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**Lords of the North-Sea World**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to understand the impact of the locality on the lordships of the North-Sea world. Historians, previously, have focussed on aristocrats and lordship through a lord's relationship to a central authority. Medievalists, moreover, have focussed on central Europe when investigating the aristocracy and nobility, the consequence of this is that lordships were fixed in central kingdoms, which have been perpetuated from a twentieth-century idea of nationhood. Also such a perception causes us to describe the period in structuralist terms and negates the possibility of a fluid society in the tenth and eleventh centuries. 'Lords of the North-Sea World' will, however, show that society was not 'feudal' or rigid, by contrast it was flexible and subject to change. This thesis intends to investigate lordships in a seascape that has been relatively untouched by historians. I use a comparative methodology which has remained an underused medium by medieval historians. I begin by outlining the topic and justifying my approach, which will explore the huge historiographical background of aristocratic studies. Four key themes will be examined; these are territory, solidarities, inheritances and 'Noble Texts'. All will reveal how important the locality was to the identity, relationships and perception of the aristocracy in medieval society. The thesis, moreover, will suggest that local factors were a key component in the decision making of lords when they had choices. This has been achieved by drawing on narrative and documentary evidence to consider the levels of regional distinctiveness in lordships. The thesis also appeals to the global versus local debates throughout academic disciplines by suggesting that in the early middle ages, global vehicles of power were attempting to blunt the unmistakable authority of localism.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ADSM</i>	Archives Départementales de la Seine-Maritime (Rouen)
<i>ANP</i>	Archives Nationales (Paris)
<i>ANS</i>	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
<i>ASC</i>	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation</i> , eds. and trans. D. Whitelock with D. C. Douglas and S. I. Tucker (London, 1961).
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
<i>Battle of Maldon</i>	'The Battle of Maldon', ed. and trans. D. Scragg, <i>The Battle of Maldon AD 991</i> (Oxford, 1991), pp. 18–31
<i>Beowulf</i>	<i>Beowulf</i> , ed. F. Klaeber, 3rd Edition (London, 1950)
<i>Carmen</i>	Guy of Amiens, <i>The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio of Guy, Bishop of Amiens</i> , ed. and trans. F. Barlow (Oxford, 1999)
<i>II Cnut</i>	<i>Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen</i> , ed. F. Liebermann, 3 vols. (Halle, 1903–1916), vol. 1, pp. 278–370
<i>DB</i>	<i>Domesday Book</i> . Cited according to the relevant Phillimore county edition (J. Morris general ed. Chichester 1975–1986)
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Encomium Emmae</i>	<i>Encomium Emmae Reginae</i> , ed. A. Campbell, Camden Society, 3rd series 72 (London, 1949)
<i>EME</i>	<i>Early Medieval Europe</i>
<i>Gallia christiana</i>	<i>Gallia christiana</i> , ed. D. Sammarthan et al., 16 vols. (Paris, 1716–1865)
<i>Heimskringla</i>	Snorri Sturluson, <i>Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway</i> , ed. and trans. L. Hollander (Austin, TX, 1964)
<i>HSJ</i>	<i>Haskins Society Journal</i>
<i>GND</i>	<i>The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni</i> , ed. and trans. E. Van Houts, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1992–1995)
<i>Lambert</i>	Lambert of Ardres, <i>Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisnensium</i> , ed. J. Heller, <i>MGH, SS 24</i> (Hanover, 1879), pp. 550–642

- Lib. El.*        *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E. O. Blake, Camden Society, 3rd series 92 (London, 1962)
- MGH*            *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
- MGH, SS*        *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*
- MGH, SSrG*    *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*
- MGH, SSrM*    *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*
- MGH, SSrG NS*    *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, Nova series*
- Orkneyinga Saga*    *Orkneyinga Saga: The History of the Earls of Orkney*, trans. H. Pálsson and P. Edwards (London, 1978)
- OV*              *Orderic Vitalis Historia Æcclesiastica/The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, 6 volumes (Oxford, 1969–1980)
- P&P*            *Past & Present*
- PL*              *Patrologia Latina*
- S*                *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, ed. P. Sawyer (London 1968)
- TRHS*          *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
- Wills*          *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. and trans. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930)
- WP/GG*        *The Gesta Guillemi of William of Poitiers*, ed. and trans. R. H. C. Davies and M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1998)

## INTRODUCTION

The lords of the North-Sea world's voices have been muted. They have been studied as mere individuals or completely omitted from the historical discussion. For this there are two reasons: first, historians usually have led us on a track that examines territorial lords against their central authority, be it a king, a duke or even a count. Secondly, historians' examinations of lordship have overlooked the importance of the locality itself and a region's impact on the authority of these elite figures. If, for example, we look at the aristocratic studies of the duchy of Normandy, what do we discover? A plethora of family studies. The goal of such works is to examine the heads of the lordship and their wider collective family. Ultimately, these surveys observe the impact of the family in relation to the central authority of the dukes of Normandy. The most notable of these were by Kathleen Thompson, who investigated the lords of Bellême, Montgomery, and L'Aigle.<sup>1</sup> However, Normandy, in the North-Sea world, is not alone. Likewise, Anglo-Saxon historians have traditionally studied ealdormanries and earldoms, of which Stephen Baxter's work on the earldom of Mercia is an excellent recent example. There are, however, plenty of other instances, the conclusions of which examine aristocrats through the lens of monarchy or central authority.<sup>2</sup> Thus lords are not compared against their contemporaries, leaving a space that needs to be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Thompson, 'Family and Influence to the South of Normandy in the Eleventh Century: The Lordship of Bellême', *Journal of Medieval History* 11 (1985), pp. 215–226; 'The Norman Aristocracy before 1066: The Example of the Montgomery's', *Historical Research* 40 (1987), pp. 251–263; 'Robert of Bellême Reconsidered', *ANS* 13 (1990), pp. 263–286; 'The Lords of L'Aigle: Ambition and Insecurity on the Borders of Normandy', *ANS* 18 (1995), pp. 177–199. Thompson also did a similar study on a county outside of Normandy, see: *Power and Border Lordship in Medieval France: The County of the Perche* (Woodbridge, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007); J.-F. Nieuws, *Un pouvoir comtal entre Flandre et France: Saint-Pol, 1000–1300* (Brussels, 2005); A. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005); B. Crawford, *The Northern Earldoms: Orkney and Caithness from AD 870–1470* (Edinburgh, 2013); and C. West, *Reframing the Feudal Revolution: Political and Social Transformation Between Marne and Moselle, c. 800–1100* (Cambridge, 2013).

Research on lordship is not new. Historians have examined it extensively, but their focus remains on the Carolingian successor kingdoms of France as well as Ottonian and Salian Germany. Lordships in Anglo-Saxon England, therefore, have been largely excluded from the discussion: Scandinavia is entirely excluded. European historians of the Middle Ages, however, do accept Anglo-Norman England, perhaps, because they have focused on state formation.<sup>3</sup> The tenth and eleventh centuries are examined less by historians of the aristocracy than the twelfth century, which is viewed as a turning point for the development, on the continent at least, of nations and central governance.<sup>4</sup> In addition to this, the twelfth century is studied because of the rise of knighthood and the growth of chivalry.<sup>5</sup> Not only, therefore, are the lordships of North-Sea Europe isolated, but early medieval lords are largely overlooked. What remains are studies on the nobility and aristocracies of the early middle ages that focus predominantly on central Europe. How then can the lords of the North-Sea world be investigated and have their regional distinctiveness understood?

Some lordships have been explored more than others because they have been included in studies of single regions, whilst some historians have fallen into the habit of evaluating a single lordship on its own merits, which is rewarding. Lordships such as Boulogne, Maine, or even Loire have been explored due to the volume of primary evidence

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<sup>3</sup> C. B. Bouchard, *'Strong of Body, Brave and Noble': Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), p. 18. Bouchard, in this work, compares French lords to the Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Holy Roman Empire lords. Also see: G. Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. C. Postan (Berkeley, CA, 1977); G. Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago, IL, 1980); R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution c. 970–1215* (Oxford, 2000); J. P. Poly and E. Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation 900–1200*, trans. C. Higgitt (New York, NY, 1991); and S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300*, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> J. Dunbabin, 'Government', ed. J. Burns, *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350–1450* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 477–519, at p. 498; R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth Century Renaissance* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 100–101. Dunbabin and Swanson describe medieval governments developing administrative mechanics from the twelfth century.

<sup>5</sup> T. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), p. 65.

available.<sup>6</sup> However, the discussion using regional approaches alone has stagnated and needs new life. A regional outlook is understandable in a project that focuses on one territorial lordship, but this thesis intends to explore lordships in the regions of eastern England, western Flanders, eastern Normandy, central Norway and also the Orkneys. All these regions have many lordships that will be investigated later. They have, however, been chosen because of their geographical position away from their central authorities. All lay outside either ruling monarchs', dukes' or counts' traditional land holdings. Thus, they all show a regional distinctiveness that exists outside of the national identities that can be hidden through kingdom studies. Moreover, the sources of the period emanating from central courts conceal local identity and politics. Each region may have modest corpuses of local material for historians to use. There is, however, an overarching methodology that this thesis can employ. It will establish an effective synthesis of the lords in northern Europe to contribute and thus the historical discourse on early medieval lordship.

The discipline that the research will adhere to is comparative history. A comparative approach has fallen out of favour recently with medieval historians in contrast to archaeological circles.<sup>7</sup> The approach has been side-lined, though not quite dismissed. 'Lords of the North-Sea World' seeks to take up the call of Chris Wickham, whose work has indubitably influenced the thesis. Wickham has been the leading scholar in advancing the cause of the discipline, which medieval historians have regrettably neglected. European history, he claimed, has become a history of islands and his full quote seems appropriate to summarise the issue: 'The problem about all these national debates is that, in their national forms, they make most sense only to scholars from one country, and sometimes no sense at

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<sup>6</sup> H. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879–1160* (Leiden, 2004); R. Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine, c. 890–1160* (Woodbridge, 2002); and A. Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of Loire, 1000–1200* (Cornell, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> For a recent comparative example from an archaeologist, see: C. Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages, c. AD 600–1150: A Comparative Archaeology* (Cambridge, 2013).

all outside its borders.’<sup>8</sup> This is a regular problem with English historians.<sup>9</sup> Comparative history, therefore, will not only permit the creation of a synthesis on lordship from northern Europe, but it will also allow for an exploration of the locality. All this will be without the shackles of national debates, which inevitably form a narrative of illustrating a culture’s move unceasingly towards centralised governments of monarchs and twentieth-century states. Wickham and others have successfully completed many studies using the comparative approach, which will be explored in greater depth in chapter one. However, it is important to outline here Wickham’s Reuter Lecture in which he described how a historian should complete comparative history. This provides the thesis with a blueprint of study throughout.

Wickham postulated that comparison was the closest historians came to ‘testing’, arguing that ‘no historical explanation can be regarded as convincing without some attempt at comparative testing; everything else is provisional’.<sup>10</sup> He identified three problems that can hinder a comparative study; the first was the material. If the sources were too different, they could hinder analysis; for example, comparisons of the aristocracy of France to Visigothic Spain are more difficult, as 95% of its material originates from central government in Spain, skewing the outlook.<sup>11</sup> The second issue is historiographical, as each region’s historians have different interests and ‘assumptions about what causes what in history’.<sup>12</sup> The final concern for Wickham was identifying what was significant to compare.

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<sup>8</sup> C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400–800* (Oxford, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> C. Wickham, ‘Historical Transitions: A Comparative Approach’, *Medieval History Journal* 13 (2010), pp. 1–21, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> C. Wickham, ‘Problems in Doing Comparative History’, ed. P. Skinner, *Challenging The Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 5–28, at p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

Alongside the problems, Wickham presented the solutions; he used the writings of Carlo Ginzburg to urge historians to find what was similar in each society they are comparing.<sup>13</sup> He suggested that medievalists need to find the *spie* in societies, which translates to clues. Wickham has it that a *spia* gives a spyhole which we can look through ‘to pinpoint elements of a social reality’.<sup>14</sup> Wickham presented European medieval castles as an excellent example to follow for other *spia*.<sup>15</sup>

Wickham not only explains the methodology of comparison but provides a comparative case study of west Francia north of the Loire, excluding Aquitaine, and England, excluding Northumbria. He asserts that their similar size, geography, local administrative structures, dominant magnates who called their regions *regna* and gained status by scrupulous means, tensions in successions and, finally, the many boy kings between 939 and 1040 made the two regions suitable for comparison.<sup>16</sup> Historiography had not explored in either area why England strengthened during this period, while France fractured. Wickham posits these reasons: French aristocrats, such as the counts of Boulogne in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, had well-defined borders, whereas English lords such as Ælfhelm Polga held land spread over three counties.<sup>17</sup> Wickham concluded that these points may not be new to historians, but asserted that the process of comparison ‘heightens contrasts and makes... some of the different developments in each kingdom easier to see.’<sup>18</sup>

We follow Wickham when he outlined that the aristocrats that are to be compared need to be equivalent in status. Our test cases will be ealdormen, counts, jarls and earls,

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<sup>13</sup> C. Ginzburg, ‘Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method’, *History Workshop Journal* 9 (1980), pp. 5–36, at p. 27. ‘Reality is opaque; but there are certain points-clues, signs-which allow us to decipher it.’

<sup>14</sup> Wickham, ‘Problems in Doing Comparative History’, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

who have similar functions and status within their respective areas. The lords of the Christian lands of eastern England, western Flanders and eastern Normandy all have similar sources, which range from regional texts to central administrative documents, such as charters. It can be argued that the Norse lords in this case are a problem, as our information comes from later sagas. However, the intention is to test and draw comparison to establish whether similar aristocratic themes appear throughout the regions. In the study, information will be presented regarding texts, which inevitably differ in kind. Comparative studies are not new in the discourse; but to tackle the discussion on lordship, this thesis will use this comparative methodology within the North-Sea world.

Historians need to be disorientated when they look at lords. The focus on kings creates a sense of inevitability, which has aristocrats almost waiting to be assimilated by a central authority and identity. We need, therefore, to view them in a new space, one that observes a lord's relationship to the locality. The common link between all of the lordships examined in this study is the North-Sea seascape. The use of the sea as a method of study is becoming more important in the wider discipline of history. The sea is no longer being perceived as a barrier between lands, but rather as a conduit of interaction.<sup>19</sup> The purpose of the recent studies employing the sea is to identify whether cultural trends were shared across seascapes. In early modern history, for example, Fernand Braudel investigated the Mediterranean world and has stressed the role the sea played 'as an essential hinge on which the European complex turned'.<sup>20</sup> The Mediterranean and the Atlantic have been explored far more than the North Sea and this will be highlighted within chapter one.

By contrast, scholars of the medieval period have started to become interested in the North Sea. The one historian who through a comparative study has used the North Sea as a central component is not surprisingly, Chris Wickham who has examined social

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<sup>19</sup> S. Rose, *The Medieval Sea* (London, 2007), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. S. Reynolds, vol. 1 (London, 1972), p. 224.

relations, power and property between 500 and 1000 in northern Europe. The study was not an examination of the lords of the seascape; rather, Wickham focused on centres of wealth ranging from England, Normandy, Saxony, Denmark to Norway. He noted that, within his investigation, all regions exhibited aristocrats as distinct social strata in all regions.<sup>21</sup> Therefore ‘Lords of the North-Sea World’ represents the first study to compare the mechanics of lordship across the North-Sea seascape in northern Europe.

In order to successfully tackle the issue of locality in lordship through a comparative methodology, there will be five thematic chapters. Chapter one begins with the historiographical frameworks that have developed on lordship. In particular, the chapter will identify the absence of regional distinctiveness. Chapter two explores the territory of lords both in a secular and sacred sense, namely highlighting how a region legitimised authority. Chapter three emphasises the solidarities of lords and how local politics affected their decision making. Chapter four continues the theme of relationships through the mode of inheritance. Chapter five will then turn to the ‘Noble Texts’ from the period that examine lordship, and tries to show not only how regionalism was suppressed, but also how it was still important to a contemporary medieval audience. Finally, the conclusion attempts to create an assessment of lordship from the North-Sea world and argues that the locality was a significant source of power. Consequently, the lords will be restored to the historiographical discussion on early-medieval lordship.

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<sup>21</sup> C. Wickham, ‘Social relations, property and power around the North Sea, 500–1000’, eds. B. van Bavel and R. Hoyle, *Rural Economy and Society in North-Western Europe, 500–2000, Social Relations: Property and Power* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 25–47, at p. 40.

# 1. CHAPTER ONE: THE EUROPEAN ARISTOCRACY

We have forgotten the impact of place in our research on the early medieval aristocracy. Historians' definitions of lordship are dominated by noble blood and lineage. Both are key elements of aristocratic status, but we now need to include the locality in our definition. The locale impacts a lord's authority, identity, family, associates and decision making. Thus, the regional factors in lordship need to be restored. In this chapter, therefore, we need to outline the current wider historiography on the aristocracy of medieval Europe. The chapter is divided into seven sections that examine the current thinking on lordship and provide a blueprint that will assist us in recovering regional distinctiveness.

There are five themes that explore the academic discourse on lordship. These include: definitions of lords; medieval society; feudal historiographies; personal ties; and territorialisation. The remaining two parts, which explore how the thesis intends to reveal the impact of regional distinctiveness, are comparative history and sea studies. The chapter, ultimately, stresses how this thesis is placed in the historiography and how it will contribute new insights. First, we need to establish the key terms that have been employed by historians when describing the aristocracy.

## 1.1. DEFINING THE ARISTOCRACY

The aristocracy had two important traits that separated them from society: birth and their regional distinctiveness. Historians have regularly noted the significance of a lineage for any aristocrat, but the locality has been left out of the definitions. When reading any academic text, we see plenty of idioms used, which include noble, magnate, lord, and aristocrat. Furthermore, the perceived ranks and offices, particularly across the North Sea, comprise thegn, knight, earl, jarl, ealdorman, count and castellan to name a few. It can be

mistakenly assumed that such terms all have the same meaning. Although they certainly have correlations with each other, they are classified differently. We need, therefore, to establish working definitions of what noblemen, aristocrats and magnates were. In the aristocracy's methods and operations, historians have prescribed terms and concepts, such as fief and vassal. These, too, will also need to be clearly described before progress can be made on the debates and theories.

Adalbéron of Laon wrote his *Carmen ad Robertum Regem Francorum* in the eleventh century between 1027 and 1031 in which he gave his well-known assessment of medieval society. He stated that, in medieval Europe, '*nunc orant alii pugnant alii que laborant*'.<sup>1</sup> The first group represented the clergymen of society and they were engaged in spiritual warfare, while the last group were servile to the other two by working the land. The second group, however, is the focus of this study – those who fight – and it included the aristocracy of medieval society who were characterised by their military actions.<sup>2</sup> Of course, grouping society in this fashion is overly simplistic it could include a thegn, an ealdorman, a count, a *vicomte*, a chieftain or an earl. The aristocracy had other distinctive traits that marked them out from the rest of society and beyond capable fighters.

Ernest Warlop, in his exhaustive four-volume study on the Flemish nobility before 1300, described four characteristics for the aristocracy: these were wealth, freedom, military power and noble birth.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the eleventh century, a *nobilis* was a free man, 'in some cases a vassal of the count or of an ecclesiastical dignitary. He owned vast free landed property, he sometimes held a fief, and he was also trained in the use of

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<sup>1</sup> Adalbéron of Laon, *Carmen ad Robertum regem Francorum*, ed. J-P. Migne, *PL* 141 (Paris, 1853), cols. 771–786, cols. 781–782, Line 298. Some pray, some fight and others work.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> E. Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility Before 1300*, trans. J. B. Ross and H. Vandermoere, vol. 1 (Courtrai, 1975), p. 40.

arms. Nobility was a matter of birth and the *nobilis* married within their class.<sup>4</sup> There is evidence to show, however, that the nobility provided service to kings in medieval society. Ealdorman Eadric Streona of Mercia, for example, despite being a noble, was castigated by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for switching his allegiance from King Æthelred II to Cnut of Denmark in the early eleventh century.<sup>5</sup> We might think that, like the peasants of the tenth and eleventh centuries, an aristocrat also provided service in some form to a king, but their exchanges were less servile and closer to a collaborative interaction.<sup>6</sup> Thus, we must discover a different codifier in order to separate the nobility from the aristocracy.

The key difference between a noble and aristocrat was a legal title bestowed from a central authority. Dominique Barthélemy and David Crouch have both stressed that a noble was a man who descended from a prestigious family and his blood made him socially prominent. A noble's status, furthermore, was legally defined in society; for example, a ducal charter tells us that Richard II of Normandy gave the church in Sotteville and the estate of what is believed to be Avremesnil to the chapter of Saint Quentin.<sup>7</sup> In the witness list of the charter, we can see nobles who were given the legal codification of *comitis*, for example, Count William of Eu. By contrast, toward the end of the witness list we see two names, Rodulf and Roger.<sup>8</sup> These men were likely members of the aristocracy or possibly even clerks; however, they were not nobles as they did not have legal titles.

David Crouch defined the aristocracy as 'a dominant group in society which drew its importance from its economic and social weight'.<sup>9</sup> A magnate was a man who was wealthy and his resources could force himself into the king's consciousness, thus 'a poor

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> ASC, 'C', 'D', and 'E', 1015.

<sup>6</sup> T. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), p. 83.

<sup>7</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961), no. 18.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> D. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900–1300* (Harlow, 2005), p. 3.

magnate was a contradiction in terms'.<sup>10</sup> In the medieval period then, it was possible to be a wealthy man but it was not conceivable to be a member of the aristocracy without having a lineage and a lord needed a legally defined title to be part of the nobility. In the eleventh century, the noble 'did not suffer from letters patents of nobility guaranteeing and regulating his status, since his social function and knightly energy already assured it'.<sup>11</sup> Even before the legal codifying in the twelfth century, a noble had little difficulty in identifying someone from his stratum in society. Although membership increased by the end of the twelfth century, the concept of who was included had remained stable.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence of the aristocracy lacking a legal definition, other ranks of society can be confused as a part of this privileged group, a good example being the knight.

For Barthélemy, the aristocracy was defined by 'birth, parenthood; knighthood was about career, activity, virile energy.'<sup>13</sup> Knighthood was a 'superfluity' for the aristocracy.<sup>14</sup> 'Knights showed their power by really making war' and they 'had no more a *spirit de corps* than they had a uniform'.<sup>15</sup> Being a knight in the eleventh century did not make a man an aristocrat. The knight was part of a social group that, between 1000 and 1200, was functional through war, but he still held a 'discrete status'.<sup>16</sup> The evidence of a difference in status is shown when several of Hugh the Chiliarch's knights were captured in c. 1030.<sup>17</sup> They were not treated with the decency that an aristocrat would expect, as they were

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>11</sup> D. Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight and the Historian*, trans. G. R. Edwards (Ithaca, NY, 2009), p. 112.

<sup>12</sup> C. B. Bouchard, *Those of My Blood': Constructing Noble Families in Medieval Francia* (Philadelphia, PA, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight*, p. 150.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London and New York, 1992), p. 26.

<sup>17</sup> For dating, see: G. Beech, 'The Lord/Dependent (Vassal) Relationship: A Case Study from Aquitaine c. 1030', *Journal of Medieval History* 24 (1998), p. 1–30, p. 3.

mutilated in captivity.<sup>18</sup> William of Poitiers noted that William the Conqueror's army had '*Milites uero mediae nobilitatis atque gregarios*'.<sup>19</sup>

We must recognise that knighthood became an established lower tier of the 'noble class' between 1170 and 1200, but it did not have a group consciousness before 1170, unlike the aristocracy.<sup>20</sup> We can, therefore, rank the medieval social elites in importance by the twelfth century into three categories: nobles, aristocrats and knights. Peter Coss said it best, when he stated that the Latin word *nobiles*, in the eleventh century, described a family condition, but the term *miles* expressed a function.<sup>21</sup>

The two positions on nobility by Crouch and Barthélemy omit the locality. Crouch described the aristocracy as being defined by power through wealth and social standing. By contrast, Barthélemy has it that lords were identified solely by birth, which brought power, status and membership to a social community for lords.<sup>22</sup> The simple definition of an aristocrat, therefore, is that they held a lordly heritage. The importance of birth for the aristocracy can be observed in the eleventh century text *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. King Sveinn of Denmark was described as being from a most noble origin and that his birth was the most important trait for men.<sup>23</sup> An important attribute for all men of the social elite was a noble birth before all else. Historians' unyielding interest in the lords of the early middle

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<sup>18</sup> '*Conventum inter Guillelmum Aquitanorum comes et Hugonem Chiliarchum*', ed. J. Matindale, *EHR* 84 (1969), pp. 528–548, pp. 542 and 543.

<sup>19</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 2, Chapter 33, p. 158. Middle nobility knights and common knights.

<sup>20</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 248.

<sup>21</sup> P. Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England 1000–1400* (Stroud, 1993), p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> S. Airle, 'Bonds of Power and Bonds of Association in the Court Circle of Louis the Pious', eds. P. Godman and R. Collins, *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–890)* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 191–204, at p. 192. Airle described the membership to an aristocratic community in the ninth century being linked into a 'similar status of birth'. For further agreement on blood being the key factor, see: C. B. Bouchard, '*Strong of Body, Brave and Noble Chivalry*': and *Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, Book 1, Chapter 1, p. 8. '*Hic denique a nobilissimis, quod primum est inter homines, duxit originem*'. There is also a more recent publication of Campbell's edition with an English translation accompanying it, see: *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. A. Campbell, with a supplementary introduction by S. Keynes (Cambridge, 1998).

ages is also reflected well in the vocabulary of relationships, in which there are several key terms we need to examine.

The two prominent terms used when explaining aristocratic relationships are fief and vassal: both are equally nebulous for the early medieval period and do not feature in the sources. The term ‘fief’ refers to a grant made by one person to another and was a gift that lasted the life of the holder. The term ‘vassal’ describes the relationship of a lord to another; if someone was a vassal, they were in the service of another person. Susan Reynolds aptly stated, however, that terms such as fiefs and vassals can be misleading.<sup>24</sup> Vassalage has been a term used by historians to explain a relationship between a lord and a free man or follower.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in modern history texts we have seen the phrases ‘his vassal’ or ‘vassal of’.<sup>26</sup> The vassal received protection from a lord in return for service or maintenance (money or land) and the land provided by a king or lord came to be described as a fief or a benefice. Originally, the grant of a fief was for the life of the holder, but this evolved to be secured in inheritances.<sup>27</sup>

The word fief, similarly to vassal, did not appear either in the freemen or nobles’ inheritances.<sup>28</sup> There were two ways a fief could be given: the first was by a grant from a lord, the second was where a follower gave allodial land (land that he owned and inherited from his family), which he did not owe service on, to a lord who returned it to the follower as a fief and, therefore, a service became owed. This meant it was contractual whereby the lord had to protect his fiefholder and, in return, the holder ‘had to fight for his lord and offer him counsel and aid, notably paying certain “customary” feudal aids when the lord

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<sup>24</sup> S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 2–5. Reynolds was not the first to suggest this, see: E. A. R. Brown, ‘The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and Historians of Medieval Europe’, *American Historical Review* 79 (1974), pp. 1063–1088, at p. 1077. Elizabeth Brown said that using the word fief and the structure of feudalism ‘distorted’ our perceptions.

<sup>25</sup> J. Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization 400–1500*, trans. J. Barrow (Oxford, 1988), pp. 91 and 92.

<sup>26</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

faced exceptional expenses, like those involved in going on crusade, knighting his son, marrying off his daughter, or ransoming if he was captured in battle.<sup>29</sup> The immunities received were privileges, but it is important that a ‘lord’s exercise of jurisdiction over his vassals was a natural and normal consequence of their vassalage’.<sup>30</sup> Historians have previously said that *miles* and *fidelis* were used as terms for vassal; the use of *miles* can be observed in a late tenth-century English charter. S871, dated to 988, involved the grant of a messuage in Hampshire to the bishop of Sherborne and to Æthelweard’s son Æthelmær, who was styled as the king’s *miles*.<sup>31</sup>

The offices of the nobles that will be compared throughout this thesis were similar in nature. England had one legally defined office that later changed its name from ealdorman to earl in the eleventh century; however, they were seen as holding similar traits. The *Liber Benefactorum Ecclesiae Ramesiensis* praised Ealdorman Æthelwine for his wisdom and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* also praised Earl Leofric for being ‘*swiðe wis*’.<sup>32</sup> The *Liber Eliensis*, moreover, claimed that an ealdorman meant a chief man or earl, or ‘*comes*’.<sup>33</sup> An ealdorman led the shire army, presided over the shire court, provided advice at royal courts, and was often from a well-established family within the region of jurisdiction.<sup>34</sup> Ealdorman Æthelweard of the Western Provinces, for example, was related to the West Saxon royal house and he was succeeded by his son, Æthelmær.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> S871. For Æthelweard's son see: S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Aethelred 'the Unready', 978–1016: A Study in their use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 192.

<sup>32</sup> *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis*, ed. W. D. Macray (London, 1886), Chapter 49, pp. 79–80. ‘*vir probatae prudentiae et discretionis*’. For the chronicle see: *ASC*, ‘D’, 1057. The quote meaning very wise.

<sup>33</sup> *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 7, pp. 79–80, p. 79. ‘*quod intelligitur princeps sive comes*’.

<sup>34</sup> P. Stafford, ‘Ealdorman’, ed. M. Lapidge, *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of England* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 152–153, at p. 152.

<sup>35</sup> *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), p. 2. This text includes an English translation. This reference has been taken from the Latin.

The jarls of Norway were leaders of armies or governors of regions and, in the sagas, they held fewer virtues in the personal qualities than kings.<sup>36</sup> The jarls, in similar fashion to the ealdormen, were described as ruling a territory, such as the Trøndelag, and were members of the local aristocracy. Similarly to the ealdormen of England, the jarls had their own followers and they expected to be rewarded for their service. In the sagas of the Norse world, the generosity of leaders was heavily stressed.<sup>37</sup> The later earl can be seen as a combination of the Scandinavian jarl and English ealdorman. The title, furthermore, was used within the Scandinavian lands of Norway, Denmark and Sweden in the eleventh century during and after Cnut's reign, as well as the Norse settlement in the Orkney Islands.

Central Europe, by contrast, had a greater uniformity with titles. The French kingdom itself did have a king, but is better served as being described as an amalgamation of lordships. These lordships such as Normandy and Flanders were headed by either a duke or count. In the reign of Richard II of Normandy, he was increasingly styled as a duke rather than a count, which has been seen as an attempt to enhance the status of the office, as it was a more prestigious title.<sup>38</sup> The thesis, due to the nature of the French kingdom, will view the dukes of Normandy and counts of Flanders as central authorities similar to the kings of England and Norway.<sup>39</sup>

The thesis, therefore, will investigate the counts within the orbit of the Norman and Flemish rulers. The counts that reside within the Flemish and Norman lands were remarkably similar to their North Sea counterparts. They were often members of the local aristocracy within their regions and had their own followers who were part of the regional

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<sup>36</sup> J. Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls and Chieftains. Rulers in Norway, Orkney and Iceland c. 900–1300', eds. G. Steinsland, J. Sigurðsson, J. Reckdal and I. Beuermann, *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Orkney and the Faeroes* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 69–108, at p. 73.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (Harlow, 1982), p. 149.

<sup>39</sup> J. Dunbabin, *France in the Making 843–1180*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 2000), pp. 169–212.

aristocracy and their titles were increasingly passed on to the eldest son in a family.<sup>40</sup> The Flemish author of the *Life of Edward the Confessor* differentiated earls (*duces*) from the continental *comites* (counts).<sup>41</sup> Crouch argued that the English earl was removable and more akin to the Carolingian *duces*.<sup>42</sup> We should stress, however, that the *Life of Edward* has these men engaging with one another in grand alliances, which we can see when Earl Godwine was received by Count Baldwin of Flanders with ‘*magno honore*’.<sup>43</sup> Godwine and Baldwin, moreover, were overseeing the marriage of Tostig, son of the earl of Wessex, and Judith, sister of the count of Flanders.<sup>44</sup> We can assert, therefore, that the status between an earl and count was similar within medieval Europe for such a union to occur.

The aristocracy, then, were defined by medieval society. Aristocrats were men who held a lineage and were militarily active within society, while a noble was the same except he held a legal rank. The term ‘lord’, therefore, can be used for either man; however, a magnate, albeit a wealthy member of society, does not hold the lineage for the required distinction. What is clear is that these titles of nobility, when reviewed from central sources, appear to be granted by a ‘higher’ authority than an aristocrat. Central records, such as charters, appear to show that lords were selected and their titles were not necessarily inheritable. Central selection and institutional choice, however, minimalises the possible impact of personal connections and the locality itself, as will be shown in this thesis. The status of a lord was inherited from his family and this allowed him to maintain authority. Titles were granted by kings; however, it will be shown that a king was subject to the local authority of aristocrats when selecting a candidate for a regional lordship.

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<sup>40</sup> Bisson, *The Crises of the Twelfth Century*, p. 33. Bisson noted that from 877 the office of count could be inherited.

<sup>41</sup> *Vita Edwardi Regis*, ed. F. Barlow, *The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster attributed to a monk of Saint-Bertin*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1–127, p. 24. Here we can see that Godwin is a *dux* in the text and Baldwin of Flanders is a *comes*. (Note there is an English translation within Barlow’s publication too.)

<sup>42</sup> Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy*, p. 48.

<sup>43</sup> *Vita Edwardi Regis*, p. 24.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24 and 26.

## 1.2. MEDIEVAL SOCIETY

Medieval society was not structured by fixed relationships from the king down to the peasants; rather, it was made of informal relationships that could change. Medievalists have often described the period as feudal: a formalised society of lords, fiefs and vassals that was rigid in nature. The feudal paradigm, as with any concept, does not stand up to scrutiny for the early middle ages. If we assert a feudal society, we are then buying into the concept of a strong central authority. However, if an informal understanding is assumed, this opens the door to evaluating lordship in a different way.

Of course, kings held great authority throughout the Middle Ages. According to the Church, they were God's chosen men on earth. Clergymen such as Thietmar of Merseburg, for example, said that Emperor Henry was elected in 1014 by '*divina preordinacione*'.<sup>45</sup> God had promoted him ahead of his secular rivals to the throne and this protected his rule. Despite their divine status, kings were far from secure in their interactions with regional nobles and a ruler's status did not necessarily carry weight outside of his traditional land holdings. We should attempt, therefore, to outline a definition of lordship before delving into its mechanics.

Lordship has been used as a term to describe the relationship between men of different status. A lord had dependents who gave their service and support to him in return for protection. Timothy Reuter believed relationships were influenced by class, caste, age and region. Elites were mainly concerned with increasing or maintaining 'their share in the fruits of domination'.<sup>46</sup> Reuter said, moreover, that the tripartite relationships of lords,

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<sup>45</sup> Thietmar of Merseburg, *Thietmari merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon/Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, ed. R. Holtzman, *MGH, SSrG NS 9* (Berlin, 1935), pp. 3–533, Book 5, Chapter 2, p. 223. For an English translation, see: Thietmar of Merseburg, *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, ed. and trans. D. Warner (Manchester, 2001), pp. 66–385, p. 206.

<sup>46</sup> T. Reuter, 'Nobles and Others: The Social and Cultural Expressions of Power Relations in the Middle Ages', ed. A. Duggan, *Nobles and Nobility: Concepts, Origins and Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 85–98, at p. 87.

royal agents and followers assisted with the ‘solidarity between lords and dependents’.<sup>47</sup>

An eleventh-century text, furthermore, can provide us a contemporary understanding of lordship.

Bishop Fulbert of Chartres wrote to Duke William of Aquitaine in the early eleventh century. The subject of his writing was an idealised view of lordship describing the followers’ role, as well as the lord’s function.<sup>48</sup> Fulbert outlined the key characteristics of someone who swore fealty as follows: he should not cause harm to the body of their lord; he should not betray his lord by providing information to rivals; he should not harm his lord’s lands; he should not impinge on a lord’s activities; and he should provide faithful counsel to his lord. If the oath-swearer betrayed any of these stipulations, then they were not worthy of the gifts they had received.<sup>49</sup> For Fulbert, the lord himself needed to reciprocate these ideals to his followers; if the lord did not, then he was unjust, too.<sup>50</sup> Fulbert’s letter on lordship informs us that the construct was a two-way relationship that had requirements on the lord as well as the follower.<sup>51</sup> Fulbert, however, as stated earlier, provides an ideal for lords and followers which they could aspire to achieve.

### 1.3. FEUDAL HISTORIOGRAPHIES

There may have been no feudal society, but it is important to understand how the view has prevailed. There has been a great amount of discussion on the topic and the presentation of it inevitably can be divided into the nationalities of historians. The chapter will now examine the historiography of British, French, American and Scandinavian scholars. After

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>48</sup> Fulbert of Chartres, ‘Fulbert to Duke William V of Aquitaine: Setting Forth the Obligations between Vassal and Lord’, ed. F. Behrends, *The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 90–92. In this publication there is a Latin and English text.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

the national historiographies, we will evaluate how medieval Europe is viewed today. Let us, then, begin with Britain.

Henry Spellman in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was one of the first observers to describe Britain as feudal in the Middle Ages.<sup>52</sup> The concept was popular before we see the rise of professional historians. Economist Adam Smith argued that feudalism had inhibited Anglo-Saxon merchants in England and William Jones noted that there was oppression in such a social system.<sup>53</sup> Feudalism became the province of legal historians, such as William Blackstone, who believed that, with the fall of the Roman Empire, Europe became dominated by tenure.<sup>54</sup> England did not feel the full force of this until the Norman Conquest. British historians' understanding on the nobility has descended from this legal tradition. A key contributor to this was Sir Henry Maine with his publication entitled *Ancient Law* in 1861. In this, he hypothesised that free villages had lordship imposed on them, which subsequently assisted the creation of social class.<sup>55</sup> Following Maine was the creator of the famous feudal pyramid model, Frederic William Maitland.<sup>56</sup> The feudal pyramid, although criticised for its simplicity and fixed groupings, can still be seen in school textbooks to this day.

The confidence in the existence of a rigid feudal system continued into the twentieth century. Frank Stenton focused on pre-Conquest England and he believed a rigid society existed within the Anglo-Saxon realm.<sup>57</sup> Eileen Power, later, did call for a new

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<sup>52</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, pp. 261–278, p. 261. David Crouch provides an excellent historiographical account on feudalism in scholarship across this section of his book. Also see: Brown, 'The Tyranny of a Construct', pp. 1065–1077.

<sup>53</sup> A. Smith, *The Wealth of Nations Books I-III*, ed. A. Skinner (London, 1999), pp. 510–513. For William Jones see: Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 263.

<sup>54</sup> W. Blackstone, *The Sovereignty of the Law: Selections from Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England*, ed. G. Jones (London, 1973), p. 133.

<sup>55</sup> H. Maine, *Ancient Law* (London, 1917), p. 214. The ties of feudalism were neither sentiment nor law, by contrast they were a 'contract'.

<sup>56</sup> F. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge, 1897; reprint, 1907), pp. 150–172.

<sup>57</sup> F. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd Edition (Oxford, 1971), p. 683.

social history open to anthropology, sociology and economics.<sup>58</sup> Michael Postan, one of Power's students, however, noted that the focus on the aristocracy did not change since Stenton for over forty years.<sup>59</sup> The historiographical position in Britain, therefore, had maintained the feudal hierarchy – a system that promoted a rigid structure within society, in which the king was at the summit and the relationships that were forged lasted for life.

Historians have discussed whether feudalism even existed within Anglo-Saxon England before the Norman Conquest. Frank Barlow described the nobility of England as holding office from the king in return for service and royal presence within a locality.<sup>60</sup> Barlow did not believe that England in the early eleventh century was as 'feudal' as France, but he understood, nevertheless, that 'she was probably developing in the same direction.'<sup>61</sup> By contrast, R. Allen Brown and Henry Loyn asserted that there was no evidence for feudalism existing within England before the Conquest of 1066.

Brown described four key elements needed for a feudal society: a secular class of knights; vassalic commendation; fiefs; and castles. He remarked that all four were present in Normandy before 1066, whereas in England they were all missing.<sup>62</sup> Brown concluded that the Conquest represented a social revolution for the upper echelons of England, as they were replaced with Norman and French men who brought their customs across the Channel.<sup>63</sup> Henry Loyn has stressed that the structure of Anglo-Saxon government and kingship was advanced compared to Ottonian Germany or France.<sup>64</sup> He noticed, nevertheless, that public authority came from the crown, but this did not necessarily

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<sup>58</sup> E. Power, 'On Medieval History as a Social Study', ed. N. B. Harte, *The Study of Economic History* (London, 1971), pp. 109–125, at p.114. Here, Power called for co-operation amongst the disciplines.

<sup>59</sup> M. M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society: An Economic History of Britain in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972), p. 159.

<sup>60</sup> F. Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England, 1042–1216*, 3rd Edition (New York, 1972), p. 14.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>62</sup> R. A. Brown, *Origins of English Feudalism* (New York, 1973), pp. 32–94.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>64</sup> H. Loyn, *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England 500–1087* (London, 1984), p. 170.

translate to the locality.<sup>65</sup> Military service with benefices and fiefs, moreover, did not arrive until the Norman Conquest. Loyn has it that William the Conqueror did continue to use the older systems of the *fyrð* in his consolidation of the realm; however, he believed that feudal military service and castle building protected the new Norman administration.<sup>66</sup> British historians have been fixated on tenure in their assessments on medieval society.

David Crouch tells us that early French historians had viewed the aristocracy differently to their British contemporaries. He noted that French historians emphasised the power of privilege over tenure.<sup>67</sup> In France, feudalism was associated with the power of the aristocracy over the king. Charles-Louis de Secondat, for example, believed it showed the weakness of kingship in France, while Henri de Boulainvilliers noticed that the aristocracy, who had descended from free Franks, were the only group that could resist the power of monarchs.<sup>68</sup> The nineteenth century saw a clearer exploration of the feudal model in France. Numa Denis Fustel asserted that the institutions of vassalage and oaths of fealty were feudal paradigms, which influenced Jacques Flach in perceiving an ancient contract of lord and dependant.<sup>69</sup> The Fustel-Flach model influenced historians such as Jean-François Lemarignier, who was another proponent of the collapse of Carolingian authority and its replacement with feudo-vassalic ties.<sup>70</sup> Marc Bloch divided feudalism into two ages: the first was the Carolingian period, while the second age occurred in the eleventh century.<sup>71</sup> The Capetians defeated the rise of a militaristic aristocracy in the first age, while the Norman Conquest was the fruit of the second age.<sup>72</sup> Bloch, by contrast to the previous

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>67</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 187.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 273–274.

<sup>70</sup> J.-F. Lemarignier, *La France médiévale institutions et société* (Paris, 1970), pp. 128–131.

<sup>71</sup> M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Mayon, 2nd edition, 2 (London, 1962), pp. 443–446.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.

French historians, drew influences from British academics such as Stenton and Blackstone.<sup>73</sup>

Georges Duby, along with Marc Bloch, however, perhaps had the most significant impact; in fact, it was so significant that it sent tremors across European medieval studies. Duby started the feudal revolution debate, which will be explained carefully in the territorialisation part of this chapter. David Crouch accurately stated that French focus on privilege has allowed its historiography to see the ‘aristocracy surviving massive social discontinuities’.<sup>74</sup> French historians use terms such as *seigneurie* (lordship) and *ban* (authority), which emerge due to the impact of privilege. By contrast, the British focus on tenure has stressed ‘the continuing replenishment of the aristocracy over the centuries by new men rising from below by marriage and money’.<sup>75</sup> Feudalism has not been the exclusive province of the Anglo-French and society has been viewed as a consequence beyond tenure and privilege.

American medievalists have increasingly provided contributions to the discussion on medieval Europe. American historians have intriguing challenges when researching this period, which is predominantly the sense of ‘otherness’ and the lack of a shared past.<sup>76</sup> The sense of otherness can be seen in the works of Thomas Jefferson, Henry Adams and Henry Charles Lea, who all compared Anglo-Saxon government to their new system.<sup>77</sup> Charles Homer Hoskins represented a counter to this in what has been termed as a progressive

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<sup>73</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 276.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> P. Freedman and G. Spiegel, ‘Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies’, *American Historical Review* 103 (1998), pp. 677–704, at p. 679. American historians need to ‘overcome absence and otherness, scholars of the medieval past in America began by construing alterity as origin, that is, identity’. The two authors also provide an excellent overview of American medieval historiography in this article.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 681. Freedman and Spiegel cite Henry Adams’s contrast of the spirit of the Virgin Mary to that of a dynamo. For Adams’ discussion of this, see: H. Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Boston, MA, 1961), pp. 379–390, p. 380. Adams, here, discusses how the sense of wonderment of the world has been diminished. For Henry Charles Lea, see: H. C. Lea, *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages: Its Organization and Operation* (London, 1963), p. 247. Lea stressed a grim medieval world; he noted the ‘repulsive’ process of executions.

approach to medieval history. Haskins attempted to push modernity back to the twelfth century.<sup>78</sup> In his *Norman Institutions*, he argued that the Norman Conquest brought order to Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>79</sup>

Joseph Strayer followed a similar model to Haskins, after World War Two, where he stated that the governance from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries' French and English monarchs had brought order and Philip I was a 'constitutional king'.<sup>80</sup> Strayer believed that the 'combination of personal and tenurial dependence brings us close to feudalism'.<sup>81</sup> He defined feudalism as a royal government, where the political power was monopolised by a group of military leaders and distributed amongst that same group equally.<sup>82</sup> Vassals and retainers, therefore, were the more important commodity for a lord.

American historians saw feudal society occurring in the twelfth century, from where they asserted a sense of modernity existed.<sup>83</sup> Intriguingly, their strand of discourse as shown with Strayer introduced the idea of personal ties rather than just tenurial rights or privileges.<sup>84</sup> These assertions from Britain, France and America provide a brief overview of feudalism for the regions of eastern England, eastern Normandy, and western Flanders; however, central Norway has its own historiography that is linked into the wider area of Scandinavia.

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<sup>78</sup> Freedman and Spiegel, 'Medievalisms Old and New', p. 682.

<sup>79</sup> C. H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, MA, 1918), p. 61. Haskins intimates strongly, although not the subject of his book, the organisation that the Normans brought to England.

<sup>80</sup> J. Strayer, 'Philip the Fair—A Constitutional King', *American Historical Review* 62 (1956), pp. 18–32, at p. 31. Strayer believed that Philip favoured working through ministers and councils.

<sup>81</sup> J. Strayer, 'Feudalism in Western Europe', ed. F. Cheyette, *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe: Selected Readings* (London, 1968), pp. 12–21, at p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> J. Strayer, *Medieval Statecraft and the Perspectives of History: Essays by Joseph Strayer* (Princeton, NJ, 1971), pp. 63–65.

<sup>83</sup> Freedman and Spiegel, 'Medievalisms Old and New', p. 688.

<sup>84</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 187.

Scandinavia has often been left out of the discussion on lordship and this has usually been due to religion.<sup>85</sup> The view that the Church converted ‘Viking raiders to Christian landlords’ has been argued by historians of the area.<sup>86</sup> In opposition to the feudal paradigm, Eirik Gejer, a Swedish scholar in the nineteenth century, claimed that there were ‘free’ Viking peasants.<sup>87</sup> Danish historian Tyge Rother continued the anti-feudal thinking in asserting that Denmark did not have any ‘hereditary aristocracy’.<sup>88</sup> According to Poulsen and Sindbæk, such a view developed and became canonical by 1900. Eik Arup, in 1925, claimed that Viking chieftains and magnate farmers existed, but he also maintained that there was weak royal power alongside a large peasant class.<sup>89</sup> Aksel Christensen provided the first challenge to the ‘free’ society view by arguing that, in the eleventh century, society had been dominated by magnate farmers.<sup>90</sup> This marked a new direction in Scandinavian history where realignment with the rest of medieval Europe was attempted.

Carl Christensen postulated the existence of major estates from at least the twelfth century in Denmark.<sup>91</sup> Tore Iverson claimed that, in Norway, the early medieval Thrall was similar to the un-free servant or serf on mainland Europe.<sup>92</sup> According to archaeological reports from the 1980s, Scandinavian villages of the Middle Ages were fixed to their locations in contrast to their predecessors from the Roman period, which have been

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<sup>85</sup> C. Krag, ‘The Early Unification of Norway’, ed. K. Helle, *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia Volume 1 Pre History to 1520* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 184–201, at p. 197. Krag identified that the improvement in Church relations did not occur until the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.

<sup>86</sup> B. Poulsen and S. Sindbæk, ‘Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia’, eds. B. Poulsen and S. Sindbæk, *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 1–28, at p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* For Arup’s influence see: K. Hørby, ‘The Social History of Medieval Denmark’, eds. N. Skyum-Nielsen and N. Lund, *Danish Medieval History: New Currents* (Copenhagen, 1981), pp. 36–53, at pp. 42–43. Hørby notes that Arup was incorrectly called a Marxist for his assertions.

<sup>90</sup> Poulsen and Sindbæk, ‘Settlement and Lordship’, p. 4. For an explanation on Christensen’s alternate approach to Arup’s thinking, see: Hørby, ‘The Social History of Medieval Denmark’, p. 47.

<sup>91</sup> Poulsen and Sindbæk, ‘Settlement and Lordship’, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> T. Iversen, ‘Thralls’ Manumission, Land Clearing, and State Building in Medieval Norway’, eds. B. Poulsen and S. Sindbæk, *Settlement and Lordship in Viking and Early Medieval Scandinavia* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 263–276, at pp. 263 and 276.

described as ‘migrating villages’.<sup>93</sup> These discoveries led to the argument that the Church and tax systems marked the beginning of a feudalising process.<sup>94</sup> Peter Sawyer, however, disagreed, arguing that this was occurring before in the Viking era.<sup>95</sup> Klavs Randsborg saw a model where a new caste of royal agents held land rights, and Lotte Hedeager reasoned that there was a continuity of estates since the Roman period.<sup>96</sup> By contrast, archaeologists, along with Marxists, upheld the framework of a free society.<sup>97</sup>

For this thesis to compare regions within the North-Sea world, we need an outline of society that works for all localities. Feudalism appears to be stifling the discussion on lordship for medievalists, despite historians now being less convinced that the tenth and eleventh centuries were feudal.

#### 1.4. PERSONAL TIES

Feudalism promotes strong central authority and the importance of institutional bonds over personal connections. We should, therefore, avoid viewing the medieval period in such restrictive constructs. An additional problem of the feudal model is that it prevents comparison of lordships in ‘feudalised’ kingdoms against Scandinavian lords because it conceives them as operating in entirely different societies. Champions of a feudal society discussed bonds within the paradigm of vassalage; also, they have begun to look at the use of offices given by central authority, the parameters of networks available to the various strata, and the employment of ritual. By contrast, anti-feudal historians have described the

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<sup>93</sup> Poulsen and Sindbæk, ‘Settlement and Lordship’, pp. 7 and 8.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> K. Randsborg, *The Viking Age in Denmark: The Formation of a State* (London, 1980), p. 127. For Lotte Hedeager, see: Poulsen and Sindbæk, ‘Settlement and Lordship’, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> L. Nielsen, ‘Omgård: The Viking Age Water-Mill Complex. A Provisional Report on the 1986 Excavations’, *Acta Archaeologica* 57 (1986), pp. 177–210, at p. 202. Nielsen says that the elite in society had connections outside of Denmark to gain access to new technology.

concept of vassalage as an unhelpful construct in investigating the structure of society. Let us begin with Ernst Warlop, who studied the Flemish aristocracy.

Warlop explained vassalage as a lord beseeching another man to be his vassal. A vassal's status was confirmed through an oath on relics and the lord gave his new follower fiefs. Warlop, as with his contemporaries, saw the relationship of vassalage as one lasting the lifetime of both participants.<sup>98</sup> Warlop has it that feudalism reorganised the Flemish nobility in the eleventh century. He also outlined that the former Carolingian administrative units, the *pagi*, were replaced by castellanies, which were held by vassals.<sup>99</sup> Offices such as the *pares Flandria* emerged in the later eleventh century and were usually inherited by family members of previous holders.<sup>100</sup> The stress on office holding has been a key component of the feudalistic model and was continued by Chris Wickham.

Wickham defined feudalism as simply being tenants owing rent to a landowner by cash or labour service. The landowner could use coercive powers to enforce this arrangement. Wickham did not sense that military obligation was an absolute necessity and asserted that a feudal mode of production had existed within the ancient world.<sup>101</sup> He believed that Rome had conquered the previous control of the countryside by a 'city-based citizen body' and, as a consequence, public wealth moved away from land to tax and tribute.<sup>102</sup>

Wickham wrote that it was possible for societies to have more than one mode of production, highlighting the American south in the nineteenth century as an example;

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<sup>98</sup> Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility*, p. 76.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146. As a representative example of the peers belonging to the ancestry of the old nobility, the three of the Oudenaarde region came from the Petegen house. In the south, too, the lord of Béthune, Robert I, descended from the old Carolingian nobility.

<sup>101</sup> C. Wickham, 'The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism', *P&P* 103 (1984), pp. 3–36, at p. 6.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

however, one mode would be more dominant than another.<sup>103</sup> As large landowners established themselves with more estates, the motive of public interest declined and they sought to avoid the tax of the state. Ultimately, the barbarian invasions into the Roman Empire left the aristocracy two choices: either remain in Rome and its punitive taxation, or go it alone and form new Germanic states.<sup>104</sup> Wickham posited, therefore, that the feudal mode was ‘more solid’ for these landowners than any other system.<sup>105</sup> It is not to say that the new Germanic states were immediately feudal societies; the Merovingian rulers continued to levy tax into the seventh century.<sup>106</sup> Office holding, nevertheless, no longer provided prestige because of an association with the state. By contrast, the offices of the post-Roman world were highly coveted because of the land that was attached to them.<sup>107</sup> Wickham concluded that a sense of public interest was still in existence during the Carolingian period; however, by the eleventh century, it had been transformed into private.<sup>108</sup>

Similarly, Jean-Pierre Polly placed lordship in the framework of feudalism and he believed that ‘the competing ambitions of the magnates led them into intricate manoeuvrings’ which were ‘supported by their kin and friends’.<sup>109</sup> He described the peasants as a ‘faceless mass’ to the aristocracy and attributed this to ‘ideological blindness, and ideological necessity’.<sup>110</sup> The lowly in society were confined to narrow social networks, for example their own village and possibly neighbouring ones at best.<sup>111</sup> At the

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>109</sup> J. P. Polly and E. Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation 900–1200*, trans. C. Higgitt (New York, NY, 1991), p. 63; and J. P. Polly, ‘Europe in the Year 1000’, trans. S. Airlie and R. Marsack, ed. R. Fossier, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Middle Ages II 950–1250*, (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 17–79, at p. 18. The historiography of the Middle Ages has become known as *Reichsaristokratie* – the study of a few great men.

<sup>110</sup> Polly, ‘Europe in the Year 1000’, p. 18.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

end of the Carolingian period, Polly saw the emergence of banal lordships, which meant that peasants of a territory were bound to a lord.<sup>112</sup> The ideology of lordship, office holding and service has also seen the feudalists posit the role of ritual within society.

Barthélemy believes that historians have failed to acknowledge the rigid structure of medieval life and argues that it was a 'compact and immobile' hierarchy.<sup>113</sup> Barthélemy saw a new feudal age occurring in 1060 with the 'development of princely prerogatives'.<sup>114</sup> This saw an increase in authority over castellans and vassals, meaning that counts were positioned as arbitrators. Dubbing became a prestigious event for young nobles and the tendency rose to exclude non-nobles from this ritual. The overlord supported dubbees and their claims over rival rulers and could enact harsh justice for treason.<sup>115</sup>

Barthélemy believes vassalage could display gradation within medieval society. This hierarchy was understood in an approximate sense, 'but everyone referred to it!'<sup>116</sup> Eleventh-century sources do not afford precise definition of the lower aristocracy's ranks. Castle knights 'were the vassals of the lord of the citadel, but he owed them plenty of respect and could not entirely count on them'.<sup>117</sup> Their power resided 'in their implementation in the locality. They had patrimonial lands... which came to them from their kin and clientele. Their symbolic capital was on the spot. All of this marked them out as *honorati castri* (castle worthies)'.<sup>118</sup> Wars had the potential to have many combatants and collaborators, but also there could be mediators due to networks.<sup>119</sup> Barthélemy

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20. Also see: Poly and Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation 900–1200*, p. 97.

<sup>113</sup> Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight*, p. 187.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

believes it is important to see nobility and knighthood as complements rather than opposites.<sup>120</sup>

The apparent dubbing of Harold Godwinson by Duke William of Normandy is depicted on the *Bayeux Tapestry*.<sup>121</sup> Barthélemy said it was Harold's 'initial access to knighthood, but it involved certain components of the rite, particularly the debt of gratitude toward the dubber'.<sup>122</sup> Barthélemy believed that the candidate for knighthood needed to display knightly qualities in one or two campaigns; 'conferred varying degrees of knighthood according to the individual cast: to each his own degree'.<sup>123</sup> The dubber was often the instructor in a court, where other nobles could confirm the candidate's rise into knighthood; naturally, it belonged 'alongside other rites, or significant gestures'.<sup>124</sup>

As shown above, the intricacies of the argument for fixed societies have progressed. The inclusion of ritual is compelling, in particular where historians have described oaths as lifetime contracts. Offices and access to networks, furthermore, allowed the top to dominate power and fix people within a set strata of society. Fixed hierarchy in medieval Europe, however, is difficult to maintain and suggests that relationships were expected to last forever. It removes the possibility of a conflict of interest; for example, a noble may have an office from a king, but his followers were from his patrimonial holdings. Eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon England saw King Edward the Confessor grant the earldom of Northumbria to Tostig, the son of Earl Godwine of Wessex.<sup>125</sup> The fixed society theory suggests that the locality should have accepted Tostig as their noble because the king had bestowed the title of the region upon him, therefore removing the personal connections of the locality. The aristocracy of York declared, however, that Tostig was an

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>121</sup> *The Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. D. Wilson (London, 2004), Plate 24.

<sup>122</sup> Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight*, p. 213.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> ASC, 'D' and 'E', 1065.

outlaw and wanted his removal from office.<sup>126</sup> Status in the locality was not given by a title. The growing trend in medieval history is to view the aristocracy as interacting in an adjustable world.

Both Susan Reynolds and David Crouch have dismissed that society was tied by rigid feudal bonds and they agreed that there were no clearly defined boundaries and rank within society. Reynolds noted that there were three tiers; however, they acknowledged the boundaries between them were vague, while Crouch placed the king at the top and peasants at the bottom.<sup>127</sup> For Crouch, the groups between peasants and lords were not ranked within society, and members such as squires and merchants drew no real status.<sup>128</sup> The omission of townsmen from a fixed model is, in fact, an argument for a society that was flexible. Merchants and burghers, for example, were involved in commerce and industry, which were not related to any of the three orders.<sup>129</sup>

The two leading medievalists also asserted that it was time to ‘jettison’ the idea of feudal kingdoms.<sup>130</sup> For Reynolds, the feudal law that was required was not prevalent in the tenth and eleventh centuries and claimed that the academic and professional laws of fiefs, which were conceived in Italy during the twelfth century, ‘owed more to the practices developed over the past centuries for grants to laymen of ecclesiastical land than it did to those of lay lords.’<sup>131</sup> The French nobility had understood that there were no formal or fixed obligations on their properties.<sup>132</sup> Reynolds noted that the lands of counts and

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 39; and Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 244.

<sup>128</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 238.

<sup>129</sup> For an excellent synopsis on burghers and merchants in eleventh and twelfth century Flanders, see: D. Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (Harlow, 1992), pp. 110–123.

<sup>130</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 20; and Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 272. Also see: D. Crouch, ‘Debate: Bastard Feudalism Revised’, *P&P* 131 (1991), pp. 165–177, at p. 166. Crouch here wanted to avoid the word feudalism.

<sup>131</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 6. Also see: S. Reynolds, ‘Afterthoughts on Fiefs and Vassals’, *HSJ* 9 (1997), pp. 1–15, at p. 12. Reynolds indicated that her conclusions, like her predecessors’ assertions, needed testing too.

<sup>132</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 131.

*vicomtes*, known as benefices or honours, could be used both for lands held *ex officio* and for church land that was under their care. The nobility rarely described office lands as allods - land that the holder's offspring inherited freely - though there were some exceptions.<sup>133</sup>

Dudo of St Quentin recorded that King Charles the Simple of France gave land to Rollo, the first ruler of Normandy, *in alodo et in fundo*.<sup>134</sup> Rollo may have performed ceremonial submission and promised aid, however this did not mean the grant was 'feudal', nor was it 'proto-feudal'.<sup>135</sup> For Reynolds, the 'so-called homage and later relations imply that territory ceded to Rollo' was seen by all parties as still part of the French kingdom.<sup>136</sup> According to Reynolds, the political cooperation that did occur between Normandy and the king of France was more to do with geography than formal service.<sup>137</sup> Reynolds's assertions on medieval society allow for greater nuance and factors affecting the mechanics of lordship. If historians are not bound to the chains of feudalism for the tenth and eleventh centuries, we can investigate more avenues, particularly when it comes to relationships.

Richard Barton also claimed that bonds were flexible, there was an absence of the state and that the term fief had a plethora of meanings; therefore, historians have begun to view kinship as the single most important bond for the early middle ages. Barton claimed Julian Pitt-Rivers, a sociologist, gave us a 'modified' interpretation of the family.<sup>138</sup> Pitt-Rivers defined kinship as something we can find even in our associations with friends.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>134</sup> *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae Ducum*, ed. J. Lair (Caen, 1865), Chapter 28, pp. 168–169, p. 169.

<sup>135</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 137.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> R. Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine, c. 890–1160* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 94.

<sup>139</sup> J. Pitt-Rivers, 'The Kith and the Kin', ed. J. Goody, *The Character of Kinship* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 89–105, at pp. 98 and 103.

Therefore, self can be identified not just by kinship but also through friendship. Barton believed that historians needed to prove that these kin-groups and families ‘acted to assist each other’.<sup>140</sup> Barton assumed that ‘it seems clear that affective bonds of whatever sort – whether between kin, affines, friends, or lords and their men – played a more crucial role in medieval politics and social relations than has heretofore been admitted.’<sup>141</sup>

Barton continued that the relationships forged by the aristocracy with other members of society were vital to personal reputation and effective power.<sup>142</sup> A lord was as powerful as the number of followers he had and of the men he followed, too. Ties to men of lesser rank, furthermore, were just as vital, even if they were anonymous, as they provided the resources militarily and socially to allow the nobility ‘to operate within the higher world of competitive honour and political manoeuvring.’<sup>143</sup> As a consequence of kinship, political borders did not bind the aristocrats in their interactions. He asserted, moreover, that the aristocratic class of medieval society, due to their ‘social understanding of prestige and status’, were able to regulate the violence that may occur between them.<sup>144</sup> Lordship was ‘not solely, or even mostly, predicated upon fixed relationships of tenurial dependence’.<sup>145</sup>

The discussion of aristocratic lordship and feudalism has often led national historiographies to compartmentalise and not seek a wider European picture. Kinship provides a framework, however, to measure aristocrats from across the North Sea as it allows for both formal and informal relationships. Therefore, a fluid society, where aristocrats were men of lineage and shared kin ties with other men, will allow for comparison of Norwegian jarls, Anglo-Saxon ealdormen, and Norman and Flemish counts.

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<sup>140</sup> Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 94.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

A model of these kin ties and networks can be created from the combination of Reynolds' work along with the German historian Gerd Althoff.

Gerd Althoff stated that children were born into networks of friends, lords and followers and he described these networks as being inherited and providing 'security and support' for the individual.<sup>146</sup> Kings attempted to promote the bonds of state as the most important, though the aristocracy did not generally agree.<sup>147</sup> Althoff explained that the followers of lords were equal in status, but hierarchies were maintained only to create order and, for the German historian, this was where the power lay in the Middle Ages.<sup>148</sup> The early middle ages saw struggle between central authority and followers in order to organise this ranking.<sup>149</sup> The group, therefore, that was able 'to establish a fixed hierarchy' held the dominant role within the relationship.<sup>150</sup>

Followers of the same lord did not necessarily aid each other. As Widukind has noted, before the Battle of Lenzen in 929 the vassals of their lord made an oath to the leader, but then they also promised to assist one another.<sup>151</sup> Althoff believed that this second oath was needed as it was not an inherent obligation of oath-taking.<sup>152</sup> Althoff argued that these relationships prevailed in the ninth and tenth centuries, but in the eleventh century rulers were able to extend their rights and authority over the nobility. He noted that Conrad II was reconciled with Duke Ernst of Swabia; however, after a dispute,

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<sup>146</sup> G. Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Medieval Europe*, trans. C. Carroll (Cambridge, 2004), p. 2.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> For Althoff's quote, see: *Ibid.*, p. 107. For Widukind's account, see: Widukind of Corvey, *Rerum Gestarum Saxoniarum libri tres*, eds. H. E. Lohmann and P. Hirsch, *MGH, SSrG* 60 (Hanover, 1935), pp. 1–154, Book 3, Chapter 4, pp. 70 and 71 and Book 1, Chapter 36, pp. 51–54. For an English translation of Widukind, see: Widukind of Corvey, *Deeds of the Saxons*, ed. and trans. B. Bachrach and D. Bachrach (Washington D.C., 2014), Book 3, Chapter 4, p. 102 and Book 1, Chapter 36, pp. 50–54.

<sup>152</sup> Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 107. For another example of this, see: G. Althoff, 'Amicitiae [friendships] as Relationships Between States and People', eds. L. Little and B. Rosenwein, *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 191–210, at p. 209. Henry IV of Germany suffered a rebellion at the hands of Saxony magnates. Henry's subsequent peace agreement with Saxony after hostilities was seen by the Swabians as a breach of their allegiance that Henry had procured with them earlier.

he punished Ernst as well as his vassals.<sup>153</sup> The emperor intended the duke to place his bond with him above all other ties.<sup>154</sup> Susan Reynolds has come to similar conclusions in her assessment of medieval England and France.

Reynolds outlined that ‘only with the twelfth-century renaissance’ did the ‘ideas of public good and public interest began to develop significantly.’<sup>155</sup> Thus, for the local aristocracy, entering the service of a higher lord to whom they were personally connected was beneficial. In Anglo-Saxon England, for example, we can see thegns aligned to particular earls or ealdormen. Their personal relationship came from the localities and, furthermore, engagement through the shire courts.<sup>156</sup> As previously discussed, a vassal could have more than one lord, but Reynolds believed that this was resolved by the liege-lord concept.<sup>157</sup> A liege lord was a vassal’s first lord, therefore a vassal placed this relationship above all others. Reynolds called for emphasis on the relationship over the vocabulary of interaction as vassal was a broad name to cover many relationships.<sup>158</sup> The term vassalage implies, nevertheless, one type of connection, namely a lord being owed service for land. Reynolds contends that this term conceals various forms of interaction, even those who simply serve for money and shelter.<sup>159</sup> All of this has led her to rightly assert that historians need to move away from the technical categories of vassals, fiefs and lords.<sup>160</sup> The emphasis, therefore, should be placed on the actual relationship rather than the vocabulary of the interaction.

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<sup>153</sup> Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers*, p. 129.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 20.

<sup>156</sup> Stafford, ‘Ealdorman’, p. 52.

<sup>157</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 21.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33. The relationships included in the term ‘are those of ruler and subject, patron and client, landlord and tenant, employer and employed, general (or lesser commander) and soldier, and something like a local boss or bully and his victim.’

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47. Reynolds believes that the old definitions have restricted the study of aristocratic relationships.

A rejection of the feudal paradigm is the intuitive path to follow for a comparison of medieval lords within North-Sea Europe. Poulsen and Sindbæk hypothesised that the developments from the Vikings to the central Middle Ages were evidence of a ‘tributary society’.<sup>161</sup> A ‘tributary society’ meant that interactions between a patron and client involved payment, service and duty. These tributes, however, were modest: for instance, gifts of cattle and payment of crops.<sup>162</sup> This has left current Scandinavian historiography divided into two groups. One group comprises the modernists, who ‘emphasize a break in the eleventh century and tend to think in terms of separate modes of production, a transition from either slave society or tributary relations to feudal ones’.<sup>163</sup> The second group comprises the primordialists, who argue ‘that forms of organization, which were substantially similar to feudal estates, existed in the Viking period, or quite possibly far back into the Iron Age.’<sup>164</sup>

The assertions from the anti-feudalists allow for an agreement with the primordialists who proclaim levels of organisation, which, similar to the hierarchies described above, were not extensive. Of course, it is not wrong to perceive Viking lordship as different from that in England, Normandy and Flanders in the eleventh century. There was, however, a culture of gift-giving for the provision of support, while the lords of Scandinavia in the tenth and eleventh centuries ‘were landlords as much as warlords’.<sup>165</sup> Social movement, furthermore, was predicated on military leadership, which was in the rest of Europe too. We only need to look at Duke William of Normandy defeating the rebel Norman aristocrats led by Guy of Brionne and Count Reginald of Burgundy at Val-ès-

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<sup>161</sup> Poulsen and Sindbæk, ‘Settlement and Lordship’, p. 13.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

Dunes.<sup>166</sup> The duke's victory solidified his authority in Normandy.<sup>167</sup> Historians have stated that Scandinavia did not possess supra-regional hegemony of kingdoms, and this left lords vulnerable to the advances of their peers.<sup>168</sup> Therefore, they relied on local support, the 'structure of rural power was thus related physically to great halls as the loci where patrons feasted with their clients'.<sup>169</sup>

Our proposed line of enquiry will allow the research to observe the aristocracy outside of administrative frameworks, which were perpetuated by the central authorities of the period. Envisaging society as a fluid construct of networks and connections allows for a fair comparison across regions. It conforms to Crouch's charge, furthermore, that historians needed to move away from the idea of feudal kingdoms, which has been maintained by the aforementioned national historiographies.<sup>170</sup> As a result, it will allow for an assessment of the impact of regional lordship and the level of authority the localities of North-Sea Europe held. Now that a fluid society has been established, we need to review the next key discussion in the field, namely the territorialisation of land. The debate itself has continued for decades and remains deadlocked; therefore, it needs to be assessed how this impacts our understanding of the aristocracy in the period.

### 1.5. TERRITORIALISATION-THE FEUDAL REVOLUTION

The aristocracy did not become increasingly violent in the tenth and eleventh centuries, as the supporters of the feudal revolution have contended. Of course, the sources appear to show more incidents of the aristocracy fiercely enacting their authority; however, if we take note that there are more documents available and that the churchmen were writing in a

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<sup>166</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 1, Chapter 8, p. 10.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 10, p. 12.

<sup>168</sup> Poulsen and Sindbæk, 'Settlement and Lordship', p. 27.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>170</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, pp. 225–226.

period when the seeds of the Peace of God were being sowed, they seem to misinterpret the tense relations between secular and ecclesiastical relations. Medievalists have been entrenched within the debate of a feudal revolution occurring between the tenth and eleventh centuries since Georges Duby conceived the notion.

Duby hypothesised a feudal revolution in the eleventh century from his study of the nobility in the Mâconnais between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Duby suggested that, in the year 980, there was a ‘disintegration of Frankish political structures’ which had not yet affected the counts of Mâconnais.<sup>171</sup> The counts, despite having command over all free men within their county, lost power over their castles and immunities. Their authority declined in the region and they would ‘become one private lord among others’.<sup>172</sup> This process started with rich lords refusing to serve the count and, as a result, they did not attend his court in c. 1000. The reason was because they had turned the castellan fiefs into allodial domains. This meant that they no longer held their land under the stipulation of serving the count; rather, it was held by right and was inheritable. The counts of Mâconnais, in order to ensure service, were forced to create new fiefs from their holdings which, in turn, weakened their position.<sup>173</sup>

As a consequence, in the shift in land holding, the county saw the upper echelons of the count’s nobility experience very nervous relationships. ‘At this level homage and fief were the only means to consolidate and calm the often very tense relationships among competitive and fundamentally foreign powers.’<sup>174</sup> By contrast, the lesser nobility feared confiscation of land and were easier to control. However, developments continued

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<sup>171</sup> G. Duby, ‘The Nobility in eleventh and twelfth-Century Mâconnais’, ed. F. Cheyette, *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe: Selected Readings* (New York, 1968), pp. 137–155, at p. 137. In this essay, Duby outlines his mutation theory excellently; however, he also explored it in other texts, see: G. Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. C. Postan (Berkeley, CA, 1977), pp. 16–34; and G. Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago, IL, 1980), pp. 147–166.

<sup>172</sup> Duby, ‘The Nobility in eleventh and twelfth-Century Mâconnais’, p. 137.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

whereby the nobility competed for the following of lesser lords by stipulating fewer services. ‘At the end of the eleventh century there undoubtedly were no longer any knights who were not vassals of two or more lords.’<sup>175</sup> As a result, later knights became noble and this superior status manifested itself into military specialisation.

Contesting Duby’s hypothesis is not a new phenomenon. Léopold Genicot, in 1968, rejected the paradigm of a mutation, ‘from the early to the late middle ages there was no break but simply adaptation of the nobility’.<sup>176</sup> Ernst Warlop wrote that, in the eleventh century, castellans of Ghent were descendants of the ninth-century nobility.<sup>177</sup> Warlop stated that there was an evolution through the offices available in the eleventh century, in particular with castellanies.<sup>178</sup> These roles, however, remained in the grasp of the current noble blood upon selection by the counts.<sup>179</sup> In this evolution, Warlop also saw an increasingly feudalised and militarised group.<sup>180</sup> The debate does not appear to have simmered and Thomas Bisson has now become the leading proponent in continuing Duby’s thesis.

Thomas Bisson, in his research, cited an increased level of violence in the eleventh century as evidence for the feudal revolution. He described it as ‘personal, affective, but inhumane; militant, aggressive, but unconstructive’.<sup>181</sup> Bisson expanded his research outside of France and envisaged the mutation occurring all over the European continent and he posited that ducal authority in Normandy was not able to control the *vicomtes* in the 1040s. In England, he acknowledged the consistent violence on church lands in the 1070s.

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>176</sup> L. Genicot, ‘The Nobility in Medieval Francia: Continuity, Break, or Evolution?’, ed. F. Cheyette, *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe: Selected Readings* (London, 1968), pp. 128–136, at p. 135.

<sup>177</sup> Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility*, p. 113.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178–180.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180. There was one incident in the early twelfth century, where a comital office was awarded to the Erembald family; the family did not have ancestry to the old nobility and, after contemporaries became aware of this, the family ‘was destroyed’ and the prospect of emerging nobility neutralised.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>181</sup> T. Bisson, ‘The “Feudal Revolution”’, *P&P* 142 (1994), pp. 6–42, at p. 18.

By contrast, Germany and Leon-Castile maintained previous institutions until 1075 and 1110 respectively.<sup>182</sup> After these dates, both realms suffered a multiplication of militant lordships and ‘accelerated castle-building, enfeoffments and impositions’.<sup>183</sup> Bisson argued that England had its mutation mature in the reign of King Stephen during the civil war.<sup>184</sup> He believed, ultimately, that the better phrase was to describe the process as a feudal mutation over a revolution.<sup>185</sup>

Bisson identified Count Raymond III of Rouergue as a prime exemplar of this increased violence in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. He noted that the monks of Conques, within the county of Rouergue, claimed that Raymond wanted to use fortifications as a method of subjugation. He wanted to fortify ‘the precipice overhead, declaring that his intention was “to subjugate by his violence (*again violentia sua*) and submit to his lordship those who neglected to render their due submission to him”’.<sup>186</sup> Bisson saw this as evidence for the change to a violent mentality within the aristocracy. Bisson rightly attempted to observe the change over the wider mass of Europe whereas, previously, Duby had focused only on the Mâconnais.<sup>187</sup> Bisson’s conclusion on the whole of Europe undergoing a process of change, therefore, was more plausible as he had extrapolated this from more than one locality. Not many historians have agreed with Bisson; nevertheless, Chris Wickham has provided support to his claims.

Wickham posited that social relationships became increasingly formalised within the locality and he believed, furthermore, that the dating has been a problem created by French historiography’s fixation on the year 1000.<sup>188</sup> The mutation occurred at different

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>188</sup> C. Wickham, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” IV’, *P&P* 155 (1997), pp. 196–208, at p. 199.

points for the various regions of Europe. The nobility for Wickham had, in the Carolingian period, held interest in the power of the state, but this dissipated over the centuries and they became fixated on their own agents.<sup>189</sup> Wickham reasoned, as a consequence, that the change was actually occurring in medieval Europe between 800 and 1150.<sup>190</sup> The proponents against mutation, however, discuss the nature of the sources used and the possibility of them misleading historians.

Dominique Barthélemy has it that the castellan lords were ‘co-ordinating power of local knightly domination; in this respect it was a copy, on a smaller scale, of the royal and comital lordships’.<sup>191</sup> Royal and comital powers had practised the same methods in the ninth and tenth centuries and Barthélemy attributed this as a misunderstanding of sources due to the trend of regional histories. He reasoned that a rise in primary material could be seen for the eleventh century due to ‘improved archiving of common documents’.<sup>192</sup> Another cause was that ‘development by the monasteries of a new style of grand notice: some of these... harked back to Carolingian traditions, while others... were more original’.<sup>193</sup> He believed that, if archives were investigated individually, as Duby had done, there would be the perception of a sudden change. However, if viewed with others, it was clear that there was no sudden change in the behaviour of the aristocracy.<sup>194</sup> Barthélemy, unlike Bisson, has received several supporters.

Stephen White believed that the ecclesiastical sources of the eleventh century made violence look wicked.<sup>195</sup> By contrast, other sources made it appear part of a legal strategy. He identified that many violent acts in disputes ended in peace. White described, therefore,

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<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>191</sup> D. Barthélemy, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” I’, *P&P* 152 (1996), pp. 196–204, at p. 203.

<sup>192</sup> Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight*, p. 30.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>195</sup> S. White, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” II’, *P&P* 152 (1996), pp. 205–223, at p. 212.

a society where violence was balanced by a process of peace and where third parties became involved as mediators.<sup>196</sup> He also agreed with Barthélemy's critique of the sources from the eleventh century, outlining that many were monastic documents dramatising the violence.<sup>197</sup>

Timothy Reuter positioned himself against the concept of a feudal mutation, considering that to complain about violence is to complain about public life. When rulers were absent or were believed to be inadequate, their reigns are heavily scrutinised for failings by contemporaries.<sup>198</sup> Reuter presented King Æthelred II's failure to deal with the external Norse threat to the kingdom, as a case which led to accounts of internal disorder about his reign. Reuter understood, furthermore, that violence in this period was not committed sporadically, but rather it was 'meaningful and controlled'.<sup>199</sup> Reuter concluded, convincingly, that the debate needed to broaden its perspective as it had been centred on France as representative of medieval Europe.<sup>200</sup> He acknowledged, however, that due to the sources being different in the regions of Europe, there was unlikely to be a methodological approach to providing an answer when comparing them.<sup>201</sup> The debate has become deadlocked but still remains an important discussion on medieval society and aristocratic study.

Charles West recently asserted that the reason for the stalemate was because historians of the central and early medieval periods were not attending the same conferences to advance the discussion.<sup>202</sup> In his regional assessment on Marne and Moselle between 800 and 1100, there was no sudden upsurge in violence other than at points where

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<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>198</sup> T. Reuter, 'The "Feudal Revolution" III', *P&P* 155 (1997), pp. 177–195, at p. 180.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180–182.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>202</sup> C. West, *Reframing the Feudal Revolution: Political and Social Transformation Between Marne and Moselle, c. 800–1100* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 5.

there was evidence for widescale warfare. He concluded the debate itself has become an ‘unhelpful dichotomy’ for medievalists and, as he saw social transformation occur in the ninth century, the debate should move there.<sup>203</sup>

The evidence favours Barthélemy, White and Reuter: sources were multiplying and the complaints of violence manifested from grievances about public life. As a consequence of the survival of more evidence, there can seem to be the appearance of increased violence; however, this was not sporadic and usually had motives.<sup>204</sup> In addition to the points above, Barthélemy and Reuter were correct in stating that the creation of the concept was rooted in regional monographs, which were predominantly on French localities.<sup>205</sup> The debate has lacked a European perspective and national historiographies, along with regional studies, furthermore, have hampered the discussion. A crucial point for this thesis to add, moreover, is that historians’ definitions for the aristocracy have not included the locality, as we have established in earlier sections of this chapter. The debate on both sides accepts the premise of lords being territorialised, just not the levels of violence that came with it. The unsavoury events being described in the contemporary sources were, in fact, a consequence of lords rooting their interests in the locality. The Church, as it will be argued as the thesis develops, was disapproving of aristocratic regional authority because it viewed such localism as a major hindrance to the coalescing of the Christian identity. So sources, authored by clergymen, complaining about the behaviour of lords, were in essence revealing disgruntlement about regional aristocracies in general. We now need an assessment of the methodologies available to us in order to study the lords of the North Sea. We will begin with comparative history.

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<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>204</sup> Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight*, p. 30.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.* Also see: Reuter, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” III’, p. 188.

## 1.6. COMPARATIVE

The introduction explained the methodology that allows this thesis to explore the aristocracy of the North Sea world. It noted how Chris Wickham has been the leading figure in not only practising comparative studies, but also outlining a methodology of study for medievalists. As stated, there is a clear gap in the historiography for more comparative approaches, particularly for the aristocracies in northern Europe. However, in this section of the chapter we must survey the developments of comparative history. In addition to this, we will ascertain the potential benefits to such an approach across a diverse seascape. We should start then with an early key advocate of the comparative approach.

Geoffrey Barraclough was one of the first supporters of comparative history. In his work *History in a Changing World*, he discussed the benefits of a comparative approach and its application to the field of history.<sup>206</sup> He was dismayed that historians, when he was writing in the 1950s, held distaste for the methodology. Barraclough, building on the work of Arnold Toynbee, questioned the rise of national histories within Europe, arguing that all were following their own paths.<sup>207</sup> He was clairvoyant in his analysis, as this has been a recent charge against the historiography of Anglo-Saxon England in what has been described as ‘English exceptionalism’. Barraclough noted that those against comparative studies argued that the paradigm was misleading as the level of accuracy needed ‘is impossible to attain’.<sup>208</sup> Barraclough countered, nonetheless, that it was more misleading to not correlate and thus ‘refuse to see the wood from the trees’.<sup>209</sup> Ultimately, he convincingly asserted that comparative history allowed people to view the past ‘from a

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<sup>206</sup> G. Barraclough, *History in a Changing World* (Oxford, 1995).

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*

wider experience'.<sup>210</sup> Barraclough had a contemporary across the Channel who was a leading light in comparative medieval studies.

The eminent medieval historian Marc Bloch often sought a comparative approach when tackling European society in the Middle Ages. In one essay, he attempted to describe how to carry out a comparative methodology.<sup>211</sup> He said that there must be 'a certain similarity or analogy between observed phenomena' and that there should also be 'a certain dissimilarity between the environments in which they occur'.<sup>212</sup> Applicable to this thesis was his argument that the 'units of comparison' could be societies separated by time or space.<sup>213</sup> He argued, furthermore, that gaps in sources can be overcome by the analogies. He discussed that state boundaries were not the ideal parameters of a comparative study as they provided a vague 'historical predestination'.<sup>214</sup> In a separate paper, he applauded Belgian historians, such as François Louis Ganshof, for being able to compare the kingdoms of France and the Ottonian realm and believed that this was due to their split history between the two powers.<sup>215</sup> We can investigate, therefore, the medieval lordship in a comparative setting as we can claim, at this stage, that it was more contemporary than the idea of a nation state.

Bloch warned against historians comparing just two separate historiographies because he understood that the historians of one nation will ask a different set of questions of their evidence compared to another.<sup>216</sup> These different questions were usually born from the different types of evidence available to them: a notable variance was the assessment of

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<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>211</sup> M. Bloch, 'Toward a Comparative History of European Societies', eds. F. Lane and J. Riemersma, *Enterprise and Secular Change: Readings in Economic History* (London, 1953), pp. 494–521.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 496.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 517.

<sup>215</sup> M. Bloch, 'A Problem in Comparative History: The Administrative Classes in France and Germany', trans. J. Anderson, *Land and Work in Medieval Europe: Selected Papers by Marc Bloch* (London, 1967), pp. 82–123, at p. 83.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

the nobility in French and German historiography. Bloch described French books as seeing the group as one entity; by contrast, German research had seen many grades within the nobility. The administrative class within France, furthermore, was never legally defined, whereas the German *ministeriales* possessed precise privilege and held an *esprit de corps* as was witnessed in the Bamberg between 1057 and 1065.<sup>217</sup> From Bloch we can understand, therefore, that the questions asked of the selected aristocracies should be the same throughout, instead of relying on the national discourse which will focus on different sets of issues. Comparative studies, despite many positives, are not plentiful and there have been some muted concerns regarding the approach.

William Sewell, although predominantly supportive of comparative research, described the criticisms of such studies. He stated that the research required ‘insight, sympathy, and intellectual power, qualities which are quite independent of a historian’s command of the comparative method, to grasp the patterns and work out the logic which underlies sequences of historical events.’<sup>218</sup> He continued that historical imagination could be supplemented by the comparative, but not replaced by it.<sup>219</sup> Sewell acknowledged, nevertheless, that comparative testing had ‘undeniable value’.<sup>220</sup> The comparative approach has been evaluated recently and a clear outline has been created for its application to history, particularly for the medieval period.

Our usual suspect in comparative matters is Chris Wickham who, in the introduction of his Reuter lecture, provided twenty-first century historians a blueprint on how to successfully carry out a historical comparison. In other papers, he has argued for the methodological benefits of a comparative outlook. Wickham has it that it broke

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<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>218</sup> W. Sewell, ‘Marc Bloch and the Logic of Comparative History’, *History and Theory* 6 (1967), pp. 208–218, at p. 217.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

continuities which have been a characteristic of English historiography. He rejected the national habitus as it ‘presumed continuity as a norm.’<sup>221</sup> Wickham did have influences on his comparative designs and he commended Timothy Reuter as an ‘instinctive comparativist’. Reuter had noted that Germany and England were similar in the tenth and eleventh centuries, yet he stressed their differences.<sup>222</sup>

Reuter’s focus can be seen in his essay on the making of England and Germany, in which he stressed how the different sources had produced alternative fixations for the respective historians.<sup>223</sup> Reuter reasoned that the kingdom of England was like a car and it just needed a driver, whereas the Imperial realm was more symbolic in nature. Reuter believed that the ‘maximum view’ promoted by James Campbell was a result of the administrative sources available and the lack of narrative works by churchmen such as Thietmar of Merseburg.<sup>224</sup> The comparison led Reuter to believe that the ‘maximum view’ could be rebutted. Reuter’s work persuasively showed the hindrance of national boundaries when comparing.<sup>225</sup> For English historians, it is all too easy to create the predestined twentieth-century state as the comparable and this is why, therefore, we must compare regions or, more accurately, territorial lordships. Comparative history has not been limited to Reuter and Wickham, as there have been several recent studies that cover Eurasia, the Middle East and Africa.

Robert Moore used a comparative approach in an investigation of Eurasian civilizations in the eleventh century. He stated that the methodology allowed for the ‘obscurities and lacunae of each culture’s evidence to be supplemented and illuminated by

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<sup>221</sup> C. Wickham, ‘Historical Transitions: A Comparative Approach’, *Medieval History Journal* 13 (2010), pp. 1–21, at p. 5.

<sup>222</sup> C. Wickham, ‘Problems in Doing Comparative History’, ed. P. Skinner, *Challenging The Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* (Turnhout, 2009), p. 5–28, at p. 5.

<sup>223</sup> T. Reuter, ‘The Making of England and Germany 850–1050: Points of Comparison and Difference’, ed. A. Smyth, *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 53–70, at p. 55.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

the strengths of others.’<sup>226</sup> In his research, he described the eleventh century as a series of crises of clerical elites. His study intended to assess the differences in responses to the crises by Latin Europe, China and the Middle East. He believed that these responses ‘greatly increased the differences between them’.<sup>227</sup> For Moore, the scholar officials of China and the clerical elites of the Islamic world relied on their kin for influence within the localities. By contrast, clerical elites in Latin Europe were hindered by primogeniture and the vows of celibacy, thus modes of advancement were limited by the goodwill of patrons and the extension of that patron’s power.<sup>228</sup> This thesis plans, however, to make comparisons outside of royal systems of governance; therefore, we need to identify studies of culture, as the tenth and eleventh centuries are dominated by studies of the levels of royal government and central power.

Archibald Lewis compared the feudal societies of Japan and Buwayhid Iran to southern France. Lewis noted the level of regional power in Japan and southern France, where exchange of land occurred without central interference.<sup>229</sup> Lewis, in addition to land exchange, drew attention to the regionalism of the French Midi in the aristocracy holding castles, which cannot be seen in Japan or the Buwayhid.<sup>230</sup> Moore’s research is an example of how the use of comparative history allows the historian to assess to what extent certain cultures are centralised or regionalised.<sup>231</sup> Lewis’ study was able to evaluate the level of central and regional authority through the lens of comparative testing.<sup>232</sup> The question of regional authority is critical to understanding the nature of medieval lordship because, in

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<sup>226</sup> R. I. Moore, ‘The Eleventh Century in Eurasian History: A Comparative Approach to the Convergence and Divergence of Medieval Civilizations’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003), pp. 1–21, at p. 5.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>229</sup> R. A. Lewis, ‘The Midi, Buwayhid Iraq, and Japan: Some Aspects of Comparative Feudalisms, A.D. 946–1055’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969), pp. 47–53, at p. 50.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>231</sup> Moore, ‘The Eleventh Century in Eurasian History’, p. 16.

<sup>232</sup> Lewis, ‘The Midi, Buwayhid, and Japan’, p. 52.

isolated circumstances, central authority can appear to be strong. However, by comparing the North-Sea world, the goal is to assess if central authority has been over-exaggerated by national historiographies. The comparative method has not been limited to assessment of central administrations. It has also been used to compare material culture and explain a society's development.

Nikki Keddie was able to discover these differences in her comparative study of material culture and geography in the Middle East. She investigated the early technological developments within the Middle East that set it ahead of Europe.<sup>233</sup> She argued that the unforested river valleys of Egypt and Iran allowed for easy agricultural development.<sup>234</sup> Keddie continued that, in northern Europe during the ancient period, harder soils and dense forests had made it more difficult to cultivate by comparison. However, as technology progressed in aiding the removal of trees and stones, medieval Europe entered a cycle of agricultural development, while the Middle East waned from the eleventh century.<sup>235</sup>

A comparative approach will greatly enhance our understanding of medieval lordship and the enrichment will allow for a greater depth of understanding on lordship, as a fixed nationalist approach will be challenged by analysing lordships against their North-Sea contemporaries. The approach presents a real gap in the historiography of early medieval studies on the whole, as there are few comparative works. Comparative study relies on its subjects sharing common characteristics. This can include geography of the landscape and types of records, too. Of course, the regions of eastern England, eastern Normandy, and western Flanders have similar sources to compare such as charters and chronicles. Central Norway, however, does not have contemporary sources from the tenth and eleventh centuries. The comparative approach provides a remedy to this problem; we

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<sup>233</sup> N. Keddie, 'Material Culture and Geography: Toward a Holistic Comparative History of the Middle East', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984), pp. 709–735, at p. 709.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 718.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 721.

are able to assess the validity of the sagas' accounts by comparing several lordships across the North-Sea world. If the sagas hold comparable details about aristocratic authority to the contemporary sources of the rest of northern Europe, then we can assert there is legitimate evidence held within the Scandinavian sources about the tenth and eleventh centuries on central Norway.

Historians have debated many other aspects of aristocratic history, for example their families and inheritances. Chapters three and four are centred on these themes and, as a result, the discussions of these topics have been placed in these two chapters. Comparative studies have also used the sea as an instrument to analyse their region; therefore, we will widen our historiographical net and assess the importance of sea studies.

#### 1.7. NORTH SEA AND SEA STUDIES

Sea studies are an excellent way for historians to move beyond the borders of particular kingdoms as they invite us to view medieval Europe within different networks of interaction. Historians are becoming increasingly interested in maritime history. The sea has been described as one of the 'greatest ever-present natural' forces that 'humankind can experience.'<sup>236</sup> Historians are increasingly looking at the ocean as a seascape rather than a barrier to interaction.<sup>237</sup> Studies on the sea have been dominated by the Atlantic and Mediterranean oceans; for example, Barry Cuncliffe asserted that a community within fifty kilometres of the sea in the Atlantic zone looked to the ocean before 'the land behind them'.<sup>238</sup> Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, moreover, from a microecological slant,

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<sup>236</sup> B. Cuncliffe, *Facing the Ocean: The Atlantic and its Peoples 8000BC–AD1500* (Oxford, 2001), p. 9.

<sup>237</sup> S. Rose, *The Medieval Sea* (London, 2007), p. 6.

<sup>238</sup> Cuncliffe, *Facing the Ocean*, p. 565.

said that exchange and interaction occurred in the Mediterranean due to the unfruitful localities.<sup>239</sup> Recently, however, focus has been moved to human agency of the sea.

David Abulafia explored the impact of the ‘human hand’ on the history of the Mediterranean.<sup>240</sup> In his research, Abulafia described the growing dominance of the Christians between the tenth and eleventh centuries with Venice, Genoa and Milan.<sup>241</sup> Benjamin Hudson, moreover, reviewed the impact of an Irish Sea province on the aristocratic family of Harold Godwinson. He noted that Wessex and Dublin may have even held a mutual assistance policy in the region during the eleventh century.<sup>242</sup> Susan Raich, in her thesis on the English Channel, moreover, argued that control of this seascape was important to central figures for the control of borders.<sup>243</sup>

Robert Liddiard recently assessed the impact of maritime histories and affirmed that the sea allows analysis of ‘diaspora and migration, connectivity, economic and cultural exchange, construction and control’.<sup>244</sup> Liddiard went as far as to state that the sea can be viewed as ‘super-highways’ in the medieval period, when they are understood in correlation with navigable inland rivers such as the Seine and the Thames.<sup>245</sup> Conclusively, Liddiard noted, in a similar fashion to comparative historians’ assessment on their paradigm, that sea studies have been hindered by national historiographies.<sup>246</sup> He argued that national outlooks caused historians to move away from the sea. German historians, for example, have tended to look south at the relationship with the Papal States. By contrast,

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<sup>239</sup> P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea; A Study of the Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2000).

<sup>240</sup> D. Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (London, 2011), p. xxx.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286. Also see: D. Abulafia, ‘The Norman Kingdom of Africa and the Norman Expeditions to Majorca and the Muslim Mediterranean’, *ANS* 7 (1985), pp. 26–49, at p. 35. Abulafia’s earlier work highlights human agency of the sea, for example, Roger II of Sicily built a coastal empire from Tripoli to Algeria.

<sup>242</sup> B. T. Hudson, *Irish Sea Studies, 900–1200* (Dublin, 2006), p. 101.

<sup>243</sup> S. Raich, ‘The Sea in the Anglo-Norman Realm, c.1050 to c.1180’, (D.Phil. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2014), p. 276.

<sup>244</sup> R. Liddiard, ‘Introduction: The North Sea’, eds. D. Bates and R. Liddiard, *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 1–14, at p. 4.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

English historians focused on northern Europe and subsequently mainstream French culture.<sup>247</sup> Yet, there have been comparative sea studies in the medieval period despite these trends.

David Smail successfully used the sea as a central component of his comparative study, viewing the Mediterranean as a medium to investigate the use of violence in the fourteenth century. In his research, Smail compared the cities of Marseilles in southern France and Lucca, which is situated between Florence and Pisa in modern Italy. Smail, in his comparison, has stressed the similarities to make this a fair study; for example, he noted the populations of both locations being between 20,000 and 25,000 before the Black Death.<sup>248</sup> He noted, furthermore, that both cities followed Roman canon law. Smail identified that the records show ‘instances of debt recovery were at least three to four times more common than criminal prosecutions’.<sup>249</sup> He concluded that the historiography of the late medieval period stated that private violence gave way to public; however, through his testing in Marseilles and Lucca, if they were representative, the courts were not particularly violent against those enacting violence on others.<sup>250</sup> Smail’s research is a clear example of the importance of testing and how a shared seascape provides fruitful analysis. His work also emphasised the gap of the wider medieval history discipline of northern Europe. There have been many studies on the early and central middle ages that have focused on central Europe, therefore often omitting the Scandinavian regions. Thus, the thesis proposes to answer the recent call to explore the North-Sea world.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup> D. Smail, ‘Violence and Predation in Late Medieval Mediterranean Europe’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54 (2012), pp. 7–34, at p. 11.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> C. Ferguson, ‘Re-Evaluating Early Medieval Northumbrian Contacts and the “Coastal Highway”’, eds. D. Petts and S. Turner, *Early Medieval Northumbria Kingdoms and Communities, AD 450–1000* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 283–302, at p. 298. Ferguson argued that the North-Sea world can be considered in a similar vein to studies on the Atlantic and Mediterranean by Cuncliffe, Horden and Purcell.

The North Sea itself is 970 kilometres long and 580 kilometres wide and has a relatively shallow sea bed on the shores of eastern England, northern Europe and Scandinavia.<sup>252</sup> The name North Sea originated from sixteenth-century Dutch cartographers and the problem for sea studies, inevitably, is the definition given to phrases such as the North-Sea world. Liddiard appropriately stated that, as soon as a definition is created, scepticism inevitably follows.<sup>253</sup> Anne Haour, an archaeologist, in her research compared central Sahel to the North Sea between 800 and 1500. She suggested that the North-Sea world included the modern-day nations of Belgium, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Netherlands and Norway.<sup>254</sup> She argued that, due to their connection with the North Sea, they can be ‘characterized by winds, relatively cool surface temperatures, and a high level of cloud cover; precipitation varies locally... with October and November typically the wettest months.’<sup>255</sup> We need to examine the past studies that have been completed on the North Sea to gain an understanding of how it has been used to date.

In 1988, a collection of essays was published from a conference at St Andrews University with the theme of Christian conversion in the North-Sea world between the sixth and twelfth centuries.<sup>256</sup> There was particular focus on the eastern seaboard of Britain, with the goal of understanding Scotland in a wider geographical background. The essays included Viking Age Scandinavia, Carolingian Francia, the Anglo-Saxons and Picts. One of the essays included was by Martin Carver who was investigating, from an archaeological perspective, conversion on the eastern seaboard of Britain.<sup>257</sup> In his

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<sup>252</sup> Liddiard, ‘Introduction: The North Sea’, p. 1. Approximately 620 miles long and 360 miles.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> A. Haour, *Rulers, Warriors, Traders, Clerics: The Central Sahel and the North Sea 800–1500* (Oxford, 2007), p. 7.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9.

<sup>256</sup> B. Crawford, ‘Preface’, ed. B. Crawford, *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World* (St Andrews, 1988), pp. 7–9.

<sup>257</sup> M. Carver, ‘Conversion and Politics on the Eastern Seaboard of Britain: Some Archaeological Indicators’, ed. B. Crawford, *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World* (St Andrews, 1988), pp. 11–40.

exploration of the North Sea, he included examples of burial mounds from Britain, Denmark and south-west Norway. He illuminated the similarities in grave mound sites, particularly with ship burials, which were evident in East Anglia, Sweden and Norway in the seventh century.<sup>258</sup> Norway and its relationship with England appear to be a key proponent of study that includes the North Sea.

In a series of essays published in 2001, Gareth Williams investigated King Haakon the Good's reign as king of Norway and stressed the similarities with Anglo-Saxon kingship.<sup>259</sup> Williams argued that Haakon's time at King Æthelstan's court had influenced him to imitate Anglo-Saxon kingship in his attempts to convert the Norwegian realm and his introduction of laws.<sup>260</sup> The North-Sea world, however, was not limited to England and Norway; within the same collection of essays, Colin Martin investigated trade in east Fife, Scotland.<sup>261</sup> He described the region as being part of a trading network that saw ceramics travel in from as far as the Balkans to western Francia. Martin believed that the locality held a connection with the North Sea for over 8,000 years for hunter gathers, with fishing sites evident at Morton.<sup>262</sup>

Eljas Oksanen, in the most recent collection of essays that has focused on the North Sea, highlighted the trade connections between East Anglia and Flanders.<sup>263</sup> He stated that the distance between the regions was a two-day sail at worst. He noted that waterways had broadened trade for the two areas in the twelfth century and he stated that there was an

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<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>259</sup> G. Williams, 'Hákon Aðalsteins fóstri: Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Kingship in Tenth Century Norway', eds. T. Liszka and L. Walker, *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 108–126, at p. 119.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> C. Martin, 'Seafaring and Trade in East Fife', eds. T. Liszka and L. Walker, *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 164–174.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>263</sup> E. Oksanen, 'Economic Relations Between East Anglia and Flanders in the Anglo-Norman Period', eds. D. Bates and R. Liddiard, *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 174–187.

increase in the trade of wool according to *Domesday Book*.<sup>264</sup> In the same collection of essays, Tom Williamson investigated the ‘character’ of East Anglia in relation to the North-Sea world and noted that there were cultural exchanges between East Anglia and Denmark.<sup>265</sup> Williamson, however, also cautioned the use of the sea as a lens. He believed Suffolk and Essex were not part of the network and argued that they were more akin to the Channel and northern France.<sup>266</sup> He stated, furthermore, that historians employing the North Sea should not ‘mistake influence for parallel development’.<sup>267</sup> What is certainly evident from the essays above is what Liddiard had reasoned; if we are to define a North-Sea world, it will be open to scepticism and interpretation. Some have allowed for economic connections, while others believe that it should be centred on shared cultural traits.

The North Sea, as a focus for this study, has clear traction as there is an opening in the historiography of the early middle ages. We must underline how the North Sea was an active network in the period so that we can understand its importance rather than perceiving it as a blank space on a map (see Figure 1.1). Historians have acknowledged that trade in Europe had declined in the ninth century: the Viking raids were a factor, but it remains uncertain as to why the decline occurred.<sup>268</sup> In the eleventh century, England saw a shift in trade from Normandy and Île-de-France to the Low Countries, which was influenced by silver coming from Flanders and Germany. Mark Gardiner explained that the growth of ports had very little to do with lordship.<sup>269</sup> Ports usually developed where ships could land safely and then expanded in order to be close to commercial zones. He argued

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<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>265</sup> T. Williamson, ‘East Anglia’s Character and the “North Sea World”’, eds. D. Bates and R. Liddiard, *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 44–62, at p. 47.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>268</sup> M. Gardiner, ‘Shipping and Trade between England and the Continent during the Eleventh Century’, *ANS* 22 (1999), pp. 71–93, at p. 72.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

that the development of ports on the south coast of England was attributed to the growing trade with Flanders.<sup>270</sup> The second half of the eleventh century saw the ports of eastern England grow and there was increased trade with Scandinavia.<sup>271</sup> According to Susan Raich, London in the eleventh century was reviving its status as a major port of trade, too.<sup>272</sup> Archaeological reports have also revealed how ships were becoming increasingly larger and more specialised from the tenth century. The evidence from ship remains suggests a greater use of the North Sea network.<sup>273</sup>

Although trade is not the main focus of this thesis, the North Sea as a network had been revived through the exchange of goods rather than political authority in the eleventh century.<sup>274</sup> As a result of this revival, we see a migration of aristocrats into new regions where many do not only plunder, but settle and adapt to the cultural community.<sup>275</sup> Lauren Breese recognised the connections between Normandy and Scandinavia and believed that there was little evidence of a large wave of immigrants displacing the native population in

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<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>271</sup> S. Sindbæk, 'Viking Disruptions of Growing Integration? Contextualising Communication Networks in the Tenth Century North Sea', eds. S. Kleingärtner and G. Zeilinger, *Raumbildung durch Netzwerke ?* (Bonn, 2012), pp. 19–38, at p. 29. Michael Sindbæk said that London was not always suitable as a hub in the North Sea network in the tenth century. He believes that the *burhs* of England were only truly urban in character in the eleventh century.

<sup>272</sup> Raich, 'The Sea in the Anglo-Norman Realm', pp. 96–121, p. 97. Raich, throughout this section of her thesis, clearly examines how ports increasingly developed in England and Normandy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

<sup>273</sup> O. Crumlin-Pedersen, 'Ships as Indicators of Trade in Northern Europe 600–1200', eds. J. Bill and B. Clausen, *Maritime Topography and the Medieval Town: Papers from the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Waterfront Archaeology in Copenhagen, 14–16 May 1998* (Copenhagen, 1999), pp. 11–20, at p. 19. Also see: O. Crumlin-Pedersen, 'Ship Types and Sizes AD 800–1400', ed. O. Crumlin-Pedersen, *Aspects of Maritime Scandinavia AD 200–1200: Proceedings of the Nordic Seminar on Maritime Aspects of Archaeology, Roskilde, 13th–15th March, 1989* (Roskilde, 1991), pp. 69–82, at pp. 75–77. This variety of shipping also can be seen in the Skalds' terminology, see: J. Jesch, *Ships and Men in the late Viking Age: The Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verse* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 119–136. A *knorr*, for example, was a broad ship that sailed across the ocean with heavy cargo.

<sup>274</sup> P. Gazzoli, 'Anglo-Danish Relations in Later Eleventh Century', (D.Phil. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2010), pp. 104 and 107. Gazzoli stressed how King Edward of England may have looked to Normandy, however, his aristocracy continued to have connections across the North Sea. For Gazzoli, a network of alliances 'could easily span the North Sea'.

<sup>275</sup> S. Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), p. 12.

Normandy.<sup>276</sup> Scandinavian place-names, however, are prevalent, particularly centring on Fécamp and the Cotentin. Also, Old-English names were in use, suggesting that some Vikings had come from the *Danelaw* in England.<sup>277</sup> Normandy in the late tenth century was the most southern point of Viking territory. Throughout the tenth century, the cooperation between the Normans and Scandinavians was based on ‘ethnic and cultural ties’.<sup>278</sup> James Barrett believed that the Viking Age saw competition for wealth, which encouraged men to voyage overseas in search of riches.<sup>279</sup> The young males, furthermore, married into the native families of the regions, which increased their ‘acculturation process’.<sup>280</sup>

Michael Sindbæk noted that Viking-Age Scandinavia had only a few sites with ‘external links’.<sup>281</sup> The *Vita Anskarii* written by Rimbert reveals the organisation of communication between these hubs.<sup>282</sup> Sindbæk concluded that the Viking Age centred on small groups of hubs, so exchange in northern Europe created a small world. These hubs had very few links to other ports or trading centres and were vulnerable if a connection was lost or reconfigured; such circumstances caused major emporia to close in the late Carolingian period.<sup>283</sup> The North Sea in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, therefore, was developing as a major crossway of communication and trade. This redevelopment can be seen in the increasing cases of Viking incursion in the eleventh century.

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<sup>276</sup> L. Breese, ‘The Persistence of Scandinavian Connections in Normandy in the Tenth and Early Eleventh Centuries’, *Viator* 8 (1977), pp. 47–61, p. 49.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>279</sup> J. Barrett, ‘What caused the Viking Age?’, *Antiquity* 82 (2008), pp. 671–685, at p. 679.

<sup>280</sup> D. Hadley, ‘Ethnicity and Acculturation’, eds. J. Crick and E. van Houts, *A Social History of England 900–1200* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 235–246, at p. 237.

<sup>281</sup> S. Sindbæk, ‘The Small World of the Vikings: Networks in Early Medieval Communication and Exchange’, *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 40 (2007), pp. 59–74, at p. 62.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63. For Rimbert, see: Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH, SSrG* 55 (Hanover, 1884), pp. 13–79, Chapter 7, p. 29 and Chapter 11, p. 32. We can see in these two chapters travel through Dorestad near Utrecht and later to Birka, a port town in Sweden.

<sup>283</sup> Sindbæk, ‘The Small World of the Vikings’, p. 71.

Judith Jesch has stressed that Scandinavian movement in northern Europe was recorded in skaldic inscriptions and chronicles. Inscription Sö 116, dated to either 1020 or 1030, commemorates a Viking attack on the Elbe.<sup>284</sup> Adam of Bremen recorded an attack in Frisia and N540 records Viking activity there too.<sup>285</sup> Alpert of Metz recorded two raids in Frisia by *Nordmanni*, one in Tiel and another in Utrecht, in the eleventh century.<sup>286</sup> He continued that the raiders burned Tiel and, as a result, the inhabitants of Utrecht decided to burn their harbour, believing that this would make the region appear less attractive.<sup>287</sup> Jesch emphasised her uncertainty as to whether these were separate raids or the same two events; but, if the North Sea was a conduit for the northern European aristocracy, it needed to be used by other lords and not just Scandinavians.<sup>288</sup>

Scandinavian raiders, in academic discussions, can appear to have been the only group to have used the North Sea. This was not the case, however, as Anglo-Saxon lords travelled across the sea too. Hereward the Wake was renowned as a Lincolnshire lord resisting the Norman rule of England, but it is his career as a mercenary prior to this that emphasises the use of the North Sea network. In the *Gesta Herewardi* we are informed of Hereward's travels from England to Flanders via the Orkneys in approximately 1064.<sup>289</sup> While in the county of Flanders, he was in the service of the Flemish count; he competed

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<sup>284</sup> J. Jesch, 'Vikings on the European Continent in the Late Viking Age', eds. J. Adams and K. Holman, *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 255–268, at p. 256.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257. For Adam of Bremen, see: *Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum ex recensione Lappenbergii. In usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae historicis recusa*, ed. altera, *MHG*, SS 17 (Hannover, 1876), Book 1, Chapter 40, p. 29. For an English translation of the text, see: Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, ed. and trans. F. Tschann (New York, 2002).

<sup>286</sup> For Jesch's exploration of other sources, see: Jesch, 'Vikings on the European Continent', p. 259. For Adam's description of Utrecht, see: *Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis*, Book 1, Chapter 40, p. 29.

<sup>287</sup> Jesch, 'Vikings on the European Continent', p. 259. Several sources recorded events in the area; Sigebert of Gembloux dated these to 1009 and 1010, *Annals Colonieses* claimed they occurred in 1006, *Chronicon Tielsne* suggested 1007 and finally the *Annales Egmondenses* advocated that raids occurred in 1010.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> E. van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', *ASE* 28 (1999), pp. 201–223, at p. 222. Elisabeth van Houts, in her analysis of the *Gesta Herewardi*'s reliability, has stated that these events in Flanders fit into the historical context and charter evidence which saw a Hereward attesting as *miles Herewardus*. The murder of Frederick, furthermore, was also mentioned in the Hyde chronicle, leaving van Houts to conclude that it is likely that these events occurred.

in tournaments in Bruges and Poitiers; he married Turfida, who was most likely a member of an aristocratic family from the Saint-Valéry-sur-Somme region; and, on his return to England, he murdered Frederick, a member of the Oosterzele-Scheldewindeke family and brother-in-law to William Warenne.<sup>290</sup>

Ultimately, the incidents of Hereward's career in Flanders stress the point that the North Sea was not just the province of Scandinavians. Another notable example was Harold Godwineson's brother, Tostig. Orderic Vitalis claimed that Tostig had travelled to Normandy, Scotland and Norway in search of support after falling out with his brother Harold. We can be dubious of Orderic's claim, but the point is that chroniclers did not see the sea as a hindrance to lords.<sup>291</sup> It was used by other lords who were also in search of service and reward. In addition to this, the account stresses the integration into local customs, with Hereward marrying into the local aristocracy and participating in regional tournaments.<sup>292</sup> This network, therefore, fits into Robert Bartlett's proposed aristocratic diaspora, as lords travelled through kingdoms in search of service as a 'transregional aristocracy'.<sup>293</sup>

The North Sea was an active network for medieval lords during the tenth and eleventh centuries. There had been active use of the sea before this period and it is clear it was in continual use during the proposed centuries of study. There has been recent research on the region, but none have attempted to assess lordship in depth, while only Wickham's research, presented in the introduction, has attempted a comparative approach within the

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<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>291</sup> For recorded details of Tostig's travels, see: *OV*, 2, Book 3, pp. 138 and 140; *Heimskringla, Saga of Harald Sigurtharson*, Chapter 79, p. 644; and *ASC*, 'C', 'D', and 'E', 1065. For criticism, see Chibnall's footnotes. Also see: S. Ghosh, *Kings' Sagas and Norwegian History: Problems and Perspectives* (Leiden, 2011), p. 121. Ghosh stated that it was more likely that Tostig had sent an envoy for assistance.

<sup>292</sup> van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', p. 205.

<sup>293</sup> R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (London, 1993), p. 27.

North-Sea world. Therefore, a clear gap in the historiography exists for lordship in northern Europe.

## 1.8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the chapter has established that the aristocracy of medieval Europe remains an important subject for historians because it reveals how medieval society functioned. As has been shown, models of feudalism have been extolled and, later, correctly refuted in favour of a social world that has less demarcation in not only ethnic borders but also social boundaries.<sup>294</sup> By investigating aristocracies, historians are moving away from the national historiographies, which have given rise to separate strands and a lack of comparative analysis. The fluid structure, furthermore, provided by current academics allows for a more fitting comparison of the aristocracies of northern Europe, as the previous feudal paradigm excluded the lords of particular kingdoms until they had been ‘feudalised’.

The feudal mutation is a perfect example of the attempts to look outside of the lenses of kings and kingdoms in the period: the debate, however, was previously hampered by focusing on small regions and presenting them as representative of Europe as a whole.<sup>295</sup> Now we see the aristocracy as a group that was common to all regions of Europe and was recognisable to everyone in society. As stated, the evidence favours Barthélemy, White and Reuter even though their sources provided an impression of increased violence.<sup>296</sup> We can maintain, therefore, that the eleventh century did not represent a radical change in social structure of the medieval world.

The methodological approaches presented here will provide a new look on medieval Europe. The use of comparative study is still lacking in medieval research and,

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<sup>294</sup> Barton, *Lordship in the County of Maine*, p. 95.

<sup>295</sup> Reuter, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” III’, p. 188.

<sup>296</sup> Barthélemy, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” I’, pp. 196–204; White, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” II’, pp. 205–223; and Reuter, ‘The “Feudal Revolution” III’, pp. 177–195.

therefore, provides a real opportunity to analyse the aristocracies against each other rather than against their central authorities. The ‘maximum view’ of Anglo-Saxon England, for example, can be tested; moreover, ‘English exceptionalism’ can be challenged through a comparison with contemporaries. In addition to the comparative model, the approach of using seascapes will provide an original understanding of the medieval aristocracy. As has been stressed, Norway, as well as other Scandinavian regions, has hitherto been left out of the discussion due to its late conversion to Christianity and the view that it was not feudalised in the eleventh century.<sup>297</sup> We can, therefore, bring the aristocracy of Norway into the discussion if we see a flexible society and use the North Sea as a common geographical feature for our lordships. Imperatively, we can turn the attention away from central Europe with Ottonian Germany, France, the Papacy and England to an understudied, yet highly influential, seascape.

Our areas have not been selected simply because they have a North Sea coastline (see Figure 1.1). The regions of study will include eastern England, western Flanders, eastern Normandy, central Norway and, in the later chapters, the Orkneys. The reasoning behind the selection is simple: first, all these areas were outside of the traditional land holdings of their central rulers; secondly they have regional sources, which allow for investigation from a locality’s perspective; thirdly, the localities have easily identifiable territorial lordships that were recognised outside of the region. Finally, these areas have been understudied in the historiographies of their respective kingdoms. We will now turn to the territory of the North Sea lords and assess how aristocrats were affected by the geography of their lordships.

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<sup>297</sup> Krag, ‘The Early Unification of Norway’, p. 197.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO: TERRITORY

Historians often have their attention fixed on kings and kingship in their assessments of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The structures of royal government have been explored and extolled as the precursors to modern notions of democracy and nationalism. This line of enquiry has focused on the period through an administrative lens, thus looking at the study of royal courts, laws and offices. The greatest example of such a royal focus can be seen in the ‘maximum view’ developed by James Campbell, who reasoned that the English kingdom in the tenth century was a nation state defined by its central authority, uniform institutions and national language.<sup>1</sup>

This creates a determinist outlook with kingships and kingdoms appearing as the inevitable form of rule in the Middle Ages. It has, furthermore, cast the aristocracy as rebellious and traitorous because they were the only social group that could muster power within a kingdom to challenge a king’s ‘central’ authority.<sup>2</sup> A crucial problem in the construct of the maximum paradigm is that the ‘uniform’ administrative structures such as shires, ealdormanries and, later, earldoms can be seen in the previous centuries through the former Anglo-Saxon heptarchy kingdoms.<sup>3</sup> The theory, moreover, negates the possibility

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<sup>1</sup> J. Campbell, ‘Observations on English Government from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century’, *TRHS, 5th Series* 25 (1975), pp. 39–54; ‘England, France, Flanders and Germany: Some Comparisons and Connections’, ed. D. Hill, *Æthelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 255–270; ‘Some Twelfth Century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past’, ed. J. Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), pp. 209–228; ‘Some Agents and Agencies of the late Anglo-Saxon State’, ed. J. Holt, *Domesday Studies: Papers Read at the Novocentenary Conference of the Royal Historical Society and the Institute of British Geographers, Winchester, 1986* (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 201–218; ‘The Sale of Land and the Economics of Power in Early England: Problems and Possibilities’, *HSJ* 1 (1989), pp. 23–37; ‘England, c. 991’, ed. J. Cooper, *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact* (London, 1993), pp. 1–17; ‘The Late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 87 (1994), pp. 39–65; and ‘The United Kingdom of England: The Anglo-Saxon Achievement’, eds. K. Stringer and A. Grant, *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London, 1995), pp. 31–47.

<sup>2</sup> S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 4–11.

<sup>3</sup> P. Hill, *The Road to Hastings: The Politics of Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud, 2005); E. John, ‘War and Society in the Tenth Century: The Maldon Campaign’, *TRHS, Fifth Series* 27 (1977), pp. 173–195; R. Abels, ‘English Tactics, Strategy and Military Organization in the Late Tenth Century’, ed. D. Scragg, *The*

of the existence of regional cultures that were based not only on past kingdoms, but also on geographical landscapes.

This chapter intends to challenge the ‘maximum view’ of Campbell in favour of a regional model and, therefore, a framework that promotes the authority of regional aristocratic lordship. This will show that cultural provinces prevailed and were inhabited by pre-existing identities that did not perceive themselves through the rule of a monarch. By contrast, they understood their identity in relation to personal family ties, culturally symbolic locations, geographical features, and sacred connections to holy figures. What then do we mean by territory?

David Harvey described territory as a ‘geographical expression of social power’.<sup>4</sup> This authority was capable of being able to influence people and relationships within a geographically defined area.<sup>5</sup> Previously, historians have understood territory through a twentieth-century lens, thus seeing national boundaries and administrative units; however, aristocratic early medieval lordship did not operate through these constructs. Territory, nevertheless, can be understood through regionalism, which can uncover a more contemporary world of the aristocrats of the North Sea, a geographical expanse which, in itself, was not bound to a central image of course. First we need a brief outline of the structure of this chapter.

The chapter will first examine the key theoretical frameworks that our investigation will employ; these include cultural provinces, contact zones and central places. Secondly we will explore aristocratic buildings to identify how they made an impact on the lord’s identity in a region. Thirdly, we will investigate the theories on sacred territory, which will reveal the impact of religion in the localities. We can then discuss the lordships that will be

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*Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 143–155; and D. Kirby, *The Making of Early England* (London, 1967).

<sup>4</sup> D. Harvey, ‘Landscape, Organisation, Identity and Change: Territoriality and Hagiography in Medieval West Cornwall’, *Landscape Research* 25 (2000), pp. 201–212, at p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

compared, which will include Essex in eastern England, Vexin and Arques in Normandy, Guines in western Flanders and Trøndelag in central Norway. There will be an explanation of the geographical boundaries of the administrative office attached to each region, as well as their responsibilities. We can then examine the secular and ecclesiastic evidence for regionalised understanding of territory and identity outside of a central authority. The chapter will divide into two sections of comparison: first cultural provinces with central places and secondly sacred territory. The aim is to show how lords of the North-Sea world had regional identities to enhance their authority within their lordships.

Charles Phythian-Adams proposed the concept of a cultural province. He defined it as ‘focused areas of influence and regional interaction’.<sup>6</sup> He believed that, in early medieval society, lineage played a crucial role through the mode of inheritance in establishing local social structure. Phythian-Adams understood that the ‘only spatial configurations available to fulfil all these preconditions are great centrally focused river-drainage basins on the one hand or, on the other, those de-centralized but localized groups broadly parallel or slightly convergent rivers that are delimited inland in each case by the same watershed line, and which share an identifiable stretch of coastline at the outlet points.’<sup>7</sup> The dominant rivers will be navigable ‘far upstream to moorings from which contact may be made with the very heartland of the entire river basin or its de-centralized equivalent.’<sup>8</sup> Under this explanation, it was inevitable that cultural provinces would overlap and interact.

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<sup>6</sup> C. Phythian-Adams, ‘Introduction: An Agenda for English Local History’, ed. C. Phythian-Adams, *Society, Cultures and Kinship, 1580–1850: Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 1–23, at p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. Also see: N. Higham, *The Origins of Cheshire* (Manchester, 1993), p. 213. Higham argued that the River Mersey was a ‘major frontier’ between Mercia and Northumbria in Northern Cheshire.

John Morrissey described areas where distinct cultures interacted as ‘contact zones’.<sup>9</sup> Morrissey applied this to late medieval Ireland; he identified the various groups and their descriptors, for example Anglo-Irish, Anglo-French and even Cambro-Norman.<sup>10</sup> He remarked that interpreting Ireland as bi-ethnic was subscribing to the national view. By contrast, identities multiplied where there was interaction and overlap.<sup>11</sup> A crucial instance was the cultural impact on the settlers from England, ‘from the moment of cultural contact, the ethnic identities of both the colonists and the host population are thereafter mutually constitutive of each-other’.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately, he viewed the landscape as networking through marriage and fosterage that initiated alliances and cultural links.<sup>13</sup> Phythian-Adams called these areas ‘intermediary zones’ and reasoned that they were colonised from opposing sides and would see gradual interaction as they came closer to each other.<sup>14</sup>

Phythian-Adam’s and Morrissey’s concepts will provide effective tools to uncover identities that were external from a central authority. We need to establish local cultures and discover if there were culturally symbolic centres of power within these cultural provinces. In Scandinavian historiography, the notion of a central place is often used to identify the symbolism of towns, aristocratic residences and fortifications to people of a region. Dagfinn Skre formulated his ‘central place’ theory by building on the previous work of Walter Christaller.<sup>15</sup> Originally, this was to identify why some towns in Norway were larger than others. Skre mentioned that Christaller’s theory was reliant on the

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<sup>9</sup> J. Morrissey, ‘Cultural Geographies of the Contact Zone: Gaels, Galls and Overlapping Territories in Late Medieval Ireland’, *Social and Cultural Geography* 6 (2005), pp. 551–566, at p. 552.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 553.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 554.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Phythian-Adams, ‘Introduction: An Agenda for English Local History’, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> D. Skre, ‘Centrality and Places. The Central Place at Skiringssal in Vestfold, Norway’, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 1 (2010), pp. 220–231, at p. 220.

movement of people and goods, through a trade medium. Skre believed that hierarchy of settlements was defined by 'property rights, such as kinship and rules of inheritance'.<sup>16</sup>

A central place was a location of cultural custom and economic elements were a secondary factor. They were areas from which power was exhibited. In Essex, for example, the ealdormen held several estates around the town of Colchester. Colchester was a Roman town and, therefore, had a symbolic connection with power.<sup>17</sup> This does not mean, however, that a central place was fixed. If the economic forces were strong enough, we can see a movement to a new site, for instance, the West Saxons increasingly used London as a principal place.<sup>18</sup>

Skre recognised the difficulty in discovering central places of the lower orders. He has stressed, however, that frequent mentions in sources such as sagas may identify a place's former status.<sup>19</sup> The factor of a location being a central place was 'ascribed' by the people that it served; thus, it would be easier to discover in more regional sources. Skre suggested that an estate did not necessarily have central functions for the community. Even those on the estate may not have had central dealings outside the rents owed to the landlord. Skre reasons that, in a community, different strata had separate centres.<sup>20</sup> In Norway, for example, an aristocrat may have an affinity to a regional *thing*. By contrast, a peasant may have had an attraction with a harbour or local market.<sup>21</sup>

We must discover, as a consequence, the lord's central place. In the North Sea, this was embodied by aristocratic residences, which could be fortified and described as castles. Castles have long been seen as imposing structures on the landscape which offer 'an

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>17</sup> B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> A. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 88. Royal assemblies were taking place in London.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

expression of hierarchies of power'.<sup>22</sup> They were designed to impress contemporaries as well as intimidate them. It is easy to forget that an aristocratic hall also had the same function as a castle, although its defences were not as impressive. This was the case for England and Norway, where castles were not as prevalent as they were in Flanders and Normandy. Ann Williams identified that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s first reference to a castle was in 1051.<sup>23</sup> The chronicle had been using terms such as *burh*, *geweore* and *herebeorg* but these had a variety of meanings.<sup>24</sup> *Burh* in particular was a flexible phrase referring to prehistoric earthworks, former Roman camps, Anglo-Saxon fortification, fortified houses, manors and market towns too.<sup>25</sup> Orderic Vitalis, in his early-twelfth-century chronicle, also used several phrases in Latin when referring to castles in Normandy.<sup>26</sup>

Williams' famous example was the site of Goltho, which was situated nine miles east of Lincoln. In the mid-ninth century, it was a manorial enclosure and remained so until the mid-twelfth century.<sup>27</sup> An archaeological survey of the site discovered timber halls, defences and anterior buildings. The site had been surrounded by a moat forty feet wide and fifteen feet deep. In the eleventh century, it was a fortified earthwork enclosure with a hall, bower, courtyard and kitchen.<sup>28</sup> Guy Beresford has reasoned that the site would have held the manorial court.<sup>29</sup> Williams believed that these remains can logically point to the

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<sup>22</sup> L. Hicks, 'Magnificent Entrances and Undignified Exits: Chronicling the Symbolism of Castle Space in Normandy', *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009), pp. 52–69, at p. 53.

<sup>23</sup> A. Williams, 'A Bell-House and a Burh-Geat: Lordly Residences in England before the Norman Conquest', eds. C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey, *Medieval Knighthood* 4 (1992), pp. 221–240, at p. 221.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>26</sup> M. Chibnall, 'Orderic Vitalis on Castles', eds. C. Harper-Bill, C. Holdsworth and J. Nelson, *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 43–56, at p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> Williams, 'A Bell-House and a Burh-Geat', p. 230.

<sup>28</sup> G. Beresford, 'Goltho manor, Lincolnshire: The Buildings and their Surrounding Defences c. 850–1150', *ANS* 4 (1982), pp. 13–36, at p. 17.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

conclusion that the Norman fortifications seen after the Conquest were often, in fact, built over pre-conquest sites.<sup>30</sup>

In Norway, fortifications were not usual. A site situated in Skiringssal, Vestfold, south-east Norway, for example, has a history that can be dated to the eighth century, when a town called Kaupang was founded. Skiringssal of the Viken area was mentioned in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*.<sup>31</sup> The area held the council known as a *thing*, called *bjóðalyng*, where nobles from the locality converged to resolve conflicts and legal disputes.<sup>32</sup> The site was occupied by a hall between 230 and 263 feet long, which has been hypothesised to be the residence of a petty king and his retinue.<sup>33</sup>

Leonie Hicks has explored the symbolism of these aristocratic residences in Normandy. She said that a 'visual presence of a leading member of the seigneurial family was necessary for the maintenance of order within the household on a daily basis.'<sup>34</sup> She has stressed, furthermore, the symbolic relationship that these structures held in the medieval period.<sup>35</sup> We can see this in the *Bayeux Tapestry*, which portrays castles as centres of defiance in its illustration of Earl Harold Godwinson and Duke William on campaign. The tapestry depicts fortifications at Rennes, Dol and Dinan in Brittany. The Norman force appears to be besieging the fortress at Dinan after taking the castle of Dol.<sup>36</sup> It clearly displays that, not only were the castles used as defensive structures, positioned on mounds overlooking the landscape, but they were also locations from which rebellions were staged. The conflict ends with Conan, duke of Brittany, handing over Dinan's keys to William.<sup>37</sup> It is intriguing that the tapestry's portrayal of this conflict has no other events

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<sup>30</sup> Williams, 'A Bell-House and a Burh-Geat', p. 231.

<sup>31</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Ynglings*, Chapter 44, p. 45.

<sup>32</sup> Skre, 'Centrality and Places', p. 225.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>34</sup> Hicks, 'Magnificent Entrances and Undignified Exits', p. 59.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *The Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. D. Wilson (London, 2004), Plates 21–23.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Plates 23–24.

after the surrendering of Dinan.<sup>38</sup> This suggests, therefore, that rebellions depended on fortifications as symbols of continued resistance. Regions, nevertheless, were not simply composed of secular symbols of identity. Also it is vital for us to discover the religious composition of aristocratic territory in the early medieval period.

We will consider the roles of saints in the construction of identity in order to investigate the religious aspect of aristocratic territory. Local saints between the ninth and eleventh centuries were far more important than in the twelfth century. According to Patrick Geary, saints were viewed as protectors of peace in the absence of strong central authority.<sup>39</sup> Samantha Herrick said that Norman dukes associated themselves with local saints within Normandy in order to ingratiate with the pre-existing Frankish culture.<sup>40</sup> She maintained that this was particularly seen on the borders.<sup>41</sup> Previously, Susan Ridyard argued that saints held ‘a central place within both church and community’ in her study on Anglo-Saxon royal saints and their cults. She assumed that they underlined the dominance of kingships and that royal families perpetuated them to provide ‘tools or foci for the working out of relations’ between the central king and a locality.<sup>42</sup>

The association with local saints was often driven through the transmission of accounts on the lives of saints. Saints’ lives were conveyed through the medium of hagiography, which Herrick claimed reached audiences in castles, monasteries and villages.<sup>43</sup> Hagiographies typically included miracles performed by the saint such as the suppression of fires, which had the potential to burn down settlements.<sup>44</sup> Ridyard noted

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Plates 24–27. After the engagements in Brittany William and Harold move to Bayeux, where Harold swears an oath to William and returns to England.

<sup>39</sup> P. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1990, orig 1978), p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> S. Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past: Hagiography and Power in Early Normandy* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), p. 136.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>42</sup> S. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 226.

<sup>43</sup> Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past*, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> B. Yorke, ‘Rudolf of Fulda’s *Vita S. Leobae*: Hagiography and Historical Reality’, eds. H. Sauer, J. Story and G. Waxenburger, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent* (Tempe, AZ, 2011), pp. 199–216, at p. 208.

that a hagiography's first purpose was to 'increase the reverence felt for the individual saint' and, in addition to this, it amplified the prestige of the monastic community that lay claim to the saint's relics.<sup>45</sup> Ridyard has stressed that, although hagiography heavily favoured the monastic community holding the subject's relics, the accounts within the hagiographies were central to the medieval belief system.<sup>46</sup> Graeme Small in his study on the vill of Tournai discussed how saints were seen as part of the locality's history. Small convincingly explained, furthermore, that such accounts could be utilised over the centuries by the local clergy or aristocrats in order to allow dominant powers to belong to the community.<sup>47</sup> The assessment of the influence of local saints on the aristocracy has been inspected by Herrick too.

Herrick in an article on Count Waleran I of Meulan in the eleventh century explored aristocratic association with saints. She argued that Waleran's actions may have been tied to the 'territory's sacred history'.<sup>48</sup> The sacred history was linked to Nicasius, a French and Norman missionary who intended to found a church at Rouen with Dionysius. Both were, however, captured by Roman authorities and subsequently beheaded. The heads were said to have been picked up by their bodies and moved to an island on the Epte, near the Seine confluence. Nicasius was recorded to have killed a dragon five miles from Meulan on the journey from the Seine to Vallis. In the eleventh century, Waleran established the priory of Saint-Nicaise, Meulan and fortified the island on the Seine.<sup>49</sup> Herrick suggested the likelihood of this influencing Waleran's allegiance towards Rouen as this was the intended target of Nicasius; also, it appealed to the dual identity in the

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<sup>45</sup> Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. Geary also argued that hagiographies were important for understanding the Medieval belief system, see: Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 10.

<sup>47</sup> G. Small, 'Les origines de la ville de Tournai dans les chroniques légendaires du bas moyen âge', eds. J. Pycke and J. Dumoulin, *Les grands siècles de Tournai (12e–15e siècles)* (Tournai, 1993), pp. 81–113, at pp. 85 and 113. In the twelfth century the legendary story of Tournai was derived from the visions of Henry of Tournai who claimed to see three local saints.

<sup>48</sup> S. Herrick, 'Between Neighbors and Saints: Waleran I of Meulan and the Allegiance of Lesser Lords in the Eleventh Century', *HSJ* 20 (2008), pp. 78–93, at p. 89.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

Vexin region of French and Norman interests.<sup>50</sup> Herrick's research provides a scheme for us to enquire into the possibility of a wider North-Sea trait of using sacred territory by aristocrats, via the agent of a local saint.

We will need to move away from the traditional centralised sources in order to extract territorial identities, central places, and sacred places of aristocrats. Applying England as an example, charters and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* can create an image of a centralised government and a weak local aristocracy.<sup>51</sup> Nicholas Brooks has stressed, moreover, how for the late tenth and early eleventh centuries the chronicle was written by someone in the service of the king.<sup>52</sup> Regional sources, such as local monastic chronicles and hagiographies, however, can bring forward details previously not known from the 'national' perspective. Of course, these regional sources have their agendas, too, especially as they tend to support their patrons, which were local aristocratic families. Monastic communities, collegiate churches and cathedral priories were often maintained through the patronage of these lords. Aristocrats participated in patronage, as it was believed that it would provide salvation for the soul.<sup>53</sup> The family provided gifts for, or founded, a monastic community and, in return, the family were the benefactors of prayer and had a place of burial. These gifts were seen as an integral part of their status.<sup>54</sup> Later we will, however, analyse the sources so we are clear on the aristocratic influences on authors. In addition to this, the fact that these regional sources will naturally reflect the view of the aristocrat is beneficial, as it is the objective of this work to identify their social consciousness and relationship to their territory.

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>51</sup> A. Sheppard, *Families of the King: Writing Identity in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (Toronto, 2004), pp. 10 and 13. Also see: R. Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars: Sources and Interpretations of Anglo-Saxon Warfare in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 19. Lavelle stated that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 'gives an impression of the exorable advance of the kingdom of Wessex' from the late ninth century.

<sup>52</sup> N. Brooks, 'Why is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* about kings', *ASE* 39 (2010), pp. 43–70, at p. 52. According to Brooks manuscripts C, D and E, which cover the years between 983 and 1022, were written by a priest in the service of Cnut.

<sup>53</sup> D. Power, *The Norman Frontier in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 301.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

## 2.1. LORDSHIPS

This chapter will look at six lordships across the North-Sea world. We need to examine the lordships now in order for an assessment of our key themes. The lordships examined here include: the ealdormanry of Essex in England; the counties of Vexin and Arques in Normandy; the county of Guines and the lordship of Ardres in Flanders; and the jarldom of Trøndelag in Norway. This section will describe the lordships' geography and explain the offices attached to the locality. First we will start with the ealdormanry of Essex.

Essex, situated within the wider region of eastern England, had a coastline on its eastern boundary which was connected to the North Sea. In the north, the region shared a border with East Anglia that was marked by the River Stour and thick woodland in the area and, to the south, the region was separated from Kent by the River Thames. Finally, Essex was connected to London, Cambridgeshire, and Hertfordshire in the west. The principal towns within the region included the former Roman settlement of Colchester and the port town of Maldon (see figure 1.2).<sup>55</sup>

In the seventh century, the region was part of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy and was called the kingdom of the East Saxons. It was believed to have controlled London, Surrey and parts of Huntingdonshire during the kingdom's zenith.<sup>56</sup> We should remind ourselves that the kingdom of the East Saxons lasted into the ninth century, when it was incorporated into the Danelaw.<sup>57</sup> West Saxon authority in the region did not occur until the early tenth century and Essex became an administrative unit called an ealdormanry held by an ealdorman.<sup>58</sup> The ealdormanry included modern Essex; however, it is not certain what it held outside of this in the early medieval period. Nicholas Banton argued that the

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<sup>55</sup> C. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London, 1992), p. 28. Hart argued that the Danes had fortified the *burhs* of Colchester and Maldon, thus highlighting their local significance.

<sup>56</sup> N. Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls in England from the reign of King Alfred to the reign of King Æthelred II' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1981), p. 208.

<sup>57</sup> B. Yorke, 'The kingdom of The East Saxons', *ASE* 14 (1985), pp. 1–36, at p. 27.

<sup>58</sup> Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 8.

ealdormanry may have represented the former kingdom by holding remit over London, Surrey and parts of Huntingdonshire.<sup>59</sup>

An ealdormanry was an office that would later evolve into an earldom, and both titles performed similar duties, also the earldom office was prevalent in Norway in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The ealdorman was appointed by the king; however, the title was often taken by the predecessor's heir or a powerful aristocrat within the jurisdiction of the office.<sup>60</sup> The ealdormen of the realm were part of the inner core of the court of the West Saxon kings and can be seen on charters attesting to land grants.<sup>61</sup> The ealdorman needed to hold the shire courts with the shire reeve, in which he received a third of the king's justice. In addition to this, he was expected to manage the defence of the area and thus had the ability to call upon the shire army.<sup>62</sup> An ealdorman or earl was equivalent in status to a count, which will be explained below.<sup>63</sup> If we consider them royal agents, however, we underestimate their political power within their localities.<sup>64</sup> Ealdormen and earls did not represent the unity required for an all-powerful central government as noted in chapter one. Ealdorman Eadric Streona of Mercia, who joined forces with the Viking leader Cnut to overthrow the West Saxon king Æthelred II, was an excellent example of this.<sup>65</sup>

Eastern Normandy represented the Normans' territorial heartland and is often referred to as Upper Normandy. This region embodied the former Neustrian march under

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<sup>59</sup> Banton, 'Ealdormen and Earls', p. 208.

<sup>60</sup> Hill, *The Road to Hastings*, p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> For Example see: S787. In this charter, dated to 972, King Edgar granted privileges to the Abbey of Peterborough. The king, as was customary, was the first name placed on the witness list. Then the high ranking ecclesiastics followed, which ranged from the archbishop of Canterbury (Dunstan) to, in this case, the abbot of Abingdon (Osgar). The archbishop of Canterbury, holding primacy over other ecclesiastics in England, was placed top. After the ecclesiastics usually came the ealdorman. Ealdorman Byrhtnoth was ranked third amongst the ealdorman at the court. He was placed after Ælfhere of Mercia (ranked first) and Æthelwine of East Anglia (ranked second).

<sup>62</sup> P. Stafford, 'Ealdorman', ed. M. Lapidge, *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of England* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 152–153, at p. 152.

<sup>63</sup> D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London and New York, 1992), p. 48.

<sup>64</sup> Campbell, 'The United Kingdom of England: The Anglo-Saxon Achievement', p. 32.

<sup>65</sup> ASC, 'C (D, E)', 1015 and 1016.

the influence of Charles the Simple in the early tenth century and acted as a buffer against Breton incursion.<sup>66</sup> In 911 Charles treated with the Viking leader Rollo and subsequently granted him the areas surrounding the River Seine, which were Talou, Caux, Roumois and parts of the Vexin and Evercin.<sup>67</sup> In 924 and 933 the Normans received two more grants, which formed what we call Lower Normandy and the area included Bayeux, parts of Maine, Avranchin and the Cotentin.<sup>68</sup>

The Normans, evidently, were not the native populace; however, their government was not a Scandinavian one.<sup>69</sup> Instead, it was more symbolic of a Carolingian regime; Norman rule did not greatly affect the local *pagi* system, diocese or the rural estates.<sup>70</sup> Connections to Scandinavia, however, continued into the early eleventh century despite the new identity introduced into the Neustrian march; as we can see when Olaf Haraldsson was welcomed to Rouen in 1025.<sup>71</sup>

The far reach of the eastern border of Upper Normandy was Eu, where Rollo had been defeated in the early tenth century while raiding.<sup>72</sup> The northern border is formed by the coast, which is connected to the Channel. The patrimonial lands of the dukes of Normandy centred on the River Seine in the tenth century. Here, William Longsword revived the mint at Rouen and possibly began the construction of a palace at Fécamp.<sup>73</sup> The southern border was adjacent to the hotly-contested region of the Vexin between the Normans and the French king. The Vexin represented a contact zone in Upper Normandy. In a frontier region, families held a greater amount of independence. In 911 the River Epte

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<sup>66</sup> D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (Harlow, 1982), pp. 3 and 4.

<sup>67</sup> R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians 751–987* (London, 1983), p. 237.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>69</sup> Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>71</sup> *GND*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 11, pp. 24 and 26.

<sup>72</sup> S. Deck, 'Le Comté d'Eu sous les Ducs', *Annales de Normandie* 4 (1954), pp. 99–116, at p. 99.

<sup>73</sup> Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 12.

was a boundary between the Norman dukes and French king.<sup>74</sup> It bisected an old *pays* called the Vexin, and the diocesan boundaries of bishoprics and archbishoprics did not match the areas of influence (see figure 1.3).<sup>75</sup>

The duchy of Normandy used the office of count to administer the various regions. The office saw the incumbent holding the title of count, he was also located in a castle and had the responsibility of protecting the region; these offices were often on the frontier.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, to ealdormen and earls in England, counts attested charters of a central authority, in this case the duke of Normandy.<sup>77</sup> In addition to the count, a *vicomte* was also used in a region. They were not military leaders, but rather concerned with management and maintenance of ducal rights.<sup>78</sup> The holder of the office managed a demesne and collected revenues from the people and land within it, for example the *vicomte* of Arques.<sup>79</sup> The *vicomte*'s most important job, moreover, was to maintain the peace by ensuring justice was upheld, as well as acting as the arbiter in disputes.<sup>80</sup> It is important to note that the title of count and its core functions were also used in Flanders.

The county of Guines, which also contained the lordship of Ardres, was, in western Flanders, sandwiched between two regions under the authority of the count of Boulogne. Guines shared its northern border with Boulonnais land, also known as the *vicomte* of

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<sup>74</sup> J. Green, 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', eds. J. Gillingham and J. Holt, *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. Prestwich* (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 47–61, at p. 47.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>77</sup> *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I 1066–1087*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), No. 248. 'William consents to and attests the grant by Arnulf Villensis to the abbey of Saint-Ouen of two and a half acres of meadow at Rouen, the land on which Robert fitzGilbert lives with the customs which belong to Arnulf there, and the church of Biennais and the two thirds of that vill which belong to Arnulf. The transaction is witnessed by law-worthy witnesses on both sides. It was agreed that Arnulf should be buried within the abbey, and that nothing further should be taken for this to be done, unless Arnulf and his relatives made a gift of their own free will.' Count Robert of Eu attests this charter as '*S(ignum) Roberti comitis Occensis*'.

<sup>78</sup> M. Hagger, 'The Norman *Vicomte*, c. 1035–1135: What did he do?', *ANS* 29 (2007), pp. 65–83, at p. 70. The only scenarios where *vicomtes* led a military force were in emergency situations. An example of this can be seen in 1072 when Archbishop John of Rouen was besieged by a mob. The *vicomte* 'hastened with aid' to the archbishop.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Merk, and its western boundary was shared with the traditional land holdings of the county of Boulogne. To the south, Guines had a border with the castellany of Saint-Omer and, in the north-west of the county was Guines' coastline (see figure 1.4). Guines itself was under the authority of the counts of Flanders.<sup>81</sup> Leah Shopkow has stressed that the county of Guines was not created by the Flemish and, therefore, was often independent as it operated within a 'peripheral' zone.<sup>82</sup> The county was under the power of a count of Guines and contained the lordship of Ardres. The counts' role was comparable to the role of a Norman count explained above.

Western Norway has been considered to be the origin of supra-regional power in Norway in the ninth and tenth centuries. As a political unit, Norway was unstable due to 'alternating domination' of secular elites.<sup>83</sup> Western Norway and the Trøndelag, for example, both followed different sets of provincial laws: the law of Gulathing was followed by the former and the law of Frostathing was adhered to by the latter.<sup>84</sup> Both sets of laws represented regional assemblies in the tenth century, which were 'representative' and 'attended by a limited number of men' in order to establish laws for their respective regions.<sup>85</sup> The regions were ruled by jarls who performed similar duties to the ealdormen and earls of Anglo-Saxon England. This included presiding over regional territories, yet there is no evidence of the raising of a 'shire army' nor is there support to claim anything more than an overlordship being exerted by the kings of Norway over the aristocracy.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> L. Shopkow, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. L. Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 1–39., at p. 27.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> F. Iversen, 'The Beauty of *Bona Regalia* and the Growth of Supra-Regional Powers in Scandinavia', ed. S. Sigmundsson, *Viking Settlements and Viking Society: Papers from the Sixteenth Viking Congress, Reykjavik and Reykholt, 16–23 August 2009* (Reykjavik, 2011), pp. 225–244, at p. 238.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> P. Sawyer and B. Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800–1500* (Minneapolis, MN, 1993), p. 83.

<sup>86</sup> C. Krag, 'The Early Unification of Norway', ed. K. Helle, *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia Volume I Prehistory to 1520* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 184–201, at pp. 198 and 199. Krag noted that the Norwegian aristocracy became more involved with the kings of Norway after 1042. Previously the king's rule was based on military force.

The jarls of Trøndelag ruled in central Norway and the district had Trondheim (also known as Niðaros) as its principal settlement. In the northern district of Trondheim there were eight ‘Thronds’ that followed the jarls and their hall was called Lade.<sup>87</sup> The region’s eastern border was marked by the Keel mountain region, which separated it from the Swedish kingdom. Trøndelag’s southern boundary incorporated several dales, including the Gaular Dale, the Totharfjord and a mountain formation extending from the main body of the Keel. In the west the district had a North Sea coastline and this could be accessed through the Trondheimsfjord, which was above the settlement of Trondheim. Finally, the northern border narrowed with the Keel and included the Naumu Dale.<sup>88</sup>

From this brief overview we can see how the lords of the North Sea had titles associated to regions. These regions appear to have held sites of cultural significance too. The offices and titles may seem to have been granted by mechanisms of central authority, and so look as if they conform to a powerful central state structure. Traditionally, therefore, such lordships have been explored as part of the identity of kingdoms. However, this chapter will now attempt to investigate if inhabitants and rulers of such lordships viewed themselves as part of a national identity.

## 2.2. CULTURAL PROVINCES AND CENTRAL PLACES

The national identities of twentieth-century Europe do not fit the North-Sea world of the tenth and eleventh centuries. For too long they have impacted on historians’ understanding of medieval society. They have forced lords to be viewed as complicit members of a national identity aligned to a monarch or central authority; therefore, in order to redress the impact of national identities and state building, we must use Charles Phythian-Adams’ cultural provinces theory and Dagfinn Skre’s central place theory. These two constructs

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<sup>87</sup> E. Christiansen, *The Norsemen in the Viking Age* (Oxford, 2002), p. 108.

<sup>88</sup> L. Hollander, ‘Introduction’, ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway* (Austin, TX, 1964), pp. ix–xxvii, at p. xxvii.

will allow for the discovery of regional distinctiveness within the localities. We will start with the ealdormanry of Essex in England.

Ealdorman Byrhtnoth was not the son of the previous incumbent of the ealdormanry of Essex, Ælfgar, but he was married to Ælfgar's daughter, Ælflæd, and thus kept a sense of continuity in the office (see figure 2.1). Byrhtnoth's patrimony was located in Cambridgeshire, which he received from his father, Byrthelm. Byrhtnoth is now the most famous holder of the office due to his longevity in the position, but also because of his death at the Battle of Maldon in 991. The land holdings of the Essex lord can be identified from the wills of Byrhtnoth, his wife and his father-in-law, in addition to that of his sister-in-law, Æthelflæd. In Essex his estates were in the north close to the River Stour and Colchester.<sup>89</sup> In Suffolk, the two estates of Elmset and Buxhall were in the authority of the ealdorman.<sup>90</sup> Intriguingly, Suffolk was within the remit of the ealdormen of East Anglia and the family of Ælflæd, Byrhtnoth's wife, had a tradition of being buried at Stoke-by-Nayland, which was just over the Suffolk border.<sup>91</sup> This is significant, as aristocratic families often endowed a church so that they received prayer and a place of burial.<sup>92</sup> Burial sites of noble families were usually located inside their sphere of authority.

Cyril Hart stated that the dynastic struggle in the reign of King Edgar (959—975) between Ealdormen Ælfhere of Mercia and Æthelwine of East Anglia saw Byrhtnoth side with his East Anglian contemporary.<sup>93</sup> Hart expanded on the possibility of the Essex ealdormanry being run by the East Anglian noble, Æthelstan, when the post was vacant in the mid-tenth century.<sup>94</sup> The northern border of Essex certainly represented a contact zone

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<sup>89</sup> Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 134. The estates held in Colchester were Dovercourt, Stanway, Byrton on Stanway, Beaumont, Alresford and Lexidon.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> S1483. 'And ic an *Pat wudelond* at *Aisfield* into *Stoke*'. For an English translation see: *Wills*, no. 2.

<sup>92</sup> Power, *The Norman Frontier*, p. 301.

<sup>93</sup> C. Hart, 'The Ealdorman of Essex', ed. K. Neale, *An Essex Tribute: Essays Presented to Frederick G. Emmison* (London, 1987), pp. 57–84, at p. 71.

<sup>94</sup> C. Hart, 'Athelstan Half King and his Family', *ASE* 2 (1973), pp. 115–144, at p. 123.

between the two cultures. The River Stour was a geographical feature that acted as a clear barrier between the two regions. In the eighth and ninth century, there was little evidence of a union between the two kingdoms of the East Saxons and East Anglians. We could assert, however, that with time and interaction the two cultures began to entangle and form new interests based on their relationship.<sup>95</sup> This can be seen with the location of the burials for Ælfflæd's family. Yet, there are two regional sources that illuminate the locality in far greater detail.

Regional sources for the lordship of Essex include the *Liber Eliensis* chronicle and the *Battle of Maldon* poem.<sup>96</sup> *The Liber Eliensis* was a Latin composition divided into three books recording from the seventh century to the twelfth century, which Alan Kennedy believed was completed between 1169 and 1174.<sup>97</sup> The text was a cartulary chronicle — a source that contains transcriptions of original texts that relate to the monastic foundation — and, as a result, ‘not one piece of historiography’.<sup>98</sup> The author is unknown, but his motive was to synthesise material in Ely Abbey over five centuries.<sup>99</sup> Janet Fairweather believed this material was predominantly local in origin.<sup>100</sup> Jennifer Paxton has described the *Liber Eliensis* as part of a Fenland textual community in eastern England.<sup>101</sup> This encompassed the abbeys of Ramsey, Ely, and Peterborough. Both Ramsey and Ely were endowed by the East Anglian and Essex ealdormen respectively. Their sources were not widely circulated and the texts ‘contain evidence of efforts the communities were making

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<sup>95</sup> Phythian-Adams, ‘Introduction: An Agenda for English Local History’, p. 12; and Morrissey, ‘Cultural Geographies of the Contact Zone’, p. 552.

<sup>96</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E. O. Blake, Camden Society, 3rd Series 92 (London, 1962). For an English translation, see: *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth*, ed. and trans. J. Fairweather (Woodbridge, 2005); and ‘The Battle of Maldon’, ed. D. Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 18–31. The Scragg edition contains an Old English and English transcript of the poem.

<sup>97</sup> A. Kennedy, ‘Byrhtnoth's Obits and Twelfth Century Accounts of the Battle of Maldon’, ed. D. Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 59–78, at p. 72.

<sup>98</sup> J. Fairweather, ‘Introduction’, ed. and trans. J. Fairweather, *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely From the Seventh Century to the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. xiii–xxiii, at p. xiv.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> J. Paxton, ‘Textual Communities in the English Fenlands: A lay Audience for Monastic Chronicles?’, *ANS* 26 (2004), pp. 123–137, at p. 123.

in the twelfth century to reach out to the wider lay community'.<sup>102</sup> Paxton argued that the abbeys were attempting to bring the 'lay people into the orbit of the monastic house'.<sup>103</sup>

Those the abbeys were attracting were the new aristocrats who had arrived after the Conquest of 1066 and had no previous ties to the region.<sup>104</sup>

The Ely text described the renewed Viking threat to eastern England before the events of Maldon in 991. These incursions had seen towns in East Anglia raided; the ealdorman of East Anglia was infirm during this period. Thus Byrhtnoth was left as the most prominent nobleman in the region. The reaction against the threat saw the description of all the chief men in the region binding themselves to Byrhtnoth against the Viking raid.<sup>105</sup> The entry continued by describing Byrhtnoth's journey to Maldon; he originally travelled to Ramsey, asking for provisions and lodging. Byrhtnoth was alleged to have moved on to Ely, as the abbey of Ramsey could support only him and seven other soldiers. In prosaic language, Byrhtnoth stated he would not dine without his men as he would not fight without them.<sup>106</sup>

Byrhtnoth received hospitality suitable for a king when he arrived at Ely.<sup>107</sup> The ealdorman granted the abbey several estates, thirty *mancuses* of gold and twenty pounds of silver in agreement that his body was to be interred at the abbey if he was slain at Maldon.<sup>108</sup> Byrhtnoth's endowment of Ely was nothing new as many aristocrats endowed a monastic house. The events described leading to the Battle of Maldon, however, raise

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>105</sup> *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 62, pp. 133–136, p. 134. '*Brithnodo autem duci omnes provinciarum principes, quasi invincibili patrono pro magna ipsius probitate et fide sese fideliter alligabant, ut eius presidio contra inimicam gentem securius se defenderent.*'

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135. Byrhtnoth's quote was '*Sciat dominus abbas, quod solus sine istis nolo prandere, quia solus sine illis nequeo pugnare.*'

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* '*Receptus ergo cum omnibus suis regali hospitalitate procurator.*'

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* '*Exponens negotium ad quod ibat aliaque maneria sub hac conditione concessit, scilicet Fuulburne, Theveresham, Impetune, Pampewrðe, Crochestune, et Fineberge, Tripelaue, Herduic, et Summeresham cum appendiciis eius, et super hec triginta mancas auri, xx libras argenti, ut, si forte in bello occumberet, corpus illius huc allatum humarent.*'

interesting issues for us. Byrhtnoth's lands in Essex were in the far north of the region, in close proximity to Colchester. Maldon was situated closer to the south, where, although the ealdormen of Essex are known to have held land, it was certainly less so than in the north.<sup>109</sup> The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* informs us that, before the defeat of Byrhtnoth, the Vikings had raided the *wics* of Folkestone and Sandwich in Kent as well as Ipswich in Suffolk.<sup>110</sup> In all three cases, there was no report of an ealdorman performing his ealdormanic duties of mustering the defence. Towns in the late tenth and eleventh century, furthermore, were more related to the power of kings than aristocrats.<sup>111</sup> Yet, using Skre's hypothesis, Maldon may have developed to become a central place in Essex, especially as it was in an ideal location for trade.<sup>112</sup>

Towns in northern Europe were developing from the tenth century. Christopher Loveluck explained in great detail how a town was important for everyone in society. A rural populace needed to use towns 'to procure services from craft specialists...who from the tenth century resided mainly in urban centres'.<sup>113</sup> Landed rulers had strong incentives to protect these urban communities. Merchants exchanged luxury goods and if they were not protected or mistreated they could vacate the vicinity.<sup>114</sup> Maldon may have been a developing port town, even though we can see in *Domesday Book* that it was much smaller than Colchester.<sup>115</sup> Byrhtnoth, however, needed to protect such central places for the legitimacy of his authority and also the economic prosperity of the people within his lordship. If the ealdorman had neglected to protect significant commercial sites the

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<sup>109</sup> Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 133.

<sup>110</sup> ASC, 'A', 991.

<sup>111</sup> Skre, 'Centrality and Places', p. 228.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>113</sup> C. Loveluck, *Northwest Europe in the Early Middle Ages, c. 600–1150: A Comparative Archaeology* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 328.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> For the Maldon entries, see: *DB, Essex*, (34,12), (20,34), (1,25), (34,31), (24,63), (1,17), and (B,6). For Colchester entries, see all the entries in range: *DB, Essex*, (B, 1–7). An example of Colchester's larger size can be seen in the population. Maldon had fifty-four recorded households whereas Colchester had 193 by 1086.

economic prosperity would have declined because merchants and craftsmen would have departed. As a consequence, if Byrhtnoth had not defended the town, he may have been seen as ineffective in the Essex region. Nevertheless, for evidence of an East Saxon cultural province, and of others in England, *The Battle of Maldon* poem is a more appropriate source than the *Liber Eliensis*.

The *Battle of Maldon* poem has an anonymous author and survives in Old English as an incomplete text.<sup>116</sup> Donald Scragg believed that the purpose of its creation is uncertain.<sup>117</sup> The date of the poem has been attributed to not long after the battle; for Scragg the audience knew the broad details of the battle and he considers that the poem, if used carefully, can reveal much about it.<sup>118</sup>

The poem raises the subject of regional distinctiveness in England. Although it described Byrhtnoth as *Æpelredes eorl*, it also stressed various other local identities.<sup>119</sup> The leaders of the army at the battle, for example, are styled as the *Eastseaxena ord* rather than English commanders.<sup>120</sup> It is noteworthy that in John of Worcester's *Chronicle of Chronicles*, a twelfth-century text, Byrhtnoth is also titled *strenus dux Orientalium Saxonum*.<sup>121</sup> In addition, after Byrhtnoth falls, we are told of speeches by members of his household. Among these men were Ælfwine, who was from a great kin among the Mercians. He would not allow thegns in that land (Mercia) to reproach him for leaving the army now that his leader, lord and kinsman was dead.<sup>122</sup> This continues with Leofsunu, Byrhtwold and Dunnere, all who fail to mention the king or the realm, but just their lord.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, p. 16.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34.

<sup>119</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, p. 26. Æthelred's earl.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20. The foremost men of the East Saxon.

<sup>121</sup> John of Worcester, 'Chronicle of Chronicles', ed. B. Thorpe, *Florentii Wigorniensis Monachi Chronicon ex Chronicis*, 2 vols. (London, 1848–1849), p. 149, 991. The mighty ealdorman of the East Saxons.

<sup>122</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, p. 26. 'þæt ic wæs on Myrcon miccles cynnes' and 'Ne sceolon me on þære þeode þegenas ætwitan, þæt ic of ðisse fyrde feran wille, eard gesecan, nu min ealdor ligeð, forheawen æt hilde...he wæs æg[ð]er min mæg and min hlaford'.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

Finally, there was a hostage of the Vikings, Æscferth, who was described as a man from a *Norðhymbron heardes cynnes*.<sup>124</sup> The author of this poem throughout illuminated the different cultures within the realm in the late tenth century. He clearly saw Northumbrians and Mercians as different from the East Saxons. Otherwise, the author would have surely described these men as English lords from powerful English families. These men were at the battle through ties of lordship to Byrhtnoth, rather than constituting a national defence through connection to the king, Æthelred. A territorial lordship centred on a regional identity was not unique to eastern England. Let us turn to the Vexin in eastern Normandy and the rest of the North-Sea world.

Milo Crispin, a monk from Le Bec in the twelfth century, wrote about the Crispin family and the Holy Virgin's appearance to William Crispin.<sup>125</sup> William was the son of Gilbert Crispin, castellan of Tillières in the Eure region, and he would later become a famous warrior in Normandy and France. William's brother, Gilbert, inherited Tillières castle from their father; however, William was granted the office of *vicomte* in the Vexin and the castle of Neaufles from Duke William the Bastard.<sup>126</sup> Milo explained that William Crispin made his home in the region and placed his family and garrison there, too, to prevent French incursions.<sup>127</sup> William married Eve, who was from a noble family which was French in origin.<sup>128</sup> William was ambushed when returning to his castle from Le Bec

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. A bold Northumbrian kin.

<sup>125</sup> Milo Crispin, *Miraculum Quo B. Maria subvenit Guillelmo Crispino seniori; ubi de nobili Crispinorum genere agitur*, ed. J. Migne, *PL* 150 (Paris, 1854), cols. 735–744. For dating and an English translation, see: M. Crispin, 'On the Origin of the Crispin family', ed. and trans. E. van Houts, *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 84–88.

<sup>126</sup> Milo, *Miraculum*, col. 737. '*donans illi castrum ipsum et Vilcasini vicecomitatum jure haereditario custodiendum*'.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* '*At ille ibi mansionem sibi constituit, familiam et milites in loco posuit contra irruptiones Francorum*'.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 741. '*Haec Eva de gente Francorum, claris natalibus progenita*'.

by French forces; the account continues that he survived after calling on the protection of the Holy Virgin.<sup>129</sup>

We can affirm, from Milo's account, that lords were aware of culturally symbolic locations within a cultural province. We should say, however, that those who occupied areas of overlapping influences preferred to create affiliations on both sides, which could be seen above with the land holdings of the Essex ealdorman family too. This is likely to be the reason why William married a French noblewoman. This marriage allowed him to participate in two cultural identities that were recognised in his territory. This was why Judith Green argued that the Norman dukes were unable to rely on the Vexin lords in the eleventh century.<sup>130</sup> The border region of Vexin was not the only lordship to portray regional authority of lords in Normandy.

The significance of castles being used by the aristocracy as a method for asserting their dominance can be seen in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*. William of Jumièges was writing from the mid-eleventh century and completed his work in the 1070s, but very little is known about his own past.<sup>131</sup> Leah Shopkow has commented that he was writing about the turbulent province that the dukes ruled rather than the dukes 'fulfilling a divine destiny'.<sup>132</sup> William, when discussing Duke William's minority, complained of the Norman lords' sudden construction of castles.<sup>133</sup> It is certainly possible that the lamenting of such constructions was based on the fear that regional lordships were strengthening, as new fortifications exerted greater authority over the landscape. In this next example, a castle features heavily as the central location of rebellion against the duke.

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<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 742. 'Beatam Domini Matrem in clamatans, voce magna: o Sancta Maria Becci, adjuva me, sancta Maria Becci, adjuva me.'

<sup>130</sup> Green, 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', p. 61.

<sup>131</sup> E. van Houts, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. E. van Houts, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1992), pp. xix–cxxxiii, at p. xxxii. For William of Jumièges's background, see: L. Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D.C., 1997), pp. 39–41.

<sup>132</sup> Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 40.

<sup>133</sup> *GND*, 1, Book 7, Chapter 1 (1–4), p. 92. 'Sub cuius ineunte etate Normannorum plurimi ab eius fidelitate aberantes plura per loca erectis aggeribus, tutissimas sibi construxere munitiones.'

Count William of Arques was hostile to William the Bastard's rise to power and William of Poitiers recorded the count's rebellion.<sup>134</sup> William of Poitiers, from 1050, spent his life in Normandy and was a chaplain of William the Conqueror.<sup>135</sup> Originally, William trained as a knight and, as a consequence, fought in wars. This makes his work a valuable source for studying military actions in Normandy as he had first-hand experience in conflict.<sup>136</sup> Marjorie Chibnall reasoned that for campaigns before Hastings, William of Poitiers was relying, for his composition, on participants.<sup>137</sup> In addition to this, he was an admirer of the duke for his 'speed, his prudence and, above all, his careful planning'.<sup>138</sup> According to Leah Shopkow, Orderic Vitalis was an admirer of William's work.<sup>139</sup> His record of the rebellion by Count William of Arques, therefore, provides a pro-ducual interpretation of the conflict, but nevertheless reveals much in regards to the power of regional lordship in eastern Normandy.

The count was defeated in his endeavour, but it his regional influence that made this rebellion possible and a genuine threat. The county of Arques was located near the eastern border of Normandy and, from this region, the count was able to gather support for his rebellion.<sup>140</sup> William of Arques attempted not only to deny entrance to his castle at Arques, but he also tried to prevent access to the lands east of the Seine from those west of

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<sup>134</sup> WP/GG, Book 1, Chapter 23, p. 34. '*Is ab ineunte pueri principatu infidus ei et aduersus, quanquam fidelitatem iuratus et obsequium, hostilia agitabat, modo temeritate non latente resistens, clandestinis interdum dolis.*' Also see: C. Hammond, 'Family Conflict in ducal Normandy, c. 1025–1135' (Ph.D. thesis, University of St Andrews, 2013), p. 88. Hammond argued that William of Arques may have been disgruntled because of the duke's reliance on 'youthful peers' which caused his decline at court.

<sup>135</sup> M. Chibnall, 'Introduction', ed. M. Chibnall, *Gesta Guillelmi: The Deeds of William* (Oxford, 1998), pp. xv–xlvi, at pp. xvi and xix.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xv.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>139</sup> Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 97.

<sup>140</sup> WP/GG, Book 1, Chapter 23, p. 34. '*Motus dissensionum aliorumque superius commemoratione aliquanta digestorum malorum, nonnullos ipse, caput principale, concitauit, plerosque exemplo, consilio, fauore et auxilio incitauit, auxit, confirmauit*'

the river.<sup>141</sup> William of Poitiers' description said that the duke of Normandy seized the castle of Arques; but he then quickly surrendered it back into the count's authority.<sup>142</sup> Count William yielded the castle to Duke William following the second siege despite an attempt by the French king to provide aid.<sup>143</sup>

The case of Arques raises many points. First, and most importantly, it highlights the authority of regional lordship. The count of Arques was capable of exploiting his stature across the Seine by inspiring rebellion in the area, as was explored above with Dinan in Brittany on *The Bayeux Tapestry*.<sup>144</sup> This was because the count, similarly to Byrhtnoth, was the central authority to the territory's inhabitants. Secondly, the castle of Arques was the central hub of the rebellion. It was the key objective for both Williams to hold and its surrender concluded the count's unsuccessful uprising. The incident emphasises, therefore, that the aristocratic residences were culturally symbolic of regional lordship. We can assert that Maldon, although not a fortification, held similar status in Essex for the ealdormen. If the town had been sacked or lost to the Vikings, Byrhtnoth's authority in the region would have been seriously damaged. He may not have lost his post like William but it would have dented the locality's confidence in the Essex lord. Thirdly, we see evidence of contact zones allowing interaction and cooperation. As he was located outside of the Norman

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* 'Multa et inquieta, longique temporis, eius molimina fuere, pro sua et contra domini sui magnitudinem, cuius accessum non modo ab Arcensi castro, uerum etiam ab ei propinqua Normanniae parte, quae citra flumen Sequanam sita est, arcere saepenumero surrexit.'

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 24, p. 34. 'Ob haec et alia tot eius et tanta ausa, dux, uti res monuit, suspiciens plura et maiora ausurum, receptaculi, quo plurimum confidebat, editius firmamentum occupauit, custodiam immittens, in nullo amplius tamen ius eius imminuens. Nempe eas latebras, id munimentum in itae elationis atque dementiae, ipse primus fundauit et quam operosissime extruxit in praealti montis Arcarum cacumine. Ceterum malefidi custodes non multo post castrum potestatem conditori reddunt, munerum pollicitatione et impensius imminente uaria sollicitatione fatigati subactique.'

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 26, p. 38. 'Audiens uero rex Henricus inclusum esse cuius uesaniae fautor erat atque consulator, auxilium ferre festinat'. For William's eventual surrender see: p. 40. 'Cernit tandem angustiarum oculo Papiae partus rapiendi contra dominum suum principatus cupidinem malesuadam esse'.

<sup>144</sup> *The Bayeux Tapestry*, Plates 23–24.

dukes' traditional sphere of influence, the count of Arques received aid from powerful contacts – in this case, the king of France.<sup>145</sup>

Finally, and perhaps the most intriguingly, was the fact that, at the conclusion of the turmoil, Duke William allowed the count to keep his patrimony, but removed his title.<sup>146</sup> This suggests that it was not possible for the duke to remove William of Arques entirely from the region, signifying that the central authority in this case had to cooperate with the local politics. This contributes, therefore, to the case that administrative titles were based on regional cultures and it was difficult to remove established lords in favour of more cooperative men from outside the cultural province. This had been experienced in England, where Tostig was ousted as earl by the regional aristocracy of Northumbria in favour of the local lord Morcar.<sup>147</sup> So far we are presented with an English Channel conception of territory; however, these regional identities can also be seen in western Flanders.

Lambert of Ardres wrote a chronicle on the county of Guines, which described the sense of locality we have seen so far in Essex, the Vexin and Arques. He wrote *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.<sup>148</sup> The narrative of the work ends in 1203 and Shopkow has hypothesised that Lambert was possibly writing up to 1206.<sup>149</sup> By authoring the chronicle, Lambert intended to gain the good graces of the counts, as his patron was its count, Arnold II.<sup>150</sup> The book is divided into three parts: the first is Lambert's lineage of the counts of Guines; the second

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<sup>145</sup> WP/GG, Book 1, Chapter 26, p. 38.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 28, p. 42. '*Patriam ei concessit*'. Also see: p. 42, n 1. It is important to note that in Orderic's interpolations he states that the count was exiled and fled to Boulogne. Chibnall believes that William of Poitiers, although hesitant to record the duke's crueller side, was telling the truth in that William of Arques would have lived off his lands. For Orderic's interpolation see: *GND*, 2, Book 7, Chapter 4 (7), pp. 102–106.

<sup>147</sup> F. Barlow, *The Godwins: The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty* (London, 2002), p. 122.

<sup>148</sup> L. Shopkow, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. L. Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 1–39, at p. 2.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

was by a different author named Walter of Le Clud, who wrote on the lords of Ardres; the third and final part was an integrated version of the two earlier parts by Lambert.<sup>151</sup> The compilation was Lambert's doing despite there being another author.

Lambert defended the county's independence from rival claims of sovereignty. The rival claim emanated from the monks of Saint-Bertin who, he believed, asserted that the counts of Guines held the land in fief from the monks. Lambert used a figure called Siegfried and linked him to the principal fortress of Guines. According to the chronicle, Siegfried wanted to expand his fortress with another earthwork. He exchanged property with the steward of the area near his keep for five shillings a year, however, due to a lack of space to complete construction.<sup>152</sup> François-Louis Ganshof explored the dispute and noted that the donation to Saint-Bertin, which later monks had presumed to be the whole county, consisted only of the town of Arques.<sup>153</sup> It is clear for us to see, however, that Lambert, when stressing the ties between the counts of Guines and the principal fortress of the region, was maintaining a commonly held belief of where power resided in the locality. He knew that the people within Guines understood that the regional ruler resided in this residence, which was evident for Count William of Arques too. Lambert makes the lords of Guines the unquestioned leaders within the cultural boundaries by establishing that the counts were there lawfully and free from services to the external authority of the counts of

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Lambert, Chapter 4, p. 565. '*Sed cum postea Ghisnensis nobilitatis et generis auctor Sifridus Ghisnensis oppidi munitionem sive dunionem fossato duplici circumcingere voluisset, nec ei ad perficiendum in propria terra locus sufficeret, de tota terra censuali iuxta dunionem tunc existenti villico concambium dedit, et sic demum fossatum perfecit. Et sic de terra illa censuali que fere octoginta iugera sive geometricalium perticarum mensuras continet, singulis annis unum fiertonem vel quinque solidos iam dictis reddidit cenobitis.*' For an English translation of Lambert, see: Lambert of Ardres, 'The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres', ed. and trans. L. Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 41–194.

<sup>153</sup> F-L. Ganshof, 'Saint-Bertin et les Origines du Comté de Guines', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 10 (1931), pp. 541–556. Ganshof highlighted that between the ninth and twelfth centuries the abbey of Saint Bertin held claims over the town of Arques. Later in 1383 Jean d'Ypres would escalate this claim to the whole county! Ganshof concludes that there was a misunderstanding of the term *comitatus*, which between the ninth and twelfth centuries could be the geographical unit and the authority of a count. This Arques was a different settlement from the previously discussed county of Arques.

Flanders. Lambert also discussed the geography of the county of Guines, which is unique compared to the other sources in this chapter.

Lambert informed the reader that the county of Guines occupied the land between the River Aa in the east, the springs of Nielles to the west and the River Hem to the south, and in the north it was dominated by a large marsh.<sup>154</sup> In addition to this, the land was hilly, covered with little woods and thickets. An area called Bredenarde also held marshlands and pasturelands fertile for sheep flocks.<sup>155</sup> These geographical features fit into Phythian-Adams' assertions on how a cultural province can be recognised.<sup>156</sup> The descriptions by Lambert give the reader an impression of an inland island surrounded by rivers and marsh. The rivers of Guines, more importantly, form a similar function to the Stour in Essex and the Seine for Arques by acting as a semi-permeable border.

Lambert claimed that Siegfried was from Denmark and was renowned because he was second in status after the king and a nephew of the king's advisor.<sup>157</sup> Lambert maintained that before Siegfried arrived in Guines, there was a Count Walbert and the land had been usurped by Arnold of Flanders.<sup>158</sup> Thus, Siegfried gathered his retinue and made for Guines, which was wooded, uncultivated and inhabited by few residents at the time.<sup>159</sup> From there, Siegfried proceeded to fortify the stronghold with a motte and double earthwork which, apparently, was achieved without consulting Count Arnold of

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<sup>154</sup> Lambert, Chapter 13, p. 568. '*Fuit enim diebus illis locus quidam pascuus, amplus admodum et latus, inter flumen quod dicitur Vonna ab orientali plaga et Neleios vel Nileios fontes ab occidentali, et inter flumen quod a re veris, id est amenitatis effectum, vel a rei vero Reveria nuncupatur a meridie usque in oppositam marisci partem spaciosi ad aquilonem longe lateque diffuses et extensus*'.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* '*Hec siquidem terra a latitudine pasture vulgo Bredenarda dicta est*'.

<sup>156</sup> Phythian-Adams, 'Introduction', p. 14.

<sup>157</sup> Lambert, Chapter 7, p. 566. '*ducens originem, nomine Sifridus, qui eo quod regi Dachorum plurimis servivit annis agnominatus est Dachus, vir quidem in bellicis apparatibus admodum strenuus et per totam Dachiam, utpote nepos et cognatus germanus regis et colateralis et a rege secundus, famosissimus extitit et nominatissimus*'.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* '*Cum diutino diucius sustinisset et hinc illinc in auribus, fame rutilante penna et verissima scripti genealogici assertionem, de predecessore suo, comite videlicet Walberto, et filio eius Bertino necnon et de fratre eiusdem Walberti Pharaone et Phara sorore similiter eorum rei percepisset eventum, et Flandrie comitem Arnoldum Magnum, sicuti et predecessores suos, Ghisnensis terre comitatum*'.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 567. '*licet adhuc silvestrem et incultam et paucis habitatoribus habitatam*'.

Flanders.<sup>160</sup> Lambert reported, however, that Siegfried gave homage to the count later and the pair became good friends.<sup>161</sup>

The authenticity of the origin story has been examined by Shopkow. It has been recognised that, if Siegfried had existed, it was likely that he was a Viking war leader.<sup>162</sup> Also, Shopkow has suggested that Guines, similarly to Normandy with Rollo, was granted to the Viking leader as a way of protection against future raids.<sup>163</sup> The origin story has another function, too; it represented the connection of the land and principal fortress of Guines to the count of the territory. Lambert, as stated earlier, described the land as not well-developed, with very few people established in the area.<sup>164</sup> He linked the creation of this territory, therefore, directly to the lords of Guines. He also established an identity outside the remit of the Flemish counts by underlining the county's creation not being achieved by the Flemish.

The west of Flanders had another powerful regional lord in the count of Boulogne, who acted very independently, particularly if we look at Boulogne's foreign diplomacy compared to the Flemish policy. On many occasions, the counts of Boulogne were backing a rival party to the counts of Flanders.<sup>165</sup> Lambert was keen to address the possible issue of Boulogne claiming an authority over Guines. Lambert alleged that there were no chronicles of Flanders or Boulogne, nor were there any stories from elders stating that

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 8, p. 567. '*inconsulto Flandrie comite*'.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 10, p. 567. '*Facti sunt itaque sub illa die amici, et Sifridus Flandrensium principi super Ghisnensis terre dominio debita cum reverentia primus prestitit hominum*'.

<sup>162</sup> Shopkow, 'Introduction', p. 26.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 7, p. 567.

<sup>165</sup> H. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879–1160* (Leiden, 2004), p. 117. Eustace of Boulogne between 1050 and 1056 supported King Edward of England and maintained alliances with his southern border and King Henry I of France. In contrast, Baldwin V maintained alliances with the dukes of Normandy and harboured the exiled family of Earl Godwine. Baldwin would also campaign against Henry I.

Erniculus of Boulogne divided his patrimony between his three sons, one of whom received Guines.<sup>166</sup>

This creates a cultural province comparable to the East Saxons. Neither of the titles represented a jurisdiction created by either the West Saxon kings or the Flemish counts. The influence embodied a previously understood area of authority for the East Saxons and the people of Guines. Regional cultures tend to have an identity, furthermore, that is linked to royal power outside of the contemporary central rulers. In the case of Guines, the stress was placed on leaders connected, through Siegfried, to the Danish royal house, whereas the Anglo-Saxon ealdormanries represented a previously understood political entity for the region. It is noteworthy, however, that the association to the Danish royal house was also made in Grimsby, England. In the late thirteenth century text of *Havelok* described Grimsby being named after a Danish fisherman called Grim.<sup>167</sup> Grim had fled Denmark with his family to protect Havelok the heir to the Danish throne and he raised him as a son.<sup>168</sup>

The same source that has been used for the counts of Guines also contains similar entries for a lord within the orbit of Guines' authority, the lords of Ardres. This section of the chronicle was written, as mentioned above, by Walter Le Clud. Le Clud was an illegitimate son of Baldwin of Ardres.<sup>169</sup> Lambert of Ardres incorporated Walter's account into his chronicle to allow him to end his work with a synthesised history of Guines and Ardres.<sup>170</sup> The origins of Ardres begin with a Herred and Adele who lived in Selnesse,

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<sup>166</sup> Lambert, Chapter 15, p. 569. '*Ghisnensium enim terra, circumspectis, lectis et relectis omnibus tam Flandrie quam Bolonie chronicis, si qua sunt, authenticis, auditis etiam et intellectis plurimorum narrationibus antiquorum et fabulis, nunquam et nusquam Boloniensis terre portio vel appendicium invenitur aut auditur, sed Flandrensis dignitatis ditoni post comitem Walbertum totaliter inclinata et subiecta.*'

<sup>167</sup> G. V. Smithers, 'Introduction', ed. G. V. Smithers, *Havelok* (Oxford, 1987), pp. xi–xciii, at p. lxix.

<sup>168</sup> *Havelok*, ed. G. V. Smithers (Oxford, 1987), pp. 1–82, pp. 22–24, Lines 691–748.

<sup>169</sup> Shopkow, 'Introduction', p. 4.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Guines, and performed homage to Eustace of Guines.<sup>171</sup> Walter noted that the Selnesse fortress was located where pagan relics were still present.<sup>172</sup> The Selnesse fortress was also surrounded by woodland and marsh.<sup>173</sup> Herred left no offspring and Adele remarried and had sons and daughters with an Arnold the castellan of Bergues. One of their sons, Eilbod, moved to the Ardres, something which Herred had considered.<sup>174</sup>

The area where Ardres was created was used for pasture and had few inhabitants, which echoes the origin story of Guines. The land near the road in the pasture was called, in the vernacular, the *Arda*.<sup>175</sup> People were alleged to have been originally attracted there due to a tavern, around which a settlement grew to a village. Eilbod developed the region by damming up the Saint Folcuin spring, building an earthen mound within the marsh, and building a fish pond and a mill near the village.<sup>176</sup> It is likely that, from this earthen mound, a construction overlooked the village and dominated the landscape to exemplify the rulership over the region. Although speculation, as we do not know the full construction, it is worth suggesting that the lords of Ardres might have made this new residence more dominating in the landscape, as they were not of ancient origin within the area.

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<sup>171</sup> Lambert, Chapter 99, pp. 608–609. ‘*et Ghisnensi comiti Eustacio, mediantibus amicis suis et parentibus et Morinensis civitatis presule, reconciliatus, hominio ei super quibusdam tenementis Ardee adiacentibus rite exhibito, amorem eius et gratia, demum recuperavit.*’

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.* ‘*Mansit igitur Herredus, ut iam diximus, apud Selnessam inter silvam et mariscum in eo loco, ubi usque hodie inveniuntur quasi reliquie gentilium.*’

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 100, p. 609–610. ‘*Sed cum Furnenses Selnessensis situm loci, munitionem circumquaque fere marisco pacioso et profundo silvarumque densitate circumcinctam et concluam.*’

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* ‘*remansit in sua firmissima Selnessa cum uxore sua Adela in diviciis deliciose.*’

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* ‘*in vulgali dicebatur Arda.*’

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 104, p. 611. ‘*Sed quoniam a domesticis suis quandoque audivit, predecessorum suum Herredum accepisse in proposito, ut a Selnessa apud Ardeam sua transferret edificia et ibi novam edificaret mansionem, et ipse simili quoque correptus voluntatis intentione, extirpato abneto a fonte sancti Folquini-ibi enim requievit olim venerandus confessor Morinensis ecclesie pontifex, dum episcopatus sui partes et ecclesias pius pastor more pastoralis visitaret et circuiret sanctus Folquinus-usque ad pedes atrii primitive matris ecclesie sancti Audomari Ardensis, ibi in primis clusam sive terreum molis dorsum in medio marisculi constituit.*’

Later, Arnold of Ardres built a motte and keep in the marsh near the mill.<sup>177</sup> Here, placed between the marsh and to the foot of the hill nearby he constructed an earthwork.<sup>178</sup> Arnold built an external wall, along with a ditch, which had the mill enclosed within it.<sup>179</sup> Arnold continued fortifying the area with defensive structures such as gates and drawbridges. Intriguingly, Arnold was able supply the building materials by tearing down Herred and Adele's previous fort at Selnesse.<sup>180</sup> Walter said that Arnold became the lord of Ardres.<sup>181</sup> The destruction of a previous fortified residence presents an interesting scenario in the discussion. We can argue that the resources were difficult and expensive to acquire and, therefore, this occurred because of convenience.

On the other hand, it could represent the psychology of power within a territory. It is logical for us to presume that a lord of a relatively small area wanted just one significant arena in which to practise his lordship and, in this case, the preference was for Ardres, as the area had grown in stature. This falls into Skre's theory, where central places of territories did not remain fixed over time and they could evolve as their purpose changed.<sup>182</sup> As a consequence of Ardres' rise, the fort of Selnesse may have become a redundant symbol. The general populace, as Skre hypothesised, saw their central place move to Ardres; therefore, Arnold needed to move his presence there to tap into the territory's power.<sup>183</sup>

We can also consider that the recycling of Selnesse, in order to construct the new residence, may have assisted in continuing the language of power for Arnold and his

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 109, p. 613. 'Videns ergo Arnoldus, quod omnia sibi arriderent et quasi ad votuum in prosperitatem succederent, in marisculo apud Ardeam iuxta molendinum exclusam quasi in iactu lapidis fecit et aliam exclusam.'

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* 'Cuius firmitatis dunionem quidam, ut aiunt incole...domesticus ursus, non ille pro quo furnagia exiguntur, inter eam altitudinem et molem aggeravit.'

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* 'Ab illo ergo die, magno Selnescensium mansionis loco commolito et contrito, edificiisque apud Ardeam contractis atque delatis, deleta est cum castello memoria etiam Selnescensium, adeo ut ab Ardea etiam ubique predicaretur et nominaretur Ardensium protector et dominus.'

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Skre, 'Centrality and Places', p. 229.

<sup>183</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 109, p. 613.

lineage. David Stocker and Paul Everson argued that the re-use of materials in this manner can be described as an iconic re-use. The builders used particular stones which brought certain associations.<sup>184</sup> Arnold's predecessor's power had been exhibited within the hall of Selnesse so, by moving the stones that it operated in, he may have had a sense of continuity of power for the people of the area.

The transfer of central places for inhabitants of the cultural province of Ardres emphasises the impact of a locality on a lordship. In the ealdormanry of Essex we saw both the towns of Maldon and Colchester acting as central places for the region's inhabitants. Despite no evidence of aristocratic fortifications we can compare the lordship of Essex to Ardres. The lords of Essex held estates near two towns. These estates may have allowed the Essex ealdormen to maintain a presence nearby these culturally symbolic locations. By contrast less powerful lords such as the aristocratic family of Ardres could not maintain estates that were too far apart, therefore, they needed to follow their populace. What this tells us ultimately is that the territory of a lordship within the North-Sea world was a negotiation between the lords and the inhabitants of a locality.

A separate cultural identity can be seen later after Arnold of Ardres' death. According to Walter of Le Clud, Eustace of Hénin and Baldwin of Ecluse did not pay homage to his successor as they refused to be tied to the count of Boulogne and the lord of Ardres.<sup>185</sup> Walter continued to refer to the inhabitants from Hénin and Ecluse as traitors and disrespectful.<sup>186</sup> This account strengthens the argument that cultural identities did not necessarily fade under the mechanism of lordship. The people of Hénin and Ecluse did not lose their cultural characteristics in the eyes of the Ardres inhabitants. The natives of Hénin

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<sup>184</sup> D. Stocker and P. Everson, 'Rubbish Recycled: A Study of the Re-Use of Stone in Lincolnshire', ed. D. Parsons, *Stone: Quarrying and Building in England AD 43–1525* (Chichester, 1990), pp. 83–101, at p. 93.

<sup>185</sup> Lambert, Chapter 120, p. 619. '*Mortuo autem Ardensi domino et preposito Arnolde sive Ernulpho advocato, Eustacius de Hinnico et Balduinus de Exclusa ad Flandrensem comitem Robertum convolaverunt et homagium sive hominum, quod Ardensi domino Arnolde facere debuerant...Flandrensi comiti, nichil impudentes, nichil in obsequio verecundantes exhibuerunt.*'

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

and Ecluse, moreover, stress that their position under the regional lordship of Ardres was personal in construction and, consequently it did not mean that their identity had become entwined with the territory of the lord of Ardres.

Both Guines and Ardres in western Flanders show that cultural provinces were well established in the Christian territories of the North Sea. Similarly to Essex, the Vexin and Arques, these provinces were defined by geography and secular locations of power. Central places operated as key components of authority. They exemplified, moreover, that lords of this period needed to negotiate with their locality's inhabitants. A presence was needed to imprint authority on a landscape. A lord needed, however, to be near those within his lordship to make this work. The lesser lordship of Ardres shows us, too, how the lesser aristocracy also had to conform to such ideals. So far we have seen that Christian kingdoms had cultural provinces creating an identity outside of the central authority. This was combined with central places that held secular authority in the locality. Norway was similar with its own cultural provinces as will now be shown with the jarldom of Trøndelag.

We must stress that for central Norway the source material is predominantly derived from sagas. Sagas were intended to be read aloud to an audience and several were composed in Iceland between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>187</sup> This oral culture had remained prevalent, even with the arrival of Christianity.<sup>188</sup> In chapter one, however, we said that comparisons are valid if they project similar characteristics of our lords. Despite the lordships having different types of sources, we must remain cognisant of the key debate of the stability of central places, which the sagas project just like monastic

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<sup>187</sup> C. Bayerschmidt and L. Hollander, 'Introduction', eds. and trans. C. Bayerschmidt and L. Hollander, *Njál's Saga* (London, 1955), pp. 1–15, at p. 5.

<sup>188</sup> P. Sørensen, 'Religions Old and New', ed. P. Sawyer, *Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 202–224, at p. 204. Also see: H. J. Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway, c. 1030–1160', eds. K. Esmark, L. Hermanson, H. J. Orning and H. Vogt, *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 45–82, at p. 47. Orning will be discussed in chapter five; however, for now note that Orning asserts that the use of sagas for the social political contexts of the period is possible.

chronicles. Norway was administratively less developed than the other territories but the Trøndelag in central Norway had a regional distinctiveness akin to the rest of the North Sea. The main source we can use from Norway to answer the question is generally focused on the kings of the Scandinavian realm

Historians have been hesitant when it comes to using sagas. Many are written long after their purported events and stem from oral tales shared in communities. We should, however, attempt to position the sources in a more positive light if we are going to compare Norse lords to our Christian aristocrats. Jon Viðar Sigurðsson has it that Icelandic saga writers from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries were almost all secular leaders. The nature of Iceland, however, was very different to that of mainland Europe. According to Sigurðsson, wars were not fought in Iceland itself until the first half of the thirteenth century.<sup>189</sup> So the sagas were a way for these lords not only to separate themselves from their general populace but also each other.<sup>190</sup> Many of the lords in Iceland also had clerics as they built churches in their lands, so they had staff to write secular sags.<sup>191</sup> After 1220 the role of the kings of Norway in the internal politics of Iceland increased as chieftains sought the king's backing in their power struggles. This allowed the kings of Norway to bind the chieftains to become his retainers.<sup>192</sup>

*Heimskringla* is believed to be authored by Snorri Sturluson and is a thirteenth-century composition.<sup>193</sup> The work follows an oral tradition and Snorri cites his sources as known to be 'well-informed men' on the subject matters.<sup>194</sup> Historians have believed, furthermore, that Snorri had used other works, for example *Ágrip Af Nóregskonungasögum*

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<sup>189</sup> J. V. Sigurðsson, 'Historical Writing and the Political Situation in Iceland 1100–1400', eds. A. Eriksen and J. V. Sigurðsson, *Negotiating Pasts in the Nordic Countries: Interdisciplinary Studies in History and memory* (Lund, 2009), pp. 59–78, at p. 64.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>193</sup> Hollander, 'Introduction', p. xxiv. Also see: Sigurðsson, 'Historical Writing and the Political Situation in Iceland', p. 62. Sigurðsson suggests that Snorri had a group of clerics play a heavy hand in the saga's authorship.

<sup>194</sup> *Heimskringla, Preface*, p. 3.

for the *Saga of Harald Fairhair*.<sup>195</sup> Sverre Bagge in his publication assessing Snorri's work and its insights on society identified that Snorri was a medieval historian who applied source criticism to his work.<sup>196</sup> The thirteenth-century author's work has value as a historical source and it is important to note that Snorri himself had been a powerful chieftain in Iceland and had travelled to Norway where his uncle, Earl Skúli, was regent and, while in Norway, he visited the regions of Trøndelag.<sup>197</sup> Snorri, like Orderic Vitalis in Normandy, had an insight into the mechanics of jarldoms and knowledge of the land in central Norway.<sup>198</sup>

*Heimskringla* provides tangible evidence of the existence of cultural provinces within Norway. The *Saga of Harald Greycloak* outlined the jarls of Trøndelag's struggles with the kings of Norway, who were situated in western Norway. Jarl Haakon Sigurdsson of Trøndelag ascended to the jarldom after his father, Sigurd Haakonsson, was killed by King Harald of Norway east of the Trondheimsfjord c. 963.<sup>199</sup> Haakon was selected by the people of the 'Trondheim shires' as they rushed to arms in response to the murder of Sigurd.<sup>200</sup> Haakon was able to keep the region within his remit and deny revenues to the king who, during this period, dwelled within Horthaland and Rogaland in western and southwestern Norway respectively. A peace between the two sides was established, although we are informed that both factions remained wary of each other.<sup>201</sup> Following the easement of conflict, Haakon allied himself with the Uppland kings, Tryggvi Ólafsson of the Viken, Guthröth Bjarnarson of the Vestfold and Guthbrand of the Dales in Heithmork. These three men ruled to the south of the jarl and to the east of the king of Norway.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Hollander, 'Introduction', p. xviii.

<sup>196</sup> S. Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley, CA, 1991), p. 26.

<sup>197</sup> Hollander, 'Introduction', pp. xi–xiv.

<sup>198</sup> Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla*, p. 13.

<sup>199</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Harald of Greycloak*, Chapter 6, p. 134.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 9, p. 137.

The jarls of Trøndelag assist in reinforcing the concept of cultural provinces in the Christian territories. As a kingdom, at this point, Norway has been considered less developed administratively and, as seen in the sagas, it did not as yet have a powerful central authority.<sup>203</sup> We see cultural provinces, therefore, binding themselves to their principal lords rather than the monarch for protection. The cultural province in the jarldom of Trøndelag is comparable when we look back at the evidence for the ealdormanry of Essex. In both cases, the identity of the province was tied to a specific family ruling the region, thus suggesting the source of lordship was personal and had very little to do with the title of the office. In addition to cultural provinces other sagas provide information regarding the central places within the Trøndelag.

*Ágrip Af Nóregskonungsögum* was a short text composed in the twelfth century that dealt with the history of the kings of Norway.<sup>204</sup> It spans the history of these rulers from Hálfðan the Black c. 880 to the accession of Ingi krókhryggr ('the hunchback') in 1136.<sup>205</sup> It is preserved in a thirteenth-century manuscript copy; however, historians believe the original text to have been composed in Norway as the source did not follow the Icelandic literary tradition of this period.<sup>206</sup> The author may have been a cleric who writes in favour of Ingi krókhryggr. Matthew Driscoll argued that it was 'intended to convince the populace that the descendants of the kings who had collaborated with the Church were more worthy of their support'.<sup>207</sup> Driscoll has stressed, moreover, that this was 'decidedly not an aristocratic work'; however, the text makes many references to the Norwegian elite and the rest of North-Sea Europe.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Iversen, 'The Beauty of *Bona Regalia*', p. 238.

<sup>204</sup> *Ágrip Af Nóregskonungasögum*, ed. and trans. M. Driscoll (Birmingham, 1995).

<sup>205</sup> M. Driscoll, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. M. Driscoll, *Ágrip Af Nóregskonungasögum* (Birmingham, 1995), pp. ix–xxv, at p. x.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

The king of Norway, Olaf Tryggvason, who ruled from c. 995 to 1000, acceded to the throne through his descent via Haraldr Fairhair, and used assembly points such as Mostr in Hǫr, according to *Ágrip*, in order to issue proclamations.<sup>209</sup> He built Christian churches on his own lands, which link into the concept of having control over the people's religion, too.<sup>210</sup> The importance of assembly points in the text continues with the return of Magnus who ruled from c. 1037 to 1047. Magnus was the son of Olaf Haraldsson and he had been in exile in the court of King Yaroslav of Russia. Jarl Rǫgnvaldr, Einarr þambarskelmir, Sveinn bryggjufótr and Kálf Arnason beseeched Magnus's return because they did not want to be ruled by Cnut's son Sveinn and his English mother Ælfgifu.<sup>211</sup> Magnus arrived in Norway and immediately held a council at Niðaros.<sup>212</sup> At this meeting, the king was warned by elders not to threaten his assembly and, in addition, not have them 'stick their noses in their cloaks'; as a result, they gave no advice which would have harmed his rulership.<sup>213</sup> The *Ágrip* text may filter out the regional identities. It affirms, however, that the prestige of Trondheim as a gathering place in central Norway.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, a central place for a North-Sea aristocrat did not have to be a castle or defensive stronghold which was vital for Arques and Guines. Jarl Haakon of Trøndelag's residence was a hall within his jarldom and this was where he practised his rulership over the region. A *þáttr* called *The Story of Thorleif Jarl's Skald* provides evidence for central place theory, but this study will first explain the source in more detail.<sup>214</sup> A *þáttr* was a genre in Old Icelandic literature where compositions of text were compiled as short narratives. Historians have said that these texts were often included

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<sup>209</sup> *Ágrip Af Nóregskonungasögum*, Chapter 16, p. 27.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 19, p. 31.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 31, pp. 43–45.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 35, p. 47.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 47 and 49.

<sup>214</sup> W. Bryant-Bachman and G. Erlingsson, 'Introduction', eds. W. Bryant Bachman and G. Erlingsson, *Svarfdale Saga and Other Tales* (Lanham, MD, 1994), pp. xvii–xxiv, at p. xxiv.

into larger sagas of kings.<sup>215</sup> Composed in the thirteenth century the *þáttr* follows the apparent struggle of the conversion of Norway from the tenth century.<sup>216</sup> The text views the Trøndelag region as a bad pagan force preventing the success of Christianity.

The *þáttr* explained how a ‘good skald’ known as Thorleif, the third son of Asgeir Red-Cloak and Thorhild, travelled to the Vik in southern Norway.<sup>217</sup> Here, he wished to trade and encountered Jarl Haakon, with whom he wished to make an exchange for his wares. Thorleif requested to be allowed to trade freely, and this was subsequently granted by Haakon. The next day, Thorleif returned from the market in the evening to discover his ship and cargo had been seized.<sup>218</sup> After going to Denmark and staying in the court of King Sveinn, Thorleif returned to Lade in Norway where Haakon was staying.<sup>219</sup>

Haakon was holding the Yule feast, a mid-winter festival, in his hall to which he had invited many powerful lords.<sup>220</sup> Thorleif came dressed as a beggar and eventually offered the hall a poem. The second half of the poem was said to have cursed the hall and darkness overcame the building; the jarl passed out and weapons killed men on their own.<sup>221</sup> The jarl later awoke and knew that a curse had been placed on his hall. Then, in his time of need, Haakon called on the goddesses Thorgerd and Irpa ‘to help him send such witchcraft out to Iceland as would do Thorleif in’.<sup>222</sup> Thorleif’s saga underlines the importance of central places within in a territory. As has been explained above, the hall of an aristocrat was the central point within his lands; it was here he entertained his allies and practised religious festivals.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> ‘The Story of Thorleif Jarl’s Skald’, eds. and trans. W. Bryant Bachman and G. Erlingsson, *Svarfdale Saga and Other Tales* (Lanham, MD, 1994), pp. 95–106, Chapter 1, p. 95.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, pp. 98–99.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, p. 99.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 5, p. 103.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, p. 99.

Secular territory was important for lords of the early medieval period because they needed to connect to a region's distinctiveness in order to rule. Aristocrats utilised past identities and symbolic locations to bolster their secular rule. In Norway we can see Magnus, son of Olaf Haraldsson, respecting Trondheim as a culturally significant point to assemble. Lords too as seen in Ardres and Essex attempted to stay close to such locations in order to maintain a presence. An aristocratic residence represented the power of a lord and was where he practised his lordship, as was seen with the loss of Arques and Thorlief's travels to Lade. All this provided a secular authority within a region. Territory, however, did not just have secular meaning in this period. A sacred identity also existed for a locality's inhabitants.

### 2.3. SACRED SPACES

The North-Sea world had Christianity and Paganism as its primary religions. Essex, Arques and Guines all followed the Christian path, while the Trøndelag was a famously pagan lordship in Norway. Both religions were hugely influential on societies in a time when local practices within places of worship still prevailed.<sup>224</sup> Latin Christendom, in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries had still very localised practices of religion. These localised practices created sacred sites in the localities and influenced territorial lordships across the North Sea in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The lords of the North Sea fostered regional identity in their ecclesiastical affairs. The development of identity was achieved through the promotion of saints' cults. Ælfgar's family, for example, associated itself with the cult of Saint Edmund, who was buried at Bury St Edmunds. Similarly to the family's church at Stoke-by-Nayland, Bury St Edmunds was located in Suffolk (see figure 1.2). Ælfgar's family can be seen contributing to the

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<sup>224</sup> K. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spiritual and Social Change* (Manchester, 2005), p. 9. Cushing notes that Europe in c. 1000 was 'characterized by regionalism'.

local cult of Saint Edmund the Martyr of East Anglia through the wills of Ealdorman Ælfgar of Essex and his daughters Æthelflæd and Ælfflæd.<sup>225</sup>

Ælfgar made a donation in his will (c. 946 to 951) of the estate of Cockfield after his and Æthelflæd's deaths to the Bury St Edmunds community.<sup>226</sup> Ælfgar's will, of course, also made grants to Stoke-by-Nayland, although we should remember there was no religious community here.<sup>227</sup> Ælfgar's other donations to religious communities were under provisos; for example, he granted the Baythorn estate to Saint Mary's at Barking and Christ Church Canterbury if Æthelflæd did not have any children.<sup>228</sup> There were also terms which stated that Mersea (north-west Essex) would receive Totham after the death of Byrhtnoth and Ælfflæd for Æthelflæd's soul.<sup>229</sup> In Æthelflæd's will (c. 962 to 991, likely after 975), the estates of Chelsworth and Cockfield were granted to Bury after the deaths of Byrhtnoth and Ælfflæd.<sup>230</sup> In addition to this, she made single donations, to Glastonbury, Christchurch, Saint Etheldreda Ely, Saint Mary's at Barking, Saint Paul's in London, and Saint Peter's in Mersea, as well as many grants to Stoke-by-Nayland.<sup>231</sup> The donations to Saint Mary's, Saint Paul's and Saint Peter's were all intended to occur after the deaths of Byrhtnoth and Ælfflæd.<sup>232</sup> Finally, Ælfflæd's will (c. 1001 to 1003) allowed Bury the rents of the estates of Chelsworth, Cockfield and Nedging.<sup>233</sup> In addition, she included Fingringhoe and six hides of land to Mersea after the death of Byrhtnoth and her sister, the estate of Walingford to Saint Gregory's at Sudbury and to Ely Saints Rettendon, Soham, Ditton and a hide at Cheveley.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> S1483 and S1494.

<sup>226</sup> S1483.

<sup>227</sup> S. Foot, 'The Abbey's Armoury of Charters', ed. T. Licence, *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 31–52, at p. 40.

<sup>228</sup> S1483.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> S1494.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> S1486.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

The wills above show us a connection to a local saint in Edmund as well as the female saints of Ely (Sts Wihtburh, Sexburh and Eormenhild), which was within Byrhtnoth's Cambridgeshire land holdings. This study, however, will focus on the connection to the church at Bury St Edmunds. Chelsworth, Cockfield and Nedging were all in Suffolk and traditionally viewed as part of the East Anglian ealdormanry and former kingdom. Saint Edmund the Martyr was a king of East Anglia and died at the hands of the Vikings on 20 November 869.<sup>235</sup> The hagiographical text *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* was composed by Abbo of Fleury at the bequest of the monks of Ramsey between 985 and 987.<sup>236</sup> Abbo claimed in the text that he had heard the account from Archbishop Dunstan, who had learned the account from Edmund's armour bearer on the day he was martyred.<sup>237</sup> Dorothy Whitelock has asserted that it was possible for the memories to cover the 116-year gap and, thus, believed that the text should be treated with respect, which Susan Ridyard has also stated.<sup>238</sup> Whitelock noted that the text by Abbo was similar in style to contemporary hagiographical writings in Europe and that there are differences with Abbo's version of events and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.<sup>239</sup> There was not much room for embellishment, however, as she believed that Dunstan, whom Abbo was writing to, was not interested in lying.<sup>240</sup> Sources after Abbo that have given accounts on Edmund's death, Whitelock has argued, were inventions.<sup>241</sup>

Abbo's account described the Vikings Hinguar and Hubba arriving in the north of England and overrunning Northumbria. Hubba remained there, whereas Hinguar moved by

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<sup>235</sup> Abbo of Fleury, *Abbonis Floriacensis Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, ed. H. Francis, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi* (London, 1907), pp. 7–59, p. 36. 'duodecimo kalendas Decembris'.

<sup>236</sup> D. Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St Edmund', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* 31 (1970), pp. 217–233, at p. 218.

<sup>237</sup> Abbo, *Abbonis Floriacensis Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 8. 'quod eadem die fuisset armiger beati viri qua pro Christo martyr occubuit'.

<sup>238</sup> Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St Edmund', p. 219; and Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 9.

<sup>239</sup> Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St Edmund', p. 219.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233.

ship to eastern England and searched for Edmund.<sup>242</sup> Edmund was in the *Hægelisdun vill*; there, Hinguar demanded Edmund's surrender and a share of his treasures.<sup>243</sup> After receiving advice from a bishop, Edmund replied that he would surrender as long as Hinguar converted to Christianity. Hinguar, angered by the terms, had his men seize the king and tie him to a tree, and ordered arrows to be shot at him until his body was covered.<sup>244</sup> According to Abbo's *Passio*, Edmund, alive, still did not yield and, in his anger, Hinguar cut Edmund's head off and threw it into the woods, leaving the body tied to the tree.<sup>245</sup> Later, the inhabitants of the area found the body in a field and searched for the head. Edmund's head cried out 'over here' and the local populace found it protected by a wolf.<sup>246</sup> Originally, he was buried at a church near the location of his death but his body was later moved to Bury St Edmunds.<sup>247</sup>

From the evidence above, we can see that it is conceivable that Saint Edmund was not just a saint for the East Anglians, but for eastern England as a whole, particularly at a time in the late tenth century when the renewed Viking threat would have been at the forefront of people's concerns. Edmund acted as a beacon of resistance against the Vikings and it is likely that the ealdormen of Essex were using the power of regional regal authority, in order to defy a similar contemporary threat. Tom Licence has it that a cult of St Edmund for eastern England in the medieval period is not implausible. He argued that Herman, a monk of Ely, had given it expression in the late eleventh century and that coin evidence reveals that memorial coins had been circulated in the early tenth century, and numismatists Mark Blackburn and Hugh Pagan have suggested that the memorial coinage

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<sup>242</sup> Abbo, *Abbonis Floriacensis Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 20. '*Northanimbrorum primitus aggressi expugnare provinciam, gravi depopulatione totam pervagantur ex ordine.*'

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34. '*icque factum est ut spiculorum terebratis aculeis circumfossus palpitans horreret, velut asper hericius, aut spinis hirtus carduus, in passione similis Sebastiano egregio martyri.*'

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34 and 36.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42. '*Hic! Hic!*'

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

was an attempt to publicise the Vikings' acceptance of Christianity by Guthrum and the new Viking rulers in the region.<sup>248</sup> If we glance at the *Early Medieval Corpus of Coins* database we currently have 102 coins of the St Edmund type. One was discovered in Essex, eleven in Cambridgeshire and twenty two in Suffolk.<sup>249</sup> All these regions were within the remit of the ealdormanry of Essex under Byrhtnoth.

Additionally, the church at Bury St Edmunds is situated approximately twenty-one miles from Stoke-by-Nayland and twenty-two miles from Ely, with the aforementioned estate of Cockfield, which was donated to Bury, located between the two, at fourteen miles from Stoke and seven miles from Bury (Colchester to Maldon being approximately seventeen miles). Tim Pestell believed that the community represented an East Anglian identity as it did not participate in the West Saxon led Benedictism until the eleventh century.<sup>250</sup> Also, the evidence indicates that this can be expanded by stating that it continued to perpetuate the idea that Suffolk – or, more accurately, western Suffolk – was in fact a contact zone for the East Saxon and East Anglian people. The ealdorman family in Essex attached itself to Edmund as it was part of the area's identity, which was again separate from the West Saxons. The cordial relations between Ealdorman Byrhtnoth and Ealdorman Æthelwine, particularly in the dynastic struggle against the ealdorman of Mercia, furthermore emphasises the increasing likelihood of a strong cultural exchange.<sup>251</sup> As stated above, the West Saxon kings and, later, Cnut also participated in the region's

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<sup>248</sup> T. Licence, 'The Cult of St Edmund', ed. T. Licence, *Bury St Edmunds and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 104–130, at p. 116; and M. Blackburn and H. Pagan, 'The St Edmund Coinage in the light of a parcel from a hoard of St Edmund Pennies', *British Numismatist* 72 (2002), pp. 1–14, at p. 2.

<sup>249</sup> The Early Medieval Corpus, Project Coin finds in Britain 410–1180, *The Fitzwilliam Museum*, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2015, <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/coins/emc/>. For Essex coin, see: 2006.0372; for Cambridgeshire coins, see: 1986.93951, 1986.93952, 1995.0148, 1999.0026, 1999.0049, 1999.0050, 2004.0112, 2005.0116, 2009.0310, 2011.0171, 2015.0125; and for Suffolk coins, see: 1987.0120, 1995.0146, 1995.0147, 1993.0204, 1994.0185, 1994.0186, 1998.0036, 2004.0169, 2006.0108, 2006.0165, 2006.0179, 2007.0049, 2007.0257, 2007.0259, 2008.0408, 2010.0273, 2010.0162, 2011.0068, 2011.0115, 2012.0117, 2014.0311, 2009.0175.

<sup>250</sup> T. Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c. 650–1200* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 118.

<sup>251</sup> Hart, 'The Ealdorman of Essex', p. 71.

royal cults to better serve their relations with the locality.<sup>252</sup> Thus, the East Saxon kin, by donating to Bury, was maintaining their connection to the region's religious identity.

Intriguingly, Keith Briggs has asserted that the death of Edmund did not take place in Suffolk but in Essex, near Maldon. Using a toponymic methodology, he affirmed that following *Domesday Book* entries the site could be *Halesdun*, Essex. He stated that Maldon (māl-dūn), meaning hill with a monument, could possibly be the same hill as *Hægelisdun* and would later replace it.<sup>253</sup> Briggs affirmed, moreover, that the monks of Bury St Edmunds would have not disputed the change in the location of Edmund's death away from Maldon, as the intention of hagiography was to increase the prestige of the community, as explained above, so the new place of the king's demise would have diverted the pilgrims from Maldon to Bury.<sup>254</sup> If this was the case, it would certainly strengthen an East Saxon association to the saint. Furthermore, in light of the Battle of Maldon in 991, the events recorded by Abbo would have been pertinent as Byrhtnoth approached the field of battle and may explain why he allowed the force to cross the causeway, fearing that, like Edmund, he may have been later caught off guard on one of his estates.<sup>255</sup> Regardless, it is safe for us to say there was certainly a negotiated role for the martyred king in the East Saxon identity in the late tenth century. The use of saints in regional identity can also be seen in eastern Normandy.

Samantha Herrick has been able to uncover the promotion of local saints by Norman lords. This not only focused on ducal strategy, but also the approach taken by Count Waleran I of Meulan in the Vexin region.<sup>256</sup> This study will focus, therefore, on

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<sup>252</sup> Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 225.

<sup>253</sup> K. Briggs, 'Was *Hægelisdun* in Essex? A new site for the martyrdom of Edmund', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History* 42 (2011), pp. 277–291, at pp. 290 and 291.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> R. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley, CA, 1988), p. 148. Abels discussed the tactical implications of Byrhtnoth's decision.

<sup>256</sup> Herrick, 'Between Neighbours and Saints: Waleran I of Meulan', p. 89; and Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past*, p. 136.

Count William of Arques and his connection to Fontenelle abbey, also known as Saint Wandrille abbey. The abbey, like the county, was located on the eastern side of the Seine, approximately thirty-five miles from Arques. Before explaining the connection with the count of Arques, we need to outline a brief history of the abbey.

The abbey was established by Wandrille and his brother Grodo in the mid-seventh century, 645 to 649/50. The abbey became an important centre of learning and culture for the Carolingians, attracting people from as far as Frisia.<sup>257</sup> Several lives were composed there, including those by Lambert and Ansbert of Rouen in the seventh century, along with the *vita* of Saint Wandrille.<sup>258</sup> Because of the incursions by the Vikings the monks were forced to flee the abbey in the ninth century, taking with them the relics of the three most important saints that the abbey held. These were the relics of Wandrille, Ansbert and Vulfran.<sup>259</sup> Their journey saw them travel to Blangy and Chartres before returning north in either 885 or 886.<sup>260</sup> The abbey was not restored until 1008 by Abbot Gerard of Crépy-en-Valois, who succeeded in convincing Duke Richard II to aid its revival. The monks on their travels, however, had to take their relics and books and had them stored in Saint Pierre, Ghent under the promise that they would be returned when the refoundation occurred. Unfortunately for Fontenelle, this deal was not upheld and the relics of the saints were kept in Flanders, despite a claim that, shortly after Gerard's arrival, the relics of Vulfran were found.<sup>261</sup> As a consequence of the lost relics, the monks set out to find lost Carolingian relics in the early eleventh century and become associated to William of Arques.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> E. van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography at Saint Wandrille: The "*Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfranini*"', *ANS* 12 (1990), pp. 233–251, at p. 233.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

William of Arques was not from the region he ruled, but he was made its count as the son of Duke Richard II, which we can see in an original charter dated between 1037 and 1048.<sup>263</sup> In this source, Duke William the Bastard approved the grant by which William of Arques and his brother, Archbishop Mauger of Rouen, gave Perriers-sur-Andelle, with its dependencies, to Saint Ouen.<sup>264</sup> The grant described the two brothers conforming to the wishes of Papia, their mother, in memory of their father Richard II and the memory of their half-brothers Richard III and Robert the Magnificent.<sup>265</sup> William of Arques, however, was far more involved in the dealings of the abbey of Fontenelle, despite this joint family grant. The association of the region of Arques and the abbey does not appear to be unusual. In a ducal charter of 1033, Robert the Magnificent granted to Fontenelle the church in Arques and two of the church's dependencies, Saint Aubin's Church and the church in Bouteilles, a grant confirmed in a later charter by William the Bastard.<sup>266</sup>

The connection continued with the involvement of Count William in four charters from Duke William the Bastard in the eleventh century prior to the invasion of England. These charters included the following: a confirmation of a grant by Robert, son of Humfredus of Vielles; a concession of churches in the Cotentin to the abbey; provisions for *maisons* at Longueil, Yvetot with the land at Carbière, the tithe Dénestanville; and, finally, a grant of the churches at Chambois, Omnéel, Avenelles, Bosguerard of Marcouville and of Longueil, which also included Gerrard Flaitel becoming a monk at Fontenelle.<sup>267</sup> All four of the charters had the count of Arques appear in the witness list. Although three were fourteenth-century copies of the original lost charters from the, and one was a partial

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<sup>263</sup> *ADSM*, 14 H 189; and *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961), no. 112.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 69.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 128, 129, 126 and 108.

reproduction from the end of the eleventh century, it does emphasise that the count of Arques was expected to be involved in the business of the abbey.<sup>268</sup>

A grant made by a William, whom Ferdinand Lot and Marie Fauroux believed to possibly be Count William of Arques, recorded that he had granted twenty-two arpents of land at Aubevoie.<sup>269</sup> The charter is spurious, seeing as the donation included some land that was in the lordship of the counts of Évreux and that Count William of Arques was not a son of Robert the Great, but was a son of Richard II.<sup>270</sup> Fauroux has suggested two other candidates, they were Count William of Eu and William, son of Archbishop Robert of Rouen, who may have held similar rights to his brother Count Richard of Évreux.<sup>271</sup> As the original is lost it is uncertain whether the fourteenth-century copyist had wrongly extended an R. initial in the text as Robert.<sup>272</sup> In the confusion of this charter, what remains true is that there are three Williams in the witness list. One would have been the duke, the second is titled as count and the third is simply William. Therefore, based on the evidence presented above about the involvement of the count of Arques in the abbey's affairs, the William styled as count was probably William of Arques.

William of Arques in the charters of Saint Wandrille made a grant at the request of Abbot Gradulph (1031–1047) to restore the island of *Belcinnaca* on the Seine, where Condedus lived as a hermit.<sup>273</sup> Gradulph had used the *vita* of Saint Condedus to convince the count to make the grant.<sup>274</sup> Count William also granted the two churches of Vatteville and Brotonne, as well as the hunting rights of the Brotonne forest.<sup>275</sup> The original charter of this donation has been lost, but the details of the grant were reconfirmed in a later

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<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>269</sup> *Études Critiques sur l'abbaye de Saint Wandrille*, ed. F. Lot (Paris, 1913), no. 29; and *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, no. 125.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, no. 125.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> *Études Critiques sur l'abbaye de Saint Wandrille*, no. 15.

<sup>274</sup> van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography', p. 239.

<sup>275</sup> *Études Critiques sur l'abbaye de Saint Wandrille*, no. 15.

original ducal act by William the Conqueror between 1082 and 1087.<sup>276</sup> If we are going to discover the significance of this act, we must explore the significance of Saint Condedus.

Saint Condedus travelled from Britain to live in *Fontana Walarici*.<sup>277</sup> Wilhelm Levison believed this to be either Saint Valery-en-Caux or St Valery-sur-Somme, both in Upper Normandy and on the coast.<sup>278</sup> Saint Valery-sur-Somme was to the east of the county of Eu and outside the duchy, whereas Saint Valery-en-Caux was approximately twenty-two miles from Arques. From *Fontana*, Condedus travelled to Fontenelle abbey visiting the monks and Saint Lambert.<sup>279</sup> Later, he moved to *Belcinnaca* island in the Seine where he built two churches and lived out his life as a hermit. After the re-establishment of the abbey of Fontenelle, Condedus' body was moved there in 1027 by the monks of Fontenelle.<sup>280</sup>

If the location was Saint Valery-sur-Somme, we can posit that the count was attaching himself to a saint who was tied to Upper Normandy and the location also joined him to his allies to the east of the duchy, whom he called upon during his uprising.<sup>281</sup> Saint Valery-sur-Somme would have fallen under the authority of the counts of Ponthieu, who assisted William of Arques during his rebellion.<sup>282</sup> This would represent a similar cultural exchange as argued above for the Ealdormen of Essex and East Anglia. There is no evidence for any of the counts of Ponthieu, however, having any association with the abbey before or in the eleventh century. Thus, it appears that Saint Valery-en-Caux was the more plausible location of Condedus' first hermitage. Saint Valery-en-Caux's location

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<sup>276</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, no. 234.

<sup>277</sup> *Vita Condedi Anachoretæ Belcinnacensis*, ed. W. Levison, *Passiones vitæque sanctorum ævi Merovingici 3*, *MGH, SSrM 5* (Hannover, 1910), pp. 644–651, p. 646. 'genere Britto, natus in Oceani insula Britannica'.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 646. 'Ac primum, postquam Oceani aequor transvectus est, in loco qui vocatur Fontana Walarici aliquot annis dulcissimos supernae contemplationis fructus saeculo nudus Deoque plenus solitaria cotidie hauriebat conversatione.'

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 651. 'translatum erat inde a fratribus sancti coenobii Fontanellae corpus sancti viri et positum in ecclesia sancti apostoli Petri iuxta oratorium sancti Martini ad plagam meridianam'.

<sup>281</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 1, Chapter 26, p. 38.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38 and 40.

was, if not under, very close to the authority of Count William. As a holder of the Arques castle, he needed to connect with the region's sacred identity. He achieved this through his association to Condedus who was buried at Fontenelle abbey.

Count William, similarly to the ealdorman family of Essex, was seeking to connect with the territory's past, which was external to the central authority of the duke. Condedus was connected to the Carolingian past and, as argued by Herrick, assisted the transition in identifying with the region.<sup>283</sup> By contrast, Ælfgar's family already held this connection in their territory, but they still needed to maintain their links. In addition, the Carolingian connection remained on the eastern side of the Seine. According to William of Poitiers, William of Arques had attempted to prevent anyone crossing the Seine from its eastern shore.<sup>284</sup> The significance of Condedus arriving from Britain to Normandy is also noteworthy. This may be representative of Count William's connections in North-Sea Europe because, as stated earlier, he received assistance from the king of France and count of Ponthieu.<sup>285</sup> It is difficult to ascertain a sacred connection for the counts of Guines, nevertheless, we can investigate the lords of Ardres in western Flanders.

The lord of Ardres also made use of the territory's religious identity through the connection to Saint Folcuin. Eilbod moved to Ardres and built a new residence between Saint Folcuin's spring and the foot of the courtyard of Saint Omer of Ardres.<sup>286</sup> The lord of Ardres provides the best case study to compare western Flanders to Essex, Arques and Trøndelag. The information for Saint Folcuin can be derived from Folcuin the Younger of Saint Bertin's *Life of Folcuin and Deeds of the Abbots of Saint Bertin*.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past*, p. 136.

<sup>284</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 1, Chapter 23, p. 34.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 16, pp. 22 and 24.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 104, pp. 611.

<sup>287</sup> Folcuin, *Vita Folquini episcopi Morinensis*, ed. O. Holder Egger, *MGH, SS 15/1* (Hanover, 1887), pp. 423–430; and Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum S. Bertini Sithiensium*, ed. O. Holder Egger, *MGH, SS 13* (Hanover, 1881), pp. 607–663, Chapter 46, p. 614.

Steven Vanderputten and Tjanke Snijders have described Saint Folcuin as an aristocratic saint. The texts on Folcuin emphasised his connection to Charles Martel and the Carolingian dynasty.<sup>288</sup> The *Gesta* saw Folcuin the Younger attempt to stress his and Saint Folcuin's Carolingian connection.<sup>289</sup> Another likely motive for Folcuin the Younger to write the works was his own career, which had seen a rapid rise from oblate of Saint Bertin to abbot of Lobbes between 948 and 965.<sup>290</sup> The *Vita Folquini* was probably written at the bequest of Abbot Walter of Saint Bertin and it is dedicated to him in the first paragraph.<sup>291</sup> It survives in two separate copies, from c. 968 and c. 1007 from the end of Odbert's abbacy, with the original having been lost.<sup>292</sup>

Saint Folcuin had been the bishop of Thérouanne between 817 and 855, his body was buried in Saint Bertin within the diocese of Thérouanne.<sup>293</sup> This region of Flanders was under the control of the count of Flanders in the ninth century. However, following Count Arnulf's death in 965, Saint Bertin steadily 'emancipated itself' from Flemish rule with the restoration of a regular abbacy, a single abbot, and a change in networks such as new connections established with the archbishopric of Canterbury.<sup>294</sup> The abbacy began, furthermore, to rely on regional elites for protection and became less interested in its patronage with the Carolingians and Flanders. In the *Life of Folcuin*, the saint is said to have once rested at the spring when he was visiting the churches in the diocese; this was the spring mentioned earlier in Eilbod's construction of a new residence.<sup>295</sup> Before his elevation to sainthood, the *Vita* claims that the site of his grave saw the miraculous healing

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<sup>288</sup> S. Vanderputten and T. Snijders, 'Stability and Transformation in the Cult of an Early Medieval Saint: The Case of Bishop Folcuin of Thérouanne (†855)', *Studi Medievali* 54 (2013), pp. 131–151, at p. 133.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>291</sup> Folcuin, *Vita Folquini episcopi Morinensis*, p. 423.

<sup>292</sup> Vanderputten and Snijders, 'Stability and Transformation in the Cult of an Early Medieval Saint', p. 138.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>295</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 104, p. 611.

of a monk and this stimulated the construction of an altar.<sup>296</sup> The saint died on a visit to the village of Esquelbecq, according to the *Vita*.<sup>297</sup>

Vanderputten and Snijders have asserted that this is evidence of a regional cult that was ‘embedded in popular culture’.<sup>298</sup> They argued, furthermore, that the monks needed to develop a community identity within the region that assisted in creating ‘a sense of collective solidarity among the monks and their associates’.<sup>299</sup> Additionally, they remarked that Lambert of Ardres did not have an explicit awareness of the text; nevertheless, his knowledge of the saint indicated that the local populace were aware of some of the details from the *Vita*. They continued in their article that there was evidence for the cult lasting into the thirteenth century and having pilgrims pay homage to Folcuin from as far away as England.<sup>300</sup> If we compare the use of Saint Folcuin’s spring to the Essex ealdormen and the count of Arques, however, we see a common theme.

Folcuin was a regional saint who was not associated with the Flemish counts. He was discussed in the context of western Flanders separating itself from the Flemish lords. This was not just through its secular lords, but also its ecclesiastical institutions such as Saint Bertin. We can ascertain, therefore, that when moving his residence, Eilbod made use of the region’s sacred past to further legitimise his rulership. Hagiographies were heard inside castles and monasteries and it is plausible that the Ardres lord had known about the location’s past and the presence of the saint.<sup>301</sup> Thus, he targeted the sacred landscape as well as the secular in his construction of a new residence.

The lord of Ardres’s identity strayed away from the Carolingians whereas as the counts of Arques gravitated to it. The Carolingian lineage, however, was tied into the

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<sup>296</sup> Folcuin, *Vita Folquini episcopi Morinensis*, Chapter 12, pp. 429–430.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429.

<sup>298</sup> Vanderputten and Snijders, ‘Stability and Transformation in the Cult of an Early Medieval Saint’, p. 145.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>301</sup> Herrick, *Imagining the Sacred Past*, p. 6.

counts of Flanders and, therefore, did not represent a regional uniqueness. Although the lords of Ardres did not connect themselves to the same Carolingian lineage, they were employing strategies to increase their connections with the regional distinctiveness of western Flanders. We can claim that, unlike the Essex and Arques lords, the lord of Ardres was not identifying with an older form of kingship that predated their central authority; rather, this saint was more embedded in an ecclesiastic driven community. There is no evidence of donations, moreover, made in dedication to Folcuin. There were charters giving land to the abbey but they do not make reference to Folcuin.<sup>302</sup> Equally to Saints Edmund and Condedus, the locations where Saint Folcuin's presence was believed to have occurred in the hagiographies remained an important node of identity and locales that the western Flemish rulers desired to relate to. So far we have recognised the impact of sacred territory on regional lordships from Christian regions. Of course pagan lordships did not have Christian saints, but they did use religious figures to create their sacred territory.

The sagas also provide very detailed accounts on how religion played a crucial role in Jarl Haakon's link to the regional distinctiveness of the Trøndelag. The jarls had their own religious origin myths that made them not only distinctive from Christian Europe, but also similar in the sense that these myths tied them to the land they ruled. There were two types of myth: first was simply rulership through conquest by a dynasty, and the second described the gestation of peoples through relationships between gods and land. This can be called 'sacral kingship'.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> *Les Chartes de Saint-Bertin d'après le Grand Cartulaire de Dom Charles-Joseph Dewitte*, 1, ed. D. Haighneré (Saint-Omer, 1886), no. 64. 'Domino magnifico in XPO patri Waltero, abbati de monasterio Sithiu, quod est constructum in pago Terwaninse super fluvio Agniona in honore beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, seu sancti Martini et sancti Bertini, congregationi etiam ipsius sancti loci.'

<sup>303</sup> G. Steinsland, 'Origin Myths and Rulership. From the Viking Age Ruler to the Ruler of Medieval Historiography: Continuity, Transformations and Innovations', eds. G. Steinsland, J. Sigurðsson, J. Rekdal and I. Beuermann, *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Orkney and the Faeroes* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 15–67, at p. 16.

Adam of Bremen claimed that the jarls of Trøndelag descended from a race of giants.<sup>304</sup> Gro Steinsland has stated that the ruling elite of Viking society all had exceptional origins and, as a result, had exceptional deaths, too.<sup>305</sup> According to the origin myth, Odin and Skadi had produced the jarls in their land of Trøndelag. Steinsland argued that the ‘metaphor of the land as the ruler’s bride shows that power was understood to refer to territory rather than to people.’<sup>306</sup> So, the jarls of Trøndelag were the rulers of land rather than the people. The land is described metaphorically as a wild woman from Utgard who needs to be ‘conquered and tamed through sexuality’.<sup>307</sup>

The aristocrats of the Christian territories did not have origin myths as vivid or elaborate as the Trøndelag jarls. This was predominantly due to Christianity, where the king was the anointed ruler by God.<sup>308</sup> The concept of ruling the land first, however, was shared. Previously, we have discussed that the counts of Guines, when they first arrived on their land, ruled over an area that was sparsely populated.<sup>309</sup> If we understand, in light of the Trøndelag ethos, that the ideology was associated with rulership of the physical landscape; therefore, the cultural identity of the medieval aristocrat was intrinsically linked to the topography. This connection to the land can also be viewed in the aristocratic residences. These buildings held similar characteristics to the other North-Sea lords previously discussed.

We can discover the importance of such sites in a different saga. *Njáls* saga was written at the end of the thirteenth century and it is purported to be by one anonymous

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<sup>304</sup> *Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum ex recensione Lappenbergii. In usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae historicis recusa*, ed. altera, *MGH, SS 17* (Hannover, 1876), Book 2, Chapter 22, p. 57. ‘*Haccon iste crudelissimus, ex genere Inguar et giganteo sanguine descendens, primua inter Nordmannos regnum arripuit, cum antei ducibus regerentur.*’

<sup>305</sup> Steinsland, ‘Origin Myths and Rulership’, p. 17.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.* For the origin myth of the jarls of Lade see: *Heimskringla, Saga of Ynglings*, pp. 12–13.

<sup>309</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 7, p. 566.

author.<sup>310</sup> We believe that, based on the understanding of Icelandic geography, the author would have been from southern Iceland. In addition to this, the author's vague descriptions of foreign lands suggested he did not travel abroad.<sup>311</sup> The saga is representative of the Icelandic Christian Church's tolerance of the old pagan religions.<sup>312</sup> Also, the narrator remains balanced, in that he 'takes no sides' and allows the deeds to 'speak for themselves'.<sup>313</sup>

The saga provided an account of Hrapp, who had travelled from Iceland and was a man who was described as a 'good storyteller'.<sup>314</sup> In Norway, he journeyed to Guthbrand's Dale, which was south of the jarldom of Trøndelag. Here, he was believed to be attempting to seduce Gúdrún the daughter of Guthbrand. Hrapp killed Guthbrand's overseer called Ásvard and he fled to the woods after telling the lord about the murder.<sup>315</sup> According to the saga, Guthbrand was a good friend of Jarl Haakon and discussed his troubles with the jarl. Haakon placed a bounty on Hrapp's head and declared him an outlaw. As Haakon and Guthbrand feasted in the Dales, Hrapp travelled to the temple that was owned by both Haakon and Guthbrand.<sup>316</sup> Hrapp removed the gold ring from Thorgerd Holgabrúd's statue, then Thor's gold ring, and finally Irpa's gold ring. He 'dragged all these images from the temple and stripped them'.<sup>317</sup> The storyteller then burned down the temple, and he escaped with Jarl Haakon in pursuit after discovering the crime the next morning.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Bayerschmidt and Hollander, 'Introduction', p. 8.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>314</sup> *Njál's Saga*, p. 178.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Thorgerd and Irpa were called on by Haakon in the *Jómsvíkinga* saga.<sup>319</sup> Lee Hollander has noted that, today, the thirteenth-century saga would be considered a historical novel rather than a history.<sup>320</sup> The author is unknown, but it is believed that he had travelled to Norway.<sup>321</sup> The writer was describing the events leading up to the Battle of Hjörung Bay in 986 between Jarl Haakon and a Danish fleet. The composer was not an enthusiastic proponent of Christianity. However, as this investigation is not using the text for details on the battle itself but rather the ideals behind Jarl Haakon's religious belief, the author seems to provide a useful description. He alleged that, during the battle, the jarl moored at an island called *Primsigned*, where he moved into the forest and prayed to his patron goddess Thorgerd. Haakon offered many sacrifices which included the death of his seven-year-old son.<sup>322</sup> Haakon called to his men declaring that he had 'invoked for victory both the sisters, Thorgerd and Irpa' during the battle.<sup>323</sup> The sacrifice and description of the goddess Thorgerd suggests that the surrounding region of Trøndelag may have had a territorial connection with the goddess.

The events in *Njáls* saga reveal intriguing details on territorial identity in Norway and, along with the *Jómsvíkinga* saga and *The Story of Thorleif Jarl's Skald*, they suggest a regional preference for particular gods. The Dorfa Mountains acted as a natural geographical division between the Trøndelag region and Guthbrand's Dale. We can propose, therefore, that the areas were comparable to the East Saxon and East Anglian promotion at Bury St Edmunds. Bury was situated in the East Anglian sphere of authority, but remained close to the contact zone and the East Saxon people. The temple, like the

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<sup>319</sup> *The Saga of the Jómsvíkinga*, ed. and trans. L. Hollander, (Austin, TX, 1955). For dating, see: N. F. Blake, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. N. F. Blake, *The Saga of the Jomsvíkinga* (Edinburgh, 1962), pp. vii–xxv, at p. xvi.

<sup>320</sup> L. Hollander, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *The Saga of the Jómsvíkinga* (Austin, TX, 1955), pp. 13–25.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>322</sup> *The Saga of the Jómsvíkinga*, Chapter 21, p. 100.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 21, p. 101.

church at Bury St Edmunds, underpins the effects of exchange across contact zones and how, after many years, associations were created through mutual understanding of regional culture.<sup>324</sup>

The sacred building of the Dale is akin to William of Arques's gifts to Fontenelle abbey based on his territory's connection to Saint Condedus; and to the construction of the lord of Ardres' principal residence near the spring of Saint Folcuin. Haakon, William, and Eilbod emphasise the point that a sacred figure could be associated with one area and worshipped in another location, but the original connection remained an important characteristic of a territory's identity. As Preben Sørensen has stated, for pagan cultures, offerings made to the gods were designed to strengthen favour from the gods to the person who provided the gifts.<sup>325</sup> Hrapp's removal of the gifts and statues of the gods suggests that he was intending to harm the lord's divine favour. In addition to this, the burning of the temple would have also harmed Haakon's and Guthbrand's favour, but it was also designed to attack their cultural friendship which stemmed from the contact zone of the Dorfa mountains.

Religion, therefore, played a role in the regional identity of our chosen localities, so much so that the lords of the North Sea needed to honour sacred sites. These sites were tied to regional sacred figures. For the Christian lords these were saints and for the pagan lords it was local gods. The attachment to these local sacred places enhanced a lord's authority by binding him to a regional identity that was not practised by their respective central authorities.

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<sup>324</sup> Morrissey, 'Cultural Geographies of the Contact Zone', p. 554.

<sup>325</sup> Sørensen, 'Religions Old and New', p. 214.

## 2.4. CONCLUSION

Central authorities perpetuated their identities through administrative sources such as charters and chronicles. The localities, however, did not conform to this and had their own regional distinctiveness. The lords of the North-Sea world tied themselves to the localities' identities in order to rule effectively and be viewed as a legitimate authority in the region. Lordships were located in cultural provinces that had an inherent connection with the land through distinctive geographical features. The lords of the North Sea created relationships with the land, so that they were part of the regional identity too. Aristocrats, as shown with Guines and Trøndelag, attempted to promote an origin story that bound their families to the land itself.<sup>326</sup>

The proposition that this period saw strong central authorities rule across an administratively defined realm is too simplistic.<sup>327</sup> It suggests that the aristocrats did not interact with the social identities inside their territory, but rather conformed to a national ethnicity. Administrative offices such as ealdorman and count, however, did not represent a central organisation; rather, they reflected cultural provinces. These were defined from dominant geographical features such as the River Stour between the East Saxons and the East Anglians.<sup>328</sup> These boundaries allowed the region to distinguish who was part of the social identity. The lords of the North Sea appear to have been aware of this and they utilised it in their lordship. We should, however, caution against re-drawing our maps based on geographical borders, as they would not illuminate the regions' semi-permeable nature. In fact, these features in the landscape represented a zone of interaction where two identities could meet, network and form a new culture, as exhibited in the Vexin region in

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<sup>326</sup> Lambert, Chapter 4, p. 565; and Steinsland, 'Origin Myths and Rulership', p. 32.

<sup>327</sup> Campbell, 'The United Kingdom of England', p. 31.

<sup>328</sup> Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 25.

the account of William Crispin.<sup>329</sup> These peripheral cultures saw very little influence from a central authority and were contested between rivals such as the duke of Normandy and the king of France.<sup>330</sup>

The North Sea's cultural provinces have shown that a central place within a locality was situated where locations had symbolism of power, as Colchester had in relation to the Romans.<sup>331</sup> Aristocrats looked to build their residences near these sites to take full advantage of their symbolism. The examples of Count William of Arques and Jarl Haakon of Trøndelag demonstrate that these dwellings did not only function as a location to exert authority over a landscape, but also acted as staging grounds for war and as emblems of resistance. As a result, the fall of these aristocratic homes represented the failure of regional rulership. If a central place, however, could be changed due to economic factors in the eleventh century remains open to question. Walter Le Clud described Arnold moving the aristocratic residence from Selnesse to Ardres. It is possible, in this instance, to say that economic motives conspired to move the central place of a region to the location where the lord would follow the locality's inhabitants.<sup>332</sup> At this point, however, it is difficult to state if this was the case for the rest of the North Sea.

The secular space formed a part of the identity, but lords also made use of their territory's 'sacred past'. The affiliation was achieved through the promotion of saints such as Edmund and Folcuin, who had either travelled through, performed miracles or died in the area.<sup>333</sup> Although the jarl of Trøndelag did not promote a saint's cult, this did not diminish the fact that the region around the Dorfa Mountains had a relationship with the

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<sup>329</sup> Milo, *Miraculum*, cols. 735–744.

<sup>330</sup> Green, 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', p. 47.

<sup>331</sup> Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 5.

<sup>332</sup> Lambert, Chapter 109, p. 613. '*Ab illo ergo die, magno Selnescensium mansionis loco commolito et contrite, edificijsque apud Ardeam contractis atque delatis, deleta est cum castello memoria etiam Selnescensium, adeo ut ab Ardea etiam ubique predicaretur et nominaretur Ardensium protector et dominus.*'

<sup>333</sup> Abbo, *Abbonis Floriacensis Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 34 and 36; and Folcuin, *Vita Folquini episcopi Morinensis*, p. 429.

two goddesses Thorgerd and Irpa.<sup>334</sup> William of Arques's example shows us that lords needed to interact with regional sacred figures. He was not originally from the Arques locality but he ensured that he was associated to the sacred identity of his lordship. The sharing of a saint across contact zones, furthermore, raises the possibility of wider regional religious identities that allowed for exchange and provided a basis for friendship for the nobility of the North-Sea world.

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<sup>334</sup> *Njál's Saga*, p. 180.

### 3. CHAPTER THREE: SOLIDARITIES

Historians have regularly asked in their investigations on medieval aristocrats, why were men loyal? The feudal model, which had dominated scholarship previously, had suggested that lords were bound by oaths and allegiances to more influential men in society. These bonds, moreover, were believed to have been fixed for a person's life.<sup>1</sup> The relationships that an aristocrat engaged in, furthermore, were inherited from a father once a lord became the new head of the household.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will dispute this inflexibly rigid view.<sup>3</sup> Instead it will contend that the lords of the North Sea had choices, which allowed them to decide who they were loyal to. These choices did not create life-long bonds, but were influenced by the impact it had on a lord's territorial interests. The solidarities of the lords of the North-Sea world are the relationships between aristocrats. Solidarities include the associations of family members and kin-groups, which all influence the decision making of lords. The intention of this chapter is to ascertain how the locality also influenced lords in political actions. First, however, we need to explore historians' understanding on the medieval aristocratic family.

Medievalists have rigorously explored the aristocratic family in European historiography. Families have been important in studies because aristocrats separated themselves from wider society due to their lineage which the peasantry did not possess.<sup>4</sup> The recognition of a family past was what gave an aristocrat his status in medieval society. Since the nineteenth century, there has been an enquiry into aristocratic families, notably

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<sup>1</sup> S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> C. B. Bouchard, *Those of My Blood': Constructing Noble Families in Medieval Francia* (Philadelphia, PA, 2001), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> T. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), p. 40. Bisson described post-Carolingian lordship as "servile" model.

<sup>4</sup> D. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900–1300* (Harlow, 2005), p. 99.

with Frédéric Le Play who marvelled at the Anglo-Saxon inheritance of the first born.<sup>5</sup> Following on from Le Play, an important progression in the discourse occurred for historians. Emile Durkheim suggested that the development of the family went from a wide nomadic tribe to an agrarian, close-knit clan, which was defined ‘more narrowly by blood’.<sup>6</sup> This ‘law of contraction’ influenced Marc Bloch’s work and, later, Georges Duby, who noted that when central authority was weak, the family looked within to defend the patrimony.<sup>7</sup>

Historians in the mid-twentieth century tied family and kin to inheritances. Karl Ferdinand Werner, for example, asserted that a continuity of lineage could be established through the names of lords, if there were no genealogical records. He theorised that the names of lords were usually repeated in each generation.<sup>8</sup> Karl Schmid believed that men of the eleventh century were interested in families only when a line of inheritance was concerned.<sup>9</sup> Gerd Tellenbach used Schmid’s work to claim that it is inconsistent to discuss continuity of a family before exploring when family consciousness occurred.<sup>10</sup> Georges Duby, however, changed the outlook of historians on the medieval aristocratic family by investigating the impact of kinship.

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<sup>5</sup> F. Le Play, *On Family, Work, and Social Change*, ed. and trans. C. Bodard Silver (Chicago, IL, 1982), pp. 268 and 269. For Le Play’s influence, see: P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 53; and D. Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (London, 1985), p. 137.

<sup>6</sup> For Durkheim’s views on family, see: E. Wallwork, *Durkheim: Morality and Milieu* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), pp. 91–98. For the term ‘progressive nuclearisation’, see: D. Herlihy, ‘Family Solidarity in Medieval Italian History’, ed. D. Herlihy, *The Social History of Italy and Western Europe, 700–1500* (London, 1978), pp. 173–184, at p. 174.

<sup>7</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 104. For Duby, see: G. Duby, *La société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (Paris, 1953, repr. 1971), pp. 225–226.

<sup>8</sup> K. F. Werner, ‘Important Noble Families in the Kingdom of Charlemagne’, ed. and trans. T. Reuter, *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1978), pp. 137–202, at p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> K. Schmid, ‘The Structure of the Nobility in the earlier Middle Ages’, ed. and trans. T. Reuter, *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1978), pp. 37–59, at p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> G. Tellenbach, ‘From the Carolingian Imperial Nobility to the German Estate of Imperial Princes’, ed. and trans. T. Reuter, *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1978), pp. 203–242, at pp. 204 and 205.

He urged that kinship bonds were the ‘inner framework’ of a feudal society and were an essential part of the unfolding politics, alliances and advancement of careers.<sup>11</sup> Duby claimed that kin-groups, therefore, attached themselves to patrons and subsequently the importance of lineage increased as benefices passed from father to son.<sup>12</sup> Duby continued to expand this theory, arguing that the importance of lineage passed from princes to counts and eventually to castellans and knights. He believed that by the twelfth century medieval society’s kinship ties had contracted so families were not branching out as widely.<sup>13</sup> Duby concluded that before 1050 there were no ‘*cognomena*, and no “races”’, by contrast there were kin-groups which were centred on a residence of a lord. He argued that these kin-groups were wider than twelfth-century medieval families and not as vigorously defined.<sup>14</sup> Duby followed Karl Schmid’s work from the ‘Munster-Freiburg’ school, which posited a shift in society to ‘vertically-organised lineages’.<sup>15</sup> Schmid had argued that the eleventh century saw society move from kin groups to a society based on lineages. This led to the emergence of a Franco-German school on the family of aristocrats that held firm until the 1990s.<sup>16</sup>

Historians today are willing to challenge the Franco-German school when discussing the medieval family. David Crouch, for example, criticised Duby, who, he believed, had become more of a theorist and adopted ‘progressive nuclearisation’ in the 1970s.<sup>17</sup> Crouch argued that Duby did not realise that the nuclear *unitus* of a family was more than capable of protecting itself when central authority was strong.<sup>18</sup> The importance of the family in modern scholarship has been championed by Constance Brittain Bouchard.

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<sup>11</sup> G. Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, trans. J. Dunnett (Chicago, IL, 1994), p. 105.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>14</sup> G. Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. C. Postan (Berkeley, CA, 1977), p. 138.

<sup>15</sup> Schmid, ‘The Structure of the Nobility’, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 107.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>18</sup> Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, pp. 69 and 73.

Bouchard has appropriately urged caution over Schmid's theory, as it was designed for the German nobility.<sup>19</sup> She believed that, if we are to understand the impact of the aristocracy on royal governments, a greater amount of research was needed. Like the anti-feudal paradigms, she described the family as specific to a time and place, therefore the medieval concept of family differs from ours.<sup>20</sup> She asserted that if we observe the medieval family in this manner 'it will be easier to understand the different ways this group was defined, and how the family unit was different even for different individuals within it at one time, and even more so for people over the generations.'<sup>21</sup> Crucially, Bouchard reasoned that only the individual of a family 'could formulate views of whom or what constituted their family'.<sup>22</sup> She continued that this did not necessarily mean that the interpretation was a mutual one, so although a person could regard an individual as their family, this did not mean the belief was reciprocated. Bouchard has it that a person's 'recognition of kinship was what created a "family" in the first place, not the other way around.'<sup>23</sup> She noted, as evidence, how the aristocracy of twelfth-century France proclaimed their lineage to Charlemagne. They did not regard themselves, however, as relations. By contrast, grandsons and great-grandsons in the ninth century were aware of their shared ancestry, 'but they treated their first and second cousins not as family members and allies but as the enemy'.<sup>24</sup>

Bouchard considered that 'the men of the Middle Ages could not be acutely aware of every ancestor, especially since distant blood connections with old royal families were

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<sup>19</sup> Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> C. B. Bouchard, 'The Structure of a Twelfth-Century French Family: The Lords of Seignelay', *Viator* 10 (1979), pp. 39–56, at p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Also see: C. B. Bouchard, 'Family Structure and Family Consciousness among the Aristocracy in the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries', *Francia* 14 (1986), pp. 639–658, at p. 641.

<sup>23</sup> Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3. Bouchard has also stressed lineage and connections to Charlemagne by the aristocracy in other works, for example, see: C. B. Bouchard, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), p. 5.

not the chief determinants of the assumption of royal power.<sup>25</sup> She accredited the great European families as already having a consciousness of the male line by the end of the ninth century. It could be deemed, therefore, that lineages that had ancestry traceable back to only the tenth and eleventh centuries were not part of the great noble house.<sup>26</sup> Bouchard presented, as an example, how the contemporary sources of Hugh Capet's succession of the Carolingian king, Louis V, saw Hugh described as not a descendant of Charlemagne. This was despite the fact that his grandmother was the daughter of the count of Vermandois, who was a direct descendent of Charlemagne himself.<sup>27</sup>

After the year 1000, castellans contributed to this expanding group of nobility and began to see their power increase. Castles became 'central points around which power could be built.'<sup>28</sup> We need to recognise that castellans did not start marrying daughters of counts until the late eleventh century. As a consequence of this great comital and ducal family houses became related to viscounts and castellans within their respective regions. 'The recruitment of castellans... is connected with a trend toward regionalism and localisation.'<sup>29</sup> Intriguingly, Bouchard has made the point that the ninth-century nobility were far more 'international' than their counterparts in the late twelfth century.<sup>30</sup> Bouchard has provided a structure that is more representative of how historians, examined in chapter one, viewed society functioning. Bouchard presented a fluid family unit that was different for each member and for which inclusion was dependent on the individual's perspective. Amy Livingstone, however, has recently added another dimension into the 'family unit' that arguably has been lost in the social assessments and constructs, that is emotion and the importance of the female family line.

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<sup>25</sup> Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

Livingstone, in her investigation on aristocratic families in the Loire between 1000 and 1200, suggested that affection bound the family together. She noted that in the region there was not a monolithic family structure or inheritance pattern.<sup>31</sup> There was, however, concern for the affinal kin and natal kin which reached back to the previous generations. For clarification, affinal kin are relatives created from marriages, while natal kin members are those associated to the female line of the family, and finally agnates are descended from the same male ancestor. Livingstone has stressed the emotion of these ties and presented Count Fulk of Anjou who loved his youngest son who had been born when Fulk was already old.<sup>32</sup> The affection was not limited to the male members; mothers educated their sons, while fathers were away due to aristocratic pursuits. We can see the affection of mothers from the account by Orderic Vitalis about Queen Matilda of England and her concern for Robert Curthose while he was in exile during his dispute with his father King William. She sent Robert gold and silver and Orderic reported that she told the king how she loved her son with affection.<sup>33</sup>

Livingstone was keen to stress the importance of women in the family unit throughout her study. She asserted that the female members developed respect and affection among the family for local ecclesiastical houses.<sup>34</sup> Orderic Vitalis, for example, praised Adelais of Le Puiset, the daughter of the viceomte of Chartres.<sup>35</sup> Orderic described Adelais's piety and her encouragement to her husband to be friendly to the monks and assist them.<sup>36</sup> Livingstone correctly described women as a conduit for a key aspect of

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<sup>31</sup> A. Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of Loire, 1000–1200* (Ithaca, NY, 2010), p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 10, p. 102. '*Ne mireris domine mi obsecro si ego primogenitam prolem meam tenere diligo*'.

<sup>34</sup> Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin*, p. 196.

<sup>35</sup> *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 13, p. 138.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

aristocratic life. The pursuit of remembrance and lineage was crucial as a lord's heritage made him aristocratic.<sup>37</sup>

The family, therefore, was not simply one unit following the rule of a male head of house. It was, by contrast, an organic unit that had individuals participating and pursuing aristocratic interests for the benefit of their perceived unit. The family was not exclusive to male members; moreover, females too played a role in not only creating ties but also maintaining identity. These units were not fixed as previously believed, instead, they were flexible according to modern scholarship. Historians have become increasingly fascinated by the term kinship and its impact on the solidarities of lords in the medieval period. Kinship, as shown in the historiography, has been freely used by medievalists.

Lorraine Lancaster has aptly defined kinship as the study of investigating the affiliation of individuals by tracing their descent. She believed that 'every individual has, in general, the option of tracing affiliation to a set of persons through both his parents (and their descendants) and his parents' parents (and their descendants) and so on.'<sup>38</sup> She supposed that it was uncertain as to which cousins were included.<sup>39</sup> Historians have been employing kinship more in their discussions on the medieval aristocratic family. Now with a clear definition of kinship, an explanation of the structure of this chapter can be described.

The chapter will examine the concept of kin-based action groups. It intends to explain how we can use the theory to compare the lords of the North Sea against each other. Following the key theoretical framework, the medieval charter will be examined. The charter is a crucial source of medieval Europe and it represented an occasion where we will see many of our themes come together in one place. Our charters, moreover, were not

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<sup>37</sup> Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin*, p. 200.

<sup>38</sup> L. Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', *The British Journal of Sociology* 9 (1958), pp. 230–250, at p. 232.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

usually regional texts, in fact, many were created by central authorities. We will investigate the murder of Count Charles the Good of Flanders as a case study in order to finish this introduction. The purpose of the case study will be to illuminate the key themes which the North-Sea lords will be compared against. These themes will be: fluidity of kinship; regional ties; and relationship to central authorities.

History is not the only discipline to converse about kinship. Sociology has also used kinship in perceiving the modern administrative boundaries of the state and whether the perceived borders of a state matched connections of blood. Vaseline Popovski and Nicholas Turner, in their investigation on a 'kin-state' of the modern period, asserted that today's current map is an artificial construct with arbitrary borders, noting the 'rich tapestry' that exists of ethnicity, religion and linguistic minorities.<sup>40</sup> In an ideal scenario, those with kin in another state should provide the basis for friendly interaction. Popovski and Turner's assertion can be applied to medieval Europe to an extent. Historians of the twentieth century have used borders based on a national identity and ethnicity in their descriptions of political development.<sup>41</sup> It has negated the existing cultural provinces and blood connections, however, that represented these territories. The study of kinship in early medieval Europe is not a new phenomenon; however, the focus on national identity can overshadow regional kin networks.

Some historians have been sceptical of using kinship as a way of studying aristocratic families. Henry Loyn, developing on from Lancaster's work, for instance, argued that lordship was increasing in authority at the expense of kindred. He cited how Athelstan's London decrees were designed to promote lordly authority to secure peace.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> V. Popovski and N. Turner, 'Blood across borders: The role of the kin-state in minority protection', eds. W. Kemp, V. Popovski and R. Thakur, *Blood Borders: The Responsibility to Protect and the Problem of the Kin-State* (Tokyo, 2011), pp. 231–239, at p. 231.

<sup>41</sup> A prevalent problem in English Anglo-Saxon historiography, see: T. Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. J. Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), p. 17.

<sup>42</sup> H. Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 3 (1974), pp. 197–209, at p. 199.

They were intended to place limitation on feuding amongst different kindreds.<sup>43</sup> He recognised that in society kinship remained an ‘immensely strong’ factor, however, despite these developments.<sup>44</sup> The issue in this argument is that laws from the West Saxon court are difficult to measure in terms of effectiveness. Similarly to charters, they present a central figure and an inherent loyalty from the regions of England at this point.

Loyn also examined the role of marriages in kin groups. Marriage was a secular affair and a priest was only needed to officiate. The groom promised to maintain the bride, pay remuneration for her upbringing, grant a gift for her suit, and grant provision for her if he died. These conditions needed to be met to a satisfactory standard for the bride’s kin. The children from this marriage, however, followed their father’s kin group.<sup>45</sup> This introduction to kinship will now present significant studies that have moved the use of kinship research forward.

Norman historians have shown how kinship allowed lords to have changing relationships with leading figures. Lords did not have relationships with central authorities that were fixed by structural institutions. Aristocrats, moreover, also saw kinship affect their standing with the lesser aristocracy. These lesser lords were the regional men in the authority of territorial lordships.<sup>46</sup> Mark Hagger, for example, investigated the influence of kinship in his study on Hugh Grandmesnil from the eleventh century. He discussed how Hugh’s familial holding, centred on Grandmesnil, brought the family into contact with the Giroies.<sup>47</sup> Such contact affected the marriage policies of lords. Hagger explained how Hugh’s father had been married to Hawisa the daughter of Giroie.<sup>48</sup> He argued that such marriages allowed historians to understand what the territorial interests of lords were.

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>46</sup> M. Hagger, ‘Kinship and Identity in eleventh-century Normandy: The case of Hugh Grandmesnil, c. 1040–1098’, *Journal of Medieval History* 32 (2006), pp. 212–230, at p. 213.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

Hugh, for example, had four daughters and three sons. Hugh's offspring all married into Norman families despite his gains in England. Three of the four daughters respectively married Robert of Courcy, Hugh of Montpinçon and William of Sai. These marriages continued to solidify his regional authority in Normandy, as Montpinçon and Courcy were neighbours of his lands.<sup>49</sup> Hagger's research reveals that networks of kin ties occurred in Normandy. These networks have been shown to spread east of Normandy too.

Kathleen Thompson's article on William Talvas is an excellent example of understanding individual lords and how they were connected to a wider network of aristocrats in their regions. Talvas was the only child of Robert of Bellême and Agnes. His mother was the heiress of the county of Ponthieu.<sup>50</sup> Thompson asserts that such connections allowed Talvas to foster links between the kings of England and France in the early twelfth century. After King Henry of England's death the family's Norman lands were restored. Thompson believed that Talvas returned to Normandy leaving the county of Ponthieu to his sons Guy and later John. According to Thompson, the family, ultimately, created a network of contacts which allowed them to forge alliances with neighbours in their localities. She asserted that King Henry, by denying the family their English lands, had forced them to enter a French world where they were 'prepared to accept a new French overlord'.<sup>51</sup>

The evidence above stresses how kinship saw changes in associations for the aristocrats of northern France. Lords were capable of establishing links across polities, which fits into the discussion in the previous chapter on contact zones. Areas such the Vexin had hybrid identities. The research above suggests the lords of the North Sea may also have fostered relationships based on this too. Mark Hagger has aptly concluded that it

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>50</sup> K. Thompson, 'William Talvas, count of Ponthieu, and the politics of the Anglo-Norman realm', eds. D. Bates and A. Curry, *England and Normandy in The Middle Ages* (London, 1994), pp. 169–184, at p. 170.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

is surprising that historians have assumed that alliances and friendships were long-lasting; he appropriately continued that, even today, we have changing relationships with friends and family.<sup>52</sup> Kinship studies, however, have not been limited to Normandy.

Anglo-Saxon historians have also attempted to ascertain the effects of kinship in local politics. Charles Insley investigated the role of kinship in the local politics of early eleventh-century Mercia. He acknowledged that the English state was a powerful one, but he understood that much of this authority ‘rested on personal bonds and relationships; between the king and his nobles’.<sup>53</sup> Insley saw Æthelred II’s reign as a prime example of institutions surviving the conquest of Cnut and the relationships with the nobility falling apart.<sup>54</sup> He used the murders of Ealdorman Ælfhelm of York in 1006 and his kinsmen Sigferth and Morcar in 1015 to make his point.

According to Insley, animosity may have spilled over between Ælfhelm and Eadric due to friction within their locality. Ælfhelm by 993, as an ealdorman, was part of a dominant group at court that included Æthelweard the Chronicler and the king’s mother, Ælfthryth. Eadric’s family, however, had been present at court since the 980s. In 1006, Ælfhelm was killed in Shropshire, according to the *Worcester Chronicle* because of the plotting of Eadric.<sup>55</sup> The murders linked to Eadric continued into the eleventh century. Two thegns, Sigferth and Morcar, were killed in 1015 at Oxford. Insley said that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and John of Worcester had portrayed ‘this murder in terms of the animosity between Eadric and Sigferth as well as Morcar’.<sup>56</sup> Insley persuasively reasoned that Eadric’s family were drawn into conflict with leading midland figures in order to climb the political ladder. This was because their lands were situated in Shropshire and

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<sup>52</sup> Hagger, ‘Kinship and Identity in eleventh-century Normandy’, p. 229.

<sup>53</sup> C. Insley, ‘Politics, Conflict and Kinship in Early Eleventh-Century Mercia’, *Midland History* 25 (2000), pp. 28–42, at p. 28.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30 and 31.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

Staffordshire, and they were also recorded in Domesday Book being held by Leofric of Mercia for 1066, which led Insley to hypothesise that Eadric had seized them years before.<sup>57</sup>

Andrew Wareham described each generation as either expanding or contracting, depending on the ‘interplay of politics, royal patronage, marriage alliances and “fictive” kinship strategies such as fosterage, god parenthood and so on’.<sup>58</sup> Wareham supposed that Europe transformed to an agnatic patrilinear structure through several stages. The first stage was described as an ‘intermediate’ phase, in which the aristocracy began to invest in family monasteries, seek marriages between neighbours and cousins, and focus on the male line.<sup>59</sup> The ‘intermediate’ stage later evolved to an ‘advanced’ phase in which castle building became more prevalent, along with an increase in actions for the preservation of patrimonies and the commissioning of a complex genealogy.<sup>60</sup> The theme of kinship has also been employed to better understand the regional politics of northern England in the early medieval period by Wareham.

Wareham, in a separate paper, noted that Ealdorman Uhtred of Northumbria had gathered enemies from his three marriages. The last two marriages were to Sige, daughter of Styr of York, and Ælfgifu daughter of King Æthelred II.<sup>61</sup> Uhtred, on account of these two women, was in conflict with Thurbrand Hold and Cnut after the Danish leader had taken the English throne. Uhtred was later killed at Cnut’s court by Thurbrand. Wareham has remarked that such marriages caused lords to come into contact with new men who might later become enemies.<sup>62</sup> The historiography of kinship appears to stress the

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> A. Wareham, ‘Transformation of kinship and the family in late Anglo-Saxon England’, *EME* 10 (2001), pp. 375–399, at pp. 375 and 376.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> A. Wareham, ‘Two Models of Marriage: Kinship and the Social Order in England and Normandy’, eds. H. Teunis, A. Wareham and A. Bijsterveld, *Negotiating Secular and Ecclesiastical Power* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 107–132, at pp. 108 and 109.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

importance of the male line, but we also need to understand the impact of women on kinship for North-Sea families.

Women did play a role in the regional politics of a lordship. The sources often reveal women being a significant part in bond building through marriage. Women have been shown in medieval Europe to have been capable of managing alliances through control of the household. Kimberly LoPrete, for example, has stressed that Adela of Blois's marriage to Count Stephen emphasised how both natal and affinal kin were considered.<sup>63</sup> LoPrete went as far as to state, furthermore, that Adela's husband saw his wife's family as part of his own.<sup>64</sup> While Stephen was on crusade evidence suggested that Adela even exercised full comital authority.<sup>65</sup> Adela was an exceptionally powerful woman for the eleventh century. She was certainly not typical; however, women in England were figures in kinship.

Wareham wrote that the 'female social exogamy should not be underestimated' in the study of kinship.<sup>66</sup> This was displayed in Ealdred's connections in Yorkshire through his mother's and daughter's marriages. Ecgfrida, Ealdred's mother, married Kilvert son of Ligulf of Yorkshire, and Ealdred's daughter, Æthelthryth, married Orm son of Gamel, lord of Kirkdale of Yorkshire.<sup>67</sup> These connections allowed Ealdred from his Northumbrian base to continue to resist Earl Eirik who was granted all of Northumbria by Cnut. Eirik died in 1024 and his son Haakon died approximately in 1030, which meant Ealdred was safe.<sup>68</sup>

Women, therefore, impacted on the regional politics of territorial lordships.

Historians, typically, have stressed how marriages created alliances. Wives, however, also

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<sup>63</sup> K. LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship', ed. T. Evergates, *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France* (Philadelphia, PA, 1999), pp. 7–43, at p. 26.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>66</sup> Wareham, 'Two Models of Marriage', p. 113.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109–112.

created new networks for territorial aristocrats. They could provide authority to rulership, access to more powerful contacts, or more dangerously contact to new threats. Kinship appears, moreover, to illuminate our sources when large groups come into conflict. Historians tend to describe such occasions as feuds. The term feud often arises in studies of kinship; however, we must understand what an early medieval feud is. This introduction, as a result, will briefly define an early medieval feud and examine its features.

Comparative study has highlighted how common feuding was and still is in societies.<sup>69</sup> Guy Halsall investigated the concept of feuds, paying particular attention to the violence enacted that accompanied them. Halsall has stressed that the connotations surrounding the word feud were linked to vendetta. The modern-day perception of a vendetta and a feud is ‘an ongoing relationship between two groups, marked by reciprocal acts of violence, each of which is carried out as revenge for the previous act.’<sup>70</sup> Halsall argued that feuds could have taken place only amongst those of similar social standing, economic capability and political stature.<sup>71</sup> Members of feuding groups saw their lineages suffer. Groups, therefore, sought vengeance if the rival group could not understand their wrong-doing.<sup>72</sup> Halsall, nevertheless, aimed to present early medieval *feuda*, *faitha* or *faethe* as inherently different from modern-day understanding.

He divided the violence of medieval Europe into two groups: one was tactical, the second was strategic. Tactical violence was characterised by rivals being incapacitated or killed, land and property being seized, and wrongs that had occurred to one side being

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<sup>69</sup> G. Ausenda and S. Barnish, ‘A comparative discussion of Langobardic feud and blood-money compensation with parallels from contemporary anthropology and from medieval history’, eds. G. Ausenda, P. Delogu, and C. Wickham, *The Langobards before the Frankish Conquest: An Ethnographic Perspective* (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 309–339, at pp. 318 and 326. The authors compared the relative price of blood-money of the Langobards to modern day Somalians.

<sup>70</sup> G. Halsall, ‘Reflections on Early Medieval Violence: The example of the “Blood Feud”’, *Memoria y Civilización* 2 (1999), pp. 7–29, at p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> Ausenda and Barnish, ‘A Comparative Discussion of Langobardic Feud’, p. 310.

inflicted with a similar injury.<sup>73</sup> Halsall described the relationship as being a direct one and the disputant's aim being achieved through violence. Strategic violence, by contrast, was the true feud of early medieval Europe. The strategic pathway was taken by those who were uncertain of success through mere violence.<sup>74</sup> As a consequence, the party took a public stance of anger and committed nominal violence. The true aim of this, however, was to draw attention to the quarrel, hoping for third parties to mediate the issue.<sup>75</sup> Either approach, for Halsall, created or activated the bonds of kinship or even friendship. He concluded that actions were not born from 'mindless thuggery' in this period.<sup>76</sup>

The studies examined so far provide us a basis to investigate kinship within localities; however, a concept has been developed for the actions of kindreds to assist our explanations of an aristocrat's behaviour. We must, therefore, apply the sociological theory that was devised by John Freedman in his anthropological study. He asserted that the use of the kindred term should be reserved for cognates, meaning a blood relative, and believed that an affine, a relative by marriage, was never included in the embrace of kindred. Freedman hypothesised that these kindreds formed action groups which were for a specific purpose and therefore they were temporary.<sup>77</sup> Members were cognates, but non-kindred were also included in the shape of affines. These cognatic ties established networks which provided an opportunity for further action groups to emerge.<sup>78</sup>

Kin-based action groups, therefore, were formed for a clear purpose, usually blood vengeance or the swearing of oaths, and 'may, for a period, become solidary groups.'<sup>79</sup> Freedman convincingly applied this to the Iban culture in Borneo, which he described as a

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<sup>73</sup> Halsall, 'Reflections on Early Medieval Violence', p. 11.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>77</sup> J. Freedman, 'On the Concept of the Kindred', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 91 (1961), pp. 192–220, at p. 202.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

group of people that were in ‘a network of interlocking kindreds.’<sup>80</sup> Inside their longhouses there were cognate families living in apartments. The founding families took precedence and were situated at the centre with their siblings and close cousins. Anyone outside of this was linked through a cognate relationship to the centre.<sup>81</sup> Thus, this meant that two unrelated families could become part of the same kindred through their relationship to the core. We must understand, however, that Freedman did not believe this was a fixed relationship. Membership, therefore, was open and people could leave the group and change in the group was possible through relation to another core. Freedman has it that a kin-based action group, although not a permanent fixture, was one that could last for months or years.<sup>82</sup> The group usually disbanded when the objective had been achieved. The group established a common purpose and a leader. Freedman claimed that the Iban were a bilateral society, reckoned through both the mother’s and father’s ancestry. He concluded that other societies that were bilateral would have likely seen these action groups.<sup>83</sup>

Heather Tanner applied Freedman’s research to her investigation on the counts of Boulogne. An objective behind this was to present the county of Boulogne as a lordship that was not held in fief from the counts of Flanders.<sup>84</sup> This was because she could not find any evidence that the counts of Flanders between 879 and 1159 had granted the Boulonnais county in *ex beneficia* as they had done with the *fisc* of Harnes.<sup>85</sup> Tanner believed that this was in opposition to Jean Dunbabin’s and Dominique Barthélemy’s sphere of influence models.<sup>86</sup> She believed that the feudal bonds that were purported were

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>84</sup> H. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879–1160* (Leiden, 2004), p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7. For Dunbabin, see: J. Dunbabin, *France in the Making 843–1180*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 2000), pp. 93–98. Dunbabin described areas that were decentralized due to overlapping zones of influence, it

flawed as the sources provide no evidence for them, reminiscent of Susan Reynold's assertions approximately ten years earlier and examined in chapter one.<sup>87</sup> In addition to Tanner disputing the existence of the feudal bonds, she also queried the hypothesis outlined by Bouchard, whereby brothers on opposing sides in war did not recognise each other.<sup>88</sup> Tanner believed, by contrast, that the 'determining factor in these cases was not who an individual considered a relative, but rather shared-territorial interests.'<sup>89</sup> The crucial point she established was that the counts of Boulogne joined action groups that had opposing aims to those of the counts of Flanders.<sup>90</sup> She identified this through their relationships with Lorraine, Picardy, England and Normandy, which the Flemish could not stop.<sup>91</sup> Such notions of flexibility and choice have also been discussed by Scandinavian historians. Lars Ivar Hansen reasoned, for example, that the kinship practised in Nordic regions was not based solely on biological factors; friendships, political alliances and marriages were just as important.<sup>92</sup> Hansen also identified that Scandinavian historians had issued a call to include friendships and fostering into the discussion far more.<sup>93</sup>

Heather Tanner qualified her arguments further by stating that territorial interests could remain opposed for extended passages of time.<sup>94</sup> These differing interests, moreover, led to the appearance of longstanding rivalries. She outlined that 'in the scramble for honour, the tenth century is characterized by an increased willingness of the counts to use force to seize counties from minor heirs and legitimize their acquisitions through a *post*

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included Picardy and Boulogne. For Barthélemy, see: D. Barthélemy, *L'Ordre Seigneurial XIe-XIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1990), p. 22. Barthélemy described the county of Boulogne as part of an external zone to the Flemish count's authority.

<sup>87</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 39.

<sup>88</sup> Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies*, p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> L. I. Hansen, 'The Concept of Kinship: According to West Nordic Medieval Laws', eds. P. Andersen, D. Tamm, and H. Vogt, *How Nordic are the Nordic Medieval Laws? Proceedings from the first Carlsberg Conference on Medieval Legal History*, 2nd Edition (Copenhagen, 2011), pp. 177–206, at p. 181.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies*, p. 12.

*factum* recognition of the church and its saints.<sup>95</sup> Tanner continued that tenth-century kinship saw ‘shared territorial interests which determined which kin were called upon to achieve one’s goal’.<sup>96</sup> The younger male members needed relatives with whom they could share a territorial interest and provide military resources in order to preserve their inheritance.<sup>97</sup> Tanner reasoned, as an example of the possible motivations and effects of marriage, that when Hugh the Great married King Edward of Wessex’s daughter, Eadhild, the union provided prestige but it did not change the fact that both sides lacked a territorial interest.<sup>98</sup> Hugh’s later marriage to Otto I’s sister, Hadwig, however, provided a common concern in limiting the Burgundian duke’s expansion.<sup>99</sup> Tanner argued that northern France was under the influence of Carolingian administration; however, by the end of the tenth century, the counts of northern France were firmly rooted within a kinship system.<sup>100</sup> The discovery of kin-networks requires using similar and different sources from the previous territory chapter.

This chapter will continue to use the regional sources that were employed for the investigation on aristocratic territory; however, it will also apply charters which, in the case of Essex, Eu and Guines are derived from central authorities. Charters are administrative documents which predominantly show a land exchange, an agreement, a dispute or a penalty.<sup>101</sup> They record an occasion at court held usually by the leading figure of the realm. The scribe of the charter is usually unknown, but he is likely to have been an ecclesiastic in service of the kings of England and France or the duke of Normandy and

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<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>101</sup> S. Keynes, ‘Charters and Writs’, ed. M. Lapidge, *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of England* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 99–100, at p. 99; and P. Stafford, ‘Political Ideas in late Tenth Century England: Charters as Evidence’, eds. P. Stafford, J. Nelson and J. Martindale, *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds* (Manchester, 2001), pp. 68–82, at p. 69.

count of Flanders.<sup>102</sup> A charter provides an image of the world from the court's perspective, rather than the locality's understanding. A land grant charter typically begins with a spiritual clause giving gratitude to God and the Holy Spirit; this was followed by the details of the grant, and then almost a 'curse' which would be of biblical origin as a warning to anyone who would challenge the contents of the charter. An original charter from the Seine-Maritime, for example, declared that if anyone contradicted its contents they would be swallowed into the ground.<sup>103</sup> Finally, a charter was authenticated with a mark by the witness and the scribe would write out their name.<sup>104</sup>

Historians have debated the possibility of an Anglo-Saxon chancery in the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>105</sup> Pierre Chaplais believed that charters were not produced by a secular royal court. Instead the charters were created by interested ecclesiastics or the bishop of the shire where the land mentioned lay in.<sup>106</sup> Keynes argued that this may be due to the bias in survival, as they come from monastic archives. So those concerned with laymen did not fit into the archives' interests.<sup>107</sup> For Insley it is 'inconceivable' that the king had no involvement in the production of charters.<sup>108</sup> Insley correctly cautions whether the witness list was part of the witan, but this did not mean the document was drawn up at the event.<sup>109</sup>

Simon Keynes, in his investigation into the royal diplomas of Æthelred II's reign, reasoned that the order of witnesses in the charters represented their standing in the royal court.<sup>110</sup> To explain this further, we can look at S836, which has been described by Keynes

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<sup>102</sup> S. Keynes, 'Charters and Writs', p. 99.

<sup>103</sup> *ADSM*, 14 H 327.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> For a clear and broader examination of the debate on an Anglo-Saxon chancery, see: C. Insley, 'Charters and episcopal scriptoria in the Anglo-Saxon South-West', *EME* 7 (1998), pp. 173–197, at pp. 179–184.

<sup>106</sup> P. Chaplais, 'The Anglo-Saxon "Chancery" of the Tenth Century Revisited', eds. H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore, *Studies in Medieval History: Presented to R. H. C. Davies* (Hambleton, 1985), pp. 41–51, at p. 53.

<sup>107</sup> S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978–1016* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 38–39.

<sup>108</sup> Insley, 'Charters and episcopal scriptoria', p. 183.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready'*, p. 156.

as an authentic document.<sup>111</sup> The charter was issued in the year 980 and, in the grant, King Æthelred II gave to the Old Minster of Winchester one and a half hides of land for a fishery in Calshot, Hampshire.<sup>112</sup> The grant was in return for a gold bracelet. The witness list included two archbishops and they were followed by seven bishops and six ealdormen who were styled as *dux*.<sup>113</sup> In order, the ealdormen were Ælfhere, Æthelwine, Byrhtnoth, Æthelweard, Æthelmær and Eadwine. We can deduce, using Keynes' methodology, that in 980 Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia was the highest ranking *dux* at court. He held, therefore, the most influence out of the aristocratic cohort within a royal assembly.<sup>114</sup> Insley suggested, however, that we should proceed with caution with Keynes's theory. He argued that some aristocrats may have taken precedence over more regular attendees, and some may have been included in the witness list despite not attending.<sup>115</sup> Although we will attempt to discover our lords' position at their central authorities' courts it is not imperative to do so for establishing their regional networks. We will, nevertheless, listen to Insley's cautions by establishing our lords' long-term position in the attestation ranks. Charters from Anglo-Saxon England, by contrast to those on the continent of Europe, come from the king or at least favour kingship. We certainly have a greater corpus to use, but this does not include any charters created by an aristocrat. We will now examine the account of the murder of Charles the Good of Flanders as an example of the impact of kinship in medieval society.

Evidence of kinship ties can be viewed in the account by Galbert of Bruges on the murder of Count Charles of Flanders. The account was compiled in the twelfth century and

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238. Also see: Insley, 'Charters and episcopal scriptoria', p. 181. We need to be aware that the terms 'authentic', 'forgery' and 'original' are problems in themselves for charter studies. Insley has appropriately noted that 'no Anglo-Saxon charter is, strictly speaking, an original.'

<sup>112</sup> S836.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> C. Insley, 'Assemblies and Charters in Late Anglo-Saxon England', eds. P. Barnwell and M. Mostert, *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 47–59, at p. 52.

was likely composed between October and December in 1127, the murder itself having been committed on 2 March 1127.<sup>116</sup> James Bruce Ross informs us that Galbert made notes only a couple of days after the events so he could complete a full narration later.<sup>117</sup> The record reveals how Bertulf the Provost of Bruges and a member of the Erembald kin, along with his brother the castellan of Bruges and their nephews were attempting to avoid servitude and cease owing service to the count.<sup>118</sup> The count attempted to claim the Erembald kin into his service and backed their rivals, the Stratens family who were in conflict with the Erembalds. The nephews of Bertulf besieged the house of Stratens under the direction of Bertulf.<sup>119</sup> Charles demanded an end to the hostilities. The Erembald kin met and agreed to betray the count.<sup>120</sup> In these discussions, however, one of the nephews, Robert the Younger, resisted and attempted to leave stating he did not wish to become a traitor against the count.<sup>121</sup> The murder was committed at Saint Donatien's Church to which the count had been followed by a nephew named Borsiard and his knights.

In this account we can see that medieval aristocrats had choices and they were not bound by social structures to one particular action. The kin-based action groups described by Heather Tanner, furthermore, were visible in this record. The Erembalds feared losing their status in society and Count Charles sought to back a rival kin group, the Stratens, to assist him in bringing the Erembalds under his lordship. By supporting the Stratens the count had increased the anxiety within the Erembald kin who were acting as a single unit in their conflict against the Stratens. The pressure created by the count, moreover, saw the Erembalds collude to eliminate Charles the Good. Robert the Younger, one of the

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<sup>116</sup> J. B. Ross, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. J. B. Ross, *The Murder of Charles the Good* (New York, 1967), pp. 3–75, at pp. 64–65.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>118</sup> Galbert of Bruges, *Passio Karoli comitis auctore Galberto*, ed. R. Köpke, *MGH, SS 12* (Hanover, 1856), pp. 561–619, Chapters 7–12, pp. 565–568. For an English translation, see: Galbert of Bruges, 'The Murder of Charles the Good', ed. and trans. J. B. Ross, *The Murder of Charles the Good* (New York, 1967), pp. 77–312, pp. 97–112.

<sup>119</sup> Galbert of Bruges, *Passio Karoli comitis auctore Galberto*, Chapter 9, p. 566.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 10, p. 566.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 11, p. 567.

nephews, however, did not want to betray the count. Robert's reluctance shows us the choices that were available to a lord and as a consequence of Robert's unease; Issac, Walter and Borsiard met again after concealing their treachery to complete their plan for killing Charles. The twelfth-century account, therefore, has stressed that kin-groups were prevalent in this period and were key components in disputes. Additionally, the Erembalds emphasised that there was evidence for the kin-groups still holding a greater power than 'feudal law' would allow as they were able to openly resist the count.

This chapter will now compare the regions of eastern England, eastern Normandy, western Flanders and central Norway against the three themes of: fluidity of kinship; regional kinship and relationships to central authority. For western Flanders, we will examine the county of Saint-Pol as well as Guines, as their charters reveal the extent of regional relationships in the region. As a result of the limitations of sources and political developments in the eleventh century, however, this solidarities chapter will investigate the county of Eu instead of the county of Arques. The reasoning for the change in county is because the county of Arques and the family line ceases to continue after the removal of William of Arques by Duke William of Normandy. The county does not appear again, but a *vicomte* of Arques emerges; however, it is difficult for us to create a clear line of continuity and would alter the parameters of the study due the different role a *vicomte* had compared to a count, as explained in chapter two.<sup>122</sup> We need to keep in mind that current historiography equates an ealdormanry and jarldom with a county, as noted in chapter one.<sup>123</sup> We will now examine the flexibility of North-Sea kin groups of the North-Sea aristocracy.

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<sup>122</sup> *OV*, 2, Book 3, p. 10. *Vicomte* Goscelin of Arques founded the abbey of the Holy Trinity outside of Rouen.

<sup>123</sup> *Vita Edwardi Regis*, ed. F. Barlow, *The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster attributed to a monk of Saint-Bertin*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1–127, pp. 24 and 26.

### 3.1. FLUIDITY OF KIN

Kin groups in the North-Sea world were not fixed and maintained by all members of the family. Kin groups developed over time and connections, also, evolved and changed. There is evidence, in some instances, for stable groups that continue links over an extended period of time. This is not evidence, nevertheless, for a fixed family policy and an everlasting relationship between two groups. Aristocrats in this period were capable of making choices when it came to their kin groups and this often saw differences amongst family members as to whom were their allies. These fluctuations were not only between families, but they also occurred inside the family, especially when it came to brothers. The focus on this theme will be on the counts of Eu and jarls of Trøndelag as they provide the best examples to explore the adaptable nature of relationships. The aristocrats of eastern England, as will be shown in the following regional kinship section, maintained very stable relationships. We do not mean to say, of course, that was because oaths were static and families remained in unison.

The county of Eu provides an excellent insight into the nature of family relations and the choices available to its members. Count William I of Eu was a son of Duke Richard I of Normandy by one of Richard's many concubines (see figure 2.2). William of Eu rebelled against his half-brother Duke Richard II in the late tenth century.<sup>124</sup> Before this rebellion William had been granted the Hiemois but not Eu, which he received after he was reconciled with the duke.<sup>125</sup> William's sons, William Busac and Robert, returned to their father's post in the mid-eleventh century, which will be explored further below. The siblings made separate choices when it came to their relationships within Normandy.

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<sup>124</sup> *GND*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 3, p. 8.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

The interpolations of Orderic Vitalis in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* reported that William Busac, like his father William, rebelled against the duke.<sup>126</sup> The rebellion saw Duke William besiege the castle of Eu with an army and the duke forced Busac and his kinsmen into exile.<sup>127</sup> Busac, due to his fame as a soldier and his nobility, was pitied by the king of France, who allowed the lord to stay at his court.<sup>128</sup> The French king gave him the county of Soissons, and an original royal charter shows Busac's son attesting as count of Soissons. William Busac married Adelaide, daughter of Count Rainold of Soissons, before 1057 and their son, Rainold, acquired the county of Soissons.<sup>129</sup> David Douglas was sceptical of this arrangement, but Elisabeth van Houts believed his scepticism was unfounded.<sup>130</sup>

Busac decided to continue his father's actions against the duke. In addition, similarly to his father, he was able to gain support amongst his kinsmen to participate in this endeavour. By contrast to his father, Busac was able to escape and what is intriguing is that he was able to gain a new lordship through his association to the French king and the count of Soissons. The ability to access new networks is reminiscent of the Vexin lords discussed in chapter two. As a result of the Vexin and Eu being situated on the periphery of the duchy, the border lords had access to the courts of the dukes of Normandy and kings of France. Busac's situation appears to suggest that aristocrats had the choice of moving between central figures. For us it is plausible, furthermore, that this was expected amongst central authorities who were looking to gain an advantage against their rivals. The mid-eleventh century is a prime example of the deteriorating relationship between the duke of Normandy and king of France. The French king, therefore, may have believed that gaining the service of Busac who held notoriety was a positive acquisition in his ongoing friction

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<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 7, Chapter (20), p. 128.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> *Recueil des actes de Philippe Ier, roi de France 1059–1108*, ed. M. Prou (Paris, 1908), nos. 108 and 110.

<sup>130</sup> *GND*, 2, p. 128, n. 3.

with the Norman dukes. Orderic informed the reader that Busac had been exiled but his brother Robert had not followed him.<sup>131</sup>

Robert, unlike his older brother, remained in Normandy and became the count of Eu.<sup>132</sup> Robert's occupation of the Eu county suggests that families, as argued by Bouchard, were not perceived as one political unit by medieval society.<sup>133</sup> This meant that the members of the family could choose to act in different groups that had varying intentions. William of Poitiers recorded that Robert of Eu was one of the leaders of the ducal army at Mortemer in 1054.<sup>134</sup> William was the archdeacon of Lisieux and likely had close contact with Bishop Hugh of Lisieux. Hugh was the brother of Count Robert, therefore, Archdeacon William likely fostered close links to the Eu family.<sup>135</sup> William of Poitiers described King Robert the Pious of France invading with his son Odo and having been defeated; he was chased by Robert, count of Eu, along with Hugh of Gournay, Hugh of Montfort, Walter Giffard and William Crispin.<sup>136</sup> The Norman victors were successful in capturing Count Guy of Poitou too.<sup>137</sup>

Robert continued a policy of close interaction with the dukes, similarly to William I of Eu after he had apologised to Duke Richard II. William of Poitiers described Robert as an advisor of Duke William upon hearing of Harold's accession to the English crown.<sup>138</sup> William of Poitiers also described Richard of Évreux, Roger of Beaumont, Roger of Montgomery, William fitzOsbern and Hugh the vicecomte as advisors.<sup>139</sup> We must acknowledge that Duke William became a very capable ruler as he aged. In his minority, he had seen many of his protectors killed and, upon his majority, had won the battle at Val-ès-

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter (20), p. 128.

<sup>132</sup> *OV*, 2, Book 4, p. 230.

<sup>133</sup> Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 1, Chapter 31, p. 48.

<sup>135</sup> M. Chibnall, 'Introduction', eds. R. Davies and M. Chibnall, *The Gesta Guillemi of William of Poitiers* (Oxford, 1998), pp. xv–xlvi, at p. xvi.

<sup>136</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 1, Chapter 31, p. 48.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 2, Chapter 1, pp. 100 and 102.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

Dunes in 1047. Robert of Eu, therefore, was in the remit of a particularly strong central figure. As a consequence, due to the duke's effective rule, it was in the interest of the Eu lord to cooperate in order to maintain his patrimony, which had been lost once before. More importantly, however, Robert and Busac stress that aristocrats were selecting whom to be in allegiance with and this was an individual choice. The decision was not enforced by a head of household.

Robert's close relationship with the duke is revealed in the ducal charters of the period. A charter from 1051 informs us how Count Robert of Eu and his wife Beatrice gave to Isembert, abbot of Sainte-Trinité du Mont in Rouen, the forest of Epinany and its dependencies in exchange for sixty pounds of money. The charter reveals a *vicomte* of Eu in the witness list, called Gosfred the son of Osbern of Eu.<sup>140</sup> The charter, furthermore, was attested by many notable lords of William's ducal court such as Roger Montgomery and William FitzOsbern.<sup>141</sup> Robert's elevation at the ducal court was not short-lived. Charters which are dated between 1050 and 1066 reveal that he continued to be present at the ducal court and solidify his position in which he moved towards the central authority for protection. Robert's last five attestations expose his leaning to the ducal court. These include an original charter outlining a confirmation by Duke William for Roger of Cleres's gift to Saint Ouen.<sup>142</sup> The charters show Robert of Eu selecting to hold a different relationship with the dukes of Normandy than his brother Busac. Robert decided, after two failed rebellions by his father and his brother, not to initiate a third revolt which he likely felt would have been a futile exercise.

The benefits of Robert's decision can be seen in the conquest of England. Orderic described the post-conquest implications and the involvement of Count Robert of Eu.

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<sup>140</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961), no. 123. A copy from the eleventh century.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> See: *ADSM*, 14 H 327; and *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, nos. 200, 208, 219 and 220.

Robert was portrayed as a close advocate of the new king of England; he was left at Lindsey with Count Robert of Mortain to prevent the Danes from escaping.<sup>143</sup> The two counts were successful in removing the threat and forcing the Danes to return to their ships. Robert of Eu, along with Eustace of Boulogne, Robert of Mortain, William of Évreux, and Geoffrey the son of Rotrou of Mortagne, were those named by Orderic as being richly rewarded for their endeavours.<sup>144</sup>

The counts of Eu show us that relationships were not tied in feudal bonds in medieval Normandy. William Busac and Robert of Eu exemplify this fluidity because, despite being brothers, Robert did not continue William's policy of dissension against the Norman duke. He joined the Norman action group and, in turn, was richly rewarded. The change in objectives and action groups differs from the Essex lords, where an eastern England association was well-maintained through marriage as will be displayed in the regional network segment. Paradoxically Robert and the ealdormen of Essex, Busac was in exile. He was welcomed into the court of the king of France and continued to maintain his status. Busac, furthermore, after losing his patrimony, appears to have been successful in activating a new network and utilising connections to secure the county of Soissons for his son. William of Eu and William Busac were described as leaders of rebellions, suggesting their followers and members of their kin groups participated. The brothers of Eu were not unique in the North Sea with their varying political ambitions.

The jarls of Trøndelag in Norway also exhibited similar behaviour. The jarls held a close relationship with the kings of Norway, as we see in the account of King Haakon eating horse meat at the Yule feast in Trondheim under the council of Jarl Sigurth.<sup>145</sup> The arrival of the sons of Gunnhild to the throne, however, did not see a continuance of cordial relations. Sigurth did not act as a mediator and the people of Norway did not accept the

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<sup>143</sup> *OV*, 2, Book 4, p. 230.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 4, p. 266.

<sup>145</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Hákon the Good*, Chapter 18, p. 111.

laws of the sons of Gunnhild.<sup>146</sup> These incidents led to increased pressure on the sons of Gunnhild. Gunnhild is recorded to have attempted to persuade the kings to move against the Trondheim lord. King Harald was not keen, however, suggesting that the jarl's regional authority made confrontation a troubling prospect. The difficulty was due to his noble status and, also, the jarl's many friends. In addition to all this, Sigurth was a popular and clever man.<sup>147</sup>

This account reveals that offices did not instantly enforce relationships. The jarls of Trøndelag were loyal to the previous king; however, they did not wish to serve the new rulers. The reply of Harald, furthermore, suggests that aristocrats were capable of choosing, particularly if their regional rule was secure and their men loyal. As this account unravels, nevertheless, we can view a similar scenario as that of the counts of Eu.

Jarl Sigurth had a brother called Grjótgarth, who went on expeditions with Sigurth; nonetheless, he was not of the same standing, nor was he a jarl (see figure 2.4).<sup>148</sup> Harald sent overtures to Sigurth but was rebuffed in his request to meet. Consequently, Harald sent word to Grjótgarth, who promised to see the king.<sup>149</sup> At Harald's and Gunnhild's court, Grjótgarth was treated as a friend and they all discussed how Sigurth had kept his brother in a low status. They offered Grjótgarth the jarldom if he assisted in removing his brother, which Grjótgarth agreed to.<sup>150</sup>

King Harald and his brother Erling moved to Trondheimsfjord and there they were met by Grjótgarth. Together, they all went to an unnamed location where Jarl Sigurth and his followers were residing.<sup>151</sup> When the kings and the jarl's brother arrived, they

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, *Saga of Harald Greycloak*, Chapter 2, p. 131.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, pp. 132–133.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, p. 133.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 5, p. 134.

proceeded to set fire to the house and eliminated its occupants.<sup>152</sup> Grjótgarth's case was similar to the Grandmesnil brothers fighting on opposite sides during the Curthose rebellion, as established by Mark Hagger.<sup>153</sup> It is a similar scenario, moreover, to what has been described above in Eu. Similarly to Robert of Eu, Grjótgarth elected to serve the central ruler unlike his older brother. Previously, heads of households have been viewed as the leaders of family units; however, both these cases reveal the options available to each lord.<sup>154</sup> Their service to the central authority was still rewarded, in addition to this, despite both Robert and Grjótgarth being part of a family that had rebelled. These rewards suggest, therefore, what was argued by Robert Bartlett. The duke of Normandy, the king of France and kings of Norway were in effect competing for the service of high-ranking men.<sup>155</sup> The aristocrats in these instances benefited and were not grouped into family units; by contrast, each individual was accountable for his own actions rather than his brother's.

A final point to consider is the impact of oath-taking and the nature of its effects. The family of Eu before Busac's rebellion clearly made peace with the dukes of Normandy. Sigurth's son Haakon and the kings of Norway took oaths of peace.<sup>156</sup> The oath completed in Norway, like the peace established in Normandy, again appears not to have created an everlasting static relationship. William of Eu's son Busac rebelled and Snorri recorded that both Sigurth and the kings continued a policy of distrust towards each other. Haakon, Sigurth's son, made alliances with King Tryggvi Ólafson of the Viken and King Guthröth Bjarnarson of the Vestfold, along with Guthbrand of the Dales.<sup>157</sup> These three men all ruled lands that were situated to the east of the territorial heartland of the sons of Gunnhild. We can assert that the relationships seen in the North Sea created through

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> Hagger, 'Kinship and Identity in eleventh-century Normandy', p. 227.

<sup>154</sup> Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, p. 3.

<sup>155</sup> R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (London, 1993), p. 45.

<sup>156</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Harald Greycloak*, Chapter 6, p. 136.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 9, p. 137.

alliances and oaths were changeable. The alliance created by Haakon with the regional rulers was either to create a buffer zone against the sons of Gunnhild, or a regional design to remove them from Norway entirely. These leading regional figures, therefore, could form an action group, which was united by a desire to challenge the growth of royal authority.<sup>158</sup>

Susan Reynolds posited, as stated in chapter one, that the terms and mechanics of feudalism were created by Italian lawyers of the twelfth century.<sup>159</sup> These lawyers applied feudal terminology to the previous centuries. Their constructs have negated the possibility of relationships that change with time and suggested that family units and offices maintained fixed exchanges. The counts of Eu and jarls of Trøndelag, however, exemplify the nature of early medieval lordship described by Heather Tanner. Aristocrats selected their allies based on individuals and territorial interest.<sup>160</sup> Thus, brothers could rival each other in objectives and select opposite factions, leading them to fight one another. Central authorities, moreover, did not punish whole houses for rebellion and continued to reward those men who served them, despite their connections to rebelling lords, as shown by Robert of Eu and Grjótgarth.

### 3.2. REGIONAL KIN

The nature of bonds between lords clearly fluctuated. Aristocrats, like people today, saw relationships change in association to their context and to time itself. We will examine regional networks of these elite figures that existed in order to discover the regional impact on nobles' ties. This theme, as a result, focuses on aristocratic interactions outside of the family unit. We will see how the connections in the locality created power blocs and enhanced the authority of leading nobles. We will look at the ealdormanry of Essex, the

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 61.

<sup>160</sup> Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies*, p. 11.

counties of Eu, Guines and Saint-Pol, and the jarldom of Trøndelag. First we will consider the regional kin of the aristocrats of eastern England.

*The Battle of Maldon* poem shows us the extent of regional kin groups. Also it reveals ties of kinship and a kin-based strategy group response. Following Byrhtnoth's death, the poem recorded those under his lordship and described how men fled the battle, mistaking the man, Godric, who departed the battlefield on Byrhtnoth's horse, for their leader.<sup>161</sup> In lines 216 to 219, a man named Ælfwine announced that he is from *on Myrcan miccles cynnes* and that his grandfather was called Ealhelm, *a wis ealdorman woruldgesælig*.<sup>162</sup> Ealhelm was one ealdorman of Mercia who held his title at the same time as Æthelstan 'Rota' of south-east Mercia.<sup>163</sup>

Ælfwine continued to state how he was not going to run, but stand and fight. He was not going to allow thegns to taunt him for deserting *ðisse fyrde* now that Byrhtnoth, his kinsman and lord, was dead.<sup>164</sup> Ælfwine had a lower status than Byrhtnoth; however, despite his kinsman's death, he elected to continue participating in the battle. Ælfwine's speech suggests evidence for a kin-based action group between south-east Mercia and Essex at least. The events at Maldon represented a specific territorial objective. The poem does not record a response as a nation, but that of the region's noble. Byrhtnoth, therefore, travelled with men within his kin that were part of the action group. By contrast, Ealdormen Ælfric of Hampshire and Thored of Northumbria did not rally to Byrhtnoth's cause, but were recorded to have been part of a royal initiative a year later.<sup>165</sup> Æthelred's court, after the defeat at Maldon, may appear to show the strength of royal authority. We should view this as an 'England-wide' crisis affecting all regions. Maldon and the other incursions preceding it represented a return of the Viking raiders; furthermore, with the

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<sup>161</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, p. 27.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* A great kin among the Mercians. Also a wise and prosperous ealdorman.

<sup>163</sup> S485. The two nobles can be viewed in the witness list.

<sup>164</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, p. 27. This militia.

<sup>165</sup> ASC, 'C', 992.

defeat of a high-ranking noble, it must have caused a great sense of fear for all other important nobles in the region. This sense of fear can be seen a few years later in the early eleventh century through the *Sermo Lupi ad anglos*. Wulfstan in his work blamed the sins of the Anglo-Saxons for the renewed Viking assaults<sup>166</sup>

The evidence for Byrhtnoth's eastern network continues in the poem when Leofsunu, who wished to avenge his lord's death, cried out how he intended to fight on and make sure that warriors in Sturmere would not taunt him.<sup>167</sup> Sturmere is a village on the border of modern-day Suffolk and Essex and is located in the River Stour valley. If we link this back to chapter two, it was clear that the ealdormen of Essex held authority on this border and thus Leofsunu was likely a warrior from Sturmere who was under the lordship of Byrhtnoth. He was certainly inside the hybrid contact zone and accordingly fostered links to the noble family of Essex. In conjunction with Ælfwine, we see the regional authority of Byrhtnoth in both Mercia and Essex. Both Ælfwine and Leofsunu, also, elected to continue fighting after the ealdorman's death. The decision to continue the engagement was part of their duty in not retreating; however, it was also very likely that this was due to the nature of the event. Ælfwine and Leofsunu were fearful that, if the Vikings received no resistance, the invaders may have attacked their lands. It was in their territorial interest to continue to fight. Regional kin-groups clearly existed in eastern England and can also be seen across the Channel in Normandy too.

The count of Eu, who was a contemporary of Byrhtnoth in the late tenth century, also shows strong regional ties. The sources for this assertion, by contrast, are derived from documents emanating from the ducal court. There is, nevertheless, clear incidence of the strength of William of Eu's regional kin network. William of Jumièges recorded that

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<sup>166</sup> *Sermo Lupi ad anglos*, ed. D. Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi ad anglos* (London, 1952), pp. 33–54. For an English translation, see: *Sermo Lupi ad anglos* (2014), ed. and trans. R. M. Liuzza, *Beowulf*, 2nd Edition (Toronto, 2013), pp. 185–189.

<sup>167</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, p. 29.

William, the bastard of Richard I and half-brother of Richard II, briefly rebelled, but he failed in this endeavour against Richard II.<sup>168</sup> William of Jumièges did not, nonetheless, blame William of Eu entirely for this action, noting that wicked men had made the lord rebellious against his duke.<sup>169</sup> For Jumièges William, although defeated in rebellion, did not wish to take the lordship of the Hiemois and he was imprisoned for five years by Duke Richard II under the advice of Count Rodulf of Ivry.<sup>170</sup> The account claimed that William remained there for five years, whilst his followers continued to rebel until a supporter of the lord assisted William in escaping Rouen. William encountered the duke at Vernon and he fell to the floor and begged the duke for forgiveness, rather than persisting with his quarrel.<sup>171</sup> Again, Rodulf played a role in advising the duke to accept this apology. Following the rebellion, William returned into the duke's favour, was awarded the county of Eu and married Lesceline the daughter of Turketil of Tocqueville. The union was likely to be a marriage of status over strategy due to the location of Tocqueville in western Normandy.<sup>172</sup>

The account of William's rebellion in the late tenth century reveals the regional action groups in the medieval period. The case discloses a group following Count William in his objective against the duke; it can be argued that, if the followers of the count were not in agreement with William's aims, it would have been fairly easy for them to have ended their dispute with the duke. Some of these men were exiled or killed during this revolt. They continued to rebel, on William of Eu's behalf, and this led them to aid his escape too. We should not be surprised, moreover, that Rodulf of Ivry was in the duke's camp. The location of his county, unlike that of Eu, was just south of Rouen and very close to the duke's principal holdings. It was in his territorial interest to collude with the duke

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<sup>168</sup> *GND*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 3, p. 8.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

against the count of Eu, who was based on the eastern border of Normandy. The notion that the Norman dukes had also attempted to give the county of Eu to the count of Brionne shows their kin-based strategy too. Brionne territorially was close to the duke's heartland, being situated near Rouen. The Brionne lords, similarly to the counts of Ivry, were far more favourable to the duke's authority than a border lord.

William of Eu's followers were behaving in a similar fashion to their eastern England equivalents at the fall of Byrhtnoth. Both sets of men probably believed that their territorial concerns were under threat, especially Eu being a border locality. In chapter one the sea was explored as a conduit of interaction. As Essex shared a border with the North Sea, we can posit that the Viking raids of the late ninth century added to the region's identity and further separated it from the West Saxons. Border lords often harboured, as portrayed in the chapter two, networks on both sides and as result they can be perceived to have experienced cultural hybridism. In each case, therefore, when their principal lord was removed, the followers continued their action as a collective representing the locality their lord had presided over. We can also see, if we travel further east from Eu, that the lords in western Flanders were also deeply entangled in a web of regional connections.

The counts of Guines made regional connections to lords who were not only of equal status, but of lesser stature too. We have reason to assert that the two comital families sought to create mutual regional links, presumably to improve their position between the larger and more powerful counts of Boulogne to the west and Flanders to the east (see figure 1.4). The counts of Saint-Pol were situated to the south of Boulogne and Guines, but still within western Flanders. The sources available to historians do not reveal any information on how the county was created. Jean-François Nieus stated that in the tenth century the county may have been affiliated to the counts of Laon and Porcien, but

there is no certainty of this.<sup>173</sup> From the beginning of the eleventh century, however, we do see a corpus of charters from the counts which make them a useful case study. In a charter from Saint-Pol, which Jean-François Nieus believed it was created before 1051, Count Roger of Saint-Pol with his sons Manassès and Robert passed the authority of the abbey of Saint Berthe of Blangy to the Trinité de Fécamp abbey.<sup>174</sup> What is intriguing about this charter for us is the possibility of Roger's son Manassès being the later count of Guines. Lambert of Ardres recorded a Count Manassès of Guines, who was also known as Robert.<sup>175</sup>

Co-operation between these two counties in western Flanders does not appear to be implausible. A later charter of 1145, surviving in a copy from the middle of the fourteenth century, explained that Enguerran the count of Saint-Pol gave the abbey of Eaucourt all the goods which Hugues III, his father, had possessed at Courcelles and Baillescourt. Enguerran did this with the support of his brother-in-law, Anselm of Houdain.<sup>176</sup> The charter's witness list included Count Theodric of Flanders and his wife, Sibil, also their sons Baldwin and Philip, followed by Count Arnulf of Guines.<sup>177</sup> The trend appears to continue from the charter evidence.

The abbey of Saint Pierre holds a record of a grant given by Count Baldwin V, confirming to the abbey the domain of Harnes and stopping the rights of avow. The charter is dated to 1056 and has on the witness list Count Roger and his son (presumably of Saint-Pol) placed fifth and sixth, with Count Manassès of Guines located fourteenth.<sup>178</sup> This charter came after the Saint-Pol gift to Fécamp, therefore confirming the likelihood that

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<sup>173</sup> J.-F. Nieus, *Un pouvoir comtal entre Flandre et France: Saint-Pol, 1000–1300* (Brussels, 2005), p. 44.

<sup>174</sup> *Les Chartres des comtes de Saint-Pol XI–XIII siècles*, ed. J. Nieus (Turnhout, 2008), no. 1.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 8.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* Their placement was first and fifth amongst secular lords, suggesting that these men were close at court with each other in the twelfth century.

<sup>178</sup> *Chartes et documents de l'abbaye de Saint Pierre de Mont Blandin à Gand*, ed. A. van Lokren (Ghent, 1868), no. 133.

Count Manassès was related to the house of Saint-Pol.<sup>179</sup> In this charter, approximately five years later, Roger of Saint-Pol attends with only one son, presumably the younger Robert. This charter, furthermore, also lacks an attestation from the count of Boulogne in this period, Eustace II.<sup>180</sup>

The association between Guines and Saint-Pol was clearly a feature of kinship that Lambert wanted to stress in his chronicle. Lambert stated that Count Ralph of Guines had married Rosella, a daughter of Count Hugh of Saint-Pol.<sup>181</sup> Lambert was likely providing the genealogical aspect of kinship that Duby has postulated.<sup>182</sup> The association for the counts of Guines and the lords of Saint-Pol in the twelfth century was similar to what we have discussed when investigating eastern England. Noble families over the region were entangled due to their territorial and political interests. In Lambert's creation of the lineage of Guines, therefore, the association to Saint-Pol was acceptable as it was part of the regional mentality in western Flanders. We have seen that the Christian lords established regional blocs of power in order to strengthen their authority. We will now see that Norse lords maintained similar networks.

The jarldom of Trøndelag has many recorded ties to regional aristocrats. King Haakon's exchanges with the Trøndelag local aristocracy in the mid-tenth century provide us with a good starting point. Haakon, son of Harald Fairhair, returned to Norway after the death of his father and sought the aid of Jarl Sigurth.<sup>183</sup> Sigurth called an assembly where he urged everyone in the Trondheim area to select Haakon as their king.<sup>184</sup> Haakon was raised as a Christian under King Æthelstan of England but, as king of Norway, he was ruling a pagan land. Sigurth attempted to assist Haakon in ingratiating himself to local

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> Lambert, Chapter 17, p. 570.

<sup>182</sup> Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, p. 134. This is explored in greater depth in chapter four.

<sup>183</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Hákon the Good*, Chapter 1, p. 96.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

customs at a Yule festival.<sup>185</sup> Haakon was described at these events as either sitting separately from the feasting or not willing to participate in the rituals. This rejection of pagan ritual, particularly at Yule, offended the farmers of the area.<sup>186</sup> Sigurth acted as the mediator between the two parties. Ultimately, a clash ensued; eight chieftains of the Trondheim area gathered and raided Moerland, destroying three churches in the process.<sup>187</sup> On their next meeting with the king, Blótólf of Olvishaug, Narfi of Staf in the Vera Dale, Thránd Haki of Eggja and Thórir Beard of Húsabæ demanded that the king participated and make a sacrifice.<sup>188</sup> Sigurth again intervened and convinced the king to eat some horse liver. The king threatened them, however, that he would return to Trondheim and exact his revenge, an action which Sigurth warned against due to the revenues from the district being lucrative.<sup>189</sup>

The horse liver incident provides us with an insight into the mechanics of relationships in Norway. We can understand that Sigurth was a follower and advisor to King Haakon. His allegiance, however, was not the only relationship that dictated his behaviour. Sigurth showed an understanding toward the Trondheim lords and this was plausibly due to his rulership over them, as well as his staunch pagan beliefs.<sup>190</sup> Sigurth, although aligned to a powerful ruler in Haakon, saw two kin-based action groups come into quarrel. The ties of kingship under our previous understanding of medieval relationships would explain why Sigurth was keeping the king's peace and protecting him. We can view this episode, however, as Sigurth protecting the Trøndelag area; Narfi of Staf in the Vera Dale's and Thránd Haki of Eggja's lands were to the north of Sigurth's

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 17, p. 110. We can also see this in a twelfth century text; *Historia Norwegie*, trans. P. Fisher, eds. I. Erken and L. B. Mortensen (København, 2003), Chapter 11, p. 80. This source includes an English translation. For the dating, see: L. B. Mortensen, 'Introduction', trans. P. Fisher, eds. I. Erken and L. B. Mortensen, *Historia Norwegie* (København, 2003), pp. 8–47., at p. 23. Mortensen argued that the date of creation was between 1150 and 1175.

<sup>186</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Hákon the Good*, Chapter 17, p. 111.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 18, p. 111.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

principal locale.<sup>191</sup> Similarly to Sigurth these men's lands were next to the Trondheimsfjord. The saga itself provides us with a feeling of Sigurth's closeness to both sides that allowed him to be the intermediary. It is entirely feasible, therefore, that in urging the king to participate these lords were part of Sigurth's territorial action group. Sigurth sought to protect his followers from the wrath of the king and, moreover, protect his own jarldom from war.

Sigurth's role relates to what was discussed in chapter two, where it was argued that aristocrats needed to invest in order to rule their respective regions effectively. If we compare this incident to that of Maldon, we can see that the local aristocracy selected to engage in battle based on territorial interest.<sup>192</sup> In both instances, if the jarl and ealdorman had not participated, their rule may have come into question as they were not protecting the localities' interests. We can assume, therefore, that regional lordship was a two-way process that saw the lesser lords unite under their local ruler; however, this was in exchange for defence. Also it included the nobles' participation in the identity and maintenance of interests in the wider political arena at royal courts. This may be why we saw, therefore, the local aristocracy of Eu support two rebellions against the duke.<sup>193</sup> Counts William I and William Busac of Eu may have been securing the rights of the locality and defending the regional distinctiveness.

The North-Sea lords all harboured, relied on and perpetuated their regional networks as part of a two-way relationship. Regional networks allowed the nobles to make political manouvers with conviction. Lesser lords, too, selected to be part of action groups that correlated to their territorial concerns. The successful noble took care to cater to these interests as seen with Sigurth at the Yule feast. If the nobility neglected their local aristocracy or did not hold the regional connections, their authority was weak and it was

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, p. 27.

<sup>193</sup> *GND*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 3, p. 10; and *GND*, 2, Book 7, Chapter (20), p. 128.

possible to remove them. Tostig, for example, was a victim of this lack of regional identity and connection in eleventh century Northumbria.<sup>194</sup> A less well known example of such a scenario, however, was Haakon Sigurdsson in the late tenth century. Haakon, known for his promiscuous behaviour, had angered the aristocracy of Trøndelag by taking local farmers' daughters away to sleep with them.<sup>195</sup> After losing support, he fled and eventually was killed in a pig sty in Meðalhús by his thrall Karkr.<sup>196</sup> Haakon's plight highlights how poor lordship harmed a lord's standing within the locality. Haakon had displeased the local aristocracy who colluded together to remove him as their ruler. William of Eu and Sigurd Haakonsson, by contrast, had strong networks within their territorial lordships. These networks allowed them to challenge central authority and manage their territories' needs. These kin-based action groups also affected a lord's standing within the courts of kings, dukes and counts which will be explored in the following discussion.

### 3.3. RELATIONSHIP TO THE COURT

Lords, of course, did interact with their central authorities. The exchanges often occurred on occasions at court, which were then recorded on charters. These central sources tend to augment the power of the ruler at the expense of the locality. In his attack on ritual, Phillipe Buc argued that these sources had assisted in creating the idea of functionalist societies which excluded the dynamism of communities. Such sources for Buc have caused historians who investigated ritual to give 'reductionist explanations of medieval evidence'.<sup>197</sup> Charter evidence, therefore, will now be examined to analyse why lords held either positive or negative standings at court. This will employ Simon Keynes' attestation

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<sup>194</sup> F. Barlow, *The Godwins: The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty* (London, 2002), p. 87.

<sup>195</sup> *Ágrip Af Nóregskonungasögum*, ed. and trans. M. Driscoll (Birmingham, 1995), Chapters 12 and 13, pp. 21–25.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), pp. 248 and 249. Social scientific theory had replaced, in Buc's eyes, the use of the historical sources.

rank theory explained above in the introduction of this chapter. As stated earlier we do not have these administrative sources for the Norwegian kings, however, the sagas do not exclude incidents at court which we can utilise to create comparisons across the North Sea. First let us investigate the ealdormanry of Essex in the kingdom of England.

For the ealdormen of Essex, it is possible to follow their rise at court due to the corpus of royal charters. Ælfgar of Essex can be seen on twenty-one charters of the West Saxon king, Eadred.<sup>198</sup> In these, he is ranked on fourteen charters in sixth or seventh place, which usually positioned him as the last ealdorman to attest.<sup>199</sup> The first charter he witnessed was the authentic document outlining a grant made by King Eadred to Wulfric, a *minister*, of five hides at Didlington, Dorset.<sup>200</sup> The last record of Ælfgar was in a charter dated to 951 in which King Eadred granted to another *minister*, also named Wulfric, twenty-five hides at Chieveley in Berkshire.<sup>201</sup> In the last authentic charter, we discover that Ælfgar was the last ealdorman to attest. The attestation ranks, therefore, disclose that Ælfgar was not a high-ranking nobleman in the West Saxon court. Arguably, this appears to be perplexing, as Ælfgar married his daughter Æthelflæd into the West Saxon royal house through King Edmund as his second wife after Ælfgifu.<sup>202</sup> It was not a royal marriage, however, that enhanced the status of an ealdorman at court, but rather – as can be seen with Ælfgar’s son-in-law- and successor, Byrhtnoth – marriages within a region.

Æthelflæd, after King Edmund’s death in 946, married Æthelstan ‘Rota’, an ealdorman of south-east Mercia between 955 and 970. Ælfflaed, Ælfgar’s second daughter, married Byrhtnoth the son of Byrthelm (see figure 2.1). Byrthelm originated from

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<sup>198</sup> See: S519, S526, S1483, S517b, S522, S552a, S493, S517, S523, S525, S527, S528, S529, S532, S535, S536, S540, S542, S544, S550, S552, S558, S578, S593 and S533.

<sup>199</sup> See: S526, S523, S529, S528, S527, S525, S521, S524, S522, S532, S533, S536, S517, S540, S547, S531, S535, S534 and S542.

<sup>200</sup> S519. For authenticity see: *The Early Charters of Wessex*, ed. H. P. R. Finberg (Leicester, 1964), no. 582.

<sup>201</sup> S558. For authenticity see: *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, ed. S. Kelly, 2 vols., 1 (Oxford, 2000–2001), no. 45.

<sup>202</sup> ASC, ‘D’, 946.

eastern England and held lands in Cambridgeshire. These two marriages appear to have created an eastern network at court and can be linked to Byrhtnoth's rising status at court.

Byrhtnoth's first appearance in an authentic charter is from 956 in the reign of King Eadwig. S611 outlined a grant made by King Eadwig to Byrhtnoth, his loyal *princeps*, of five hides at Tadmarton in Oxfordshire.<sup>203</sup> We can appreciate that this was the start of Byrhtnoth's political career at the royal court as he was positioned sixth amongst all ealdormen, with a total of only six ealdormen attesting this charter. Byrhtnoth later became the third most senior ealdorman at the court of Æthelred II. After the death of Ealdorman Ælfhere of Mercia in 983, Byrhtnoth climbed to the second position in every charter except for one before his death in 991.<sup>204</sup> Byrhtnoth's final appearance in a charter dated to 990, a year before his death at the Battle of Maldon. The charter described King Æthelred granting to Æthelweard, a *minister*, fifteen hides at Wootton Saint Lawrence in Hampshire. Æthelweard also received nine *messuages* in Winchester, a meadow at Basingstoke and a mill at *Hines clifæ*. Byrhtnoth was ranked second behind Ealdorman Æthelwine of East Anglia and ahead of Ealdorman Æthelweard of the Western Provinces. For a short period of time in the royal court, therefore, an eastern England group emerged as the most influential secular men.<sup>205</sup>

The evidence suggests that standing at court was based on the regional authority which an ealdorman held. A marriage into the royal family, although it may have given prestige to the ealdormen, did not guarantee elevation at an assembly. By contrast, it was the marriages to aristocrats either bordering or inside the ealdormanry that provided amplified authority in a locality, coincided with the rise for the ealdormanry of Essex at the royal court. We can assert that the rise of Byrhtnoth was based on more than just his

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<sup>203</sup> S611. For authenticity see: *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, 2, no. 73. Susan Kelly stated that the charter is an authentic copy in her study on the Abingdon archive.

<sup>204</sup> S874.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

experience at court. Ælfhere, Æthelwine and Byrhtnoth certainly represented an old guard which had served King Edgar the Peaceable. We need to compare Essex, however, with the rest of the North Sea as that will allow us to acquire a clearer picture.

The counts of Eu provide an intriguing account for what influenced the relationship to a central authority. As stated, William I and William Busac both rebelled against the dukes of Normandy. The rebellions were in spite of William I being the illegitimate son of Richard the Fearless and thus the half-brother of Duke Richard II. William's imprisonment and removal from political life is evident in the ducal charters. The first charter is dated to 990 and is a twelfth-century copy. It describes Richard I giving to Fécamp the properties of Mondeville, Argences, Saint Valery and their dependencies, Bretennoles and Ingauville. The church of the abbey and twelve of its dependencies were freed from episcopal customs. The witness list is where we first discover William as a count and where he attests after Richard I's legitimate heir, Richard II. Here he was followed by Godfrey of Brionne who was also an illegitimate son of Richard the Fearless.<sup>206</sup> William of Eu attested three more ducal charters; however, the second attestation did not occur until 1012 on an original document, again following the ducal family and the archbishop of Rouen, Robert, in the witness list.<sup>207</sup> By comparison with Ælfgar, William of Eu was a leading secular noble at the ducal court. The high status was due to his direct relationship to the dukes through blood rather than by marriage to a daughter.

William of Jumièges suggests that the count of Eu at this juncture had not married and upon his reconciliation with the duke, who was advised by Count Rodulf of Ivry, William of Eu married Lesceline the daughter of Turketil, the lord of Torqueville, and together they had three sons Robert, William Busac and Hugh (see figure 2.2).<sup>208</sup> It appears

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<sup>206</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie, 911–1066*, no. 41.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.* no. 14. For the other two charters see: *ADSM*, 9 H 906; and *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie, 911–1066*, no. 18.

<sup>208</sup> *GND*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 3, p. 10.

from the ducal charters, however, that neither Busac nor Robert ruled the county. Charter evidence shows that Count Godfrey of Brionne, William I of Eu's brother, and Godfrey's son Gilbert were the counts of Eu from approximately 1017 to 1026.<sup>209</sup> We should not be shocked then that Rodulf of Ivry and Counts Godfrey and Gilbert were favoured by the dukes. Paradoxically to the Eu locality, both Brionne and Ivry were very close to the duke's principal holdings.<sup>210</sup> It was within their territorial interest, therefore, to cooperate with ducal authority.

Count William Busac of Eu, like his father, rebelled against the duke as stated earlier in this chapter. Charter evidence reveals that Busac may have been dismayed at his family's poor status at court before he initiated his rebellion. In a charter explaining how Duke William conceded Forêt-Verte to Fécamp, and how he invested five pounds of gold in Saint Ouen, the witness list included the rest of the Norman aristocracy. William Busac attested the charter ranked in thirteenth position, while his brother Robert of Eu follows him in fourteenth.<sup>211</sup> We can affirm, from this charter, that this could have been an added motive for rebellion, as Busac's standing in the ducal court was very low.

Busac, after he was exiled, entered the French royal court, whilst his brother Robert on the other hand remained in Normandy. A charter outlining Robert of Eu's and his wife Beatrice's gift to Isembert the abbot of Saint Trinite of Mont of Rouen has not only the ducal family as witnesses, but also prominent members of the Norman aristocracy such as Roger Montgomery and William FitzOsbern. It appears, nevertheless, that Robert did not regain the standing that his father had achieved. He continued to attest the charters of the duke; however, his status was below prominent figures such as Richard of Évreux and

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<sup>209</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie, 911–1066*, nos. 48 and 64.

<sup>210</sup> V. Traill, 'The social & political networks of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy: the Clare, Giffard & Tosny Kin-groups, c. 940 to c. 1200', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013), pp. 37–38. Traill noted that the Brionne family stressed their connections to the ducal line, 'and this made them a threat in the eyes of their more ambitious peers.'

<sup>211</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie, 911–1066*, no. 105.

Roger of Montgomery. The lower ranking was due to his brother's rebellion, and also the duke may not have been able to remove the family as rulers from the region. The duke, nevertheless, was able to decrease their influence at court as punishment for rebellions.

Unlike the lords in eastern England, Count William I of Eu did not marry a daughter of a lord near or in his locality. It is likely Lesceline added to his status as had Ælfgar's daughter's marriage to King Edmund. However, in both cases this had not strengthened their regional authority and, as a consequence, their promotion within their respective royal and ducal courts was hindered. Central authorities in these two cases appeared to recognise lords who were secure in their own locality and were well-connected to neighbouring aristocrats, as seen with Byrhtnoth and Ælfflæd. The marriage of Robert of Eu to Beatrice of Falaise can also be interpreted in this fashion. Falaise was across the Seine close to the western border of Normandy. Robert's position in his territory like that of his father, therefore, was not strengthened, thus allowing the duke to diminish his influence at court. By contrast, Busac's marriage to the count of Soissons's daughter and Byrhtnoth's marriage to Ælfflæd increased the territorial strength of both nobles. Byrhtnoth's enhanced an already established authority, while Busac's union with the count of Soissons's daughter allowed him to establish himself in a region where he would have been perceived as an illegitimate outsider as he had connections only to the Eu lordship. In Guines we can also see the impact of the counts being at the court of two powerful figures.

We can liken the counts of Guines to Robert of Eu; they were eventual supporters of their lord, the counts of Flanders. First, we can find evidence for this from the chronicle by Lambert. Despite his insistence of a unique identity from the Flemish counts, he also uses marriages to exemplify connections to the Flemish comital house. In Siegfried's origin story, for example, we are informed that he impregnated a daughter of the count,

who subsequently had Ardulf as their son (see figure 2.3).<sup>212</sup> Lambert claimed that Count Arnold of Flanders in turn granted Ardulf a larger holding.<sup>213</sup> The information cannot be verified but, as shown previously, it provides a window into the mentality towards central authority for the counts of Guines by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

There is documentation from the kings of France that attest to this positive relationship between the counts of Flanders and Guines. It stresses, furthermore, the superiority of Flanders in the exchange. Count Baldwin of Flanders can be identified on two charters both dated to 1065. The first is a confirmation charter that described Baldwin the Younger's (son of the count of Flanders) restoration of the Hanson monastery in Arras, located in south Lille. The charter is a copy from either the end of the fifteenth century or the beginning of the sixteenth century in the *Chartularum monasterii sancti Petri Hasnoniensis*.<sup>214</sup> The witness list includes Count Baldwin along with Baldwin the Younger. Further down the list we see the inclusion of sixteen counts and aristocrats, the last of whom is Count Baldwin of Guines styled as *comitis*. Eleven names follow on after Baldwin of Guines before we see Arnulf of Arda (Ardres).<sup>215</sup> The second charter is a confirmation by King Phillip I of France, at the request of Baldwin of Flanders, to the abbey of Saint Pierre, for the possession of all its goods and those given by its founder and those restored by Baldwin the Younger.<sup>216</sup> Similarly, to the last witness list, it includes Baldwin of Flanders; then, seventeen places later, Baldwin count of Guines, who is separated from Arnulf of Ardres by castellans and advocates.<sup>217</sup> The charter is an eighteenth-century copy by Dom Queinsert.<sup>218</sup> Heather Tanner believed that, in the eleventh century, the counts of Boulogne were often acting in an opposing action group to

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<sup>212</sup> Lambert, Chapter 12, p. 568.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>214</sup> *Recueil des actes de Philippe Ier, roi de France 1059–1108*, no. 22.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 23.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

Flanders. This did not involve necessarily direct conflict with the count of Flanders, but the two nobles did not unite on many matters. The counts of Guines, on the other hand, were similar to Robert of Eu; they were participating in the courts of the Flemish counts.

The two French royal charters and Flemish documents are later copies, the original manuscripts having been lost; nevertheless, an original charter from 1066 strengthens the possibility of the information purported for 1065 being plausible. Again, it is a confirmation charter of Philip I at the request of Baldwin of Flanders and his wife Adel confirmed the liberty of the church at Messines and promised the abbey the possession of the goods it received.<sup>219</sup> In the witness list on this occasion, a *comes de Gisnas* is cited; however, a name is not given.<sup>220</sup> As above, in none of these charters do we see a count of Boulogne, which is to be expected after Tanner's research.

The association to the counts of Flanders is likely a reason for Baldwin of Guines's purported marriage as reported in Lambert's text to Adel, daughter of Count Floris I of Holland. Floris was married to Gertrude of Saxony. After Floris's death in 1063, Gertrude married Count Robert the Frisian who gained overlordship of the county of Holland.<sup>221</sup> Lambert is the only record we have of Adel and he does not provide a date for their union. If the marriage did not take place, however, Lambert again attempted to present a strong union between the counts of Flanders and the counts of Guines in his chronicle. The eleventh-century charters exemplify the alliance with the Flemish lords. A strong relationship with central authority appeared to have continued for the counts of Guines up to the late eleventh century.

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<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 24.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> K. Nicholas, 'Countesses as Rulers in Flanders', ed. T. Evergates, *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France* (Philadelphia, PA, 1999), pp. 111–137, at p. 115.

Two later copies of charters of the counts of Flanders exist in the late eleventh century. Both documents contain the attestation of Count Manassès of Guines.<sup>222</sup> The first charter recorded the foundation of the abbey of Ham and placed the Guines noble as the second witness amongst all testators.<sup>223</sup> The second charter recorded a pledge made by Count Robert II of Flanders to Saint Marie Church and Saint Eloi Church at Noyon. Similarly, to the first charter, Manassès is positioned second.<sup>224</sup> In the latter text, however, he had followed Count Guy of Ponthieu. Further research reveals that there are no surviving charters from the counts of Ponthieu from the late eleventh century.<sup>225</sup> The charters that exist for the first half of the eleventh century do not contain any references to the counts of Guines either.<sup>226</sup>

The charters indicate, therefore, that by the end of the eleventh century the status of the county of Guines was high within the Flemish count's court. In addition to this they strengthen the information of the charters from the French king's court dated to the mid-eleventh century in which we saw Count Baldwin of Guines attesting a charter pertaining to the counts of Flanders. Baldwin of Guines can be likened strongly to Robert, the lord of Eu, in their status at court and their marriage partners. Both married daughters of lords who were on the opposite side of their respective rulers' authority. These marriages, unlike those of Byrhtnoth and William Busac, appeared to have weakened their authority at court as they did not improve their position in their respective locality or around their territory. This failure in doing so allowed the counts of Flanders and dukes of Normandy to weaken lords' influence at court. The associations of the nobility of Trøndelag and kings of Norway also illuminate cooperation and political manoeuvring based on locality across the North Sea.

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<sup>222</sup> *Actes des Comtes de Flandre 1070–1128*, ed. F. Vercauteren (Brussels, 1938), nos. 13 and 21.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 13.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 21.

<sup>225</sup> *Recueil des actes des comtes de Ponthieu (1026–1279)*, ed. C. Brunel (Paris 1930), nos. 1–15.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

The first jarls of Trøndelag had a pro-central authority relationship akin to that of Robert of Eu and Baldwin of Guines. Haakon Grjótgardsson in the late ninth century supported King Harald Fairhair in defeating two kings from the Gaular Dale and Strinda Districts.<sup>227</sup> This association rewarded Haakon with new territory. At the Battle of Stjóra Dale, King Harald defeated four kings of regions within the Trondheimsfjord.<sup>228</sup> The victories for Harald saw him establish the estate of Hlathir and, to solidify his union with Haakon, he married Haakon's daughter, Asa. As part of this relationship, Haakon often ruled from Hlathir over the Trondheim districts when the king was not in the region.<sup>229</sup> Haakon met his end, however, when he quarrelled with Jarl Atli, and the two fought at Slafaness Bay. Haakon Grjótgardsson formed close bonds with King Harald through the marriage of his daughter in the late ninth century. The marriage can be contrasted against that of Ælfgar's daughter to King Edmund, who subsequently died. Ælfgar's influence at court was not enhanced from charter evidence, whereas the Norse sagas provide details of a close relationship between the jarl of Trøndelag and the king. The sagas provide more information as to why this may have been the case. When Haakon died, his son Sigurth took over as jarl. Sigurth maintained cordial relations with the royal house by allowing the king's sons Hálfðan the Black and Sigröth to stay at his court.<sup>230</sup> The relationship between the jarl and his king appears far closer; it was likely due to Haakon's participation in battle. We can view the marriage to Asa as a reward, whereas King Edmund's to Æthelflæd can be regarded as a political union that ultimately bore little fruit for the Essex lord as Edmund died early.

Such a marriage strategy was arguably continued by Haakon's son Sigurth. Sigurth himself married Bergljót, the daughter of Jarl Thórir the Silent of the Mær. Bergljót's

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<sup>227</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Harald Fairhair*, Chapter 7, p. 63.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 9, p. 64.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 37, p. 91.

mother was a daughter of King Harald Fairhair.<sup>231</sup> Sigurth also was present to assist a partner of the king, Thóra Morstrong, to give birth to Harald's son and named him Haakon. Harald's son later travelled to England and was raised by King Æthelstan.<sup>232</sup>

It is Sigurth's own son Haakon, however, who demonstrates the individuality of relationships in medieval lordship, but also emphasises the strength of regional lords against their central rulers if they were well affiliated. In previous sections in this chapter, the variability of family relations was highlighted between Sigurth and his brother Grjótgarth. Sigurth's son, Haakon, was in the inner Trondheimsfjord when he learned of his father's fate. The men of the Trondheim districts did not submit to Harald and Grjótgarth; rather, they chose Haakon as their jarl.<sup>233</sup> Haakon was clearly able to gain access to his father's regional network. We can see links to the Trøndelag aristocracy later in the tenth century when Jarl Haakon Sigurdsson slept with a woman of lower birth in the Uppland district.<sup>234</sup> She gave birth to a son, who was named Eirik. Haakon had Eirik raised by Thorleif the Wise, who resided in Methal Dale and which was in the Trøndelag region. Thorleif was a very powerful and wealthy man and a close friend to Haakon.<sup>235</sup> Snorri has it that Haakon married Thora, the daughter Skopti Skagason 'a man of high rank'. According to the *Landnámabók* his domain was located in the Mœr, a region that was in close proximity to the west of Trondheim.<sup>236</sup> The union between Trøndelag and the Mœr had existed when Sigurth was the jarl; however, the marriage with Thora enhanced Haakon's regional strength and permitted him to withstand the sons of Gunnhild. Haakon was able to create an alliance with lords west of the kings and south of Trøndelag. These

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<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, *Saga of Hákon the Good*, Chapter 1, p. 96.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, *Saga of Harald Greycloak*, Chapter 6, p. 134.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 8, p. 137.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók*, eds. and trans. H. Pálsson and P. Edwards (Winnipeg, 1972), no. 236.

men were King Tryggvi Ólafsson of the Viken, King Guthröth Bjarnarson of the Vestfold, and Guthbrand of the Dales.<sup>237</sup>

The marriage represented a strengthening of power for Jarl Haakon and is similar to the scenario presented in eastern England and Soissons. All three had strengthened their regional authority and, in so doing, became a stronger entity for their respective kings to deal with. Marriages that did not provide lords with shared territorial interests ultimately did not improve their authority territorially and this allowed kings, dukes and counts to limit the power of that respective lord at court.

The lords of the North Sea all had varying relationships with their central authorities. In some cases, such as Robert of Eu and Baldwin of Guines, there was active support for their ruler. We can argue that in both these cases the reason for this support was due to their regional strength not being as strong as that of other lords. Neither Robert nor Baldwin were as strong as Jarl Haakon of Trøndelag, for example, who was able to resist the king in open conflict because of his marriage to a neighbouring lord. Ealdorman Byrhtnoth was able to enhance his influence at court due to a union of two families with a close and wide interest in Cambridgeshire and Essex. These unions formed power blocs that could rival a ruler's traditional landholdings. It is clear for us from the case of William Busac that marriages to families close to or within the territory of rulership were vital to securing and augmenting power. Busac was able to marry the count of Soissons's daughter and this allowed their son, Rainold, to inherit the county c. 1076. The inheritance was despite Busac being a lord from a border region of Normandy.

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<sup>237</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Harald Greycloak*, Chapter 9, p. 137.

### 3.4. CONCLUSION

Lords in the early medieval period were not loyal due to feudal bonds or lifetime oaths. Aristocrats could select whom to be aligned to and decide whether such interactions continued. These decisions were based on their territorial lordships, that is to say how it affected their locality. The nobility, furthermore, sought to create strong local power bases through marriages and shared objectives. These power bases not only assisted them in ruling their lordships but also enhanced their status in central courts. They provided lords with security and hindered central figures from subverting the local aristocracy.

Of course nobles could establish positive relationships with their respective central authorities. Vanessa Traill has shown that other Norman families, including the Brionnes, established strong ties with the dukes while the Eu lords were on uneasy ground.<sup>238</sup> Positive relations in the North-Sea world were achieved through marriage; however, such unions did not guarantee an improved stature within the realm. Ælfgar's family, for example, did not appear to benefit greatly from Æthelflæd's marriage to King Edmund. The Essex family, however, grew in stature through ties to neighbouring lords Byrhtnoth and Æthelstan 'Rota'. Marriages were beneficial when both sides had similar territorial concerns that allowed for a kin-based action group. The county of Guines and Flanders, for instance, were both looking for security in the face of the increasingly unreliable counts of Boulogne.

Families on the whole were united in their approaches to regional and central solidarities. Brothers, however, could elect to take different paths that saw them back political rivals. The freedom of choice, therefore, was not restricted to a head of family, as second sons also had opportunities to carve out their own alliances. A family's regional base was stronger, needless for us to say, when brothers were united; Byrthelm and his

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<sup>238</sup> Traill, 'The social & political networks of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy', p. 165.

brother Byrhtferth in Cambridgeshire are a good example of this, whereas by contrast siblings who were divided often suffered death or a decline in status. Robert of Eu, after his brother was exiled, was not able to recover the status that his father, William, had achieved at the ducal court. In Norway, moreover, Sigurth was murdered by his brother Grjótgarth and the kings of Norway. Brothers, thus, were willing to rival each other too for regional authority.

Lords located on the periphery of central influence held many advantages. Like the counts of Eu, they were able to gain access to networks outside the influence of their rulers. The positioning of these lordships, therefore, gave aristocrats a greater amount of flexibility and choice. Access to a larger number of networks provided aristocrats with more prospects. These were particularly useful for lords who had to leave their regions and needed to establish themselves in new localities, which was notable with William Busac. So, lords were loyal to others based on political advantage, which usually was linked to local interests. Yet we can be sure that some aristocrats were just difficult individuals in life.

#### 4. CHAPTER FOUR: INHERITANCES

Over the centuries the inheritance of an aristocrat was often subject to the growing authority of central powers. Admittedly, the aristocracy was able to pass on patrimonial holdings and wealth freely, to the next generation, which ensured the status of a family within a region. It forced the central authorities, furthermore, to continue with the heir in the office of count, jarl or ealdorman. Thus the identity of the regional lordship passed through the generations of nobility, a local identity which conformed to the regional distinctiveness of the lordship under the family's rule. The family, nevertheless, was not a patrilineal construction; by contrast, it was bilateral. Both the agnatic and natal lines played a role for men and women in the identity of the family and the mode of inheritance methodology. As opposed to the view that the natal line was minimal, it will be shown here that it was part of the kin's consciousness.

Today when we think of inheritances we associate them with death. A ritual performed at the death of a family member, when lands, items and wealth are passed down to the next generation. When thinking about medieval inheritance we should abandon this one dimensional association and by contrast, include the symbolic and living too. A child inherited a family identity from birth. A father and mother gave their baby a name that associated the new life to a kin-group, a locality and the authority of power held by the aristocratic family. A name continued a lineage for aristocrats. We should, therefore, not see the concept of aristocratic inheritance as just a province of the dead and physical possessions. At the death of a family member, however, estates and moveable wealth were passed on. Julia Crick has aptly described the impact of death; she stated, in her investigation of Anglo-Saxon landowners, that Anglo-Saxon lords needed to provide for

successors and dependants as well as their souls.<sup>1</sup> The living needed to cooperate with the final wishes of the dead who remained an invisible part of the collective. Therefore, the *post-obit* arrangements linked the past with the present and the future by mutual obligation.<sup>2</sup> Thus, an inheritance was a thread for the family lineage and identity. It allowed current members to associate with the past in very similar ways to that in which lords associated with the territory of their lordships.<sup>3</sup>

In the North Sea, for example, Count Manassès of Guines and his wife Emma had a single daughter named Sybil, who married Henry of Bourbourg, but died during the birth of their child, Beatrice.<sup>4</sup> According to Lambert of Ardres, as a consequence Manassès feared for his position as he had no male heir. He dreaded a foreign lord taking Guines, showing how important it was for an aristocratic family to be able to pass on their possessions to a family member.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it stresses Manassès's fear of an individual from outside the locality acquiring the lordship. The anxiety came from the prospect of not being able to carry the lineage and identity of a family forward. Thus inheritances were an integral process of aristocratic life and a key process for a regional lordship. Moveable wealth did not bestow familial identity but did remain important in an inheritance.

Timothy Reuter noted that the custom of amassing wealth could be seen within heroic poetry of Germanic origin, particularly in Old English and Norse poetry.<sup>6</sup> Few hoards survive on the continent but there are enough references of gift-giving in early medieval society. For Reuter the dispersal of treasure was based on three principles: the first being part of 'what it means to be alive'; the second as a means of 'making a good

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<sup>1</sup> J. Crick, 'Posthumous Obligation and Family Identity', eds. W. Frazer and A. Tyrell, *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain* (London, 2000), pp. 193–208, at p. 198.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207. Also see: A.-J. A. Bijsterveld, 'The Medieval Gift as Agent of Social Bonding and Political Power: A Comparative Approach', eds. E. Cohen and M. De Jong, *Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power, and Gifts in Context* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 123–156, at p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 42, p. 582.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 43, pp. 582–583, p. 583.

<sup>6</sup> T. Reuter, "'You Can't Take it with You': Testaments, Hoards and Moveable Wealth in Europe, 600–1100', ed. E. Tyler, *Treasure in the Medieval West* (York, 2000), pp. 11–24, at p. 13.

end’; and, finally, a ‘symbolic dispersal of power’, in which he described these goods as more than ‘movable wealth’.<sup>7</sup> Rather, for him they were ‘provisional goods’, an investment not only in utility but also as representations of power and status, for example swords, arm rings, necklaces and helmets. Food and money, on the other hand, were not positional and so were freely disposed.<sup>8</sup> Thomas Charles Edwards believed that such goods allowed lords to maintain friendships.<sup>9</sup> *Beowulf*, dated between the late seventh and early eleventh centuries, provides us a similar understanding.<sup>10</sup>

The *Beowulf* poem depicts warrior culture in northern Europe and the importance of treasure dispersal. Beowulf, when he lay dying, after defeating the dragon with Wiglaf, said that if he had had a son he would have given him his war garments and he instructed Wiglaf to enter the dragon’s cave to bring out the treasure.<sup>11</sup> Upon seeing the treasure, Beowulf gave thanks to God for the gifts he had received and wished that he might have given them to his people before his death, and gave his golden collar, gold-plated helmet, rings, and mail-shirt to Wiglaf telling him ‘*bū eart endē-lāf ūsses cynnes*’.<sup>12</sup>

The *Beowulf* poem underlines the cultural significance in northern Europe of the disposal of moveable wealth. Beowulf is recorded distributing his moveable wealth to his people and thane upon his death.<sup>13</sup> It is plausible to consider that such gifts were more

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15. Reuter noted that Widukind of Corvey in his *Deeds of the Saxons* described Iring giving up treasure for peace. Later, Eberhard of Franconia submitted to Henry I by providing all his treasure. On his deathbed, Henry made Otto the king and provided his other sons with land and treasure. See: Widukind of Corvey, *Rerum Gestarum Saxonum libri tres*, eds. H. E. Lohmann and P. Hirsch, *MGH, SSrG* 60 (Hanover, 1935), pp. 1–154, Book 1, Chapter 41, pp. 60–61.

<sup>8</sup> Reuter, “‘You Can’t Take it with You’”, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘The Distinction between Land and Moveable Wealth in Anglo-Saxon England’, ed. P. Sawyer, *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change* (London, 1976), pp. 180–187, at p. 187.

<sup>10</sup> F. Klaeber, *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsberg*, 3rd Edition (Boston, MA, 1950), p. cvii. Historians are in two camps when it comes to the dating of the *Beowulf* manuscript. The first group argues for an ‘Age of Cnut’ creation, in which case the poem would be rooted in the eleventh century, whereas the second group has argued for its creation between the late seventh century and the early ninth. For discussion of *Beowulf* being an earlier text, see: K. Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1981), p. 23; and S. Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 16–17.

<sup>11</sup> *Beowulf*, Lines 2726–2749.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 2794–2813. ‘You are the last of our tribe’.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Line 2798.

valuable to Wiglaf. These ‘positional goods’, it can be asserted, were more prized to a lord who was not of nobility. A man of this status preferred treasure, as a landed estate or territorial lordship was troublesome to rule. As stated above by Reuter, the need to disperse treasure was a shared cultural trait for the lords of the North-Sea world. Both Christian and Germanic culture advocated it.

Inheritance, then, did represent the passing on of items and names, but we should also describe it as the passing on of an identity. First, names marked children to particular ruling families. Secondly, estates, as was shown in chapter two, represented the regional authority of the ruling lords. Finally, moveable wealth in the form of luxury items exuded elite status. An inheritance in the medieval period for a lord, therefore, was a crucial ritual in life. It was essential to the legitimacy of his rule and enhanced his prestige.<sup>14</sup> Historians have recognised the importance of inheritance, and have, consequently, debated how it functioned.

On the subject of aristocratic inheritances, historians can be divided into two camps. One asserts the progressive favouring of the first-born which consequently contracted the family, whilst the other side believes that provisions were made for divisible inheritances. Though the latter prevails in modern scholarship, it still remains important to give an overview of the two sides and their proponents. Georges Duby, under the influence of Karl Schmid and the ‘Munster-Freiburg’ school, argued in his grand thesis on medieval nobility that the concept of indivisible inheritance grew after 950.<sup>15</sup> After the year 1000, moreover, sons also did not have the independent right to their inheritance while their parents were living. Husbands, too, slowly took greater control over their wives’

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<sup>14</sup> Bijsterveld, ‘The Medieval Gift’, p. 125.

<sup>15</sup> K. Schmid, ‘The Structure of the Nobility in the earlier Middle Ages’, ed. and trans. T. Reuter, *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1978), pp. 37–59, at p. 56. Schmid had discussed how the German aristocracy moved away from horizontal ties to vertically constructed lineage.

landholdings.<sup>16</sup> Duby accepted that it is difficult to fully ascertain how an inheritance was divided. He believed, nevertheless, from the genealogies of the eleventh century that families were adhering to a single branch which favoured the first-born son. He presented, as an example, the lords of Uxelles who had five sons and only the eldest inherited. Duby strengthened these assertions by stating that if a lord had only a daughter, there is no evidence of an uncle inheriting.<sup>17</sup>

David Crouch described a post-*Annales* school supplying a revisionist version of the Duby-Schmid scheme.<sup>18</sup> Régine Le Jan, for instance, argued that the ‘progressive nuclearisation’ had occurred a century earlier than had been reported. She maintained that lineages continued to be organised ‘around an *honor* that was now a patrimony, handed on to the next line.’<sup>19</sup> Le Jan described ‘secondary lineages’ breaking off from the family power which was based on the patrimonial holdings.<sup>20</sup> Le Jan and the post-*Annales* school continued to assert, nevertheless, the fundamental importance of the male line and primogeniture.<sup>21</sup> The post-*Annales* view had been built on the foundations of Duby’s thesis. Across the Channel, however, Anglo-Norman historians disagreed with the primogeniture model.

James Holt’s research, although never being the original intention, challenges the Duby model of inheritance. His work on the Anglo-Norman aristocracy after 1066 revealed a different picture. He discovered an aristocracy that did favour the first-born, but

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<sup>16</sup> G. Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. C. Postan (Berkeley, CA, 1977), pp. 69 and 73.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74–75. For other historians claiming primogeniture, see: J. P. Polly and E. Bournazel, *The Feudal Transformation 900–1200*, trans. C. Higgitt (New York, NY, 1991), pp. 107 and 108; and K. Leyser, ‘The German Aristocracy from the Ninth to the Early Twelfth Century: A Historical and Cultural Sketch’, *P&P* 41 (1968), pp. 25–53, at p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> D. Crouch, ‘The Historian, Lineage and Heraldry 1050–1250’, eds. P. Cross and M. Hugh, *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 17–37, at p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> R. Le Jan, ‘Continuity and Change in the Tenth-Century Nobility’, trans. J. Nelson, ed. A. Duggan, *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 53–68, at p. 59.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* For an excellent assessment of the debate, see: Crouch, ‘The Historian, Lineage and Heraldry 1050–1250’, pp. 23–26.

maintained provisions for their other children. The Norman conquerors divided their lands amongst the two first-born sons. The eldest son received the patrimony in Normandy, while the youngest gained the new estates within England.<sup>22</sup> Notable families following this mode of inheritance, for Holt, included the Grandmesnils and Montgomerys. Holt, however, cautioned that divisible inheritance was not necessarily a strict custom. He carefully argued that there was a choice available to families. Therefore aristocrats, such as the lords of Boulogne, despite having more than one son could have ensured that only the oldest son inherited all the land.<sup>23</sup>

Holt, much like Duby, has several supporters of his assertions. In fact, research into the Anglo-Norman aristocracy has built on his work. Judith Green, for example, argued that primogeniture was on the rise after 1066.<sup>24</sup> Lords, nevertheless, continued to practise a divisible inheritance. William fitzOsbern, for instance, had his eldest son, William inherit Breteuil, while the youngest Roger was given Hereford.<sup>25</sup> Once these inheritances were passed on the lands became a patrimony themselves.<sup>26</sup> David Crouch, whose work extended into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, has also produced research in support of Holt's assertions. He maintained that before 1119 Robert fitzAnschetil de Harcourt had divided his lands amongst three sons, possibly even four sons.<sup>27</sup> William Marshal in the thirteenth century, moreover, provided lands for his two eldest sons at his death in 1219.<sup>28</sup> The Holt model of inheritance, therefore, did not focus on one branch as Duby had postulated, but in contrast saw lords seeking to provide for their sons and daughters.

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<sup>22</sup> J. Holt, 'Politics and Property in Early Medieval England', *P&P* 57 (1972), pp. 3–52, at p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15. John Hudson acknowledged Holt's argument and agreed that some were patrimonial divisions, however, cautioned they were very rare, see: J. Hudson, *Land, Law, and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 109 and 110.

<sup>24</sup> J. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 337.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>27</sup> D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 124.

<sup>28</sup> D. Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147–1219* (London and New York, 1990), pp. 130–131.

William the Conqueror's death is an excellent example from the North Sea of Holt's premise. William had inherited Normandy from his father, Robert the Magnificent, and became king of England in 1066. William had three sons Robert, William, and Henry with his wife Matilda. King William decided to divide up his lands for his sons' inheritance.<sup>29</sup> Robert Curthose, as the eldest, received the patrimonial lands of Normandy. William Rufus was given the kingdom of England. Henry received a cash sum of either £2000 or £5000 and he expected to inherit his mother's estates in England.<sup>30</sup> Of course we must remember not every family had a son or even more than one son to inherit, therefore, inheritance models do not fit every aristocratic family. Anglo-Norman historians, nevertheless, appear to have provided the best understanding on the subject.

We will see in the ensuing chapter how sons were endowed and how the female line yet still remained significant. Duby and Holt, however, did not factor the impact of the locality on an inheritance. Holt's model suggested lords had the power to choose how to divide their property. The territory chapter, in this thesis, highlighted how lords of the North Sea were tied to a territorial identity. Therefore we must investigate the gap left by historians and ascertain how the locality impacted aristocratic inheritances. First let us turn to the sources which provide us with details on inheritances.

Sources of the tenth and eleventh centuries' Europe recorded property ownership and transactions, which were not necessarily recorded for legal purposes.<sup>31</sup> They identified

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<sup>29</sup> 'De Obitu Willelmi', ed. E. van Houts, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni, Books 5–8*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1995), pp. 184–191, pp. 186–187. Orderic Vitalis also discussed William the Conqueror's last moments and described the inheritance of William's three sons, see: *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 10, pp. 112 and 114.

<sup>30</sup> 'De Obitu Willelmi', pp. 186–187. Also see: *OV*, 4, Book 7, Chapter 16, p. 94; and William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, i, eds. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1998–1999), pp. 510 and 512. For discussion of the inheritance by historians, see: W. Aird, *Robert Curthose: Duke of Normandy (c. 1050–1134)* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 101; F. Barlow, *William Rufus* (London, 1983), p. 50; and J. Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 25.

<sup>31</sup> T. Reuter, 'Property transactions and social relations between rulers, bishops and nobles in early eleventh-century Saxony: the evidence of the *Vita Meinwerki*', eds. W. Davies and P. Fouracre, *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 165–199, at p. 167.

the witnesses of the original transaction at most and were just as much ‘*memoria* as that of litigation.’<sup>32</sup> Peter Johanek believed they were ‘to provide a reinforcement of the “obligation of the ecclesiastical community to preserve their donation to the saint...and protect it against an alienation which would have endangered the purpose of the gift and hence the value of the preservation of their *memoria*.”’<sup>33</sup>

Reuter, in his study, investigated the Paderborn notices and outlined that they had no formula and appeared to include whatever the scribe felt necessary.<sup>34</sup> Across northern Europe, however, many records such as the Paderborn notices survived as copies in cartulary chronicles. They were subjected, therefore, to ‘rewriting with nefarious intent’.<sup>35</sup> These sources, furthermore, are frozen moments where we learn about a property. Usually, as historians of medieval Europe, we tend to understand more about inheritances when land exchanged hands.

The evidence for Christian aristocrats can be viewed within the monasteries of their regions. In wills, chronicles and/or charters lords were recorded to have provided landed and material wealth to monastic institutions for the commemoration of the soul of the individual and their ancestors. In the *Liber Eliensis*, for example, Godgifu, a widow of an earl, was recorded providing various goods to churches within the region.<sup>36</sup> Godgifu developed a relationship with the monastery of Ely and, as a result, granted the estates of Easter, Fambridge and Terling in Essex.<sup>37</sup> As has been explored in previous chapters, Ely was a regional monastic centre for eastern England. Thus, the widow sought to ensure her salvation along with her husband’s with gifts to the ecclesiastical institution. The goods though not described in this case were, nevertheless, likely to be sacramental. We can

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>36</sup> *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 81, p. 150. Also see: *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I 1066–1087*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), no. 121.

<sup>37</sup> *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 81, p. 150.

imagine, therefore, that these goods included vases, cups and candles, which were more useful to an ecclesiastic establishment, as items like swords were tied into an aristocratic status. By contrast, the estates given provided Ely income from the rents that were extracted from the lands.

Wills as sources predominantly focus on the landed wealth of aristocrats, but also show the granting of moveable wealth. The will of Ealdorman Æthelmær of Hampshire, in the late tenth century, for instance, describes the Wessex noble bequeathing the estate of Tidworth to his wife for her lifetime.<sup>38</sup> After she died, the estate would have been transferred to the Old Minster at Winchester where they were both going to be buried.<sup>39</sup> In addition to this, he provided a heriot to his lord which included gold, swords and a horse.<sup>40</sup> He gave, moreover, his children three hundred *manuces* of gold to be divided amongst them. Æthelmær's will has a high volume of goods being granted to individuals. Also, other Anglo-Saxon wills such as that of Ealdorman Ælfheah of Hampshire, from the mid-tenth century, included the gifts of two estates to the Old Minster at Winchester and twenty hides at Charlton to Malmesbury.<sup>41</sup> This will also includes many gifts of positional wealth, which included a sword to the king's son.<sup>42</sup> The above presents a picture of simple transfers of goods and estates between the aristocracy and the Church, which was not always the reality.

This introduction will now explore two key themes in this chapter. First we will explore disputes. Inheritances could be challenged in the Middle Ages and these were recorded. The historians, therefore, gain insight into how inheritances functioned when such events occurred. Our next topic will be support. To solidify their wishes, lords often sought their affairs to be supported by heirs, wives, and regional aristocrats. A final theme

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<sup>38</sup> S1498. For an English translation, see: *Wills*, no. 10.

<sup>39</sup> S1498.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> S1485. For an English translation, see: *Wills*, no. 9.

<sup>42</sup> S1485.

that will then be addressed will be the impact of women and widowhood. As will be shown not only were women important, but they provide us with a clearer picture of the structure of a family.

Sources can make us believe that disputes were a regular occurrence in any aristocratic inheritance that involved land. In all probability, however, such disputes affected the ecclesiastical institutions that created the record. Disputes then were of great interest to monastic authors. Steven Vanderputten has it that disputes were a method for lords to change or adjust their relations with others much like in feuds between the living, as discussed in chapter three.<sup>43</sup> Vanderputten clearly explained that in the lordship of Hesdin in Flanders lords consulted relatives before any donations were made due to the vast network of ‘familial and inter-familial alliances’.<sup>44</sup>

Gifts to churches were challenged by later or even current kin members of the donor. Kin-members claimed they were not consulted, or that their rights had not been respected; but they did not argue that the gift should never have been made.<sup>45</sup> If there was a desire to nullify the grant they could enter legal proceedings, but this acknowledged that the gift had been made in a legitimate manner. Aggressive actions were not recorded on surviving charters, but ‘enough donations were apparently never challenged for us to be able to conclude that they could be seen, and frequently were seen, as wholly legitimate.’<sup>46</sup> In these conflicts, bishops held the advantage over the lay nobility in being able to employ spiritual jurisdiction over monasteries and their rights.<sup>47</sup> The noble was open to severe punishment if they treated prelates fiercely.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> S. Vanderputten, ‘A Compromised Inheritance: Monastic Discourse and the Politics of Property Exchange in Early Twelfth-Century Flanders’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61 (2010), pp. 229–251, at p. 231.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>45</sup> Reuter, ‘Property transactions and social relations’, p. 185.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

The *clamores* sections of *Domesday Book* provide an example of such disputes. The disputes section of Huntingdonshire recorded that the lands of Ælfric at Yelling, Hemingford Abbots, and Boxted in Essex, were claimed to be the property of Ramsey Abbey.<sup>49</sup> The claim stated that the land had been granted to Ælfric for life on condition that it was returned to the monastery. After Ælfric's death at the Battle of Hastings the abbot of Ramsey took the land back. Aubrey of Vere seized the land from the monastery.<sup>50</sup> Resolutions can also be seen in the *clamores*, notably, in Huntingdonshire again. Bishop Remigius of Lincoln produced a writ of King Edward to prove that the king had given Leofric with all his land to the bishopric of Dorchester, with *sake* and *soke* rather than Leofric being in the king's *soke*.<sup>51</sup> The seizing of land was not exclusive to acts of conquest by rival lords. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, too, recorded the ealdormen of Mercia and East Anglia seizing their rivals' donations from the monasteries of eastern England in a dynastic struggle.<sup>52</sup>

As far as support is concerned we will explore in greater depth the importance of witness lists for both the ecclesiastical authors of these documents and the aristocracy. The aristocracy will be shown to be witnesses in ritual and document exchanges to protect their regional authority. The concept builds on Emily Zack Tabuteau's research on Normandy in the eleventh century. Tabuteau outlined that a person's inheritance could not be simply seized, although the sources did not explicitly state such terms.<sup>53</sup> She noted that aristocratic donations often sought witnesses to protect their interests.<sup>54</sup> She asserted aristocratic inheritances were possessions of the family which were freely owned in eleventh century

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<sup>49</sup> *DB, Huntingdonshire*, (D, 7). Also see: R. Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law: Society and Legal Custom in Early Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 179.

<sup>50</sup> *DB, Huntingdonshire*, (D, 7).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, (D, 29). Also see: Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law*, p. 180.

<sup>52</sup> ASC, 'D', 'E', and 'F', 975. Also see: *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 55, pp. 126–127.

<sup>53</sup> E. Z. Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), p. 100.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Normandy.<sup>55</sup> Her research explored the importance of the consent of heirs in donations made by lords.

In Normandy, she says, what was paramount in transfers of land was consent, whose purpose was to prevent heirs of future generations challenging grants and claiming that gifts were in fact part of their inheritance. 'It would seem that the more likely a person was to succeed the alienator, the more likely he or she was to challenge a transfer and, therefore, the more desirable it was to get his or her consent.'<sup>56</sup> Hawisa, for example, mother of Ardulf of Braci, gave tithes to Tréport. Ardulf conceded this and, when he died, Ardulf's son Nuevro did the same, which led Tabuteau to conclude that the consent of an heir was vital; indeed, when Ardulf died, the consent of his successor, Nuevro, became crucial.<sup>57</sup> Relatives gave confirmations to transfers already accomplished and the consent of alienators' lords was also sought.<sup>58</sup> It was rare, nevertheless, for more than one lord to confirm an exchange and, if they did, it is difficult to tell who the superior lord was considered to be. Tabuteau stated that the reason for the presence of two lords was that they were relatives. Duke William and Count William of Arques, for example, confirmed Gerard Flaitel's becoming a monk of Saint Wandrille abbey.<sup>59</sup>

American historians have become increasingly interested in the interactions between the nobility and the Church.<sup>60</sup> Constance Bouchard, while researching Burgundy, identified how church leaders were tied to the noble families. She explored how these intimate relationships affected church reform, lay generosity and donations for grants of

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180. For the charter itself see: *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961), no 108.

<sup>60</sup> M. McLaughlin, *Consorting with Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 1994), p. 15.

prayer.<sup>61</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, meanwhile, explored how grants by nobility were not solely for prayer. The transfers were designed to forge close relations between the monastic institutions and their local aristocracy.<sup>62</sup> One American historian, however, can provide us with a methodology for understanding the networks of support behind such donations in inheritances.

Stephen White noted that, throughout France, the practice of relatives approving grants was common amongst the aristocracy. White stated that local custom dictated how it was recorded.<sup>63</sup> Historians have used the *laudatio parentum* in different ways, with legal historians employing it to investigate land law and social historians using it for kinship.<sup>64</sup> Georges Duby, White noted, utilised the *laudatio* to highlight momentary social ties ‘that bound monastic benefactors and their kin into “families” or kinship groups’.<sup>65</sup> Marc Bloch argued that, from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, these consenting groups would contract.<sup>66</sup> Despite the assertions of historians, White believed that there was no consensus on how to use the *laudatio*.

In evaluating the source typically used, namely charters, White suggested that the text did not explain the ritual.<sup>67</sup> The sources rarely explain where the transactions are temporally in relation to earlier and later events. White continued that the charter at best was a lay interpretation of an exchange; in the worst case, they explain nothing about the lay attitude ‘and present only retrospective and self-interested views of gift giving

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<sup>61</sup> C. B. Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980–1198* (Ithaca, NY, 1987), pp. 225–246. Bouchard explored the political, economic and crises induced motives as well as the role of relatives in monasteries. Of course the sake of a person’s soul mattered too.

<sup>62</sup> B. Rosenwein, *To be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny’s Property, 909–1049* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), p. 41.

<sup>63</sup> S. White, ‘The Politics of Exchange: Gifts, Fiefs, and Feudalism’, eds. E. Cohen and M. De Jong, *Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power, and Gifts in Context* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 169–188, at p. 186. We should note, according to White, that the process of gift giving was ‘culturally constructed’ and not regulated intently by central authorities.

<sup>64</sup> S. White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050–1150* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988), p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* For Duby, see: Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, pp. 146–148. Duby concludes here that branches of the family spread out to create alliances.

<sup>66</sup> M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. A. Mayon, 2nd edition, 1 (London, 1962), pp 131–133, p. 132.

<sup>67</sup> White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, p. 11.

ceremonies'.<sup>68</sup> The document, furthermore, may have been produced by a scribe who was not present at the event and whose priority was to protect the interests of their foundation.

Historians have remarked that the diplomatic of these transactions was that a gift was balanced by a counter gift, furthermore, gift giving represented a continuous social relationship.<sup>69</sup> Lords, therefore, gave an estate in exchange for the salvation of their soul and their ancestors' souls.<sup>70</sup> A charter from the county of Saint-Pol in the mid-twelfth century, for example, shows Enguerran granting the rights at Courcelles-le-Comtes and Baillescourt to the abbey of Eaucourt for the souls of his ancestors.<sup>71</sup> Lay benefactors, for White, as a consequence of the gift, established 'an ongoing social relationship that was supposed to last forever and to link him indirectly to one of the saints and to God.'<sup>72</sup> A kinsman also entered the unique relationship of the donor, saint and monastery. It involved property rights associated with their kin in exchange for heavenly inheritance and their involvement was designed to limit challenges.<sup>73</sup>

In looking at aristocratic support we will build on the research here by not only evaluating the support of the family but also that of the locality and will refer also to the lesser aristocracy within the lordship of the nobility. In the Saint-Pol charter eleven witnesses who were part of the aristocracy can be identified. The list even included Count Arnulf of Guines from the neighbouring county.<sup>74</sup> Thus we need to investigate the reasons behind the presence of the local aristocracy at these donations. It will be shown, too, that women held a prominent role in witness lists; indeed, the female of the family became extremely significant if her husband passed away.

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Bijsterveld, 'The Medieval Gift', p. 124.

<sup>70</sup> White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, p. 27.

<sup>71</sup> *Les Chartes des comtes de Saint-Pol XI–XIII siècles*, ed. J. Nieuw (Turnhout, 2008), no. 8.

<sup>72</sup> White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, p. 27.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>74</sup> *Les Chartes des comtes de Saint-Pol XI–XIII siècles*, no. 8.

Inheritances were complicated by marriages, which potentially might involve disputes. A dowry was the property from a parent given to a daughter on her marriage to her husband. The dower was a gift given by the husband to his wife from his estate to hold for life. When the wife became a widow there were inevitable impediments to the inheritance. Women, consequently, were able to re-marry, which created issues with the heirs from the first relationship.

Widowhood in the Middle Ages was a likely prospect for the wives of nobles because their husbands were prone to die at a young age due to fighting. Julia Crick has stressed the fact that in pre-Conquest England there was no ‘special designation’ for the construct of widowhood.<sup>75</sup> Crick correctly stated that the death of the male head of household ‘presented the families of the elite with a difficult and important problem.’<sup>76</sup> The issue for a high-status family was to find a solution in dealing with the remaining females. The answer, too, had to uphold the prestige of the family and protect the future generations.<sup>77</sup>

One outcome was, if the wife had had no children by her husband, for her to marry a close relative. Other possibilities included the widow being ‘detached from her conjugal property and consequently would become an economic burden elsewhere, perhaps to her natal family or an institution.’<sup>78</sup> Another alternative was that the widow could gain a set amount of freedom of disposition over her husband’s property.<sup>79</sup> That could have been defined at the time of her marriage or outlined in a will. Inevitably, the majority of the grants made by women were conforming to the wishes of ‘earlier arrangements: reversionary grants to religious houses or relatives made by husbands or fathers now

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<sup>75</sup> J. Crick, ‘Men, Women and Widows: Widowhood in pre-Conquest England’, eds. S. Cavallo and L. Warner, *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Harlow, 1999), pp. 24–36, at p. 24.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

dead.’<sup>80</sup> The power of women can be underestimated in medieval society due to the nature of the documents. There have been studies, nevertheless, illuminating the authority of women in other regions of Europe.

Elizabeth Haluska-Rausch’s study on the power of wives and widows, although set in southern France, is noteworthy for this part. Haluska-Rausch argued, in her work on Montpellier, that widows became responsible for children and, in addition, had to assume public roles during an heir’s minority.<sup>81</sup> The importance of women can be seen by the 1019 foundation of a Benedictine house created to be served by females.<sup>82</sup> From the late tenth century and throughout the eleventh century, women played a prominent role in public life and this was evident with the counts of Melgueil, including their wives and even mothers in presentations of land holdings.<sup>83</sup> Haluska-Rausch argued that, in this region of southern France, partible inheritance was the norm from the twelfth century and noted Guillem V of Montpellier in 1121 dividing his property amongst his three sons. Guillem’s three daughters, however, did not receive any seigniorial lands, but they were provided with ‘large dowries’ in moveable wealth.<sup>84</sup> Female inheritance is a key question in the Christian regions of the North Sea. A large proportion of wills that have survived from Anglo-Saxon England have come from widows.<sup>85</sup> Crick identified that there were twenty-three testatrices, thirteen of which were widows. Widowed men, however, are harder to discover; as an example, Crick noted Toki agreeing with the archbishop of Canterbury to retain ‘a lifetime interest in an estate destined for Christ Church by his father-in-law, of which his wife had usufruct.’<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>81</sup> E. Haluska-Rausch, ‘Transformations in the Powers of Wives and Widows near Montpellier, 985–1213’, eds. R. Berkhofer III, A. Cooper and A. Kosto, *The Experience of Power in Medieval Europe 950–1350* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 153–168, at p. 154.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>85</sup> Crick, ‘Men, Women and Widows: Widowhood in pre-Conquest England’, p. 29.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Eleanor Searle argued that the sources after the Norman Conquest took marriage and inheritance extremely seriously. She postulated that the rules of inheriting ‘in the seignorial world of the eleventh century could be neither automatic nor governed by rigid rules.’<sup>87</sup> She asserted that the man who had no background was unsuitable and a disastrous marriage candidate for an heiress of an aristocratic family. She argued that interdependent groups of lords ensured their children’s inheritances.<sup>88</sup> The premise has weight in that, in chapter three, we have seen regional ties being sought after to strengthen regional authority. She believed that it was unlikely that a lord was able to select an heir and cited Hereward as evidence of the tragedy of the disinherited.<sup>89</sup> So far this introduction has explored the Christian understanding of inheritance. However exploration of how we can explore and compare the Norse inheritances needs to be provided.

Aristocratic moveable goods existed across the North Sea due to the influence of Germanic heritage. We must work out how we can reconcile a comparison between Christian and Norse populaces. Timothy Reuter noted the Germanic elements within the inheritance patterns in Christian society.<sup>90</sup> Historians have also described a Germanic heritage as also existing within Scandinavia. That heritage allows for successful comparison across the North Sea. We will now explore whether we can find commonality in culture between the Norse and the Christian worlds for a fair comparison. Once we establish this, we will look at the jarldom of Orkney as a viable lordship to compare to the rest of the North-Sea world.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> E. Searle, ‘Women and the Legitimization of Succession at the Norman Conquest’, *ANS* 3 (1981), pp. 159–171, at p. 159.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>89</sup> *Gesta Herewardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, eds. T. Hardy and C. Martin, *Lestorie des Engles solum la translacion maistre Geffrei Gaimar*, 1 (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 339–404, p. 342.

<sup>90</sup> Reuter, “‘You Can’t Take it with You’”, p. 13.

<sup>91</sup> For the sake of clarity the Orkney lordship will be described as a Norse jarldom. Later, however, the region does become known as the earldom of Orkney. For a discussion on the rise of the *jarl* title, see: B. Crawford, *The Northern Earldoms: Orkney and Caithness from AD 870–1470* (Edinburgh, 2013), pp. 81–85.

Early Scandinavian society, according to Peter and Birgit Sawyer, was similar to other Germanic societies and based on ‘descent groups that were responsible for many of the functions that were later taken over by kings and the Church’.<sup>92</sup> They evaluated the laws on inheritance, noting that they followed kinship based on both the male and female line. Females were potential inheritors but their claims were ultimately weaker than a male’s claim.<sup>93</sup> Runic inscriptions showed that families tended to be nuclear in composition and kinship systems bilateral. The change, however, came with the rise of the power of the monarchs and the Church.<sup>94</sup> Despite men having children by many women, the runic inscriptions highlighted that the female that was recognised as wife took precedence. Again, the scholars noted that, in the twelfth century, the Church came into conflict with royal custom.<sup>95</sup> The Church, for example, believed that only legitimate children should inherit; many of the kings of the twelfth century, however, were products of concubines. The resistance perhaps is best exemplified by the Norwegian Law of Succession in 1163, which required heirs to be legitimate, a law not followed until the middle of the thirteenth century.<sup>96</sup> As shown in the solidarities chapter it can be stated that lords within Norse culture operated within similar local networks to their Christian contemporaries. Therefore it is valid to test, as Chris Wickham’s comparative methodology encourages, whether local factors determined their inheritances.

The jarls of Trøndelag can continue as a case study for the naming patterns of Norse lords. *Heimskringla* provides a clear line of succession of this family of jarls, which in turn, allows for an assessment of the naming patterns.<sup>97</sup> Snorri Sturluson’s work,

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<sup>92</sup> P. Sawyer and B. Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800–1500* (Minneapolis, MN, 1993), p. 166.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171–180.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway*, ed. and trans. L. Hollander (Austin, 1964). We can see this throughout the saga as Snorri discusses the jarls.

however, does not reveal a great deal about the inheritance of wealth and landed estates. We also learn little from Snorri about the women of the Trøndelag except for the aforementioned affairs of Haakon. In addition to Snorri, the possibility of runic evidence is hampered by the fact that only fifty runic inscriptions exist in Norway.<sup>98</sup> That is not to say, of course, that the runes are not a useful source. It is necessary to show caution when comparing this type of evidence against the monastic creations of the rest of the North Sea. The opportunity, furthermore, to investigate the earls of the twelfth and thirteenth century is hindered by the change in Norway's political landscape. In these centuries the kings of Norway resided in Trondheim and an archbishopric was created within the region, so this chapter will produce a new lordship from the Norse world in the shape of the jarldom of Orkney.<sup>99</sup>

The Orkneys, though situated off the north-east coast of modern day Scotland, were under the influence of the kings of Norway (see figure 1.6).<sup>100</sup> According to the *Historia Norwegie*, a twelfth-century text, the Orkney jarls paid tribute to Norway's kings.<sup>101</sup> The advantage, for a historian, of the jarls of Orkney is their proximity to the Scottish kingdom. This closeness saw Scottish kings grant the Orcadian dynasty the earldom of Caithness, an example of Althoff's thesis in which aristocrats had more than one 'liege lord'.<sup>102</sup> The Orkney jarldom has been selected also due to the source material that is available for the area. The *Orkneyinga Saga* provides several cases of inheritance that are comparable to the

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<sup>98</sup> B. Sawyer, *Property and Inheritance in Viking Scandinavia: The Runic Evidence* (Alingsås, 1988), p. 5. Also see: Crawford, *The Northern Earldoms*, p. 19.

<sup>99</sup> A. Christophersen, 'Power and Impotence: Political Background of Urbanisation in Trøndelag 900–1100AD', *Archaeologia Polona* 32 (1994), pp. 95–108, at p. 100. Also see: S. Imsen, 'Introduction', ed. S. Imsen, *The Norwegian Domination and the Norse World c. 1100–1400* (Trondheim, 2010), pp. 13–34, at p. 22.

<sup>100</sup> J. V. Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls and Chieftains, Rulers in Norway, Orkney and Iceland c. 900–1300', eds. G. Steinsland, J. Sigurðsson, J. Rekdal and I. Beuermann, *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Orkney and the Faeroes* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 69–108, at p. 86.

<sup>101</sup> *Historia Norwegie*, Chapter 5, p. 64.

<sup>102</sup> G. Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Medieval Europe*, translated by C. Carroll (Cambridge, 2004), p. 2. Also see: S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), p. 21.

rest of the North Sea.<sup>103</sup> As this is a new source being introduced, an outline will now be provided of the text to explain its creation and outlook.

The jarldom of Orkney's main source is the *Orkneyinga Saga* which records many incidents regarding the Orcadian nobility. Scholars regularly discuss the source's purpose, its creation, and its intended audience.<sup>104</sup> The original text was believed to be made some time after 1192; it is set in the context of the king of Norway exerting 'his overlordship over Orkney' in 1195 and Harald Maddardson of Orkney in conflict with King William of Scotland between 1196 and 1202.<sup>105</sup> The text was revised by an Icelander in the 1230s when chapters 108 to 112 were added, and the saga ends in 1214.<sup>106</sup> Historians are uncertain whether the author of the compilation was an Orcadian or someone with excellent Orcadian material. It has also been speculated that the creator may have been an Icelander residing in the Orkney Isles.<sup>107</sup> Ian Beuermann cautioned, correctly, that the descriptions within the *Orkneyinga Saga* on relationships of jarls/earls and kings are from the thirteenth century. The caution resonates with Susan Reynolds' assertions that feudalism in medieval France and England is misleading, as discussed in chapter one.<sup>108</sup> Certainly, the relationship was far less formal than the term 'vassal' would suggest and more in line with the fluid relationships discussed within the solidarities chapter. From this investigation's perspective, the saga does not provide detailed accounts, like the Anglo-Saxons' wills, on estates and goods being passed to the next generation. However, despite this, it deals with similar issues of inheritance regarding freedom of distribution by lords over their kings.

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<sup>103</sup> *Orkneyinga Saga: The History of the Earls of Orkney*, trans. H. Pálsson and P. Edwards (London, 1978).

<sup>104</sup> I. Beuermann, 'Jarla-Sögur Orkneyja. Status And Power of the Earls Of Orkney according to their sagas', eds. G. Steinsland, J. Sigurðsson, J. Rekdal and I. Beuermann, *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Orkney and the Faeroes* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 109–161, at p. 111.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals*, p. 61.

In the North-Sea world, the Orkney jarls had their own exceptional origin myth stories. Their descent was traced from the giant Fornjótr; whereas, the jarls of Trøndelag were claimed to have descended from Oðinn's son. This placed the Orkney jarls within the Nordic cultural sphere according to Beuermann.<sup>109</sup> If we compare this, however, to our other lords, this was another origin myth that was associated with a locality, which placed the Orkney lords within a Nordic culture, but also created a clear difference: they were not descended from the gods of the Hárfangi dynasty, 'the "official" Norwegian royal line'.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, the jarls operated in a peripheral zone in a similar fashion to the lords of Guines.

The chapter will now present the case study of Robert Curthose of Normandy and his inheritance, in order to explain how familial inheritance became a matter of importance in the early middle ages and what themes were drawn into disputes. Orderic Vitalis recorded many disputes in his widely read *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Orderic was sent to Normandy in 1085 from England and he wrote his chronicle from c. 1114 at Saint-Évroult.<sup>111</sup> Originally the work was commissioned as a short history of the Saint-Évroult monastery in order to push for the return of estates following the arrest of Robert of Bellême in 1113.<sup>112</sup> The scope of his chronicle expanded to cover Norman history. The monk took twenty five years to complete it in thirteen books.<sup>113</sup> He used an extensive range of sources which included charters, chronicles and saints' lives.<sup>114</sup> Orderic, similarly to saga writers, also drew on 'some oral accounts enshrined in collective memory'.<sup>115</sup>

The most famous recorded dispute from Orderic's chronicle was between Robert Curthose and his father, William the Conqueror. According to Orderic Vitalis, Robert

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116. Also see: J. Sigurðsson, 'The Norse Community', ed. S. Imsen, *The Norwegian Domination and the Norse World 1100–1400* (Trondheim, 2010), pp. 59–73, at p. 59.

<sup>110</sup> Beuermann, 'Jarla-Sögur Orkneyja.', p. 116.

<sup>111</sup> L. Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D.C., 1997), p. 99

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Curthose, in what William Aird described as a ‘frustrated masculinity’, was urged by young knights to reclaim the duchy of Normandy.<sup>116</sup> This was because he was living in apparent poverty and his father had promised it to him in front of the Norman aristocracy.<sup>117</sup> Orderic’s account described Curthose’s followers persuading him to seize the duchy. They were recorded arguing that it was not correct for Curthose to have those of lower status placed above him and his inheritance denied.<sup>118</sup>

Orderic himself saw the situation as Robert being greedy and recorded the exchange between the king and his son. King William did not wish to relax his hold over Normandy, which he affirmed was his by ‘*Hæreditario iure*’; furthermore, he told his son not to take power which was to be his in time.<sup>119</sup> Robert departed from his father affirming that he was to serve others in exile. Orderic again blamed the poor counsel that Robert had received from lords such as Robert of Bellême and William Breteuil.<sup>120</sup> During this period of Robert’s life, his mother Queen Matilda assisted him by providing gifts and argued with the king about their son.<sup>121</sup> Robert’s travels, ultimately, led him back to Normandy where both he and his father prepared for conflict with each other.<sup>122</sup>

From this we can see the importance of inheritance and its meaning for the aristocracy. Aird explained that the father’s role was to produce a son who could continue the line as head of the dynasty, in addition to handing over the family’s holdings intact.<sup>123</sup> William refused to pass an inheritance to his son, therefore denying Robert access to power. It appears that contemporaries expected Curthose to follow his father’s will, with

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<sup>116</sup> W. Aird, ‘Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and his Eldest Son’, ed. D. Hadley, *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 39–55; Aird, *Robert Curthose: Duke of Normandy*, p. 73; and *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 10, p. 96.

<sup>117</sup> *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 10, p. 96. Young men around Curthose asked him ‘*utquid in ingenti pauperie degis?*’

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>123</sup> Aird, ‘Frustrated Masculinity’, p. 49.

Orderic Vitalis describing the heir apparent as a victim of young knights who persuaded him to challenge his father.<sup>124</sup> So inheritance of titles and estates did not only include a benefactor but a network of lords. Orderic wrote that Robert had his own followers who were relying on their lord to gain his inheritance in order to be rewarded and that the higher aristocracy of Normandy pleaded with King William to end hostilities with his son. According to Orderic this was because their own kin were involved in the fighting and losing family members.<sup>125</sup> From another angle, however, the aristocracy of Normandy had agreed to Robert eventually succeeding as duke of Normandy. We can see from charter evidence that many agreements of this nature occurred throughout early medieval Europe. It is plausible, therefore, to believe that lords such as Hugh Grandmesnil and Earl Roger of Shrewsbury had such deals relying on the presence of other lords. The aristocrats that confirmed the agreement between William and Robert not only feared Robert's vengeance, but they were worried that their own inheritance arrangements may have been damaged.

Thus inheritances provided regional stability; when disputed, the conflict saw pulls from both sides to gather followers. Unlike today, where courts can oversee disputes, in the early middle ages if those in disagreement were both powerful enough they could draw many different lords into conflict.<sup>126</sup> This was not exclusive to Normandy, as Orderic also describes Robert gathering support from the French aristocracy, Angevins and men of Aquitaine.<sup>127</sup> Inheritances, as a consequence, were a source of aristocratic stability if performed in a smooth transition; however, the evidence here also suggests that, if not agreeable to both sides, they were likely to cause instability too. The followers of lords were themselves involved in the instability as these lesser lords were attempting to protect

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<sup>124</sup> *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 10, p. 96.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>126</sup> Aird, *Robert Curthose: Duke of Normandy*, p. 74. Aird described a refusal to a lord as a collective insult to the lord and his followers.

<sup>127</sup> *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 10, p. 112.

their future position: if Curthose was unable to provide for them, they would have had to move to rival lords.

Matilda's involvement in the inheritance dispute between her son and husband shows us the importance of women. A mother providing her sons with protection was not exclusive to queens. William fitzOsbern's mother, Emma, the daughter of Count Rodolf of Ivry and wife of Osbern the Steward, was recorded to have also protected her son in such matters.<sup>128</sup> Emma, it is said, watched over William and his brother carefully, which was a consequence of their hazardous youth.<sup>129</sup> David Douglas described Emma's care, along with her other achievements, as very considerable.<sup>130</sup> We will now continue to our four major themes under investigation: naming, disputes, local support and widowhood. We also will look at the lordships of Essex, Eu, Saint-Pol, Guines, Trøndelag and Orkney.

#### 4.1. NAMING

An aristocrat's name represented the inheritance of a familial identity for the living. It associated the recipient with a kin group, locality and a lordship, therefore, maintaining a family lineage. Some names carried a similar function to the origin stories or association to previous authorities. The name was for the family but also the locality itself. It represented a method of legitimising holding a lordship over a locality. Georges Duby correctly noted that there are two types of family in historical research. The first is the biological family which was created in order to discover blood relations of figures. The second type is a family psychology created by contemporaries.<sup>131</sup> For Duby, crucially, the second type looked for a family identity and influence subsequent generations in their conduct.<sup>132</sup> In the

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<sup>128</sup> D. Douglas, 'The Ancestors of William fitzOsbern', *EHR* 59 (1944), pp. 62–79, at p. 71. For Emma's father.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>130</sup> Douglas, 'The Ancestors of William of fitzOsbern', p. 75.

<sup>131</sup> Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, p. 134.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

twelfth century a common residence was used in a name handed from the father, however, before the eleventh century lords only used their individual names.<sup>133</sup> According to Régine Le Jan parents between the sixth and tenth centuries had a choice in naming their child and this was often influenced by ‘political, religious, or economic’ factors.<sup>134</sup> A parent’s choice needed to ‘integrate its bearer into the kingroup and represent him or her to the wider world.’<sup>135</sup> Thus, we must discover how the naming practices of aristocratic families represented an inheritance of regional distinctiveness in the North-Sea world. In order to achieve this we need to give an overview of the family lines to observe how these names were employed to promote identity within a living inheritance.

Constance-Brittain Bouchard, bemoaning past historians who based families around name inheritance, studied the counts of Bologna, who for six generations through the tenth and eleventh centuries, did not repeat their names. More than this, names could be part of several lineages.<sup>136</sup> A prime indicator of this would be William, a name that was used by the dukes of Normandy and Aquitaine and the counts of Burgundy and Provence.<sup>137</sup> We need to remember that children could be given their name from the father’s or mother’s side of the family. Bouchard’s assertions were mainly derived from southern France and Monique Bourin has stated that naming practices were regionally diverse, which we can certainly see in North-Sea Europe.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> G. Duby, ‘Une enquête à poursuivre: La noblesse dans la France médiévale’, *Revue Historique* 226 (1961), pp. 1–22, at p. 10; and C. B. Bouchard, ‘Family Structure and Family Consciousness among the Aristocracy in the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries’, *Francia* 14 (1986), pp. 639–658, at p. 650.

<sup>134</sup> R. Le Jan, ‘Personal Names and the Transformation of Kinship in Early Medieval Society (Sixth to Tenth Centuries)’, eds. G. Beech, M. Bourin, and P. Charielle, *Personal Names Studies of Medieval Europe: Social Identity and Family Structures* (Kalamazoo, MI, 2002), pp. 31–50, at p. 32.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>136</sup> C. B. Bouchard, *Those of My Blood’: Constructing Noble Families in Medieval Francia* (Philadelphia, PA, 2001), p. 8.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> M. Bourin, ‘How Changes in Naming Reflect the Evolution of Familial Structures in Southern Europe, 950–1250’, eds. G. Beech, M. Bourin and P. Charielle, *Personal Names Studies of Medieval Europe: Social Identity and Family Structures* (Kalamazoo, MI, 2002), pp. 3–13, at p. 4.

When naming their offspring, the ealdorman family of Essex practised a familial identity which associated them to northern Essex and, later, the Cambridgeshire region too. We can begin in the tenth century with Ealdorman Ælfgar of Essex. Along with his wife Wiswith, who is known only from Ælfgar's will, he had three children named Æthelweard, Æthelflæd, and Ælfflæd (see figure 2.1).<sup>139</sup> All three children represented a continuance of Ælfgar's name with an *Æ*-beginning. Æthelflæd married King Edmund and, after his death in 946, she married Æthelstan 'Rota', an ealdorman of south-east Mercia between 955 and 970.<sup>140</sup> We do not, however, have a record of any children; Ælfflæd married an eastern lord called Byrhtnoth. Ælfflæd, like her sister, did not have any recorded offspring. If we track Byrhtnoth's lineage we can also see a continuance of identity in the naming patterns. Byrhtnoth was the first-born son of Byrthelm who had a son named Byrhtic. Byrhtic appeared in sixteen charters' witness lists from 959 to 972 and was recorded as a *minister* in fifteen of these.<sup>141</sup> From the evidence above, we can see a sense of identity in the naming practices of the lords. The Cambridgeshire lords adhere to a comparable pattern. Byrthelm's sons are named with a *Byrht*-beginning, which gives a continuance of identity in the next generation.

Historians have pondered whether Byrhtferth succeeded Ælfgar as the ealdorman of Essex, between 951 and 956, before Byrhtnoth.<sup>142</sup> Byrhtferth attests twenty charters in Eadwig's reign and he was the uncle of Byrhtnoth.<sup>143</sup> Byrhtferth and Byrhtnoth never attest the same charter, with Byrhtferth's participation ending in 956 and Byrhtnoth's starting at this point.<sup>144</sup> Cyril Hart, previously, in his investigation on the Essex ealdormanry,

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<sup>139</sup> S1483.

<sup>140</sup> *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 64, p. 136.

<sup>141</sup> M. Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family', ed. D. Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 253–262, at p. 254.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>143</sup> S582, S605, S633, S597, S627, S666, S594, S608, S629, S589, S614, S631, S672, S590, S635, S624, S606, S607, S663, S583, S600, S601, S615, S621, S592, S622, S609, S604, S596, S598, S603, S636 and S1662.

<sup>144</sup> S616.

suggested that Byrhtferth may have been the Essex ealdorman before Byrhtnoth, although he acknowledged that no one can be certain of this.<sup>145</sup> Byrhtferth, despite the uncertainty, provides evidence for the Cambridgeshire lords' identity through naming. Byrthelm and Byrhtferth were brothers with the same first element in their name. Byrthelm reproduces this with his sons Byrhtnoth and Byrhtic.<sup>146</sup> The *Byrht-*, therefore, was a signifier within Cambridgeshire of the aristocratic family of Byrthelm. The beginning of a name represented an inheritance of the living and was akin to the passing on patrimonial land holdings. The name represented regional identity and the lordship itself.

Byrhtnoth succeeded Ælfgar as the ealdorman of Essex as Ælfgar's son Æthelweard had died in 951.<sup>147</sup> Byrhtnoth did have a child named Leofflæd; however, this was not by Ælfflæd, as Leofflæd was not mentioned in the wills of either Æthelflæd or Ælfflæd.<sup>148</sup> Leofflæd's will confirmed that she survived into the eleventh century in Cnut's reign.<sup>149</sup> Leofflæd married an Oswig, whom the *Liber Eliensis* described as a generous man to the poor and churches.<sup>150</sup> Oswig was said to be respected by all ranks and had a brother named Uvi.<sup>151</sup> Oswig and Leofflæd had a child named Ælfwine, who was offered to Saint Æthelthryth as a monk for the vill of Stechworth.<sup>152</sup> In addition to Ælfwine, they had three daughters named Æthelsyth, Ælfwynn and Leofwaru.<sup>153</sup> Naming practices become difficult after Byrthelm and Ælfgar as Byrhtnoth did not produce any male heirs

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<sup>145</sup> C. Hart, 'The Ealdorodm of Essex', ed. K. Neale, *An Essex Tribute: Essays Presented to Frederick G. Emmison* (London, 1987), pp. 57–84, at p. 69.

<sup>146</sup> Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family', p. 254. Locherbie-Cameron asserts this from charters; S598, S611, S617, and S618.

<sup>147</sup> S1483.

<sup>148</sup> S1486 and S1494. For an English translation, see: *Wills*, nos. 15 and 16. Also see: *The Early Charters of Essex*, ed. C. Hart, 2nd Edition (Leicester, 1971), nos. 18 and 34. Also see: A. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 68. Wareham incorrectly cited Locherbie-Cameron's essay in stating that Leofflæd was Ælfflæd's daughter. For correct outline of the family, see: Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family', p. 255. Locherbie-Cameron effectively argued that the couple were childless and Leofflæd may have been an illegitimate daughter of Byrhtnoth.

<sup>149</sup> *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 85, pp. 153–154, p. 153.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 2, Chapter 67, p. 139.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 2, Chapter 85, pp. 153–154.

and his only daughter is from an unknown woman. Despite Leofflæd's children having similar names to the previous daughters of Ælfgar, it is difficult to discern whether this was a conscious decision with her husband being named Oswig. We can say, nevertheless, that the names shown above appear to be popular in eastern England. Byrthelm and Ælfgar exhibit a regional identity through the names they pass on to the next generation. The inheritance of regional signifiers in names was not exclusive to eastern England and can be viewed across the North Sea.

We can see naming practices, particularly in the first-born, in the county of Eu too. The Eu lords, like many counts in tenth-century Normandy, were related to the ruling ducal family. Duke Richard I was married to Gunnor after previously being partnered with Emma.<sup>154</sup> Gunnor and Richard had three sons, Richard, Robert and Malger, with three daughters named Emma, Hawissa and Matilda.<sup>155</sup> Richard I had many concubines and these produced many daughters and two sons. The sons were Godfrey, the later count of Brionne, and William, the later count of Eu (see figure 2.2).<sup>156</sup>

William I of Eu was married to Lescelina, the daughter of Turketil, the lord of Torqueville; together, they had three sons William Busac, Robert and Hugh.<sup>157</sup> Historians believed that Robert succeeded his father as the count, while Hugh was selected by Duke William to become the Bishop of Lisieux in either 1049 or 1050.<sup>158</sup> Aristocratic families that had more than one son sent the younger boys into a monastic life in order to provide them a livelihood, preventing them from depleting the family patrimony.<sup>159</sup> Norman researchers have debated over who succeeded William as the count of Eu. Elisabeth Van

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<sup>154</sup> *GND*, 1, Book 4, Chapter 18, p. 128.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130. William of Jumièges said that William of Normandy's daughter Emma married Æthelred II, king of England, while Hawissa married Count Geoffrey of the Bretons and Matilda married Count Odo of Clovis and Chartres.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 3, p. 10.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* This view has been taken from the *Gesta* itself.

<sup>159</sup> C. B. Bouchard, 'The Structure of a Twelfth-Century French Family: The Lords of Seignelay', *Viator* 10 (1979), pp. 39–56, at p. 52.

Houts suggested that it was William Busac, who attested as heir between 1027x1035 and 1035x1040, which coincides with Count Gilbert of Brionne being designated the count of Eu. Robert, as a successor for Van Houts, dates between 1047 and as count from 1051.<sup>160</sup> Van Houts believes this coincides with Orderic Vitalis' account, which states that William Busac lost his castle because he had rebelled in 1047 or 1048.<sup>161</sup> Van Houts urged that Robert was, in fact, the second and not the first son of William of Eu.<sup>162</sup> Busac married Adelaide, a daughter of the count of Soissons, and they had a son named Rainold.<sup>163</sup> Robert became the count after Busac's exile and married Beatrice believed to be from Falaise (see figure 2.2).

By studying the names of the Eu family, we can see similar trends to those of the Essex aristocrats. William I named his first-born William after himself, whereas Byrthelm provided the beginning of his name to Byrhtnoth, thus, we can postulate a regional identity in the names. There is the noticeable difference with the names Robert and Hugh as second and third-born sons; moreover, William Busac did not name his son William and this is significant. Busac had married into the Soissons lord's household, and the identity of Busac's son needed to be linked to this new region as he had been exiled.<sup>164</sup> This explains, therefore, why he elects to use Adelaide's natal identity in naming his son after her father, Rainold, rather than using Eu's distinctiveness. By contrast, Busac's brother Robert, with his wife Beatrice, according to the abbey of Saint Michael in Tréport, had three children named Radulf, William and Robert.<sup>165</sup> We know that William succeeded as the count of Eu, but it is uncertain as to the order of their births. If, however, we were to base it on the naming practice that we have seen, it was likely that William was the first-born son of

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<sup>160</sup> *GND*, 1, pp. 10–11, n. 4.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> *Recueil des actes de Philippe Ier, roi de France 1059–1108*, ed. M. Prou (Paris, 1908), nos. 108 and 110.

<sup>164</sup> *GND*, 1, Book 7, Chapter 20, p. 128.

<sup>165</sup> *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Michel de Tréport*, ed. P. Laffleur de Kermaingant (Paris, 1880), Chapter 1, p. 1.

Robert. This conforms, moreover, to the territorial identity the first name provided for the aristocrats. A name created a sense of continuity and was designed to connect to the locality's legitimate rulers. In our next example, however, we cannot be so sure that there was a designed naming tradition.

Outlining the family of the counts of Guines in this period has its difficulties. We will start with the initial claims of Lambert with the lineage of the counts of Guines. We have little information outside of Lambert's chronicle, we can, however, gain a sense of how the inheritance of a name was connected to neighbouring powers. In chapter two, the origin story of the counts of Guines was revealed. We will proceed from Siegfried of Guines, who was the count in the tenth century.<sup>166</sup> Lambert claimed that Siegfried had impregnated Elfrude, a sister of Count Baldwin of Flanders. Baldwin's son, Arnold, discovered that his aunt was pregnant and had borne Siegfried's son, Ardulf.<sup>167</sup> Ardulf married Matilda, a daughter of Count Erniculus of Boulogne.<sup>168</sup> They had two sons, named Ralph and Roger. Roger died as a young boy and Ralph took over the county.<sup>169</sup> Lambert described him as an heir of Boulonaisse and of Flemish descent which made him a warlike and fierce character.<sup>170</sup> Ralph married Rosella, the daughter of Count Hugh of Saint-Pol, and the pair had many sons, most notably Eustace (see figure 2.3).<sup>171</sup>

In comparison to the previous two regions, it is difficult to establish a discernible naming pattern, due to the uncertainty of Lambert himself; however, the name of Ardulf, who can be viewed in a charter as a witness in 988, does have similarity in Latin with Ralph as they are recorded as '*Ardolphus*' and '*Radolphus*'.<sup>172</sup> The endings of these names, '-lph', are similar to the beginnings of the names of the lords of Essex and Cambridge. The

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<sup>166</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 4, pp. 564–565, p. 565.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 11, p. 568.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 12, p. 568.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 14, p. 569.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 16, p. 570.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 17, p. 570.

<sup>172</sup> *Liber traditionum Sancti Petri Blandiniensis*, ed. A. Fayern (Ghent, 1906), no. 96.

key difference with the Guines aristocrats is that it is not a continued trend. Ralph's son Eustace succeeded and married Susanna, the daughter of Siger of Grammene, a chamberlain of the Flemish counts.<sup>173</sup> Their children were Baldwin, William, Reinhelm, Adele and Beatrice (see figure 2.3).<sup>174</sup> The lack of continuity within the names of the male members of the house of Guines was likely due to Lambert not having accurate information himself. He sought, therefore, to create a lineage that placed the county due to its powerful neighbours with Saint-Pol, Boulogne and Flanders counts. In Guines, therefore, we struggle to find an equivalent case to the lords of Essex and Eu. In Norway, however, we find evidence of men inheriting the names of previous members of their house to provide an association with the territory of their rulership.

The jarls of Trøndelag exhibit *cognomina* which have been described by Duby as emerging in medieval Europe after 1050.<sup>175</sup> The sagas provide a clear line of succession that was uninterrupted. The jarl we can start with was Haakon Grjótgardsson; we do not know who his wife was, but we do know that he had two sons named Sigurth and Grjótgarth and a daughter named Asa, who married King Harald Fairhair (see figure 2.4).<sup>176</sup> From Haakon's name, we recognise that his father was called Grjótgarth and this, we see, is the name of his second son. Naming the second son after his father is different from the lords of Essex and Eu, who all either used parts of their names or their full names for their first-born sons with the second son, in Robert of Eu's case, varying.

After Haakon's death, his son Sigurth took up the jarldom of Trøndelag. Sigurth was married to a woman named Bergljót, the daughter of Jarl Thórir and Álof Árbot, Álof herself being a daughter of Harald Fairhair.<sup>177</sup> We are informed by the sagas that Sigurth

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<sup>173</sup> Lambert, Chapter 18, pp. 570–571, p. 571.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 23, p. 573.

<sup>175</sup> Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, p. 138.

<sup>176</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Harald Fairhair*, Chapter 9, p. 64.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 37, p. 91.

and Bergljót had a son named Haakon.<sup>178</sup> Thus, Sigurth Haakonsson in the tenth century had, as with the other North-Sea aristocrats, selected a name for his son connected to the ruling family of the Trøndelag. Similarly to the counts of Guines, however, towards the end of the tenth century, the naming of sons would alter. Despite this alteration in practice, we must remember that the sagas continued to refer to each son with a second name that indicated who their father was.

In the mid-tenth century, Haakon succeeded his father as jarl, and he had a son called Eirik by an unnamed woman from the Uppland district.<sup>179</sup> Eirik was sent by Haakon to Thorleif the Wise from Methal Dale to be raised under his care.<sup>180</sup> Haakon Sigurdsson was married to Thóra, the daughter of Skpoti Skagason, a high-ranking man; the pair had two sons, one named Svein and the other called Hemming, and a daughter named Einar.<sup>181</sup> Eirik was a jarl before his father died and fought against the *Jómsvikinga* with Haakon.<sup>182</sup> After Haakon's death, there was not a quick succession by Eirik; however, he received the domain from King Sveinn of Denmark.<sup>183</sup> Eirik's brother, Svein, married Hólmfrith, daughter of Oláf of Sweden.<sup>184</sup> Still, this study will end with Eirik who, in the eleventh century, would travel to England with Cnut and participate in the conquest of the land.<sup>185</sup> Eirik was married to Gytha and had a son whom they named Haakon, which was in reference to Eirik's father (see figure 2.4). Excluding Haakon's son, Eirik, we can observe that the jarls of Trøndelag inherited their grandfather's name.

The naming inheritances of the lords of the North Sea were similar to the concept of territorial identity. The first name tended to be shared, or held aspects of the previous

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<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, *Saga of Hákon the Good*, Chapter 11, p. 104.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, *Saga of Harald Greycloak*, Chapter 8, p. 137.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, *Saga of Óláf Tryggvason*, Chapter 19, p. 159.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 40, p. 179.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 113, p. 244.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, *Saint Óláf's Saga*, Chapter 25, p. 262.

incumbent, to represent an identity that the family wished to maintain. The firstborn male often inherited the name of his father or of their grandfather. These names appeared crucial in noting the region which they were operating. We can view this with William Busac, who was named his son after his wife's father, the count of Soissons, Rainold.<sup>186</sup> The Busac instance stresses the exact importance of naming for the family's consciousness. In the exile's example, he wished to refer to his new locality outside of Normandy. In the case of Trøndelag, we can see the use of a *cognomen*; Snorri who was writing in the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries, we can argue, may have created this.<sup>187</sup> If Snorri added these *cognomina*, we can still assert that names had been passed on with new-born sons taking the name of their grandfather, as was the case for Sigurth's son, Haakon. Further, Eirik named his son Haakon after his father.

In eastern England, however, the aristocracy appeared to have names passed through all siblings. Byrhtnoth's brother, for example, was called Byrhtic.<sup>188</sup> The brother of Byrthelm and uncle of Byrhtnoth, furthermore, was named Byrhtferth. The offspring of Ælfgar, in addition to this, all resembled their father's name. In Eu, paradoxically, a second son received a different name, as shown with Robert I of Eu and Radulf. We must keep in mind, however, that two of Robert I's other sons all held names that were linked to the family identity, William and Robert.

By comparison to the other lords of the North Sea, it is not clear if a practice was maintained by the counts of Guines. Arduf and Radulf resembled some likeness to the rest of the North Sea. It is not substantial enough to say, however, that it conformed to the development. One reason for this is that, in reading Lambert's early account of the counts, the reader can gain the impression of a region seeking to carve out an identity. The counts

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<sup>186</sup> *Recueil des actes de Philippe*, nos. 108 and 110.

<sup>187</sup> L. Hollander, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway* (Austin, TX, 1964), pp. ix–xxvii, at p. xxiv.

<sup>188</sup> S598, S611, S617, and S618.

of Guines appear to be squeezed between two regional powerhouses in the counts of Flanders and Boulogne, as we also explored in chapter two.<sup>189</sup> This predicament can be detected in names such as Baldwin and Eustace, which were intrinsically linked to that of Flanders and Boulogne.

The inheritance of names has been shown to contribute to a family and regional identity which formed part of an aristocrat's lineage. Inheritances of goods and land, however, were often a source of confrontation. The confrontation particularly occurs between the locality and the central authorities of kingdoms. As a consequence we will now investigate key disputes between lords and kings. The theme will stress, furthermore, the strength of a regional aristocracy and how the central powers sought increasingly to exert control over the inheritance of lords.

#### 4.2. DISPUTES

As historians we can gain a detailed understanding of an aristocratic inheritance from recorded disputes. They provide two sides, each with a different desired outcome from the quarrel. We will see, as a result, that central authorities often become involved, which has given rise to the belief of strong authority emanating from central courts. Aristocratic disputes, therefore, allow us to work out whether the locality was stronger than central authority.

In eastern England, there is a well-known case of a dispute over a will that involved a king, the Church, the higher nobility, the local aristocracy, and a widow. We can see the disagreement over two charters from the late tenth century. The sources provide evidence of local collusion to protect the inheritance of a deceased lord who was survived by his wife. The charters have stressed, furthermore, that local aristocrats bound together to

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<sup>189</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 13, p. 568 and Chapter 15, p. 569.

secure inheritances of their contemporaries from central interference. From the incident, therefore, we can view the power of regional lordship over central influence. The will of Æthelric, a thegn in Essex, dated to 995, was the source of trouble and as a consequence was followed by a confirmation charter at Cookham by King Æthelred II.<sup>190</sup>

The original will outlines a payment to Æthelric's lord of sixty *mancuses* of gold along with a sword, belt, two horses, two round shields and two javelins.<sup>191</sup> Æthelric granted to his wife for the rest of her life the estate at Bocking. Bocking after her death, passed to Christchurch Canterbury, except for a hide of the estate which was transferred to the church at Christchurch for the priest there.<sup>192</sup> The will also granted Copford to Bishop Ælfstan of London and regional ecclesiastical centres such as Saint Paul's in London and Saint Gregory's Church in Suffolk.<sup>193</sup> The East Saxon thegn, finally, asked the bishop of London to protect his wife and the gifts he had given her; in addition, the will requested that the bishop protect the interests of Æthelric and his wife if he were to outlive the couple.<sup>194</sup> We must also note a separate charter by which Æthelric and his wife Leofwyn granted Bocking and West Mersea to the monks of Canterbury Christ Church.<sup>195</sup> The grant is linked to the later confirmation and will; it also included a witness list with Leofsig, ealdorman of Essex, and Leofwine ealdorman of the Hwicce as well as Ealdorman Æthelmær of the Western Provinces.<sup>196</sup>

The will of Æthelric represents the problem for lords if they had no heir to succeed them. Æthelric's wife was in a vulnerable position and that explains why Bishop Ælfstan is

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<sup>190</sup> S1501. For an English translation, see: *Wills*, no. 16 (1). For the dating see: D. Whitelock, 'Notes', ed. D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 99–212, p. 147. Also see: *The Early Charters of Essex*, no. 27, pp. 16–18. Hart identified the widow as Leofwyn from S1218. For a more recent discussion of the charter, see: *Charters of Christ Church Canterbury*, ed. S. Kelly, 2 vols. (Oxford 2013), no. 136 and no. 137.

<sup>191</sup> S1501.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> S1218.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

requested to protect her. As discussed above, the Church held an advantage over the lay nobility in disputes due to their spiritual standing. Æthelric, therefore, sought to employ this to prevent any aristocrats seizing his wife's possessions. The bishop of London, furthermore, would have had jurisdiction over the Essex region.<sup>197</sup> Thus, it is likely that a regional thegn who held a decent standing with the ecclesiastical lord would be able to ensure that such a request was adhered to. On its own, the will shows a lord being motivated by regional interests. The ecclesiastical centres of the locality were well endowed and the testator requested that the religious institutions upheld the family's regional identity and memory'. The nature of the will and confirmation raise many issues for us, for example, was the confirmation a ceremonial affair? Why did Æthelred wait to enact the charge of treason? Was Æthelric the brother of Sibryht mentioned in the *Battle of Maldon* poem?<sup>198</sup> How did the local politics of Essex affect this event? We should attempt to place this within the context of regional lordship and compare it later to a similar case at Orkney.

The case of local collusion can be revealed in the confirmation charter of the will which is also dated to 995.<sup>199</sup> King Æthelred was informed of a plot that sought to give Essex to the Viking leader Sveinn Forkbeard when he landed on the shores.<sup>200</sup> Sveinn had been recorded by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as invading the kingdom in 994.<sup>201</sup> Æthelric's widow, Leofwyn, was summoned to a royal assembly at Cookham in Berkshire. Æthelric had neither been charged nor cleared of the crime of collusion while he had been alive.<sup>202</sup> The king believed that Ealdorman Leofsig of Essex and others were aware of the charges.

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<sup>197</sup> S. Kelly, 'Introduction', ed. S. Kelly, *Charters of Saint Paul's, London* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 1–122, at p. 38. The bishops of London held estates in the Essex region.

<sup>198</sup> *Battle of Maldon*, pp. 28 and 30. Also see: Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church*, p. 1006.

<sup>199</sup> Whitelock, 'Notes', p. 148. The date was because the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which dated Sveinn's invasion to 994. Whitelock noted was held in the Christchurch archive with the latest date of this accusation being 995. Also see: Hart, *The Early Charters of Essex*, no. 29.

<sup>200</sup> S939. For an English translation see: *Wills*, no. 16 (2).

<sup>201</sup> ASC, 'C', 'D', and 'E', 994.

<sup>202</sup> S939.

We should note that Leofsigge was later exiled in 1002 for killing the king's reeve, Ælfric, which suggested discontent with royal authority within the locality.<sup>203</sup> Susan Kelly has stated, amongst many other plausible scenarios, the possibility of East Saxon nobles being vulnerable in the courts of Æthelred, particularly if they had deserted the army at Maldon or had not participated in the battle.<sup>204</sup> Based on this thesis's findings, however, there is another possibility. The region was dissatisfied with Æthelred's peace brokering with the Vikings at London after the locality lost its ealdorman and perhaps many leading lords at Maldon.<sup>205</sup> Also the rest of eastern England could have been displeased at the lack of aid after suffering several raids along the coast; nevertheless this remains speculation and we cannot be certain. As we will see in this chapter, however, aristocratic inheritances were not easy for central rulers throughout the North-Sea world.

Leofwyn requested that her advocates, Archbishop Ælfric and Æthelmær, petition the king to allow her to give her marriage gift to Christchurch in return for the charges being dropped and for Æthelric's will to stand.<sup>206</sup> The king consented to these terms and a declaration was written and read before the *witan*. The attendants included bishops and ealdormen; furthermore, many thegns had attended from 'both West Saxons and Mercians and Danes and English'.<sup>207</sup> In the *Domesday Book*, the estate of Bocking remained in the hands of Canterbury Christ Church.<sup>208</sup>

Æthelmær in this confirmation could be the same Æthelmær mentioned in the will of Byrhtnoth's wife, Ælfflæd, as Whitelock asserted: both wills were concerned with

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<sup>203</sup> ASC, 'C', 'D', and 'E', 1002. Also see: Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church*, p. 1006. Kelly rightfully notes that we are not fully aware of the local politics in Essex during this period. She has suggested, however, that Leofsigge succeeded Byrhtnoth as ealdorman of Essex.

<sup>204</sup> Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church*, p. 1006.

<sup>205</sup> ASC, C', 'D', and 'E', 994.

<sup>206</sup> S939; and Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church*, p. 1007. Note Archbishop Sigeric had died on 28<sup>th</sup> October 994 leaving Leofwyn in a 'more difficult position'. Archbishop Ælfric had inherited the advocacy of the family.

<sup>207</sup> S939.

<sup>208</sup> DB, *Essex*, (2,2). For Æthelric and Leofwyn see: S1218.

Essex.<sup>209</sup> To add further weight to this, Saint Gregory's Church in Suffolk, mentioned in the will of Æthelric, is in close proximity to the ealdormanic family of Essex's church, Stoke-by-Nayland. Æthelric must have been a significantly important thegn to the Essex nobility because he operated so closely to the family's sacred site and patrimony.<sup>210</sup>

We can argue that the confirmation of the will represents an example of a powerful state exerting its authority within the locality to impinge on a local lord's final testimony. The context, however, is crucial. The case is set when the whole kingdom was under a renewed Viking threat. The old guard within Æthelred's court of local powerful regional aristocrats had died: Ælfhere of Mercia in 983; Byrhtnoth of Essex in 991; and Æthelwine of East Anglia in 992.<sup>211</sup> The king's fear, therefore, can be viewed within this document; however, it does not show a king being able to change the course of the property of Bocking. Æthelric's will required the estate of Bocking to be transferred to his wife when he died and, after her death, to Christchurch. The king saw the land pass to Christchurch away from the widow.<sup>212</sup> We need to be clear that the original will was drawn up from the perspective of the thegn, whereas, by contrast, the confirmation is a document created by the central authority. The confirmation charter, accordingly, provides an overview that portrays a powerful central figure in the king. If we balance the events with the original will, nevertheless, it is reasonable that regional authority was stronger as inevitably the Bocking estate remained in the hands of a beneficiary of Æthelric's will.

The witnesses present also stress the authority of the aristocracy at this point within the kingdom. In addition to the local Essex aristocracy, thegns of the West Saxons, Mercians and people who were seen to be English or Danes were present.<sup>213</sup> In the

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<sup>209</sup> Whitelock, 'Notes', p. 149. Also see: Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church*, p. 1007. Æthelmær could be the son of Ealdorman Æthelweard the chronicler.

<sup>210</sup> S1501.

<sup>211</sup> ASC, 'A', 'C', 'D', and 'E', 983, 991, and 992.

<sup>212</sup> S939.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

presence of these witnesses the king did not reverse the decision of the will, nor did he seize any estates from the widow. He did not have the authority to intervene in aristocratic inheritances. Michael Lapidge has stated that a reason for the concession was the respect the king had for the cult of St Dunstan which Archbishop Ælfric was promoting and Kelly appears to agree to this having some impact on the decision.<sup>214</sup> It is also likely, however, that the applied pressure of thegns discouraged the king from this choice. The confirmation, furthermore, provides evidence to suggest that a local aristocracy could collude together to follow a new figurehead. The attempted selection of Sveinn was a cause of angst for the king. From the charter and *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* we are not aware of anyone being punished for the charge of collusion to receive Sveinn in Essex.

The accusations against Æthelric, moreover, were not brought forward until after the thegn's death. The confirmation informs us, furthermore, that Leofsige was aware of this charge too.<sup>215</sup> The king's suspicion of the ealdorman embodies the monarch's understanding that regional nobles held great authority within their locality. The support of the locality's thegns, too, is a plausible resource for an ealdorman who had regular contact with these individuals through shire courts and, in times of war, in regional armies.

The will shows the local aristocracy in eastern England being suspected of colluding to support a Viking war leader. The authority Sveinn might have had if the plot had been successful is hard to discern, but we can assert it would have undermined the authority of West Saxon kingship. What this case shows is, moreover, the perils of leaving no heir. A woman was vulnerable to outside forces without sons of her own and, as a

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<sup>214</sup> M. Lapidge, 'B and the *Vita Dunstani*', eds. N. Ramsay, M. Sparks, and T. Tatton-Brown, *St. Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 247–259, at p. 258; and Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church*, p. 1007. For the promotion of Saint Dunstan, see: A. Thacker, 'Cults and Canterbury: Relics and Reform under Dunstan and his Successors', eds. N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown, *St. Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 221–245, at p. 222; and N. Ramsay and M. Sparks, 'The Cult of St Dunstan at Christ Church, Canterbury', eds. N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown, *St. Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 311–323, at p. 311.

<sup>215</sup> S939.

consequence, she turned to the Church for protection in the form of Archbishop Ælfric. It may, therefore, represent the Church's authority in the face of the king. The Church ultimately promoted kingship, however, there is no denying that aristocratic families turned to members of the Church for assistance. We should affirm that the instability was similar to that of Duke William the Bastard's minority, with the aristocracy appearing to be out of control according to churchmen.<sup>216</sup> We can understand the dispute more fully if we can compare it to other regions. So let us turn to a dispute over the jarldom of Orkney.

The inheritance of the jarldom of Orkney features in the *Orkneyinga Saga* and reveals comparable themes to those affecting the lords of eastern England. The saga mentions the impact of regional collusion in the face of an encroaching central authority. It also stresses the impact of a lordship which operated on the periphery between two monarchs and how lords of a locality exploited this in their favour. The saga described Haakon, when he became the jarl of Orkney, being in dispute with the previous incumbent's son named Erlend, who had returned to the isles backed by his kinsmen.<sup>217</sup> As Haakon, too, had gathered supporters, a neutral party was employed to act as a mediator.<sup>218</sup> They agreed that the jarldom should be split under the proviso of an agreement from King Eystein I of Norway. Eystein approved the arrangement and was described as handing 'over to him [Haakon] his patrimony, half of Orkney' and the jarldom.<sup>219</sup>

The king's agreement appears to resonate with the ideal that a monarch was able to dictate an inheritance of office. The splitting of the Orkney jarldom, however, is remarkably analogous to the offering of the ealdormanry of Essex.<sup>220</sup> All parties gathered backing from the locality to stress the point that they were entitled to the jarldom itself. The kings in both cases take a passive role in the matters and were unable to select who

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<sup>216</sup> *GND*, 2, Book 7, Chapter 1 (1–4), pp. 90–92.

<sup>217</sup> *Orkneyinga Saga*, Chapter 44, p. 89.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> S939.

inherited an office if their choice did not have local sponsors. If we take the text as an Orcadian creation, we can posit that it gives us a local perception on the events. It is reasonable, therefore, that the confirmation of Cookham may represent an idealised view for a king who, in fact, did not have a high degree of authority in the matter.<sup>221</sup>

The saga continues to give details regarding early medieval inheritance and strengthens the impact of personal ties over institutional. The next case again emphasises how regional lordship was capable of denying central authority either seizing or even profiting from lands gained by another monarch. The incident begins with the death of King Sigurd and the succession of his son Magnus. Jarl Rognvald of Orkney had participated in aiding Harald Gili in becoming a king of Norway, which was shared between Harald and Magnus.<sup>222</sup> Magnus was described as never acknowledging King Sigurd's gift of Orkney to Rognvald. Magnus, despite becoming king, was not able to remove Rognvald from the jarldom and this was probably because Rognvald was supported by the local aristocracy of Orkney. This again, therefore, affirms that inheritance of 'offices' relied on local strength, while kings found it difficult to challenge the regional authority of a powerful lord.<sup>223</sup> Another dispute for the jarls of Orkney was between Thorfinn and the king of Scots.

Jarl Thorfinn was named the earl of Caithness by Malcolm, king of the Scots, at the age of five. From the age of fifteen, Thorfinn led expeditions against other chieftains and, as Malcolm was his grandfather, this strengthened the youth's position within the Orkneys.<sup>224</sup> When Malcolm died in 1093 and, according to the saga, was succeeded by a Karl Hundason (a nickname for MacBeth) the saga recorded a dispute between the new

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<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> *Orkneyinga Saga*, Chapter 62, p. 117.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 20, p. 50.

king and earl.<sup>225</sup> Hundason expected the tribute that Malcolm had received for Thorfinn to continue holding the earldom.<sup>226</sup> By contrast, Thorfinn believed that it was ‘his proper inheritance from his grandfather and refused to pay any tribute for it.’<sup>227</sup>

The inheritance of the earldom of Caithness in Thorfinn’s case raises issues that exchanges were personal and this is what kings sought to challenge through the tenth and eleventh centuries. Thorfinn believed the gift of the earldom and tribute was an inheritance agreement between him and Malcom. When Hundason requested the same tribute, therefore, Thorfinn believed this was an impingement on his patrimony. Thorfinn understood that he had inherited the ownership of the earldom with his grandfather’s death.<sup>228</sup> Therefore as Thorfinn viewed it as part of his land holding with Malcolm’s death a new king did not have the power to enforce the tribute.

The Norse and Anglo-Saxon examples exemplify the tension that emerges between the localities and the centre when an inheritance became disputed. It appears that disputes within the locality allowed for central incursion into a local matter. The aristocracy of a region, however, did not necessarily yield to a king’s demands, as seen with Thorfinn above. Kings could not gain access to local holdings or shift regional lords out of a locality, not because they were incapable rulers; rather the authority of kingship was not strong enough to bend a regional aristocracy. Of course, lords could be removed from office, but kings struggled to replace these men with their own supporters, mainly because they needed regional support. If a king, therefore, had subverted an inheritance it was likely to cause unrest within the locality. In each of the cases, furthermore, the kings gained very little from these exchanges. The lords all received what they had intended to

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<sup>225</sup> Crawford, *The Northern Earldoms: Orkney and Caithness*, pp. 135–136 . Crawford explains that ‘Hundison’ means son of a dog and the ‘a’ in the saga is an idiosyncrasy.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

gain and kings appear to have little say. What is quite clear, however, is the implied image of local support during these disputes, which nicely leads us into the next theme.<sup>229</sup>

#### 4.3. ARISTOCRATIC SUPPORT

Horizontal ties were important in preserving social and regional inheritances. Local networks of aristocrats came together to prevent outside influences from altering the course of an important ritual of aristocratic life. The lords of the North-Sea world all had similar networks in order to strengthen any inheritances made, which were rooted within the locality of the ruling lords. We are investigating the support of inheritance in an attempt to understand how the aristocracy, as a social group, viewed the passing down of land. We will illuminate, furthermore, how a regional aristocracy colluded to strengthen the claims of their lord against central interference by witnessing or advising in favour of the locality. First we will look at another example from the jarldom of Orkney.

Thorfinn requested that a third of the islands should be granted to him; land that his dead brother Einar Wry-Mouth had held from his nephew Jarl Rognvald.<sup>230</sup> Rognvald had claimed that those lands were given to him by King Magnus of Norway, who believed they were ‘part of his own patrimony’.<sup>231</sup> Thorfinn believed that those islands were part of his inheritance from Einar and were not the king’s lands to redistribute. What is intriguing is that, when Thorfinn prepared for war, Rognvald took counsel. Rognvald’s advisors were split with some believing ‘that it would only be fair for Thorfinn to control what had once belonged to Jarl Einar, even though Rognvald had been ruling it for some time.’<sup>232</sup> In

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<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 25, p. 63.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

addition to the suggestion of ceding control of the lands to Thorfinn, other advisors recommended splitting the islands in half as a compromise between the two.<sup>233</sup>

We can see then that many local lords believed that Thorfinn did have a claim to his brother's land. It appears that the lords of the region believed that, if his brother did not leave an heir and Thorfinn succeeded him, then Thorfinn should also gain his lands. The land therefore was not subject to seizure by a king, nor should it have been redistributed by the king if a brother of the late Jarl Einar had survived him. As a consequence, from the Orkney saga, we can assert that the aristocratic family's patrimonial holdings were understood by lords to be exclusively held by members of the family. We can hypothesise that the general belief that Thorfinn should retain his brother's land by the local aristocracy was in fact custom. The lords of the region expected the same customs for their own holdings to be maintained and therefore this was why many were sympathetic to Thorfinn's claims.

These incidents of inheritance in the Orkneys are comparable to the case of Robert Giroie upon his return to Normandy from Apulia. According to Orderic Vitalis the lord returned and Geoffrey of Mayenne introduced the young knight as Duke Robert's kinsman.<sup>234</sup> Along with leaders of the Mancaeux, Geoffrey requested that the duke grant Robert his rightful inheritance with the castle of Saint-Céneri.<sup>235</sup> The request was granted by the duke and Robert died leaving it to his sons, William and Robert. Again, we are presented with similar themes describing central authorities becoming involved with hereditary rights.<sup>236</sup> A collection of lords are involved in these proceedings and, although Orderic created an impression of a central decision, it appears that it was pressure from a collection of aristocrats that allowed the transaction to occur. As stated previously, this was

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<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>234</sup> *OV*, 4, Book 8, Chapter 5, pp. 154 and 156.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

likely a security for a locality which had aristocrats all witnessing similar agreements. So it was a witness network that protected the inheritance of the local aristocracy from central manipulation. The evidence from eastern Normandy and western Flanders for aristocratic support does not come from sagas or chronicles. Instead the medieval charter will be utilized to highlight aristocratic support in these regions. As a consequence we will now assess charters and their witness lists.

Historians have debated the authenticity of charters and the meaning behind witness lists. Michael Clanchy has it that the charter was to be read aloud because the voice either by tradition or convenience was still the preference in political activities.<sup>237</sup> Clanchy continued that early charters before 1066 revealed that draftsmen or scribes were not following a set formula. Rather they were making an ‘effort to master the complexities of documentary proof for the first time.’<sup>238</sup> The documents included repetitious clauses which Clanchy argued were evidence for the lower level of confidence they held compared to public ceremonies. He described the attestators of a charter placing a cross on the document and the process of marking the text was an action in the ceremony itself.<sup>239</sup> There were, moreover, differences in style and in phraseology because charters fixed the human relationships they described to a specific time and place. Clanchy stated that witness lists could be long and over time there was the development of the phrase *multis aliis* which does not aid identification.<sup>240</sup>

In his investigation of the meaning behind the cross placed on charters by the witnesses, Dominique Barthélemy noted, in his research on the archive of Saint Aubin, that the mark of a cross appeared crucial to certain types of acts such as concessions.<sup>241</sup> These

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<sup>237</sup> M. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066–1307*, 3rd Edition (Oxford, 2013), p. 265.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>241</sup> D. Barthélemy, ‘Une crise de l’Écrit? Observations sur des actes de Saint-Aubin d’Angers (XIe siècle)’, *Bibliothèque de l’École des chartes* 155 (1997), at p. 105.

crosses made the document more credible for a period that had favoured oral proceedings.<sup>242</sup> The anathema clause usually occurred just before the witnesses were outlined. The witness lists have also been studied in Anglo-Saxon research. Simon Keynes and Julia Barrow have both asserted that the list of names not only represented attendance, but also the social prominence of those at the event.<sup>243</sup> By contrast Charles Insley has cautioned, as we established in chapter three, the use of such lists. It was possible that some lords took precedence over more regular attendees.<sup>244</sup>

We can say that charters of the period were in their infancy and that is why as Clanchy noted there was variance in styles and structures. The witness lists, however, remain consistent in being at the end of the document. We must understand, furthermore, these documents being specific to a time and place. Charters purport associations between men at a certain point in time, although that is not to say of course that such relationships could not change. The charter was a record of an event and the ritual was more likely to be significant to the aristocrats of the North-Sea world than the parchment. A charter's witness list, nevertheless, does provide evidence for supporters of decisions pertaining to the inheritances of lords. We can discern, moreover, who was considered by the drafter as significant to the transaction being made through interpreting the attestation rank within the document. Previously work has centred on these ranks through royal charters of Anglo-Saxon England. In the following two instances, however, lords' regional documentation will be utilised. The crucial attestators can, accordingly, be identified for the locality itself rather than a central court's interpretation and be employed in research to understand the

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<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>243</sup> S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Aethelred 'the Unready', 978–1016: A Study in their use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 156. Also see: J. Barrow, 'Demonstrative Behaviour and Political Communication in later Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 36 (2007), pp. 127–150, at p. 149. Barrow noted that the attestation ranks were important because they were linked to society's desire for hierarchy.

<sup>244</sup> C. Insley, 'Assemblies and Charters in Late Anglo-Saxon England', eds. P. Barnwell and M. Mostert, *Political Assemblies in the Earlier Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 47–59, at p. 52. Also see: C. Insley, 'Southumbria', ed. P. Stafford, *A Companion to the Early Medieval Ages: Britain and Ireland c. 500–1100* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 332–340, at p. 332.

status of the aristocratic inheritance. It can, furthermore, be used to establish how it was secured for the time when the donor inevitably departed the world leaving their supporters behind. Let us begin with the charters from eastern Normandy.

In eastern Normandy, the use of collective witnessing appears in the *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Michel du Tréport* provides evidence that sons confirmed transfers of their parents.<sup>245</sup> According to the cartulary, Count Robert I of Eu with the counsel of Duke William of Normandy, Archbishop Mauger of Rouen, other magnates and bishops established the abbey of Saint Michael near Tréport having taken the 'advice' of his wife Beatrice and along with his three sons Ralph, William and Robert.<sup>246</sup> Following the suggestions of Tabuteau and White, we can assume that the presence of his sons was necessary to protect the establishment as the count of Eu provided resources to found the monastery.<sup>247</sup>

A witness list is outlined at the end of the account, in which. Robert and his three sons are first, followed by the vicomte of Eu named Hugo, Geoffery of Bailleul-Neuville and Walter of Dévillille. Galterus is difficult to locate but Hugo and Gaufridus certainly represent the local aristocracy of Eu.<sup>248</sup> They acted, therefore, in a similar fashion to the Orkney lords by supporting this transfer.<sup>249</sup> They attempted to ensure that the family's gifts were honoured and not challenged by outside forces. It is arguable, moreover, that they also prevented sons from seizing holdings from their family after the passing of the father. The support of Robert's immediate heirs solidified the transfer and hoped that their successors honoured the gift to the church. It could also be, moreover, that Robert believed that involving his sons would encourage them to continue the family support of this

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<sup>245</sup> *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Michel du Tréport*, eds. P. Laffleur de Kermaingant (Paris, 1880), no. 1.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law*, p. 177; and White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints*, p. 171.

<sup>248</sup> *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Michel du Tréport*, no. 1.

<sup>249</sup> *Orkneyinga Saga*, Chapter 25, p. 64.

church. They would maintain, therefore, a connection with a place through inheritance, similarly to the jarls of Orkney and their affinity to the jarldom.

The cases of the lords of Orkney and Eu are similar to the instance of Robert Giroie in Normandy, in which lords petitioned a central authority to ensure a rightful inheritance was maintained. In Giroie's circumstances, however, we gain the records of the dispute from a central perspective. The Orcadian source, which at the very least is focused on the earldom over the Norwegian kingdom, sheds light from the aristocratic perspective. Similarly, the *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Michel du Tréport* presents a regional account as the abbey was within the orbit of the lordship of Eu. We can assume, therefore, that the central sources of Normandy enhanced the power of central authority unjustly. The central sources have also side-lined the behaviour of the locality's aristocrats. We can grasp that in all three cases the lesser lords of the region were cited to be present at the time these agreements were made. Medieval historians have evaluated that the ritual of the grant was more important than the recorded charter. The charters have revealed that, like Orkney lords, in the county of Eu the local aristocracy were present for their count's grants. This was due to local custom being practised over central decision making.

When we move to the next region, that of Saint-Pol in western Flanders, we find the county has its own charters which can be explored; they continue to stress the importance of a locality's validation of grants. The counts of Saint-Pol's charters date from the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries and provide us with evidence from the understanding of the lord himself. The three charters reveal the need for family agreement. In the following examples it appears it was crucial to get the agreement of a lord's heirs. The first charter, according to Jean-François Nieus, originates from the eleventh century, most likely before 1051.<sup>250</sup> It outlines how Count Roger of Saint-Pol with the agreement of

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<sup>250</sup> *Les Chartes des comtes de Saint-Pol Xi–Xiii siècles*, no. 1.

his wife, Hadvise, and sons Manassès and Robert granted the abbey of Saint Bertin of Blangy-sur-Ternoise to the Trinity of Fécamp. The details were followed by a long witness list of monks and knights and the agreement sheds light onto the issue of succession.<sup>251</sup>

From this eleventh-century charter, we can consider that there was parity in western Flanders. Although the charter may not present us with a case of succession, it does provide a key aspect of inheritance. Aristocrats and benefactors of the lords were aware that successors could contest transfers. Lords found it preferable, therefore, to have the agreement of those succeeding the head of a family to prevent this outcome. Similarly to the lords of Eu, we can observe that the sons and wife of the count were described as being in agreement with the regional lord. The presence of sons and spouse further suggests that the counts of both Eu and Saint-Pol were attempting to associate their family with certain local ecclesiastic institutions. The heads of the family, also, were attempting to prevent fracturing of the patrimony by having local lords witnessing their assent.

A second charter from Saint-Pol in the eleventh century also attests to the need for the heirs' agreement. The notice is dated 17 June 1095 and informs us how Count Hugues II of Saint-Pol, with the agreement of his wife Hélsiende and his sons Enguerran and Hugues, provided various gifts to the abbey of Molesne.<sup>252</sup> The donation involved tithes, goods and rights all emanating from Lucheux, and is followed by a witness list of ecclesiastical figures and lords of the region.<sup>253</sup> The grant suggests the necessity of agreement when gifts are provided to abbeys of the family unit. Both cases show that the wife and children should be included within the charters for landed estates as well as financial benefits. In both charters, moreover, the local aristocracy are present as in the *Orkneyinga Saga* and sources for the Norman lords Giroie and Robert of Eu.

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<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 2.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*

The third charter follows the pattern of the previous two; it is dated to the twelfth century between 1112 and 1115.<sup>254</sup> Unlike the previous two Saint-Pol charters, it is not a grant by Count Hugues II of Saint-Pol; it is, rather, a confirmation by Arnoul of Hézeques' gift to the abbey of Saint Sylvain of Auchy-les-Moines.<sup>255</sup> The first point to make is that we see the heirs still agreeing to their father's decision. The presence of the heirs is comparable to the gift to Saint Tréport by Robert of Eu, as they were designed to secure the gift and ensure family association to the monastic centre.<sup>256</sup> This was in a confirmation charter and so stresses the personal connections that they were trying to pass on, especially in this case where it was the local ties. The witness list is more revealing, however, in this example than the previous two.

The men that attest this charter all appear to be secular lords; none of them is given a clerical title. We can hypothesise that these men were regional followers of the count. As a consequence, we can say that their presence, too, was to secure the transfer of estates and protect the count and benefactor from counter claims, just as we have seen from earlier Saint-Pol charters and in the instances of Eu as well as the Orkneys. The first witness, furthermore, to the charter is an Arnulf Carus, who attested after the count confirmed the agreement with his two sons Baldwin and Adam.<sup>257</sup> We can assume that this Arnulf is Arnoul of Hézeques. His sons, therefore, are present for similar reasons to the count's heirs, in that it was to secure the estate and not open it to an inheritance dispute. The charter strengthens, therefore, the premise of a group of local lords securing their inheritance through collectively witnessing grants from a family's patrimony within the locality.

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

From the charters of Saint-Pol, another factor worth considering is the length of the witness list. The documents record at least eleven named individuals.<sup>258</sup> The need for so many witnesses was an attempt to prevent seizure by heirs. If the charter represented the ritual performed by the lords present, it was the oaths employed at the ceremony that aided this. The number of witnesses can be attributed to local stability. Lords tried to avoid disputes amongst themselves by attending such events and were discouraged from challenging the agreements made. We can assume this from the anathema curses which invoked biblical curses for those who dared to contest, as we discussed in chapter three.<sup>259</sup> The witness lists also underline that these events represented a networking opportunity for younger lords and as a result allowed for positive relations amongst the locality's families too.

The cases presented above all aid the idea of local aristocratic support of estate transfer, which was needed to protect the inheritances of heirs from central authority or even rival lords. At the beginning of this chapter, Count Manassès of Guines was examined as an example of the aristocratic fear of not being able to pass on an inheritance or having local rivals seize the family patrimony.<sup>260</sup> The fear, despite not being explicitly stated in the charters, chronicles and sagas, lingers in the lords' consciousness implicitly. When central figures become involved it appears that local lords would be described as 'advising' the notable on how best to proceed. This interpretation, particularly for Normandy, has been derived from sources coming from the central figure. However if we understand the cases across the North Sea from the Orcadian perspective of the sagas, the Tréport cartulary, and the counts of Saint-Pol's own charters, we can assert that the lords in these regions also held local authority in a similar manner over their inheritance.

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<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> *ADSM*, 14 H 327.

<sup>260</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 43, pp. 582–583, p. 583.

Aristocratic families did not believe their inheritances would be upheld because of growing central authority. Central figures sought to control these inheritances as it would assist them in selecting their officials in the locality. They were, however, regularly hindered by the coalescing of regional lords behind the family who held historic links with the land and kin groups. The cooperation that can be witnessed across the North Sea was not only a custom to ensure local peace but also a method in preventing central powers from subverting their regional distinctiveness.

In Thorfinn's case we saw the saga describing the local aristocracy as believing he was entitled to his brother's land holdings. The instance of Giroie was comparable to Orkney as a group of lords backed the young knight to inherit his patrimony. The cases of Eu and Saint-Pol, meanwhile, underline the need for not only the agreement of the heirs but also the need for the local aristocracy's presence. We can accept that the attendance of local lords was part of the ritual of grants from the patrimony to ensure regional stability. Lords guaranteed stability by giving their assent to each other's grants as well as their regional noble's grants. This assent allowed the local aristocracy to protect their locality from outside interference, from central authority, and thus protected the patrimonies of many families within a noble's regional lordship.

The comparison of inheritance in the North-Sea world has allowed for a picture of greater regional strength across this seascape and shown how the regional collective of each locality strengthened the gifts made by lords and ensured that central interference was minimalised. The lordships, furthermore, have shown that the lesser lords under the nobility involved in noble inheritances. The participation of the regional aristocracy can be garnered from sagas, chronicles and charters which all recorded them giving their approval to a course of action, which inevitably favoured the local figurehead before a central one. Another aim of the collective agreement was to ensure regional stability, so, aiming to

deter disputes amongst the lords of the locality. These confirmations, however, were eschewed when a family was unable to provide an heir or clear line of succession. The consequence of this was that without a male inheritor the widow of the lord often became vulnerable and the agreements made null and void.

#### 4.4. WIDOWHOOD

Widows also contributed to the locality of their husband's regional lordship. In fact we can propose that the role of the widow on the death of their husband was to promote links to regional ecclesiastic centres, which served the memory of their family. Widows made grants to these regional religious centres on a large scale, particularly when they had no heirs to protect their position. A widow is important in the study of medieval inheritance as she is a way of identifying the intended wishes of her husband before his death. Women played a key role within the aristocratic family and distributed their own possessions as well as following their husband's wishes. In addition, the role of widows allows us to discover that not every inheritance was disputed.

Georges Duby said that, in the family, the male as head of the household was responsible for the patrimony that he had inherited from his father. Also his role included rewarding the monks and priests who served his family's dead.<sup>261</sup> The female, nonetheless, held a 'privileged relationship' with the deceased. At funerals they were required to be seen weeping and remaining close to the bodies of the departed. Duby is quite clear that life came from the womb like it did from fertile earth and thus life returned to the earth when dead, therefore, the body came back to the woman in medieval life.<sup>262</sup> Widowhood was a common reality of aristocratic life: male pursuits were dangerous. Duby concluded that women of the twelfth century, once they became a widow, should have been supported

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<sup>261</sup> G. Duby, *Women of the Twelfth Century Volume 2: Remembering the Dead*, trans. J. Birrell (Chicago, IL, 1997), p. 13.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

by their sons and in return she would lead them to live better lives.<sup>263</sup> Unfortunately, due to the nature of the sources, we do not have a clear example from the Norse case studies; however, from the *Orkneyinga Saga*, we can provide an instance of the importance of widows politically.

The *Orkneyinga Saga*, in what is a disputed account, states that Jarl Thorfinn died leaving behind his wife Ingibjorg and their sons. The record went on to say that Ingibjorg remarried and her husband was Malcolm, king of Scots.<sup>264</sup> There are issues with dating and inclusion in other sources regarding this information. In fact, Angelo Forte, Richard Oram and Frederik Pedersen have suggested that it was more likely that she married a member of Thorfinn's court named Máel Coluim.<sup>265</sup> The saga, nevertheless, provides an expectancy of how widows were politically valuable and sought after as partners for other lords. We can contrast this to the example of Manassès of Guines, however, and note that the security for Thorfinn, in his passing, came from the fact there was a clear line of succession; the couple had sons who had reached adulthood

In eastern England we are very fortunate for the corpus of material left behind by widows. First we must outline the will of two widows' father as it provides some context to later grants in his daughters' wills.<sup>266</sup> Monastic chronicles from eastern Normandy illuminate the situation of the countess of Eu, who was a widow establishing new ecclesiastical foundations.<sup>267</sup> Lambert of Ardres's monastic chronicle, moreover, provides details on widowhood and the expectations placed on a wife after the death of her husband.<sup>268</sup> To begin, we will start with the widows from Ælfgar's family to show the difference between the will of the male head of household and that of Ælfgar's daughters.

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<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>264</sup> *Orkneyinga Saga*, Chapter 33, p. 76.

<sup>265</sup> A. Forte, R. Oram and F. Pedersen, *Viking Empires* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 274.

<sup>266</sup> S1486, S1483 and S1494.

<sup>267</sup> *Gallia Christiana*..., t. 11, Instr., cols. 153–156.

<sup>268</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 51, pp. 586–587.

Ælfgar's will from the mid-tenth century describes a transfer of moveable wealth to his lord in the heriot; swords, armlets, *mancuses* of gold, horses, shields and spears were all transferred.<sup>269</sup> The will, furthermore, states that he was informed that, if he gave the sword, which was given to him by King Edmund, worth 120 pounds and also four pounds of silver on the hilt, he could make a will.<sup>270</sup> This correlates with the concept that gifts were designed to show status and passed back and forth. As has been stated, Ælfgar was survived by his daughters Æthelflæd and Ælfflæd, both of whom received land.<sup>271</sup> Ælfflæd was the wife of the next ealdorman of Essex in Byrhtnoth. The will which stresses this connection and states that land given to the couple would pass to Æthelflæd if there were no children from the union appears to display the desire for children to keep the family unit moving forward. The desire is evident where it states that any future children of Æthelflæd were to receive Lavenham and, if no children were to come from her, it was to revert to Stoke-by-Nayland.<sup>272</sup>

We should remind ourselves that Ælfgar was happy for his land to pass to Byrhtnoth and Ælfflæd. This was likely due to the role of a local network within the ealdormanry and was further strengthened Byrhtnoth's claim to succeed as the ealdorman, as he was married to a surviving daughter of the previous incumbent and had benefited from the will. The will raises the question, as Reuter described, of how important moveable wealth or positional items was to the aristocracy.<sup>273</sup> We can reason that these items were symbolic in nature; no monastic foundation received a sword or a shield. Modern society certainly places a high value on land, but we can contend that there was an emblematic nature in land at this point in identifying rulership of a territory.

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<sup>269</sup> S1483.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> Reuter, "You Can't Take it with You", p. 23.

The problem of the corpus of Anglo-Saxon wills presented here is that we are not privy to anyone attending the event itself. Therefore, to establish a network of supporters of these final transfers is hard. At the very least it could be theorised that those mentioned within the will were present. In this case, it is reasonable that Ælfgar had his two surviving daughters along with his son-in-law present.

Andrew Wareham investigated the wills of Ælfgar, Æthelflæd and Ælfflæd in his study *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia*.<sup>274</sup> He compared Ælfgar's will to that of the bishop of London, Theodred, who had assisted with the revival of the Church in East Anglia after the Vikings.<sup>275</sup> Wareham has it that, in contrast to Theodred's grants to religious houses, Ælfgar bequeathed the majority of his estates to kinsfolk and that the ealdorman was concerned with the minster of Stoke-by-Nayland: the sacred site for his family as discussed in chapter two.<sup>276</sup> In this will his eldest daughter, Æthelflæd, received nearly twice as many estates as her younger sister Ælfflæd.<sup>277</sup> Wareham hypothesised that this was not because the eldest daughter was the widow of King Edmund. He asserted that, as the will noted that Æthelflæd was given seniority over her sister Ælfflæd because she was an older child and still able to rear children.<sup>278</sup>

The will of Æthelflæd, unlike her father's, does not grant items of war such as swords and shields to her lord. By contrast, we see cups, robes and bowls included with the typical gold, armlets and horses.<sup>279</sup> In addition to the granting of goods, the daughter of Ælfgar grants her lord estates at Cholsey, Lambourn and Reading. Æthelflæd was the first from her family to make a connection with the abbey of Canterbury Christ Church and we

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<sup>274</sup> Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, pp. 46–60.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> S1483.

<sup>278</sup> Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, p. 53.

<sup>279</sup> S1494.

can understand this as being influenced by her marriage to King Edmund.<sup>280</sup> Æthelflæd's will, furthermore, bequeathed Damerham in Wiltshire to abbey of Glastonbury.<sup>281</sup> She disposed of twice as many estates in eastern England as her father had thirteen in total, five being re-grants and eight being new.<sup>282</sup> She provided eight estates to the family's religious house at Stoke-by-Nayland in the Stour valley.<sup>283</sup> Ely received one estate after her death and should have received five more. These five estates, however, passed to Ælfflæd and Byrhtnoth for a life tenure.<sup>284</sup> In contrast, Ælfgar's will made provision for the possibility of grandchildren from Ælfflæd and Byrhtnoth. Æthelflæd grants land to her sister, Ælfflæd, and her brother-in-law, Byrhtnoth; this included eight estates all containing the provision that, after their deaths, they would revert to different monastic institutions including Stoke-by-Nayland.<sup>285</sup> Wareham correctly stated that if Æthelflæd had been in an agnatic kinship system, her grants would have been to the benefit of her husband's and her agnate's associated religious houses.<sup>286</sup> Æthelflæd maintained, however, a balance between her familial interests and those of her in-laws.

The will continues the expected regional lordship tradition of the kin keeping landed estates within the family. We can claim that this will was created near the end of Byrhtnoth's life, who was already old by the time of the Battle of Maldon. This may explain, therefore, why we do not see the stipulation of lands passing on to children as it is conceivable that Æthelflæd knew her sister was unable to bear children. Intriguingly, the institutions to which the estates were planned to pass on to after their deaths were regional centres. These included Saint Mary's church at Barking, Saint Paul's London, Bury St

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<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.* Also see: Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, p. 55.

<sup>283</sup> S1494.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> S1483.

<sup>286</sup> Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, p. 56.

Edmunds, Saint Peter's church in Mersea, in northern Essex, and Stoke-by-Nayland.<sup>287</sup>

Æthelflæd also provided lands to kinsmen, a kinswoman, a reeve, a servant and a priest.<sup>288</sup>

By contrast, we do not see the same types of grants by her father Ælfgar, whose will appears to be strictly benefitting immediate family, lord and monastic establishments.

Æthelflæd's grants to these final individuals are far smaller and range from two to ten hides in various locations and an estate at Waldingfield.<sup>289</sup>

Ælfflæd, too, differs from her father. She also did not share the same pattern of benefaction as her sister. Her interests were spread between her ancestors and the commemoration of Byrhtnoth at Ely where he was buried. Ælfflæd, too, is unique compared to the rest of her family because we see a will and an entry in a monastic chronicle that provides insight into her final wishes. The *Liber Eliensis* claimed she gave four estates and a tapestry of Byrhtnoth's deeds to the abbey.<sup>290</sup> Wareham has argued that the Latin text appears to assume a patrilineal framework in play here, whereas the will fits a bilateral framework.<sup>291</sup> Another difference is that, in the will, the estate of Rettendon is described as a morning gift, while in the *Liber Eliensis* it is either a dowry or dower.<sup>292</sup> Rettendon descended to Ely in similar fashion as the Damerham did to Glastonbury.<sup>293</sup> The will drew attention to a ring or bracelet that was part of a pair given to Ely, one by Byrhtnoth and one by his wife; the chronicle does not, however, record any item of this nature.<sup>294</sup> We can theorise that this was because these items were 'positional' and therefore associated to aristocratic status. Thus, aristocratic social items were not valuable to a monastery. Wareham postulated that Soham was Ælfflæd's dower from Byrhtnoth which

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<sup>287</sup> S1494.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 63, p. 136.

<sup>291</sup> Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, p. 56.

<sup>292</sup> S1486; and *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 63, p. 136.

<sup>293</sup> S1494.

<sup>294</sup> S1486; and *Lib. El.*, Book 2, Chapter 63, p. 136.

she bequeathed to Ely.<sup>295</sup> She bequeathed two estates to Ely, which were acquired as marriage gifts and dower from Byrhtnoth, and two estates which were inherited from her family members.<sup>296</sup>

Ælfflæd's will provides us clear evidence for the role of the woman in familial inheritances. She granted land and a tapestry to the monastery at Ely, which as shown in previous chapters became well-endowed by Byrhtnoth's visit before the Battle of Maldon. It was, furthermore, within the patrimonial holdings of Byrhtnoth's family in Cambridgeshire. The tapestry strengthens the argument that the widow had to look after the remembrance of the family's dead. Of course we know that the tapestry has been lost. We can, however, assume the deeds of his life would have been displayed on the piece at Ely.<sup>297</sup> If it was remotely in the style of the *Bayeux Tapestry* it would certainly have promoted Byrhtnoth as a hero of eastern England. Ælfflæd also provided for her natal family with grants to the Stoke-by-Nayland church, which as seen with Ælfgar and Æthelflæd represented a familial centre of remembrance. Thus we can deduce that the widow commemorated her husband's family, but also did not disregard her natal family in remembrance strategies.

In the case of the two eastern England widows, we can see a concerted effort to provide for the regional churches of their locality. As has been shown, probably because of then precarious lack of heirs the widows provide for ecclesiastical institutions whereas their father was more concerned with his kin. Their grants, therefore, were vulnerable outside of the Church as their line had failed to create a male heir. In fact, if we look at *Domesday Book* estates recorded in their wills such as Polstead and Withermarsh were in

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<sup>295</sup> Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, p. 58.

<sup>296</sup> S1486.

<sup>297</sup> M. Bundy, 'The Byrhtnoth Tapestry or Embroidery', ed. D. Scragg, *The Battle of Maldon AD 991* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 263–278, at p. 273.

lay hands by 1066.<sup>298</sup> They continued, nevertheless, to maintain their family role of providing remembrance at their regional centres. Ælfflæd, in particular, exemplifies the need to support institutions that were related to her family and those of her husband. We can reason, however, that these patterns of grants were in line with the patterns of kinship. Members of aristocratic households sought regional connections to solidify their political standing within their territory and the royal court. Thus, it is reasonable for us to assume that widows were contributing to these connections through grants to monastic houses.

In addition, Wareham cautions that the will was in a context where the wealth of a wife, which was gained from the husband, was traditionally transferred to the husband's associated religious house. A will did not necessarily include the wealth from the wife's own family. The Anglo-Norman tradition saw the wife's family resources descend to an heir or religious house associated with the husband or his ancestors.<sup>299</sup> We now need, therefore, to proceed to our next example, that of widows maintaining their husband's and family's interests which can also be observed in eastern Normandy.

In a charter from the *Gallia Christiana*, the countess of Eu established Saint Pierre-sur-Dives in c. 1046. The author of the original charter that appears in the *Gallia Christiana* was worried that the countess' sons might take them back after Countess Lescelina had died. So it recorded the heirs as being present at the exchange and Lescelina purchasing the land directly from her sons.<sup>300</sup> We can discuss this account from a couple of perspectives. In the first instance, it can be argued that this follows a trend seen elsewhere of the fear of heirs disputing grants that were made by their predecessors as they believed the gifts were part of their inheritance. We can postulate that wives of departed nobles sought to combat this by gaining agreements made in the presence of key witnesses such as

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<sup>298</sup> *Suffolk*, (27,5) and (27,4).

<sup>299</sup> Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, p. 60.

<sup>300</sup> *Gallia Christiana*..., t. 11, Instr., cols. 153–156, col. 155.

Duke William of Normandy.<sup>301</sup> Conversely, it can be stated that, as the text is from a monastic background, it is in fact the fears of the writer being expressed here. It would, therefore, coincide with the feudal revolution paradigm whereby lords were seizing lands from the Church and this entry represents the Church's anticipation of the event.<sup>302</sup>

In this case, Lescelina wanted her sons to be present for the agreement to strengthen the church's hold on her gifts. It was not necessarily, however, Lescelina's fear that her sons would take this away when she died. By contrast, we can reason that she, like Ælfflæd in eastern England, wanted protection and therefore called on her sons. Ælfflæd did not have any sons to call upon so, in her will, she beseeched Ealdorman Æthelmær of the Western Provinces to protect her natal church of Stoke-by-Nayland.<sup>303</sup> Lescelina's situation displays the need for aristocratic families of the North Sea to have heirs not only to continue the family name and maintain the unit's prestige, but also to protect the gifts of past members. The consequences of not being able to produce heirs are evident in eastern England. The establishment of Saint Pierre-sur-Dives is far from the orbit of Eu. Pierre Bauduin has posited, following the account of William of Jumièges, that William, Lescelina's husband, was also still the count of the Hiemois which encompassed where Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives was erected.<sup>304</sup> We can see that Lescelina was honouring her husband's patrimonial holdings in central Normandy too. In addition, we can imagine that the countess of Eu was operating in a similar fashion to the count of Saint-Pol. These events that the documents describe record witnesses as part of a ritual; however, it is likely the main cause was to ensure that future generations would protect the gifts. There is another example, nonetheless, from western Flanders that we can employ.

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<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>302</sup> D. Barthélemy, *The Serf, the Knight and the Historian*, trans. G. R. Edwards (Ithaca, NY, 2009), p. 38.

<sup>303</sup> S1494. For Æthelmær's father's lineage see: *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), p. 2.

<sup>304</sup> P. Bauduin, *La Première Normandie (Xe-XIe Siècles): sur les frontières de la haute Normandie: identité et construction d'une principauté*, 2nd Edition (Caen, 2006), p. 296. Also see: *GND*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 4, p. 10.

A widow from the county of Guines also carried out the wishes of her dead husband. According to Lambert of Ardres, Count Manassès of Guines wanted to imitate his father by building a monastic church within his lands.<sup>305</sup> Manassès' aim could not be completed due to other matters that interfered. His wife Emma carried out the wish after his death and Lambert described her deed in a chapter of his chronicle.<sup>306</sup> Lambert described Emma as a widow who decided to carry out the vow her husband had made to God. This resulted in the creation of Saint Leonard's Church and a cloister in a monastery at Guines. Emma did this for the salvation of her soul as well as her husband's soul. Lambert claimed that Emma summoned nuns from Estrun to the monastery and placed as abebess a Sybil, who came from the family of Countess Adele of Guines. Emma later became a nun at the monastery and was buried there at her death.<sup>307</sup>

Leah Shopkow noted that the dates Lambert provided are incorrect as St. Leonard's church was built twenty years before Manassès' death.<sup>308</sup> At the very least, Lambert provides an account which follows the patterns of the other lords of the North Sea. He described the wife of the count as following the requests of her husband who had died. We can believe, therefore, that the ecclesiastical expectation of a wife was to carry out these desires for her husband. If we compare this to other regions in the North Sea it is a plausible expectation. Lambert described the wife creating a church within the territory of the county of Guines, which correlates with the countess of Eu's project and the grants of the eastern England widows.<sup>309</sup> These focuses on spiritual centres within churches, therefore, add to the concept of the territory. That is to say, a lordship held ritual secular sites and ritual spiritual sites to enhance the rule of the lord's family.

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<sup>305</sup> *Lambert*, Chapter 37, p. 580.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 51, p. 586.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 52, p. 587.

<sup>308</sup> L. Shopkow, 'Notes', ed. and trans. L. Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 224–225, nos. 197–200.

<sup>309</sup> S1494 and S1486.

All these examples emphasise the expectations placed on medieval widows. Widows sought to carry out the wishes of their deceased husbands by either providing possessions to their partner's ecclesiastical interests or carrying out projects that were not yet completed. As we have seen, both Lescelina of Eu and Emma of Guines were described by monastic sources as following a request of their respective husbands.<sup>310</sup> In the case of Lescelina, however, there appears to be a greater stress on the presence of her sons and this was for security, as discussed above.<sup>311</sup> The wills of Anglo-Saxon England are more complicated: there are more of them. At the basic level, however, we see honouring of family churches such as Stoke-by-Nayland.<sup>312</sup> We can view, furthermore, a difference in the moveable items transferred. The positional items, as theorised by Reuter, were not the same for the female members of the family. As noted by Wareham, we also see a network for widows being dominated by ecclesiastical individuals over lay nobility. The sources for inheritance also highlight the peril for widows without a son to inherit their father's local title. Widows were vulnerable as stated at the beginning of this chapter; however, the evidence suggests that they were capable of calling on support for their grants.

#### 4.5. CONCLUSION

The inheritances of the North-Sea lords show that aristocrats were not focussed on a single male line. We can see, of course, the eldest male taking priority, but this is not to say that the whole family was excluded from an inheritance. All males were involved and daughters did receive a significantly smaller inheritance than their brothers. Women, nevertheless, maintained a pivotal role in the death of lords. We must then not view an aristocratic inheritance as an incident centred on death. It started at birth with names that tied children to a family and locality. The naming inheritances of the lords appeared to be

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<sup>310</sup> *Gallia Christiana*..., t. 11, Instr., cols. 153–156, cols. 154–155.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 155.

<sup>312</sup> S1494 and S1486.

focused on the agnate line as shown with the family of Ælfgar, Byrthelm and Sigurth Haakonsson. Aristocratic inheritances, nevertheless, were not solely about passing on a family lineage. They also involved a regional identity that tied lords to their territory and included the locality in securing power from outside forces such as kings and dukes.

An inheritance was a battle ground for central authority and the locality. It allows historians to assess the level of authority a kingship held or on the other hand the solidarity that existed within the regions. The aristocracy within a noble's lordship colluded in such matters to combat central authority. The local aristocrats witnessed agreements in mass to protect the interests of the group. We can see this in narrative sources such as the *Orkneyinga Saga* or even administrative sources such as the charters of Saint-Pol. A central authority may attempt to push its agenda forward within a locality but the inheritances show that this was stiffly resisted in the tenth and eleventh centuries. We can postulate then that a local aristocracy also relied on these agreements to ensure stability within a region. Families came together and this provided an opportunity for young heirs to meet and network with the lords with whom they would be engaging when they reached their majorities. So we can state that inheritances were influenced by local interests with the desire to prevent discord in the locality too.

The aristocracy was not solely focused on the agnate line. In fact lordly families were bilateral in their ties. The male, as shown, often took precedence in naming, but we can also see evidence of the female line taking precedence. William Busac named his son Rainold to tie him to his maternal line in Soissons instead of his father's lineage in the county of Eu. The female members were not excluded from their father's inheritance, but a noble in this period preferred a male heir to succeed. The desperation was to ensure that the family lineage continued in a direction that had been set out by grants, in which the

past, present and future all participated. We can see this in Count Manassès of Guines's anguish over not having an heir.<sup>313</sup>

Women were in a vulnerable position, however, when there was no male heir: a particular problem for widows. The unnamed widow of Æthelric, for example, was subject to scrutiny and had to rely on advocates.<sup>314</sup> By contrast, Lescelina, in Eu, was able to utilise her sons in grants to strengthen her establishment of Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives.<sup>315</sup> The eastern England widows commemorated the agnate line and the natal line in their final wills. The evidence from Eu and Guines clearly places the stress on the agnate line. We can postulate, however, that if the eastern England widows had sons to support their wills their offspring's presence would have been part of the ritual of will making. Thus the continental widows may have performed commemoration of the natal line too; however, from the examples examined the evidence is not there to confirm this. Widows, however, could call on the aid of the Church which also played a role in the familial identity.

Ecclesiastic institutions became hubs of remembrance for lords. Monasteries and churches provided prayers for the souls of the family with the gifts both men and women gave them. Churches such as Saint Tréport or Stoke-by-Nayland were part of the lordships' identity. Aristocratic families maintained traditions of making grants for the souls of those not only in the present but also their ancestors too. Families also founded their own centres too, as shown with Saint Pierre-sur-Dives. Women in particular secured this link it seems. They probably educated younger members on the link between the family and centre and they were responsible for fostering and maintaining the link. Ælflæd, for example, in her will gave gifts to her husband's monastery of Ely, but also to her family's church of Stoke-by-Nayland. We should see then that aristocratic inheritances were much more than estates, titles and money.

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<sup>313</sup> Lambert, Chapter 42, p. 582.

<sup>314</sup> S939.

<sup>315</sup> *Gallia Christiana*..., t. 11, Instr., cols. 153–156, cols. 154–155.

## 5. CHAPTER FIVE: NOBLE TEXTS

Robert Bartlett has it that the lords of the early middle ages were ‘transregional’. The aristocracy was an international group in which its members held similar characteristics. Lords travelled in search of serving a liege lord and central authorities competed for the service of these men to enhance their power.<sup>1</sup> Bartlett’s theory is certainly not wrong. William Busac presented in chapter three, for example, was such a ‘transregional’ man.<sup>2</sup> A ‘transregional aristocracy’, however, is too simplistic as it omits the localities. This chapter seeks, therefore, to address this omission through the use of ‘Noble Texts’.

‘Noble Texts’ are sources that have the aristocracy as their subject. They either describe, judge, or display lordly status. A ‘Noble Text’ can be a written source, a tapestry, or even a physical object such as a hall. The *Bayeux Tapestry* is arguably the most famous ‘Noble Text’ from the eleventh century. The tapestry contained many images on the nature of lordship. Michael John Lewis noted that Duke William of Normandy was often shown as taller than his companions in the tapestry.<sup>3</sup> By contrast to nobles, the king held orbs, crowns, maces, sceptres and staffs. Only the Normans used horses, while only the English were portrayed using horned drinking cups.<sup>4</sup> The lost tapestry of Byrhtnoth’s deeds would have certainly held such tropes too.

We will investigate in this chapter the written texts of the North-Sea world. These sources were often created by monks who were responding to the aristocracy. A monk, for

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<sup>1</sup> R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (London, 1993), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> G. Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Medieval Europe*, trans. C. Carroll (Cambridge, 2004), p. 2; and S. Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford, 1994), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> M. Lewis, ‘Identity and Status in the Bayeux Tapestry: The Iconographic and Afterfactual Evidence’, *ANS* 29 (2007), pp. 100–120, at p. 103. For Duke William on the tapestry see: *The Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. D. Wilson (London, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Lewis, ‘Identity and Status in the Bayeux Tapestry’, p. 103. For the image on the tapestry see: *The Bayeux Tapestry*, Plate 4.

example, may have been located at a monastery which was well endowed by its regional lord. The author, therefore, may have responded by praising him for his deeds in writing as a way of remembrance. On the other hand clergymen may have been reacting to the poor behaviour of lords and looked to provide guidance on what they believed to be good lordship. Ultimately a ‘Noble Text’ exudes noble aspiration to its reader or observer. This chapter will have a diverse range of written ‘Noble Texts’. They vary in style and authorship, and their subjects include mythical figures and historical men. Aristocratic seals are a good example of a ‘Noble Text’ to begin our analysis.

Seals were increasingly used by North-Sea aristocrats over the centuries, though there are few extant seals for our period.<sup>5</sup> Importantly, however, they provide us an aristocratic image of their subject, and project a desired persona to those reading the charter to which the seal was affixed to. We can say that it was a public depiction and often these representations were designed to relate to a lord’s status within society. Originally seals were used by royal families, for example, King Lothar of West Francia’s seal figured the king from his waist upwards and showing his face along with a crown, sceptre, and baton of coronation.<sup>6</sup> According to Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak sealing practices between 1050 and 1180 had been extended to non-royal elites. Bishops, abbots, nobles and major cities, therefore, used seals.<sup>7</sup> Bishop Maurice of Paris’s seal, for example, had the bishop on a throne made of animals’ heads; Abbot Eudes of Saint-Germain had a seal depicting an abbot’s figure standing upright and holding a staff; the seal of Simon de Montfort in the thirteenth century portrayed a lord on the hunt. He was riding on horseback with a horn and a dog for company; and the municipal seal of Saint Omer from the late twelfth century

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<sup>5</sup> B. Merdrignac and A. Chédévile, *Les sciences annexes en histoire du Moyen Âge* (Rennes, 1998), p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>7</sup> B. M. Bedos-Rezak, ‘In Search of a Semiotic Paradigm: The Matter of Sealing in Medieval Thought and Praxis (1050–1400)’, eds. N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson, *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals* (London, 2008), pp. 1–7, at p. 1.

portrayed four seated men surrounded by seven heads.<sup>8</sup> There is, however, an earlier example from the North-Sea world that is stored in Keele library.

Count Robert of Meulan's seal from the early twelfth century is an excellent specimen of early aristocratic imagery. It is fixed to a grant of a manor at Milburne, Dorset, and the chapel of Compton, Wiltshire, from Robert to the abbey of Bec. On the front it depicts a man standing upright, his sword pointed towards the ground. It also appears that the figure is wearing a coat of mail as there is an item of clothing reaching the man's knees.<sup>9</sup> The obverse of the seal shows a galloping horse. We are unable to tell, due to part of the seal being worn away, however, if there is a rider.<sup>10</sup> The seal provides us the image of aristocrats from their own mind. Robert is depicted as a warrior by holding a sword. The seal maybe unique for this period as it does not show the lord physically mounted on a horse.<sup>11</sup> Adrian Ailes noted that equestrian designs increased from the mid-twelfth century.<sup>12</sup> From the beginning of the thirteenth century lords replaced these images with a shield of arms. The concept was attempting to convey legitimate inheritance.<sup>13</sup> For two reasons, however, these images will be omitted from the investigation. The first is to create a fair comparison between our selected regions, as some areas lack any images to employ. There are so few seals available that we cannot make a fair comparison.

As we know the context of a source is key, so in this introduction we will now examine literacy, manuscripts, the Peace of God and noble conduct for the Middle Ages and use the *vita* of Saint Gerald and *Saga of Ragnar Loðbrok* to provide examples of these themes from a Christian and Norse perspective.

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<sup>8</sup> Seal of Maurice de Sully, bishop of Paris, D6782, ANP; Seal of Eudes, abbot of Saint-Germain, D8906, ANP; Seal of Simon de Montfort, D708, ANP; and First Grand Seal of Omer D5546, ANP.

<sup>9</sup> Keele University Library, Hatton Wood MSS 72/46/1 (1). A grant by Count Robert of Meulan to the Abbey of Bec.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Merdrignac and Chédéville, *Les sciences annexes en histoire du Moyen Âge*, p. 156. The trend of lords being depicted on foot started in the thirteenth century.

<sup>12</sup> A. Ailes, 'The Knight's Alter Ego: From Equestrian to Armorial Seals', eds. N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson, *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals* (London, 2008), pp. 8–11, at p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Many of the sources are dated after the tenth and eleventh centuries. Claudio Leonardi noted that there are fewer manuscripts dated to the tenth and the early eleventh centuries, as opposed to the ninth or later eleventh centuries. He hypothesised that the Carolingian Renaissance ‘largely ended Germanic oral tradition and popular culture.’<sup>14</sup> Books, on the other hand, were produced only on demand as it was a costly exercise.<sup>15</sup> Leonardi postulated that the *vita* of Saint Gerald of Aurillac from the early tenth century was the first hagiographic text about a layman.<sup>16</sup> A characteristic of tenth and eleventh century hagiography was territorial expansion, according to Leonardi because hagiographers were seeking saints to be involved with the history of place.<sup>17</sup> His reasoning was as follows: there were crises in institutions; Papal crises; problems of invasion across borders; ‘and above all the effects of social and political particularism’.<sup>18</sup>

We must recognise the uses of literary sources as this chapter will show many of these texts. Gerd Althoff, in his discussion on the rules of conflict, said that nobles, warriors and retainers followed rules. Pagans or those of lower strata, however, suffered unrestricted violence.<sup>19</sup> Althoff believed this unrestricted violence is what gave the medieval period its vicious reputation. The rules were not written but ‘were habits according to which this society organised its communal life, agreed upon again and again in council.’<sup>20</sup> Althoff explained that the use of literature can be difficult for historians compared to the annals, chronicles and other historiographical sources.<sup>21</sup> He has it that literature is a laboratory space, ‘where reality is idealised, commented upon ironically,

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<sup>14</sup> C. Leonardi, ‘Intellectual Life’, ed. T. Reuter, *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Volume III, c. 900–1024* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 186–211, at p. 186.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> G. Althoff, ‘The Rules of Conflict Among the Warrior Aristocracy of the High Middle Ages’, eds. K. Esmark, L. Hermanson, H. J. Orning and H. Vogt, *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 313–332, at p. 314.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

caricatured, exaggerated, or made problematic for the sake of experimentation.<sup>22</sup> He remarked that texts such as *Nibelungenlied* from the twelfth century highlight rules, but conceded that the level to which these rules were followed in reality is open to question. Althoff has it that there were regional peculiarities, for example Norman-rule in southern Italy appeared harsher.<sup>23</sup>

Sources in the Middle Ages have a tendency to show uniformity and order. Geoffrey Koziol believed that this was a result of clerics who were trained to discover organisation.<sup>24</sup> Alois Wolf proposed that, in the early and central middle ages, orality and literacy ‘merged and supported each other’.<sup>25</sup> The oral recitation of a text was experienced every day within monasteries. American medieval historians provide, however, an approach to the material available that may allow us to discover local perspectives.

According to semiotics, language is not a natural construction; rather, it is a form of code. The author of a text, therefore, was not in control of what he or she writes. Jacques Derrida argued for deconstruction, in which a person who has witnessed an event is unable to explain it as they are following a code of language.<sup>26</sup> The consequence of this approach means that the context of a source, and other aspects that are not written within the text, are just as important as the body of writing itself.<sup>27</sup> Gabrielle Spiegel argued, following Derrida’s theory, and in defence of medieval history, that any language can be viewed as a

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>24</sup> G. Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favour: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1992), p. 299.

<sup>25</sup> A. Wolf, ‘Medieval Heroic: Traditions and Their Transitions from Orality to Literacy’, eds. A. N. Doane and C. B. Pasternack, *Vox Intexta Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages* (Madison, WI, 1991), pp. 67–88, at p. 67.

<sup>26</sup> G. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, MD, 1997), p. 8. For Derrida, see: J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore, MD, 1974), p. 154. ‘Through this sequence of supplements a necessity is announced: that of an indefinite chain, ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing they defer: the mirage of the thing itself, of immediate presence, of originary perception. Immediacy is derived. That all begins through the intermediary is what is indeed “inconceivable [to reason].”’

<sup>27</sup> Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, p. 8.

‘historically specific occurrence’.<sup>28</sup> As a result, if we are to investigate these linguistic communities, the practice of ‘historicism appears to hold out the best hope’.<sup>29</sup> Spiegel has it that the crucial aspect of deconstruction for historians to practise is listening to the silence of the text.<sup>30</sup> This means placing as much emphasis on what is *not* in the text as to that which *is* in the source.

According to Spiegel typology was a method which can bridge the gap between the past and present, as well as the present and future.<sup>31</sup> Chroniclers used the Old Testament for figures and events as a technique in ‘legitimizing present political life’.<sup>32</sup> The author saw his work ‘as a vehicle for transmitting segments of past texts conjoined’.<sup>33</sup> The insertion of genealogies represented ‘expressions of social memory and, as much, could be expected to have a particular affinity with historical thought’.<sup>34</sup> Contemporary authors, furthermore, saw history formed as a biographical process of hereditary succession. Spiegel noted that chroniclers created the divisions within history with generational changes, and provided an image of connected historical relationships fundamentally grounded in social reality.<sup>35</sup> Ultimately, to fully draw out their meaning, the historian needs to place sources within their context. Another key feature for historians to identify is the intended audiences of these sources.

Brian Stock has stressed the importance of investigation into the audiences that the texts were intended for. Additionally, he commented on the need to enquire into ‘the mentality in which they were received’.<sup>36</sup> He argued that, in the eleventh century, there are two vital elements in the study of medieval literacy. The first is the status of text, the other

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>36</sup> B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ, 1983), p. 7.

being the position of oral discourse. Stock went on to signify the importance of oral culture in the medieval period. Oral culture relied on information being passed from generation to generation, while the social memory prevented it from being altered.<sup>37</sup> Stock saw this oral culture playing a key role in the administration and literary culture in Europe up to the 1050s.<sup>38</sup>

The account of Saint Gerald of Aurillac is a good example of Stock's arguments. Odo of Cluny was the author and it is an excellent illustration of a 'Noble Text'. Gerald died in the early tenth century, and Odo wrote in the 930s, approximately twenty years after the count's death.<sup>39</sup> In Odo's dedicatory letter, he informed the reader that he wrote the text at the request of Abbot Aymo, Bishop Turpin and others. Also he discussed the project with Hildebert the Priest, Hugh the Monk and Wiltard along with another layman and several others. Odo's aim in the text was to show a lay life that was worthy of sainthood.<sup>40</sup> The source conforms, therefore, to Stock's assertion of how information was passed on to parchment. Spiegel's suggestion of a generational outlook can also be observed in the same *vita*.

In the first chapter of his work, Odo outlined Gerald's lineage and how this pertained to his rule. Aurillac was where his lordship was centred and was bordered by Auvergne and the regions of Cahors and Albi. Gerald was high born, his father Gerald and mother Adaltruda.<sup>41</sup> Gerald inherited their modesty and respect for religion as well as their beauty of mind.<sup>42</sup> The lineage of birth was crucial to one's reputation as, ultimately, Odo understood Gerald as inheriting not only family territory but also the characteristics of his

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> A. R. Lewis, 'Count Gerald of Aurillac and Feudalism in South Central France in the Early Tenth Century', *Traditio* 20 (1964), pp. 41–58, at p. 41.

<sup>40</sup> Odo of Cluny, *De vita Sancti Geraldi Auriliacensis comitis libri quattuor*, ed. J. Migne, *PL* 133 (Paris, 1853), cols. 639–703, at cols. 640–641. For an English translation see: Odo of Cluny, 'The Life of Saint Gerald of Aurillac', trans. G. Sitwell, eds. T. Noble and T. Head, *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1995), pp. 295–362.

<sup>41</sup> Odo, *De vita Sancti Geraldi Auriliacensis comitis*, col. 641.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 642.

parents. These traits included being free from pride and religious in nature. As well, Gerald had a great number of followers across several locales by right of succession, reinforcing the importance of lawful inheritance amongst the nobility. Gerald then had received the lordship honestly.

The methodologies presented above are centred on Christian sources from chronicles, saints' lives and other texts. We also need, however, to stress the literacy of the Norse world. Messengers in Scandinavia, according to Arnved Nedkvitne, knew the contents of their text by heart.<sup>43</sup> Nedkvitne believed that the oral messengers gave more credibility to the text as this was still an important medium in the early middle ages. The sagas were predominantly written between 1150 and 1350. The trust in the oral culture during this period came from 'well-respected men and women in the local community'.<sup>44</sup> Snorri Sturluson's works, for example, were enhanced by the social prestige of his testifiers.<sup>45</sup> Nedkvitne maintained, nevertheless, that the movement from an oral culture to a written one did contain the continuity of trust in the messenger.<sup>46</sup>

Hans Jacob Orning, investigating whether Norwegian society was unstable, noted that it is possible to use the sagas to discover societal order.<sup>47</sup> He argued that society was not likely to have changed much from the period to the time of authorship; furthermore, he did not approach the text for truthful accuracy.<sup>48</sup> By contrast, he employed the text as an indicator 'but that does not mean that its author could invent the whole socio-political

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<sup>43</sup> A. Nedkvitne, 'Trusting Writing in Medieval Scandinavia', eds. P. Schulte, M. Mostert, and T. van Renswoude, *Strategies of Writing Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages: Papers from "Trust in Writing in the Middle Ages" (Utrecht, 28–29 November 2002)* (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 337–353, at p. 340.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 344.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>47</sup> H. J. Orning, 'Saga and Society', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 33 (2008), pp. 289–299, at p. 291. Orning noted that pre-state society was often described as violent. He criticised historians for accepting the clerical view which describes the state as 'inevitable' and a 'necessary remedy' for a violent society.

<sup>48</sup> H. J. Orning, 'Conflict and Social (Dis)Order in Norway, c. 1030–1160', eds. K. Esmark, L. Hermanson, H. J. Orning and H. Vogt, *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia* (Leiden, 2013), pp. 45–82, at p. 47.

framework within which the actors operated.’<sup>49</sup> Orning has stressed that the approach was similar to that of Sverre Bagge discussed earlier in chapter two.<sup>50</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, the *Saga of Ragnar Loðbrok* provides us insight from the Norse world.

The *Saga of Ragnar Loðbrok* is an account based on an individual who may or may not have actually existed. He might have been the war leader that sacked Paris in 845 according to the *Annals of St. Bertin*, or the *Paginarius* given land by Charles the Bald in 840.<sup>51</sup> The saga itself did not place the man in Francia and Irish chronicles also recorded a Ragnall.<sup>52</sup> The legends of Ragnar and his family are a patchwork of tales that the author has calibrated to a world that he understood.<sup>53</sup> Later sagas use Ragnar as a justification in their subject’s expansion. *Sögubrot* claimed, for instance, that Ragnar was the son of King Hring.<sup>54</sup> The manuscript is from approximately 1400 and contains the *Völsunga Saga* and the Ragnar account as a continuation.<sup>55</sup> The text of Ragnar is from an early thirteenth-century manuscript that has been lost. The account, nevertheless, provides insight into how society functioned.<sup>56</sup>

The jarl of Gautland in the saga called an assembly to discover who killed the creature that guarded the gold outside of his bower (the full story is expanded on below).<sup>57</sup> At this assembly, he gave Ragnar permission to marry his daughter Thora in gratitude for

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>51</sup> *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH, SSrG 5* (Hannover, 1883), pp. 1–154, pp. 32–33, 845. For an English translation, see: *The Annals of St-Bertin*, ed. and trans. J. L. Nelson, *Manchester Medieval Sources Ninth-Century Histories 1* (Manchester, 1991), pp. 60–62, 845. Ragnar is also recorded in Adam of Bremen, see: *Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum ex recensione Lappenbergii. In usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae historicis recusa*, ed. altera, *MHG, SS 17* (Hannover, 1876), Book 1, Chapter 39, p. 28.

<sup>52</sup> B. Waggoner, ‘Introduction’, ed. and trans. B. Waggoner, *The Sagas of Ragnar Loðbrok* (New Haven, CT, 2009), pp. viii–xxvii, at p. xxi.

<sup>53</sup> Waggoner, ‘Introduction’, pp. xxi and p. xxii.

<sup>54</sup> *Sögubrot*, ed. and trans. B. Waggoner, *The Sagas of Ragnar Loðbrok* (New Haven, CT, 2009), pp. 44–58, Chapter 6, p. 52.

<sup>55</sup> Waggoner, ‘Introduction’, p. xxiv.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Saga of Ragnar Loðbrok*, ed. and trans. B. Waggoner, *The Sagas of Ragnar Loðbrok* (New Haven, CT, 2009), pp. 2–41, Chapter 3, p. 5.

killing the creature.<sup>58</sup> According to the lineage in the saga, Ragnar had two sons by Thora and later three more by a woman called Kraka.<sup>59</sup> The author of the text proclaimed that all the sons were strong, handsome, and tall. When Thora died, Ragnar was afflicted with grief and appointed his sons, Eirek and Agnar, as rulers of their kingdom. Ragnar in the meantime returned to raiding and winning many victories.<sup>60</sup>

The details of this saga are difficult to corroborate from any other source. There are elements, however, that we can use for this chapter which allow for comparisons. In the text we gain ideal physical traits of aristocratic men. The text informs us, moreover, that Ragnar had his sons rule his domain while he was afflicted with grief over the loss of his wife. The audience of the text probably understood these elements as conceivable even if the subjects were fictional. Now that a context has been established for the manuscripts of the North Sea, it is essential to outline the Peace of God, which can be understood as having a significant impact on authors.

The Peace of God movement was in its infancy in the eleventh century with the growth of the papacy and a homogeneous Europe.<sup>61</sup> The effects of the movement on the aristocracy were a set of regulations of behaviour and warfare. Large councils made decrees to limit private violence of the aristocracy from the tenth century. Historians have also considered bishops aligning themselves with dukes and counts in order to ‘shore up their own authority.’<sup>62</sup> Anna Jones has cautioned, however, that historians should not view the movement as a uniform practice. By contrast we need to understand that local circumstances and individual concerns affected the Peace differently depending on time

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, p. 7; and *Ibid.*, Chapter 7, p. 12.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> R. I. Moore, ‘Postscript: The Peace of God and the Social Revolution’, eds. T. Head and R. Landes, *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response Around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), pp. 308–326, at p. 325. Moore indicated that the movement started to spread to the north and east of Europe.

<sup>62</sup> A. T. Jones, *Noble Lord, Good Shepard: Episcopal Power and Piety in Aquitaine, 877–1050* (Leiden, 2009), p. 10.

and place.<sup>63</sup> We can see the seeds of the movement for instance in the later ideals in the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>64</sup>

The Peace of God lies in a curious position for the use of Norway and the Orkneys in our investigation. Their Norse culture excluded them from the Christian ideals of central Europe. Historians see the Peace of God as the Church attempting to regulate violence in Europe and directly challenging the aristocracies, the group capable of initiating such conflicts. Geoffrey Koziol has it that Flanders experienced the call for the Peace from 1024. He has stressed, crucially, that the Peace was transferred from the great councils to the localities.<sup>65</sup> Count Baldwin V and Emperor Henry III, between 1047 and 1056, for instance, fought for control of Lotharinga with Haincitur ravaged by war.<sup>66</sup> Holy relics were used to calm the aristocrats. In Starzele the knights were so hostile to each other that no man could calm them, but in the presence of secular and ecclesiastical authorities equipped with relics, these men were pressured into resolving their differences.<sup>67</sup>

The *vita* of Saint Gerald stresses the Church's desire for a less aggressive and war-hungry aristocracy. He was advised by his dependents to take vengeance on those who had made him suffer.<sup>68</sup> They argued that, if he did not take action, these men would greedily devour what was rightfully his. Gerald, however, was not moved to violence by the motive of revenge.<sup>69</sup> By contrast, the count felt compelled to fight back in protection of his people, especially the poor who were unable to defend themselves.<sup>70</sup> He attempted to be reconciled

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<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>64</sup> Moore, 'Postscript: The Peace of God and the Social Revolution', pp. 325 and 326.

<sup>65</sup> G. Koziol, 'Monks, Feuds, and the Making of Peace in Eleventh-Century Flanders', eds. T. Head and R. Landes, *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response Around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), pp. 239–258, at p. 258.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 243–245. Also see: *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 5, p. 26. Orderic discusses the *Pax dei* occurring in Normandy in the reign of Duke William.

<sup>68</sup> Odo, *De vita Sancti Geraldii Auriliacensis comitis*, col. 646.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

with enemies first; however, if they were unwilling he ordered his troops to reverse their spears in order not to kill his opponents.<sup>71</sup>

Odo's discussion of Gerald as a count is similar to the concepts of the Peace of God movement which was to be espoused later in the tenth century, in which the Church praised lords who were not violent in nature and sought peaceful means to end conflict. Gerald continued to protect those within his lordship, but in particular it was the poor that moved him. In this period the poor were not just peasants but also local clerics. This chapter, however, does not intend to focus too closely on these issues, as the discussion is designed to reveal the nature of lordship.

The account confirms this thesis's understanding of lordship. The lord was expected to protect those within his lands, otherwise he was considered to be ineffective. Odo attempted to claim that the motivation for rebuffing invaders was simply defence of the poor. As stated, this was an idealised ecclesiastic view, which omitted the impact of the psychological understanding of territory explained in chapter two. We should expect that lords saw the ravaging of their land as a direct attack on themselves and their rule over the landscape. But naturally texts written by churchmen saw it in a different context. It is the aristocratic aspirations, however, that we are seeking to discover and compare throughout North-Sea Europe.

David Crouch argued that there was a more focused ideal of noble conduct in 1200 than previously thought by historians. Crouch stated that by 1100 'there was an ideal type of mature, discreet and wise conduct, and it was to be found in the conduct of the proverbial *preudomme*.'<sup>72</sup> The *preudomme* was the embodiment of societies' best ideals for

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> D. Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France 900–1300* (Harlow, 2005), p. 30.

a leader and protector – the essences of a good lord. All males from a family of nobility strived to reach the heights of a *preudomme*.<sup>73</sup>

Crouch believes that noble conduct had nothing to do with classical humanism, rather it was due to a ‘pragmatic response to a society where success depended on patronage.’<sup>74</sup> Crouch postulated several key factors that lay within texts that formed noble conduct. These factors included forbearance to other warriors, loyalty to other lords, physical capabilities grouped into being hardy, and the expectation of providing gifts to followers. Crouch also outlined the Davidic ethic founded on eighth-century canons from Frankish church councils outlining good rulership.<sup>75</sup> Many believed, during this period, that the psalms composed by King David outlined good rulership. Hincmar in his *De Regis Persona et Ministerio* described how it was acceptable to God for rulers to fight in armies.<sup>76</sup> The protection of the poor and defenceless was ultimately a value of the Peace of God movement with the ecclesiastical authors positioning themselves as the vulnerable.<sup>77</sup> The Peace of God, therefore, was evidence for Crouch that the ethic had penetrated the noble *habitus* by 1000. In sum, according to Crouch, the nobility desired honour and feared shame. The honour system imposed morality and was experienced as approval amongst one’s peers. Fatally, the loss of honour was a significant blow to a man’s standing in society.<sup>78</sup>

For Crouch, the eleventh-century text the *Song of Roland*, which will be used as a source later within this chapter, fully expressed that aristocratic ideal. Count Oliver was a

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73. For Hincmar, see: Hincmar, *De Regis Persona et Regio Ministerio as Carolum Calvum Regem*, ed. J. Migne, *PL* 125 (Paris, 1852), cols. 833–856, Chapter 10, at cols. 841–842. Hincmar cites the biblical figure David as a marker for kings to be compared against.

<sup>77</sup> C. B. Bouchard, ‘*Strong of Body, Brave and Noble*’: *Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), p. 22.

<sup>78</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 73.

good example of a 'composite prozdom'.<sup>79</sup> He was a friend to Roland, an effective soldier and gave him wise counsel. Oliver warns Roland to sound his horn when positioned in the Frankish rear-guard with the Muslim army coming towards them.<sup>80</sup> Later, Oliver said to Roland that it was too late to sound the horn as this would be dishonourable and a reproach to his kinsmen.<sup>81</sup>

Men like Oliver in Crouch's eyes were idealised in early medieval society and their virtues were extolled. The concept of the *preudomme* was linked into the notion of courtliness, which has been seen as part of noble behaviour.<sup>82</sup> Crouch's assertions were set in the context of continental Europe and Britain. This again omits, however, the Scandinavian aristocracy. This chapter intends, therefore, to identify whether this code of behaviour worked comparatively across the North Sea. It will attempt, furthermore, to identify whether historians of the nobility in Europe have failed to recognise any similarities with Norse lords.

Ragnar was described as the son of Sigurd Hring, who ruled Denmark which gave Ragnar a prestigious lineage. Ragnar was a man of great size, handsome, generous, intelligent and fierce on the battlefield.<sup>83</sup> The evidence for his ferocity in fighting and intelligence was stressed in his contest against the serpent of Gautland. In the region, Jarl Herrud gave his permission to marry his daughter Thora if any man could kill the snake that encircled his bower guarding the jarl's gold.<sup>84</sup> Early in the morning Ragnar rolled his body in sand with a shaggy cape that had been boiled in tar.<sup>85</sup> Then, he travelled to the

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>80</sup> 'The Song of Roland', ed. and trans. G. Brault, *The Song of Roland: An Analytical Edition Volume II Oxford Text and English Translation* (University Park, PA, 1978), pp. 2–245, Laisse 85, p. 69.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, Laisse 129, p. 107.

<sup>82</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 37.

<sup>83</sup> 'Saga of Ragnar Loðbrok', Chapter 3, p. 5.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

bower and killed the snake with his spear, which he left in the creature so that, at a later assembly, he could be identified as the snake's slayer.<sup>86</sup>

Ragnar achieved these feats without endangering any men from his raiding party, as he had left them in the warships when he set off to fight. We see how, moreover, like Oliver, he was a capable warrior in strength and also intelligence. The texts present different scenarios for noble conduct to be explored; nonetheless, these men share similar characteristics in these accounts and thus leave scope for comparison. The text also refers to a lineage in order to stress the importance of the subject, similar to Odo's text on Gerald and also portrays the interactions of lords.

The relationship between Oliver and Roland raises the question of lordly interactions. It reveals not only a friendship but also Oliver as a counsellor. The act of service can be seen in the text of Odo on Saint Gerald, which recorded Duke William of Aquitaine entreating Gerald to serve him rather than the king of France.<sup>87</sup> Gerald refuses the duke's overtures and remains faithful in his service to his king, arguing that he could not turn his back on the monarch as he had been made a count by him.<sup>88</sup> Duke William wanted, moreover, Gerald to marry his sister, but Gerald did not wish to turn his back on chastity. The theme of service continued with proceedings between Gerald and Count Adermarus, who wanted the Aurillac lord to be his ally. Gerald's refusal of Adermarus' allegiance caused friction between the two counts, and Odo then showed Gerald's sanctity by allowing the men he was besieging within a castle to depart freely.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* Saxo Grammaticus also explores this tale and introduces Lathgertha, see: Saxo Grammaticus, *Saxonis Gesta Danorum*, eds. J Olrik and H. Ræder, 1 (Copenhagen, 1931), Book 9, p. 253; and for Lathgertha see: Chapters 9–11, pp. 253 and 254. For an English translation, see: Saxo Grammaticus, *Saxo Grammaticus: The History of the Danes, Books I-IX*, trans. P. Fisher, ed. H. E. Davidson (Cambridge, 1979–1980), Book 9, p. 282.

<sup>87</sup> Odo, *De vita Sancti Geraldi Auriliacensis comitis*, col. 661.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 664.

The evidence from Odo can be viewed through the lens of Christian morality. Gerald follows the king, who is God's chosen representative on earth, choosing not to kill needlessly when he had won victories against rival counts. We can also see Odo's information from the perspective of lordship. Odo's account informs us that there were opportunities for lords to select whom they served. In the case of Gerald, we were informed of three: a king, a duke, and a count. The Church's own view on society most likely influenced the story stating that Gerald selected the king, but only as one of his options, and nobles sought to compete for service, even against kings. In the North Sea we need to identify how lordship has been described to function in the texts. This will include the use of service and the employment of counsel. Warfare was a prominent subject in 'Noble Texts' too.

Jay Rubenstein explored the effects of ecclesiastical writing on the sources describing battles, with William of Poitiers' account on the Battle of Hastings. Rubenstein argued that William the Bastard was portrayed throughout was a purveyor of peace and a man exercising royal prerogative.<sup>90</sup> The battle was a courtroom where the notion of a 'just war' was on trial.<sup>91</sup> As the English weakened in the account, this was seen as a confession. It was legal procedure and Harold had committed a crime. The outcome was the verdict.<sup>92</sup>

In the eleventh century, tactics could be described by churchmen as 'indecent', despite their use to minimise casualties.<sup>93</sup> William of Poitiers, for example, does not claim that the Duke of Normandy deliberately feigned attacks.<sup>94</sup> By contrast, the account reports that William had merely stumbled on the action.<sup>95</sup> Tactics were seen as deceptive and the

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<sup>90</sup> J. Rubenstein, 'William of Poitiers Talks About War', ed. J. Glenn, *The Middle Ages in Texts and Texture Reflections on Medieval Sources* (Toronto, 2011), pp. 129–140, at p. 133.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 2, Chapter 18, p. 130.

dishonesty was ‘engaging in trickery before God.’<sup>96</sup> Therefore, one was less open and was trying to ‘beat the ordeal’ in an arena of battle which was intended to bring justice.<sup>97</sup> For William of Poitiers the discussion of Harold’s tactics in taking the higher ground was evidence of a man attempting to hide from judgement as he did not meet the duke fairly in William’s eyes.<sup>98</sup> Harold was not relying on God’s will and so was the guilty party.<sup>99</sup>

Crouch correctly recognised, however, that the sources in which we glean these ideals of behaviour idealised their subjects. Noble lay lives, particularly the lives of Christian saints, therefore, were exaggerated in order to provide justification for their road to sanctity.<sup>100</sup> Gerald’s life with Odo’s explanations of his endeavours in war is a suitable illustration. Odo claimed that, when presented with interlopers within his lordship, Gerald used weapons only on those that scripture was unable to subdue.<sup>101</sup> Also he won openly without deceit or ambushes.<sup>102</sup> Odo raised a key issue on the recordings of medieval warfare by churchmen. Battles were seen as courtrooms where God’s judgement was pronounced. Odo consequently omitted any explanation of battle planning to increase the sanctity of his subject. Christian influence on warfare is certainly dominant in any medieval text, except for pagan texts in Scandinavia.

Judith Jesch discusses the warrior ideal in the Viking Age as understood by the skaldic poets. She maintains that warriors did not flee from the battlefield, but gave copious amounts of food to war beasts through the killing of their enemies. The poets praised those leaders who routed their opponents.<sup>103</sup> Jesch mentioned how the ideals of the skalds were derived from the law codes of Cnut which stated that anyone who in battle fled

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<sup>96</sup> Rubenstein, ‘William of Poitiers Talks About War’, p. 139.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *WP/GG*, Book 2, Chapter 16, p. 126.

<sup>99</sup> Rubenstein, ‘William of Poitiers Talks About War’, p. 139.

<sup>100</sup> Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, p. 38.

<sup>101</sup> Odo, *De vita Sancti Geraldi Auriliacensis comitis*, col. 647.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> J. Jesch, ‘The Warrior Ideal in the Late Viking Age’, eds. J. Sheehan and D. Ó. Corráin, *The Viking Age Ireland and The West* (Dublin, 2010), pp. 165–173, at p. 168.

from their companions or lord on land or sea was subject to punishment.<sup>104</sup> We can affirm from Jesch's research, therefore, that these texts reflect concepts familiar to contemporary society.<sup>105</sup>

Jesch believes the warrior ideals of the texts were designed to indoctrinate young warriors. She is quite clear that praise poems did not acknowledge tactical retreats and any retreat was seen as a defeat. The leaders of the skaldic poems are, therefore, role models. Ultimately, she concludes that such texts were 'indispensable evidence for the study of the conceptual world of the Viking Age.'<sup>106</sup> The texts held social and psychological roles.

The Ragnar text provided role models for Scandinavian lords. Ragnar's sons by Thora, Eirik and Agnar, became renowned raiders like their father. The fame they received encouraged Ragnar's sons by Kraka, Ivar, Hvitserk and Bjorn, to ask Ragnar for war boats and crews in order for them to win fame too.<sup>107</sup> The text itself was a way of encouraging its listeners to be inspired by the feats of the family of Ragnar. It reinforced the role model concept by stressing how Ragnar's own sons, by two different wives, were inspired by their father to carry out their own deeds rather than rest on their family's reputation.

In a study of aristocratic ideologies and traits there are inevitably omissions from the discussion. Feasting, which included the diets and hunting habits of lords, is a subject that is part of an aristocratic ideology. In Anglo-Saxon society, the feast was seen 'as an occasion for the few and their treasures.'<sup>108</sup> Allan Frantzen, however, believed it was much more than this. There were those involved in the background, for example workers would have had to attend these gatherings. Feasting was mentioned in the poetry of the period.<sup>109</sup> In *Beowulf*, surprisingly, men were eaten and do not eat food themselves. Hugh Magennis

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<sup>104</sup> *II Cnut* 77.

<sup>105</sup> Jesch, 'The Warrior Ideal in the Late Viking Age', p. 168.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>107</sup> 'Saga of Ragnar Loðbrok', Chapter 7, p. 12.

<sup>108</sup> A. Frantzen, *Food, Eating and Identity in Early Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2014), p. 35.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

says it positioned man close to animals which they ate for nourishment.<sup>110</sup> By contrast, the ritual of drinking from goblets and cups could not be undertaken by animals.<sup>111</sup> Other aspects of aristocratic ideals such as lifestyle, therefore, are clearly worth studying. As this thesis is focusing on functionality of lordship such themes have not been explored in this chapter. We must move on to the case study which encompasses the key themes this chapter is searching to evaluate.

This introduction will end with the case study of the ‘Noble Text’ called *Waltharius*, stressing the key features of lordship that we will be investigating across the North Sea. The chapter will compare ‘Noble Texts’ through the lenses of local lineage, service which included relationships and counsel and, finally, warfare, which will stress the common thread of ideals within the North-Sea world’s lords. The Latin text *Waltharius* was composed by a monk in the ninth century, though it has been debated whether it was composed in the tenth century.<sup>112</sup> For Dennis Kratz the most plausible author remains Ekkenhard I. Kratz believes that the text is Carolingian in spirit and also includes Germanic, Classical and Christian elements.<sup>113</sup>

Early within the text, the author provided the lineage of our subjects Hagen, Walter and Hildegund. Attila, the author wrote, ordered the Huns against the Franks, causing King Gibicho to seek advice by calling a council.<sup>114</sup> All agreed that a treaty should be sought as well as giving hostages and paying tribute. Hagen was selected to take the gifts to Attila and was taken hostage.<sup>115</sup> The Huns agreed on the deal and moved to the Burgundians, when King Hereric sent envoys to Attila. They agreed to give treasures and his daughter

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* Frantzen cited Magennis in his work on food in early medieval England.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>112</sup> D. Kratz, ‘Introduction’, ed. D. Kratz, *Waltharius and Ruodlieb* (New York, 1984), pp. xiii–xxxviii, at p. xiii.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xiv–xv.

<sup>114</sup> *Waltharius*, ed. D. Kratz, *Waltharius and Ruodlieb* (New York, 1984), pp. 2–71, at p. 4. This publication gives the Latin text and an English translation. Citations have been taken from the Latin.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

Hildegund.<sup>116</sup> The Huns continued to Aquitaine, where King Alphere also sent envoys and his son Walter was taken as a hostage. Alphere and Hereric had agreed that their offspring were to marry before their encounters with the Huns.<sup>117</sup>

In the opening sequence we are told that the main subject, Walter, was a son of the king of Aquitaine, while Hildegund was the daughter of a king of Burgundy. By contrast, Hagen was a noble unrelated to the king of the Franks. We must recognise that the author was using different kingdoms as descriptors for his subjects. We can argue, as a late ninth or early tenth-century production, that these regional divisions were certainly significant with Aquitaine and Burgundy both being dukedoms in the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>118</sup>

In addition to the lineage, the poem then stressed their noble virtues. Attila raised the three hostages as if they were his own children, the males growing strong and intelligent and being appointed as captains in the Hun army.<sup>119</sup> These virtues, as we have seen above, were also evident in the sons of Ragnar and appear to be used as they add to the noble image. Lords such as these were expected to perform in war; strength and intelligence, therefore, were seen as useful tools.

The story's next phase, however, reveals much about service given to individuals over institutions. King Hereric's son, Gunther who was too young to be a hostage, became king and broke the treaty with the Huns, leading Hagen to flee.<sup>120</sup> He did not believe he should continue honouring the treaty his father had agreed, thus indicating the ties between men in the period were personal in nature. Hagen departed quickly and this can be viewed from two angles. He was no longer required to remain because their agreement was in tatters. By contrast, the second reason was that Hagen, despite serving Attila, did not place his identity with the Huns. He was serving Hereric's will by being a hostage. Now that his

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> J. Dunbabin, *France in the Making 843–1180*, 2nd Edition (Oxford, 2000), pp. 173–184.

<sup>119</sup> *Waltharius*, p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

lord was dead, he did not believe he was required to serve Attila either. He vacated the Hun court, a stark contrast from Leofsunu and Ælfwine in the *Battle of Maldon* poem discussed in chapter three.

Walter, by contrast, stayed and continued to fight for the Huns. Attila's wife, Ospirin, warned the Hun leader not to allow Walter to leave and to this end he should permit Walter to marry someone from the Avars, though Walter states that he wanted to remain with Attila and continue to serve without being married.<sup>121</sup> Walter and Hildegund spoke of their oath as well as their longing for their homes.<sup>122</sup> Walter encouraged the Aquitaine woman to steal two coffers full of arm rings and a corselet which bore the mark of smiths. Walter, at a banquet, ensured that Attila and his court were overcome by drunkenness.<sup>123</sup> The two departed and, when it was discovered the next morning, Attila ordered that Walter should be brought back immediately. However, due to Walter's courage, no noble, duke, count, knight, or even serving man dared to pursue Walter in arms.<sup>124</sup>

It appears that Walter and Hildegund also continued to honour the familial identity by remembering the agreement of their fathers. The account allowed them to maintain their Burgundian and Aquitanian identities, which were separate from the Huns. Like Hagen, they did not see themselves as Huns and thus decided to leave when the court was vulnerable. We need to also recognise that Attila's men, although loyal to their leader, were unwilling to pursue Walter because of his reputation on the battlefield. This implicitly stressed again the nature of service in the period; lords could decide if they wanted to carry out a request. Men of the period would have questioned the order to chase a man across the

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16 and 18.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Rhine into rival territory.<sup>125</sup> The risk was not worth the reward. The final segment of the story fits into the theme of war where the two men, Hagen and Walter, meet along with Gunther.

As Walter and Hildegund fled and crossed the Rhine, King Gunther, excited by the treasure they carried, set off with eleven other men including Hagen, who tried to stop the king chasing Walter.<sup>126</sup> Hagen warned the king that attacking Walter was not wise. As they were confronted, Walter recognised Hagen's helmet.<sup>127</sup> Gamalo was ordered to take the treasure from Walter, who offered one hundred armlet rings to honour the king, but stated the monarch was no god.<sup>128</sup> Hagen again warned the king and begged him to accept the offer. Gunther accused Hagen of being timid in war.<sup>129</sup> Walter subsequently killed the oncoming Gamalo. After losing all his men, the king returned to Hagen and persuaded him to fight by his side.<sup>130</sup>

The account reveals Walter's capability as he continued to defeat the king's men one by one in hand-to-hand combat. In the incidents described, the man of Aquitaine does not employ any trickery and meets his opponent fairly. The text has stressed the lord's abilities in combat, a key component of his nobility. We can argue, furthermore, that Gunther and his men were being punished in the author's eyes due to the vice of greed in desiring the treasure that Walter and Hildegund carried. Thus, the battle was representing a judgement of God. Hagen's entry, however, should be viewed separately.

When the two friends met on the field, Walter asked why Hagen had abandoned their friendship. Hagen replied that Walter broke their pact when he attacked Batavrid, his

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

kinsman and nephew, despite knowing that Hagen was there.<sup>131</sup> In the fight, the king was afraid and Hagen was fighting Walter. Walter hacked off the king's leg, Hagen cut off Walter's right arm, and Walter gauged out Hagen's eye with a dagger.<sup>132</sup> All lay on the ground, Walter then called for Hildegund to bring wine, for Hagen first, then himself and then the king, who was '*segnis inter magnanimum qui paruit arma virorum*'.<sup>133</sup> Hagen told Hildegund to serve Walter first and Walter joked about their injuries.<sup>134</sup> The tale ends with Hildegund and Walter marrying and ruling happily for thirty years.<sup>135</sup>

Hagen's entry is revealing as, in chapter three, we argued that kin-based action groups affected a noble's decision making.<sup>136</sup> Lords assessed the benefits that were in the operation presented to them. In Hagen's case, he was originally unwilling to enter the fray due to his pact with Walter. The author reveals that if noblemen killed kinsmen of other lords, we can expect that this would be a point of friction with surviving family members. Hagen, therefore, was not entering battle in service to his king, but rather the author has him joining it because Walter has harmed his kin group.

This section also has stressed how nobility viewed combat as honourable and even sports-like. The end saw Walter and Hagen being jovial about the battle's events despite their serious injuries. The king was mocked for his inferior skill in the engagement and, therefore, was to be served wine last. The scenario emphasises how lords saw the battlefield as a place to win reputation, even subjecting their kings to the same scrutiny they placed upon themselves. Walter, as a case study from the main continent of Europe, identifies how 'Noble Texts' give us the contemporary views of nobility and how they

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<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68. 'Sluggish in a battle of great-hearted men'.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>136</sup> H. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879–1160* (Leiden, 2004), p. 11.

functioned. We now need to ensure we understand how the dating of these sources may influence what is discussed in their text.

### 5.1. CHRONOLOGY

The texts that were selected for this section do not just fit regional criteria but, more importantly, they appropriately match the characteristics of a 'Noble Text'. The subjects range from mythical figures such as Rig to the lesser aristocracy represented by Hereward. The range is ideal for a comparison of the portrayals of noble etiquette in the period. Men of the lower aristocracy aspired to reach the heights of nobility; therefore, texts on men who were not noble but at least aristocratic still have merits. It is these descriptions the investigation is seeking to compare across the North-Sea world. The aim is to recover noble aspiration in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and to avoid breaking up the comparative analysis of these sources, while illuminating the impact of the locality.

In order to provide greater clarity the chronology of the texts will be discussed as a whole. The *Pseudo Turpin* text, for example, described Charlemagne's alleged victory and conquest of Spain. Gabrielle Spiegel analysed the creation of the different *Pseudo Turpin* texts. She believed that the reproduction of the manuscript in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries represented a resistance against Capetian governance in Flanders.<sup>137</sup> She argued that the work's condensed circulation suggested that the text 'addressed itself with special urgency to the needs of the Flemish aristocracy'.<sup>138</sup> She asserted that such historiographical invention was partly responding to the changing conditions that the aristocracy were experiencing within a particular moment.<sup>139</sup> These inventions were not exclusive to Flemish lords. They can be seen after the Norman Conquest within the Anglo-Norman

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<sup>137</sup> G. Spiegel, 'Pseudo-Turpin, the Crisis of the Aristocracy and the Beginnings of Vernacular Historiography in France', *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1986), pp. 207–223, at p. 213.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

aristocracy. Brian Levy proposed that the *Estorie de Waldef* was intended to flatter Robert of Mortimer of Attleborough. Waltheof represented a hero for the Anglo-Norman community, and therefore according to Levy, provided ties to the Anglo-Saxon past of the region they ruled.<sup>140</sup> Consequently the texts for this chapter will have their contents explored, which exploration will allow us to understand how the background of these documents influenced their authors' interpretations of aristocratic behaviour as well as their audiences' reading.

The sources will be divided into three groups: texts written before the Battle of Hastings; texts written on or relating to Hastings; and finally texts from the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Battle of Hastings has often been viewed as an English affair: but it was a North-Sea event. The chronologies of the texts being used in this chapter are situated around an episode that saw lords from across the North Sea participate. The first group of texts are those known to have been in circulation in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

From Scandinavia this chapter will use the *Edda* poems. Lee Hollander described the *Edda* as a 'repository' of mythology and heroic lore. It presents 'both ethical views and the cultural life of the north during the late heathen and early Christian time.'<sup>141</sup> The preservation of the poems is indebted to Christianity along with the political refuge of Iceland for pagans. Iceland 'fostered the cultural traditions which connected it with Scandinavian' culture.<sup>142</sup> The location of the Icelanders made it hard to enforce a strict Christianity; therefore this allowed the continuation of the Nordic poems.<sup>143</sup> Hollander believed that an Icelander wrote it in the last half of the thirteenth century, probably from

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<sup>140</sup> B. Levy, 'Waltheof « Earl » de Huntingdon et de Northampton: la naissance d'un héros anglo-normand', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 18 (1975), pp. 183–196, at p. 196.

<sup>141</sup> L. Hollander, 'Introduction', ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *The Poetic Edda*, 2nd Edition (Austin, TX, 1962), pp. ix–xxix, at p. ix.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

at least two manuscripts made in the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>144</sup> He notes that the poems had west Norse speech forms, as spoken in Norway between 800 and 1050.<sup>145</sup>

A poem from the *Edda* called the *Lay of Rig* or *Rigspula* reveals much on the nature of the locality in lordships within Norse society. The text itself was preserved in *Codex Wormianus* of Snorri's *Edda* in a fragmentary condition.<sup>146</sup> According to Hollander, the text was either written by a Norwegian in the tenth century celebrating Harold Fairhair, or it was by an Icelander who was praising the Danish royal house of King Gorm or Harold Bluetooth.<sup>147</sup> Debate has focused on whether the poem was a later antiquarian effort or even dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is a unique poem, nevertheless, due to its descriptions of a thrall, freeman and noble in Norse society.<sup>148</sup> A second poem from the *Edda* that will be used in this chapter is *The Sayings of Har*. Hollander has it that the text was likely a Norwegian creation; but it remains difficult to date, although it does refer to tenth-century works.<sup>149</sup> The poem discusses hospitality, decent conduct, wealth, merit and moderation, and emphasises, furthermore, the Norse mentality for fighting.

The third and final source that predates Hastings is *Beowulf*. *Beowulf* as a poem has and remains a source of debate about when it was written. Historians believe that the tale was by a Christian poet, however, it deals more with Germanic values of a pagan society.<sup>150</sup> The manuscript itself is an eleventh-century creation and academics are in two camps regarding the poem's provenance.<sup>151</sup> As we noted in chapter four, the first group argues for an 'Age of Cnut' creation, in which case the poem would be rooted in the

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. x.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

<sup>146</sup> L. Hollander, 'Lay of Rig, Rigspula', ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *The Poetic Edda*, 2nd Edition (Austin, TX, 1962), at p. 120.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> L. Hollander, 'Sayings of Har, Hávamál', ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *The Poetic Edda*, 2nd Edition (Austin, TX, 1962), p. 14.

<sup>150</sup> H. Aërtsen, 'Beowulf', eds. W. Gerritsen and A. van Melle, *A Dictionary of Medieval Heroes* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 54–59.

<sup>151</sup> F. Klaeber, *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsberg*, 3rd Edition (Boston, MA, 1950), p. cvii.

eleventh century, whereas the second group has contended that it was written between the late seventh and the early ninth centuries.<sup>152</sup> Crucially, however, the source is arguably the most famous ‘Noble Text’ from Anglo-Saxon England.

Not only do these texts pre-date Hastings, they were also created before any notion of the Peace of God. This leads us to think, therefore, that these Germanic texts from the North Sea reveal the ideals of aristocratic life and lordship closer to a lord’s perspective, by contrast to the later groups’ monastic authors. The Scandinavian sources, furthermore, were composed in a period of growing royal power in Norway. It can be argued the circulation of *Beowulf* in the eleventh century represented readers’ desire for a less formal monarchy with the growing power of the West Saxon royal house in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The next group of texts, however, refer directly reference to the Battle of Hastings and its immediate consequences in the North-Sea world.

The first text is the *Carmen De Hastingae Proelio* composed by Bishop Guy of Amiens before May 1068.<sup>153</sup> R. H. C. Davies has argued, however, that the source was a creation of the mid-twelfth century between c. 1125 and 1140.<sup>154</sup> The poem fits into this Hastings group due to the nature of the text’s subject despite the disputed dating of the *Proelio*. Bishop Guy was an uncle of Count Guy of Ponthieu, whose lordship was located to the east of the counts of Eu and to the west of the nobles of Boulogne, Guines and St-Pol.<sup>155</sup> The author, according to Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz, was a Frenchman ‘conversant in the sea and with warfare’ and ‘he was attached to Eustace of Boulogne’.<sup>156</sup> In essence, for the purposes of this thesis, he was within the orbit of the North-Sea world.

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<sup>152</sup> K. Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1981), p. 23; and S. Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 16–17.

<sup>153</sup> C. Morton and H. Muntz, ‘Introduction’, eds. and trans. C. Morton and H. Muntz, *The Carmen De Hastingae Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens* (Oxford, 1972), pp. xiv–lxxi, at p. xv. The recent edition by Frank Barlow also dates the text to the years immediately after Hastings, see: F. Barlow, ‘Introduction’, ed. and trans. F. Barlow, *The Carmen De Hastingae Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens* (Oxford, 1999), pp. xiii–xcii, at pp. xxiv–xlii.

<sup>154</sup> R. H. C. Davies, ‘*The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*’, *EHR* 93 (1978), pp. 241–261, at p. 261.

<sup>155</sup> Morton and Muntz, ‘Introduction’, p. xv.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxix.

The counts of Ponthieu had enhanced their power during the eleventh century.<sup>157</sup> Charter evidence stresses, however, the difficulty in elaborating more on the counts in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.<sup>158</sup> This text focuses on the Battle of Hastings, which saw a dramatic shift in power within the North-Sea world rather than solely the collapse of an Anglo-Saxon kingdom. However, due to the origin of the author, he is useful in identifying behaviour that was considered noble from the far east in Normandy and far west of Flanders. Moreover, compared to William of Poitiers' account, which was heavily favourable to William the Bastard, Guy's record is far less concerned with making the Norman duke appear a worthy king.<sup>159</sup> The next source's subject matter is focused on the fall out of the Norman conquest of England.

The *Gesta Herewardi* was set in the context of the 1066 conquest of England by William of Normandy. Hereward was in the Lincolnshire *Domesday Book* as a pre-conquest land holder.<sup>160</sup> The *Gesta* was written in the twelfth century and Elisabeth van Houts has posited that Richard of Ely was the most likely author.<sup>161</sup> Hereward's lordship may have been in Lincolnshire, which is not within the remit of eastern England. For this thesis his account, nevertheless, is useful as a 'Noble Text' due to his association with Ely. The author was a monk of Ely and we can say he would have held views on noble behaviour that were consistent with the rest of the Fenlands.<sup>162</sup> As we noted in chapter two texts from Ely were written as part of a Fenland textual community.<sup>163</sup> The Ely man gained his information on Hereward from Siward of Bury St Edmunds and Leofric the Black, two

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<sup>157</sup> Guy of Ponthieu, according to William of Poitiers, gained many new lands from Duke William of Normandy for handing over Harold Godwinson whom he had captured, see: *WP/GG*, Book 1, Chapter 41, pp. 68 and 70. '*terras tradidit amplas ac multum opimas*'.

<sup>158</sup> *Recueil des actes des comtes de Ponthieu (1026–1279)*, ed. C. Brunei. (Paris 1930), nos. 1–15.

<sup>159</sup> C. Morton and H. Muntz, 'Introduction', p. xxix.

<sup>160</sup> E. van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', *ASE* 28 (1999), pp. 201–223, p. 201. For the Domesday entry see: *DB, Lincolnshire*, (8,34).

<sup>161</sup> van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', p. 201.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203. Richard of Ely is the most plausible author.

<sup>163</sup> J. Paxton, 'Textual Communities in the English Fenlands: A lay Audience for Monastic Chronicles?', *ANS* 26 (2004), pp. 123–137, at p. 130.

of Hereward's companions.<sup>164</sup> The author, also, used an Old English biographical text, which has been lost, to construct his *Gesta*.<sup>165</sup> Hereward himself did not hold a title to make him a true noble; however, he had an aristocratic background. The text still presents the expected mechanics of lordship and the virtues of nobility despite having a lesser lord as its subject.

The Conquest texts have been separated as they focus on Hastings and the aftermath of William's victory. The two texts give us an account of aristocrats going to war and settling new regions. They will show, however, that the ideals of the locality remained within the aristocratic ethos. The final group of sources is not directly related to the events at Hastings. They were written in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries; however, their focus continued to be on aristocratic individuals across the North Sea.

The first two texts in this group were focused on the Carolingian kings Charlemagne and Louis. The first text in this collection is the *Song of Roland*. Susan Millinger said that the *Song of Roland* is in essence a tale of good and evil.<sup>166</sup> It celebrated the Franks' victory at the Battle of Roncevaux, which may be the battle Einhard recorded for 778.<sup>167</sup> The text was developed around the time of the first Crusade between 1096 and 1099 and was a popular epic for medieval audiences.<sup>168</sup> It was translated into German, Norwegian, Welsh, Latin, and fragments of translations have been discovered in Middle Dutch, Castilian and English. Millinger suggested that the piece was a form of entertainment for those within the medieval period.<sup>169</sup> She says that like most chansons, the

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<sup>164</sup> van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', p. 203.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> S. Millinger, 'Epic Values: *The Song of Roland*', ed. J. Glenn, *The Middle Ages in Texts and Texture Reflections on Medieval Sources* (Toronto, 2011), pp. 141–152, at p. 141.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.* For Einhard, see: Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH, SSrG 25* (Hannover, 1911), Chapter 9, p. 12.

<sup>168</sup> Millinger, 'Epic Values: *The Song of Roland*', p. 142.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*

Roland text includes the armies arriving before battle, taunting, hand-to-hand fighting, and prayers of heroes.<sup>170</sup>

The second text in the post-Conquest group is less well known than Roland and we cannot be sure when it was composed. *Gormont et Isembart* survives as a fragmentary from the eleventh century and is known to have been circulated within the county of Flanders.<sup>171</sup> Leah Shopkow asserted that the text was well known throughout the medieval period. Its anonymous author provided an account of what is believed to be the Battle of Saucourt-en-Vimeu in 881.<sup>172</sup> The historical event saw King Louis III defeat an invading Viking force.<sup>173</sup> The text, however, has not been used extensively in this chapter. The next two texts from this late eleventh century and twelfth century group, however, focused on the life of aristocratic individuals and have been employed heavily.

The *Life of Herluin* was produced in the twelfth century by Gilbert Crispin at Bec in the duchy of Normandy.<sup>174</sup> Bec was an abbey that was endowed by the count of Brionne's family.<sup>175</sup> Historians have used it to discuss the nature of service between the lesser aristocracy and greater lords. We can use the source to stress the importance of the locality in the aristocratic psyche. Gilbert had entered the monastery of Bec as a child in approximately 1055 and, according to Sally Vaughn, was a witness to the events he later recorded.<sup>176</sup> The life itself, by Leah Shopkow's estimations, was written between 1109 and 1117.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> 'The Song of Roland', Laisse 94, p. 77. Duke Falsaron taunts the Franks that 'Today fair France will lose its honour!'

<sup>171</sup> L. Shopkow, 'Notes', ed. and trans. L. Shopkow, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 195–244, at p. 215, n. 43.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> S. Vaughn, *The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo-Norman State 1034–1136* (Woodbridge, 1981), p. 63.

<sup>175</sup> V. Traill, 'The social & political networks of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy: the Clare, Giffard & Tosny Kin-groups, c. 940 to c. 1200', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013), p. 117.

<sup>176</sup> Vaughn, *The Abbey of Bec*, p. 63.

<sup>177</sup> L. Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D.C., 1997), p. 54.

The final text we will examine from the post-Conquest is similar to the *Life of Herluin*. The account of Earl Magnus provides a Christian life from a Norse society in the Orkneys. Snorri Sturluson created an account about Saint Olaf of Norway; however, he was a king.<sup>178</sup> The account of Saint Magnus is known to have been in several texts, including a Latin script from the 1170s which has not survived.<sup>179</sup> The life we have now survives within the *Orkneyinga* saga, which has been analysed above in chapter four.

The texts of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries might be heavily influenced by the Peace of God. Their authors were churchmen, and therefore likely to reveal an ecclesiastical outlook on aristocratic behaviour and lordship. As a consequence the following analysis will show that this cohort of sources played down the locality's impact on lordship. The earlier texts stressed the importance of central places. All texts, nevertheless, made lords the subject of their discussion. The aristocracy, as their primary subject, was described and analysed by the writers against a period's concept of noble behaviour. The following themes of locality, solidarities and warfare investigate noble aspiration across the North-Sea world. It will begin with the impact of the locality.

## 5.2. LOCALITY

We looked at the importance of regional distinctiveness in previous chapters; in 'Noble Texts' this distinctiveness is more subtle. Chapter one established that to be a lord in the early medieval world one needed an aristocratic lineage. Medieval lords expressed ties to the past through genealogies. The presentation and development of lineages was a Celtic and Germanic tradition rather than a trend from Rome.<sup>180</sup> From the eleventh century, lineages with mythical ancestors were created in Europe.<sup>181</sup> These figures were made

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<sup>178</sup> *Heimskringla, Saint Ólaf's Saga*, pp. 245–537.

<sup>179</sup> H. Antonsson, *St. Magnús of Orkney: A Scandinavian Martyr-Cult in Context* (Leiden, 2007), p. 5.

<sup>180</sup> L. Genicot, *Les Genealogies* (Turnhout, 1975), p. 14.

<sup>181</sup> Merdrignac and Chédéville, *Les sciences annexes en histoire du Moyen Âge*, p. 179.

heroes in order to increase the prestige of the line.<sup>182</sup> Lambert of Ardres's chronicle, for instance, stated that the counts of Guines were descended from Siegfried the Dane.<sup>183</sup> Jean-Philippe Genet described this behaviour as a need in the aristocracy to express their identity. It was, moreover, evidence of a family's historical conscience.<sup>184</sup> Therefore in the texts on aristocratic virtues, lineage was part of identity, but an identity that was centred on the locality of their lordship. Texts of the North-Sea world did not stress regionality explicitly; however, through lineage, cultural markers, and central residences lords were connected to their regional territory in 'Noble Texts'. We can see this in a text from the abbey of Bec.

Gilbert Crispin, in the *Life of Herluin*, noted that Herluin came from a region where it was unusual for a capable soldier to lay down his arms and enter a monastic life.<sup>185</sup> Herluin's father was descended from the Danes who had invaded and subsequently ruled Normandy. By contrast, his mother was a blood relation of the lords of Flanders.<sup>186</sup> Herluin was raised in the household of Count Gilbert of Brionne and was lauded for his military skill as well as his physical prowess.<sup>187</sup> Herluin won favour from Count Gilbert and Duke Robert of Normandy through his skill. His ability gave him fame from outside Normandy, which allowed him to gain access to the courts of foreign lords.<sup>188</sup>

Gilbert of Crispin noted that Herluin's lineage was split between the ruling Viking raiders of the early tenth century and the lords of Flanders. Herluin's lineage made him an important subject and significant within society. The lineage helps us understand how

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<sup>182</sup> Genicot, *Les Genealogies*, p. 42.

<sup>183</sup> Lambert, Chapter 7, p. 566.

<sup>184</sup> J-P. Genet, 'Cartulaires, registres, et histoire: L'exemple anglais', ed. B. Guenée, *Le Métier d'Historien au Moyen Âge. Etudes sur l'historiographie médiévale* (Paris, 1977), pp. 95–138, at pp. 102–103.

<sup>185</sup> Gilbert Crispin, *Vita Domini Herluini Abbatis Beccensis*, ed. J. A. Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin Abbot of Westminster: A Study of the Abbey Under Norman Rule* (Cambridge, 1911), pp. 87–110, at p. 87. For an English translation see: Gilbert Crispin, 'The Life of Lord Herluin, Abbot of Bec, by Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster', trans. S. Vaughn, *The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo-Norman State 1034–1136* (Woodbridge, 1981), pp. 68–86.

<sup>186</sup> Gilbert Crispin, *Vita Domini Herluini Abbatis Beccensis*, p. 87.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

Herluin had access to a count's court and how he was able to gain influence and reputation. He was associated with the right people. The opening has stressed the importance of how a lord saw himself fitting into the contemporary world. Both male and female sides were used to place him firmly in eastern Normandy. The text did not provide dates for the main subject; however, we can estimate that as Gilbert of Brionne was holding Eu at this point perhaps it was between 1034 and 1040.<sup>189</sup> As a twelfth-century text, in spite of the twelfth century being viewed as the rise of central royal government, it stresses the impact of locality for an aristocratic image.<sup>190</sup> The Herluin text, moreover, was written after the further strengthening of the Norman dukes by William's conquest approximately sixty years earlier.

The importance of a local lineage for lords also occurred in the Orkney Islands in the text of Saint Magnus. As an earl, Magnus's physical virtues were praised. He was tall, 'lordly-minded', lucky in fights, ready to provide counsel, loved by friends, 'hard and unsprang against robbers and sea-rovers', wise and just.<sup>191</sup> The life described Magnus's lineage: his father was Earl Erlend, Thorfinn's son, and his mother was Thora the daughter of Summerled the son of Ospak. Magnus had a calmer personality than his siblings Hacon and Erling.<sup>192</sup> Similarly to the *vitae* on Saint Gerald and Herluin, lineage is the first piece of information for the regional lord of Orkney in that text. Magnus returned to the Orkneys on the death of King Magnus of Norway.<sup>193</sup> The newly crowned King Sigurd of Norway,

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<sup>189</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961), no. 98. For Gilbert's death, see: *OV*, 3, Book 5, Chapter 9, p. 88.

<sup>190</sup> G. Koziol, 'England, France, and the Problem of Sacrality in Twelfth-Century Ritual', ed. T. Bisson, *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe* (Philadelphia, PA, 1995), pp. 124–148, at p. 124; and J. Cotts, *Europe's Long Twelfth Century: Order, Anxiety and Adaptation, 1095–1229* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 10.

<sup>191</sup> 'The Story of Earl Magnus', trans. G. Dasent, *Icelandic Sagas and Other Historical Documents Relating to the Settlements and Descents of the Northmen of the British Isles* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 61–96, Chapter 41, p. 64. For Magnus we will follow the text's terminology as it is a Christian *vita*, therefore, he will not be described as a jarl rather we will call him an earl.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 40, p. 63.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 44, p. 72.

however, had already granted the earldom to Hacon.<sup>194</sup> Magnus son of Erlend's return was pleasing to the men within Orkney as he had many friends there. Hacon prepared a force to remove Magnus, but mediators had them agree to split the earldom.<sup>195</sup> King Eystein of Norway, a co-ruler with Sigurd, granted the inheritance to Magnus. The peace between Hacon and Magnus lasted as long as their friendship.<sup>196</sup>

We need to remember that the Orcadian text was created while the kings of Norway were attempting to increase their authority over the jarldom.<sup>197</sup> Therefore, in the same vein as Spiegel's analysis of the *Pseudo-Turpin* text, the source might have been seeking social continuity or perhaps it may be lamenting the disruption. The text of Magnus shows parallels to the text of Herluin. Both authors expressed similar noble virtues and their subjects were described as physically imposing. Also these virtues translated on to the battlefield as they were capable fighters. More importantly, however, are the texts' subtle indicators toward the localities of both subjects. From Magnus we gain a named lineage that centres on his father being earl; moreover, it is emphasised how when he returned to Orkney it aided his rise to the earldom. Similarly, in Herluin we are given a local identity of the lord, his father a Dane and his mother a Fleming. Their lineage was still stressed to create, for both lords, an identity that is tied into the landscape of Orkney and eastern Normandy. Alternatively we could say that both texts were a reaction against the growing power of central authority that was not as prevalent in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The theme of local lineage also prevailed in the *Gesta Herewardi*.

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<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 46, p. 74.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 47, p. 75.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> B. Crawford, *The Northern Earldoms: Orkney and Caithness from AD 870–1470* (Edinburgh, 2013), p. 40. Barbara Crawford has provided a clear diagram of the different components of the text. Also see: I. Beuermann, 'Jarla-Sögur Orkneyja. Status And Power Of The Earls Of Orkney According To Their Sagas', eds. G. Steinsland, J. Sigurðsson, J. Rekdal and I. Beuermann, *Ideology and Power in the Viking and Middle Ages: Scandinavia, Iceland, Orkney and the Faeroes* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 109–161, at pp. 109–111. The Orkney text was probably written in the late twelfth century. However it was revised in the thirteenth century too. Our most complete form of the text comes from *Flateyrbók* which was created at the end of the fourteenth century. We must remember that Norwegian domination over the Orkney Islands had grown from the late twelfth to the fourteenth century.

Hereward's lineage was proclaimed at the very beginning of the *Gesta*. He was the son of Leofric of Bourne, a nephew of Earl Ralph the Staller, and his mother was Eadgyth the great-great niece of Duke Oslac.<sup>198</sup> Following his inheritance, Hereward's attributes are described as formidable, sturdy, courageous and strong.<sup>199</sup> He excelled in these robust virtues, according to the author, from boyhood even to the extent where he exceeded grown men.<sup>200</sup> The author of the *Gesta* praised Hereward for his daring, but noted he had caused too much trouble for his parents. Leofric and Eadgyth were in disputes with their friends over his deeds and had to protect their son.<sup>201</sup> Eventually his father drove him into exile due to the trouble Hereward had caused.<sup>202</sup> Hereward with his companions beat Leofric to his estates and seized his goods. Hereward allegedly went as far as to appoint stewards on his father's lands in order to take Leofric's possessions.<sup>203</sup> Leofric asked King Edward the Confessor to banish Hereward for his acts against his parents and the locality.<sup>204</sup>

The author of the *Gesta* has stressed the inheritance of a pedigree from the parents of his subject. It tied Hereward's parents to greater lords of the region, as the author was trying to stress his secular authority. Just as in the Magnus and Herluin texts, moreover, we are told of Hereward's characteristics, including courage, strength, and a formidable appearance, all traits ideally suited to a fighting lord. Intriguingly in Hereward's story he is exiled, however, due to the disruption he caused within his father's lordship. The text appeared to provide a lesson for lords who were overexerting themselves.

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<sup>198</sup> *Gesta Herewardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, eds. T. Hardy and C. Martin, *Lestorie des Engles solum la translacion maistre Geffrei Gaimar*, 1 (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 339–404, Chapter 1, p. 341. For an English translation see: 'The Deeds of Hereward', trans. M. Swanton, ed. T. Ohlgren, *A Book of Medieval Outlaws: Ten Tales in Modern English* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 12–60.

<sup>199</sup> *Gesta Herewardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, Chapter 1, pp. 341–342.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 342–343.

Hereward's actions harmed his family and his locality to the point that his father had to exile him. The incident also feeds into the theme of solidarities; however, we must stay on the lineage of locality. Lords inherited their local identity from their parents as we saw in chapter four. This is why at the beginning of texts we have explanations of genealogy. It legitimised the presence of the subject to the audience. The locality pushing Hereward's father to exile his son, therefore, stresses the point that a lord was subject to his territory's populace, who expected him to behave appropriately. The daring of Hereward's character, consequently, was seen as a negative trait that he had developed and not inherited.

Hereward, Herluin and Magnus were three figures written about in the twelfth century. The *Gesta Herewardi* portrayed the pressure of Norman outsiders ruling new territory as will be shown later in this discussion. This stress can be likened to the Orkney text and the context of 'foreign' Norwegian rule. The authors of the three texts presented above were writing in periods of increasing royal authority. It is plausible for us, following Spiegel's research, to determine that these authors were lamenting the changes in the twelfth century. We can assert that in their narratives these twelfth-century texts suppress the overall impact of the locality in lordship due to authors' subtle allusions to regional distinctiveness.

The texts so far have emphasised lords' local lineage through genealogies. There were other ways too by which 'Noble Texts' discussed this local lineage, notably by differentiating men from each other when describing cohorts, as was shown in the *Waltharius* and Gerald texts. This occurred in the North-Sea world too. It shows us that authors and audiences expected men to be described according to different regional backgrounds instead of using kingdom identities.

The first text here was composed by a man from a lordship sandwiched between eastern Normandy and western Flanders. Bishop Guy of Amiens composed the *Carmen De Hastingae Proelio*. For the locality, Guy of Amiens made clear distinctions between the men within William's force. In the text he names Normans, Bretons, men of Maine and Frenchmen all participating in the fight against Harold.<sup>205</sup> Also he noted the participation of Count Eustace II of Boulogne and the count of Ponthieu's heir, Hugh.<sup>206</sup> He described the populace of Kent resisting the future king and thus were justly killed.<sup>207</sup> Guy's descriptions are essential to understanding the regional mentality involved in lordship. The aristocracies across what was medieval northern France stretching from Brittany to western Flanders were clearly defined as being separate from one another. We should note that Heather Tanner noted that Count Eustace II of Boulogne, historiographical vassal of the counts of Flanders, had travelled to Hastings with the Normans, despite the tension between Flanders and Normandy in this period.<sup>208</sup> Guy also said that the battle formation of the invading Norman army was divided into regions. The Normans attacked from the centre, while the French moved to the left, and the Bretons went to the right.<sup>209</sup>

Guy of Amiens did not describe any lineages, but he did strengthen the importance of regional identity. The use of the different lordships represented an aristocratic outlook on the world, where men were attached to a regional lordship rather than a central ruler. These differ from the previous genealogical descriptions, where regional lineages were examined. The purpose, however, remains the same. Regional lords were committed to their locality and we can say that Guy had witnessed the imbalance of power in the North Sea. Before William's conquest the regions of England, Normandy, Flanders and Norway were balanced. William's victory in 1066 broke this stability. We can posit, therefore, that

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<sup>205</sup> *Carmen*, pp. 10 and 16.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>208</sup> Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies*, p. 6.

<sup>209</sup> *Carmen*, p. 24.

Guy was perhaps attempting to stress these lordships because he was responding to the dynamic political change in the North-Sea world. Guy was not alone in his focus on territorial lordships. *The Song of Roland* also used them to describe the identity of men in Charlemagne's army.

The *Song of Roland* appears to be an account of French endeavour; however, as Charlemagne prepared his army to fight the oncoming Muslim force, we are afforded the different identities in his empire. The song shows Germans, Normans, Bretons, men of Poitevin and Auvergne, Flemings, Frisians, men of Lorraine and Burgundy.<sup>210</sup> Just as Guy of Amiens's account on Hastings, the author of the *Song of Roland* was stressing the regional lordships within Charlemagne's orbit. We can say that, despite a king being the anointed representative of God, audiences of such texts still understood the regional differences inside kingdoms. Nobles must have viewed their identity first through the lens of the locality over a collective national identity, which has been fostered from the twentieth century. The Roland text does not lend itself as well as the previous four examples. We can perhaps argue that the text may represent an idealised church view from the Peace of God movement on how a lord should behave. The regional lordships followed Charlemagne's orders as king. The regional influences that are present were tempered. This may have been a consequence of an increasing attempt to regulate the behaviour of lords as was described in Flanders by Koziol.

So far, we have local identity perpetuated through genealogies and local designators of nobles but we can see the impact of place and the aristocratic principal residence in 'Noble Texts'. The 'Noble Texts' of the North-Sea world strengthened the regional attachment through the discussion of principal residencies. The first text is from the Norse world and identifies the hall as a key part of a lord's persona.

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<sup>210</sup> 'The Song of Roland', Laisses 218–225, pp. 185–189.

The poem the *Lay of Rig* describes a god who travelled to the doors of a thrall, a freeman and a noble. Eventually, he came to a hall with a raised door. The lady of the estate wore linen, a brooch, and silk.<sup>211</sup> The food available included light baked white bread, a silver plate holding bacon and fowl, and also wine in gold goblets.<sup>212</sup> The lady gave birth to a son named ‘Earl’ nine months after Rig’s arrival. The child had eyes ‘like an adder’s’ and he grew up in the hall where he practised for war.<sup>213</sup> The activities he had undertaken included hunting, brandishing swords and horse riding.<sup>214</sup> Rig taught him runic inscriptions, made him heir, and encouraged him to acquire his own lands. So the son slayed rival warriors and won territory.<sup>215</sup> From his feats he gained wealth, which he shared out to his followers, and also reputation which prompted heralds to visit him in his hall.<sup>216</sup>

The *Lay of Rig* reveals the Scandinavian ethos on nobility. The lord lived in a hall that was raised, which imposed their authority over their holdings.<sup>217</sup> The centrality of the hall, furthermore, was also stressed in the poem, as seen when heralds and messengers visit the ‘Earl’ in the structure. The hall, therefore, was a marker of his identity inside the locality because men knew to go there to visit the lord, something which is reminiscent of central place theory discussed in chapter two.<sup>218</sup> The structure was where the young ‘Earl’ was raised and prepared for war. The hall embodied a theatre where lordship was enacted. Such a structure added to the importance of place in the composition of aristocratic identity. An intriguing difference in this Norse text to the Christian ones is that the ‘Earl’

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<sup>211</sup> *Lay of Rig, Rigspula*, ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *The Poetic Edda*, 2nd Edition (Austin, TX, 1962), pp. 120–128, pp. 124 and 125.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> L. Hicks, ‘Magnificent Entrances and Undignified Exits: Chronicling the Symbolism of Castle Space in Normandy’, *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009), pp. 52–69, at p. 53.

<sup>218</sup> D. Skre, ‘Centrality and Places. The Central Place at Skiringssal in Vestfold, Norway’, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 1 (2010), pp. 220–231.

later moved on to gain his own lands and hall. The importance of the hall, nevertheless, can be seen in the *Beowulf* text too.

At the beginning of *Beowulf*, Hrothgar's hall is attacked by the kinsman of Cain, Grendel.<sup>219</sup> Grendel came to the hall at night where he found the nobles asleep. The creature snatched thirty sleeping men, taking them back to its lair to feast upon.<sup>220</sup> The king grieved for the loss of his men and Grendel returned the next night to carry out similar actions. Subsequently, the king's men stayed away from the hall, opting to sleep in the out buildings.<sup>221</sup>

The hall as a symbol of power and authority is clear from this incident. Hrothgar's lordship was directly challenged when the monster attacked his principal residence. The king grieved for his losses but also for the fact that his authority was ineffectual. The hall was the centre of Hrothgar's lordship like the hall in the *Rig* poem. The theme on the importance of the principal residence continues in *Beowulf*.

Beowulf is introduced as a heroic warrior and a Geatish leader with fifteen companions. Beowulf made his way to Hrothgar's court, where the king remembered the lord's lineage.<sup>222</sup> Beowulf described himself as Hygelac's 'thane and kinsman' and noted how he drove out trouble in the Geat lands.<sup>223</sup> He requested Hrothgar for permission to fight Grendel and cleanse the king's hall. The hall was cleared for the Geats, Hrothgar entrusted his hall to the Geat lord, and wished him good luck. The king said that he had never entrusted his hall to anyone before Beowulf.<sup>224</sup>

*Beowulf* used both genealogy and the hall to stress the regional persona of lordship in the early middle ages. Beowulf remarked on his lineage as being Geatish, outside of the

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<sup>219</sup> *Beowulf*, Line 108.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 114–125.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, Line 140.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 372–376.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, Line 408.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 631–655.

Danes; moreover, he was described like Magnus, Hereward and Herluin as a capable fighter. The importance here lay on the hall. The king gave his building to Beowulf because of the monstrous threat and said he had never done this before. The ‘Noble Text’, therefore, stresses how a central place is exclusively linked to the lord holding it. The *Lay of Rig* indicated, moreover, that men came to the lord of a hall knowing that was where an aristocrat resided. The story of Beowulf showed the same attitude, as we see when the Geatish lord came to Heorot hall to explain himself and request permission to assist the king of the Danes. The earlier texts place a greater stress on the importance of the hall for a lord. The *Rig* and *Beowulf* texts are dated before the mid-eleventh century, therefore, it can be argued that there was a greater sense of authority placed in a building than on a title. These could be representations of periods where kingship was not effective within the localities. Consequently such accounts were circulated in later centuries as there was a desire for that reality to return. The importance of central residences was also not lost on twelfth-century authors.

Hereward wanted to remove the foreign men who occupied his father’s lands after the Norman Conquest.<sup>225</sup> He left his two closest men behind in Flanders and his wife Turfrida.<sup>226</sup> On his return to his home, Hereward learned that his brother’s inheritance had been seized with the consent of William the Conqueror. Hereward’s brother was killed because he had defended his widowed mother and killed two men in the process. Hereward’s brother’s head was hung above the gate of their ancestral estate.<sup>227</sup> Hereward entered his estate, and he overheard a Zeelander disparaging his name for his actions in Flanders. Hereward and his followers were able to kill the interlopers because they were drunk.<sup>228</sup> The Lincolnshire lord subsequently placed their heads on his gate. Frenchmen

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<sup>225</sup> *Gesta Herewardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, Chapter 13, p. 364.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 365.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 366–367.

around the area, fearing for their lives, fled the region and the lands that had been assigned to them.<sup>229</sup>

The incident shows the significance of the family holding onto their ancestral territory. Hereward was compelled to return and fight upon hearing of his family's decline. The decline was epitomised in the loss of their estate and residence. As explored in chapter two, the residence was a family's seat of power, thus it was an insult for foreign invaders to occupy it while Hereward was alive. The problem of incursion was also apparent in the *Beowulf* text when Grendel entered the hall. Grendel and the Norman invaders had entered a sacred space of aristocratic authority. Such challenges to lordly authority had to be met by aristocrats in order to maintain their power. The essence of the hall's authority continues throughout the Hereward text.

Hereward's return to the region saw the inhabitants as well as his kinsmen flock to him. They garrisoned his father's estate and Hereward led several of them in raids against the manors of the French lords.<sup>230</sup> His force of the condemned and disinherited grew and Hereward requested that Abbot Brand of Peterborough knight him. Wulfwine, a monk of Ely, knighted the rest of his men. Hereward preferred to be knighted by churchmen as this was opposed by Normans.<sup>231</sup> Hereward and his knights defended the Isle of Ely from King William and killed Frederick, the brother of Earl William of Warenne, who had been plotting to kill Hereward. After committing the act, Hereward returned to Flanders to allow the tensions to cool down.<sup>232</sup>

In this scenario, the text on Hereward shows us the impact of regional lordship. According to the source, the inhabitants of the region united behind the lord after he had reclaimed his estate. The recapture of his ancestral home signified the re-establishment of

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<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 14, p. 367.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 367–368.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 15, p. 368.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 16, p. 369.

his rule over his familial territory; therefore it allowed the locality to gather round him as this was their regional tradition. The text subtly portrayed this regional lordship and its power over the landscape. This is not to say, of course, that the effect of Hereward being a symbol of resistance was minimal. The figure needed, nonetheless, to hold an effective lordship and authority. This clout was tied to holding a principal residence in a familial lordship.

The 'Noble Texts' of the North-Sea world implicitly stated how the locality was essential to the identity of the aristocracy. Historians have stressed that the aristocracy was aware of their lineage and this is what made them aristocratic. We can contend, however, that the sources' consideration of regional territory identify that there has been tempering the locality's importance. The genealogies have stressed a lord's lineage and also emphasised the importance of the continuity of a family in the region. Magnus was able to regain the earldom of Orkney because inhabitants recognised him as the son of Erlend. Herluin, similarly, was linked to eastern Normandy through the lineage of his mother and father. These identities were also in the *Carmen* and the *Song of Roland*, in which they must have been a key method for lords in identifying themselves. Finally, the principal residences, as shown by Heorot for Hrothgar and 'Earl' of the *Rig* poem, were a beacon of their authority over the landscape. The loss of the building or even an attack on the structure represented failure of that regional authority.

We can assume that the texts of Hereward, Herluin and Magnus were all reacting to a social change. The authors of the texts consequently have stressed the locality. The locality represented a stability that they yearned for. Guy of Amiens also attempted to keep this regional outlook after his North-Sea world had been significantly changed. By contrast the two earlier texts report a regional distinctiveness without a title given from a royal seat: the power was within the hall. Nevertheless texts, such as *Roland*, were beginning to be

affected by the ideals of the Peace of God. The clergy were beginning to push their principles relating to lordship on to their subjects and they were marginalising the power of the region on lords. We can hypothesise that the Church, which wanted to limit aristocratic feuding, blamed these local identities for the outbreak of feuds. The notion of regionalism for the Church, moreover, was not beneficial to the overarching Christian identity of Europe which sought to minimalise regional practice of religion.<sup>233</sup> We can hypothesise that churchmen preferred a homogenous aristocracy practising one form of Christian lordship that excluded regionalism, however, a rigorous investigation of this premise lies outside the scope of this study.

There were differences in the North-Sea world that suggested uniqueness of locality. The Norse poem of *Rig*, for instance, stressed how ‘Earl’ had to make his own lordship and gain his own hall, whereas the rest of the regions saw inheritance and continuity of halls stressed. It did not detract from the importance of the locality in the identity of ‘Earl’. He mimicked the hall he had grown up in and men knew where to find him. Let us turn to the solidarities of the lords of the North-Sea world in ‘Noble Texts’ and understand to what extent these sources described a fluid society.

### 5.3. SOLIDARITIES

Chapter three of this thesis argued against the feudal model in favour of kin-based action groups. The construct asserted that lords in the early middle ages had choices. These choices were predominantly influenced by the personal and regional interest in any given action. This chapter will intend to discover if these choices appear in the ‘Noble Texts’ of the North-Sea world. The section can be divided into two parts: the first will be based on

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<sup>233</sup> K. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spiritual and Social Change* (Manchester, 2005), p. 24 and pp. 31–32.

duties to a higher lord and the second will be the counsel given to aristocrats or kings by men. Our first source for this theme will be the *Vita Domini Herluini* from Normandy.

Gilbert Crispin recalled an incident between Count Gilbert and Herluin. Herluin departed from Gilbert's court when the count had injured him. Herluin, when Gilbert requested aid against his enemies, nevertheless loyally returned with his own retinue and forgetting the injuries.<sup>234</sup> The author emphasised the point of service being reciprocal and the bonds of which, if broken, allowed people to leave the service of their lord. Aristocrats were obliged not to injure their followers and, in turn, supporters were required to respond to a summons. In this case, the account is portraying Herluin as a forgiving man in true Christian fashion. More importantly for this study, however, it indicates the choice Herluin had when answering the call of summons. Society was not structured then to force Herluin into assisting his former lord.

Count Gilbert selected Herluin to travel to Duke Robert of Normandy's court in order to place a charge against a person who had caused loss to one of Gilbert's men. Herluin refused to bear schemes that may have damaged another man.<sup>235</sup> He favoured the path of God and broke his bond to his lord, despite the count's threats, and left his court. The count decided, as punishment, to seize all of Herluin's possessions and those of his followers.<sup>236</sup> According to the text, Herluin was not concerned about the lands he had lost. He was perturbed, however, by his peasants losing their possessions. So the knight returned to the count to plea for the holdings of the peasants, and the count summoned his court for a trial.<sup>237</sup> Herluin refuted all charges set against him and pleaded for his followers' lands. Herluin was willing to have his lands divided up and his pleading eventually moved the count to mercy. Gilbert conceded and divided Herluin's lands to the

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<sup>234</sup> Gilbert Crispin, *Vita Domini Herluini Abbatis Beccensis*, p. 88.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

knight's brothers.<sup>238</sup> Herluin's siblings were described as equal in rank. The author Gilbert, interestingly, noted that Herluin had seized these lands previously from his brothers anyway.<sup>239</sup> This was not considered injurious as the brothers had not proved themselves worthier or of greater eminence.<sup>240</sup>

The interaction between Gilbert and Herluin strikes the image again of a devout Christian man who did not want to bring harm to another person. We can imagine that is how Gilbert Crispin had intended to display the incident. We can again identify this as another case of a lord not willing to follow commands that he found disagreeable. The scenario was not in protection of Count Gilbert and, thus, Herluin did not believe he was required to take out the action. We can say, therefore, that activities such as these were a way of gaining favour from a lord, although they were not a stipulation of service. Consequently, refusing a request was not breaking any oath or form of allegiance. It was a choice a lord had made for himself, which most likely was influenced by the personal gains attached to the request.

The scenario of Gilbert returning the land to Herluin's brothers echoes chapter four's observations on inheritances. By custom this was the correct decision if Herluin, who was unmarried, was leaving his secular role for a monastic life. The locality expected his lands then to have remained in the family. Furthermore, as there was no unlawful inheritance purported, Count Gilbert would have risked discord in his lordship as men of similar rank would likely have opposed any seizure. Gilbert Crispin's explanation of Herluin's seizure of the land from his brothers can again be amounted to a local incident that did not require outside interference. The land had remained in the hands of a family member. By contrast, if the land had been seized by a rival local family we would have seen greater interference from Count Gilbert as it would have been a fractious incident.

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<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Gilbert Crispin's account is not the only example of service in the North-Sea world. Guy of Amiens from Ponthieu also explored this subject in his description of the proceedings leading up to the Battle of Hastings.

Guy described the build up to Hastings and elaborated on the Anglo-Saxon king in exchanges with the nobles of the realm. Guy had it that Harold recognised that his great nobles had already given a lot of effort in repelling the king of Norway's forces. He told his nobles that William sought to subjugate them and '*Nec nouit pacem nec retinere fidem*'.<sup>241</sup> The author revealed that the king's lords preferred to bow their necks to Harold instead of the Norman duke. Along with Harold, the lords and other common men agreed in selecting a monk to send to William to give the duke the Anglo-Saxons' refusal.<sup>242</sup>

Guy of Amiens showed the balance between royal and noble power. The kingdom had been attacked by a foreign noble, Duke William. The king of England was described as pleading with his leading nobles. Harold was requesting the nobility of his kingdom to prepare for another battle. The great men decided to follow Harold and not yield to the duke of Normandy. In addition, they all selected a monk to send their reply to William. This represented the ties between the king and his leading men of the localities. The king may have been recognised as the ruler of a kingdom, however the monarchs of the tenth and eleventh centuries needed to collaborate with these regional lords in order to execute their objectives. The passage is comparable to the relationship of Herluin and his count. In both scenarios, lords were requested to perform actions by men who were 'higher' in society. The texts' authors described the aristocrats as choosing to take an action rather than being forced to participate or bound by social constructs. The prospect of choice was also in the Magnus text.

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<sup>241</sup> *Carmen*, p. 12. 'He does not know peace nor how to keep faith'.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The Magnus account noted that the Norwegian king, also called Magnus, and a host came to the islands where he enlisted the sons of Paul and Erlend to conquer the southern isles. The cohort then proceeded to Wales. Magnus of Orkney would not fight the Welsh forces, however, as he had ‘no quarrel with any man there’.<sup>243</sup> A long battle ensued and Magnus decided to stay out of the fighting and sung aloud after reading a psalter. King Magnus of Norway won the battle, but he had lost a lot of men in combat. The king took a great disliking towards Magnus despite making him his page.<sup>244</sup> The king accused Magnus of being a coward and, as a consequence, the son of Erlend decided to leave.<sup>245</sup> Off the coast of Scotland, he swam for the shore and entered the woods where he hid in the branches of a great tree. King Magnus attempted to find the Orkney lord, who had eventually reached the court of King Malcolm of the Scots. Interestingly, as long as King Magnus of Norway lived, the son of Erlend did not return to the Orkney Islands.<sup>246</sup>

We can see parallels between Magnus’s relationship to the king and Herluin’s to Count Gilbert. Both choose not to follow particular objectives of their lord. In the case of Magnus of Orkney, we are provided with a reason. Magnus did not wish to fight the Welsh as he had no issues with the populace. By contrast, he did participate in the conflict against the southern isles.<sup>247</sup> The circumstances in this ‘Noble Text’ focus on the issues of locality and choice that lords had available to them. Magnus had his own territorial interests, which led him to fight in the southern isles of Orkney. Wales, on the other hand, was far from the reach of the Orkney lords. The life explores this rejection as a sign of Christian sanctity; however, if we view this through the lens of territorial interest, we can understand this as the Orkney lord not seeing the battle as worthy of his attention. Again we see choices available to lords and how their lordship affected decision making. Magnus made a

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<sup>243</sup> ‘The Story of Earl Magnus’, Chapter 44, p. 70.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

decision not to participate, due to regional motives, despite the orders of a king. The author as mentioned previously may have been stressing the choice in light of increasing Norwegian encroachment on Orkney. This incident, therefore, links well to Guy of Amiens' account of the English king entreating his lords before the battle. Kings were acknowledged as rulers, but the nobility had the option to follow if the scenario was not in their local interests. We can hypothesise that both Guy of Amiens and the Orcadian author were writing about how they believed aristocrats and kings should interact. Choices were made in their minds according to regional interests and it could be their dissatisfaction at the new political map emerging before them that explains their descriptions. These lordly relationships were similarly described in the *Beowulf* text too.

In *Beowulf*'s death we can see the idealised view of 'service' in aristocratic culture if a man had agreed to join their lord on an expedition. *Beowulf* and his men planned to set out against the dragon, and the Geatish king told his followers he was wearing armour because of the breath of the serpent.<sup>248</sup> He then explained to his men that he had to succeed and win gold or die in battle as their lord.<sup>249</sup> They met the dragon in combat and Wiglaf watched his lord suffer from the heat of the monster. The text described the thane remembering what his king had given him and then he drew his sword, clashing with the dragon.

Wiglaf, in his battle against the dragon, said how he remembered how they had promised the lord, who gave them armlets, that they would repay him if he needed their aid.<sup>250</sup> The two were victorious, but *Beowulf* was poisoned and, as was examined in chapter four, bemoaned that he was unable to have a son to give his war garments to.<sup>251</sup> The dying warrior gave a golden collar to Wiglaf. Wiglaf lamented the followers who did

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<sup>248</sup> *Beowulf*, Line 2524.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 2535–2537.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 2633–2637.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, Line 2715.

not join their lord but had taken his gifts. The thane exiled them and stated that ‘*Dēað bið sēlla eorla gehwylcum þonne edwit-lif*’.<sup>252</sup>

Wiglaf provides an excellent example of what was expected of a man’s close follower. If the lord had held his end of the relationship through gift-giving and protection, then he was expected to be reciprocal in providing guardianship of his life. This is why the text then portrays Wiglaf’s dismay at his contemporaries, but also his own determination to protect his leader from the dragon. In addition, for his deeds Wiglaf was rewarded by Beowulf with a gold collar.<sup>253</sup> Wiglaf’s episode differs slightly from that of Magnus of Orkney. The author of *Beowulf* bemoaned the nobles departing, leaving their lord to his doom. By contrast, Magnus travels with the king of Norway but chooses not to fight. They both still hold a comparable theme of lords choosing when to enter an engagement. The rigid code of service that has been suggested previously by historians does not appear exist in ‘Noble Texts’.

The *Beowulf* text possibly signifies an early seventh-century outlook. The existence of an eleventh-century manuscript, however, suggests that it was popular in England, and eastern England in particular.<sup>254</sup> We can assume that the text held similar traits to *Pseudo-Turpin* for the thirteenth-century aristocracy of Flanders. *Beowulf* was a text sought after as it represented a reaction against increasing West Saxon hegemony over the former kingdoms of the seventh and eighth centuries.

The ‘Noble Texts’ show that choices available to men included whom a man might follow. Hereward, as an exile from his region, was documented as providing his assistance to several lords. After being made an outlaw, Hereward was sent for by Gislebert of Ghent,

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<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 2890–2891. ‘Death is better for any chief than a disgraceful death’.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 2809–2810.

<sup>254</sup> Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf*, chp. Six, pp. 132–145. Newton makes the argument for the document being composed in an Anglian kingdom.

his god-father.<sup>255</sup> Gislebert was in England and was known to test men wanted to be knighted. These tests would pit men against animals. Hereward wished to fight a bear described as cunning, however Gislebert refused his request. Later the bear broke loose and Hereward was able to defeat it. The Lincolnshire lord earned the envy of Gislebert's court, his fame increased and his body grew stronger. Hereward's enemies, accordingly, began to collude against him.<sup>256</sup> This forced him to leave and enter the court of Alef a prince in Cornwall.<sup>257</sup> As the account progressed, Hereward joined the count of Flanders in his war against the count of Guines. He met Hoibrich in battle who was a renowned soldier in Guines. Hoibrich's defeat at the hands of the famed warrior from Lincolnshire prompted the count of Guines to sue for peace.<sup>258</sup>

The passage revealed that aristocrats were able to travel in search of service, linking into Bartlett's 'transregional aristocracy'.<sup>259</sup> The record of Hereward in the *Gesta* may be factually inaccurate; nevertheless it has presented a lord capable of travelling away from his 'home' region in search of 'foreign' lords to serve.<sup>260</sup> It conforms, furthermore, to the ideal that relationships were not rigid, as was also shown in chapter three. Hereward's movement agrees with the other texts from the North-Sea world. Hereward elects to move and serve new lords ranging from kings to high-ranking aristocrats.

Hereward's travels, furthermore, explained the personal nature of lordship. Hereward served the count of Flanders again in his army, after officials that were sent to Zeeland to collect tax revenue were mutilated.<sup>261</sup> Hereward led a force against the region and overcame the Zeelanders, causing the locality to seek peace. The Zeelanders offered

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<sup>255</sup> *Gesta Herewardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, Chapter 2, p. 343.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 343–344.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, pp. 344–345.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 8, p. 355.

<sup>259</sup> Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, p. 27.

<sup>260</sup> van Houts, 'Hereward and Flanders', p. 223. Elisabeth van Houts argues that the tale on Hereward should be seen as a historical narrative like Gaimar's *L'Estorie des Engleis*.

<sup>261</sup> *Gesta Herewardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, Chapter 10, p. 359.

double the revenues and many gifts for the count, but a new count of Flanders had emerged. Hereward, realising that he and the force were to receive nothing for the deed, decided to share amongst the men of his cohort the spoils which were intended for the count of Flanders.<sup>262</sup>

Hereward's judgment in the text is a revealing account into a lordship's personal nature that can often be overlooked. In this thesis, we have argued that the ties between monarchy, nobility and lesser aristocracy were personal. These bonds were not institutional and the text suggested that this can be said of travelling lords. Hereward gave his allegiance to a count; however, as the occupant of the noble position changed, Hereward believed the rewards of a service for the old count to the new count. Lords could also serve their superiors through counsel: a procedure that 'Noble Texts' seriously consider.

The process of counsel in the texts of the North-Sea world underlined that advice was not only expected, but often taken by kings or higher lords. In the *Song of Roland* we are afforded numerous examples of the importance of lords providing counsel. At the text's opening, we are informed that King Marsile was in Saragossa, where he called on his 'cunning vassals' to give him counsel on how to combat Charlemagne's army.<sup>263</sup> Castel Blancandrin de Valfonde suggested offering the king of the Franks gifts in exchange for him and his forces retuning to Francia. In addition to the gifts, Marsile was advised to convert to Christianity and send hostages to the Franks as a way of ensuring peace to encourage the Frankish lords to return home.<sup>264</sup>

The text then moved on to how the Franks performed the same process. Charlemagne's court debated who should be sent to give a Frankish response, and Roland offered to go. Oliver, his follower, however, said that his lord would only pick a fight. The

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<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 12, pp. 363–364.

<sup>263</sup> 'The Song of Roland', Laisse 2, p. 3.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, p. 5.

king refused to make Roland, Naines or Oliver messengers.<sup>265</sup> Roland later suggested sending his stepfather Ganelon, which angered Ganelon and he warned Roland that he would exact vengeance on him for the nomination. Roland offered to go in Ganelon's stead, however his stepfather replied 'You're not my vassal and I'm not your lord.'<sup>266</sup>

The author portrayed the counsel of both sides as being a discussion between the aristocracy and the kings. The lords made suggestions which kings listened to, but neither text described a royal decision before noble counsel. In both cases, we saw the monarch following the suggestions of the nobles within their court. Therefore, again we see a reciprocal relationship between kings and nobles. Advice was expected to be given and these recommendations were anticipated to be taken into account, nevertheless, counsel was not compulsory. The *Song of Roland* is not the only text to show aristocratic practice of counsel.

The account on Earl Magnus blamed the counsel given by Sigurd and Sighvat Sock to Hacon for the dispute between him and Magnus. The two in their conflict had come ready for battle and required mediators to end the discord. Hacon later had Magnus meet him on Egil's island.<sup>267</sup> Magnus suspected betrayal and, once he arrived and prayed at the church, he sent his men away as he did not want them to risk their lives. The event led Magnus to his martyrdom as he elected not to fight Hacon and his men.<sup>268</sup>

The author of the Magnus text reveals how lords were expected to provide good counsel to their respective leaders. It creates a comparable scenario to that of the Roland text, where we saw men giving suggestions to a lord and the aristocrat carrying them out. This view was being projected to a medieval audience. We can assume that the author was attempting to lessen some of the blame on Hacon in a similar fashion to how Æthelred II

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15 and 17.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>267</sup> 'The Story of Earl Magnus', Chapter 50, p. 77.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 54, p. 82.

was alleged to have had poor counsel.<sup>269</sup> Advice from followers was clearly an inherent part of lordship in the early middle ages. There was a danger of receiving poor guidance from those in the household or court. We can believe it was likely that the author intended to use Sighvat and Sigurd as conduits to excuse poor noble behaviour from Earl Hacon. The passage does not, nonetheless, detract from lords receiving good and bad counsel and the need for them to choose their course of action. The Magnus account is similar to Harold and his chief nobles before Hastings in their deliberation over sending a monk. It is comparable, moreover, to Harold imploring his men to participate in one last fight after defeating the Norwegian force at Stamford Bridge.<sup>270</sup>

Guy of Amiens, too, emphasised the importance of agreement in noble counsel. He noted that, after the Battle of Hastings, Harold was dead along with many members of the aristocracy. He described the remaining nobles electing Edward the Exile's son, Edgar the Ætheling as king.<sup>271</sup> The text accentuates, therefore, that the institution of monarchy did not continue without any aristocratic impetus. The nobility played a role in supporting a new king, particularly in a crisis. According to Guy, as William surrounded London the duke negotiated with the *witan* and the remaining lords agreed to reverse their previous decision.<sup>272</sup> Ultimately in Guy's account, a number of leading men from England and the *witan* itself attended William's consecration.<sup>273</sup>

Guy's account strengthens the impact of advice taken and received by kings. In the text, there was a council reversing the decision to make Edgar the Ætheling the king. The audience of the account would have had to find this a believable scenario to occur for Guy to report it. It adds weight, moreover, to the *Song of Roland* in which the nobility held

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<sup>269</sup> A. Williams, *Æthelred the Unready: The Ill Counsellor King* (London, 2003), pp. 149–150. Williams notes that the West Saxon king was 'amenable to good counsel as well as bad.'

<sup>270</sup> *Carmen*, p. 12.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

great sway in the decision making. The three accounts ultimately report a duty to provide advice to a leading lord or king. There was good and poor suggestions that could be made; either way, these recommendations held vast weight.

The 'Noble Texts' in this solidarities section have stressed the loose nature of lordship in the early medieval period, much like chapter three. Aristocrats were able to select which duties they wanted to carry out and often the decision was based on personal investment in the cause presented. These lords could make kings angry through their decisions, but it appears that medieval audiences throughout the North-Sea world found such rejections believable. Finally, the expectation of counsel created a myriad of outcomes. Advice was not necessarily given in the best interests of the lord and these aristocrats were crucial in counsel for keeping a king in power, as shown with the Ætheling. The section indicates that 'Noble Texts' for the period were intimating the strength of aristocratic power over royal authority.

#### 5.4. WARFARE

The texts of the North-Sea world can appear to differ drastically in type and style. They are comparatively similar, however, on the subject of aristocrats in war. They appear to agree on what is expected in the face of death and the importance of participation in such events to establish honour and esteem amongst contemporaries. This theme is smaller than the previous two but underlines the key point that, within the North-Sea world, the aristocracies shared common values in their most exclusive pursuit.

The nature of the texts does not reveal a great deal in skill of command; as established, the tactics employed were either not discussed or were viewed as an attempt to cheat. We can see this in Guy of Amiens' account on the Battle of Hastings. The *Carmen De Hastingae Proelio* disapproved of the strategy used by Harold on the day. It criticised

how Harold and his men had hidden in the forest, and seized the hill.<sup>274</sup> The Anglo-Saxons dismounted from their horses and the nobility were deployed on the wings of the battleline.<sup>275</sup> Guy of Amiens disapproved of Harold attempting to use an ambush from the woods to attack the Norman duke.<sup>276</sup> Guy's analysis of tactics was similar to that of his Norman counterpart, William of Poitiers. Both churchmen were strong believers of the battlefield being a courtroom for God's judgement.<sup>277</sup> An aristocrat's identity was linked into warfare and we need to recognise, therefore, that the Church's view of nobility overlooks tactical astuteness in battles. It appears, nevertheless, that kings, nobles and knights did employ tactics. The section on war will attempt to stress the similarity in understanding on how combat can propel the 'career' of a noble in the North-Sea world. First we need to consider how 'Noble Texts' understood conduct on the battlefield.

*The Sayings of Har* discussed hospitality, decent conduct, wealth, merit and moderation. More importantly for the purposes of this section, however, it stressed the Norse mentality on fighting. The text outlined that unwise men believed that they will live if they flee from battle, the author argued that the aches of old age will dog them, 'though spears have spared them.'<sup>278</sup> The author later noted that fame does not fade, in contrast to kinsmen and the individual.<sup>279</sup>

In the Norse world the prospect of death on the battlefield was desirable, it would seem. Lords sought such an end because it allowed them to gain fame and reputation amongst their peers. We can imagine, therefore, that the use of war allowed a lord to show his martial skill and test it against his contemporaries. This was not exclusive to the Norse

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<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> Rubenstein, 'William of Poitiers Talks About War', p. 135.

<sup>278</sup> *Sayings of Har, Hávamál*, ed. and trans. L. Hollander, *The Poetic Edda*, 2nd Edition (Austin, TX, 1962), pp. 12–41, p. 17.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

aristocracy; Christian texts from Europe also give the impression that the battlefield was a stage on which to win honour.

The *Beowulf* text also reported the enticement of reputation and honour in fighting great challenges. Grendel's mother, angered by the death of her son, came to the hall at Heorot where she snatched one of the nobles before fleeing back to her lair.<sup>280</sup> In response, Beowulf and his companions tracked her down after the lord had rallied them. Beowulf prepared for battle and ordered that the treasures found should be sent back to Hygelac, the lord of the Geats.<sup>281</sup> As Beowulf and Grendel's mother fought, neither could pierce the other. Beowulf's mail protected him from any stabbing blows she attempted with a knife. Eventually, Beowulf drew a sword made by giants, lent to him by Hrothgar, and split the fiend in two.<sup>282</sup>

When Beowulf returned to the land of the Geats, Hygelac wanted him to speak about his travels. Beowulf explained his confrontation and as a reward for his valour, Hygelac gave Beowulf a blade called Hrethel, seven thousand hides, and a hall.<sup>283</sup> Hygelac and his son died, which resulted in Beowulf ruling for fifty winters. The nights, however, began to be ruled by a dragon guarding a hoard within a high barrow.<sup>284</sup> The fight against Grendel did not see Beowulf's death, but he gained the fame that the *Har* text celebrated. For lords in the North-Sea world, it was this fame that appeared to give them currency in the secular world.

The *Gesta Herewardi* reported that Hereward, when he was in Cornwall, fought '*Ulcus Ferrcus*' in a duel which began with verbal taunting. Hereward defeated his opponent in hand-to-hand combat and was imprisoned as Rough Scab was the prince of

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<sup>280</sup> *Beowulf*, Line 1279.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, Line 1483.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 1550 and 1551.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, Lines 2190–2200.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, Line 2221.

Cornwall's son-in-law.<sup>285</sup> He later escaped to the son of the king of Ireland. The king and his son received him honourably. Hereward agreed, at the bequest of the king, to go to war against the duke of Munster. In the ensuing battle, Hereward killed the duke and two of his followers after offering them peace.<sup>286</sup> His fame again increased and men came to Hereward to be educated in the skill of arms.<sup>287</sup> Following the battle, the Lincolnshire lord continued to subdue the region with the king.<sup>288</sup> Hereward's activities in the *Gesta* matched his daring that caused him as a youth to be exiled by his father. As an exile Hereward managed to get into many conflicts.

Turfrida was a noble and beautiful woman from Saint Omer who fell in love with Hereward and secured his affections.<sup>289</sup> Hereward, who travelled to tournaments in Bruges and Poitiers, came across a rival who also wished to have Turfrida as a wife. As he returned to Turfrida, Hereward was ambushed by his rival.<sup>290</sup> The *Gesta* reiterated the lord's skill in stating that he killed twenty-five out of forty attackers.<sup>291</sup> Turfrida and Hereward pledged themselves to each other, and Hereward then returned to his lord in Flanders. The count rewarded Hereward and his companions with many gifts and honours for their victories in tournaments.<sup>292</sup>

Hereward was similar to Beowulf in meeting seemingly impossible challenges and succeeding. He acquired fame and reputation, which allowed him to gain access to new courts and had men seeking his aid. The 'celebrity' cache he obtained was exactly what the *Har* text also referred to. The risk was there for lords to lose their lives, however the rewards allowed them to increase their status in pursuit of honours.

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<sup>285</sup> *Gesta Herewardi Incliti Exulis et Militis*, Chapter 3, pp. 345–346. A name meaning rough scab.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 4, p. 348.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 9, p. 356.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356–357.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

The *Har* text reported a desire for composure on the battlefield and an acceptance of impending death. These ideals were also in a text that was known to have been circulated in the county of Flanders. The text of *Gormont et Isembart* described how Isembart, a Frankish knight, was unjustly treated by Louis of France. Subsequently, the lord enlisted the aid of Gormont, a king of the Saracens, to wreak havoc on his former lord's lands. A battle ensued, Gormont was killed and Louis was fatally wounded. Isembart lamented the loss of his friend; moreover, he reproached the fleeing Saracen army.<sup>293</sup> He beseeched them to return to the field of battle and avenge their lord. Isembart was able to rally the Muslim soldiers; however, due to fatigue and hunger, many deserted the Frankish lord.<sup>294</sup> Isembart continued to fight with two thousand men. He knew his death was coming and made peace with God.<sup>295</sup> In the text, he asked for mercy and likened his suffering to the ordeals of Christ. Isembart asked God to forgive those who slayed him; as he died, he turned to the east a symbolic location of God.<sup>296</sup>

These texts appear to confirm Jesch's assertions for Norse lords, which were explored in the introduction of this chapter.<sup>297</sup> Lords, across the seascape, were expected not to flee the field even if it was tactical to regroup. They were to stand their ground and continue the fight. The loss of companions, regardless of religion, is also a frequent subject, as shown above. The *Song of Roland*, for example, perhaps reported this lack of fear and sense of companionship more adequately than any other text.

The text explained that Roland and Oliver, after being selected for the rear guard and suffering an attack from King Marsile's force, continued to fight the Saracen army causing many of the Muslims to flee.<sup>298</sup> Archbishop Turpin proclaimed it was 'the sort of

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<sup>293</sup> *Gormont et Isembart Fragment de chanson de geste du XIIe siècle*, ed. A. Bayot (Paris, 1914), p. 14.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14 and 15.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>296</sup> P. Lonigan, 'Is Isembart's Defeat Inglorious or Heroic?', *Neophilologus* 53 (1969), pp. 1–7, at p. 5.

<sup>297</sup> Jesch, 'The Warrior Ideal in the Late Viking Age', p. 169.

<sup>298</sup> 'The Song of Roland', *Laisse* 141, p. 117.

valour any knight must have'.<sup>299</sup> Turpin stated that if a knight was not strong or fierce in the fray, then they should be 'in one of those monasteries praying all the time for our sins'.<sup>300</sup> Roland announced his awareness that they were about to receive their martyrdom, but both Roland and Oliver continued in spite of the odds. Oliver was impaled and he was still able to strike Marganise who had mocked them by saying that Charlemagne had abandoned them.<sup>301</sup> Roland fainted at the sight of a bloody Oliver, who had blurred vision because of the wounds. Oliver, in his weakness, accidentally struck Roland who asked why. Roland, however, accepted the apology of his companion.<sup>302</sup>

The two bowed in affection of each other and Oliver felt his death coming. Thus, he dismounted from his horse to confess his sins aloud and blessed Charlemagne. Once Oliver died, Roland wept over his body, crying 'We were together for years and days, You never did me harm and I did not wrong you. Now that you are dead, it is painful for me to live!'<sup>303</sup> Roland again fainted and only Turpin and Gautier remained with Roland. The Muslim army no longer confronted the Frankish lords in hand-to-hand combat. Rather, they opted to fire missiles at the three men. The first volley killed Gautier and the second wounded Turpin.<sup>304</sup> The archbishop drew his sword called Almace and continued to fight. Roland sounded his horn once more but ultimately succumbed to his wounds.<sup>305</sup>

*The Song of Roland*, like the other 'Noble Texts', expanded on how lords were expected to meet death in a composed manner. They were expected to fight as a fraternal group. Losses of men were mourned, such as Oliver and Gormont, as it represented the failing of the band. The poems appear to suggest that there was an expected code of conduct on the battlefield, despite all being from different religious backgrounds. Men did

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<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

not flee from their lords to save their life for a later day. By contrast, they revelled in the prospect of the chance to gain prestige. That prestige, as shown in the case of Beowulf, *Har* and Hereward, was understood across the seascape. The texts on Beowulf and Hereward appear to suggest that it also allowed access to new networks as fame spread from hall to hall.

## 5.5. CONCLUSION

Robert Bartlett's 'transregional aristocracy' existed in the North-Sea world. Societies across the seascape held similar expectations of these elite figures. Christian and Norse cultures discussed comparable virtues and conduct. The North-Sea writers described their lords as having the ability to select their leaders and that the theatre of war was a chance to gain fame amongst fellow aristocrats. Historians are not wrong when they assess the impact of the aristocracy on the global features of medieval society such as central authorities. It is certainly a part of an aristocrat's life.

The localities of early medieval Europe, however, have been pushed to the background by predominantly Christian writers. For this there are two reasons: first the increasing prominence of central authority in the twelfth century and secondly the Peace of God movement. From our corpus of 'Noble Texts' we can see that the twelfth century sources were promoting a centralised view of society. The reasoning for this is the increasingly powerful mechanics of royal government in the twelfth-century which superseded local authority.<sup>306</sup> The Church was also invested in the coalescing of a Christian identity from the eleventh century.<sup>307</sup> This process placed kings as God's

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<sup>306</sup> R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth Century Renaissance* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 100–101. Swanson explains the growth of administrative powers in the 'evolution of government.'

<sup>307</sup> G. Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the tenth to The Early Twelfth Century*, trans. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 21–25. Tellenbach describes the unity of the church. Also see: Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century*, pp. 85–86. Cushing discusses the impact of the growing authority of the Church, which allowed it to control Christian identity. Also see: Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, p. 254. Bartlett states that Christendom became 'aware' of itself in the eleventh century. Finally, see:

representatives on earth.<sup>308</sup> Historians have noted that the Peace of God caused ecclesiastical writers to promote Christian lordship. This brand of lordship sought to reduce the violence that contemporary writers believed was on the rise. These authors, therefore, marginalised the locality and promoted the global vehicle of kingship. Clergymen likely believed that regionalism was a major source of feuding, which was shown in the introduction of this chapter to cause disruption to ecclesiastical establishments. This comparative study has attempted to lift the localities from the sources. We have seen through the poems on *Rig* and *Beowulf* that older texts were more regionally orientated, however, their themes were also in later sources such as Bishop Guy's *Carmen* or Gilbert Crispin's piece on Herluin.

The 'Noble Texts' did, albeit implicitly, describe the importance of regional distinctiveness in lordship. The sources explained lords' genealogies on both their father's and mother's sides. These family histories provided their audience with the significance of such a figure, as we could see with Herluin's lineage being tied to a Danish war leader and a Flemish aristocrat. Authors too bound their subjects to a regional identity or central place. Aristocrats were distinguished through their territorial lordships and the men who served them were also described in relation to these lordships. Finally the hall was the location where lordship was enacted. These structures were fiercely defended as symbols of authority. The hall adds weight, therefore, to the importance of place for North-Sea lords. The earlier sources have stressed the hall far more than later sources; nevertheless, we can see a lingering symbolic importance of the principal residence in Hereward.

An aristocrat in the North Sea could be recognised across the seascape as they all practised warfare and operated flexible relationships. Their glory and valour translated to

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R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution c. 970–1215* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 146–159. The Church claimed primacy over the entire Christian church. This led to the persecuting society where those who did not fit the 'Christian identity' faced the wrath of Rome.

<sup>308</sup> Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe*, p. 38.

other courts and gave them status. It made these men transregional, although that is not to say they were no longer local figures. Effective rulership, regardless of reputation, required regional distinctiveness, for example, we saw in chapters three and four how William Busac tied his son to the county of Soissons. 'Noble Texts' may have begun to suppress the local factor, but through comparison throughout our sources it can be seen to matter to medieval audiences. Clergymen were writing not only from their perspective but also the view of the world from an aristocratic eye too. These lordly eyes tended to remain fixed on the prominence of the locality.

## CONCLUSION

The lords of the North-Sea world's voices are no longer muted, rather uplifted. The thesis has sought to prove that these aristocrats are not only worthy of study but also contribute to the existing historiographical discussions on lordship. Historians have been prone to forget about the locality in their assessments of territorial lordships. This thesis, however, has attempted to put the impact of regionalism back into the discussions on the aristocracy and their power. Lords needed the locality to bring legitimacy, authority and stability to their rule. We can say that the relationship between aristocrats and their locality was collaborative. We discovered in chapter two that lords needed to immerse themselves in the locality's identity. They did this by associating their lordship to previous authorities, as in the example of the ealdormanry of Essex and the kingdom of the East Saxons. Lords could also establish origin stories which separated them from the central authorities, as in the county of Guines with Siegfried the Dane as the creator of the central residence.<sup>1</sup> The aristocracy, moreover, looked beyond simply tying their family to a secular identity: they also sought to be bound by spiritual ties. As we saw in his grants William of Arques looked to Saint Condedus and the jarls of Trøndelag maintained temples to the regional god Thorgerd.<sup>2</sup> Not that we should return to our maps and draw out new lines of influence based on lordship's territorial frameworks. Such rigid frameworks have been shown in this thesis and others to be fragile.<sup>3</sup> Considering territory, however, is a way for us to interpret a world that did not have today's institutional frameworks. We must understand that these

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<sup>1</sup> Lambert, Chapter 7, p. 566.

<sup>2</sup> *Études Critiques sur l'abbaye de Saint Wandrille*, ed. F. Lot (Paris, 1913), no. 29; *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)*, no. 15; and *Vita Condedi Anachoretæ Belcinnacensis*, ed. W. Levison, *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici 3*, MGH SM 5 (1910), pp. 644–651.

<sup>3</sup> P. Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), p. 251. Buc warns of placing modern scientific social models on the medieval period. Also see: A. Sargent, 'Lichfield and the lands of St Chad', (Ph.D. thesis, Keele University, 2012), p. 308. Andrew Sargent argued that we should seek to identify the nodes of remembrance in the landscape instead of defining cultural provinces.

regional identities provided legitimacy and authority to a lord's rule over the locality. The stability, however, came from their solidarities and inheritances.

Aristocrats were not part of fixed social constructs in the North Sea. There were no feudal pyramids; no life bonds and no fixed relationships. They could choose, though not irrespective of locality. Regional ties were paramount in establishing local authority in order to prevent outside interference. These connections, moreover, enhanced the regional lords at court. From charters we see their position rise and their inheritances protected. Such connections provided stability and encouraged the local aristocrats to back their regional noble family. Nobles and their lesser aristocracy, therefore, were in a cooperative relationship. We could see this in chapter four with the lesser aristocracy of Saint-Pol, for instance, supporting the grants of their counts.<sup>4</sup> Nobles protected the interests of the region be it at court or on the battlefield, and the local lords contributed to their authority by securing alliances and inheritance strategies.

Our definitions of nobility are inadequate. Historians, as outlined in chapter one, have described a noble as having a lineage, holding a title, and probably being wealthy, though not always. We should now also say a noble was man of his locality; by which we mean he had regional distinctiveness. This regional identity was tied to the lands within his lordship; he did not participate in the central authority's 'kingdom' identity. The jarls of Trøndelag, for example, were tied into the Trønder identity with their mythological origin story.<sup>5</sup> Lords could not rule their regions legitimately without these ties, otherwise their tenure was ultimately fragile. The locality was intertwined into their family identity and was regularly invoked at the birth and deaths of family members. Women were inside the circle - indeed they can be viewed as the caretakers of such family identities as we could

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<sup>4</sup> *Les Chartes des comtes de Saint-Pol XI–XIII siècles*, ed. J. Nieuw (Turnhout, 2008), nos. 1, 2 and 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum ex recensione Lappenbergii. In usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae historicis recusa*, ed. altera, *MGH, SS 17* (Hannover, 1876), Book 2, Chapter 22, p. 57; and *Heimskringla, Saga of Ynglings*, Chapter 8, pp. 12–13.

see in chapter four with Countess Lescelina.<sup>6</sup> What then has been concealing the aristocracy's regional distinctiveness?

Historians' failure to see beyond the global structures in the medieval world is the main reason for this absence of the locality. Kingship, the papacy, and the Christian faith can all be viewed as vehicles of global power in the Middle Ages.<sup>7</sup> They all performed a role in the coalescing of the Christian European identity. At least this is what we understand from sources produced within the orbits of central authorities' courts. But these authorities were silencing the influence of the locality as it was tied in the early middle ages to the authority of the nobility. We saw this in chapter five, with 'Noble Texts' written by churchmen in the later centuries minimalising the effects of regional distinctiveness on a lordship. The Peace of God movement, a church measure which sought to promote good 'Christian lordship', played a role too. Aristocrats were implored to protect the poor, by whom the clergy meant themselves, and be loyal to God's anointed rulers.<sup>8</sup> Christian kings represented the secular rule whereas the Papacy and Church were the spiritual rule, but neither were symbols of local secular authority.

The nobility represented the local forces in the medieval world; their power was derived from the landscape and inhabitants of the region which tied their family to the area. The North-Sea lords were able to create power blocs in the localities which central authorities had to negotiate with. These blocs were created through mutual interests: lords preferred regional ties over central association in order to ensure their position in the world. Historians must not comprehend the development of medieval Europe, however, as lords waiting to be assimilated into the twentieth-century ideals of nationhood. Royal

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<sup>6</sup> *Gallia Christiana*..., t. 11, Instr., cols. 153–156.

<sup>7</sup> G. Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the tenth to The Early Twelfth Century*, trans. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 21–25 and p. 38. The rise of the Christian identity which was controlled by the papacy and kings were the anointed representatives of God on the earth.

<sup>8</sup> G. Koziol, 'Monks, Feuds, and the Making of Peace in Eleventh-Century Flanders', eds. T. Head and R. Landes, *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response Around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), pp. 239–258, at p. 258.

polities were not inevitable; instead we can claim that the tripartite relationship between central authority, regional noble and locality was delicate in the tenth and eleventh centuries across northern Europe. A king, for example, could not easily remove families from localities even if they had rebelled, as we saw in chapter three with the family of Count William I of Eu.<sup>9</sup> Localities favoured their traditional ruling families, so any central interference could be stiffly resisted. Central powers were more successful, however, if they understood this. Again the county of Eu exemplifies this. Robert, despite the rebellions of his father and older brother Busac, inherited the county of Eu. Robert later assisted William of Normandy in his conquest of England.<sup>10</sup> By contrast the Trøndelag family routinely resisted the presence of central authority and sought to unify its neighbouring lords against the royal authority in the west of Norway.<sup>11</sup> Our conclusions are derived from a comparative approach that has not been attempted before with the lords of the North Sea.

We have gained much from the comparative approach in this thesis. A comparative methodology has allowed us to assess lordships outside of a kingship lens; to include areas of northern Europe that are often omitted from historiography; and to discover that there was a great deal of similarity amongst the North-Sea lords. National historiographic approaches limit us from seeing the aristocracy outside of its relationship with central rulers. We have been able instead to assess their relationship with the lands these lords ruled. The approach has afforded us the opportunity, therefore, to contribute to the debate between global and local, much stressed throughout academia.<sup>12</sup> Lords, in fact, begin to look similar to modern transnational companies in search of service across many polities.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *GND*, 2, Book 5, Chapter 3, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> *OV*, 2, Book 4, p. 230.

<sup>11</sup> *Heimskringla, Saga of Harald Greycloak*, Chapter 9, p. 137.

<sup>12</sup> A. Dirlik, 'The Global in the Local', eds. R. Wilson and W. Dissanayake, *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, NC, 1996), pp. 21–45, at p. 38. Dirlik viewed the local as 'a site of resistance to the global'. Also see: M. Featherstone, 'Localism, Globalism and Cultural

A comparative approach has also provided us with the opportunity to compare lordships that have been left relatively untouched by historians. The ealdormanry of Essex, for example, has not been extensively investigated in Anglo-Saxon historiography compared to the ealdormanries of Mercia and East Anglia. Historians that focus on central authority select their regions based on the sources available for a large study. The comparative methodology, however, affords us to not only bring the less mentioned lordships into the discussion; but also gives a chance to analyse regions more intensely with a contemporary comparison. The comparative approach was centred on the North Sea as part of the methodology too. The methodology allowed us to contribute new insights into the northern European aristocracy and it raised questions too.

This thesis has raised many points on the mechanics of lordship; however, one question emerges if we are to call to look at nobles in their regional contexts. That is: did lords of different seascapes rule in the same manner? Indeed an ambitious project is needed to answer such large questions; however, they allow us to legitimately assess the power lordship in the period. We could compare the lords of the North Sea to those of the Mediterranean, the Irish or even the Baltic Seas. In order for us to fully break out of the national historiography trend we must view seascapes as a viable option of comparisons. Seascapes, moreover, will also bring in regions of Europe that are routinely left out because their sources are not exactly the same in style. Along with a comparative approach, seascape studies will allow us to overcome these issues, as comparisons across a

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Identity', eds. R. Wilson and W. Dissanayake, *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, NC, 1996), pp. 46–77, at p. 70. Featherstone discussed whether seeing the world as a single place meant giving 'it a sense of false correctness and unity.'; and S. Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton, NJ, 2006), p. 37. The medieval locus on territory allowed for 'decentred authority'.

<sup>13</sup> M. Miyoshi, 'A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State', eds. R. Wilson and W. Dissanayake, *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, NC, 1996), pp. 78–106, at p. 87; Miyoshi discussed the impact of transnationalism and how a true transnational company would exploit states as long as it served their purpose. Also see: Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, p. 419. Sassen discusses whether a late medieval urban political economy of territoriality can be seen today. She asserts that global cities are similar to those medieval urban centres. So the nation-state is one of many historical territories.

wide range of regions allow us to strengthen the plausibility of any claims made. We can assert that the use of seascapes is not exclusive to the aristocracy. Future research in other topics such as medieval economy and monasticism might hold fruits through this scope, however from this thesis, there are two clear topics that need further investigation.

In chapter two we noted how towns could be central places for localities in the North Sea. Towns, however, need further investigation: their origin myths, role in networking; and status to an aristocratic family would contribute to the overall picture of aristocratic authority in seascapes. The second theme that can be explored further is women as caretakers of the aristocratic family. In this thesis we investigated their prominent role on the death of their relatives and touched on their part in raising children. Further research, however, could reveal in greater depth the impact they had on the family identity and possibly unveil their position in the wider aristocratic networks of Europe.

The North-Sea world, of course, was not limited to the lordships that were examined in this thesis. There are plenty more that we can incorporate in future research, for example, the county of Ponthieu, the earldom of Northumbria, or even the duchy of Saxony. Any study, much like Georges Duby's feudal revolution premise, needs to be tested further. We would be foolish not to cast our net further and see if there are more lordships that project the prominence of the locality, by contrast there may be lordships that do not fit this pattern. The thesis may have discovered a general pattern for selected lords of the North-Sea world but it would be unwise to think that every lord was invested in such practices. We know, for example, that Tostig, although later removed by the locality, attempted to be the earl of Northumbria.<sup>14</sup> We could argue that all aristocratic families knew that they needed the locality on their side. So Tostig was perhaps foolish to believe he could break such a well-established trend. Finally, can we even go as far as to

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<sup>14</sup> ASC, 'D' and 'E', 1065.

say that there was an aristocratic language in North-Sea Europe? Certainly, we can say that lords throughout the seascape recognised a man of similar status. Lords were probably not linguists but identity and symbolism of power they could understand. We can reasonably argue that a code was shared across the sea through cultural contact which was exclusive and characterised by regionalism.

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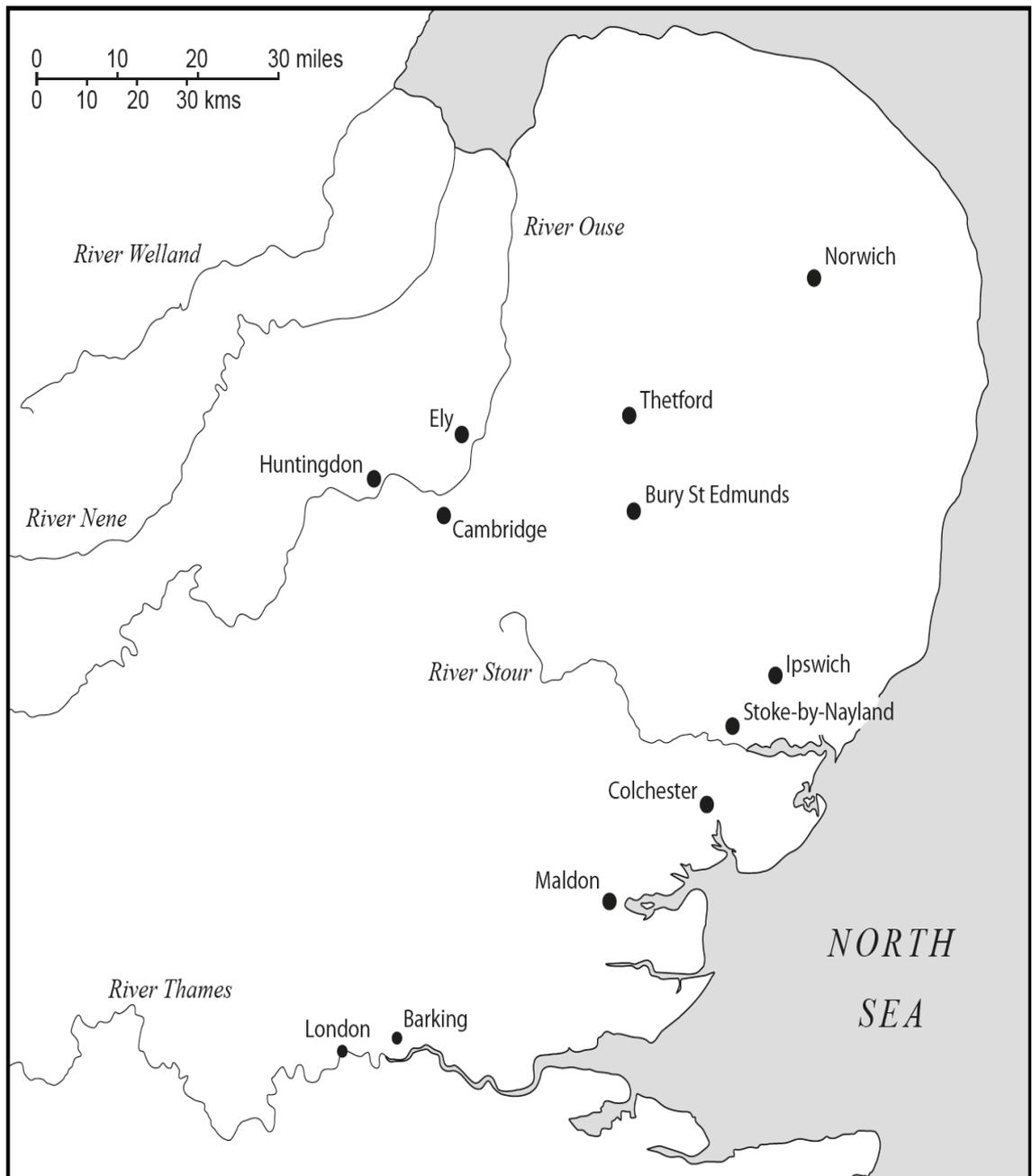
Trail, V., 'The social & political networks of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy: the Clare, Giffard & Tosny Kin-groups, c. 940 to c. 1200' (Ph.D.thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013).

# APPENDICES

## MAPS OF THE NORTH-SEA WORLD



**Figure 1.1 – Map of the North-Sea World in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries**



**Figure 1.2 – Map of Eastern England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries**

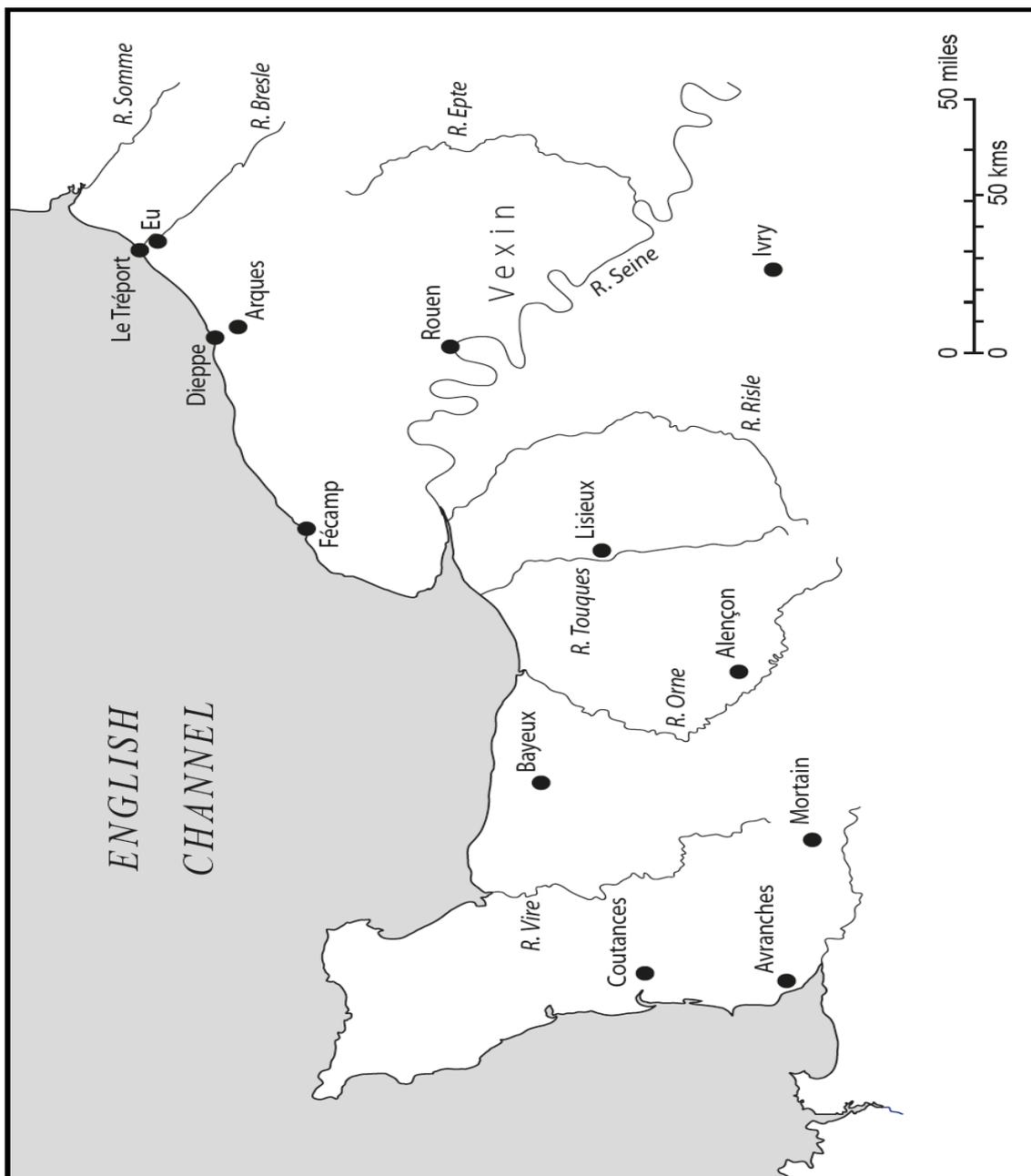
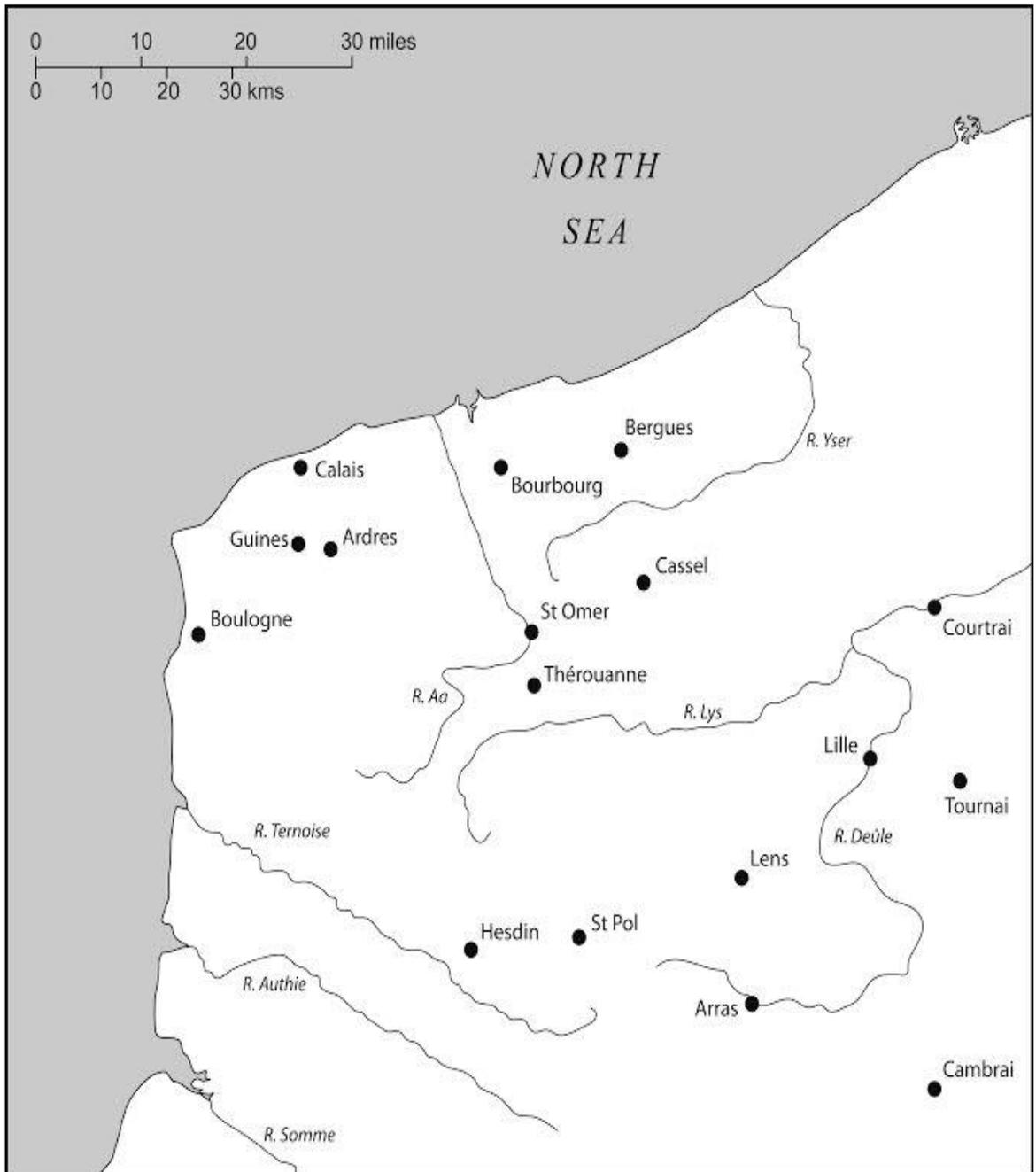
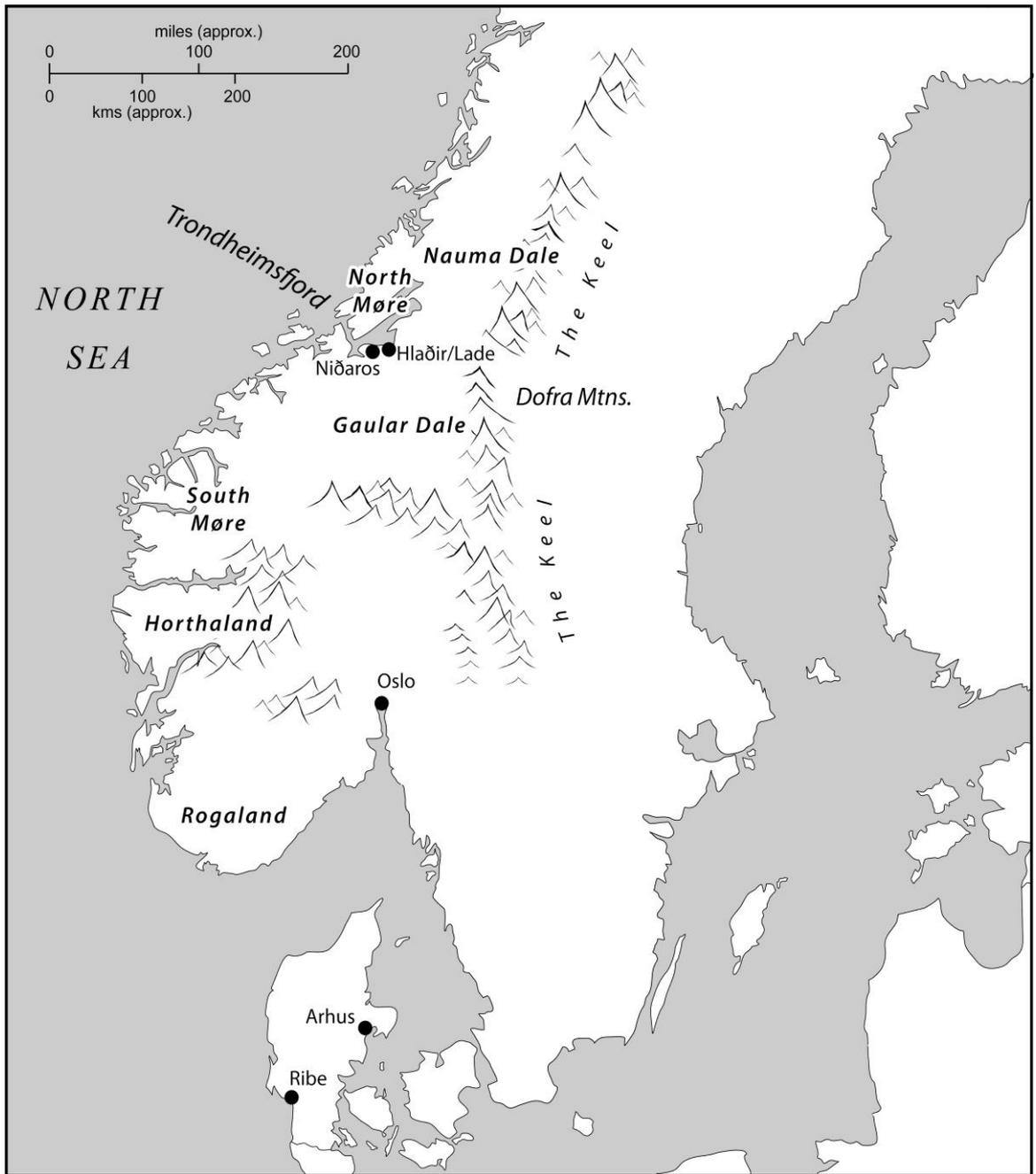


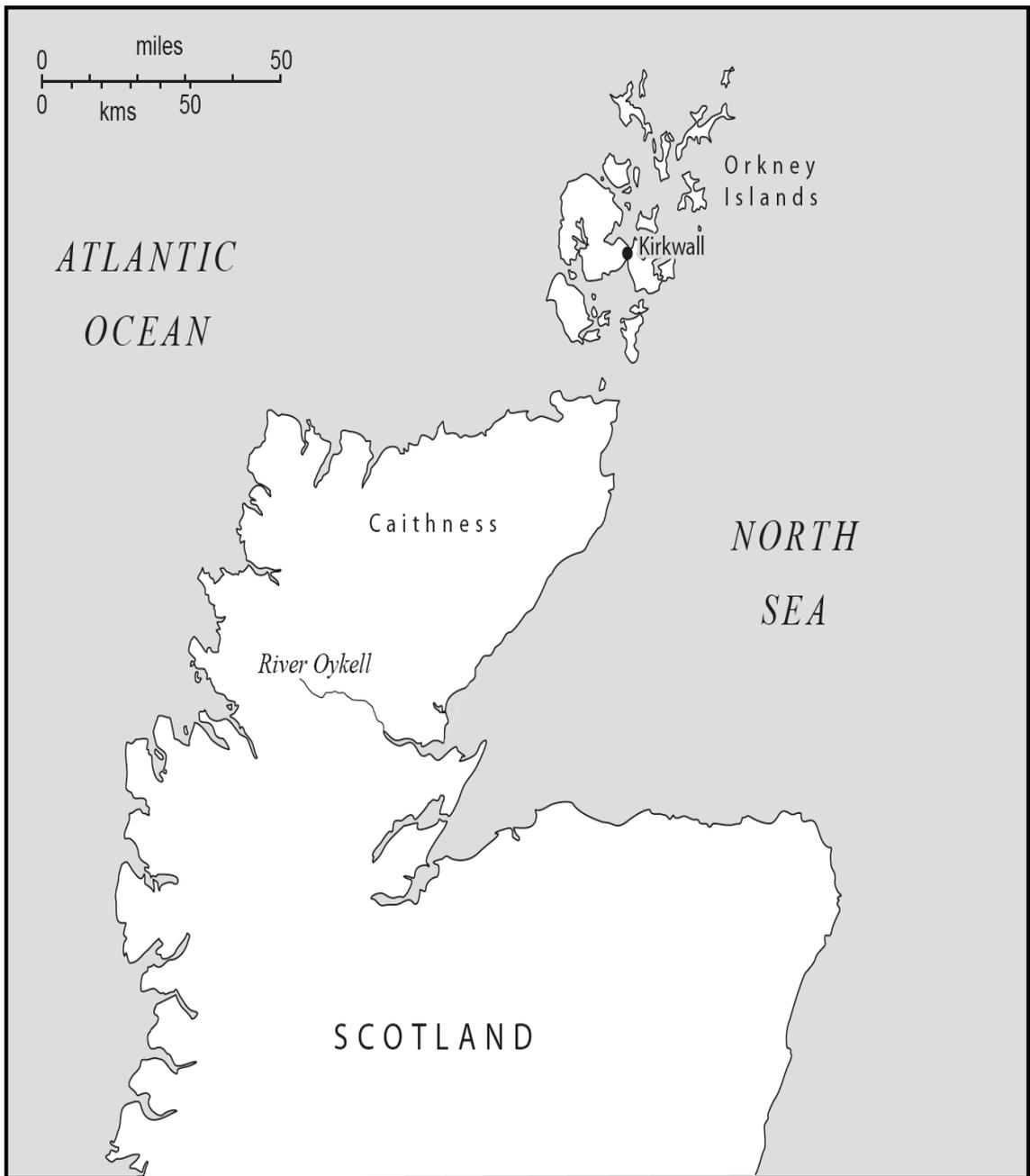
Figure 1.3 – Map of Normandy in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries



**Figure 1.4 – Map of Western Flanders in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries**



**Figure 1.5 – Map of Norway in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries**



**Figure 1.6 – Map of Orkney Islands in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries**

FAMILY TREES OF THE NORTH-SEA WORLD

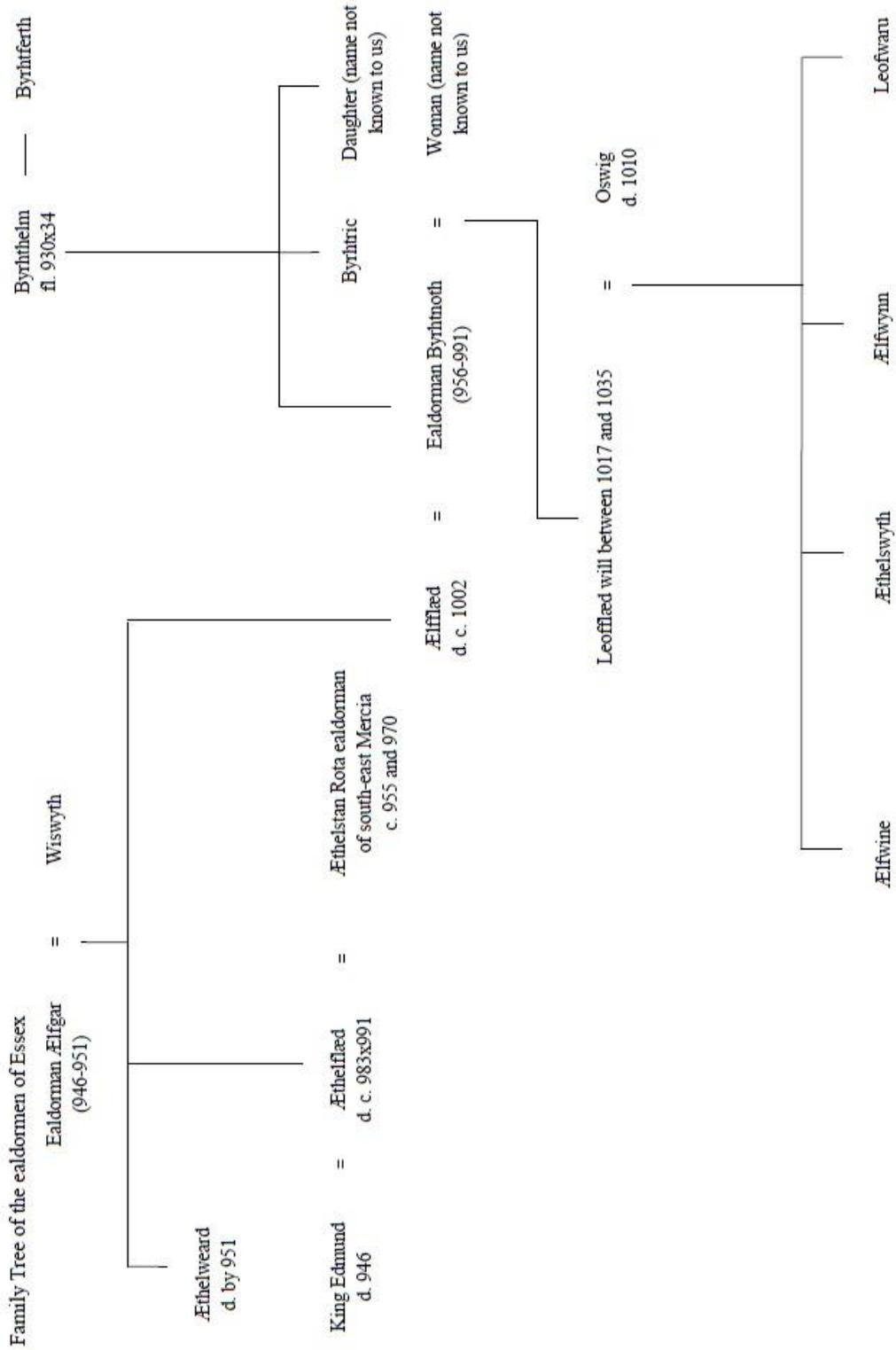


Figure 2.1 – Family of Ealdorman Ælfgar of Essex

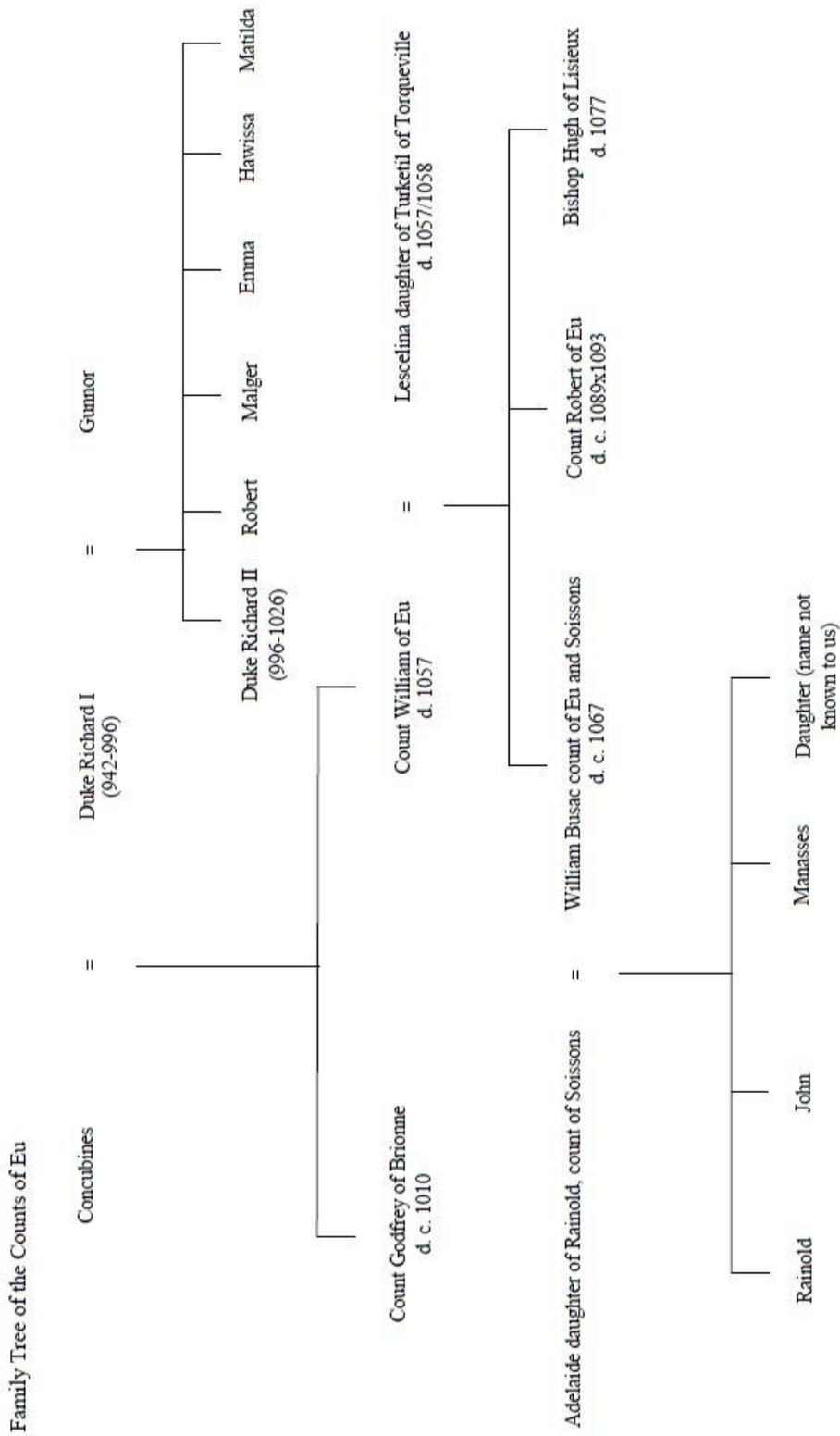


Figure 2.2 – Family of Count William I of Eu

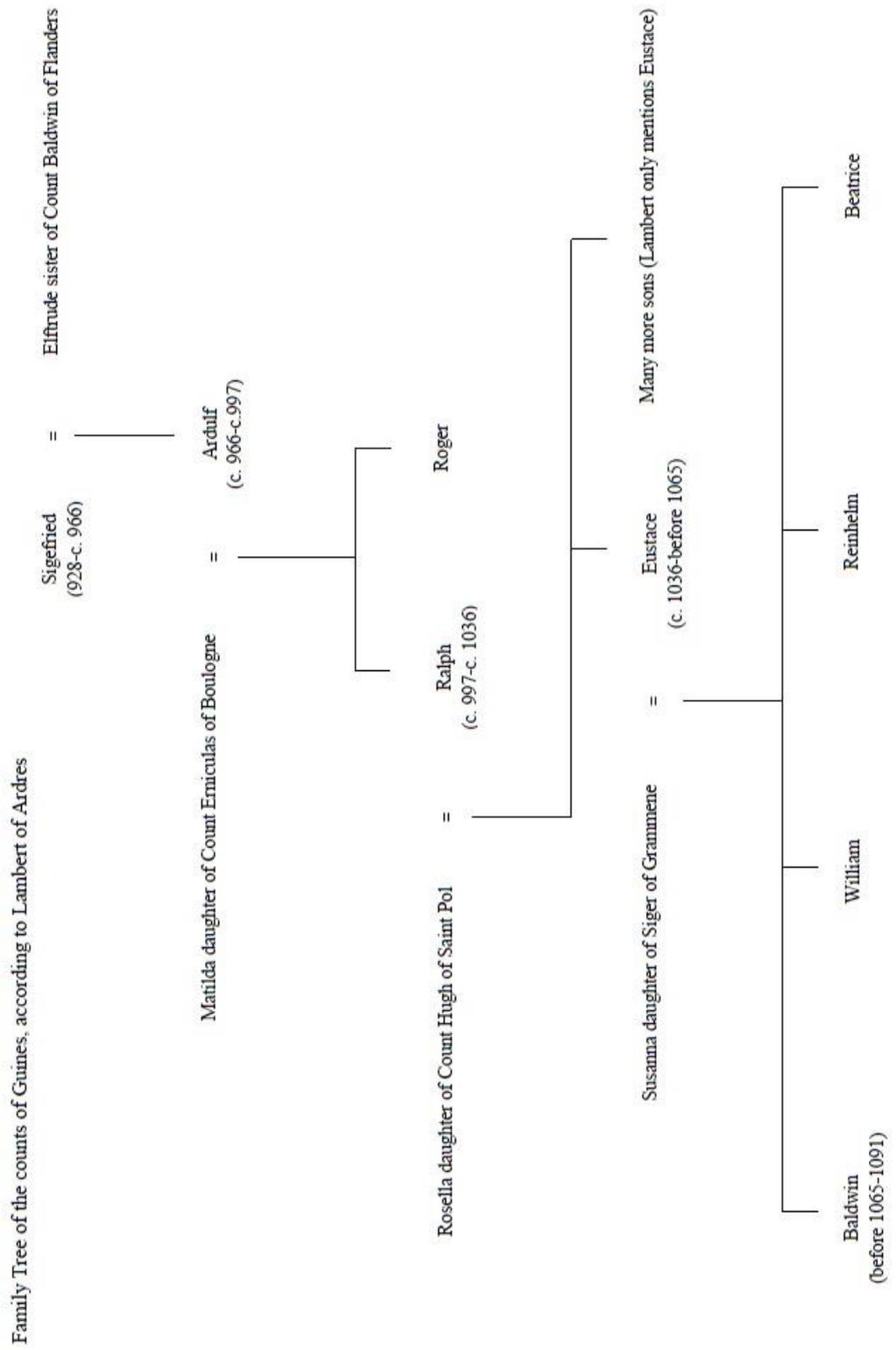


Figure 2.3 – Family of Count Sigefried of Guines according to Lambert of Ardres

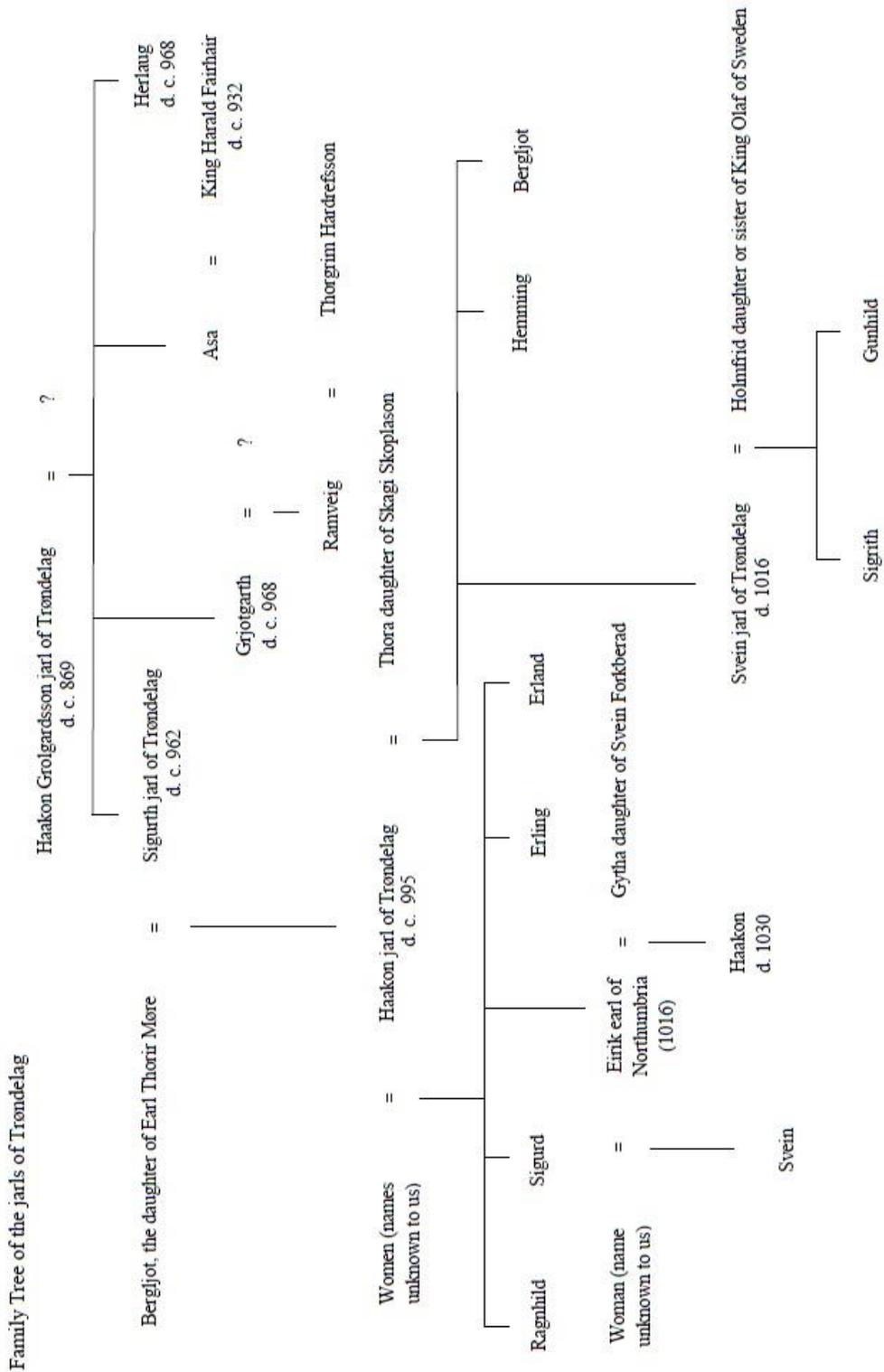


Figure 2.4 – Family of Jarls of Haakon I of Trøndelag