

# The Empire of Cnut the Great

*Conquest and the Consolidation  
of Power in Northern Europe  
in the Early Eleventh Century*



Timothy Bolton



BRILL

# The Empire of Cnut the Great

# The Northern World

North Europe and the Baltic c. 400–1700 A.D.  
Peoples, Economies and Cultures

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Conquest and the Consolidation of  
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*By*

Timothy Bolton



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## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study grew from my own Ph.D. study, completed a few years ago in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. It was titled “The ‘Imperial’ Rule of Cnut the Great: a Re-examination of the Nature of his Hegemony in England and Scandinavia”, and was always intended to attempt to work concurrently with the widely differing sources of evidence for the various regimes of Cnut’s ‘empire’. It was during the course of that study that I became convinced that progress could be made in the field, either through pure interdisciplinary research or through the comparison of the conclusions of a number of single-disciplinary studies. The work was then augmented by a spell of teaching and research in the rich interdisciplinary environment of the Senter for Studier i Vikingtid og Nordisk Middelalder (‘the Centre for the Study of the Viking Age and Nordic Middle Ages’) of the University of Oslo, during which time much of the Scandinavian material evolved or was added to. In fact, I now have trouble discerning what is the product of my time in Cambridge and what is the product of my time in Oslo, and it seems to me that the situation is much like a particular paradox as seen in both Plutarch’s description of the Ship of Theseus and an episode from the British television series “Only Fools and Horses”—the reader may choose whichever he feels more comfortable with. Plutarch reports that the ship in which Theseus and the youth of Athens returned from Crete was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus, in so much as when the old timbers rotted away they replaced them with new ones in their place, and the ship became a standing example among philosophers for the logical question of things that grow; one side holding that it remained the same ship, the other contending that it was not. Similarly, in an episode of “Only Fools and Horses”, a character nicknamed Trigger, who works as a street-sweeper, proudly displays a medal which he was awarded by the local council for having contributed to the community for the past twenty years, and holding up his brush claims he has “Maintained it for twenty years. This old broom’s had seventeen new heads and fourteen new handles in its time”. Another character interjects, “How the hell can it be the same bloody broom then?”, and Trigger holds up a photograph of him and the broom receiving the medal, and ‘proves’ his argument with

the line, "There's the picture. What more proof do you want?". As old timbers, handles or brush-heads have rotted away from this work they have been replaced with newer, better and more appropriate ones in a process of organic growth that makes any acknowledgement of the vast amount of aid I have received across the entire project extremely difficult. Ultimately, this study was only possible through the financial support of the Arts and Humanities Research Board, who funded both my Master's Degree and doctoral study. Professionally, I must acknowledge the tireless input of my supervisor, Simon Keynes, given at a time when the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic demanded much of his attention. Thanks are also due to my friend Kari Maund and my graduate-advisor David Dumville for equal amounts of help and advice, and the librarian, Christopher de Hamel, and the staff of the Parker Library, namely Gill Cannell, Iwona Krasodomska-Jones, Will Hale and Shiralee Brittain, for suffering my typically disruptive presence, incessant questioning and calls for aid over the last three years. It has been an honour and a pleasure to spend a large amount of my time in such an environment with such fine individuals. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Senter for Studier i Vikingtid og Nordisk Middelalder in Oslo, in particular to Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, for providing a friendly and supportive environment in which at least half of the Ph.D. was composed, and to whom I returned after that course of study was completed. I must thank also Michael Gelting for reading the Scandinavian part of this work and responding to a barrage of questions from me. Jesper Hjerminde and Mette Iversen of Viborg Stiftsmuseet also merit special note for their willingness to aid me in my research through the free-exchange of ideas and research materials. Further thanks are also due to Kenneth Jonsson, Brita Malmer, Frederick Elver and Cecelia von Hejne of the Kungliga MyntKabinettet in Stockholm. In Cambridge and Oslo respectively, I should like to especially note the support of Prof. Ray Page and Prof. Michael Benskin, whose scholarship and friendship, offered kind-heartedly over numerous pints of beer (often the way I have accepted advice best) jump-started me and my study at times when it was greatly needed. Most recently Niels Lund has read a number of chapters in proof and offered many helpful comments. I beg the forgiveness of anyone who has been omitted here, but my appreciation of their efforts is heartfelt.

In my personal life this study has also generated a bewilderingly long list of those who have given support at crucial stages, and I regret that space forbids the mentioning of any but a few here. My wife Ingela

has supported me throughout the worst parts of this study and has my greatest thanks. Dr. Peter Stokes has been a devoted friend and academic touchstone and deserves far more than I think I can ever give back. In addition to Peter, Catriona Strauss, Laura Williams, Lizzie White and Nancy Moss have stood by me and helped me through exceptionally difficult times. Finally, I should like to express my thanks to my father and my mother for their nurturing of my bibliophilic interests. Both of them went above and beyond their duties to their bookish son; the former through countless hours in the weekends of my childhood spent travelling to bookshops, patiently waiting while I ransacked the shelves, when I am sure he had better things to do; the latter through passionate defence of the precocity of my reading ability, even when it included heated confrontation with my primary school teacher.

### *Conventions*

There remain only a few technical points for me to comment on. The various forms of ampersands found in a number of sources and some modern editions have been silently expanded here to the OE 'ond' or '&'. Additionally, a number of letters which may be unfamiliar to the reader do appear in their OE or ON forms: most obvious to the reader will be Thorn 'Ð' and its lower case form 'þ', and Eth 'Ð' and its lower case form 'ð', which are both pronounced as Modern English 'th'.

Moreover, it should be noted that when anyone writes in English about historical figures and places from both England and Scandinavia, it is difficult to select a consistent principle by which these names should be spelt. Anglicised spellings, whether modern or medieval, often distort Scandinavian names so that they become almost unintelligible to a modern reader of Scandinavian history (and certainly to those in more linguistic fields such as Old Norse or skaldic verse), and likewise the use of normalised Old Norse or modern Scandinavian forms garbles Anglo-Saxon names. Moreover, while many problems that remained at the completion of the Ph.D. have been resolved in the following years, this one has not; and in my subsequent publications I have found no editor's decision that made perfect sense to me. Thus, here I shall follow the convention that seems to me to make the most sense for the readers: in that, the names of the majority of the historical figures are given here according to the geographical spheres in which they were most active, with Scandinavian skalds' names appearing in their

normalised Old Norse form and Anglo-Saxon statesmen in the accepted English form. Returning to the names: where doubtful cases occur, such as in Scandinavians who came in with Cnut and spent most, if not all, of their careers in England (and as such appear predominantly in English records with various Anglicised spellings), Anglicised forms are used, but the first such use is accompanied by the Old Norse form of their name if the deviation produced is significant. The only exceptions to this are Cnut, for whom I hope to show that neither England or Scandinavia can be conclusively identified as his main region of activity, and Harthacnut and Harald Harefoot, who also straddle these modern boundaries.

With the same eye on ease of access for my reader, the same attentiveness to detail has not been shown to modern placenames, and with these sense alone has been my guide. On these last two issues in particular, I beg my reader's linguistic forgiveness, and ask him or her to overlook the occasional arbitrary decision that I have made.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ASC: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: various redactions published in the series *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* (A: J. M. Bately, 1986; C: O'Keefe, K. O'Brien, 2001; D: G. P. Cubbin, 1996; E: S. Irvine, 2004; F: P. S. Baker, 2000)

*Danmarks Runeindskrifter* (plus number): Jacobsen, L. and E. Moltke, *Danmarks Runeindskrifter*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen, 1941–2)

DB (plus volume and folio number): Farley, A. (ed.), *Domesday Book: seu liber censualis Willelmi Primi Regis Angliae...*, 4 vols. (London, 1783 & 1816); most conveniently consulted in the series, *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England*, which reproduces Farley's text with a translation. See Appendix B for a list of the relevant publications within this series.

*Diplomatarium Danicum*: Weibull, L. & N. Skyum-Nielsen, *Diplomatarium Danicum* 1. Række 2. Bind 1053–1169 (Copenhagen, 1963)

*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*: C. C. A. Lange & C. R. Unger (eds.), *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, Norsk Historisk Kjeldeskript-Institutt (Kristiania/Oslo, 1919–)

Dugdale, *Monasticon*: Caley, J., H. Ellis and B. Bandinel (eds.), *Monasticon Anglicanum: A History of Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches...*, 6 vols. (London, 1817–30)

Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning* (plus references to volumes): Finnur Jónsson (ed. & trans.), *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning*, 4 vols. (Copenhagen & Kristiania, 1912–15)

Freeman *NC*: Freeman, E. A., *A History of the Norman Conquest of England, Its Causes and Its Results*, 6 vols., 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1877–9)

Gerchow, *Gedenküberlieferung*: Gerchow, J. (ed.), *Die Gedenküberlieferung der Angelsachsen*, Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung 20 (Berlin, 1988)

Harmer, *Writs*: Harmer, F. E., *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (Manchester, 1952)

Keynes, *Atlas*: Keynes, S., *An Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters c. 670–1066, I: Tables*, ASNC Guides Texts and Studies 5 (Cambridge, 2002)

Keynes, *Diplomas*: Keynes, S., *The Diplomas of King Æthelred the Unready, 978–1016: A Study in Their Use As Historical Evidence*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 3rd Series, 13 (Cambridge, 1980)



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- Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*: Liebermann, F., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Halle, 1898–1916)
- Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*: Rumble, A. R. (ed.), *The Reign of Cnut, King of England, Denmark and Norway*, *Studies in the Early History of Britain* (London, 1994)
- S. (plus number): a charter catalogued by Sawyer, P., *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, *Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks* 8 (London, 1968)
- Stenton, *A-SE*: Stenton, F. M., *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1971)
- Whitelock, *English*: Whitelock, D., *English Historical Documents c. 500–1042*, *English Historical Documents* 1 (London, 1955)

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Figure 22: Obverse of a brooch excavated in Viborg

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The reign of Cnut the Great marks a pivotal point in the history of both England and Scandinavia, yet his route to power and the development of his authority over the countries he ruled remains under-appreciated and rarely studied. His career was relatively short, from commanding armies in England under his father in 1013 to his early death on 12 November 1035. Yet, in the intervening twenty-two years, he claimed and held the thrones of England, Denmark and Norway, all the while accumulating power, influence, skill and wealth.

English language scholars have commented on some aspects of this remarkable ruler, Freeman initially in 1877, and subsequently Stenton in 1943, as part of their respective general studies of Anglo-Saxon England, but it was Larson who made the first comprehensive studies of Cnut's reign in 1910 and 1912, producing assessments of his actions in England and Scandinavia which have set the scene for almost all comment in the following century.<sup>1</sup> Larson's studies are now often somewhat dated, and in recent decades scholars have returned to the study of Cnut, with Lawson's study of his rule which was published in 1993 and the collection of articles discussing diverse aspects of his rule which was published in 1994.<sup>2</sup> While these publications have brought debate about Cnut up to date, and opened many new avenues of research, they have fought shy of the Scandinavian sources of evidence. Lawson expressly avoided these sources, stating in the preface to his work, that he had "concentrated largely on the English aspects of Cnut's reign", because "the English material has proved a richer field, as well as being more central to my own interests".<sup>3</sup> The collection of articles published in 1994 included more Scandinavian material, but many aspects were

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman, *NC*, i, 380–479 and Stenton, *A-SE*, 386–419; L. M. Larson, "The Political Policies of Cnut as King of England", *American Historical Review* 15 (1909–10), and the same author's *Cnut the Great 995–1035, and the Rise of Danish Imperialism During the Viking Age* (London: Putnum, 1912).

<sup>2</sup> Lawson, *Cnut*, and Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*.

<sup>3</sup> Lawson, *Cnut*, x. Indeed, his work includes only minimal comment on Cnut's actions in Scandinavia in a chapter entitled 'Cnut, England and Northern Europe, 1017–35', where only eleven pages out of a possible thirty-five (pp. 89–91 and 93–102 out of 81–116) contained such comment.

left uncovered.<sup>4</sup> In particular, as Jesch has noted in a review of this work, it almost entirely avoided discussion of the difficult Scandinavian narrative sources. As she notes, the only contributor to discuss these in any detail was Keynes, paradoxically in his contribution on the English diplomatic evidence.<sup>5</sup>

The poor state of the historical evidence appears to have inhibited modern Scandinavian historical study of Cnut's hegemony. After Steenstrup published his wide-ranging study of the Viking Age in 1878 there have been no large-scale studies of Cnut in a modern Scandinavian language, and scholars seem to have confined themselves to debating individual aspects of his reign.<sup>6</sup> The problem is simple: the contemporary native sources which do inspire confidence (such as runestones) are few, commonly fragmentary, and offer little concrete information. Native narrative sources survive from the mid twelfth century onwards for Denmark, but are not numerous, and like the notoriously unreliable saga material often require a great deal of work to establish their veracity. The only supposedly clear light through this dark period has been that of the handful of foreign sources which comment on events in Scandinavia. Within these Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* holds a commanding position, but its record is often the only coordinated witness to events, and worryingly, it is an openly partisan account. Thus, for the early eleventh century, history seems to have slowly become the 'poor cousin' of the other disciplines in Danish medieval studies, such as archaeology and numismatics, whose sources of evidence are more plentiful and reliable; and as technical developments throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries increased the reliability of the findings of the latter two disciplines, awareness of the

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<sup>4</sup> There are discussions there of Cnut's rule in Denmark (N. Lund, "Cnut's Danish Kingdom", in Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*, 27–42); his coinage there, as well as in England (K. Jonsson, "The Coinage of Cnut", *ibid.*, 193–230); the verse composed for him by his Scandinavian court-poets (R. Frank, "King Cnut in the Verse of his Skalds", 106–24); and a general discussion of his Scandinavian hegemony with an appendix discussing some of the runic material (P. Sawyer, "Cnut's Scandinavian Empire", 10–22, with an appendix by B. Sawyer, "Appendix: the Evidence of Scandinavian Runic Inscriptions", 23–6).

<sup>5</sup> J. Jesch, in her review of the book for *Saga Book* 24 (1996): 273–4.

<sup>6</sup> J. C. H. R. Steenstrup, *Normannerne* (Copenhagen, 1876–82) 3: 290–412; for one such debate see O. Moberg, "The Battle of Helgeå", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 14 (1989) and B. Graslund, "Knut den Store och Sveariket: Slaget vid Helgeå i ny Belysning", *Scandia, Tidskrift för Historisk Forskning* 52 (1986), regarding the details of the battle of Helgeå.

problems of the historical sources has grown. While notable exceptions to the trend can be found in the contributions of historians such as N. Lund, H. Janson and M. Gelting amongst others, it is common to find that the thin historical sources have limited the potential for discussion to the point where these sources habitually serve to bolster the observations of archaeologists or other non-historical specialists, or to provide an interpretative key for otherwise difficult (and often non-historical) data.<sup>7</sup> The result is that archaeological specialists have come to dominate the majority of medieval scholarship written in the last century in Scandinavia on its early eleventh-century past, and thus the questions asked of the surviving historical sources are often archaeological ones, with archaeological preconceptions and perspectives.

Within such an approach the reign of an individual ruler, no matter how prominent or innovatory, can become lost.<sup>8</sup> The ability of history to focus on the significance of individual events and very short periods of time within an overall context, allows interpretations of the events unlike that reached by other disciplines.

It is possible to reassert the position of the historian in the study of Cnut's actions in Scandinavia. The native narrative sources are difficult but represent some skeletal fragments of historical tradition that must be accounted for. Furthermore, the hypercritical attitude taken by many scholars towards the Scandinavian historical sources has begun to be eroded in recent years. Studies of the political and social climate of the period in which the majority of the medieval Danish historical narratives were composed, the twelfth century, has allowed us to identify many of the accretions of later centuries. Progressively, work on individual historical narratives and annals have inspired confidence in those parts of their texts which appear to embody reliable historical traditions. Skaldic verse in particular has received much attention, and linguists and literary specialists have shown that we can place trust

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<sup>7</sup> Historical studies such as N. Lund, "Cnut's Danish Kingdom"; H. Janson, "Konfliktlinjer i Tidlig Nordeuropeisk Kyrkoorganisation", in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et symposium i Roskilde den 5.-7. februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund. (Roskilde Museums Forlag), pp. 215-34; and M. H., Gelting, "Elusive Bishops: Remembering, Forgetting, and Remaking the History of the Early Danish Church", in *The Bishop: Power and Piety at the First Millennium*, ed. S. Gilsdorf (Munster, Hamburg & Berlin, 2004), are notable and welcome exceptions.

<sup>8</sup> See for example K. Randsborg, *The Viking Age in Denmark* (London: Duckworth, 1980), and T. L. Thurston, *Landscapes of Power, Landscapes of Conflict. State Formation in the South Scandinavian Iron Age* (New York, London: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2001), for assessments of this kind.

in those named poems which are stated in the sagas to be by known authors.<sup>9</sup> It seems to me that an avenue of research into Scandinavian history in the eleventh century which remains to be explored, is to ask historical questions of the accumulated bodies of archaeological and numismatic evidence, in order to 'flesh out' our understanding of the difficult historical sources.

Thus, this study re-examines the nature of Cnut's hegemony through the perspective of the political historian, but with a more omnivorous approach to the source material; that is, I do not believe that we can even begin to approach an assessment of this hegemony without trying to understand his actions in Scandinavia, and the study of those requires the historian to attempt to incorporate and understand the traditional fare of the archaeologist, numismatist, literary specialist and perhaps even art historian.

The sporadic survival of the sources in both England and Scandinavia, and the nature of those sources, inhibits any approach to gather a complete and comprehensive picture of Cnut's hegemony. However, enough evidence does survive to allow us to target a few crucial areas of study. For the initial part of the study, that which focuses on events in England, these are:

- Cnut's affect on the national government of England, the royal court,
- Cnut's affect on the local government of Southumbrian England,
- Cnut and the English Church,
- Cnut's affect on the *Imperium* of late Anglo-Saxon England: Northumbria, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

In Denmark, where the sources are most scarce, a more general approach has been taken, and rather than examining individual organs of government, the focus is on Cnut's consolidation of authority in the individual regions. Thus there are sections on:

- Cnut's consolidation of power in Western Denmark,
- Cnut's consolidation of power in Eastern Denmark and the Baltic,

and finally, a study of Cnut's affect on Norway is appended.

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<sup>9</sup> See in particular B. Fidjestøl, *Det Nørøne Fyrstediktet* (Bergen: Universitet i Bergen, 1982). See also R. G. Poole, "Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History: Some Aspects of the Period 1009–1016", *Speculum. A Journal of Medieval Studies* 62 (1987), for an extended defence of several poems which were composed for Cnut.

These individual studies vary greatly in the type of evidence used, and the methodologies in handling and assessing such evidence. This leads to a somewhat eclectic approach, but my intention is that while some of the individual studies within this book sit within different disciplinary backgrounds and thus cannot be comfortably compared with each other at each individual stage of their argument, the results and conclusions of those studies can be compared, and understood within the context of each other. Thus, the final sections examine how Cnut conceived of the political unit he had constructed, and whether such a unit might be granted the title 'empire'.





PART ONE

THE NATURE OF CNUT'S HEGEMONIES IN ENGLAND



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Cnut's takeover of power in England came as the culmination of some thirty-five years of renewed Scandinavian raids on English territory. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that the raiders came first in 980, striking Southampton, and this force was followed, until 991, by numerous small raiding-armies which struck at coastal sites or headed inland on devastating raiding campaigns.<sup>1</sup> In 991 a larger raiding-party arrived and remained in England until 1005, closely followed by another in 1006–7. In 1009 Thorkell's army arrived at Sandwich and remained in England, raiding and extracting protection money until 1013.<sup>2</sup> This force was the most devastating yet. As the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle enumerates they swept through East Anglia, Essex, Middlesex, Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, half of Huntingdonshire, all the land of Kent and Sussex which lay south of the Thames, Surrey, Berkshire, Hampshire and much of Wiltshire. During the raiding they had plundered and burnt widely, and succeeded in razing the towns of Oxford, Thetford, Cambridge and Northampton, and finally seized and executed the archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup> The chronicler's account is passionate and partisan at this stage, but his enumeration of the areas affected by this army in 1011 remains a reliable contemporary witness to the impact of this army upon the infrastructure of England, and his poetic description of the wretched imprisonment and execution of the archbishop is a testament to the crushed morale of the English nobility. Æthelred succeeded in purchasing peace with this army, but as this force was paid off, the Danish king, Sveinn Tjúguskegg (Sweyn Forkbeard) and his son Cnut, struck with another fleet aimed not at raiding, but at invasion and conquest.<sup>4</sup> This force struck up the East-Anglian coastline into the North of England, and having forced this region to submit, turned southwards via western Mercia

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<sup>1</sup> ASC 981–1008 D (Cubbin, 48–54).

<sup>2</sup> ASC 1009–13 D (Cubbin, 54–8).

<sup>3</sup> ASC CDE 1011 (E: Irvine, 68–9).

<sup>4</sup> ASC 1013 D (Cubbin, 58).

to Wessex. Æthelred withdrew within London, and Sveinn, unable to breach the city, turned his attention to the south west of England. In 1013 this region submitted to him in a formal ceremony at Bath, and Æthelred fled to Normandy. No previous Scandinavian raider or invader had succeeded in causing the West Saxon king to flee England, and it is clear that Sveinn intended to rule England, rather than just extract a single payment from it. We should like to know more about his reign, but it was cut short by his unexpected death only a few months later in 1014. Cnut fled with the Danish forces, and Æthelred returned from exile. England had already seen much factioning under the pressure of invasion, and the political climate appears to have worsened during Æthelred's final years, until a decisive split appeared between Æthelred and his immediate heir, Edmund Ironside, in 1015.<sup>5</sup> It was at this moment of crisis that Cnut re-invaded, and by the end of the summer in 1016 his forces had fought the English into submission, and a settlement was reached between Cnut and Æthelred's son Edmund Ironside. Edmund died later in that year in unclear circumstances, and Cnut assumed full control over England.

The narration of these events is important in order to appreciate the political climate of England in 1016, as well as Cnut's subsequent actions in that country. In 1016 Cnut's regime in England was not a promising one. He inherited a country devastated by raiding and politically factioned along many lines, in which he had only the right of conquest to support his claim for the throne.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the main part of his forces were composed of mercenaries, and in 1018, these were paid and they returned to Scandinavia, removing the majority of his military

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<sup>5</sup> ASC 1015 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 99–100).

<sup>6</sup> His father had held control briefly, and his reign may not have been seen as legitimate. As noted above, Sveinn held power for only a few months, and there is evidence to suggest that he died 16 days before the meeting of a witenagemot called to pronounce him king. J. Wilcox, "Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* as Political Performance: 16 February 1014 and Beyond", in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), noted that the D-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's mention of the appointment at York of one Ælfrig as bishop of London on 16 February (i.e. just 13 days after the death of Sveinn), is suggestive that immediately prior to his death Sveinn had called a *witena-gemot* in York. He appears to have died while most of the dignitaries were in transit and so the assembly was held without a king, carrying out such business as episcopal appointments. Wilcox reasonably surmised that this assembly was probably called in order to crown Sveinn in York.

might at this crucial stage.<sup>7</sup> Thus, with so many forces opposing the likelihood that a strong and peaceful regime could be established, it is something of a paradox that Cnut remained in control and quickly and efficiently consolidated his authority over England. It is to the processes which enabled this consolidation of power that we now turn.

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<sup>7</sup> ASC 1018 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 104); note that this entry specifies that Cnut had to demobilise all but 40 ships.



## CHAPTER TWO

### NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IN CNUT'S REIGN: THE ROYAL COURT<sup>1</sup>

#### *The Nature of the Royal Court Immediately Before the Reign of Cnut*

The systems of central government and the nature of the royal court which Cnut inherited from his Anglo-Saxon predecessors are only occasionally reported in the extant sources, and have rarely been discussed by modern historians.<sup>2</sup> However, some general features are discernable. The king was the source of all authority in late Anglo-Saxon England. A body of counsellors, the *witan*, advised him and shared the consequences of some of his actions.<sup>3</sup> However, little is known of the composition of this political body or its precise functions. Royal charters seem to offer some indications of its composition, preserving within their witness-lists the names and titles of some of the men who surrounded the king at public assemblies.<sup>4</sup> At the head of the secular entries in the witness-lists are the ealdormen or earls. As well as their obligations in the localities of England, these officials appear to have held significant influence at court.<sup>5</sup> However, I shall only trace the briefest details of their role.

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<sup>1</sup> I shall discuss only the secular officials in the royal court here. Clerical members of this political body will be discussed in a subsequent chapter on Cnut's relations with the Church.

<sup>2</sup> J. Campbell, "Anglo-Saxon Courts", in *Court Culture in the Early Middle Ages: the Proceedings of the First Alcuin Conference*, ed. C. Cubitt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), and Keynes, *Diplomas*, are notable exceptions to this silence.

<sup>3</sup> For an example of the *witan* sharing in a king's fate, see Asser's comments on King Æthelwulf's renegade son Æthelbald and his *witan*: *Vita Ælfredi Regis*, ch. 12–13, ed. W. H. Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904), 9–12.

<sup>4</sup> Here I concur with Keynes, *Diplomas*, 14–83, especially 39–79, in his conclusion that similarities in witness-lists surviving from a variety of archives, often geographically distant from each other, indicate that some written record of the pronouncements of the royal court (including the upper echelons of the witness-lists) was made at that court and sent out to the localities.

<sup>5</sup> As observed by T. J. Oleson, *The Witenagemot in the Reign of Edward the Confessor. A Study in the Constitutional History of Eleventh-Century England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 53–4, the frequency of their appearance in the witness-lists of royal diplomas would appear to suggest that their presence at meetings of the *witan* was compulsory.



Recently, Keynes has expanded Larson's discussion of Cnut's ealdormen and earls, to show their influence on Cnut's administration.<sup>6</sup> He demonstrated that Cnut's reign in England can be divided into three time-periods, each marked by the ascendancy of a particular earl: the period 1017–21 marked by the primacy of Earl Thorkell, that 1021–3 by the primacy of Earl Eiríkr, and that 1023–35 by the primacy of Earl Godwine. Little remains here but to concur with him.

Below the social level of the earls previous studies have begun by identifying members of the royal household through the occasional inclusion of a title such as *discþen*, *byrle*, *hræglþegn*, or their Latin equivalents, in the witness-lists.<sup>7</sup> As no such figure is identified in any reliable diploma from Cnut's reign this approach is not possible. The standard title for the majority of secular officials in Cnut's diplomas is the term *minister*. The term is indiscriminately used in witness-lists for a variety of officials of both local and national importance, who held a wide range of responsibilities. However, it is apparent that amongst the *ministri* present in the witness-lists there are both attendant thegns travelling with the royal court, whose names frequently recur and who attest prominently at the head of the lists, and locally powerful men based in the immediate hinterland of the meeting, who are usually found lower down the witness-lists and who usually appear only once or twice. Thus, a careful approach to those names which appear commonly at the head of the lists of *ministri* can identify some whose influence was beyond that of any individual locality and who probably held responsibilities at court.

As Keynes has shown in his research into King Æthelred's diplomas, patterns can be discerned in the relative order of the uppermost names in these witness-lists, and the height of individuals in these lists appear to mark (or perhaps only reflect) their prominence at court.<sup>8</sup> It is unclear what practises were used to organise and orchestrate the sliding-scale of prominence within this group, but it is clear that names within the uppermost *ministri* can be observed appearing consistently in positions of prominence relative to their peers, and that the rising or falling in such a sequence can be connected to increased prestige in the royal court, or falling from the king's grace.

<sup>6</sup> Larson, "Political Policies", 725–8, and S. Keynes, "Cnut's Earls" in Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*, 43–88.

<sup>7</sup> See Keynes, *Diplomas*, 158–9, for approaches to Æthelred's reign in this vein.

<sup>8</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, 84–231.

It is unlikely that individual *ministri* held responsibilities specific to an identifiable governing office.<sup>9</sup> The Anglo-Saxon royal court had begun to exhibit some specialisation of function in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but, in comparison with the highly specialised division of labour in the royal courts of the neighbouring Norman and Capetian states, it was markedly disorganised.<sup>10</sup> The surviving evidence from the early eleventh century reveals an internal court structure with a poorly defined division of labour. An eleventh-century compilation on status, *Gehyncðo*, implies that the majority of the royal court consisted of groups of *ministri*, constantly jostling for position, who were given duties on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>11</sup> Instead of specialised court-officers *Gehyncðo* identifies those *ministri* whom the monarch trusted and who “rode in his household band on his missions”, as the most influential figures at court.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the thegn who could be regularly trusted with these royal errands, or, in *Gehyncðo*'s words, he who served the king in this way three times or more, was accorded especially high honour. Royal favour seems to have been conveyed by the assigning of the operative tasks of government to individuals or groups of *ministri*.

### *The Danish Officials of Cnut's Court*

A large number of Scandinavian names appear among the lists of *ministri* following Cnut's conquest. Very few of these names had occurred prominently in the charters of Æthelred, and certainly never in the numbers which we can observe in Cnut's reign. It seems that these *ministri* were either members of Cnut's retinue, or fellow invaders who did not return to Denmark in 1018.

The most prominent Scandinavian name in the *ministri* from the early years of Cnut's reign is that of Thored (an anglicisation of ON Þórðr). Given that only twenty-seven of Cnut's thirty-six extant charters include any *ministri* amongst the witness-lists, it seems remarkable that

<sup>9</sup> See H. M. Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), 355, for comments reflecting this.

<sup>10</sup> The exception to this rule is found in the increasingly specialised office of the chancellor in eleventh-century England. See S. Keynes, “Regenbald the Chancellor (*sc*)”, *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 10 (1987), for details.

<sup>11</sup> Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, 1: 456–8.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*: “his rádstæfne rád on his hirede”. The translation here follows Whitelock, *English*, no. 52a, pp. 431–2.

this name can be found in eleven of these. Furthermore, it appears from the consistent position of the name at the head of these lists that the majority of these attestations are of a single man. He is present at the head of the *ministri* in both versions of an authentic witness-list appended to two dubious Exeter grants of 1018.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, he heads the *ministri* in a grant supposedly from 1023, and another from 1024.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, he heads a group of three Scandinavians in a further grant from 1023.<sup>15</sup> The Thored who attests prominently in other charters is probably the same man. In a grant from 1026 he attests third among fourteen *ministri*. In three grants from the 1030s he appears in positions indicating importance: in a grant from 1032 he is seventh among sixteen *ministri*, in another from 1033 he is fourth among fourteen, and in another from 1035 he attests third among nineteen.<sup>16</sup> Clearly this man held a position of some influence in Cnut's court.

However, some records from the first decade of Cnut's reign attest to the existence of two prominent Thoreds in his following. Two Thoreds are present in a block of four names bearing the ethnic epithet *Danus*, in the *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster, Winchester.<sup>17</sup> This section of the *Liber Vitae* appears to be based on lists compiled during the later part of Æthelred's reign and added to up until *c.* 1031, the date of the compilation of the original form of the codex.<sup>18</sup> The four Danish names follow a block of entries which include figures identifiable from Æthelred's reign, such as the *ministri* with the rare names Fræna, Wynnelm and Wiper, who witness royal charters between 994–1004, 995–8 and 1005–1009 respectively.<sup>19</sup> The four Danish names are followed by a block of names including the name of Bishop Lyfing, who was appointed by Cnut in 1027. Thus, they would appear to date to

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<sup>13</sup> S. 951 and S. 953 (both Exeter). A comparison of the witness-lists of these texts reveals that they come from a common source. This will be commented on further below at pp. 25–6.

<sup>14</sup> S. 959 (Christ Church, Canterbury) and S. 961 (Abbotsbury).

<sup>15</sup> S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester).

<sup>16</sup> S. 964, S. 967 (both Abbotsbury) and S. 962 (Old Minster, Winchester) and S. 975 (Sherborne).

<sup>17</sup> London, Brit. Lib., Stowe MS. 944, fol. 25r. The sequence runs thus: "Þored Danus, Toui Danus, Þored Danus, Toca Danus". See S. Keynes, *The Liber Vitae of The New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester, British Library Stowe 944, Together With Leaves From British Library Cotton Vespasian A. viii and British Library Cotton Titus D. xxii*, (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1996), for a facsimile.

<sup>18</sup> See Keynes, *Liber Vitae*, 66–8, for the date of the compilation of the original form of the codex.

<sup>19</sup> See Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxiii.

the early years of Cnut's reign (at least before the late 1020s). The existence of two prominent Thoreds in this period is confirmed by the attestations in two royal charters issued in 1023 and 1024.<sup>20</sup> In these two separate Thoreds are entered above and below another Scandinavian figure at the head of the *ministri* in a pattern similar to that seen in the New Minster *Liber Vitae*. It is possible to separate out the areas of their respective influence and identify the Thored who dominates Cnut's court. One Thored owned estates in the counties of Surrey and Kent, and appears to have been based there. Records from Christ Church, Canterbury show his connections to that house and its hinterland. A brief note of confraternity between Christ Church and Cnut which was entered into a Gospel book from this monastery, bears his and two other Scandinavians' names: *Dorð* (Thored), *Kartoca* and *Thuri*, individually naming each as *ure broðor*.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Thored donated an estate at East Horsley, Surrey to Christ Church, and the fullest version of their obituary lists records the gift from him of two gospel books decorated with gold and silver.<sup>22</sup> Through this connection to the south-east of England he can probably be identified as the Thored who is named as an *optimatus regis* in a land sale of 1020 × 1023, which "was confirmed in London in the presence of King Cnut".<sup>23</sup>

The other Thored appears to have held land in south-western England. One Thored (here *Toret*) appears in the Domesday Book as the giver of two hides of land at Laverstock, Wiltshire, to Wilton Abbey, providing that his two daughters were subsequently clothed by the community.<sup>24</sup> It appears that his other estates in Wiltshire passed to his son Azor Thoredsson (ON Özurr Þórðarson), who is named as a wealthy

<sup>20</sup> S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester): "Ðureð minister, Ðurkill minister, Ðoreð minister", and in S. 961 (Abbotsbury): "Ðorð minister, Agemund minister, Þorð minister".

<sup>21</sup> Entered in space following the end of the Gospel text in London, Brit. Lib. Royal, I. D. ix, fol. 43v, and tentatively dated pre- c. 1019, through the mention of Cnut's brother Haraldr in a form which implies he was alive at the time it was written.

<sup>22</sup> S. 1222 (Christ Church, Canterbury). See R. Fleming, "Christchurch's Sisters and Brothers: An Edition and Discussion of Canterbury Obituary Lists", in *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethell*, ed. M. A. Meyer (London: Hambledon, 1993), for the various versions of the obituary-list, but disregard her comments on p. 22 regarding Thored's commission of a Gospel book, which are based on a misunderstanding of the composite nature of London, Brit. Lib., Cotton MS. Claudius A. iii.

<sup>23</sup> S. 1463 (Peterborough); edited as J. M. Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici* (London, 1839–48), no. 733, 4: 11–13: "emptio stagni ita confirmata est Londoniae coram rege Cunut".

<sup>24</sup> DB, i, fol. 68r.

landowner in Domesday Book's entries for Wiltshire.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Clarke has shown that many of the estates owned by this Azor Thoredson can be traced through the lands held, after the Norman Conquest, by Earl Aubrey, his Norman successor.<sup>26</sup> This adds to the number of estates that he held in Wiltshire, and shows that he also held some small estates in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire.

The evidence is complicated, but does allow us to conclude which of these Thoreds had an influential role in the royal court from 1018. It appears that where both Thoreds witnessed together it is the one based in Kent who took precedence. A pattern is noticeable in the initial two attestations of *ministri* in an authentic grant of 1024 from the archive of Christ Church, Canterbury:

*Dord minister.*  
*Agemund minister.*<sup>27</sup>

a spurious grant from the same archive (although this may not be an independent witness):

*Dored steallara ond Agamund.*<sup>28</sup>

and the initial *ministri* of an unrelated authentic grant from the archive of Abbotsbury:

*Dorð minister*  
*Agemund minister*  
*Dorð minister.*<sup>29</sup>

The repetition of a pattern in which a Thored attests immediately before an associate Agemund (ON Ögmundr) is suggestive that the Thored who witnesses at the head of the *ministri* in the charter from the archive at Abbotsbury was the one who held estates in Kent and Surrey. However, this does not necessarily imply that this Kentish Thored attested at the head of the *ministri* throughout Cnut's charters. In fact, it seems more likely that in this charter from Abbotsbury the names of the Kentish Thored and Agemund have been inserted at the head

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<sup>25</sup> See P. A. Clarke, *The English Nobility Under Edward the Confessor* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 32, for details of his wealth.

<sup>26</sup> Clarke (*ibid.*, 253) lists the three estates of Elcombe, Stratford Tony and Gussage St Michael in Wiltshire, as well as smaller estates in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire.

<sup>27</sup> S. 959 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>28</sup> S. 981 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>29</sup> S. 961 (Abbotsbury).

of the list of *ministri* as prominent, but infrequent, visitors to Cnut's court. The Thored who was the influential official in Cnut's court had a career that can be traced through the consistency of his attestations from 1018 to 1045, and he received a grant of 2 hides in Ditchampton from Edward the Confessor in 1045.<sup>30</sup> As Ditchampton is less than two miles from Wilton, it seems unlikely that this man was based in Kent, and probable that he can be identified with the benefactor of Wilton Abbey, whose son Azor held estates throughout Wiltshire. Furthermore, Azor's position at court may indicate much about his father's status. He emerges in the witness-lists in 1040 × 1042 under Harthacnut, and seems to have risen in prominence throughout the following two decades.<sup>31</sup> Azor does not appear frequently in Edward the Confessor's charters, but seems to have been prominent at court, being styled *regis dapifer* in a document dating to 1062.<sup>32</sup>

There are some persons with other Scandinavian names in the witness-lists of Cnut's charters whose attestations may indicate a role in Cnut's royal court in the first decade of his regime. A Halfdan (ON Hálfdan) occurs second among the twenty-six *ministri*, and third amongst the twelve *ministri* who attest two charters from 1019.<sup>33</sup> A man with the same name can be found in close connection with Christ Church, Canterbury. He occurs in the obituary lists of the community as the donor of estates at Hythe and Saltwood.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, he features in a number of documents created at later dates by this house, notably a grant which purports to be a confirmation of the house's privileges.<sup>35</sup> Another two such witnesses with Scandinavian names are Hakon (ON Hákon) and Aslac (ON Áslákr).<sup>36</sup> Hakon attests immediately before

<sup>30</sup> S. 1010 (Wilton).

<sup>31</sup> S. 982 (Féchamp), S. 994 (Old Minster, Winchester) and S. 1396 (Worcester).

<sup>32</sup> S. 1036 (Waltham).

<sup>33</sup> S. 954 (Exeter) and S. 956 (New Minster, Winchester).

<sup>34</sup> See the edition of the obituary-lists by Fleming, "Christchurch's Sisters", 130.

<sup>35</sup> S. 952 (Christ Church, Canterbury). Much has been written about this grant, and what it may indicate about Halfdan's position and power. For this see Lawson, *Cnut*, 90–1 and 185, and Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 62. However, it should be observed that the title *princeps* which Halfdan bears in some of these records is only found in conjunction with his name in documents originating from Christ Church. Furthermore, the title *princeps* was used elsewhere in the tenth and eleventh century to indicate nothing more than a favoured *minister*. See for comparison S. 611 (Abingdon) and S. 1036 (Waltham).

<sup>36</sup> This Hakon minister is distinct from Earl Hákon. See S. 955 (Shaftesbury), where they both attest. Although Aslac's name can be derived either from OE *Oslac*, or ON *Áslákr*, context and spelling suggests the latter. D. Whitelock seems to have supported this interpretation. In "The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in

Halfdan in one of the grants from 1019, and at the head of another grant for the same year.<sup>37</sup> Aslac attests immediately after Thored Azor's father in both versions of a witness-list appended to two dubious grants which claim to date to 1018, and third amongst the thirteen *ministri* in a charter from 1019.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, if the *Oslacus* and *Dord*, who are the first two witnesses in the column of *ministri* in a spurious charter from c. 1022 from Bury St Edmunds, are more than local thegns, then this may be another record of Aslac's presence at the royal court. However, none of these individuals can be convincingly identified as having held a position of importance in the royal court for a prolonged period of time. Their appearances in witness-lists were prestigious, but unlike Thored (the benefactor of Wilton) they were brief. The fact that most of these men (the Kentish Thored, Halfdan and perhaps Hakon and Aslac if the connection to Bury St Edmunds can be sustained) seem to be connected to estates in the south-east of England, is suggestive that they formed an elite group of settlers there who had only sporadic contact with the peripatetic royal court, but were accorded especial status in their own locality.<sup>39</sup>

From 1026 two new Scandinavian names, Osgot and Tovi, appear at the head of the witness-lists, forcing the name of Thored Azor's father into third place.<sup>40</sup> The frequent appearance of these two names together allows the identification of them as Osgot clapa and his son-in-law Tovi pruða.<sup>41</sup> A *Tobi minister*, who appears in witness-lists from

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the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries", in *The Anglo-Saxons. Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. P. Clemoes (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), 79, she observed that "Oslac is often an Anglicized form of ON Áslákr", and her translation of this document in her *English*, no. 131, pp. 551–3, suggestively leaves the name as 'Aslac'.

<sup>37</sup> S. 956 (New Minster, Winchester), S. 955 (Shaftesbury).

<sup>38</sup> S. 951, S. 953 (both Exeter) and S. 955 (Shaftesbury).

<sup>39</sup> Fuller comment on the local administration in Kent will be made below at pp. 72–5.

<sup>40</sup> S. 962 (Old Minster, Winchester). It should be noted that A. Williams, "The King's Nephew: The Family and Career of Ralph Earl of Hereford", in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, eds. C. Harper-Bill, C. J. Holdsworth and J. L. Nelson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), 333–6, has argued that Osgot clapa was descended from an English East-Anglian family. However, with Osgot's close association with Tovi pruða, who John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1042 (532–5) identified as Danish, I have placed him here among the Scandinavian descended followers of Cnut. He may be the exception that proves the rule.

<sup>41</sup> They occur together with their distinctive appellations in S. 968 (York), and the *Liber Vitae* of Thorney Abbey. For an edition see Gerchow, *Gedenküberlieferung*, 326–8. See also John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1042, eds. R. R. Darlington, P. McGurk and J. Bray (Oxford, 1995), 532–4.

1018 to 1024, has been supposed by some scholars to be Tovi pruđa.<sup>42</sup> The evidence does not seem to bear out this conclusion. Osgot is absent from these charters, and, as he is identified in the other sources as the older (and probably senior in responsibility) of the two men, it seems unlikely that Tovi's career significantly predated his.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, there are some indications that the Tovi in the witness-lists from 1019 and 1024 may be a different and less prominent witness of the same name. This Tovi attests in both alongside a Karl. This pair of names appears in another charter from 1032, and there the Tovi who witnesses in conjunction with Karl attests some five entries after Tovi pruđa, who witnesses alongside Osgot clapa and Thored Azor's father.<sup>44</sup> All the grants witnessed by this Tovi and his associate Karl are from the south-west and perhaps we should conclude that he was a figure of primarily local importance there.

In addition to their local jurisdiction in the vicinity of London, Osgot clapa and Tovi pruđa operated as important members of Cnut's court. The frequency of their attestations indicates their presence at Cnut's court, and there is evidence that they held influential positions there. A history of Bury St Edmunds written by its arch-deacon, Herman, in the very last years of the eleventh century, gives Osgot the title *maior domus*.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the late-twelfth-century account of Waltham's foundation outlines Tovi's responsibilities as those of a *uexillifer regis*, adding that he "was guiding the monarch".<sup>46</sup> The account states that Tovi was "closest to the king in his counsels".<sup>47</sup> It is uncertain whether Hermann was attempting to compare Osgot's role with that of the *maior domus* of the Merovingian court, and it is equally uncertain what the responsibilities of an eleventh-century "royal standard bearer"

<sup>42</sup> S. 951, S. 953 (both Exeter), S. 955 (Shaftesbury), and S. 961 (Abbotsbury). Williams, "The King's Nephew", 335, has made this assumption.

<sup>43</sup> See *The Waltham Chronicle: An Account of the Discovery of Our Holy Cross at Montacute and its Conveyance to Waltham*, ch. 13, eds. L. Watkiss & N. Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 22, for their familial relations. Osgot is clearly here the senior and, by implication, older figure.

<sup>44</sup> S. 964, (Abbotsbury).

<sup>45</sup> Herman, *Liber de Miraculis*, ch. 21, in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, ed. T. Arnold (London, 1890–6), 1: 54.

<sup>46</sup> *Waltham Chronicle*, ch. 7 (Watkiss & Chibnall, 12); "Toui le Prude... monarchiam gubernabat". Note the translation used here is mine; Watkiss has provided a sense-translation instead, rendering the phrase as "accustomed to advising the monarch".

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*; "...regi proximus in consiliis".



were, but we can be surer of the implications of a literal translation of *maior domus* as implying a significant position within the royal household or palace, and the statement that Tovi was a close advisor to the king.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, it appears that we can connect Tovi's actions on behalf of Cnut with what *Gehyncðo* identified as the role of the most prestigious and trusted *ministri* in the late Anglo-Saxon royal court. It is recorded in the Waltham Chronicle that when the foundation relic of the house was discovered, Tovi was "occupied in distant parts of England, involved in royal business".<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, in a document which records a Herefordshire shire-court settlement from Cnut's reign it is noted that Tovi was present "on the king's business".<sup>50</sup> It appears that Tovi was engaged on the royal errands which are recorded in *Gehyncðo* as given to the most favoured *ministri*.

### *The English Officials of Cnut's Court*

A recently debated issue concerning the Englishmen in Cnut's court is the possibility that some of Æthelred's and Edmund Ironside's administrative personnel may have survived the conquest of 1016 and thus represented some form of continuity in the political structure. Mack directly addressed this topic in a study published in 1984, and Keynes revised her statistics some years later.<sup>51</sup> Both attempted to identify names in the witness-lists of royal charters either side of 1016, who might represent personnel active in both regimes. Both concluded in varying degrees that there was, in Keynes's words, "rather less than a lot" of administrative continuity.<sup>52</sup> The assessment bears deeper examination than space allowed him to give.<sup>53</sup> As a maximum figure I count from

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<sup>48</sup> Although if the writer knew the first book of Einhard's *Vita Karoli*, or St. Boniface's Letter Collection, then it is possible that he knew of the *maior domus* of the Merovingian court.

<sup>49</sup> *Waltham Chronicle*, ch. 7 (12); "Ille tunc in remotis Anglie partibus degebat, regis implicitus negotiis".

<sup>50</sup> S. 1462 (Hereford); "... on þæs Cinges ærende".

<sup>51</sup> K. Mack, "Changing Thegns: Cnut's Conquest and the English Aristocracy", *Albion* 16 (1984): 386, n. 74, and Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 79, n. 206. For his later tabulation of the data, see Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxiv.

<sup>52</sup> Mack, "Changing Thegns", 385, was the bolder of the two, concluding that no thegn can be positively identified in the administration both before and after 1016.

<sup>53</sup> His correction of Mack's statistics was given in a footnote to an article on "Cnut's Earls", and hence was outside the remit of that study.

Keynes's tables some twenty-seven Englishmen who could conceivably have spanned the gap between the regimes, but on closer inspection most of these identifications do seem too tenuous to be credible.<sup>54</sup>

| Name       | Last witness for Æthelred | First witness for Cnut | Comments on likelihood of being same individual  |
|------------|---------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Ælfgar     | 1014 (S. 933)             | 1018 (S. 951)          | Plausible.   |
| Ælfmær     | 1014 (S. 933)             | 1018 (S. 953)          | Plausible.   |
| Ælfweard   | 1005 (S. 911)             | 1022 (S. 958)          | Implausible: absence of 17 years.  |
| Ælfwig     | '1008' (S. 918)           | 1019 (S. 954)          | Implausible: absence of 11 years.  |
| Ælfwine    | '1012' (S. 927)           | 1019 (S. 954)          | Plausible.   |
| Æthelmær   | 1013 (S. 931b)            | 1019 (S. 954)          | Plausible.   |
| Æthelric   | 1013 (S. 931)             | 1018 (S. 950)          | Implausible: only in 2 of Cnut's grants, and both for Christ Church, Canterbury. Possibly a local thegn. |
| Æthelweard | 1015 (S. 934)             | 1019 (S. 956)          | Implausible: only in 1 of Cnut's grants. <sup>55</sup>   |
| Æthelwine  | 1013 (S. 931)             | 1019 (S. 954)          | Plausible.   |
| Beorhtric  | 1016 (S. 935)             | 1018 (S. 953)          | Implausible: only in 1 of Æthelred's grants, and he is probably a local thegn.                           |
| Brihtsige  | 1013 (S. 931b)            | 1024 (S. 961)          | Implausible: absence of 11 years.  |
| Ceolric    | 1015 (S. 934)             | c. 1023 (S. 977)       | Implausible: only in 1 each of Æthelred's and Cnut's grants.   |
| Eadric     | '1008' (S. 918)           | 1026 (S. 962)          | Implausible: absence of 18 years.  |
| Eadwig     | 1005 (S. 911)             | 1019 (S. 954)          | Implausible: absence of 14 years.  |
| Eadwine    | 1016 (S. 935)             | 1019 (S. 954)          | Implausible: only in 1 of Cnut's grants.   |
| Godric     | 1013 (S. 931b)            | 1022 (S. 958)          | Implausible: absence of 9 years.   |

<sup>54</sup> Keynes "Cnut's Earls", 79, n. 206, counted "about 32". The extra five are the result of his allowing for the greatest margin of duplication of royal thegns with the same name. For my purposes here this approach is not necessary.

<sup>55</sup> Here, as in other similar cases, the small size of the sample of the data makes it impossible to draw a firm conclusion. However, so few attestations is suggestive that if the figure did play a role in both regimes it was not at the royal court.

Table (*cont.*)

| Name      | Last witness for Æthelred | First witness for Cnut | Comments on likelihood of being same individual              |
|-----------|---------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Godwine   | 1016 (S. 935)             | 1018 (S. 950)          | Plausible.   |
| Leofnoth  | 1005 (S. 911)             | 1018 (S. 953)          | Implausible: absence of 13 years.                            |
| Leofric   | 1007 (S. 918)             | 1019 (S. 954)          | Implausible: absence of 12 years.                            |
| Leofsig   | 1013 (S. 931)             | 1018 (S. 953)          | Implausible: only in 1 of Æthelred's grants.                 |
| Leofwine  | 1015 (S. 934)             | 1019 (S. 956)          | Plausible.   |
| Odda      | 1015 (S. 934)             | 1018 (S. 951)          | Plausible.   |
| Wulfmær   | 1005 (S. 911)             | 1018 (S. 953)          | Implausible: only in 1 of Cnut's grants.                     |
| Wulfnoth  | 1005 (S. 911)             | 1024 (S. 961)          | Implausible: absence of 19 years.                            |
| Wulfric   | 1013 (S. 931b)            | 1022 (S. 958)          | Implausible: only in 1 each of Æthelred's and Cnut's grants. |
| Wulfsige  | 1009 (S. 922)             | 1019 (S. 954)          | Implausible: only in 1 each of Æthelred's and Cnut's grants. |
| Wulfweard | 1014 (S. 933)             | 1018 (S. 953)          | Implausible: only in 1 of Cnut's grants.                     |

Thus, out of the twenty-seven possible cases, only eight are even plausible. Furthermore, very few of these names are uncommon. It seems unlikely, given absences of nine to nineteen years of some of the names from the record, that these are anything other than chance recurrences of the name. Additionally, much of the information is insufficient to suggest men with places in the royal court. The majority of these Englishmen appear to be local officials.

However, a different approach to the material indicates that there may have been some politically significant continuity. If we ignore Æthelred's charters momentarily, it should be possible to identify some of the most important Englishmen in Cnut's following by ranking the English names which attest Cnut's witness-lists, according to the frequency of their attestations. Many of the English names appear only once or twice, and in the interests of brevity I have tabulated below only those names which appear in the witness-lists of Cnut's charters four or more times.

| Name     | Freq. | Comments   |
|----------|-------|--|
| Ælfgar   | 11    | Note that on 7 of these charters two Ælfgars witness simultaneously. |
| Ælfwine  | 9     |  |
| Odda     | 9     |  |
| Æthelmær | 8     | Note that on 2 of these grants two Æthelmærs witness simultaneously. |
| Byrhtric | 7     |  |
| Ordgar   | 6     |  |
| Ælfged   | 5     |  |
| Leofsig  | 5     |  |
| Leofric  | 5     |  |
| Eadmær   | 4     |  |
| Leofwine | 4     |  |
| Wulfnoth | 4     |  |

Much can be said about several of the names which rank highest in this table.

An Odda can be found third among the eleven *ministri* of a charter of Æthelred's from 1013.<sup>56</sup> He recurs in a charter of 1014, and another from 1015, in similarly high positions (fifth among nine *ministri* and second among four respectively).<sup>57</sup> This individual's entrance to politics at such a high level does appear to indicate, as Williams has suggested, "the influence of a powerful kindred".<sup>58</sup> As few charters are extant from 1016, and none for 1017, no comment can be made about his position at court in those years. However, an Odda reappears in Cnut's earliest extant charters. One of the earliest extant witness-lists for Cnut's reign is the apparently legitimate list appended in slightly differing versions to two forgeries produced at Exeter in the late eleventh century.<sup>59</sup> Significantly, both charters claim to be from 1018, and

<sup>56</sup> S. 931b (Barking).

<sup>57</sup> S. 933 (Sherborne) and S. 934 (Abingdon).

<sup>58</sup> A. Williams, "Land and Power in the Eleventh Century: the Estates of Harold Godwinson", *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies* 3 (1980): 4.

<sup>59</sup> S. 951 and S. 953 (both Exeter). Both witness-lists appended to these forgeries are remarkably similar. However the list attached to S. 953 is some twelve names longer, inserting the name Ordgar into the existing block of names, and adding some eleven names after the point at which S. 951 stops. Additionally, a few of the names in S. 953 are added interlineally, although these additions were certainly made at approximately the same time as the extant document was written, and appear to be in the hand of the main scribe, as contemporaneous corrections made by him. It appears that the forger(s)

this date may have been lifted from the original document used by the forgers. This would accord with the inclusion of the three Scandinavian names in both extant copies of the witness-list, indicating that they are unlikely to have been copied from a document composed before 1016.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, as Aslac's attestation cannot be found in witness-lists after 1019 (perhaps with a single exception from *c.* 1022), it is unlikely that the exemplar dated after that year. The highest *ministri* in the three witness-lists are as follows:

| S 931b<br>(Barking)<br>1013 | S 951<br>(Exeter)<br>1018(?) | S 953<br>(Exeter)<br>1018(?) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Ethelmer</i>             | <i>Dored</i>                 | <i>Poryd</i>                 |
| <i>Elfgar</i>               | <i>Aslac</i>                 | <i>Aslac</i>                 |
| <i>Odda</i>                 | <i>Tobi</i>                  | <i>Tobi</i>                  |
| <i>Ethelric</i>             | <i>Ælfgar</i>                | <i>Ælfgar</i>                |
| <i>Elfgar</i>               | <i>Odda</i>                  | <i>Odda</i>                  |
|                             | <i>Ælfgar</i>                | <i>Ordgar</i>                |
|                             |                              | <i>Ælfgar</i>                |

The geographical distance between Barking and Exeter makes it unlikely that any cross-contamination of the documents could have occurred. Thus, the pattern of an *Ælfgar* witnessing immediately before *Odda*, and another *Ælfgar* closely following him after an intermediate figure (either *Ethelric* or *Ordgar*), strongly suggests that the *Odda* here is the same official before and after the conquest of 1016.

An association between *Odda* and the senior *Ælfgar* is evident in other charters of this period. A charter of 1019 also from Exeter's archive, but clearly not descendent from the 1018 witness-list, contains an *Ælfgar* and an *Odda* together, high up in the lists (fifth and sixth among twenty-six *ministri*).<sup>61</sup> This association seems to have endured beyond *Cnut*'s early years. In a charter from 1026 *Odda* is accompanied by an *Ælfgar*, fourth and sixth among fifteen *ministri*.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the

of both charters had access to an authentic witness-list, and only included part of this in S. 951, but had more space or need of support when S. 953 was produced.

<sup>60</sup> I have removed the title *minister* from all names here. The use of characters in bold for emphasis is my own.

<sup>61</sup> S. 954 (Exeter).

<sup>62</sup> S. 962 (Old Minster, Winchester).

figure between Odda and Ælfgar in this charter, Ælfwine, also appears to have had links to Cnut's court. The trio reappears at the head of the *ministri* in a grant from 1033, taking precedence there above even Osgot clapa and Tovi pruða.<sup>63</sup>

It is perhaps significant that, while Scandinavian names dominate the attestations of Cnut's charters, in the minority in which English names head the lists of *ministri* there are nearly always one or more of these three Englishmen present. In an authentic charter of 1023 Ælfgar and Ælfwine witnessed together, second and third among six *ministri*, before Thored Azor's father, the Kentish Thored, and a *minister* named Thorkell.<sup>64</sup> The pattern can also be found in the witness-list appended to a suspect grant bearing the date 1032.<sup>65</sup> In this, following the figures named *Siuuard* and Harold, who may have been important visitors to court, Ælfwine and Ælfgar stand immediately before the Danish 'faction' (Tovi pruða, Osgot clapa and Thored Azor's father).<sup>66</sup> Finally, in two further charters where a few English *ministri* witness before the Scandinavian ones Ælfwine is among the Englishmen.<sup>67</sup>

Returning to Odda, we find that as our charter resources improve in the 1030s we can begin to link more names from our table above to him and his associate Ælfgar. In an authentic grant, whose witness-list has been re-dated to 1026 × 1030, he appears immediately before an Ordgar and an Æthelmær, third, fourth, and fifth among eight *ministri*.<sup>68</sup> Odda's association with this Ordgar and this Æthelmær continues in an authentic production from 1033.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, Ordgar in Cnut's reign has only one appearance where he is not immediately associated with Odda. This is in a spurious renewal of the privileges of Old

<sup>63</sup> S. 970 (Old Minster, Winchester).

<sup>64</sup> S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester).

<sup>65</sup> S. 964 (Abingdon).

<sup>66</sup> At least Haraldr has been tentatively identified as Earl Thorkell's son. See Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 66.

<sup>67</sup> S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester), and S. 967 (Abbotsbury).

<sup>68</sup> S. 963 (Exeter), see Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 50, especially n. 43, for the re-dating of the witness-list.

<sup>69</sup> S. 969 (Sherborne). In this diploma some manipulation of the witness-lists is evident as the central court officials are included a few places from the end of the list, and below some seven names of demonstrably local figures. The thegns Siwerd, Wulfnoth, Winus, Scirwold, Eadwold, Ecglaf, and Eadwig all recur in much the same order in the lower levels of the witness-lists for another Dorset charter, S. 975 (Sherborne), and the initial three names recur as locals in further Dorset charter, S. 961 (Abbotsbury). Curiously, both Sherborne charters show this similar placing of names which we can associate with the central court beneath men who were clearly locals.

Minster, Winchester, supposedly from 1035, which includes only four *ministri*.<sup>70</sup> Ordgar is the last of these, and, revealingly, the only other English name present is Ælfwine. All these connections between these associates can be summarised in a diagram thus:

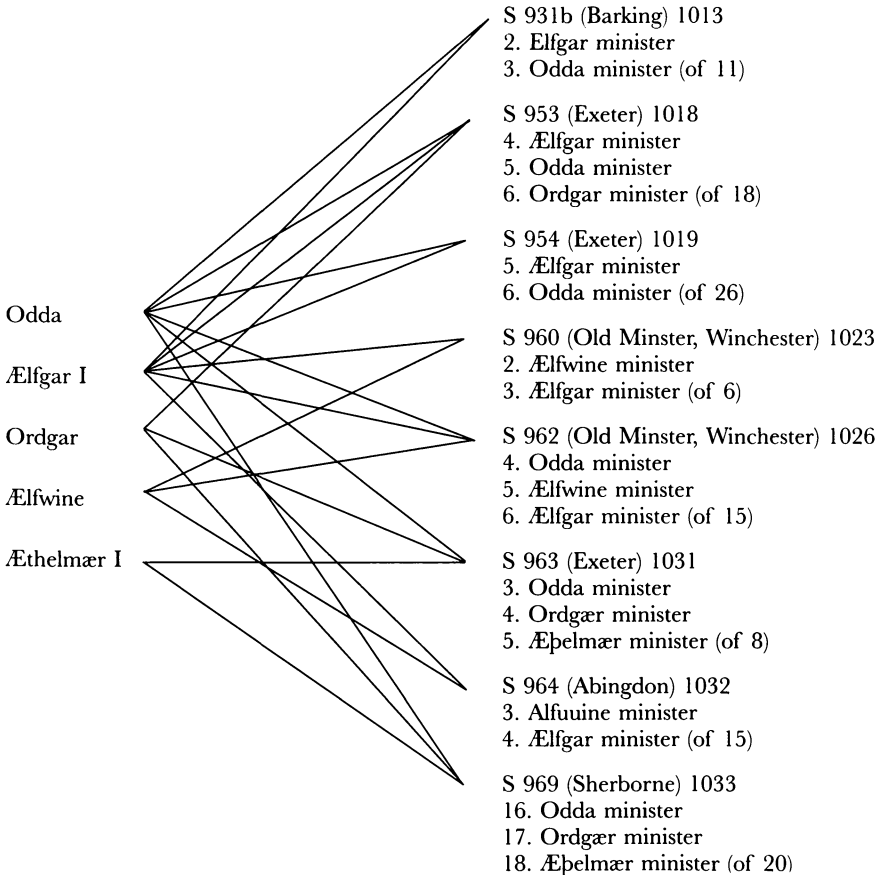


Fig. 1. The connections between the associates of Odde in the witness-lists of Cnut's charters.

<sup>70</sup> S. 976 (Old Minster, Winchester).

What then can be discerned of the careers of these men outside the witness-lists of Cnut's charters? The attestations of Odda stretch seamlessly from Æthelred's to Cnut's to Harthacnut's and into Edward the Confessor's reign, in a position of consistent prominence, often still alongside Ælfgar and Ordgar. He disappears in 1050 from the witness-lists of royal documents, re-appearing only in a Worcestershire lease of 1051 × 1055 as *Odda eorl. ond Aelfric his broðor*.<sup>71</sup> The rise in office to an earldom, as well as the record of Odda's brother Ælfric, allows us to identify him with the nobleman who became the earl of western Wessex in 1051 and, after several years service within Edward the Confessor's administration, died on 31 August 1056, at his estate in Deerhurst, Gloucestershire.<sup>72</sup>

It is possible to identify Ordgar as well. Like Odda, he witnessed charters in the 1030s and 1040s in positions indicating a man of importance in the royal court. His prominence, as well as the rarity of his name, allows us to identify him with the royal *minister* Ordgar, to whom Edward the Confessor granted half a hide of land at Littleham in 1042.<sup>73</sup> Through this grant it is possible to deduce that he was the head of an influential aristocratic family based on the Devonshire Cornwall border.<sup>74</sup> At the time of the Domesday inquest the same half-hide in Littleham was in the possession of the monastery of Horton. Details recorded by William of Malmesbury plausibly explain the history of the estate. William noted that two members of this powerful Devonshire family, one Ordgar and his son Ordulf, were buried at Tavistock and that their property passed to that house.<sup>75</sup> However, this was against Ordulf's wishes, as he had left instructions that he was to be buried at Horton. Furthermore, the *Liber Exoniensis* redaction of the Domesday Book records evidence of litigation following Tavistock Abbey's reception of both Ordulf's corpse and his property.<sup>76</sup> However, the eventual outcome of this legal claim is not known. Thus, it appears easiest to

<sup>71</sup> S. 1409 (Worcester).

<sup>72</sup> See Williams, "Land", for details of Odda's later career and family connections.

<sup>73</sup> S. 998 (Horton).

<sup>74</sup> See H. P. R. Finberg, "The House of Ordgar and the Foundation of Tavistock Abbey", *English Historical Review* 58 (1943), and his *Lucerna. Studies of Some Problems in the Early History of England* (London: Macmillan, 1964), 186–202, for discussion of his family and landholdings on the Cornish border.

<sup>75</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*, 2: 95, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London, 1870), 203. I owe the connection to Finberg, *Lucerna*, 198.

<sup>76</sup> For references to this see *ibid.*, 200.



conclude that either the community at Horton received Littleham from Ordulf pre-mortem or the estate came into the possession of the abbey as part of some legal settlement.<sup>77</sup>

The survival of a fragment of genealogical information in a Devonshire document from the mid-1040s perhaps reveals the identity of the Ælfgar who witnessed in association with Odda and Ordgar.<sup>78</sup> Odda and Ordgar are cited as witnesses in this local record, alongside an Ælfric who is stated to be Odda's brother, and an Ælfger and an *Escbern* who are stated to be Ordgar's brothers. As the name element *ger* is a common variant for *gar*, then this first of Ordgar's brothers is a plausible candidate for this Ælfgar.<sup>79</sup>

These men were important figures in the West Saxon hierarchy, and were closely related to the West-Saxon royal house. William of Malmesbury's statement that Odda was a *cognatus* of Edward the Confessor, is apparently confirmed by the fact that after Odda died without an heir in 1056, Edward the Confessor appears to have inherited both Deerhurst and Pershore from his estates.<sup>80</sup> The precise nature of this connection is obscure, but a connection through Ealdorman Æthelweard's line is implied by Odda's patronage of, and burial at Pershore. This abbey was founded by Ealdorman Æthelweard in the tenth century and subsequently patronised in a pattern that suggests that it was considered to be an *eigenkloster*.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, the Tewkesbury Chronicle records that Æthelweard mæw (Ælfgar mæw's father) was "descended from the illustrious line of King Edward the Elder".<sup>82</sup> Williams has read into this an identification of Æthelweard mæw with Ealdorman Æthelweard.<sup>83</sup> The idea is attractive but not borne out by

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<sup>77</sup> Note that M. A. O'Donovan, *Charters of Sherborne* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), lx–lxi, has reached a similar conclusion.

<sup>78</sup> S. 1474 (Sherborne).

<sup>79</sup> The common use of *ger* in the place of *gar* can be seen in the attestations for Ælfgar, Odda's associate, in S. 969 (Sherborne) and S. 963 (Exeter). In these context reveals that this is the one identified above, yet on both occasions the written text has Ælfger. Furthermore, it should be noted that his grandfather, Ealdorman Ordgar, attests S. 770 (Exeter) in the form *Ordger dux*.

<sup>80</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2: 199, eds. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1987–99), 360; Harmer, *Writs*, no. 99–102, pp. 363–7 & 519–21.

<sup>81</sup> Williams, "Land", 5. See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 4: 162 (Hamilton, 298), for information about Ealdorman Æthelweard's patronage of Pershore.

<sup>82</sup> Tewkesbury Chronicle, in Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 2: 60; "Haylwardus snew ... ex illustri prosapia regis Edwardi senioris ortus".

<sup>83</sup> Williams, "Land", 5 and the same author's, "A West-Country Magnate of the

the evidence. The name Æthelweard is common in the period, and the Latin translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which is generally attributed to this Ealdorman Æthelweard, states that its author was a descendant of King Alfred's elder brother Æthelred, not Alfred's son Edward the Elder.<sup>84</sup>

In addition to this, there is evidence for another group of associates among the men with English names in Cnut's charters. Both groups attest together in the longer version of the 1018 Exeter witness-list, and so it is reproduced again here:<sup>85</sup>

*Poryd*  
*Aslac*  
*Tobi*  
*Ælfgar*  
*Odda*  
*Ordgar*  
*Ælfgar*  
*Ælfmær*  
*Ælfged*  
*Byrhitric*

The names immediately following the second Ælfgar, those of Ælfmær (corrected to Æthelmær), Ælfged (Ælfget), and *Byrhitric* (Beorhtric) attest together on a large number of documents.<sup>86</sup> Æthelmær, Ælfget and Beorhtric witness together immediately after a block of seven Scandinavian names heading the *ministri* in a grant of 1019.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, despite the insertion of two Danish names into the sequence between Ælfget and Æthelmær, the same group is recognisable among the

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Eleventh Century: the Family, Estates and Patronage of Beorhtric, Son of Ælfgar", in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: the Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), 44.

<sup>84</sup> *The Chronicle of Æthelweard (Chronicon Æthelwardi)*, ed. A. Campbell (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), 2.

<sup>85</sup> That attached to S. 953 (Exeter).

<sup>86</sup> While it is evident that the names Ælfmær and Æthelmær are distinct from each other, they are often confused in the sources. See Keynes, *Diplomas*, 235, n. 15, for discussion of the phenomenon. It should be noted that this witness-list appears to incorrectly record this name. This is the sole witness to a *minister* with the name Ælfmær during the reigns of Cnut and Harthacnut, and all other attestations of the group discussed here have an Æthelmær in this context. Compare for example the trio in the authentic S. 955 (Shaftesbury).

<sup>87</sup> S. 955 (Shaftesbury).

*ministri* witnessing a grant from 1024.<sup>88</sup> Finally, Ælfgar, Ælfget, and Æthelmær witness together immediately beneath the Danes who head the *ministri* in a grant of 1033.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, this Ælfgar and Beorhtric attest together, separated by one Thorkell, immediately beneath five Scandinavian names heading the *ministri* of a grant from 1019.<sup>90</sup> In addition, these two men are found together among the *ministri* of an authentic witness-list appended to a suspect charter bearing the date 1026.<sup>91</sup> The connections between these associates can be summarised in a diagram thus:

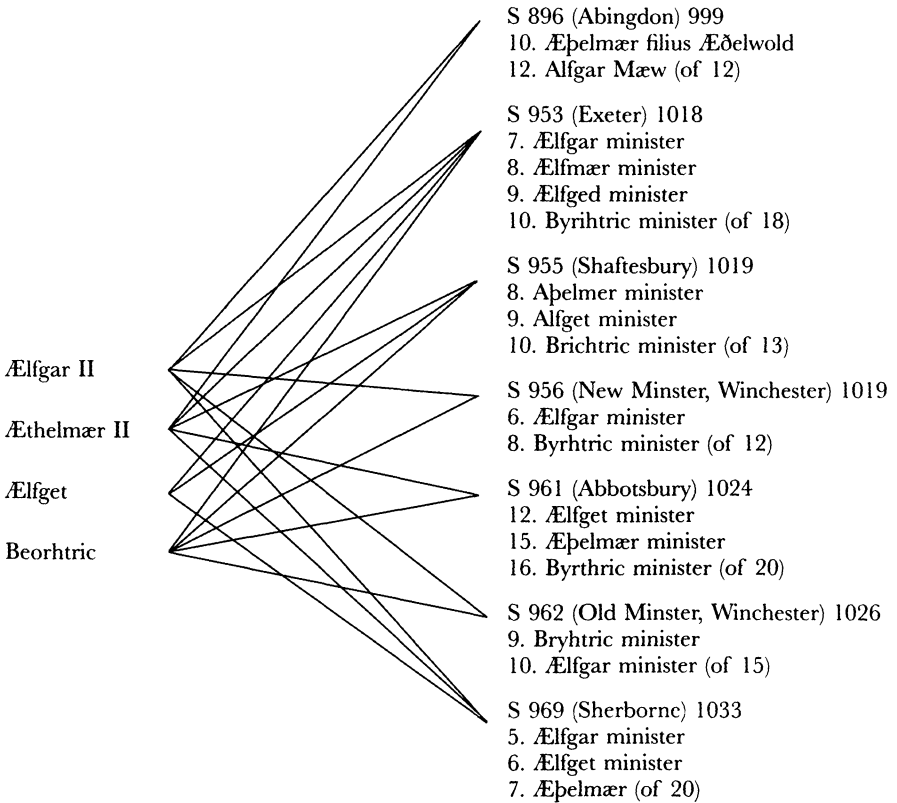


Fig. 2. The connections between the associates of Ælfgar in the witness-lists of Cnut's charters.

<sup>88</sup> S. 961 (Abbotsbury).

<sup>89</sup> S. 969 (Sherborne).

<sup>90</sup> S. 956 (New Minster, Winchester).

<sup>91</sup> S. 962 (Old Minster, Winchester).

We can trace the careers of some of these men further into the eleventh century. Neither Ælfgar nor Æthelmær appears in the charters of Harthacnut or Edward the Confessor, and it seems safe to deduce that they both died at some point in the late 1030s.<sup>92</sup> However, Beorhtric's career was more enduring. In the 1040s we can see Beorhtric still holding a position in the witness-lists which is indicative of importance in the royal court, but subordinate to Odda and Ordgar.<sup>93</sup> Only in a grant of 1044, in the absence of both Odda and Ordgar, is Beorhtric found heading the *ministri*.<sup>94</sup> This appearance seems to prefigure Beorhtric's rise in political status *c.* 1050, moving in a charter of this year to a position immediately beneath Odda and receiving the same title as him: *nobilis*.<sup>95</sup> In two charters from 1061 he is placed at the head of the *ministri*, and in the one preserved in Bath's archive he is given a title indicating some status at court, *consiliarius*, perhaps to be translated as "royal adviser".<sup>96</sup>

The Domesday Book records that, in 1065, the wealthiest thegn below the rank of earl was a landowner based in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire named Beorhtric son of Ælfgar.<sup>97</sup> The Domesday Book records that among the properties held in 1065 by this Beorhtric were estates at Cranborne and Dewlish.<sup>98</sup> Both of these appear in a list of estates found in an early modern transcript of the medieval chronicle of Tewkesbury Abbey.<sup>99</sup> There the estates are listed as a gift from one Ælfgar, who was a member of an Anglo-Saxon noble family which patronised the monastic community. Three generations of this noble

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<sup>92</sup> Although an Ælfgar does witness charters in the 1040s, and very sporadically alongside Beorhtric, it is clear from the association of this Ælfgar with Odda and Ordgar that this is more probably Ordgar's brother.

<sup>93</sup> See S. 994, S. 1001 (both Old Minster, Winchester), S. 1010 (Wilton), as examples.

<sup>94</sup> S. 1004 (Abbotsbury).

<sup>95</sup> S. 1021 (Exeter).

<sup>96</sup> S. 1033 (Rouen) and S. 1034 (Bath). See Keynes, "Regenbald the Chancellor", 200–1, for discussion of the first of these.

<sup>97</sup> See Clarke, *English Nobility*, 260–2, for an assessment of his vast estates, and Williams, "A West Country Magnate", for an account of his later career.

<sup>98</sup> DB, i, 75v and 79. See also Williams, "A West Country Magnate", 48.

<sup>99</sup> The main text of the chronicle was edited in Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 2: 59–65. However, by the time that Dugdale came to consult the original manuscript it was corrupt at the point at which the details of Ælfgar's donations to the community are listed. Both London, Brit. Lib., Additional MS. 36985, and Oxford, Bodleian, MS. Top. Glouc. D. 2, are accurate early modern transcripts containing that part of the text. I am indebted to J. Luxford for bringing this record to my attention, and to S. D. Keynes for allowing me to see his unpublished material upon these lost charters.

family are named in the text, and given their distinctive family name: *mæw*. They are, in genealogical order, one *Haylwardus meaw* (more correctly Æthelweard *mæw*), his son *Algar meaw* (Ælfgar *mæw*), and his grandson, *Brictric meaw* (Beorhtric *mæw*). Most probably the Beorhtric, son of Ælfgar, found in the Domesday Book should be identified with the Beorhtric *mæw*, son of Ælfgar *mæw*, who appears in the Tewkesbury Chronicle, and it can be surmised that he retained some form of ownership of the estates his father bequeathed to Tewkesbury Abbey until 1065 at least. Furthermore, the identification of the Ælfgar in Cnut's charters, who appears in conjunction with members of this second group, with Ælfgar *mæw* also seems probable. As shown above, two persons named Ælfgar witnessed S. 931b and S. 951. The one whose name appeared beneath Odda, and was not Odda's close associate, can also be shown to have appeared as a witness on royal documents both before and after 1016. There was only one prominent *minister* by this name in the last years of Æthelred's reign, and he is named in a grant dated 999 as Ælfgar *mæw*.<sup>100</sup> He is most probably the Ælfgar who is named in a charter of King Æthelred's as a royal *prepositus atque pretiosus* (that is a "royal administrative official as well as a wealthy and influential individual"). He is recorded in this document as persuading the king to grant him an estate in Wiltshire which had formerly belonged to Abingdon abbey, and thus appears to have held a position which placed him in close proximity to Æthelred.<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore, in the charters from the last years of Æthelred's reign this Ælfgar *mæw* nearly always attests with an Æthelmær and his father Æthelwold.<sup>102</sup> Æthelwold's name does not appear after 1007 (as he presumably retired or died), but Æthelmær can be found in conjunction with Ælfgar *mæw* and one *Brihtric minister* (who is probably Beorhtric *mæw*) in a charter of 1009.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the Æthelmær who is found commonly alongside Ælfgar *mæw* and Beorhtric *mæw* in Cnut's charters, was most probably their associate from before the conquest of 1016.

Again these men were prominent West Saxon noblemen who were closely related to the royal house. Ordgar's grandfather was the tenth-

<sup>100</sup> S. 896 (Abingdon). Note Keynes, *Diplomas*, 209, has traced the attestations of this figure during these years.

<sup>101</sup> S. 918 (Abingdon). See Keynes, *Diplomas*, 183–4, n. 110, for discussion of this source.

<sup>102</sup> All are named together in S. 896 (Abingdon).

<sup>103</sup> S. 915 (Beorchore), S. 921 (Athelney).

century noblemen, also called Ordgar, whose daughter Ælfthryth married King Edgar in 964. Thus, their father Ordulf was King Æthelred's maternal uncle, and was part of a faction which dominated the royal court from around 993 until his retirement in 1005.<sup>104</sup>

To summarise: the supposed continuity in the Anglo-Saxon administration was numerically small, but in terms of importance in the royal court, quite significant. We can perceive in the witness-lists two groups of Englishmen; one composed of Odda and Ordgar, their brothers and associates, and the other Ælfgar mæw, his son and a number of their associates.

### *The Implications of this Administrative Continuity*

These men did not merely survive the conquest in 1016 but thrived under its pressures. All of them appear consistently in positions in the witness-lists which indicate power within the royal court. They attested, in general, in a lowlier position than the small groups of Scandinavians in Cnut's court, but they held positions of trust and relative independence. As far as we can see, through such favour at court they each had successful careers, acquired large landed estates, and represented a powerful court bloc that remained in existence until the 1050s, and perhaps the Norman Conquest. On the basis of the charter evidence, it is hard to avoid the suspicion that they were collaborators with Cnut's regime, who withdrew their support from Æthelred and offered it to Cnut. Such an impression is probably correct; when John of Worcester copied out the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's list of the traitorous Englishmen among the ranks of the Danes in the battle of Sherston in 1016, he added the name of one *Algarus filius Meauues*, who must be Ælfgar son of Æthelweard mæw.<sup>105</sup> We can safely assume that Ælfgar mæw's associates followed him in this change of allegiance, and while John does not mention Odda in this context, it seems probable that he and his associates also changed sides at some point *c.* 1015–16.

Their personal motives for such an act of betrayal are now entirely obscure, but we can press the evidence a little further to see the extent

<sup>104</sup> For his presence in government in the years 993 to 1006 see Keynes, *Diplomas*, 186–208.

<sup>105</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1016 (Darlington et al., 486).

to which the actions of these men represented the general feeling among the aristocracy of England on the invasion of Cnut.

Æthelred's last years in government before 1015 were turbulent and difficult ones, marked by a number of court figures being banished from the court or entering self-imposed retirement. It seems that much of this 'palace revolution', as Keynes has called it, was orchestrated by an ambitious court figure named Eadric streona, who was (along with his numerous brothers) the principal person to profit from the political vacuum left around the king.<sup>106</sup> Members of both Ordgar's and Odda's families were among the victims of this. As Keynes has shown, Ordgar's father Ordulf either retired or was ousted from Æthelred's government in 1005. Ealdorman Æthelmær, Æthelweard's son and thus Odda's close relative, also disappeared from public office in the wake of this political crisis. Perhaps we should perceive a wider group of nobles who were disgruntled with Æthelred's regime than just Odda and Ordgar and their associates. Æthelred's 'palace revolution' had forced several influential families from court, and perhaps they too offered support to Cnut. This is an attractive solution but cannot explain the motives of all the men in question here. Odda, and his probable relative, Ealdorman Æthelmær, held prominent positions at court in the strained years immediately before 1016 (and in Odda's case since 1013), and so at the time of Cnut's invasion they appear to have been experiencing a period of growing, rather than waning influence.<sup>107</sup> Additionally, some of these collaborators actually profited from the political vacuum left by the 'palace revolution'. Ælfgar mæw and his associate Æthelmær attest only sporadically and very far down the witness-lists before 1006, and leap to positions of prominence immediately after this date.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the events of 1006 would appear to have been responsible for their success at court.

Perhaps the sources of this betrayal came from a section of the aristocracy wider than just one expelled court faction. A few fragments of evidence are suggestive that Æthelred's regime (as well as that of his son Edmund Ironside) may have faced more general opposition from

<sup>106</sup> See Keynes, *Diplomas*, 209–28.

<sup>107</sup> See S. 933 (Sherborne) from 1014, and Keynes, *Diplomas*, 209–10, for Æthelmær's return to court.

<sup>108</sup> Compare their positions in S. 896 (Abingdon) from 999 where they are placed tenth and twelfth at the end of the list of twelve *munstr*, and that in S. 931b (Barking) from 1013, where they are the first and second of eleven *munstr*.

elements of the West Saxon and Mercian nobility. Retracing the events of 1016 reveals much about the political climate in that crucial year. Our sources indicate that support for Æthelred and Edmund Ironside was waning in some regions of England throughout 1016. Æthelred appears to have been infirm, and command of the forces fell to his son Edmund Ironside. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports that in 1015 Æthelred had lain ill in Cosham whilst Cnut ravaged Dorset, Wiltshire and Somerset.<sup>109</sup> Edmund appears to have had some difficulty in commanding the allegiances owed to his father. Early in 1016 Edmund met opposition while trying to counteract Cnut's ravaging of Warwickshire. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that Edmund began to collect the *fyrd* in the area, but the local militia refused to support him unless he had the support of his father and the London garrison. These Edmund had secured by 6 January, but still the full penalty and force of the law had to be threatened to mobilise an army.<sup>110</sup> This reluctance appears to have been taken by Æthelred as an indication that elements in these areas were ready to revolt; Æthelred travelled to Mercia to support his son's attempts to levy forces, but was warned that he would be betrayed by either an unnamed follower of his or some of his auxiliary troops (in varying accounts of the event), and he fled back to the safety of London.<sup>111</sup> The Mercians' conditional support of Edmund early in 1016 seems to prefigure what happened after Æthelred's death. Support for Edmund in Wessex seems to have begun to collapse on the death of his father on 23 April 1016. Following this Edmund was elected king by "those of the nobles who were at that time at London".<sup>112</sup> However, Cnut was simultaneously elected at a more comprehensive *witenagemot* in Southampton, which repudiated Æthelred and his descendants.<sup>113</sup> Only a few months later, "after midsummer", Cnut and Edmund's forces met at Sherston, Wiltshire. It is in connection with this crucial battle that the sources begin to report defections by members of the English nobility to the Danish side.<sup>114</sup> Given the sources' identification of Eadric streona as a serial traitor, we are not surprised when the Anglo-Saxon

<sup>109</sup> ASC 1015 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 100).

<sup>110</sup> ASC 1016 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 100).

<sup>111</sup> The ASC 1016 CDE states that the threat came from an unnamed follower, and John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1016 (Darlington et al., 482) claims that the threat came from the auxiliaries.

<sup>112</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1016 (Darlington et al., 484).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> See *ibid.* (Darlington et al., 486) for the fullest account.



Chronicle names him as a defector at Sherston. Perhaps we can even conclude that the mysterious Ælfmær deorling was a follower of his in this betrayal. However, when we find John of Worcester adding Ælfgar mæw to the list of turncoats, this is a different matter. There are hints in John of Worcester's account that these defections may have involved wider sections of the English forces than a few renegade nobles. In this entry John of Worcester records that forces from Hampshire and Wiltshire were with the Danes at Sherston. Of course, these could be the followers of one of the three named turncoats, but this seems unlikely. In particular, it is unlikely that forces from these areas would have followed Eadric streona into battle; the nearest we can place his influence to these shires is across the Mercian border in Gloucestershire.<sup>115</sup> It hardly seems likely that such a substantial force would be the following of an otherwise unknown figure such as Ælfmær deorling. Furthermore, what we can know of Ælfgar mæw's estates (from those of his son, Beorhtric as recorded in the Domesday Book) it does not seem likely that he held any jurisdiction in Wiltshire and Hampshire either.<sup>116</sup> John of Worcester's naming of these areas as in revolt against Edmund would appear to also identify them as turncoats at Sherston. Thus, this battle appears to have been a crucial turning point in the conflict, where notable leaders, and perhaps the forces from entire regions, switched allegiance mid-battle from Edmund to Cnut.

In this context it seems significant that the Englishmen who prominently witness Cnut's charters came from the regions of England implicated here: southern Mercia and western Wessex. Odda's estates focussed on disparate holdings around Deerhurst in Gloucestershire, the southernmost tip of Mercia. His nearest neighbour was Beorhtric Ælfgar's son, whose lands seem to have centred on the massive 95 hide estate of Tewkesbury.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, both of these men had ties to Wessex. If we may suppose that Odda was related to Ealdorman Æthelweard, then he must have held some of that influential south-western family's estates. The Tewkesbury Chronicle records that Ælfgar mæw held the estates of Cranborne, Wimborne, Dewlish and High Ashton

<sup>115</sup> His authority in this area is attested by Hemming. See *Hemungi Chartularum Ecclesie Wigornensis*, ed. T. Hearne (Oxford, 1723) 1: 280.

<sup>116</sup> In fact, Beorhtric can only be shown to have held a single estate in Wiltshire, and none in Hampshire.

<sup>117</sup> Details of this can be found in Williams, "A West-Country Magnate", 46–7.

in Dorset, as well as Loosebeare and Medland in Devon.<sup>118</sup> Finally, it should be noted that Ordgar's family had dominated the Devonshire hundred of Lifton on the border with Cornwall since the tenth century, and it seems that his estates were still concentrated there.<sup>119</sup>

However, to suggest that these collaborators should be seen as the tip of an iceberg of open revolt against Edmund Ironside's rule goes further than the evidence will allow. Less than whole-hearted support, and perhaps even the hedging of diplomatic bets, is quite a different thing than open revolt against a royal candidate. Wessex and southern Mercia appear to be the areas affected by both a lack of vigour in the support for Edmund as well as open revolt, but there may have been only an indirect connection between them. The majority of West Saxon and Mercian forces appear to have held to their allegiance to him, albeit reservedly, and there are no signs that the most significant sources of local authority, the ealdormen of the region, withdrew their support from Edmund. Moreover, the English names present in the witness-lists of Cnut's charters indicate that those who profited from this act of betrayal (in the royal court at least) were few in number and represented two groups of family members and associates who held neighbouring estates in Gloucestershire.<sup>120</sup> They were probably a small but highly integrated clique, who shared common concerns about the rule of Edmund Ironside in 1016, concerns that were perhaps individual to them among the West Saxon and Mercian elites, and used them to justify revolt against Edmund.

We might question why some sections of the nobility of Mercia and Wessex held common concerns about Edmund Ironside as a ruler in 1016? It seems unlikely that it was his inability to present serious resistance to the invader which motivated these concerns. The accounts of 1016 do not describe an unstoppable invasion in the face of which resistance would have been futile. Edmund had his measure of success at Penselwood in Dorset, Otley in Kent, and in the defence of London. Doubts appear to have existed before his father's death, but it is that event which seems to have formed a crucial turning point in

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<sup>118</sup> London, Brit. Lib., Additional, MS. 36985, fol. 1rv.

<sup>119</sup> Finberg, *Lucerna*, 192-4, and see 195-6, for the identification of the early-eleventh-century Ordgar's estates in the hundred of Lifton.

<sup>120</sup> It is very difficult to trace such collaborators outside the royal court, but for discussion of some English officials who were based in the local administration and may also have supported Cnut at this stage see pp. 59-60.

his ability to command the support of the West-Saxon and Mercian aristocracies. It may be significant in this context that Edmund appears to have formed a lasting social bond not with the nobility of Wessex or Mercia, but with that of the eastern Danelaw.<sup>121</sup> Most of the extant records connected with him derive from this region. Only two charters in his name survive, one of which is a grant to Thorney Abbey from 1015 × 1016, and the other is a grant of land to Peterborough Abbey, made for the souls of Edmund, his wife, and an East-Anglian thegn Sigferth.<sup>122</sup> While his elder brother, the *ætheling* Æthelstan, left decorated weaponry and valuable horses to both of his living brothers in his will, only Edmund received land, specifically estates in East Anglia and further north in the Danelaw.<sup>123</sup> A presumed connection of Edmund and his elder brother Athelstan, to the Danelaw explains much about Edmund's actions early in 1015. In this year he revolted against his father's execution of two prominent Danelaw thegns, Sigferth and Morcar, and the seizure of their property.<sup>124</sup> Edmund released Sigferth's widow from her imprisonment in Malmesbury Abbey and married her, moving northwards to accept the formal submission of the dependants of the executed thegns. If he had not formally represented this Danelaw faction at court before, his marriage ensured that he would do so from this point onwards. This was a scandalous affair, and probably Edmund only escaped punishment because Cnut chose this moment to launch his invasion, and in the face of that new threat, differences between Edmund and his father were quickly set aside. However, it seems significant that immediately before Cnut's invasion Edmund may have been seen as more closely allied to the eastern Danelaw and the north of England before 1015, and had shown his willingness to defend the interests of his allies there, even when that led to direct defiance of the king. His actions may have inadvertently alienated the nobility of Wessex and Mercia, who began to look for another potential royal candidate, in what resembles a reversal of the events of 957 when the aristocracy of Mercia, followed by that of the North, withdrew their support from King Eadwig and offered it to his brother Edgar. However, in 1015–16

<sup>121</sup> This may have been due to his mother's origins in the eastern Danelaw. See Whitelock, "Dealings", 80, for details.

<sup>122</sup> S. 947 (Peterborough) and S. 48 (Thorney).

<sup>123</sup> S. 1503. See D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), no. 20, pp. 56–63, & 167–74.

<sup>124</sup> ASC 1015 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 99–100).

there was no obvious candidate from the line of Æthelred apart from Edmund, and so, while the majority of the elites of Wessex and Mercia sat on the proverbial fence, a small group of court figures offered their allegiance to Cnut.

### *Conclusion*

That Cnut's Scandinavian followers dominated the royal court has long been recognised. In 1912 Larson declared in an assessment of the witness-lists that Cnut, when building up his retinue, showed a "preference for men of Northern ancestry".<sup>125</sup> He claimed that "the signatures of more than half of these [the witnesses] show names that are unmistakably Scandinavian".<sup>126</sup> Additionally, he noted that "usually, the Northmen sign before their Saxon fellows".<sup>127</sup> Despite nearly a century of scholarship his observations still have merit, although on the question of scale he may have been wrong. There are many Scandinavian names in the witness-lists of Cnut's charters, although examination of the extant corpus shows that their numbers are under half.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, surprisingly few of these Scandinavians can be identified in more than one or two documents, hardly indicating national prominence. However, Larson's main observation, that there is a demonstrably strong Danish presence in the highest levels of the witness-lists, is correct. Those Scandinavian names which can be found frequently and prominently indicate a small but consistent presence at the highest level in Cnut's court.

The mid-1020s were a crucial period for Cnut's Scandinavian followers. It is notable that most of those Scandinavians who may have had more than local significance in Cnut's early years disappeared from positions of power in the government at this point. Only Thored Azor's father survived this decade. It should be noted that these changes coincide with the removal of Cnut's powerful and independent Scandinavian earls. The disgrace and exile of Thorkell in 1021 was closely followed by the death of Eiríkr in 1023 and the flight of Eileifr from England in 1025–6. The Kentish Thored, Halfdan, Aslac and Hakon

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<sup>125</sup> Larson, *Canute*, 122.

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

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxx, lists some 71 *ministri* with English names, and 46 with Scandinavian names.

seem to have been dispensed with at the same time. They may have fled to Scandinavia or merely gone into retirement on their English estates. After the disappearance from England of this 'old guard', the mid-1020s are characterised by the emergence of the majority of Cnut's 'new men'. Earl Godwine shot to prominence in 1023, helping to fill the power vacuum left by the Danish earls. Similarly, Osgot clapa and Tovi pruđa joined Thored Azor's father at the head of the royal *ministri*.

The large number of Englishmen in Cnut's court is evident and somewhat startling. As members of the Anglo-Saxon nobility who had probably held a measure of power in the central administration under Æthelred, these potential collaborators could offer much to Cnut in 1016. As such they appear as a significant faction or clique immediately beneath the few Scandinavians who held the most prominent positions in Cnut's royal court. Under this skeleton staff of Scandinavians, these English officials must have acted as an experienced buffer between the new king and the Anglo-Saxon administration. Thus, it is on the careers of these men that the stability of Cnut's takeover of power seems to rest. Following his invasion in 1015 he appears to have either sought out high ranking potential supporters, or received offers of support from them, with the intention of using them in this way. They in turn maintained their prestigious positions, and even flourished under Cnut and the new regime.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE GOVERNMENT IN THE LOCALITIES OF SOUTHUMBRIAN ENGLAND IN THE REIGN OF CNUT

#### *Government in the Localities Immediately Before the Reign of Cnut*

Before we can begin to examine Cnut's impact on local government in the various regions of England, we must attempt to perceive the form of the administration in Æthelred's final years, and assess how well it was functioning in 1017.

To date only the general outlines of the system of government in the localities of late Anglo-Saxon England are clearly defined, but what emerges is a relatively simple structure. In the provinces of southern England the main organs of social-control were the court of the shire, and beneath that, the court of the administrative unit known as the hundred.<sup>1</sup> The two main officials functioning in and around this judicial network were the ealdorman (or earl) and the shire-reeve, and these officials also appear to have performed a range of administrative functions.<sup>2</sup> The ealdorman held the highest level of secular office beneath the monarch, as a form of provincial governor, and presided with the local bishop over the twice-yearly shire courts. He was aided in his role by a large group of wealthy landholders of the region, the thegns. In the local administration they seem to have functioned almost always in the sway of the ealdorman; in 1013 the administration of western Wessex submitted to Sveinn Tjúguskegg through Ealdorman Æthelmær "and the western thegns" offering allegiance at Bath.<sup>3</sup> Presumably their main functions were to extend the influence of the ealdorman and monarch throughout the shire and ensure the continuance of local

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<sup>1</sup> Owing to the differences between the power structures of Northumbria and those found elsewhere in late Anglo-Saxon England, comments about government in that region during Cnut's reign will be found in chapter five below.

<sup>2</sup> A brief note must be appended here on the different titles of ealdorman and earl. In the eleventh century both titles were used, apparently interchangeably, of the same office, marking only the ethnic origin of the holder of the title. Here they appear accordingly throughout, with ealdormen for Englishmen and earl for Scandinavians.

<sup>3</sup> ASC 1013 E (Irvine, 70); "ond þa weasternan þægna".

authority during the temporary absence of an ealdorman. Socially beneath the ealdorman, though probably not entirely functioning as his direct subordinates, were the shire-reeves.<sup>4</sup> These were officials who, at least in theory, were directly responsible to the king, and appear to have functioned as a form of check on the activities of the ealdorman or earl. Primarily, they brought cases to the shire- and hundred-courts and dealt with the enforcement of their sentences.

The somewhat erratic politics of Æthelred the Unready's later years did much damage to this system, and there were great losses of high ranking personnel in the conflicts with Thorkell's, Sveinn's and then Cnut's invading forces.<sup>5</sup> However, the extant evidence indicates that the administration, on the whole, continued with only localised break-downs; gaps in the administrative line appear to have been filled at the earliest opportunity, royal charters continued to bear the attestations of representatives from all the regions of southern England, and the production of a regulated coinage was only marginally affected. Some opportunistic individuals, such as Eadric streona, did use this period of political strife to manipulate the traditional boundaries of the system for their own territorial gains. However, such activity, as we can perceive it in the evidence, appears to have functioned within the system, through the accumulation of pre-existing offices and estates by individuals and groups. Cnut would appear to have inherited a functioning system of local government in southern England. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports only the broadest details of his initial interaction with this system: after succeeding to the kingdom, he divided it in four, keeping Wessex for himself, and placing East Anglia under the governance of his follower Thorkell, Northumbria under that of another follower Eiríkr, and acknowledging the authority of Eadric Streona in Mercia.<sup>6</sup> Comparison of this record with other sources reveals that it obscures a great deal of detail, and describes a division of authority that remained in place only for a few months, and was completely removed by the end of 1021.

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<sup>4</sup> For some discussion of these officials see Keynes, *Diplomas*, 198, n. 165, and for discussion of their complex jurisdictional interaction with the earls see W. A. Morris, *The Medieval English Sheriff to 1300*, (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1927), 17–39.

<sup>5</sup> See Mack, "Changing Thegns", for some discussion of this loss of personnel.

<sup>6</sup> ASC 1017 C (O'Brien O'Keefe, 103).

*Government of Wessex in Cnut's Reign*

During the late tenth and early eleventh centuries Wessex was divided into two areas of influence: an ealdormanry covering the eastern counties of Hampshire and Berkshire, which had pushed eastward to extend its authority over Sussex and the areas around London; and another for the 'Western Provinces' of Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. Despite the statement of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that Cnut kept this region for himself, there are indications that both ealdormanries continued in existence. The earliest extant charters from Cnut's reign date to 1018 and identify an Ealdorman Æthelweard in the west, and Ealdorman Godwine in the east.<sup>7</sup>

Ealdorman Æthelweard held jurisdiction over the 'Western Provinces' from either 1015 × 1016 or 1017 × 1018 to 1020, and was a patron of religious houses in this region.<sup>8</sup> Given his English origins, and the fact that his name duplicates that of a late-tenth-century ealdorman of this same region, it seems likely that he was related to the local aristocracy that had held authority under Æthelred. It has been suggested that he may be identified with the son-in-law of Ealdorman Æthelmær (obit *c.* 1014), who is recorded in Eynsham's foundation charter.<sup>9</sup> This is possible, but the name Æthelweard is extremely common in late Anglo-Saxon England, and the often reliable John of Worcester identifies him as the brother of Eadric streona.<sup>10</sup> Eadric received an ealdormanry with responsibilities over much of western Mercia in 1007, but he had been an extremely influential figure at court for a year or so before that, and it is not implausible to suppose that he managed to secure some form of overlordship over western Wessex for his brother after the earlier Ealdorman Æthelweard's death *c.* 998 and Æthelmær's retreat into a monastery *c.* 1005. Either way, it seems certain that he was a member of the local aristocracy whose authority (or that of his family) was so entrenched in the region that Cnut initially had to accept his rule there. Such acceptance did not, however, last long. Cnut spent the winter of

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<sup>7</sup> Godwine occurs in the probably genuine witness-list attached to the dubious charter S. 951 (Exeter), and Æthelweard's appears as a witness in S. 1387 and S. 953 (both Exeter).

<sup>8</sup> See Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 68, for discussion of the date at which Æthelweard took up the office of ealdorman, and a fuller discussion of the known details of his career.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; note also that in n. 142 Keynes does not entirely discount another possibility, that this Æthelweard was a brother of Eadric Streona.

<sup>10</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1008 (Darlington et al., 460).



1019–20 in Denmark, and immediately on his return in Easter 1020 he removed Æthelweard from office and exiled him.<sup>11</sup> This occurred at the same royal assembly as that in which the C-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle places the expulsion of a royal pretender named Eadwig “the ceorls’ king”.<sup>12</sup> The association in punishment suggests an association in crime, and it seems reasonable to deduce that Æthelweard had aided this figure in a bid for the throne. Interestingly, no successor to Æthelweard occurs in any of our sources, and it appears that the western ealdormany of Wessex fell vacant at this point, and remained so for some decades. Such a prolonged vacuum of authority at the head of the local administration is puzzling. Keynes has noted that during Æthelred’s reign a number of ealdormanries did not receive an immediate appointment on the death of the incumbent, and he draws attention to the vacancy of the ealdormany of the ‘Western Provinces’ between the death of Ealdorman Æthelweard *c.* 998 and the first attestation of Æthelmær as an ealdorman in the witness-list of a royal charter in 1014.<sup>13</sup> However, the two situations cannot be compared. If Æthelred chose *c.* 998 to not appoint a successor and to leave the administration in the hands of the pre-existing shire-reeves and thegns for approximately 16 years, he could count on their continued support for his rule. Cnut in 1020 appears to have just faced an attempted *coup d’état* from this region, and while Ealdorman Æthelweard and Eadwig bore the brunt of his punishments, it is unlikely that they acted alone. It seems inconceivable that Cnut, after facing a threat to his authority from the administrative officials of this area, would be content to remove the head of this administration, and let the acephalous remainder continue without any interference.

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<sup>11</sup> ASC 1020 C (O’Brien O’Keeffe, 104).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*; “Eadwig ceorla cyngc”.

<sup>13</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, 197–8, n. 163. Note that several of the vacant-ealdormanries cited by Keynes might not actually have created apparent gaps in the administration. Administrative problems following the death of Eadwine of Sussex in 982 and the banishment of Leofsige of Essex in 1002, would have been eased by the fact that both of these regions lay under (or at least on the border of) the overlordship of larger ealdormanries in eastern Wessex and the Eastern Danelaw. Conversely, the vacancies following the death of Æthelwine of East Anglia in 992 and the exile of Ælfric of Mercia in 985, represent the removal of an ealdorman with an overlordship over several lesser ealdormen of the same region. Thus, in neither of these groups did the removal of the ealdorman in question and an ensuing prolonged vacancy of his office create an apparent gap in the administration.

It has been suggested that Earl Godwine filled this gap in the ‘Western Provinces’ early in Cnut’s reign.<sup>14</sup> However, this is uncertain. The main problem with any assessment of the size or location of Godwine’s jurisdiction early in his career is the retrospective nature of the evidence. Despite his later successes and his sons’ dominance of English politics, the origins of his earldom or its actual geographical extent remain obscure. He held an earldom from 1018 to his death in 1053, and he witnessed royal charters as the principal earl from 1023 onwards.<sup>15</sup> However, only in accounts significantly post-dating his and Cnut’s death is the area over which he held jurisdiction implied or identified. Examples can be found in the F-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which names him at the head of “all the best men of Wessex”, and John of Worcester’s entry for 1041 where he is called [*dux*] *Godwinus Westsaxonum*.<sup>16</sup> In modern historiography only Keynes has attempted to date the extension of Godwine’s earldom over the whole of Wessex. Keynes has focussed on the narration of a series of events from early in Godwine’s career in the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*.<sup>17</sup> The text states that immediately after Godwine accompanied Cnut on a campaign in Scandinavia, Cnut married his sister to Godwine, and appointed him *dux et baiulus* of “almost all the kingdom”. As this campaign in Scandinavia can be dated to 1022, and it had certainly ended by the end of 1023, it would appear that Godwine’s promotion to an office above all other secular noblemen can be dated to the period immediately following those years.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, 1023 saw Godwine begin to witness Cnut’s charters as the principal earl, and thus “it is tempting” (as Keynes has put it) to conclude that this increase in power is an indication that, soon after Æthelweard’s expulsion, Godwine assumed some responsibility over western Wessex as well the eastern parts of that region.<sup>19</sup> However, while the evidence indicates that *c.* 1023 Godwine was raised to a position of great prominence in the royal court, it does not necessarily follow

<sup>14</sup> Freeman, *NC* 1: 406, 422, and especially 711–13.

<sup>15</sup> See Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxix.

<sup>16</sup> ASC 1036 F (Baker, 115); “Godwine eorl ond ealle ða betstan men on Westsexan”; John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1041, (Darlington et al., 532).

<sup>17</sup> *The Life of King Edward the Confessor who rests at Westminster*, ch. 1, ed. F. Barlow (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 6.

<sup>18</sup> I discuss this campaign more fully below, see pp. 213–14.

<sup>19</sup> Keynes, “Cnut’s Earls”, 73.

that there was any geographical extension of his earldom.<sup>20</sup> There are no records that connect him to events in the ‘Western Provinces’ until the middle of the eleventh century, and it is possible that he may not have held any significant authority there until late in Cnut’s reign or even after Cnut’s death.

The entries for Godwine and his immediate family in Domesday Book seem to offer a representative record of their landholdings as they stood three decades after Cnut’s death. While these cannot be used to perceive the details of the family’s landholding patterns during Cnut’s reign, they can be used to indicate general trends of these patterns, enabling us to differentiate areas in which Godwine and his family appear to have been active from those in which they seem to have shown little interest. As Godwine died in 1053, we do not possess references to him in all the counties of Wessex in Domesday Book.<sup>21</sup> As his son Harold inherited his office it seems plausible to assume that this son also inherited the bulk of his father’s comital estates. Additionally, Godwine’s wife Gytha survived him into the 1060s, and it appears she too may have remained in possession of certain comital estates.<sup>22</sup> Thus, in the tabulation of Godwine’s landholdings in Domesday Book given below, both Harold’s and Gytha’s landholdings are listed as well.<sup>23</sup> In addition to their total landholdings I have tabulated here the amount of their estates in each shire which Domesday Book indicates were not held as part of the comital demesne, and therefore were personal possessions inherited or obtained by Godwine.<sup>24</sup> These personal holdings can be used as a touchstone for our findings, as they crudely indicate the regions in which Godwine showed an active interest, exploiting his

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<sup>20</sup> Note that Larson, “Political Policies”, 735, held similar doubts about Godwine’s position in the 1020s.

<sup>21</sup> See D. Raraty, “Earl Godwine of Wessex: the Origins of his Power and his Political Loyalties”, *History* 74 (1989): 9, for discussion of Godwine’s sporadic inclusion in the Domesday Book.

<sup>22</sup> For the suggestion that Gytha assumed control of Godwine’s lands in 1053, see Williams, “Land and Power”, 177.

<sup>23</sup> Harold and Gytha may have acquired territory in the years between 1053 and 1066, independent of Godwine’s acquisitions, but against the whole sample this margin of error must be small.

<sup>24</sup> These estates are defined in Domesday Book as those in the individual’s ownership which are not enumerated amongst the royal demesne, explicitly named as comital estates held by Godwine, Gytha or Harold, or named at the time of the inquest that they were held ‘in lordship’ from the monarch.

position and prominence to annex coveted land, as opposed to areas in which he may have inherited patrimonial estates or received them as part of the earl's demesne.

|                      | Godwine's<br>total land<br>holdings | Godwine's<br>non-comital<br>holdings | Gytha's<br>total land<br>holdings | Gytha's<br>non-<br>comital<br>holdings | Harold's<br>total land<br>holdings | Harold's<br>non-<br>comital<br>holdings | Collective<br>total land<br>holdings | Collective<br>total non-<br>comital<br>holdings |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Sussex <sup>25</sup> | 586.5<br>hides<br>(54)              | 402.5<br>hides<br>(46)               | 114.5<br>hides<br>(6)             | 25.5<br>hides<br>(4)                   | 179.75<br>hides<br>(12)            | 40.75<br>hides<br>(10)                  | 880.75<br>(72)                       | 468.75<br>(60)                                  |
| Surrey               | 20 hides<br>(1)                     | 20 hides<br>(1)                      | 20 hides<br>(1)                   | 20 hides<br>(1)                        | 153.5 hides<br>(10)                | 28.5<br>hides<br>(6)                    | 193.5<br>(12)                        | 68.5<br>(8)                                     |
| Berkshire            | 0                                   | 0                                    | 16 hides<br>(1)                   | 16 hides (1)                           | 194 hides<br>(12)                  | 50 hides<br>(3)                         | 210<br>(13)                          | 66<br>(4)                                       |
| Hampshire            | 93.75<br>hides<br>(13)              | 25.75 hides<br>(10)                  | 27 hides<br>(2)                   | 0                                      | 145.5 hides<br>(10)                | 37 hides<br>(7)                         | 266.25<br>(25)                       | 62.75<br>(17)                                   |
| Wiltshire            | 2.5 hides<br>(1)                    | 2.5 hides (1)                        | 100.5<br>hides<br>(3)             | 0                                      | 228 hides<br>(14)                  | 54 hides<br>(8)                         | 331<br>(18)                          | 56.5<br>(9)                                     |
| Somerset             | 0                                   | 0                                    | 25.5<br>hides (3)                 | 0                                      | 98.75 hides<br>(10)                | 41 hides<br>(4)                         | 124.5<br>(13)                        | 41<br>(4)                                       |
| Dorset               | 0                                   | 0                                    | 30.5<br>hides (2)                 | 0                                      | 85.5 hides<br>(10)                 | 24 hides<br>(2)                         | 116<br>(12)                          | 24<br>(2)                                       |
| Devon                | 0                                   | 0                                    | 53.5<br>hides (9)                 | 0                                      | 45.375<br>hides<br>(17)            | 9 hides<br>(3)                          | 98.875<br>(26)                       | 9<br>(3)  |
| Cornwall             | 0                                   | 0                                    | 0.5 hide<br>(2)                   | 0.5 hide (2)                           | 26.25 hides<br>(14)                | 2.25<br>hides<br>(3)                    | 26.75<br>(16)                        | 2.75<br>(5)                                     |

West Saxon Landholdings of Godwine, Gytha and Harold in the Domesday Book  
(the numbers in brackets indicate the number of estates involved)

Numerically there is a clear focus on Sussex in the eastern counties, which is most easily explained by the suggestion that Godwine's father was a landholder in this region named Wulfnoth *cild*, and that Godwine inherited the bulk of these estates from him, or indirectly through a gift from either Æthelred or Cnut.<sup>26</sup> Wulfnoth fell from royal favour

<sup>25</sup> As noted above, the counties of Sussex and Surrey, while not strictly part of Wessex, do seem to have fallen under the jurisdiction of the ealdorman of the eastern part of Wessex in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Thus, they are included here.

<sup>26</sup> See Raraty, "Earl Godwine", 4-6, for discussion of this.

in 1009, having ravaged areas of the south coast, and his estates must have been forfeited to the king.<sup>27</sup> However, the will of the ætheling Athelstan, dated 1014, records a gift to a Godwine, son of Wulfnoth of an estate at Compton in Sussex which had been “previously owned by his father”.<sup>28</sup> Compton in the Domesday Book was held by one *Esbarn* from Earl Godwine and by one Harold (presumably Godwine’s son).<sup>29</sup> This attests to the return of some of the family’s estates to Godwine in 1009 × 1014. Presumably, after Godwine’s rise to prominence in the royal court he regained any remaining estates of his patrimony.

The pattern of landholding in Sussex also indicates that this was the initial area of Godwine’s influence. In Sussex the three family members held a vast 880.75 hides, across a sample involving some 72 estates, over half of which were in their personal possession. In the surrounding counties of Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire very similar (albeit lower) levels of landholding are observed.<sup>30</sup> While there is some minor fluctuation between the highest total holding of 266.25 hides (Hampshire) and the lowest of 193.5 hides (Surrey), the estates in the family’s personal possession fit within a very narrow deviation, between 68.5 and 62.75 hides. Thus, it is likely that Godwine had also inherited a number of estates within these neighbouring shires, and pursued his interests there for his entire career.

In the west of Wessex the situation is, in general, different. Wiltshire has a total amount of land held by the family which is similar to that in the eastern counties, with some 331 hides in the family’s possession. The non-comital estates here also compare with those in the eastern counties: with 56.5 hides held; lower than the 62.75 hides held in Hampshire but not by much. However, Wiltshire is the only one of the western shires in which Godwine is mentioned directly as a landholder, and it is perhaps a special case. The other western shires are markedly different from those in the east. Total landholdings in the family’s possession vary between a high of 124.5 hides (Somerset) and a low of 26.75 hides (Cornwall). There is a pattern here: as we investigate further westwards the level of the family’s landholdings becomes lower

<sup>27</sup> ASC 1009 CDE (C: O’Brien O’Keeffe, 93).

<sup>28</sup> S. 1503 (Christ Church, Canterbury & Old Minster, Winchester); “Ic geann Godwine Wulfnoðes suna. þæs landes. æt Cumtune. þe his fæder ær ahte”. An edition can be found in Whitelock, *Wills*, no. 20, pp. 56–63, and 167–74.

<sup>29</sup> DB, i, fol. 24r and 21r.

<sup>30</sup> As is explained below, the landholdings in Kent most plausibly represent events after 1040 and therefore have not been included here. See pp. 72–5 for details.

and lower. Somerset's 41 hides are considerably lower than the 68.5 to 62.75 range observed in the eastern counties. Dorset's 24 hides, Devon's 9 hides, and Cornwall's minute 2.75 hides continue this trend. As the pattern is also found in the family's non-comital landholdings, this cannot be governed by the nature of the comital estates or the nature of landholding peculiar to the west. Thus, the general impression is that Godwine's attention appears to have been concentrated for the majority of his career on the eastern counties of Wessex. The small number of acquired estates in the south-west appears to indicate that he had less interest in that region, or that he was its overlord for considerably less time than he was for eastern Wessex. Identifying him as the earl of the 'Western Provinces' from 1023 (just 5 years into his 35 year career as an earl) seems difficult.

Perhaps then in the absence of an ealdorman we should turn our attention to the administration beneath the level of the ealdorman in western Wessex early in Cnut's reign. Cnut's grants to his secular ministers are one available source of evidence for this enquiry, as they survive particularly well for one of the shires in question: Dorset.<sup>31</sup> There are three extant authentic grants by Cnut to laymen of estates in Dorset. In an authentic grant of 1019, Cnut granted 16 hides of land at Cheselbourne to a man with the Scandinavian name Agemund (ON Ögmundur).<sup>32</sup> In 1024 a grant of 7 hides at Portisham was made to Cnut's minister Urk (or perhaps Ork).<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Cnut granted 7 hides to his minister Bovi (ON Bófi) in 1033.<sup>34</sup> In addition, seventeenth-century transcripts survive of fragments of records once contained in a now-lost cartulary of Abbotsbury.<sup>35</sup> Both the antiquaries John Leland and Clement Reyner connected the foundation of a monastic house at Abbotsbury to Urk, and him to Cnut.<sup>36</sup> Reyner dated this monastic

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<sup>31</sup> The good survival of charters for this shire seems to be the result of the survival of the cartularies of Sherborne and Shaftesbury, and the antiquarian interest in the now-lost Abbotsbury cartulary in the early-modern period.

<sup>32</sup> S. 955 (Shaftesbury).

<sup>33</sup> S. 961 (Abbotsbury). Note that G. Fellows-Jensen, *The Vikings and their Victims: the verdict of the names* (London: Viking Society, 1998), 7, suggests that his uncommon name is in fact a by-name referring to ethnic descent from Orkney.

<sup>34</sup> S. 969 (Sherborne).

<sup>35</sup> See S. Keynes, "The Lost Cartulary of Abbotsbury", *Anglo Saxon England* 18 (1989), for details of these transcripts.

<sup>36</sup> *Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii; De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (London, 1774), 4: 149, and C. Reyner, *Apostulatus Benedictinorum in Anglia, sive Disceptatio Historica de Antiquitate Ordinis Monachorum Nigrorum S. Benedicti in Regno Angliae* (Douai, 1626), 132. See Keynes, "Lost Cartulary", 221–3, for discussion of these.

foundation to 1026. Another antiquarian, Thomas Gerard, noted that Cnut granted the estate used in this foundation to Urk, and an undated extract from this charter survives in the transcripts of another antiquary, Henry Spelman.<sup>37</sup> Since it must predate the foundation date given by Reyner this grant of Abbotsbury can be dated to 1017 × 1026. Furthermore, Gerard's account records a further estate named Hilton that Cnut gave to Urk, and the information that nearby Tolpuddle was owned by Urk's wife, and thus may also be a royal gift.<sup>38</sup> Finally, one manuscript of Spelman's account records a single phrase from the body of an undated grant to Bovi.<sup>39</sup> Keynes has shown that the wording of this extract does not correspond with any passage of Bovi's extant grant and thus seems to indicate that the Abbotsbury cartulary once included another, otherwise unknown, grant to him.

Much can be learnt about these men from their appearance as grantees and witnesses in royal diplomas. All three seem to have maintained an interest in each other's affairs, witnessing each other's charters in positions in the lists of *ministri* indicating a degree of importance. Bovi witnessed among the *ministri* of both Agemund's grant of 1019 (fifth of thirteen) and Urk's grant of 1024 (third place in the second column of *ministri*). Similarly Agemund witnessed Urk's grant of 1024 (second place in the first column of *ministri*), and Urk witnessed Bovi's grant of 1033 (fourth of twenty). Additionally, both Bovi and Urk witnessed a grant of Cnut's to Sherborne Abbey of 16 hides at Corscombe, an estate within their sphere of influence in Dorset.<sup>40</sup> Spelman's record of a lost charter concerning Bovi in the Abbotsbury cartulary is also suggestive of connections between their affairs. The cartulary was associated primarily with Urk as the founder of the community, and

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<sup>37</sup> See Keynes, "Lost Cartulary", 220–32, for the texts of both Gerard's and Spelman's records.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 222–3. Note that Urk also received grants from Edward the Confessor in 1044 (S. 1004 (Abbotsbury)), and in an undated writ specifying all land from his estates to the shore (S. 1063 (Abbotsbury)). Thus his landholdings came to dominate the hundreds of Uggescombe and Whitchurch Canonorum. He grew wealthy enough to found a guild based at Abbotsbury which is known from extant guild-regulations. See B. Thorpe, *Diplomatarum Anglicum Ævi Saxonici* (London, 1865), 605.

<sup>39</sup> The nine word Latin phrase occurs only in the Harvard manuscript of Spelman's tract. See Keynes "Lost Cartulary", 232, for an edition.

<sup>40</sup> S. 975 (Sherborne). Note that they witness highly here as well (fourth and fifth out of eleven), but this may not be a reliable witness. I have commented above (p. 27, n. 69) that certain charters from this archive seem to have some form of rearrangement present in the order of the witness-lists.

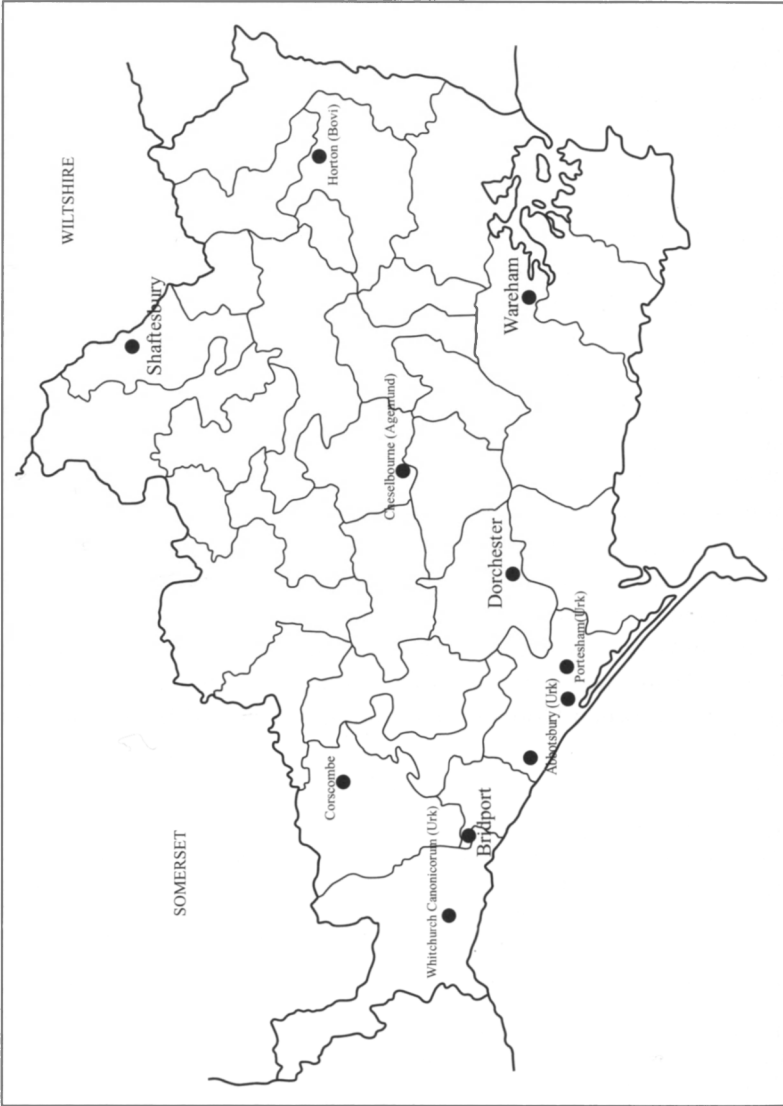


Fig. 3. Map showing estates and sites in Dorset relevant to Cnut's followers resident in the county.



the inclusion of one of Bovi's grants in this archive suggests that they "had dealings of some kind with each other".<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, neither Bovi nor Urk witnessed any of the extant diplomas for any area other than Dorset.<sup>42</sup> They appear to have been part of a close-knit group with interests primarily in that region.

The names Urk, Bovi and Agemund do not occur in records from Æthelred's reign, and so we should probably place their arrival with Cnut. Moreover, Urk and Bovi are named as holding a Scandinavian office, that of the 'huscarl': Urk in Gerard's text and an extant writ of 1044, and Bovi in the rubric of S. 969.<sup>43</sup> There has been debate about the meaning of this term, with Hooper attempting to overturn Larson's interpretation of huscarls as members of a Scandinavian ruler's private retinue.<sup>44</sup> Hooper has argued instead that the title held no functional distinction of office, but was used in late Anglo-Saxon England for the Scandinavian equivalent of a thegn.<sup>45</sup> However, Hooper's research concentrated on the examples of the title found in the sources from the late-eleventh century, when the office had existed in England for a number of decades and had probably evolved into something quite different from that of Cnut's reign. It must be recognised that the attestation of the title in connection with Urk and Bovi is the earliest witness after the introduction of the office to England, and thus probably attests to a role for them closer to the huscarl in late-tenth- and early-eleventh-century Scandinavia, than that of late-eleventh-century England.<sup>46</sup> Thus, they were probably, at one time, members of Cnut's personal guard. When Hooper turns to discuss Urk and Bovi as holders

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<sup>41</sup> Keynes "Lost Cartulary", 232.

<sup>42</sup> An Agemund appears in the suspect S. 959 and S. 981 (both Christ Church, Canterbury), and Keynes has identified him as the same one who received Cheselbourne from Cnut (Keynes, "Lost Cartulary", 230–1). However, this name is common in eleventh-century sources, and I have argued elsewhere (below at p. 18) that at least one other figure with this name appears in the charters.

<sup>43</sup> For Gerard's text see S. Keynes, "Lost Cartulary", 222; see also Harmer, *Writs*, no. 1, pp. 120 and 425–6.

<sup>44</sup> L. M. Larson, *The King's Household in England Before the Norman Conquest* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Bulletin, 1904), 152–68.

<sup>45</sup> N. Hooper, "The Housecarls in England in the Eleventh Century", *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 7 (1984): 172–5.

<sup>46</sup> We might compare the references to huscarls here to the account of King Harthacnut of Denmark (and later England) sending his huscarls to Winchester to protect his mother against his half-brother, Harald Harefoot, which is found in the E-text of the ASC for the year 1036. There certainly, we are dealing with members of the military retinue of a Scandinavian ruler.

of the title, he assumes that their placement into the landscape of Dorset was part of Cnut's demobilisation of his forces onto the estates of dead Englishmen and pieces of the royal demesne.<sup>47</sup> This may be so, but the fact that Urk and Bovi act as if they were a close-knit group who had interests in matters relating to the coastline of Dorset which were heard by the royal court (and perhaps represented the region at court), and the continued appearance of Urk and Bovi amongst the witnesses to royal charters, is suggestive of a relationship with Cnut with more obligations than that of the demobbed soldier.

There appears to be evidence for the settlement of this type of personnel by Cnut in the other shires of western Wessex as well, although the diplomatic evidence there is less helpful. In 1982 and 1985 Insley published research into Scandinavian personal names which show linguistic signs of having been adopted into English in the eleventh century, and which were recorded as the names of landholders in western Wessex.<sup>48</sup> The historical narrative indicates that this is an area which was unlikely to have received many Scandinavian settlers before the eleventh century, and thus it is surprising that many of the residents of the region had Scandinavian names. His conclusions can be refined by mapping the Scandinavian names of this form found in the Domesday Book.<sup>49</sup> The names and corresponding estates, when plotted on maps, show a widespread dispersal of Scandinavian-named landowners across the whole of the region. There are few concentrations of these names or notable patterns in Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset.

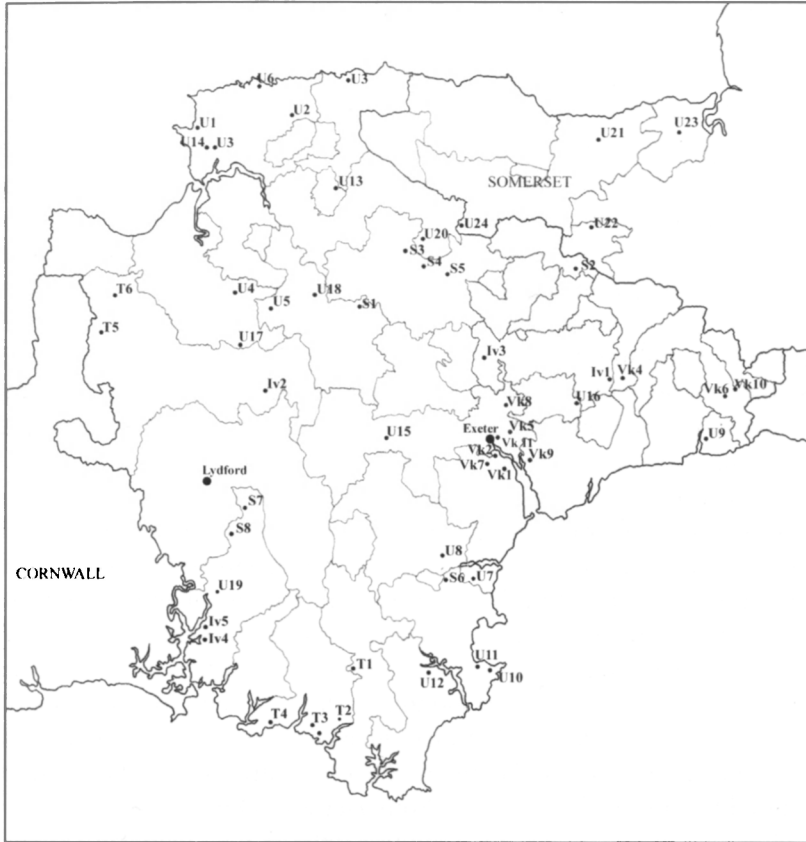
However, in Devon we can identify names of men who were known to be royal officials active during Cnut's reign, and perhaps the distribution of the evidence can be used to identify more of these men. As well as the apparently casual distribution across the shire of Scandinavians holding single estates, there were five individuals in 1065 who held a large number of estates. These are mapped below.

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<sup>47</sup> Hooper, "Housecarls", 94–5.

<sup>48</sup> J. Insley, "Some Scandinavian Personal Names in South-West England", *Namn och Bygd* 70 (1982), and the same author's "Some Scandinavian Personal Names in South-West England from Post-Conquest Records", *Studia Anthroponymica Scandinavica* 3 (1985).

<sup>49</sup> Perhaps Insley was moving towards this in his note of the Scandinavian names in the Domesday Book in his "Scandinavian Names from Post-Conquest Records", but the data from this source is not included in his main assessment.



Iv Estates owned by an Ingvar

- Iv1 Curscombe
- Iv2 Inwardleigh
- Iv3 Cadbury
- Iv4 Tamerton
- Iv5 Blaxton

S Estates owned by a Siward

- S1 Chawleigh
- S2 Holcombe Rogus
- S3 Rose Ash
- S4 Creacombe
- S5 Rackenford
- S6 Wolborough
- S7 Willsworthy
- S8 Peter Tavy

T Estates owned by a Tovi

- T1 Butterford
- T2 Stadbury
- T3 Okenbury
- T4 Lambside
- T5 Dunsdon
- T6 Bradworthy

U Estates owned by an Ulf

- U1 Pickwell
- U2 Northcote
- U3 East Buckland
- U4 Potheridge
- U5 Dolton
- U6 Hagginton
- U7 Haccombe
- U8 Teigngrace
- U9 Stedcombe
- U10 Brixham
- U11 Churston Ferrers
- U12 Cornworthy
- U13 Buckland and Caffyns Heanton
- U14 Lobb
- U15 Crockernwell
- U16 Larkbeare
- U17 Hele
- U18 Hook
- U19 Wadham

and in neighbouring Somerset

U20. Hawkwell

- U21. Woolston
- U22. Manworthy
- U23. Edstock

Vk Estates owned by a Viking

- Vk1. Exminster
- Vk2. Matford
- Vk3. Hewise
- Vk4. Awliscombe
- Vk5. Whipton
- Vk6. Axminster
- Vk7. Peamore
- Vk8. Huxham
- Vk9. Clyst St Georges
- Vk10. Weycroft
- Vk11. Heavitree

Fig. 4. Map showing estates and sites in Devon relevant to Scandinavian settlers in the county in the eleventh century.

One of these, named Viking, held 11 estates in the hundreds of Wonford, Budleigh and Exminster surrounding Exeter.<sup>50</sup> A moneyer who was responsible for the mint at Lydford during the production of Cnut's Short Cross issue (c. 1029–35), and who went on to be responsible for production in Exeter during Edward the Confessor's reign also had this rare name.<sup>51</sup> Thus, it is probable that they are the same royal official who began his career during Cnut's reign. There are no surviving grants of land to this Viking from Cnut, but two royal grants from 1031, to *ministri* with the English names of Æthelric and Hunewine, do establish a connection between Cnut and Devon.<sup>52</sup> Hunewine's grant concerns an estate at Stoke Canon, approximately 4 miles to the north of Exeter, and thus within the centre of Viking's area of interest. Æthelric's concerns land at Meavy in the south-west of the region. By the end of Cnut's reign Viking would appear to have been a wealthy royal official in the area, and he can be found as a witness in records from Exeter and its hinterland, and from the other shires of western Wessex. He occurs as a witness to an agreement, dated to 1045 × 1046, between Bishop Ælfwold and the community at Sherborne regarding land at Holcolme Rogus, near his own estates.<sup>53</sup> Additionally he is probably the *wycinges batswegenes* [*sunu*] who witnessed a manumission made "during King Edward's reign", and recorded on flyleaves at the beginning of a missal in Exeter by the middle of the eleventh century.<sup>54</sup> He is last recorded as a witness in Edward the Confessor's confirmation of the Somerset estates held by the bishop of Wells, dated 1065.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Note that, rather than the pejorative ON term for pirate, Viking's name more probably derives from *Vik-ing* (an inhabitant of the Vik), i.e. the Viken (a region of the modern Oslo-fjord).

<sup>51</sup> K. Jonsson, and G. van de Meer, "Mints and Moneyers c. 973–1066", in *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage in Memory of Bror Emul Hildebrand*, ed. K. Jonsson, (Stockholm: Swedish Numismatic Society, 1990) 89 & 70. Note that the name is rare: apart from the concentration of estates held by a Viking in Dorset, the Domesday Book records only 1 estate held in Warwickshire, 1 held in Cambridgeshire and another held in Suffolk by men (or perhaps a single man?) with this name. See O. von Feilitzen, *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1937) 405, for further details.

<sup>52</sup> S. 963 (Exeter) and S. 971 (Exeter).

<sup>53</sup> S. 1474 (Sherborne).

<sup>54</sup> The manuscript is the Leofric Missal: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodl. 579, fol. 1v. The form of the name *Batswegen* most probably derives from \*bát-sveinn, where the epithet 'bát-' indicates that the holder was a steersman or was in command of a boat. Alternatively, the initial element might represent the word 'bót-', deriving from a word meaning 'fine' or 'of quality'. I am grateful to Jón Viðar Sigurðsson for this last suggestion.

<sup>55</sup> S. 1042 (Wells).

The distribution of the estates of the other four main landholders who had Scandinavian names, across Devon, is suggestive that some of these men may have been placed into the shire by Cnut. Besides Viking the Domesday Book records an Ulf (ON *Úlfr*) holding 20 estates, a Siward (ON *Sigvarðr*) 8 estates, a Tovi 7 estates, and an Ingvar (ON *Ívarr*) 5 estates.<sup>56</sup> The estates of these individuals concentrate on five separate core-areas of influence in the shire, which cumulatively divide up and dominate the coastline. They are placed thus: Viking's around the eastern hundreds of Wonford, Budleigh and Exminster surrounding Exeter, Tovi's around the southern hundreds of Ermington and Stanborough, Ulf's along the northern coastline and across the border with Somerset, and perhaps Siward's in the hundred of Witheridge plugging the gap between Viking and Ulf's areas of influence. This distribution could be explained by casual settling of Scandinavian invaders into the south-west of England. However, the connections between these figures and the urban boroughs of western Wessex seems to suggest otherwise. In the entries of Domesday Book for Dorset there survives a record that at some point before the Domesday inquest the major urban-boroughs of Dorset: Dorchester, Wareham, Shaftesbury and Bridport, paid one mark of silver for each ten hides in the borough *ad opus huscarlium*.<sup>57</sup> This record is too fragmentary to be fully understood, but it connects these huscarls to urban sites in a way which appears to have been sanctioned by local, if not central, government. It seems notable that in Dorset Urk's landholdings seem to focus on the small urban borough of Abbotsbury, and, as discussed above, Viking held responsibilities in the mints of Lydford and Exeter in *c.* 1029 × 1035 and *c.* 1059 × 1062.<sup>58</sup> Hypothetically, attempts to control western Wessex

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<sup>56</sup> Although Siward could be either Scandinavian (ON *Sigvarðr*) or English (OE *Sigeward*) in origin, I have included him here as he closely follows the general trend, and the English form of his name is rare in the southern parts of late Anglo-Saxon England. It should be noted that one Siward the Falconer held an estate at Dinnington in Somerset, and another named Siward Guntram an estate at Adber in Somerset at the time of the Domesday inquest in the 1080s. If either of these men could be identified with the Siward in question here then it is unlikely that he was placed in office by Cnut. However, despite the fact that the Siward in question here did hold some estates in Somerset it is improbable that he is either Siward the Falconer or Siward Guntram. His estates can be clearly identified as a separate block which fell to a single Norman antecessor after the conquest: Baldwin the sheriff of Devon (only Willsworthy and Peter Tavy in Devon, and Stringston in Somerset are held by others: the king, Alfred the Breton, and one William, respectively).

<sup>57</sup> DB, i, fol. 75r. See fig. 3 for these sites.

<sup>58</sup> Jonsson & De Meer, "Mints", 89 & 70.

through royal agents implanted into mints and urban boroughs would be an extremely efficient method.<sup>59</sup> Late-Anglo-Saxon lawcodes directed trade towards the urban boroughs and the witness of the royal officials there, and all silver bullion in the economy would have to pass through a mint approximately every six years in order to be re-coined.

Furthermore, if these were merely prominent landholders, their Scandinavian names and regular coastal distribution would be quite a coincidence. Edward the Confessor was known to patronise powerful Scandinavian settlers, but it seems unlikely that he would choose exclusively Scandinavian officials (or those with Scandinavian names) to tighten his grip on the shire. Moreover, a consideration of all settlements mapped by the Domesday Book for Devon shows that this coastal distribution was not held to by the pre-existing English settlers. It seems possible to suggest (albeit tentatively) that some of these landholders of 1066 were either elderly first-generation or second-generation Danish settlers, inserted into a dangerous power vacuum to influence local politics.

There may have been Englishmen aiding these royal officials in the urban boroughs. A comparison of the names of moneyers who held responsibility under Æthelred with those who held responsibility under Cnut reveals a bewildering number of officials who could possibly have worked under both kings.<sup>60</sup> However, most of the names are very common, and there are often lengthy breaks in the sequence of the attestations of apparently 'identified' individuals. Thus, it is difficult to make certain identifications of individuals. More can be known where the moneyer's name is rare, and occurs in written records as well as on coins. A moneyer with the English name Hunewine held responsibility for several mints in Devon, Dorset and Somerset.<sup>61</sup> His name appears

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<sup>59</sup> I am indebted to K. Jonsson for suggesting this hypothesis.

<sup>60</sup> In Jonsson and De Meer's data ("Mints", 54–119) there are 884 moneyers during Æthelred's reign, and 672 during Cnut's reign. Note no attempt has been made here to collate moneyers with the same name working at different mints. The same names appear in both reigns some 269 times, so with the widest possible margin of error, approximately one fifth of Æthelred's moneyers could have continued in their office under Cnut. There is no apparent pattern in the geographic distribution of these names.

<sup>61</sup> I. Stewart, "Ministri and Monetarii", *Revue Numismatique*, 6th Series 30 (1988): 170 and 172, initially made this prosopographical identification, and I concur with him. The majority of records of this name in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries focus closely on the south-west of England, and fall within the years c. 985 to 1033. This would accord with an official who began his career as a teenager and died aged approximately 63.

initially on coins struck at Totnes in the middle of the 980s until *c.* 991–7.<sup>62</sup> From *c.* 991–7 his name appears on coins from Ilchester and Exeter, continuing at Exeter until *c.* 1050–3. From *c.* 997–1003 to *c.* 1017–23 his name appears on coins minted at Watchet, and his name is also present on coins produced at Axbridge *c.* 1017–23 and Lydford between *c.* 1017–23 and *c.* 1023–9. Furthermore, his name occurs on two charters concerning an estate at Stoke Canon, Devon. He appears on the first, a late-tenth-century list of sureties to an agreement between one Abbess Eadgifu and one Abbot Leofric, as a local witness, and then in a document dated 1033, receiving the estate as a grant from Cnut.<sup>63</sup> This moneyer was already powerful in Devon and Somerset when Cnut seized control in 1017, and he seems to have increased this power and profited during Cnut's reign. It should be noted that Hunewine might have operated alongside Viking at two of these mints. Hunewine was named on Cnut's Quatrefoil (*c.* 1017–23) and Pointed Helmet (*c.* 1023–9) issues from Lydford, and Viking was named on the subsequent issue from there: Short Cross (*c.* 1029–35). Furthermore, Hunewine was named on Cnut's Quatrefoil issue from Exeter, and Viking was named on Edward the Confessor's Hammer Cross (*c.* 1059–62) issues from there, as well as holding many estates in the hinterland of this urban borough. I have already commented on the presence of English collaborators in Cnut's court, and it seems likely that Hunewine was another of these based in western Wessex. If so, it seems unlikely that he was the only one.

### *Government of the Eastern Danelaw in Cnut's Reign*

Of all the regions of late Anglo-Saxon England the most difficult to define is that of the eastern Danelaw. In Cnut's initial division of England into four administrative units it is implied that Earl Thorkell was given control over much of the eastern coastline between London and Northumbria, but the text only refers to his jurisdiction through the title of the principal ealdormanry in the area, that of East Anglia.<sup>64</sup> It is probable that the earldom of Essex was a part of this; it formed a

<sup>62</sup> The dates of Hunewine's minting activity are derived from the data of Jonsson and De Meer, "Mints", 54–119.

<sup>63</sup> S. 1452 (Exeter), S. 971 (Exeter/Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>64</sup> ASC 1017 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 103).

part of Earl Harold's earldom in 1045, and there was precedent in the tenth century for the ealdorman of East Anglia having some form of overlordship over his counterpart in Essex.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Thorkell's earldom may also have included many of the surrounding counties to the west of East Anglia. Precedents can be found in the fact that Athelstan 'Half-king's' ealdormanry of East Anglia (932–956/957) seems to have encompassed Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, and Leofsige's ealdormanry of Essex (994–1002) encompassed Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

Due to the paucity of the evidence for this region, little is known of Thorkell's activities in this office.<sup>66</sup> Thorkell's earldom lasted only until November 1021, when he was exiled by Cnut, probably because he had married one of Æthelred's daughters during Cnut's absence in Denmark, and Cnut perceived this as preparatory to a bid for the throne.<sup>67</sup> For a considerable period of time, that is 1021–45 (when Harold Godwinsson received the earldom) there is no apparent successor in the records, and the earldom may have lain vacant. As in western Wessex, it seems unlikely that following an attempted threat to his authority (or at least a perceived one), Cnut would have left this large and wealthy ealdormanry purely in the hands of the existing local administration.

There were a number of sources of authority in this region who appear to have arrived with Cnut. Principal among these was the Scandinavian naval garrison which was stationed in the vicinity of London from the beginning of Cnut's reign, and this must have exerted authority over the Thames valley and much of the coastline of eastern England. This garrison seems to have occupied the area of modern Southwark on the southern bank of the river Thames, facing the medieval city, and was probably placed there because the city had shown strong support for the West Saxon dynasty during both Sveinn's and Cnut's

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<sup>65</sup> See C. Hart, "The Ealdordom of Essex", in *An Essex Tribute: Essays Presented to Frederick G. Emmson*, ed. K. Neale (London: Leopard's Head, 1987), 129 & 138.

<sup>66</sup> Indeed only two local records survive connecting him with the region. These are a thirteenth-century extract of a grant to Ramsey (see *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis*, ed. W. D. Macray (London, 1886), 147, for an edition), and a marginal reference in the Easter Tables of a Psalter from Bury St Edmunds, which records his involvement in the reform of the community (see Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 56, n. 65, for an edition and comment).

<sup>67</sup> The sparse evidence for this affair has been discussed by Freeman, *NC*, 1: 666–70, and more sceptically by A. Campbell, *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, (London: Royal Historical Society, 1949), 87–91. See my discussion of this below at pp. 211–12.



invasions.<sup>68</sup> This area was one of the few sites of the river in the vicinity of London which had beaches, and it seems to have been the site of naval activity throughout the late-Anglo-Saxon and medieval period. Whilst the archaeological finds indicating this activity can be seen on both sides of the river, concentrating around the areas of the two main fords, one of these distributions coincides with an area of Southwark which had the earliest church and parish dedicated to a Scandinavian royal saint, St Olave's. Moreover, Dickins has shown that Tooley Street, which runs for 1,100 metres south of and parallel to the Thames, and meets the roads of both the fording points, is derived from the name of a street incorporating the name *Sancti Olavi*.<sup>69</sup>

Written sources indicate that this Scandinavian garrison held some considerable authority over London throughout the eleventh century. As Nightingale has shown, the occurrence in documents from the eleventh century onwards of the Old Norse loanword *husting* for London's urban assembly, suggests that this urban council came under the control of the Scandinavian garrison during the reign of Cnut.<sup>70</sup> Previously, the term had only occurred in English records as a description for the assembly of Thorkell's Scandinavian forces at Greenwich in 1012 which executed Archbishop Ælfheah.<sup>71</sup> Scandinavians were evidently still in control of this council late in the eleventh century. A source from this period, the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*, records that a single official, Esgar (ON *Asgeirr*), was in control of London and its urban assembly at the time of the Norman Conquest.<sup>72</sup> The *Waltham Chronicle* adds to this the information that this Esgar was the son of one Athelstan, who was himself the son of Tovi pruða and the daughter of Osgot clapa.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Esgar was the direct descendant of two of Cnut's most prominent court officials, and the fact that Osgot owned at least one estate in the

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<sup>68</sup> Note that Æthelred made his last stand from within London's walls, and on his death it was London's counsellors who elected Edmund Ironside king and gave him sanctuary during Cnut's campaign. See ASC 1016 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 100–3)

<sup>69</sup> B. Dickins, "The Cult of S. Olave in the British Isles", *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 12 (1939): 67.

<sup>70</sup> See P. Nightingale, "The Origin of the Court of Husting and Danish Influence on London's Development into a Capital City", *English Historical Review* 102 (1987): 562–4.

<sup>71</sup> ASC 1012 C (O'Brien O'Keeffe, 96); "hiora hustinge".

<sup>72</sup> *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio of Guy, Bishop of Amiens*, lines 679–752, ed. F. Barlow (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999): 40–4.

<sup>73</sup> *Waltham Chronicle*, ch. 14 (Watkins & Chibnall, 24).

vicinity of London, at Lambeth, invites the speculation Osgot and Tovi may also have held authority over some part of the local administration of the Eastern Danelaw, as well as having responsibilities in the royal court.<sup>74</sup> Fragments of evidence consolidate this impression. Osgot seems to have been active in the local administration. A royal writ of 1044 × 1051 addresses Osgot in a position between Bishop Robert of London and the shire-reeve, Ulf.<sup>75</sup> He is given no title in this document, but this position is one in which the earl of the region would normally witness. The writ concerns estates in Middlesex owned by Westminster, and thus it seems to bear witness to Osgot's authority in both London and its environs. Additionally, the Waltham Chronicle states that Tovi was the "lord of the fee" for the area around Waltham.<sup>76</sup> This office did not exist in late Anglo-Saxon England, and it appears that the author of this monastic chronicle, writing in the thirteenth century, has used a title current in his age to explain an office that he knew Tovi had held. The details of the eleventh-century office are obscure, but it is clear that Tovi held some official role in the countryside in London's immediate hinterland. This office came to be known as that of the 'staller', a title of a type of high-ranking Scandinavian royal servant, most probably introduced by Cnut.<sup>77</sup>

Presumably led by the occurrence of Osgot clapa's name in the position most commonly assigned to the local earl or ealdorman in the royal writ of 1044 × 1051, Hart has assumed that the office held by Osgot was equated to that of the local provincial governor.<sup>78</sup> Mack's study of the landholdings of the stallers in Domesday Book lends some support to this hypothesis, and shows them to have been far wealthier than any other local official, and to have had incomes similar to some of the lesser earls. Esgar in 1065 had an annual income of £400, below the several thousands of pounds claimed by the monarch, the family of Earl Godwine, and the family of Earl Leofric, but above the £300

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<sup>74</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1042, (Darlington et al., 532–4), records that it was at this estate that Harthacnut died, during the marriage of Tovi to Osgot's daughter.

<sup>75</sup> S. 1121 (Westminster). An edition can be found in Harmer, *Writs*, no. 77, pp. 344 and 496–9.

<sup>76</sup> *Waltham Chronicle*, ch. 7 (Watkiss & Chibnall, 12); "dominus feodi".

<sup>77</sup> Larson, *The King's Household in England*, 146–52.

<sup>78</sup> This is assumed by C. Hart, "Athelstan 'Half-King' and his Family", *Anglo Saxon England* 2 (1973): 43–4.

income of Earl Siward.<sup>79</sup> This set him above the richest local official, a sheriff with an income of £160.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, Mack's study shows that the estates of these officials were scattered throughout the counties of the eastern Danelaw.<sup>81</sup> All stallers in 1065 held a few estates within Wessex, but the bulk of their landholdings concentrated in East Anglia, Essex and the surrounding counties.<sup>82</sup> It is tempting to perceive similar estate patterns behind the records of a writ of Edward the Confessor's which records that Osgot owned an estate near Bury St Edmunds, and his citation as a prestigious witness *innon Norfolk* to the will of Thurstan, son of Wine, which dates to 1043 × 1045.<sup>83</sup>

However, whilst the evidence indicates that the stallers and the garrison at London had jurisdiction over the city and its immediate hinterland, it is not clear that they held similar authority further northwards in the counties of the eastern Danelaw. There are indications that the stallers had some power in this region, but the evidence also suggests that there were limitations to their authority. The will of Thurstan, son of Wine, apports properties throughout Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex, but cites Osgot as a witness only in one of these counties. It is possible that even within Norfolk Osgot's citation as a witness may not have been due to his holding some form of jurisdiction there, but merely as a prominent landholder. The other witnesses named by the will are revealing. For Suffolk the will cites as witnesses the deacon Leofstan, the community at Bury St Edmunds, and six local landholders. For Cambridgeshire it cites the abbot and community of Ely Abbey, the abbot and the community of Ramsey Abbey, and four local landholders. For Essex it cites the son of Earl Ælfgar and five local landholders. Comparison of the witnesses here with another document of Thurstan's, a land agreement concerning estates in Essex from 1042 × 1043, shows the same trends.<sup>84</sup> His witness-list begins with the king, queen and major ecclesiastical officers, and then moves on to more local witnesses. Revealingly, no earl or staller is cited, but the text records the

<sup>79</sup> K. Mack, "The Stallers: Administrative Innovation in the Reign of Edward the Confessor", *Journal of Medieval History* 12 (1986): 126–7.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 127. Note that this official was particularly wealthy; the next highest shire-reeve had an income of £55.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>82</sup> The sole exception in the Domesday Book is a staller named Eadnoth, who uncharacteristically for his office, only held estates in Wessex.

<sup>83</sup> S. 1074 and S. 1531 (both Bury St Edmunds).

<sup>84</sup> S. 1530 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

witness of the shire-reeve Leofcild, four local landholders and *ealle þa þegenas on Eastsexan*. It appears that within many of the counties of the eastern Danelaw the principal secular figures whom Thurstan relied on to witness his land grants, and ensure that his will was enforced, were the landholding thegns.

Other sources suggest that, as in western Wessex, Cnut might have attempted to implant his Scandinavian followers into this body of men throughout East Anglia. There are numerous records of Scandinavian landholders who were introduced into the area by Cnut. In the Ramsey Chronicle, which dates in its present form to the fourteenth century but parts of which are based on lost eleventh-century records, we are told that Cnut alienated the estates of Englishmen in the region of the monastery and gave them to his “comrades in arms”.<sup>85</sup> In this context the text names a Thorkell, who held the estate of West Elsworth, Cambridgeshire. Then, after narrating a lengthy anecdote about a murder committed by Thorkell’s wife the text details estates in Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, which Abbot Æthelric (who held office 1017–34) either cheated or bought from unnamed (and on one occasion inebriated) Danes who fled the country.<sup>86</sup> By implication these estates would appear to be those which the text states that Cnut had alienated from the English aristocracy and used to settle his followers (or perhaps members of his military retinue) on. Moreover, amongst the documents transcribed into the Ramsey Chronicle is the will of a woman called *Thurgunt*, who gave land at Sawtry to the abbey.<sup>87</sup> This will was enforced by her husband, Thorkell of Harringworth, a figure about whom we know quite a lot. We can be certain that he was a recent Danish immigrant in the early eleventh century, as he is named *Turkil Danus* by the entries of Domesday Book for Huntingdonshire, and the Red Book of Thorney reports that after the Norman Conquest “he abandoned his estates, and gave his support to the Danes who were his kinsmen”, presumably during Sveinn Ástriðarson’s (Sweyn

<sup>85</sup> *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis* (Macray, 129); the text records the gift of these properties to “Dacis commilitonibus Regis”.

<sup>86</sup> *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis* (Macray, 140, 143, & 135). Note in addition that I disagree with F. Barlow’s suggestion in his *The English Church 1000–1066* (London: Longman, 1979), 39, n. 3 & 273–4, that the Thorkell whose wife committed the murder is to be identified with Earl Thorkell. It was an extremely common name, and the Ramsey record never once acknowledges such a connection. The Thorkell in question here was probably only a man of local significance.

<sup>87</sup> *Chronicon Abbatiae Rameseiensis* (Macray, 175–6).

Estrithsson) invasion of 1069–71.<sup>88</sup> We can also link his settlement in the area of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire (where he held extensive estates) directly to Cnut. This is explicitly stated in the twelfth-century foundation charter of Sawtry Abbey, and this document also records his involvement in the local administration on Cnut's behalf, reappportioning the fen to the south and east of the largest lake in East Anglia, Whittlesey Mere.<sup>89</sup> Additionally he is probably the *Turkil* who appears, alongside a *Turgund* who must be his wife, in the *Liber Vitae* of Thorney Abbey.<sup>90</sup> In its present form the *Liber Vitae* represents several stages of entries and additions copied up into a single list by a scribe in the twelfth century.<sup>91</sup> The primary stage represents a visit by Cnut to the abbey, which can be dated to 1020 × November 1021.<sup>92</sup> In addition to the king, queen and numerous ecclesiastics, a number of the earls were present, and beneath them in the list are a group of Scandinavian names, which Whitelock tentatively identified as the retinue of one of the Scandinavian earls.<sup>93</sup> These are followed by the names of local landholders from the years entered after the royal visit and onwards up to *c.* 1100 when the present copy was made. There has been some debate as to where the line can be drawn between the names of the Scandinavians who accompanied the royal visit and the names of the local landholders. Whitelock opted for a maximum figure and included all thirty-one Scandinavian names in the block. Gerchow subsequently corrected this to twenty-nine names, drawing the line at the first mention of an Anglo-Saxon name: Eadric. Neither of these seem to me to fit well with the form of the list. The initial twenty-eight Scandinavian names which follow Cnut's earls are predominantly short names with no mention of patronyms or clauses adding the name of the man's wife into the list. The twenty-ninth name, *Asbern hacessunu*, has a patronym, and the thirtieth, *Ðorð clapessunu*, has both that and

<sup>88</sup> Red Book of Thorney, edited in Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 2: 604; "sed postquam terram suam reliquit, et ad Danos qui ejus erant parentes transfretavit". Note that D. Whitelock, "Scandinavian Personal Names in the Liber Vitae of Thorney Abbey", *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research* 12 (1937–45): 140, and C. Hart, *The Early Charters of Eastern England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), 237, discuss this.

<sup>89</sup> *Cartularum Monasterii de Rameseia*, eds. W. H. Hart, & P. A. Lyons (London: Longman, 1884–93), 1: 163–4; see Hart, *Early Charters of Eastern England*, 236–8, for the original connection.

<sup>90</sup> See D. Whitelock, "Scandinavian Personal Names", 140, for the original connection.

<sup>91</sup> For the text see Gerchow, *Gedenküberlieferung*, 326–8.

<sup>92</sup> For the dating see *ibid.* 194–5.

<sup>93</sup> Whitelock, "Scandinavian Personal Names", 135–6 & 140.

the accompanying formula [and] *his wif*. From this point onwards such patronyms and formulas are common, and I would place the break between the two types of entry immediately before the name of *Asbern hacessunu*. Thorkell of Haringworth and his wife occur twenty-five entries after this break, and the preceding twenty-four names include the names of several men who can plausibly be identified as followers of Cnut placed by him into the East Anglian landscape. Four entries below *Asbern hacessunu* there are the names of one *Turkyl Hoge et uxor eius*, who must be the *Turkilus Hoche* who was recorded in the chronicle of Hugh Candidus as a wealthy benefactor of Peterborough Abbey, and a landholder based in Cambridgeshire.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, it is possible to establish some connection between him and Cnut's court, as he prominently attests a charter of Cnut's dated 1024.<sup>95</sup> The names *Browter* and *Turstan steallare* are entered together immediately after Thorkell Hoga's name in the *Liber Vitae*, and while the identification is far from certain they may be the *Broðor* (ON *Bróðor*) and *Þurstan* (ON *Þórsteinn*) found in the witness-lists of certain East-Anglian charters.<sup>96</sup> Finally, to this body of men we might also add the Thorkell and his wife Æthelgyth, who have been identified as most probably settlers from Scandinavia in the early eleventh century on the basis of the form of his name, and who made a donation of land in Norfolk to Bury St Edmund's before the Conquest.<sup>97</sup> If we can judge from his wife's name, this Thorkell appears to have married into an English family in the area.

There are similarities here to what we have observed in western Wessex. In both regions Cnut faced a serious threat to his authority and responded by the removal of the head of the local administration, and the implanting of his Scandinavian followers into the next level of the administration, that of the landholding thegns. It seems significant that while we lack evidence for the eastern Danelaw which would allow us to map the estates of these men against the urban boroughs of the

<sup>94</sup> *The Chronicle of Hugh Candidus, A Monk of Peterborough*, ed. W. T. Mellows (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 70.

<sup>95</sup> S. 961 (Abbotsbury). He attests this as the fifth of twenty *munstr*, amongst names which I have elsewhere connected to Cnut's royal court.

<sup>96</sup> Elsewhere in the reign of Cnut, Thurstan witnesses only the authentic S. 958 for Ely, and Broðor's name appears only in the witness-list appended to the spurious S. 980 for Bury St Edmunds.

<sup>97</sup> S. 1529 (Bury St Edmunds); edited by Whitelock, *Wills*, no. 36. See also Fellows-Jensen, *The Vikings and their Victims*, 11–12.

region, one of them, Thorkell hoga, was connected in an apparently official capacity to a mint. Alongside numerous estates in the record of his donations to Peterborough Abbey is reference to his gift of a *monetarius* in Stamford. The interpretation of this word has proved difficult, but it seems to refer to a moneyer or part of the proceeds of a mint.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps some indication that Thorkell hoga held some responsibility over the mint can be found in a single damaged coin from that borough whose inscription records that a moneyer *ÐVRCET* (a shortened version of the name Thorketil or Thorkell) operated there *c.* 1038 × 1040.<sup>99</sup>

### *Government of Mercia in Cnut's Reign*

The boundaries of Mercia in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries are also difficult to define sharply. A period of strong leadership under Ealdorman Ælfhere from 956 onwards saw the expansion of the region to the north into Cheshire, Shropshire, to the south into Gloucestershire, and as far west as Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. However, Ælfhere died in 983, and his son and successor Ælfric was disgraced and banished in 985.<sup>100</sup> Eadric streona profited from his downfall, and by 1007 held an overlordship described as the ealdormanry of all Mercia.<sup>101</sup> However, it is not certain how far he exerted his authority in the north of this region. We only have evidence for Eadric's involvement in the southern shires of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, and perhaps Worcestershire through a subordinate ealdorman, Leofwine. The northern areas of Mercia saw much of the fighting of 1015 and 1016, and during the course of the invasion Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Chester were ravaged and burnt.<sup>102</sup> It is possible that these areas

<sup>98</sup> P. Grierson, "Domesday Book, the Geld de Moneta and Monetarium: a Forgotten Minting Reform", *British Numismatic Journal* 55 (1986), especially p. 88, argues that it was normal for individuals or ecclesiastical institutions to own part of the proceeds of a mint in the eleventh century.

<sup>99</sup> The coin is catalogued as B. E. Hildebrand, *Anglosachsiska Mynt i Svenska Konghga Myntkabinettet Funna i Sveriges Jord* (Stockholm: Kongliga Myntkabinettet, 1881), no. 915, p. 370.

<sup>100</sup> A. Williams, "Principes Merciorum Gentis: The Family, Career and Connections of Ælfhere, Ealdorman of Mercia, 956–83", *Anglo Saxon England* 10 (1982): 165, especially n. 110.

<sup>101</sup> ASC 1007 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 92).

<sup>102</sup> ASC 1015–16 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 99–101).

remained outside the authority of an ealdorman throughout much of the eleventh century.<sup>103</sup>

In 1017 Cnut was forced to acknowledge Eadric's grip on this region, confirming his office as ealdorman.<sup>104</sup> However this arrangement was short-lived, and later that same year Eadric was executed in London by Cnut's command. From this point onwards, Cnut appears to have maintained the resident English nobility wherever they posed no problem, and simultaneously settled some of his most powerful Scandinavian followers into the upper echelons of the local administration, to ensure the continuance of his authority.

Ealdorman Leofwine had held the central ealdormanry of Mercia from around 994 onwards.<sup>105</sup> Despite the execution of his eldest son, Northman, alongside Eadric Streona in 1017, Leofwine seems to have presented no challenge to Cnut, and he continued in his office, witnessing charters at the royal court from 1019 to 1023.<sup>106</sup> He was active in Worcestershire during these years, presiding as ealdorman over the shire-court to decide the fate of disputed lands at Inkberrow, and witnessing a lease concerning land owned by Evesham Abbey.<sup>107</sup> As his attestations cease in 1023 we may conclude that he died at some point in that year. Hemming's account of the spoliation of Worcester places the earldom of the Norwegian Hákon concurrently in Worcestershire. In Hemming's account the arrival of *Comes Hacun et sui milites* is placed immediately after the invasion and laying waste of Worcestershire, which was part of the invasion campaign of 1015–16.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, Hákon witnessed royal charters as an earl from 1019 to 1026, and is given the title *comes Wireceastrescire* in a writ recording Cnut's grant of land to one Brihtwine.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, from 1016 to 1024 both he and Leofwine apparently held office over this ealdormanry. Modern historians have seen a complex pattern of interaction in the jurisdictions of these two figures, with either Hákon being demoted to some form of subordinate

<sup>103</sup> This would accord with the apparent ease with which Earl Leofric in the 1040s and 1050s extended his authority there. The governing structures of this region in the early eleventh century are entirely obscure.

<sup>104</sup> ASC 1017 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 103).

<sup>105</sup> See S. 891 (Old Minster, Winchester).

<sup>106</sup> S. 954 (Exeter), S. 956 (New Minster, Winchester), S. 984 (St Benedict of Holme) and S. 977 (Evesham).

<sup>107</sup> S. 1460 and S. 1423 (both Worcester).

<sup>108</sup> Hearne, *Hemings Chartularum*, 1: 251.

<sup>109</sup> S. 991 (Evesham).



official beneath Leofwine, until the latter's death, or Leofwine being promoted above this single ealdormanry to an overlordship of the whole of Mercia.<sup>110</sup> Neither of these hypotheses accords well with the evidence, and it is simpler to conclude that this central province of Mercia had for a period of eight years an ealdorman and an earl concurrently.<sup>111</sup> This seems to be indicated by the occurrence of Leofwine and Hákon together in two local records from Worcester's archive. In these, a lease by Evesham Abbey to one Æthelmær, which dates to 1016 × 1023, and a record of a dispute between Bishop Athelstan of Hereford and one Wulfstan Wulfric's son, which dates to 1010 × 1023, there is no clear pattern of seniority between Hákon and Leofwine.<sup>112</sup> In the record of the dispute mention is made of an earlier shire-court meeting at Worcester at which the bishop had put his case to the decision of both Leofwine and Hákon. In this record Leofwine is named first and given the title ealdorman, while Hákon is second and title-less. However, in the lease this situation is reversed with Hákon named alone in the document as presiding over the shire-court. Leofwine is present in the witness-list, and is given the title ealdorman, but appears beneath Hákon and another Danish earl from a neighbouring region, who both bear the title earl.<sup>113</sup>

Elsewhere in Mercia there is evidence of more wholesale tampering by Cnut with the traditional boundaries of the ealdormanries. Earl Eileifr (usually 'Eilaf' in English sources), another of Cnut's Danish followers was placed in an earldom centred on Gloucestershire. This Eileifr witnesses royal charters as an earl between 1018 and 1024.<sup>114</sup> Our earliest record connecting him with the area is a lease of St Peter's, Gloucester, from 1022, which he witnessed as *comes* alongside *tota ciuitas*

<sup>110</sup> See Williams, "'Cockles Amongst the Wheat': Danes and English in the Western Midlands in the First Half of the Eleventh Century', *Midland History* 11 (1986): 6–8, and Freeman, *NC*, 1: 418 & 738–9.

<sup>111</sup> As originally suggested by Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 75.

<sup>112</sup> S. 1423 and S. 1460 (both Worcester).

<sup>113</sup> There may be evidence of one of Hákon's followers settling in Herefordshire in the record of one *Durcal hunta* who took part in a law-suit concerning land in the shire in the reign of Cnut; the details of the record survive in S. 1462. The form of Thorkell's name identify him as most probably an immigrant from Scandinavia in the early eleventh century. See Fellows-Jenson, *The Vikings and their Victims*, 11, for discussion. Evidently he had married into a local family, and he and his wife (with the English name Leoflæd) still held land in the county in 1066.

<sup>114</sup> See S. 951 and S. 953 (both Exeter) as examples.

*Gloucestriae*.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, presumably in this official role and for the protection of his Mercian earldom, he is recorded in Welsh sources as ravaging the entire coastal region of South Wales in 1022 or 1023.<sup>116</sup> In 1024 he ceased to witness documents as an earl, and most probably returned to Denmark.<sup>117</sup> Hemming associates Eadric streona's activities in Mercia primarily with Gloucestershire, recording his seizure of three properties there, and his amalgamation of the shires of Gloucestershire and Winchcombeshire.<sup>118</sup> It is probable that this region contained many of Eadric's supporters and necessitated the introduction of a Danish earl after his execution in 1017.

Moreover, the only other area that our sources name as supporting Eadric also received a Danish earl. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's description of the battle of *Assandun* in 1016, it is the forces of the *Magonsetan* that followed Eadric in his flight from the battlefield.<sup>119</sup> This term referred to the populations of Herefordshire north of the River Wye, and those of southern Shropshire. Hemming's account states that immediately after the partition of England in the autumn of 1016 a Scandinavian named Hrani was imposed by Cnut on Herefordshire.<sup>120</sup> Five estates are detailed as those taken by Hrani from Worcester Abbey, all of which were in Herefordshire. Furthermore, he appears as the earl of the region in a record of a Herefordshire shire-court from Cnut's reign.<sup>121</sup> He occurs in the witness-lists of royal charters as an earl between 1018 and 1031, and is last recorded as present during Harthacnut's punishment of Worcester in 1041.<sup>122</sup>

The positions held by both of Ealdorman Leofwine's surviving sons, Eadwine and Leofric, in the local records of the Mercian shire-courts are suggestive of the superficial level to which the Danish invaders penetrated the local administration in Mercia. In the address of a local record from a Herefordshire shire-court, *Edwine þæs ealdormannes (sunu)*

<sup>115</sup> S. 1424 (St Peter's, Gloucester).

<sup>116</sup> Both the C and the B-texts of *Annales Cambrae*, ed. J. Williams (London, 1860), 23, record this.

<sup>117</sup> See below at pp. 232–6.

<sup>118</sup> *Hemungi Chartularum* (Hearne 1: 280).

<sup>119</sup> ASC 1016 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 102).

<sup>120</sup> *Hemungi Chartularum* (Hearne 1: 274).

<sup>121</sup> S. 1462 (Hereford); John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1041 (Darlington et al., 532).

<sup>122</sup> S. 951 (Exeter), S. 953 (Exeter), S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester), S. 962 (Old Minster, Winchester), S. 963 (Exeter), S. 971 (Exeter/Christ Church, Canterbury), and perhaps S. 956 (New Minster, Winchester); regarding S. 956, see also Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 61.

is named immediately after the Danish earl and before the list of local thegns, a place usually reserved in the formulae for the shire-reeve.<sup>123</sup> Similarly in two local records from Worcestershire shire-courts, Leofric is placed in this position, and is named as the shire-reeve of Worcestershire during Cnut's reign by as writ granting land to a Brihtwine.<sup>124</sup> While the Danes dominated the highest level of the administration, and neither son would become an earl alongside Hákon in Worcestershire, they did hold positions just below that level.<sup>125</sup> Leofric would inherit his father's office only in the late 1020s, after both Eileifr's and Hákon's departure from England.

### *Government of Kent in Cnut's Reign*

Following Eadmer's styling of Godwine as *Cantiæ comes*, it has been assumed that this region was under his jurisdiction throughout Cnut's reign.<sup>126</sup> However, Eadmer's account dates to the 1120s, and does not accord with more trustworthy evidence. Godwine's landholdings in Kent, as presented in Domesday Book, are highly unusual.

It should be noted that while Godwine and Harold held many estates in Kent and 135.58 sulungs there in total, only a tiny fraction of this (just 4 sulungs) were described by the Domesday inquest as part of

|      | Godwine's<br>total land<br>holdings      | Godwine's<br>non-comital<br>holdings | Gytha's<br>total<br>land<br>holdings | Gytha's<br>non-<br>comital<br>holdings | Harold's<br>total<br>land<br>holdings | Harold's<br>non-<br>comital<br>holdings | Collective<br>total land<br>holdings | Collective<br>total non-<br>comital<br>holdings |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Kent | 133.58<br>sulungs <sup>127</sup><br>(20) | 129.58<br>sulungs (18)               | 0                                    | 0                                      | 2<br>sulungs<br>(2)                   | 2 sulungs<br>(2)                        | 135.58<br>sulungs<br>(22)            | 131.58<br>sulungs<br>(20)                       |

### Kentish Landholdings of Godwine, Gytha and Harold in Domesday Book

<sup>123</sup> S. 1462 (Hereford).

<sup>124</sup> S. 1420 (New Minster, Winchester), S. 1460 (Worcester), and S. 991 (Evesham).

<sup>125</sup> Eadwine died in a foray against the Welsh: *Hemngi Chartularium* (Hearne 1: 278), and as corrected by Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 51, n. 44, Leofric's earliest secure attestation as earl is not until 1032.

<sup>126</sup> *Eadmeri Historia Novorum in Anglia*, ed. M. Rule (London, 1884), 5. This assumption was initially made by Freeman, *NC*, 1: 731.

<sup>127</sup> Note that the Domesday Book for Kent uses the local measurement of the sulung, rather than the hide.

the comital demesne. By 1053 Godwine seems to have owned many estates in Kent as personal property, but seems not to have held the main bulk of the lands assigned to the earl of this region. An incidental note included in an account that immediately predates the Domesday inquest, of possessions that once were part of the endowment of Canterbury, may identify who did hold the comital demesne during Cnut's reign. This account states that the *tertium denarium de comitatus* was held by Archbishop Eadsige and his predecessor, and that King Edward the Confessor subsequently gave this "third penny of the shire" to Godwine during the archiepiscopacy of Eadsige.<sup>128</sup> Thus, this document seems to preserve a memory of the collection by Archbishops Æthelnoth (1020–38) and Eadsige (1038–51) of the part of the profits of justice usually due to the earl. The inclusion of so much detail in the document, and the lack of a motive for forgery, argue for its legitimacy.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, I shall argue later that as part of Cnut's agreement with the English Church, he gave unprecedented freedoms to the archbishop of Canterbury and many of his secular supporters.<sup>130</sup> This archiepiscopal autonomy would appear to be part of that.

Are we to conclude that the archbishop operated in Kent in the role of a secular administrator at least until the early 1040s? If so, he may not have been the only secular authority in the county. Keynes has identified an Earl Sired, who appears in both the authentic witness-list appended to a dubious charter from Exeter's archive, and an authentic one from Old Minster, Winchester's archive from 1023.<sup>131</sup> In both documents his name is entered in the lists as the last earl present. This same earl reappears in the record of an estate that he sold to Archbishop Æthelnoth before 1038.<sup>132</sup> It appears easiest (as Keynes has suggested) to connect this shadowy figure with the *Sigeryd minister* who attests at the head of the thegns witnessing a charter in the Canterbury

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<sup>128</sup> The account survives as a single sheet in a late-eleventh-century hand, now London, British Library, Cotton MS. Augustus ii. 36. The text has been edited by D. C. Douglas, "Odo, Lanfranc and the Domesday Survey", in *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tat*, ed. J. G. Edwards, V. H. Galbraith and E. F. Jacob (Manchester, 1933), 51–2.

<sup>129</sup> The author cannot have expected that a forgery of claims to the earl's 'third penny' would result in its post-Conquest restitution to the house.

<sup>130</sup> See below at pp. 78–83.

<sup>131</sup> Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 76. The charters are S. 954 (Exeter) and S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester).

<sup>132</sup> S. 1389 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

archive, and with the powerful Kentish landowner Sired ‘the old’, and to conclude that a senior figure in Kent “was sometimes accorded a status commensurate with his local distinction”.<sup>133</sup>

Furthermore, there is evidence that a number of Scandinavian invaders settled in Kent after Cnut’s invasion. I have noted above that some infrequent witnesses to royal charters, such as the Kentish Thored and Halfdan, held land in and around Kent.<sup>134</sup> Other names can be added to the list of Scandinavians found in this region. The brief note of confraternity between the Kentish Thored and the monastic community at Christ Church, names him alongside two other Scandinavians: Kartoca and Thuri (ON Þórri?) as ‘brothers’ of the monks. In the case of Thored it is clear that this confraternity entry was made between Christ Church and a figure of local importance who subsequently made large donations to the community. Perhaps we should interpret the relationship between Kartoca, Thuri and the community in the same light. A Kentish marriage settlement from 1016 × 1020 names a *Kar* among its local witnesses.<sup>135</sup> This name is perhaps a garbled rendering of the name Karl, or alternatively this may be Kartoca appearing under just his epithet. Unfortunately, as the manuscript of this document no longer survives and it is known only from a copy published in the early eighteenth century, the original spelling of the name and condition of the text at this stage cannot now be checked.<sup>136</sup> Either way, the fact that this document styled this *Kar* as *þæs cingces cniht* indicates that he was operating (or had operated) as Cnut’s servant in some capacity.

To summarise, in Kent the archbishop appears to have operated in the shire- and hundred-courts in place of the local ealdorman up until the 1040s. Some influential English thegns, most probably associates of the archbishop, were also occasionally named as earls in royal documents and were clearly shown great respect in the royal court, but were in infrequent attendance on the king and the title may have only been nominal. A number of Scandinavians were also established as landholding thegns in the region, but any connection to Cnut’s practises in western Wessex and the eastern Danelaw is illusory. In Kent there is no evidence that these men frequently attended Cnut’s court, or operated as an organised clique within the region. With the sole exception

<sup>133</sup> S. 950 and S. 1461 (both Christ Church, Canterbury). Keynes, “Cnut’s Earls”, 76.

<sup>134</sup> See above pp. 17–19.

<sup>135</sup> S. 1461 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>136</sup> It is published as W. Somner, *A Treatise of Gavelkind* (London, 1726), 195–7.

of *Kar* there is nothing to suggest that these were men were closely connected to Cnut, or had a prominence above that of the local level. It is perhaps significant that two of these men, Halfdan and Thored, appear to have been accorded a great deal of respect among their Scandinavian peers. It may be that these men were beneath the social level of Earl Eiríkr of Northumbria, Earl Thorkell of East Anglia, and Earls Hákon, Eileifr and Hrani of Mercia, but considerably above that of the rank and file of the invaders who remained in England in 1018. As the earls received earldoms for their part in the invasion these men were given wealthy estates in Kent commensurate to their social status. Their appearance in Kent may represent nothing more than Cnut's willingness to demobilise such one-time allies in this region.

### *Concluding Remarks*

When we examine the evidence for Cnut's government in the localities of England an array of differing solutions to individual crises emerges. In western Wessex and the eastern Danelaw the seriousness of the threat to Cnut's rule necessitated the most radical alterations to the local political structure. Perhaps before the crises of 1020 and 1021 Cnut may have felt threatened by these areas and begun to place more trustworthy personnel there. Agemund was granted an estate in Dorset as early as 1019, and Bovi's witness to this document also places his interests in the region before Æthelweard's exile. We can only hypothesise that, similarly, the placing of powerful Danish landholders in the eastern Danelaw occurred before Thorkell's expulsion. After the removal of the earls, Cnut appears to have had no intention of replacing them. Under the Anglo-Saxon monarchs, many of the duties of the local administration had occasionally carried on in the earl's absence through his immediate subordinates who were landholding thegns. Through the placing of his trusted followers in the localities, Cnut appears to have made this a more permanent solution by flooding this social group with his supporters.

In Mercia and in the case of London, presumably to counteract the influence of elements loyal to Eadric Streona and Æthelred, more overt seizure of the political machine was required.<sup>137</sup> Cnut redrew the political

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<sup>137</sup> See below pp. 86–8, for discussion of London's strong support of Æthelred and Edmund Ironside, and the privations they suffered under Cnut.

boundaries of Mercia to break up any existing blocks of resistance, and he settled Danish earls across Eadric's former support-base. Around London, Cnut introduced a Scandinavian official, the staller, to suppress local opposition. As there seems to have always been several of these stallers, and they had additional roles in the royal court which required them to regularly remain in attendance of the king, they would appear to have been more accountable to the king than an earl.

Kent appears to have been placed in the hands of the archbishop, local figures of significant importance, and a handful of Scandinavians with little connection to the royal court.

No grand plan is apparent behind all this, and it appears that this system came into place haphazardly as a series of responses to local crises. Cnut seems to have given little of his attention to reorganising and systematising England's local government.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CNUT AND THE ENGLISH CHURCH

#### *Cnut and the English Church in the Existing Historiography*

More evidence of Cnut's interaction with the English Church survives than for any other king of Anglo-Saxon England. There are records of land grants and gifts of expensive objects to religious figures and houses, the foundation of monasteries and construction of new buildings within existing communities, the translation of saint-relics, and evidence of royal interference with certain ecclesiastical appointments. This wealth of material has had to be explained by modern historians. Freeman played down the exceptional character of the evidence of Cnut's gifts, describing them as merely representative of "the custom of the age".<sup>1</sup> More recently, others have conceded the exceptional nature of Cnut's actions, but these historians seem unwilling to portray Cnut as the driving force behind this, usually finding this instead in Archbishop Wulfstan.<sup>2</sup> To Bethurum it was clear that Cnut, a "brilliant young barbarian...put himself under Wulfstan's tutelage".<sup>3</sup> Barlow went further in an attempt to endorse this claim, observing (in error) that Cnut's patronage appears to wane after the archbishop's death in 1023.<sup>4</sup> Significant change in this viewpoint only occurred recently, in Lawson's study.<sup>5</sup> He opened discussion about the political benefits that Cnut could gain from the appeasement of the English church, and included in his study some mention of Cnut's selective patronage of

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman, *NC*, 1: 438.

<sup>2</sup> Although N. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984), 287–8, suggests that Archbishop Lyfing may have played an equal role to Wulfstan's. Additionally, Lawson, *Cnut*, 128–9, implies that Wulfstan, Lyfing and Cnut's wife Emma may have been instrumental in this patronage.

<sup>3</sup> D. Bethurum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1957), 63–4. Cf. D. Whitelock in the introduction to her *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1976), who with characteristic precision makes no such claims for a supposed relationship between Cnut and Wulfstan.

<sup>4</sup> Barlow, *English Church*, 41. Some of what follows in this chapter will demonstrate that Barlow's observation has no basis in fact.

<sup>5</sup> Lawson, *Cnut*, 117–60, especially 158–60.



powerful houses, and I should like to continue in this vein, but with an approach which prioritises a region-by-region assessment of the evidence, as used in the previous chapter.<sup>6</sup>

*Cnut's Interaction with the Archbishop of Canterbury*

When Cnut came to power he inherited his predecessor's archbishop, Lyfing, who had held office since 1013. The extant record of Æthelred's benefactions to this see is unimpressive, amounting to a note in the pre-Domesday inquest land survey, which was discussed above, that Æthelred donated the estates of Pimpe, Chinton and West Yalding, and a record in the obituary lists of Christ Church, Canterbury, of a gift of a church at Eastry and an estate at Sandwich.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, there is a great deal of evidence for Cnut's benefactions to this see. A grant of 1018 records Cnut's gift of woodland in Ticehurst, Sussex directly to Lyfing, and a writ, dating to 1017 × 1019, formally endorses the archbishop's liberties and privileges.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, this writ indicates that Cnut made a royal visit to Christ Church in 1017 × 1019. It states that as part of Cnut's endorsement of Lyfing's rights, Cnut laid these freedoms (presumably in a written form) on the altar at Canterbury in front of a public assembly. It was, presumably, at this public assembly that Cnut and three of his Danish followers entered into confraternity with the community of Christ Church. In the record of this Cnut is described in elevated terms as "our beloved worldly lord, and our spiritual brother in heaven".<sup>9</sup> It appears that Cnut was attempting to

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<sup>6</sup> Due to its relative independence from the southern English Church, the ecclesiastical community of Durham will not be discussed here. An assessment of their interaction with Cnut can be found below at pp. 125–6 and 134–5.

<sup>7</sup> The land-survey is edited in Douglas, "Odo", 51–2. A number of Christ Church's obituary-lists have been edited by Fleming "Christchurch's Sisters", and the record referred to here is at p. 127. Additionally, the records here seem to be confirmed by some details of a lost grant printed by R. Twysden in his *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores X...* (London, 1652), col. 2221. Note that I have not included here the 're-foundation' charter of 1002 (S. 914), as Brooks, *Early History*, pp. 257–8, has demonstrated that it is probably a forgery dating from Cnut's reign. Furthermore, I have not included S. 901 (Christ Church, Canterbury), a grant of 24 hides to Archbishop Ælfric in 1002, as the archbishop had to pay 50 talents for them. This seems to be a royal property-deal rather than a pious grant.

<sup>8</sup> S. 950 (Christ Church, Canterbury). S. 985 (Christ Church, Canterbury); the writ has been dated by its proximity to a confraternity entry in the Gospel Book in which it survives (London, Brit. Lib., Royal MS. I. D, ix, folio 43v and 44v).

<sup>9</sup> London, Brit. Lib., Royal MS. I. D, ix, fol. 43v; "Ðe is ure leofa hlaforð for worulde.

build support with the archbishop, and it is possible that we can see traces of a close relationship between Lyfing, the community at Christ Church and the royal court in these years.

Cnut's munificence to Canterbury can be perceived more clearly after Lyfing's death in 1020. In an authentic grant of 1020 to Lyfing's successor, Æthelnoth, Cnut extended the liberties he had endorsed for Lyfing.<sup>10</sup> In this document Cnut granted extensive liberties to the archbishop, specifying those of *griddbryce*, *hamsocn*, *forstal* and *flymenafyrmdæ*, the same liberties which were reserved in II Cnut 12 exclusively for the king unless he wished to "show especial honour to anyone".<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere in this same grant Cnut granted to Æthelnoth extensive judicial and financial rights over "as many thegns as I have granted to him".<sup>12</sup> These rights appear to have been extensive, apparently excluding all other authorities, and seem to have little precedent.<sup>13</sup> As discussed above, this grant seems to explain the statement of the late-eleventh-century land-survey of the community, that Æthelnoth and his successor held the revenues of justice normally collected by the ealdorman.<sup>14</sup> The granting to Æthelnoth of some revenues of the Kentish judicial system represented a sustainable gift of great wealth, and implies a degree of royal trust. To this Cnut added five estates recorded in Christ Church's obituary lists, and if the tradition evidenced in a late-eleventh-century spurious grant can be believed, the port of Sandwich and one of his royal crowns.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, the community at Christ Church received relics from Cnut. The translation of St. Ælfheah from London to Christ Church in 1023 is attested by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Osbern's *Trans-*

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ond ure gastlica broðor for gode". As discussed below, E. O. Blake in his edition of *Liber Eliensis*, 2: 79 (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1962), 148, records that immediately after the battle of *Assandun* Cnut removed the relics of St. Wendreda from that house. These were then believed to have been deposited in Canterbury. Perhaps we can speculate that they were given to Christ Church at this meeting in 1018.

<sup>10</sup> S. 986 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>11</sup> II Cnut, 12, Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, 1: 316; "butan he hwæne ðe furðor gemæðrian". Originally noted by Brooks, *Early History*, 290.

<sup>12</sup> Harmer, Writs no. 28, pp. 183 and 449–50; "ofer swa feala þegna swa ic him to lætan hæbbe".

<sup>13</sup> See discussion in *ibid.* 79–82 and 449–50.

<sup>14</sup> See text in Douglas, "Odo", p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> See edition in Fleming, "Christchurch's Sisters", 129–30, and S. 959 (Christ Church, Canterbury). Lawson, *Cnut*, 136–7, discusses Henry II of Germany's similar donation of a crown to a monastery, in order to show that this record of Cnut's gift is likely to be based in fact.

*latio*.<sup>16</sup> These both attest to the personal involvement of Cnut in the removal of the saint's body from London. Moreover, the community may have acquired an arm of St. Bartholomew from Cnut. Eadmer's *Historia Nouorum* states that Emma purchased and donated the relic to the community, with Cnut merely assenting to the gift.<sup>17</sup> However, this does not accord with the Christ Church obituary lists.<sup>18</sup> These do not record the relic as part of Emma's lengthy entry, but place it amongst the gifts given by Cnut.<sup>19</sup> Thus, it is possible that Eadmer or the elders of the house from whom he claimed to have heard the story of the acquisition were in error.<sup>20</sup>

Understanding the relationship between Cnut and Æthelnoth is crucial in assessing Cnut's interaction with the Church. Brooks in his study of the see of Canterbury focussed on the statement of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that Æthelnoth was dean and prior of Christ Church before becoming archbishop.<sup>21</sup> Thus, in Brooks' words, Æthelnoth's election was the achievement of the "ambition of every Benedictine community—the election of one of their own number in accordance with the Benedictine Rule".<sup>22</sup> However, Æthelnoth's election may not have been as free of royal interference as Brooks believed it to be. Some sources attest to Cnut and Æthelnoth's close association, and suggest that Cnut may have been directly involved in Æthelnoth's election.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> ASC 1023 CE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 104), D is fuller (Cubbin, 64), and Osbern's *Translatio Sancti Ælfegi*, edited by A. Rumble in Rumble, *Cnut*, 300–8.

<sup>17</sup> *Historia Nouorum*, chap. 2 (Rule, 107–8).

<sup>18</sup> Note that the manuscript of the obituary lists which preserves this information, that of London, Brit. Lib., MS Cotton Galba E iii, 2, fol. 32r–34r, dates to the thirteenth century. However, the same information regarding Cnut's donation of St Bartholomew's arm can also be found in an addition made to the *Textus Roffensis*, Rochester Cathedral Library MS. A. 3. 5, fol. 57v, in the early twelfth century (ed. Hearne, 37). P. Sawyer, *Textus Roffensis: Rochester Cathedral Library Manuscript A. 3. 5, Part I* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1957), 16, has dismissed this addition to the manuscript, stating that it is a digest of a copy of S. 959 (Christ Church, Canterbury). However, the information regarding the relic does not occur in any version of the charter. This addition to *Textus Roffensis* seems to be a combination of the charter and an unknown version of the obituary-list, and thus evidences the existence of both in the early twelfth century.

<sup>19</sup> Fleming, "Christchurch's Sisters", 129. See p. 126 for Emma's entry.

<sup>20</sup> *Historia Nouorum*, chap. 2 (Rule, 107).

<sup>21</sup> Brooks, *Early History*, 258.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Translatio Sancti Ælfegi* (Rumble, 300–8), notes their close association. This also appears to be attested by the details of a grant of Cnut's to Glastonbury (S. 966), and Bury St Edmund's legends concerning the foundation of their new church in 1032. See D. N. Dumville, *English Caroline Script and Monastic History: Studies in Benedictinism, AD 950–1030* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), 31–4, for details.

Osbern's *Translatio* includes the statement that Cnut and Æthelnoth's intimacy originated in the fact that Æthelnoth had 'anointed him'.<sup>24</sup> Freeman concluded that this might refer to a ceremony of confirmation at Cnut's election in Southampton in 1016.<sup>25</sup> Alternatively, it may have occurred at the peace settlement at Oxford in 1018, or perhaps represent part of the ceremony of confraternity which occurred c. 1018. Whatever the occasion may have been, the date of the ceremony would appear to have been before Æthelnoth's election in 1020, and thus the connection between Cnut and Æthelnoth predates his archiepiscopate. Furthermore, Æthelnoth's family connections are revealing in this context. John of Worcester recorded that Æthelnoth was "the son of the nobleman Æthelmær", who can be identified with Ealdorman Æthelmær of western Wessex.<sup>26</sup> Although John does not actually identify him here as a *dux* (the standard translation he uses for ealdorman), he does refer to Æthelmær *dux* a few lines above the entry naming Æthelnoth, and thus the repetition of the term in this annal is redundant.<sup>27</sup> I have discussed above the close association of another member of this family, Odda, with Cnut.<sup>28</sup>

However, if we accept that the Ealdorman Æthelweard exiled in Easter 1020 was also a member of this family, then the timing of Æthelnoth's elevation also seems significant. He was appointed archbishop in November 1020, six months after the expulsion of Æthelweard. The promotion of a prominent member of a family, which had so recently mustered resistance against Cnut, to the archbishopric of Canterbury may have been a calculated move to appease elements of that kin-group who remained in power. This had the advantage of demonstrating to these members of the kin-group that Æthelweard's fall from grace would not affect them all, and it placed Æthelnoth in a position of power at some geographical remove from western Wessex and any potential pockets of resistance.

Although Eadsige did not become archbishop until after Æthelnoth's death in 1038, Cnut seems to have promoted him as an archiepiscopal candidate throughout the 1030s, and so discussion of his career is included here. Before becoming archbishop Eadsige had been a *presbiter*,

<sup>24</sup> *Translatio Sancti Ælfgi* (Rumble, 300); "Ægelnothus... regi propterea quod illum sancto crismate liuisset ualde acceptus".

<sup>25</sup> Freeman, *NC*, 1: 692.

<sup>26</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1020 (Darlington et al., 506).

<sup>27</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1017 (Darlington et al., 504).

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 30–1 above.

a priest working within the royal household. In this capacity he attests at the head of the three men with this title in a royal grant of 1024.<sup>29</sup> In the early 1030s Cnut seems to have given him a role within the monastic community of St. Martin's, Canterbury, and after having served a year or two as a monk he was elevated to a *chorepiscopus* alongside the aged Æthelnoth.<sup>30</sup> At the same time Cnut enabled Eadsige to enter into a complex property arrangement with Christ Church, by providing him with a bookland property base within Kent. This gave him a local support base, and provided an incentive for Christ Church to accept him as their next archbishop.<sup>31</sup>

This may also be the place to discuss Cnut's interaction with the monastic community in Canterbury which did not lie under the archbishop's direct control, that of St Augustine's. The relationship between the two monastic houses of Christ Church and St Augustine's is somewhat obscure. It lay under the control of the archbishop, but whereas the archbishop concurrently held his archiepiscopal office as well as the abbacy of Christ Church, St Augustine's had their own abbot, and thus some measure of independence.<sup>32</sup> This community appears to have had an especially close relationship with Cnut. William Thorne, a late-fourteenth-century chronicler of St Augustine's, records Cnut's patronage of the house, and his appointment of its monks to high ecclesiastical offices.<sup>33</sup> Confirmation of this relationship may be extant in a grant of liberties to the community.<sup>34</sup> The grant is spurious in its extant form, but possibly contains a memory of an accurate historical tradition. Furthermore, late-eleventh-century records from this house assert that Cnut translated the relics of St. Mildred from Thanet to St. Augustine's. However, doubt has been cast over their authentic-

<sup>29</sup> S. 961 (Abbotsbury). Note that the ASC 1038 F (Baker, 115), and the spurious S. 981 (Christ Church, Canterbury), also identify him as a *presbiter*.

<sup>30</sup> See Brooks, *Early History*, 295, for details of this. See also the role he is given in two of Cnut's writs issued in 1035, S. 987 and S. 988 (both Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>31</sup> See Brooks, *Early History*, 295, for details of the affair.

<sup>32</sup> Very little is known of the details of the interaction between the two communities. The little that has been discerned concerns mainly matters of palaeographical interaction. See Brooks, *Early History*, 90–1, for general discussion, and T. A. M. Bishop, *English Caroline Minuscule* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), xxi–xxiii, and Dumville, *English Caroline*, 88–91, for discussion of the interaction of the scripts of these two houses.

<sup>33</sup> *Chronica Willelmi Thorne*, ch. 4, in Twysden, *Historiae Anglicanae*, col. 1782.

<sup>34</sup> S. 989 (St. Augustine's, Canterbury). Note that a further grant of some rights by Cnut to the community is indicated by the specification in a writ of Edward the Confessor (S. 1091), which endorses their freedoms as they were in the days of King Cnut.

ity by the counter claims to the same relics, of a rival Canterbury house, St. Gregory's.<sup>35</sup> I do not intend to rehearse the details of this lengthy debate here. It is suffice to say that there is nothing improbable concerning Cnut's endorsement of the translation. Furthermore, some confirmation of the authenticity of the claims of St Augustine's can probably be found in the fact that the claims of the community of St. Gregory's appear even to have been doubted by their founder Archbishop Lanfranc.<sup>36</sup>

*Cnut's Interaction with the Archbishop of York*

In the archiepiscopal see at York Cnut inherited Archbishop Wulfstan, who had held the office since 1002 in plurality with that of Worcester. Similar to his counterpart in Canterbury, Wulfstan appears to have enjoyed a close working relationship with the new regime. The *Liber Eliensis* states that he was a friend and adviser to both Æthelred and Cnut, and in this capacity he appears to have written and compiled legislation for both kings.<sup>37</sup> Much of Cnut's lawcodes of 1018 and 1020 are formulaic and depend heavily on Edgar's lawcodes, but the prologues have no extant source and presumably are Wulfstan's own composition. The wording of these indicates Wulfstan's personal support for Cnut and his regime.<sup>38</sup> The admonition that "foremost" the people must hold to a single Christian faith and "love King Cnut with due loyalty", is an explicit statement of Wulfstan's endorsement of Cnut's regime.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the adverbial phrase, *mid rihtan*, is present in the 1018 text, and sharpens the meaning by stressing the legitimacy of the new regime.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, this earlier version of the prologue exhorts its audience in Cnut's name to "zealously observe

<sup>35</sup> The details of the dispute can be found in Harmer, *Writs*, 191-7, and Rollason, *Mildreth Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), 58-68.

<sup>36</sup> Initially noticed in *ibid.*, 68.

<sup>37</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, 2: 87 (Blake, 156).

<sup>38</sup> For Wulfstan's authorship of Æthelred's and Cnut's legislation see D. Whitelock, "Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut", *English Historical Review* 63 (1948), and "Archbishop Wulfstan, Homilist and Statesman", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4th Series 24 (1942), and P. Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century*. Vol. 1, *Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 345-66.

<sup>39</sup> See A. Kennedy, "Cnut's Law Code of 1018", *Anglo Saxon England* 11 (1983): 72-3, and Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, 1: 194-6 & 278-80, for the texts.

<sup>40</sup> Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, 1: 278.

the laws of Edgar".<sup>41</sup> To an audience accustomed to Wulfstan's rhetoric this invocation of Edgar's laws held sharply defined connotations. In Wulfstan's compositions from the final years of Æthelred's reign, the reign of Edgar was nostalgically portrayed as a golden age.<sup>42</sup> To connect Cnut's reign at its inception to that of Edgar's was a politically charged statement, signalling a return to peace, prosperity, and the archbishop's acceptance of Cnut's claim to the throne. Moreover, there is evidence that Wulfstan publicly preached his political acceptance of Cnut. Cnut's letter to the English people of 1019 × 1020 survives only in a series of manuscript leaves prepared for Wulfstan and annotated in a hand identified as his.<sup>43</sup> Here the letter forms part of a set with three homilies chiefly concerned with the state of the ideal Christian nation. The letter itself seems to form part of the homiletic set, providing an example of model Christian kingship. Furthermore, it has been rewritten for public preaching, ending in an *AMEN* of the same form as those found at the base of each preceding homily.

After Wulfstan's death in May 1023 Ælfric Puttoc succeeded to York. Little information survives about this figure. John of Worcester noted that previous to this office he served as the prior of a monastic house in Winchester.<sup>44</sup> I have discussed below Cnut's close association with the houses at Winchester, especially New Minster, and it is plausible that Cnut was behind Ælfric Puttoc's advancement.<sup>45</sup> It must be noted that he is not identifiable with any Ælfric in the lists of the communities of the Old Minster or the New Minster, extant in the New Minster *Liber Vitae*.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, later records from both York and Winchester,

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.; "Eadgares lagan geornlice folgian".

<sup>42</sup> Examples of this are common in Wulfstan's writings. See for example Whitelock, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, 26, n. 39, where one manuscript adds to the statement that the laws have deteriorated, the statement "since Edgar died". See Whitelock, "Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut", 442–3, for a discussion of the occurrences of Edgar's name in Wulfstan's writings.

<sup>43</sup> Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, 1: 273–5. A facsimile of the manuscript is available in N. Barker, *The York Gospels: a facsimile with introductory essays by Jonathan Alexander, Patrick McGurk, Simon Keynes and Bernard Barr* (London: Roxburghe Club, 1986), fols. 158r–160v. See also N. R. Ker, "The Handwriting of Archbishop Wulfstan" in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. P. Clemoes & K. Hughes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 315–31, especially 330–1, for the identification of the annotator.

<sup>44</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1023, (Darlington et al., 508); "Wintoniensis prepositus".

<sup>45</sup> See below pp. 95–7.

<sup>46</sup> See Keynes, *Liber Vitae*, 88–9 and compare 90 and 119–20. There is no person of this name recorded at the Old Minster in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries,

which identify Ælfric Puttoc as *Wintoniensis prepositus*, cannot be shown to be independent of John of Worcester's narrative.<sup>17</sup> However, in his discussions of the eleventh century John of Worcester is rarely very inaccurate. Moreover, the fact that Ælfric Puttoc held the see of Worcester in plurality with York during 1040–1 and thus was enumerated among the bishops of John's own house, makes this even less likely to be an error. Thus, John's unsubstantiated record may be correct. As archbishop, Ælfric Puttoc received Cnut's support and appears to have been instrumental in the assertion of royal authority over the north of England in the 1030s.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, from at least 1018 Cnut appears to have had a close relationship with both of the archbishops. In the case of Canterbury, evidence survives to show that Cnut bought this support with gifts and extensive freedoms. In York the process by which Cnut built up bonds between himself and Wulfstan is obscure, but we can see the archbishop adding legitimacy to Cnut's regime in documents intended to be preached to the populace in general. This canvassing of support from the archbishops appears not to accord with the aggressive way in which Cnut eliminated potential sources of opposition among the secular elite, but it must be understood as a short-term expedient. Brooks has noted that Æthelred's appointments to the archbishoprics were men "of venerable

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and all possible candidates in the New Minster community were dead by 1030 × 1031. There is no obvious reason why he does not appear in these lists. There is evidence that members of the late Anglo-Saxon aristocracy sometimes held two names or took another at confirmation or upon the reception of ecclesiastical office. John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1005 (Darlington et al., 456–7) records that Archbishop Lyfing had the name Ælfstan at some stage before he became a bishop. Furthermore, *Liber Ehusensis* 2: 80 (Blake, 149) includes a note about an abbot of Ely from c. 1019 named *Oschitellus alio nomine Leofinnus appellatus* (note that Whitelock, "Dealings", 74, has noted that this is probably a misplaced reference to a bishop of Dorchester rather than an abbot of Ely). Thus, Ælfric Puttoc may occur in the lists for one of the communities at Winchester, but under an unknown name.

<sup>17</sup> This is noted in a chronicle of the archbishops of York written in the early twelfth century and the *Liber de Hyda* written in the fifteenth-century. Note that both of these texts use terminology for Ælfric Puttoc's office which appears to be directly copied from John of Worcester's account, and thus neither is an independent record. See *Liber Monasterii de Hyda; Comprising a Chronicle of the Affairs of England, from the Settlement of the Saxons to the Reign of Cnut and a Chartulary of the Abbey of Hyde, in Hampshire*, ed. E. Edwards (London, 1866), 279, for the New Minster text. Furthermore, the chronicle from York contains an entry immediately above that on Ælfric Puttoc, which is demonstrably copied from John of Worcester's account. Compare Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, 2: 342, with John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1020 (Darlington et al., 506–7) on the construction of the church at *Assandun*.

<sup>18</sup> I discuss this below at pp. 132–4.



age".<sup>49</sup> Indeed, if Lyfing was 30 years old at the time he became abbot of Chertsey in 988, and if Wulfstan was at least 30 when he ceased to be an abbot (of an unknown house) and became bishop of London in 996, then in 1017 they were 59 and at least 51 years old respectively. Both would die in the first few years of Cnut's regime: Lyfing in 1020 and Wulfstan in 1023. Thus, Cnut, having won the support of both archbishops, had only to bide his time before death would permit him to legitimately involve himself in ecclesiastical affairs and replace the archbishops with his own supporters.

*Cnut's Interaction with the Church in the Eastern Danelaw*

The Church in this region of England appears to have suffered depredations by Cnut in the early years of his reign, in what appears to be an organised effort to humble and reduce the coffers of the major ecclesiastical institutions in the area. This region had shown staunch allegiance to Æthelred and then Edmund Ironside during Sveinn Tjúguskegg's and Cnut's invasions. Therefore, in 1017, the bishoprics and monasteries of the eastern Danelaw must have been filled with men promoted by Æthelred or Edmund, who represented a wealthy and organised element of potential resistance to Cnut's regime.

London's clergy were particularly closely associated with Æthelred and his children, and thus suffered badly during these depredations. Bishop Ælfhun of London was identified by John of Worcester as the tutor of the *æthelings* Edward and Alfred, and in 1013 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that he escorted them to safety in Normandy.<sup>50</sup> He did not return and his successor Bishop Ælfwig was consecrated in February 1014.<sup>51</sup> During Ælfwig's episcopate London gave strong support to Edmund Ironside as a royal candidate, and Ælfwig himself must have played an influential role in the assembly of 1016 in London which elected Edmund to the kingship. Ælfwig survived until 1035, and Cnut appears to have begun reducing the wealth of this potential opponent almost immediately after his conquest. The ecclesiastical communities of London must have paid a large proportion of the punitive levy of

<sup>49</sup> Brooks, *Early History*, 278–9.

<sup>50</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1013, (Darlington et al., 474). ASC 1013 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 98).

<sup>51</sup> ASC 1014 D (Cubbin, 59).

£10,500 that Cnut demanded from the city in 1018.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the Domesday Book informs us of another large exaction from the bishopric, the 30 hide manor of Southminster, Essex, which was removed by Cnut and not returned until after 1066.<sup>53</sup> As well as alienating wealth and estates Cnut also removed a potential source of wealth from the monastery of St Paul's, London. This was the resting place of the relics of St. Ælfheah, who had been martyred in 1012 by forces under the command of Earl Thorkell, and whose cult appears to have developed quickly after his death. As noted above, Cnut was instrumental in the removal of the relics of St. Ælfheah from London to Christ Church, Canterbury, in 1023.<sup>54</sup> Pilgrims must have quickly reappeared at religious communities after the cessation of hostilities in 1017, and the loss of the relics of a popular saint would have reduced the finances of St. Paul's considerably. Furthermore, Cnut's patronage of a neighbouring house, outside of the city, appears to be an attempt to crush any aspects of the cult of St Ælfheah which remained associated with St Paul's. The monastic community at Westminster, outside of London and a few miles upriver, was small during Æthelred's reign. Æthelred showed relatively little interest in Westminster, granting only two small parcels of land to the monastery.<sup>55</sup> However, Cnut's benevolence to this house was much greater. The archive of this house is now much dispersed and obscure, but details extracted from it in the fifteenth century by its chronicler, John Flete, provide some information regarding Cnut's interaction with Westminster. In this digest Flete records that Westminster preserved the tradition that Cnut had donated to them an arm of St. Ciriacus, a relic of St. Edward, king and martyr, a finger of St. Ælfheah, and

<sup>52</sup> ASC 1018 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 104).

<sup>53</sup> DB, ii, 10r. Furthermore, it has been argued by Kelly that the list of naval-dues owed by the bishop of London and the community at St Paul's, now preserved in S. 1458a, is a record of the entire landholdings of those institutions c. 1000 (S. Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's, London*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 98). Of the fifteen identifiable estates held by the community c. 1000, four were in private hands by 1066 and remained so; significantly one of these (Tollington) was held by a man of the king. A further two estates were in private hands and were seized back by the community by 1086. Of the eleven identifiable estates held by the bishop c. 1000, two estates were in private hands by 1066 and remained so, and one was in private hands and was seized back by the community by 1086. See Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, 195–201 for details. Some of these may also have been extracted during Cnut's reign.

<sup>54</sup> See above at pp. 79–80.

<sup>55</sup> These are the 2 hides granted in S. 903 (Westminster), and a further 5 hides as part of a general confirmation of estates in S. 894 (Westminster). Note that the abbey paid 100 *mancuses* of gold for the 'gift' in S. 903.

also some bones of St. George.<sup>56</sup> It is the finger of St. Ælfheah that seems most significant. Osbern's account of the translation does not mention the removal of any corporeal relics from the corpse of the saint. Unless Flete was mistaken (and I cannot see why), it appears that Cnut having removed the saint from St. Paul's extracted a substantial relic from the corpse and deposited it in the neighbouring monastery at Westminster. Such a gift would have ensured the destruction of the cult of St Ælfheah within London's walls. It redirected whatever vestiges of the pilgrimage route (and the wealth that accompanied it) which had previously run into London, some 3 miles up the Thames to Westminster.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, Cnut tightened his grip on Westminster around 1023. After the death of the previous abbot in the early 1020s, one Wulfnoth took over the abbacy. He appears initially in a charter from 1023, and perhaps we can date his advancement to that year.<sup>58</sup> Flete states that Wulfnoth was Cnut's choice, and his wording suggests that Cnut interceded to guarantee the success of this candidate.<sup>59</sup> If Cnut did intercede on Wulfnoth's behalf then probably it was to ensure that a supporter of his was placed in a crucial position to ensure the allegiance of Westminster and the continued financial pressure on London.

Cnut's depredation of London appears to have ceased and perhaps even reversed by the early 1030s. An extant royal writ, whose witnesses are dateable to 1033–35, endorses the judicial and financial rights of St Paul's.<sup>60</sup> It has several elements that are post-Conquest in their form, but is probably a later copy of an authentic document.<sup>61</sup> Another possible record of this change of fortune can be found in a late thirteenth-century copy of a record of the dues of the church at Lambourn,

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<sup>56</sup> *The History of Westminster Abbey* by John Flete, ch. 14, ed. J. A. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 70.

<sup>57</sup> It appears that St Paul's retained some non-corporeal relics of St Ælfheah, and that the removal of the saint's body did not completely stop pilgrimage to the site. The Ramsey Chronicle records that Bishop Ælfward of London (1035–44) went to Ramsey after his retirement. Among the relics he brought with him was a blood-stained cowl of St Ælfheah's, probably abstracted from St Paul's. See *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis*, ch. 93 (Macray, 158).

<sup>58</sup> S. 959 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>59</sup> Robinson, *History of Westminster Abbey*, ch. 18 (81); "et postmodum mediante Cnutone Anglorum rege ejusdem loci abbas ordinatus est".

<sup>60</sup> S. 992 (St. Paul's, London). See Harmer, *Writs*, 468–9, for the dating of the witnesses.

<sup>61</sup> See Harmer's discussion of the problems of this text and her endorsement of its authenticity in *Writs*, 239–40.

Berkshire, in one of the muniment books of St. Paul's Chapter House, which claims to have been copied from a Missal from Lambourn which was already old in the thirteenth century.<sup>62</sup> The late thirteenth-century copyist of the record appended to this a note that Cnut had endorsed the document and granted the church of St. Michael at Lambourn to the community of St. Paul's. However, London may have remained a cause for concern, and after the death of Bishop Ælfwig early in 1035 Cnut placed a strong supporter of his regime, Abbot Ælfweard of Evesham, in the see.<sup>63</sup>

The East-Anglian monasteries were also staunch supporters of Æthelred and Edmund Ironside during Cnut's invasion, and it would be surprising if the punishments carried out on London were not also applied, in some measure, to the ecclesiastical institutions in that region. Ely had close ties with Æthelred's dynasty and its obituary-lists show that many of the landed aristocracy of the region had fought and died for Edmund at *Assandun*.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Ramsey had close connections with Æthelred's family. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that its abbot in 1016, as well as his predecessor (who had been elevated to the see of Dorchester), were among the English casualties at the battle of *Assandun*.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, when the author of the Ramsey Chronicle copied (or translated) some form of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's entry concerning the battle, he added the information that Eadnoth and Wulfsig died alongside "many other ordained men", implying that numerous members of the community fought alongside Edmund Ironside's forces in 1016.<sup>66</sup> Some ecclesiastics from this region had enjoyed particularly close associations with Æthelred's family. Abbot Ælfsige of Peterborough was close to Æthelred's personal circle, escorting Emma to safety in

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<sup>62</sup> London, St. Paul's Cathedral Library, Chapter House Book W.D. 16, p. 36v (edited and translated by A. J. Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 240–1 & 490–3. Although note the witness-list of the document appears garbled, and elements of it clearly date from the late eleventh century.

<sup>63</sup> See *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham ad annum 1418*, chap. 3, ed. W. D. Macray (London, 1863), 83, and *Translatio Sancte Odulfi*, edited by the same author in the same volume at pp. 313–4.

<sup>64</sup> Calendar in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS. O. 2, I (edited by B. Dickens, "The Day of Byrhtnoth's Death and Other Obits from a Twelfth-Century Ely Kalender", *Leeds Studies in English* 3 (1937): 21); "Obiit... plurimi amici nostri qui interempti sunt a pirates".

<sup>65</sup> ASC 1016 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 103).

<sup>66</sup> *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis*, ch. 69 (Macray, 118); "multis aliis religiosis personae".

1013.<sup>67</sup> Hugh Candidus records his three year exile with Emma, and his return to his office in 1017.<sup>68</sup>

However, there are few records of any depredations; perhaps only the record in the *Liber Eliensis* records that Cnut plundered Ely of the relics of St Wendreda immediately after the battle of *Assandun*.<sup>69</sup> What is notable is that while the abbots of East Anglian communities had enjoyed royal favour under Æthelred, they are almost absent from Cnut's court. During Æthelred's reign Abbot Ælfsige of Ely witnessed almost every royal charter in a position denoting importance.<sup>70</sup> A period of confusion followed his death in 1016 or 1019, during which there appears to have been a vacancy in the office for some years, filled by a Leofwine who resigned his abbacy in disgrace after three subsequent years, went to Rome, returned and died.<sup>71</sup> All this appears to have inhibited the inclusion of the abbot in royal charters. His successor Leofric was elected in 1022, but attests only sporadically in Cnut's charters. He appears fifth among the ten abbots in a charter of 1019 from Exeter's archive.<sup>72</sup> After this, he appears in the witness-lists of two further documents, both of which are from East Anglian houses and date to *c.* 1022, and in these his appearance probably indicates his local importance to the estate concerned rather than his prominence, or even presence, at the royal court.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, a royal charter of 1022 survives which grants Leofric land at Wood Ditton, Cambridgeshire, but this cannot be taken to indicate Cnut's benevolence towards him as the grant specifies that the estate was given in exchange for an estate at nearby Cheveley which Cnut wanted.<sup>74</sup> This was a property-transaction rather than a pious gift. Similar patterns can be observed for the abbot of Thorney. Abbot Godeman of Thorney infrequently witnesses Æthelred's charters from 990 to 1013.<sup>75</sup> He rose to prominence in charters of 1012 and 1013, attesting in these third of the seven abbots present and fourth of six, respectively.<sup>76</sup> This sudden rise to prominence does not continue into

<sup>67</sup> ASC 1013 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 98).

<sup>68</sup> *Chronicle of Hugh Candidus* (Mellows, 48).

<sup>69</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, 2: 79 (Blake, 148).

<sup>70</sup> In Æthelred's reign the abbot of Ely was usually ranked second, third or fourth amongst his peers. See Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxi.

<sup>71</sup> For discussion of the details of this affair see Blake, *Liber Eliensis*, 411–12.

<sup>72</sup> S. 954 (Exeter).

<sup>73</sup> S. 980 (Bury St. Edmund's), S. 984 (St. Benedict of Holme).

<sup>74</sup> S. 958 (Ely).

<sup>75</sup> See Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxi.

<sup>76</sup> See S. 927 (Abingdon), and S. 931 (Thorney).

Cnut's reign, and is difficult to even identify him in the royal court, as only one attestation of the abbot of Thorney can be found in Cnut's reign.<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, a squabble between the abbot of Ramsey and the monks and then the bishop, which raged between 1016 and *c.* 1021, and resulted in the abbot's resignation, pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and return to live as a hermit, completely inhibits our ability to perceive any patterns in his potential interaction with Æthelred and Cnut in this early period. His successor, Abbot Æthelstan, does appear in the witness-lists of three of Cnut's charters.<sup>78</sup> However, these are the same three East-Anglian charters in which the abbot of Ely appears. Thus, Abbot Æthelstan is probably also present as a witness with only local importance. Finally, Abbot Ælfsige of Peterborough should be noted as the exception to this trend. He held his office from 1007 to 1042, and as noted above accompanied Æthelred's wife Emma into exile, returning after the conquest, and resuming his frequent attendance at court, and actually increasing his prominence under Cnut.<sup>79</sup> However, he is probably the exception that proves the rule. Just as Emma had made the transition from Æthelred's regime to Cnut's by marrying the invader, so her close associates and members of her retinue made a similar transition and returned to court safe under her protection.

What can be made of this silence of the sources? It is possible that this indicates that the abbots of this region fell from favour in royal circles or were excluded from the court. Certainly, there appears to have been little royal zeal for pious munificence in the region. However, it is difficult to assess whether this was caused by Cnut's wrath (as it certainly was in London), or whether the precise terms under which Earl Thorkell held the region from Cnut inhibited direct contact between the king and the monastic communities in the locality.<sup>80</sup> However, Thorkell only held office until November 1021 and most of these abbots were absent for the whole of Cnut's reign. As commented on above, Thorkell's governing structures were superseded by the implantation of Cnut's close associates into the social strata of the wealthy landholding

<sup>77</sup> S. 977 (Evesham).

<sup>78</sup> S. 958 (Ely), S. 980 (Bury St. Edmund's) and S. 984 (St. Benedict of Holme).

<sup>79</sup> See S. 954 (Exeter) and S. 977 (Evesham), where he attests second and first amongst his peers.

<sup>80</sup> More will be said later about this overmighty and ambitious follower of Cnut. The nature of his power in Scandinavia and his experience as a warleader in 1015–16 makes it likely that he had a greater degree of independence from Cnut's authority than many of the other earls and ealdormen. See pp. 203–19 below.

thegns, and so, in accordance with this consolidation of power in the region, we might have expected Cnut to have tried to draw the abbots of this region nearer to him in the period after 1021. Perhaps their absence from the witness lists of his charters does indicate a prolonged period of disgrace.

There is evidence of some form of reconciliation between Cnut and the ecclesiastical institutions of the eastern Danelaw from 1020. This year saw the foundation of a stone church at *Assandun* to commemorate the dead.<sup>81</sup> The D-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle informs us that the consecration of the building was a public ceremony attended by Cnut, Earl Thorkell, Archbishop Wulfstan, other bishops, “and also abbots and many monks”.<sup>82</sup> The investment of royal wealth in a construction on a site where so many of the members of the religious communities of the region had died in 1016, seems intended to generate public support for the king in this area, and perhaps signal the end of Cnut’s depredations.<sup>83</sup> At around the same time Cnut began to visit the larger monastic communities in the region. In either 1020 or 1021 he visited Thorney Abbey and his name was entered into the *liber vitae* of the community.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the names of Archbishop Æthelnoth, Bishop Æthelric of Dorchester and five of Cnut’s Scandinavian earls were also entered into the list during this visit. The occasion seems to have been impressive, and probably it was the scene of a public ceremony similar to that at *Assandun*.<sup>85</sup> It seems likely that Cnut’s visit to Ely, recorded in the *Liber Eliensis*, was made in the next year.<sup>86</sup> The land exchange between Cnut and the abbot of Ely, which was discussed above, bears a very specific and significant date. It is dated to the festival of St Æthelthryth (23 June) 1022.<sup>87</sup> It would have been a remarkable coincidence if a record of a land exchange made between the king and the abbot at some unspecified *witenagemot* in that year was made

<sup>81</sup> ASC 1020 CDE (C: O’Brien O’Keeffe, 104). The F-text (Baker, 111) notes that the building was made of stone.

<sup>82</sup> ASC 1020 D (Cubbin, 63); “ond eac abbodas ond manege munecas”.

<sup>83</sup> Although, note that the estates seized from St Paul’s and the relics seized from Ely were not returned.

<sup>84</sup> See Gerchow, *Gedenkuberlieferung*, 195 & 326, for the date of the entry and an edition of the list.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 191 & 194–5), for discussion of the ecclesiastics and earls present in the list.

<sup>86</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, 1: 85 (Blake, 153–4).

<sup>87</sup> S. 958 (Ely) (edited in Blake, *Liber Eliensis*, 150–1); “Facta est haec commutatio anno incarnationis dominicae mxxii...die festiuitatis sanctae Æðeldredae reginae et uirginis”.

on the day of the saint credited as the founder of that religious house.<sup>88</sup> Why then does the record of the land exchange bear such a significant date? The fact that in 1020 × 1021 Cnut participated in public reconciliation ceremonies at *Assandun* and Thorney leads me to suspect that the exchange was agreed during Cnut's visit to Ely, and thus Cnut's visit was staged to occur on a date of great importance to the community. If correct, then this visit was probably accompanied by some similar public ceremony.

Elsewhere in the eastern Danelaw, from 1022 onwards, Cnut granted estates and lavish gifts to monastic houses. A grant of land at Horning in Norfolk, with its subsidiaries Ludham and Neatishead, to the abbey of St. Benet of Holme has been dated to *c.* 1022.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, the property in Thetford that Ramsey Abbey received from Cnut, recorded in a writ of Harthacnut's, probably came to that house in this period.<sup>90</sup> The monastery at Crowland remembered Cnut donating silk vestments, a silver gilt thurible, and less plausibly twelve white bear skins in 1032.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, there is evidence of Cnut's involvement in construction projects in this area. Apparently with some involvement by Cnut, a church was constructed and consecrated at Bury St. Edmund's.<sup>92</sup> The consecration of the new church at Bury is dated by the annal in the Bury Psalter to 1032. Furthermore, Crowland's chronicle reports that Cnut had also fostered rebuilding plans at that abbey, and Ramsey's chronicle records that Cnut had begun to build a second house at Ramsey.<sup>93</sup>

On closer inspection there are also indications of careful tactical manoeuvring by Cnut, rather than an outpouring of pious zeal, in this period of benevolent reconciliation. Just as the abbots appear to have continued to fail to find much favour from Cnut, the foundation of a church at *Assandun* placed a trusted member of Cnut's inner circle in

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<sup>88</sup> The record of St Æthelthryth's foundation of Ely is given by Bede. See, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 4: 19, eds., B. Colgrave & R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 390–2.

<sup>89</sup> S. 984 (St. Benedict of Holme).

<sup>90</sup> S. 996 (Ramsey).

<sup>91</sup> *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptorum Veterum, Tomus I. Quorum Ingulfus nunc primum Integer, Caetera nunc primum Prodeunt*, ed. T. Gale (Oxford, 1684), 1: 61.

<sup>92</sup> Despite the debate about the veracity of much of Bury's legends of Cnut's patronage, this foundation seems to be based in fact. See A. Gransden, "The legends and traditions concerning the origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds", *English Historical Review* 100 (1985): 89–95, and cf. Dumville, *English Caroline Script*, 37–41.

<sup>93</sup> *Historia Ingulphi* (Gale, 1: 61); *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis*, ch. 71 (Macray, 126).



a position of authority in the region. The F manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that the incumbent of the new church at *Assandun* was Cnut's "own priest, whose name was Stigand".<sup>94</sup> A brief aside must be appended here on this record. It seems unlikely that this royal priest was attached to Cnut's church at *Assandun* as early as 1020. Stigand only appears in charter witness-lists in the early 1030s, and survived to 1070 at least. His attestations mark him as a person who dominated the royal priesthood from 1030 onwards, and it seems unlikely that he should receive such an important appointment a decade before any other source mentions his existence.<sup>95</sup> It is perhaps easiest to conclude that *c.* 1100 when the scribe of the F manuscript interpolated material into the text, he attached the note of Stigand's office to a note of the foundation of the church, irrespective of whether the two events happened concurrently. However, Stigand's appointment there does indicate Cnut's interest in the site, and it seems likely that another unknown royal servant held the office in *Assandun* from 1020 until Stigand's appointment. This ecclesiastical office appears to have carried some weight in Essex at least; Thurstan Winesson in a bequest of land at *Wimbish* in the 1040s cited Stigand and another royal priest, Eadwold, as local witnesses.<sup>96</sup> Presumably, they represented royal interests in the region.

#### *Cnut's Interaction with the Church in Wessex*

Cnut's initial interaction with the Church in Wessex was very different to that in the eastern Danelaw. There is little evidence of depredation, and instead, Cnut appears to have been cautious in his approach to the clergy and population of this region.

There is some evidence from early in Cnut's reign of public ceremonies of reconciliation in certain areas of Wessex which could have fostered unrest. In both William of Malmesbury's *De Antiquitate* and

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<sup>94</sup> ASC 1020 F (Baker, 111); "his anum preoste þas nama was Stigand". Note that although this version of the Chronicle is bilingual, there is no corresponding Latin entry for this addition.

<sup>95</sup> He appears in S. 969 (Sherborne), which is dated 1033, S. 967 (Abingdon), which is dated 1033, S. 975 (Sherborne), which is dated 1035, and S. 979 (Athelney), which is dated 1024 × 1032.

<sup>96</sup> S. 1530 (Christ Church, Canterbury). Note that Eadwold is identified as a royal priest in S. 961 (Abbotsbury).

his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* he records a visit made by Cnut to the tomb of Edmund Ironside in Glastonbury Abbey.<sup>97</sup> William narrates that Cnut visited Edmund Ironside's tomb to offer prayers and lay a gift of a cloak embroidered with peacock feathers upon the casket. It is probable that the details of this narrative have been exaggerated but it seems unlikely that the visit and purpose are outright inventions. The presence of Archbishop Æthelnoth at the ceremony in William's account establishes that it must have occurred after 1020. Furthermore, if Cnut had avoided such a post-mortem reconciliation with Edmund until at least 1020, then something must have triggered such an event after 1020. The focus on the tomb of his deceased political rival suggests that this event was triggered by political tensions. There are no recorded insurrections in Wessex in the 1030s, and the only point at which there was such a crisis point was during the events which led up to the punishment of Ealdorman Æthelweard and Eadwig "the ceorls-king" in 1020. Perhaps, we should see this event as a response to that probable threat to Cnut's authority. Cnut's donation of a gold shrine for the relics of St Edith, recorded in *Vita S. Edithe* by Goscelin of Canterbury, may be related to this ceremony at Glastonbury.<sup>98</sup> St Edith was the sister of Æthelred, and there are records which indicate that Emma had Æthelred's body transferred there.<sup>99</sup> The site may have become a focal point for supporters of the old regime.

The evidence of Cnut's interaction with the Church in Wessex after 1020 is marked by his benevolence. However, this benevolence does not appear to have been indiscriminately applied throughout Wessex; Cnut appears to have targeted his munificence at those large and wealthy ecclesiastical institutions which were previously patronised by the West-Saxon kings. Cnut's grants and gifts focus on the ecclesiastical organisations of three boroughs, those of Winchester, Abingdon and Glastonbury. By the early eleventh century Winchester had come to be one of the principal sites for the organisation of West-Saxon government. Æthelred appears to have been lavish in his donations to the

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<sup>97</sup> *The Early History of Glastonbury: An Edition, Translation and Study of William of Malmesbury's De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie*, ch. 64, ed. J. Scott, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1981), 132–3; and William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2: 184, (Hamilton, 330–1).

<sup>98</sup> Goscelin, *Vita S. Edithe*, 2: 13, edited in A. Wilmart, "La Légende de Ste Édith en Prose et Vers par le Moine Goscelin", *Analecta Bollandiana* 56 (1938): 280–1.

<sup>99</sup> The statement that Emma translated Æthelred's body to Wilton is found in *Vita S. Edithe* (ibid., 281).

monasteries of Winchester, and Cnut followed him in this practise.<sup>100</sup> Many records survive of Cnut's grants and gifts to the Old Minster, Winchester. The annals of Old Minster, Winchester, extant now only in a late medieval record, enumerate Cnut's gifts of a decorated reliquary for their relic of St. Birinus, a silver candelabrum, and 3 hides of land at Bishop's Hull, Somerset.<sup>101</sup> Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, and Goscelin's *Translatio S. Mildrethe* both contain a record in their narratives that Cnut gave a gold crown to the community.<sup>102</sup> This may, like the donation of a crown to Christ Church, Canterbury, have some basis in fact. Furthermore, a renewal of privileges for the community, spurious in its extant form but perhaps with some authentic basis, claims to date from 1035.<sup>103</sup> Finally, it seems possible that Cnut donated the relic of St. Ælfheah, which is recorded at the Old Minster in an eleventh-century list of saint's resting-places. As Ælfheah was not martyred until 1012 and the list containing this information dates to the middle of the eleventh century, the relic must have come to the Old Minster between those dates.<sup>104</sup> I have discussed above how Cnut appears to have abstracted the only other known relic of St Ælfheah from the corpse during the translation of the saint in 1023. He may have donated another to the Old Minster at that time. Additionally, the

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<sup>100</sup> See for example the 100 hides restored to the Old Minster in S. 997 (Ramsey), and the stone tower he built for the New Minster. However, the Old Minster may have suffered in what Keynes, *Diplomas*, 180, has called Æthelred's period of 'youthful indiscretions'.

<sup>101</sup> *Annales de Wintonia*, s. a. 1016, edited in H. R. Luard, *Annales Monastici* (London, 1865) 2: 16. The grant of land is subsequently recorded in the dubious S. 972 (Old Minster, Winchester).

<sup>102</sup> *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, 6: 17, ed. D. E. Greenway, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 368–9, and Goscelin, *Translatio Sancte Mildrethe*, ch. 6 (edited in D. W. Rollason, "Translatio Sancte Mildrethe Virginis", *Medieval Studies* 48 (1986): 163.

<sup>103</sup> S. 976 (Old Minster, Winchester).

<sup>104</sup> It should be noted that the relic is mentioned in the copy of the text found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 201 pp. 147–51, but not in the version found in the New Minster *Liber Vitae* (London, Brit. Lib., Stowe MS. 944, fol. 33r–34r). The text in the New Minster *Liber Vitae*, although written c. 1031, is a faithful copy of a list from Æthelred's reign, including several saints (such as St Wigstan) in houses they occupied before Cnut's reign, but not after it. The copy in the Corpus Christi MS. 201 was written in the mid-eleventh century, and the entry for St. Ælfheah is in the main hand of the entry. For an edition see F. Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands* (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1889), 9–19, and for some general discussion see D. W. Rollason, "Lists of Saints' Resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England", *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978).

head of this community, the bishop of Winchester, continued to hold a prominent position at court throughout Cnut's reign.<sup>105</sup>

The New Minster also received much from Cnut. Foremost was what one of John of Worcester's continuators described as "a great and holy cross, made . . . by the order of King Cnut, and most splendidly enriched by him with gold and silver, with gems and precious stones".<sup>106</sup> The continuator states that 500 lbs of silver, 30 marks of gold, three diadems, and three footrests of pure Arabian gold were recovered from this object. Additionally, the abbot of the New Minster was shown great respect in Cnut's court. He witnesses nearly every one of Cnut's diplomas, in first and second position in all but a few cases. During the abbacy of Ælfwine (1031–57) the close relationship between the abbot and the royal court began to have an impact on the products of the *scriptorium* of the New Minster. The frontispiece of the *Liber Vitae*, which was composed and compiled within the first year of Abbot Ælfwine's office, makes clear his public endorsement of the legitimacy of the new regime. As demonstrated by Gerchow and subsequently Keynes, this donation portrait depicting Cnut in the act of giving the cross to New Minster, clearly emulates the portrait of Edgar in the so-called New Minster Charter.<sup>107</sup> Cnut is placed in the picture in a modified version of Edgar's role as royal benefactor. However, the relationship between God and king is developed in Cnut's portrait; Edgar receives only Christ's blessing for his supplication, while Cnut receives this and the symbolic crown that the angel above him places on his head.

Abingdon was another prominent and established West-Saxon site that had been patronised by generations of West-Saxon kings. Despite difficulties arising between Æthelred and Abingdon during his period of "youthful indiscretions", Æthelred made spectacular donations to the house.<sup>108</sup> Cnut followed this precedent, and according to the Abingdon chronicle, donated a gold and silver reliquary for the remains of St.

<sup>105</sup> The bishop appears in a remarkable twenty-seven of Cnut's extant diplomas, ranking between first and sixth place amongst the bishops.

<sup>106</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1141, ed. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998), 133–6. See also Keynes, *Liber Vitae*, 35.

<sup>107</sup> J. Gerchow, "Prayers for King Cnut: The Liturgical Commemoration of a Conqueror", in *England in the Eleventh Century: proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. C. Hicks, (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1992), 222–3.

<sup>108</sup> See Keynes, *Diplomas*, 177, for the details of the depredations, and S. 843, S. 876, S. 896, S. 897, S. 918, and S. 934 (all Abingdon) for Æthelred's gifts to the monastery, churches and bishop of Abingdon.

Vincent, valued at 60 lbs of silver.<sup>109</sup> The Abingdon Chronicle also numbers among Cnut's gifts some relics of St. Edward.<sup>110</sup> In addition, records survive of Cnut's grants of 2 hides at Lydford, Berkshire, a *monasteriolum* in Oxford, and 3 hides at Myton, Warwicks, to the community in the early 1030s.<sup>111</sup> Similar to the heads of religious houses in Winchester, the abbot of Abingdon remained prominent in witness-lists throughout Æthelred's and Cnut's reigns.<sup>112</sup> Æthelsige, the abbot from 1016 to 1018, witnessed two of the three charters extant for those years at the head of the abbots present, and his successor Æthelwine, witnesses second, third or fourth amongst his peers.<sup>113</sup>

Glastonbury Abbey presents a different case. The abbot of this house maintained the prominence at court that he had enjoyed under Æthelred, and he witnessed Cnut's charters second only to (and occasionally preceding) the abbot of New Minster, Winchester. Yet the community apparently received very little from Cnut. Apart from the vestment laid upon Edmund Ironside's tomb discussed above, there is only a suspicious confirmation of privileges which bears the date 1032.<sup>114</sup> Some historians have read into this lack of grants and gifts a deliberate policy of Cnut, which was fuelled by Glastonbury's association with Edmund Ironside.<sup>115</sup> However, once again Cnut appears to be following Æthelred's precedent. Some of Æthelred's depredations must have been repaid with the 40 hides that were restored to the abbey in 987, but unlike the other houses he extracted estates from, the over-compensating munificence of Æthelred's later years is absent in Glastonbury's case.<sup>116</sup> Unknown factors in both Æthelred's and Cnut's reigns appear to have allowed the abbot of this house to hold a prominent place in the royal court, but without receiving any of the wealth that was distributed to his peers.

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<sup>109</sup> *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon* and *De Abbatibus Abbendonae*, both edited by J. Stevenson, *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon* (London, 1858), 1: 433 & 2: 291.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 443 & 2: 157.

<sup>111</sup> S. 964, S. 967 and S. 973 (all Abingdon).

<sup>112</sup> In Æthelred's last charters (1013–16) the abbot witnessed usually second or third amongst his peers. See Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxi.

<sup>113</sup> S. 951 (Exeter), S. 953 (Exeter), S. 956 (New Minster, Winchester), and for Æthelwine see S. 958 (Ely), S. 977 (Evesham), S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester), S. 963 (Exeter) and S. 971 (Exeter).

<sup>114</sup> S. 966 (Glastonbury).

<sup>115</sup> See Lawson, *Cnut*, 155–6, for an example.

<sup>116</sup> S. 866 (Glastonbury); Keynes, *Diplomas*, 176–81, lists the houses who appear to have lost estates to Æthelred.

When we consider the evidence for Cnut's attempts to influence episcopal succession in Wessex, it is clear that in the initial decade of rule, the 1020s, Cnut took a cautious approach to ecclesiastical institutions in Wessex. There is evidence that Cnut attempted to interfere in the succession of the bishops of Sherborne in 1023. Goscelin's *Vita Sancti Wlsmi* recorded that Bishop Brihtwine of Sherborne was expelled from his see in unknown circumstances.<sup>117</sup> In his place Cnut placed a preferred candidate, Abbot Ælfmær of St Augustine's, Canterbury. The date of this is established by Ælfmær's final attestation as an abbot. This is in a witness-list appended to a dubious charter bearing the date 1023.<sup>118</sup> There are many post-Conquest features to the charter itself, but the position of Earl Godwine at the head of the earls in the witness-list indicates that 1023 is the earliest possible date for the original document.<sup>119</sup> However, this forced appointment did not last long. William Thorne records in his *Chronica* that after a number of years Ælfmær went blind and had to return to Canterbury. Cnut imposed no other royal candidate upon the bishopric and Ælfmær's predecessor Brihtwine returned to office.<sup>120</sup> Brihtwine had returned by 1030, and appears in a witness-list dated to that year.<sup>121</sup> A similarly indecisive succession dispute appears to have arisen over the see of Wells. William of Malmesbury, in his *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, records that when Cnut came to power Bishop Æthelwine held the see.<sup>122</sup> Early in Cnut's reign Æthelwine was forcibly replaced by a Bishop Brihtwine. After a short while Æthelwine returned to Wells and expelled this Brihtwine. An end to this dispute came when Brihtwine re-expelled Æthelwine and held onto the bishopric. The dating of the initial expulsion of Æthelwine is conveniently located by the charter-evidence as occurring in 1023; this year saw both Æthelwine's last attestation as bishop and Brihtwine's first.<sup>123</sup> William

<sup>117</sup> *De Vita Sancti Wlsmi*, ch. 16 (edited by C. H. Talbot, "The Life of Saint Wulsin of Sherborne by Goscelin", *Revue Bénédictine* 69 (1959): 82).

<sup>118</sup> S. 959 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>119</sup> Some confirmation of this date can be found in a chronicle written in St Augustine's by William Thorne in the late-fourteenth century. There he states that Ælfmær was elected bishop in 1022. See William Thorne, *Chronica*, ch. 4 (published in Twysden, *Historiae Anglucanae* col. 1782).

<sup>120</sup> All this receives confirmation from the episcopal lists in William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 2: 81 (Hamilton, 179). There the succession runs: "Brihtwinus, Elmerus, Birhtuinus". Thus, William appears not to have known the details of this affair, and innocently repeats Brihtwine's name.

<sup>121</sup> S. 963 (Exeter).

<sup>122</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, 2: 90 (Hamilton, 194).

<sup>123</sup> S. 977 (Evesham), and S. 960 (Old Minster, Winchester).

does not connect these events to Cnut, but it is perhaps easiest to see this ‘to-ing and fro-ing’ as a dispute between a candidate with local backing (Æthelwine) and one with royal approval (Brihtwine). Brihtwine was a close associate of Cnut, and is named by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as one of the three members of clergy involved in the translation of the relics of St. Ælfheah for the king.<sup>124</sup> Thus, it is difficult to see how Cnut could have avoided becoming involved in the affair. It should be noted that Lawson has cast doubt on whether this succession dispute actually occurred, suggesting instead that William of Malmesbury may have conflated the succession dispute of Sherborne with events that occurred at Wells.<sup>125</sup> However, there is independent evidence which supports William’s account, in the form of two versions of episcopal lists for Wells. The versions survive as an early-twelfth-century addition to a Bath Gospel book, and a record within the late medieval *Historiola* of Wells.<sup>126</sup> The bishops of Cnut’s reign are given as follows:

| CCCC 140  | <i>Historiola</i>  |
|---|--------------------|
| <i>Liuing</i>                                   | <i>Liowyngus</i>   |
| <i>Brihtuwinus</i>                              | <i>Brithumus</i>   |
| <i>Ægeluwinus</i>                               | <i>Elwynus</i>     |
| <i>Brihtuwinus</i> ( <i>merewit</i> interlined) | <i>Brithweynus</i> |
| <i>Dudico</i>                                   | <i>Duduco</i>      |

These lists are not totally independent of each other, and at some stage they must have had a common ancestor. However, their similarities and differences are revealing. Both versions reverse the order of Æthelwine and Brihtwine as presented to us in William’s narrative. However, the narrative has substantial support from the witness-lists of Cnut’s charters, in which Bishop Æthelwine attests from 1018 to *c.* 1023, and Bishop Brihtwine only twice in 1023.<sup>127</sup> Infact, the reversal of

<sup>124</sup> ASC 1023 DEF (D: Cubbin, 64). The other two are Archbishop Æthelnoth, and Bishop Ælfsige of Winchester.

<sup>125</sup> Lawson, *Cnut*, 150 n. 143.

<sup>126</sup> The twelfth-century list can be found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS. 140, fol. 115r. The *Historiola* has been recently edited in S. Keynes, “Giso, Bishop of Wells (1061–88)”, *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 19 (1996): 263–8. The text given here can be found on p. 264.

<sup>127</sup> See Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxvi.

Æthelwine and Brihtwine in both lists only makes sense in the context of William's account, in that the lists seem to record one of the secondary stages of replacement, after Æthelwine's initial removal from the see. Furthermore, an error in the version of the list found in the *Historiola* also confirms details of William's narrative. This source includes Bishop Æthelwine (Elwynus), and instead of the correct Bishop Brihtwig merewit, who did hold the see late in Cnut's reign, names Æthelwine's successor as *Brihtwynus* (or more correctly Brihtwine). The author of this list seems to have known that a Brihtwine succeeded Æthelwine, and emended the similar name of Brihtwig to accord with this. William of Malmesbury appears to have recorded the more reliable tradition. The known details of this affair suggest that after Cnut's initial support of his candidate, Brihtwine, this support appears to have been, on occasion, tentative and perhaps even cautious, and the locally favoured candidate was allowed to take back the see.

Such caution is not evident in the early 1030s. During this period Cnut began to forcibly impose ecclesiastics from his own retinue onto crucial bishoprics in Wessex. After the death of Bishop Ælfsige of Winchester in 1032, Cnut placed a preferred candidate in the office. William Thorne states that Cnut initially attempted to promote the prior of St. Augustine's, Ælfstan, to the bishopric.<sup>128</sup> However, Ælfstan refused the office, and Cnut subsequently placed an Ælfwine in the see. The E manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle identifies this Ælfwine as one of Cnut's royal priests.<sup>129</sup> He appears, alongside two other such royal priests named Eadsige and Eadwold, in an authentic charter of 1024.<sup>130</sup> Ælfwine also appears alongside this Eadwold in two further witness-lists from 1032, one of which was attached to a document endorsing property arrangements for the Eadsige who had accompanied them on the document of 1024.<sup>131</sup> In a grant of 1033 Eadwold was joined by one Duduc, the Stigand who was discussed above, and an otherwise unknown Wulfnoth.<sup>132</sup> This Duduc received the see of Wells

<sup>128</sup> *Chronica Willelmi Thorne*, in Twysden, *Historiae Anglicanae*, col. 1783.

<sup>129</sup> ASC 1032 E (E: Irvine, 76). The precise responsibilities of the priests attached to the Anglo-Saxon royal court are unknown, but by the eleventh century it seems plausible to connect their principal role to the chancery. See Larson, *King's Household*, 142–5, and Keynes, "Regenbald", 189–92.

<sup>130</sup> S. 961 (Abbotsbury).

<sup>131</sup> S. 964 (Abingdon), and S. 1465 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>132</sup> S. 969 (Sherborne).



after the death of Bishop Brihtwig merewit, apparently in 1033.<sup>133</sup> This stocking of vacant bishoprics and crucial incumbencies with men taken from Cnut's private staff was not just limited to Wessex, and as noted above, Stigand became a priest at *Assandun* and Eadsige was appointed to the archbishopric of Canterbury. The appointment of these royal servants in Wessex probably has much to do with the security of Cnut's authority there in the 1030s. The threat Æthelweard had presented in 1019–20 was a distant memory, both of Æthelred's archbishops were long since dead, and Cnut's machinery of control was firmly keyed into the localities of the region. As Keynes has observed, the placing of royal priests in crucial bishoprics throughout the ninth and tenth centuries was "commonplace", and we cannot avoid the possibility that Cnut took his inspiration for this practice from his English predecessors.<sup>134</sup> However, the timing of this development within Cnut's reign is suggestive that Cnut may have been influenced by recent contacts outside of England. It seems odd that there are no appointments of royal priests to sees before 1032. There had been other opportunities for such appointments during Cnut's earlier reign, from which there is no evidence of any attempt by him to influence the selection of a succeeding candidate.<sup>135</sup> It seems significant that in the 1030s Duduc appears among the royal priests in Cnut's court. This Duduc was identified by John of Worcester as a native of Lotharingia.<sup>136</sup> The city of Cologne, in this region of Germany, had in the tenth and eleventh centuries become a focus for diplomatic contact between England and Germany (notably through the archbishop of Cologne), and the city had become an important residence of the emperor by the early eleventh century.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, Cologne and another city in Lotharingia, Liège, were prominent centres of education: Cologne was a hive of ecclesiastical activity; Liège in the early eleventh century housed a cathedral school, as well as five separate collegiate church schools which

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<sup>133</sup> Bishop Brihtwig merewit ceased to witness charters in 1033, and presumably was replaced by Duduc in that or the following year. However, it should be noted that Duduc does not witness as bishop of Wells until 1038, in S. 1392 (Worcester).

<sup>134</sup> Keynes, "Regenbald", 188–92, especially 191, n. 43.

<sup>135</sup> See for example the death of Bishop Ælfgar of Elmham reported in the ASC D 1021 (Cubbin, 63).

<sup>136</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1060 (McGurk, 586).

<sup>137</sup> J. P. Huffman, *Social Politics of Medieval Diplomacy: Anglo-German Relations (1066–1307)* (Michigan, Mi: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 26–8, traces the role of Cologne and its archbishop as a diplomatic conduit between England and Germany.

drew in students from across Europe.<sup>138</sup> In Easter 1027 Cnut attended the coronation of Emperor Conrad II, and he visited the shrine of St. Heribert in Deutz, on the right bank of the River Rhine opposite the city of Cologne, either on the outgoing or return journey.<sup>139</sup> Presumably at this time Cnut donated a psalter and a sacramentary to either the emperor or a religious house there.<sup>140</sup> On his return from the coronation, he went directly to Denmark, and as argued elsewhere, it appears that he returned to England only sporadically and briefly before 1031, spending the majority of his time in Scandinavia. It seems probable that Duduc became attached to Cnut's court in 1027, either through Cnut's contact with the Emperor in 1027, or through Cnut's travel through the educational centres in and around Cologne, and accompanied him to Scandinavia, finally returning with him to England in 1031. Duduc was presumably regarded as an educated, foreign scholar in Cnut's court, and accordingly, he was given a position of great prominence in the single witness-list in which he attests. In this document, Duduc is placed foremost among the royal priests, even ahead of Eadwold, who had held a commanding position in the court since the mid-1020s, and the influential Stigand, who had been accorded similar respect in an earlier charter.<sup>141</sup> It seems significant to me that the promotion of priests attached to the royal chapel to important bishoprics was the preferred method of episcopal succession for the last Ottonian and first Salian Emperors.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, Cnut began this practise within a year of his permanent return to England after having seen the imperial court, and after Duduc had entered his service. While it is incapable of proof, it seems probable that this method of preferment was suggested to the king by his foreign chaplain.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> See V. Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 43–4 & 46–7.

<sup>139</sup> See M. Hare, "Cnut and Lotharingia: Two Notes", *Anglo Saxon England* 29 (2000): 269–78.

<sup>140</sup> As recorded in William of Malmesbury's *Vita Wulfstan*, 1: 1 & 9 (edited by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury: Saints' Lives: Lives of SS. Wulfstan, Dunstan, Patrick, Benignus and Indract* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002), 16 & 40).

<sup>141</sup> S. 979 (Athelney).

<sup>142</sup> S. Weinfurter, *The Salian Century: Main Currents in an Age of Transition* (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 56–7 & 97.

<sup>143</sup> Interestingly, Brooks, *Early History*, 258, appears to suggest the same.

*Cnut's Interaction with the Church in western Mercia*

Cnut's interaction with the Church in western Mercia is of a different form from that found in the eastern Danelaw or Wessex. It appears that Cnut almost ignored the churches in this region. There are almost no records of royal grants or gifts to the ecclesiastics and monastic houses of the region.<sup>144</sup> Furthermore, most of the bishops and abbots of this region are almost completely absent from the witness-lists of Cnut's charters.<sup>145</sup> Only Bishop Godwine of Lichfield appeared prominently, but his attestations ceased in 1023.<sup>146</sup>

Evesham Abbey was patronised by Cnut. However, they appear to have received comparably little from him, and his grants are more easily explained as evidence of the close personal relationship he had with its abbot, Ælfweard. A charter bearing Cnut's name and the date 1020 purports to grant 4 hides at Badby and Newnham, Northamptonshire to the community of Evesham.<sup>147</sup> Despite its dubious status it may record a genuine grant. The text and witness-list of this charter is copied from another authentic grant in Evesham's archive, which dates to 1021 × 1023 and grants 5 hides to an otherwise unknown monk named Æfic.<sup>148</sup> It appears that after Cnut gave the land to Æfic, a scribe at Evesham updated Cnut's grant to include the abbey as the beneficiary. In addition, the Evesham Chronicle records Cnut's translation of the relics of St. Wigstan from Repton Abbey to the community.<sup>149</sup> However, as the distance between Repton and Evesham is only 40 miles, it appears probable that this 'royal translation' was in fact Cnut acquiescing in Evesham building up its relic collection at the expense of their neighbours. Thus, the only items they appear to have received from Cnut were the black *causula* and other ornaments enumerated in the Evesham Chronicle. This source informs us that the abbot of the community from 1016 to 1035, Ælfweard, was related to Cnut.<sup>150</sup> He

<sup>144</sup> Evesham is the sole exception and will be discussed below.

<sup>145</sup> All of the bishops or abbots of this area identified by Keynes, *Atlas*, tables lxvi–lxvii, appear sporadically in Cnut's reign, and none of these are in any way prominent appearances.

<sup>146</sup> He attests last in S. 959 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>147</sup> S. 957 (Evesham).

<sup>148</sup> S. 977 (Evesham).

<sup>149</sup> *Chronicon Abbatae de Evesham*, ch. 3 (Macray, 83).

<sup>150</sup> Perhaps this familial bond was through marriage. Ælfweard may have been a relative of Cnut's first wife Ælfgifu of Northampton.

appears to have exploited this link to get close to the king and the royal court. This self-promotion brought benefits, and besides the patronage discussed above he attested five of Cnut's charters prominently and received the bishopric of London in 1035.<sup>151</sup>

There are only two other records of Cnut patronising ecclesiastics or religious communities in western Mercia. The first is found in the chronicle of Gloucester Abbey, written in the early fifteenth century, which states that Cnut was involved in the construction of an abbey in the city in 1022.<sup>152</sup> The second is the rebuilding of Pershore abbey at some point soon after the fire of 1018, as recorded by the antiquary John Leland.<sup>153</sup> If Cnut was actually involved in these construction projects, then his participation was probably solicited by powerful figures within his court. The Gloucester Chronicle states that Archbishop Wulfstan was the driving force behind the construction of the new abbey, and it seems that Cnut's role was subsidiary to his. Additionally, Pershore was owned by Odda, and as the D-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records, it eventually became his own burial site.<sup>154</sup> Thus, following the fire of 1018, when Cnut repaired the church, this was probably performed as a personal grant to a close associate.

Interestingly, the absence of Mercian ecclesiastics from court and the apparent lack of royal grants to the region, is also found in the evidence from late in Æthelred's reign. Again the bishop of Lichfield is the sole prominent episcopal witness to royal charters, and moreover no abbot of a monastic house in Mercia can be securely identified.<sup>155</sup> A single grant of 1.5 hides to the abbot of Burton is Æthelred's sole donation to the religious communities of the area.<sup>156</sup> The political machinery of Mercia would appear to have caused this lack of royal interest in the region. As commented on above, Cnut ruled Mercia through a series

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<sup>151</sup> S. 958 (Ely), S. 980 (Bury St Edmunds), S. 984 (St Benet of Holme), S. 977 (Evesham) and S. 967 (Abingdon). In these he usually appears second, third or fourth among the abbots present. Regarding his appointment as bishop of London see *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham*, ch. 3 (Macray, 83).

<sup>152</sup> *Historia et cartularum monasterii sancti Petri Gloucestrae*, ed. W. H. Hart, (London, 1863–7), 1: 8.

<sup>153</sup> Hearne, *De Rebus Britannicus*, 1: 242.

<sup>154</sup> ASC 1053 D (Cubbin, 73).

<sup>155</sup> The exception is the bishop of Worcester, whose office was held until 1016 in plurality with the archbishop of York, and thus appears on most charters.

<sup>156</sup> S. 930 (Burton). Perhaps S. 913 (Worcester) should also be considered as it is a grant of land in Gloucestershire to St. David's with reversion after three lives to Worcester Abbey.

of independent and powerful Scandinavian earls. This practice seems, in part, to have recognised a degree of independence already present in Æthelred's last decade with Eadric Streona's overlordship of Mercia. The king in this political system had less contact with the population and religious institutions of the region, governing instead through earls who operated as political middlemen. It fell to these middlemen to patronise the local monasteries and report the thoughts of the Mercian episcopacy to the court. This distance between the population of the region and the king appears to have inhibited royal patronage.

### *Conclusion*

A study of Cnut's interaction with the ecclesiastical aristocracy in England reveals a subtle politician, who gradually extended his authority over the Church, while using it for his own ends. Initially, he appears to have attempted to acquire the support of both archbishops. This gave his regime legitimacy, and minimised the risk of widespread ecclesiastical resistance to his actions, particularly those in the eastern Danelaw. There he appears to have undermined the wealth of the pockets of resistance to his regime which remained in the monastic communities of that region. In Wessex he appears initially to have been more cautious, holding back from any direct assertion of his will, and using the Church to defuse political tensions. After 1020 his purge of the eastern Danelaw was complete and he embarked on a public campaign of reconciliation. After 1023 Cnut had adherents of his in both archbishoprics, and he continued to build on his popularity in both Wessex and the eastern Danelaw through a campaign of lavish donations to the larger monastic houses. In the 1030s, at the height of his power, he became bolder and began to impose his candidates on politically and economically crucial sees when they fell vacant.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# CNUT AND THE *IMPERIUM* OF LATE ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND: NORTHUMBRIA, WALES, SCOTLAND AND IRELAND

### *The Imperium Before Cnut's Reign*

By the time Cnut came to power in England, the king of southern England had been involved in complex arrangements of overlordship with the regions neighbouring his realm for nearly a hundred and fifty years. It is important to recognise that there are two main forms of overlordship witnessed by the sources from this period. The earliest power-relations seem to have been forms of alliances, made as short-term responses to specific mutual threats. King Alfred's biographer, Asser, offers an example of this form of relationship when he records that many of the kings of south Wales, who were under threat from the aggressive sons of Rhodri Mawr of Gwynedd, came to Alfred and offered submission in exchange for his protection.<sup>1</sup> As the larger and wealthier state Wessex took some form of precedence, but neither party in the alliance could afford to let Gwynedd extend its authority. Further such alliances were made necessary by the Viking invasions of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. In general the eleventh-century English historical sources do not often mention affairs outside of that region, but perhaps there is some factual basis to an undated entry in the Fragmentary Irish Annals, which states that Æthelflæd, ruler of Mercia from 911–18, made peace with the Scots and Welsh so that "whenever the same race [the Vikings] should come to attack her, they would rise to help her".<sup>2</sup> They in turn received her protection. This would fit well with the events of 911–14, when she was actively extending Mercian control northwards up the Welsh border, against a Viking

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<sup>1</sup> Asser, *Vita Alfredi*, ch. 80–1, edited in W. H. Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred. Together With The Annals of Saint Neots, Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904), 66–8.

<sup>2</sup> Fragmentary Irish Annals, ch. 459 (edited as J. N. Radner, *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978), 180; "tan tiugfáidís an cineadh cédna da h-ionsoighidh-si, gur ro eirghidis sin do congnamh lé"). Note the translation is Radner's. I am indebted to Dr. E. Boyle for help with this annal.

raiding party who ravaged the area and captured Bishop Cyfeiliog of Archenfeld, before departing to Ireland.<sup>3</sup> A temporary truce with some of the Welsh and the Scots, in order to contain the invaders, and perhaps some promise of mutual support, appears probable.<sup>4</sup> The second form of overlordship appears to have evolved in the tenth century from this first, and temporary, form of alliance. By the middle of the tenth century the political ambition of a number of southern English kings had led them to attempt to make these temporary power-relations into a more permanent *imperium* of dominated territory. Through marriage and warfare Athelstan made predatory advances towards Wales, Northumbria, and Scotland, cementing these new relations through public ceremonies of mass-submission of multiple rulers from a number of subject-regions.<sup>5</sup> He was followed in this by nearly all of his successors. It becomes increasingly apparent from the mid-tenth century onwards that the relationships between the king of Wessex and the other rulers of the British Isles were beginning to solidify into a form which could survive the death of the individual ruler and the termination of his personal bonds and alliances, and that these relationships were conceived of and expressed, in Wessex at least, through terms and regalia borrowed from the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>6</sup>

This political development has formed the context through which the majority of modern historians have interpreted the evidence for Cnut's contact with the regions which bordered his southern English conquest. The historical consensus has claimed that Cnut, as king of England, inherited a political structure of *imperium* that he sought to maintain as an integral part of his rule.<sup>7</sup> However, close examination of

<sup>3</sup> ASC 911-14 ABCD (A: Bately, 64-66).

<sup>4</sup> Although this truce can only have been with some of these peoples. Note that John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 917 (Darlington et al., 372-5), records that Æthelflæd in that year sent an army into Wales to attack the fortress at *Becenanmwee*, bringing back a Welsh king's wife and thirty-four men to Mercia as captives. Perhaps these were collaborators with the vikings.

<sup>5</sup> At *Brunanburh* Athelstan received the submission of the kings of Deheubarth, Central Scotland and Gwent, and the ruler of Bamburgh. At his coronation in 973 Edgar likewise received the submission of the kings of Scotland and Wales, and the rulers of Northumbria. See John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 973 (Darlington et al., 422-4), where the overtones of imperial overlordship are most pronounced.

<sup>6</sup> See H. R. Loyn, "The Imperial Style of the Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Kings", *History* 40 (1955): 111-15, and M. Wood, "The Making of King Aethelstan's Empire: An English Charlemagne?", in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, eds. P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> See Freeman, *NC*, 1: 446-51, and Lawson, *Cnut*, 107-8, for the clearest examples.

the sources for Cnut's interaction with these regions suggests something quite different. It is clear that Cnut, like his predecessors, did claim some rule over these areas. The *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, a text written in the early 1040s and associated with both Cnut's wife and third son, lists both Wales (*Britannia*) and Scotland (*Scothia*) amongst the kingdoms that Cnut claimed dominion over when he died.<sup>8</sup> It cannot be disputed that Cnut had some form of political relationship with these regions, but it is not clear that we can perceive a simple, linear progression between the political relationships established in the tenth century and Cnut's actions in the early eleventh century.

The evidence for Cnut's interaction with the components of late Anglo-Saxon England's *imperium* indicates that a definitive change occurred immediately after 1030. Thus, I shall deal initially with the relations in the initial decade of Cnut's rule, and then discuss the relations in the second part of Cnut's reign.

*Interaction in the Initial Decade of Cnut's Regime,  
1016–29: Northumbria*

Although this region was ethnically ultimately English, the degree of political separation it had from the regions of southern England in the late Anglo-Saxon period forces us to consider it here, rather than in the previous chapter on Cnut's control of the localities of England. However, as it presents a special case it is perhaps correct that it gets more in-depth attention here than the other units of the Anglo-Saxon *imperium*. We must begin with some broad outlines of the structures of government that existed before Cnut's conquest. Here the paucity of the sources and the tendency for modern scholarship to focus on southern England has left us a problematic legacy. The preceding studies of Cnut's government of the various localities of southern England have shown that it is useful to be able to trace the details of the structures of authority beneath the level of the earl in each locality. However, few studies have been made of the political structures of Northumbria in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, and those that do exist focus on the actions of the main earls or their northern counterpart, the lords of Bamburgh.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Encomium*, 2: 19 (Campbell, 34–5).

<sup>9</sup> See Whitelock, "Dealings". Her study is the best among the few considerations of the political map of this region.



Let us deal with these officials first. At the head of the political machinery of the region were the earls of southern and northern Northumbria. In the latter half of the tenth century and the earliest years of the eleventh century two families from southern England successively held the earldom of southern Northumbria.<sup>10</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the accession of an Earl Oslac to the office in 966.<sup>11</sup> Through a reference to him in the *Liber Eliensis* Whitelock deduced that his origins lay to the south, probably in Cambridgeshire.<sup>12</sup> By 979, at the latest, he was replaced by a Thored who was probably his son. This Thored was a leader in an abortive operation against a Viking raid in 992, and following this seems to have been dismissed. Filling the vacuum left by his dismissal was a representative from a prominent Mercian family, Ælfhelm, who held the earldom from 993.<sup>13</sup> He was swept up in some court intrigue in 1006 and executed, whereupon his authority was added to that of his northern counterpart.<sup>14</sup>

The northern region of Northumbria, or at least the north-eastern coastline from the Scottish border to the River Tees, was controlled by members of an aristocratic family based in Bamburgh. These appear to have been in power since the early tenth century, and at times of emergency had also held jurisdiction in the southern Northumbria.<sup>15</sup> The nature of the office they held is almost entirely obscure, but it appears that they were equal to earls in authority, but were more independent from the overlordship of the southern English king, holding the area of northern Northumbria as an English satellite state. Occasionally, as in the attestation of Osulf in a document dated 934, members of this ruling family were given the title *dux*, but more commonly they were styled *hægerefa*, or *ad Bebb' hegr'* (high-reeve at Bamburgh).<sup>16</sup> Additionally, in these documents the high-reeve was placed at the head of the earls present or with the Welsh *sub-reguli*.<sup>17</sup> Similar indications of the status of high-reeves are given in the list of wergilds in the *Norðleoda Laga*, a

<sup>10</sup> See *ibid.*, 78–81, for details.

<sup>11</sup> ASC 966 DEF (D: Cubbin, 46).

<sup>12</sup> Whitelock, “Dealings”, 78–80.

<sup>13</sup> See S. 876 (Abingdon).

<sup>14</sup> See Whitelock, “Dealings”, 80–1 and Keynes, *Diplomas*, 211–13, for details of this affair.

<sup>15</sup> It appears that Osulf of Bamburgh ruled over all of Northumbria after the expulsion of Erik Bloodaxe in 954.

<sup>16</sup> See S. 546 (Canterbury, Christ Church), S. 520 (Worcester) and S. 544 (Abingdon), for these titles.

<sup>17</sup> S. 546 (Christ Church, Canterbury) and S. 544 (Abingdon).

law text concerning arrangements in Mercia and the north of England in the late ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>18</sup> Here the level of wergild for a high-reeve (4000 *thrymsas*) is half that of a bishop or earl (8000 *thrymsas*), but twice that of an ordinary secular thegn (2000 *thrymsas*).

The evidence for the existence of officials beneath the principal earl in both parts of Northumbria is not abundant, but enough survives to draw some brief conclusions. In particular, there is evidence for several lesser earls. Early in the tenth century it appears that a wealth of these figures existed in Mercia, the eastern Danelaw, and Northumbria.<sup>19</sup> An Earl Gunnar received an enormous 30 hide estate in Newbald, Yorkshire from King Edgar in 963.<sup>20</sup> This same earl can be identified in the witness-lists of charters written between the 930s and the 960s for Edgar's predecessors, King Athelstan and King Eadred.<sup>21</sup> As Earl Gunnar had held jurisdiction over some part of Northumbria for at least a couple of decades before King Edgar gave him Newbald, perhaps we should view Edgar's grant as an attempt to canvass for support or reward a powerful follower in the region.<sup>22</sup> The Thored Gunnarsson who appears in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry for 966 ravaging Westmorland, is presumably this Earl Gunnar's son and successor.<sup>23</sup> The survival of a damaged attestation of a *dux* whose name began with a 'Ð' in a charter for this year may indicate his witness to this document and presence at the royal court.<sup>24</sup> Information added by Gaimar to his translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that this raid was carried out in defiance of King Edgar and Thored was

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<sup>18</sup> Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, 1: 458–61. See comments on this text in Wormald, *Making*, 391–4.

<sup>19</sup> Some studies of these lesser earls in Mercia and East Anglia can be found in A. Williams, "Princeps Merciorum Gentis: the Family, Career and Connections of Ælfhere, Ealdorman of Mercia", *Anglo Saxon England* 10 (1982), and Hart, "Athelstan 'Half King'".

<sup>20</sup> S. 716 (York).

<sup>21</sup> S. 416 (Old Minster, Winchester), S. 550 (Evesham), S. 552a (Barking), S. 674 (Peterborough), S. 712 (York) and the edition of the charter and discussion in N. Brooks, M. Gelling & D. Johnson, "A New Charter of King Edgar", *Anglo Saxon England* 13 (1984).

<sup>22</sup> Another charter from York's archive (S. 712) dates to 963 and records another gift of Edgar's to an *Æsclac* (presumably Earl Oslac) which also seems to be an appeal or reward for support. Keynes, "Additions", 86, notes the large number of charters for this year and suggests that in 963 Edgar may have made a tour of the north to generate support.

<sup>23</sup> ASC 966 DEF (D: Cubbin, 46).

<sup>24</sup> S. 738 (Old Minster, Winchester). This suggestion was made originally by White-lock, "Dealings", 78, n. 4, where she notes that the "name is only partly legible, but initial þ and what remains of a d are visible".

subsequently executed.<sup>25</sup> Whilst we know that this family was active in Northumbria in the tenth century we are uncertain as to the centre of their area of influence. The areas connected to their activities lie at opposite ends of Northumbria with Newbald to the south-east of York, and Westmorland on the Scottish border.

Other charters enable us to identify other influential Northumbrian families. A block of Mercian and northern witnesses are included in a grant of 996 by Æthelred of an estate in Hampshire to his mother.<sup>26</sup> Among these names are those of *Nafena ond Norþmann his broðor*. Northman is recognisable as the *Norðman miles* to whom Æthelred gave 3.5 hides in Twywell, Northamptonshire in 1013.<sup>27</sup> He is presumably the Northman whose landholdings link him to the monastic community at Durham. The late-eleventh century *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* records a Northman as one of three earls who was able to forcibly abstract from the community twenty-four estates during the episcopate of Bishop Aldhun (990–1018).<sup>28</sup> One of these estates, that at Escomb, was eventually returned. This same *Norðman eorl* made a donation (probably in fact a restitution) of this estate, which is recorded in an addition to Durham's *Liber Vitae*.<sup>29</sup> As the abstracted estates were all in the vicinity of Durham it seems likely that these lesser earls were also based in this area.

Within this context it may be worth noting that there seems to have been some uncertainty about the southern boundary of the jurisdiction of the house of Bamburgh, especially where it concerned Durham and its hinterland. Both the historical tract *De Primo Saxonum Adventu* and the chronicle attributed to John of Wallingford state that the River Tees was the boundary between the two parts of Northumbria.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Gaimar, *Lestore des Engles*, line 3587 (edited in T. D. Hardy and C. T. Martin, *Lestore des Engles solum la Translacion Maistre Geffrei Gaimar* (London, 1888–9), 150).

<sup>26</sup> S. 877 (New Minster, Winchester).

<sup>27</sup> S. 931 (Thorney).

<sup>28</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, ch. 31, ed. T. Johnson South (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), 66–8. Although the record here notes that Aldhun gave this estates to the earls as his supporters, other records (such as Symeon of Durham, *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiae*, ch. 4, edited in T. Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London, 1882–5), 1: 83, and the Red Book of Durham (edited in H. H. E. Craster, “The Red Book of Durham”, *English Historical Review* 40 (1925): 526–7); note that these were loaned to these *comites Northanhumbroorum* through necessity, and were subsequently withheld by force by these earls.

<sup>29</sup> *Liber Vitae Ecclesiae Dunelmensis; Nec Non Obituano Duo Eiusdem Ecclesiae*, ed. J. Stevenson, (Durham: Surtees Society, 1841), 57.

<sup>30</sup> *De Primo Saxonum* (edited in Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 2: 382); John of Wallingford, *Chronicon*, ed. R. Vaughan (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1958), 54.

However, Symeon of Durham in his *Historia Regum* clearly sets the boundary much further to the North, at the River Tyne.<sup>31</sup> Whitelock explained this inconsistency through the assumption that “a Durham writer would not admit that anyone but St Cuthbert’s had authority in County Durham”.<sup>32</sup> This is possible, but unlikely given the connection of both *De Primo Saxonum Adventu* and Symeon’s *Historia Regum* to a single ‘historical school’ in twelfth-century Durham.<sup>33</sup> It seems more likely that in Durham in the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was no clear consensus on the matter. It should be noted that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Thurcetel, Nafena’s son (and thus Northman’s nephew) was executed alongside Earl Uhtred in 1016.<sup>34</sup> This would imply that Thurcetel was a subordinate of Uhtred’s, and thus perhaps a subordination of these lesser earls ruling the region around Durham to the high-reeve of Bamburgh. Such indirect control of Durham could explain the confusion over jurisdictional boundaries in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries.

There are a few other named Northumbrian earls who may have been related to these men or may represent other ruling families. An Earl Thurri (*Ðurre*) can be found attesting immediately beneath Gunnar in a charter from 963.<sup>35</sup> An Earl *Myrdah* can also be identified witnessing in conjunction with Gunnar and again on his own in a York charter of 958.<sup>36</sup> Brooks has suggested that his name is an English spelling of Old Irish Muiredach, and that he was an earl amongst the Hiberno-Norse settlers of north-western Northumbria.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, there is evidence that influential land-holding thegns held some jurisdiction over areas of the region. In 1015 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records the execution of the royal servants Sigeferth and Morcar “the chief thegns of the Seven Boroughs”.<sup>38</sup> As this region

<sup>31</sup> Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, ch. 159 (cited in Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 2: 197).

<sup>32</sup> Whitelock, “Dealings”, 78, n. 1.

<sup>33</sup> See D. W. Rollason, “Symeon’s Contribution to Historical Writing in Northern England”, in *Symeon of Durham, Historian of Durham and the North*, ed. D. Rollason (Stamford, 1998), 4–11, for details of this ‘historical school’.

<sup>34</sup> ASC 1016 CDE (C: O’Brien O’Keeffe, 101).

<sup>35</sup> S. 712 (York).

<sup>36</sup> See the charter in Brooks et al., “New Charter”, and S. 679 (York).

<sup>37</sup> Brooks et al., “New Charter”, 144.

<sup>38</sup> ASC CDE 1015 (C: O’Brien O’Keeffe, 99); “þa yldestan þegenas into Seofonburgum”. John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1015 (Darlington et al., 478) adds the information that these two were brothers, and were the sons of one Earngrim.

would appear to be that of the Five Boroughs (Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, Stamford and Derby), probably with the addition of York and Torksey, it is likely that these thegns held extensive authority in southern Northumbria.<sup>39</sup> A clearer picture of such thegns is given by the northern narrative sources, most notably *De Obsessione Dunelmi*, which records a feud between two influential Northumbrian thegns, Styrr Ulfsson and Thurbrand.<sup>40</sup> Styrr's donation of seven estates to Durham allows us to see that he held land in both the northern and southern parts of Northumbria.<sup>41</sup> The description of him in *De Obsessione Dunelmi* as *ciuis diuitis* has been taken to indicate his residence in York, but this seems a little tenuous.<sup>42</sup> Fletcher has noted that following eleventh-century literary conventions it could be translated as "a rich and powerful man".<sup>43</sup> Considering the distribution of his landholdings it is perhaps safest to conclude that whilst he had influence in Yorkshire he was probably based in the northern part of Northumbria.

His opponent in this feud, the Thurbrand discussed above, also appears to have been an influential figure. Symeon of Durham in his *Historia Regum* described Thurbrand as both a *nobilo et Danico vir*, and significantly as holding the office of a *hold* (ON *holdr*).<sup>44</sup> This implies a governing role to Thurbrand's presence in Northumbria, as the term *hold* occurs as a rank among the Scandinavian invaders which was immediately subordinate to that of the Scandinavian *jarl*.<sup>45</sup> In the *Norðleoda Laga* the wergild of a *hold* is equated with that of the high-reeve, indicating great influence. Furthermore, it is possible that some remnant of this authority can be traced in Domesday Book's record. In this record the name of Karl, Thurbrand's son, appears at the end of

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<sup>39</sup> For this definition of the 'Seven Boroughs' see D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas & S. I. Tucker, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), 94, n. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *De Obsessione Dunelmi* (edited in Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 1: 215–20).

<sup>41</sup> Different forms of the record of this gift can be found in *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, ch. 29 (Johnson South, 66), Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, ch. 76 (edited in Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 1: 83), and Craster, "Red Book of Durham", 526.

<sup>42</sup> Both Whitelock, "Dealings", 5, and W. E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: the Region and its Transformation, 1000–1135* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 19, make this assumption.

<sup>43</sup> R. Fletcher, *Bloodfeud: Murder and Revenge in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Allen Lane, 2002), 52–3.

<sup>44</sup> Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, chs. 126 & 159 (edited in Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 1: 148 & 197).

<sup>45</sup> See ASC 904 A (Bately, 63), for references to the Hold Ysopa and the Hold Oscytel.

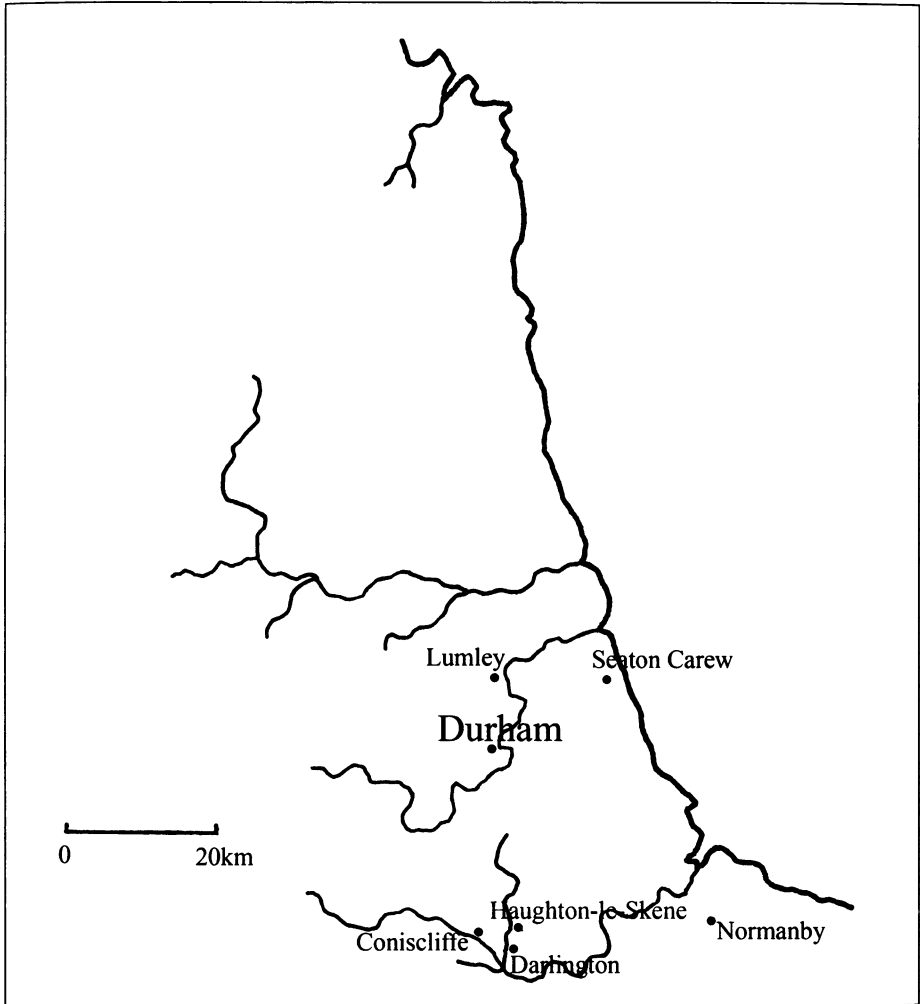


Fig. 5. Map of the estates which Styrr Ulfsson donated to Durham.

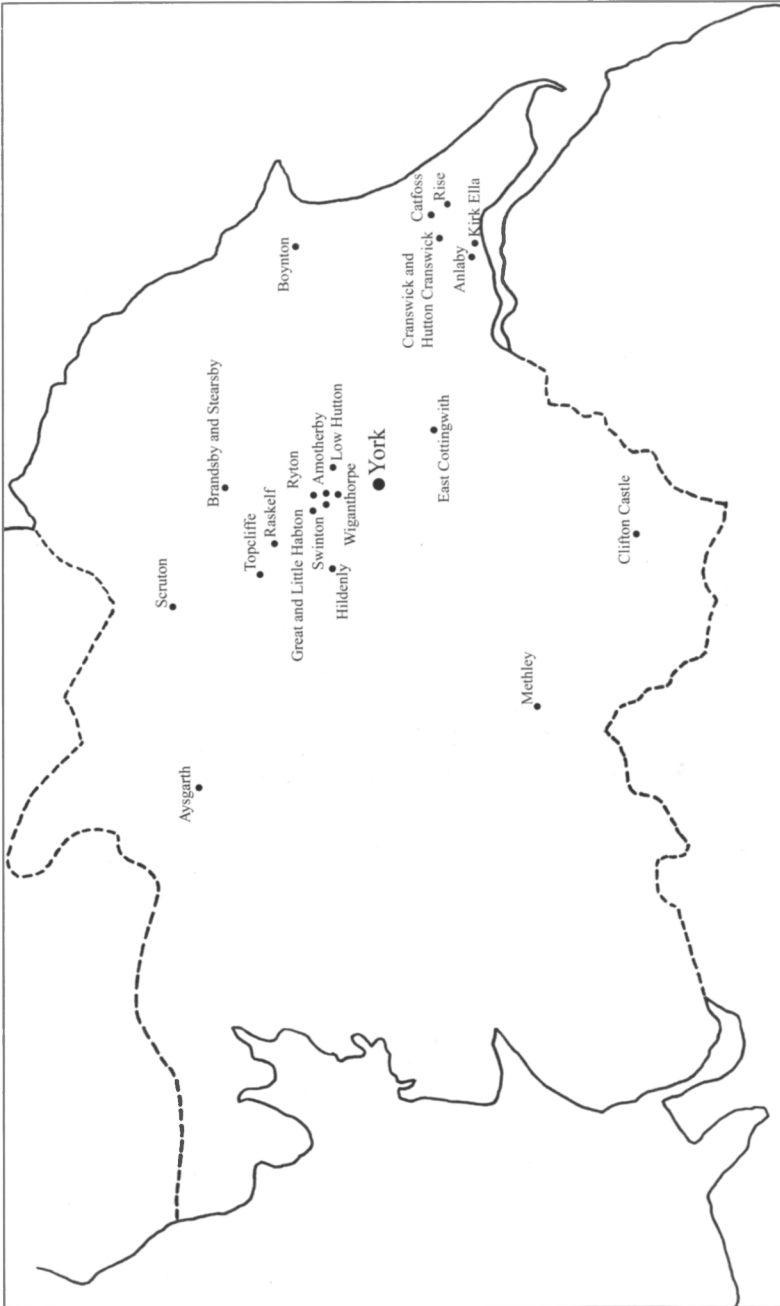


Fig. 6. Map of the estates of Karl's sons, Cnut and Sumerled, in Domesday Book.

a short series of men who, in 1065, held soke and sake, toll and team and all customary dues, and who if they transgressed owed fines only to the king and earl.<sup>46</sup> It is not reported when Thurbrand received this office or over whom he held authority, but some indication of his area of influence can be traced through the estates held by his descendants at the time of the Domesday inquest.

I should like here to add some weight to a suggestion of Fletcher's that Thurbrand's jurisdiction was focussed on a promontory of land to the east of York which came to be named after his office, Holderness.<sup>47</sup> It seems significant that three of the estates that the Domesday Book records as held by Thurbrand's grandson, Cnut, were in this region.<sup>48</sup>

The nature of the evidence ensures that this discussion cannot be exhaustive, but some faint lines of the political machinery of Northumbria can be discerned. The region was probably divided into two main blocks, the northern of which lay further outside the control of the southern English king than the southern. Beneath the main earls of these regions, the government was composed of a bewildering array of competing and co-operating lesser earls, semi earls, and title-less but influential thegns, each of which had jurisdiction of some geographical territory. No simple or straightforward hierarchical organisation of these men can be perceived, and the little that can be known about their titles and offices indicates that these were *ad hoc* constructions created by the settlement of invading Scandinavian armies in the region, and the production of hybrid forms of government from that which the invaders found and that which they brought with them, as well as the occasional influence of the southern English king on areas of the administration. It is probably impossible now to discern how the holders of such an array of offices interacted with each other, and even in the tenth and eleventh centuries such interaction may not have lasted more than the lifetime of each office-holder. It seems probable that differences in status between the members of this group beneath the level of the principal earl were mainly decided on the basis of relative wealth and military might. In comparison to the organisation of local government in southern England Northumbria begins to resemble a

<sup>46</sup> DB, ii, fol. 298v.

<sup>47</sup> Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 51.

<sup>48</sup> The estates are 1 carucate in the unidentified *Chenuthesholm* (in Long Riston), 6 carucates in Catfoss, and 7.5 carucates in Rise.



complex and somewhat anarchic border territory, over which only a degree of control could be established.

Turning to the issue of Cnut's affects on this complex political structure, it is clear that there was a great deal of activity early in his reign, perhaps even during his invasion. The initial moves involved the replacement of the principal earl with a trusted supporter. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 1017 Cnut had placed one of his trusted military generals, Earl Eiríkr, in charge of Northumbria.<sup>49</sup> This does not appear to be part of a final political settlement, but was a by-product of a political expedient aimed primarily at reducing Edmund Ironside's forces during the conflict of 1016.<sup>50</sup> Early in 1016 Edmund had called on the support of the principal earl during the latter part of Æthelred's reign, Uhtred of Bamburgh. Uhtred was an experienced warrior, and he mobilised a large army, and began to lead this force south-eastwards across the country from Durham towards Chester and the Welsh marches. Avoiding a direct conflict with this force, Cnut took his forces northwards up the eastern coast to York. From here he occupied some of Uhtred's territories and threatened Uhtred's patrimonial estates to the north. Faced with this apparently unexpected threat on his home and inheritance, Uhtred withdrew his support from Edmund and submitted to Cnut "out of necessity".<sup>51</sup> He was executed and replaced by Earl Eiríkr.

However, there is doubt concerning the actual extent of Eiríkr's power over Northumbria. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries monastic writers associated with the community at Durham produced several narrative accounts of this period.<sup>52</sup> None of these mentions Eiríkr. These historical traditions report instead that after Uhtred's murder his brother Eadulf Cudel succeeded to the earldom, and the office is not reported as passing outside this family until 1041. Whitelock resolved this inconsistency through postulating that Uhtred's

<sup>49</sup> For details of Eiríkr's career see Campbell, *Encomium*, 66–73.

<sup>50</sup> Both ASC 1016 DEF (D: Cubbin, 60–1) and John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1016 (Darlington et al., 480–502), provide a full narrative of what follows.

<sup>51</sup> The term used in the ASC 1016 D (Cubbin, 61), is "beah ða for nyde". This corresponds to John of Worcester's, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1016 (Darlington et al., 482); "et necessitate compulsus".

<sup>52</sup> The principal accounts here are *De Obsessione Dunelmi*, *De Primo Saxonum Adventum*, and Symeon of Durham's *Historia Regum*. These are edited in Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 1: 215–20; 2: 365–84 & 3–283, respectively). For the interrelation of these accounts and some discussion of this Durham 'historical-school' see Rollason, "Symeon's Contribution".

earldom was divided at this point into a northern area focussed upon Bamburgh and Durham which he had inherited from his father, and a southern area focussed upon York which was given to him by King Æthelred.<sup>53</sup> Thus, she hypothesised that after 1016 Eiríkr may have governed only the southern part in Uhtred's place, leaving Uhtred's surviving family in power to the north. Alternatively, Eiríkr may have been ignored in the accounts from the Durham narratives because of the shortness of his earldom. He ceased to witness Cnut's charters in 1023, and presumably died in that year, having held power for only six or seven years. To northern writers with the benefit of a century or so of hindsight, Eiríkr may have appeared to have been only an interim expedient after Uhtred's execution.

Cnut does not appear to have appointed a successor to Eiríkr in Northumbria. Indeed, there does not appear to be an earl identifiable with the region until the appointment of Siward in 1033. Who then operated in the role of earl in Northumbria between 1023 and 1033? Kapelle has hypothesised that a local figure who profited from Uhtred's death may have taken the earldom after Eiríkr's death.<sup>54</sup> One account, the *De Obsessione Dunelmi*, presents Uhtred's death as the result of a private bloodfeud in which Uhtred had become embroiled. This narrative fleshes out the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's report of Cnut's involvement in Uhtred's death, by recording that Cnut exploited the tension between Uhtred and a local rival of his, named Thurbrand, to bring about Uhtred's death by the hand of his rival.<sup>55</sup> The source also records that this murder sparked a bloodfeud between the surviving heirs of the two men. Ealdred, Uhtred's son killed Thurbrand in revenge, and in turn Karl, Thurbrand's son, subsequently attempted to exact his revenge on Ealdred, finally killing him in the forest of Risewood. It appears that Thurbrand and his son Karl were based in Yorkshire, and thus, after the death of Thurbrand in the 1020s or 1030s, Karl was an influential figure in the southern region of Northumbria.<sup>56</sup> As Kapelle observes,

<sup>53</sup> Whitelock, "Dealings", 82–3.

<sup>54</sup> Kapelle, *Norman*, 23–4.

<sup>55</sup> Note that John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1016 (Darlington et al., 482), also records that Uhtred was killed by "Turebrandus nobili et Danico" on Cnut's command, or at least with his assent.

<sup>56</sup> Whitelock, "Dealings", 82, n. 5, originally suggested that some of Thurbrand's estates could be traced by plotting those of his known descendants who were alive in 1066 through the records of the Domesday Book. These I have mapped out below on p. 116. All that needs to be acknowledged here is that the estates are spread across Yorkshire.

a witness by the name of Karl begins to attest Cnut's charters in 1024, the year after Eiríkr's death, and the name can be found in the witness-lists of royal charters until 1045.<sup>57</sup> Kapelle has argued that a connection can be perceived between this Karl and the subsequent earl of Northumbria, Siward, in the charters after 1033. In his words Karl between 1033 and 1045 appeared "always in the company of Siward".<sup>58</sup> As Thurbrand had been associated with Cnut through the murder of Uhtred, Kapelle has argued that Thurbrand, and his son Karl, may have been close associates of Cnut. Thus, Kapelle concluded that Karl "probably did defend Cnut's interests in the North" after 1023.

The identification of this Karl as the principal royal official in southern Northumbria between 1023 and 1033 seems compelling, but the evidence begins to disintegrate on closer inspection. Firstly, there is no evidence which indicates that Karl, Thurbrand's son, should be regarded as a supporter of Cnut. Even to interpret Thurbrand's association with Cnut as close or enduring may be to stretch the evidence a little far. Thurbrand may be identified as ethnically Danish (or at least descended from Scandinavians), but he had settled in Northumbria before Sveinn Tjúguskegg or Cnut had invaded, and held some authority there before *c.* 1004. He does not appear in any documents which could connect him to Cnut's court, and perhaps his association with Cnut was slight at best. He is more convincing as a rival of Uhtred's, whose perspective was focussed on the local level, and who was given a free hand by a distant overlord to carry out an act of private violence on Uhtred. Thus, Cnut appears to have been exploiting local rivalries in order to destroy Uhtred, rather than relying on trusted associates in the area. Additionally, the only evidence to connect Karl and Cnut is that of the charters. However, it seems doubtful if the Karl who witnessed Cnut's charters can be linked to Northumbria. Despite Kapelle's assertion, there is no demonstrable connection between Earl Siward and Karl in the witness-lists concerned. As Keynes has shown, the only conclusive way of showing associations between witnesses to royal grants is by demonstrating that their attestations occur in association with each other with such a high frequency that it is improbable that the attestations represent chance occurrences.<sup>59</sup> This cannot be

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<sup>57</sup> Kapelle, *Norman*, 23.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Keynes, *Diplomas*, especially pp. 154–228.

demonstrated for Siward and Karl. The earliest record to include both names is an authentic witness-list appended to a dubious grant dated 1032.<sup>60</sup> If the *Siuuard*, who attests at the head of the fifteen *ministri* present, was Earl Siward immediately before his appointment to the Northumbrian earldom, then he attests this document some ten names above Karl. Moreover, while the name Siward occurs at the head of the *ministri* above the names of men I have associated above with the royal court, the name Karl occurs among what are probably local witnesses drawn from the locality of the royal meeting which ratified the grant.<sup>61</sup> The charters from after this date cannot be used to show an association between Siward and this Karl through their proximity, as Siward attests amongst the groups of earls and ealdormen, and Karl among the *ministri*.

Kapelle's case is based on the supposed fact that Siward and Karl 'always' appear together in the witness-lists of royal charters, by which I presume he means that they always appear in the same documents. If so, they might plausibly have been associates who attended royal meetings in conjunction with each other, but whose different offices and the form of Anglo-Saxon royal charters lead to them holding quite separate positions among the witnesses to those documents. If such a case could be made then this might provide some indication of an association. However, again there are flaws. Siward attests fifteen charters from this period, and in seven of them there is no Karl among the *ministri*.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the connection that Kapelle perceived between Earl Siward and a Karl in the remaining seven charters in which they do both occur, is based upon a misunderstanding of the evidence. An overview of late Anglo-Saxon charters indicates that the attendance of earls at royal meetings was compulsory, and only avoidable under extreme circumstances. Siward appears as an infrequent witness to Cnut's final charters, but his name occurs in all but one of the charters from Harthacnut's and Edward the Confessor's reigns. Thus, as he had to attend these meetings his presence must be taken

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<sup>60</sup> S. 964 (Abingdon).

<sup>61</sup> The names immediately beneath Siward are an unknown Harald (whom Keynes "Cnut's Earls", 66, has tentatively identified as Haraldr the son of Earl Thorkell), Ælfwine and Ælfgar, who were two members of 'group one' of the factions of Englishmen in Cnut's entourage, and Tovi pruða, Osgot clapa and Thored Azor's father.

<sup>62</sup> See Keynes, *Atlas*, tables llix & lxxiv, for Siward's attestations. Karl is absent from S. 968 (York), S. 995 (Bury St Edmunds), S. 982 (Féchamp), S. 998 (Horton), S. 1000 (Coventry), S. 1005 (Christ Church, Canterbury) and S. 1004 (Abbotsbury).

as a constant, and with only one other name, that of Karl, in this supposed group of associates, we are unable to conclude anything more than that Karl was an infrequent attester of royal charters, to which Siward, like his peers, was a compulsory witness.

It is also uncertain that there is only one Karl behind all these attestations, or that any of these figures can be plausibly associated with Northumbria. Some sixteen charters from the early eleventh century contain a secular witness named Karl. Half of this number were preserved in archives in south-western England, directing our attention towards that region. In five of these south-western diplomas we can identify an individual named Karl through the fact that he always witnesses in conjunction with a Thored, an Azor, or both.<sup>63</sup> Elsewhere I have identified the Thored and Azor in these attestations as a father and son who were influential in Cnut's royal court, and were based in Wiltshire and the surrounding counties of the south-west.<sup>64</sup> The form of Karl's association with them suggests that he was another member of this Danish, immigrant family, and clearly not a Northumbrian. In addition, the lowly position of some of the attestations of the name Karl (see for example S. 967, where Karl witnesses 13th of 14 secular witnesses beneath the level of the earls) make it improbable that all the attestations of this name can be connected to the associate of Thored and Azor, or that we should search for these men far outside of the locality of the royal meetings in southern England which ratified the grants.<sup>65</sup>

In light of my earlier arguments about Cnut's extension of his control over the local government of western Wessex and the eastern Danelaw, it appears possible (perhaps even probable) that the office of the principal earl of the southern part of Northumbria was left vacant by Cnut, and that this political vacuum was offset by his attempts to

<sup>63</sup> S. 994, S. 1006, S. 1007, S. 1012 (all Old Minster, Winchester), and S. 1003 (Exeter).

<sup>64</sup> I refer here to pp. 15–19 above.

<sup>65</sup> As noted above (p. 74), a record of a Kentish marriage settlement from Cnut's reign (S. 1461 (Christ Church, Canterbury) names, among its local witnesses, a *Kar þæs cūcges cniht*. This may represent a form of the name Karl, and identify a landholder by the name as based in Kent. Additionally, it should be noted that four of the seven charters in question are from the archive of Abingdon. These are: S. 964, S. 967, S. 993, and S. 999. With the absence of Thored and Azor in any of these grants, we can be certain that this Karl was not the one based in Wiltshire. As two of these grants appear to have been drawn up at Abingdon itself (see S. Kelly, *Charters of Abingdon Abbey* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000–1), no. 141–2), it is possible that this statistical anomaly points to another Karl local to Abingdon.

bring the other structures of government in the region beneath the level of the earl under his control. Indeed, there is some evidence of Cnut's interaction with this group immediately after 1016. I have commented at length elsewhere on the existence of a faction of northern nobles during Æthelred's reign, which had close contacts through the family of Earl Ælfhelm and his brother Wulfric Spott to the royal court.<sup>66</sup> This faction included Uhtred of Bamburgh, Styrr Ulfsson, the lesser earls Nafena and Northmann, and Morcar, who was one of the 'thegns of the Seven Boroughs'. Much of this faction had died or been executed by 1016: Thurbrand killed Styrr in 1004 × 1006; Earl Ælfhelm's family were consumed by the court intrigues of 1006; Morcar was killed by Æthelred following further suspicion in 1015; and Nafena and Northmann had most probably died by 1016, but were survived by Thurcetel, Nafena's son. Only this Thurcetel and Uhtred of Bamburgh survived until 1016, and the record of the execution of this Thurcetel alongside Uhtred might be taken to indicate that Cnut's was purging all levels of the aristocracy of the remnants of this pro-Æthelredian clique, prior to the placement of Eiríkr in the region.

However, Cnut's interest in the north seems to have dwindled rapidly, and neither southern English records, nor the northern narrative accounts, record that Cnut embarked on any attempt to implant his followers into the level of the administration beneath that of the earl, or affect the political structures there in any way. This may have much to do with the placement of Eiríkr in the region. Eiríkr was a member of the dynasty of the jarls of Hlaðir, who had controlled much of northern and western Norway since the tenth century at least.<sup>67</sup> The nature of their authority there was that of overlords of a bewilderingly complicated and chaotic political structure made up from numerous kingships and jarldoms of greatly varying size and influence. Thus, Northumbria was the region which politically speaking most closely resembled Norway in the same period. The nature of the relationship between the jarls of Hlaðir and the kings of Denmark in the tenth and early eleventh centuries is also significant. They had entered military

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<sup>66</sup> See my "Ælfgifu of Northampton: Cnut the Great's 'Other Woman'", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 51 (2007): 247–68; especially the section on her childhood and adolescence. There I comment also at length of the differing policies of Sveinn Tjúguskegg and Cnut in their interaction with this group.

<sup>67</sup> See H. Koht, "Om Haalogaland og Haaløyg-Ætten", *Historisk Tidsskrift* (Oslo) 4th Series, 6 (1910), and the same author's, "Haakon Sigurdsson", in *Norsk Biografisk Leksikon*, ed. E. Bull and E. Jansen (Kristiania: Aschehoug, 1931).

alliances and members of the dynasty of jarls of Hlaðir had been sheltered at the Danish court during times of emergency, and during these periods marriage-alliances had been concluded, but the kings of Denmark held only nominal overlordship over the jarls of Hlaðir. Just as the kings of Denmark had not attempted to interfere with the affairs of the jarls of Hlaðir in their own territories in Scandinavia, perhaps Northumbria was granted to Eiríkr under the same conditions: that is he held it as a semi-independent state, only nominally subject to Cnut's authority. Such an agreement would continue, and perhaps extend, the already existing relationship between the region and the southern English king. Such a relationship might have inhibited any direct contact between the local administration and Cnut.

What then happened after Eiríkr's death in 1023? There are no indications that Cnut had much contact with the secular institutions of the region in this period, and moreover, no clear indications that influential figures from this region visited his court in the south. If any official, or number of officials, was placed in charge of Northumbria after Eiríkr's death in 1023, they have failed to make any mark on the sources. It is perhaps best to conclude that the region had little contact with the secular structures of government in southern England in the period 1023–9. This receives some support from the description of the affairs of the lords of Bamburgh after Uhtred's execution in the *De Obsessione Dunelmi*. This source reports that after Uhtred's death, his brother Eadwulf took the earldom, presumably the patrimonial part in the north. However, he did not live more than a year or two, and after his death Uhtred's son Ealdred "succeeded to the whole of Northumbria".<sup>68</sup> The opposition of terms here implies that Ealdred, unlike his uncle, could exert authority in southern Northumbria as well as in the patrimonial region of the north. As the text proceeds to narrate Ealdred's attack on Thurbrand in Yorkshire, this would appear to be confirmed by events in the narrative. However, it remains to be seen how much jurisdiction Ealdred could exert in southern Northumbria. As the political machinery of the region was composed from a number of small, almost autonomous units in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, it seems probable to me that after the death of Eiríkr in 1023

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<sup>68</sup> *Obsessione Dunelmi* ch. 7 (edited Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 1: 219); "Aldredus... solius Northumbriae comitatum suscepit". This suggestion was originally made by Whitelock, "Dealings", 83.

southern Northumbria returned to a large degree of self-rule, with each lesser earl or landholding thegn ruling autonomously over their individual jurisdictions. Ealdred probably pushed his influence further and further into this chaotic mass of overlordships and alliances, and it seems unlikely that he could have controlled all of it.

In the absence of any apparent contact between the king in the south and the secular authority of the North after 1023, perhaps some minimal contact with the royal court was continued by the ecclesiastical institutions of the region. As I have discussed above, Archbishop Wulfstan and Ælfric Puttoc appear to have been supporters of Cnut, and they may well have represented some degree of royal presence in southern Northumbria in the initial decade of Cnut's rule. However, it seems unlikely that Cnut had many supporters in the ecclesiastical institutions of northern Northumbria. Some modern historians have argued that Cnut was courting support from the community at Durham in this period as well, but the evidence seems inconclusive. Much has been made of the report in Symeon of Durham's *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiae* that after Bishop Aldhun's death *c.* 1016 there was a three year vacancy in the office.<sup>69</sup> This vacancy was resolved when a clerk of the church named Edmund was chosen through the intervention of St. Cuthbert. Subsequently he travelled to Cnut's court and had his appointment confirmed. Aird has interpreted the three year vacancy as due to Cnut's interest in the community.<sup>70</sup> He believes that the evidence indicates that in the period immediately after 1016 there was opposition to Cnut in Durham. He suggests that the unsavoury nature of being elected, confirmed by Cnut and thus potentially being seen as Cnut's candidate, caused the chapter members to be reluctant to stand for election. Only significantly after the removal of Uhtred's influence did they warm to Cnut and decide it best to have some form of presence at the royal court. This seems to be reading far too much into the evidence. Using the same account Fletcher is just as creative, and manages to postulate that Symeon's use of the literary motif of a saint choosing a candidate, indicates that during the three year vacancy there was a dispute over the election.<sup>71</sup> From the fact that Edmund

<sup>69</sup> Symeon of Durham, *Historia Dunelmensis*, 3: 6 (edited in Arnold, *Symeon's Monach Opera*, 1: 85–7).

<sup>70</sup> W. M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans: the Church of Durham, 1071–1153* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1998), 49.

<sup>71</sup> Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 112–13.



was a member of Durham's community Fletcher has supposed that he was the locally preferred candidate, as opposed to Cnut's own, who is apparently ignored in the account. Thus, he presumes that continuing relations between the community and the royal court were strained. Both of these historians have gone further than I think the evidence allows us to. Given the three year vacancy and the method by which it was apparently resolved it does seem likely, as Fletcher says, that there was a disputed election following Aldhun's death. However, this may have had nothing to do with any candidate, either visible or invisible in Symeon's account, being favoured by Cnut. In the tenth and eleventh centuries the Anglo-Saxon king seems to have had little to do with the selection process of Durham's bishop. Indeed, the election was usually reserved for the chapter alone. It seems easiest to conclude that Cnut was merely a distant overlord called upon to give a disputed decision some much needed authority. There is no evidence that Cnut took an interest in the affairs of northern Northumbria in this period.

*Interaction in the Initial Decade of Cnut's Regime,  
1016–29: Scotland*

There is next to no interaction between Cnut and Scotland in this period. There is evidence of an invasion mounted by the Scots that met with English forces at Carham in 1018.<sup>72</sup> However, the accounts of this mention only the forces of the house of Bamburgh present on the English side.

*Interaction in the Initial Decade of Cnut's Regime,  
1016–29: Wales*

A single piece of evidence witnesses contact between Cnut and Wales in this period. In *Liber Landauensis*, a twelfth-century compilation, there is a charter which claims to be a grant by King Rhydderch ap Iestyn of Morgannwg (c. 1020(?)–1033), confirming the landholdings of the community of Llandaff with the “assent of Archbishop Æthelnoth of Canterbury along with letters of commendation from Cnut king of the

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<sup>72</sup> See Kapelle, *Norman*, 21–2, and his references there for the debate surrounding the battle of Carham.

English".<sup>73</sup> A note which precedes the charter makes it evident this was not the only contact the scribe thought had occurred between Cnut and Rhydderch. The note states that Bishop Joseph, in whose episcopate the grant was made, was consecrated by Archbishop Æthelnoth in October 1022, with the consent of Cnut, Rhydderch, and a sub-king Hywel ap Owain of Morgannwg.<sup>74</sup> This charter and its attached note have received a great deal of attention and criticism.<sup>75</sup> There is much about the document to suggest that it is a forgery. It contains twelfth-century interpolations throughout, and lacks a witness-list. Moreover, if we view the document within the context of the twelfth-century enterprise that created the *Liber Landauensis* then it begins to look even more suspect. The text was created with a clear political purpose in the 1130s. The Llandaff chapter had for many years been engaged in a dispute with the chapter of St David's, and within this both were developing exaggerated claims of antiquity. To further the cause of an independent Welsh church under the leadership of St David's, that bishopric claimed that the pre-Conquest English church had granted them archiepiscopal status over Wales.<sup>76</sup> Llandaff fought back against these claims, arguing that in the pre-Conquest period they had never owed allegiance to St David's, but instead to Canterbury.<sup>77</sup> It appears that few, if any, authentic historical materials for these claims existed in twelfth-century Wales, and so it is plausible that the authors of the *Liber Landauensis* turned to forgery to substantiate the claims of their community, producing in the document bearing Cnut's and Æthelnoth's names a precedent for their bishop's consecration in Canterbury, and evidence of ongoing relations between their community and the English king and archbishop.

However, there remains a residual impression that there may be some evidence of contact behind this record. Most importantly, there is no glaring inconsistency in the document's chronology. Æthelnoth became archbishop in 1020, Rhydderch was ruling by 1022 and continued

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<sup>73</sup> *Book of Llan Dav*, eds. J. G. Evans & J. Rhys (Oxford, 1893), 254; "... ammonitione Ælnod archiepiscopi cantuariensi simul cum litteris commendatis Cnut regnantis angliam".

<sup>74</sup> *Book of Llan Dav* (Evans et al., 252).

<sup>75</sup> See W. Davies, *An Early Welsh Microcosm: Studies in the Llandaff Charters* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), 186 and K. L. Maund, *Ireland, Wales, and England in the Eleventh Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991), 188–9, for criticisms of this text.

<sup>76</sup> See Brooks, *Early History*, 21–2.

<sup>77</sup> See *ibid.*, 23.

until his death in 1033, and Hywel ap Owain died *c.* 1043 in advanced old age. With this in mind it seems notable that many of the known forgeries of the *Liber Landauensis* do not compare to this charter in this respect.<sup>78</sup>

Additionally, the alleged contact between Cnut and Rhydderch fits well into the context of what is known of non-royal English interaction with Wales in the early 1020s. The *Annales Cambriae* and the *Brutian* record that in 1022 Earl Eilaf, whose earldom was based on Gloucestershire, made an extensive and damaging raid into Dyfed, apparently destroying St. Davids.<sup>79</sup> The account of this raid in *Vita Sancti Cadoci* makes it clear that this raid was for plunder, and the clergy had to flee from Llancarfan into Monmouthshire with their relics and valuables.<sup>80</sup> This raid seems to fit into a long-standing pattern of interaction between the Mercian earls and the Welsh. Many of these earls had acted in a predatory fashion towards Wales, using it as a source of plunder and revenue. What seems significant is the date of Eilaf's raid. It appears revealing that in the same year as Eilaf turned his attention to Wales the first contact was allegedly made between Bishop Joseph and Canterbury. This contact subsequently developed into Rhydderch entering into some form of power-relationship with Cnut. We could interpret this contact as an attempt to appeal to Eilaf's political superior for clemency. Indeed, a parallel for these actions can be found in Asser's record, in his *Vita Ælfredi*, that a number of Welsh kings submitted to King Alfred.<sup>81</sup> Three of the Welsh kings who submitted to Alfred are of particular interest. These are King Hywel ap Rhys of Glywysing and King Brochfael and King Ffyrnfael of Gwent. These rulers submitted to Alfred to gain his protection against the incursions of the "might and tyrannical behaviour of Ealdorman Æthelred" of Mercia.<sup>82</sup> Thus, if there is any legitimate record contained in the charter and accompanying note in the *Liber Landauensis*, then it does not indicate

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<sup>78</sup> For example, compare the confirmation-charter of Morgan Hen supposedly confirmed by King Edgar and witnessed by Hywel Dda: edited in *Book of Llan Dav*, (Evans, 247–9). Note, Edgar did not come to power until seven years after Hywel's death in 950.

<sup>79</sup> Williams, *Annales Cambriae*, s. a. 1022 (Williams, 23) and *Brut y Tywysogyon* s. a. 1022, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1955), 20–2.

<sup>80</sup> Lifris, *Vita Sancti Cadoci*, ch. 40 (edited in A. W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1944), 110–13).

<sup>81</sup> Asser, *Vita Ælfredi*, ch. 80 (Stevenson, 66–7).

<sup>82</sup> Asser, *Vita Ælfredi*, ch. 80 (Stevenson, 66–7); "ui et tyrannide Eadred, comitis".

that Cnut maintained an interest in Wales. Instead, it appears that where contact can be perceived the Welsh kings initiated it in order to protect themselves from depredations by Mercian earls.

*Interaction in the Initial Decade of Cnut's Regime,  
1016–29: Ireland*

With the exception of the submission of the Hiberno-Norse ruler Olaf Guthfrithsson to Athelstan in 937, Cnut's Anglo-Saxon predecessors had no claim to any overlordship over rulers of Ireland. However, it seems likely that there was some contact between Cnut and King Sihtric Silkbeard of Dublin (c. 989–1036), and in light of the nature of this contact I shall deal with this here. Hudson has commented most recently on this subject, and several of his conclusions bear some re-examination.<sup>83</sup> Hudson focussed his attention on the numismatic evidence.<sup>84</sup> Sihtric commissioned a coinage for himself using Cnut's Quatrefoil issue as his model, sporadically replacing the legend with one bearing his own name and styling him as ruler either "of Dublin" or "among the Irish".<sup>85</sup> The production of the exemplar issue c. 1017–23 in England dates Sihtric's coinage to those years or the period immediately following. Furthermore, Blackburn has shown that the mint at Chester was the most likely place of production for the dies which were used to strike Sihtric's coins.<sup>86</sup> Hudson placed emphasis on the "tight control... maintained over his moneymen by the English king", taking this to suggest that Cnut had authorised Sihtric's imitations.<sup>87</sup> This appears to be taking the evidence too far. Hudson has failed to appreciate the independence of the borough of Chester in late Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>88</sup> Chester was founded in 907 on the edge of the Scandinavian-settled Wirral, as part of a Mercian campaign to establish English

<sup>83</sup> B. T. Hudson, "Knútr and Viking Dublin", *Scandinavian Studies* 66 (1994).

<sup>84</sup> See Hudson, "Knútr", 323–5.

<sup>85</sup> The various inscriptions are edited in Blackburn, "Hiberno-Norse", 16–17.

<sup>86</sup> M. Blackburn, "Hiberno-Norse Coins of the Helmet Type", in *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage in Memory of Bror Emil Hildebrand*, ed. K. Jonsson (Stockholm: Swedish Numismatic Society, 1990).

<sup>87</sup> Hudson, "Knútr", 323–4.

<sup>88</sup> M. A. S. Blackburn & C. S. S. Lyon, "Regional Die-Production in Cnut's Quatrefoil issue", in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History: Essays in Memory of Michael Dolley*, ed. M. A. S. Blackburn (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), 246–8, and Blackburn, "Hiberno-Norse", 4–5.

rule in northern Mercia. It does not seem to have been firmly within the control of the West-Saxon rulers in the tenth and early eleventh centuries. It was neutral border-territory when Edgar met the rulers of Wales, Scotland and Northumbria there in 973, and again in 1000 when Æthelred used it as a mustering point for the forces which he used to ravage Cumberland.<sup>89</sup> Geographically, Chester lay within the zones of control of both the earls of Mercia and the Hiberno-Norse colonies on the western coast of Ireland. Indeed, only the might of Earl Leofric in the middle of the eleventh century seems to have permanently established English control over the site. The existence of Chester outside of the standard English administration (at least until the mid-eleventh century) is also confirmed by what can be discerned about the operation of its mint. Blackburn, in his discussion of Chester as the source for Sihtric's dies, noted an idiosyncrasy about the mint there.<sup>90</sup> Unlike all other large English die-centres, which operated as production and distribution hubs for the surrounding smaller mints, remarkably few dies were distributed from Chester to surrounding mints. It appears to have been acting outside the normal system in a form of administrative 'bubble' on the borders of English territory. Rather than see close diplomatic contact in the numismatic evidence, it appears simpler to conclude that Sihtric's emulation of Cnut's coinage was dictated by convenience; he sourced his dies from an experienced workshop within his sphere of influence, and there they merely adapted the models that were most readily available.

The possibility of ecclesiastical contact between Dublin and Canterbury during Sihtric's reign has received much attention. The evidence for this is notably fragmentary and inconclusive. The annals of St Mary's, Dublin, note that the consecration of two of Dublin's bishops by the archbishop of Canterbury in the late eleventh century were done *more antecessorum suorum*.<sup>91</sup> This could indicate that the first bishop of Dublin, Dunan, could also have been consecrated in Canterbury. A connection between this ecclesiastical contact and Sihtric has been read into a fourteenth-century addition to the Black Book of Christ

<sup>89</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 973 (Darlington et al., 422–4), and ASC 1000 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 88).

<sup>90</sup> Blackburn, "Regional Die-Production", 236.

<sup>91</sup> *Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (London 1884): 2: 249. All this was originally discussed by A. Gwynn, "Some Unpublished Texts from the Black Book of Christ Church, Dublin", *Analecta Hiberniae* 16 (1946): 309. Furthermore, critical discussion can be found in M. T. Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship: Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 8–55.

Church, Dublin.<sup>92</sup> This addition states that Sihtric donated the land for the Church of the Holy Trinity, Dublin, which was subsequently the seat of Bishop Dunan's see. However, the connection to Sihtric is rather tenuous. The imprecise phrasing of the addition allows us to conclude that either Sihtric made his donation for the foundation of the church, or that sometime after the donation, perhaps even after Sihtric's abdication in 1036, the land he gave had the church constructed upon it.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, the Annals of Ulster report that Bishop Dunan died in 1074, and, thus, some constructive mathematics are required in order for his consecration to even occur during Cnut's reign.<sup>94</sup> Finally, evidence of consecration by the archbishop of Canterbury does not necessarily imply further contact by secular or ecclesiastical figures. The bishop of Dublin throughout the eleventh century attempted to establish his independence from the powerful bishop of Armagh.<sup>95</sup> The archbishop of Canterbury may have just acted as the closest figure, outside of Ireland, who could consecrate Dunan.<sup>96</sup>

The sources from outside of Ireland offer even less evidence of contact. Hudson took the recurrence of the name *Sihtric dux* in the witness-lists of three of Cnut's charters to indicate the presence of Sihtric Silkbeard at Cnut's court.<sup>97</sup> However, a more convincing identification of this witness with a powerful land owner based in Hertfordshire, has been provided by Keynes.<sup>98</sup>

The most reliable piece of evidence for contact between Cnut and Ireland before 1029 is that of a single skaldic verse which describes Cnut as:<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Dublin, Christ Church MS. 1.1. See A. Gwynn, "The First Bishops of Dublin", *Reportorium Nouum: Dublin Diocesan Historical Record* 1 (1955): 3, for some discussion.

<sup>93</sup> Indeed, the way that modern historians have generated a date for the foundation of the house is by postulating that this building project may have occurred immediately after Sihtric's pilgrimage to Rome in 1028; Hudson, "Knútr", 325, follows A. Gwynn, *The Writings of Bishop Patrick 1074-1084*, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1955), 1-2, here. There is no other evidence to support this connection.

<sup>94</sup> Annals of Ulster, s. a. 1074, ed. S. Mac Airt & G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), 510.

<sup>95</sup> See A. Gwynn, "The Origins of the See of Dublin", *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 57 (1941): 45 & 107-9, for details of the rivalry of Armagh and Dublin in the eleventh century.

<sup>96</sup> Note that Barlow, *English Church*, 232-3, came to a similar conclusion.

<sup>97</sup> Hudson, "Knútr", 330-1. The charters are S. 962 (Old Minster, Winchester), S. 963 (Exeter) and S. 971 (Exeter / Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>98</sup> Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 65.

<sup>99</sup> Fragment 2 (edited in Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 299; B. 1: 275). This verse is preserved without being named as part of a larger known poem, and as such it is suspect. However, some factors suggest that it is genuine. It is attributed to a known

konung Dana  
 Íra ok Engla  
 ok Eybúa

the king of the Danes, the Irish and the English, and the island-dwellers

In the absence of any other evidence of contact between Cnut and the other Irish kingdoms it seems that the kings of Dublin are implied by the 'Irish' in this stanza. Certainly, to the English die-cutter who produced dies for Sihtric the Hiberno-Scandinavian population of Dublin could be called Irish. However, I am uncertain how literally this witness should be trusted on this point. It seems significant that the author of *Encomium Emmae Reginae* made no mention of Dublin or Ireland when enumerating the kingdoms which Cnut held power over.<sup>100</sup> Moreover, claims of power and actual power are two different things. The title *konungr* appears to have had a wide semantic range covering rulers of warbands, rulers of nations, and on occasion even Roman emperors. Cnut was certainly a *konungr* of Denmark and England, and one might wonder if the poet here has extended the legitimate uses of his title to regions where it did not apply in the same sense of the term, and where he may have held only a nominal overlordship or even less authority. It must be considered that the extension of the term to cover 'the Irish' or Dublin implies that some power-relationship existed between Cnut and the king of Dublin, but such a relationship cannot be clearly defined from this single scrap of extant evidence.

*Interaction in the Final Years of Cnut's Regime,  
 1030–5: Northumbria*

It appears that we can observe little contact between Cnut and these areas in the first decade of Cnut's rule. Furthermore, little of what can be perceived appears to have been initiated by him. This lack of interest in the regions neighbouring southern England changed in the years between 1031 and 1033. This change is particularly noticeable in

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court-poet of Cnut's, Óttar Svarti. Furthermore, it is extant only in the 'Legendary Saga' of St Óláfr, which has many later accretions, but these usually concern Óláfr's miracles, and this verse clearly does not. Finally, it seems unlikely that a later forger would assert that Cnut held some authority over the Irish, as there is no contact between Cnut and Ireland recorded in the saga tradition.

<sup>100</sup> *Encomium*, 2: 19 (Campbell, 34).

Cnut's interaction with Northumbria. In 1033 Cnut granted an estate in Patrington, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, to Archbishop Ælfric Puttoc.<sup>101</sup> We know little of the landholdings of the archbishop and cathedral chapter in the early eleventh century, but the estates which we can show were owned by the archbishop in this period are to the west of York.<sup>102</sup> Patrington lies to the east of York, out on the promontory of land created by the estuary of the River Humber intersecting with the eastern coastline. Furthermore, I have outlined above my reasons for believing this promontory, and especially the region of Holderness, to have been in the initial years of the eleventh century under the control of Thurbrand the *Hold*. Moreover, the archbishop's charter has certain features which make it unique amongst Cnut's other grants, and arouse suspicion as to the nature of the archbishop's involvement in Patrington. The size of the estate conveyed is enormous, some 43 hides. This is the largest grant known for the north of England in the eleventh century, and is over twice the size of any other extant grant to the see.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, the columns of the *ministri* in the witness-list, while apparently authentic, are unusual. Two officials from the royal court, Osgot clapa and Tovi pruða, head these columns. Following them are some eighteen names which would appear to be landholding thegns local to York.<sup>104</sup> Admittedly, the survival of charters from the York archive is exceptionally poor, yielding in total only seven extant documents with witness-lists, but it still seems significant that no other document from this archive appears to include almost exclusively local *ministri*, and those in such high numbers.<sup>105</sup> However, this list of names does seem to have much in common with a list of the *festermenn*, or sureties of one Ælfric, which was entered by an eleventh-century hand onto an endleaf of the York Gospels.<sup>106</sup> The inclusion of this list in a

<sup>101</sup> S. 968 (York).

<sup>102</sup> Namely Sherburn-in-Elmet, Otley and Ripon. See S. 1453 (York) and Keynes, "Additions", 83–91, for details.

<sup>103</sup> The largest other grants made to the see are one by Edgar of 10 hides (S. 679), and one by Eadwig to Archbishop Oscytel of 20 hides (S. 659).

<sup>104</sup> Specifically, it is the high percentage of the names which are Scandinavian that identifies them as residents of Northumbria; 16 of the 18 names are Scandinavian.

<sup>105</sup> Unless we include S. 679 (York) where at the end of 19 *munstr* who are clearly from southern England there is a list of 9 Scandinavian names punctuated by two Dunstans.

<sup>106</sup> York, York Minster Additional MS. 1, fol. 161v. A facsimile can be found in Barker, *The York Gospels*.



text that had associations with successive archbishops of York makes it likely that the Ælfric here is that of Cnut's archbishop: Ælfric Puttoc. Furthermore, there are certain names that occur in both lists. The list of *festermenn* begins with an Ulfketil, who is identified there as a *cyninges reue*, perhaps the shire-reeve of Yorkshire. There is a prominent Ulfketil in the witness-list of the charter who could be this official. In the charter this Ulfketil attests alongside a Fornā, whose uncommon name also appears in the list of *festermenn*. Finally, the list of *festermenn* records the name Fartheegn, which presumably lies behind the garbled *Faryem* in the charter.<sup>107</sup> Keynes has suggested that the list of *festermenn* may have been compiled in some period when Ælfric needed to count on his secular supporters in the vicinity of York.<sup>108</sup> This seems likely, and thus, the addition of a similar list of the archbishop's local supporters to the grant of Patrington, suggests that the passing of this estate into the archbishop's ownership was expected to generate dispute in Yorkshire. As noted above, it appears that this grant of land was intended to involve the archbishop in a part of the shire outside of that of his former landholdings, in an area which appears to have formed the patrimony of an influential Danish (or Scandinavian descended) landholding family. It appears that this grant may represent an attempt by Cnut to extend the authority of his archbishop over that of some of the more independent aristocracy of southern Northumbria.

Cnut also appears, in this period, to have utilised the power of the community at Durham to reduce the wealth of some the aristocracy of northern Northumbria. At some point in the early 1030s Cnut visited Durham. Symeon of Durham records a public ceremony accompanying Cnut's visit to Durham, in which Cnut made a barefoot pilgrimage to Durham from the site of Garmondsway, some five miles to the southeast.<sup>109</sup> Once at Durham Cnut made great benefactions to the community, granting them the estates of Staindrop and Brompton with all the other lands that were attached to them.<sup>110</sup> However, several of

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<sup>107</sup> With the common replacement of 'y' for 'p' and 'em' for 'en' in the late medieval transcriptions which are now our earliest extant copy of the charter. Keynes, "Additions", 99, initially noted the connection between the two names.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Symeon of Durham, *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiae*, 3: 8 (edited in Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera*, 1: 90).

<sup>110</sup> The text lists Cnapatun, West Shotton, Raby, Wackerfield, Evenwood, Bishop Auckland, Lartington, Eldon, Ingleton, Thickey and Middleton as appurtenances of Staindrop. The appurtenances of Brompton are not listed. Craster, "Red Book of Durham", 527-8, adds 17 properties and 2 churches in Yorkshire to this list.

the estates listed in this grant had previously been owned by the community at Durham. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* records that during the episcopate of Bishop Aldhun (995–1018) an unknown *Ethred eorle*, accompanied by the more recognisable *Northman eorle* and *Uhtred eorle*, abstracted twenty-four estates from the community.<sup>111</sup> Lartington and Thicklely appear in both the list of abstracted estates and Cnut's grant. Furthermore, Cnut's grant includes the estate of Bishop Auckland, whose appurtenances, Escomb, Helmington, Copeland, Witton-le-Wear, Hunwick and Newton Cap, all appear in the list of abstracted estates.<sup>112</sup> As noted above, it is recorded in the Durham *Liber Vitae* that one of these appurtenances, that of Escomb, was presented back to the community by the secular nobleman, Earl Northman, who had seized it from the community.<sup>113</sup> It would appear that the return of this estate was made during the royal visit, and perhaps was forced upon the earl by Cnut. Cnut would appear to have lent authority to the community's claims to these estates, and as part of a public ceremony, in which he appeared as a repentant secular lord, forced the local aristocracy to return contentious properties. This simultaneously removed these estates from the ownership of the local secular aristocracy, eroding their wealth, and fostered royal supporters among the community at Durham.

Moreover, in this period a powerful secular royal representative was placed in Northumbria. The witness-list of the grant of 1033 from York's archive includes the earliest appearance of Earl Siward.<sup>114</sup> Twelfth- and thirteenth-century accounts of the descendants of Siward record that he was the son of a prominent Danish nobleman.<sup>115</sup> This seems significant. His absence from the witness-lists of Cnut's charters indicates that it is unlikely that he was in England much before 1033.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>111</sup> *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, ch. 31 (Johnson South, 66–8).

<sup>112</sup> Aird, *St Cuthbert*, 51, initially noted this. Note also that Thicklely is one of the appurtenances of Bishop Auckland, but as it is mentioned separately in Cnut's grant it has been omitted here.

<sup>113</sup> *Liber Vitae Dunelmensis* (Stevenson, 57).

<sup>114</sup> S. 968 (York).

<sup>115</sup> See in particular the *Gesta Antecessorum Comitum Waldevi*, edited in J. Langebek, *Scriptores Rerum Danicarum Medii Aevi* (1772–92), 3: 287–302. For some comment on these historical traditions see my "Was the Family of Earl Siward and Earl Waltheof a Lost Line of the Ancestors of the Danish Royal Family?", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 51 (2007): 41–72.

<sup>116</sup> However, he may be the Siward who appears at the head of the *ministri* who attest S. 964 (Abingdon). Note that I have argued below, at p. 319, that Cnut was mostly absent from England from the period 1026–31, and was on the Continent and then in Scandinavia. Siward, along with a number of other court figures, would appear to have arrived from Scandinavia in Cnut's entourage after that period abroad.

Thus, it appears that Cnut after apparently ignoring the gap in the secular administration of Northumbria for a decade, filled it with a Danish member of his entourage. Siward had little local support and owed his appointment, and presumably his loyalty, entirely to Cnut.

As Siward ascended to his earldom in England only two years before Cnut's death, he is somewhat of a mysterious figure during Cnut's lifetime. However, his actions in the years immediately after Cnut's death can be used to indicate some of his remit in 1033. He was evidently introduced to Northumbria to consolidate royal authority in the southern part of the region, and to control the ambitions of the house of Bamburgh in the northern part. In 1041, after Harthacnut's murder of Eadulf of Bamburgh, Siward seized control of the earldom, consolidating his gains by marrying into the house of Bamburgh.

*Interaction in the Final Years of Cnut's Regime,  
1030–5: Scotland*

The early 1030s also saw a dramatic about-face from Cnut's earlier policy concerning Scotland. There is evidence that in 1031 period Cnut met three Scottish kings and received their submission. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle notes the affair and one of its redactions names the kings as Malcolm king of Scots and two lesser rulers, *Mælbeth* and *Iehmarc*.<sup>117</sup> Some modern historians have argued that this event must be seen in relation to a longer process of interaction between Cnut and Scotland, about which our sources are silent.<sup>118</sup> There is only one piece of evidence supporting this interpretation, and it is from a problematic source. Among the clutter of information in the historical miscellany of Rodulphus Glaber, a monk who lived in southern France in the early eleventh century, is the statement that Cnut attempted to assert himself

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<sup>117</sup> ASC 1027 (= 1031) DEF (D: Cubbin, 65), the naming of all three kings occurs in ASC 1027 (= 1031) EF (E: Irvine, 76). It should be noted that the chronicler here misdates the meeting to 1027 after Cnut's return from Rome. B. T. Hudson, "Cnut and the Scottish Kings", *English Historical Review* 107 (1992): 357–8, has argued that this is most probably because the chronicler knew that this meeting occurred after Cnut returned to England from Rome, but failed to account for the period spent by Cnut on the Continent and in Scandinavia from 1026–31. Thus, the chronicler placed it in 1027, the year after Cnut's return from Rome, rather than in 1031 immediately after his true return to England.

<sup>118</sup> See M. O. Anderson, "Lothian and the Early Scottish Kings", *Scottish Historical Review* 39 (1960), and B. Meehan, "The Siege of Durham, the Battle of Carham and the Cession of Lothian", *Scottish Historical Review* 55 (1976).

over King Malcolm and the Scots almost immediately after his marriage to Emma in 1017.<sup>119</sup> Rodulphus continues, describing how constant warfare ensued until Emma and Duke Richard II of Normandy interceded and negotiated a peace-settlement between the two parties. This narrative appears to give us a plausible context for the meeting in 1031, but upon closer inspection there is much about this record that is unsettling. Rodulphus was geographically isolated from these events. He claims an English source for some of his material but often his narrative gives a simplified account of English history with many errors.<sup>120</sup> Often such generalisation can be observed to serve a Rodulphus' need to lend weight to the ecclesiastical moral of the story, and here this seems to be the case with Cnut depicted as the barbarous warlord who has set aside his past ferocity through the intercession of Duke Richard, and ceased his harrying of the good Christian Malcolm. The facts here may have been altered to fit a moral lesson. Furthermore, the chronology of the account is flawed. If the peace-settlement between Cnut and Malcolm was conducted immediately before the submission of 1031 then Richard II, who had died in 1026, cannot have played a part in the negotiations. Alternatively, if Richard's intercession in this conflict occurred between Cnut's marriage to Emma in 1017 and Richard's death in 1026, then there is a significant gap between these events and Cnut's meeting with Malcolm in 1031. It appears more likely that Rodulphus muddled the few facts he knew of contemporary English politics, mistakenly conflating Cnut's invasion of southern England in 1015–16 with a meeting with Malcolm in 1031. It appears more plausible, and accords with the silence found in our other sources, to conclude that Cnut's interest in Scotland does not predate the early 1030s.

*Interaction in the Final Years of Cnut's Regime,  
1030–5: Ireland*

Cnut's relations with the kings of Dublin may have also become closer in the early 1030s. At the end of the entry for 1030 in the *Annals of Tigernach* there is a record of:

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<sup>119</sup> Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiarum Libri Quinque*, 2: 3, ed. J. France (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 54–6.

<sup>120</sup> As for errors I think it is suffice to mention that in narrating the Danish invasion of 1016 Glaber has Cnut as king of the western English and Æthelred as the king of the Danes.

Orguin Bretan ó Saxanaib & ó Gallaib Átha cliath

Raiding [or ‘slaughter’] of the Welsh by the English and the Foreigners of Dublin.<sup>121</sup>

As in the previous decade the contact between the kings of Dublin and Englishmen does not necessarily imply contact between Sihtric and Cnut. The context of the attack would appear to have been the defence or expansion of the stronghold established by the kings of Dublin in northern Wales.<sup>122</sup> Hudson accepts without much debate that these are Cnut’s forces.<sup>123</sup> However, we need to ask a number of questions about the identity of these Englishmen. We might reasonably observe that in 1030 Cnut and a large part of his fleet were involved in matters in Scandinavia, and speculate that involvement in a campaign in the Irish Sea in that year sounds a little far-fetched. Furthermore, it should be noted that as there are no articles present we cannot even securely translate *Saxanaib* as “the English”.<sup>124</sup> There remains the possibility that it should be translated as “some English” instead. Additionally, as the raid was on northern Wales it is possible that the Englishmen were mercenary forces from nearby Chester or English exiles resident in Ireland. However, there is no evidence of English mercenaries being hired by Hiberno-Scandinavian or the Irish in this period, and the historical sources offer few, if any, English exiles who fled to Ireland in this period. The terse nature of the annal-entry and the poor state of the Irish historical record ensures that we cannot know with any certainty if these Englishmen were some of Cnut’s forces, and perhaps we should view this interpretation only as a possibility.

*Interaction in the Final Years of Cnut’s Regime,  
1030–5: Some Analysis*

It is apparent that in the years between 1030 and 1033 Cnut performed a complete about-face in his relations with Northumbria, Scotland, and

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<sup>121</sup> Annals of Tigernach, s. a. 1030 (edited in W. Stokes, “The Annals of Tigernach: the Fourth Fragment, A.D. 973–A.D. 1088”, *Revue Celtique* 17 (1896): 370). Note the translation is his.

<sup>122</sup> See C. Etchingam, “North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: the Insular Viking Zone”, *Pentia* 15 (2001): 157–8, for the fullest study of this outpost.

<sup>123</sup> Hudson, “Knútr”, 327–8.

<sup>124</sup> I am indebted to Dr. E. Boyle for this point.

perhaps Dublin. From 1030 onwards there is evidence that he travelled to these regions, directly involved himself with the machinery of local government, and attempted to reduce the power of the local aristocracy. Previous historiography has interpreted Cnut's actions in these areas as an attempt to emulate his royal predecessors. Certainly, some of his actions in these regions do resemble the actions of Athelstan and Edgar. In Symeon of Durham's accounts of Cnut's benefactions to Durham there are possible echoes of Athelstan's visit a century before. Similarly, the phrasing of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's record of Cnut's meeting with the Scottish kings in 1031, which places emphasis on the fact that they surrendered to him, does seem to refer to the submissions which the Northumbrians, the Scots and the Welsh made to a southern English king in 920, 927 and perhaps 972.<sup>125</sup> We might conclude that Cnut had always intended to assert his traditional rights over England's *imperium*, but did not have the time or resources to pursue this in the initial decade of his rule. Subsequently, he spent the majority of the period 1026–31 on the Continent or in Scandinavia, and so perhaps we should see Cnut's sudden interest after 1030 in the territories of the Anglo-Saxon *imperium* (and perhaps Dublin as well) as an attempt to develop his authority there in a point of relative leisure late in his career. In part this could explain Cnut's actions in Northumbria and Scotland in the early 1030s. By 1030 Cnut's grip on southern England was great enough that he could turn his attention to the political chaos of the north of England, and after this, re-establish the political subjugation of Scottish kings to an English overlord.

However, there are problems with the conclusion that Cnut was continuing to assert his grasp on an *imperium* which he had inherited from his predecessors. If Cnut was seeking to emulate these kings then he seems to have ignored a key-element of the political structure he inherited. Wales was closer to the seat of West-Saxon government and thus much easier to control. In the tenth century the perceived domination of Wales seems to have been the principal component of England's *imperium*. Little that has been discussed above indicates that Cnut had any interest in Wales or made any attempts to assert his overlordship

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<sup>125</sup> ASC 1031 DEF (D: Cubbin, 65). The Chronicle specifies that the Scottish king submitted to him and became his man ("Scotta cyng eode him on hand ond wearð his mann"). However, note that in the entries for 920 and 927 this terminology of submission is not employed, and the chronicle does not report the submission to Edgar in 972.

of the region. Rhydderch ap Iestyn would appear to have initiated diplomatic contact with Cnut in the 1020s, and there is no evidence that Wales played any part in Cnut's interests after 1030.

We should take a closer look at the key-event in this process: the submission of the Scottish kings to Cnut in 1031. The events of 1030 in England are entirely obscure, and the English sources report only the meeting with the Scottish kings in 1031. Two of the manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle name the three kings that Cnut met at this meeting as Malcolm, *Mælbaeth* and *Iehmarc*.<sup>126</sup> The Malcolm here must be Malcolm mac Kenneth (Máel Coluim mac Cináeda), the ruler of the central Scottish region from 1005 to 1034, and the most powerful king in Scotland in that period. Hudson has plausibly identified the two other kings as Macbeth (Mac Bethad mac Findláech) and Echmarcach Rögnvaldsson.<sup>127</sup> Macbeth was the *mormaer*, or great-steward of a region based on the north-eastern coast of Scotland around the Moray Firth, stretching northwards into Sutherland and Caithness.<sup>128</sup> He held this title, or at least some pretension to it, after the death of the previous *mormaer* in 1029.<sup>129</sup> Echmarcach Rögnvaldsson ruled Galloway, the Isle of Man and probably some part of the Hebrides, from 1005 to 1064.<sup>130</sup>

What connects these three rulers, and the regions they controlled, to each other and to Cnut? It is possible to interpret the association between these three Scottish rulers as merely that of the main Scottish king, Malcolm mac Kenneth, and two of his client-rulers. From brief mentions in late-thirteenth- and mid-fourteenth-century sources of a familial relationship between Malcolm mac Kenneth and Macbeth it has been deduced by modern historians that they were closely related, and Malcom may even have fostered Macbeth.<sup>131</sup> Thus, it has been

<sup>126</sup> ASC 1027 (= 1031) EF (E: Irvine, 76).

<sup>127</sup> Hudson, "Cnut", 351–6.

<sup>128</sup> See D. P. Kirby, "Moray Prior to 1100", in *An Historical Atlas of Scotland, c.400–c.1600*, ed. P. MacNeill & R. Nicholson (St. Andrews, 1975), and A. Woolf, "'The 'Moray Question' and the Kingship of Alba in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries'", *Scottish Historical Review* 79. 2 (2000): 145, for a survey of the present knowledge of the geographical extent of the region.

<sup>129</sup> See Hudson, "Cnut", 354, and his *Kings of Celtic Scotland* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), 136, for discussion of when Macbeth succeeded to the *mormaer*-ship.

<sup>130</sup> Hudson, "Cnut", 355–6.

<sup>131</sup> The standard reconstruction of events is that Findláech, Macbeth's father, married a daughter or sister of Malcolm mac Kenneth. See N. Aichinson, *Macbeth. Man*



Fig. 7. Map of the Regions of Scotland *c.* 1031.



assumed that Macbeth's bid for power in Moray was made with the backing of Malcolm mac Kenneth.<sup>132</sup> It is also possible that some part of Galloway was under Malcolm mac Kenneth's overlordship. The Annals of Ulster contain an obituary in 1034 for a king of Galloway named Sweeney mac Kenneth (Suibne mac Cináeda), whose patronym might identify him with an otherwise unknown brother of Malcolm mac Kenneth. Certainly, Malcolm had extended his authority over much of southern Scotland, holding Strathclyde since the death of the last native ruler *c.* 1000, seizing control of Lothian in 1018, and in John of Worcester's account being hailed as the king of Cumbria as well.<sup>133</sup> However, the division of Galloway between this Sweeney and Echmarcach Rögnvaldsson, and the relations between them, are entirely obscure. Macbeth and Echmarcach may have been Malcolm's client-kings, but the evidence is inconclusive.

It seems significant that while there were representatives of the rulers of southern Scotland, the western Isles and north-eastern Scotland at this meeting with Cnut, there are regions of Scotland which were not represented at this meeting. A glance at the topography of north-western Scotland reveals that almost all of it is mountainous and cannot have sustained the same levels of population as the south and the north-east. Little is known of this area in this period but we could safely speculate that the habitable areas of coastline were controlled by the rulers of the Hebrides (*i.e.* Echmarcach Rögnvaldsson among others). Strikingly, the jarl of the Orkneys is also absent. Submissions to Anglo-Norman kings in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries reveal that the jarl was not beyond the remit of their overlordship, and it seems strange that in 1031 this region of Scotland should have been left out.<sup>134</sup>

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*and Myth* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 33 & 40, and Kirby, "Moray", 21. Note that Hudson, *Kings*, 137, has rejected this evidence of a family connection, although his alternative conclusion has been criticised by Woolf, "Moray Question", 148 9.

<sup>132</sup> See Aichinson, *Macbeth*, 44–5. However, the mormær-ship of Moray appears to have descended in a strict pattern, alternating between two lines of the family. As Macbeth received the office either after the death of his cousin Malcolm mac Brigte (Máel coluim mac Máel Brigti) in 1029 (*Annals of Ulster*, s. a. 1029 (Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill, 466–7)), or after the death of his other cousin Gilla Cóemgáin in 1032 (*ibid.*, s. a. 103 (470–1)) this may have descended to him naturally, without any need for a powerful patron.

<sup>133</sup> Anderson, "Lothian". Note that John of Worcester in his *Chronicon*, s. a. 1054 (Darlington et al., 574), identifies Malcolm III as the son of the king of Cumbria.

<sup>134</sup> Note that in the early-twelfth-century chronicle incorporated into John of Wallingford's *Chronicon* (Vaughan, 55) it is noted that Edgar received the submission of several Scottish rulers, namely King Kenneth of Scotland, his son Malcolm, the

The majority of the known history of the Orkney jarls can be found within a single, highly questionable thirteenth-century text, the *Orkneyinga saga*.<sup>135</sup> The use of saga-sources for this period of history, especially when dealing with affairs outside of Scandinavia, is notoriously fraught with problems and errors, but we cannot ignore them as a source. With a nuanced approach to its literary nature, and an extremely cautious acceptance of any material found in it, it appears that some details of historical events can be extracted from this source. It reveals that Cnut's principal contemporary in Orkney was Jarl Þórfinnr II, who ruled from the 1020s to his death in the early 1050s. *Orkneyinga saga* contains two interpolated sections which seem to record animosity between Macbeth and Þórfinnr. Both were incorporated into the main body of the saga in a revision made some thirty years after the composition of the original and stand quite apart from the saga itself.<sup>136</sup> There are indications that these additions were copied blindly into the text, without much attempt to adapt their contents to that of the main body of the saga. Both are strikingly different in tone from the main narrative and from each other, the first reading like a formal document, the second more like an oral legend which sporadically cites spoken stories as the source of the details given.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, the introduction of Þórfinnr and description of him, which is given in the second episode, repeats the introduction of him given in the main body of the saga.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, in the earliest manuscripts of the saga these chapters stand apart from all others in that they are not given illuminated initials or titles.<sup>139</sup> We

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king of Cumbria, and one "Oriccus plurimarum rex insularum, et Orcadum diuersi reges". For more on links with the Orkneys in the Anglo-Norman period see R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7 & 16.

<sup>135</sup> Much of what follows has already been discussed by B. E. Crawford in her *Scandinavian Scotland*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987), 71–9.

<sup>136</sup> See *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. Finnbogi Guðmundsson (Reykjavik, 1965), 700; A. B. Taylor, *The Orkneyinga Saga. A New Translation with Introduction and Notes* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1938), 51–2 & 58–9, and M. Chesnutt, "Orkneyinga Saga", in *Medieval Scandinavia, An Encyclopedia*, ed. P. Pulsiano & K. Wolf (New York: Garland, 1993), 456–7, for details of these additions.

<sup>137</sup> As in *Orkneyinga saga*, ch. 20 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 50) where the saga states that the source of his information is that "en sumir menn segja" (as many people talk about).

<sup>138</sup> Compare *Orkneyinga saga*, chs. 13 & 20 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 28 & 43).

<sup>139</sup> The only extant thirteenth-century witness to the relevant sections of the saga is a fragment: Copenhagen, A. M. MS. 325 iii β 4to. It contains the last part of the second interpolation and part of the subsequent main text. The beginning of the main text chapter is picked out with a coloured initial, twice the height of the other lines of

do not know what sources the saga-reviser took these narratives from, but the level of local detail is uncharacteristically Icelandic and probably indicates a local, and therefore Orcadian, source.

The first interpolation names both Macbeth (*Magbjóðr jarl* in the text) and his father Findláech (*Finnleikr Skotajarl* in the text), and discusses battles between them and the Orkney jarls.<sup>140</sup> The narrative is in error in its placing of Macbeth's reign before that of Findláech, but it does attest to a historical tradition, current in the 1230s, that both of these rulers had warred with the jarl of Orkney.

The second interpolation narrates the battles between Þórfinnr and a mysterious figure named Karl Hundison over the region between Moray and the Orkneys.<sup>141</sup> The name Karl Hundison is also recorded in a contemporary skaldic verse composed for Þórfinnr.<sup>142</sup> However, it appears to be a derogatory nickname, translating as "Ceorl, son of a dog", applied by the Orcadian Norse to a political opponent. Several modern historians have identified this Karl Hundison with Macbeth.<sup>143</sup> The saga-account states that Karl Hundison's struggles with Þórfinnr were precipitated by the death of a King Malcolm of the Scots (*Melkomr Skotakonungr* in the text). Thus, the identification of this King Malcolm is crucial to the dating of Macbeth's struggles with the jarl of Orkney. He has been identified by several modern historians with Malcolm mac Kenneth.<sup>144</sup> However, this does not agree with other details in the saga

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text. However, the beginning of the interpolated chapter is not marked (or separated) from its predecessor. Moreover, the witness of Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, Cod. Isl. Paper Fol., MS. 39, suggests that other early manuscripts of the saga may have similarly failed to mark off the main text from the interpolations. This manuscript is a translation of the saga into early modern Danish, and is dated 1615. It was made from a now-lost manuscript in the collection of Arni Magnússon, and apparently attempts to emulate its exemplar on occasion (as in for example the letter-forms of the titles; see in particular the word *Iarl* in the titles on fol. 36v). Interestingly, it contains chapter headings, clearly separate from the main body of text in script and spatial orientation, which correspond closely to those of the modern edition by Finnboði Guðmundsson for all chapters except those of the interpolations. Similar to the Copenhagen fragment, the interpolated areas in the Stockholm copy are not given titles or separated into individual chapters.

<sup>140</sup> This section is chap. 10–11 of the present edition (Finnboði Guðmundsson, 22–5).

<sup>141</sup> This section is chap. 20–1 of the present edition (Finnboði Guðmundsson, 43–56).

<sup>142</sup> *Porfinnsdrápa* stanza 6 (edited in D. Whaley, *The Poetry of Arnórr Jarlaskáld: An Edition and Study* (London, 1998) 124 & 231).

<sup>143</sup> Crawford, *Scandinavian Scotland*, 71–2.

<sup>144</sup> This conclusion is recited by Thomson, *History of Orkney*, 43, as late as 1987, and Aichinson, *Macbeth*, 41, in 1999.

about this King Malcolm. Elsewhere in the saga it is recorded that this King Malcolm married his daughter to Jarl Sigurðr of the Orkneys, who was Þórfinnr's father.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, it is stated that Þórfinnr was fostered by this maternal grandfather, and was granted large territories on the north-eastern coastline of Scotland (in Caithness and Sutherland) by this grandfather. This Malcolm appointed Þórfinnr as jarl of the region, and placed regents into the administration on his behalf. Upon this Malcolm's death these territories became a source of tension between Þórfinnr and Malcolm's successor, who claimed Caithness "just as the earlier kings of Scotland had".<sup>146</sup> King Malcolm mac Kenneth did not hold sufficient authority in northern Scotland to make the grants specified. Indeed, the central Scottish king did not have any real power in these areas until the twelfth century. It should be noted that the Annals of Tigernach sporadically give the *mormærs* of Moray the title *rí Alban*, or king of Alba, and we might ask if one of these more northern rulers should be identified with the King Malcolm of the saga-account.<sup>147</sup> This identification agrees with the internal chronology of the saga.<sup>148</sup> The narrative places the death of this Malcolm in the same year as Þórfinnr was reconciled with his brother Brúsi, which is identified in the narrative as the year in which Cnut seized power in Norway, and Óláfr fled.<sup>149</sup> This would be either 1028 or 1029, and the Irish annals record the death of Malcolm mac Brigte, who was Macbeth's cousin in the latter year.<sup>150</sup> This northern Scottish ruler was in a position to grant the estates concerned, and his fosterage and support of Þórfinnr would have increased the animosity between Þórfinnr and Macbeth. As the Annals of Tigernach record, Malcolm mac Brigte came to power through the murder of Macbeth's father,

<sup>145</sup> *Orkneyinga saga*, ch. 20 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 43).

<sup>146</sup> *Orkneyinga saga*, ch. 20 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 44); "hann þóttisk ok eiga Katanes, sem inir fyrri Skotakonungar".

<sup>147</sup> See Woolf, "Moray Question", 149, and Hudson, "Cnut", 354, for details of this contemporary witness to the title.

<sup>148</sup> It is interesting that despite the many flaws inherent to the saga-tradition, quite often the internal chronology of events and the sequence of their placement in respect to each other can be startlingly accurate.

<sup>149</sup> *Orkneyinga saga*, ch. 19 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 42). Taylor, "Karl Hundason", 335.

<sup>150</sup> Annals of Tigernach, s. a. 1029 (Stokes, 369), Annals of Ulster, s. a. 1029 (Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill, 466–7), and the Annals of the Four Masters, s. a. 1029, ed. J. O'Donovan (Dublin, 1856), 2: 818–19. Taylor, "Karl", 335–41 and Kirby, "Moray", 21 also make this identification.

Findláech, in 1020.<sup>151</sup> Thus, this Malcolm and Macbeth represented two lines of this ruling dynasty, which in the early eleventh century were in the middle of a blood-feud. In furtherance of this feud, Macbeth was probably behind the burning of Malcolm mac Brigitte's brother, Gilla Cóemgáin, in 1032, and in the saga Macbeth (as Karl Hundison) repudiated Malcolm mac Brigitte's grants to Þórfinnr in Caithness as soon as he came to power.<sup>152</sup>

Thus, the two separate and distinct interpolations into the saga-account record a conflict between one line of the ruling family of Moray, that of Findláech and Macbeth, and the jarls of Orkney, over the control of the northern coastline of Scotland. This struggle became particularly acute after 1029 when Macbeth came to power, as Þórfinnr's fosterage by a member of the other line of this ruling family, and the grants of the disputed territories to him, involved Þórfinnr in a family blood-feud.

Additionally, the main body of the saga offers us evidence that Echmarcach Rögnvaldsson may have suffered from Þórfinnr's raiding around 1031. The saga states that after seizing Caithness and Sutherland Þórfinnr began to extend his power southwards down the western coastline of Scotland. This is placed by the internal chronology of the saga immediately after the death of Þórfinnr's brother Jarl Brúsi in 1030 × 1035. Certainly, it appears that when Brúsi's son Rögnvaldr returned to Orkney *c.* 1037 Þórfinnr was dealing with the after-effects of a raiding campaign reaching past the Hebrides and into Ireland.<sup>153</sup>

Therefore, both Macbeth and Echmarcach may have suffered in the early 1030s from Þórfinnr's warring and raiding. Furthermore, the probable familial or client-relationship between Macbeth and Malcolm mac Kenneth may have brought the latter into the conflict. However, if we regard the meeting in 1031 as attended by Þórfinnr's enemies, then how are we to explain Cnut's presence? Þórfinnr appears to have presented no direct threat to Cnut, and Cnut cannot have feared any serious incursion of Þórfinnr in southern England. I shall argue later that Cnut in this period appears to have begun to think of himself

<sup>151</sup> Annals of Tigernach, s. a. 1020 (Stokes, 359).

<sup>152</sup> Annals of Ulster, s. a. 1032 (Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill, 470–1).

<sup>153</sup> The saga reports that on Rögnvaldr's return "átti Þórfinnr jarl deilar miklar við Suðreynga ok Íra" [Þórfinnr was much occupied with the Hebrideans and Irish], *Orkneyinga Saga*, ch. 22 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 57). The record that this campaign reached Ireland opens the possibility that it may also have affected Sihtric's interests in Dublin and Gwynedd.

as some form of emperor, or at least begun to mould himself in that image, and so, perhaps, we should interpret this act of submission to him, immediately after his return, in this light. However, there appears to be more to this, and I should like to lend some weight to a suggestion of Hudson's regarding this situation.<sup>154</sup> The chronology of Cnut's re-interest in Northumbria, Scotland and perhaps Ireland suggests that the building of alliances and extension of control in these areas has much to do with Cnut's Scandinavian conquests. In 1028 King Óláfr Haraldsson of Norway was driven out of his country and Cnut took control. After the death of Cnut's client-ruler, Earl Hákon, in 1029 × 1030 Cnut's regime in Norway was suffering from a lack of legitimacy. Cnut was forced to use his first wife Ælfgifu and their young son Sveinn as regents. By 1033, and probably before that, members of the Norwegian nobility appear to have become disenchanted with Cnut's rule in Norway. The Norwegian system of inheritance gave equal claim to all descendants of Norwegian kings whether legitimate or not, and during the various succession disputes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries there were commonly many claimants, often from the Norwegian colonies.<sup>155</sup> Indeed, the thirteenth-century saga-account *Heimskringla* records that *c.* 1033 a contender for the Norwegian throne named Tryggvi, who claimed to be a son of King Óláfr Tryggvason and a Dublin princess, arrived in Norway and received support from sections of the Norwegian nobility.<sup>156</sup> This was a serious threat and if we believe the saga-account Tryggvi attracted local support on its arrival in Norway, and the combined force required the mustering of a large force in order to defeat it. Certainly, the main sea-battle seems to have been celebrated in its immediate aftermath as a particularly fierce one; it is the subject of a skaldic poem by Sigvatr Þórðarson, of which only one verse survives, and another anonymous verse from a poem of praise about Cnut's son Sveinn, which is probably authentic.<sup>157</sup> It seems unlikely that he was the only such claimant in this period.

<sup>154</sup> Hudson, "Cnut", 359.

<sup>155</sup> For a detailed study of the peculiarities of the Norwegian royal-inheritance system see J. Jochens, "The Politics of Reproduction: Medieval Norwegian Kingship", *American Historical Review* 92 (1987).

<sup>156</sup> *Hka, Óláfs Saga Helga*, chs. 248–9, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (Reykjavík, 1941–51), 2: 411–13.

<sup>157</sup> Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Tryggvaflokkur* (Finnur Jónsson, *Skaldedgting*, A. 1: 247; B. 1: 231). See M. Townend, "Knutr and the Cult of St Óláfr: Poetry and Patronage in Eleventh-Century Norway and England", *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 1 (2005): 255–6,

Furthermore, there were close links between King Óláfr Haraldsson's dynasty and that of the Orkney jarls. Nominally, at least, the jarl of Orkney was subject to the Norwegian king in this period.<sup>158</sup> In the early eleventh century the connection between the jarl and the king appears to have been close. Several Scandinavian sources state that Rögnvaldr Brúsisson, Þórfinnr's nephew, fought alongside Óláfr Haraldsson at the battle of Stiklastaðir, and aided in the smuggling of Magnús, Óláfr's son, out of Norway in the aftermath of his father's death in the battle.<sup>159</sup> Furthermore, Þórfinnr was married to the daughter of one of Óláfr's closest Norwegian allies, Finn Árnason.<sup>160</sup> No source records the date of this marriage. However, as Kálfr Árnason used this familial connection when fleeing King Magnús of Norway in 1035 × 1036, it must have occurred either immediately before or during Cnut's reign in England.<sup>161</sup> It probably was arranged by Óláfr Haraldsson himself, in order to securely tie Jarl Þórfinnr to him. Finally, our English sources attest to the military support that the jarl of Orkney lent to the Norwegian king in the eleventh century. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle notes that Harold Godwineson met at the battle of Stamford Bridge, King Haraldr of Norway, his son Óláfr, a bishop of Norway and the *eorle of Orcaneye*.<sup>162</sup>

Thus, in 1030, as popular opinion for Cnut's regime drained away in Norway, it was probable that potential candidates for the Norwegian

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for a re-edition, translation, and some comment on this verse. I should like to add that as *Skáldatal*, a source which I shall say much about later (pp. 205–06) records that Cnut's son, Sveinn, had two poets, and we have extant verse for only one of these (Þórarinn loftunga), it may be that this anonymous verse should be attributed to the other poet (Óttarr keptr). On the matter of its authenticity, the fact that it is cited second to the verse by Sigvatr Þórðarson, and as an afterthought, argues for this. There would appear to be little point for the saga-author to go to the trouble of forging a second verse to verify an account which had already been verified by the verse of such authorial weight as one by Sigvatr Þórðarson. The verse adds no new information, and would appear to be genuine.

<sup>158</sup> See Theodoricus, *Hystoria*, ch. 9 (Storm, 16–17).

<sup>159</sup> *Ágrip*, ch. 31 (Driscoll, 42); Theodoricus, *Hystoria*, ch. 18 (Storm, 35–6); *Orkneyingja saga*, ch. 21 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 54).

<sup>160</sup> *Orkneyingja saga*, ch. 25 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 63).

<sup>161</sup> For the period of time that Kálfr Árnason spent in the Orkneys, see *Orkneyingja saga*, chs. 25–7 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 63–71).

<sup>162</sup> ASC 1066 D (Cubbin, 80). John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1066 (Darlington et al., 604) names the earl as Paul (ON Páll), and records that he took an active role in the assault, commanding a section of the army as well as safeguarding the fleet. Furthermore, *Orkneyingja saga*, ch. 34 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 86–8) claims that the Norwegian king's son Óláfr (later King Óláfr kyrri of Norway) found sanctuary in the Orkneys after the battle.

throne were emerging from the Norse colonies in Ireland, Scotland and Northumbria.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, it was also probable that Magnús Ólafsson could call on Þórfinnr for military aid, at a point at which Þórfinnr's might was reaching its zenith. The nature of the meeting between Cnut and the Scottish kings is crucial here. Only two sources record the event. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle places no doubt on the fact that the meeting was a symbolic submission, tersely stating that the Scottish kings 'surrendered' to Cnut, and that Malcolm 'became his man'. A similar impression is given by a skaldic verse attributed to Sigvatr Þórðarson which states,<sup>164</sup>

Hafa allframir jǫfrar  
 út sín hǫfuð Knúti  
 færð ór Fífi norðan,  
 (friðkaup vas þat) miðju.

The celebrated rulers have brought their heads to Cnut from the north from the middle of Fife. That was a 'peace-purchase'.

This verse is preserved only as a fragment from an unnamed poem and as part of the main action of the saga-narrative. However, this verse records an event, Cnut's meeting with the Scottish kings, which is not mentioned elsewhere in the saga narratives, and thus there is no apparent motive for forgery. If we accept it as genuine, it should be noted that neither this nor the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is an impartial witness to the events of 1031. The chronicler took little interest in Cnut's activities outside of England, and had an obvious model to pattern his description of this behaviour on in the submissions made to King Athelstan and King Edgar. The skaldic verse purports to have been composed for Óláfr Haraldsson (or perhaps more correctly in the memory of this ruler), Cnut's rival for power in Norway, in a climate of political unrest fuelled by Cnut's bribery of Norwegian noblemen. The remaining section of the stanza (not given here) opposes this description of a purchase of peace from Cnut (through fealty rather than actual monies), to the actions of the skald's patron Óláfr, who never yielded

<sup>163</sup> In regard to Northumbria also containing such political claimants, note that *Orkneyinga saga*, chs. 59–60 (Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 131–3) records that a large number of people from Orkney, Scotland and the Hebrides were resident in Grimsby.

<sup>164</sup> Fragment 15: Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 269–70; B. 1: 249. Note that as Óláfr died in 1030 this verse must have been composed after his death, if genuine; perhaps as a memorial poem.



in such a fashion. The focus on the term *fríðkaup* (literally a peace-purchase), with its monetary connotations, is particularly suspect. The verse appears to be affected by contemporary events in Norway, and to have moulded its report to criticise the actions of certain sections of the Scandinavian nobility and chastise them for their taking of Cnut's bribes. What then can we conclude about this meeting between Cnut and the Scottish kings? The extension of control over Northumbria, as well as the opening of a diplomatic channel with the ruling dynasties of central Scotland, Moray, Galloway and the Isles, may have been intended to provide Cnut with information about potential claimants to the Norwegian throne, and a chance to nip these pretensions in the bud. Moreover, while Cnut's meeting with Þórfinnr's Scottish enemies in 1031 clearly had imperial overtones, and probably had a part to play in his new conception of himself as a ruler, the record of who attended the meeting is suggestive that there may have been other more pressing issues on the agenda than the symbolic submission of the Scottish crowns to the southern English one. This may have been a calculated move by Cnut to foster unrest on the borders of Orcadian power, and thereby reduce the possibility of Þórfinnr's direct military intervention in Norway. The subject-rulers may have received wealth or even arms from Cnut at this time, in order to further these goals.<sup>165</sup>

It appears that Cnut demonstrated little interest in the regions that surrounded southern England until they threatened the *imperium* that he was building in Scandinavia. Then he extended his grasp over Northumbria, and stretched into Scotland and Dublin, building a network of relationships that seem intended to limit potential threats to his rule in Norway.

Furthermore, to return to the definitions of the differing forms of English overlordship in the ninth and tenth centuries discussed in the introduction to this chapter, it should be noted that in building these relationships after 1030, Cnut appears to have had more in common with the actions of the ninth and early tenth century English kings who built temporary alliances to counteract individual threats, than Athelstan and Edgar.

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<sup>165</sup> This is the only context in which Cnut's military support of Sihtric makes any sense. If so then the annal entry may be misplaced by a year or so. If correct, Sihtric may also have played a part in this possible arming of Þórfinnr's enemies and monitoring of the Norse colonies for potential claimants to the Norwegian throne.

PART TWO

THE NATURE OF CNUT'S HEGEMONIES  
IN SCANDINAVIA



## CHAPTER SIX

### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

What follows here is an attempt to ask questions regarding Cnut's consolidation of political power in Scandinavia in accord with those asked above about England. However, it is often impossible to approach the same questions about Cnut's hegemony in Scandinavia using similar evidence to that extant for England. As discussed above, the most reliable evidence for Scandinavia is archaeological and numismatic, and, where possible, these sources have been used to create some context for the sparse and often questionable written sources. This approach has proved fruitful in the study of Denmark, and has produced conclusions from the available evidence that can be compared with those in the chapters on England. It is used in the following two chapters which cover Cnut's extension of authority over western and central Denmark, and the extension of his authority over eastern Denmark. Due to the near-complete dearth of evidence it is not possible to make any assessment of the development of the Danish royal court under Cnut, but the evidence of Cnut's foundation of and investment in urban sites, his establishment of a Danish episcopacy, and his interaction with the Danish aristocracy, provide a great deal of information about his extension of control over the government of the localities of Denmark.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, comment can also be made on his support for the infant Danish church.

However, when we turn to the study of Cnut's interaction with Sweden and his seizure of power in Norway there are very few urban-archaeological or numismatic sources of any relevance. Thus, the next chapter relies on the recently rehabilitated corpus of skaldic verse alongside sensitive comparison of the narrative sources to assess Cnut's extension of his authority over Sweden and Norway. The conclusions

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to M. Gelting for his unfailing kindness in reading earlier drafts of many of the Scandinavian chapters in this thesis, and for his offering of excellent and illuminating comments on several occasions on a number of the ideas expressed herein.

<sup>2</sup> The sole source for the development of the Danish royal court under Cnut is the notoriously late and garbled *Vederloven*, or 'Law of the Retainers'. See Christiansen, *The Works of Sven Aggesen, Twelfth-Century Danish Historian* (London: Viking Society, 1992), 31-47 & 86-102 for an edition of the text with detailed commentary.

reached there are necessarily more tentative, but perhaps compelling in their opposition to the findings offered for England and Denmark. The use of such literary evidence allows us to understand more clearly some of the differences between Cnut's seizure of control over Norway and Denmark and England, and the conclusions reached here are suggestive of a shift in Cnut's own conception of his authority late in his reign. This development will be discussed in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CNUT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 'MACHINERY OF CONTROL' IN WESTERN AND CENTRAL DENMARK

There is some debate about the date at which Cnut came to power in Denmark. The fullest account of the Danish succession in this period is provided by the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. It claims that when Sveinn and Cnut left Denmark in 1013, Sveinn's other son, Haraldr, remained in control of the country.<sup>1</sup> After Sveinn's death on 3rd February 1014 Cnut returned to Denmark, and asked his brother for, and was refused, a share of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Much of this accords well with the other evidence, and can be believed. However, there is numismatic evidence that Cnut did hold some form of governing responsibility in Denmark immediately after the death of his father. Some of the earliest coins from Lund which name Cnut as a *Rex Danorum*, most probably date from the period 1014–15.<sup>3</sup> The numismatic evidence appears to be

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<sup>1</sup> I reject the suggestion of I. Howard, *Svein Forkbeard's Invasions and the Danish Conquest of England 991–1017* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2003), 10–11, that Cnut had two brothers named Haraldr, one of whom died, the other subsequently being named Haraldr to follow “the custom of replacing the name of a dead child”. Furthermore, I can find no evidence of such a custom. Instead, it appears that the confusion is created by the encomiast's insistence that Cnut was the elder brother, while all other sources record that Haraldr was the elder. It is probable, and more economic on the invention of siblings, that the encomiast retrospectively altered events to give Cnut (and thus his living heir, Harthacnut) the best claim to the Danish throne. See also N. Lund, “Cnut's Danish Kingdom”, in Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*, 28, for a similar conclusion on this point.

<sup>2</sup> *Encomium*, 2: 2 (Campbell, 16–18).

<sup>3</sup> M. A. S. Blackburn, “Do Cnut the Great's First Coins as King of Denmark Date from before 1018?”, in *Sigtuna Papers. Proceedings of the Viking-Age Coinage Symposium at Sigtuna, 1989*, eds. K. Jonsson and B. Malmer, (Stockholm: Swedish Numismatic Society, 1990). Blackburn's principal arguments focus on the fact that Scandinavian copies of English coins tend to copy the current English issue-type, or the issue-type in use in England in the immediately preceding years. All the early Lund coins which bear Cnut's name are copies of King Æthelred the Unready's Last Small Cross issue, current between c. 1009–15. It should be noted that Lund, “Cnut's Danish Kingdom”, pp. 29–30, has criticised Blackburn's interpretation of the numismatic evidence here, but these criticisms seem to me to be in error. In an attempt to show that the occurrence of Cnut's name on these Danish coins does not necessarily indicate that he actually held power there, Lund discusses other examples of Scandinavian coins bearing the names

sound, and suggests that the encomiast is in error here, and in fact in 1014 the brothers contested for power or entered into a joint-kingship, a form of rule common in Denmark until the rule of Valdimar I. We cannot know where the boundaries of any joint-kingship lay, but one modern historian when discussing joint-kingship in ninth-century Denmark has concluded that when close family members ruled together (usually brothers) they tended to rule the same area in cooperation with each other, rather than sub-dividing the kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Cnut and Haraldr may have ruled Denmark jointly in this period. Cnut reinvaded England in the autumn of 1015, and spent the time between then and late 1018 consolidating his hold over his new acquisition. We do not know when Haraldr died (or as in the narrative of the late-medieval and dubious *Annales Ryenses*, was deposed for effeminacy).<sup>5</sup> He appears to have been alive and in power in 1017 × 1019 when his name was entered after Cnut's in a note of confraternity in a Christ Church, Canterbury Gospel book.<sup>6</sup> Thus, it has been deduced that when Cnut went to Denmark in the winter of 1019, it was to receive the royal title following his brother's recent death (or deposition).

What then did Cnut inherit in Denmark? In the century before Cnut came to power Denmark had only just begun to be politically unified, and it was still greatly fragmented in 1019. Little about Cnut's dynasty can be known with any degree of certainty, but it seems probable that they were originally petty-kings from mid-Jylland who extended their control over much of Jylland and the neighbouring island of Fyn, and as I shall discuss in a subsequent chapter there appears to have been a powerful rival dynasty based in Skåne in the life of Svein and Cnut at least.<sup>7</sup> Literary evidence indicates that the jarls of Skåne also had

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of kings who did not rule in Scandinavia. However, while his examples are copies of already existing coins, the examples that Blackburn discusses are different. The use of Cnut's name on his earliest Danish coins is not copied from any other source. Thus, they are innovations and appear to record legitimate claims to authority.

<sup>4</sup> K. L. Maund, "A Turmoil of Warring Princes: Political Leadership in Ninth-Century Denmark", *Haskans Society Journal* 6 (1994): 32–3; as opposed to unrelated joint-kings who tended to sub-divide the kingdom.

<sup>5</sup> See *Annales Ryenses*, item 91 (edited in E. Kroman, *Danmarks Middelalderlige Annaler* (Copenhagen: Selskabet for Udgivelse af Kilder til Dansk Historie, 1980), 161) for the variant account of Haraldr's deposition. The charge of effeminacy should be interpreted through comparison with other medieval uses of the term, which usually indicate either failure in war, a tendency towards sin, or the display of sexual excesses.

<sup>6</sup> See the comments regarding this confraternity entry above at pp. 78–9.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter eight below.

interests in the eastern coastal regions of Sjælland which face Skåne.<sup>8</sup> In chapter nineteen of the late and romantic *Jomsvíkinga saga* it is claimed that Jarl Strút-Haraldr of Skåne owned estates on Sjælland.<sup>9</sup> This may contain an accurate memory of some of the estates owned by the jarls, but it does not specify the extent or nature of their control there.

The island of Sjælland lay geographically between these centres of power, and does not seem to have been entirely under the control of either of the elites of these two regions. It has commonly been asserted that the royal centre of power had shifted eastwards during the reign of Cnut's grandfather, Haraldr Gormsson, from mid-Jylland to Sjælland, and more specifically an area in the east of the island around Roskilde and the nearby rural manor of Lejre.<sup>10</sup> However, these arguments are usually based solely on Thietmar of Merseburg's description of Lejre as the *caput...regni*, and Adam of Bremen's note of the burial of Haraldr Gormsson in a church in Roskilde.<sup>11</sup> Neither of these reports stands up to much scrutiny. It is uncertain what Thietmar meant by *caput regni*; as a German ecclesiastic with only minimal contact with Scandinavians he may have transferred Continental ideas about centres of power onto the Scandinavians.

Turning to the matter of Haraldr Gormsson's grave; it seems probable that Adam may be in error here, and it may be Sveinn Tjúguskegg who was buried in a church in Roskilde. However, whichever ruler it was, the fact that they were buried at a site cannot be taken to indicate that they held unequivocal authority in the surrounding region. Just as Otto I had often frequented Magdeburg on the easternmost border of his territory with the hostile Slavs, treating it, in Zotz's words, as "nothing less than the Ottonian counterpart of the Carolingian Aachen", so the interest of Sveinn Tjúguskegg and Cnut in Roskilde (and Lund) may indicate a need to maintain a visible presence there, rather than the

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<sup>8</sup> Note that, in the late and doubtful *Jomsvíkinga saga*, ch. 16, ed. Ólafur Halldórsson (Reykjavík: Íslenzkar Fornbókmenntir, 1969), 131, the author of this saga mistakenly named Strút-Haraldr and Sigvaldi as the jarls of Sjælland; an error repeated in modern scholarship by Campbell in his *Encomium*, 73, and Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 54.

<sup>9</sup> *Jomsvíkinga saga*, ch. 19 (Ólafur Halldórsson, 137).

<sup>10</sup> See A. Andersen, "Hovedstaden i Riget", *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark* (1960): 34, for just such a view. Although note that he dates the move to c. 1000, i.e. in the reign of Cnut's father, Sveinn Tjúguskegg.

<sup>11</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 1: 17 (edited in R. Holtzmann, *Thietmar Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon. Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung* (Berlin, 1935), 23-4); Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 28, ed. B. Schmeidler (Hannover, 1917), 87.



holding of secure authority over its hinterland.<sup>12</sup> The burial of a ruler in such a place would have great psychological impact on the local elites, and may have served an active propagandistic function within an important but hostile border-region.

To me, at least, the transference of the seat of Cnut's dynasty from Jylland to Sjælland appears to have been a development of the middle or later eleventh century. It seems more plausible that the shift of royal authority from Jylland to Sjælland was associated with the reign of Sveinn Ástriðarson, who had family alliances in eastern Denmark, and fled there on a number of occasions during King Magnus of Norway's invasion in the mid-eleventh century. Definitive evidence is lacking, but perhaps this is supported by the descriptions of Danish kings found in contemporary skaldic verse. As Frank has shown, there is a heavy preponderance of references in such verse to Cnut as "lord", "ruler" or "defender of the Jutes" (Jutes = inhabitants of Jutland/Jylland), and yet he is called "prince of the inhabitants of Skåne" only once, and that within the context of the aftermath of the battle of Helgeå.<sup>13</sup> No verse survives for the reign of Cnut's son Harthacnut in Denmark, but thirteen stanzas of a poem on Sveinn Ástriðarson are extant.<sup>14</sup> Þórleikr fagri's *flokkr* on Sveinn Ástriðarson was composed c. 1051, but makes no attempt, that I can see, to mirror the descriptions of Cnut which link him to Jylland when describing its own patron, despite the fact that his foe in the enumerated battles, the king of Norway, is called *Hörða gramr* "the king of the inhabitants of Hordaland" (a region of modern south western Norway), and *Þranda þengill* "the lord of the inhabitants of Trondelag" (the region around modern Trondheim).<sup>15</sup> Yet, in an extant fragment of a poem from c. 1062 by another court poet, Steinn Herðisarson, Sveinn Ástriðarson is referred to as a *reiðr*... *Hleiðrar*

<sup>12</sup> T. Zotz, "Carolingian Tradition and Ottonian Salian Innovation. Comparative Observations on Palatine Policy in the Empire", in *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe*, ed. A. J. Duggan (London: King's College London, 1993), 89. There he notes that Otto I visited Magdeburg a total of twenty-two times.

<sup>13</sup> R. Frank, "King Cnut in the Verse of his Skalds", in Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*, 113. There she counts a total of five occasions (from five different poems).

<sup>14</sup> Þórleikr fagri's *flokkr* on Sveinn Ástriðarson (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 396–9; B. 1: 365–8).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, stanzas 4 and 8. Only one reference to Jylland is made in the poem, in stanza 10, where it is stated that Sveinn held all of Jutland from one coast to the other, as well as Denmark. However, as this was the main region invaded and held by the Norwegian king, this statement seems to be a direct response to the end of the period of Norwegian occupation from early in Sveinn's career, rather than a statement of more-long standing regional affiliation.

(ruler of Lejre).<sup>16</sup> Skaldic verse is a conservative artistic medium, and so caution must be used here, but it does appear that some form of shift eastwards can be traced in the focus of the imagery of the verse.

The sites of the three main thing-assembly sites in the later medieval period appear to confirm this three-part division of the landscape. From the twelfth century onwards the crucial assemblies of medieval Denmark are recorded at Viborg in Jylland, another site near Lund in Skåne, and at Ringsted in the centre of Sjælland.<sup>17</sup> If, as seems likely, these sites had a socio-political function during the Viking Age as well, then this distribution would suggest that Sjælland was an independent central region of Denmark in the period, into which both Cnut's dynasty in the west, and the dynasty of the jarls of Skåne in the east, were attempting to extend their authority.

The consolidation of political, social and economic control in this region of western Denmark (Jylland and the island of Fyn) will be dealt with in this chapter. Consideration will be made of the interests of Cnut in the central region of Denmark (Sjælland), and some mention will be made of eastern Denmark (Skåne), but as this is the subject of a subsequent chapter, this will only be to illuminate aspects of the other two regions. The focus will primarily be on Cnut's involvement in the development of urbanism in these regions, his establishment of ecclesiastical organisation, and his interaction with the aristocracy of northern Jylland.

*Urban Foundation and the Development of Urban Sites in  
Western and Central Denmark*

In the late tenth century there were only three established urban sites in Western Denmark.<sup>18</sup> Århus in the north-east of Jylland was the most recent foundation, dating from *c.* 900. In the south of Jylland there were

<sup>16</sup> *Nízarvísur*, stanza 2 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 407; B. 1: 377).

<sup>17</sup> E. Hoffmann, "The Unity of the Kingdom and the Provinces in Denmark during the Middle Ages", in *Danish Medieval History: New Currents*, eds. N. Skyum-Nielsen & N. Lund (Copenhagen, 1981), 100.

<sup>18</sup> For general discussion of these sites see H. Clarke & B. Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), 50–4 & 56–63. For more specific discussion of Århus see H. J. Madsen, 'Introduction to Viking Århus', in *The Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress, Århus, 24th–31st August 1977*, eds. H. Bekker-Nielsen, P. Foote, O. Olsen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981); and for Ribe see I. Nielsen, *Middelalderbyen Ribe* (Viby: Centrum, 1985), 35–6.



Fig. 8. Map of Denmark in the early eleventh century.

two older sites, Ribe and Hedeby-Schleswig, which were in existence from the eighth century onwards.<sup>19</sup> All three would appear to have been fortified sites, operating as the economic focal-point for the many small non-urban exchange sites scattered along the coastlines of their respective hinterlands. While all three appear to have been founded by petty-kings or regional chieftains and developed under their authority, it appears unlikely that these urban sites received much royal attention during the reigns of Sveinn Tjúguskegg or those of his sons. It is notable that for these years there are almost no archaeological deposits in any of these three sites. Ribe, in particular, lacks any archaeological layers which can be dated between *c.* 900 and 1077, and appears to have been almost abandoned throughout the period.<sup>20</sup> The historical evidence confirms the abandonment of these early urban sites during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Adam of Bremen informs us that after the death of Archbishop Adaldag of Hamburg-Bremen in 988, the (albeit ephemeral) see at Århus passed out of existence, and the *Vita Bernwardi* records that *c.* 1000 Bishop Ekkihard (or Esico) of Hedeby-Schleswig left his see and went into exile in Germany, declaring the town deserted and the church destroyed.<sup>21</sup> In Cnut's reign, the

<sup>19</sup> Note that during Cnut's reign the related sites of Hedeby and Schleswig co-existed, and only *c.* 1050 was Hedeby abandoned. Thus, hereafter these sites will be referred to as Hedeby-Schleswig.

<sup>20</sup> C. Feveile, *Ribe Studier—Det ældste Ribe. Udgravninger på nordsiden af Ribe Å 1984–2000* (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2006).

<sup>21</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 46 (Schmeidler, 106); Thangmar, *Vita Bernwardi*, ch. 33 (edited by G. H. Pertz, in *Patrologie Coursus Completus. Series Latina* 140, item 21, gen. ed., J. P. Migne (1844), col. 418–19). Some scholars have hypothesised that these German bishops never set foot in Denmark, but served out their episcopates in exile in Germany (see N. Lund, "Harald Bluetooth—A Saint Very Nearly Made by Adam of Bremen", in *The Scandinavians from the Vendel period to the tenth century: an ethnographic perspective*, ed. Judith Jesch (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 311, for an example, and his comments in the discussion afterwards, at p. 319, where he suggests that the three bishops were appointed to places, the names of which were apparently plucked out of the air, in order that the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen could have enough suffragans to function properly as an archdiocese). This is possible, but is perhaps an extreme conclusion. The hypothesis fails to account at all for the addition of a fourth diocese in 988 at Odense (a problem noted by Lund, *ibid.*, 311). This, and the record in the *Vita Bernwardi* that Bishop Ekkihard (or Esico) of Hedeby-Schleswig left his see and fled to Germany *c.* 1000, reporting his church there destroyed, argue for the occasional fleeting visit for the bishops in southern Jylland at least. Perhaps we might concur with Gelting, "Elusive Bishops", 172, that while it is "doubtful whether they [the bishops appointed in 948] gained immediate access to their putative dioceses. The conversion of the Danish king Harald Bluetooth *c.* 958/65 probably enabled the bishops to take up residence in their sees and the success was followed up with the creation of a fourth Danish bishopric".

most conclusive indication of the absence of any royal interest in these urban sites is the fact that none of them produced coins in his name. Hedeby-Schleswig had minted coins in the middle of the tenth century, copying German models, and although none have been connected to Ribe, it does not seem improbable that some similar mint-activity operated there as well in this period.<sup>22</sup> After the renewed Viking raiding in the late tenth century there was a shift towards the copying of English coins, and some of this forgery must have occurred at these sites. However, these were blind copies, often with illegible inscriptions, and are distinct from the type of coin-production which began in the reign of Sveinn Tjúguskegg.<sup>23</sup> Sveinn's coins were adapted from the model of Æthelred the Unready's Crux type, but bore the name of a king of Denmark, alongside some form of royal title: *ŹVEN REX AD DENER* (perhaps: 'Sveinn king of [or among] the Danes'). Additionally, they included on their obverse a record of the issuing authority, a *GODWINE M-AN DNER* (Godwine moneyer among the Danes). However, Sveinn's coins were few and seem to have been produced at only one unidentified mint site. Cnut developed this practise, producing a sizeable corpus of evidence. Furthermore, the addition of mint-signatures to Cnut's coins has allowed the identification of a number of mints across Denmark. Crucially, of the early urban sites at Århus, Ribe and Hedeby-Schleswig, only the latter certainly minted coins for Cnut, and that did not begin until late in his reign, *c.* 1026 × 1028.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, a group of coins minted in Cnut's name has been identified as from Ribe, but this appears to be a very doubtful attribution.<sup>25</sup>

However, two urban sites were founded in the western and central regions of Denmark during the reigns of Sveinn Tjúguskegg and his sons. These are Viborg in northern Jylland, and Roskilde on Sjæl-

<sup>22</sup> See B. Malmer, *Nordiska Mynt före År 1000* (Lund, 1966), 7-12 & 246-8.

<sup>23</sup> See J. S. Jensen, "Svend Tveskægs Mønt", in *Tusindtallets Danske Mønter fra den Kongelige Mønt- og Medaillesamling Danish Coins from the 11th Century in the Royal Collection of Coins and Medals*, ed. J. S. Jensen (Copenhagen, 1995), 22, for details of this limited coinage.

<sup>24</sup> K. Jonsson, "The Coinage of Cnut", in Rumble, *Reign of Cnut*, 226. More will be said about the circumstances behind this production, below at p. 182.

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that on these coins the name of Ribe occurs in very garbled forms, and all known examples are linked together in a very small die-chain. See Jonsson, "Coinage", 226, and J. S. Jensen, "Ribes Mønter i 1000-tallet", in *Tusindtallets Danske Mønter fra den Kongelige Mønt- og Medaillesamling Danish Coins from the 11th Century in the Royal Collection of Coins and Medals*, ed. J. S. Jensen (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1995), 48, for differing opinions on these coins.

land.<sup>26</sup> Viborg has archaeological deposits which can be dated through dendrochronology to the period around 1000 (perhaps in the end of the 900s).<sup>27</sup> Previously, the site had only a number of Viking-Age farm buildings with some associated ploughmarks, which lay beneath what is the centre of the present town.<sup>28</sup> At the end of the tenth century a large area of the marshy lakeside, to the south-west of the present town, was prepared for development through the building up of a stable ground-surface with layers of wattle-matting, clay and sand. Turning to Roskilde, it must be recognised that little archaeological material survives at Roskilde which identifies an urban site in the same period. However, it is probable that it shares a similar history to that of Viborg. There are traces of Viking-Age farm buildings beneath modern Roskilde, and the earliest structures, which indicate an urban function, are perhaps attested by historical sources as in existence in 987 × 1014.<sup>29</sup>

It is conceivable that these developments may have been one facet of a general trend towards centralisation in the Danish economy, which was evident *c.* 1000. In recent decades, archaeology has revealed what have been termed 'magnate farms', contemporary with these urban sites. The excavation of a settlement at Vorbasse, in central Jylland, showed that the site was an important rural manor inhabited continuously from the eighth to the twelfth centuries.<sup>30</sup> Nothing indicates that this manor was royal. It is possible to trace a shift in the form of the eastern part of this settlement late in the tenth and early in the eleventh centuries. The structures and the property boundaries on this site were reorganised in that period, concentrating the distribution of the buildings. The numerous equally small dwelling buildings, which were sited apparently

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<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that Lund in south-western Skåne is also part of this urban-group. Discussion of the archaeology of this site can be found below at pp. 220–22.

<sup>27</sup> H. K. Kristensen, "A Viking-Period and Medieval Settlement at Viborg Sønderø, Jutland", *Journal of Danish Archaeology* 7 (1988): 193.

<sup>28</sup> Kristensen, "Viking-Period", 191. See also his fuller *Middelalderbyen Viborg* (Viby: Centrum, 1987), 38–9.

<sup>29</sup> See M. Andersen, M. Højog, & S. A. Sørensen, "Et Vikingetidshus fra Bredgade i Roskilde", *Romu* (Roskilde) (1986), for details of the Viking Age farms.

<sup>30</sup> See S. Hvass, "Viking Age Villages in Denmark—New Investigations" in *Society and Trade in the Baltic during the Viking Age. Papers of the VIIth Visby Symposium held at Gotlands Fornsal, Gotland's Historical Museum, Visby, August 15th–19th, 1983*, ed. S. O. Lindquist, (Visby: Gotlands Fornsal, 1985); the same author's "Vikingbebyggelsen i Vorbasse", *Mark og Monte fra Sydvestjyske Museer* (1977), and "Vorbasse: The Viking-Age Settlement at Vorbasse, Jutland", *Acta Archaeologica* 50 (1979); and L.C. Nielsen, "Omgård: A Settlement from the Late Iron Age and the Viking Period in West Jutland", *Acta Archaeologica* 50 (1979).

randomly, were replaced by three large farmsteads. These farmsteads were highly organised, with subsidiary buildings arranged around centrally-placed Trelleborg-style halls. Similar developments have been identified at Omgård in north-western Jylland, and may point to a wider trend.<sup>31</sup> These developments have been interpreted as physical evidence of the introduction of more systematic forms of agricultural production and storage of surplus by a profit-seeking aristocratic owner.<sup>32</sup>

However, there is significant numismatic and archaeological evidence of royal interest in the urban sites at Viborg and Roskilde, which indicates that by Cnut's reign at least the Danish king was a driving force behind the development of these sites. By 1019 a mint at Viborg was producing coins for Cnut. This mint had an impressive output relative to its peers, being linked to eight out of the sixty published die-impressions.<sup>33</sup> The dating of coins from Roskilde's mint remains difficult, but it is possible to see that a similar mint was functioning there before *c.* 1025.<sup>34</sup> It also produced many coins in Cnut's name, being connected to twelve out of the sixty published die-impressions.<sup>35</sup> Admittedly, there is a great deal of variation in the earliest coins produced for Cnut, and the coinage produced in Denmark never reached a level of organisation which could compare with the model in England.<sup>36</sup> However, it is improbable that these coins were minted by local elites with little or no contact with the Danish king. Whilst the aristocracy could profit from developing agriculture, and centralising the system of re-distribution of agricultural surplus, they had no incentive to alter the existing system of coin-production, and much less to invest time and wealth in sourcing and installing skilled literate personnel who could produce high-quality coins. The fact that most of the coins bear Cnut's name makes it even

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<sup>31</sup> Nielsen, "Omgård" and "Stormænd og bonder. Et Aktuelt Problem I Sydskandinaviske Vikingetid", *Kontaktstencil* 19 (1981).

<sup>32</sup> Hvass, "Viking Age Villages in Denmark", 217–22 & 227. Whether such a conclusion can be sustained from the archaeological evidence is another question altogether, and one beyond the scope of this study here.

<sup>33</sup> P. Hauberg, *Mynforhold og Udmynninger i Danmark indtil 1146* (Copenhagen, 1900), 45.

<sup>34</sup> Jonsson, "Coinage", 226.

<sup>35</sup> Hauberg, *Mynforhold*, 45.

<sup>36</sup> B. Malmer, "Coinage and Monetary Circulation in late Viking Age Scandinavia According to Recent Die-Studies", in *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Numismatics, London September 1986. Actes du 10ème Congrès International de Numismatique*, eds. I. A. Carradice and P. Attwood (Wetteren, 1989), discusses the variation in the coins produced in Cnut's name at Lund. As yet, no such studies have been published regarding the coins produced in western and central Denmark, although the trends observed by Malmer seem also to have applied there.

less likely that any agency, other than the Danish king, is behind the establishment of these mints.

The occurrence of the distinctively English name *Brihtred* (OE Beorhtred) as a moneyer of coins for Cnut at Slagelse, on Sjælland, is suggestive of the origin of Cnut's moneyers.<sup>37</sup> The peculiar proliferation of non-urban mints on Sjælland has not yet received much scholarly attention, but it seems likely that these sites were under the control of Roskilde.<sup>38</sup> The names of other moneyers active in western and central Denmark are ambiguous in that they are either Scandinavian or Anglo-Scandinavian (perhaps Danelaw in origin), as with Osgot and Ulf, found on coins from Roskilde and Ringsted (another small mint on Sjælland probably sub-ordinate to Roskilde), or continental Germans, as with *Svartgol* and *Fulgod*, an ethnic group who are also attested amongst contemporary English moneyers.<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, the archaeological evidence indicates that there was, most probably, royal influence or a significant royal presence in these newly-founded urban sites. Excavations at Viborg in 1981, 1984–5 and 2002 have revealed sections of the earliest construction-phases immediately above the layers of wattle-matting, clay and sand used to stabilise the site.<sup>40</sup> Fortunately, the site was flooded in the thirteenth century after the nearby lake was dammed during the construction of a watermill. Thus, the site was waterlogged and remained so until the

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<sup>37</sup> See von Feilitzen, *Names of Domesday Book*, 196, for occurrences of this in the Domesday Book.

<sup>38</sup> So far Danish numismatic research has focussed on the mint at Lund during Cnut's reign, and little work has been done on the other mints of Denmark. The relationship between Roskilde and the two smaller mints found elsewhere on Sjælland has received very little attention. See K. Grønder-Hansen, "Ringsted som Møntsted", in *Tusindtallets Danske Mønter fra den Kongelige Mønt- og Medallesamling. Danish Coins from the 11th Century in the Royal Collection of Coins and Medals*, ed. J. S. Jensen (Copenhagen, 1995), 42, and P. Arnskov, *Bogen om Slagelse. Historiske og Topografiske Skildringer af Slagelse Gennem Aarene* (Slagelse, 1931), 60–3, for the little comment that exists in print.

<sup>39</sup> Of the 811 moneyers for Cnut's reign surveyed in V. J. Smart, "Moneyers of the Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage: the Danish Dynasty 1017–42", *Anglo Saxon England* 16 (1987), twenty-three have continental German names. In addition, while full discussion of this will be postponed until later (at p. 221), it should be noted that English names can be frequently found for the moneyers in Lund.

<sup>40</sup> See Kristensen, *Viborg* and the same author's, "A Viking-Period". See also the individual contributions in J. Hjeremind, M. Iversen & H. K. Kristensen, *Viborg Sønderø 1000–1300: Byarkæologiske Undersøgelser 1981 og 1984–85* (Århus: Viborg Stiftsmuseum, 1998), and J. Hjeremind, M. Iversen, D. Robinson & C. Christensen, *Viborg Sønderø II. Arkæologi og naturvidenskab i et værkstedsområde fra det tidlige 1000-tal* (Århus: Viborg Stiftsmuseum, 2005), for details of these excavations.



last few decades, increasing the preservation of artefacts and structures (particularly those made of wood). The excavated site appears to be a craft-production and industrial quarter. It shows traces of large-scale planning, indicating that the authority of a powerful ruler lay behind this urban development. The site was carefully chosen and extensively prepared to exploit a road running eastwards across an outcrop of solid ground in the marshy lakeside to the nearby settlement at Asmild. Furthermore, there is evidence that this road network was extended throughout the new development. The excavations of the 1980s discovered a section of wooden-paved road, which ran north-south across the site, and probably interacted with the road to Asmild.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, evidence remains of the parcelling out of building plots in the earliest layers through the survival of sections of boundary fences. The excavations of 1984–5 revealed one structure which lay in an area fenced off by wattle-screens on three sides, and further boundaries of this form have been detected in subsequent excavations.<sup>42</sup> Dendrochronology has made it possible to date many of the wooden structures. Some construction occurred during the period of Cnut's joint-rule with his brother Haraldr. Excavation has revealed remains of a wooden building, which dates to 1015.<sup>43</sup> Two planks found in the bottom of the outer wall of a well, also date to this year.<sup>44</sup> However, most of the earliest construction phase dates to Cnut's reign, and the amount of data indicates a significant boom in construction on the site during this period. The excavations in the 1980s discovered the sill-beam of a building, laying 75cm above the wattle-work construction layer, where it had been reused to support some fencing. This beam was dated to 1018 ( $\pm 1$  year).<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, the timbers of the wooden-paved road date to 1020, and there are large pieces of wooden debris which date to that year and 1028, which are either construction waste or decomposed fragments of lost buildings.<sup>46</sup> Significantly, the most recent excavation has unearthed a smith-building

<sup>41</sup> H. K. Kristensen, "Bebyggelsen", in *Viborg Sønderø 1000–1300: Byarkæologiske Undersøgelser 1981 og 1984–85*, eds. J. Hjerminde, M. Iversen and H. K. Kristensen (Århus: Viborg Stiftsmuseum, 1998), 59–80, at pp. 78–9.

<sup>42</sup> Kristensen, "A Viking-Period and Medieval Settlement", 198, and Kristensen, "Bebyggelsen", 63–9.

<sup>43</sup> H. K. Kristensen, "Udgravningerne 1981 og 1984–85", in *Viborg Sønderø 1000–1300: Byarkæologiske Undersøgelser 1981 og 1984–85*, eds. J. Hjerminde, M. Iversen and H. K. Kristensen (Århus: Viborg Stiftsmuseum, 1998), 50–1.

<sup>44</sup> Kristensen, "A Viking-Period and Medieval Settlement", 194 & 195, fig. 7.

<sup>45</sup> See Kristensen, "A Viking-Period and Medieval Settlement", 193, and Kristensen, "Bebyggelsen", 67.

<sup>46</sup> Pers. comm. from J. Hjerminde and M. Iversen, 2005.

which contained so many datable samples of wood that we can map the stages of the construction and development of this individual structure throughout the period in which it was used.<sup>47</sup> The main fabric of the workshop and some of the surviving sections of fencework around it, date its initial construction to the winter of 1018–19. Furthermore, a latrine behind this building dates to the winter of 1019–20. Part of the entrance of the workshop dates to the early months of 1020, as do parts of the base of the forge, the surviving posts for the bellows, and the most recent part of the repaired wooden support for the anvil. It seems significant that the phase of the building in which the latrine and all the functional elements of the forge were constructed, can be dated from the winter months of 1019 to late in the spring of 1020. Furthermore, paleo-botanical study of roots preserved in the sand-layers forming much of the floor of this structure, has confirmed these dates, demonstrating that the workshop was abandoned in the spring and summer of 1020, when plants grew on the floor-layer.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, the period of use seems to closely correspond with that which our historical sources indicate Cnut spent in Denmark in 1019–20. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 1019 Cnut “returned to Denmark, and stayed there all the winter”.<sup>49</sup> A date for his return is provided by the next annal, which records that after Cnut returned to England in 1020, he outlawed Ealdorman Æthelweard at an assembly held at Easter. Cnut almost certainly dealt with this threat as soon as possible after returning from Denmark, suggesting that he remained in Denmark until March or early April that year. As I have mentioned above, it seems probable that Cnut returned to Denmark in the winter of 1019 to accept the sole-kingship after the death (or deposition) of his brother. Little is known of the rituals of inauguration current in Scandinavia in the early eleventh century, but it appears clear that some progression through the kingdom to a series of crucial election sites was involved.<sup>50</sup> Viborg was one of these sites, and in the later medieval

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<sup>47</sup> This structure is the subject of the articles in the Hjermind et al., *Viborg Sønder sø II* volume. I should like to thank here J. Hjermind and M. Iversen for a warm welcome in Viborg and much enlightening discussion with me about this site.

<sup>48</sup> A. Moltsen, “Lag- og makrofossilanalyser”, in the volume mentioned immediately above.

<sup>49</sup> ASC 1019 CDE (C: O’Brien O’Keefe, 104); “gewende Cnut cyng to Denemearcon ond ðær wunode ealne þone winter”. See also my contribution ‘An historical perspective on the recent archaeological discoveries at Viborg Sønder sø’ to the *Viborg Sønder sø II* volume.

<sup>50</sup> Hoffmann, “Unity”, 100.

period is known to have been the principal site for royal election.<sup>51</sup> Thus, this construction phase may be due to the presence of the new king and his numerous followers in the vicinity of the urban site.

Subsequently, the building continued in seasonal use in the winters from 1019 to 1025, and the fencing surrounding this structure on three sides was extended in the winter of 1024–5 to the north. The seasonal occupation of this building may indicate the presence of a royal official in Viborg at certain times of the year. It seems peculiar that anyone from the vicinity of the urban-site would choose to move into the boggy lakeside region of the settlement only in the winter months when conditions must have been at their worst. The probable use of the building by members of the royal party may indicate that the inhabitants throughout the 1020s also had a connection to the king. Royal urban officials were not unknown in Viking Age Scandinavia: Rimbart in his *Vita Anskarii* records that in the early ninth century St. Ansgar met and converted in Birka, a *praefectus vici* ('official/sheriff of the town'), who was in charge of the urban site for the local petty-king, and similar officials with the vernacular title *gældker* appear in the records for the town of Lund from the second half of the twelfth century onwards.<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps connected to this, the discovery of some ceramic evidence in the recent excavations of this smith-building attests to a small English population in Viborg during Cnut's reign. Among the sherds of pottery from eleventh-century domestic vessels found in the vicinity of the structure, are two sherds of apparent English manufacture. These are wheel-thrown and are identical in style to those produced in late Anglo-Saxon England in the pottery-industries of the north-eastern coast at Stamford and Torksey. Native pottery production was rare in Scandinavia before the twelfth century, and the use of a potter's wheel exceptionally so until the thirteenth century. However, these are not English imports. Petrological analysis of the material of these sherds has revealed that the clay that they were made from is local to Scandinavia.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the potters (and not the pots) must have been imported

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Rimbart, *Vita Anskarii*, ch. 11, ed. G. Waitz (Hannover, 1884), 32. For the *gældker* or urban official at Lund from the late 1100s onwards, see H. Nielsen, "Gældker", in J. Danstrup et al., *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder fra Vikingetid til Reformations tid* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1956–) 5: 674–5.

<sup>53</sup> This is based on the analysis of similar material found during the excavation of Lund. See T. Christensen, A. C. Larsen, S. Larsson & A. Vince, "Early Glazed Ware from Medieval Denmark", *Medieval Ceramics* 18 (1994), for details. Subsequently, of six

from England to Denmark, where they continued to produce domestic wares unavailable in Scandinavia in styles and with technology that they were familiar with from England.<sup>54</sup> It is unlikely that Denmark attracted many English settlers in the early eleventh century, and most probably these potters were part of the extended families of imported English moneyers, town-reeves or other unattested English officials introduced into Denmark by Cnut.

Thus, while we cannot be certain about royal involvement in Viborg between *c.* 1000 and 1019, the production of coins there in Cnut's name and the presence of Englishmen in the town during Cnut's reign allows us to be surer of royal involvement in the urban site after Cnut's accession.

Adam of Bremen provides the bulk of the historical evidence. In the mid-1070s, he claimed that Roskilde was the largest urban site on Sjælland, and was at that time "the seat of Danish royalty".<sup>55</sup> Moreover, he claims that Haraldr Gormsson was buried in a tomb which he had prepared for himself in a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity in Roskilde.<sup>56</sup> This statement has provoked a great deal of debate. It receives some apparent support from the *Encomium Emmae Reginae's* record that Sveinn Tjúguskegg was entombed in a monastery (*monasterium*) dedicated to the Holy Trinity in Denmark, which he had constructed.<sup>57</sup> The difference in the site of the tomb (either a church or a monastery) is minor, and perhaps brought about by a simple error by the Flemish origin of the author of the *Encomium*, who was more accustomed to burial in monastic houses, and most probably did not know that there were no monasteries in Scandinavia in the early eleventh century.<sup>58</sup> However, the failure of the author of the *Encomium* to

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sherds of Torksey-ware found in Viborg a number have been subjected to the same petrochemical analysis (in 2000 by A. Vince) and been found to be identical. Information originally supplied to me through a pers. comm. from J. Hjerminde in 2004; and now published as K. L. Rasmussen and J. Hjerminde, "Bestemmelse af proveniens og brændingstemperatur på tidligmiddelalderlig keramik, lerklining m.v. fra Viborg og Spangsbjerg", in *Viborg Sønderø II*, 423–37, especially at p. 429.

<sup>54</sup> Compare the discussion here with that below at pp. 221–2, for the 130 sherds of similar imitation-Stamford ware found in Lund.

<sup>55</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 4: 5 (Schmeidler, 233); "sedes regia Danorum".

<sup>56</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 28 (Schmeidler, 87–8).

<sup>57</sup> *Encomium*, 2: 3 (Campbell, 18).

<sup>58</sup> The author of the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* was from Flanders, and also must have absorbed much English influence from Emma's retinue. Elite burial in monasteries was the norm in both of those countries.

identify Roskilde as the site of Haraldr's grave leaves Adam's account as the sole witness to this, and importantly this is a stage at which Adam can be shown to be at his most partisan.<sup>59</sup> A number of emendations of the evidence have been proposed ranging from Birkebæk's suggestion that the church was built during the reign of Sveinn Tjúguskegg, and its construction back-dated by Adam of Bremen in an attempt to avoid connecting any such favourable activity to Sveinn, to Lund's suggestion that Adam invented the site of Haraldr's grave in Roskilde for his own ends (the reference to Sveinn's grave in the *Encomium* referring instead to a church excavated in Lund).<sup>60</sup> It seems possible that a royal mausoleum existed in Roskilde in the period 987 × 1014, but at the moment this is impossible to prove or disprove.

We are on safer ground with Adam's record of Cnut introducing ecclesiastical personnel from England to Denmark. He tells us that Cnut placed a clergyman from England named Gerbrand into a see based at Roskilde.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps connected with this, archaeology has found traces of a number of ecclesiastical structures in Roskilde dating to the early eleventh century. An excavation in 1953 of St. Clement's church in the area of St Jørgensbjerg, in the northwest of the present city, revealed traces of a pre-existing chancel and nave beneath the early-twelfth-century fabric of the present church.<sup>62</sup> No material from the earlier building was left, but the trenches left by the foundations of the earlier structure indicated that it was constructed in stone. Furthermore, a coin hoard found in one of the foundation trenches dated

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<sup>59</sup> See P. Sawyer's brilliant analysis of Adam's partisan representation of Sveinn Tjúguskegg's reign for his own ends ("Swein Forkbeard and the historians", in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: essays presented to John Taylor*, eds. I. N. Wood and G. A. Loud (London: Hambledon, 1991)), and N. Lund's comments extending this to Adam's portrayal of Haraldr Gormsson (see Lund, "Harald Bluetooth").

<sup>60</sup> F. A. Birkebæk, E. Verwohlt & M. Høj, *Roskilde Bys Historie—Tiden indtil 1536*, (Roskilde: Historisk Samfund for Roskilde Amt, 1992), 64–5; Lund, "Harald Bluetooth". Note that the identification of Sveinn's grave in Lund was made by M. Cinthio, *De Första Stadsborna: Medeltida Graver och Människor i Lund* (Eslöv, 2002), 33–5; and repeated in her "Trinitatiskyrkan, gravarna och de första lundaborna", in *Kristendommen i Danmark för 1050: et symposium i Roskilde den 5–7 februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004). However, this rests only on the similar dedication and contemporary dating of the building, and also appears to be incapable of proof. It does not seem so unlikely to me that a king who founded one church (or whose father founded one) and dedicated it to the Holy Trinity should not found another with a similar dedication in another urban site also under his control.

<sup>61</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 55 (Schmeidler, 115).

<sup>62</sup> See O. Olsen, "St Jørgensbjerg Kirke. Arkæologiske Undersøgelser i Murværk og Gulv", *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* (1961), for details.

the construction of the church to *c.* 1029.<sup>63</sup> Again English immigrant craftsmen seem to have been involved. The northern doorway of the present church is older than the rest of that structure, and appears to have been robbed from the original and reused by the twelfth-century masons. It is carved from local stone, but its architectural form is paralleled only by late Anglo-Saxon models, particularly that of Barholme in Lincolnshire.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, this building must be understood within the context of contemporary Danish construction. While the original church was not large, measuring 18m. × 17.5m., its construction in stone, a material uncommonly used for buildings in Scandinavia in the Viking Age, indicates that it was prestigious, and had extremely wealthy patrons.<sup>65</sup> Subsequent excavations in the western part of the parish of St Jørgensbjerg have revealed a churchyard and remains of a small wooden church, with gravegoods loosely dateable to the late tenth and early eleventh century.<sup>66</sup> Perhaps significantly, the name of this site is Kongemarken and possibly attests to royal ownership of the estate at some time in the distant past.<sup>67</sup> Almost certainly related to these two churches is that of St. Ibs, which lies within the modern parish of St. Jørgensbjerg. The church was excavated during 1959–61, and whilst the present church is stone and dates to the twelfth century, remains of two or more wooden predecessors were found beneath it.<sup>68</sup> There is no evidence that any mishap, such as fire, befell either of these predecessors, and thus the earliest of these almost certainly dates to some point in the early eleventh century. Furthermore, the excavation uncovered several coin-finds in the disturbed soil beneath the nave and outer walls of the present church. These were identified as a coin of Æthelred the

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<sup>63</sup> For a recent dating of this hoard see Jensen, "Møntskatten under Skt. Jørgensbjerg", in *Tusindtallets Danske Mønter fra den Kongelige Mønt- og Medallesamling Danish Coins from the 11th Century in the Royal Collection of Coins and Medals*, ed. J. S. Jensen (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 1995), 38.

<sup>64</sup> Olsen, "St Jørgensbjerg Kirke", 22–8.

<sup>65</sup> Note that M. Andersen and Å. Højland Nielsen, "En stormandsgård fra den ældre middelalder ved Sankt Jørgensbjerg kirke" in *Cvntas Roskald—fra byen begyndelse*, eds. T. Christensen and M. Andersen (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2000), conclude that this was an influential magnate's church.

<sup>66</sup> See T. Christensen & N. Lynnerup, "Kirkegården i Kongemarken", in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et Symposium i Roskilde den 5–7 Februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004), for details of this site.

<sup>67</sup> Although, note that the name of the site is apparently unattested until the modern period.

<sup>68</sup> See O. Olsen, "Sankt Ibs Kirke i Vindebode: Et Bidrag til Roskildes Ældste Historie", in *Fra Københavns Amt 1961* (Roskilde, 1961), especially p. 75.

Unready, another English one of Cnut, and one struck in Cologne between 1036–9.<sup>69</sup> Whether we interpret these finds as a disturbed and dispersed foundation-hoard or separate accidental deposits during construction, they would appear to date this church to 1023 × 1036–9.

In addition, further examples of imitation Stamford ware, dated to the early eleventh century, have been found in a royal manor in the vicinity of Roskilde. Excavators have associated the massive complex of halls, heaps of stones (with a probable cultic function) and inhumation graves found at the large rural estate of Lejre, some 5 miles to the southwest of Roskilde, with the forms of wealth and power only achievable by royalty or exceptionally powerful groups of elites.<sup>70</sup> Approximately 30 sherds of imitation Stamford ware were excavated in a group of pit-houses close to the main hall, in a context imprecisely dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century.<sup>71</sup> Thus, it seems there was an English immigrant population (or at least elites who were in contact with the English immigrants in Viborg or Lund) in the vicinity of Roskilde during Cnut's reign.

Thus, as with Viborg, the numismatic and archaeological evidence from Roskilde indicates that Cnut, and perhaps his immediate predecessors, had influence over the development of the urban site. In addition to these sources, the historical evidence names both Sveinn and Cnut as involved with Roskilde.

If we map Viborg and Roskilde alongside that of Lund, in which Cnut also had demonstrable interests, certain features are evident.<sup>72</sup>

All three urban sites are situated in northern Denmark, separate from the other pre-existing urban sites. With the exception of Århus on the eastern coastline of mid-Jylland the pre-existing urban sites were placed in the south of Jylland, close to the border with Germany. Conversely, the early-eleventh-century sites are deep inside Danish territory, in areas where the emperor and the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen had little, if any, influence. Moreover, it should be noted that these urban sites seem to be placed in an advantageous position to control

<sup>69</sup> Olsen, "Sankt Ibs Kirke", 86, n. 13.

<sup>70</sup> See T. Christensen, "Fra Hedenskab til Kristendom i Lejre og Roskilde", in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et Symposium i Roskilde den 5–7 Februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004), for the best summary of research on this site.

<sup>71</sup> Christensen et al., "Early Glazed Ware".

<sup>72</sup> Lund shares many characteristics in this period with Viborg and Roskilde, but as it lies in eastern Denmark, and apparently had a specific role to play there, it will not be discussed here.



Fig. 9. Map showing the relevant urban sites in eleventh-century Denmark.



the whole of medieval Denmark between them. There is one urban site in each main landmass, fairly equally spaced across the kingdom. An examination of these sites within the context of their individual hinterlands consolidates the impression that they are sited for political control. We can only glimpse the sites in Denmark which were important for political and religious assemblies and economic activities before the late eleventh century, but what we can discern shows that Viborg, Roskilde and Lund were sited close to, or on top of the principal places for these practices. Viborg may have been sited to exploit the pre-existing use of the site as a thing-assembly place: the meeting place for the regional political assembly and the central place for pre-Christian cult practices. Political power in Jylland in the twelfth century was concentrated on a political assembly at this site, and it seems probable that the roots of this can be traced into the Viking period.<sup>73</sup> The first element in Viborg's name, the element 'Vi' or in ON *Vé*, indicates that the assembly-site also had some cult functions.<sup>74</sup> This element has elsewhere been shown to indicate the presence of important Viking Age cult sites.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the site is central to northern Jylland, and sits on the main crossroads of the Viking Age and medieval road network.<sup>76</sup> Thus, it is the natural meeting place for any political or religious assembly, and must have been economically crucial as well. In this economic context, it should be noted that Viborg lies just a few miles south of one of the inlets of the Limfjord. As the voyage around the northernmost tip of Denmark through the Kattegat and the Skagerrak was so treacherous that it was not commercially sailed until c. 1300, the Limfjord, which was then open in the west, east and probably to the north near Aggersborg, offered the only safe passage from the North Sea to the Øresund.<sup>77</sup> Thus, Viborg was advantageously placed at the point at which the road and sea networks interacted, to monitor and tax goods coming to Jylland from both the west and east.

<sup>73</sup> See Hoffman, "Unity", 97 & 100.

<sup>74</sup> See Kristensen, *Viborg*, 40–1, for a discussion of this element in Viborg's place name.

<sup>75</sup> See A. E. Christensen, *Vikanetidens Danmark: paa Oldhustonsk Baggrund*, (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University, 1969), 91–3, for details of this.

<sup>76</sup> Kristensen, *Viborg*, 29–32, and his "Indledning", in *Viborg Sandersø 1000–1300: Byarkæologiske Undersøgelser 1981 og 1984–85*, eds. J. Hjeremind, M. Iversen and H. K. Kristensen (Århus: Viborg Stiftsmuseum, 1998), 9, for a better map.

<sup>77</sup> See C. J. Becker, "Zwei Frauengraber des 7. Jahrhunderts aus Nørre, Sandegaard, Børnholm", *Acta Archaeologica* 24 (1953): 152–5, for some discussion of the trade-routes used by ships during the Viking Age.

In contrast, Roskilde does not seem to have been the site of a similar regional assembly; the historical sources indicate that the principal assembly site on Sjælland was at Ringsted.<sup>78</sup> However, there is evidence for important cult practises within the vicinity of Roskilde. Thietmar of Merseburg includes in his description of Lejre, the information that it was the scene of human and animal sacrifices every nine years.<sup>79</sup> These details may be exaggerated or distorted, but this record does appear to identify it as an important site for pre-Christian religious practises. Furthermore, only 2.5 miles to the southeast of Roskilde is a site with the name of Vindinge, which in its earliest recorded form, that of *Winningawe*, ends with the same cultic *ve* element that is present in the name Viborg.<sup>80</sup> The site of Roskilde also had economic importance. It lies at the bottom of the Roskilde Fjord, another important body of calm water adjoined to the Kattegat, past which the majority of trade from eastern Denmark and the Baltic to western Europe had to travel. Thus, royal control over these focal-points in the Danish landscape brought the king power over both political and religious assemblies, and placed his officials at the hubs of the economy.

Thus, these urban sites appear to show a distinct development of urbanism in early eleventh century Denmark, separate from the pre-existing urban network, and associated with the ambitions of Cnut (and perhaps his father and brother) to develop royal domination of the Danish landscape. The years that he spent in England, as well as his own attempts to consolidate his control over the local government there, had shown Cnut that urban sites could be used as efficient points to monitor and control the political, social and economic activities of a population. In addition, they had propaganda value as scenes for the display of royal authority and wealth. However, two of the three pre-existing urban sites lay too close to the German border, and thus, new sites had to be founded and developed. Sveinn Tjúguskegg may have begun this process, but Cnut realised its full potential. He invested wealth in urban development, and imported English personnel to these sites, extending his domination of western and central Denmark through them.

<sup>78</sup> Hoffmann, "Unity", 97 & 100.

<sup>79</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 1: 17 (Holtzmann, 23–4).

<sup>80</sup> F. A. Birkebæk, "Det Ældste Roskilde", in *13 Bidrag til Roskilde By og Egn's Historie. Udgvæet i Anledning af Roskilde's Museum's 50 Års Jubilæum*, ed. F. A. Birkebæk (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 1979), 87.

*Episcopal Authority in Western and Central Denmark*

Throughout Scandinavia in the late tenth- and early eleventh-century secular rulers attempted to profit from the centralising influences of Christianity and episcopal organisation. Indeed, religious conversion often seems to have been forced by rulers onto their people in order to erode local aristocratic control of religious sites and practises. As a politically unifying process which increased the efficiency of the state machinery to control its inhabitants, Christianity was clearly of interest to Cnut's dynasty. The processes involved in the development of ecclesiastical organisation in Denmark during Cnut's reign began during the reigns of his grandfather and father. The contemporary German chronicler Widukind records that Haraldr Gormsson was publicly converted by the missionary Poppo after a public debate about the position of Christ in the Danish pantheon.<sup>81</sup> Confirmation of Haraldr's conversion can be found on his monument at Jelling, which bears a depiction of the crucifixion, along with a runic inscription claiming that he "made the Danes Christian".<sup>82</sup> This conversion was accepted by Haraldr and his descendants without the implied political encroachment from the archbishop of Hamberg-Bremen, who may have had nominal primacy over the whole Scandinavian church. Adam of Bremen attests to ecclesiastical overlordship of the see of Hamburg-Bremen over Scandinavia, and claims that it fostered missionary efforts from 948 onwards, appointing bishops for the urban sites of Hedeby-Schleswig, Ribe and Århus in Denmark. However, recently his witness here has been called into question by Janson, who demonstrates that to early eleventh-century contemporaries such as Bruno of Querfurt, a Saxon nobleman, the see of Hamburg-Bremen did not hold any pre-eminent position over Scandinavia before 1022, and in fact may have been seriously threatened or even rivalled there by other neighbouring German sees.<sup>83</sup> Much of Janson's arguments are extremely convincing, but it is important to remember that his conclusions do not show that repre-

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<sup>81</sup> Widukind, *Rerum Gestarum Saxoniarum Libri Tres*, 3: 65, eds. H. E. Lohmann & P. Hirsch (Hannover: Hahnische, 1935), 140). See also Demidoff, L., 'The Poppo Legend', *Medieval Scandinavia* 6 (1973), especially pp. 65–6, and Janson, H. "Konfliktlinjer i Tidlig Nordeuropeisk Kyrkoorganisation", in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et Symposium i Roskilde den 5–7 Februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004).

<sup>82</sup> *Danmarks Runeindskrifter*, no. 42 (text volume, 79); "haraltr:kunukr...tani[ ](karþi) kristna" ('haraldr konungr...dani gerði kristna').

<sup>83</sup> Janson, "Konfliktlinjer".

sentatives of the see of Hamburg-Bremen were not active in Denmark in the last decades of the tenth century and the first two decades of the eleventh, but rather that they had competition there in this period from other less well-recorded German missions. Adam may be wildly exaggerating the role of his archiepiscopal see in the establishment of bishoprics in Hedeby-Schleswig, Ribe and Århus, but the archaeology makes it clear that significant settlements did exist at these sites, and the *Vita Bernwardi* appears to record that at least one of these (Hedeby-Schleswig) had a German bishop in attendance before the year 1000. It seems certain that German missions, whether under the authority of Hamburg-Bremen or not, would have used pre-existing urban sites as a focal point for their activity, and Adam's claims about the fate of the bishops appointed by Hamburg-Bremen under Sveinn Tjúguskegg and Cnut may in fact hold true for all German ecclesiastical personnel in the area. It is clear that Sveinn Tjúguskegg and Cnut encouraged the development of other urban sites, and before 988 Sveinn had expelled from Denmark (or perhaps refused re-admittance to) the German bishops of Hedeby-Schleswig, Ribe, Århus and an otherwise unattested bishop of Odense, who are recorded as living under imperial protection in Germany in an imperial privilege of 18th March 988.<sup>84</sup> Thus, only the elderly missionary Poppo and a bishop plucked from the Danish nobility, Óðinkárr, were free to operate in Denmark.<sup>85</sup> To begin to fill this episcopal vacuum Sveinn imported a missionary bishop, Gotebald, from outside of Hamburg-Bremen's authority, to Skåne.<sup>86</sup> After 1019, Cnut continued his father's precedent, appointing clergymen who were

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<sup>84</sup> Diploma issued in the name of Otto III (edited by T. Sickel, *Die Urkunden der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser, Bind 2. Die Urkunden Otto des III* (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1893), no. 41, pp. 440–1). I add the clause 'or refused re-admittance' here as it is possible that these bishops had fled during the period of fighting between Sveinn and his father Haraldr.

<sup>85</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 49 (110). More will be said about this Óðinkárr below at pp. 179–80. It is, of course, possible that other German bishops not under the authority of Hamburg-Bremen remained in Denmark, and were ignored by Adam for propagandistic reasons, but this is not probable. Adam is perhaps more likely to have tried to claim them as suffragans of Hamburg-Bremen rather than ignore them completely. It is just possible that an origin for Sveinn's and Cnut's so-called 'English' bishops can be found in such men, but it is difficult to reconcile Adam's identification of them as English with an origin in a rival German see, and these 'English' bishops were more probably figures attached to the Danish court (see my comments immediately below).

<sup>86</sup> See the comments on this figure in Gelting, "Elusive Bishops", 175–6. Adam claims he was English (*Gesta*, 2: 41 (Schmeidler, 101)).

independent of Hamburg-Bremen's authority to the remaining vacant bishoprics. Adam records that Cnut installed one Gerbrand to a see based on Sjælland, one Reginbert to a see based on Fyn and one Bernhard to a see based in Skåne.<sup>87</sup> Only one of these appointments can be dated. By 1022 Gerbrand had taken up his office, and appeared as a witness to an English charter dated to that year, as *Gerbrandus Roscylde parochiae Danorum gentis*.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, few details are known of Reginbert's see. There appears to have been no urban site on Fyn in this period, although a concentration of Viking-Age settlements can be detected in the area where Odense was subsequently founded.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps this bishopric was one based on royal estates.

The nationality of these foreign bishops remains obscure. Adam of Bremen stated that Cnut's appointments, like Gotebald, were English, and this is in accord with the other sources of evidence for the origin of other officials introduced to Danish urban sites by Cnut.<sup>90</sup> However, none of the names of the ecclesiastics were current in England in the Anglo-Saxon period. In fact, all seem to be names with a continental German origin.<sup>91</sup> No obvious resolution springs to mind. There were Germans who held positions in the English church in the early eleventh century, but it seems quite a coincidence that Cnut should select four men with continental German names for the positions, and there is no clear reason why he should prefer Germans within the English church for these roles. Janson's demonstration that Adam most probably exaggerated the primacy of the see of Hamburg-Bremen in the missions to Scandinavia, opens the possibility that these men were German ecclesiastics from rival sees, but this fails to explain why Adam identifies them as 'English'. It may be that the specification that these men were English refers to their consecration, not national origin. As the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* names Sveinn as both a Christian and the founder of

<sup>87</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 55 (Schmeidler, 115).

<sup>88</sup> S. 958 (Ely). (edited in Blake, *Liber Ehemensis*, 150–1)

<sup>89</sup> T. G. Jeppesen, *Middelalder-Landsbyens Opståen: Kontinuitet og Brud i den Fynske Agrar-bebyggelse mellem Yngre Jernalder og Tidlig Middelalder* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), 24–6, traces and maps the ceramic evidence from this focus of settlement in the vicinity of pre-urban Odense.

<sup>90</sup> *Gesta*, 2: 41 & 55 (Schmeidler, 101 & 115).

<sup>91</sup> Note that von Felitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, 191, 260, 274 & 348, records an exclusively Continental German origin for the name-elements *Ger-*, *Got-*, *Regin-* and *-brand*. Some brief consideration of this problem can be found elsewhere in L. M. Larson, *Canute the Great 995–1035, and the Rise of Danish Imperialism During the Viking Age* (London: Putnam, 1912), 190, and L. Abrams, "The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia", *Anglo Saxon England* 24 (1995), 228.

the church in which he was entombed, it seems probable that his royal court, as well as that of his sons, had chaplains.<sup>92</sup> As such court-figures would have had to exist before Sveinn's invasion of England, it may be that they were drawn from the members of early German missions to Denmark or from clerics who had broken away from the German clergy and ended up in the service of the Danish king, and taken to England in 1013 and after 1016, and consecrated there.

It has been argued that as these bishops were outside the authority of the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, they may have been subject to the archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>93</sup> Adam records that Cnut had Gerbrand consecrated by Archbishop Æthelnoth.<sup>94</sup> However, there is little evidence of subsequent contact between the two, and no evidence that the other bishops ever went through a similar ceremony. As with Wales and Dublin, it is perhaps wisest to economise on the amount of contact that can be read into one consecration ceremony. Therefore, as members of a church hierarchy with no apparent head other than the king of Denmark, they probably should be regarded as primarily royal agents.

It should be noted that Adam of Bremen acknowledged the existence of two bishops in Denmark in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries who were not 'English' in any sense of the term, nor appointed by Cnut. One of these, the elderly missionary Poppo, must have died during the later part of Sveinn's reign. However, the other, Óðinkárr the younger, was alive during Cnut's reign. Gelting has recently discussed some of the known details of Óðinkárr's life.<sup>95</sup> Gelting seems correct in concluding that Adam may have confused some of the details of the life of Óðinkárr the younger, a contemporary of Cnut, with those of his uncle and mentor, Óðinkárr the elder, a missionary bishop in Denmark in the late tenth century. Gelting noted that an addition made to Adam's account (made apparently by Adam himself) seems to indicate that part of Óðinkárr the younger's education was made possible by

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<sup>92</sup> *Encomium*, 2: 3 (Campbell, 18).

<sup>93</sup> Gelting, "Elusive Bishops", 177, has suggested that Cnut sought to organise his Danish Church dependent on Canterbury. Lund, "Cnut's Danish Kingdom", 42, has postulated instead that Cnut may have intended to make Roskilde an archiepiscopal see. Neither of these hypotheses has any evidence to commend them, and it seems easier to view Cnut's church as a form of missionary church with the necessary number of personnel but without an organised or comprehensive ecclesiastical structure.

<sup>94</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 55 (Schmeidler, 116).

<sup>95</sup> Gelting, "Elusive Bishops", 174-5 & 177.

Cnut after his inauguration as the king of Denmark c. 1019, and thus he could not have been ordained by Archbishop Libentius I, as Adam claims, as that archbishop died in 1013.<sup>96</sup> Gelting suggested that Adam confused this Archbishop Libentius with his namesake and eventual successor, Archbishop Libentius II, who held office from 1029 to 1032, and thus emended the date of Óðinkárr the younger's consecration to late in Cnut's reign. However, at the base of this hypothesis is the assumption that Cnut's intervention in Óðinkárr the younger's education completed the studies required in order to take up his episcopal office (thus, such studies must predate Óðinkárr's holding of the office of bishop). This is not clearly attested in the source, which ambiguously states that Óðinkárr was taken to England to be "instructed in letters".<sup>97</sup> Adam also informs us that this Óðinkárr was educated in the cathedral school at Bremen, and it seems inconceivable that he could have left this environment, intended for a career in the clergy, as an illiterate. The principal problem is with the definition of what is meant by "instruction in letters". It is equally possible that Óðinkárr may have finished his necessary education at Bremen and been consecrated, as Adam states, within the office of Archbishop Libentius I (988/9–1013), before Cnut came to power. His instruction 'in letters' could then plausibly have been a period of retraining in England, in order to allow him to work alongside Cnut's appointees who had spent time in England, and were familiar with the differing liturgical traditions there.

Whether we believe Adam's witness that the archiepiscopal see of Hamburg-Bremen had primacy over Scandinavia in this period, or just pretensions to this overlordship, it is clear that Cnut's and his father's appointments excluded potential appointments from Hamburg-Bremen, and this did not go unnoticed in Germany. Adam of Bremen records that Unwan took offence at Cnut's appointment of 'English' bishops in what were nominally his suffragan-sees, and he seized Gerbrand as he was returning from England.<sup>98</sup> It appears from his account that Gerbrand was interrogated by Archbishop Unwan, and "persuaded by necessity" Gerbrand offered his allegiance and fidelity to Hamburg-

<sup>96</sup> The addition is Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, schol. 25(26) (Schmeidler, 97).

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*; "iste Odinkar in Angliam ductus est a knut rege ibique eruditus litteris". It must be acknowledged that much ambiguity exists within this brief record, which continues to describe a period of travel (and presumed study) in France undertaken by Óðinkárr perhaps immediately after his time in England, or perhaps many years later.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 55 (Schmeidler, 116).

Bremen.<sup>99</sup> The archbishop sent legates to Cnut and the two appear to have come to an arrangement entering into what Adam calls a "close union". Adam's account presents events in a light favourable to the see of Hamburg-Bremen, and it should be noted that while he stresses Cnut's willingness to comply thenceforth with Archbishop Unwan's wishes there is scant evidence of this, and the period of the "close union" seems instead to have been one of protracted negotiations concerning Hamburg-Bremen's jurisdiction. Adam recorded that after the capture of Gerbrand, the archbishop held a conference with Cnut and the Slavic leaders Udo and Sederich.<sup>100</sup> These Slavic princes were the secular leaders of Hamburg-Bremen's other suffragan sees, and in particular, Sederich is mentioned earlier in Adam's text alongside Udo's father Mistivoi as a prince over the people for whom the archbishop consecrated several bishops.<sup>101</sup> It seems significant that despite concluding a supposedly "close union" with Cnut, Unwan was unable to supplant Cnut's appointments or install any bishops from his own following alongside them.

Moreover, from the mid-1020s onwards the see of Hamburg-Bremen was forced to make concessions to Cnut. In 1027 Cnut was in Rome attending the imperial coronation of Conrad II. Matters of business seem to have been discussed at this meeting, during which Adam claims that the emperor waived his rights to the Danish territory on the northern bank of the River Eider, an area which included Hedeby-Schleswig.<sup>102</sup> This may not be entirely accurate: the area had been invaded by the Germans in 973-4, and they were expelled from it in 983, but it is not clear what the state of this region was in Cnut's reign. However, strategic concessions to the Danes accord well with what we know of imperial ambitions in the period, and perhaps this is a record of an agreement between Cnut and the emperor to guarantee this border. As noted elsewhere, Cnut was closely related to the ruling Piast dynasty of Poland, and might have been expected to offer them military support.<sup>103</sup> Cnut's grandfather, Haraldr, had cooperated in a military assault in 983 on Germany with another Slavic group,

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 55 (Schmeidler, 116); "quod necessitas persuasit".

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 60 (Schmeidler, 119) and 2: lxvi (Schmeidler, 125).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 26 (Schmeidler, 86).

<sup>102</sup> See *ibid.*, 2: 56 (116-17), for details of what follows here.

<sup>103</sup> Cnut's mother appears to have been either the sister or daughter of Boleslaw Chrobry, head of the Piast dynasty 966/7-1025.



the Abodrites, with whom he was allied; Haraldr regaining losses on his southern border and the Abodrites sacking Hamburg. The event may have weighed heavily on the German memory. The head of the Piast dynasty after 1025, Mieszko II, had moved aggressively into the border regions between the area under his control and that under the emperor's, and in 1028 Mieszko seized Western Pomerania.<sup>104</sup> Conrad II needed to respond to such outright challenges with vigour, and he led campaigns into Polish territory at Lusatia in 1029 and Bautzen in 1030. The concessions to Cnut were probably made in order to secure his neutrality in this conflict, and avoid the possibility that the Empire would face a war on its northern as well as eastern frontier. Hedeby-Schleswig lay in some form of buffer-zone, ignored by Cnut until after his meeting with the emperor may explain the peculiarities of the numismatic evidence from the site. Coins were minted at the site from the 940s onwards, and a large group of Cross-type coins were produced there during the last years of Haraldr Gormsson, this type subsequently descending into chaos in the 980s.<sup>105</sup> Following this, a small number of Cnut's coins (4 possible die-impressions in Hauberg's assessment) have been connected with the site, but only on the basis of their low weight and uniform workmanship.<sup>106</sup> As I said above, Cnut and his father appear to have focussed their energies on urban sites away from the pre-existing ones (perhaps with incumbent German bishops and sympathisers), and so when sites such as Lund, Viborg and most probably Roskilde began to mint coins in Cnut's name immediately after his accession or in the early 1020s, Hedeby-Schleswig did not. The coins from there have been dated to the period 1026/8 onwards, and it is tempting to speculate that this may be an indirect result of Cnut's meeting with the emperor.

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<sup>104</sup> See H. J. Lang, "The Fall of the Monarchy of Mieszko II, Lambert", *Speculum* 49 (1974), especially pp. 632–8, for details of the violent interaction of the Germans and the Poles in this period. While Cnut may have made a pragmatic decision to not aid his maternal family, it should be noted that Adam of Bremen records that Cnut sheltered at least one Slavic political refugee, that of Gottschalk, in this period. Adam reports that Gottschalk's grandfather was one *Mistwoj*; a figure who can probably be identified with *Mistui* (obit 990s?), a ruler of the Obodrites, a Slavic tribe whose power was based on Mecklenburg. See Widukind of Corvey, *Rerum Gestarum Saxonicarum*, 3: 68 (Lohmann & Hirsch, 142) on this figure. It is probably significant that this *Mistui* appears alongside Boleslaw Chrobry in Thietmar of Merseburg's account of the supplication of a number of Slavic peoples to the emperor at Magdeburg in 984 (*ibid.* 4: 2). He may have been a close ally of Boleslaw.

<sup>105</sup> B. Malmer, *Nordiska Mynt före år 1000* (Lund: Lund Universitet, 1966), 7–12 and 230–8.

<sup>106</sup> Hauberg, *Myntförhold*, 45; Jonsson, "Cnut's Coinage", 226.

Cnut also met the Pope in Rome, and appears to have discussed matters of his ecclesiastical affairs with him. We know from Cnut's letter to the English from 1027 that he discussed affairs of the English Church with the Pope, and it seems likely that such discussions also involved the Danish Church although the content of these is entirely obscure.

Therefore, on his return from Rome Cnut appears to have presented Unwan with a *fait accompli*. He had met both the emperor and the Pope, and apparently secured concessions over territory which included one of Hamburg-Bremen's suffragan-sees (or at least one they had pretensions to rule), and perhaps religious privileges concerning the nature of the Danish Church. Presented with this state of affairs, when Unwan died two years later in 1029, he was replaced by Archbishop Libentius II, whose first priority was, in Adam's words, to "conciliate Cnut, king of the Danes".<sup>107</sup>

There are many apparent links between the establishment and development of urban sites and the establishment of a new episcopal system during Cnut's reign, and both were crucial to the extension of Cnut's power. However, when these features are mapped alongside each other, one crucial difference becomes apparent.

Skåne and Sjælland seem to fit a recognisable pattern. Each region had one bishop and one urban site. Fyn also seems acceptable, although its bishopric must have been based on rural royal estates. All these are of roughly equal size. However, the size of the see of Ribe was disproportionately large, with a single bishop like the others, but approximately twice the geographical extent of the other sees.<sup>108</sup> In addition, when King Sveinn Ástríðarson began to reform these bishoprics in 1057 × 1060, the fact that only this vast bishopric in Jylland received any major subdivisions (being divided into the four smaller sees based on Ribe, Århus, Viborg and *Wendila*: the land north of the Limfjord), confirms that the size of this see was disproportionately large in the early eleventh century.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 64 (Schmeidler, 123); "primo omnium concilians sibi Chnud regem Danorum".

<sup>108</sup> Note that the see of Ribe during Cnut's reign may have been even larger than that depicted on the map here. Little is known of the see of Hedeby-Schleswig in this period, except that the bishop of this region was in exile until c. 1027. Thus, some of this region also may have fallen under the bishop of Ribe's control during Cnut's reign.

<sup>109</sup> Note that the see of Lund also underwent a division during these reforms, with another see based at Dalby being created within the already existing one based at Lund, but as these sites are only a few miles apart it is clear that something other than

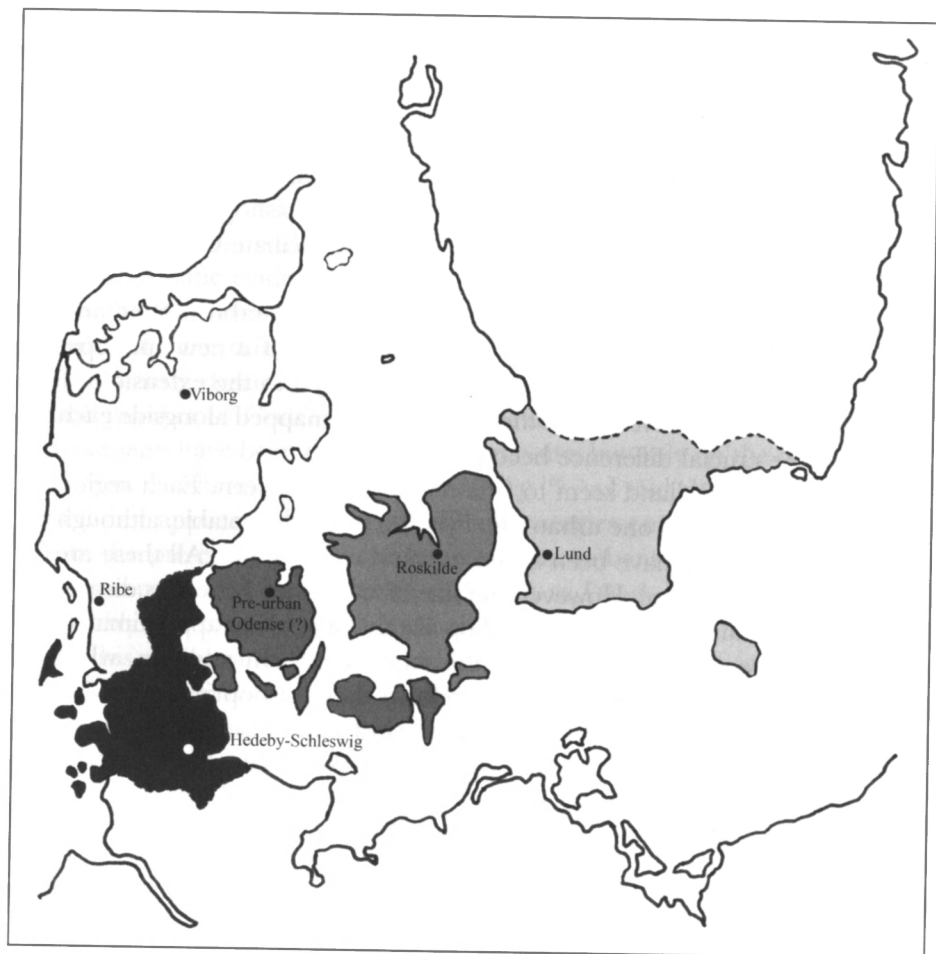


Fig. 10. Maps of Denmark showing the bishoprics and urban sites during Cnut's reign.



Fig. 11. Maps of Denmark showing the bishoprics and urban sites during Sveinn Ástriðarson's reign.

Furthermore, this was the only see during the reigns of Sveinn and Cnut which kept its incumbent bishop. Closer scrutiny of the known details of this bishop and his family reveals much about this peculiar arrangement. An addition to Adam of Bremen's text shows that the family were high-ranking Danish nobility: Óðinkárr the elder was the son of a *Tóki dux*.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, the family appear to have been closely allied to the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen, and members of the family were Christianised at a surprisingly early date. Óðinkárr the younger's uncle and mentor, Óðinkárr the elder, was consecrated as a missionary bishop at some point in 937 × 988; that is about the same time, or perhaps even immediately before, the conversion of King Haraldr Gormsson. Several members of this family had close and personal connections to the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. Óðinkárr the elder maintained good relations with the archbishopric, receiving his consecration from them, and travelling to synods as their suffragan-bishop.<sup>111</sup> He was buried in St Peter's cathedral in Bremen.<sup>112</sup> His sister, Æsa, is recorded as living as a nun in Bremen.<sup>113</sup> Óðinkárr the younger was baptised personally by Archbishop Adaldag, and received the archbishop's name at this ceremony.<sup>114</sup> Thus, Óðinkárr the younger appears to have been among the part of the nobility of western Denmark who were conspicuously pro-German in their religious and political affiliations. However, this does not necessarily imply that there was tension between the family of Óðinkárr the younger and Cnut. In fact, the Chronicle of the Bishops of Ribe, composed in the thirteenth century, records that Óðinkárr the younger and Cnut were closely related. This account names Óðinkárr the younger as a *nepos regis Kanuti antiqui*, and subsequently refers to this *Kanutus* as Óðinkárr's *auunculus*.<sup>115</sup> As the nickname *Gamelæknut* ('Old-Cnut') was used in the other Danish annals and the thirteenth-century saga materials for the King Cnut who is the subject of this study, it is clear that this *Kanutus*

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a straightforward and permanent division of one large region into two smaller ones happened here. It was recombined with that of Lund after only one episcopal reign. See Gelting, "Elusive Bishops", 190, for fuller comment.

<sup>110</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, schol. 35(37) (Schmeidler, 110).

<sup>111</sup> See Gelting, "Elusive Bishops", 174, for details and identification of the Óðinkárr mentioned as Óðinkárr the elder.

<sup>112</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, schol. 43 (Schmeidler, 124).

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, schol. 45(46) (Schmeidler, 124).

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 36 (Schmeidler, 97).

<sup>115</sup> Chronicle of the Bishops of Ribe (Jørgensen, 26–7).

*antiquus* is the Cnut in question here.<sup>116</sup> Both *nepos* and *avunculus* are terms used in early-medieval texts to describe the relationship between almost all close male relatives connected by blood or marriage, and so the precise nature of their familial bond remains obscure. However, it seems unlikely that there was a direct blood-link between them, as this would make Tóki and Óðinkárr the elder otherwise unattested brothers of either Sveinn Tjúguskegg or Cnut himself. A link through marriage seems more probable. Both of Cnut's wives are well recorded, but it is unknown if his elder brother Haraldr was married, and if he was, this may have been to an unknown sister of Tóki and Óðinkárr the elder. Alternatively, a member of Óðinkárr's family may have married a sister of Cnut. Whichever of these options is correct, it appears most likely that an alliance was made between Óðinkárr the younger's family and Cnut's within (or at least immediately before) Cnut's own lifespan. This alliance could explain how this aristocratic family maintained their influential position throughout the early eleventh century, when Sveinn and Cnut both adopted hostile stances to ecclesiastics who had close affiliations with Hamburg-Bremen. Óðinkárr the younger remained in his see, and despite its disproportionate size its boundaries remained intact.

These conclusions about the interaction between Óðinkárr the younger's family and Cnut provide an opportunity for some discussion of the interaction of Cnut's dynasty with the aristocracy of western Denmark.

### *Cnut and the Aristocracy of Western Denmark*

As noted above, little can be known of the origin of Cnut's dynasty with any certainty, and much rests on Adam's somewhat partisan and confusing account. It is most likely that they began as petty kings of a region of south- or mid-Jylland in early years of the tenth century. The spectacular grave-mound and church complex at Jelling has been used to identify the principal site they held, and there seems to be little

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<sup>116</sup> The vernacular form of the name here is taken from the *Annales Ryenses*, items 91–2, in Kroman, *Danmarks Middelalderlige Annaler*, 161. Other examples can be found in *Annales Ripenses* (ibid., 255), *Knytlunga saga*, ch. 17, in *Danakonunga sogur: Skyldunga saga, Knytlunga saga, Agrþ af Sogu Danakonunga*, ed. Bjarni Guðnason (Reykjavík: Íslenzk Fornrit, 1982), 122–3, and *Hemskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 130 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 221).

reason to doubt this.<sup>117</sup> The earliest figure from this dynastic line introduced in Adam's account is *Hardecnudth Vurm* ('Hörða-Knútr 'Worm' [perhaps for Gorm]'), for whom Adam allows himself an alliterative and literary flourish: *crudelissimus, inquam, vermis* ('a most cruel worm, I say').<sup>118</sup> Four chapters later (some 34 lines in Schmeidler's edition) this *Vurm* has a son named Haraldr who is recognisable as Haraldr Gormsson.<sup>119</sup> Adam makes no mention of the source of this information, but the tone suggests that these details were drawn from the records of Hamburg-Bremen. A little earlier in his account he sets down some earlier details of preceding rulers in the region of Hedeby-Schleswig which he heard from the mouth of King Sveinn Ástriðarson, one of his principal sources.<sup>120</sup> Sveinn claimed that during the office of Archbishop Hoger (909–16), these rulers were overthrown by a *Hardegón, filius Suein, veniens a Nortmannia* ('Hardegón, son of Sveinn, who came from Norway / Normandy'). A great deal of debate has ensued about the identity of this Hardegón, but the consensus view has been stated by Sawyer, that while one cannot place trust on all details of Adam's account here "the most satisfactory interpretation . . . appears to be that Hardegón was a mistaken form of Hardeknud, and that he was the father of Gorm".<sup>121</sup> For my own part I concur, and it seems to me that the differing forms of the name can be explained through Adam's differing sources (German ecclesiastical records and the oral testimony of Sveinn Ástriðarson), and that while it is possible that Sveinn Ástriðarson enumerated any number of genealogies of the various Danish ruling families to Adam when they met, it is most likely that he principally traced his own line of descent.

<sup>117</sup> See K. J. Krogh, "The Royal Viking-Age Monuments at Jelling in the Light of Recent Archaeological Excavations. A Preliminary Report", *Acta Archaeologica* 53 (1982), and the same author's, *Gåden om Kong Gorms Grav: Historien om Nordhøjen i Jelling* (Herning: Kristensen, 1993).

<sup>118</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 1: 55 (Schmeidler, 56).

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 59 (Schmeidler, 57).

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 52 (Schmeidler, 53).

<sup>121</sup> P. Sawyer, "Konger og Kongemagt", in *Fra Stamme til Stat i Danmark 2. Hovdingesamfund og Kongemagt*, eds. P. Mortensen and B. M. Rasmussen, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1991), 279; his own translation following his Danish "Man kan ikke I alle detaljer stole på Adam af Bremens beretning . . . [but] Den mest tilfredsstillende tolkning af Adams beretning synes at være, at Hardegón er en misforstået form for Hardeknud, og at han var far til Gorm". For more detailed discussion of the debate see I. Skovgaard-Petersen, "Oldtid og Vikingetid", in *Danmarks Historie Bind 1: Tiden indtil 1340*, eds. I. Skovgaard-Petersen, A. E. Christiansen and H. Paluden (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1977), at pp. 161–4.

This conquest should perhaps be seen as part of a wider campaign of power-building in Jylland, and presumably Adam knew of this event (and not others in neighbouring regions to the north and east) because the previous dynasty in control of Hedeby-Schleswig were allied or subordinate to Hamburg-Bremen.<sup>122</sup> It appears safe to presume that around this time, or in the decades following, this dynasty extended their territory both northwards into Jylland, and eastwards over the islands, subjugating the numerous petty kingships of Denmark.<sup>123</sup> The state of this power-consolidation in Jylland at the end of Haraldr Gormsson's reign can be gauged by the construction of the Trelleborg-forts at Fyrkat, near Viborg in central north-Jylland, and Aggersborg, at the northernmost opening of the Limfjord. Furthermore, the runic evidence may also attest to this process of political consolidation in the north of Jylland. Randsborg and Sawyer have independently concluded that the presence of a concentration of runestones from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries in the north-westernmost regions of Jylland, may also indicate some form of aggressive interaction between royal agents and local elites.<sup>124</sup>

Thus, the northernmost region of Jylland would appear to have been an area that Haraldr Gormsson and his immediate descendants attempted to exert authority over.

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<sup>122</sup> See below at pp. 196–7 for more detailed discussion of the possible relationship between this dynasty and the archbishopric.

<sup>123</sup> See Maund, "A Turmoil of Warring Princes", 32, for an important discussion of the existence of multiple petty kingships in Denmark in the ninth century. See also Sawyer, "Konger og Kongermakt". A fascinating source for these petty kingships exists in an often overlooked section of the Roskilde Chronicle (written 1138 × 1143). While discussing the legendary history of Denmark, the author qualifies his mention of numerous legendary kings with the statement that "in those times there were many kings in Denmark". He then lists two such petty-kingships in Jylland, a third in Fyn, a fourth on Sjælland and a fifth in Skåne. This is followed by the statement that subsequently there were "two kings over the whole of Denmark, and then one over the whole of Denmark, and then one over the whole of England as well as Denmark, as will be shown later". The text does not make it clear whether this reference to a single king over England and Denmark "as will be shown later", is to be identified with the immediately following details of the invasion of northern England by one Ivarr (son of the pseudo-historical ninth-century ruler Ragnarr Loðbrok), or the subsequent account, a few pages later, of Cnut. However, there was no stable single-kingship over Denmark and England in the mid-ninth century, and if there is any merit in this fragmentary account then it must refer to the period before Cnut's dynasty came to power.

<sup>124</sup> Randsborg, *Viking Age*, and B. Sawyer, "Appendix", and more fully in "Viking-Age Rune-Stones as a Crisis Symptom", *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 24 (1991). I have dealt elsewhere with the criticisms of their work (see pp. 229–30).





Fig. 12. Map from Randsborg, *Viking Age*, 30. Each dot indicates an appropriate runic find.

It is interesting that some of this region may be that over which the family of Bishop Óðinkárr the younger exerted control. An addition to Adam of Bremen's text records that Óðinkárr the elder was the son of a *Toki dux Winlandensis*.<sup>125</sup> Two questions emerge here: what did Adam mean by using the title *dux* here, and where was *Winland*? Let us deal with the implications of the term *dux* first. Little can be known about Adam's meaning of *dux* with any certainty, but it is clear that this Tóki ruled a sizeable territory. If Adam applied the term himself to Tóki's office then we should perhaps use the occurrence of the term in German documents as a guide; a good example might be found in a diploma of 20 May 1027 issued by Emperor Conrad II for the episcopal church in Sarsina, which places *dux* in a sequence of titles, above *marchio* (apparently from *comes marchiae* or 'count of the march'), *comes* ('count' or regional governor), and *vice-comes* (most probably 'sheriff').<sup>126</sup> This was clearly an office of great authority in the structure of local government. Alternatively, if the term *dux* was current among the Danish aristocracy of the eleventh century as a Latin gloss for a vernacular title then we might turn our attention to its use by Scandinavian writers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a translation of the term *jarl*.<sup>127</sup> The sparse evidence does not allow a comprehensive examination of this office, and in fact the title *jarl* may have covered a range of offices and roles, but it is clear from the earliest Norwegian legal material that the *jarl* was, in the late eleventh century at least, second only to the king among the secular aristocracy; and English historical sources establish the existence of *jarls* within the social structure of Denmark and Norway throughout the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>128</sup> Whichever source we follow it is clear

<sup>125</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, schol. 35(37) (Schmeidler, 110).

<sup>126</sup> Diploma edited by H. Bresslau, *Die Urkunden der deutschen Könige und Kaiser: Vierter band. Die Urkunden Konrads II mit nachtragen zu den unkunden Heinrichs II* (Hannover and Leipzig: Hahnische, 1909), no. 93, p. 128.

<sup>127</sup> See for example *Annales Lundenses*, s. a. 1283, in Kroman, *Danmarks Middelalderlige Annaler*, 67, where it is recorded that Valdemar Eiriksson received a *jarldom* in Jylland; "Waldermarus, filius ducis Erici, factus est dux Lucie". Additionally, see *Annalibus Danosuecanis*, s. a. 1260, in *ibid.* 302–3, where Jarl Birgir of Sweden is named *Bugerus dux*, and in the same paragraph, when discussing his wife, his title is translated as *Bugerus Ierll*.

<sup>128</sup> See the rights of the *jarl* enumerated alongside those of the king and his royal officers and ecclesiastical personnel in the Gulathing's Lawcode, ch. 200 (edited in R. Keyser & P. A. Munch, *Norges Gamle Love indtil 1387* (Kristiania, 1846), 1: 71; the Frostathing's Law, 4: 53 (*ibid.* 1: 173); and King Magnús Lagabœtir's *Hrðskrá* ch. 9(14)–12(17) (edited by V. S. Imsen, *Hrdloven til Norges Konge og Hans Håndgangne Menn*,

that Adam's use of this term implies that the family of Óðinkárr were notably wealthy and powerful. This accords well with other records of Óðinkárr's wealth: the addition to Adam's text records that Óðinkárr's inheritance was a third of his father's land in *Vindland*, and other records of his life record that from this he founded the landholdings of the see of Ribe as well as making a number of substantial donations to individual churches throughout Jylland.<sup>129</sup>

Let us turn to the location of *Winland* (or in the vernacular most probably \*Vinland or \*Wendland/\*Vendland).<sup>130</sup> Most modern scholars have assumed that the region has some association with the present day Vendsyssel (the north-easternmost area of Jylland, and while the identification has much to commend it, the relationship between the two has not to my knowledge been discussed comprehensively elsewhere.<sup>131</sup> Surviving placenames cannot offer much guidance here as the potential roots of the name, either the proposed Old Danish words

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*Etter AM 322 fol* (Oslo: Riksarkivet, 2000), 78–84). For the existence of jarls in the ninth to eleventh centuries see the ASC C 872 (O'Brien O'Keefe, 59), which records a raid on England in the late ninth century which had a number of Danish jarls (*eorlas*) among its commanders. See also, John of Worcester who states that there were two jarls (*comites*) present in Sveinn Ástriðarson's invasion of England in 1069: John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1069 (McGurk, 8–9).

<sup>129</sup> The Chronicle of the Bishops of Ribe (Jørgensen, "Ribe Bispekrønike", 26–7), claims that Óðinkárr donated his entire patrimony to the see of Ribe. Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia*, 10: 13, ed. E. Christiansen (Oxford, 1980–1), 1: 25–7, records Óðinkárr's numerous donations to churches throughout Jylland.

<sup>130</sup> Of course here I am implicitly rejecting the identification of this *Vinland* with that of the Norse colony in North America or a region of the Baltic coastline populated by the 'Wends'. A local ruler in either of these regions is not very likely to have had a brother who went to school in Bremen, a sister who died in a convent in Bremen, and a son whose patrimonial estates formed the basis of the see of Ribe. The region, albeit now difficult to perceive, was clearly in Denmark.

<sup>131</sup> For an example of this see O. Jørgensen & T. Nyberg, *Sejlruter i Adam af Bremens Danske Øverden*, (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1992), 15–16. I should like to acknowledge that M. Gelting in a pers. comm. has suggested a further reasonable possibility in that *dux Winlandensis* could be a scribal error for *dux Utlandensis*, i.e. the north Frisian islands. This would agree with Óðinkárr the younger having the centre of his bishopric in Ribe. However, the site of the bishopric was presumably set by its first bishop, Liafdag the Frisian (obit 937 × 988) or his ecclesiastical masters, rather than Óðinkárr's kin, and as fig. 11 on p. 185 above shows, in Cnut's reign, the majority of Jylland was in this bishopric. No manuscript witnesses survive for this section of the text older than the thirteenth century, but as A. S. Vedel's edition of 1579 (Schmeidler's B2) does preserve the reading of the Sorø Abbey manuscript (written twelfth century; subsequently burnt in 1728), and its spelling is in accordance with the other manuscripts, I have preferred to avoid such emendation when another explanation can be found.

\*win, ('meadow') or \*wænd ('to wind or meander'), identify geographical features common to almost all of the Danish landscape: meadows and winding rivers and coastlines.<sup>132</sup> There are, however, a few written sources which identify a region with a markedly similar name. The *Epistola Ailnothi ad regem Dacie*, a work composed in either 1109 or 1122, by a monk of Canterbury (and perhaps Evesham) who settled in the Benedictine community at Odense, describes the *fluvius* (a river or moving body of water),

qui Lima dicitur...ad regionam maritimam que Wendel lingua Danica nomen habet, quod 'convertibilis' interpretatur

(which was called Lim [i.e., the 'Lim'-fjord]... [and which] extends up to the coastal region which in the Danish language has the name Wendel, which means 'the changeable' [or perhaps here 'the meandering']).<sup>133</sup>

Similarly, Saxo Grammaticus in his *Gesta Danorum*, which was composed in the period 1180? × 1222 (and probably completed by 1208), claims that a German raid of the tenth century penetrated Jylland all the way to the Limfjord, *tunc temporis Wendalam aquis claudentis* (which at that time cut off Wendal [from the rest of Jylland] by water).<sup>134</sup> Adam of Bremen himself would appear to have known a region in much the same area, with a very similar name: as noted above, in the fourth book of Adam's own account, where he describes the division of Jylland into four bishoprics under Sveinn Ástriðarson, he refers to a large bishopric covering all the land north of Viborg and Århus (that is from the southern shore of the Limfjord northwards, and including modern Vendsyssel in its north-eastern tip) by the name *Wendila* (most probably a Latinisation of a vernacular placename \*Wendil or \*Vendil).<sup>135</sup> None of these sources appears related to each other at this stage of their accounts, and thus they are apparently independent witnesses to a large region above the Limfjord named either *Wendel*, *Wendal* or *Wendil*. Our knowledge of the names of regions in late Viking Age Denmark is far from perfect, but if we wish to find one close to Winland (or

<sup>132</sup> See B. Jørgensen, *Dansk Stednavneleksikon* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1981-3): 2, 143-4, for fuller comment.

<sup>133</sup> *Epistola Ailnothi ad regem Dacie*, ch. 17, edited in M. C. Gertz, *Vitae Sanctorum Danorum* (Copenhagen, 1908-12), 104.

<sup>134</sup> Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta*, 10: 2 (Christiansen, I:6-7).

<sup>135</sup> See Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 4: 2 (Schmeidler, 230).

\*Vinland/\*Wendland/\*Vendland) in Jylland, Wendel/-al/ -il is the best candidate. The form in Adam's scholia could represent a contraction of Windel-land/\*Vindel-land, and we might conclude that when Adam was compiling material for his main account he heard one version of the region name, and when he (or a close associate) made additions to the text, another form was incorporated into the marginalia.<sup>136</sup> This hypothesis is, of course, necessarily tentative, but this impression is consolidated by both runic and archaeological evidence.

The name Óðinkárr is rare in the medieval period, and in the tenth- and early-eleventh-century Scandinavian records occurs elsewhere only on three runestones from Jylland and as the name of a moneyer in Lund.<sup>137</sup> The appearances of this name can be tabulated thus:

| Form of name   | Type of source   | Place of origin  | Proposed typological dating         | Comments   |
|--|--|------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>osfriþr... tutir upinkaus</i><br>(Ásfríðr... Óðinkárr's daughter) | Runestone. <i>Danmarks Runeindskrifter</i> , no. 4 (text volume, 15) | Hedeby-Schleswig | Jelling (reign of Haraldr Gormsson) | This inscription and that of DR. 2 show that this Ásfríðr was married to Gnúpu ( <i>knuba</i> ), and had a son named Sigtrygg ( <i>siktriuk</i> ). |

<sup>136</sup> Adam's main text can be shown elsewhere to have slightly varying material to that found in the marginal additions, most probably attesting to the existence of at least one other contributor to the text in its earliest extant version. See T. Bolton, "a Textual Historical Response to Adam of Bremen's Witness to the Activities of the Uppsala-Cult", in *Transformasjoner i Vikingtid og Norrøn Middelalder*, ed. G. Steinsland (Oslo: Unipub, 2006), 61–91, especially pp. 70–4, for details.

<sup>137</sup> See Gunnar Knudsen, Marius Kristensen & Rikard Hornby, eds., *Danmarks gamle Personnavne* (Copenhagen, 1936–64): 1, cols. 1055–7, where apart from those occurrences noted here the name is recorded only for a handful of Danish inhabitants from 1254 to 1488 (specifically a priest in Fyn in 1295; a clergyman in Schleswig in 1336; an inhabitant of Bornholm in 1340; a priest in Århus c. 1350; an inhabitant of Skanør in 1407; an inhabitant of Malmø in 1441; an inhabitant of Skarholt in 1488; and finally an undated obit of a priest in a Danish necrology). The name is also rarely attested in English sources: the Domesday Book records only 8 occurrences (1 in Derbyshire, 4 in Nottinghamshire and 3 in Lincolnshire), and all most probably represent a single landholder. See von Feilitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, 342 for further details.

Table (cont.)

| Form of name  | Type of source  | Place of origin | Proposed typological dating                                    | Comments  |
|---|---|-----------------|--|---|
| <i>upinkau(r)</i>   | Runestone. <i>Danmarks Runeindskrifter</i> , no. 133 (text volume, 170–1)                           | Skivum          | Jelling (reign of Haraldr Gormsson)                            | The inscription notes that Óðinkárr's father was a great and prominent landowner or local lord ( <i>landmanna beztr í Danmorku ok fyrstr</i> ). |
| <i>upinkaur: usbiarnaR: sun</i> (Óðinkárr, Ásbjörn's son) | Runestone. <i>Danmarks Runeindskrifter</i> , no. 81 (text volume, 116–17)                           | Skern           | After-Jelling (reign of Sveinn Tjúguskegg, Cnut or Harthacnut) | Very lavishly decorated with central cult-mask with staring eyes. From a funerary monument of local nobleman.                                   |
| <i>OÐÐENCAR MON LVDI</i>                                  | Coins issued in Harthacnut's name: Hauberg <i>Myntforhold</i> , nos. 3, 16 and 54 (190, 192 & 222). | Lund            | 1030s–1040s  |   |

It may be of significance that Adam of Bremen records that this name was held by two successive members of an aristocratic family in Denmark in the eleventh century. The use of recurring familial names is a well-attested phenomenon in Denmark in this period, and it may be that all the references to members of the ruling elite bearing this name are to members of one aristocratic dynasty.<sup>138</sup> The name Óðinkárr

<sup>138</sup> It appears to have been common for some Danish aristocratic families to choose names for their offspring from a small stock of family names. For example, consider the recurrence of the names Haraldr, Sveinn and Cnut / Knútr (or variants thereof) in the known generations of Cnut's own dynasty. This phenomenon has not been extensively studied, and the nature of the material most probably inhibits any such enquiry, but the general impression is that of an aristocratic practise of naming the

appears sufficiently distinctive to connect Adam's bishops and their family with the Ásfríðr who names herself as the daughter of an Óðinkárr, on the runestone from Hedeby-Schleswig, also recording that she was married to a *Gnúpu* (or *Gnúpa*) and had a son named *Sigtrygg*.<sup>139</sup> Adam of Bremen's and Widukind's accounts allow us to identify this *Gnúpa* and *Sigtrygg* as petty-kings who ruled the territory around the town of Hedeby-Schleswig immediately before the rise of Cnut's dynasty. Adam states, citing no less than Sveinn Ásfríðarson as his informant, that early in the tenth century an Óláfr came from Sweden and obtained the Danish kingdom by military force.<sup>140</sup> It is unclear if this kingdom was merely a petty-kingdom in the vicinity of Hedeby-Schleswig or some form of overlordship of a larger territory, and probably the two were not mutually exclusive. Adam notes that among his sons, *Cnob* (an apparent variant of *Gnúpa*) and *Gurd*, ruled with their father, and succeeded to power after the death of their father. A further variant of the name *Gnúpa* can be found in Widukind's account of Henry the Fowler's baptism of this King *Cnuba* in 934.<sup>141</sup> In Adam's account this *Gnúpa* and *Gurd* were succeeded by a younger relation named *Sigerich* (who was removed from power by the Hardegon son of Sveinn, noted above, who may have been Gorm's father), and who was most probably the *Sigtrygg* of the runestones.<sup>142</sup> Invaders such as these needed influential local allies, and the marriage of *Gnúpa*'s son to Ásfríðr was probably part of such an alliance, but it does not follow that Ásfríðr's family were based in the immediate region of Hedeby-Schleswig. If the familial links between the Óðinkárrs of Adam's account and those of the Hedeby runestones can be sustained, then an alternative reason for the marriage between *Gnúpa*'s son and Ásfríðr presents itself. One of the principal features of what we know of the family of Óðinkárr as presented in Adam's account is their close connection to the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen, which can be traced to the ordination of Óðinkárr the elder in 937 × 988 at least. *Gnúpa*'s baptism in 934

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first acknowledged son after the paternal grandfather, the next after the paternal great-grandfather, and so on.

<sup>139</sup> See also Christiansen in his *Saxo Grammaticus, Historia*, 1: 185, n. 86, where he states that the name is "sufficiently distinctive to connect the bishops Othenkar and Earl Tóki with the Áfríðr daughter of Uthinkaur who married the early tenth-century King Knuba".

<sup>140</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 1: 48 & 52 (Schmeidler, 48 & 53).

<sup>141</sup> Widukind, *Rerum Gestarum*, 1: 40 (Lohmann & Hirsch, 59).

<sup>142</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 1: 5 (Schmeidler, 56).

brought him under the ecclesiastical authority of the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen, and the marriage of his son to the daughter of a prominent Danish nobleman who was an ally of the archbishopric would cement the relationship between Hamburg-Bremen and both of these Danish noble kin-groups. If so, then the runestone indicates that this family were influential enough to marry their heiresses to kings or at least petty-kings before Cnut's dynasty began to consolidate their power over Jylland. Moreover, the marriage of one of Cnut's siblings to a member of this aristocratic family seems to fit within a pattern of this noble family making alliances, cemented by political marriages, with aggressive and powerful royal lines and ecclesiastical patrons in the tenth and early eleventh century, and preserving much of their influence through these alliances.

To return to the list of the attestations of the name Óðinkárr above; the appearance of an Óðinkárr among Harthacnut's moneyers in Lund cannot be taken to connect that individual to that region. Indeed, his appearance among the royal officials of that site strongly suggests that he was an immigrant to the area. In fact, the only records of this name which record the names of aristocracy local to the regions in which the records survive, are the runestones at Skivum and Skern, which commemorate important local magnates from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, and in the case of the former, record that he was the son of a *landmanna beztr í Danmorku ok fyrstr* (perhaps 'the most great and prominent landowner in Denmark, as well as a lord'). While it must be admitted that neither of these runestones is actually in the area identified by our written sources as Wendel / Vendel, they are in northern part of Jylland, and that at Skivum is in a close neighbouring region immediately to the south of the Limfjord.

In addition, recent archaeological excavation of a prosperous trade settlement at Sebbersund, approximately 6 miles to the north of Skivum on the southern bank of an arm of the Limfjord, has revealed remains of a wooden church, datable through radiocarbon-dating of samples from an adjacent prestige burial to the year 1000 ( $\pm 10$ ).<sup>143</sup> The site

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<sup>143</sup> See P. Birkedahl, "Sebbersund—en Handelsplads med Trækirke ved Limfjorden—Forbindelser til Norge", in *Havn og Handel i 1000 År, Karmøyseminaret 1997* (Stavanger: Karmøy kommune, 2000), 37–9, and J. N. Nielsen, "Sebbersund—Tidlige Kirker ved Limfjorden", in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et Symposium i Roskilde den 5–7 Februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004), for some discussion of this church. The date given here was provided by a C. 14 dating of both the skeleton in the grave and the wood of the cist. This was brought to my attention through a



has been identified as one of a series of thirteen important pre-urban settlements from the late Viking-Age around the western arm of the Limfjord, and it has been hypothesised that these are the remains of a network of authority under the control of the local elites.<sup>144</sup> This is an exceptionally early archaeological trace of Christianity in Denmark, only half a century after the conversion of Haraldr Gormsson, and many decades before such constructions became common.<sup>145</sup> If the connection of the family of Óðinkárr the younger to some part of northern Jylland can be sustained, then it seems probable that the foundation of a church here *c.* 1000 was linked to the political and religious sympathies of this elite.

Furthermore, some archaeological traces of the processes of conversion in northern Jylland indicate that they may have retained some degree of independence throughout this period. The progress of Christianity throughout this northern region of Jylland appears to have been complex, and somewhat paradoxical. The concentration of burials with the apparently pagan trappings of military and equestrian equipment (and on occasion entire horses) in north-eastern Jylland throughout the late tenth and the early eleventh century has led many scholars to conclude that this was one of the last bastions of pre-Christian practises in Denmark.<sup>146</sup> However, this is the area in which Sebbersund lies. Paradoxically, it appears that the church was

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pers. comm. with one of the excavators, P. Birkedahl, to whom I am indebted for this information.

<sup>144</sup> P. Birkedahl & E. Johansen, "The Eastern Limfjord in the Germanic Iron Age and the Viking Period. Structures and External Relations", in *Vikings in the West*, eds. S. Stummann Hanson and K. Randsborg (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 2000). It should be noted that the evidence for several of these sites is at present piecemeal and full excavation is wanting. However, the sites do all share important characteristics in their siting on top of the hills that surround the Limfjord, in positions crucial for the control of the coastline. Sebbersund is the only exception and appears to have operated as a trade and exchange site on the shore of the fjord for these 'hillforts'. See *ibid.*, 26 & 29–31, where these settlements are mapped and individually discussed.

<sup>145</sup> It is among the earliest of the 31 archaeologically established wooden churches in Denmark. See A. K. Thaastrup-Leth, "Trækirker i det middlealderlige Danmark indtil ca. 1100. Hvornår blev de bygget?", in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et Symposium i Roskilde den 5–7 Februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004). E. Roesdahl's contribution, "Hvornår blev kirkerne bygget?", to the same volume, discusses the date of these churches, and concludes that the majority were built in the period 1060–70.

<sup>146</sup> See L. C. Nielsen, "Hedenskab og Kristendom. Religionsskriftet Afspejlet i Vikingetidens Grave", in *Fra Stamme til Stat i Danmark 2. Høvdingesamfund og Kongemagt*, eds. P. Mortensen and B. M. Rasmussen, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1991), and Randsborg, *Viking Age in Denmark*, 123–33, for just such views.

founded by local elites at the same time as they conspicuously asserted their paganism in some of their burials. Two interpretations present themselves. Firstly, we might conclude that the upsurge in horse burials are evidence of a pagan backlash following a forceful introduction of Christianity. As the horse burials are present in the tenth century, and it seems unlikely that we can postulate the construction of churches in northern Jylland very far back into that century, this should probably be seen in the form of a general and gradual opposition to aspects of the new belief-system from elements of the elite. Alternatively, we might conclude that this represents an early syncretic stage of the missionary process where Christianity and its God were adopted without discarding earlier cultic practises and deities, incorporating it within a wider system of beliefs.

Another archaeological site is relevant here, that of a church at nearby Hørning, to the east of Randers, which indicates that the situation was much the same in the late eleventh century.<sup>147</sup> Traces of two wooden churches have been found beneath the main twelfth-century fabric of Hørning church, and the probable date of one of these can be gleaned from a single decorated plank, dendrochronologically dated to 1070, which was re-used in the fabric of the present church.<sup>148</sup> Most interestingly, the church is sited on top of a pagan grave mound. The grave contained one body and several artefacts that indicated that it was a tenth-century pre-Christian burial, and held the body of a woman of some status. During the construction of the church the grave mound was levelled, and the church constructed immediately above the level of the grave. Furthermore, the church was sited so that the grave lay directly under the entrance to the nave, so that the parishioners had to pass over the body in order to approach the altar. It beggars belief to think that this alignment came about by coincidence, and we are left to conclude that the ruling elite in control of the region in the late eleventh century sited the church in order to associate the new religion with the pre-Christian burial.<sup>149</sup> As there had been churches in this

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<sup>147</sup> Krogh & Voss, "Fra Hedenskab til Kristendom". Also commented on by E. Roesdahl, "Hvornår blev kirkerne bygget?", 202.

<sup>148</sup> For a reproduction of the plank see Krogh & Voss, "Fra Hedenskab til Kristendom", fig. 1, opposite p. 8.

<sup>149</sup> Note that M. L. Nielsen, "På Sporet af Borups Vikinger—Tanker omkring en By og dens Runesten", *Kulturstorisk Museum Randers* (1996), and M. Stocklund, "Runestenen i Bjerring Kirke", *Nationalsmuseet Arbejdsmark* (1997), followed in English by L. Abrams, "History and Archaeology: the Conversion of Scandinavia", in *Conversion*

area of Denmark since *c.* 1000 it does not seem that we can interpret this alignment as a missionary effort to associate an important cultic site with a new church in the minds of the local populace, and the implication is that the local elites in 1070 were either the descendants of the dead woman or at least drew their descent from her, and in 1070 still attached great importance to the grave mound. Thus, they are much more likely to be members of an aristocracy in power since the deposition of the woman in the tenth century, rather than new elites imposed onto the pre-existing power structure.

Within Denmark, this syncretism in the use of a pagan grave as the site of a new church has its closest parallel in Haraldr Gormsson's movement of the remains of his father from a grave mound into the newly built church at Jelling.<sup>150</sup> However, the 'posthumous conversion' at Jelling was performed during the infancy of Christianity in Denmark, during a period when concessions had to be made by the new ecclesiastical elites to powerful secular lords uncomfortable with the idea of religiously separating themselves from their forebears and their previous social-identities. By the late eleventh century, Christianity was much more developed, and the population of northern Jylland had been exposed to Christianity and foreign officials in Viborg for at least half a century. Moreover, Sveinn Ástríðarson's reforms of the bishoprics *c.* 1060 appear to started a period of mass construction of smaller churches *c.* 1060–70, replacing the previous system of sparsely distributed 'Minster churches' or 'main churches', and by the time that Hørning church was constructed Adam of Bremen claims there were

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*and Christianity in the North Sea World. The Proceedings of a Day Conference Held on 21st February 1998*, ed. B. E. Crawford (St Andrews: University of St Andrews, 1998), 119–21, have detected similar practises in the reuse of tenth-century commemorative runestones face-upwards in the thresholds of the northern doors of the churches at Borup (approximately 25 miles north of Hørning) and Bjerring (approximately 25 miles north-west of Hørning).

<sup>150</sup> Possibly, another example can be found underneath the church at St. Jørgensbjerg, Roskilde. See Olsen, "St. Jørgensbjerg Kirke", 31–4, for details. However, the interaction of the mound and the church-site here seems different. At St. Jørgensbjerg no material from the mound was kept by the builders of the church, and it is the opinion of the excavator that it was merely the positioning of the mound in the landscape (at the summit of a ridge) that led the builders of the church to use the same site. However, note that Roesdahl, "Hvornår blev kirkene bygget?", concludes that some eleventh-century churches (including that at Lisbjerg, north of Århus) were sited over large halls which were previously used for cultic practices (among other more mundane activities). Clearly more work is needed on the siting of these early churches to assess if this is exceptional or not.

many churches throughout Denmark: approximately 300 in Skåne and a third of that figure on Fyn.<sup>151</sup>

In the north of Jylland, around Hørning at least, the general impression is that the ruling elites, who appear to have been in power since the tenth century at least, still had a great deal of independence in the initial two thirds of the eleventh century, and may have been able to negotiate the pace and nature of the religious change to a degree not seen elsewhere in Denmark. This area was under Óðinkárr the younger's episcopal responsibility until his death in 1043 (at the latest), and as Gelting has shown, while Hamburg-Bremen did appoint a new candidate on his death, their candidate, Bishop Wal, could not take up residence in his see as it was taken over by Óðinkárr's son Kristiann who continued to carry out the duties of the bishop in his father's stead, perhaps until some time in the late 1050s.<sup>152</sup> These bishops might have been expected to take steps to crush practises such as horse burials and the siting of churches over gravemounds, and when the extension of Christianity appears to have been used alongside other forms of centralising authority elsewhere in Denmark, we might expect them to have been forced by Cnut and Harthacnut (via the royal presence at nearby Viborg) to clamp down on such activities, but instead they were apparently permitted or instructed to ignore them.

Admittedly much of the last few pages of discussion hangs on two identifications which cannot be conclusively proved: that of my identification of the Winland/\*Vinland in the addition to Adam's text with the region of Wendel/-al/-il in northernmost Jylland, and a familial connection between the figures named Óðinkárr in the various sources of evidence. However, even if these links are discarded, my main points here still stand. There is still evidence that Cnut pursued a conciliatory policy in Western and Central Denmark, allowing his relative Óðinkárr the younger to maintain his influential position when all other remnants of German ecclesiastical structures were apparently swept away or side-stepped, and furthermore it appears that throughout much of the eleventh century the elites in the north of Jylland (who may or may not

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<sup>151</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 4: 7 (Schmeidler, 234–5). Unfortunately due to a confusion of the text here it is unclear which of the figures given by Adam relates to Jylland. Hence the figures for Skåne and Fyn are given here as general indications of the state of church foundation as Adam believed it to be in the mid-1070s.

<sup>152</sup> Gelting, "Elusive Bishops", 182–4.

have been connected to the family of this Óðinkárr) were allowed to enjoy a large degree of religious, and most probably political, autonomy, presumably in exchange for their support.

### *Conclusion*

The study of Cnut's interaction with urban sites, episcopal organisation and the elements of the aristocracy for whom some information survives, reveals that he was a vigorous ruler in western and central Denmark, who invested a great deal of energy in extending the machinery of control throughout the regions under his authority. This consolidation of political power was built on foundations laid by his father, and perhaps his grandfather, but was ultimately achieved through Cnut's domination of England. England must have provided the wealth to fund such building projects, and clearly provided the necessary secular and ecclesiastical personnel. Furthermore, in England Cnut seems to have observed the efficiency with which a society with centralised social, political and economic systems could be controlled, and attempted to foster the same form of society in Denmark.

In his interaction with the ruling elite of northern Jylland we can most probably see similarities to the way he ruled western Mercia, and until 1020, western Wessex as well. There Cnut attempted to rule through those elements of the native nobility who were prepared to accept his overlordship and collaborate with his new regime in exchange for their continuing hold on power, and perhaps in northern Jylland some degree of autonomy on crucial issues such as religious change. The Danish aristocrats of northern Jylland appear to have been powerful and entrenched. Rather than waste resources attempting to uproot them through force, Cnut appears to have entered into agreements with them and permitted them a large degree of independence, while subtly consolidating his hold over the political life and economy of the region through the development of the urban site at Viborg.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CNUT, EASTERN DENMARK AND THE BALTIC: THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY

As defined above, the region of Skåne comprised the easternmost province of medieval Denmark. Its geography ensured that it was the wealthiest region of Denmark. It was the largest single landmass within the kingdom, and had more arable farming land than any other region. Adam of Bremen informs us that in the 1070s it was known for producing good crops and correspondingly had a sizeable population.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the region held a commanding position over the outlet of the Baltic into the North Sea through the Øresund, and thus was well placed to exploit much of the Baltic coastline to the south, and to control the trade routes between Sweden, Russia and Northern Europe. Indeed, one of the main structural weaknesses of Denmark in the tenth and early eleventh centuries lay in the fact that this province was both the wealthiest and the furthest from the seat of royal power in mid-Jylland. Thus, it is unsurprising that while there is evidence in this region of urban development and the introduction of bishops similar to that discussed above for western and central Denmark, here the principal feature of Cnut's reign appears to have been the resistance of the local aristocracy to Cnut's overlordship.

#### *The Assertions of Political Independence by the Ruling Elite of Skåne*

The Roskilde Chronicle records that Skåne had been a petty kingship at some point in Danish history.<sup>2</sup> The details of the ruling elite of this region in the period before the rise of Cnut and his dynasty are now almost entirely obscure, but a few crucial details do survive in some of the more literary narrative sources of evidence. *Heimskringla* states that in the late tenth century the region was under the control of the dynasty of a powerful ruler named Strút-Haraldr.<sup>3</sup> *Fagrskinna* is the sole witness

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<sup>1</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 4: 7 (Schmeidler, 234–5).

<sup>2</sup> See my comments above at p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar*, chs. 34–5 (1: 272–4).

to the date of his death, and it places this in the same year as the death of Haraldr Gormsson (*c.* 986/8).<sup>4</sup> He appears to have relinquished active rule by *c.* 980, when his eldest son, Sigvaldi, appeared at the battle of Hjörungavágr as the jarl of the region.<sup>5</sup> Another of Strút-Haraldr's sons, Hemming, is identified in another source as holding the jarldom immediately before his death in England in 1014; perhaps Sigvaldi had also died before that date.<sup>6</sup> Finally, Earl Thorkell, who was among the Scandinavian nobles given positions within Cnut's administration in England, was yet another son of Jarl Strút-Haraldr.<sup>7</sup>

It seems significant that when the thirteenth-century Icelandic author Snorri Sturlusson describes Strút-Haraldr in his *Heimskringla*, he does not use the term jarl, but instead uses the term king (*konungr*).<sup>8</sup> However, he consistently styles Sigvaldi as jarl.<sup>9</sup> This distinction fits well with the known historical and archaeological context, and it seems probable that as Haraldr Gormsson and Sveinn Tjúguskegg expanded their authority to the east the independence of the petty-kingship of Skåne was undermined and it was commuted to a jarldom.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Fagrskinna*, ch. 19 (edited as Bjarni Einarsson under the variant title: *Ágrþ af Noregs konunga sögum; Fagrskanna—Noregs konunga tal* (Reykjavik: Íslensk Fornrit, 1984), 122).

<sup>5</sup> *Heimskringla Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 34 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 1: 272–3).

<sup>6</sup> This source, a *þáttur* found at the end of the version of *Jómsvíkinga saga* in *Flateyjarbók*, has been edited by Campbell, *Encomium*, 92–3. Comment will be made on it below at pp. 211–12.

<sup>7</sup> Apart from the details given here no more members of this dynasty can be discerned in the evidence. An elaborate genealogical construction can be found in Å. Ohlmark, *Striden om Strutkronan: en Hövdingasaga från Nordens Tiohundralet* (Stockholm: LT, 1976), table 2 at rear, but it is clear that this is based on as much guesswork as evidence, and on occasion directly contradicts the extant evidence.

<sup>8</sup> *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 34 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 1: 272). The description follows a note about Sigvaldi, “Hann var sonur Strút-Haralds konungs er ráðið hafði fyrir Skáney” [he was the son of King Strút-Haraldr, who had authority over Skåne].

<sup>9</sup> See his appearance with the title of jarl in *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar*, chs. 34 5, 39–40, 92, 99–102, 105 & 112 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 1: 272 4, 278 9, 283, 341, 350–5, 358 & 367).

<sup>10</sup> Certainly, the reign of Haraldr Gormsson saw the establishment of the fort at Trelleborg (see B. Jacobsson, “Visst Har det Funnits en Borg i Trelleborg!”, *Popular Arkeologi* (1990)), and thus, the initial encroachment of royal authority in Skåne. Perhaps the occurrence of the name Toki Gormsson (“tuka: kurms: sun”) on runestones from Hallestad, Malmöhus lan, in southwestern Skåne (*Danmarks Runendskryfter*, no. 4 (text volume, 295–6), dated to post-Jelling period, indicates that an otherwise unknown son of King Gorm of Jelling held authority there. However, it must be acknowledged that the only thing to commend such a familial connection is the occurrence of the name Gorm.

However, we do not have to rely solely on Snorri's often dubious witness here. A somewhat oblique witness survives in records of now-lost skaldic verses composed for members of the dynasty of the jarls of Skåne, which record their assertions of power and perhaps political independence. Skaldic praise poetry, especially when focussed on an individual ruler, is almost always highly politically charged, depicting that ruler in laudatory tones in a fashion that he, or his immediate followers, wished him to be seen in. Furthermore, while the verses are lost, the existence of a record of them is enough to infer some grand pretensions: a wide view of the extant skaldic corpus shows that to have a skald compose praise poetry for a living ruler in the early medieval period indicated that the patron was exceptionally powerful and held great pretensions to overlordship.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, for a ruler to possess a skald who was attached to his retinue for some time seems to have indicated royal or near-royal status. Due to the preservation of the majority of the extant skaldic verse in the Icelandic sagas, little survives of verse which was composed for Scandinavian rulers who did not have a direct effect on Norwegian or Icelandic politics.<sup>12</sup> However, a list of Scandinavian rulers and the poets who composed for them, the *Skáldatal*, does survive.<sup>13</sup> This list is preserved in contexts which show that it was composed within the milieu of Snorri Sturluson's family, the *Sturlungar*, in the mid-thirteenth century. Members of this family took a keen interest in skaldic verse, composing verses themselves and writing the treatises and grammars on this literary form without which we should be unable to comprehend much of the extant corpus. *Skáldatal* appears

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<sup>11</sup> K. E. Gade, *The Structure of Old Norse Drottkvætt Poetry*, *Islandica* 49 (Ithaca & London: Cornell, 1995), 3; B. Fidjestøl, "Norse-Icelandic Composition in the Oral Period", in *Bjarne Fidjestøl: Collected Papers*, ed. O. E. Haugen and E. Mundal (Odense: Odense University Press, 1997), 321; and H. Kuhn, *Das Dróttkvætt* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1983), 228.

<sup>12</sup> For discussion of another area of 'lost' verse see M. Townend, "Whatever Happened to York Viking Poetry? Memory, Tradition and the Transmission of Skaldic Verse", *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 27 (2003), 48–90.

<sup>13</sup> For an edition of this text see Jón Sigurðsson, Finnur Jónsson & Sveinbjörn Egilsson, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar. Edda Snorronis Sturlæi*, (Copenhagen, 1848, 1852, 1880–7), 3: 259, 268 & 284. See Guðrún Nordal, "Skáldatal and its Manuscript Context in Kringla and Uppsalaedda", in *Sagas and the Norwegian Experience. Sagene og Noreg*, Preprints of the Tenth International Saga Conference, Trondheim, 3–9 August 1997, ed. J. R. Haglund (Trondheim: Noregs Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet, 1997), for discussion of this source.



to be a catalogue of all the verse known in the thirteenth century by the members of this family, and significantly, where we can check it against the extant corpus it appears to be highly accurate.<sup>14</sup> The earliest form of this list names the rulers and poets of the kings of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, as well as the jarls of Hlaðir in Northern Norway, and those of Skåne. The jarls of Skåne are in esteemed company here. Apart from them, the only dynasty present which did not bear a conventional royal title is that of the jarls of Hlaðir, and these were *de facto* rulers of the whole of central and northern Norway throughout much of the tenth and early eleventh centuries.

The three extant manuscripts of *Skáldatal* list the immediate family of Thorkell the Tall as having several court-poets:<sup>15</sup>

1. Uppsala, De La Gardie MS. 11, p. 46  
Parchment manuscript of *c.* 1300

Svein.j.            þioðolfr or hvini  
Sigvaldi.j.       þorðr sigvallda sk

2. Reykjavík, A. M. MS. 761 4to, ff. 16v–17r  
Paper transcript of *c.* 1700

Strut Harall } Þioðolfr or Hvini.  
dr jarl  
Sigvaldi } Þorþr Sigvalda scald.  
jarl  
Haralldr } Þioðolfr Arna son.  
Þork. son

<sup>14</sup> See for example the entries for Cnut, where eight skalds are named for him. Verses survive from five of these poets, and of the other three it seems plausible that Bersi Torfuson did compose for Cnut. Other early eleventh century verses by Bersi survive, and a fragment of a poem ascribed to Sigvatr Þórðarson notes Cnut's gift of more than a mark in gold to Bersi. This leaves only Steinn Skaptason and *Óðarkeptr* (Óttar Keptr) as poets for whom we have no surviving examples.

<sup>15</sup> A facsimile and edition of Uppsala, De la Gardie MS. 11 is available in A. Grape, G. Kallstenius, & O. Thorell, *Snorre Sturlasons Edda. Uppsala-Handschriften DG 11* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977). The present edition of this text, that of Jón Sigurðsson, Finnur Jonnson and Sveinbjörn Egilsson, is inadequate for my purposes here, and so the readings here are taken directly from the manuscripts.

## 3. Uppsala, MS. R. 685, f. 25v

Early 18th century paper transcript of the Swedish antiquary Peter Salan.

Strút Har. jarl.} Þioþolfr or hvin  
 Sigvalldi jarl.} Þþr. Sigvalda scaldr  
 Har. Þk.s.} Þiodolfr arna.s.

The list has clearly suffered some minor corruption. Þioðolfr or Hvíni was a poet known for his compositions in the ninth century, and thus it is impossible that he composed for Strút-Haraldr late in the tenth century. Moreover, at the point in the list at which he is included the only medieval manuscript replaces Strút-Haraldr's name with that of an otherwise unknown Jarl Sveinn. We could hypothesise that this Sveinn was an unknown ninth-century jarl, but perhaps it is safer to economise on any extension to the dynasty for which we have no other witness, and presume that Sveinn is a scribal error for Strút-Haraldr.<sup>16</sup> The inclusion of Strút-Haraldr alongside Þioðolfr or Hvíni is more likely to have been a clumsy error rather than an outright forgery. The author seems to have known the chronologies of his poets well, and Þioðolfr or Hvíni occurs elsewhere in the list for four other patrons, all of whom lived in the ninth century. It should be noted that in the earliest manuscript the section immediately following that discussed here begins its list with the patron *Þorleifr spaki* and the poet *Þioðolfr or hvini*. It seems plausible that in an ancestral version of the *Skáldatal* the individual lists were in parallel columns, and that a scribe may have accidentally transferred Þioðolfr or Hvíni's name to the head of the column of the jarls of Skåne from the head of the next column.

It is to be much regretted that these poems do not survive, but we can, at least, list the poets who composed for the jarls of Skåne as some

<sup>16</sup> The fact that the name of Sveinn jarl in Uppsala, De la Gardie MS. 11 is clearly an addition to the manuscript consolidates this point. The name is not in the hand of the main scribe, but in that of a rather unskilled hand which uses markedly different letter forms from that scribe. Additionally, this new hand uses a medial bar to indicate the spelling of 'Sven' with two 'n's, a feature found nowhere else in the manuscript. Later additions of other names elsewhere in the list indicate that the original scribe was unable to transcribe all of his exemplar (presumably as it was corrupt in several places) and had to leave spaces for occasional unreadable names. These were filled in at later dates. It should be noted that the jarl of Hlaðir who was contemporary with Jarl Strút-Haraldr had the name Jarl Sveinn (Hákonarson), and so the inclusion of the name by a later scribe may represent a clumsy misidentification.

form of skeletal record. As Strút-Haraldr's name is listed by two of the three manuscripts that survive it seems probable that poetry was composed for him, but as the name of Þioðolfr or Hvíni is a manifest error we are at a loss to name the poet. The composition of verse for Jarl Sigvaldi clearly indicates that he was thought of by his followers as wielding great wealth and power. His poet, Þórðr, bore the epithet *Sigvaldaskáld*, implying that he was resident in Sigvaldi's retinue for some time. Certainly, Snorri claims that Þórðr was Jarl Sigvaldi's permanent court-poet and he should perhaps be seen as a poet who worked for Sigvaldi's family. *Heimskringla* states that,

Þórðr Sigvaldaskáld hét maðr íslenzkr. Hann hafði verit lengi með Sigvalda jarli ok síðan með Þorkatli háva, bróður hans, en eptir fall jarls þá var Þórðr kaupmaðr.<sup>17</sup>

(There was an Icelander named Þórðr Sigvaldaskald. He had been with Jarl Sigvaldi a long time and afterwards was with Thorkell the Tall, his brother; and after the fall of the jarl Þórðr became a merchant).

Thus, it appears that we can also add Thorkell to the list of the members of this dynasty who had skaldic verse composed for them. It seems that we can assume that Sigvaldi, his brother Thorkell and probably also their father Strút-Haraldr had skaldic poetry composed for them, and Sigvaldi and Thorkell at least appear to have kept at least one prominent court-skald. They evidently had significant power or pretensions to such, and were keen to advertise this fact among their Scandinavian contemporaries.

Additionally, a number of English sources record tension between Thorkell, Sveinn Tjúguskegg and Cnut. The most important is the witness of the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. As a record of the invasion of England written within living memory of the campaign, and most probably composed within a circle who traced the origin of their careers to this event, we might place some weight on this. Despite the overt statement in the text that Thorkell acted as a loyal servant of the Danish royal family, the narrative at several stages portrays Thorkell as a dangerous rival to Sveinn and Cnut.<sup>18</sup> The reason given in the text

<sup>17</sup> *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 43 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 54).

<sup>18</sup> For the encomiast's attempts to portray Thorkell as a follower of Cnut, see his reasoning why Thorkell remained in England after Cnut had fled, in Campbell, *Encomium*, 2: 1 (14–16). In fact, only Cnut's letter of 1019 (which addresses Thorkell by name as the principal earl: see Liebermann, *De Gesetze*, 1: 276–7) and the charter witness-lists appear on first impression to record a close relationship between Thorkell and Cnut.

for Sveinn's invasion of England was that Thorkell had led a royally sanctioned raiding army to England, but had not returned as planned and had become an ally of the English.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, later in the narrative, after Sveinn's death, Cnut fled back to Denmark, reporting to his brother that Thorkell had settled again in England, "deserting us as he did our father... and I believe he will be against us".<sup>20</sup> Finally, as Cnut regrouped his forces in preparation for a reinvasion the narrative has Thorkell come to Denmark to arrange a peace-settlement.<sup>21</sup> His approach is cautious, mooring offshore and communicating initially with Cnut through messengers. Little here indicates that any bond of trust existed between Cnut and Thorkell, and the implication is that they were powerful rivals. By 1015 Thorkell was already an elderly and experienced commander while Cnut was still only a young man, and it seems significant that a number of sources indicate that during the invasion of 1015–16 Thorkell, not Cnut, was in command of the majority of the invading army. Both the *Encomium Emmae* and Gaimar's Anglo-Norman translation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle claim that Thorkell fought the crucial battle at Sherston in midsummer 1016 for Cnut.<sup>22</sup> Gaimar goes further and has Thorkell command the forces for most of the remaining battles, with Cnut only emerging in the narrative after the final conflict at *Assandun*. The same inference can be drawn from the contemporary skaldic poem *Liðsmannaflokkr*.<sup>23</sup> This anonymous poem narrates the invasion of 1015–16 and the fall of London, and has been dated between 1017 and 1021. It is almost unique in the extant skaldic corpus in appearing to have two patrons, Thorkell and Cnut, and within such a conservative genre the effect of this is quite

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This has been discussed by Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 82–4, in which he noted that from 1017–21 Thorkell witnessed first among all the earls in Cnut's charters. Normally, the principal witnesses to royal charters can be demonstrated to be those closest to the king, but it seems equally possible here that this 'Primacy of Thorkell' in the sources reflects his control over a large part of the military forces or some form of seniority he held over his peers in England.

<sup>19</sup> *Encomium*, 1: 1 (Campbell, 8–10).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 2 (Campbell, 16).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 3 (Campbell, 18–20).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 6–7 (Campbell, 20–24); Gaimar, *Lestone des Engles*, lines 4229–56 (Hardy & Martin, 179–80).

<sup>23</sup> See R. G. Poole, *Viking Poems on War and Peace: A Study in Skaldic Narrative*, Toronto Medieval Texts and Translations 8 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 86–115, and his "Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History: Some Aspects of the Period 1009–1016", *Speculum* 62 (1987), for an edition and discussion of this poem.

startling.<sup>24</sup> Normally with such verse we would be at the mercy of the thirteenth-century copyist and dependant on whatever verses or fragments he chose to copy from the larger poem known to him, but with *Liðsmannaflokkur* all ten extant verses are given in their correct order in a late fourteenth-century compilation, *Flateyjarbók* (Reykjavík, A. M. GKS 1005 fol.). No patron is present in the first three verses, which narrate the beginnings of the invasion of England instead. In verse four the forces are finally identified as under Thorkell's command, and the focus of the poem on him is confirmed by the laudatory pun in the opening of verse five *Hár þykki mér . . . / hinn jarl* ("the jarl seems *Hár* ['great', but literally 'high' or 'tall'] to me"), which exults Thorkell and plays on his epithet 'the tall'. Only at the end of this verse does the complex political reality of the invasion begin to emerge as the poet turns our attention towards the battle on the bank of the Thames, and in verse six we are explicitly told that as English reinforcements arrived *twær hugir runnu* ('two opinions arose', ie. dissent emerged in the ranks of the Scandinavians), opening up the chance for Cnut to be named for the first time in the powerful opening line of verse seven as the dispeller of this dissent, and allowing him to seize centre stage: *Knútr réð ok bað biða / . . . Dani alla* (Cnut decided, and commanded all the Danes). A complicated political situation seems to be implied, within which the poet(s) tread very carefully, exulting Thorkell as commander of the forces in the heat of the action (the traditional place of honour in skaldic verse), but portraying Cnut as a decisive leader and overlord of 'all the Danes'. It seems probable that Thorkell held a prominence among the commanders of the invading forces which Cnut did not, but Cnut held a position as overall commander by right of his birth. Thus, the witness of the late Scandinavian literary sources accord well with the contemporary English record. Thorkell and his family appear to have been notably independent from the authority of the Danish kings, and were mighty lords who had probably ruled much of Skåne as petty-kings a generation or so before Cnut's reign, and despite losing some power to Cnut's father and grandfather appear to have been making public statements asserting their own power and independence throughout the same period and into the early years of Cnut's reign. In

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<sup>24</sup> However, a similar situation can be found in the *Eiríksdrápa* composed by Þórðr Kolbeinsson (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 213–17; B. 1: 203–6), where the main patron Earl Eiríkr shares his status as patron with Cnut.

this context Thorkell appears to have been a powerful and dangerously independent follower of Cnut, who could not be trusted but was too influential to dismiss easily.

*The Implications of the Dynastic Tension between the Danish king and the Jarls of Skåne*

These conclusions alter much of our interpretation of Cnut's actions in the 1020s. The perception of Thorkell as a dangerously over-mighty follower with roots in an only recently subdued area of Denmark, perhaps allows us to be a little more conclusive about the possible reasons for his banishment from England in November 1021 and the impact of this on Danish politics. The details of Thorkell's expulsion are obscure, but enough survives to suggest that he may have been making a bid for the English throne, or at least Cnut interpreted his actions as such. His expulsion is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle after Cnut returned from an extended period in Denmark. As mentioned briefly above, Freeman noted that a supplement to the redaction of *Jómsvíkinga saga* found in the *Flatayjarbók* contains information relevant to this. This 'Supplement' appears to be an attempt by an anonymous author to fill some of the gap left in Icelandic historiography regarding the jarls of Skåne.<sup>25</sup> By comparison of a number of events narrated in this 'Supplement' with those found in other saga-accounts, Campbell made a convincing case for the composition of this text to be dated before that of *Knytlínga saga*, that is pre-1235 × 1259.<sup>26</sup> He also proposed that at one time this text formed a supplement to an early version of *Jómsvíkinga saga*. His belief that this text was not the composition of the principal scribe of *Flatayjarbók*, but pre-dated the compilation of that text, has been recently upheld by the investigations of E. Ashman Rowe into that codex, who has shown the volume to be almost entirely copied from a vast array of sources in an Icelandic library at the disposal of the principal scribe.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, much of its information agrees with that

<sup>25</sup> This 'Supplement' has been edited and briefly studied by Campbell, *Encomium*, 87–93. I follow his nomenclature for this source.

<sup>26</sup> I here follow the idea that Óláfr Þórðarson was the author of the text. If not then perhaps the date range should be widened to 1235 × 1300. See Bjarni Guðnason, *Danakonunga sögur*, 179–84, for full discussion.

<sup>27</sup> E. Ashman Rowe, *The Development of Flateyjarbók: Iceland and the Norwegian Dynastic Crisis of 1389* (Odense: Odense University Press, 2005), especially pp. 35–50.

in our contemporary English sources.<sup>28</sup> The ‘Supplement’ records that Thorkell married a daughter of Æthelred the Unready.<sup>29</sup> The account states that she was the widow of Ulfcetel, the *de facto* ealdorman of East Anglia during Æthelred’s last years, and thus Thorkell’s predecessor. The events are plausible, and there are indications that some grain of truth may lie behind this report. It is probable that Ulfcetel was married to a daughter of Æthelred the Unready, and John of Worcester records that Thorkell had an English wife, who was expelled alongside him in 1021.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, her inclusion in John of Worcester’s account seems to implicate her in some part of the affair. The only inconsistency exists in the fact that John of Worcester named Thorkell’s wife as one Edith, whereas the ‘Supplement’ records her name as Úlfhildr. Icelandic saga authors often garble or even apparently invent the names of minor figures in Anglo-Saxon history.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, it seems suspicious that the first element, *Úlf-* mirrors that of Ulfcetel’s name, and the second element, *-hild*, is a markedly Continental Germanic one.<sup>32</sup> It appears likely that the author did not know the name of Thorkell’s wife and was forced to invent something.

Cnut’s expulsion of Thorkell appears to have been a knee-jerk reaction, and Thorkell seems to have become as much of a threat to Cnut’s authority in Denmark. Two late-eleventh-century sources add some detail. Osbern of Canterbury briefly describes in his *Translatio Sancti*

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<sup>28</sup> In his edition of the *Encomium Emmae* Campbell took a rather harsh approach to this source. However, in the course of his discussion he noted that there are several fragments of knowledge in the account which are surprisingly accurate. Amongst these are the association discussed below between Thorkell, his brother Hemming and Earl Eileifr; that this Eileifr was the brother of Jarl Úlfr; and that Edmund Ironside’s reign lasted only nine months. Furthermore, subsequent parts of the account, such as Thorkell’s interception of Emma’s flight from England, have since proved to be likely. Campbell (*Encomium*, 90) thought that Thorkell’s detention of Emma was “a preposterous legend”. However, see the discussion of Emma’s whereabouts in 1016 in Poole, “Skaldic Verse”, 290–2. It should be noted that there are some glaring inaccuracies. However, these are few, and the general impression is that this ‘Supplement’ is a crystallisation of generally accurate historical traditions concerning Thorkell’s family.

<sup>29</sup> Freeman, *JC*, 1: 670.

<sup>30</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1021 (Darlington et al., 506).

<sup>31</sup> Note that elsewhere in the ‘Supplement’ (Campbell, *Encomium*, 93), when the author discusses the part played by Eadric streona in Cnut’s invasion, he records the form *Alrekr strjóna*, and adds “er sumir kolluðu Eirik” [who some call Eiríkr].

<sup>32</sup> Although, the name is not totally unknown in Anglo-Saxon England. It appears twice in an Anglicised form among the *nomina reginarum et abbatissarum* of the Durham *Liber Vitae* (Gerchow, *Gedenküberlieferung*, 305), and once among the *nomina feminarum illustrium* of the New Minster, Winchester *Liber Vitae* (*ibid.*, 325).

*Ælfegi* how after Thorkell's return to Denmark, "he was suspected by the leaders of the Danes, lest he should foment internecine strife", and the author of the *Vita Edwardi Regis* seems to be discussing the same events when he states that in Denmark "some unbridled men, putting off his [Cnut's] authority from their necks, had prepared to rebel".<sup>33</sup> Thorkell may, at this stage, have held the jarldom of Skåne or some part of it, and even if he did not, he must have had access to his family's alliances and the ability to call on military allies of his own.<sup>34</sup> The threat he could present was serious, and in response Cnut mustered a fleet and led this to Denmark in 1022 × 1023. As I have mentioned in a previous chapter, the *Vita Edwardi Regis* places several events involving Earl Godwine in a specific order that allows us to date a military expedition led by Cnut to Denmark to 1022 × 1023.<sup>35</sup> This expedition seems to have left traces in many sources in both England and Scandinavia. Henry of Huntingdon in his *Historia Anglorum* records that English and Danish forces accompanied Cnut on an attack on the *Wandali*.<sup>36</sup> This tribal name of classical antiquity was commonly used in the medieval period for the Wends, the people of the southern Baltic coastline to the east of Denmark.<sup>37</sup> Henry places this campaign in the third year of Cnut's reign in England (i.e. 1019). However, he may be confused in his dating here. He states next that "around this time Æthelnoth, successor to the deceased Archbishop Lyfing, went to Rome".<sup>38</sup> This we know happened in 1022.<sup>39</sup> Historical traditions concerning this campaign are attested in a variety of Scandinavian sources. The *Annales Ryenses*, which are the product of a historical school based at Lund in the thirteenth century, note that sometime after Cnut subjugated England

<sup>33</sup> *Translatio Sancti Ælfegi* (Rumble, 298); "suspectus Danorum principibus ne intestina bella moliretur". Note the translation here is Rumble's. Additionally, *Vita Edwardi Regis*, ch. 1 (Barlow, 5); "absenti enim rebellare parauerant collo effreni eius abicientes potentiam". Note the translation here is Barlow's.

<sup>34</sup> Thorkell may very well have been the jarl in this period; both Sigvaldi and Hemming were dead, and no other male siblings are recorded. However, it should be noted that no source refers to Thorkell as jarl, and the absence of other candidates probably has more to do with the paucity of the sources than the paucity of heirs.

<sup>35</sup> *Vita Edwardi Regis*, ch. 1 (Barlow, 5). See p. 47 above for discussion of these events.

<sup>36</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 6: 15 (Greenway, 362–4).

<sup>37</sup> For an example of an early-medieval use of the term to describe certain coastal Slavic tribes see Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 21 (Schmeidler, 76).

<sup>38</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 6: 15 (Greenway, 364); "Hoc circa tempus Leuing archiepiscopo defuncto, Athelnod successor eius Romam pectit".

<sup>39</sup> ASC 1022 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 104).



he “also subjugated the people of *Estonica*” (probably a region in the Baltic, and perhaps related to modern Estonia), perhaps identifying this *Estonica* as the area Cnut led his forces to, or using the term in a loose sense to indicate unspecified Slavic tribes.<sup>40</sup> A Danish narrative source, the *Ágrip af Sögu Danakonunga*, written in 1261 × 1287 for the Danish wife of the Norwegian king, Magnus Lagabøtir, also seems to have knowledge of this campaign. It claims that “as Danish men say, King Cnut cast *Eistland* under his sway”.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the *Vita Edwardi Regis* records that Cnut led forces to put down an insurrection in Denmark, and our other sources indicate that this campaign went beyond the boundaries of Denmark to some part of the Baltic coastline.

We might ask why should Cnut have taken an interest in the Baltic in this period? It is possible that he was attempting to reduce Thorkell’s ability to raise wealth and troops. Dispossessed Scandinavian rulers commonly raided in this region or in England to raise wealth to fight their territorial claims in Scandinavia. Sveinn’s and Cnut’s invasions had halted the flow of plunder from the west, and only the eastern route remained. Sigvatr Þórðarson’s poem *Vikingavísur* records that Óláfr Haraldsson engaged in such activity in advance of his claims to the kingship of Norway, and the same is attested for Earl Eiríkr of Hlaðir in advance of his return to Norway to challenge Óláfr Tryggvasson.<sup>42</sup> However, as it seems impossible that Cnut could have laid waste all potential sources of wealth along the Baltic coastline, this suggestion does not work.

Instead, the leading of a campaign to the Baltic may have been related to the authority Cnut and his father held over some regions of the Baltic coastline, and the political and dynastic connections they had with some of the rulers there. A skaldic verse composed c. 1100 by Markús Skeggjason for King Eiríkr Sveinnsson of Denmark records that this king made claims over a part of Wendland which had been

<sup>40</sup> *Annales Ryenses*, item 92, in Kroman, *Danmarks Middelalderlige Annaler*, 161; “Estonicam etiam gentem subdidit”. See Guðrun Nordal, “Skáldatal”, and Lund, “Cnut’s Danish Kingdom”, 29, n. 11, for some additional comment.

<sup>41</sup> *Ágrip af Sögu Danakonunga*, edited in Bjarni Guðnason, *Danakonunga sögur*, 329–30; “Sva segir danskir menn, at Knútr konungr vann undir sik Eistland”. Perhaps the use of the term *Eistland* here suggests that the author knew of the annals mentioned above where *Estonica* is specified.

<sup>42</sup> *Vikingarvísur* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 223–41; B. 1. 213–14). For evidence of Earl Eiríkr’s campaign see the narrative *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar*, ch. 89, with support from stanza 6 of Eyjolfr dáðaskald’s *Bandadrápa* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 201; B. 1: 191–2).

previously subjugated by Sveinn Tjúguskegg.<sup>43</sup> It was probably as part of this that Sveinn took a wife from this region who came to be Cnut's mother. Unfortunately, many of the details of this affair have been obfuscated by the development of elaborate and fanciful traditions about her in the saga-material. What can be found in those sources is most probably the combined product of a number of individuals who may or may not have had contact with Sveinn. More reliable sources can be found on the Continent. Thietmar of Merseburg records that Cnut and Haraldr were Sveinn's sons by a sister of Bolesław Chrobry, the head of the Piast dynasty who ruled Poland.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, Adam of Bremen records that Cnut's mother was the wife of a King Eiríkr of some part of Sweden before she married Sveinn, and a *scholion* appended elsewhere to his account claims that this Eiríkr married either the daughter or sister of Bolesław Chrobry.<sup>45</sup> Some confirmation of these accounts can be found in the records of Cnut having the baptismal name of Lambert.<sup>46</sup> As Hare has shown this name was popular among the members of the Piast dynasty in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and it is most probable that Cnut took this name as a child or youth through the instigation of his mother.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the name of an otherwise unknown sister of Cnut appears in the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, Winchester, in the peculiar form, *Santslaue*.<sup>48</sup> This name is definitely not English, probably not Danish and defies certain identification. However, as Uspenskij has shown it is almost certainly a garbled form of the Polish name, Świętosława, a name commonly found in the Piast dynasty.<sup>49</sup> She may, or may not, be identifiable with the unnamed daughter of Sveinn who John of Worcester records as

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<sup>43</sup> The verse is from Markus Skeggjason's *Hrynhenda* (stanza 23) for King Eiríkr Sveinsson (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 449; B. 1: 417–18). The text of *Knytingla saga*, ch. 76 (edited in Bjarni Guðnason, *Danakonunga sögur*, 226), in which the verse is preserved, identifies the Sveinn in the verse as Sveinn Tjúguskegg.

<sup>44</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 7: 39 (Holtzmann, 446).

<sup>45</sup> Adam, *Gesta*, 2: 39, and *schol.* 24(25) (Schmeidler, 99 & 95).

<sup>46</sup> Gerchow, "Prayers", 235–6.

<sup>47</sup> Hare, "Cnut and Lotharingia", 263–8.

<sup>48</sup> Gerchow, *Gedenkübertlieferung*, 325.

<sup>49</sup> F. Uspenskij, "Dynastic Names in Medieval Scandinavia and Russia (Rus'): Family Traditions and International Connections", *Studia Anthropologica Scandinavica* 21 (2003): 15–50, especially at pp. 17 and 20. There is also much valuable discussion in Hare, "Cnut and Lotharingia", 265–6, n. 23, but note that here, following G. Thoma, *Namensänderungen in Herrscherfamilien des mittelalterlichen Europa* (Kallmünz: Lassleben, 1985) 48 & 146, he identifies the name as representing a garbled form of the Polish names Sędzysława or Stanisława.

married to a King *Wyrtegeorn* of the Wends.<sup>50</sup> Cnut maintained his father's links with the Baltic. An English charter of 1026 from the archive of Old Minster, Winchester, contains the prominent attestation of a *Wrytsleof dux*.<sup>51</sup> This name has been interpreted as a garbled form of the Slavic name Vratislav, and seems to record the presence of a Slavic visitor to Cnut's court in England.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, while Thietmar informs us that this wife of Sveinn Tjúguskegg fell into disgrace and was sent away by her husband, suffering much controversy in exile, the *Encomium Emmae* records that Cnut and Haraldr, soon after their father's death, travelled into the land of the Slavs to find their mother and bring her back to Denmark.<sup>53</sup> Presumably, she remained in Denmark for the rest of her life.

However, while dominion in the region and a familial connection to the rulers of Poland gave Cnut reasons to be involved with matters there, this does not explain why he led a military force there in 1022 × 1023. It is probable that the jarls of Skåne also had links with the Baltic. A verse from Halldor úkristni's poem about Earl Eiríkr of Hlaðir, records the presence of Wendish ships among Jarl Sigvaldi's fleet at the battle of Svold (*c.* 999).<sup>54</sup> The *Jómsvíkinga saga* contains much exaggeration and literary accretion, but one of the central tenets of the narrative, which may have a grain of truth behind it, is the assertion that members of the dynasty of the jarls (notably that of Sigvaldi) had close connections with a settlement on the Baltic coastline with the Scandinavian name *Jóm*.<sup>55</sup> This site has been identified with modern Wolin in the mouth of the River Oder, and archaeological excavations have revealed a wealthy trade site involved in the export of cereal crops to the markets of northern Europe, which did have a resident Scandinavian elite presence between *c.* 950 and 1050.<sup>56</sup> Certainly, by the 1040s the settlement was a source of significant power close to eastern Denmark, and later

<sup>50</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1029 (Darlington et al., 510).

<sup>51</sup> S. 962 (Winchester, Old Minster).

<sup>52</sup> Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 64–5.

<sup>53</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 7: 39 (Holtzmann, 446); *Encomium*, 2: 2 (Campbell, 18).

<sup>54</sup> *Eiríksflokkr* 7 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedǫgting*, A. 1: 204; B. 1: 194).

<sup>55</sup> *Jómsvíkinga Saga*, chs. 18 & 21–7, ed. N. F. Blake (London: Nelson, 1962), 19 & 22–30. Note that this connection is repeated in *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar*, chap. 34 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 1: 272–3), and so must predate the composition of that work at least.

<sup>56</sup> See Blake, *Saga of the Jómsvíkings*, ix–xi, for an overview of some of the archaeological evidence for settlement. See also W. Filipowiak, *Wolin-Jomsborg. En Vikangetids-Handelby i Polen* (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 1991), for a fuller discussion.

in the eleventh century would be destroyed by King Magnús of Norway during an attempt to reduce Sveinn Ástríðarson's resources in eastern Denmark.<sup>57</sup> A closer look at the relationship between the dynasty of Bolesław Chrobry and the settlement at Wolin is suggestive that, while Cnut's dynasty and that of the jarls of Skåne may have been political rivals in Denmark, their allies in the Baltic may also have been enemies of each other. As Ślupecki has recently observed, there are a few sources which attest to conflicts between these two Baltic powers in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.<sup>58</sup> In the 960s, Widukind of Corvey recorded that a German traveller named Wichmann, who was probably an agent of Count Gero of the Eastern March, "spent time with the Slavic people who are called *Vuloini*" (most probably the 'Wolinians': the inhabitants of Wolin), and that he had been involved in fighting against the forces of Mieszko I (the father of Bolesław Chrobry) during that ruler's expansion into the territory around the mouth of the River Oder.<sup>59</sup> The same events may also be related by the Spanish-Arabic traveller Ibrahim ibn Yaquub al-Tartushi, who in the late tenth century travelled from Cordova or Tortosa throughout northern and western Europe. While describing a tribe he calls the *Waltabah*, he records the existence of a great town on the shores of the Baltic, whose inhabitants were in permanent conflict with Mieszko I and the Poles.<sup>60</sup> The town itself is not named, but it is plausible that it was Wolin, and if this identification is in error then this source does attest, at least, to conflict

<sup>57</sup> The attack is recorded by the reference in Adam of Bremen, *Gesta, schol.* 56(57) (Schmeidler, 137) and in two poems by Arnorr jarlaskáld: his *Magnússdrápa* and *Hrynhenda*; for editions of these see Whaley, *Poetry*, 165–9 & 198–9.

<sup>58</sup> See his excellent contribution to *The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature; Sagas and the British Isles: Preprint Papers of the 13th International Saga Conference, Durham and York, August 6–12, 2006*, eds. J. McKinnell, D. Ashurst, and D. Kick (Durham: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006). Note that such a conflict would explain much about Haraldr Gormsson's death in Wolin after apparently suffering revolt from his own son Sveinn Tjúguskegg and a coalition of Danish nobles. Sveinn was allied by marriage to the dynasty of Bolesław Chrobry, and Haraldr appears to have fled in defeat to their enemies, who were presumably the only inhabitants of the southern Baltic coastline who were unlikely to hand him over to Bolesław Chrobry and thus Sveinn. Although note that Lund, "Harald Bluetooth", has suggested that Adam may have fabricated Haraldr Gormsson's connection to Jóm/Wolin.

<sup>59</sup> Widukind, *Rerum Gestarum*, 3: 69 (Lohmann & P. Hirsch, 143); "egitque cum Sclavis qui dicuntur Vuloini". For some discussion of Wichmann see Lang, "Fall of the Monarchy", 625 (and his references there to scholarly works in Polish).

<sup>60</sup> D. Mishin, "Ibrahim Ibn-Ya'Qubat-Turtushi's Account of the Slavs from the Middle of the Tenth Century", *Annual of Medieval Studies at the CEU, Budapest* (1996): 189.

between the Poles and the Slavic coastal towns on the Baltic. Finally, Thietmar of Merseberg records that King Henry II of Germany (later emperor) met envoys from the pagan Lutitians and from the great city of *Livilni* (Wolin?) at Regensburg in Easter 1007, in order to conclude an alliance against Bolesław Chrobry.<sup>61</sup> Thus, it appears that the jarls of Skåne and the kings of Denmark both had allies in the Baltic, and in fact were allied to dynasties or groups who were themselves in conflict with each other: the jarls of Skåne with the inhabitants of *Jóm/Wolin*, and Cnut and his father with the Poles.<sup>62</sup> Within this context, perhaps we should interpret Cnut's campaign in the Baltic, so soon after Thorkell's expulsion from England, as a strike against the jarls' allies, who may have provided him with wealth and troops.

Cnut was apparently successful at humbling Thorkell. The C-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 1023 he and Cnut were reconciled.<sup>63</sup> This account adds that Thorkell and Cnut exchanged sons, and Cnut "entrusted Denmark" to Thorkell and his own son.<sup>64</sup> Evidently, Cnut forced Thorkell to come to terms, and give political hostages. However, while Cnut was sufficiently powerful to force Thorkell into a settlement, he seems to have lacked the power to remove Thorkell completely, and had to give up one of his own sons as a hostage, and acknowledge some of Thorkell's claims to power in Denmark. The saga-material does not precisely agree here with the account of these events given in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. *Heimskringla* makes it clear that in the early 1020s Cnut placed Harthacnut (presumably as a figurehead alongside a group of noblemen who could be trusted to defend Cnut's interests) in direct control of Denmark alongside a

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<sup>61</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, 6: 33 (edited as Holtzmann, *Thietmari Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon*, 312–14).

<sup>62</sup> Although note that later Cnut would partly renege on these alliances, and adopt a neutral position during Conrad II's invasion of Poland. See pp. 181–2 on this.

<sup>63</sup> ASC 1023 C (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 104); "þurcil ond he [Cnut] wæron anræde".

<sup>64</sup> There has been debate over which of Cnut's sons took part in this exchange of hostages. Harthacnut certainly played a central role in the government of Denmark in the 1020s, but as he is recorded as being in England for the translation of St Ælfheah immediately after Cnut's reconciliation with Thorkell, it is improbable that this was him. Cnut had two other sons, who appear to have been older than Harthacnut, and as I have argued elsewhere they may have been resident in some part of Denmark or the Danish territories in Scandinavia at the time. See my "Ælfgifu of Northampton: Cnut the Great's 'other woman'", especially the sub-section entitled 'The period from 1014 to 1029' for this. It is most likely that one of these sons was briefly held by Thorkell. In addition, it is most likely that Haraldr Thórkelsson was the son of Thorkell who was surrendered to Cnut, and that his connection with Cnut's retinue should be dated from that event.

Danish nobleman named Úlfr Þórgilsson.<sup>65</sup> Thus, we have one of Cnut's sons in some position of responsibility in Denmark, but sharing that responsibility with Úlfr Þórgilsson, not Thórkell. Howard has suggested that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle may have conflated Thorkell's peace-settlement with Cnut with the later appointment of Úlfr as the governor of Denmark.<sup>66</sup> However, such a gross error in the English sources for this period would seem out of place, and it is possible to reconcile the two narratives. It appears that Thorkell did not live more than a year or two after his return to Denmark, while Úlfr Þórgilsson survived until 1026.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, as I shall show below, Úlfr Þórgilsson and his brother Eileifr were very closely associated with Thorkell.<sup>68</sup> Thus, Thorkell's and Úlfr's holding of some governorship of Denmark was not mutually exclusive, and it seems probable that a saga-narrative, written two centuries later could have eroded the details of Thorkell's brief period as a Danish regent, and passed silently onto those of his more-enduring successor.

A series of political marriages happened immediately after Cnut's and Thorkell's reconciliation. These tied the new governors of Denmark to Cnut's family and the families of Cnut's closest English noblemen, in an apparent attempt to stabilise the new division of power in Denmark. The *Vita Edwardi Regis* places Godwine's marriage to Gytha, Úlfr Þórgilsson's sister, in the aftermath of the campaign of 1022.<sup>69</sup> Other sources record that Úlfr Þórgilsson was married to Ástríðr, Cnut's sister, and this presumably occurred at the same time.<sup>70</sup>

Cnut had successfully restrained Thorkell. He had restricted his capacity to generate significant resistance, he had been able to tie Thorkell's associates to himself, and he had been able to impose Harthacnut into the highest levels of the Danish administration.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>65</sup> *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, chap. 134 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 235).

<sup>66</sup> Howard, *Swen Forkbeard's Invasions*, 143, n. 101.

<sup>67</sup> Very little is known of the details of Thorkell's death. The only source to mention this in any detail, the *Translatio Sancti Ælfegi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi et martiris* (Rumble, 298), claims that after he was exiled to Denmark by Cnut, and suspected of fomenting internecine strife, he was pursued through the districts of that land, and finally killed by an ignorant mob. I see no reason to doubt the main parts of this account. As he took no apparent part in the battle at Helgeå, we can place his death in the period November 1021 to 1026.

<sup>68</sup> See pp. 232–7 below.

<sup>69</sup> *Vita Edwardi Regis*, 1: 1 (Barlow, 6).

<sup>70</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 54 (Schmeidler, 114). Certainly, this marriage occurred before Úlfr's death in 1026.

<sup>71</sup> It is also possible that Cnut's first 'wife' and his other two sons were imposed at this time on whatever forms of Danish administration existed in the Baltic.

Interestingly, the archaeology of Skåne also appears to reflect an aspect of this interaction between Cnut and the local elites of Skåne. Several excavations in the last century have shed much light on the earliest layers of the town of Lund in south western Skåne.<sup>72</sup> Similar to the urban sites in western and central Denmark, Lund was founded in the reign of Sveinn Tjúguskegg, and experienced a boom in development during Cnut's reign. The excavation on behalf of the PK-Bank in the 1970s uncovered a large cemetery from the period of the earliest occupation layers. Many of the bodies were interred in wooden coffins, and thus could be dated very accurately through dendrochronology. The earliest graves date to the period from 994(±5)–1048(±5).<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, the earliest traces of structures from the site date to the period from 1010(±5)–1023(±5).<sup>74</sup> As can be seen from the diagram below, a large concentration of the dendrochronological samples date to the 1020s and 1030s.

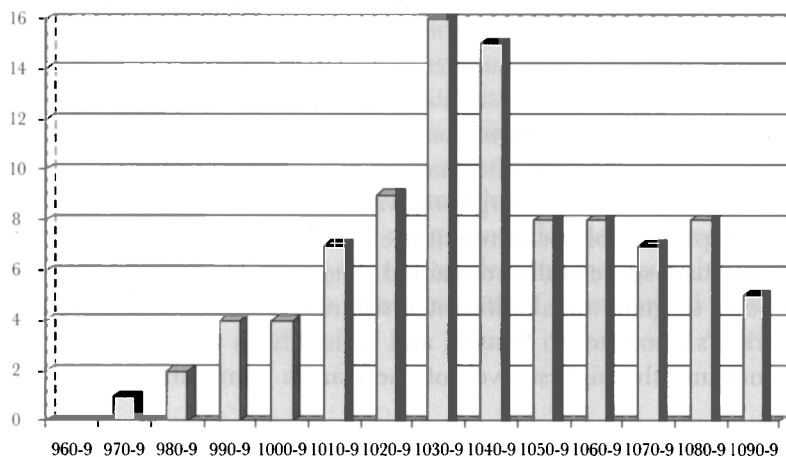


Fig. 13. Diagram charting the number of dendrochronologically datable samples produced by archaeology in Lund. Produced from data in P. Carelli, *En kapitalistisk anda: kulturella förändringar i 1100-talets Danmark* (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 2001), 116. Note that the dates given here have a margin of error of  $\pm 5$  years.

<sup>72</sup> For the Thule site see R. Blomqvist & A. W. Mårtensson, *Thulegravningen 1961. En Berättelse om Vad. Grävningarna för Thulehuset i Lund Aslöjade* (Lund, 1963); for the PK Bank site see A. W. Mårtensson, *Uppgrävt förflutet för PKbanken i Lund. En Investering i Arkeologi* (Lund, 1976). Both dealt with sites in the central area of the town.

<sup>73</sup> A. Andrén, “Stadsbilden”, in *ibid.*, 24, and A. W. Mårtensson, “Gravar och kyrkor”, in *ibid.*, 88–90.

<sup>74</sup> Andrén, “Stadsbilden”, 24.

Furthermore, traces of large-scale planning have been perceived in the division of the area west of the present main street, Stora Södergatan, into regular building plots.<sup>75</sup> Dendrochronology has identified the fencing material used to separate these plots as dating to *c.* 1020. As in Viborg, large-scale planning of an urban site into separate building plots required a great deal of authority, and the dates suggest Cnut as a candidate.

As with the other urban sites in western and central Denmark, the historical and numismatic sources also indicate a link between the development of this urban site and Cnut. Adam of Bremen claimed that Lund “was directed [by Cnut] to be the rival of the British London”.<sup>76</sup> This statement is in accord with the numismatic and archaeological evidence. Blackburn has suggested that coins may have been produced at a mint in Lund as early as 1014 × 1015.<sup>77</sup> Certainly, by 1019 the Lund mint was producing coins in Cnut’s name alongside a royal title and a named moneyer and mint-signature. Furthermore, the surviving examples of die-impressions reveal that Lund had the largest output of any Danish mint during Cnut’s reign, having a claim to twenty-three of the sixty published die-impressions.<sup>78</sup> As in the other urban sites of Denmark this introduction of organised coin production appears to have been achieved by the introduction of skilled personnel from England, and it is here that we find the distinctively English names of Godwine, Ælfwine and Leofwine among the moneyers named on the coins.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, large quantities of the ceramic sherds of the type found in Viborg and Lejre, have been unearthed by successive excavations in Lund.<sup>80</sup> Approximately 130 sherds of imitation Stamford ware have been found and published. Furthermore, the large number of sherds from this site allows us to see that while they consistently appear scattered throughout the archaeological layers which date to the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, examples of this material are not known from stratigraphied layers datable to the second half of the eleventh century or later. They are all from domestic vessels,

<sup>75</sup> A. Andrén, *Lund* (Stockholm, 1980), 46–9.

<sup>76</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta, schol.* 111(111) (Schmeidler, 234); “Cuius metropolis ciuitas Lundona, quam... Chnud Britannicae Lundonae aemulam esse prece[pit]”.

<sup>77</sup> Blackburn, “Do Cnut the Great’s First Coins”.

<sup>78</sup> Hauberg, *Myntförhold*, 45.

<sup>79</sup> See M. Cinthio. “Myntverk och Myntare i Lund”, *Kulturen: En Årsbok till Medlemmarna av Kulturhistoriska Föreningen för Södra Sverige* (1990), for some discussion of the names of moneyers from Lund.

<sup>80</sup> Christensen, et al. “Early Glazed Ware”.



and are all produced from clay local to Scandinavia. They testify to a large English population in early Lund, and again they only make sense as evidence of some contingent of Englishmen moved into Lund by Cnut, probably as part of the retinue of one of the royal moneyers, the bishops or some group of unattested urban-officials.

Both Sveinn Tjúguskegg and Cnut appear to have been instrumental in introducing Christianity to Skåne. Adam of Bremen records that Sveinn “installed a certain bishop Gotebald, from England, to teach in Skåne”.<sup>81</sup> This bishop does not appear to have been attached to a fixed see, and he subsequently travelled in Skåne, Sweden and Norway as an itinerant preacher. Adam of Bremen also records that Cnut imposed another bishop of English extraction (or training), one Bernhard, on a see based on Skåne.<sup>82</sup> Adam does not state that this see was based on the town of Lund, but I think that this may be deduced from Anglert’s studies of the spread of parish formation and church building across the region.<sup>83</sup> Anglert has established that Christianity gained a foothold initially in the southwestern area of the region around Lund, and spread slowly from there throughout the region, reaching the north-eastern coastline last. Additionally, an early and prestigious church has been discovered at the centre of Lund. The research of M. Cinthio into the excavations in the churchyard of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Lund, has shown that there are traces of a wooden stave church in the churchyard which date from *c.* 990.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, in the period between 1020 and 1030 this wooden stave church was superseded by the construction of a stone church a few metres to the south. This construction was large (some 17m × 14m and serving a churchyard of an estimated 7000m<sup>2</sup>) and extremely prestigious.<sup>85</sup> Just as with the stone church at St. Jørgensbjerg, in Roskilde, the construction material of this building must indicate a royal or extremely powerful patron.

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<sup>81</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 41 (Schmeidler, 101); “Sven... Gotebaldum quondam ab Anglia venientem episcopum in Sconia posuit doctorem”.

<sup>82</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 55 (Schmeidler, 115).

<sup>83</sup> M. Anglert, *Kyrkor och herravälde: från Kristnade til Sockenbildning i Skåne* (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995).

<sup>84</sup> See Cinthio, *De Första Stadsborna*, 29–38, and see p. 43 for a map of the site; and the same author’s, “Trinitatiskyrkan, gravarna och de första lundaborna”, for this at what follows here.

<sup>85</sup> See both publications by M. Cinthio in the footnote immediately above, and P. Carelli, “Lunds äldsta kyrkogård och förekomsten av ett senvikingatida danskt parochialsystem”, in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et Symposium i Roskilde den 5–7 Februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004).

In order to understand the significance of Cnut's development of the urban site at Lund, we must consider the landscape that Lund was founded in, and the changes that it brought to that landscape. It is possible to perceive where the focal-points for the local elites in Skåne were in the early eleventh century by mapping the concentrations of population against the trade and exchange sites that were crucial to the authority of those elites. The mapping of the distribution of prehistoric settlements in Skåne reveals concentrations of such settlements along the western coast of the region (focussing on the southern region of this coastline), as well as a small area in the south-eastern tip of the region and perhaps the north-eastern coastline. These regions contained the best farmland and access to fisheries, and were separated by belts of uncultivable bogland.

The same impression can be gathered through the mapping of sites with the placename suffix 'köpinge' (derived from the Old Norse: *kaupangra*: a meadow where trade takes place). Research has shown that in Skåne such sites have much in common with each other. They are all sited on estuaries, just over a mile or so inland, and excavation has shown that they were small trade-sites founded in the early Viking Age as export locations for high prestige goods.<sup>86</sup> As such they appear to have been under the control of the local aristocracy throughout the Viking-Age.

These köpinge sites concentrate in the same areas as the prehistoric settlements. Furthermore, Lund lies in the centre of the concentration of such sites which is closest to Sjælland and the rest of Denmark.

Uppåkra, some 5 miles to the south of Lund is a site of significance within this context.<sup>87</sup> Archaeological investigation of the site has exposed occupation layers from the late Roman Iron Age to the early eleventh century, and it is clear that in the late Viking Age it was the pre-urban base of the rulers of a considerable amount of surrounding territory.

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<sup>86</sup> See E. Cinthio, "Variationsmuster in dem frühmittelalterlichen Städtewesen Schonens. Einige aus archaologischen beobachtungen abgeleitete Gesichtspunkte", in *Frühe Städte im westlichen Ostseeraum* (Neumünster, 1972); T. Ohlsson, "The Lødekøppinge Investigation I. The Settlement at Vikhögsvagen", *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum, New Series* 3 (1979–80), 150–6; and perhaps Thurston, *Landscapes of Power*, 163–7, for studies of these sites.

<sup>87</sup> See B. Stjernquist, "Uppåkra, ett Bebyggelsecentrum i Skåne under Jarnåldern", in *Fra Lurstan til Lusehøj. Festskrift til Henrik Thrane i Anledning af 60-Års Dagen*, ed. J. Ganshorn & J. A. Jacobsen (Odense: Odense Bys Museer, 1994), and L. Larsson & B. Hårdh, "Uppåkra—ett Hövdinga—eller Kungasäte", *Förvännen. Tidskrift för Svensk Antikvarisk Forskning* 92 (1997), for fuller studies of this most significant site.

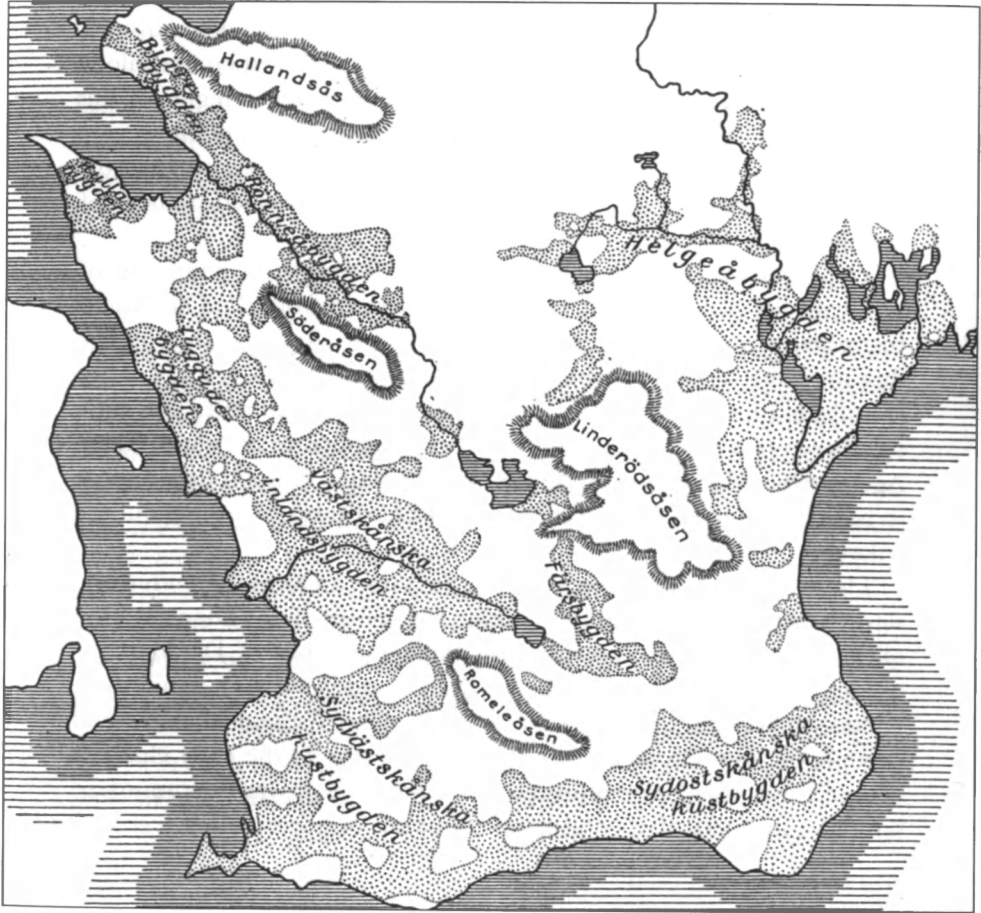


Fig. 14. Map of the prehistoric settlements of Skåne, from S. Bolin, *Skånelands Historia: skildringar från tiden före försvenskningen* (Lund, 1930–33), 63.

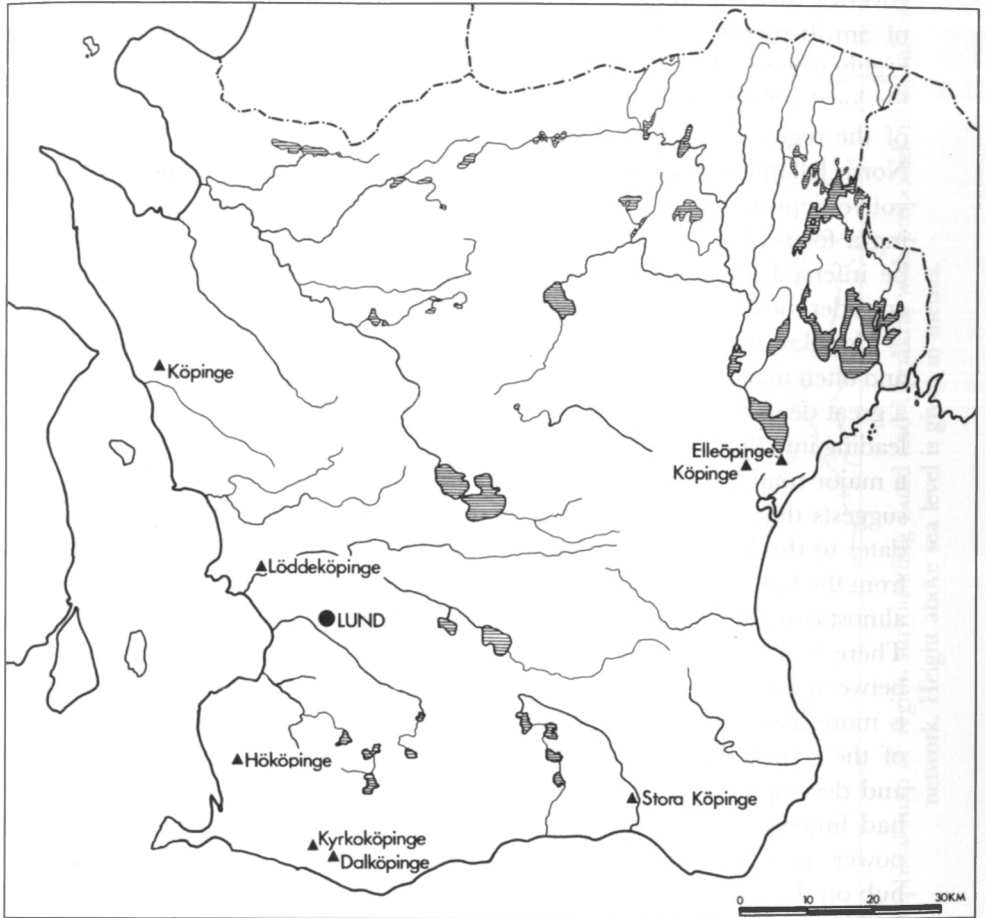


Fig. 15. Map of the Kopinge sites in Skåne, adapted from E. Cinthio, *Variationsmøster in dem frøhmittellalterlichen Stødtwesen Schonens. Einige aus archøologischen beobachtungen abgeleitete Gesichtsputte*, in *Frøhe Stødte im westlichen Ostseeraum* (Neumunster, 1972), 58.

The Viking Age artefacts, especially those of decorated metalwork, indicate the breathtaking wealth of the ruling elite of the region, and the international character of their contact with the rest of Europe. The site was both large and densely occupied with occupation layers covering an area approximately 600m × 1100m to a maximum depth of 3m. It retained an agricultural character, but appears to have been highly organised as a rural manor. It appears the site formed a centre for local political power, religious practises and perhaps the economy of the region as well on a scale which can be compared to Viborg in North Jylland or the region of Roskilde on Sjælland. Close to Uppåkra votive deposits have been found in the Gullåkra bog, perhaps revealing a focus of cultic practises in the region. Furthermore, much can be inferred about the interaction of Lund and Uppåkra through a consideration of the topography of the region.

Uppåkra was sited on an island of high terrain within a low lying, and often marshy, floodplain. This natural fortress gave the resident elites a great deal of security, but separated them from the network of roads leading into the hinterland and to the coastal trade centres. The fact that a major road from this network goes from the town towards Uppåkra, suggests that this road network predates the foundation of Lund and dates to the Viking Age at least. The settlement at Uppåkra dwindled from the last years of the tenth century onwards, and it appears to have almost completely disappeared by the middle of the eleventh century.<sup>88</sup> There is no reason why a major road should have been constructed between Lund and Uppåkra in the early eleventh century or later. It is more likely that the road connecting the two sites, as well as much of the rest of the associated road network, pre-existed the foundation and development of Lund. Before the foundation of Lund this road had functioned as a vital supply-line connecting the centre of elite power on a natural fortress in low-lying marshland to a distribution hub on the adjacent high-ground. It was the obvious weak-spot of the settlement, and this appears to have been seized upon by Cnut and his father. Just as at Viborg, it appears that an urban site was placed

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<sup>88</sup> Additionally, it should be noted that the köpinge-sites in the vicinity of Lund were also affected by the development of the town, dwindling away in importance in a fashion similar to that observed for Uppåkra. See Ohlsson, "Löddeköppinge Investigation I" and the same author's, "The Löddeköppinge Investigation II. The Northern Part of the Village Area", *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum, New Series*, 1 (1975-6), and perhaps also G. Rausing, "Löddeköppinge, Lund and Lodde Kar", *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum, New Series* 8 (1989-90).

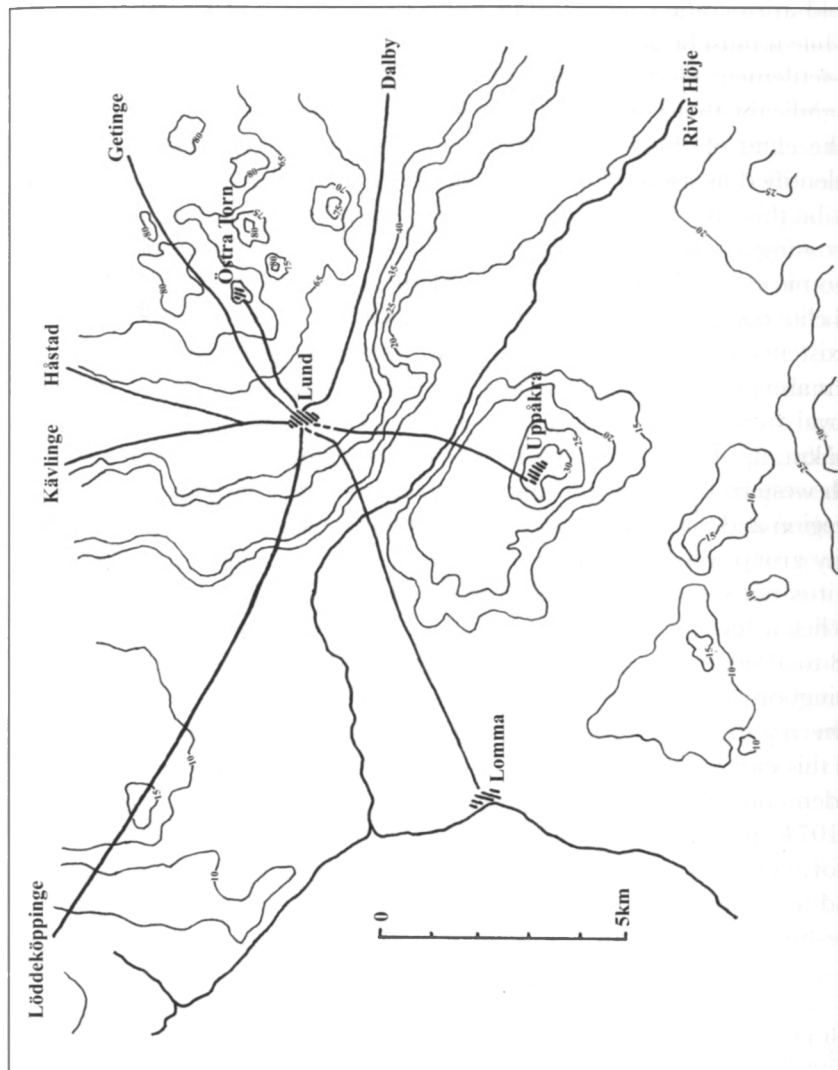


Fig. 16. Topographical map of region surrounding Lund and Uppåkra, with proposed medieval road network. Height above sea level is given in metres.

on top of a pre-existing road network in order to control and monitor the traffic along this network and ensure a royal presence at a crucial meeting place, but here the foundation had the added advantage of placing the urban officials in charge of the vital supply lines between the old aristocratic centre and its hinterland.

While it must be admitted that we cannot know now the site of every elite-settlement along the western coastline of Skåne, this site seems so significant that control of it must have been of great importance for the elites of the region. Indeed, if any site in western Skåne can be identified as associated with Strút-Haraldr and his descendants, it must be this one. It seems probable that at the same time as Cnut was negotiating a political compromise with Thorkell, he was re-routing the economic channels of south western Skåne towards a royal rather than local elite controlled centre, and either starving the local elite centre out of existence or causing it to relocate to the environs of Lund.<sup>89</sup>

It is also possible that archaeology has revealed traces of the extension of royal authority over another crucial local elite centre to the north of Uppåkra, up the western coastline, at Helsingborg. This site lies at the north western tip of Skåne, and is the shortest crossing-place between the region and Sjælland. Thus, it had economic and political importance to any group who might wish to control western and southern Skåne, and it is not surprising that one of the local elite controlled köpinge-sites lies a few miles to the south of Helsingborg. Excavations from 1958 to 1960 of the remains of a church dedicated to St. Clemens in Helsingborg revealed that a small wooden church had existed in the northern part of the present nave, and that a cemetery was associated with this earliest construction.<sup>90</sup> The stone church which replaced this wooden construction can be dated through constructional analysis to pre-1074, and was probably built under English influence. Specifically, the form of the wall-construction appears to link this structure to some found in Lund and dated to the mid-eleventh century. Analysis of the grave-finds from the adjacent cemetery has revealed a concentration

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<sup>89</sup> It may be significant in this context that the first mention of Uppåkra in the historical record is in St. Cnut's grant of 1085 to St. Laurentius in Lund (*Diplomatarum Danicum* 1: 2, item 21) where that king granted farms in South Uppåkra and the other Uppåkra to the Cathedral at Lund. Thus, estates at the site were in the possession of the king by 1085, and might have been seized as part of further punitive measures against the elites in control of the site.

<sup>90</sup> M. Weidhagen-Hallerdt, "St. Clemens Kyrka i Helsingborg", *Medeltiden och Arkeologin. Festskrift till Erik Cnutso*, ed. A. Andrén (Lund: Lund Universitets Historiska Museum, 1986).

of eleventh-century material, namely a Danish coin from the reign of Sveinn Ástriðarson (1042–76) and another from the reign of Emperor Henry III (1039–56). The evidence would appear to indicate a construction from the early part of the reign of Sveinn Ástriðarson, but the dating of the stone construction to the period of the mid-eleventh century (but before *c.* 1074), is suggestive that the preceding wooden church existed at least a few decades before that. There are no obvious signs of fire or any accidental destruction of this building, and so we should probably presume that it stood for a generation before it was superseded by a stone construction. Thus, it may be that the earliest church on this site, along with whatever settlement accompanied it, dates from the first half of the eleventh century. If so, then it might be best understood as part of Cnut's aggressive displacement of the local elites in the region, or possibly as part of Harthacnut's continuation of this policy.

It is possible that this displacement of local elites by supporters of the Danish king can be traced further around the south western coastline of Skåne through the runic evidence. In recent decades, two scholars, Randsborg and B. Sawyer, have constructed arguments of this form.<sup>91</sup> However, it should be noted that neither of their theories has received universal acclaim. Randsborg noted that the majority of Danish runestones which are datable to the late tenth and early eleventh centuries are distributed in northern Jylland and Skåne, that is on the periphery of the area which was securely under the control of the Danish king. Thus, he concluded that their existence and geographical distribution testified to some part of the expansion of the authority of the Danish kings. He interpreted the claims of land-ownership and land-inheritance, which are frequently found on such stones, as evidence of a newly implanted aristocracy asserting themselves against traditional local elites. Furthermore, Randsborg developed a theory first suggested by Aakjær in 1927–8, that the fact that many of these stones call their commemoratees and commemorators 'thegn' or 'drengr', often accompanied by the adjective 'good', identifies them as members of a unified social-group of royal officials.<sup>92</sup> Paradoxically, B. Sawyer's analysis used the same linguistic

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<sup>91</sup> Randsborg, *Viking Age in Denmark*; B. Sawyer, "Appendix", and more fully in "Viking-Age Rune-Stones". See p. 190 above for a reproduction of Randsborg's distribution map.

<sup>92</sup> See S. Aakjær, "Old Danish Thegns and Drengrs", *Acta Philologica Scandinavica* 2 (1927–28), and subsequent studies in support of this, such as A. Christophersen,



titles and markers to identify groups of oppressed local elites in the same runic material. Thus, she interpreted the claims of land-ownership and inheritance as an increasingly desperate response to the erosion of their traditional rights by supporters of the Danish king. For my purposes here both interpretations amount to the same thing, that the points of aggressive interaction between the traditional elites and supporters of the Danish king can be identified by the concentrations of runestones. However, in adopting a nationwide scale to their analyses both Randsborg and B. Sawyer have opened themselves to criticism. Both adopted Aakjær's theory without noting that a great deal of debate had occurred since the 1920s about the meaning of the terms *thegn* and *dreng*. Numerous linguists have expressed doubt that either term had a meaning precise enough to be securely identified on every stone as an official title.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, the terms appear to have a wide semantic field, ranging from some form of official title to nothing more than a 'good' or 'noble man'. Moreover, it seems questionable if all the material included in Randsborg's and B. Sawyer's analyses should be classified together. Numerous typological differences suggest that several smaller divisions of the data might be more appropriate.

However, scholars who have reduced the scale of these studies to a local level, and have been sensitive to typological differences of the runestones, have produced what seem to be more fruitful analyses. Anglert included the runic material as part of his study of the spread of Christianity across Skåne, and showed that in that region it had a geographical distribution in accord with other indicators of the extension of royal influence, such as church construction, and place-name evidence of royal estates.<sup>94</sup>

Anglert further demonstrated that the concentration of runic material in the south-western region of Skåne probably was influenced by the introduction of royal supporters during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Therefore, it seems that outside of Lund, the cluster of stones along the southern coastline may be evidence of the influence of Cnut's followers consolidating their hold over an area critical

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"Drengs, Thegns, Landmen and Kings: Some Aspects on the Forms of Social Relations in Viking Society during the Transition to Historic Times", *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum, New Series* 4 (1981–2).

<sup>93</sup> See M. Syrett, *The Vikings in England: the Evidence of Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, 2002), 102–4, and references there.

<sup>94</sup> Anglert, *Kyrkor och herravalde*, 22–56.

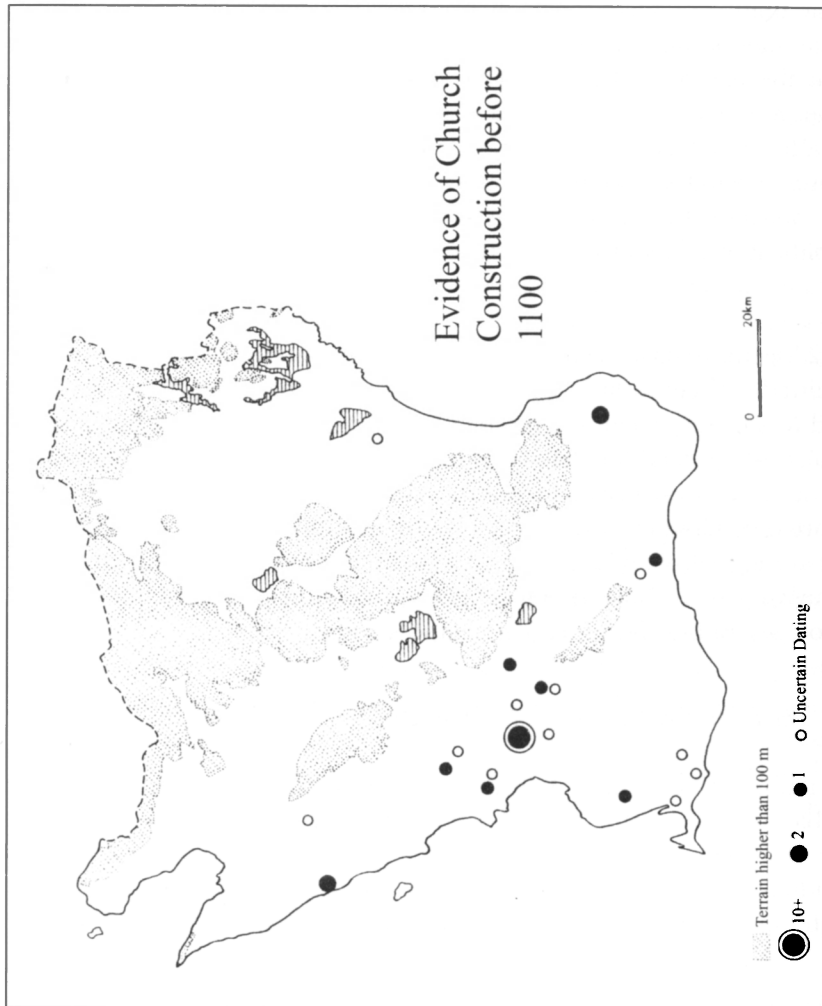


Fig. 17. Distribution map from M. Anglert, *Kyrkor och herravälde: från Kristnade til Sockenbildning i Skåne* (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995), 68 (title and key translated from Modern Swedish).

for monitoring the trade in the Baltic. However, none of this can be securely dated to Cnut's reign, and the traces of a Trelleborg-style fort which have been excavated along this coastline, suggest that this runic evidence may attest to royal supporters planted in the region by Haraldr Gormsson or Sveinn Tjúguskegg.<sup>95</sup>

The uniting of these scraps of historical evidence with the archaeological data perhaps allows us to go as little further and say something about the nature of this interaction between Cnut and the elites of Skåne. Just as in Viborg, the siting of the urban-site, staffed with royal officials, was a crucial step for the Danish king in terms of establishing his presence in the region; but unlike that at Viborg, there are no signs here that the local elites were allowed to retain a degree of autonomy in political or religious matters. If anything, here the historical sources indicate tension between a representative member of the dynasty of the jarls of Skåne (Thorkell) and Cnut, and the peace-settlement of *c.* 1023 seems to have been more of a Mexican-standoff than an accord. Admittedly, there is little about the earliest archaeological layers of Lund to suggest violent clashes between the newcomers and the local populace or a need for defence of the site, but the presence there of such a large royal urban-site, with a sizeable population apparently imported by Cnut from England, cannot have failed to alarm magnates such as the jarls of Skåne. It may be fair to interpret the emergence of this urban-site as Cnut riding roughshod over the wishes of the local aristocracy rather than forming alliances with them.

### *The Interaction between Cnut and the Associates of Thorkell the Tall*

The nature of Scandinavian evidence commonly defies any attempts at reliable prosopography. The exceptions to this rule are few, but among them is the close association that can be traced between one of Cnut's Scandinavian followers who held office under him in England, Earl Eileifr, and the family of the jarls of Skåne.<sup>96</sup> Significantly, this Eileifr

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<sup>95</sup> Jacobsson, "Visst har det Funnits". Note also that P. Carelli, "Lunds aldsta kyrkogård", 254–6, has observed that as the graveyard in central Lund functioned only for the period *c.* 990–1050s and contains approximately 3,400 graves, the site served a population many times the size of the population of Lund. He concludes that it functioned as a necropolis for the parishes of Skåne. These may have been the new elites scattered along the western and southern coastline.

<sup>96</sup> On Eileifr's career see Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 58–60 (there 'Eilaf').

appears in association with members of this dynasty on a number of occasions both before and after 1016. In John of Worcester's adaptation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's account of the invasion of Thórkell's raiding army in 1009, he adds the information that two Scandinavian leaders named Eileifr and Hemming led separate contingents of this force.<sup>97</sup> The identification of this Eileifr with the one that held office under Cnut would not be particularly convincing were it not for the survival of the same names as close military associates in the initial part of the 'Supplement' to *Jómsvíkinga saga*.<sup>98</sup> There Thorkell's campaign forms the base of the whole narrative, and Hemming is identified as a brother of Thorkell who held the jarldom of Skåne at the time, and Eileifr is given the fuller name of *Eilífr Þorgilsson, bróðir Úlfs*, and is identified as Thorkell's comrade-in-arms. The same *Eglaf com ond his broðor Ulf* appear in an entry in the Thorney *Liber Vitae*, but here it is clear that this is Earl Eileifr of Mercia.<sup>99</sup> Úlfr appears to be the figure who in the saga-material plays a prominent part in Danish politics as the governor of Denmark.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, both English and Scandinavian sources confirm the brothers' patronym, and record that they were descended from an influential Danish family. Snorri in his *Heimskringla* and the author of *Knytlínga saga* identify Úlfr's father as a powerful Danish regional ruler named Þórgils Sprakaleggr.<sup>101</sup> John of Worcester also identifies Úlfr and his father, although he garbles the name of the latter, preserving only the second part as *Spraclingus*.<sup>102</sup> What is surprising is the fact that the same names appear in connection with each other in the more reliable English traditions and saga-accounts written down at least two hundred years after the deaths of the men concerned. The sources used by the compiler of *Flateyjarbók* for this part of his text are now obscure, but it appears that in Scandinavian historical traditions (as well as the English) the names of Thorkell, Hemming and Eileifr were seen as synonymous.

<sup>97</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1009 (Darlington et al., 462).

<sup>98</sup> 'Supplement' (edited in Campbell, *Encomium*, 92); although note that there the invasion seems to have been confused with the one led by Sveinn Tjúguskegg in 1013.

<sup>99</sup> Gerchow, *Gedenküberlieferung*, 326–8.

<sup>100</sup> On Úlfr's career see Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 62–4.

<sup>101</sup> *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 134 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 235); *Knytlínga saga*, ch. 5, edited in Bjarni Guðnason, *Danakonunga sagnar*, 97.

<sup>102</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1049 (Darlington et al., 548).

Furthermore, a fragment of English evidence suggests that Thorkell and Eileifr remained closely associated after the campaign of 1009. The *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramesiensis* preserves some details of a now-lost local record from 1017 × 1020, which recorded the gift of an Æthelric of five hides of land to Ramsay Abbey.<sup>103</sup> This includes a truncated version of the lost witness-list. It names the archbishop of Canterbury, the local bishop of Dorchester, and two other English bishops, those of Winchester and Ramsbury. The only secular witnesses named are *Turkillus comes et Eylafus aldermannus*, and the record would appear to descend from a local land agreement most probably ratified at a shire or hundred court over which Thorkell presided, and at which Eileifr was apparently present as a prestigious visitor. This witness is a late one, but without any significant motive for forgery or adaptation of the now-lost document, an apparently trustworthy one. Eileifr's attendance at the local meeting which ratified this donation is surprising. His earldom was located in the area of western Mercia around Gloucester, and we know of only one other occasion when he was in East Anglia. This was for a royal meeting at nearby Thorney, which culminated in the inclusion of their names in the Thorney *Liber Vitae*.<sup>104</sup> However, the lost grant and the *liber vitae* entry cannot have come from the same visit of Eileifr to East Anglia, as the grant was witnessed by Archbishop Lifting, who died in 1019, and his successor Æthelnoth appears in the *Liber Vitae* entry. Eileifr's appearance in this local record would appear to be evidence that he spent time in Thorkell's company after 1009.

What then was the nature of the connection between Eileifr and Thorkell? It is possible that Úlfr and Eileifr were distant members of the family of the jarls of Skåne. Alternatively, as Saxo Grammaticus records that these two brothers were descendants of nobility who held authority in some part of Sweden, they may have been from one of the regions on the border of Skåne with Sweden, such as Halland and Blekinge.<sup>105</sup> Thus, they may have had close contact with the jarls of Skåne, possibly as subsidiary rulers of territories within Skåne or neighbouring to it. It seems significant that in the earliest context in which we encounter Thorkell, Hemming and Eileifr together, they are co-commanders of a raiding fleet. It may be that the link between them was forged by military service together. Elsewhere in Scandina-

<sup>103</sup> *Chronicon Abbatiae Ramensensis*, ch. 81 (Macray, 147).

<sup>104</sup> I have commented on this elsewhere. See above at p. 92.

<sup>105</sup> Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia*, 10: 15–16 (Christiansen, 1: 29–31).

via, runic evidence has been used to show the existence of extended military retinues.<sup>106</sup> It is plausible that Eileifr and perhaps his brother Úlfr were important members of the military retinue of Thorkell, and perhaps also the jarls of Skåne.

As above, a more detailed understanding of the interrelations of the Danish nobility enables us to understand better Cnut's interaction with them. Thorkell probably died soon after 1023. However, his associates remained in positions of power and offered in 1026 one final act of resistance to Cnut's authority in the events that led up to the battle of Helgeå. Again the Scandinavian and English historical traditions diverge in a way that tells us a great deal. The saga-material records that this battle was the culmination of a joint invasion led by the Norwegian king Óláfr Haraldsson, and the Swedish king Anund Jakob.<sup>107</sup> While the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mentions the battle it does not record Óláfr Haraldsson and Anund Jakob as Cnut's opponents, but instead names 'Ulf' and 'Eilaf'.<sup>108</sup> There has been considerable debate regarding the identification of these men, and it has been argued at various stages that that they were as the sons of a powerful Swedish jarl, Rögnvaldr, or that 'Eilaf' was a scribal error for Óláfr.<sup>109</sup> However, the fact that the chronicler refers to them with such a familiar tone, without any form of introduction or explanation of who these men were, suggests that they were well known to the audience of the chronicle. Of the possible candidates, only Eileifr and Úlfr Þórgilsson could have been well known in England in this period, and so the record must refer to them.<sup>110</sup> Eileifr's attestations of Cnut's charters confirm this. Eileifr witnessed royal charters frequently and prominently from 1018 to 1024, when his name disappears from these documents.<sup>111</sup> This absence is most easily explained by his revolt against Cnut and return to Denmark in the period 1024 × 1026. The two records may in fact show different aspects of the same invasion: Óláfr Haraldsson and Anund Jakob may

<sup>106</sup> See B. Varenius, "Maritime Warfare as an Organising Principle in Scandinavian Society 1000–1300 AD", in *Maritime Warfare in Northern Europe: Technology, Organisation, Logistics and Administration 500 BC–1500 AD: Papers from an International Research Seminar at the Danish National Museum, Copenhagen, 3–5 May 2000*, ed. A. N. Jørgensen (Copenhagen: National Museum of Denmark, 2002), for a study of these military organisations.

<sup>107</sup> *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, chs. 132, 134 & 145–52 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 226–7, 234–5 & 269–84).

<sup>108</sup> ASC 1026 (= 1025) EF (E: Irvine, 75).

<sup>109</sup> Moberg, "Battle of Helgeå", 11; Freeman, *NC*, 1: 765; and Campbell, *Encoumum*, 86.

<sup>110</sup> See Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 60 & 63–4.

<sup>111</sup> See Keynes, *Atlas*, table lxix.

have been invited into Denmark by Úlfr and Eileifr Þórgilsson and the local elites of eastern Denmark. The few details of the conflict that we can glean from the contemporary witnesses of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Tögdrápa*, accord with such an interpretation. Importantly, Sigvatr's verses record that a Norwegian fleet and a Swedish fleet made the initial attack on Sjælland, and that one of these forces ravaged Skåne severely.<sup>112</sup> However, if the action narrated in these verses is intended as sequential (and this seems most probable), then this indicates that the attack on Skåne occurred after the initial attack on Sjælland.<sup>113</sup> Only in the late witness of *Heimskringla* is there mention of Skåne being ravaged during the initial stage of the conflict by a Swedish land-army, and the details of the narrative there make it clear that this occurred whilst the army was marching through the region on its way to Sjælland.<sup>114</sup> On the face of it, this seems back to front: while Skåne was the wealthiest region of medieval Denmark, with a large royal centre at Lund, and moreover was the closest part of Danish territory to Sweden, the initial attack and the subsequent pillaging appears to have been concentrated on Sjælland, with Skåne suffering only from a land-army marching through the region on its way to Sjælland, and perhaps taking provisions on its way. Such fragments of evidence accord well with the suggestion that the Norwegians and Swedes were working with the elites of this region to expel Cnut's influence. The mention by Sigvatr of subsequent pillaging in Skåne would appear to be a record of the actions of the force in retreat away from Sjælland, perhaps attempting to make up for financial losses while in flight. Apparently only after they were pushed into retreat did they begin to harry in the territories of their allies. In 1026 Cnut may have faced both the beginnings of civil war as well as an invasion by two foreign powers.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> *Tögdrápa*, 4–6 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedægtning*, A. 1: 249–50; B. 1: 233; as *Knútsdrápa*).

<sup>113</sup> *Fagrskanna*, ch. 32 (edited as Bjarni Einarsson, *Ágrþ*, 182–90, especially 184–5), records all but two of the extant stanzas of this poem. The crucial ones here, verses 4–6, are given as part of a continuous block without prose interruptions, and thus the order of these stanzas (at least as understood in Norway in the early thirteenth century) would appear to be that of the original.

<sup>114</sup> *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 145 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 269). The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that a land-force from Sweden was present at the battle of Helgeå, and these were probably the same troops.

<sup>115</sup> I have dealt below, at pp. 242–5, with the details of this conflict.

After this conflict Cnut's moved swiftly to eliminate those sections of the Danish aristocracy who had raised opposition to him. As the *Chronicon Roskildense* and *Heimskringla* record, Úlfr was executed at Roskilde, on Cnut's orders, sometime soon after the battle of Helgeå.<sup>116</sup> At the same time Eileifr disappears from the sources.<sup>117</sup> A clause in Cnut's second extant letter to the English, which was dispatched from Rome in 1027, suggests that Cnut's response to this uprising and invasion had far-reaching consequences for the Eastern Danish aristocracy.<sup>118</sup> It states Cnut's intention to return to England via Denmark, so that he can convene a council and conclude a peace-settlement with "those nations and peoples who wished, if it had been possible for them, to deprive us of both kingdom and life".<sup>119</sup> Such a settlement presumably involved the surrender of certain ringleaders and the execution of a number of Úlfr's and Eileifr's followers. It is after this settlement that Harthacnut began to hold a commanding presence in the Danish administration, and he, and his followers, probably exploited the political vacuum left by a purge of the aristocracy by his father.

A brief aside must be appended here on the probable fate of the jarls of Skåne and their followers. Thorkell had most probably died before 1026, and Úlfr was executed soon after that date. Eileifr may have been killed, or may have fled alongside members of the jarls' dynasty or their allies. It seems unlikely that members of this aristocratic group remained at Uppåkra, and they may have fled to their allies on the southern Baltic coastline, into Sweden, or perhaps to other areas of Skåne still under their control. It has been shown that there was no actual royal or ecclesiastical impact in the north eastern part of the region until the twelfth or thirteenth century, and the presence of

<sup>116</sup> *Chronicon Roskildense*, item 7, in Gertz, *Scriptores Historiae Danicae Minores*, 1: 20–1; Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia*, 10: 17 (Christiansen, 1: 36–7); and *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 153 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 285). Note that *Fagrskinna* contains the variant story that Úlfr survived Helgeå and subsequently held responsibilities in Norway. However, as argued by Campbell, *Encomium*, 83–4, this account is most probably in error at this point.

<sup>117</sup> It should be noted that the *Brut y Tywysogyon*, s. a. 1035 (Jones, 22–3) states that Eileifr left England after Cnut's death for *Germania* (either Norway or Germany). However, the 'Supplement' (edited in Campbell, *Encomium*, 93) states that Eileifr departed England for Constantinople at some stage during Cnut's early career, where he died in the Varangian guard. Little about either of these accounts inspires any confidence.

<sup>118</sup> Liebermann, *De Gesetze*, 1: 276–7.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, "cum eis gentibus et populis compositurus, qui nos et regno uita priuare, si eis possibile esset, uolebant".



two köpings-sites there, named Älleköpinge and Gårds-köpings, may reveal another central area for the local elites of Skåne.<sup>120</sup> Excavations in the area have so far revealed concentrations of occupation from the eighth and ninth centuries in conjunction with a seasonally-occupied market-site some 2–3 miles downstream from the köpings-sites, and further excavation may reveal another significant elite-site in the region.<sup>121</sup> It seems relevant to note that one of the two proposed sites for the battle of Helgeå lies on an island in the river which is adjacent to these köpings-sites; and so this battle may have been fought in the last territory which remained firmly in the grip of the jarls of Skåne. Cnut's primary interest appears to have been in southern and western Skåne, and the control of the Øresund and its trade-routes. There are no records of a jarl appointed by him to the region, and perhaps the jarldom went into abeyance for a number of decades after the mid-1020s. The size and organisation of Lund makes it extremely likely that the officials in charge of that site extended their control throughout the southern and western areas of the region, and held authority over that on Cnut's behalf.

Harthacnut was still a child (between 3 and 6 years old) in 1026, and we might ask how effective his government could have been.<sup>122</sup> However, a precedent of putting a child-heir in control of a rebellious region had been set in the tenth century by the Ottonian rulers, and there such an appointment appears to have had the effect of galvanising local support for the dynasty.<sup>123</sup> Certainly, he must have ruled in Denmark as his elder half-brother would subsequently rule in Norway: as a child at the head of a carefully selected group of trusted advisors and noblemen.

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<sup>120</sup> See B. Rosenborg, *Åhus* (Stockholm: Riksantikvarieambetet och Statens Historiska Museer, 1984). They appear on the map above at p. 225.

<sup>121</sup> See J. Callmer, "Production site and Market Area. Some Notes on Fieldwork in Progress", *Meddelanden från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum 1981–1982*, and Rosenborg, *Åhus*, 53–5.

<sup>122</sup> The calculation is based on the fact that Harthacnut cannot have been born before 1017 when his parents were married, and must have been born before 1023 when he is recorded as a child accompanying his mother in the translation of St. Ælfheah.

<sup>123</sup> See Leyser, "Sacral Kingship", in the same author's *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottoman Saxony* (London: Edward Arnold, 1979), 88–9. Note especially the discussion of Otto III's leading of an army when only 6 years old. Cnut's dynasty had had profound effects on Denmark in the tenth and early eleventh century and there is no reason to suspect that they may not have been held with the same esteem as the Ottonians were on the Continent.

Little is known of Harthacnut's actions in this period, but perhaps the reforms of the Danish coinage which occurred during his regency indicate the extent of his authority. Around 1026–8 two developments are noticeable in the coins produced by Danish mints. Firstly, they cease to imitate English models, and begin to replace the stylised ruler portrait with Scandinavian symbols.<sup>124</sup> Secondly, two new weight standards were adopted, with an average of *c.* 1.0g in eastern Denmark and *c.* 0.75g in western Denmark.<sup>125</sup> Becker interpreted the changes as evidence of the growing power of the local elites and the receding power of the kingship.<sup>126</sup> Unfortunately, his conclusions rest on very weak evidence. He surmised from the fact that Cnut's early coins followed an English model, that such a model represented the preferred royal format. Thus, he argued, deviations from this format represented non-royal developments, and were evidence of the Danish aristocracy asserting itself against the new kingship. However, the uniformity of the replacement of English ruler portraits for Scandinavian symbols, and the adherence to two new weight standards does not seem to indicate the absence of a central royal authority, but rather confirm its existence. Furthermore, these changes seem to have taken effect immediately after the battle of Helgeå and the elimination of the last vestiges of resistance to Cnut in Denmark. They would appear to indicate the strength of royal authority in the period after Helgeå, not its weakness.

### *Conclusion*

It is evident that, as in western and central Denmark, Cnut's main concern in Skåne was the consolidation of royal power. Furthermore, the same methods which Cnut had learnt in England were employed there here, and England was also the source of the skilled personnel who oversaw the takeover of power. The development of an urban site alongside the establishment of ecclesiastical organisation wrested the power in the region out of the hands of the local elites. The elites of eastern Denmark put up fierce resistance to Cnut, and he removed them at the first possible opportunity. Thus, it does not appear surprising that of

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<sup>124</sup> See Jonsson, "Coinage", 226 and see p. 225, fig. 11.8, no. 2 & 4 for examples.

<sup>125</sup> C. J. Becker, "Danske Mønter som Historiske Kildemateriale i 1000-Tallet", in *Festskrift til Olaf Olsen på 60-Års Dagen den 7 Juni 1988*, ed. A. Anderson (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Nordiske Oldskriftselskab, 1988), 125; and Jonsson, "Coinage", 226.

<sup>126</sup> Becker, "Danske Mønter".

all Danish urban sites from this period, Lund is by far the largest and most highly organised. Cnut's measures elsewhere in the country had extended his authority at a slow and measured pace, working with compliant members of the aristocracy. However, in Skåne the pace of development was furious, and intended initially to punish and contain local elites who had showed him resistance, and perhaps secondarily to provide the Danish king with a spearhead in Lund, from which he could strike further into the region.

## CHAPTER NINE

### DANISH SUPREMACY IN SCANDINAVIA IN THE EARLY ELEVENTH CENTURY: CNUT AND THE REGIMES OF NORWAY AND SWEDEN

Although Norway and Sweden have been mentioned only briefly in previous chapters, they had a lengthy history of interaction with each other as well as with Denmark. During the expansion of Danish royal power during the reigns of Haraldr Gormsson and Sveinn Tjúguskegg southern Norway appears to have come under Danish authority.<sup>1</sup> The largest of all the excavated Trelleborg-forts is at Aggersborg, on the northernmost tip of Jylland. This had some function controlling the population within the vicinity of the fort, but its size argues that it also had a wider function, perhaps exerting royal influence over the trade routes around the head of the peninsula of Jylland and northwards up the Oslofjord.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, Schia has built a case that the earliest urban layers of Oslo were founded as an administrative centre by Haraldr Gormsson.<sup>3</sup> This would accord with the statement of Haraldr's runestone at Jelling, that he had "won all Denmark for himself and Norway", albeit with some allowance made for exaggeration.<sup>4</sup> The northern coastal regions of Norway were under the authority of the jarls of Hlaðir from 961 to c. 995. Relations between the jarls of Hlaðir and Haraldr Gormsson were close, and Jarl Hákon brought Norwegian military forces to the Danish king's aid on at least one occasion in the late tenth century.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, members of the jarl's dynasty

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<sup>1</sup> Note, however, that the record of the Royal Frankish Annals, s. a. 813 (*Annales Regni Francorum et annals Q. D. Einhardi*, ed. G. H. Pertz (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1895), 138–9) implies that some area of southern Norway (most probably Vestfold) had been under Danish control in the ninth century also.

<sup>2</sup> E. Roesdahl, "Danish Geometrical Viking Fortresses and Their Context", *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 9* (1986): 215 & 225–6.

<sup>3</sup> E. Schia, "Urban Oslo. Evolution from a Royal Stronghold and Administrative Centre", *Archaeology and the Urban Economy. Festschrift to Asbjørn E. Herteig* (Bergen: Universitetet i Bergen, 1989), 63–8.

<sup>4</sup> *Danmarks Runeandskrifter*, no. 42 (text volume, 79); "ias saR . uan . tanmaurk / ala . auk . nuruiak".

<sup>5</sup> See for example the claims made by Einarr skálaglammi in his *Vellekla* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedugtmng*, A. 1: 122–31; B. 1: 117–124).

sought refuge in the Danish court during the periods of exile which were forced on the jarls by the Norwegian rulers Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson. Sveinn Tjúguskegg appears to have consolidated his father's relations with the jarls by marrying his daughter to Eiríkr, Jarl Hákon's son. Additionally, although the evidence is circumstantial, Sveinn appears to have held some form of overlordship over the Swedish king, Óláfr skötkonungr.<sup>6</sup>

*The Beginnings of Cnut's Interaction with Norway and Sweden:  
The Period up to and including Helgeå*

Cnut appears to have tried to perpetuate his father's relationships with rulers in Norway and Sweden, but with little success. Adam of Bremen notes that in preparation for the reinvasion of England, Cnut "entered into a pact with his brother Óláfr . . . who reigned in Sweden".<sup>7</sup> However, Óláfr skötkonungr appears not to have held to whatever was agreed in the pact and opened diplomatic negotiations with the enemies of the Danish king, petitioning Archbishop Unwan of Hamburg-Bremen for some ecclesiastical representation.<sup>8</sup> This was granted by Hamburg-Bremen, and Bishop Thorgaut was established in a see based on the settlement of Skara. Óláfr skötkonungr also seems to have entered into some form of alliance with the Norwegian king, Óláfr Haraldsson, at this time, resulting in the marriage of Óláfr skötkonungr's daughter Ástríðr to Óláfr Haraldsson c. 1019.<sup>9</sup> This defiance of Danish overlordship gives some context to John of Worcester's account of the movements of the two English æthelings (royal heirs), Edmund and Edward, after Cnut

<sup>6</sup> See Sawyer, "Cnut's Scandinavian Empire", 14–15, and J. Ros, *Sigtuna. Staden, Kyrkorna och den Kyrkliga Organisationen* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2001), 95–8, for details of this.

<sup>7</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 52 (Schmeidler, 112–13); "pactum iniit cum fratre Olaph . . . qui regnavit in Suedia".

<sup>8</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 58 (Schmeidler, 118). Sawyer, "Cnut's Scandinavian Empire", 18, has noted that as Unwan was consecrated archbishop on 2 February 1013, and Sveinn died exactly one year and one day later, it is more probable that the appointment of Thorgaut occurred early in Cnut's reign rather than very late in Sveinn's.

<sup>9</sup> This marriage-alliance is recorded by a fragment of a poem of Sigvatr Þórðarson's (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 248; B. 1: 231), and in the historical narratives of Theodoricus, *Historia*, ch. 16 (Storm, 29), and *Agnp*, ch. 25, ed. M. J. Driscoll (London, 1995), 36–8.

came to power in England.<sup>10</sup> He records that Cnut sent the æthelings to the Swedish king, who had a treaty with him, with instructions that he was to kill them. However, the Swedish king defied the order, and sent the æthelings into exile in Hungary.

This anti-Danish alliance continued after the death of Óláfr skötkonungr in 1021 × 1022, and as noted above, Óláfr Haraldsson and Óláfr skötkonungr's son and successor, Anund Jakob, mounted a joint invasion of Danish territory in 1026. I have discussed above the effects of this invasion on Danish politics, and I shall concentrate here on the Norwegian and Swedish part in the conflict. The main accounts record a naval engagement in a river (or on an island in that river) named Helgeå ('Holy River'), identified variously as in Skåne or in Uppland in modern Sweden.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, Saxo Grammaticus records a land battle between a force led by Anund Jakob and some Danish troops at a site named *Stångeberg*, which was close to Helgeå.<sup>12</sup> The immediate conflict was not a decisive victory for Cnut. One redaction of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records heavy losses amongst Cnut's forces, and that the Swedes had control of the battlefield.<sup>13</sup> The extant skaldic verse tacitly confirms this. While several extant verses record Cnut's presence at the battle, it is significant that none state conclusively that he was victorious. Sigvatr Þórðarson in his *Togdrápa* only describes Cnut's preparations for the conflict and his magnanimity afterwards.<sup>14</sup> The one extant stanza of Þórðr Säreksson's *Roðudrápa* is equally vague,

<sup>10</sup> The account can be found in John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1017 (Darlington et al., 502–4).

<sup>11</sup> See Moberg, "The Battle of Helgeå", 4–7, and Graslund, "Knut den Store", 217–28, for varying identifications of the site. There is not enough evidence to conclusively confirm or deny either of these arguments. Note, however, that I have suggested above (at p. 238), on the basis of proximity to Elleköpinge and Köpinge and the involvement of the ruling elite of Skåne in the battle, that the site in north eastern Skåne seems more likely to me.

<sup>12</sup> Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, 10: 16 (Christiansen, 1: 33). See also Christiansen's comments on pp. 195–6, n. 118, and the discussion of the site by Graslund, "Knut den Store och Sveariket", 226–7.

<sup>13</sup> ASC 1025 EF (E: Irvine, 75). Despite Moberg's re-interpretation of the wording of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to indicate a victory not a defeat, I agree with Sawyer's suggestion that this pushes our interpretation of the OE beyond the point of credibility. See Moberg, "The Battle of Helgeå", 12–14, and P. Sawyer, "Knut, Sweden and Sigtuna", in *Austamp—för en ny Sigtunaforskning. 18 Forskare om Sigtuna. Heldagseminarium kring Sigtunaforskning den 26 November 1987, Gröna Laden, Sigtuna*, ed. S. Tesch (Sigtuna, 1989), 89, for details of the debate.

<sup>14</sup> *Togdrápa*, 3–9 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 248–51; B. 1: 232–4, as *Knútsdrápa*).

praising the bravery of both Cnut and Óláfr Haraldsson.<sup>15</sup> Only Óttar svarti, in a single surviving stanza from one of his *Knútsdrápur*, records any form of success for Cnut, but even his words stop short of claiming a decisive victory. His statements that Cnut attacked the Swedes in the place called Holy River and that he “held the land against two princes”, seem to fit into the pattern established by the other poets: praise of Cnut without recording a definitive outcome at Helgeå.<sup>16</sup> If, as seems likely, the poem was composed some time after the battle then such artistic licence may have been justified by the events that followed the initial defeat. Cnut appears to have come out of the overall conflict with fewer losses than either Anund Jakob or Óláfr Haraldsson, and in particular the Norwegians appear to have made a tactical error in the stages of the campaign which led up to Helgeå. When the Swedes pulled back their forces to a site most probably on the north eastern coast of Skåne they were moving to a position of security, but in doing the same the Norwegians trapped their fleet in the Baltic. One of the surviving fragments of the so-called ‘Oldest Saga of St Óláfr’, which was written *c.* 1200, narrates that as Cnut retreated from the battle at Helgeå he stationed the main part of his fleet in the Øresund, blocking the main sea-route from the Baltic to Norwegian territory, and from where his fleet could move quickly to meet any ships trying to slip through the Store Bælt or the Lillebælt.<sup>17</sup> This blockade forced the Norwegian forces to abandon their ships and march home across southern Sweden

<sup>15</sup> *Röðudrápa* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 329; B. 1: 303).

<sup>16</sup> Fragment (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 298; B. 1: 275, as *Knútsdrápa*, stanza 11); “helt/... láði/... fyr jofrum/... tveimr”. Finnur Jonsson identified this verse as part of the well-known *Knútsdrápa* by Óttar svarti. However, M. Townend, “Contextualising the *Knútsdrápur*: Skaldic Praise-Poetry at the Court of Cnut”, *Anglo Saxon England* 30 (2001): 159–61, has shown that metrical considerations, as well as the context of the sagas in which the verses survive, indicates that this verse is not part of that poem. He suggests that it may be a fragment of another *Knútsdrápa* by the same poet or a *lausavisa*. As Snorri in his *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 150 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 280) introduces the stanza as part of a poem known to him as *Knútsdrápa*, the former seems more likely.

<sup>17</sup> The details can be found on fragment 4 & 5 of the so-called Oldest Saga. This is Oslo, Norsk Rikskivert, MS. 52; edited by G. Storm, *Den Ældste Saga om Olav den Helge* (Kristiania, 1893), 9–10. Note that I am setting aside the verses which appear in the *Legendary Saga*, ch. 61, A. Heinrichs (Heidelberg, 1982), 148–50 and *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 158 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 289–91) for my purposes here, which support the existence of this blockade. They were supposedly composed by the Norwegian nobleman Harek of Piotta, but as they are given no formal title in either account, and appear as part of the narrative, they must be regarded as unreliable *lausavisor*.

to Sarpsborg (a few miles south from Oslo on the eastern side of the Oslofjord). This journey took them across approximately 400 miles of heavily wooded terrain.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, this journey was probably made during late winter. On 2 August 1026 the exiled Bishop Ekkihard (or Esico) of Hedeby-Schleswig died violently during a military campaign in Denmark. Gelting has reasonably interpreted this as evidence that the bishop attempted in that year to regain his see by force.<sup>19</sup> The bishop had been in exile since 988 at least, and there are no records of any previous attempts by him to recover his see through force. It seems to be too much of a coincidence that his invasion occurred in the same year as Óláfr Haraldsson's and Anund Jakob's campaign, and it seems probable that he gathered his forces and set off for Hedeby-Schleswig after he had heard that Óláfr Haraldsson and Anund Jakob had moved into Skåne and attacked Sjælland. Thus, his intention was to seize the urban-site in the ensuing confusion, and perhaps to come to an arrangement with the Norwegian and Swedish invaders. If we allow for a reasonable period of time after his death on 2 August, in which Cnut mustered troops and sailed to Denmark, Óláfr Haraldsson and Anund Jakob retreated through the Øresund, and the battles at Helgeå and *Stångeberg* occurred, then winter must already have begun when Cnut blockaded the Øresund. The mortality of the Norwegian forces on the march back to Norwegian territory would have been greatly affected by the season. Evidence from similar movements of troops in winter, such as that made in 1033 by the armies of Emperor Conrad II to counteract the rebellion of Count Odo of Burgundy, indicate that such marches had extremely high mortality rates.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the fact that the Norwegian forces had set out prepared for a sea voyage, and had to return on foot, must have increased the hardships of the journey. This march must have decimated the Norwegian forces, and seriously threatened relations between the survivors and Óláfr Haraldsson.

This conflict was a defining moment in Cnut's career. Until 1026 his attention had been focussed on the extension of royal authority across Denmark. After this point his attention turned outwards, as he began to view his immediate neighbours as potential threats to his power.

<sup>18</sup> Note that Adam of Bremen in his *Gesta*, 4: 7 (Schmeidler, 234–5), discusses the impenetrability of this perilous terrain.

<sup>19</sup> See Gelting, "Elusive Bishops" 179, for details of his argument.

<sup>20</sup> For Conrad's campaign of 1033 see Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, ch. 30; edited by H. Bresslau, *Wiponis Opera. Die Werke Wipos* (Hannover, 1915), 49–50.



*Cnut's Subsequent Actions in Sweden*

A number of modern historians have made assertions that Cnut assumed some form of overlordship over Sweden after 1026.<sup>21</sup> However, these are commonly based on unreliable numismatic evidence. A number of coins were minted in Sigtuna in the late 1020s and 1030s bearing the inscription *CNUT REX SV* (expanded to *rex Swevorum* or *Swenorum*). The moneyer, one Thormod, also minted coins for Anund Jakob, and the royal title found here also appears on his and Óláfr skötkonung's coins. However, little can be concluded from them. In an *addenda* to a paper published in 1989, Sawyer admitted that all the obverses of the coins bearing the relevant inscription were struck with the same die.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it is more likely that this Thormod, while active for Anund Jakob, crudely adapted a coin produced in England or Denmark for Cnut, changing the royal title but not the name of the king, irrespective of who held power in Sweden.

The only legitimate evidence that Cnut asserted some form of overlordship in Sweden is the title he adopted in his letter of 1027 to the English, which styles him as *rex totius Anglie et Denemarcie et Norreganorum et partis Suanorum*.<sup>23</sup> During the Viking Age Sweden was sub-divided into numerous smaller sub-kingdoms and regional chieftaincies.<sup>24</sup> Some centralisation of power occurred during the reigns of Óláfr skötkonung and Anund Jakob, but their authority was focussed on the urban site at Sigtuna and the area around Lake Mälaren. Throughout their reigns an unknown number of independent rulers must have remained throughout the majority of the country. This fragmented nature of Swedish society in the early eleventh century has been taken as corroborating detail to the specification that Cnut ruled "part of the Swedes", and a

<sup>21</sup> See Sawyer, "Knut" and C. Lofving, "Who Ruled the Region East of the Skagerrak in the Eleventh Century?", in *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, ed. R. Samson (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1991), for examples.

<sup>22</sup> Sawyer, "Knut", 88–9, and the *addenda* at p. 92. He credits Kenneth Jonsson for bringing this to his attention. See also Sawyer, "Cnut's Scandinavian Empire", 20 for a more recent discussion of the material.

<sup>23</sup> Liebermann, *De Gesetze*, 1: 276.

<sup>24</sup> See P. Sawyer, *The Making of Sweden* (Alingsås: Viktoria Bokförlag & Department of History, Gothenburg University, 1989), which was also published in 1991 in Swedish under the title *När Sverige blev Sverige*; the same author's, "Knut", 91, Ros, *Sigtuna*, 15–32, and T. Lindkvist, "Social and Political Power in Sweden 1000–1300: Predatory Incursions, Royal Taxation, and the Formation of a Feudal State", in *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, ed. R. Samson (Glasgow: Cruithne, 1991), 140–1, for discussion.

number of attempts have been made to identify which section of the population he claimed authority over.<sup>25</sup> However, attempts to trace Cnut's influence in any of these sub-kingdoms and regional chieftaincies have been inconclusive at best. The runic evidence has received a great deal of attention. Four Swedish runic monuments from the period mention Cnut, and record that the commemoratee had either served in his military following, or had received his geld-payment for military service.<sup>26</sup> Tentative connections have been made between these four records of some client-relationship between Cnut and men commemorated in Sweden and the commemoration of other individuals with the appellation of *thegn* or *dreng* on other runestones.<sup>27</sup> Several scholars have made a connection between this use of the term *thegn* and the client status that it has in some of the contemporary English records.<sup>28</sup> Thus, they have suggested that the men given this title on Swedish runestones were Cnut's representatives. In Sweden there is an overwhelming focus of the material on Västergötland (34 inscriptions from a total of 56).<sup>29</sup> It has also been argued that the influence of these thegns can be discerned in the twelve settlements which are named *Tegneby* (the settlement of the thegns) found along the coastline adjacent to Västergötland heading northwards into south-eastern Norway.<sup>30</sup> Thus, it has been concluded that Cnut extended his control there in the aftermath of Helgeå, through a network of Danish royal officials implanted into the Swedish landscape.<sup>31</sup> However, this argument leaves many questions unanswered. I have noted above that philologists and linguists have cast doubt on this interpretation of these titles. The same criticism applies here. Both *thegn* and *dreng* have wide semantic

<sup>25</sup> See Sawyer, "Cnut's Scandinavian Empire", 19–20, and Löfving, "Who Ruled", for examples.

<sup>26</sup> E. Brate, *Södermanlands Runnskryfter, Första Häftet* (Malmö: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antivittetsakademien, 1924), no. 14 (9–10); the same author's, *Östergötlands Runnskryfter, Andra Häftet* (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antivittetsakademien, 1911), no. 111 (109–11); E. Wessén and S. B. F. Jansson, *Upplands Runnskryfter* (Uppsala: Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antivittetsakademien, 1943–53), nos. 194 & 344 (1: 294–6 & 2: 79–86).

<sup>27</sup> See B. Sawyer, "Appendix", for a recent proposal of a form of this argument.

<sup>28</sup> Both B. Sawyer, "Appendix", 23, and Löfving, "Who Ruled", 154, make explicit a connection to the English office of *thegn*.

<sup>29</sup> Figures taken from B. Sawyer, "Appendix", 24, n. 2, & 25.

<sup>30</sup> See Löfving, "Who Ruled", 152, and B. Sawyer, "Appendix", 25.

<sup>31</sup> B. Sawyer has gone even a little further (*ibid.*, 25) and postulated that even the runic monuments that mention *drengs* from outside Västergötland denote some form of client relationship between the commemoratees and Cnut.

fields and while they conceivably could indicate a Danish officer in the Swedish landscape, it is just as likely that the term should be translated as a 'noble' or 'good man'.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, much of this interpretation rests on the presumption that the relationship recorded on the four stones which name Cnut was an enduring one. It should be noted that these monuments do record the presence of the commoratee on military expeditions with Cnut, but none state that their relationship lasted longer than that individual military campaign. The invading army that Cnut brought to England in 1015 was predominantly made up from mercenary forces. The huge geld of 1018 was collected, in part, to pay these troops, and as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records, they promptly left for Scandinavia after being paid.<sup>33</sup> I see no reason to believe that Cnut's relationship with these forces, and thus the men commemorated on the runestones, continued after his payment of them.

Finally, the supposed runic evidence of Cnut's extension of authority over some part of Sweden cannot be seen as a direct response to the events at Helgeå. If Cnut took some interest in Sweden following the battle, then presumably his attention would have been focussed on the area of Anund Jakob's jurisdiction, that of Sigtuna and the area around Lake Mälär on the eastern coast. However, the runic evidence concentrates on the opposite side of the country, on the western coast.

Furthermore, it does not seem certain that the series of titles given to Cnut in the letter of 1027 indicate any actual extension of Cnut's authority. If we accept the statement that in 1027 Cnut was *rex...partis Suanorum* we must also accept that at that date Cnut claimed to be *rex...Norreganorum*, and this was evidently not the case. Cnut did not seize control of Norway until the subsequent year. It appears that if these titles indicate anything, then it was Cnut's claim to rule over 'the Norwegians and part of the Swedes' through his military success in 1026, rather than through a physical extension of his authority there.

However, while Cnut does not appear to have involved himself directly in Swedish politics, it is unlikely that he completely ignored Anund Jakob after 1026. Lönnroth in 1982 proposed a theory that in part seems to solve this problem.<sup>34</sup> He noted that the majority of

<sup>32</sup> See above at p. 230.

<sup>33</sup> ASC 1018 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 104).

<sup>34</sup> E. Lönnroth, "Administration och Samhälle i 1000-tallets Sverige", *Bebyggelsehistorisk Tidskrift* 4 (1982).

the runestones in Uppland, the area surrounding Sigtuna, which date from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, record that the commemoratee had travelled either to the Baltic or to England for trade or as members of raiding parties. This travel disproportionately enriched this group in Swedish society. Lönnroth saw this group as composed of peasants who on their return to Sweden undermined the authority of the established aristocracy, and effected social change. It is only the class-based part of this interpretation that I find hard to accept. While the mercenary armies of the second Viking Age were indeed made up mainly from peasants, English wealth seems to have come into the possession of these men through the aristocratic leaders of these armies. Thus, this raiding and trading did not enrich a new class of peasant, but injected wealth into all levels of society which involved themselves with these activities. Sweden was politically already very fragmented in the early eleventh century, and rivalry and feuding between a large part of the numerous petty-kings, jarls and chieftains must have been endemic.<sup>35</sup> Injections of wealth into such a social system can only have added to this instability, empowering those who returned from the expeditions, and enabling them to engage in their feuding with renewed vigour. This increased instability within the Swedish political system came at the worst possible moment for Anund Jakob. His father's and his attempts to centralise power raised opposition among the local aristocracy around Sigtuna.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, his return home empty-handed after the invasion of Denmark in 1026 must have put strain on his relations with the Swedish aristocracy. Significantly, Anund Jakob's minting of coins ceased in 1030 × 1035, indicating a collapse in

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<sup>35</sup> I reject here the more peaceful social model put forward by Sawyer, *The Making of Sweden*, 19–20, of Sweden as a society who recognised that “The trade that was concentrated in Malaren was a potential source of great wealth...but unbridled competition would have been disastrous” and so they acknowledged an over-king to keep order. The evidence for such is too flimsy to step away from the social model that seems to be evidenced elsewhere throughout Scandinavia and much of Northern Europe, of a society within which feuding and fighting between neighbouring groups was ubiquitous.

<sup>36</sup> The main reforms of Óláfr skötkonungr's and Anund Jakob's reigns were the introduction of Christianity and royal taxation. Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 58 (118–19) notes that the introduction of Christianity was so unpopular with the Swedish local elites that they offered Óláfr skötkonungr rule over ‘the best part of Sweden’ in exchange for the safety of the pagan-shrine at Uppsala. It seems unlikely that royal taxation was any more popular.

his authority in the region surrounding Sigtuna.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the only other figure in Swedish politics in this period that we can name, Jarl Rögnvaldr, was expelled from Sweden at some time after the mid-1020s and fled to Staraja Ladoga.<sup>38</sup> It appears that the years after 1026 may have been turbulent ones for Anund Jakob and the Swedish aristocracy in general. Thus, Cnut may not have had to attempt to limit the power of Anund Jakob after Helgeå as changes in Swedish social structure may have already done this for him.

### *The Reaction to Helgeå in Norway*

Unlike Sweden, Norway was much more politically organised in the early eleventh century, and although the concentration of power in the hands of a single ruler had occurred only recently, it had been fought for aggressively and successfully. Correspondingly, Cnut's approach there was different.

Both the English and Scandinavian narrative sources agree that the initial phase of Cnut's seizure of power in Norway involved him offering sections of the Norwegian aristocracy money in return for the withdrawal of their support from Óláfr Haraldsson. John of Worcester records that Cnut bribed sections of the Norwegian nobility, writing that Cnut 'sent to them [the Norwegians] much gold and silver beseeching them... to surrender to him, and permit him to reign over them'.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, similar historical traditions exist in the anonymous *Passio Olavi*, Theodoricus monachus' *Historia*, and the later saga-accounts.<sup>40</sup>

It is not clear if these events took place before Helgeå, the battle there being an end-product of Cnut's aggressive encroachment on Norwegian territory, or if Cnut's courting of supporters was more hast-

<sup>37</sup> N. L. Rasmuson, "An Overlooked Type of Coin from the Time of King Anund Jacob", *Commentationes de Nummis Saeculorum IX-XI in Suecia Repertis* (1968): 380.

<sup>38</sup> In *Hemskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 93 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 2: 147-8) it is claimed that Jarl Rögnvaldr was expelled from Sweden by Óláfr skötkonungr, and having fled to Jaroslav, was given a jarldom over Staraja Lagoda.

<sup>39</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1027 (Darlington et al., 510); "Canutus... multum auri et argenti quibusdam illorum misit, multis rogans petitionibus... deditionem illi facerent ac illum super se regnare permetterent".

<sup>40</sup> *Passio Olavi*, ch. 9 (edited in G. Storm, *Monumenta Historica Norvegiae. Latinske Kildeskrifter til Norges Historie i Middelalderen* (Kristiania, 1880), 131); Theodoricus, *Historia*, ch. 16, (edited in *ibid.*, 31), and *Hemskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 130 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 222).

ily arranged in the aftermath of Helgeå. The little evidence that does survive for the careers of the collaborators suggests that they began to support Cnut later rather than sooner in the 1020s. Some of the known details of their careers have been summarised below, but all that need be emphasised here is that it is very difficult to associate these men with Cnut or place them in England until late in the 1020s.<sup>41</sup> Einarr þambarskelfir and Erlingr Skjalgsson fled Óláfr Haraldsson's wrath in the aftermath of the battle of Nesjar c. 1015. However, they most probably did not flee to Cnut, or at least not directly to him. Einarr clearly did not: *Heimskringla* and the *Legendary Saga* claim that he fled into Sweden and then to Denmark. Both *Heimskringla* and *Fagrskinna* claim that Erlingr went to England to find Cnut, but the various reports of the similar period of exile of Þórir hundr casts doubt the reports of Erlingr's whereabouts in the years immediately after 1015. Þórir did not fight at Nesjar, but like Erlingr did fall into a dispute with a royal official and had to flee Norway. The late Icelandic source *Heimskringla* claims that he fled directly to Cnut's court in England, but the earlier Norwegian witness of the *Legendary Saga* makes the more reasonable claim that he spent this period of time in Finnmark instead, and adds the detail that his exile was for only two winters.<sup>42</sup> It seems likely that the later tradition is in error, and that in the later saga-accounts the geographical distance from the places mentioned as well as the literary opposition of Óláfr and Cnut has caused the story to be reduced in size and complexity, with the exiles' flights from Óláfr's wrath being neatly attached to their meetings with Cnut, omitting the interim period spent in exile most probably in areas of Scandinavia beyond Óláfr's control. Importantly, within the *Legendary Saga* Þórir's exile is placed in the same year as that when Cnut met Óláfr Haraldsson and Anund Jakob at Helgeå (i.e. 1026). Thus, an exile of approximately two years has him return to Norway during or after Óláfr's flight in 1028–9, and identifies the period of difficulty between him and Óláfr (i.e. the period in which he would be open to Cnut's bribes) as 1026–8 rather than 1020–6.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> See below at pp. 258–9 for details of the following.

<sup>42</sup> See the references on p. 258 below.

<sup>43</sup> As noted in a previous chapter, it is interesting that despite the many flaws inherent in the saga-tradition, quite often the internal chronology of events and the sequence of their placement in respect to each other can be startlingly accurate.

It appears possible to list some of those members of the Norwegian aristocracy who accepted these bribes and collaborated with Cnut. At the point at which the Norwegian and Icelandic narrative sources discuss Cnut's payments to Norwegian noblemen, all the earliest accounts include lists of the names of those who accepted the bribes. Furthermore, a comparison of these lists suggests that they all descend from a common ancestor. The various lists are set out below:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Theodoricus, <i>Historia</i> : <sup>44</sup><br>1177 × 1187  | <i>Ágrip</i> : <sup>45</sup><br>1188 × 1200  |
| Erlingum...fiulium Scialgs de Sola<br>Kalf filium Arna<br>Thore hund<br>Et alios plures  | Erlingr á Sóla<br>Kálfr á Eggju<br>Þórir hundr<br>ok margir aðrir  |
| The Legendary Saga: <sup>46</sup><br>c. 1200   | Styrmir Kárason's <i>Lifssaga</i> : <sup>47</sup><br>before 1245   |
| Ærlingr Skialgsson<br>Ærlændr or Gerði<br>Aslacr af Fitium<br>Kalfr Arnasun<br>Þorer hundr<br>Harek or Þiotto<br>Oc marger aðrer | Erlingr aa Sola<br>Erlendr or Gerdi<br>Aslacr af Finneyju<br>Harek or Þiottu<br>Kalfr Arna son<br>Þorir hundr<br>ÞorgeiRr af Kuist stodum<br>Hrutr af ViGgiu |

It is probable that the lists in *Ágrip* and Theodoricus' account are directly connected, or that both descend from a lost source.<sup>48</sup> However, the lists in the *Legendary Saga* and in Styrmir Kárason's *Lifssaga* are not directly connected to any of these sources. The form of the lists found in the *Legendary Saga* and in Styrmir Kárason's *Lifssaga* bear

<sup>44</sup> Theodoricus, *Historia*, ch. 16 (Storm, 30).

<sup>45</sup> *Ágrip*, ch. 26 (Driscoll, 38).

<sup>46</sup> *Legendary Saga*, ch. 65 (Heinrichs, 158).

<sup>47</sup> Styrmir Kárason's *Lifssaga* is preserved only as fragments copied into *Flateyjarbók*. The details here are in fragment number 17 (edited in Ó. A. Johnsen & Jón Helgason, *Den Store Saga om Olav den Hellige* (Oslo: Riksarkivet, 1941), 692).

<sup>48</sup> It is generally assumed that the author of *Ágrip* was following and translating (with a few deviations) the text of Theodoricus' work.

some similarity to that in Theodoricus' account, listing all three names included by Theodoricus in an identical order to him. However, the lists given in the *Legendary Saga* and in Styrmir Kárasón's account are fuller, and appear to be closely related to each other. The first four additional names in the *Legendary Saga*, those of Erlendr of Gerði, Áslákr of Fittja, Kálfr Árnason and Hárekr of Þiotta, can be found inserted at the same point in the list in Styrmir Kárasón's *Lífssaga*, and in approximately the same order. They do not agree on the order of the names of Kálfr Árnason, Þórir hundr and Hárekr of Þiotta, which all appear low down in the list. However, this appears to be a minor difference created by the movement of the name of Hárekr of Þiotta from a position below the names of Kálfr Árnason and Þórir hundr in the *Legendary Saga*, to a position above these two names in Styrmir Kárasón's account. These two lists only clearly deviate from each other when Styrmir Kárasón's *Lífssaga* adds two further names to the list in the place of the phrase 'and many others'.<sup>49</sup> The close similarity between all the lists suggests that an ancestral written text lies behind them. This source appears to have been Norwegian in origin. Three of the four sources to include these names have a Norwegian provenance; only Styrmir Kárasón's *Lífssaga* represents an Icelandic tradition. Furthermore, the Norwegian texts are the earliest witnesses to the list. Subsequent authors, often working in Iceland, seem to have either attempted to rework the list of names, as Styrmir Kárasón did, or ignored it as detail irrelevant to an Icelandic audience, as Snorri did. One problem remains. It is not clear whether the shorter version of this list, as reported by Theodoricus and the author of *Ágrip*, or the longer version, as reported in the *Legendary Saga* and Styrmir Kárasón's *Lífssaga* (albeit with a few additions to the latter), is closer to the lost original. Two deductions are possible:

- Styrmir Kárasón and the author of the *Legendary Saga* (or a lost source used by them) had access to a better copy of the source used by Theodoricus and the author of *Ágrip*,
- or that Styrmir Kárasón and the author of the *Legendary Saga* (or a lost source used by them) knew of other historical traditions linking

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<sup>49</sup> As Styrmir Kárasón's narrative carries on to list the men who are said to have been present at the battle of Stiklastaðir but who do not feature in the list (i.e. Þorsteinn knara smíðr and Olafur frændi Kalfs), it is possible that Styrmir was attempting to flesh-out the phrase "and many others" from other accounts known to him.



Kálfr, Þórir and Hárekr to Cnut's bribes, and added their names to their copy (or copies) of the list.

The former of these hypotheses seems to be more probable. The majority of the additions were made in the middle of the list, a peculiar place to add names to an already existing sequence. Furthermore, while Hárekr of Piotta was a well known figure in Scandinavian historical traditions, Erlendr of Gerði and Aslak of Fittja are relatively unknown. Thus, it seems surprising that these two names are found in the lists in the *Legendary Saga* and Styrmir Kárason's account in positions of prominence. Thus, the fuller list in the *Legendary Saga* appears to be closer to the lost original, and the form found in Theodoricus' account and *Ágrip* represents an abridged or truncated record. What form might such an ancestral written text have taken? The only Norwegian written accounts known from before Theodoricus' narrative, which might include such a list, are hagiographical. The earliest complete collection of hagiographical material on Óláfr is the *Passio Olavi*, which in its present form dates to the period of 1180–3, and records Cnut's bribery without any such list of names.<sup>50</sup> However, the *Gamal Norsk Homiliebok* (Old Norse Homily Book) appears to attest to earlier hagiographical traditions concerning Cnut's bribery of the Norwegian nobles, which include some names of the traitors. It includes a homily entitled *In die sancti Olavi Regis et Martiris*, which narrates the treachery of certain nobles towards Óláfr, naming one of the men from the list, *Cálfr Arnasonr*.<sup>51</sup> The manuscript of this text, Copenhagen, A. M. MS. 619 4to, dates to c. 1200, but is Icelandic and as such is unlikely to represent the original witness to the collection or its composite parts. The survival of manuscripts containing similar material from the mid- to late twelfth century allow us to push the date of this material back a little further. Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS. 209, f. 57–90 contains the fullest extant copy of the *Passio Olavi*, and was produced at Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, in the last third of the twelfth century, presumably under influence from that community's daughter-foundation at Lyse, near Bergen, which had been in existence since 1146.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, Copen-

<sup>50</sup> C. Phepstead, *A History of Norway and the Passion and Miracles of the Blessed Óláfr* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2001), xxxviii–xxxix.

<sup>51</sup> *Gamal Norsk Homiliebok*, ed. G. Indrebø (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1931), 111.

<sup>52</sup> See L. B. Mortensen, "Olav den Helliges Mirakler i det 12. Årh.: Streng Tekstkontrol eller Fri Fabuleringen?", in *Olavslegenden og den Latnske Historiskruvning i 1100-tallets*

hagen, A. M. MS. 325 v α 4to is a manuscript-fragment which dates to c. 1155 × 1165, and was once part of an Old Norse hagiographical collection containing accounts of some of Óláfr Haraldsson's miracles.<sup>53</sup> An even earlier date is suggested by John of Worcester's comments on Óláfr Haraldsson. John, while writing in England in the 1130s, appears to have known of hagiographical traditions concerning Óláfr. He names Óláfr as a saint when discussing Magnús Ólafsson's parentage, and his account of the collaborators seems informed by hagiographical writings, making the rather far-fetched claim that it was Óláfr's simplicity and mildness, justice and piety which made him unpopular with his Norwegian subjects.<sup>54</sup> It does not seem unreasonable to presume that hagiographical traditions concerning Óláfr and his martyrdom, and most probably the events that led up to this, existed in a written form in the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries.<sup>55</sup> This places the record on the threshold of living memory of the events concerned, and thus argues for its accuracy.

The narrative sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries indicate that a few further names should be added to this list of collaborators. Foremost among these is Einarr þambarskelfir. He is closely allied in a number of early accounts to members of the list discussed above. Both Theodoricus and the author of *Ágrip* associate him with a campaign which was led by Jarl Sveinn Hákonarson of Hlaðir against Óláfr Haraldsson c. 1015.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the *Legendary Saga* lists the leaders of this campaign, placing him alongside Erlingr of Soli (Skjalgsson), Kálfr of Eggja (Arnason) and Hárekr of Þiotta.<sup>57</sup> It also appears that we can include Áslakr and Skjálgr, the sons of Erlingr Skjalgsson, among the list of collaborators. Their father occurs at the head of the list of those who accepted Cnut's bribes, and *Heimskringla* associates them with their father's rebellion.<sup>58</sup>

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*Norge*, ed. I. Ekrem, L. B. Mortensen & K. Skovgaard-Petersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanums Forlag, 2000), for discussion of this manuscript.

<sup>53</sup> This is now Copenhagen, A. M. MS. 325 v α 4to.

<sup>54</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1046 & 1027 (Darlington et al., 510 & 542).

<sup>55</sup> This would accord well with the interest in church foundation and European writing culture which occurred in the reign of King Óláfr kyrri (obit. 1093), and the earliest Norwegian monastic foundations at Selja (c. 1080 × 1100) and Munkeliv (c. 1110).

<sup>56</sup> Theodoricus, *Historia*, ch. 15 (Storm, 28), *Ágrip*, ch. 24 (Driscoll, 36).

<sup>57</sup> *Legendary Saga*, ch. 23 (Heinrichs, 74).

<sup>58</sup> *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 131 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 226).

It is possible to perceive in a number of these collaborators a family-group bound together through mutual association to the jarls of Hlaðir. Theodoricus' account and the *Legendary Saga* note that Einarr þambarskelfir was married to Jarl Hákon Sigurðsson's daughter Bergljot.<sup>59</sup> The family of Erlingr Skjalgsson was also linked by marriage to the jarls of Hlaðir, as Aslákr Erlingsson was married to Jarl Sveinn Hákonarson's daughter Sigríðr.<sup>60</sup> Hárekr of Þiotta was married to Ragnhildr Árnadóttir, the sister of Kálfr Árnason, linking him to this family group.<sup>61</sup> In addition, Snorri provides a great deal of genealogical information about a twelfth-century descendent of the Árnasons.<sup>62</sup> From this it can be seen that Finnr Árnason's daughter, Ingibjörg, married a Norwegian nobleman named Ormr Eilífsson, whose mother Ragnhildr was another daughter of Jarl Hákon the Good. The daughter of Ormr Eilífsson and Ingibjörg was named Ragna and was married to Sveinn Sveinnsson, who was the grandson of another of our conspirators, Erlendr of Gerði.

However, the evidence falls short of indicating that these men represented an organised and integrated faction among the Norwegian nobility to whom Cnut appealed for support. Some of these family-relations, such as that which connects Erlendr of Gerði to the Árnasons, were quite distant, and some of these conspirators, such as Hárekr of Þiotta, were also closely related to the kings of Norway.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the fact that the link between the group and the Árnasons and thus Erlendr of Gerði is provided by the daughter of Finnr Árnason does not fit well with such an interpretation. Finnr is the only one of his brothers who appears unlikely to have been associated with Cnut. He appears in Theodoricus' and the *Legendary Saga's* accounts among the firm supporters of Óláfr Haraldsson, and he is reported as fighting alongside Óláfr at the battle of Stiklastaðir.<sup>64</sup> During the 1020s at

<sup>59</sup> Theodoricus, *Historia*, ch. 15 (Storm, 28) and *Legendary Saga*, ch. 24 (Heinrichs, 74).

<sup>60</sup> *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 131 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 226).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 110 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 181).

<sup>62</sup> *Heimskringla, Haraldssona Saga*, ch. 17 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 3: 323), there the information is offered as part of the genealogy of one Erlingr Ormsson.

<sup>63</sup> *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 104 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 175), records that Hárekr's grandmother was the daughter of Jarl Halfdan and Ingebjörg, who was herself a daughter of King Haraldr Hárfagri.

<sup>64</sup> Theodoricus, *Historia*, ch. 18–9 (Storm, 35–39), and the *Legendary Saga*, ch. 76 (Heinrichs, 180).

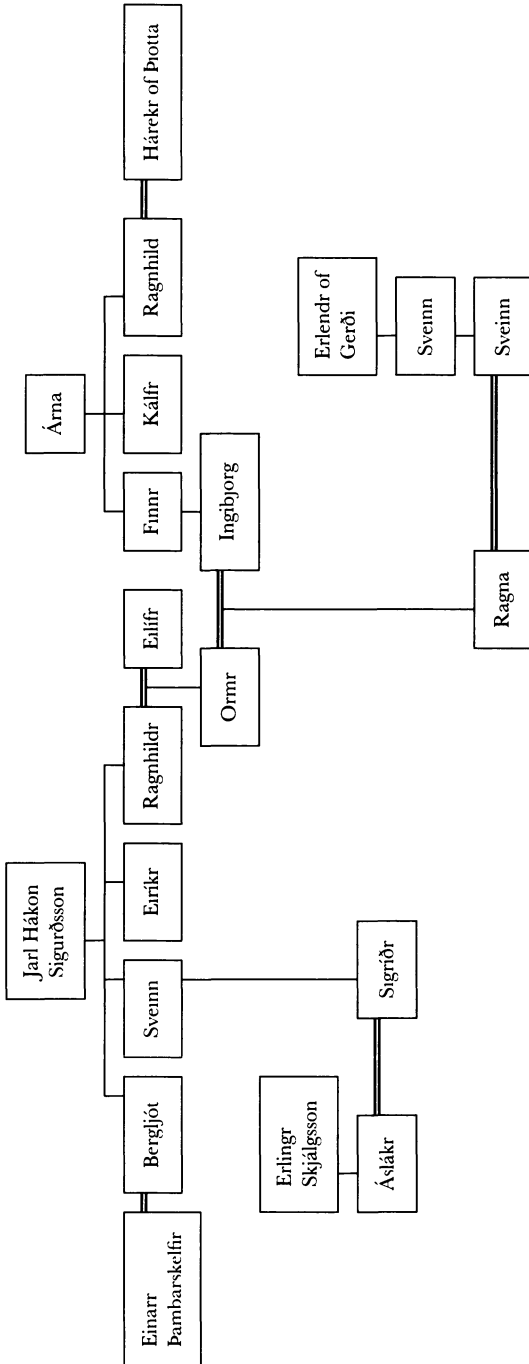


Fig. 18. Diagram of the familial connections between Gnut's Norwegian associates, and their connections to the jarls of Hlaðir.

least, Finnur probably should be seen as an exception to the Árnasons, not the lynchpin holding it to its crucial political allies.

It appears that more pragmatic reasons may have individually motivated these men to withdraw their support from Óláfr Haraldsson. Many of these men appear to have transferred their allegiance to Cnut only when they became fugitives from Óláfr's justice. Einarr þambarskelfir put up resistance to Óláfr at the battle of Nesjar, and with the failure of this he fled into Sweden.<sup>65</sup> Snorri relates that after the death of his Swedish patrons Einarr negotiated a truce between himself and Óláfr, and returned to his estates.<sup>66</sup> However, he seems not to have returned to his governing office until after Cnut's conquest in 1028.<sup>67</sup> This vacillation between Óláfr and Cnut, seeking the support of one only when immediately threatened by the other, is characteristic of several of the other conspirators. Erlingr Skjalgsson was another member of the resistance to Óláfr who was present at the battle of Nesjar, and subsequently appears to have got into a disagreement with one of Óláfr's officials.<sup>68</sup> He yielded to Óláfr over this and reached a settlement, fleeing the country a little later.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, Hárekr of Þiotta was an influential figure who offered his allegiance to Óláfr only when the king arrived in Hålogaland. He also got into a disagreement over jurisdiction with one of Óláfr's officials.<sup>70</sup> Hárekr accepted the king's judgement against him, before exacting violent revenge on the official and transferring his allegiance to Cnut.<sup>71</sup> Another example of this can be found in Þórir hundr. He became involved in a feud with one of Óláfr's officials, and having been forced to accept Óláfr's justice he fled to Cnut.<sup>72</sup> In the main, these stories resemble the basic motifs of feud and flight from Norwegian authority which can be found throughout the Icelandic

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<sup>65</sup> *Hemskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, chs. 39, 41, 46 & 51 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 50, 52-3, 58 & 67). *Legendary Saga*, ch. 25, (Heinrichs, 78), also notes that he was in Helsingland (on the eastern coast of mid-Sweden, around the modern city of Soderhamn) for some time, as well as in Denmark.

<sup>66</sup> *Hemskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 115 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 191-2).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 171 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 306-7).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, chs. 116 & 120-1 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 192-3 & 203-6).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, chs. 120-1 & 131 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 203-6 & 226) and *Fagrskanna*, ch. 25 (Bjarni Einarsson, 27).

<sup>70</sup> *Hemskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, chs. 123 & 140 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 211 & 253-5).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 169 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 305).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, chs. 123, 133, & 139 (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, 2: 211-13, 227-34 & 250-3). *Legendary Saga*, ch. 46 & 62 (Heinrichs, 108 & 152) narrates the same story except that it has Þórir flee northwards to Finnmark, not England.

family saga accounts, and it is probable that some elements have been exaggerated by the literary tastes of Norwegians and Icelanders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, in the cases of Erlingr, Hárekr and Þórir, the close agreement between the accounts over the motive for their dispute with the king: that they quarrelled with and usually killed a royal official who had been inserted into a region over which they held traditional rights, inspires some confidence. There is no apparent reason to doubt that Óláfr pursued an aggressive policy through the appointment of large numbers of royal officials, and such attempts to centralise authority would have made common enemies among the Norwegian nobility. Cnut may have come to be an alternative patron to those members of the Norwegian nobility who had been displaced from their traditional rights by Óláfr's officials.

Other sources suggest that the Norwegian nobles of the early eleventh century may have become particularly powerful and independent, and that they were beginning to openly assert this independence against overlordship in that period. Apart from the saga material, evidence of this trend can be found in one manuscript of the *Skáldatal*. The copy of this document in *Codex Upsaliensis* (Uppsala, De la Gardie MS. 11), which was written in the western fjords of Iceland c. 1300, includes some additional matters, among which is an extension of the list of poets and patrons to include those who composed for kings of England and for Norwegian noblemen. After an anecdotal note about a poet named Ulf hinn oargi, the additional list runs thus:<sup>73</sup>

| Patron              | Poet                   | Notes on possible dating |
|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Þorleifr spaki      | þjóðólfr or hvini      | Early tenth century      |
| Arinbiorn hersir    | egill skalla grims son | Mid tenth century        |
| Þorstein þorv son.  | egill skalla grims son | Mid tenth century        |
| erlingr skialgs son | Sighvatr skalld.       | Early eleventh century   |
| Gvþbrandr i do[l]um | otar svartí            | Early eleventh century   |
| Jvar hviti          | sighvatr skalld        | Early eleventh century   |
| harekr or þiotv     | Refr gestz son.        | Early eleventh century   |
| einar Flvga         | Refr skalld            | Early eleventh century   |
| kalfr arna son.     | biarni gvlbra skald    | Early eleventh century   |

<sup>73</sup> All data here has been taken from Grape, et al., *Snorre Sturlasons Edda*, 1: 46–7, & 2: 46–7.

Table (*cont.*)

| Patron                    | Poet   | Notes on possible dating  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Vlfr stallari             | stein herdisar son.  | Mid eleventh century<br>(follower of King Haraldr Sigurðsson)   |
| eystein orri              | þorkell hamarskalld  | Mid eleventh century<br>(follower of King Haraldr Sigurðsson)   |
| Viðkvnr jons son          | aso þorþr.   | Mid eleventh century (great-grandson of Þórir hundr)  |
| Gregorius dags son.       | Einarr skula son   | Early twelfth century<br>(follower of King Ingi)  |
| nikvlas skialldvarar son. | Svgandi skalld   | Mid twelfth century<br>(magnate in reign of King Magnús Erlingsson)   |
| eindriði vngi             | einar skvla son.   | Mid twelfth century<br>(rebellious magnate in reign of King Magnús Erlingsson)  |
| Jvarr selki               | arnor kalfs son.   | untraced  |
| Sigvrþr mvnkr             | arnor kalfs son  | untraced  |
| Arnbiorn jons son.        | olaFr herdisar son   | By implication thirteenth century (note <i>olafr herdisar son</i> composed for both this Arnbiorn and Gautr of Meli). |
| Gavtr a meli              | Steinvor sighvatv<br>dottir.<br>olaFr herdisar son<br>dagFinnr gvðlavgs[son] | Mid thirteenth century<br>(magnate who died in 1270)  |

Most of these poems are lost, but a few surviving stanzas confirm the existence of some of this verse. Fragments survive of Sigvatr Þórðarson's poem on Erlingr Skjalgsson, Bjarni Gullbráskáld's poem on Kálfir Árnason, and while Óttar svartí's poem on Dala-Guðbrandr is lost, Guðbrandr is mentioned in Sigvatr Þórðarson's poem on Erlingr Skjalgsson as a figure as powerful as Erlingr.<sup>71</sup> It is somewhat difficult to assess the veracity and representativity of this source, but it seems

<sup>71</sup> There are two poems by Sigvatr Þórðarson on Erlingr Skjalgsson: a *kviða* and a *flokkr* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 243–7; B. 1: 228–31). However, upon close examination it is clear that only the *kviða* was actually composed for Erlingr. The *flokkr* is actually about Óláfr, and mentions Erlingr only as an aggressor to the poem's central figure and patron.

noteworthy that there are no surviving verses or fragments of verses composed for Norwegian magnates which are not included here.<sup>75</sup> Progressing through the data chronologically, an interesting pattern emerges. The three examples of tenth-century material should be treated with caution, and as they are outside the remit of this study they will be set aside here.<sup>76</sup> Some nine compositions are recorded for the eleventh century, the highest number for any century represented, and it should be noted that several of the magnates who are identified elsewhere as collaborators appear here as patrons. Strangely, this source records much less skaldic verse for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (3–5 and 2–4 compositions respectively), and yet these centuries were closer to, and presumably more familiar to, the author. Moreover, the other sections of *Skáldatal*, notably those which list the poets of the Norwegian kings in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, demonstrate that skaldic verse did not become less popular in Norway in that period. The variant witnesses to this section of the list can be tabulated thus:

| King                | Approx.<br>year of<br>death | Number<br>of skalds in<br>Copenhagen,<br>A. M. MS.<br>761 4to | Number<br>of skalds in<br>Uppsala,<br>De la Gardie<br>MS. 11 | Number<br>of skalds<br>in Uppsala<br>R. 685 |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Óláfr kyrri         | 1093                        | 3   | 5  | 5   |
| Magnús berfott      | 1103                        | 5   | 6  | 6   |
| Sigurðr Magnússon   | 1130                        | 6   | 6  | 6   |
| Eysteinn Magnússon  | 1122                        | 2   | 2  | 2   |
| Haraldr gilli       | 1136                        | 3   | 3  | 3   |
| Magnús blindi       | 1139                        | 1   | 1  | 1   |
| Sigurðr slembir     | 1139                        | 1   | 1  | 1   |
| Ingi Haraldsson     | 1161                        | 3   | 3  | 4   |
| Sigurðr Haraldsson  | 1155                        | 3   | 2  | 3   |
| Óláfr Haraldsson    | Unknown                     | –   | 1  | –   |
| Eysteinn Haraldsson | 1176                        | 2   | 2  | 2   |
| Magnús Erlingsson   | 1184                        | 6   | 6  | 6   |

<sup>75</sup> Apart from these listed here, for the eleventh century there are only the verses by Þórðr Sareksson on Klæingr Brúason, and Árnorr Jarlaskald on Hermundr Illugason. Both of these patrons were Icelanders.

<sup>76</sup> See Kuhn, *Das Dróttkvætt*, 279–81 and 285–8, for studies of the tenth-century poets named here and their compositions.



Table (*cont.*)

| King  | Approx.<br>year of<br>death  | Number<br>of skalds in<br>Copenhagen,<br>A. M. MS.<br>761 4to | Number<br>of skalds in<br>Uppsala,<br>De la Gardie<br>MS. 11 | Number<br>of skalds<br>in Uppsala<br>R. 685 |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| Hákon herðibreiðr                                   | 1162   | 1   | 2  | 1   |
| Sverrir Hákonarson                                  | 1202   | 13  | 13   | 13  |
| (?) ( <i>recte</i> Sigurðsson)                      |  |   |  |   |
| Hákon Sverrirsson                                   | 1204   | 2   | 3  | 2   |
| Ingi Barðarson                                      | 1217   | 5   | 5  | 5   |
| Hákon Hákonarson                                    | 1263   | 7   | 8  | 8   |
| <i>Hakon son Haco nor hins<br/>koronaða konungs</i> | Eldest son<br>of Hakon<br>Hakonsson.<br>Predeceased<br>his father. | 1   | –  | 1   |
| Magnús Hákonarson                                   | 1278   | –   | 1  | 1   |
| Eiríkr Magnússon                                    | 1299   | –   | 5  | 5   |

There appears to be no reason for an Icelander, who wrote *c.* 1300, to give preferential notice to skaldic verse composed for Norwegian noblemen in the eleventh century. Thus, the list may record an actual boom in the composition of verse for Norwegian noblemen in this period. As argued above, the composition of such verse and the maintenance of poets was a crucial part of the public display of both wealth and political independence in early medieval Scandinavia, and an upsurge in such assertions by the Norwegian aristocracy of the eleventh century fits well with what can be known of the political situation. Most probably these elites had increased their wealth and independence as a result of the political confusion in the region which had been created by the competition for power between the new Norwegian kings and the jarls of Hlaðir in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Only after the jarls were finally expelled did Óláfr Haraldsson's centralisation of political power make itself felt in the north and western regions of Norway, prompting an apparent backlash against this process.

It appears that in bribing or supporting those Norwegian magnates who had been alienated by Óláfr Haraldsson, Cnut was attempting to exploit certain weaknesses that had emerged in the changing Norwegian social system.

The second part of Cnut's takeover of power in Norway involved more direct action. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Cnut

sailed for Norway with fifty ships in 1028.<sup>77</sup> It is probable that the skalds Sigvatr Þórðarson and Þórarinn loftunga accompanied this fleet and their individual *Knútsdrápur* record that the fleet halted briefly in the Limfjord, most probably to collect more Danish forces, before beginning, what is in Þórarinn's poem, a triumphal procession northwards along the western coastline of Norway towards Trondheim.<sup>78</sup> No warfare is recorded, and it seems likely that this was a bloodless occupation rather than a violent invasion. A passing reference in *Ágrip* to Cnut having held the sons of many Norwegian noblemen hostage at this time, may reflect one of the measures Cnut took to consolidate his position in Norway.<sup>79</sup>

In addition, Cnut appears to have rewarded his influential Norwegian followers. An extant verse from a poem by Bjarni Gullbráráskáld, which was composed for Kálfr Árnason, indicates that Cnut spent some time in this period endorsing grants of Norwegian estates which had been previously made in England.<sup>80</sup> The verse is most probably authentic. The entire poem was known to the author of the *Codex Uppsaliensis* manuscript of *Skáldatal* c. 1300, and while thirteenth-century saga-authors probably did forge the occasional verse to add to their narrative, it is a little far-fetched to suppose they forged an entire poem. The verse records that Cnut gave Kálfr gifts and then extensive estates, and, crucially, it dates these grants to the period before Kálfr returned to Norway (pre-1028).<sup>81</sup> Of course, such grants would have been of a speculative form when made, and required formal endorsement if and when Cnut came to power in Norway.

Additionally, Cnut appears to have recognised the political potential of having a figure with a legitimate claim to rule at the head of his government, especially one whose claim to rule predated Óláfr's. Thus, Hákon Eiríksson, the only known son of Earl Eiríkr Hákonarson, and thus the only apparent heir of the dynasty of the jarls of Hlaðir, left his earldom in western Mercia and assumed a position of authority in Norway.<sup>82</sup> A single skaldic verse attributed to Sigvatr Þórðarson records

<sup>77</sup> ASC 1028 DE (D: Cubbin, 64). This was presumably the fleet Cnut had ordered the English, in his letter of 1027, to begin preparing while he was in Denmark.

<sup>78</sup> Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedigtning*, A. 1: 248–51 & 322–4; B. 1: 232–4 & 298–9.

<sup>79</sup> *Ágrip*, ch. 30 (Driscoll, 42).

<sup>80</sup> Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedigtning*, A. 1: 393–6; B. 1: 363–5.

<sup>81</sup> This presumes that the granted estates were in Norway, not England. This seems to me to be the most probable interpretation.

<sup>82</sup> Hákon may have been the only direct male heir to the dynasty in 1028. His paternal uncle, Sveinn Hákonarson, had held the jarldom while Hákon and his father

a war of diplomacy that followed between Cnut, Hákon and Óláfr Haraldsson.<sup>83</sup> This verse is somewhat suspect, as it is a *lausavisa*, and is found only in *Heimskringla*, but as the details of the conflict given in the verse do not agree with any extant Norwegian or Icelandic narrative account there is no apparent motive for its forgery. As such it is included here. The verse highlights the traditional rivalry between Hákon's dynasty and Óláfr, placing the two rulers in opposing roles in their method of interaction with the Norwegian elite. Óláfr is presented as a source of unnamed problems, while the verse pays particular attention to Hákon's ability to reconcile the disagreements of the senior Norwegian landholders (*búendr gamla*). The message is clear: Hákon as a representative of his family could bring peace back to groups divided by bitter disputes. When Óláfr's own aggressive attempts to centralise power had alienated key members of the Norwegian elite, and he had returned with large losses from Helgeå, his fate was probably already sealed. He fled before Cnut's and Hákon's advance, retreating into Sweden and from there to Novgorod.<sup>84</sup>

Cnut appears to have worked actively throughout 1028–9 to convince the Norwegian aristocracy of the legitimacy of his regime. Fragments of skaldic verse appear to preserve evidence of a campaign of propaganda aimed at the Norwegian nobility. Skaldic verse was composed for recital before the patron and his retinue in order to please him in the short-term and to preserve the memory of his deeds and authority in the long-term. Thus, those poems which were popular enough to survive usually contain representations of the ruler which were approved of by him and his entourage. Hallvarðr Háreksblei's *Knutsdrápa* dates to the period immediately after Cnut's seizure of power in Norway, and it is the terms used to describe Cnut's overlordship of that country that are interesting.<sup>85</sup> The imagery of the verses which describe Cnut's domination of Norway are loaded with sexual overtones, in ways which

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were in England, and the only known descendent of this Sveinn was a daughter (see my comment on her and her marriage on p. 256).

<sup>83</sup> Fragment (Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedigtning*, A. 1: 242; B. 1: 227, as *Vestfararvísur*, stanza 4). The verse is preserved in *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 146 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 272).

<sup>84</sup> *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, chs. 177–80 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 319–27).

<sup>85</sup> *Knutsdrápa*, 4 and 6 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedigtning*, A. 1: 317–18; B. 1: 294). See Townend, "Contextualising", 151–2, for the dating of this verse. Note that the translation and arrangement used here is that of Frank, "Cnut", 120.

are suggestive of the manipulation of the links between Cnut and the jarls of Hlaðir for political effect. The stanzas in question run thus:

Grund liggr und þqr bundin  
breið holmfjöturs leiðar  
(heinlands hoddum grandar  
Hóðr) eitrsvólum naðri.

The broad land, wrapped around by the deadly-cold serpent (sea), lies under the tree (man) of the island-fetters (Midgard serpent's) path (gold); the hone-land's (sword's) Hoðr (warrior) destroys treasure (is generous).

Englandi ræðr Yngvi  
einn (hefsk friðr at beinni)  
þøðrakkr bænar nøkkva  
barkrjóðr, ok Danmørkku;  
ok hefr (odda Leiknar)  
jalm-Freyr und sik malma  
(hjaldrørr haukum þverrir  
hungr) Nøregi þrungit.

The prince, the battle-bold reddener of the bark (byrnie) of the ship of prayers (breast), alone rules England and Denmark; peace becomes easier. The Freyr of the noise of weapons (warrior) has also cast under him Norway; the battle-server (warrior) diminishes the hunger of the valcyrie's hawks (ravens).

Here the poet states that Cnut has *und sik...Nøregi þrungit* (thrust Norway under himself), and the choice of this verb *þrøngva* with the preposition *und sik*, figuratively meaning to subvert, but literally meaning to physically press under one's self, is suggestive of violent sexual imagery. Furthermore, the statement that the broad land lies 'bound under the king', and the choice of the kenning *holmfjöturr* (fetters of the island) for the sea, also seem to emphasise this restraint aspect. In the extant corpus of such verse, imagery close to this can only be found in the poems composed for the jarls of Hlaðir, and specifically those which concern their conception of their right to rule over Norway. In several of the extant poems for members of this dynasty we find references to an association between the ruling jarl and a pagan god in a conceptualised fertility ritual. Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld's *Hákonardrápa*, Eyvindr skáldaspillir's *Háleygatal*, and Einarr skálaglamm's *Vellekla* (all composed in the tenth century for Jarl Hákon Sigurðsson) all rework a motif found initially in pre-Christian cultic poetry. In this the land of Norway, represented as a woman, goes through a forced marriage

ceremony and a sexual union with a god, in order to figuratively fertilise the land.<sup>86</sup> In the verse composed in the court of Jarl Hákon Sigurðsson, the jarl replaced the god in this sexual union, and the force and violence of the sexual liaison was exaggerated, apparently to emphasise his military conquest of Norway. A few examples from those mentioned above demonstrate this connection:

Eyvindr skáldaspillir, *Háleygiatal*<sup>87</sup>

Þeims alt austr  
til Egða býs  
brúðr Val-Tys  
und bægi liggr.

(Hákon,) under whose arms Val-Tyr's bride (the land), all the way eastward to the homes of the men of Agðer, now lies.

Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld, *Hákonardrápa*<sup>88</sup>

Sannyrðum spenr sverða  
snarr þiggjandi viggjar  
harrhaddaða byrjar  
biðkvón und sik Þriðja.

The war-ship's brisk lord with the veracity of the sword entices under him Þriði's (Oðinn's) beloved, whose hair is the foliage of pine trees.

Því hykk fleygjanda frakna  
(ferr jorð und mennþverri),  
ítra eina at láta  
Auðs systur mjök trauðan.

Therefore, I think that the thrower of the spear is very unwilling to leave Auðr's glorious sister (the land) alone; the land prostrates herself under the ring-waster (the generous leader).

<sup>86</sup> See G. Steinsland, *Det Hellige Bryllup og Norrøn Kongedeologi: En Analyse av Hierogami-Myten i Skírmsmál, Ynglingatal, Háleygiatal og Hyndluljóð* (Oslo: Solum, 1991), for fuller study of this religious motif. For the jarls of Hlaðir's reuse of it see F. Ström, "Poetry as an Instrument of Propaganda: Jarl Hákon and his Poets", in *Speculum Norroenvm: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. U. Dronke, Guðrún P. Helgadóttir, G. W. Weber and H. Bekker-Nielsen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), 446–49, and M. Clunies Ross, "Style and Authorial Presence in Skaldic Mythological Poetry", *Saga Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research* 20 (1981): 284–7.

<sup>87</sup> *Háleygiatal*, 15 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 71; B. 1: 62). The translation is adapted from Ström, "Poetry", 448.

<sup>88</sup> *Hákonardrápa*, 3 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, A. 1: 155; B. 1: 147). The translation is adapted from Ström, "Poetry", 452–3.

Whilst the specific verbs used to describe the sexual domination of Norway are different from that used by Hallvarðr in his poem about Cnut, the image of the land being forced under the body of the ruler in a sexual liaison with violent overtones, is recognisable. Cnut had close family ties to the jarls of Hlaðir, but this skaldic emulation may represent more than a blank admission of this familial connection.<sup>89</sup> In all of these verses composed for the jarls of Hlaðir this motif appears to have had a political purpose. Thus, it does not seem to have been a coincidence that Cnut's poets emulated the single component of the poems composed for the jarls which gave mythological legitimacy to their rule.

Furthermore, these verses may have had a wider audience than just that of the named patron and his court. We can observe that some verses, which were often composed only a few years apart by men who do not appear to have been in the same patron's retinue, commonly take up and adapt each other's motifs and phrases for artistic effect. In order for this to be possible the verses of famous poets, at least, would have to have been rapidly circulated within a wide poetic community. Through this oral-dissemination such verses would have reached a large part of the most wealthy and influential Scandinavian elites.<sup>90</sup> Thus, this poetic statement of a link between Cnut and the dynasty of the jarls of Hlaðir may have had a larger audience than just Cnut's court, and presumably had a political function within this wider context. Indeed, there appears to be evidence that Hallvarðr's poem may have been widely known in Norway in the mid-eleventh century. In the 1040s another poet, Árnorr jarlaskáld, composed a *drápa* for King Magnús Ólafsson of Norway.<sup>91</sup> Stanza seven of this poem runs thus:

<sup>89</sup> Jarl Eiríkr had married Cnut's sister during Sveinn Tjúguskegg's lifetime, and his son Hákon Eiríksson married one Gunnhildr, whom John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1029 (Darlington et al., 510) identified as the daughter of Cnut's sister and of *Wyrtegeorn*, a king of the Wends.

<sup>90</sup> Some confirmation of this role of the skald as a disseminator of the known body of verse can be found in the later saga evidence, such as in *Stífs pátr blnda*. See B. Fíðjestøl, "Icelandic Sagas and Poems on Princes. Literature and Society in Archaic West Norse Culture", in *Bjarne Fíðjestøl: Collected Papers*, ed. O. E. Haugen & E. Mundal, (Odense: Odense University Press, 1997), 246–7, for a translation of the relevant part with some discussion. In this episode a poet was retained by King Haraldr harðráði of Norway for the recitation of many poems to entertain the king, none of which were his own composition.

<sup>91</sup> The edition and translation here are from Whaley, *Poetry*, 120 & 197–8. The emphasis is mine.

Náði siklingr síðan  
 Snjallr ok Danmǫrk allri  
 —mǫttr óx drengja dróttins—  
 dýrr Nóregi at stýra.  
 Engr hefr annarr þengill  
 Áðr svá gnógu láði  
 —bráskat bragnings þroski—  
 barnungr und sik þrungit.

Then the excellent prince attained, daring, the whole of Denmark—the strength of the warriors' liege waxed—to rule, as well as Norway. No other lord before has thrust such ample lands,—the sovereign's manhood did not fail—whilst a stripling, under his sway.

If we compare one of the stanzas of Hallvarðr Háreksblesi's *Knutsdrápa* given above, certain similarities are striking:

Englandi ræðr Yngvi  
 einn,—hefsk friðr at beinni—  
 boðrakkur bæna nokkva  
 barkrjóðr, ok Danmorku.  
 Auk hefr (odda Leiknar)  
 jalm-Freyr und sik malma  
 (hjaldrórr haukum þverrir  
 hungri) Nóregi þrungit.

The prince, the battle-bold reddener of the bark (byrnie) of the ship of prayers (breast), alone rules England and Denmark; peace becomes easier. The Freyr of the noise of weapons (warrior) has also cast under him Norway; the battle-server (warrior) diminishes the hunger of the valcyrie's hawks (ravens).

The repetition of certain key words and features shows that Árnorr is emulating and reworking elements of Hallvarðr's verse. He repeats the phrase *ok Danmǫrk* ('and Denmark') midway through the stanza. Further, the use of the same rare verb and preposition *und sik . . . þrungit* ('suppressed under himself'), and the fact that in Árnorr's verse, as in Hallvarðr's, this striking verb is used to end the stanza, consolidates the impression that Árnorr is echoing his predecessor's composition.<sup>92</sup> Even the pronounced alliteration on 'b' in Hallvarðr's verse is replicated. The function of this emulation is evident in Árnorr's statement

<sup>92</sup> Note that Whaley, *Poetry*, 197–8, records that her preferred manuscript witnesses the nonsensical form “vnd sik strvngit”. However, as she notes, no such verb *strvngva* is known elsewhere and the obvious emendation is to *þrungit* (*þrøngva*), for which there are numerous other witnesses.

that 'no other lord before has thrust such ample lands... under his sway'. For artistic effect his verse emulates and subverts the statement of power found in the poem about Cnut, setting the new patron above the old. This use of this poetic device presupposes that at least some part of the audience of the new verse, the Norwegian king and the magnates who surrounded him in the middle of the eleventh century, were familiar enough with its model to identify the original source. Additionally, as Árnorr's verse was composed in the 1040s, then it is most probable that this familiarity stems from the period of Cnut's rule in Norway.<sup>93</sup> It would appear that a large section of the aristocracy of early-eleventh-century Norway either attended Cnut's court there and had this politically-charged verse recited to them, or that these verses were widely disseminated throughout the courts and retinues of these same magnates during Cnut's reign. Thus, Cnut's association of himself with the political-religious myths of the jarls of Hlaðir appears to have been intended to make his regime appear more legitimate among the Norwegian elites.

Hákon's death after a few months of rule was a political disaster for Cnut, and some indication of the precarious position of Cnut's regime in Norway at this moment can be gauged from the fact that Óláfr Haraldsson chose this moment to return and make a bid for power. He appears to have misjudged the number and strength of his enemies among the Norwegian nobility, and he was met in battle by a consortium of them and killed at Stiklastaðir.<sup>94</sup>

However, Óláfr's death did not bring stability to Cnut's regime. Any pretence of a legitimate succession through a dynastic connection to the jarls of Hlaðir had died with Hákon, leaving Cnut with only the right of a conqueror. In early eleventh century Norway such a claim was a weak one. The formation of a single kingship there was relatively new, and the aristocracies in control of the various regions were powerful and independent. Moreover, as the legitimacy of the jarls of Hlaðir (and Cnut's dynastic connections to them) appears to have formed a large part of the diplomatic war with Óláfr, a new problem may have arisen after Hákon's death. Several powerful members of the Norwegian nobility were as closely related to the dynasty of the jarls of Hlaðir as

<sup>93</sup> Clearly verse lauding Cnut is not likely to have enjoyed an upsurge in popularity in Norway after the return of Óláfr Haraldsson's heir, Magnús, to the throne in 1034.

<sup>94</sup> The earliest to mention this are *Passio Olavi* ch. 20 (Storm, 144); Theodoricus, *Histona*, ch. 19 (Storm, 39-42); *Agnp*, ch. 31 (Driscoll, 42-4).



Cnut, and thus, after Hákon's death they had strong inheritance claims over the jarldom and perhaps the associated authority. Snorri informs us that at least one of these pressed such claims in the aftermath of Óláfr's death, and Cnut cautiously appeased him with extensive land grants. As noted above, Einarr þambarskelfir was married to Bergljót, the daughter of Jarl Hákon Sigurðsson. He returned to Norway in the aftermath of Óláfr's death, perhaps to assert his own claim to rule. *Heimskringla* states that in response Cnut gave him extensive territories to pacify him.<sup>95</sup> Another candidate can be found in Kálfr Árnason. He had married Jarl Sveinn Hákonarson's daughter during the period in which the jarls were in power, and thus had a very strong claim to the jarldom. The traditions in *Heimskringla* regarding him at this stage are hopelessly jumbled, but it may be significant that Snorri singles him out as someone who had aspirations to rule in Norway and who Cnut had to placate with extensive grants of land.<sup>96</sup> These assertions are only found in one thirteenth-century narrative and as such must remain suspect, but they are historically plausible and may record an accurate tradition.

In Hákon's stead Cnut placed his own son Sveinn as a regent in Norway. However, this son was probably only fifteen or sixteen years old in 1029, and thus was placed under the guidance of his mother Ælfgifu and a retinue of followers chosen from Cnut's court and the Danish administration.<sup>97</sup> It should also be borne in mind that as I have

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<sup>95</sup> See *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, chs. 171 & 241 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 306–7 & 401–2).

<sup>96</sup> See the jumbled material in *Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 183 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 333–4).

<sup>97</sup> The first stanza of *Glælognskvæða* mentions an unnamed number of faithful Danes who travelled with Sveinn to Norway. Snorri, in the prose account in which this verse survives (*Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 239 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 399)) identified one of these as Haraldr Thórkelsson. Campbell, *Encomium*, 84, has cast doubt on this, but the original identification has recently been endorsed by Townend (“Knútr and the Cult of St Óláfr”, 261–2). I should like to add my weight to Townend's case. The identification is quite plausible: Haraldr appears to have been in Cnut's retinue, and the record of two of the manuscripts of *Skáldatal* (Uppsala, MS. R. 685 and Reykjavík, A. M. MS. 761 4to) to the existence of poetry about him suggests that he did have a significant career, most probably in Scandinavia somewhere. Additionally, elsewhere in *Heimskringla*, Snorri records that before 1029 Haraldr was given a Danish earldom by Cnut (*Heimskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 183 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 333)). In addition, I have argued in my “Ælfgifu of Northampton: Cnut the Great's ‘other woman’”, that Sveinn and his mother held some form of authority over Danish dominions in the Baltic in the period after 1014 and before 1029, and thus the selection of Haraldr for a position in Cnut's Norwegian administration would accord well with Cnut's selection

commented on above, and shall argue later, it appears that Cnut was outside England for the majority of the period 1026–31. He must have spent this period in Scandinavia, and thus, probably personally oversaw much of the initial phase of rule in Norway.

Skaldic verse appears to have served a legitimising political purpose during the period in which Cnut aspired to rule Norway through Hákon Eiríksson, and it appears to have had a similar function during Sveinn's and his mother's regency. As I have outlined above, if Cnut's skalds continued to associate their patron with the line of the jarls of Hlaðir they were endorsing not only Cnut's claims to rule, but also those of some of the most powerful Norwegian noblemen. Thus, it comes as no surprise that a skaldic poem, *Glælognskviða*, which was composed by one of Cnut's court skalds, Þórarinn loftunga, for his son Sveinn while he was regent of Norway, makes no connection between Sveinn and the jarls of Hlaðir. Instead it associates Sveinn and his regime with the developing saint's-cult of Óláfr Haraldsson.<sup>98</sup> It survives in two fragments, the first comprising the initial stanza describing Sveinn and his retinue's travel to Norway, the second a group of nine stanzas from later in the poem which detail Óláfr's sanctity. Both Snorri and the author of *Fagrskinna* identify both fragments as belonging to this named poem.<sup>99</sup> The verses slowly and carefully establish an association between the nominal head of the new regime and the head of the old one, capitalising on the growing belief in Óláfr's sanctity to cast Sveinn's kingship in a holy and perhaps even Óláfr-endorsed light. It is of use to follow this development through a number of the extant stanzas here. The second and third surviving stanzas of the poem run thus:<sup>100</sup>

Nú hefr sér  
til sess hagat  
þjóðkonungr  
í Þrandheimi;

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of other trusted associates who had proven their worth in the field of Danish politics. If so, then Haraldr's marriage to Cnut's niece, Gunnhild, (see Keynes, "Cnut's Earls", 66 & 62, n. 97 on this) probably happened at this time.

<sup>98</sup> *Glælognskviða* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedigtning*, A. 1: 324–7; B. 1: 300–1). However the edition and translation here is that of Townend, "Knútr and the Cult of St Óláfr", 258–60.

<sup>99</sup> Regarding the lengthy debate over the unity of this poem see Haki Antonsson, "The Cult of St. Ólafr in the Eleventh Century and Kievan Rus'", *Middelalderforum, Tverrfaglig Tidsskrift for Middelalderstudier* 1–2 (2003): 145–6, and references there.

<sup>100</sup> Townend, "Knútr and the Cult of St Óláfr", 258–60.

þar vill ey  
ævi sína  
bauga brjótr  
byggðum ráða.

Now the great king has taken his seat in Trøndelag. There the breaker of rings will rule the dwellings for his whole life.

Þars Áleifr  
áðan byggði,  
áðr hann hvarf  
til himinríkis,  
ok þar varð,  
sem vitu allir,  
kykvasettr  
ór konungmanni.

There Óláfr previously dwelt, before he turned to the heavenly kingdom, and there, as everyone knows, he became enshrined alive, having been king.

Here the language used to describe Sveinn is reassuringly peaceful and conservative. He is not the mighty warrior king so commonly found in such verses in the midst of slaughter. He is a *þjóðkonungr*, a king of the nation/gens, not a foriegn invader, and this point is emphasised by the statement that he will reside there his whole life. Moreover, he is a *bauga brjótr*, a ‘breaker of rings’ or a re-distributor of wealth to his followers. This verse creates an image of Sveinn as a generous peaceful ruler and sets him up for a favourable comparison with Óláfr. Sveinn sits in authority in Trondheim, where it is stressed Óláfr had been previously and in a spiritual form still resides. The focus on this continued physical presence by Óláfr in a site now associated with Sveinn’s (and thus Cnut’s) administration, sharpened by the focus on the *kykvasettr*, literally the ‘living seat’ of the saint, the shrine, works to associate Sveinn and Óláfr. Indeed, at the end of stanza three the casual reader (or listener) might be forgiven for assuming that Sveinn’s regime was the natural and legitimate successor to Óláfr’s.

In addition, the poem elides any direct mention of Óláfr’s martyrdom, and any uncomfortable implications this may have had for both Sveinn and many of the Norwegian magnates around him, stating in the next stanza:<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Note that here I deviate slightly from Townend’s translation. He translates ‘harðla’ as “hardly”.

Hafði sér  
 harðla ráðit  
 Haralds sonr  
 til himinríkis,  
 áðr seimbrjótr  
 at sætti varð...

The son of Harald had strenuously moved himself to the kingdom of heaven, before the treasure-breaker became a mediator...

If the use of the adjective *harðla* (strenuously) is meant to suggest Óláfr's violent death (it is commonly used to describe battles), then its impact is drastically reduced by the specification that Óláfr moved himself to heaven, not that he was moved to heaven by others. Moreover, the use of the kenning *seimbrjótr* (gold-breaker) for Óláfr, continues to emphasise the association between Óláfr and Sveinn, who is described with the similar term of *bauga brjótr* ('ring-breaker') in stanza two.

Much of the rest of the poem concentrates on the actual signs of Óláfr's sanctity, but returns to a political exhortation in the last two stanzas. They run thus:

Bið Áleif  
 at unni þér  
 (hann's goðs maðr)  
 grundar sinnar;  
 hann of getr  
 af goði sjölfum  
 ár ok frið  
 qllum mǫnnum.

Pray to Óláfr that he grant you his land (he is God's man); he obtains from God himself prosperity and peace for all people.

Þás þú rekr  
 fyr reginnagla  
 bóka-máls  
 bænir þínar.

When you present your prayers before the sacred nail of the language of books [i.e. Óláfr].

Here the poem shifts to a personal appeal to Sveinn to pray to Óláfr to 'give' him his land, or legitimise the authority he already holds. In this appeal the association of Sveinn with Óláfr reaches a crescendo, with them united as temporal supplicant and spiritual guide. The return of peace and abundance is taken to imply that Óláfr will posthumously endorse his successor's rule in Norway.

Some scholars have read into this last exhortation the implication that Sveinn was not all he should have been as a ruler, and that Þórarinn loftunga in the poem was urging him to become more peaceful or halt criticism of Óláfr's developing cult-status.<sup>102</sup> This is possible, and would place the poem in the same vein as Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Bersöglisvísur*. However, it seems to me just as likely that this is a literary device, a false exhortation to the king to do what he was already engaged in, in order to publicly demonstrate those actions with humility and understatement. Moreover, much of the doubt in modern scholarship concerning Sveinn's (and Cnut's) actual association with the cult of Óláfr is founded on the premise that an invader would be unlikely to have promoted the cult of his predecessor. However, as Haki Antonsson has shown, there are numerous precedents for this practise among the early medieval rulers of the Kievan Rus', and a number of saga-accounts associate Sveinn and his mother with the earliest phase of the development of a cult around Óláfr.<sup>103</sup> Thus, it seems most probable that the poem portrays the regime in the way the king and his counsellors wished, and as well as having a propagandistic function, it also reflects part of their involvement with Óláfr's cult.

The little that can be known of the career of Bishop Grimkell, in particular his whereabouts during the period 1029–34, is suggestive that Sveinn (under Cnut's orders) took a cautious and placatory approach to the Norwegian nobility, working with, rather than against, the surviving elements of Óláfr's regime.<sup>104</sup> Adam of Bremen names Grimkell as arriving in Norway through the evangelising agency of Óláfr, and it is clear that within a few years of his arrival he appears to have held an important and trusted position in Óláfr's court.<sup>105</sup> As a part of that role he acted as Óláfr's legate to Archbishop Unwan of Hamburg-Bremen.<sup>106</sup> It is uncertain what ecclesiastical role he played in Norway, and as the Norwegian church remained essentially a missionary church without a definite number of fixed sees based on

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<sup>102</sup> In particular see of J. Rainford, *Ólafur Haraldsson, King and Saint of Norway, and the Development of Skaldic Style (ca. 1015–ca. 1153)*, (Unpubl. PhD Thesis, Oxford Uni., 1996), 73–4, in which she comes to the conclusion that the poem is an ironic statement aimed at Sveinn, to bring to his attention the fact of Óláfr's sanctity.

<sup>103</sup> Haki Antonsson, "The Cult", 143–57.

<sup>104</sup> Some of what follows here about Grimkell has already been noted by Townend, "Knútr and the Cult of St Óláfr", 265.

<sup>105</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 57 (Schmeidler, 117–18).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: 34 (Schmeidler, 268).

urban-sites until the early twelfth century, we might presume that his ecclesiastical duties were focused on the royal court. *Heimskringla* states that Grimkell left Norway with Óláfr, and Cnut gave another bishop, Sigurðr, to Jarl Hákon as his court-bishop.<sup>107</sup> Again this record is late, but as it is our only record of events and there is nothing to make us doubt it, perhaps it can be accepted as a reliable historical tradition. Interestingly, the same witness reports that Óláfr subsequently sent Grimkell back to Norway where he took up residence in Oppland in Central Norway, and he remained there until Óláfr returned and met his death.<sup>108</sup> Grimkell was then recalled to the Trondelag by the inhabitants of the region, took part in the exhumation and testing of Óláfr's relics and became one of the foremost proponents of the cult.<sup>109</sup> If this record is reliable then this would indicate that the changes that occurred in Cnut's approach to the Norwegian nobility on Hákon's death involved direct action as well as propaganda and ideology. We cannot know if Cnut or Sveinn had a direct hand in the apparent re-installment of Grimkell in an office in the Trondelag, or whether they merely acquiesced in the wishes of the inhabitants of the region, but either way it shows their willingness to incorporate influential members of the old regime, rather than alienate them.

*The Actions of the Conqueror: the Issue of Cnut's 'Norwegian Lawcode'*

The picture commonly drawn by modern scholarship of Sveinn's and his mother's regency over Norway is one of deprivation and harsh taxation, in which the young ruler made poor choices and through excessive taxation drove the Norwegian elite into revolt against him.<sup>110</sup> This interpretation is entirely dependent on the similar views of the saga-accounts, supported by one single skaldic verse, and while I have frequently defended the use of such sources above there may be reason to be suspicious of their accounts at this stage.

<sup>107</sup> *Hemskringla, Óláfs Saga Helga*, chs. 243 & 217 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 403 & 370–1).

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 243 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 403).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, chs. 243–4 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 403–5). See Haki Antonsson, "The Cult", for further comment on this.

<sup>110</sup> For an example of this viewpoint see P. S. Andersen, *Samlingen av Norge og Kristningen av landet 800–1130* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 144–6, where in a discussion of their successor's rise to power the single feature of their rule noted is the "skattepolitikk" (tax-politics).

The root of the problem is in what we make of a series of legal clauses which are quoted in a number of saga-accounts in connection with Cnut's takeover. *Ágrip*, the *Legendary Saga*, and Snorri's *Heimskringla* unite in identifying a series of legal clauses as a lawcode enforced by Cnut's and Sveinn's regime in the 1030s.<sup>111</sup> The clauses detail royal rights and demands, restrict the movement of ships out of Norway without royal permission, specify the forfeiture of the property and inheritance of outlaws to the crown, and the obligations of the landowners to erect buildings on the royal estates and equip every seventh man for military service. The clauses also detail a tax to be paid to the king at Christmas by each household. There is much about this 'lawcode' that actually inspires confidence in its authenticity. It seems clear that the earliest version of the text known to our narrative sources was a Norwegian version: *Ágrip* and the *Legendary Saga* are the earliest extant witnesses to the text, and these have a Norwegian provenance. Furthermore, in the extant body of medieval Norwegian law there are fragmentary witnesses to some of these legal clauses which record their existence prior to the writing of *Ágrip* c. 1190. Sets of legal amendments added to the laws of the Gulathing region and the Frostathing region have content and specific legal terminology that is linked to the 'lawcode' found in our narrative sources.<sup>112</sup> The first statement of the Gulathing amendments is that the *Iola giaver* (or Christmas tax) shall cease to be collected. This seems to be reminiscent of the statement in *Ágrip* that Cnut's taxation was to be levied *at Jolum* (at Christmas). This impression is consolidated by the fact that these are the sole occurrences of Christmas as a tax-collection-point in extant Norwegian legal sources. The Frostathing amendments supply us with more details of this *Iola giaver*, with remarkably similar legal terminology to that used by *Ágrip*. Where *Ágrip* specifies the payment of *Vinar toddi* (translated as 'a piece of the meadow'), we find in the amendment the repealing of the king's demands for *viniar sponn* (meaning 'a measure of the meadow').<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the term *rykkjarto* (translated as 'a lady's tow') from *Ágrip*, can

<sup>111</sup> *Ágrip*, chs. 28–9 (Driscoll, 40–2); *Legendary Saga*, ch. 71 (Heinrichs, 172–4); *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs Saga Helga*, ch. 239 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 2: 399–401).

<sup>112</sup> These amendments are edited separately from the main lawcodes in S. Bagge, S. Holstad Smedsdal and K. Helle, *Norske Middelalder Dokumenter* (Bergen/Oslo/Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1973), 18–23; with modern Norwegian translation. Some brief scholarly comment can be found in G. Indrebø, "Aagrip", *Edda: Nordisk Tidsskrift for Litteraturforskning* 17 (1922): 18–65, at pp. 43–45.

<sup>113</sup> See Driscoll, *Ágrip*, 99, n. 90, for the translation of this.

also be found in the amendments to the Frostathing-law as *rygiar tó*.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, the term *spann smjörs* (a ‘measure of butter’) found in *Ágrip*, may lie behind an error in some manuscripts of the Frostathing law, where *vinjar spönn* may represent both *vinjar toddi* and *spann smjörs*, where the scribe has accidentally removed two words.<sup>115</sup> As the Frostathing amendments fail to specify the specific weights and measures behind these terms we are unable to know if the amounts specified in *Ágrip* are accurate renditions of *Vinar toddi* or *rykkjarto*, but they do seem to bear witness to the existence of taxes with these names. Furthermore, these terms, whilst intelligible to any Old Norse reader, appear nowhere else in the highly conservative language of Norwegian legal sources, and only occur in the narrative sources in the context of this alleged legislation of Cnut’s.

The other clauses in the relevant legal amendments appear to consolidate this link. They include clauses which appear to repeal some of the specific provisions of the lawcode found in the narrative sources, and it should be noted that the content of these clauses (and the amendments that repealed them) are otherwise extremely rare in the extant body of medieval Norwegian law. The clause detailing that a man may in peacetime travel where and when he wishes, may be a response to the ban we find in *Ágrip*’s statement that no one could leave the country without the king’s permission at risk of forfeiture of his estates.<sup>116</sup> Additionally, legal specifications in Norwegian medieval lawcodes concerning who is responsible for the construction of royal buildings and work on royal estates are extremely rare. However, just as there is a statement in *Ágrip* detailing that the farmer’s were collectively responsible for this, then the corresponding amendment can be found in the Frostathing amendments. Here it is stated emphatically that only the royal official (the *ármaðr*), and not the landowners, were obliged to erect buildings for the king. Finally, the clause in *Ágrip* which states that the land and chattels of outlaws were to pass to the king and not to his heirs, seems to have been both exceptional and extremely unpopular in Norwegian law. A great deal of the extant legal material concerns itself with the process of inheritance, and this *carte-blanche* enabling the king to absorb traditionally aristocratic property at will cannot have

<sup>114</sup> See *ibid.*, n. 91, for the translation of this.

<sup>115</sup> This is certainly the conclusion of the editors of *Norges Gamle Lov*. See the edition of the Frostathing Law, 16: 2, for details.

<sup>116</sup> Driscoll, *Ágrip*, 40.



been received well. It is notable that the amendments in both regional lawcodes repeal this emphatically, stating in the Frostathing amendments that the “nearest relative down from him” shall inherit the outlaw’s property, “and not the king”.<sup>117</sup>

It does seem likely that the two records are related, and that while the legal amendments to the Gulathing and Frostathing lawcodes do not directly mention Cnut and Sveinn or any lawcode enforced by them, they do record the removal of laws which the narrative sources identify as connected with their regime.

However the matter of the date of these amendments requires some consideration. It is a difficult one, but is important in order to establish that the legal amendments are not some from of retrospectively-added addition to the regional lawcodes added retrospectively by an author who knew the relevant section of *Ágrip*. Unfortunately, much of the previous debate on the date of the regional lawcodes has focussed on the amendments, taking their statements that the repeals were made by specific Norwegian kings (Magnús Ólafsson (1034–47) and his son Hákon (1093–4) for the Gulathing amendments, and Sigurðr (1125–30) and his two brothers Eysteinn and Óláfr for the Frostathing amendments) at face value.<sup>118</sup> The dates supplied by these amendments have been used as crucial evidence for the date of the earliest written version of the overall code, and have received little criticism themselves. Moreover, physical manuscript witnesses to the antiquity of these lawcodes can only take us so far. The oldest complete manuscript of either of these two codes is that of the Gulathing-law in Reykjavik, A.M. MS. 315 f., 2°, which dates to *c.* 1200 at the earliest, and is thus contemporary with our earliest narrative sources. Some fragments of the lawcodes may predate these codices by a decade or so, but the dating of them remains inconclusive. We are thus left with the internal content of the lawcodes and anecdotal references to their existence in other texts. The majority of the legal clauses in the lawcodes state that Óláfr Haraldsson began the formulation and codification of written law, presumably before his expulsion in 1028. There is still a school

<sup>117</sup> Bagge et al., *Norske Middelalder Dokumenter*, 21: “þá scal hinn nánasti niðr sá er í erðum er taldr taca arf þann. en eigi konungr”.

<sup>118</sup> See A. Taranger, “De Norske Folkkelovbøker (Før 1263): I”, *Tidsskrift for Retsvidenskap*, ny. række V, 39 (1926), 191–3, and “De Norske Folkkelovbøker (Før 1263): II”, 51–3, as well as B. Eithun, M. Rindal & T. Ulset, *Den Eldre Gulatngslova* (Oslo: Riksarkivet, 1994), 10 for a more modern example of this focus of the dating on the statements of the legal amendments.

among Norwegian historians who would support these statements, but we must be cautious here, and perhaps we are on safer ground if we look to the second half of the eleventh century for a written codification of a provincial Norwegian lawcode.<sup>119</sup> Regarding their dating, this is the period where the internal content of the lawcodes converges with secondary references to their existence in a written form. A study of the internal details allows us to establish a *terminus ante quem* and a *terminus post quem* for the earliest religious sections of the law. The presence of St. Hallvarðr at the head of the saints listed in the Christian section of the Gulathing-law indicates a date after 1050, before which time he appears not to have held such prominence.<sup>120</sup> Also, details of ecclesiastical organisation, such as the requirement of the bishop to have a fixed seat from which he dispensed his part of justice, suggest that the earliest written form of the law must predate the re-organisation of the Norwegian Church in 1111.<sup>121</sup> References to the existence of a written lawcode abound, but much of this is extremely dubious. However, *Sverris saga* represents the attempt of a named twelfth-century Icelandic scribe to write contemporary history in the style of the Icelandic king's sagas. As a near contemporary witness it has inspired much more confidence than some of its contemporaries. Significantly, it names King Magnús Ólafsson (obit 1047) as responsible for having written down for posterity the laws of the Frostathing region in a text named *Grágás*.<sup>122</sup> While we should not take this at face value, it is clear that in the early twelfth century written codes were known to the author, and it was thought that they dated to the previous century. We first meet a reference to a lawcode being used in a setting contemporary with the author of the narrative in the contemporary saga of King Sverrir's grandson, King Hákon Hákonarson. This text records that at

<sup>119</sup> See M. Rindal's comments in Eithun et al., *Den Eldre Gulatingslova*, 7–12, for one example of a scholar who would see an origin for a written law in the reign of Óláfr Haraldsson. This debate is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, but for my part I should like to note that I see more evidence for a written code in the late eleventh century; yet it is clear that Óláfr Haraldsson played a fundamental role. Perhaps a codification and re-organisation of the regional laws occurred prior to 1028 through the pre-existing oral means, achieving a written form several decades later.

<sup>120</sup> E. Hertzberg, "Vore Ældste Lovtexters Oprindelige Nedskrivelsestid" In: *Historiske Afhandlinger Tilegnet Professor Dr. J. E. Sars paa hans Syttende Fødselsdag den ellefte Oktober 1905* (Kristiania, 1905), 112.

<sup>121</sup> Hertzberg, "Vore Ældste Lovtexters", 107–8, and endorsed and discussed further by Eithun et al., *Den Eldre Gulatingslova*, 10–12.

<sup>122</sup> *Sverris saga*, ch. 117, ed. G. Indrebø (Kristiania: Riksarkivet, 1920), 122–4.

a national assembly in Bergen a Trondelag lawman, Gunnar Grjonbak, consulted a written book which was believed to be a record of Óláfr Haraldsson's lawcode.<sup>123</sup> Following Hertzberg's study, consensus has focussed on the reign of the Norwegian king Óláfr kyrri (1066–93), who was universally described by the narrative sources as a peaceful social organiser. However, perhaps we can take a slightly longer view, and in light of the link of some written form of the Frostathing-law to Magnús Ólafsson, see the whole of the late eleventh century as a period of slow and sporadic development of written codices, resulting in the initial texts some time by the 1090s. This would place the composition of a written form of these codes, and the legal amendments within them, within living memory of Cnut's regime, strongly arguing for at least a part of them to be considered legitimate.

What further details can we learn through a study of the lawcode found in *Ágrip* within the context of the extant body of medieval Norwegian law? In the main, the terminology used by medieval Norwegian legal experts is extremely conservative. Names for individual renders or legal practises are commonly formed as compound-nouns from a small stock of accepted legal terms. The concentration of the knowledge of the law in the hands of a professional class, the law-men (*lögmaður*), can only have exaggerated this trend. The end result is that few novel terms can be found in Norwegian lawcodes. As noted above, the terminology found in both the clauses in *Ágrip* and in the legal amendments is found nowhere else in the extant legal materials. There is no clear way to explain this. The terminology here, whilst in Old Norse and intelligible to any reader, bears no resemblance to the accepted stock of Norwegian legal terms. Additionally, the terminology is not from any other Scandinavian legislation. All that we can say about it is that it does not seem to fit with accepted Norwegian practise.

Moreover, the form of royal rights and their system of organisation given in the clauses in *Ágrip* are very different from those in the main body of Norwegian law. In Norway in the early medieval period there was comparatively little royal power, and the laws are more concerned with regional-level social regulation. In essence, the Norwegian king endorsed and enforced the law, but was not in a position to make many

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<sup>123</sup> *Hákonar Saga Hákonarsonar*, ch. 91, ed. M. Mundt (Oslo: Norsk Historisk Kjeldeskrift-Institutt, 1977), 55.

demands for payment through it, or to milk it for profits in same way that some of the rulers in more highly organised neighbouring states did. Additionally, it seems noteworthy that all the clauses in the lawcode associated with Cnut are royal demands, whether insisting on the royal-rights to outlaw's land and chattels, or to specifying the amounts of each form of agricultural produce owed by each farmer to the crown. The specification of such rights is virtually unprecedented in the extant Norwegian legal collections. Moreover, this tax on agricultural surplus was organised remarkably systematically; the amount of tax owed to the king was calculated as a set render from each hearth of each dwelling, that is by taxing each individual land owner. Such a form of systematic taxation was almost unknown in Norwegian law until the late medieval period. Royal taxation in medieval Norway between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries was based on the direct consumption of agricultural surplus and the profits of justice. The royal court was ambulatory and consumed taxes in the form of goods as it travelled. The farming of some royal estates through bailiffs augmented this, but a render from a number of royal estates cannot really be behind the specification that an amount was assessed from each landholder in the country. The only other source of royal revenue was that of fines for a series of specific crimes. Furthermore, the other Scandinavian nations appear to have been in much the same state as Norway in the early medieval period.<sup>124</sup> Thus, so regulated and systematic a tax as laid out in *Ágrip* seems incongruous by its very presence, and yet its existence is attested by apparently reliable records. To some extent a similarly highly organised, systematic calculation of tax existed in the more highly organised states of continental Europe; however, little evidence survives for its functioning there in the early medieval period. We do have a little more information about taxation in late Anglo-Saxon England. While I am not arguing that we have enough evidence to establish a firm link between the code given in *Ágrip* and late Anglo-Saxon legal practise, what survives is suggestive of such a link. Some of the religious sections of late-Anglo-Saxon lawcodes note a system of taxation which is as systematic as that found in *Ágrip*, basing its renders upon the individual landholder's property. I Cnut 11.2 specifies the payment

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<sup>124</sup> For Sweden see the comments in Lindkvist, "Social and political power in Sweden", 138–41. There is some discussion of a systematic tax in Västergötland on p. 138, but the inception of this appears to postdate Cnut's reign in Norway.

of such a tax “by each free[man’s] hearth”.<sup>125</sup> The ancestor of this phrase is in II Edgar 4, where in a directive concerning the payment of ‘Peter’s pence’ the tax is called a *heorðþæning* (hearth-money).<sup>126</sup> The term hearth-money here seems particularly close to *Ágrip*’s specification of payment *af arni hverjum* (from every hearth), and there may well be evidence of a direct link here.

One final obstacle remains to the interpretation that some form of this lawcode was promulgated by Cnut and Sveinn. It could be hypothesised that *c.* 1190 the author of *Ágrip* was working from a copy of the legal amendments very much like that extant in Frostathing-law today, and that in order to ‘flesh-out’ his account of the Danish occupation he attached the punitive clauses there to the reign of Cnut and Sveinn, irrespective of who actually promulgated them in the eleventh century. There are numerous links between the two texts. Both identify King Sigurðr and his two brothers Eysteinn and Óláfr as the kings responsible for the repealing of the clauses. Furthermore, the division of the series of clauses into two separate groups, one detailing royal inheritance rights, and the other detailing royal exactions, appears to be inherited in *Ágrip* from the Frostathing-law. However, there is much in *Ágrip*’s account that cannot be found in Frostathing’s amendments. Furthermore, the extant versions of those amendments do not directly connect the repealed laws to Cnut, and as that version of the amendments connects the initial attempts to repeal these laws to the period before Sigurðr’s death in 1130, almost a century after Cnut’s death, there is little to imply that Cnut was behind their initial promulgation. Bearing in mind the apparent alterity of the practises found in *Ágrip*’s ‘lawcode’ from that of traditional Norwegian law, it is perhaps more economic on the evidence to conclude that these records are more likely to be accurate than not.

Thus, it appears plausible that in the 1030s Cnut did promulgate a punitive tax on his new subjects, and that this tax was systematically applied to all landholders and, if we can judge from the legal terminology itself, aimed at claiming a percentage of the agricultural surplus for the crown. Cnut appears to have imposed new obligations on the landholders, and made attempts to subjugate some elements

<sup>125</sup> Liebermann, *De Gesetze*, 1: 294; “be ælcon frigan heorðc”.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 198.

of the aristocracy by creating a system where he could absorb their patrimonial estates into the royal demesne at will. Such exactions and forfeitures go against the grain of my other conclusions about Cnut's and Sveinn's actions in Norway, and require explanation.

If correct, then it is unsurprising that most of the extant narrative accounts either state or imply that it was this harsh and punitive rule by Cnut that led to the expulsion of his regime from Norway in 1034. However, I am not so sure that we can place trust in this interpretation of events. Firstly, it is hard to explain why Cnut, after successfully conquering England and subduing Denmark, would enforce royal demands in Norway so harsh and punitive that they incited rebellion. Secondly, there are some features of this lawcode in the legal amendments that indicate that this text was, in one respect, misunderstood by Norwegian and Icelandic writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It seems problematic that between the two regional lawcodes that include the legal amendments five rulers are identified as the king who forced the repeal. The Gulathing-law reports that Magnús did so, and approximately fifty years later was followed in this by his son Hákon. The Frostathing-law and *Ágrip* make no mention of Magnús and his son, claiming that King Sigurðr and his two brothers were responsible instead. We might presume that Magnus' and his son's actions only applied to the region under the authority of the Gulathing, and Sigurðr's and his brother's actions for the region under the authority of the Frostathing, but there is no evidence to indicate that the Frostathing region lay outside Magnús' and his son's authority or that the Gulathing region lay outside that of Sigurðr and his brothers. We should probably regard these as two witnesses to the same repeated act. Even if we do not follow the idea that any of the rulers concerned repealed the laws for more than just the region stated in the relevant lawcode, then we are still confronted by the fact that Magnus' repealed these laws and yet they evidently continued in force, as his son had to repeal them as well. This is historically implausible; it seems improbable that a punitive royal tax would have been so popular with the Norwegian populace that they continued to pay it even when the king had refused it. Thus, the exactions appear to have been repealed on multiple occasions by multiple kings. Significantly, compared to the other extant legal amendments in medieval Norwegian lawcodes, they are unique in this respect. The only explanation offered by modern historiography is that Magnús' repeal of these exactions slipped or was promised and never

given, and this seems unsatisfactory.<sup>127</sup> What then was different about the repealing of Cnut's demands?

The problem here may be our understanding of the way in which certain royal exactions were levied in Scandinavia in the Early Medieval period (at least the eleventh and early twelfth century). It should be noted that immediately after seizing control over all of England in 1018 Cnut is recorded as forcing the English to pay a tax of 72,000 pounds (with a further 10,000 pounds being exacted from London).<sup>128</sup> This tax was not repeated annually and appears to have been a one-off payment to a conqueror principally used by him to pay off his mercenary forces. Similarly, when Harthacnut arrived in England in 1040 with his fleet he also demanded the payment of a large tax to him.<sup>129</sup> This appears to have been a one-off payment to a new monarch made only at the inception of his reign. Certainly, there was a tradition in Scandinavian law in the early medieval period, that certain laws or grants only held for the period of the individual ruler's lifetime, and had to be formally re-made, re-claimed or re-granted by each successor.<sup>130</sup> Such a tax, exacted at the inception of each new ruler's reign appears to be attested among the Scandinavian settlers of the Isle of Man in the early twelfth century. Abbot Robert of Torini of Mont St. Michel, describes a meeting which took place at his abbey between King Henry II of England, King William 'the Lion' of Scotland and a bishop of Sodor and Man. In his description of the political relationships between the three men, Robert states that

illas 32 insulas tenet rex insularum tali tributo de rege Norwegie, quod quando rex innovatur, rex insularum dat ei decem marcas auri, nec aliquid facit in tota vita sua nisi iterum alius rex ordinetur i Norwegiae

(these thirty-two islands, the king of the Isles holds from the king of Norway in such a form of tribute, so that when a new king succeeds, the

<sup>127</sup> See Andersen, *Samlingen av Norge*, 144–6, for an example.

<sup>128</sup> ASC 1018 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 104).

<sup>129</sup> ASC 1040 CD (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 107).

<sup>130</sup> See for example the statements in *Hemskringla, Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar*, ch. 98 (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 3: 197–8) about the granting of a *fylki* (a large geographic region) by King Óláfr kyrri, which was refused and estates taken instead, as the control over the *fylki* could be revoked by the next king; the *páttr* commented on by S. Bagge in "Law and Justice in Norway in the Middle Ages: A Case Study", in *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe. A Collection of Essays in Honour of Tore Nyberg*, ed. L. Bisgaard & S. Bagge (Odense: Odense University Press, 2001); and the document catalogued as *Diplomatarum Norvegicum* 1: 303, a court record of 1347, where the decision was recorded that the king could not dispose of royal incomes and rights for longer than his own lifetime.

king of the Isles renders to him ten marks of gold, but does nothing else for him his whole life, unless another king is appointed in Norway).<sup>131</sup>

Thus, perhaps we can see the main part of Cnut's Norwegian 'lawcode', that detailing the systematic exaction of a percentage of the agricultural surplus, as an exaction which was paid only once to a ruler at the inception of his reign. Norway had a profoundly non-monetarised economy in the first half of the eleventh century, and thus a tax of the form detailed in *Ágrip* would have to have been paid in chattel rather than coins (as in England in 1018). To see these exactions as a one-off payment made to a king at the inception of his reign, rather than an annual tax, explains neatly why records survive of a number of subsequent kings stating that they were not going to follow Cnut's precedent.

When Cnut's and Sveinn's exactions are seen in this light, it is clear that the insistence of the saga-accounts that this series of punitive exactions lead to the unpopularity of Cnut's and Sveinn's administration and its expulsion from Norway, is wrong. Indeed, the exactions would make the most sense if they were imposed in the first few months of the regime there when Hákon was alive, rather than in the conciliatory period of 1030–4. Moreover, as discussed above, the king of Norway in the early eleventh century held little actual power without the consent of a coalition of powerful magnates. Such exactions, therefore, must also have been organised with the cognisance of these magnates. Neither *Ágrip*, the *Legendary Saga*, nor *Heimskringla* contain any record of revolts by these magnates early in Cnut's and Sveinn's reign, suggesting that it was not their disgruntlement at this punitive tax that caused them to reject Cnut's overlordship.

The final question of this chapter then must turn to the reasons for the expulsion of Sveinn from Norway in 1034. One speculation can be made here. The focus on the promise of *ár ok frið / ǫllum monnum* (peace and good seasons for all men) which Sveinn's regime through an alliance with St Óláfr offers the Norwegian people in *Glælognskviða*, seems significant in this context. Side-stepping any discussion of whether this formula contains a relic from the beliefs of the pre-Christian Scandinavian past or a phrase created by early Norwegian missionaries, it should be observed that, taken literally, this might be seen in the context of *Glælognskviða* as recording the things most desired by the Norwegians and

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<sup>131</sup> Robert of Torigni, *Chronica* (edited in R. Howlett *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I* (London, 1889), 4: 228).



their Danish overlords in the 1030s.<sup>132</sup> A similar focus on bad seasons can be found in the only other possible contemporary source of the phrase: a *lausavisa* supposedly by Sigvatr Þórðarson, which is recorded in the *Legendary Saga* and *Ágrip*.<sup>133</sup> The verse runs thus:<sup>134</sup>

Alfívu mun ævi  
 ungr drengr muna lengi,  
 es oxmat ótum  
 inni skaf sem hafrar;  
 annat vas, þás Áleifr,  
 ógnbandaðr, réð landi;  
 hvern átti þá hrósa  
 hjalmpornuðu korni.

A young man will remember for a long time the age of Ælfgifu, when we ate cattlefeed indoors, [ate] bark like billy-goats. It was otherwise, when Óláfr, the battle-announcer, ruled the land. Then everyone had dry, stacked corn to boast of.

Crucially, the verse records hardship, starvation and the loss of vital food stocks, but not harsh taxation. Indeed, the surrounding prose of *Ágrip* specifically blames the misery of the Norwegian people under Sveinn's rule on *óþfrelsi ok... óáraní* (their tyranny and the bad seasons).

The verse is a *lausavisa* and has received some criticism by Sawyer, who claims that it is “manifestly based on *Ágrip*”.<sup>135</sup> However, I am not so sure that we cannot place trust in its witness. It seems to me equally likely that the text of *Ágrip* may be based on a close reading of the poem. Moreover, as the narrative sources in which the verse survives (*Ágrip* and the *Legendary Saga*) are some of the very earliest for Norway, and include markedly less verse than later compositions, it would seem that during the period of their composition their authors were experimenting with the citation of skaldic verse in their narratives as evidence

<sup>132</sup> On the debate over the pre-Christian or Christian associations of the phrase see the excellent discussion by C. Krag, “Kirkens Forkynnelse i Tidlig Middelalder og Nordmenneses Kristendom”, in H. E. Lidén, *Møtet mellom hedendom og kristendom i Norge* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1995).

<sup>133</sup> Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgting*, A. 1: 274; B. 1: 253.

<sup>134</sup> Note that here I follow the most recent translation by Townend in his “Knútr and the Cult of St Óláfr”, 253.

<sup>135</sup> Sawyer, “Cnut’s Scandinavian Empire”, 21. Note that in support of this hypothesis he cites B. Fidjestøl, *Det Norrøne Fyrstedkjet* (Bergen: Øvre Ervik, 1982), 22. However, this seems to be based on a misreading of Fidjestøl’s text. Fidjestøl does discuss the verse and the narratives in which it survives, but his arguments there are generally suggestive of the verse’s authenticity, not its invention by the author of *Ágrip*.

or support for the events in the narrative, rather than composing in a tradition where such use of skaldic verses was common and accepted. Thus, the apparent motive for forgery is weakened: why forge a verse from the prose, if there is a less than clear gain to the credibility of the narrative? It is more probable that the verse pre-existed the prose.

There are other indications that Scandinavia suffered occasional bad seasons and crop failures in the eleventh century. In particular those of the 1070s and 1080s should be mentioned here. Saxo Grammaticus' account records the widespread failure of crops, leading to mass starvation in Denmark, during the reign of Haraldr Hen, one of Sveinn Ástríðarson's sons.<sup>136</sup> A letter from Pope Gregory VII to Haraldr Hen, dated 19 April, 1080, appears to confirm this, as it records that it had come to the Pope's attention that priests and certain unspecified women had been blamed by sections of the Danish populace for recent crop failures, and were being openly persecuted.<sup>137</sup> If such climatic failures had struck Norway in the 1030s, then the strain on the already precarious social and political systems, might well have caused an upsurge in political tension. Just as the disastrous march back from Helgeå damaged the relationships between Óláfr and the Norwegian magnates, so such a period of hardship may have significantly contributed to the collapse of Sveinn's and Cnut's relationships with the Norwegian aristocracy.

### *Concluding Remarks*

The investigation of Cnut's takeover of power in Norway must use very different forms of evidence from those found in previous chapters. In addition, the use of such material reduces the certainty with which we can reach conclusions. However, it is still possible to detect similarities between Cnut's actions here and those in England and Denmark. Like much of the government of England and Denmark, the extension of Cnut's authority over Norway was only possible through the use of native collaborators. Cnut appears to have exploited structural weaknesses in Norwegian society in the early eleventh century to tempt supporters away from Óláfr Haraldsson, and act, as he did in England, as the alternative candidate to a ruler who had grown unpopular.

<sup>136</sup> Saxo, *Gesta*, 12: 1 (Christiansen, 90–3).

<sup>137</sup> *Diplomatarum Danicum* 1: 2, item 20, pp. 41–3.

However, even if Cnut ousted his political opponent in Norway in a manner which appears similar to that observed in England, he could not consolidate his hold over the local and central government in Norway, as he had done elsewhere in his other hegemonies. The wealth and power of the Norwegian elites, the relative novelty of a single-kingship, and the survival of Óláfr Haraldsson and his heir Magnús, forced Cnut to invest great effort in attempts to financially and ideologically canvass the support of these elites.

Furthermore, the amount of English wealth which Cnut invested in Norway in this period raises questions regarding his motivation for seeking the Norwegian kingship. We have no means of assessing how much the conquest of Norway cost Cnut, but we must take into account the period of bribery in 1026–8, and after that a more wholesale campaign of buying support from the already relatively wealthy Norwegian elites. Any tax on the Norwegian economy no matter how punitive could not have significantly repaid these debts. It appears that Norway was won at a substantial financial loss.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE CONQUEST OF NORWAY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPERIAL ASPIRATIONS

There are clear differences between the nature of Cnut's control over England, Denmark and Norway, and much about the seizure of Norway sets it apart from the other territories. While Cnut appears to have used his wealth to increase his authority in England and Denmark, his seizure of power was costly and brought little actual power. In fact, the use of so much wealth to secure so little power in Norway forces us to consider the apparent wisdom of such an inefficient conquest. The bribery of collaborators, the raising of an invasion fleet and the war of diplomacy fought with Óláfr Haraldsson, must have cost Cnut a fortune. This fortune could never have been collected back from Norway after Cnut came to power. Throughout the medieval period Norway had relatively few useful resources and little wealth, and it seems unlikely that there was much surplus for Cnut or Sveinn to take.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, through Cnut's actions the already powerful aristocracy grew even more so, and Cnut's son, Sveinn, cannot have exercised much authority independent of them. Cnut's authority over Norway seems to have been nominal, and the investment of so much wealth for so little outcome does not seem to fit with his otherwise efficient acquisition of wealth and territory.

We might conclude that Cnut's invasion of Norway and his imposition of a regent there was motivated by a direct threat which Óláfr Haraldsson posed to Denmark. However, on consideration this appears to be untenable. In the period 1026–8 there was a profound alienation of a large part of the most influential elements of the Norwegian nobility from Óláfr, and immediately before 1028, Cnut cannot have thought that Óláfr presented any greater threat than Anund Jakob did in Sweden. Yet as Cnut's own letter to the English reveals, in 1027

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<sup>1</sup> I do not mean to underestimate the size of Norwegian iron mining or the stock-fish trade; for general discussion of these see E. Orrmann, "Rural Conditions", in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia, Volume 1, Prehistory to 1520*, ed. K. Helle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 280–4. However, neither of these could produce the amount of wealth required to reimburse Cnut, and much of these industries lay in rural Norway under the control of powerful magnates rather than royal officials.

Cnut settled the Swedish question through a meeting (presumably with appropriate exactions of tribute and hostages), and yet he was simultaneously planning the invasion of Norway. The seizure of the Norwegian kingship seems to have been an expensive redundant act.

We appear to be missing a piece of the puzzle here. Perhaps in order to try and understand this we should reject a ledger-book type of assessment of this conquest, and focus instead on what can be known of the ideological associations of this act. As discussed above, skaldic verse was composed for recital before the patron and his retinue, and those verses which survive usually contain representations of the ruler which were approved of by him and his entourage. Therefore, innovations which entered skaldic verse during Cnut's reign would appear to reflect changes in the way he thought about the nature of his rule, or at least the way he wished it to be portrayed.

Townend has provided the most recent dating of the surviving poems composed for Cnut.<sup>2</sup> His results can be chronologically presented thus:

*Liðsmannaflokkur*  
1016 × 1017

*Eiríksdrápa*  
1018 × 1023

Óttar svarti's *Knútsdrápa I* and *II*  
immediately after 1026

Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Tøgdrápa*  
1027 × 1028 (?)

Þórarinn loftunga's  
*Hofuðlausn* and  
*Tøgdrápa*  
1029 × 1030

Hallvarðr  
hárekblei's  
*Knútsdrápa*  
c. 1029 × 1034

<sup>2</sup> Townend, "Contextualising", 151–62. It should be noted that the *Eiríksdrápa* was not composed for Cnut, but it does mention him and appears to have been recited before him, and thus, has been included here. Óttar svarti's compositions probably derive from a single period of service in Cnut's court, and thus, as the second poem appears to record the battle of Helgeå, this would appear to have been after 1026.

It must be noted that in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries changes in the conception of the ruler were evident in skaldic verse in general. New terminology and the use of the second person began to develop the role of the ruler, focussing the action of the narrative upon him, and elevating him above the rank and file of his warband.<sup>3</sup> However, the poetry composed late in Cnut's reign shows innovations which are not evident in poetry composed for other Scandinavian rulers in the eleventh century. It seems that skalds composing for Cnut abandoned the pre-Christian mythological idea of a ruler's right to hold office, and adopted more European notions instead. Einarr skálaglamm's *Vellekla*, which was composed for Jarl Hákon Sigurðsson, provides an example of conventional verse of the tenth century:<sup>4</sup>

hver sé if, nema jofra  
ætrýri goð stýra?  
rammaukin kveðk ríki  
rogn Hókonar magna.

What doubt can there be but that the gods control the destroyer of the race of princes? I say that the most mighty gods strengthen the authority of Hákon.

Here the ruler is distinguished from other men by the fact that the gods "control" or "guide him".<sup>5</sup> This divine favour, demonstrated by his continuing success, is his right to rule until such time as the favour of the gods leaves him and he fails in his endeavours. Indeed, it is this need to continually demonstrate the ongoing success of the ruler, to prove to the audience that he still has the support of the "most mighty gods", that caused skaldic verse to focus on the violent acts of the ruler, the successful slaughter of his enemies that demonstrated his ongoing possession of divine favour.

While there are violent episodes in the verses composed late in Cnut's reign, they are augmented by a striking new element: a direct

<sup>3</sup> See Frank, "Cnut", 118–19, J. Jesch, *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age: the Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verse* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 266–9, and the same author's, "Knútr in Poetry and History", in *International Scandinavian and Medieval Studies in Memory of Gerd Wolfgang Weber*, ed. M. Dallapiazza, O. Hansen, P. Meulengracht-Sørensen and Y. S. Bonnetain (Trieste: Parnaso, 2000), for studies of this trend.

<sup>4</sup> *Vellekla*, 32 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedigtning*, A. 1: 130; B. 1: 123). The translation is from B. Fidjestøl, "Pagan Beliefs and Christian Impact: The Contribution of Scaldic Studies", in *Viking Revaluations*, ed. A. Faulkes & R. Perkins (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1992), 116.

<sup>5</sup> This is discussed further by Fidjestøl, *ibid.*, 103–4 & 116–19.

comparison between the authority of the ruler and that of the Christian God. This is found in Þórarinn loftunga's *Hofuðlausn*,<sup>6</sup>

Knútr verr grund sem gætir  
Gríklands himinríki.

Knútr defends the land as the shepherd of Greece (God / Christ) does for the kingdom of Heaven.

and Hallvarðr Hárekblei's *Knútsdrápa*,<sup>7</sup>

Knútr verr jörð sem ítran  
alls dróttin sal fjalla.

Cnut defends the land as the Lord of all (does) the splendid hall of the mountains (Heaven).

The clear similarities between the two, seen most clearly in the repetition of the phrase, *Knútr verr grund/jörð . . . sem* (Cnut defends the land as . . .), indicates either that one of the authors was copying or emulating the other, or that they were both working within a milieu in which such ideas and this form of words was in vogue. Furthermore, other poems composed late in Cnut's reign seem to contain statements about his power which appear to be related to these. Sigvatr Þórðarson in his *Togdrápa* uses a refrain which implicitly compares Cnut's authority to that of God,<sup>8</sup>

Knútr er und himnum  
hofuðfremstr-jofurr.

Cnut is under Heaven the foremost great Lord.

As Frank has noted, there is an auxillary meaning for the potential term *hofuð-jofurr* (great/principal, lord) in this verse, as an epithet for a temporal ruler instead of God, and this serves to further the comparison

<sup>6</sup> *Hofuðlausn* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgtning*, A. 1: 322; B. 1: 298). The translation is adapted from Frank, "Cnut", 116. There she discusses this innovatory feature in some detail.

<sup>7</sup> *Knútsdrápa*, 8 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgtning*, A. 1: 318; B. 1: 294). The translation is adapted from Frank, "Cnut", 116.

<sup>8</sup> Preserved in *Togdrápa*, 3, 7, 9 & 11 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgtning*, A. 1: 249–51; B. 1: 232–4). The translation is adapted from Frank, "Cnut", 116. The emendation of the first line here follows the arguments of Townend, "Contextualising", 154–5.

between their roles.<sup>9</sup> Finally, a similar but fragmentary refrain exists from another poem composed by Þórarinn loftunga, his *Togdrápa*:<sup>10</sup>

Knútr es und sólar...

Cnut is under the sun's...

The clear similarities of this half-line to the statement in Sigvatr Þórðarson's composition suggests that the lost part of the statement was similar in content, and also a product of this milieu. It should be noted that this innovation in skaldic verse seems to be firmly associated with Cnut's reign, appearing in the verses above, and almost disappearing from the skaldic corpus after Cnut's death until the twelfth century.<sup>11</sup>

There are profound political implications in these expressions of Cnut's power. The ruler is directly compared with God, and he is elevated above all other men through this comparison. Just as there is only one all-powerful deity in the Christian worldview, there is only one ruler over the country. He does not rely anymore on the favour of an assemblage of greater or lesser pre-Christian gods for his authority, but possesses a form of authority which is divinely ordained. Furthermore, the basis of his power is more secure than that of the pre-Christian rulers, as the authority of the temporal ruler, like that of the Christian God's, cannot suddenly leave him.

In independent examinations of these verses, both Hoffmann and Frank have assumed that the origin of these new political ideas lay in Cnut's prolonged contact with England.<sup>12</sup> That is, as Cnut and his court were resident in England for some time, they may have absorbed (either consciously or not) political ideas from there and reflected them in their verse. Certainly, at least one skald had used similar imagery when previously composing for an English king. A single verse apparently composed for Æthelred 'the Unready' by an Icelandic skald, Gunnlaugr ormstunga, runs:<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Frank, "Cnut", 116–17.

<sup>10</sup> *Togdrápa*, 2 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedgtung*, A. 1: 322; B. 1: 298).

<sup>11</sup> Of the six extant examples of this motif, four are in poems composed for Cnut. Furthermore, the last is in Arnórr jarlaskáld's *Hrynhenda*, 19 (edited in Whaley, *Poetry*, 118 & 179–80), which was composed for Sveinn's successor in Norway, Magnús Ólafsson. It seems likely that it occurs here through influence from poetry composed for Cnut.

<sup>12</sup> See D. Hofmann, *Nordisch-englische Lehnbeziehungen der Wikingerzeit* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1955), 96–7, and Frank, "Cnut", 117, for examples.

<sup>13</sup> Note this was edited by Finnur Jonsson under the erroneous title *Adalsteinsdrápa* (Finnur Jonsson, *Skaldedgtung*, A. 1: 194; B. 1: 184). Also note that an emendation



Herr sésk allr við qrva  
 Englands sem goð þengill;  
 ætt lýtr grams ok gumna  
 gunnbráðs Aðalráði.

All the host stands in awe of the generous prince of England as of God; the race of the war-swift King and all the race of men bow to Æthelred.

It is difficult to assess the legitimacy of this verse, but the fact that the entire poem was known to the scribe of the *Codex Uppsaliensis* c. 1300 when he added it to his copy of *Skáldatal* does argue for its acceptance.

However, such ideas were not definitively English, and there were numerous other sources for such concepts among the ruling elites of continental Europe.

A consideration of Cnut's actions immediately before 1027 × 1028 is suggestive that Cnut may have been influenced directly by the imperial court and Rome. As the research of Deshman has shown, the image of rulership cultivated by the Ottonians in the late tenth century was a Christo-centric one, where the image of the emperor and some of his public ceremonial acts were mirrored on contemporary representations of Christ.<sup>14</sup> At Easter 1027 Cnut attended the imperial coronation of Emperor Conrad II in Rome. Cnut, alongside Rudolf, king of Burgundy, had a role to play in the ceremony, leading the new emperor to his chamber after the ceremony.<sup>15</sup> Cnut's letter of 1027 reveals that he was warmly received by the Pope, the new emperor, and the European nobles that he met.<sup>16</sup> The tone of the letter is suggestive that the wealth and splendour of Rome and the imperial court left a deep impression on Cnut. The skald, Sigvatr Þórðarson, who may have accompanied him on this journey or entered Cnut's service on the return voyage to Denmark, England and then Norway, composed his *Togdrápa* on his return. It seems significant that the refrain of this poem, that which compares Cnut to God and is given above, survives

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made by Fidjestøl, "Pagan Beliefs", p. 118, to the first line is followed here, and the translation follows the one he reproduces there.

<sup>14</sup> R. Deshman, "Kingship and Christology in Ottonian and Anglo-Saxon Art", *Fruhmittelalterliche Studien* 10 (1976): 367–405, esp. 377–96.

<sup>15</sup> Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, ch. 16. (Bresslau, 36–7).

<sup>16</sup> Liebermann, *De Gesetze*, 1: 276–7.

in conjunction with other politically-charged fragments of the poem. Sigvatr describes that:<sup>17</sup>

Kómu fylki  
farlystir, 's bar  
hervig í hug,  
hafanda staf;  
rauf ræsir af  
Rúms veg suman  
kærr keisara,  
klúss Pétrúsi.

Svá mun fárf feril  
fetum suðr metinn  
hringdrífr hafa.

There came to the ruler a longing for travel bearing a (pilgrim's) staff, he who previously had battle in his mind. The ruler, dear to the emperor and close to the Pope, halted on his journey to Rome. So few generous princes will have measured with their feet the southward path.

Here there are other startling innovations. These verses break with the skaldic convention of praising the ruler through the enumeration of his military successes, and instead, Sigvatr praises Cnut through a peaceful comparison with the emperor and the Pope.<sup>18</sup> This was unprecedented in the genre, and must have been somewhat shocking to its original audience. It is also suggestive of the source of these new ideas in skaldic verse. Sigvatr introduces a form of conversion-episode into the verse here, in which Cnut undergoes a psychological change from a warleader to a penitent pilgrim as part of the visit to Rome to attend the imperial coronation. Thus, in these stanzas, at least, the changes to the representation of Cnut's authority from the traditional style to the new European one are linked to his 'pilgrimage' to Rome. Given this, as well as the date at which these innovations enter the verse composed for Cnut, it seems more likely to me that Rome and the imperial court were the source of Cnut's new conception of his authority.

Imperial elements have also been perceived in the picture of Cnut in the Winchester *Liber Vitae*. This manuscript was produced c. 1031 under the guidance of Abbot Ælfwine of the New Minster, Winchester, who as

<sup>17</sup> *Tögdrápa*, 10–11 (Finnur Jonsson, *Skjaldedgtning*, A. 1: 251; B. 1: 234). The translation is mine.

<sup>18</sup> See also Frank, "Cnut", 118, on this comparison. In particular, her brilliant discussion of the last two lines of the initial stanza given here.

I have said above, was one of Cnut's royal priests and was placed in his abbacy directly by Cnut.<sup>19</sup> The artist who depicted Cnut in this codex used the tenth-century illustration of King Edgar offering a charter for New Minster to Christ as his model.<sup>20</sup> It seems significant that wherever the artist deviated from this model he did so in ways which identify Ottonian and Salian ruler portraits as his sources. The inclusion of Emma opposite Cnut is strongly reminiscent of the couples found in Ottonian and Salian donation portraits.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the veil or *stola* which Emma receives from an angel is an uncommon feature, and may indicate the artist's knowledge of the depictions of Agnes of Poitou (wife of Emperor Henry III) in two Echternach manuscripts, in which she wears a white veil which hangs to her sleeves, as she is crowned by Christ.<sup>22</sup> Most importantly, the crown Cnut receives from the angel in the picture in the Winchester *Liber Vitae* is of a form unparalleled in late Anglo-Saxon art. It resembles the English trefoil crown, which had been commonly depicted on tenth- and early-eleventh-century coins and in pictures of kings and biblical rulers. However, the crown that the angel presents to Cnut has a bar added over the top of the ruler's head, which closely resembles that of a ceremonial imperial crown worn by Conrad II.<sup>23</sup> The lower portion of this crown can be dated stylistically to the 990s, and appears to be Ottonian. However, the decorated bar over the top of the ruler's head is a later addition and bears the legend *CHUONRADUS DEIGRATIA ROMANORU[M] IMPERATOR AUG[USTUS]*. Depictions of other emperors of the early eleventh century also attest to this addition to the imperial crown.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See p. 97 above.

<sup>20</sup> The picture of Edgar is London, Brit. Lib., Cotton MS. Vespasian A. viii, fol. 2v. See Gerchow, "Prayers", 223 for details of the comparison.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 224–5.

<sup>22</sup> Uppsala, MS. C. 93, fol. 1v & Madrid, Escorial, Codex Aureus, fol. 3. See C. Nordenfalk, *Codex Caesareus Upsalensis. An Echternach Gospel Book of the Eleventh Century* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1971), 119 for a reproduction of both images together. For some recent discussion of Emma's veil see C. E. Karkov, *Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), 129–31, but note that in that discussion she misidentifies the veiled empress of the Echternach pictures as Gisela (the wife of Conrad II).

<sup>23</sup> The crown is now held by the Schatzkammer in Vienna. For a comprehensive publication of this artefact, and extensive scholarly comment, see R. Staats, *Theologie der Reichskrone: Ottonische »Renovatio Imperii« im Spiegel einer Insigne* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1976). See figs. 19 and 20.

<sup>24</sup> Depictions of this crown, or others very similar to it, can be found in a number of ruler portraits from the eleventh and twelfth century. See the reproductions in P. E. Schramm, *Die Deutschen Kaiser und Könige in Bildern ihrer Zeit 751–1190* (Munich:

Furthermore, it may be possible that imperial traces are detectable in the iconography of Cnut's Danish coinage. As noted above, in 'about 1026/8' the format of Danish coins changed. Hitherto, in the main, English models had been closely copied, but after this date the king's portrait on the obverse was usually changed for a Scandinavian symbol, and occasionally the cross on the other side appears in a modified form. Several aspects of this reform suggest that the moneyers concerned may have been attempting to emulate imperial coins. The replacement of a royal portrait with a local symbol is a clear indicator of this. In contemporary northern Europe only the imperial currency had commonly replaced its ruler-portraits with politically charged symbols.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the type of cross found on the reverse of a number of coins from the mint at Lund, the so-called 'serpent coins', is of a form never found on English models.<sup>26</sup> The body of the cross on English coins is formed through the overlaying of two elongated shapes at right-angles; yet that found on the relevant coins from Lund is formed by the scooping-out of the four corners of a circle to leave the cross-shape in relief. In addition, the internal boundaries of these scooped-out 'bites' are decorated by a series of small points or beads arranged in lines. An identical cross is found on three extant imperial coins from Duisberg, minted in the name of Emperor Conrad II and subsequently that of his son. At least one of these issues appears to have been quite numerous, and it should be noted that Duisberg lies a few miles northwards up the Rhine from Cologne, and thus was on Cnut's known itinerary either on his way to Rome, or on his return (or perhaps both). He may have collected examples of these coins and

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Prestel, 1983); in particular the Sacramentary of Bishop Warmund von Ivrea (Ivrea, Bibliotheca Capitolare MS. 86, f. 16v; Ivrea, 969 × 1011): pl. 108; a Pontifical (now in Bamberg Staatsbibliothek; 999 × 1001): pl. 123; the Sacramentary of Henry II (Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 4456, f. 11r; Regensburg, 1002 × 14): pl. 124; the Evangelary of Bamberg Staatsbibliothek (Bamberg Staatsbibliothek, Bibl. 95, f. 7v-8v; Seon 1012 × 14): pl. 125; a Pericope (Bremen, University Library, B.21, f. 3v & 125r; Echternach, 1039-43): pl. 156; the Goslar Evangelary (Uppsala University Library MS. 7, f. 3v & 4r; Echternach, c. 1051): pl. 158. To these should also be added the apse wall fresco of the cathedral of Aquileia (c. 1031), which depicts Conrad II, his wife Gisela and the patriarch Poppone of Aquileia among a number of saints. Conrad II is wearing this imperial crown in this picture, but the fresco is now faint, and I know of no adequate reproduction in print.

<sup>25</sup> See B. Malmer, *Mynt och Människor, Vikingatidens Silverskatter Berättar* (Uddevalla: Raben & Sjögren, 1968), 49-77, especially 69-74, for publication and discussion of the Ottonian and Salian material.

<sup>26</sup> I am indebted to B. Malmer for this connection.



Fig. 19. Detail from the picture of Cnut in the New Minster, Winchester, *Liber Vitae*, London, Brit. Lib., Stowe MS. 944, fol. 6r.

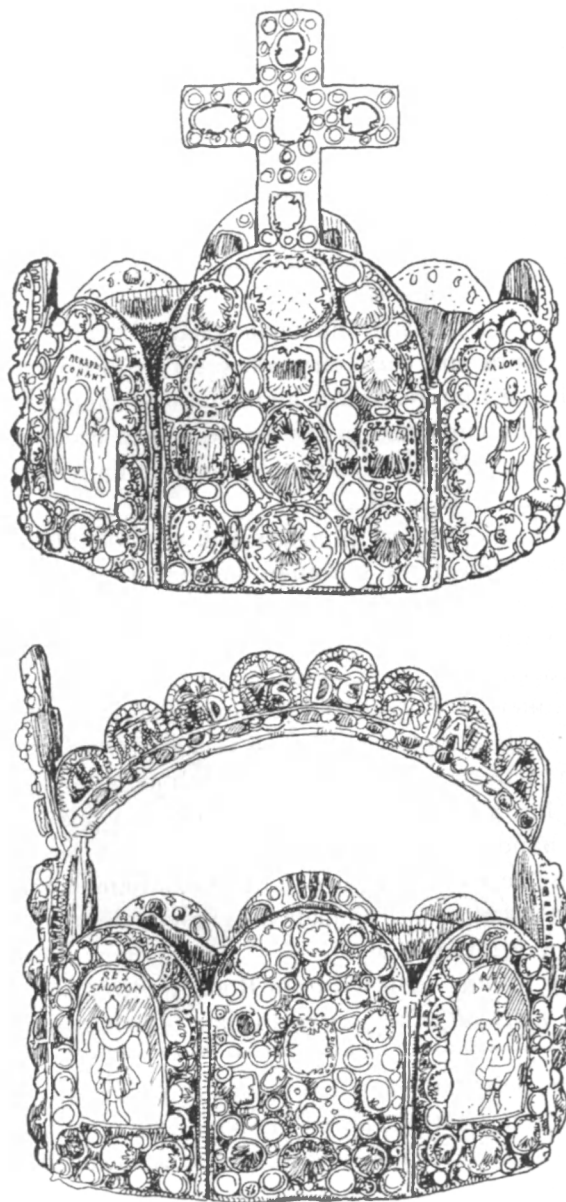


Fig. 20. Line drawings of the crown of Conrad II in the Schatzkammer in Vienna. J. Steane, *The Archaeology of Power* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001); drawn by that author.

brought them to Denmark himself, or the coins may have been carried to Denmark through the subsequent contact that he maintained with sites such as Cologne.

Additionally, while this symbol does not appear on coins from any of Cnut's mints apart from Lund, it appears that it did have a wider currency in Denmark. A similar cross does appear at the centre of a brooch discovered in the most recent excavation at Viborg. The brooch lay in the deposits of the smith-building discussed above, in a context which would date it somewhere in the 1020s.<sup>27</sup>

Such emulation is startling, and implies political significance. Throughout the late tenth and early eleventh centuries Denmark had close contact with the Empire, and it appears that a number of imperial coins continually circulated in the Scandinavian economy. However, throughout this period there was only minimal imperial influence on the coins produced in Denmark.

The sudden adoption of practises and symbols known otherwise only from the coins of the Ottonian and Salian emperors, alongside the depiction of Cnut in the Winchester *Liber Vitae*, and the startling developments within skaldic verse composed for him, are suggestive of a development in the perception of Cnut's dominion in the years immediately after 1027. It should be noted that the skilled personnel who produced these artefacts were all very close to Cnut. His skalds represent an element of his royal court, Abbot Ælfwine was a close associate of his, and the moneyers at Lund were his royal servants, presumably hand-picked for the mint. Thus, they were all close to him, and these developments suggest that Cnut himself may have been conspicuously attempting to emulate the emperor after 1027, or at least wished to be portrayed as such.

Cnut seems to have returned from Rome in 1027 with ideas about the nature of kingship influenced by the late Ottonian and early Salian empires. His appearance in his letter of 1027 as *rex...Norreganorum et partis Suanorum*, despite the fact that he had actually only defeated them in battle, may represent his earliest fumbling with imperial ideas whilst on the return journey from Rome. In 1028 Cnut invaded Norway, and

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<sup>27</sup> The photographs of this artefact have been supplied by J. Hjermind. Again I must acknowledge that I am indebted to both him and M. Iversen for all their help during the course of my research.



Fig. 21. Pictures of the obverses of two serpent coins, and details of the crosses there, from B. Malmer, "Kristna Symboler på Danska Mynt", in *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050. Et Symposium i Roskilde den 5-7 Februar 2003*, ed. N. Lund (Roskilde: Roskilde Museum, 2004), 82 (drawn by B. Malmer).





Fig. 22. Obverse of a brooch excavated in Viborg. Photography by Moesgaard Foto-og Medielab, 2004.

it is after this act that these conceptual developments appear to reach a mature and stable form. Thus, Cnut's decision to seize Norway may have been affected by, or even be the direct result of, these new political ideas. As shown above, the conquest of Norway and consolidation of authority there was profoundly dissimilar to that in England or Denmark, and there was no clear military reason for the invasion. Perhaps it was not wealth or political control that Cnut sought in Norway, but prestige. While several previous Norwegian rulers had been nominally subject to the king of Denmark, no member of Cnut's dynasty had ever led an invasion there, or claimed any form of direct overlordship over the region. It is probable that Cnut claimed such an overlordship through Hákon Eiríksson, and certain that he did through his son Sveinn. Moreover, Cnut had inherited Denmark, and his claims in England were ultimately based on the reign (albeit brief) of his father. Norway was Cnut's only independent conquest, and the nominal joining of it to his other hegemonies brought him more authority than any previous Scandinavian ruler had ever held. Control of Norway may have helped to legitimise his new imperial conception of his own rule.

*A Comparison of the Hegemonies of Conrad II and Cnut*

Modern scholars have repeatedly stated that the territories under Cnut's control did not and could not develop into a proper 'empire'. Freeman led the charge by pointing out that while "[t]he good fortune of Cnut had raised him up an Empire in Northern Europe to which there was no parallel before or after him", any attempt to give this unit coherence would have been a "hopelessly impossible" task, as "Empires like those of Alexander [the Great], Charles [the Great, i.e. Charlemagne], and Cnut are in their own nature ephemeral".<sup>28</sup> That is, the fact that Cnut's dominions were so geographically disparate and were mainly built on personal bonds to him, ensured that like the dominions of Alexander and Charlemagne the unit would disintegrate on the death of the ruler, and fall piecemeal to a series of sons and heirs. Stenton followed, observing of Cnut's "composite dominion" that "there is no evidence that he [Cnut] ever regarded this dominion as an organised

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<sup>28</sup> Freeman, *NC*, 2: 479–81.

state”.<sup>29</sup> In Stenton’s words, Cnut was not a ruler of a single unit, but rather a “lord of a number of separate peoples”. Stenton shifted the focus instead to the geographical position of Cnut’s dominion, stressing that this control over the Northern European shipping lanes was the real support behind Cnut’s prestige among his contemporaries; depicting him as a sort of nouveau-riche business-emperor invited to join the club of respectable European leaders only at a stage at which they could not ignore his financial success. The most recent work to touch on this, that of Sawyer, does little to adapt this viewpoint. For Sawyer, Cnut’s “Scandinavian empire was a partial re-creation of the overlordships established successively by his grandfather . . . and his father”, and when Cnut died, the personal bonds which held this ‘empire’ together dissolved and the unit itself fragmented.<sup>30</sup>

While very little of the individual facts here can be disputed, these interpretations seem to be based on a conception of ‘empire’ which is anachronistic in an eleventh-century context. Cnut’s own conception of his new authority appears to be based on a direct comparison of his dominion with that of Conrad II. Before we can pass judgement on Cnut’s ‘empire’, we must examine Conrad’s, and compare them to see if Cnut’s assertions were rational observations or mere political flights of fancy.

On the matter of the apparent unity of the political and bureaucratic structure of the ‘empire’ there is little difference apart from the matter of scale. While the Ottonian and Salian empires claimed the universality of their Roman predecessors, they could not have hoped to achieve this. No one language, coinage, lawcode, or even political structure can be found throughout the Holy Roman Empire in the early medieval period, and authority lay in the hands of a bewildering array of secular and ecclesiastical nobles.<sup>31</sup> These nobles had varying forms of

<sup>29</sup> Stenton, *A-SE*, 406.

<sup>30</sup> Sawyer, “Cnut’s Scandinavian Empire”, 10 & 22.

<sup>31</sup> For discussion of this see R. Folz, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969); J. Gillingham, “Elective Kingship and the Unity of Medieval Germany”, *German History* 9 (1991): 124–35; B. Arnold, *Count and Bishop in Medieval Germany: A Study of Regional Power, 1100–1350* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), especially 24–43. Note however that these accounts are quite general. Comment on this specific aspect of Conrad II’s reign is uncommon, but see as an example the appendix to C. Kilger, *Pfennigmärkte und Währungslandschaften: Monetarisierungen im Sächsisch-Slawischen Grenzland ca. 965–1120* (Stockholm: Kungl. Myntkabinettet, 2000) on coin production during Conrad II’s reign.

authority, and in actuality varying levels of independence from imperial control. The Ottonian and Salian empires were effectively somewhat chaotic federations, a form of political umbrella over the pre-existing patchwork of local political structures.

Alternatively, the Ottonian and Salian empires may be said to have possessed an antiquity which stretched back further than Cnut's dynasty could muster. However, such claims also dissolve on closer inspection. The Ottonians had ruled since the early tenth century, and had dynastic links by blood to the line of Charlemagne and by marriage to that of the Byzantine emperors.<sup>32</sup> However, little of this antiquity was apparent in 1026. Conrad II's appointment had followed the termination of the direct dynastic line of the Ottonians; when after the sudden death of Henry II in 1024, with no heir and no provision for succession, an heir had to be sought in a collateral line of the family. In fact, Conrad II's claim to inclusion in this dynasty rested only on his father's descent as a grandson of a daughter of Otto I who had been married to the Salian duke Conrad the Red. In addition, Conrad II's election did not pass uncontested and he was opposed by another candidate (also named Conrad) from this same collateral line. Wipo reveals that the matter was only settled by an electoral assembly at Kamba in the Rhineland, and his overly ameliorative description of the divinely inspired unanimous decision of the council to elect his patron may, in fact, hide a great deal of dissent.<sup>33</sup> Thus, in 1026 Conrad II's claim to imperial status may have appeared to have had little claim to antiquity.

Additionally, within the Holy Roman Empire in the tenth and eleventh centuries there was no clear consensus regarding the political ideology behind the imperial title or even what act conveyed this onto the person of the emperor. There appear to have been a number of theories for the requirements for the title of emperor, which appear variously and in varying combinations in the works of contemporary political philosophers. From the ninth century onwards, the papacy endorsed a particular view of the imperial office, which foregrounded

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<sup>32</sup> Otto I's mother, Hedwiga, was a great-great-granddaughter of Charlemagne. His successor, Otto II, married Theophanu, daughter of Emperor John I Tzimisces, in 972.

<sup>33</sup> Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, ch. 2 (Bresslau, 13–20). Note that he does concede that the archbishop of Cologne and Duke Frederick of Lotharingia along with a number of Lotharingian noblemen left the assembly in a belligerent fashion after the election, with the implication that they were opposed to the council's decision.

the papal consecration as the most important constituent act. Such a view must have found an audience among some sections of the imperial court, most notably the ecclesiastics. However, other sources, such as political and legal tracts and narrative histories of the emperors, often placed emphasis elsewhere. It seems significant that the tenth-century chronicler of the Ottonian house and their origins, Widukind of Corvey (obit *c.* 973), acknowledged Otto I's expedition to Italy, but failed to even mention the coronation. Instead his focus is on Otto I's overlordship over a number of peoples or nations (principally that of Germany, Italy and Burgundy) as something that made him eligible for the emperorship.

In the focus on the emperor's overlordship of a number of regions Widukind agreed with a number of papal theorists, but crucially he appears to consider the territorial extent of the empire as the only grounds for eligibility; the imperial office itself was granted on the battlefield by the troops. Widukind does not call Otto an emperor until after his military success at the battlefield of Lechfield in 955, when after a decisive repelling of the Magyar forces Widukind has the troops proclaim him emperor.<sup>34</sup> Such a battlefield-proclamation in the style of the Roman emperors was a widely debated political point in the tenth century, and for that reason at least we must consider it to have been well-known to the aristocratic elites of Saxony, and perhaps wider Europe, in the tenth and eleventh centuries.<sup>35</sup>

It is important also to note that there were few formal institutionalised bonds between the various regions of the Holy Roman Empire in the early medieval period. What held them together were the individual personal bonds to the emperor himself. Indeed, in the period concerned here the first evidence of the idea of an institutional imperial office above that of the personal bonds of each individual emperor comes in Wipo's account of Conrad II's reactions to the destruction of an imperial palace in Pavia by the citizens of the town.<sup>36</sup> The palace had been razed immediately after the death of Emperor Henry II, and the Pavians

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<sup>34</sup> See J. A. Brundage, "Widukind of Corvey and the Non-Roman Imperial Idea", *Mediaeval Studies* 22 (1960): 18–21, for detailed discussion of these interpretations of the imperial office.

<sup>35</sup> See for example the focus on this concept in Atto of Vercelli's (obit 960/1), *Polypiticum*, and for some discussion see Brundage, "Widukind of Corvey", 16.

<sup>36</sup> Wipo, *Gesta*, ch. 7 (Bresslau, 29–30).

subsequently argued that they had committed no crime since they had sworn to honour the emperor for the period of his life and the actions in question had been committed after the death of one emperor and before the succession of another. Wipo reports that Conrad replied to this that *Si rex perit, regnum remansit, sicut nauis remanet, cuius gubernator cadit* (even if the king died the kingdom remained, just as the ship remains if the steersman falls).<sup>37</sup> Even if such ideas existed during Conrad II's lifetime, they were clearly innovatory, and the majority of his dominion, like that of his predecessors, rested on personal bonds.

Thus, when Cnut visited Rome in 1026, and afterwards consulted Duduc regarding the political theories of the empire, he was probably confronted by a number of different interpretations of what constituted an emperor, some of which would have accorded with his own political reality. Cnut was in 1026 a direct ruler of two nations: England and Denmark, and within a year would add a third to crown: Norway. Moreover, he had just fought off a combined force from two hostile Scandinavian powers for control of Denmark, and had become the most significant and prestigious ruler in Scandinavia and perhaps the neighbouring regions around the North Sea and the western Baltic. He held control over a number of regions and had demonstrated considerable military success. All he lacked was papal confirmation of a change in the nature of his office, but as this seems to have mattered little to Widukind and sections of the Saxon nobility this fact may have been brushed aside. It is true that Cnut's dominions had no single language, coinage, lawcode, or political structure, and were held together through only the individual personal bonds of the regions to the ruler, but this was in accordance with Conrad II's empire, and this must have been evident to Cnut and his court in 1026. Whether or not we believe Cnut's empire (or the contemporary Holy Roman Empire for that matter) met our modern standards of imperialism, it was reasonable for Cnut and his court to make such a connection.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, at p. 30.

*The End of Cnut's Anglo-Scandinavian Empire*

Ultimately, a series of inopportune deaths caused this 'fledgling' empire to collapse. Dominion over Norway was lost within Cnut's lifetime, most probably *c.* 1034, and while it is possible that Cnut may have been planning to take steps to reassert himself there, his own death on 12 November 1035 ensures that we cannot now know if such plans ever existed.

It was noted above that one of the structural weaknesses of the form of empire that Cnut held is that the individual units were held together primarily through their personal bonds to the ruler, not through any institutional or economic bonds to each other. In principle this is correct, but it needs to be borne in mind that such a viewpoint obfuscates the strength and tenacity of the bonds which were formed in the period between at least two of the three geographical units of Cnut's 'empire'. It must be noted that England and Denmark remained in the eyes of an Anglo-Scandinavian elite, at least, linked as a political and cultural unit throughout much of the eleventh century.

Scholarship has commonly focussed on the fracturing, re-uniting and re-fracturing of Cnut's Anglo-Danish dominion, and some of it bears repeating here. After Cnut's death support seems to have formed in England for both Harthacnut and Harald Harefoot as successors. The threat of invasion from Norway kept Harthacnut in Denmark, and Harald appears to have waged a diplomatic campaign against his half-brother in his absence. A letter written in July or August 1036 by a priest in the imperial court reveals that Harald and his mother had held a large assembly, at which they offered bribes to a number of English noblemen and secured oaths of allegiance.<sup>38</sup> However, Harthacnut appears to have had some staunch allies who initially resisted such advances.<sup>39</sup> The stalemate was broken in 1037 and with Harthacnut still absent, Harald was accepted as king throughout England.<sup>40</sup> This partition of

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<sup>38</sup> See W. H. Stevenson, "An Alleged Son of King Harold Harefoot", *English Historical Review* 28 (1913): 115–16.

<sup>39</sup> Most notably the archbishop of Canterbury, who according to the *Encomium*, 3: 1 (Campbell, 38–40) refused to crown Harald.

<sup>40</sup> ASC 1037 CD (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 106). See also T. Talvio, "Harold I and Harthacnut's Jewel Cross Type Reconsidered", in *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History. Essays*

Cnut's Anglo-Scandinavian empire did not last long, and Harald died suddenly on 17 March 1040. Harthacnut acceded to the English throne, re-uniting it with the Danish one, until his own death on 8 June, 1042. Harthacnut's half-brother Edward (later 'the Confessor') appears to have shared power with Harthacnut at the end of his reign, or at least held a position of prominence in his court. Harthacnut's sudden death swept him into power, and thus terminated the rule of Cnut's line in England. However, what is not commonly acknowledged is that Cnut had succeeded in creating a powerful Anglo-Scandinavian elite in both England and Denmark, and this elite continued to remain in positions of power and influence throughout the rule of Cnut's sons, and far into the reign of Edward the Confessor. Most prominent among this new Anglo-Scandinavian elite were the family of Earl Godwine. Godwine himself had married the sister of a Danish nobleman, Jarl Úlfr þórgilsson, and their offspring kept in particularly close contact with the ruling elite of Denmark.<sup>41</sup> They remained the single most influential group throughout the reigns of Harald Harefoot, Harthacnut and Edward the Confessor, and exercised sufficient authority to return from exile in the 1050s and force their own reinstatement, and seize the crown for themselves in 1065. Only the Norman Conquest decimated this family and drove the remnants into exile in Scandinavia.<sup>42</sup> However, the Godwinsons were not the only Scandinavians, or descendents of Scandinavians, who continued to hold prominent positions in England after Cnut's and his sons deaths. Members of the Danish royal family remained. Gunnhild, Cnut's niece, and wife of Earl Hákon Eiríksson and Jarl Haraldr Thórkelsson respectively, remained on her English

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*in memory of Michael Dolley*, ed. M. A. S. Blackburn (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), on this.

<sup>41</sup> In particular note that Godwine's eldest son, Sweyn Godwinsson, after having disgraced himself in England in 1046, was sent to Denmark (via Bruges) to escape punishment at the hands of Edward the Confessor (John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1049 (Darlington et al., 548)). Note also, as I have commented on elsewhere, that the ties of this family to Denmark remained even after the Norman Conquest; the surviving members fled there from England in the aftermath of 1066. See my "English Political Refugees at the Court of King Sveinn Ástriðarson, king of Denmark (1042–76)", *Medieval Scandinavia* 15 (2005).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 19–21.



estates until her exile in 1044.<sup>43</sup> Biörn, Sveinn Ástriðarson's younger brother, held an earldom in the region of Huntingdonshire between c. 1045 and his death in 1049/50, and if Adam of Bremen is not mistaken he may have been joined in England by another brother, Ásbiörn.<sup>44</sup> I have argued elsewhere that Earl Siward of Northumbria (held office from c. 1031 until his death in 1055) was also a prominent member of this family, and so he and his son Earl Waltheof (obit 1076), should perhaps be added to this group.<sup>45</sup> Cnut's royal officers also maintained their influence in the decades after his death. Osgot clapa the staller remained in power until he was suddenly and mysteriously exiled immediately before Christmas 1046.<sup>46</sup> The occurrence of this piece of information between the reports of Sweyn Godwinsson's disgraceful carrying off of the abbess of Leominster and subsequent flight into exile, and King Magnus 'the Good' of Norway's conquest of Denmark, makes the reader suspect that Osgot's involvement with one of these two enemies of the peace brought him into ill-repute. Whichever it was, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle subsequently reports that it was brought to Edward's attention that Osgot was in Flanders with a fleet of 39 ships, which he proceeded to use to harry the Sussex coastline.<sup>47</sup> He seems at some stage to have been restored to his English possessions, and is reported as dieing in his bed (by implication in England) in 1054.<sup>48</sup> At the very least, as said above, his descendents through his daughter and Tovi pruða remained in control of the stallership and London until the Norman Conquest. As noted above, Cnut's minister Thored held office

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<sup>43</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1044 (Darlington et al., 540). Note that her exile followed soon after the assassination in 1042 of her last husband, Haraldr Thórkels-son, while he was in Denmark. Adam of Bremen (*Gesta*, 2: 79 (Schmeidler, 136-7)) records that this was at the request of King Magnus of Norway as Haraldr was closely connected to the royal house of Denmark, and thus could threaten Magnus' interests there. Perhaps in 1044 Gunnhild's children, Hemming and Thórkell, were seen as a threat in England for similar reasons, and hence their sudden exile.

<sup>44</sup> ASC 1049 CDE (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 110); Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 3: 9 (Schmeidler, 155).

<sup>45</sup> See my "Was the Family of Earl Siward and Earl Waltheof a Lost Line of the Ancestors of the Danish Royal Family?"

<sup>46</sup> ASC 1046 CD (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 109); John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1046 (Schmeidler, 542).

<sup>47</sup> ASC 1049 C (O'Brien O'Keefe, 110). Note John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1049 (Schmeidler, 550) gives the number as 29 not 39.

<sup>48</sup> See ASC 1054 CD (C: O'Brien O'Keefe, 115) for his death. Note that if he was exiled for aiding Sweyn Godwinsson he may have shared in Sweyn's reinstatement in 1050.

until c. 1045, and received a grant from Edward the Confessor in that year.<sup>49</sup> His son Azor is probably the witness of the same name who attests a royal grant datable to 1042 × 1044 among the last witnesses, as he appears there alongside his and his father's associate Karl, separated by only one intermediary name.<sup>50</sup> He is probably among the attestations of an Azor (or the variant Esgar) in twelve further grants from Edward the Confessor's reign, but we cannot be certain until his identification with his patronymic in a document dated 28 February 1072; in which he formerly transferred ownership, presumably under duress from the Norman overlords, of his estates to Bishop Giso of Wells.<sup>51</sup> In the localities of England Cnut's huscarl Urk survived into the 1050s, and was the beneficiary of a number of grants from Edward the Confessor.<sup>52</sup> He was certainly dead when Edward issued a writ in favour of Tole (ON Þola?) his widow in 1058 × 1066.<sup>53</sup> Viking, the landholding thegn in the vicinity of Exeter, also survived to witness a document of 1065.<sup>54</sup> If I am correct in identifying the other major landholders in Devon with Scandinavian names as men placed into the local landscape by Cnut, they it should be noted that they held their estates until they were seized by Norman overlords. The Ramsey Chronicle records that some unnamed Danes fled their estates in East Anglia during the abbacy of Abbot Æthelric (1017–34), but this account may be biased at this stage, and we can be certain that Thorkell of Haringworth remained on his estates until 1069–71, when he went into revolt against the Normans. While we might suppose that the English collaborators with Cnut's regime merely changed their political allegiances with each change of dynasty on the throne, the survival of so many of Cnut's Anglo-Danish elite in England up to the Norman Conquest is suggestive of a powerful

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<sup>49</sup> He witnesses last in S. 1012 (Old Minster, Winchester), and the grant to him is S. 1010 (Wilton).

<sup>50</sup> S. 1044 (Christ Church, Canterbury).

<sup>51</sup> An Azor/Esgar appears in S. 1015 (Rouen); S. 1026 (Evesham); S. 1029 (Peterborough); S. 1031 (Westminster); S. 1033 (Rouen); S. 1034 (Bath); S. 1040 (Westminster); S. 1041 (Westminster); S. 1042 (Wells); S. 1043 (Westminster). In a further two grants: S. 1028 (St. Denis, Paris) & S. 1036 (Waltham), two Azors/Esgars appear, and in the latter are given titles ("Esgarus regiae procurator aulae" and "regis dapifer") which could indicate prominence at court. It is almost certain that the other Azor/Esgar is Osgot clapa's descendant. The document of 1072 is catalogued by D. Pelteret, *Catalogue of English Post-Conquest Vernacular Documents* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1990), item 56, p. 83.

<sup>52</sup> The grants are S. 1004 & S. 1063 (both Abbotsbury).

<sup>53</sup> S. 1064 (Abbotsbury).

<sup>54</sup> S. 1042 (Wells).

pro-Danish political element. These men had families and origins in Scandinavia, and it beggars belief to think that those ties were broken by the events of 1035–42. Certainly, on the rare glimpses we have of these men in action, they appear to have acted as if a common bond still existed between England and Denmark. In 1047 and again in 1048 Sveinn Ástriðarson called on England to send military aid to Denmark, initially under threat of invasion by King Magnus of Norway, and then after Magnus' sudden death under similar threat from Magnus' uncle and successor, King Haraldr Hardráði. England had apparently also feared attack from Norway, and had been collecting a large defensive fleet at Sandwich.<sup>55</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that on both occasions all the people refused, but John of Worcester in an interesting deviation claims that Earl Godwine advised that 50 ships could be sent, but he was opposed on both occasions by Earl Leofric and the people.<sup>56</sup> Presumably the decision whether to use this force called by the king for the purposes of the defence of England, in the relief of Denmark, rested ultimately with the king. On neither occasion was relief sent, but it is interesting that members of the Anglo-Danish elite, who were closely related to elites in Denmark continued to act under Edward the Confessor as if the two units still shared common bonds.

We cannot know of the fate of the English elites and royal servants sent to Denmark, but again it seems unlikely that the events of 1035–42 caused them to return home *en masse*. Presumably, having made careers as skilled royal servants in Denmark, they continued in those under Sveinn Ástriðarson and his heirs. Certainly, moneyers with the distinctly English names Godwine, Leofwine, Ælfnoth and Ælfweard minted coins for Cnut, Harthacnut, Sveinn Ástriðarson, and in the latter case two of Sveinn's sons, Knútr the Holy and Eiríkr the Good.

It is clear that the royal family in Denmark, and thus the elites who surrounded them, maintained claims to rule in England after 1042.<sup>57</sup> Adam of Bremen and the anonymous author of the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*

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<sup>55</sup> ASC 1045 CD (C: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 108). ASC D records that the fleet was collected because of a threat from Magnus.

<sup>56</sup> ASC 1048–9 D (Cubbin, 67–8); John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1047–8 (Darlington et al., 544).

<sup>57</sup> The single best scholarly publication on this subject is the most obscure one: that by L. M. Larson, "The Efforts of the Danish Kings to Recover the English Crown after the Death of Harthacnut", published as an appendix to the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1910*.

indicate that Sveinn Ástriðarson made some form of claim to England in the initial years of Edward the Confessor's rule. Adam records that immediately after Harthacnut's death Sveinn travelled to England to petition Edward for the throne (or more probably a share in it), and was bought off with a promise that the kingdom would revert to him in the event of Edward's death without heirs.<sup>58</sup> The *Vita* presents the scene slightly differently, placing the unnamed king of the Danes among the ambassadors who travelled to England to pay their respects to Edward after his coronation.<sup>59</sup> This account is clearly biased towards Edward, and makes Sveinn choose Edward as a father, and submit himself to him, but it does concede that what was agreed between them was settled by oath and the exchange of hostages. These last admissions seem more at home in a tense political settlement, than a simple paying of tribute, and indicate that Adam may have the more correct account here.

In fact, the appointment of prominent members of the Danish royal family to English earldoms under Edward the Confessor may have been part of Edward's settlement with Sveinn Ástriðarson; ensuring that Cnut's dynasty kept a foothold in England throughout Edward's reign. Three Danish invasions were launched after Edward's death. The first was launched in 1069, and was led initially by Sveinn's brother Ásbiörn, three of Sveinn's sons, an otherwise unknown Jarl Thórkell, and Bishop Kristian of Århus, and was joined in 1070 by Sveinn himself.<sup>60</sup> The second was launched under the command of two of Sveinn's sons in 1075, and was intended to add military might to the so-called 'revolt of the three earls'. In the event the revolt collapsed and the isolated Danish forces raided St. Peter's minster at York and returned to Denmark. The third and final invasion attempt came in 1083, after Sveinn's death, and was commanded by one of the two sons (King Knútr the Holy, obit 1086) who had led the expedition of 1075. The Danes were clearly not

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<sup>58</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, 2: 78 (Schmeidler, 136). There are numerous other examples of such arrangements in the period, especially where Scandinavians are concerned. See A. Williams, "Some notes and considerations on problems connected with the English royal succession, 860–1066", *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 1 (1979) for some discussion.

<sup>59</sup> *Vita Edwardi Regis*, 1: 1 (Barlow, 16–17). As Barlow (*ibid.*, 17, n. 37) states, "[t]his statement has caused endless trouble". Freeman, *NC*, 2: 18, interpreted it to be a mistaken reference to King Magnus of Norway. I concur here with Barlow that the king intended is Sveinn Ástriðarson.

<sup>60</sup> ASC 1068 [= 1069] D (Cubbin, 84) & 1070 E (Irvine, 88).

planning on being isolated and outnumbered again, and as well as a vast Danish contingent they had secured promises of military support from Norway and Flanders. The threat was enough to panic William the Conqueror into returning from his own campaign in Maine, and he arrived in England with a large number of continental mercenaries, and he proceeded to lay waste large areas of the eastern coastline to slow the invaders' progress.<sup>61</sup> In the event the invasion never sailed. King Knútr the Holy was delayed at Hedeby-Schleswig, and the various fleets tired of waiting and disbanded before he could join them.<sup>62</sup>

It is important to recognise that although both of the successful campaigns here ended in raiding, their object was not to raise money through the traditional Viking methods of pillage and tribute. Crucially, John of Worcester records that the invasion of 1069 was brought to a standstill by its commander Ásbiörn, when he was paid off by William 'the Conqueror' with a large sum of gold and silver.<sup>63</sup> King Sveinn Ástríðarson (Ásbiörn's brother) immediately exiled him on his return, *propter pecuniam, quam contra uoluntatem Danorum a rege Willelmo acceperat* (because he had received money from King William against the wishes of the Danes). If it was not money, what then was the aim of these large and costly military actions? We appear to be left only with conquest for its own sake; Sveinn Ástríðarson and his sons seem to have felt that they had a legitimate right to rule in England, and that that right was worth investing a great deal of money and effort in trying to realise.

In summary, we should note that while Cnut's Anglo-Scandinavian empire met its end before he did his, and his Anglo-Danish one endured as a political reality less than a decade after his death, it had profound effects on the conceptual map of Northern Europe. Anglo-Scandinavian elites in England continued to operate as if strong political bonds existed between England and Denmark until the late 1040s, and

<sup>61</sup> ASC 1085 E (Irvine, 93–4).

<sup>62</sup> The most plausible reasons for Knútr the Holy's delay have been set out by Larson, "Danish Kings", 80. That is the controversial pope, Gregory VII, suddenly died as the Scandinavian forces were beginning to gather. As the news reached the imperial court, Henry IV dashed into Saxony, and the rival emperor, Henry of Salm, the archbishop of Magdeburg, and the bishop of Halberstadt sought refuge in Denmark. Thus, the king of Denmark was required to be close to the border in order to negotiate between the parties and prevent a punitive expedition into his own country.

<sup>63</sup> John of Worcester, *Chronicon*, s. a. 1069–70 (McGurk, 10–15).

remained a significant presence in English politics until the Norman Conquest, ensuring the cultural bonds must have endured at least until then. Moreover, the Danish king, and presumably the larger part of the Danish elites, continued to think of England as part of their area of interest in a way which was not based exclusively on raiding and pillaging. In effect, enduring bonds had been formed between the two nations as a result of Cnut's conquests.

The end of this 'fledgling empire' came about as a result of the rapid succession of deaths of Cnut and his two sons, and the series of events which reduced the impact of the Danish invasions of the late 1060s, 1070s and 1080s. The death of Harthacnut in 1042 brought Edward the Confessor to the throne. The son of Æthelred 'the Unready', he had spent his formative years in exile in the Norman court, and the supporters he drew to his court in England in later life appear to reflect his Continental leanings.<sup>64</sup> To see a Norman clique in the English court before 1066 is now a contested point, but it is clear that when Edward looked for men he could trust to offset the power of the Godwine family, and perhaps that of the other Anglo-Scandinavians, he was left with few options other than drawing on his Norman relatives, and men from France. Thus, Robert, previously abbot of Jumieges, a cousin and close ally of Edward's, was appointed to the bishopric of London in 1046, and two Ralphs, one a Frenchman and Edward's nephew, and the other a half-French half-Englishman who may have been in exile in France during the period of Anglo-Danish kingship, were given court positions.<sup>65</sup> Whether because of Edward's own feelings of cultural affinity with Normandy and France, or because the overmighty and aggressive Godwine family forced him to seek allies from outside their sphere, or most probably a combination of both, the foreign alliances of England were sought to the south rather than the west. In such a shifting political climate it was unlikely that Edward would have allowed English defences to be sent to aid Sveinn Ástriðarson, or that a powerful Anglo-Danish official, such as Osgot clapa, would be given the benefit

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<sup>64</sup> For discussion of this period of Edward's life see S. Keynes, "The Æthelings in Normandy", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1991).

<sup>65</sup> For the speculation that the second Ralph may have been in exile during Cnut's reign (and by implication that of Cnut's sons) see C. P. Lewis, "The French in England before the Norman Conquest", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 17 (1995), 129.

of the doubt when he fell from favour. Edward began to erode the new Anglo-Danish society, and after a few momentary fillips with the various failed or abortive Scandinavian invasions and Harold Godwinsson's short-lived reign, the Norman invaders swept its leaders from positions of power alongside the remains of its Anglo-Saxon predecessor.

## CONCLUSION

Comparison of Cnut's development of his authority in each of the countries within his hegemony reveals new perspectives on the methods by which such an important early-medieval ruler came to power. In England we can see that there is more to his takeover of power than a violent invasion quickly followed by the development of an harsh and efficient governing structure for the extraction of wealth from the populace.<sup>1</sup> Cnut did not have the military manpower after 1018 to force such changes, and thus other more subtle processes had to be employed in the initial years after the conquest. Two such aspects are discussed in detail above. The canvassing of favour among the highest levels of secular and ecclesiastical elites in England, perhaps most evident in Cnut's interaction with the archbishops after 1016, was crucial. Equally important was the sourcing, persuasion and use of trusted collaborators in positions of power within the English government and church, as with the use of the factions of English *ministri* headed by Odda of Deerhurst and Ælfgar mæw. Alongside the growth of an oppressive machine for the extraction of surplus wealth from England, we also see a gradual and considered campaign for the extension of control through the promotion of trusted supporters to positions of power in local and central government and the church, while simultaneously crushing and starving sources of resistance to his rule.

Through these aspects of Cnut's rule in England we can explain the apparent paradox of the remarkable strength of his regime. Through these Cnut developed a network of control in England that could withstand two apparent *coups d'état* in its initial years, and cope with his prolonged periods of absence in Scandinavia in the 1020s and 1030s.

In Denmark we can perceive the same slow progression of the machinery of control, but interestingly here it was achieved partly through the importation of English models of governing structures and English personnel. While Cnut's youth in Denmark in the late tenth and early eleventh century evidently gave him a clear grasp of

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<sup>1</sup> As studied in brilliant detail by Lawson, *Cnut*, 177–210.



how to manipulate political factions for his own (and his supporters') ends, his experiences of power in England appear to have given him an understanding of the relative efficiency and power of late Anglo-Saxon government. In Denmark the evidence indicates similar infiltration and adaptation of existing governing structures, but through the placement of urban-sites staffed by English moneyers, and probably other royal officers, on top of pre-existing administrative sites. Similarly, the infant Danish church was flooded with English-influenced personnel in order to break the last vestiges of contact with the see of Hamburg-Bremen and to increase Cnut's control of the Danish populace.

Furthermore, in Cnut's erosion of the independence of certain factions of the Danish nobility we can recognise elements of his interaction with the English elites. In western Denmark we can observe that groups of collaborators who were prepared to work as his agents, or at least acquiesce in his adaptations of the governing structures, were left in positions of power and allowed to retain a measure of independence. In eastern Denmark we can observe the opposite, that those who opposed him were crushed through the removal of their sources of wealth using the newly-introduced trappings of English royal control, and in markedly similar ways to that observed for the reduction of power of Cnut's enemies in England, such as the inhabitants of London and the community of St Paul's.

In Norway there are both similarities and dissimilarities. We can recognise elements in Cnut's undermining of Óláfr Haraldsson's rule, through the bribery and persuasion of important collaborators of the processes observed in England and perhaps also in western Denmark. However, in Norway there were no apparent attempts to introduce urban-sites, their mints and officials, or ecclesiastical personnel from England, and moreover, there appears to have been very little authority and surplus wealth for any potential ruler of this region to wield or siphon off.

Some of the sources of evidence available to the historian for the study of Scandinavian history in this period allow us to ask questions about the nature of Cnut's hegemony. Traditionally, historians have seen in the amount of time Cnut spent in England a pre-eminent position for that country in Cnut's hegemony. For Freeman, in the romantic language of a late-nineteenth-century account of "the seat of his [Cnut's] Anglo-Scandinavian Empire", England was his "favourite dwelling-place, better loved than his native Denmark, better loved than any of the other lands

which he brought under his power”.<sup>2</sup> The *realpolitik* in Sawyer’s argument of 1994 is more pronounced, but in essence the main detail remains: “Cnut spent relatively little of his time in Scandinavia... England was the source of his wealth and basis of his power and therefore he did not need to dominate Scandinavia as his father and grandfather had done”.<sup>3</sup> Cnut appears to have left Scandinavia in 1015, to return in the winter of 1019–20, lead a campaign there in 1022 × 1023, and remain there for the majority of the period 1026–31.<sup>4</sup> These were often responses to specific military threats or needs to consolidate power, but we cannot know of the traffic of envoys and information across the North Sea from Denmark to England and vice versa. I suspect that this measurement of each of Cnut’s regimes against each other by the amount of time he spent in each is a false yardstick. England did hold a crucial place within Cnut’s hegemony. It supplied wealth and a form of rule beyond the ability of any Scandinavian ruler. The acquisition of wealth and power there allowed Cnut to step outside the traditional patterns of rulership and warfare available to other Scandinavian rulers. However, it is not clear that England dominated the overall hegemony. In many ways Cnut remained a Scandinavian ruler, with Scandinavian interests. His interaction with the regions bordering southumbrian England does not indicate a ruler who wished to exert the claims made by previous West-Saxon kings over these regions, and he appears to have only taken an interest in them when some of these regions threatened his Scandinavian conquests. Moreover, from 1019 to 1030 Cnut used a vast amount of English wealth and a large number of English personnel to extend his control over Scandinavia. Thus, England appears to have been a storehouse of personnel, wealth and governing models for an innovative Scandinavian king. The wealth of England may have ensured that Cnut did not need to dominate Scandinavia as his father and grandfather had done, but he used that wealth to do exactly that, maintaining and extending his father’s and grandfather’s claims in Scandinavia. An inclusion of the Scandinavian material alongside

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, *NC*, 1: 424 and 406–7.

<sup>3</sup> Sawyer, “Cnut’s Scandinavian Empire”, 22.

<sup>4</sup> Note that such proposed absences from England fit almost exactly with the gaps in the sequence of datable and authentic examples of Cnut’s charters: there are no charters from the earliest years, but a number are extant for 1018 and 1019, one for 1022, and a few for the period 1023–6. The sequence terminates here, beginning again in 1031, and with a large number of charters surviving for the period 1032–5.

the English in an assessment of the nature of Cnut's dominion leads to the conclusion that we cannot identify any of the countries under his rule as the seat of his hegemony, but we can appreciate that in his understanding of his authority Scandinavia occupied a place at least equal to England.

Cnut's imperial pretensions after 1028 appear to be equally based on his contact with the imperial court in 1027 and the expansion of his authority over Norway in 1028. Certainly, this is the most probable explanation of Cnut's expenditure of large amounts of time and wealth on the control of Norway, when such investment could never possibly be repaid in money or direct control of land. It seems that we should see Norway as a costly jewel in his perceived imperial crown.

In a century in which the Scandinavian countries began to adopt and adapt mainland European forms of rule, Cnut's career stands as a crucial example of this practise. From his origins in a newly founded Danish royal family he rose to a position of prominence where he, and at least his immediate circle, could no longer compare him to other contemporary kings and had to begin to compare him with the Holy Roman emperor. Moreover, the cultural bonds forged by his fledgling 'empire' outlived him both in Denmark and England for around half a century, and we might well wonder how much longer this unit would have survived if Harald Harefoot and Harthacnut had not died so suddenly in 1040 and 1042.

## APPENDIX A

*Concordance to the charters referred to which have been edited by the ongoing  
Anglo-Saxon Charters project*

- S. 544 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 1*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 7 (Oxford, 2000), no. 43, pp. 175–80
- S. 611 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 73, pp. 305–8
- S. 843 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 119, pp. 461–4
- S. 876 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 124, pp. 477–83
- S. 877 Miller, S. (ed.), *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 9 (Oxford, 2001), no. 31, pp. 144–57
- S. 896 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 128, pp. 497–503
- S. 897 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 130, pp. 507–9
- S. 906 Sawyer, P. H. (ed.), *Charters of Burton Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 2 (Oxford, 1979), no. 28, pp. 48–53
- S. 918 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 135, pp. 526–31
- S. 922 Sawyer, P. H. (ed.), *Charters of Burton Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 2 (Oxford, 1979), no. 32, pp. 60–4
- S. 927 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 136, pp. 531–5
- S. 930 Sawyer, P. H. (ed.), *Charters of Burton Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 2 (Oxford, 1979), no. 35, pp. 67–9
- S. 933 O'Donovan, M. A. (ed.), *Charters of Sherborne*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford, 1988), no. 15, pp. 51–4
- S. 934 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 137, pp. 535–40
- S. 955 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Shaftesbury Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 5 (Oxford, 1996), no. 30, pp. 122–7
- S. 956 Miller, S. (ed.), *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 9 (Oxford, 2001), no. 33, pp. 159–64

- S. 964 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 138, pp. 540–3
- S. 967 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 139, pp. 544–5
- S. 969 O'Donovan, M. A. (ed.), *Charters of Sherborne*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford, 1988), no. 20, pp. 68–70
- S. 973 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 140, p. 546
- S. 975 O'Donovan, M. A. (ed.), *Charters of Sherborne*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford, 1988), no. 16, pp. 55–8
- S. 989 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, and Minster-in-Thanel*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 4 (Oxford, 1995), no. 32, pp. 119–21
- S. 992 Kelly, S. E. (ed. & trans.), *Charters of St Paul's, London*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 10 (Oxford, 2004), no. 27, pp. 203–6
- S. 993 Kelly, S. E. (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 8 (Oxford, 2001), no. 141, pp. 549–53
- S. 998 O'Donovan, M. A. (ed.), *Charters of Sherborne*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford, 1988), no. 21, pp. 74–7
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- S. 1420 Miller, S. (ed.), *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 9 (Oxford, 2001), no. 32, pp. 157–9
- S. 1458a Kelly, S. E. (ed. & trans.), *Charters of St Paul's, London*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 10 (Oxford, 2004), no. 25, pp. 192–201
- S. 1474 O'Donovan, M. A. (ed.), *Charters of Sherborne*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford, 1988), no. 17, pp. 59–61

## APPENDIX B

### *Editions of the Domesday Book for the counties referred to above*

Farley, A. (ed.), *Domesday Book: seu liber censualis Willelmi Primi Regis Angliae . . .*, 4 vols. (London, 1783 & 1816)

Berkshire Morgan, P. (ed. & trans.), *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England 5, Berkshire*, History from the Sources (Chichester, 1979)

Cornwall Thorn, C., and F. Thorn, (ed. & trans.), *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England 10, Cornwall*, History from the Sources (Chichester, 1979)

Devon Thorn, C., and F. Thorn, (ed. & trans.), *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England 9, Devon*, History from the Sources (Chichester, 1985)

Dorset Thorn, C., and F. Thorn, (ed. & trans.), *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England 7, Dorset*, History from the Sources (Chichester, 1983)

Essex Rumble, A. (ed. & trans.), *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England 32, Essex*, History from the Sources (Chichester, 1983)

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Kent Morgan, P. (ed. & trans.), *Domesday Book: A Survey of the Counties of England 1, Kent*, History from the Sources (Chichester, 1983)

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Copenhagen, A. M. MS. 619 4to  
Dublin, Christ Church MS. 1.1.  
London, Brit. Lib., Additional, MS. 36985  
London, Brit. Lib., Cotton MS. Claudius A. iii  
London, Brit. Lib., Cotton MS. Vespasian A. viii  
London, Brit. Lib., Royal MS. I. D, ix  
London, Brit. Lib., Stowe MS. 944  
London, Brit. Lib., Additional MS. 36985  
Oslo, Norsk Riksarkivet, MS. 52  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodl. 579  
Oxford, Bodleian, MS. Top. Glouc. D. 2  
Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS. 209  
Reykjavik, A. M. MS. 761 4to  
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