked to the region that their identity was projected back into the period before they arrived.

In only one exceptional charter did a Norman ruler lay claim to the title of a wider geographical region. In a charter of 1009 (F12), Richard II was entitled 'princeps et

<sup>33</sup> However, this document is only preserved in copies dating from the thirteenth century and later, so the phrasing may not be entirely original.

<sup>34</sup> Werner, 'Quelques observations', p.705.

<sup>35</sup> Ferdinand Lot, *Études critiques sur l'Abbaye de Saint-Wandrille* (Paris: Champion, 1913), no.7.

marchio totius Neustrie provinciae cunctis religionis christiane fidelibus'. Neustria was a long-standing regional name for northern France, especially the area between the Seine and the Loire. Richard's claim to rule this entire region was, therefore, an unrealistic assertion of authority over Brittany and Maine. The motivation for this claim should be sought in the circumstances of the act contained in the charter. This title was assumed by Richard as he intervened in the affairs of Mont-Saint-Michel, where the clerics, and then monks, had turned to other lords for patronage besides the Normans – the Bretons and the counts of Maine. Richard used the title *marchio Neustrie* because *marchio Normanniae* would not necessarily have justified his intervention at the distant monastery. Neustria provided a recognisable name for a distinct geographical region, a political entity with ancient heritage. Other instances of Neustria as a precursor to Normandy occur rarely. Notably, in Fulbert's *Vita Romani*, the saint was described as a light to 'Neustriam... regionem'.<sup>36</sup> The saint's position as archbishop of Rouen was generalized to make him the apostle of all Neustria. By the end of the eleventh century, this connection had developed to the extent that 'Neustria' was used as a poetic synonym for Normandy.<sup>37</sup>

### **b. Counts of Rouen**

The most common title was simply *comes*, without a demographic or territorial identifier. In discussions of this title, it has been assumed that this referred to the county of Rouen. Certainly, this was one of the ways in which the Normans' neighbours perceived their authority. Raoul Glaber called Richard II 'christianissimum comitem eiusdem ciuitatis' and William Longsword 'Rothomagorum ducem'.<sup>38</sup> However, no

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<sup>36</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.241.

<sup>37</sup> Davis, *Normans and their Myth*, p.58.

<sup>38</sup> *Rodulfi Glabri Historiarum libri quinque*/ Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of the Histories*, ed. by John France (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp.138, 162.

Norman charter includes the title *comes Rotomagensis*, even used retrospectively. The closest any of them come is F14bis, which refers back to William Longsword. The document notes that he lived in ‘Rotomagensis civitate’, but it does not make this his title.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, the *Planctus* of the 940s called William ‘Rodomensis’ in opposition to William of Aquitaine as ‘Pictavensis’, and in its final stanza addressed Richard I as ‘comes Rodomensis, o Ricarde, comitatus princeps atque pater’.<sup>40</sup> Richard I’s coins associated his name with the city of Rouen, where they were struck.<sup>41</sup> From this evidence, it seems likely that Richard I, and before him Rollo and William Longsword did use this title during their lifetimes. However, Dukes Richard I and Richard II began to produce charters as a mark of a wider authority. The complete absence of the title *comes Rotomagensis* from Norman charters resulted from a deliberate decision. In the *pagus* of Rouen, by this time, the authority of the descendants of Rollo was unquestioned. These documents asserted authority across the wider principality of Normandy.

Raoul Glaber described Rouen as ‘the capital city of this ducal principality’, and this is how it is presented in these early charters.<sup>42</sup> Already a *metropolis* in the sense of metropolitan see, Rouen was perfectly positioned to become the centre of secular authority over an area equivalent to the archdiocese. Rouen was the centre of ducal administration, as demonstrated by the number of charters which name Rouen as their place of production. On two occasions only, charters state that a transaction took place at the beneficiary monastery. Each time, it is recorded that the charter was placed on the

<sup>39</sup> F14bis: ‘Igitur, post multa curricula annorum, extitit nobilissimus comes Vuillelmus Rotomagensis civitate, qui uxorem habuit nomine Leyardam...’. Werner, ‘Quelques observations’, p.697, treats this as William’s formal title of count of Rouen, but if this were the case surely the document would say ‘comes Vuillelmus Rotomagensis civitatis’.

<sup>40</sup> *Planctus*, ed. by Helmerichs, v.15, v.17.

<sup>41</sup> Dumas, *Trésor de Fécamp*, pp.71-75. Michael Dolley and Jacques Yvon, ‘A Group of tenth-century coins found at Mont-Saint-Michel’, *British Numismatic Journal*, 40 (1971), 7-11, reports a single example of a coin minted by William Longsword as duke of Brittany, but his son and grandson were not so ambitious in this respect.

<sup>42</sup> *Rodulfi Glabri Historiarum libri quinque*, ed. by France, pp.36-37: ‘Illorum quippe ducaminis principatus fuit metropolis ciuitas Rotomagorum’.

high altar of St-Ouen (F41) or St-Wandrille, a short journey down the Seine from Rouen (F46bis). Otherwise, it seems that charters composed at Rouen were produced directly for the duke: a further eight documents state that they were produced in the city, ‘hoc Rodomo civitate’ (F13) or ‘Rodomagensi civitate’ (F18). The transactions recorded in these charters were diverse. They were not all ducal donations, although they would generally be attested by the duke.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, they were not all for houses within Normandy – Richard II gave land to St-Riquier and Notre-Dame de Chartres, and consented to Dudo’s donation to St-Quentin. Different kinds of transactions took place at Rouen because it was the centre of ducal – and ecclesiastical – government.

It is likely that Richard demanded that requests, such as that of the abbot Angelrannus of St-Riquier (F20), be directed to him at Rouen. His father, Richard I, made such a demand to the monks of St-Denis. A charter of 968 records this event, in which Richard I gave Berneval to St-Denis (F3). This early charter states that it was enacted at Berneval, the only time an act was recorded as having taken place at a location donated in the transaction (royal donations, on the other hand, were quite likely to take place at the locations involved: for example F22, F59). However, even though the donation was made at Berneval, the charter emphasized that the request and grant were decided at Rouen, the duke’s centre of government. Richard was approached by the monks of St-Denis at Gisors, where he was meeting the French king and which was situated in the Norman borderlands. Richard demanded that the monks should direct their request to him when he was in his capital of Rouen, which they did, in the presence of his wife and *fideles*. He granted the monks’ request, and in doing so Richard asserted his territorial authority over both Rouen and Berneval. By having the monks

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<sup>43</sup> An exception is Lot, *Saint-Wandrille*, no.7, the gift of Count Drogo of the Vexin to St-Wandrille, which was enacted in Rouen but does not involve the duke in any way. On Count Drogo’s patronage of Norman monasteries and close relationship with the ducal family (he was married to Richard II’s niece), see Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*, pp.255-57.

attend him at his capital, Richard showed that Rouen was the proper place for such business and the centre of the land which he ruled.

Rollo and his successors' strong connection to Rouen also made them rulers of the people of the city, whose support they cultivated through narratives relating transactions enacted before the production of charters. The earliest narrative texts, the *Vita Romani* and the *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, focused on the citizens of Rouen – not just the monks and clergy, but the entire population. Their authors clearly stated the actions of 'eiusdem urbis clericis et populus unanimiter' or 'universus tam ecclesiasticus quam monasticus ordo, cum ingenti populo ab urbe'.<sup>44</sup> Narratives such as these, like charters, established land transactions in the memories of the citizens of Rouen.<sup>45</sup> The *Translatio Prima Audoeni* provided an origin story for the place-name of 'Longum-pedanum', and then carefully described the land which Rollo granted to St-Ouen. The passage mimics a charter, complete with the threat of anathema at the end. Because charters were not granted by the dukes for most of the tenth century, the narrative thus acted as evidence of ownership of this property, while the etymology of 'Longum-pedanum' was an effective way to spread the story of Rollo's gift rapidly through non-literate society.

There is a slight possibility that the location referred to in the 968 charter for St-Denis was not the city itself, as it specifies that the monks should come to Richard 'near the city of Rouen' ('in proximo Rotomis civitate'). This may have referred to Fécamp, the ducal residence on the coast, forty miles from Rouen. William Longsword built his palace there, where his son, Richard I, was born. The monastery which Richard then established on the site was, from the time of its 990 consecration, closely associated with the ducal family. Richard I and Richard II, after spending much of their lives with

<sup>44</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.187; *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, ch.9.

<sup>45</sup> See further Chibnall, 'Charter and Chronicle', who mentions the *Translatio Prima Audoeni* on pp.7-8.



Fécamp as their home, were buried in the abbey there: it became a kind of *Eigenkloster* for the family.

The palace at Fécamp was certainly seen by Richard II as an appropriate place for the business recorded in charters. After Richard I's 990 foundation charter was enacted there (F4), five charters from Richard II's reign record that they were produced at Fécamp, by which we may understand the ducal palace, as four of them specify.<sup>46</sup> Three of these charters confirmed the properties of the great monasteries of Fécamp and Jumièges, and of the newly-established priory of Bernay; to this group may be added F53, the confirmation of the properties of St-Ouen.<sup>47</sup> From the evidence of these charters, it seems likely that Richard II based his incipient chancery at Fécamp. The location of the ducal palace alongside the abbey would have been ideal for training members of such a chancery, or for simply providing literate members of the household. The correspondence between Dudo's *De moribus* and the Fécamp Chronicle indicates that there was a close relationship between writers at the abbey and the ducal retinue.

The dukes were so closely associated with Fécamp that even documents involving other monasteries referred to the connection. In the charter for St-Ouen which was enacted at the beneficiary monastery, Richard II was identified by his connection to Fécamp: 'marquis Richard, son of marquis Richard, who founded the place of the Holy Trinity at Fécamp'.<sup>48</sup> The association of the dukes with Fécamp was such that it became an identifying feature. The *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*, also written at St-Ouen, likewise supplemented Richard I's title with the information that it was he 'who built the church of the Holy Trinity at Fécamp from its foundations'.<sup>49</sup> The similarity of this phrasing to that found in the charter is one of many such similarities in the *Translatio*

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<sup>46</sup> F9, 'Charta Roberti pro Fiscannensi'; F34, F35, F36.

<sup>47</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival*, p.41.

<sup>48</sup> F41: 'Richardus marchio, filius Richardi marchionis, qui locum Sanctae Trinitatis in Fisco campo fundavit'.

<sup>49</sup> *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*, ch.20: 'qui ecclesiam beatæ Trinitatis Fiscanni e fundamentis construxit'.

*Secunda.* Moreover, Pope Benedict VIII referred to Fécamp as ‘ecclesiam tuam’ in a 1017 bull addressed to Richard II.<sup>50</sup>

In a gift to Fécamp, Richard II used the title ‘hujusce cespitis monarchus’ (‘monarch of this piece of earth’, F31), another phrase that is only found in a single charter. It is not entirely clear to which *cespes* this refers – to all of Normandy or to Fécamp in particular.<sup>51</sup> Framing himself as *monarchus* of Fécamp reflected the imitation of Carolingian rulership he based there. Although the Normans never used the title *reges* to refer to their leaders, Victoria Jordan has demonstrated Dudo’s portrayal of the dukes’ developing ‘kingship’ over three generations.<sup>52</sup> Outside Normandy, Ademar of Chabannes, alone among Frankish chroniclers, recognized the regal nature of their authority, and identified Rollo as ‘rex’.<sup>53</sup>

### c. King and duke

However, the Normans operated within a political hierarchy headed by a king, and this is reflected in their charters. The dukes oscillated between supporting the Carolingian and Robertian parties during the tenth century, but they always recognized a king as their superior.<sup>54</sup> Helmerichs’ study rejected the idea that the Rollonids’ titles were linked to the Robertians’ titles, since they were at war on several occasions.<sup>55</sup> The

<sup>50</sup> Jean-François Lemarignier, *Étude sur les privilèges d’exemption et de juridiction ecclésiastique des abbayes Normandes des origines à 1140* (Paris: Picard, 1937), p.37; he discusses the authenticity of the bull in n.38, concluding in favour of its authenticity; see further Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p.375, n.160.

<sup>51</sup> The choice of the word ‘cespes’ may conceivably relate to the practice of placing a clod of earth on the altar of the beneficiary church. This practice was common in England, although unrecorded in Normandy. Foot, ‘Reading Anglo Saxon Charters’, p.51.

<sup>52</sup> Jordan, ‘The Role of Kingship’.

<sup>53</sup> Ademar of Chabannes, *Chronicon*, p.123.

<sup>54</sup> David Douglas, ‘The Rise of Normandy’, in David Douglas, *Time and the Hour* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), pp.95-119 (p.102). Again, the charters display a changed political direction from the *Plactus*, which applauds William’s relationship with the king (ed. by Helmerichs, v.4): ‘Hic audacer olim regem Hcludowicum sibi fecit seniore’, but also indicates that this relationship was aimed at aggrandizing William, so that he too would ‘reign in the way of kings’ (‘regnaretque regum more’).

<sup>55</sup> Helmerichs, ‘Rollonid Designators’, p.70.

Normans chose which titles to use themselves, in response to the authority exercised by the Robertians and the Carolingians.

These authorities make infrequent appearances in Norman charters. The consent of a superior authority for a ducal action occurred in only one document, the gift of Berneval to St-Denis by Richard I in 968 (F3). The text specifies that Richard asked the monks to address him at Rouen, ‘cum assensu senioris mei Hugonis Francorum principis ceterorumque virorum meorum fidelium’. Tabuteau has shown that the consent of a lord, although it might be included in Norman charters, was not required. The inclusion of Hugh Capet’s agreement as ‘senioris mei’ in this charter, therefore, may be seen as Richard’s recognition that Hugh held authority over his decisions. However, it was not the transaction to which Hugh gave his assent. The charter records that Hugh Capet and Richard’s other faithful men all recognized that this demand should be addressed to Richard at Rouen, rather than at the *placitum* of Gisors. This is the only Norman ducal charter of the period which includes the consent of a lord.<sup>56</sup> Usually, it appears that the confirmation of the duke was sufficient, sometimes in conjunction with the archbishop or other bishops. In most cases, they confirmed the charter by their public authority, rather than as the lord of the donor (although the duke is sometimes referred to in this way).<sup>57</sup> They did not require the assent of anyone senior, because they held the highest secular and spiritual authority throughout Normandy.

However, the public authority of the king was acknowledged. This charter, like many others, is dated by the regnal year of the king (in this case, Lothair IV). While most charters are not dated, those that are generally used the combination of both the Frankish king’s regnal year and the year since the incarnation. The Frankish king therefore retained a quiet presence in these charters. The one case in which it could not

<sup>56</sup> Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p.190, who cites one other possible example before 1100, but states that this is unreliable.

<sup>57</sup> Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, pp.189-91.

be referred to as ‘quiet’ is in a charter composed for St-Ouen by the monk Bernerius. This charter is filled with extravagant language, and introduces the king as ‘Robert, with his glorious right hand happily bearing the sceptre of the shining peoples of the Gauls... the true catholic king sitting on the most exalted throne of all the noblest peoples of the Franks’.<sup>58</sup> At first, this appears to be a statement of enthusiastic fidelity to the king. However, this sentence was basically the equivalent of a dating clause, as the next phrase introduced the duke with ‘hujus itaque temporibus...’. Such clauses situated the Normans within a wider political community, without placing them in a position of dependence on the king.

Moreover, the notary carefully distinguished the two figures – king and duke – by the peoples they ruled. Bernerius emphasized that Robert was the king of ‘gentium Galliarum’ or ‘Francorum cuntarum gentium nobilissimorum’; his fulsome praise of Duke Richard created a parallel role for him as leader of ‘nobilium valde Normannorum gentium’. In this way, Bernerius differentiated the peoples over whom the two rulers held authority and thereby claimed separate spheres of jurisdiction. He also asserted Richard’s status in relation to the king by proclaiming that the duke was ‘regibus ducibusque ubique omnigenium nationum venerabiliter honorabilis honorabiliterque venerabilis’. In this way, he presented kings and dukes as equivalent in their leadership of ethnic groups.

*Sanctiones* are another element of the charter which occasionally felt the king’s presence. Generally, only the spiritual sanction of anathema and excommunication was included in Norman charters. However, in eleven charters financial penalties were imposed too.<sup>59</sup> These usually took the form of fines to be paid *ad fiscum dominicum*,

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<sup>58</sup> F42: ‘Rodbertus stringens gloriosa dextera candentium gentium Galliarum feliciter sceptrum... sedens sublimissimo solio Francorum cuntarum gentium nobilissimorum vere catholicus rex’.

<sup>59</sup> On spiritual and financial sanctions, see Michel Zimmerman, ‘Protocoles et Préambules dans les documents Catalans du Xe au XIIe siècle: évolution diplomatique et signification spirituelle I. Les protocoles’, *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 10 (1974), 41-76 (pp.50-55).

which were often of inflated size (100 gold pounds was common) because they were purely symbolic and not expected to be paid. The two charters produced by Dudo, however, required a dual fine – partly to be paid to the duke, and partly to the king of the Franks. It is most likely that Dudo's inclusion of this formula stemmed from his training in St-Quentin. Here, the amounts to be paid to king and duke are the same, placing them in an equal, rather than hierarchical, relationship.

Any active role for the king in these documents usually related to a non-Norman participant or gift. In this period, there is only one case in which the king's signature appeared on a charter involving a Norman benefactor and beneficiary (F33). However, this is a donation of William of Bellême, whose lordship fell between France and Normandy. While he was donating to the Norman bishopric of Sées, which in itself might explain Richard II's attestation, William would not necessarily have submitted to the Norman duke. Kathleen Thompson, in her study of the lordship of Bellême, noted that William's desire for the king's attestation might have caused the duke 'disquiet', and explained the recourse to dual authority 'as if William were uncertain which power could effectively guarantee his act'.<sup>60</sup> The lords of Bellême were a special case because they occupied the frontier of Norman authority and identity.

Neither was the king usually asked to confirm donations within Normandy. Potts has highlighted two charters from St-Wandrille, which were confirmed by Henry I in 1033; but, as she has also demonstrated, the monks of St-Wandrille in this period asked all their powerful visitors to confirm documents.<sup>61</sup> They did not particularly require the king's approval for these documents, at least one of which had been prepared seven or

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<sup>60</sup> Kathleen Thompson, 'Family and influence to the south of Normandy in the eleventh century: the lordship of Bellême', *Journal of Medieval History*, 11 (1985), 215-26 (p.216); see Potts, *Monastic Revival*, pp.71-72 and p.123 on the conflict between Norman dukes and lords of Bellême, especially over the Sées bishopric; she suggests that this gift was only made because the bishop was William's kinsman, Sigefridus.

<sup>61</sup> Cassandra Potts, 'Une charte de Saint-Wandrille', in *La Normandie vers l'an mil*, ed. by de Beaurepaire and Chaline, pp.112-15; Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p.374, n.145.

eight years earlier. In general, we observe little recourse to the king in the exercise and display of Norman authority. A striking exception is the charter of 1006 in which Robert II confirmed Richard II's gifts to Fécamp. This charter was produced at the same time as Richard's own charter of donation, at Fécamp: the two documents share very similar wording. Robert stated in the charter that he came to Fécamp 'for the sake of prayer', and he also gave a property to the abbey.<sup>62</sup> Robert's presence at Fécamp was an assertion of his superior authority, but it also added prestige to the dukes' personal monastery. His confirmation of Richard's gifts to Fécamp should be seen as a result of his presence there, rather than as a deliberately-sought and required demand of the monks.

On the other hand, the dukes frequently confirmed donations to Norman monasteries. The audits of Jumièges, Fécamp, St-Ouen and Bernay were composed for precisely this purpose. Firstly, they confirmed the gifts of Richard's predecessors – Rollo, William Longsword and Richard I. Richard never looked further back than this: all gifts stemmed from their dynasty. By confirming these gifts, he re-enacted his ancestors' generosity and reaffirmed his relationship with the beneficiary monasteries. Richard also confirmed the donations of his nobles in these charters, thereby demonstrating that these gifts were made under his authority. Finally, donations from individuals were often framed as gifts from the duke, made at the suggestion of the tenant.<sup>63</sup>

Confirming the gifts of earlier Norman rulers was an act of succession.<sup>64</sup> Through confirmations, Richard emphasized that his authority over the land was inherited. Awareness of this inheritance infused the documents. The dukes were identified by their fathers as well as by territorial designations. Richard I was referred to as 'son of William' a number of times. Richard had been a child when William was killed, but he

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<sup>62</sup> 'Charta Roberti pro Fiscannensi': 'orationis gratia'; *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, 24 vols (Paris: Libraires Associés, 1738-1904), X (1760), 587.

<sup>63</sup> Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p.25.

<sup>64</sup> Koziol, *Politics of Memory*, pp.5, 97-118.

retained the rulership of the Normans purely through their relationship. In emphasizing their descent, the dukes also asserted dynastic rights and the heritable nature of their authority in the model of kingship. The charters contain frequent references to the patronage of their fathers and grandfathers. They showed the continuity of earlier plans and relationships. Richard II's installation of William of Volpiano at Fécamp (F9) was justified by his assertion that monasticism had been his father's design for the place, while the confirmation charters of the great ducal monasteries essentially re-enacted the donations of Richard II's father and grandfather.

In the language of charters, Norman people and the geographical unit of Normandy became coterminous. Richard I and Richard II began to produce charters to create this definition. Their charters show the dukes exercising authority in their own territory largely independent of the French king. In doing so, they distinguished their subjects in Normandy from the Franks outside their borders.

### **III. Territorial range of ducal authority**

These documents and the acts recorded in them gradually defined the land of *Normannica*. The dukes gave land from their personal property, consented to the donations of others, intervened in the government of ecclesiastical institutions, and confirmed the gifts of their predecessors. In all of these actions, the dukes displayed their relationship to the land of Normandy and their authority over the people within it. Depending on the beneficiary, this was a performance for their subjects or for their neighbours.

The major beneficiaries of Norman donations, from other individuals as well as the dukes, were the grand ducal monasteries around Rouen: St-Ouen, Jumièges, St-Wandrille and Fécamp. As discussed in the previous chapter, these houses had all been re-founded by the dukes and enjoyed the patronage of the ducal family. Donations by

individuals to these houses, therefore, strengthened their connections with the dukes as well as the individual ecclesiastical institution. This was recognized by donors, who might state that they gave the gift to the monastery for the soul of the duke.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the ducal family reinforced their influence over the monasteries through gifts which entailed a spiritual counter-gift from the monks. Charters reminded the monks of their debt to Richard, whose name they would repeat in their prayers every day. The patronage of these monasteries further established the Norman power-base around Rouen.

It was unusual for non-Norman benefactors to patronize the great ducal monasteries. Two examples stand out: the gifts of King Robert II to Fécamp in 1005 and to Jumièges in 1027.<sup>66</sup> This latter transaction recorded the king's judgement concerning a property outside Norman borders. The former was enacted after the king's visit to Richard II at Fécamp, where he confirmed the duke's gifts to the abbey. While asserting kingly authority, therefore, these two gifts also confirmed the Norman ducal presence as rulers of their territory. Another gift, from the bishop of Chartres to Jumièges, also concerned land outside Norman borders, further along the Seine.<sup>67</sup> The Norman duke did not attest or confirm this gift because the land given was outside his jurisdiction. Through such (relatively infrequent) transactions, the borders of Normandy were defined by neighbouring powers – in this case, Hugh Capet.

Non-Norman donors also appear in exchanges of properties, which occurred twice in the period under discussion. In the first transaction (1012), discussed above, the monastery of Bourgueil in Poitiers gave a property which it held in Normandy to the abbey of Jumièges, and in return received a property which Jumièges held near to

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<sup>65</sup> E.g. F22.

<sup>66</sup> *Recueil des Historiens*, X, 587; F59.

<sup>67</sup> *Chartes de l'Abbaye de Jumièges (v.825 à 1204) conservées aux Archives de la Seine-Inférieure*, ed. by Jules Vernier, 2 vols (Rouen: Société de l'Histoire de Normandie, 1916), I, 14-15 (no.V, 984).



Bourgueil. This transaction is recorded in two slightly different documents, one from the cartulary of Bourgueil (F14) and one in an original copy from the archives of Jumièges (F14bis). The Bourgueil version presented the transaction as a direct exchange, and noted that ‘our princes’ (‘nostri principes’), William, duke of Aquitaine and Richard, marquis of Normandy, gave their consent: they were framed as rulers of the two territories respectively. The exchange took place, according to the document, because Longueville was ‘in Normannia sita prope Gimegiense caenobium’, while Tourtenay ‘est Burgulio vicina quae est in Aquitaniae regno locata’. This reasoning is repeated in another Bourgueil charter, which refers to the exchange being made ‘sicuti ad unumquamque erat vicina terra’.<sup>68</sup> In 1024, Jumièges again took part in an exchange, this time with Saint-Vaast (F26). Jumièges gave Haspres, ‘quia vicinior nobis erat’, in the words of the abbot of Saint-Vaast, who returned the favour by giving Angicourt to Jumièges, because it was ‘vicinior sibi’. As Tabuteau has suggested, Jumièges and perhaps other Norman abbeys may have striven to concentrate their possessions within the borders of the region ruled over by the duke.<sup>69</sup> This policy was recognized by later donors, who might make allowance for possible exchange in their charters when giving a distant property.

This policy was not purely for convenience: properties which were located at a distance, but within Normandy, were retained by these abbeys. In fact, in the early eleventh century, it seems to have been a deliberate policy of the dukes to grant property in western Normandy to the abbeys of Rouen. They also attached priories elsewhere to these abbeys. In doing so, they created ties between their capital and centre of support at Rouen, and the less-secure areas in the west. Arnoux has shown how three early

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<sup>68</sup> Lucien Musset, ‘Actes Inédits du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle III. Les plus anciennes chartes Normandes de l’abbaye de Bourgueil’, *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, 54 (1957-58), 15-54 (no.VI, p.53); see further Lucien Musset, ‘Actes Inédits du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle IV. Deux nouvelles chartes Normandes de l’abbaye de Bourgueil’, *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, 56 (1961-62), 5-11.

<sup>69</sup> Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, pp.35-36

eleventh-century narratives, the *Translatio Secunda Audoeni*, the Fécamp Chronicle, and the *Translatio Severi* all established ties between ecclesiastical institutions in and around Rouen and properties in the Cotentin, Bessin and Avranchin.<sup>70</sup> These narratives use the conventions of charters and the performance of land transactions to do so, notably transfer by knife or staff.<sup>71</sup> The property which the *Translatio Secunda Audoeni* claimed Richard I gave to St-Ouen, Rots in the Bessin, is recorded as a gift of Richard II in a charter of 1017-24 (F44).

Ducal influence marked Mont-Saint-Michel as the western limit of Normandy. A charter of 1009 recounts Richard II's intervention at the monastery (F12). In the document, Richard recalled how the monks of Mont-Saint-Michel came to him, asking that he replace their abbot, Mainard II, who had grown too old to carry out his pastoral duties. Richard rejected Mainard's request for a deputy, and instead replaced him with a young man named Hildebert. Both this action and the record of it in the charter demonstrated that Richard had the right to decide the fate of the monastery, even if that meant going against the wishes of the community. Mainard I had been his father's candidate for the abbacy of Mont-Saint-Michel, and Hildebert was Richard II's choice. Later, in 1023, Richard II attempted to establish Thierry of Jumièges as abbot, so that he might institute the reforms which William of Volpiano had begun at Fécamp.<sup>72</sup> The dukes aimed to bring Mont-Saint-Michel under their secular jurisdiction and within the monastic network through which they disseminated the ideological underpinnings of their authority.

In this intervention, Richard demonstrated the geographical range of his power. The western location of Mont-Saint-Michel was one reason the Norman dukes patronized the abbey from early in Normandy's history. Having been under the authority and

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<sup>70</sup> Arnoux, 'Before the *Gesta Normannorum*'.

<sup>71</sup> For these practices in Normandy, see Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, pp.127-29.

<sup>72</sup> *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. by Keats-Rohan, p.17; Potts, *Monastic Revival*, pp.99-100, argues that the monks rejected Thierry in favour of their own candidate, Almod.

patronage of the Bretons, it was a valuable stage to demonstrate Norman wealth, power and piety to their neighbours. William of Jumièges recorded that the wedding of Richard II and Judith, sister of the Breton Geoffrey, count of Rennes, took place at Mont-Saint-Michel, in a place he referred to as 'the frontier': 'ad limina'.<sup>73</sup> Potts has argued that Richard II's 1009 intervention at Mont-Saint-Michel was deliberately timed to take advantage of Count Geoffrey's absence on pilgrimage and thereby avoid potential conflict.<sup>74</sup> The abbey was also very prestigious, and a centre of pilgrimage, enabling similar displays to neighbours from further afield.

Unlike donations to the abbey, however, this charter was enacted at Rouen. As we have seen, Rouen was the ducal capital of Normandy and a centre of charter production. By ruling on the organization of Mont-Saint-Michel from Rouen, Richard demonstrated that the authority he wielded in the distant city applied equally throughout his lands. He showed the people and church of the furthest reach of his province that they belonged to the authority of Rouen. Through this message to the monks and their non-Norman lay supporters, Richard used Mont-Saint-Michel to draw a stark boundary between Normans and Bretons.

Ecclesiastical networks emanating from the centres of Rouen and Fécamp were essential to the extension of ducal authority westwards. The authority of Rouen over Mont-Saint-Michel was more acceptable because it was the seat of the archbishop. Indeed, the final borders of Normandy mapped almost exactly onto the archdiocese of Rouen (the French Vexin was still outside Norman borders). Richer of Reims saw the province and the archdiocese as equivalent, stating that 'Rouen is the metropolitan see of this province, and its authority extends over just six cities: Bayeux, Avranches, Évreux, Sées, Coutances, and Lisieux. It is clear, then, that the pirates have held this

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<sup>73</sup> *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, I, 28.

<sup>74</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival*, p.96.

territory from the distant past'.<sup>75</sup> As the vikings had taken control of Rouen, he saw their dominance of the rest of the region as a logical extension. By supporting Benedictine reform, the dukes could exert direct authority over monasteries outside the jurisdiction of the bishop. Their influence over monastic life emanated from their family monastery at Fécamp, where in 1001 Richard II established the reformer William of Volpiano as abbot. William's reforms, instituted by himself or one of his pupils, were then introduced at the other monasteries in Normandy.<sup>76</sup>

The duke also made donations to institutions outside Normandy. St Peter of Chartres, Notre-Dame of Chartres, St-Denis, Notre Dame of St-Riquier, and Marmoutier all benefited from his patronage. In these transactions and their associated documents, Richard II displayed his dominance of Normandy to his neighbours. By accepting his gifts, these institutions recognized the Normans' authority in the regions where they were located, and thus Richard's neighbours ratified Normandy's borders. In order to be recognized as the authority over a distinct geographical entity, the Norman dukes demanded its acknowledgement by their subjects and neighbours. In doing so, they used the networks of the episcopal and monastic church to tie the more tentatively-held regions of their province to the centre in the Seine valley.

#### IV. Origins of ducal authority

These charters gave direct interpretations of the acts they contained. In the majority of Richard II's charters, lengthy *arengae* explain and justify in general terms the gifts of land or concessions which they record. The *narrationes* which follow link the general motivations found in the *arengae* to the specific circumstances of the particular

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<sup>75</sup> Richer of St-Rémi, *Histoires*, I, pp.16-17: 'Huius provinciae metropolis Rhodum esse dinoscitur, sex tantum urbibus, Baiocis videlicet, Abrincanto, Ebrocis, Sagio, Constantiae, Lisoio vim suae dominationis intendens. Hanc itaque ex antiquo a piratis possessam esse manifestum est'.

<sup>76</sup> René Herval, 'Un Moine de l'An Mille: Guillaume de Volpiano, 1er abbe de Fecamp (962-1031)', in *L'abbaye Benedictine de Fécamp*, pp.27-44.

transaction. In Richard II's reign, these links often took the form of a discussion of his own internal considerations and reflections, thus making the sentiments of the *arengae* personal to the duke. Although the duke himself may not have specified the points he wished to be made, the charter was written in his voice, and the thoughts of the *arenga* ascribed to him. It is unlikely that elements displeasing to the duke would be placed in such a context, especially when a member of his household composed the document.

Despite containing conventional sentiments, preambles reveal the attitudes to land and donations which were to be found among the Norman ducal family, monks, clergy and secular elites. The documents vary considerably in wording, length and content, suggesting that the Norman notaries did not use a formulary. They did draw upon existing charters, and they also seem to have possessed some sort of *florilegium* which provided quotations from Scripture and the Church Fathers appropriate to their purpose. They shared elements, but the *arengae* differ considerably between these documents: they are all unique (although there are a few examples which are very similar, notably the charters from Mont-Saint-Michel and those drafted by Dudo). While they drew inspiration from their models, Norman notaries certainly engaged with the meaning of the pious sentiments they produced. The content of a preamble was chosen to correspond to the transactions recorded in each charter. For instance, the preambles for dowries describe and explain the institution of marriage. The notary did not have complete freedom, as the other parties in a transaction were also concerned with the content of the charter. They exerted different degrees of influence: it may well be the case that charters produced in a monastery included the sentiments favoured by that institution, whereas those produced in the ducal chancery would have reflected the interests of the duke. However, both parties, as well as those consenting to the transaction, needed to approve the text. Thus the *arengae* exhibit principles which contented donors and recipients alike.

Moreover, sentiments preserved in the *arengae* continued to exert an influence on ducal behaviour after the texts were produced. The principles which are contained in the charters had a degree of binding force. They cannot be dismissed as pious platitudes, even if they do not necessarily reveal the dukes' 'true' motives. While the dukes did follow political strategies in their monastic patronage, their stated religious motivations were important components of their actions. Once they had justified actions using an ideological principle, the dukes' future behaviour was then constrained by this principle. The ideological justification was only convincing while the duke appeared to act consistently according to principle; he needed to continue behaving appropriately in order that others would believe the original profession of motivation.<sup>77</sup>

The maintenance of credible ideological justifications was especially important when the dukes engaged in unpopular actions. The replacement of Abbot Mainard II of Mont-Saint-Michel by Abbot Hildebert in 1009, for example, probably appeared excessively controlling to the monks it affected. The lengthy and developed *arengae* in the early Norman charters catered to this need. In addition, the Normans' neighbours are also a likely audience for these statements. A later charter of William the Conqueror gives an indication of how the Normans needed to convince those around them. The charter records the following exchange, which took place on the occasion of William's donation to St-Florent of Saumur:

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<sup>77</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics I: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p.155, expresses this idea most clearly: '...even if they were not motivated by any such principle, they will find themselves committed to behaving in such a way that their actions *remain compatible* with the claim that their professed principles genuinely motivated them'.

When the monks said that alms ought to be given purely, he, as a most prudent man, replied, “Although we may be Normans, we know well that it ought to be done in this way, and thus, if it is pleasing to God, we will do it.”<sup>78</sup>

This incident reveals the expectation, even in the 1050s (Fauroux dated the charter, which survives in an original, to between 1051 and 1066), that Normans would not follow Christian traditions and principles – and it also reveals that they were aware of this expectation. Land donations, particularly to external recipients, were opportunities to demonstrate their Christian credentials, but their motives needed to appear impeccable. The principles found in the *arengae* of these charters constituted a programme which the Norman dukes and nobles pursued in combination with the monasteries they patronized.

The *arengae* are of two main types: those justifying the written record itself, and those explaining the purpose of giving land.

Many charters open with a statement concerning the practice of producing such documents. These *arengae* indicate that documents were produced for the benefit of future generations. The other temporal concern of these clauses is the past: the custom of recording transactions in charters is presented as a long-standing institution, which in itself seems to give justification. However, as already noted, the predecessors of Richard I in Normandy did *not* follow this custom. The *antecessores* mentioned in several charters cannot therefore be understood to mean the dukes’ immediate ancestors.<sup>79</sup> Rather, the Norman notaries referred to their *antecessores* in the Christian religion, as another *arenga* made clear when addressing the custom of giving land to the church. The origins of the custom were located within Christian history, which was said

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<sup>78</sup> F199: ‘Monachis enim dicentibus helemosinam mundam debere dari, ipse, ut vir prudentissius, respondit: “Licet Normanni simus, bene tamen novimus quia sic oportet fieri, et ita, si Deo placuerit, faciemus”.’

<sup>79</sup> F49, F17, F16; *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. by Keats-Rohan, no.47, p.131.

to have arisen ‘In the beginning of the birth of the church, with the examples of the holy apostles having spread throughout the earth’.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, notaries situated the origins of the custom of producing charters vaguely in the Christian past, with ‘the authority of the holy fathers’ (‘sanctorum patrum auctoritate’, F33). The antiquity of the custom linked the practice of the Norman participants to the long-standing tradition of the Christian community. A lengthy preamble in a donation to the chapter of Lisieux described how these practices were created in the earliest history of the Church, when it began to own property and construct buildings (F48). This *arenga* seems to make a parallel between the new Norman church and the early days of Christianity: both had the same need for securing that which was given ‘because many people, having abandoned heathen idolatry, surrendered themselves by the profession of Christianity, and they bestowed their inheritance, which had earlier been emptiness, to the use of the Church, for the cure of their souls’.<sup>81</sup> The Normans’ pagan past was substituted for a wider history of the church, which they adopted for themselves.

The rest of the *arengae* concern the motivations of donors in making transactions, and the custom of giving away land in gift more generally. The most common sentiment is the idea, which was popular in charters across medieval Europe, that giving lands to the church will lead to the donor receiving a place in heaven. The diverse and discursive nature of the Norman *arengae* explored this theme from a number of angles. In this exchange of temporal land for eternal life, the size or value of the gift did not matter, as it could never approach the value of its reward, a place in heaven.<sup>82</sup> This principle established that the donors’ acts were more significant than they appeared to be.

<sup>80</sup> F43: ‘In exordio nascentis aeclesie, per omnem terram documentis sanctorum apostolorum diffusae’.

<sup>81</sup> ‘...quia plurimi, relicta gentilitatis idolatria, se christianae professioni manciparunt, et patrimonia, quae prius vanitati, pro animarum remedio, ecclesiae utilitati contulerunt’.

<sup>82</sup> This theme is particularly clear in the *arengae* from Mont-Saint-Michel: F12, F16, F17, F47, F49; very similar sentiments, invoking Matthew 10.42 as the Mont-Saint-Michel charters do, may be found in the ducal charter F35, enacted at the ducal palace at Fécamp.



Several *arengae* emphasize the idea that all possessions are held from God. A charter of Richard II and Gunnor to Mont-Saint-Michel expresses this most directly, stating that they gave gifts not of their own property, but of God's: 'For do we think we have anything except that which we have received from him?', a sentiment echoed in another charter of Gunnor to the same monastery (F17).<sup>83</sup> Elsewhere it is more briefly stated that 'these possessions were given to us in this world by God' or that the church should be served 'out of these good things given to us by God'.<sup>84</sup> A charter recording the assumption of the monastic habit by Richard II's brothers-in-law foregrounded this concept by opening with the assertion that 'all earthly possession is a gift of merciful God' ('terrena possidere ex dono est clementis Dei', F46bis). These motivations were not restricted to the ducal family, but also ascribed to Rainaldus, viscount of Arques, as he donated to Fécamp, explaining that 'it is right that it is returned to him by whom all things are given' ('quia justum est ut ei reddantur a quo omnia tribuuntur', F54). The idea is even found in a charter of a certain Imma, which cites the biblical injunction to honour your father and mother – here interpreted as the church – so that 'you will live long upon the land which the Lord your God will give to you'.<sup>85</sup> *Arengae* thus emphasized that possessions, particularly land, were given directly by God to the Norman dukes, ecclesiastics and wealthy individuals.

Just as earthly possession was seen to have come from God, so was earthly power. A charter of 1021-25 which records the gifts of Richard II to St Peter of Chartres, elaborated on this theme at length. Unusually, in this document, there is no distinct *arenga*, but the principles were applied directly to Richard. The text reads as a

<sup>83</sup> F49: 'Detur igitur Deo non nostrum, sed suum. Quid enim aliud nos habere putamus quam quod ab eo accepimus?'

<sup>84</sup> F4 (Richard I): 'ipsis in hoc mundo a Deo tribuuntur bonis'; *Chartes de Jumièges*, ed. by Vernier, I, 20 (no. VIII, Hugh d'Ivry): 'ex bonis a Deo nobis attributis'.

<sup>85</sup> F55: 'Honora patrem tuum et matrem, ut sis longevus super terram quam Dominus Deus tuus daturus est tibi' (Deuteronomy 5.16). On this charter, see Potts, 'Une charte de Saint-Wandrille'; Imma appears in *Inventio et Miracula Vulfranni*, pp.43-44.

discussion of Richard's power specifically, rather than the more common general axioms.

...Next, by a similar reasoning, it is openly certain that I am elevated to such dominion of power, not by human but rather by divine grant, and for no other reason than for the defence of holy mother church and the future establishment of the rule of public law. Having considered these things through this inquiry of reason, I feared lest that saying in the Gospels: 'every tree that does not bear good fruit should be cut down and thrown in the fire' [Matt. 7.19], should be ascribed to me as unfruitful, if I did not deserve to become the holder of heavenly properties through the fruitfulness of good benefits, or if I could not recall the community of the holy church to better things by an example of honesty. And I remember what is said of this: 'having gifts according to the grace which is given to you' [Romans 12.6], I decided to give a portion of the possessions divinely given to me by God, because he who lays up treasure in Christ does not forget that he will join to him through them.<sup>86</sup>

This passage describes how Richard's authority, wealth and power was given by God – but could also be taken away by God. The reasoning, presumably written by a cleric at St Peter of Chartres, may be read as a reminder to Richard that he was reliant on the church in legitimizing his rule, and that the church possessed powerful spiritual sanctions if he forgot this. Conversely, the charter was an opportunity for Richard to assert that he ruled with the favour of God – the evidence was in the very exercise of authority and the ability to donate to the church. In the 1009 charter by which he replaced the abbot of Mont-Saint-Michel, Richard offered similar sentiments (F12).

This charter was probably composed by the ducal chancery and presented Richard's

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<sup>86</sup> F32: 'Deinde, simili ratione, in propatulo constitit non humane sed potius divine esse concessionis me tante imperiositatis dominio sublimari, nec ob aliud nisi ad sanctae matris aecclēsie defensionem et constituendam juris publici normalitatem. His ita per rationis indagacionem cognitis, veritus sum ne illud ewangelicum: "omnis arbor que non facit fructum bonum excidatur et in ignem mittatur" mihi infructuoso deputaretur, si non per bonorum emolumentorum fructificationem cēlestis adquisicionis consecutor fieri meruissem, nec sanctę ēcclesiae congregationem, probitatis exemplo, ad meliora revocarem. Ac memor illius quod dicitur: "Habentes donationes secundum gratiam quę data est vobis" possessionis mihi divinitus concessę Deo portionem dare decrevi, quia qui in Christo thesaurizat non ignorat cui congregabit ea'.

own interests. Richard asserted that he acted in the care of the monks ‘laid under our excellent dignity’ (‘nostrae subditam excellentiae dignitatis’) and, more generally, for ‘the security of the people entrusted to us by God’ (‘stabilitate plebis a Deo nobis delegatę’). Thus, in recognising that the land they possessed was granted by God, the Norman dukes demonstrated also that God had appointed them to the rulership of the people who lived in that land.

Narrative texts also exploited this concept. The idea that Normandy was given to the Normans by God was a powerful element of their ethnic myth, found in the pages of the *De moribus*. Dudo reassured his readers that the vikings assailed Francia ‘with God’s approval’ because of the wickedness of the Franks.<sup>87</sup> He continued this theme by stating that it was ‘the high providence of the godly Trinity’ who directed Rollo towards Francia, in order that those who afflicted it would save the church.<sup>88</sup> Rollo’s dream firmly rooted this prophecy in Normandy: his Christian prisoner interpreted ‘the mountain in Francia’ as ‘the church of that land’, while the Dacian men indicated to Rollo that they believed ‘the interpretation of your vision directs us to this very country’ – the Seine valley, and Rouen.<sup>89</sup> The vision included the diverse people of the land who were united under the rule of Rollo. Towards the end of the *De moribus*, Dudo recounted how it was God who restored Richard I to his rightful place in Normandy because this was the Christian desire of the people: ‘the Lord who is the King of Kings was placated by the continual prayers and fasting most devoutly engaged in by the Normans and Bretons with a single mind, and He snatched Richard, the boy of

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<sup>87</sup> Christiansen, p.22; Lair, p.137: ‘nutu Dei’.

<sup>88</sup> Christiansen, p.25; Lair, pp.140-41: ‘superna Deificae Trinitatis providentia’.

<sup>89</sup> Christiansen, pp.30, 36 (and p.47); Lair, p.146: ‘Mons Franciae quo stare videbaris, Ecclesia illius designatur’; p.153: ‘Forsan interpretatio tuae visionis vertetur in finibus istius’ (and p.167).

inestimable promise, from the king's hands'.<sup>90</sup> People, land and ruler were united through God's plan for them.

More than merely pious posturing, this viewpoint distanced the Normans from the French king. The dukes presented their power and possessions as the direct gift of God, rather than a superior territorial lord. The dukes, and increasingly the Norman elites, did this using the tools, network and ideology of the church. The partnership between secular powers and the church created a discourse in which fidelity to God was also fidelity to the Norman rulers. People in the province were thus strongly encouraged to identify as Normans.

#### V. 'The kingdom won by the sweat of battle'

In many ways, therefore, the Norman dukes and magnates implemented similar strategies to other Christian princes in defining their principality in terms of geography and community. They asserted their own dominance over the land they ruled and characterized its people as their subjects, bound by common habitation.

Strikingly, Norman charters did not refer to the viking past which, as we have seen, the dukes emphasized in other contexts. The only Norman charter to refer to viking destruction was the confirmation for Jumièges, in which Richard II recalled William Longsword's restoration of the monastery. He stated that Jumièges had been 'once torn down to the ground by the raving sword of evildoers' (F36: 'quondam perversorum bacante gladio ad solum usque diruto'). Even in this reference, the destroyers were not identified as vikings specifically, although the identification would probably have been assumed. Nor were they identified as the ancestors of the Norman nobles, as they were in narrative texts. The focus was firmly on William Longsword's restoration, and no

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<sup>90</sup> Christiansen, p.105; Lair, p.230: 'Northmannorum et Britonum precibus continuis jejuniisque singulis mensibus devotissime exercitatis placatus, regum rex Dominus, eripuit Ricardum, inestimabilis incrementationis puerum, taliter de regis manibus'. I have slightly added to Christiansen's translation.

connection was drawn between his action and the previous destruction. The destruction of Jumièges was remembered most strongly. In all other charters, Richard I and Richard II presented their donations as given purely from pious generosity, and out of concern for the growth of monastic life ('ad augendam igitur vitam inibi Domino militantium', F31).

The charters of the Normans' neighbours, in contrast, did identify viking destruction as a reason for their donations and restitutions. This was even the case at monasteries patronized by the Norman dukes. The Mont-Saint-Michel cartulary records the gift of Ivo fitz Fulcoin on 12<sup>th</sup> October 997-1003/04, who restored eight villas which were lost during the viking invasions. He made no distinction between his contemporary Christian Normans and the pagan invaders of the ninth century, simply stating that 'irruente Normannorum infestatione locus ipse per multorum curricula annorum amiserat'.<sup>91</sup>

The Normans very rarely referred to any events that far in the past. Recompense was made for more recent injuries: Richard II gave to Notre-Dame de Chartres so that 'the cause of immoderate injury which I had carried out grievously in their neighbourhood was placated to anyone's satisfaction'.<sup>92</sup> He also attested William of Bellême's donation to the church of Sées, which he made 'to delete those evil acts [of his and his predecessors] by a good compensation'.<sup>93</sup> These charters refer to the events of recent years, rather than viking activities of the past.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Cartulary of Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. by Keats-Rohan, no.26 (p.109). Further examples: *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint-Père de Chartres*, ed. by Benjamin Guérard, 2 vols (Paris: Crapelet, 1840), I, no.1 (c.930), no.4 (c.954); *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Redon en Bretagne*, ed. by Aurélian de Courson (Paris: Impériale, 1863), no.283 (924); *Recueil des Actes de Louis IV, Roi de France (936-984)*, ed. by Philippe Lauer (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1914), no.2 (936).

<sup>92</sup> F15: 'tum injuria causa non modicae quam in vicinia ejus graviter exercueram, quatenus aliquantula satisfactione placata'.

<sup>93</sup> F33: 'reminiscens plurimarum injuriarum quas ego et praedecessores mei Salariensi intuleramus ecclesiae, decrevi boni compensatione male acta delere'.

<sup>94</sup> Fauroux (*Recueil*, p.93, n.1) suggests that Richard II was atoning for injuries sustained in war c.1013 during his conflict with Odo II of Chartres over the dowry of his sister: see *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, pp.22-27.

This omission of all reference to the viking past from charters requires explanation. Musset and Potts have shown that the dukes pursued a deliberate policy of restoration, choosing to refound houses dating from the Merovingian or Carolingian period rather than establish completely new sites. Much of the land which they gave to these houses consisted of estates which they had held during the ninth century.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the histories and hagiographies produced in these houses and for the dukes explicitly referred to the viking destruction of their ancestors as the reason why the Normans restored them to a new glory.

The charters examined in this chapter were produced in the same institutions and by the same people as these longer historical texts. Dudo, the dukes' own historian, personally composed two of the charters examined here, and other notaries included members of the ducal household. Many documents were written by clerics and monks of beneficiary houses, and their language and purpose is reflected in the other texts they produced, notably in the case of the *Translationes Audoeni*. The difference in emphasis cannot, therefore, be explained by a different authorship or purpose.

In their charters, the Normans did not refer to any claims from before the establishment of their principality. They might refer to the original foundation of a monastery by its saintly father, but they did not recall the original acquisition of its property.<sup>96</sup> The grand confirmation charters of St-Ouen (F53), Jumièges (F36), St-Wandrille (F52), Bernay (F35), Fécamp (F34) and Mont-Saint-Michel (F49) trace all their possessions back to the gifts of one of the dukes, or of their followers: they do not include any properties granted to them before the viking conquest. The immediate effect of this was that all grants of land and other concessions now stemmed ultimately from

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<sup>95</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival*, pp.38-39; Musset, 'Monachisme d'Époque Franque'.

<sup>96</sup> F52 notes that St-Wandrille was built by St Wandregislaus and later dedicated to him. F59 refers to Jumièges's claim to land that it had held 'ex sanctę Batildis tempore', but this was a judgment of the king, heard in the king's court at Senlis, and concerned with property outside Norman borders. Nevertheless, the example highlights the fact that equivalent claims were never made for property within Normandy.

one of the dukes or Norman conquerors. Frequent reference was made to the restoration of property given in gift by ducal predecessors. Even the very early charter for St-Denis (F3) claimed the gift had originally been given by Rollo and William Longsword, a claim reinforced in Dudo's *De moribus*.<sup>97</sup> Other charters traced the past ownership of properties to inheritance or gifts in dowry from previous dukes, and the origins of monasteries to the work of predecessors, but only ever as far back as Rollo.<sup>98</sup> The more general effect was that the idea of Normandy as a unit was maintained. No recourse to the region's previous existence – when it had not been a discrete unit – was required.

The exception, again, was the confirmation charter for Jumièges (F36). This document, as the other confirmation charters, focused on the ducal lineage by emphasizing the current duke's continuation of his father's and grandfather's work. When recalling the gifts of William Longsword, however, Richard II explicitly framed them as a restoration of property that had been lost in the viking period, repeatedly using the word '*restituit*'. He stated that:

I give... the farms, possessions and tithes listed below, which by these precepts had once belonged to that place by right but, after the ravaging of the place they made way for the domination and the uses of certain evil men, had been restored to the use of the servants of God by the zeal and care of that most pious restorer.<sup>99</sup>

As suggested above, it may well be that the tradition of destruction and restoration at Jumièges was too strong to be ignored.<sup>100</sup> William Longsword had held a special attachment to the monastery and probably did present himself primarily as a restorer.

The later donations confirmed in the charter, however, the gifts of Richard I, Richard II

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<sup>97</sup> Christiansen, p.51; Lair, p.171.

<sup>98</sup> E.g. F3, F9, F14bis, F17.

<sup>99</sup> 'Concedo... subnotata predia et possessiones sive decimas, prescriptis his que quondam ipsius loci juris fuerant, sed post loci devastacionem quorundam malignorum usibus et dominationi cesserant, ipsius vero piissimi restauratoris studio et diligencia in usus servorum Dei fuere restituta'.

<sup>100</sup> In addition, it seems that the monks of Jumièges retained a number of their pre-viking conquest charters, unlike most other monasteries. See *Jumièges*, ed. by Vernier, I, 1-14 (nos.I-IV).

and their nobility, were not considered to be restorations. The charter thus drew a line under the process of restitution, indicating that it was complete. Moreover, the actual claims to property from the pre-viking period were not rehearsed. William Longsword's action remained the origin of all future claims.<sup>101</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

Although it was not mentioned in charters, the viking past was a vital part of the Normans' legal claim to Normandy. For this reason it featured prominently in their narrative texts. The Norman dukes promoted their viking seizure of the land in order to show that their ancestors had conquered the land of Normandy themselves, rather than merely receiving it in gift or benefice from the French kings. In the *De moribus*, Dudo presented Rollo at the advantage in his meeting with Charles the Simple at St-Clair-sur-Epte. Dudo stated clearly that Rollo and his vikings had already taken Normandy by conquest.<sup>102</sup> Other narratives also played down the role of the king in the establishment of the viking principality. In the *Vita Romani*, Fulbert referred to the arrival of viking lords as a violent takeover on their own initiative. The *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, discussing the agreement with the king and Rollo's baptism, emphasized that Rollo had subjugated Normandy by force of arms himself.<sup>103</sup> Rollo's claim on Normandy was twofold: a grant of the king and the spoils of war. Both rights passed down to his successors, giving them the province as an inheritance which was doubly secure.

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<sup>101</sup> A later example from St-Wandrille did call on claims from a more distant past: the monks received the island of *Belcinnaca* from William, count of Arques (Richard II's son), as the result of a claim based on the ninth-century *Vita Condedi*, from which they forged a charter. However, this took place between 1032 and 1047, a time of weakened ducal authority and, moreover, it did not refer to the viking past but the life of the saint. See Chibnall, 'Charter and Chronicle', p.3; F234 (p.452) and Lot, *Saint-Wandrille*, no.1 and no.15.

<sup>102</sup> Christiansen, p.60; Lair, p.182: 'the kingdom won by laborious contests and by the sweat of battle'; 'regnum, labore certaminum sudoreque praeliorum adeptum'.

<sup>103</sup> *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, ch.3: 'totiusque Normanniae provinciam, quam sibi isdem Rollo debellando subegerat, regali munere liberaliter concessit.'



An episode from the mid-eleventh century *Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfranni* dramatized this issue. The text, written at St-Wandrille in 1053, records an early attempt at restoration of the abbey by Gerard of Brogne in the 940s.<sup>104</sup> Gerard came to Richard I at Rouen bearing the relics of St Wandregisilus, who had been evacuated from the monastery of St-Wandrille during the viking invasions. Gerard requested that the land of St-Wandrille should be restored, and produced charters (*cartarum priuilegia*) proving the monastic community's ownership of various properties. The Norman nobles, however, disputed Gerard's claims – not because they did not believe the charters, but because they considered themselves to have stronger claims on the land. They regarded these properties as their own possessions, 'which the warlike strength of their predecessors had gained for them by arms and blood, or which they had obtained for themselves through long service and much effort'.<sup>105</sup> Gerard had come up against a society which did not share his views of what constituted a binding claim to land ownership. No charters had yet been produced in Normandy, so it is not surprising if the Norman elites remained unimpressed by the documentary record of ownership or claims to the perpetual possession of church land. They had their own claims on the land they inhabited, justified by history, inheritance and experience.

This episode is often interpreted as a comment on past attitudes of the mid-tenth century.<sup>106</sup> However, the narrator did not criticize the Norman nobles. In fact, in the very same text, he continued their attitude, demonstrating how Normandy had been won by viking conquest. The text described how Rollo, the greatest viking leader, had divided the province among his army, with no reference to the king.<sup>107</sup> The early Scandinavian elite's claim by conquest was shown to trump Gerard's charters dating

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<sup>104</sup> Elisabeth van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography at Saint-Wandrille: The *Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfranni*', *ANS*, 12 (1990), 233-51 (p.238); *Inventio et Miracula Vulfranni*, pp.29-30.

<sup>105</sup> *Inventio et Miracula Vulfranni*, p.30: '...propriis honoribus quos sibi armis et sanguine predecessorum suorum pepererat bellicosa uirtus, siue quos sibi ipsi diuturno adquisierant seruitio multisque sudoribus'.

<sup>106</sup> Potts, *Monastic Revival*, p.25; Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, pp.213-14.

<sup>107</sup> *Inventio et Miracula Vulfranni*, pp.26-27.

from before their arrival. Even in the Jumièges confirmation charter, when William Longsword restored land held by one of his followers, it was stated that it was done ‘consensu et voluntate’ of the owner: the property was not the church’s by right. The origins of Norman ownership were based in the events of the viking conquest, and these were the most ancient claims that would be recognized. In this way, charters demonstrated that all Norman monasteries, churches and individuals were indebted to the family of Rollo.

This conquest involved the violent seizure or destruction of churches and their properties. Charters, delineating the lawful transfer of specific pieces of land, could not legitimize such behaviour as a legal means of taking possession. It would certainly not have been acceptable to repeat this conquest. The *arengae* of these documents established the special status of the viking conquest of Normandy: it had been God’s plan. This claim to God’s favour was combined with the claim of conquest in Dudo’s history.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Geographical Identity in English royal diplomas**

#### **I. The Danelaw**

The effect of Scandinavian settlement on regional identities in England is generally characterized in terms of a north-south divide. However, on close examination, the ethnic distinction appears less clear-cut. The framing of identities responded to the rapidly evolving relationships of West Saxon kings and institutions with areas of Danish settlement in the north and east of England. Boundaries between the inhabitants of the West Saxon heartlands and those in the north and east were expressed in a variety of forms by individuals of differing viewpoints. The alignment of ‘Danish’ and ‘English’ identities with regional interests was only one of these forms, employed politically in specific contexts.

Modern scholars often use the term ‘Danelaw’ to refer to regions of Scandinavian settlement in northern and eastern England.<sup>1</sup> However, the uniform use of the term ‘Danelaw’ for the whole area throughout the later ninth to eleventh centuries masks the changing political structures and relationships within the region and with the rest of England.<sup>2</sup> The situation under Edgar, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred was very different from that of their predecessors. Areas of Danish settlement, which had previously been under various states of Scandinavian rule, were all now incorporated into one kingdom under their direct authority. It was this situation of formerly Danish regions within a united English kingdom that led to the creation of the term ‘Danelaw’, which first appeared in the legislation of Æthelred.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. Dawn Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c.800-1100* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000); Katherine Holman, ‘Defining the Danelaw’, in *Vikings and the Danelaw: Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell and others (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp.1-11.

<sup>2</sup> Abrams, ‘Edward the Elder’s Danelaw’, pp.128-33, on definitions.

Æthelred's tenth-century predecessors had referred to regional distinctions directly, albeit briefly. Edward the Elder's law code made a general distinction between the customs of his own kingdom, and those 'in the east and the north'.<sup>3</sup> Only once these areas were combined in one kingdom did an English king concern himself with the specific differences between them. The first considerable references to legal distinctions between English and Danes appeared in IV Edgar, Edgar's law code promulgated at *Wihthordestan*, which was perhaps written around 970 and certainly after Edgar's accession to the kingdom of England in 959.<sup>4</sup> IV Edgar drew the distinction between 'mid Denum' and 'mid Englum', legislating directly for the English and stating several times that, in general, the Danes should follow 'the best constitution which they can determine upon'.<sup>5</sup> But the term 'Danelaw' was first used in the early eleventh century, in Archbishop Wulfstan's legislation for Æthelred.<sup>6</sup> The Danelaw was thus a creation of the English kings after they had conquered these areas and removed the final Norse-speaking king of York in 954. It was an expression of the accommodation of previously independent communities into the kingdom of England under the authority of the West Saxon dynasty.

Both the term and the concept of the 'Danelaw' are usually interpreted geographically; in general, historians have taken Edgar's legislation 'mid Denum' and Æthelred's references to 'Dena lage' to refer to a defined region in which a different law applied to all inhabitants, rather than as the expression of 'personal law' (the practice by which different laws applied to different ethnicities in the same geographical

<sup>3</sup> II Eadweard 5.2: *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by Felix Liebermann, 3 vols (Halle, 1898-1916), I, 144: 'gif hit sy east inne, gif hit sy norð inne'.

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century. Volume I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp.441-42.

<sup>5</sup> IV Edgar 12: *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I*, trans. by A.J. Robertson (Cambridge: CUP, 1925), p.37; *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 212: 'swa gode laga swa hy betste geceosan'.

<sup>6</sup> Edward-Guthrum 7.2: *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 132: 'on Deone lage'; VI Æthelred 37: *ibid*, p.256: 'on Dena lage'.

region).<sup>7</sup> In his law codes, Edgar recognized that local custom endured even after the removal of ‘Danish’ rulers and the appointment of ealdormen and bishops by the English king, and he explained the difference ethnically.<sup>8</sup> How Scandinavian in character the laws and customs of northern England really were continues to be a matter of considerable debate – after all, Northumbrian custom may well have been different to West Saxon custom, regardless of Danish input. However, in a legal context, this difference was labelled as stemming from Danish tradition.

Those who see the Danelaw as a geographical entity have often considered the Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum of 886 to be the foundation document of the Danelaw.<sup>9</sup> The text of the treaty opens with a clear delineation of geographical boundaries between the two kings’ realms:

First as to the boundaries between us. [They shall run] up the Thames, and then up the Lea, and along the Lea to its source, then in a straight line to Bedford, and then up the Ouse to Watling Street.<sup>10</sup>

The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty might thus be seen as comparable to the Treaty of St-Clair-sur-Epte, which has played a similar role as a foundation document in the historiography of Normandy. It was a political agreement with a ‘native’ ruler which established the Danes in a permanent settlement in a defined region.

However, just as the tradition of Normandy’s foundation in 911 owed a significant amount to Dudo’s interpretation, so the status of Alfred-Guthrum was developed by a

<sup>7</sup> Discussion of this issue in Abrams, ‘Edward the Elder’s Danelaw’, p.133; Reynolds, ‘What do we mean by “Anglo-Saxon”?’, p.406.

<sup>8</sup> For a particularly influential interpretation, see Niels Lund, ‘King Edgar and the Danelaw’, *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 9 (1976), 181-95.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Kershaw, ‘The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty: Scripting Accommodation and Interaction in Viking Age England’, in *Cultures in Contact*, ed. by Hadley and Richards, pp.43-64 (p.45). The dating of the treaty depends on the status of London. Whitelock (EHD, p.416) thought it was probably written after Alfred took London in 886.

<sup>10</sup> Alfred-Guthrum 1, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, trans. by F.L. Attenborough (Cambridge: CUP, 1922), p.99. *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 126: ‘Ærest ymbe heora landgemæra: andlang Témese, þ[onne] up on Ligean, andlang Ligean oð hire æwylm, ðanon on gerihta to Bedaforda, þanon upon on Usan oð Wætlingastræt’.

later interpreter, Dudo's contemporary Wulfstan II, Archbishop of York. In an important article of 1941, Dorothy Whitelock showed that the so-called 'Laws of Edward and Guthrum', which appear in one manuscript after the 'Peace of Alfred and Guthrum', were in fact written in the early eleventh century by Archbishop Wulfstan.<sup>11</sup> These laws are prefaced by a short note, apparently contemporary, claiming that they represent the agreements made between Edward (the Elder) and Guthrum, the viking ruler of East Anglia:<sup>12</sup>

This also is the legislation which King Alfred and King Guthrum, and afterwards King Edward and King Guthrum, enacted and agreed upon, when the English and the Danes unreservedly entered into relations of peace and friendship. The councillors also who have been [in office] since then, frequently and often have re-enacted the same, and added improvements thereto.<sup>13</sup>

In producing the 'Laws of Edward and Guthrum', Wulfstan aligned the regional difference in law with an ethnic boundary between English and Danes. He dated the origin of this distinction precisely to the treaty between Alfred and Guthrum which drew a linear boundary between English and Danish kingdoms along Watling Street.<sup>14</sup> In fact, this ninth-century document was not a lawcode, but a peace treaty between kings, which agreed their separate spheres of influence. However, Wulfstan interpreted it, as many historians after him have done, as the establishment of the geographical and legal entity of the Danelaw, which later became subject directly to English kings.

The 'Peace of Edward and Guthrum' attributed differences between north and south to the ninth-century viking settlement, rather than the specific character of the historical

<sup>11</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, 'Wulfstan and the so-called Laws of Edward and Guthrum', *EHR*, 56 (1941), 1-21.

<sup>12</sup> The identities of Edward and Guthrum have been disputed because they were not contemporaries, but now the text is known to be a forgery, the error may be attributed to Wulfstan.

<sup>13</sup> *Laws*, trans. by Attenborough, p.103; *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 128: 'And ðis is seo gerædnyss eac, ðe Ælfred cyng 7 Guðrum cyng 7 eft Eadward cyng (7 Gyprum cyng) gecuran 7 gecwædon, ða ða Engle 7 Dene to friðe 7 to freondscipe fulllice fengon; 7 ða witan eac, ðe syððan wæron, oft 7 unseldan þæt seolfre geniwodon 7 mid gode gehuhtan'.

<sup>14</sup> Florin Curta, 'Linear Frontiers in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century: Bulgaria and Wessex', *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* (2011), pp.15-32.

kingdoms of Northumbria and East Anglia. Moreover, in this document Wulfstan stated that the division had been maintained in subsequent generations through inter-ethnic dialogue. Something of this process is hinted at in Edward the Elder's law code from Exeter (II Edward 5.2), which referred to 'treaties' between his kingdom and those in the east and north. By claiming that this was an ongoing process, Wulfstan implied that Anglo-Saxons and Danes survived as distinct groups either side of the border.

Wulfstan's interpretation seems to have reflected wider perceptions of the symbolic importance of Watling Street as a boundary between two regions of England. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 1013, Swein received the submission of 'all the raiding-army to the north of Watling Street', and then proceeded to raid 'after he came over Watling Street'.<sup>15</sup> The passage implied that those to the north of the boundary submitted to Swein because of their Danish identity (alluded to in the use of the word *here*), and that he waited to cross Watling Street before raiding for a similar reason.<sup>16</sup>

Wulfstan's emphasis on Guthrum derived from the text of the 'Peace of Alfred and Guthrum', which he was effectively updating. Historical sources would have shown him that Edward and Guthrum were not contemporaries. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Guthrum died before Alfred and was succeeded by a certain Eohric, who was killed in 904. Edward the Elder's contemporary would therefore have been Eohric's successor.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Wulfstan's laws were clearly meant to apply to the entire 'Danelaw', including Northumbria, whereas Guthrum was only king of East Anglia. Wulfstan's choice reflects a parallel interest in the narrative texts discussed in Chapter Four. Guthrum appeared as a fleshed-out character in the early eleventh-century *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* (and to a lesser degree in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*), which implies that he was better-known as Alfred's viking adversary.

<sup>15</sup> ASC E 1013: 'þæs eall here be norðan Wætlingastræte'; 'syððan he com ofer Wæclingastræte'.

<sup>16</sup> Innes, 'Danelaw Identities', p.74.

<sup>17</sup> ASC A 904.

Whitelock suggested that Wulfstan's interest in these laws arose from his appointment as Archbishop of York and Worcester in 1002. Although Wormald labelled the text 'a forgery', Wulfstan may well have written it from genuine belief in the need for a textual record of a long-standing tradition of customary law.<sup>18</sup> Whitelock and Wormald both determined that Wulfstan, in this text as in his later legislation, was striving for the best interests of the northern diocese. The 'Peace of Edward and Guthrum' was produced between 1002 and 1008, and shortly afterwards Wulfstan began to draft laws for the king which accounted for the same divide in the same terms.<sup>19</sup> The archbishop of York used his 'forgery' to convince Æthelred to legislate according to a geographical Danish-English distinction. It was, however, a dangerous strategy: Wulfstan composed a text which stressed 'peace and friendship' between English and Danes, but events of the following decade showed that the distinction was more likely to bring discord.

A few references in contemporary narrative sources suggest that the geographical distinction had a widely-perceived ethnic significance. In the *Life of St Æthelwold*, composed in the 990s, the Northumbrian thegns who accompanied King Eadred to Abingdon were singled out as a different people ('ex gente Northanhimbrorum'), with the characteristic habit of drinking: 'The Northumbrians became drunk, as they tend to, and very cheerful they were when they left at evening'.<sup>20</sup> Byrhtferth of Ramsey distinguished Northumbrians and Danes in his description of York, although he drew a connection between them. He described the city as 'metropolis totius gentis

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<sup>18</sup> Wormald, *Making of English Law*, p.391.

<sup>19</sup> Wormald, *Making of English Law*, pp.330-45; Patrick Wormald, 'Æthelred the Lawmaker', in *Æthelred the Unready*, ed. by Hill, pp.47-80.

<sup>20</sup> Wulfstan of Winchester, *The Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp.24-25: 'inebriatis suatim Northanimbris et uesperis cum laetitia recedentibus'.



Northanimbrorum', which was filled with merchants from Denmark.<sup>21</sup> The *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti* provides a rare view of East Anglia. It refers to this area as in 'aquilonarium partium', although this perspective may relate to Neot's journey from Cornwall.<sup>22</sup> However, those who lived in the north and east were never referred to as 'Danes' in narrative texts in a way that reflects the use in law codes.

The silence of narrative texts about 'Danish' regions of England raises questions about Wulfstan's legal distinctions. How widespread and how well-established was the perception of 'Danish' England? The hundreds of royal diplomas surviving from tenth-century England provide a different perspective on divisions among inhabitants of the English kingdom. They suggest that regional divides on the lines demarcated by Wulfstan were recognized at an earlier date, but that they were employed by West Saxon kings and northern authorities for different political reasons. Moreover, they were not usually expressed in terms of English and Danish heritage.

## **II. Tenth-century royal diplomas**

In the rest of this chapter, Wulfstan's vision of the 'Danelaw' is further contextualized by an investigation into Æthelred the Unready's diplomas. These are royal gifts, judgements or confirmations of privileges and as such deal with authority and rights over territory. Æthelred's reign (978-1016) provides special interest since, as we have seen in previous chapters, narrative texts composed in this period showed renewed interest in the ancient Danish heritage of the English (Chapter Two) and in the historical events of the First Viking Age (Chapter Four). A focus on Æthelred's charters allows us

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<sup>21</sup> *Byrhtferth of Ramsey*, ed. by Lapidge, pp.150-51: 'Que inedicibiliter est repleta et mercatorum gazis locupletata, qui undique adueniunt, maxime ex Danorum gente'.

<sup>22</sup> VPSN, p.135.

to investigate the presentation of geographical identity in this same period of renewed viking threat.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, the character of the diplomas produced for Æthelred makes them particularly suitable for an analysis of this kind. Æthelred's charters followed a long diplomatic tradition in Anglo-Saxon England, dating back at least to 675 (the date of the earliest extant text, S7, although it is not an original copy) and probably to the Augustinian mission of 597.<sup>24</sup> Charter production peaked in Edgar's reign, from which 164 diplomas survive. After this explosion in production, Æthelred's diplomas represent the final height of the Anglo-Saxon Latin royal diploma, soon to be superseded in large part by the writ.<sup>25</sup> Towards the end of Æthelred's reign, fewer charters seem to have been produced, but those that were composed were longer and more considered.<sup>26</sup> They include new and distinctive features, notably short narratives describing the history of an estate and lengthy, often unique, preambles.<sup>27</sup> These features mean that the corpus of Æthelred's diplomas, more than that of any other tenth-century king, describe contemporary perceptions of land ownership and its significance.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> On Æthelred's charters, see Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready': A Study in Their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980). On the reign of Æthelred, see most recently Ryan Lavelle, *Aethelred II: King of the English 978-1016* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002); Ann Williams, *Æthelred the Unready: the Ill-Counselled King* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> Pierre Chaplais, 'Who Introduced Charters into England? The Case for Augustine', in *Prisca Munimenta. Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to Dr A.E.J. Hollaender*, ed. by Felicity Ranger (London: University of London Press, 1973), pp.88-107, and Pierre Chaplais, 'The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma', in *Prisca Munimenta*, ed. by Ranger, pp.28-42; Susan Thompson, *Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas: A Palaeography*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), p.3.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Insley, 'Where Did All The Charters Go? Anglo-Saxon Charters and the New Politics of the Eleventh Century', *ANS*, 24 (2002), 109-27 (pp.120-22); Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.140-42; Pierre Chaplais, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: from the Diploma to the Writ', in *Prisca Munimenta*, ed. by Ranger, pp.43-62.

<sup>26</sup> Susan Kelly points out in *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 7-8, 2 vols (Oxford: OUP, 2000-01), II, 460: 'If fewer charters were being drawn up, then the draftsmen could spend more time on each text'.

<sup>27</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.95-98.

<sup>28</sup> Pauline Stafford, 'Political ideas in late tenth-century England: charters as evidence', in *Law, laity and solidarities: Essays in honour of Susan Reynolds*, ed. by Pauline Stafford, Janet Nelson and Jane Martindale (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp.68-82 (p.79): these diplomas 'became more discursive in the (post)-modern sense, that is, more rhetorical, more ideologically charged. Thus we can read from them statements of beliefs and values, hitherto less articulated, which justified political claims in tenth- and early eleventh-century English culture'. See also Frank Stenton, *The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period* (Oxford: OUP, 1955), pp.74-75.

According to the Electronic Sawyer database, 117 texts survive which purport to be charters of Æthelred.<sup>29</sup> Two of these are vernacular writs, rather than Latin diplomas, and are not considered here.<sup>30</sup> Other documents can be dismissed as spurious. Slightly over half of Æthelred's diplomas have been newly edited in the British Academy Anglo-Saxon Charters series, and in general I have followed the opinions of their editors regarding these charters' authenticity.<sup>31</sup> In addition, Simon Keynes included many valuable comments on the authenticity – or otherwise – of Æthelred's diplomas in his monograph on the subject.<sup>32</sup> For those charters yet to be edited, I have taken Keynes's opinions as my principal guide, but references to further discussion of each document may be found in the relevant entries of the Electronic Sawyer. After dismissing those texts which are either spurious or show signs of later interpolation, ninety-three diplomas remain.<sup>33</sup> Of course, this corpus constitutes a fraction of the diplomas produced during Æthelred's reign, as they are only those which were preserved in the archives of a few religious institutions.<sup>34</sup> However, they survive in sufficient quantity and variety for an analysis of their key features and content.

These were not the only charters produced during the period: other types of document still survive, such as vernacular wills and leases, and a few charters modelled on royal diplomas but in which the benefactor is a bishop or lay magnate. However, these are few in number, largely because they have had a much lower rate of survival

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<sup>29</sup> *The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters* <<http://www.esawyer.org.uk/>> [accessed 19/05/2013]. Charter references are given by their number in this handlist/database (hereafter S).

<sup>30</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.140, 145, suggests that writs may have been produced in this period, although the two surviving examples are unlikely to be authentic.

<sup>31</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Charters* series (OUP for the British Academy, 1973- ).

<sup>32</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, esp. pp.237-68.

<sup>33</sup> In the cases of S866 and S912, there are signs of later interpolation in the dispositive or immunity clauses, but their editors argue that the rest of the diplomas are authentic. Therefore these texts have been included in my analyses of royal styles and proems. In this selection of material, I aim not to be reductive, which necessitates using documents which do not survive as originals. Productive answers may be found by restricting analysis to original documents: see Julia Crick, 'Edgar, Albion and Insular Dominion', in *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations*, ed. by Donald Scragg (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp.158-70. However, I follow an approach more similar to that of Sarah Foot in 'Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record, or Story?' (p.46).

<sup>34</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.1-4.

than royal diplomas. Monastic archives after the Norman Conquest tended to preserve high-status documents; they also seem to have preferred Latin texts to Old English, which may not have been readable to later generations.<sup>35</sup> The few of these documents that do survive are not necessarily representative, as it may have been their special features which led to their survival. Only the archives of Bury St Edmunds and Worcester preserved Old English documents in any numbers.<sup>36</sup> This chapter concentrates its analysis on the royal diplomas, which do form a cohesive group.

Tenth-century diplomas were produced under royal influence, and therefore reflect the views of the king in whose voice they were written. The production of charters has been discussed in the context of a debate over the existence of a chancery in tenth-century England. The diplomas of King Æthelstan display the first clear evidence of centralized production. Most would agree that charters were produced by the same draftsmen throughout Æthelstan's reign, although Pierre Chaplais argued that they were monks rather than royal officials. Indeed, Chaplais claimed that diplomas were always produced in ecclesiastical scriptoria, but that royal authority at various points delegated this duty to particular institutions. Opinions diverge further over the fate of the 'chancery' after Æthelstan's reign. Richard Drögereit thought the chancery ceased to function in Edgar's reign. Simon Keynes, on the other hand, maintains that the degree of correspondence between diplomas for different beneficiaries indicates that a royal chancery remained in existence throughout the tenth century and into Æthelred's reign.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, those of both viewpoints agree that there was a considerable degree

<sup>35</sup> Charles Insley, 'Archives and lay documentary practice in the Anglo-Saxon world', in *Documentary Culture*, ed. by Brown, Costambeys, Innes and Kosto, pp.336-62 (pp.341-42).

<sup>36</sup> Insley, 'Archives and lay documentary practice', p.362.

<sup>37</sup> Chaplais, 'Anglo-Saxon Chancery'; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.14-83 on pre-Æthelred centralized production, and at pp.134-53 argues for a 'central writing office' under Æthelred. Chaplais upheld his view, arguing further that 'Athelstan A' was a monastic draftsman, in 'The Royal Anglo-Saxon "Chancery" of the Tenth Century Revisited', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis*, ed. by Henry Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (London: Hambledon, 1985), pp.41-51. Richard Drögereit, 'Gab es eine angelsächsische Königskanzlei?' *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, 13 (1935), 335-436; *Abingdon Abbey*, I, p.lxxiii.

of centralization and royal control in the production of tenth-century diplomas. The question which is left unresolved is whether tenth-century kings entrusted this production to favoured ecclesiastical houses or to their own officials. Both positions require a degree of flexibility, as there are clearly charters which are outside of the ‘diplomatic mainstream’ and were produced by beneficiaries.<sup>38</sup>

Although the royal chancery may not have been a developed institution, we can identify the involvement of Æthelred and his counsellors in the composition of diplomas. Diplomas recorded decisions made at the meeting of the witan, and their witness lists were (largely) accurate records of those present.<sup>39</sup> The arguments for Norman ducal involvement adduced in the previous chapter apply here: the king must have agreed the general sentiments and the details of the disposition to which he put his name, even though Anglo-Saxon subscriptions were not autographs.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, a number of Æthelred’s diplomas deal more explicitly with the king’s personal motivations. A group of charters expressing the king’s remorse for the actions of ‘the ignorance of my youth’ (‘meae iuuentutis ignorantia’, S876) has been most intensely studied.<sup>41</sup> Discussion of this group of charters has also led to greater consideration of rituals and demonstrative behaviour associated with land-grants.<sup>42</sup> Such practices fortified the relationship between the actions of the king and the texts of the diplomas.

Diplomas show the king’s perspective on his interaction with the land and people he ruled, but he was constrained in his displays of power. Produced by king, witan and

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<sup>38</sup> Some charters include phrases in the subscriptions that imply a particular ecclesiastic was responsible for the charter’s drafting: Thompson, *Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas*, p.15; Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.26-28.

<sup>39</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, p.37.

<sup>40</sup> Kelly, ‘Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word’, p.42. On the role of the king, see Chaplais, ‘Anglo-Saxon Chancery Revisited’, p.42; Eric John, ‘“Orbis Britanniae” and the Anglo-Saxon Kings’, in Eric John, *‘Orbis Britanniae’ and Other Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), pp.1-63 (p.3).

<sup>41</sup> S876 (AD 993), S893 (AD 998), S891 (AD 997), S885 (AD 995) and S937 (AD 990x1006); S838 (AD 981) may be considered in addition, though the relevant passage must have been interpolated later. Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.176-80; Stafford, ‘Political ideas in late tenth-century England’; Insley, ‘Where Did All the Charters Go?’, pp.112-14.

<sup>42</sup> Insley, ‘Rhetoric and Ritual’, pp.117-19.

ecclesiastical draftsmen, charters were a negotiation of authority between several parties.<sup>43</sup> They show Æthelred's ambitions, which were themselves shaped by the real limits of his power, but they also indicate the pressures from his supporters and rivals. Moreover, the surviving royal diplomas relate overwhelmingly to the southern part of England, where Æthelred's rule was more secure. Æthelred's relationship with northern England remains somewhat obscure. Nevertheless, like his royal predecessors throughout the tenth century, Æthelred asserted his authority over the people of the north through the rhetoric of his charters. Although he was an English king, Æthelred thereby became – in the eyes of his counsellors at least – ruler of all the peoples who resided in Britain.

### **III. Royal and imperial authority**

Tenth-century English kings used various titles in their diplomas as a means of expressing their changing spheres of authority. As we have seen, Æthelstan and his tenth-century successors took charter composition into centralized control. The titles these kings used in dispositive sections and in their subscriptions expressed relationships with their subjects and neighbours during a period in which these were rapidly being reconfigured. Æthelstan may be called the first 'king of England' because he united the former Anglo-Saxon kingdoms under his rule. However, he and his successors used 'imperial' styles to reflect their developing authority in different regions.<sup>44</sup> These styles were political statements, which reflected ambition but also responded to neighbouring authorities. Although expressed in a number of forms, Æthelred's charters contained a clear concept of the region and peoples over which he ruled.

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<sup>43</sup> Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan: the First King of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp.133-34 discusses the relationship between the witan and the text of a diploma.

<sup>44</sup> Foot, *Æthelstan*, pp.213-16.

Æthelred's primary title was *rex Anglorum*. This title appears alone in eleven dispositive phrases, but was more common in subscriptions: he subscribed thirty-six diplomas with this simple phrase. It was also the title that appeared on Æthelred's coins.<sup>45</sup> At certain points in his reign the notary slightly lengthened this subscription, as in thirteen diplomas dating from 983-990 which include in addition the phrase 'regni totius fastigium tenens'.<sup>46</sup> In other sections of his charters, Æthelred was named simply *rex* (or *cing/cyning*). *Rex Anglorum* also usually constituted the base of more developed royal styles. Thus, in his most widely-used title, Æthelred was king of a people, the English. *Anglorum* was the most frequent qualifier of *rex*, appearing alongside it a little under two-thirds of the time. Four charters use the term 'Anglo-Saxons', which was perhaps derived from earlier models, but apparently held a similar meaning.<sup>47</sup>

'English' (*Angli*) by this point had become a relatively stable term. Earlier tenth-century kings divided their realm into Wessex and Mercia (and East Anglia and Northumbria when they were under English control): for a brief period on the death of Edward the Elder in 924, it seems that Edward's sons Ælfweard and Æthelstan were elected to the kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia respectively. Keynes has raised the question of whether the two kings were simply recognized differently in the two regions, and especially if Ælfweard, in using the title *rex Anglorum*, was claiming rulership of all the English, not just the West Saxons.<sup>48</sup> However, a simpler conclusion may be made: by the mid-tenth century, the title *rex Anglorum* could only be used by the king holding Wessex, the heartland of the emergent 'kingdom of the English', or *Englaland*. Whoever ruled the West Saxons also held the inheritance of Alfred, which was sovereignty 'over

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<sup>45</sup> Michael Dolley, 'An Introduction to the Coinage of Æthelred II', in *Ethelred the Unready*, ed. by Hill, 115-33.

<sup>46</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, p.85.

<sup>47</sup> S931 (AD 1013); S911 (AD 1005); S890 (AD 997); S898 (AD 1001). 'Rex Anglo Saxonum' was used relatively frequently up to the end of Eadwig's reign, but thereafter appears only in one charter of Edward the Martyr (S830, AD 976) and one of Edgar (S810, AD 961x963).

<sup>48</sup> Simon Keynes, 'England, 900-1016', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History III: c.900-c.1024*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp.456-84 (p.467).

all the English race except that part which was under Danish control'.<sup>49</sup> Æthelred's father Edgar went by *rex Merciorum* from 957-59, while his brother Eadwig, ruling Wessex, was called *rex Anglorum*.<sup>50</sup> Although Mercia appeared as a distinct administrative unit well into Cnut's reign, its inhabitants were no less English for that. Æthelred, having been crowned king of both parts of the kingdom, never used the separate title of *rex Merciorum*: this was included within *rex Anglorum*.

The English were always singled out as the principal ethnic group under Æthelred.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, they were identified as the primary audience of his charters. The English language was used for essential details, such as descriptions of bounds and, in a few documents, a brief history of the estate's ownership. Place names given in the vernacular were identified as being in English, or in the speech of the place's inhabitants. In some cases, regional variation was revealed here: in S885 (AD 995), the draftsman distinguished the language and land measurements of the *gens* of Kent from what he considered 'the customary naming of the English'.<sup>52</sup> Æthelred appeared in Kentish charters as *rex Anglorum*, however, and there was no indication that this did not include the Kentish people. Regional difference could be expressed in terms of *gens*, at the same time as implied membership of a wider *gens Anglorum*.

Æthelred, like his tenth-century forebears, was king of an ethnic group rather than a geographical region. His claims over particular territories stemmed from his status as king of the English people. Geographical terms for England were rare in these diplomas. In one, Æthelred is called 'king of the land of the English' (S900: 'rex Anglorum

<sup>49</sup> ASC A 900 [899]: 'ofer eall Ongelcyn butan ðæm dæle þe under Dena onwalde wæs'.

<sup>50</sup> Edgar used the title *rex Merciorum* or a variation in S667, S675, S678, S676, S676a, all AD 958. Edgar used *rex Anglorum* in three charters of this period: S674, S679 and S673, all AD 958.

<sup>51</sup> Two earlier charters defined the English against the 'barbarian' other peoples of Britain: Eadwig (S632) claimed rule of 'huius insule barbarorum' as well as of the English, and a diploma of Edgar (S725) distinguished the English from 'barbarorum atque gentilium'.

<sup>52</sup> S885: '...sex quidem mansas. quas Cantuarii. syx sulunga nominare solent. illo scilicet in loco. cui iam dudum gentis eiusdem indigene uocabulum. æt Wuldaham indiderunt. Unam quoque mansam. solita Anglorum uocatione. æt Lytlanbroce celebriter appellatam...' Precursors from the 940s include S489, S512, S497, S510, S535.



telluris gubernator et rector'), and in another 'king of the territory of the English people' (S850: 'regionis Angligenarum rex') without this land being defined in either case. But there was no use of *Anglia*, *Englaland* or similar in Latin royal diplomas.

Rather than *Englaland*, the most frequent geographical designator for the area Æthelred ruled was *Britannia*: royal styles feature this term or the similar *Britannica* twenty-five times. The term *Britannia* had been used since the Roman occupation, and did not retain a close connection with the Britons in particular. When invoking *Britannia*, therefore, Æthelred's charters were not referring particularly to land inhabited by Britons, but to the whole island. Indeed, in a few examples he was called ruler of 'the entire island of Britain'; in one this was expanded to include 'the islands lying around it'.<sup>53</sup> Æthelred's notaries' use of the term *Britannia* stemmed from their knowledge of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, which began with a description of the island and the peoples who inhabited it. Britain was conceived as a geographical unit that might be governed from a single centre, although it contained a diversity of peoples.

Æthelred's territory was also called 'Albion'. As Julia Crick has discussed regarding the use of the term in Edgar's charters, this too referred to the whole island of Britain and seems to have been derived also from the pages of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, which begins with the words 'Britain, formerly known as Albion, is an island in the ocean...' ('Britannia Oceani insula, cui quondam Albion nomen fuit...').<sup>54</sup> The use of this term in the *intitulatio* of Æthelred's charters was not innovative, but followed a phrasing used by all tenth-century kings since Æthelstan. Crick has shown the

<sup>53</sup> 'Totius Britannicae insulae' or similar in S866 (AD 987), S874 and S942 (both AD 990), S898 (AD 1001), S904 (AD 1002/1008), S933 (AD 1014). S904: 'gentis gubernator Angligenae totiusque insulae coregulus Britannicae et caeterarum insularum in circuitu adiacentium'. S914 is a late-eleventh-century forgery, which calls him 'gratia Dei summitonantis Angligenum Orcadarum necne in gyro iacentium monarchus': Michael Lapidge, 'B and the Vita S. Dunstani', in *St Dunstan: his Life, Times and Cult*, ed. by Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks and Tim Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp.247–59 (pp.258–9). Cf. IV Edgar 14.2, which makes a command applying 'to all of us who dwell in these islands' ('us eallum gemæne, þe on ðissum iglandum wuniað': *Die Gesetze*, ed. by Liebermann, I, 214).

<sup>54</sup> *Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. by J.E. King (London: Heinemann, 1930), pp.10–11.

preference for the term among the monks of the Benedictine movement;<sup>55</sup> however, despite her focus on Edgar, Albion was no less linked to Æthelred's reign. It is true that the title appears most often in Edgar's diplomas, but this discrepancy is far less pronounced when we consider the occurrences in relation to the proportion of surviving diplomas.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, most of the narrative sources Crick identified as containing references to Albion were written during the reign of Æthelred, although they looked back to the time of Edgar. Thus the presentation of a king with authority over all Britain, or all Albion, was promoted primarily by the Benedictine monks throughout the second half of the tenth century, although it originated with Æthelstan.

The titles Æthelstan used supported these ambitious claims to rule all Britain. As well as *rex*, Æthelred's draftsmen deployed titles with imperial connotations. The most common title used by Æthelred after *rex* was *basileus*, a Greek word for emperor, which appears in thirty-seven charters (S923 uses the Greek word *archos*).<sup>57</sup> Draftsmen used *imperator* in six charters, and referred to Æthelred's *imperium*, although this seems to have referred more generally to his authority. Previous kings had applied *imperator* only when they asserted rule over several named peoples, but Æthelred used *basileus* and *imperator* more or less interchangeably with *rex*.<sup>58</sup> In one subscription, Æthelred was even called 'rex Anglorum rite dicatus basileus' (S861).<sup>59</sup> These titles suggested that the position of king of the English brought imperial power with it.

In their nature, royal diplomas presented the king as the supreme authority over the land concerned in the transaction. However, Æthelred's charters did stress the

<sup>55</sup> Crick, 'Edgar, Albion and Insular Dominion', esp. p.164.

<sup>56</sup> Albion is mentioned in 28% of Edgar's authentic diplomas, and 23% of Æthelred's.

<sup>57</sup> George Molyneaux, 'Why Were Some Tenth-Century English Kings Presented as Rulers of Britain?', *TRHS*, 21 (2011), 59-91 (p.63) suggests this term was employed for its sense of grandeur.

<sup>58</sup> 'Imperator' appears only in the 'alliterative' charters of Eadred, and one of Eadwig; and Edgar used it twice (S751, S775 – this latter resembles Æthelred's styles instead).

<sup>59</sup> Drögereit reached the same conclusion for Edgar's use of the title. See Henry Loyn, 'The Imperial Style of the Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Kings', *History*, 40 (1955), 111-15 (p.111) and Richard Drögereit, 'Kaiseridee unter Kaisertitel bei den Angelsachsen', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung*, 69 (1952), 24-73.

importance of his counsellors. Unlike continental practice, the Anglo-Saxon tradition did not use outward signs of authentication like seals and autograph signatures. Whereas in the Frankish world, even in some Norman examples, a secular authority such as the king or duke would authenticate a charter through these means, Anglo-Saxon diplomas all contained witness-lists made up of members of the *witan*. These documents, therefore, never showed the king acting alone. Pauline Stafford has pointed out the prominence in Æthelred's diplomas of counsel and advice, concepts which are referred to explicitly in sixteen documents of the period 990-1005.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, their characteristic narratives of estate histories seem to have arisen out of the necessity for the king to justify himself. The group of charters from the early 990s which contained Æthelred's regrets for his youthful actions further emphasized his dependence on counsellors, representing a transfer from those who led him astray in his youth to those who now advised him. The first of these documents, S876 (AD 993), stated that the kingdom had been beset by problems since the death of bishop Æthelwold, which indicates the importance Æthelred placed on leading clerics. Clerics (bishops then abbots) also led the witness-lists, followed by ealdormen and thegns. Each ealdorman usually subscribed simply as *dux*, but one charter of 997 (S891) attributed specific provinces to each of them, which Stafford interpreted as stemming from the desire for unity across the provinces.<sup>61</sup> Each act was thus presented as the agreed will of king and magnates, acting together in the interests of the whole nation.

No other king was mentioned in the same diploma as Æthelred, and so his status as the ultimate authority in the territory concerned was reinforced.<sup>62</sup> Nor did any other king appear in Æthelred's witness lists, in contrast to several diplomas of the mid-tenth

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<sup>60</sup> Stafford, 'Political Ideas', p.75.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> S904 (AD 1002) refers to Æthelred as 'coregulus' of Britain, which at first seems to complicate the picture, but this was probably intended as *curagulus*, 'guardian', since this title was used in a number of Æthelstan's charters (S430, AD 935; S438, AD 937; S440, AD 938; S446, S447, S449, all AD 939) and one of Edmund's (S466, AD 940).

century which contained the subscriptions of British kings.<sup>63</sup> Genuine charters of Edgar did not contain the subscriptions of these kings, but he appears to have displayed himself as their superior in a ceremony of oath-swearing after his coronation in 973.<sup>64</sup> However, Julia Barrow has argued that this episode originally represented an alliance, and it was in fact Benedictine writers of Æthelred's reign who interpreted it as a submission. In doing so, these writers further developed the concept of English king as emperor of Britain. Æthelred, although similarly claiming to be 'steersman' (*gubernator*) of other peoples of Britain, did not refer to other kings in his charters, but he may have claimed his overlordship in other ways. In the year 1000 he engaged in a northern campaign which seems to have been designed as a show of superiority over the kingdoms of Strathclyde and Man.<sup>65</sup> While tenth-century kings, including Æthelred, were ambitious in asserting their authority over the whole of Britain, they did refer to areas where their influence was felt.<sup>66</sup>

Æthelred's claims to imperial authority thus extended over several peoples within Britain. The English were his primary concern, but it was often specified that he was also ruler of 'ceterarum[que] gentium in circuitu persistentium'. Æthelred was described as king *caeterarum gentium* or *nationum* in nineteen authentic diplomas, and 'caeterarum provinciarum imperator' in another (S931). His usage of this formulation reflects its popularity throughout the tenth century: this phrase or similar occurs in nearly a third of the extant authentic diplomas from Æthelstan's reign to Edgar's. It asserted that Æthelred ruled the people-groups who inhabited his territory: his authority

<sup>63</sup> Julia Barrow, 'Chester's Earliest Regatta? Edgar's Dee-rowing Revisited', *EME*, 10 (2001), 81-93 (p.88). Simon Keynes, *An Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters, c.670-1066* (Cambridge: Department of ASNaC, 2002), Tables XXXVI and XXVIII, shows the subscriptions of British 'sub-kings' in the diplomas of Æthelstan (928-35) and in 'alliterative' charters between c.946 and 956. In Æthelstan's charters (S400, 407, 413, 416, 417, 418a, 425, 426, 434), they attest as 'subreguli'; in Eadred's (S520, 550, 552a, 566) and Eadwig's (S633), they are each called 'rex' or 'regulus'.

<sup>64</sup> David Thornton, 'Edgar and the eight kings, AD 973: *textus et dramatis personae*', *EME*, 10 (2001), 49-79 (pp.70-74 he examines the possibility that they included Scandinavian kings of Ireland); Barrow, 'Chester's Earliest Regatta?'.

<sup>65</sup> ASC E, 1001; Lavelle, *Æthelred*, pp.101-02.

<sup>66</sup> Molyneux, 'Rulers of Britain', pp.64, 75.

over them was dictated by where they lived. Æthelred's position at the head of the English people gave him power and authority, but that power was not limited to the English. This assertion made clear that Æthelred's land-grants and rulings over territorial possessions were to be respected by all those under his authority, regardless of ethnicity. Æthelred borrowed this phrase from his predecessors' imperial rhetoric, which rarely specified precisely which peoples tenth-century kings ruled. The phrase was inclusive, and its content was determined by the geographical limits of Britain.

Æthelred did not explicitly lay claim to authority over any people other than the English, except in one document, S931. This charter of 1013 gave Æthelred the title 'rex Anglosaxonie atque Norðhymbrensis gubernator monarchie, paganorumque propugnator, ac Brettonum ceterarumque prouinciarum imperator'. The draftsman of this charter, in using this style, relied on models from the mid-tenth century.<sup>67</sup> No extant charter uses exactly the same phrasing as this, but it strongly resembles a number of 'alliterative' charters of Eadred and Eadwig.<sup>68</sup> Seven of these diplomas divided the king's subjects into the same four peoples (although *Anglorum* was more usual than *Anglosaxonie*). These titles recognized a distinction between the Northumbrians and the rest of the English, but the two peoples were always grouped together. In Æthelred's charter S931, the pagans and Britons were placed at a greater distance by the use of titles implying less direct rule. The only surviving charter of Edgar that divided the inhabitants of Britain into these same peoples followed the same groupings by calling him 'rex Anglorum cum Nordhymbra regimine, ac progenie Paganorum Brettonumque prosapia sublimiter roboratus' (S766, AD 968).<sup>69</sup> This fourfold division seems to have

<sup>67</sup> Cyril Hart, 'Danelaw and Mercian Charters of the Mid Tenth Century', in Hart, *Danelaw*, pp.431-53 (p.435), on earlier models.

<sup>68</sup> S548, 549, 550, 569, 572 and 633; S520 uses a similar phrase in the dating clause.

<sup>69</sup> This division hints at the distinction between the king's 'extensive' and 'intensive' power in different regions that Molyneux sees emerging in this period: 'Rulers of Britain', pp.87-91. In addition, S677 (AD 958) called Edgar 'rex Merciorum et Norðanhymbroorum atque Brettonum', during the period in which Eadwig was styled *rex Anglorum*. This apparent original implies consciousness of a similar fourfold division which would include the *Angli*.

been devised by the draftsmen of the ‘alliterative’ charters in the 940s, but it remained sufficiently familiar to be redeployed in 968 and again in 1013.

The fourfold division also separated ‘Northumbrians’ from ‘pagans’. Regardless of their religious belief, the label ‘pagans’ was probably intended to apply to Scandinavians – as noted in Chapter Four, writers such as Asser and Æthelweard used the terms ‘Dane’ and ‘pagan’ interchangeably. These styles are therefore evidence that English kings throughout the tenth century did identify a Danish element in their subject populations. However, this Danish element was presented as a group distinct from the Northumbrians and not necessarily geographically determined. No tenth-century styles referred to the East Angles as a separate people, so it is possible that ‘pagans’ referred to Danish settlers in the east as well as the north. The idea of the ‘fourfold kingdoms’ (‘regna quadripertiti’, S520, AD 946) probably derived from Bede’s similar idea of four peoples within Britain in the first chapter of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Draftsmen may have striven to fit the peoples they perceived in Britain into four categories in order to continue this pattern.<sup>70</sup>

These ‘imperial styles’ delineating subject peoples have been commented on by a number of historians since the sixteenth century, as Julia Crick noted.<sup>71</sup> The key issue, however, is the contemporary meaning of these imperial styles: as Eric John argued, the use of the same words at different times gave them varied meanings.<sup>72</sup> Eadred seems to have been the first to name distinct peoples in this way in his diplomas.<sup>73</sup> In doing so, he responded to the actions of the Northumbrians in choosing the Norse king Eric, and

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<sup>70</sup> One ‘alliterative’ diploma of Eadred, S636 (AD 956), used the unusual royal style ‘gentis Geuuisorum orientaliumque nec non occidentalium simul etiam aquilonalium Saxonum archons’: the Gewissae was an archaic name for the West Saxons, while the other labels were probably meant to imply rule of all the peoples of Britain, rather than referring specifically to the Saxons. See Molyneaux, ‘Rulers of Britain’, pp.63–64 for lists of subject peoples in non-charter contexts.

<sup>71</sup> Crick, ‘Edgar, Albion and Insular Dominion’.

<sup>72</sup> John, ‘Orbis Britanniae’, p.46.

<sup>73</sup> S404 (AD 930) is unlikely to be preserved in its original form.

asserted his imperial rule not only by force but also in his royal styles.<sup>74</sup> The use of a similar style in Æthelred's charter of 1013, which was issued before the Northumbrians' submission to Swein, seems to have served a different purpose. Innes has drawn attention to this charter as the only (surviving) occasion on which Æthelred acknowledged the distinct identity of the Northumbrians, arguing that Æthelred was trying to gather support in 'Danish' areas.<sup>75</sup> However, closer examination of the diploma suggests that the phrasing was not a deliberate strategy from the king, but an exception to Æthelred's main diplomatic tradition.

The charter of 1013 probably owed more to the influence of the draftsman and expressed regional interests. It seems to have been overseen, perhaps even personally drafted, by the diocesan bishop of the grant in Northamptonshire, Bishop Eadnoth of Dorchester. Bishop Eadnoth subscribed the diploma with the phrase 'Ego Eadnoð episcopus hanc scedulam dictitans. rege suisque praecipientibus perscribere iussi'.<sup>76</sup> The bishop of this northern diocese chose a royal style which emphasized the separate nature of the Northumbrians and their 'monarchia' as a geographical region, looking back to the mid-tenth century when they enjoyed more independence. This charter implies that the distinction between the Northumbrian kingdom and the rest of England suited the interests of the northern bishop. Eadnoth's desire to distinguish the Northumbrians may thus be comparable to Wulfstan's similar desire as Archbishop of York. However, Eadnoth used an outmoded style which distinguished, rather than equated, Northumbrians and pagans.

In fact, when diplomas did refer to Danes, they were never speaking of the inhabitants of Northumbria. Several charters made allusions to the money paid by

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<sup>74</sup> John, 'Orbis Britanniae', pp.46, 50-52, 55. The relevant charters of Eadred are S520 (AD 946), S544, S548, S549, S550 (all AD 949), S552a (AD 950), S569 (AD 955), S572 (956 for 954x955). The popularity of these titles in 949, the year after Eadred carried out a punitive raid in Northumbria, is striking.

<sup>75</sup> Innes, 'Danelaw Identities', pp.75-76.

<sup>76</sup> On Eadnoth's role, see Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.124-25.

Archbishop Sigeric to the Danes from 994 onwards.<sup>77</sup> In these cases, ‘Danes’ applied to foreign invaders: they were a ‘gens pagana’, called ‘hostes’ (S882, AD 995 for 994). However, Danes were friends and allies as well. One diploma even records ‘quidam Danus nomine Toti’, as the beneficiary and his ‘propinquus’ Celi as intermediary; the land granted was in Oxfordshire (S943, AD 1006x1011). None of the references to Danes in Æthelred’s diplomas seem to have had any specific connection to northern England.

A vernacular charter in which Æthelred confirmed the will of Æthelric of Bocking hints at a division of *ceterarum gentium* which included Danes (S939, 995x999). At the end of the witness-list, rather than listing the names of the thegns, the draftsman simply referred to ‘all the thegns who were gathered there from far, both West Saxons and Mercians, and Danes and English’ (‘ealle ða ðegnas ðe þær widan gegæderode wæron ægðer. ge of Westsexan. ge of Myrcean. ge of Denon. ge of Englon’). The division is intriguing. Conceivably it is a four-fold division, in which ‘Denon’ referred to Northumbrians and ‘Englon’ to East Angles; however, in this period ‘Englon’ usually referred to the English people generally, and in that case should surely *include* ‘Westsexan’ and ‘Myrcean’. It seems more likely that the draftsman had categorized the thegns in two different ways: firstly, they either came from Wessex or Mercia, in terms of their regional origin; and secondly, they were either Danish or English in terms of an ethnic origin not based on regional identity. He probably referred to this additional division because of the content of the charter, which discusses the accusation that Æthelric was involved in a conspiracy to receive Swein in Essex. The draftsman drew a distinction between ‘native’ English and ‘foreign’ Danes, who lived side-by-side. Although England had been under attack by Swein, Æthelred still counted Danes among his thegns, and so did not assume their disloyalty based on their ethnic identity.

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<sup>77</sup> S882 (AD 995 for 994); S912 (AD 1005); S919 (AD 1008).



‘Danes’ refers to a similar group in a charter of 1004, although by this time Æthelred’s viewpoint had drastically changed. This detailed account of Danish-English interaction in the charter for St Frideswide’s (S909) is one of unbridled ethnic hostility. This diploma restored privileges and territories to the monastery after the people of the town had burned a group of Danes alive in the church. This action was explained as a response to Æthelred’s command on St Brice’s Day 1002 ‘that all the Danes who had sprung up in this island, sprouting like cockle amongst the wheat, were to be destroyed by a most just extermination’.<sup>78</sup> While post-Conquest historians such as William of Malmesbury believed this applied to the descendants of ninth-century Danish settlers, recent historical opinion has tended to agree with Susan Reynolds’s claim that the command was aimed at ‘recent immigrants’, perhaps merchants who had come via northern England, or mercenaries paid by Æthelred in agreements such as that represented by II Æthelred.<sup>79</sup> If so, Æthelred’s application of the phrase ‘cuncti Dani qui in hac insula’ in this context clarified that he did not consider his northern subjects to be ‘Danes’. The description of Danes ‘sprouting like cockles among the wheat’ implies that this was not a geographical distinction, but that the people to whom the draftsman referred were mixed everywhere among the English. In the *narratio* of this charter, Æthelred maintained his claim to rule the entire *insula* of Britain – not just the English – but identified the Danish element as an alien force.

#### IV. Origins of royal authority

Æthelred’s draftsmen further emphasized the unity of the English within Britain in *arengae*. The proems of Æthelred’s charters, after the 980s at least, are largely unique

<sup>78</sup> ‘...ut cuncti Dani qui in hac insula uelut lolium inter triticum pullulando emerserant, iustissima examinatione necarentur’; trans. in EHD, p.591.

<sup>79</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, I, pp.276-77. Innes, ‘Danelaw Identities’, p.65; Reynolds, ‘What do we mean by “Anglo-Saxon”?’; p.412.

and were composed especially for the occasions on which they were used.<sup>80</sup> The uniqueness of the *arengae* is such that a repeated proem is cause for suspicion.<sup>81</sup> Despite their unique formulations, Æthelred's *arengae* display themes shared with each other and with proems composed earlier in the tenth century (they rarely relied on texts earlier than this for their models). These shared themes provided contexts for the king's authority over the land he granted to churches and laymen. Æthelred's *arengae* were therefore expressions of contemporary political thought, applied to specific situations.<sup>82</sup> However, they are often complex in form and meaning, and the connections between a proem and a transaction are not always clear. The ideas expressed in the *arengae* create parallels between divine and human history, authority and ownership.<sup>83</sup>

Like the *arengae* of Norman charters, the proems of Æthelred's charters occasionally deal with the practice of charter-writing itself (nine charters discuss this theme). It was common for Anglo-Saxon diplomas to claim the superiority of writing over memory, and the institution of the practice might be ascribed to their forefathers.<sup>84</sup> The concern for continuity across generations was clear: the deeds of the forefathers were intended to be known by their descendants.<sup>85</sup> However, discussion of Christian history in this context was more limited than in Norman charters. The few references to church history in Æthelred's charters concerned the English, rather than the universal Church. This is most apparent in the charters of St Albans, which refer to the monastery's patron-saint,

<sup>80</sup> *Abingdon Abbey*, II, 460. For the creativity of the proems, see the extended metaphors presented in S858 (AD 985, body as boat), S874 (AD 990, military) and S875 (AD 990, gladiatorial combat).

<sup>81</sup> E.g. *Charters of Burton Abbey*, ed. by Peter Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters 2 (Oxford: OUP, 1979), p.72: S920 (1008) and S930 (AD 1012).

<sup>82</sup> The potential of Anglo-Saxon charters, especially *arengae*, to illuminate aspects of political thought has been established by Charles Insley ('Where did all the Charters Go?', esp. pp.113-18; 'Rhetoric and Ritual', p.118), and Pauline Stafford ('Political Ideas').

<sup>83</sup> E.g. Johnson, 'Fall of Lucifer', pp.520-21.

<sup>84</sup> See e.g. on memory S883: 'quia hominum fragilis memoria moriendo obliuiscitur quod scriptura litterarum seruando retinet' ('because the fragile memory of men forgets in dying what the writing of letters retains in preserving'); Foot, 'Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters', p.40.

<sup>85</sup> S888 (AD 996), S842 (AD 982).

‘the proto-martyr of the English people’.<sup>86</sup> An *arenga* of 1007 proclaimed that ‘the glorious victory of the blessed martyr Alban is to be honoured especially by the population of the English placed in the circumference of Britain; who was subjected to martyrdom for Christ and consecrated that people with the outpouring of his rose-red blood’.<sup>87</sup> It was known from Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* that Alban was a Briton martyred under the Romans, before the Anglo-Saxons arrived in Britain. His sanctification of the English people was thus transmitted through the land they inhabited, rather than genetic connection, as the charter’s draftsman indicated in the phrase ‘ambitum Britanniae’.<sup>88</sup> The St Albans charters claimed their saint for the English people precisely because they were defined through their inhabitation of the island of Britain.

Just as in royal styles, draftsmen united the histories and dynasties of Mercia and Wessex. Understandably, monasteries with prestigious benefactors emphasized their royal origins. Diplomas for St Albans referred to King Offa of Mercia, the abbey’s original benefactor.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, charters from Abingdon recounted its foundation and the privileges conferred by King Coenwulf of Mercia and Pope Leo III, while charters from the Old Minster at Winchester looked back to that monastery’s foundation by King Cenwalh of Wessex.<sup>90</sup> Although only the last of these was of the West Saxon royal line, Æthelred claimed connection to all of these kings. A St Albans diploma of 1005 linked Offa directly to Æthelred by having the king refer to him as ‘my ancestor and predecessor Offa, princely king’ and connect himself to Offa through his similar

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<sup>86</sup> S888, AD 996: ‘gentis Anglorum protomartyri’; S912, AD 1005: ‘huius patriae protomartyris’.

<sup>87</sup> S916: ‘Anglorum tamen populis intra ambitum Britanniae constitutis specialiter est honoranda beati martyris Albani gloriosa uictoria; qui et ipse pro Christo martyrium subiit; et hanc gentem rosei sanguinis effusione consecrauit’.

<sup>88</sup> Ælfric went further and called the land in which Alban died ‘*engla lande*’ (*Ælfric’s Lives of Saints*, I, 414); see Patrick Wormald, ‘*Engla Lond*: The Making of an Allegiance’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 7 (1994), 1-24 (p.11).

<sup>89</sup> S916, AD 1007; S912, AD 1005. See *Charters of St Albans*, ed. by Julia Crick, Anglo-Saxon Charters 12 (Oxford: OUP, 2007), pp.171, 185.

<sup>90</sup> S876 (AD 993); S891 (AD 997).

benefaction.<sup>91</sup> In references to his predecessors, Æthelred stressed the continuation of the family line, the transfer of kingship, and the similar relationship of patronage to the recipient monasteries. In his charters of restitution of the 990s, Æthelred emphasized that his action connected him with his immediate predecessors as king, to whom he was also joined by family relationship. In S891 (AD 997), a restoration of lands to the Old Minster, Winchester, Æthelred presented his gift:

just as in the beginning of Christianity it was decided by king Cenwalh, and afterwards signed by Cynewulf; then indeed it was restored by Ecgbyrht, and reached its former heights; at last, by Eadred, that is uncle of my father Edgar, it was renewed in a similar way with the certain stipulation of letters to the above-mentioned holy place; most recently it was restored by my father...<sup>92</sup>

The reference to ‘in the beginning of Christianity’ alludes to the establishment of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, and more specifically the conversion of the first West Saxon kings.<sup>93</sup> The concern was with the English as Christians, rather than membership of any wider community.

Christian faith was presented as equivalent to the rule of the English kings. Although gifts were presented in terms of eternal possession and heavenly reward, a number of charters substitute *perpetualiter* with a phrase such as ‘so long as the torch of faith shines out on the *patria* of the English’.<sup>94</sup> Although narrative sections indicate that the king could and did deprive people of their lands in punishment, the commands and sanctions of the charters were purely spiritual. The injunction that property given by the

<sup>91</sup> S912: ‘abauus praedecessor meus Offa, scilicet, rex inclitus’; ‘ipsum coenobium rex beneuolus Offa ditauit, et egomet nunc confirmando renouauit’.

<sup>92</sup> S891 (AD 997): ‘uti in inchoatione christianitatis a Kynewalho rege deliberatum est; ac postmodum a Kynewulfo praetitulatum est; dein uero ab Ecgbyrhto restauratum, ac apicibus recuperatum est; ad ultimum autem ab Eadredo patruo scilicet patris mei Eadgari simili modo cum certa litterarum adstipulatione redintegratum est eidem suprascripto sancto loco; nouissime uero ab ipso patre meo satis clara demonstratione renouatum est...’

<sup>93</sup> S914 refers to Augustine, Gregory and Æthelberht, because of its Canterbury origin, but this is a forgery from later in the eleventh century (n.53, above).

<sup>94</sup> S925, AD 1012: ‘quamdiu Anglorum patriae facula eluxerit fidei’.

king should be respected was strengthened by recourse to Christian principles and beliefs, and thus cohered with the instruction that it should last as long as the faith itself.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, this phrase aligned the persistence of Christianity in the land of the English with civilization and the accepted order.

Anglo-Saxon proems more generally situated their transactions in the divine history of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Judgement, rather than the history of the earthly church. Many charters opened with the idea that God was governor of the universe, directing earthly and eternal order. This idea appeared regularly in invocations, which might be quite brief or more developed (S884, AD 995, is an example of a lengthier invocation on this theme). The ultimate authority of God was reinforced further in the introduction of royal styles, which often contained a phrase such as *diuina fauente gratia* or *diuina dei gratia dispensante*. The *arengae* provided an opportunity for draftsmen to reflect further on God's role as governor of everything.<sup>96</sup> In these diplomatic elements, divine authority was expressed in terms of monarchy and kingdoms. Insley has drawn attention to the similarity in vocabulary of invocations and royal styles, which created an immediate parallel between God's rule of the universe with the English king's rule in Britain: like Æthelred, God was called *gubernator* and *rector*.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the terms of his power reflected those Æthelred used: *monarchia* (S884, AD 995), *imperium* (S882, AD 995 for 994) and *regnum* (S893, AD 998); he too sat on a throne ('residente solio', S901, AD 1002). The comparison was most directly stated in a proem of 988, which created a neat parallel between God as heavenly governor and the government of earthly kings (S869: 'All positioning of worldly things

<sup>95</sup> Chaplais, 'Origin and Authenticity', p.33 highlighted the purely ecclesiastical nature of sanctions and authenticity in Anglo-Saxon diplomas. However, Norman charters provide a comparable system in this respect. Hadley notes that such phrases indicated the threat felt to be posed by pagan vikings: *Northern Danelaw*, p.36 n.126. Variants linking the English people to Britain include a will of the ninth century, in which the donor hopes his gifts will last 'as long as there be baptism on the English people's island' (S1508), and a charter of Eadwig (S610): 'quamdiu Christianitas in hac Albionis insula uiguerit'.

<sup>96</sup> S837-840, S843, S850.

<sup>97</sup> Insley, 'Where did all the charters go?', pp.117-18. E.g. S869 (AD 988), S880 (AD 994).

is governed by the heavenly moderator... and the lineages of kings and princes rule over the summit of the world through renowned government').<sup>98</sup>

From 984 (which Keynes saw as the end of Æthelred's 'period of tutelage'), draftsmen began to reflect on the idea that God granted worldly authority directly.<sup>99</sup> New *arengae* were composed expanding on this theme and specifically applying it to the king.<sup>100</sup> A rare repeated proem (used in S856 and S860, both AD 985), described how God established the world after the Fall, and 'conceded that diverse monarchies of nations should be dominated by various rectors'.<sup>101</sup> These statements established that Æthelred ruled by the will of God, and therefore should be obeyed in his decisions, for 'the laws of the kingdoms are governed by the dispensation of providence'.<sup>102</sup> In particular, the theme of Creation, which features in seventeen diplomas, provided scope for further reflection on God's role as governor and on his delegation of earthly authority.

Draftsmen emphasized God's bestowal of worldly authority, rather than physical possessions as in Norman *arengae*. God's gift of wealth separate from authority appears in three charters only, spread across the period in 985, 1011 and 1015. This may reflect the fact that Æthelred claimed authority over the whole of Britain, but royal possessions were concentrated primarily in the south. The relationship between ruler and subjects was more prominent. A unique proem of 1007 explained Æthelred's gift to his *prepositus* Ælfgar as a product of this special relationship, which stemmed from God, who 'mingled the love of such great sweetness in the hearts of lords and rulers, so that

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<sup>98</sup> 'Omnis status mundanarum rerum superno gubernatur moderatore... regum satrapumque prosapia mundi iam iamque principantur fastigio precluenti moderamine'.

<sup>99</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.176-77.

<sup>100</sup> See the comment by Sean Miller in *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 9 (Oxford: OUP, 2001), p.137.

<sup>101</sup> S856: '...diuersas nationum monarchias uariis concessit dominari rectoribus...'

<sup>102</sup> S886, AD 995: 'regnorum iura prouida dispensatione gubernatur'.

they would love their servants and subjects as much as their own sons'.<sup>103</sup> The reflection on these themes in *arengae* gave Æthelred's authority over his subjects a Christian significance.

Increasingly emphasis turned towards the Fall, and the perilous world to which it led. It was usual for the world to be described as transitory, but charters began to stress its dangerous character. In the 980s, draftsmen reformulated proems from Eadwig or Edgar's charters (S834, S841, S864) which announced the coming of the end and the Biblical prophecy that 'People will rise against people and kingdom against kingdom' [Mark 13.8; Luke 12.10]. Later references refer to specific troubles, which has led various editors and commenters to ascribe such statements to the viking invasions of Æthelred's reign.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, the openings of two charters of 1005 (S911) and 1016 (S935) specifically referred to viking attackers, characterizing them as *piratae, hostes barbari* and *paganae gentes*. Diplomas presented these troubles as assailing the English land ('the dreadful roars of obscene and horrible death warn us that we are not safe in our own land of acquired peace'), and the king claimed he acted in the interests of his nation, to gain favour with God ('on account of the cure of my soul and the stability of the kingdom conceded to me from heaven').<sup>105</sup>

The king's responsibility to his people was focused on the English. Although the royal styles of these diplomas presented the king as ruler of many peoples, the rhetoric of the *arengae* framed the nation with reference to the English past and the Christian community. Danish attacks in particular were assaults on a Christian English land which Æthelred sought to defend. The *arengae* of Æthelred's charters emphasized unity among his subjects, rather than the division between English and Danish presented by

<sup>103</sup> S915 (AD 1007): 'tanteque caritatem dulcedinis dominorum ac prelatorum cordibus inmiscuit ut seruulos ac subditos utpote proprios diligerent filios'.

<sup>104</sup> E.g. *Abingdon Abbey*, II, 516.

<sup>105</sup> S928, AD 1012: 'diris obscene horrendaeque mortalitatis circumsepta latratibus. non nos propria indepte pacis securos'; S912, AD 1005: 'ob meae remedium animulae et ob stabilimentum regni coelitus mihimet concessi'.

Wulfstan. They referred to the Mercian and West Saxon royal pasts and to the Christian history of Britain as the legacy of all the English people. Æthelred's authority, however, did not come from this heritage alone but from God's delegation. The 'English' were those who obeyed his authority, as Christian subjects should.

## V. Territorial range of royal authority

Æthelred's claims to rule all Britain are barely substantiated in his surviving diplomas. Witness-lists contain predominantly Mercian and West Saxon ecclesiastics and officials, and most beneficiary institutions were located in Mercia and Wessex, too. These were the heartlands of royal authority and regions where people may be assumed to be most receptive to Æthelred's view of English identity; his claims to imperial rule over the rest of Britain were safely made here. From the 990s, Æthelred was keen to patronize religious houses.<sup>106</sup> Many of the institutions which received land-grants in this area already had firm connections with the West Saxon dynasty, such as New Minster, Winchester, where Æthelred's ancestors were buried and which was re-founded as a Benedictine monastery by Æthelred's father Edgar in 966 (S745). Æthelred continued to build these connections, not only through land-grants but through actions such as the 981 translation and 1001 elevation of the body of his brother St Edward to the nunnery Alfred had founded at Shaftesbury.<sup>107</sup> Æthelred did not solely patronize Benedictine houses, but many of the institutions from which archives survive were associated with reformers such as Æthelwold, whom he identified as so important to his reign.

Through patronizing these institutions and confirming them as significant land-holders in southern England, Æthelred strengthened his power-base in the heartlands of the English kingdom. In the early years of his reign, Æthelred had appropriated lands from some of these monasteries. In the group of charters produced from 993 onwards

<sup>106</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp.198-99.

<sup>107</sup> ASC E 980; S899; Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, pp.155-57.



which proclaim his regret for the actions of his youth, he restored these lands and privileges to the monastic houses of Abingdon and Old Minster, Winchester, and the bishopric of Rochester. In one of these charters for Abingdon Abbey, Æthelred stated that he restored what Edgar had given ‘because it seems to me very grievous to incur and bear the curse of my father, by retaining this offering which he made to God for the redemption of his soul’.<sup>108</sup> Through such actions, Æthelred re-established the connections between the English royal dynasty and these institutions. In return, they promulgated a view of his rule over the English and Britain.

The concentration of diplomas concerning the south is partly a result of the pattern of survival. As Kelly has pointed out, we have relatively abundant evidence from ‘the centre’, but ‘we know little about the peripheries where alternative strategies may have been followed’.<sup>109</sup> We are left without comparable source material for areas of ninth-century Danish settlement, where alternative perceptions of geographical identity may have flourished. However, it seems that this disparity results from more than chance in the preservation of Anglo-Saxon material. The available sources suggest that Æthelred did not issue charters or give land so frequently in these regions.<sup>110</sup> The – admittedly scarce – evidence from these areas seems to demonstrate the continuing existence of Wulfstan’s regional divide.

Documents relating to northern England in the Anglo-Saxon period are particularly scarce. It is clear from written sources such as Bede’s *Letter to Ecgbert* and the *Life of*

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<sup>108</sup> S937 (AD 999?): ‘quia mihi uidetur esse ualde molestum patris mei incurrere et portare maledictum retinendo hoc quod ipse pro sue anime redemptione Deo contulit donarium’; trans. in EHD, p.583.

<sup>109</sup> *Abingdon Abbey*, I, lxxviii: most surviving charters relate to Wessex, Kent and Sussex, the Abingdon region and the West Midlands, there are a scattering from Essex and the East Midlands, and ‘virtually nothing’ from East Anglia and north of Trent. There remains, however, a substantial number of charters relating to Devon, which do indicate alternative strategies: Charles Insley, ‘Charters and Episcopal Scriptoria in the Anglo-Saxon South-West’, *EME*, 7 (1998), 173-97.

<sup>110</sup> Pauline Stafford, ‘The Reign of Æthelred II, a study in the limitations on Royal Policy and Action’, in *Ethelred the Unready*, ed. by Hill, pp.15-46 (pp.25, 28, 32) maps Æthelred’s land grants.

*Bishop Wilfrid* that charters were used in the early Northumbrian kingdom.<sup>111</sup> The events of the ninth to eleventh centuries, however, led to the destruction of virtually all pre-viking diplomas and caused a break in diplomatic production. The viking invasions were one cause of destruction to documents (others are likely to have been Eadred's burning of Ripon in 948 and the 'harrying of the north' by William the Conqueror in 1069).<sup>112</sup> Viking destruction and subsequent pagan Scandinavian settlement also severely disrupted ecclesiastical life, which meant fewer charters were produced in the following period. However, the few ecclesiastical foundations which survived in the tenth century – York minster, St John at Beverley, and the community of St Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street – developed their own ways of recording and protecting landed property.<sup>113</sup> David Woodman has suggested that the 'horn of Ulf' in York minster was used in an oral transaction of property in the eleventh century.<sup>114</sup> Occasionally, the kings of England issued diplomas for northern houses, but they did not dominate the transfer of land in the same way as they did further south. Diplomas of Æthelstan which granted land in 'Danish' regions described how they had come into the king's jurisdiction – a feature of diplomatic otherwise rare before Æthelred's reign.<sup>115</sup> Confirmations were not required for transactions which did not concern royal land. The king was an important patron in the north, but not the ultimate source of authority over landed property.

Tenth-century English kings were especially eager to pursue relationships with the archbishops of York, who regularly attested their diplomas. Like his father Edgar,

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<sup>111</sup> Stenton, *Latin Charters*, p.32; *Charters of Northern Houses*, ed. by David Woodman, Anglo-Saxon Charters 16 (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp.2-3.

<sup>112</sup> *Northern Houses*, pp.5-6. The archives of York minster were burned in 1069, and only eleven Anglo-Saxon documents survive, two in pre-Conquest copies: *Northern Houses*, p.68. The archive of St John at Beverley contains two writs of Edward the Confessor (p.187), while there are no genuine documents from Ripon (p.249). The community of St Cuthbert at Durham is in a different situation again – there are four pre-Conquest notes in Woodman's edition (pp.316-23).

<sup>113</sup> Hadley, *Northern Danelaw*, pp.216-97, surveys smaller churches in the region.

<sup>114</sup> *Northern Houses*, pp.8-9.

<sup>115</sup> S396, S397 (both AD 926), S407 (AD 930 for 934).

Æthelred had learned the importance of the loyalty of the northern see from the actions of Archbishop Wulfstan I, who supported the Norse king Eric against Eadred in 947. In order to secure the archbishop's co-operation and forestall any future Norse claims to York, Edgar and Æthelred appointed their own men to the archbishopric. The kings intended these men to represent their interests in Northumbria, and do not seem to have chosen local men. Several of the archbishops appear to have originated in East Anglia, and may have been chosen because of their experience of living in a Danish-settled area.<sup>116</sup> They also pursued the interests of their northern diocese. Wulfstan II, appointed as archbishop by Æthelred, balanced these responsibilities. He worked closely with the king in drafting his laws, but some of these (such as VI Æthelred) protected the rights of the northern church in particular.

The other major religious institution in Northumbria patronized by English kings was the community of St Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street, which moved to Durham in 995. Although York minster received diplomas from Æthelstan and his successors, it seems that the community of St Cuthbert did not. As Æthelstan travelled north in 934, he aimed to cultivate the support of this community through the giving of gifts. However, the record of his gifts was produced entirely by the beneficiary community. At Chester-le-Street (and Durham), it was the practice to record land-grants as notes in important books, such as the community's *Liber Vitae*. These short vernacular records show some knowledge of charter formulae, but were clearly produced entirely separately from the diplomas examined above.<sup>117</sup> The narrative *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* also recorded the community's patrimony. Woodman has explained the different diplomatic practices at York and Durham with reference to the historic distinction between the kingdoms of

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<sup>116</sup> Whitelock, 'Dealings of the Kings of England', pp.75-76, and suggests a similar strategy in appointments of earls, pp.78-79.

<sup>117</sup> *Northern Houses*, pp.301, 316-23.

Deira and Bernicia.<sup>118</sup> The distinction is not made in contemporary texts, but the point that Northumbrians did not have united interests in this period is worth emphasizing. Indeed, the community of St Cuthbert seems more removed from West Saxon dominance than York was, despite being less touched by Scandinavian settlement.<sup>119</sup>

For these reasons, English kings had much less control over the representation of their authority in northern England. In the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, the community recorded the landed property of St Cuthbert, including gifts from English kings, in a mixture of narrative form and documentary style. This method of presentation demonstrates the community's feeling that St Cuthbert could guarantee property more effectively than the king. However, in giving gifts to St Cuthbert and York, English kings made their influence felt, and attempted to impress upon these institutions the sphere of that influence. Although the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* was not produced by the king's officials, it reflects contemporary diplomatic practice in several ways. The titles applied to Alfred are those of tenth-century kings: 'rex totius Britanniae', ruler of 'tota Albion' and 'regnum Brytanniae'.<sup>120</sup> The compiler of the *Historia* represented the extension of West Saxon authority over Northumbria in the same imperial terms as the royal draftsmen. Another passage imitates the form of a charter by which a certain Styr gave land to St Cuthbert.<sup>121</sup> In this 'charter', it is claimed that Styr obtained King Æthelred's permission to donate land to St Cuthbert. These indications suggest that the community recognized and were willing to acknowledge the English kings' claims to rule their region.

The situation in the eastern Danelaw was very different, as the borderlands of this region were the site of a number of reformed houses, such as Peterborough, Ely and Ramsey. Their demand for diplomas went hand-in-hand with Edgar and Æthelred's

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<sup>118</sup> *Northern Houses*, pp.11-16.

<sup>119</sup> Rollason, *Northumbria*, p.244.

<sup>120</sup> HSC, pp.54-56.

<sup>121</sup> *Northern Houses*, p.317.

desire to emphasize their patronage. It was these border regions where the rhetoric of Æthelred's authority was stretched the most. There are fewer surviving charters of Æthelred for these houses, but West Saxon influence can also be seen in their narratives. The *Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, apparently composed in this region bordering on East Anglia, shows a view of English rule over Britain similar to that in Æthelred's royal styles. Several times, the text refers to 'in Britannie Anglice partibus', but the viking invasion was said to affect 'Brittannie Anglice insulam'.<sup>122</sup> Thus, while there was awareness that the English only inhabited some parts of Britain, they were represented as the dominant nation on the island.

The documents and practices of religious communities in northern (and, to a lesser extent, eastern) England display a perception of regional difference under one royal authority. These institutions rarely benefited from Æthelred's, or even Edgar's patronage, but were left to operate with a greater degree of independence. Nevertheless, they accepted royal authority at a distance and reflected the rhetoric of power found in the charters of tenth-century kings.

## VI. Conclusion

Charters rarely referred to an ethnic distinction between northern and southern England, but when they did it seems that the impetus came from northern ecclesiastics. The only explicit reference to Northumbrians as a separate people in one of Æthelred's charters was drafted by the bishop of Dorchester. St Cuthbert's community, in accepting royal patronage, chose to refer to the West Saxon kings' claims to imperial rule of all Britain, rather than including themselves and their people within one English identity. Æthelred and his advisors, throughout his reign, preferred to emphasize the unity of his subjects, the Christian people of Britain. Nevertheless, the geographical range of

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<sup>122</sup> VPSN, pp.112, 118, 124-25. See further the *Libellus Æthelwoldi* in the *Liber Eliensis*, ed. by E.O. Blake (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962), pp.72-117, 395-99.

Æthelred's power did not extend as far as his rhetoric of authority. Therefore, in his interactions with more distant regions, Æthelred had to accommodate the demands of northern ecclesiastics. Wulfstan, as archbishop of York and Worcester, reflected the interests of the north in his creation of the 'Laws of Edward and Guthrum'.

However, the divide between north and south was not expressed in terms of English-Danish interaction in other contexts than law. Northern ecclesiastics called their people 'Northumbrians' or 'northerners', and sometimes referred to 'pagans' as another group. They did not identify themselves as Danes – but neither, in general, did the king, the witan or royal draftsmen. The Danes in royal charters were attackers, visitors and inhabitants of Wessex and Mercia. They were involved in political life, even though they were perceived as alien; at other times, they were enemies of the nation. For these reasons, the divide between English and Danish was a matter of contemporary concern.

Perhaps it was the legal context that led Wulfstan, and the draftsmen of Edgar's laws, to ascribe a Danish character to the regional distinction. Early medieval understandings of what constituted a *gens* included law and, conversely, non-Roman law was seen to apply to a people-group rather than a territory. The 'Danish' explanation of difference was therefore readily understandable. Moreover, this explanation avoided distinctions among the English, such as Northumbrian and West Saxon: by attributing difference to the Danes, the fiction that the English were one people legally, customarily and ethnically could be maintained.

### Conclusion

Ethnic narratives concerning vikings in England and Normandy depicted Scandinavians as both enemies and ancestors. These depictions have many familiar elements. Norman writers called upon classical texts and early ‘barbarian’ histories such as Jordanes’s *History of the Goths* in their depictions of Scandinavian origins shared with the Franks. English writers, on the other hand, seem to have drawn directly on Danish and Norse tradition in order to situate Anglo-Saxon origins within a Scandinavian context. Writers from both regions showed vikings of the ninth century as violent enemies to Christians; all of them exploited ninth-century chronicles, histories and hagiographies, which were usually monastic products. As a result, they display similarities in the language used to describe viking raiders. For instance, they emphasized the vikings’ pagan origins and underhand tactics through the image of the wolf. Abbo, in a phrase picked up by Ælfric and subsequent writers, described the stealth of Hinguar’s attack as ‘just like the custom of the wolf of the evening’.<sup>1</sup> Dudo saw viking ferocity in similar terms. He first used the image of wolves attacking sheep when describing Hasting’s activities, but continued to deploy it throughout his history in descriptions of Norman warfare.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the image acted as a reminder of the Normans’ ferocious viking nature. The fearsome image of the wolf fed into the transformative vision of conversion in the *Translatio Prima Sancti Audoeni*, which described the Danes as ‘from wolves turned into lambs’; the post-Conquest writer of the English *Vita Secunda Sancti Neoti* used the same phrase in his description of Guthrum’s conversion, although earlier English writers concentrated more on the pre-conversion viking state.<sup>3</sup>

However, comparison of English and Norman ethnic narratives discloses a number of direct contradictions. Different interpretations arose from the new political contexts

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<sup>1</sup> Abbo, p.73: ‘uelut lupis uespertinis mos’.

<sup>2</sup> Lair, pp.135, 155, 190, 196, 204, 242, 255, 275, 278.

<sup>3</sup> *Translatio Prima Audoeni*, ch.12: ‘ex lupis facti agni’; *Vita II Neoti*, ch.64: ‘de lupo factus est agnus’. Cf. Lair, p.153.

to which tenth- and eleventh-century writers adapted their sources. In particular, they presented very different views of the impact of the vikings on England and Normandy. Apart from a few brief entries in the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, English writers usually ignored the Scandinavian settlement. The hagiographies of this period, in fact, stated that Guthrum and his followers had departed from England and gone back to Scandinavia. The Danish settlement was only addressed directly in Northumbria, where West Saxon royal authority was less dominant. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* discussed the community's – albeit temporary – interaction with different groups of Scandinavian settlers; and it was an archbishop of York, Wulfstan II, who composed a text attributing the legal distinctiveness of the north-east to its ninth-century Scandinavian rulers. Norman writers, on the other hand, took Scandinavian settlement as the defining fact of their histories. In these views of the past, the settlement of Rollo and his followers led to a complete transformation of the region and its people. Their settlement was equated with the establishment of the principality of Normandy; the inhabitants of Normandy saw this moment as the origin of monastic revival and the source of all land ownership.

This contrast led to varied interpretations of viking conversions. Norman texts emphasized conversion as the instrument of transformation from vikings to rulers, and the means by which newcomers and natives were bonded into one people. English writers, conversely, were sceptical of the possibility of whole-hearted conversion to Christianity, and instead presented paganism as an ethnic attribute of vikings. Many 'ethnological' descriptions drew on Abbo's *Passio Eadmundi*, which described the Danes as the servants of the devil. Monastic texts equated Danish identity with paganism. Byrhtferth reported in his *Vita Sancti Oswaldi* that Archbishop Oda's father had come to England with Hubba and Hinguar, and added scornfully 'for that reason his



father did not wholly seek to serve Christ!’.<sup>4</sup> Oda’s career, however, implies that, in Byrhtferth’s eyes, such ethnic attributes did not necessarily pass through the family line. In both societies, therefore, conversion provided the means for ethnic adaptation, but such adaptation was less flexible – perhaps intergenerational – in England.

Religious and secular authorities combined familiar elements into very different creations in order to negotiate, define and manipulate ethnicity. They faced similar past events and used similar methods, but their interpretations differed according to their purposes. The Norman dukes integrated themselves into Frankish political life, and focused on the creation of a polity that held the greatest independence from royal power. In support of these aims, their ethnic narratives emphasized their people’s separation and interaction with the Franks across a multiply reinforced boundary. The English kings, on the other hand, attempted to unify several societies into a single kingdom, but continually faced various Scandinavian threats. Their ethnic narratives, therefore, balanced inclusive unity with opposition to these threats, and the boundaries they constructed were fluid and permeable.

The contrast between the ethnic narratives produced in Normandy and in England demonstrates a simple but important point. Claims to viking identity were not an expression of contact with Scandinavia. Norman texts consistently defined ‘viking’ identity within a Frankish context. Genealogical, historical and geographical boundaries were constructed between the vikings of Normandy and the neighbouring Franks. These ethnic narratives were not aimed at the rest of the Old Norse world. In England, on the other hand, viking and Scandinavian heritage was employed in the negotiation of various relationships. Sometimes it was used to construct boundaries within England, and sometimes it was used for boundaries between the inhabitants of the English kingdom and external forces. Continued contact between England and Scandinavia

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<sup>4</sup> *Byrhtferth of Ramsey*, ed. by Lapidge, pp.16-17: ‘ideo pater non penitus Christo seruire studuit!’

meant that the meanings of ‘Danish’ and of the viking past remained ambiguous and context-dependent. The lack of such contact between Francia and Scandinavia allowed the Normans and their neighbours to impose a consistent meaning on viking identity.

### **Viking identities in Normandy**

From the outset, the establishment of the Norman dukes in northern France was inextricably linked to their viking identity. Charles the Simple had granted Rollo and his followers the region that became Normandy *because* they were vikings. The agreement was made partly in appeasement, but primarily so Rollo would defend the rest of France, and especially Paris, from other groups of vikings. The first mention of a grant of land to Rollo is found in a 918 charter of Charles the Simple which refers to Rollo and his companions as ‘Normannis Sequanensibus’.<sup>5</sup> Rollo’s group of vikings was thus equated at this early stage with the ‘Seine vikings’ who had troubled Francia for many years. Rollo was granted the Seine valley, with the understanding that he would prevent other viking bands accessing the French interior, and the sea-coast, which he would defend from raids as his own territory. The original agreement, as recorded by Frankish and Norman historians, relied upon the particularly ‘viking’ qualities and connections of Rollo and his followers, and inherently recognised that Rollo was one of several viking leaders active at the time.<sup>6</sup>

Norman writers over the next century propagated this view, but redeployed it. They emphasized the viking past of the Norman dukes and their followers, even though the Frankish image of a viking was that of a violent, heathen barbarian. Norman texts written in the tenth and early eleventh centuries demonstrate that, despite its hitherto negative role, this image held benefits for the new rulers of Normandy. The viking

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<sup>5</sup> *Recueil des actes de Charles III le Simple*, ed. by Philippe Lauer, 2 vols (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1940), I, 211.

<sup>6</sup> *Inventio et Miracula Vulfranni*, p.26, states that vikings ravaged Francia ‘sub uariis... ducibus’.

identity of the Normans held an element of threat for their neighbours, who were accustomed to regarding vikings with fear. More importantly, emphasis on the viking subjugation of Normandy reduced the importance of Charles the Simple's grant. Whereas Flodoard of Reims presented Scandinavian settlement in Normandy as a concession of the king, Norman historians attributed the same process to viking conquest – thereby placing the Normans in the superior position.

In this period, Norman texts almost always reflected ducal interests and viewpoints. The most detailed and influential narrative was Dudo of St-Quentin's *De moribus*, which was commissioned by the ducal family. The monks who wrote other narrative texts relied on ducal patronage of their monasteries, and themselves may have arrived in Normandy as a result of the dukes' repopulation of their foundations. As has been demonstrated, these narratives showed similarity with and influence from Dudo's text as a result. Richard II even seems to have controlled the production of charters centrally in many cases. Whether composed in a ducal administrative milieu or in a monastery which was the beneficiary of his patronage, these charters claimed to speak with the voice of the duke, and he ratified them personally. All of these texts display a view of ethnic relations that is broadly similar. Their unity is a result, not of complete consensus within Normandy, but of the dominance of the ducal family in textual production. As immigrants to Francia, establishing a new society within a shifting power-structure, the Norman rulers engaged with the presentation of themselves, their authority, and their relationship with their subjects.

The Norman dukes' main concern was their relationships with neighbouring counts and the king of the Franks. These neighbours presented the major threats to ducal power. Conflict with Arnulf, Count of Flanders, resulted in William Longsword's assassination in 943. Afterwards, the future of Normandy must have looked very uncertain, as King Louis IV and Hugh the Great attempted to wrest direct control of the region from the

young Richard I. Once Richard, as an adult, had re-asserted ducal authority, he and his successors were eager to defend their position against such attempts in the future. They built up Normandy as a distinct unit, ruled separately from the rest of France by right. Therefore, the dukes employed the viking heritage of their dynasty to define their people against the Franks. Moreover, they associated all viking activity with their dynasty alone.<sup>7</sup> The earliest texts presented the subjects of the Norman dukes as two groups: the existing inhabitants of Rouen, and the new viking elite. Very rapidly, however, this internal distinction disappeared. The construction of a boundary between Normans and Franks led to the coherence of all the inhabitants of Normandy into one people, defined by their difference from their neighbours.

The secular authority of the dukes and the religious authority of the church – often involving members of the ducal family – worked closely together to promote the distinction between Normans and Franks. The ethnic narratives they produced were all aimed at the negotiation of this boundary. Ethnic relations in terms of genealogical, historical, and geographical identity operated across analogous boundaries between Normans and Franks. This three-fold interpretation of ethnicity reinforced the strength of the distinction.

### **Normandy and Scandinavia**

The Normans only invoked the viking past when it assisted with the aim of distinguishing their people from the Franks. These texts showed the French version of vikings. They used the language and the tropes of Frankish narratives, contemporary and earlier, to reflect back a slightly adapted vision of barbarian raiders. This characterization of the Normans' viking and Scandinavian heritage indicates that the audience and the writers of all these texts were immersed in Frankish culture. The

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<sup>7</sup> Abrams, 'Early Normandy', p.64, on the disappearance of other viking leaders from the historical record.

concomitant point is that these ethnic narratives did not derive from Scandinavian culture and were not aimed at the Old Norse world.

Even the Scandinavian past was used as a means of negotiating this Frankish-Norman boundary. The writers of the Normans' Frankish models possessed little interest and considerable ignorance about the viking homelands of Denmark and Norway. Norman writers, many of whom came from other regions of Francia, employed the Frankish vision of Scandinavia in the service of Norman distinction. Their audience and context were Frankish – they did not need to engage with the realities of Scandinavian life. Narratives of Norman origins generally began with the viking arrival in Francia, rather than in the Scandinavian homelands. Their brief references to Scandinavia used ideas from western geographies concerning the north. The *Vita Romani* described the Danes as 'a nation from the extreme ends of the sea and the unknown islands', a concept mirrored exactly in the *Translatio Severi*, which states that they came 'from the most remote northern islands of the sea'.<sup>8</sup> Beyond these geographical introductions, Norman and Frankish writers displayed little curiosity or imagination when it came to the Scandinavian homelands.

The exception, as ever, was Dudo, who dedicated a considerable part of the first two books of the *De moribus* to the political conditions of Scandinavia. It is highly unlikely that this had any basis in reality; rather, he used the Scandinavian background to create a parallel situation to that of the Normans and the Franks. Dudo introduced the Norman dynasty first of all by describing the situation of Rollo's father in Dacia:

Never had he bowed the nape of his neck to any king, nor had he done service or entrusted his own hands into the hands of any man by way of commendation. As owner of almost the whole

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<sup>8</sup> Lifshitz, *Pious Neustria*, p.250: 'gentem... ab extremis finibus maris et ignotis insulis'; trans. in Lifshitz, 'Dossier of Romanus', p.257; *Translatio Severi*, p.56: 'a remotis septentrionalibus maris insulis'.

of the kingdom of Dacia, he won for himself lands adjacent to Dacia and Alania and subjected their peoples to his might and power in several battles.<sup>9</sup>

This ‘all-powerful leader’ (‘dux praepotentissimus’) was distinct from the Dacian king, who threatened the young Dacian men with expulsion and the seizure of their ‘lands and land-grants’ (‘fundis... atque beneficiis’).<sup>10</sup> His power over the wide lands he ruled was effective, and won by his own force; it was also hereditary, passing on to his sons Rollo and Gurim. This structure of power or ‘monarchia’, independent of and sometimes in opposition to the king, prefigured the future state of the dukes of Normandy beside France.<sup>11</sup>

Dudo, like the writers of hagiographies and charters, wrote for an audience based in Francia and Normandy. There is no evidence that Dudo’s Scandinavian contemporaries had any knowledge of his work: Saxo Grammaticus referred to Dudo’s work in the beginning of his *Gesta Danorum*, but he wrote over 150 years later.<sup>12</sup> Old Norse references to Normandy are generally late, and still scarce. *Landnámabók* contains a reference to Rollo, as ‘Ganger-Hrólfr’, but again this dates from the twelfth century at the earliest.<sup>13</sup> There is record of a skaldic poet’s presence in Rouen in 1025: Sigvatr Þorðarson, Olaf Haraldsson’s skald, mentioned the city in his *Vestrfararvísur*, but there is no evidence that Old Norse poetry was composed in Normandy at this time.<sup>14</sup> Richard

<sup>9</sup> Christiansen, p.26; Lair, p.141: ‘qui nunquam colla suae cervicis cuiquam regi subegit nec cujuslibet manibus, gratia servitii, manus suas commendando commisit. Qui Daciae regnum pene universum possidens, affines Daciae et Alaniae terras sibi vindicavit, populosque sibi praeliis quamplurimis vi et potestate subjugavit’.

<sup>10</sup> Christiansen, p.26; Lair p.142.

<sup>11</sup> Lair, p.143; Ademar of Chabannes, *Chronicon*, p.127: ‘omnisque eorum Normannorum, qui iuxta Frantiam inhabitaverant...’

<sup>12</sup> *Saxonis Gesta Danorum*, I, 10.

<sup>13</sup> *The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók*, trans. by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1972), pp.119-20. Because of this reference, Rollo has been identified with the protagonist of Göngu-Hrólfs Saga, but this later composition bears no relation to the early Norman duchy: Jacob Hartmann, *The Göngu-Hrólfs saga: A Study in Old Norse Philology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912), pp.53-55. For an overview of Normandy’s Old Norse connections, see Lesley Abrams, ‘England, Normandy and Scandinavia’, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp.43-62.

<sup>14</sup> Sigvatr, *Vestrfararvísur*, p.617.

II and his brother Archbishop Robert seem to have confined their literary patronage to the production of Latin texts for an audience within the Frankish world.<sup>15</sup> The ducal family concerned themselves with mediating the ethnic relations between their people and their Frankish neighbours.

Their lack of concern for the Old Norse world reflects dwindling relations with Scandinavia. Although, occasionally, Norman dukes called upon viking armies to assist them against their neighbours, in 945 and 962 and perhaps again in 1013, it was increasingly rare for them to resort to this policy. The dukes were content to allow viking armies raiding England in the 980s to use their ports, and to enrich their markets with booty from the raids. Yet it became clear that the Church authorities would not permit the Normans to maintain this double loyalty for long. In 991, Pope John XV brokered an agreement between Richard I and Æthelred, in which Richard swore not to assist Æthelred's enemies any longer.<sup>16</sup> Richard II flouted this treaty in the year 1000, but Normandy's Scandinavian alliances did not have long to live.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the French king Robert II negotiated peace between the Normans and Bretons in 1013, in order to remove the viking armies.<sup>18</sup> Although Sigvatr's presence in Rouen testifies to some ongoing connections, by the second decade of the eleventh century, Scandinavian visitors came to Normandy only in the course of trade and travel. Even economic connections diminished considerably, and quite abruptly: the evidence of coinage found in Normandy, Scandinavia and along viking trade routes suggests a sudden rupture in the second decade of the eleventh century.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Lucien Musset, 'Le satiriste Garnier de Rouen et son Milieu (Début du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle)', *Revue du Moyen Âge Latin*, 10 (1954), 237-58.

<sup>16</sup> *Memorials of St Dunstan*, ed. by William Stubbs (London: Longman, 1874), pp.397-98.

<sup>17</sup> Lauren Wood Breese, 'The Persistence of Scandinavian Connections in Normandy in the Tenth and Early Eleventh Centuries', *Viator*, 8 (1977), 47-61.

<sup>18</sup> *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, II, 24-27.

<sup>19</sup> Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p.36.

Norman dukes were exclusively concerned with ethnic relations within the Frankish world because of the nature of these contacts. Essentially, Scandinavian forces never seriously threatened them; after the mid-tenth century, they did not threaten the Franks, either. On the other hand, the Norman dukes and their subjects engaged in a process of constant negotiation with their Frankish and Flemish neighbours, which frequently erupted into conflict. The Norman dukes created ethnic narratives that assisted them in these conflicts. The writers they patronized were free to use the viking past and the imagined world of Scandinavia in the service of these ethnic narratives, precisely because they did not need to engage with contemporary Scandinavians. At the same time as these texts were composed – the second half of the tenth and the early eleventh century – contacts with Scandinavia and viking forces stopped. Counter-intuitively, it was the *cessation* of Scandinavian connections that enabled the creation of Norman viking identity.

### **Viking identities in England**

The West Saxon monarchy also rose to dominance as a result of viking invasions, but in a different manner. Ninth-century viking armies had left them as the only ‘native’ Anglo-Saxon dynasty. The West Saxons, now dominant in the south, directed their ambitions towards the new Anglo-Scandinavian polities. From Alfred’s treaty with Guthrum onwards, West Saxon kings justified their claims to increasingly wide authority in terms of ethnicity. They styled themselves rulers ‘over all the English race except that part which was under Danish control’.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the tenth century, therefore, West Saxon kings presented themselves and their people as one, in opposition to a single alternative, the Danes. Until 954, the West Saxon kings of England strove to assert themselves over Norse rulers within England. Even after the final West Saxon

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<sup>20</sup> ASC A 900 [899]: ‘ofer eall Ongelcyn butan ðæm dæle þe under Dena onwalde wæs’.



conquest of Northumbria, the English kings enjoyed only a very brief period of respite before a new Scandinavian threat troubled them. Viking armies from Denmark and Norway began to attack the heartlands of the kingdom, and soon directed their ambitions to the conquest of the whole of England.

As in Normandy, textual production in tenth-century England was often the result of a combination of secular authority, in the person of the king and his witan, and monastic reformers. Dominant interpretations of the viking past were created by this partnership, usually in the service of the West Saxon dynasty. The Wessex kings from Alfred onwards promoted their dynasty through a variety of methods including genealogical production and the promotion of their associations with saints' cults. They capitalized on their status as the only remaining Anglo-Saxon kings after the viking conquests, and thus began to define their role against the Scandinavian presence in England. The legendary significance of Alfred's retreat to Athelney and subsequent defeat of Guthrum's army was apparently promoted by the royal court in conjunction with monasteries that enjoyed royal patronage. Moreover, Æthelstan and subsequent kings centralized charter production, and so the majority of these documents also represented the viewpoint of the governing elite, the king and his West Saxon and Mercian thegns in particular.

English interest in the Scandinavian past intensified in response to the resurgence of viking attacks in the 980s, which posed a significant threat to the kingdom from 991 onwards. It was only in this period that writers turned their gaze back to the viking wars of the ninth century, as if searching for solutions and reassurance for their current problems. Abbo of Fleury and Ælfric of Eynsham, the author of the *Vita Neoti* and the homilist of the Life of St Neot, Byrhtferth of Ramsey and Ealdorman Æthelweard all produced reinterpretations of the events of the 860s to 890s. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* is the only tenth-century text dealing with these events that is likely to have

been written earlier than Æthelred's reign. These writers imposed their presentations of ethnic conflict on the inhabitants of England, and especially those in the north and east. Their visions of ethnic relations were political creations, which were intended to inspire allegiance to the West Saxon king against Danish invaders. However, conflict was not the only paradigm. Æthelweard in particular also considered the Scandinavian origins of the English, apparently inspired by Norse-speaking inhabitants of England.

English kings seem to have been uneasy about the possibility of 'Danish' elements among their subjects sympathizing or aligning themselves with foreigners and enemies from Scandinavia. As a result, their presentation of English-Danish relations was very changeable and context-dependent. Æthelred in particular worried about treason. He ordered the St Brice's Day massacre of 1002 in response to rumours that the 'Danes' in England were planning to kill him and take over the kingdom. This was not the first time that Æthelred had heard of such a plot. The charter which confirmed the will of Æthelric of Bocking recorded the accusation that Æthelric 'was in the plot that Swein would be received in Essex when he first came there with a fleet'.<sup>21</sup> However, this same charter documented the presence of Danish thegns at the meeting. Ethnic simplification was not possible in these situations.

Ethnic terminology was complicated by the fact that English kings, perhaps because they laid claim to a much larger geographical area than Norman dukes, did not have the same monopoly on production of any of these texts. Narratives and documents also reflected regional interests. Although the tales of Alfred's interaction with saints Cuthbert and Neot probably originated at the royal court, they developed local versions in Chester-le-Street, Eynesbury and the South West, not all of which were completely complimentary to the king. Charters, also, were on occasion produced by beneficiary institutions or the relevant diocesan bishop rather than a royal draftsman. In

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<sup>21</sup> S939, AD 995x999: 'he wære on þam unræde þæt man sceolde on Eastsexon Swegen underfon ða he ærest þyder mid flotan com'.

Northumbria, especially Bernicia, beneficiaries seem to have had complete control over how royal gifts were recorded. In fact, it was only in genealogical production that the kings of England retained a complete monopoly.

Boundaries between English and Danish were constructed in different ways in different regions of England and dependent on the situation. Sometimes ethnic narratives were used to construct boundaries within England, and sometimes between the inhabitants of England and external forces. These overlapping visions of ethnic relations resulted in identities that were fluid and open to political manipulation.

### **England and Scandinavia**

English writers defined various ethnic boundaries with reference to the viking past. They identified several different contemporary groups with Danes: inhabitants of north-east England, who had previously been subject to Scandinavian rulers; merchants and thegns recently arrived from Scandinavia; and the raiders who attacked England throughout Æthelred's reign. Thus elements of Scandinavian identity were used to distinguish the English from others both within and outside the kingdom. These identities could not be separated. Æthelred in particular among English kings, suspecting treason, perceived a connection between 'Danes' in England and 'Danes' who attacked it. He patronized the production of texts which played upon this connection in an attempt to establish the loyalty of his subjects. However, the ethnic narratives produced in genealogies, hagiographies, legal texts and charters did not present the connection in the same way. Genealogies emphasized the Danish aspect of all the English, whereas hagiographies denied that any Danish element persisted at all. The draftsmen of law codes and charters took a different approach, and presented the English kingdom as a multi-ethnic realm.

Similarly, English writers presented multiple visions of Scandinavia. The depiction of Denmark or Norway depended on the context of its composition and the ethnic boundary with which its writer was concerned. Thus, hagiographic texts which demonized vikings painted a hellish portrait of the north. Abbo depicted Scandinavia as the seat of the devil. His ideas contained biblical elements that equated the north with judgement and the Antichrist, interwoven with classical geographers' tales about cannibals. Information about the reality of the north would have been available to him in England – for example, the Old English version of Orosius's history contained the account of Ohthere, a Dane at Alfred's court.<sup>22</sup> Instead of using this information, Abbo chose to describe Scandinavia in terms of horror, in order to make the evil actions of the Danes part of their inescapable ethnic nature. Abbo's *Passio Eadmundi* encouraged its Christian readers to identify with the English, and never with the Danes. But his elaborate vilification of the north would have had little effect on a pagan, or anyone who had actually travelled to Denmark.

However, other texts produced in the same period display considerable interest in Scandinavia. Æthelweard elaborated the West Saxon genealogy with references to the English people's Scandinavian origins. In doing so, he alluded to the *Beowulf* legend. Indeed, an English scribe copied the only surviving manuscript of *Beowulf* around the year 1000.<sup>23</sup> This action itself indicates a different view of the north, one which glorified Denmark, and equated English and Danish experiences. Moreover, the Old English composition of *Beowulf* reflects active engagement with Norse stories about Denmark, if not the reality of the place at that time. Scholars fiercely contest the date of *Beowulf*'s composition, but the existence of multiple images of Scandinavia is worth emphasizing in this respect. Many arguments have rested on the fundamental point that

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<sup>22</sup> *Old English Orosius*, pp.13-16.

<sup>23</sup> Kevin Kiernan, 'The Eleventh-Century Origin of *Beowulf* and the *Beowulf* Manuscript', in *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. by Chase, pp.9-21 (pp.9-10).

*Beowulf* could not have been composed – or in some cases, even copied – during Æthelred’s reign, precisely because of the enmity between English and Danes.<sup>24</sup> But in this context of contested identities, *Beowulf* is in itself evidence for sympathetic interest in Scandinavia.

Moreover, texts such as *Beowulf* and Æthelred’s *Chronicon* reveal that interaction with Norse-speakers persisted as an element in the English creation of ethnic narratives. A degree of contact continued between England and Scandinavia throughout the tenth century. Danish thegns attested at the *witenagemot* and Danish merchants traded in York. In addition, English missionaries seem to have travelled to Denmark and Norway to evangelize.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the principal mode of contact was conflictual. Danish and Norwegian vikings attacked England from the 980s until 1016. Vikings living in Ireland also participated in the earliest of these raids; although the English identified them as ‘Norsemen’, they may have originated far from Scandinavia. These continuing contacts influenced and fed into ethnic narratives about the settlement of Danes in England. Unlike in Normandy, English writers were not able to define ‘viking’ or ‘Danish’ heritage purely by their internal ethnic relations. However, ‘Danish’ ethnicity still remained a means of expressing internal divisions. Wulfstan found it useful in the early eleventh century, when he legislated for northern distinctiveness according to ‘Danish law’.

Thus, despite facing numerous different ethnic boundaries within England, across the British Isles, and against Scandinavian invaders, English writers did not develop an ethnic vocabulary to distinguish them. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle hints at such

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<sup>24</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford: OUP, 1951; rev. ed. 1958), pp.24-25; Kiernan, ‘Eleventh-Century Origin’, p.10; R.I. Page, ‘The audience of Beowulf and the vikings’, in *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. by Chase, pp.113-22; but see Murray, ‘Beowulf, the Danish invasions, and royal genealogy’, p.102-03.

<sup>25</sup> Abrams, ‘Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia’, pp.216-20.

distinctions when it states that ‘earlier the Danes were under Northmen’.<sup>26</sup> But this is a rare example. Modern historians have developed distinctions such as ‘Hiberno-Norse’ and ‘Anglo-Scandinavian’ in order to define different groups, dynasties, polities and cultures active in the British Isles.<sup>27</sup> When medieval writers created narratives about ethnic relations in England, they were not engaged in an act of classification. Ethnicity was a means of manipulating people’s political loyalties, not a taxonomy.

The West Saxon kings of England faced various threats: they worried about separatism within their kingdom, or the return of Norse rule in the north, or the acceptance of Danish rulers in their stead (as in fact took place). One of the weapons they used to assert themselves across the new English kingdom was the ideology of ethnicity. Rather than distinguishing between their Scandinavian enemies as different cultural groups or political leaders, they employed existing ideas about English-Danish relations in new ways. Grand ethnic generalizations affected their subjects’ loyalties at a deeper level than would the decisions of mere political pragmatism.

Because of continuing contacts, friendly and conflictual, with Scandinavians, ‘Danes’ never had a stable meaning to the inhabitants of England. English kings conducted relationships with political actors of various Scandinavian backgrounds – Eric Bloodaxe, Olaf Tryggvasson, Swein Forkbeard – and groups within their kingdom that they considered to hold Danish loyalties. Because of these constantly changing relationships, ethnic relations between English and Danes always operated across more than a single boundary.

### **Viking identities across Europe**

These conclusions could be enriched with reference to two other societies in which vikings settled in the ninth and tenth centuries: Russia and Ireland.

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<sup>26</sup> ASC A 942: ‘Dæne wæran ær under Norðmannum’.

<sup>27</sup> Clare Downham (“‘Hiberno-Norse’ and ‘Anglo-Danes’”) argues against the usefulness of these terms.

Ethnic relations in Viking-Age Ireland may usefully be compared with this analysis of England. Viking raiders established bases in various locations on the Irish coasts in the mid-ninth century, and new forces arrived throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. In some places, vikings were expelled for a time, most notably in 902 when Irish groups banded together to expel them from Dublin, but they returned in 917. Viking kings of Dublin, some of whom seem to have claimed descent from Ívarr, set their sights also on the kingdom of York (see Chapter Two). Politically, viking inhabitants of Ireland were disunited. At the battle of Clontarf in 1014, viking forces fought on both sides. Moreover, none of them retained a dominant position. After the battle of Tara in 980, Irish kings took supremacy, and Scandinavians held more localized power, paying tribute to the king. Some of our conclusions for ethnic relations in England may therefore apply to Ireland, as well. Continuing contact with Scandinavia meant that new viking forces continued to threaten the inhabitants of Ireland, many of whom were themselves descendants of vikings.

Ethnic relations were complex, and correspondingly Scandinavian identities were multivalent. Ninth-century Irish annals distinguished between ‘fair foreigners’ and ‘dark foreigners’, who fought against each other. Scholars have disputed what these labels signify. Some have suggested that they distinguished between Danes and Norwegians. It seems more likely, however, that these ethnic distinctions applied to vikings’ roles within Ireland.<sup>28</sup> ‘Fair foreigners’ referred to established Norse communities in Ireland, while ‘dark foreigners’ denoted recent arrivals of the 850s. David Dumville has proposed that ‘dark foreigners’ were the followers of Ívarr, and Clare Downham has developed this idea to demonstrate that Irish sources used this term for the followers of

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<sup>28</sup> Clare Downham, ‘The good, the bad and the ugly: portrayals of vikings in “The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland”’, *The Medieval Chronicle*, 3 (2004) 28-40.

the kings of *Laithlind*.<sup>29</sup> Irish chroniclers created the distinction as a means of contrasting two groups of vikings, who settled in Ireland at different times.

The early origins of Russia provide a comparable situation to Normandy. Traders from Scandinavia (not only Sweden, but eastern Denmark and Norway as well) established bases in the northern Baltic from the seventh century onwards.<sup>30</sup> They began to exact tribute from local inhabitants and from those further south, in a process similar to viking demands for protection payments in England and Francia. Moreover, Scandinavians raided across Eastern Europe and even attacked Byzantium in 860.<sup>31</sup> In the mid-ninth century, one family led by a certain Rurik established themselves as rulers in northern Russia. On Rurik's death, his kinsman Oleg took power in Kiev, which became the centre of the Rus' state.<sup>32</sup> Little is known of these events from contemporary sources, but the early twelfth-century *Russian Primary Chronicle* presented an influential view of the Scandinavian source of Russian origins. It stated that the Slavs and other peoples of the Kiev region had invited Rurik and two of his brothers to rule over them. The chronicler emphasized the ethnic relevance of the Scandinavian origin myth to his contemporary context: 'On account of these Varangians, the district of Novgorod became known as the land of Rus'. The present inhabitants of Novgorod are descended from the Varangian race, but aforetime they were Slavs'.<sup>33</sup> Thus, like the Normans, the Russian ruling dynasty created a clearly defined role for Scandinavian identity. Their interactions with peoples around them motivated the formation of this identity. As well as the mention of the Slavs, for instance, the *Russian Primary Chronicle* records a series of tenth-century treaties between the Rus' of Kiev and

<sup>29</sup> Downham, *Viking Kings*, pp.14-15.

<sup>30</sup> Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings* (London: Penguin, 1987, rev. ed. 1998), p.283.

<sup>31</sup> Roesdahl, *Vikings*, p.286.

<sup>32</sup> On the historical (primarily archaeological) evidence for these events, see E.A. Melnikova, *The Eastern World of the Vikings* (Gothenburg: Litteraturvetenskapliga Institutionen, Göteborgs Universitet, 1996), pp.47-60, and Wladyslaw Duczko, *Viking Rus: Studies on the Presence of Scandinavians in Eastern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp.60-114.

<sup>33</sup> *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, ed. by Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd Sherbowitz-Wetzor (Cambridge, M.A.: Medieval Academy of America, 1953), pp.59-60.



Byzantium. In beginning to explore these developments, Wladyslaw Duczko has referred to the role of Norse identity in such terms: 'By defining their peculiarity, the Rus could make clear to the people with which they were interacting – trade companions, tributary people – who they were'.<sup>34</sup> In this distant context, Scandinavian identity was similarly a means of distinction.

The arguments of this thesis, when applied to European Russia, suggest that Scandinavian identity was an effective means of distinction for the Rus' of Kiev because they were the only vikings in the neighbourhood. As in Normandy, connections to Scandinavia lost their importance in Russia and interactions with the north became less frequent. The faltering supply of Islamic silver after around 965 had profound effects, causing vikings to look west for opportunities instead of east.<sup>35</sup> Some connections retained their vitality, however. In the early eleventh century, Yaroslav the Wise (1014-54) married the daughter of the Swedish king, and his daughter married King Harald Harðraði of Norway.<sup>36</sup> It may well be that particular kinds of contact with the Scandinavian homelands influenced ethnic relations more strongly. In particular, conflict did not continue: the inhabitants of Normandy and Russia did not perceive Scandinavians as a threat. Therefore, their ruling dynasties could advantageously claim viking ethnicity for themselves.

### **Ethnicity and elites**

This model places considerable emphasis on the actions of political elites in shaping ethnic identities. Rulers possessed the mechanisms for disseminating ideological messages widely. In partnership with members of the church and aristocracies, they had considerably greater influence over the manipulation of identity than anyone else.

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<sup>34</sup> Duczko, *Viking Rus*, pp.6-7.

<sup>35</sup> Roesdahl, *Vikings*, p.285.

<sup>36</sup> Roesdahl, *Vikings*, p.288.

English and Norman rulers required their subjects to identify with their interests, and consequently they promoted their ethnic narratives, through saints' cults, dynastic propaganda, and rituals of property transfer. In this way, they operated as 'ethnopolitical entrepreneurs'.<sup>37</sup> The narratives English and Norman rulers promoted were not determined by their biological characteristics or family backgrounds. They chose to present themselves and their people in these ways because it suited their political relationships and the loyalties of their audiences.

However, the audiences of the texts examined in this thesis had demands and expectations. Subjects did not merely adopt their rulers' ethnic identities. After all, once Cnut had conquered all England in 1016, he continued to refer to his subjects as English *and* Danes. Rulers responded to their subjects' affections and memories in order to provoke feelings of identity. For instance, the English hagiographies discussed in Chapter Four seem intended for areas of Danish settlement. Therefore, they encouraged inhabitants of these areas to identify with the English, rather than the Danes. Yet in order to make their narratives appealing, the hagiographers needed to employ local saints and traditions.

Fifty years after the end of the period examined here, the Normans conquered England, and a new chapter in the history of their ethnic relations opened. Writers within England composed new ethnic narratives, which made sense of the relationship between conqueror and conquered. One aspect of the new histories was an emphasis on past viking destruction. In national histories and local chronicles, in hagiographies and in forged charters, English and Norman writers re-interpreted the viking period once again. It was in this period that they dreamt up the most lurid stories: St Edmund took mortal revenge on Swein Forkbeard; the nuns of Coldingham cut off their noses to

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<sup>37</sup> Brubaker, *Ethnicity Without Groups*, p.10; historical investigations such as this one provide a useful complement and corrective to the 'elite theory' of ethnicity discussed by Malešević, *Sociology of Ethnicity*, pp.111-26, esp. p.125.

avoid being raped by vikings; King Alfred snuck into Guthrum's camp dressed as a minstrel.<sup>38</sup> Ethnic relations in England continued to evolve, and so did the history of the viking past. This period continued to fascinate because, to the English and the Normans, vikings were both enemies and ancestors.

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<sup>38</sup> *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, RS 96, 3 vols (London: Longman, 1890-96), I, 32-39; Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, I, 300-02; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, I, 182-85.

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