

UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

Viking 'otherness' in Anglo-Norman chronicles

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Abstract

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This thesis deals with the presentation of largely pre-conquest history in the works of five Anglo-Norman historians writing in the early twelfth century. The works of chroniclers have been used to interpret and analyse forms of 'otherness' descriptions used in their accounts of the history of England. The main purpose of this study is to discover what forms of 'otherness' were applied to the Vikings by the Anglo-Norman chroniclers and whether there was a common purpose which linked these 'otherness' descriptions together.

This thesis has revealed there were three main areas of 'otherness' descriptions over the period the Vikings were active in England. This period ran from their first recorded engagement with Wessex in 789 until Cnut IV's abandoned invasion attempt of 1085. During the first of the three periods of 'otherness' from the first encounter until the time of King Cnut the area of 'otherness' most associated with the Vikings was that of monstrous behaviour. Although the Vikings were not represented as monsters, their behaviour was firmly linked to being monstrous. This monstrosity changed almost overnight when the former monstrous pirate Cnut became king of England and changed into a just and Christian king. In this second period of 'otherness' Cnut was reflected in terms of the 'other' as 'self' as he changed into a person the chroniclers could associate with. After the end of his short-lived dynasty, the third period of Viking 'otherness' appeared in the post-conquest period where the Vikings were perceived as a latent threat to England, even though their actual threat no longer existed after 1085.

This thesis takes its place in research literature as the first study to have investigated the treatment of the Vikings in terms of their 'otherness' profile by chroniclers who could be categorized as first-generation 'English' writers of English history.

Keywords: Otherness, Vikings, Danes, Anglo-Norman, Chroniclers, Monster Theory

Abbreviations

ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
ASC	<i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i>
ASC (D)	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a Collaborative Edition, Volume 6, MS D</i> , ed. Cubbin, G. P. (Cambridge, 1996)
ASC (E)	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a Collaborative Edition, Volume 7, MS E</i> , ed. Irvine, S. (Cambridge, 2004)
ASC trans	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a revised translation</i> , ed. Whitelock, D., with Douglas, D. C., and Tucker, S. I. (London, 1961; rev. 1965)
Bede, HE	<i>Bede, Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum: Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> , eds. and trans. Colgrave, B., and Mynors, R. A. B. OMT (Oxford, 1969)
EHD 1	<i>English Historical Documents, vol. 1, c. 500-1042</i> , ed. Whitelock, D. (London, 1955)
EHD 2	<i>English Historical Documents, vol. 2, 1042-1189</i> , eds. Douglas, D., and Greenaway, G. (New York, 1953)
GG	<i>Geffrei Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis</i> , ed. and trans. Short, I. (Oxford, 2009)
GPA	<i>William of Malmesbury, Gesta Pontificum Anglorum, the History of the English Bishops: Volume I</i> , eds. Winterbottom, M. and Thomson, R. M. OMT (Oxford, 2007)
HH	<i>Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, Historia Anglorum, The History of the English People</i> , ed. and trans. Greenway, D. OMT (Oxford, 1996)
JW, 2	<i>John of Worcester, The Chronicle of John of Worcester, Volume 2: The Annals from 450 to 1066</i> , eds. Darlington, R. R., and McGurk, P. OMT (Oxford, 1995)
JW, 3	<i>John of Worcester, The Chronicle of John of Worcester, Volume 3: The Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141</i> , ed. and trans. McGurk, P. OMT (Oxford, 1998)
OMT	Oxford Medieval Texts
OV, [volume number]	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis</i> , 6 vols., ed. and trans. Chibnall, M. OMT (Oxford, 1969-1980)
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
VSNR	Viking Society for Northern Research
WM	<i>William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum, Volume I</i> eds. and trans. Mynors, R., Thomson, R., and Winterbottom, M. (OMT, Oxford, 1998)

Notation usage

Within this study Vikings have been denoted with a capital 'V'. Where the term 'otherness' is used, it is denoted in its lower-case form and between inverted commas. Likewise, the concept of 'self' has also been denoted in inverted commas. This study will use the term 'otherness' in preference to 'alterity' by interpreting the use of 'otherness' as applied to the use of the sense of the past, or to a past which has been created, as distinct from that of the present as defined by alterity. This study has been organised to reflect the interdependency of types of 'otherness' spread across a broadly chronological perspective. When referring to the English King Cnut, he keeps the spelling of his name this way, whilst the later Cnut IV becomes Knut to avoid confusion.

The references herein to Anglo-Normans are used to identify those living in the period from the Norman Conquest to the death of King Stephen. The definition of who or what an Anglo-Norman is has proven to be a difficult issue. Hirokazu Tsurushima has called the term Anglo-Norman an 'invented phrase'.¹ Tsurushima compared the term Danelaw with the other terms with the Anglo prefix such as Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon, as 'modern constructs'.² He also cited John Gillingham whose views about Norman cultural assimilation with the English have resulted in questioning whether those of Norman descent were 'simply confused' during a period of two generations. Gillingham's conclusion used the identity argument as:

Since the days of David Hume historians have happily written of 'Anglo-Norman' government, the 'Anglo-Norman' language, the 'Anglo-Norman society', 'Anglo-Norman England' and 'the Anglo-Norman realm', they have shied away from the notion of an 'Anglo-Norman' national identity, doubtless for the very reason that there is no extant evidence that anyone in the eleventh or twelfth centuries ever used the term 'Anglo-Norman'. In the absence of some such term, it is clearly not easy to argue for the existence of an 'Anglo-Norman' nationality.³

¹ Hirokazu Tsurushima, 'What Do We Mean by "Nations" in Early Medieval Britain?', in ed. Tsurushima, H., *Nations in Medieval Britain* (Donington, 2010), 7.

² Tsurushima, 'What Do We Mean by "Nations"', 18.

³ John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century, Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge, 2000), 124.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

This research is focused on the representation of Viking 'otherness' by five twelfth-century Anglo-Norman chroniclers. It examines the authors and their chronicles in terms of how the depiction of Vikings was portrayed using 'otherness' techniques with some specific consideration given to the idea of monsterisation. The Vikings were a group who were variously described as pirates, who later became Danish settlers. Their identity and relationship to England is both fraught and complex and this is especially true for those Anglo-Normans who sought to record their past exploits.

This study will also approach the views of 'otherness' from the perspective of how the interpretational modes of writing by five Anglo-Norman chroniclers enhanced and exaggerated the view of Vikings as monsters, added to the view of Cnut as pious, and how this helped generate a sense of haunting and trauma of the past to their contemporary times. As Julia Barrow has commented, 'the attempt to remould the past by the writing of history', is herein interpreted through the exaggeration of Viking 'otherness'.⁴ Clare Downham has summarised the historiographical views of the Vikings as reflecting changing attitudes over a period to various issues such as regional identity, conquest and cultural assimilation.⁵

Developmental timeframes are used by outlining 'otherness' descriptions starting with monstrous vilification and moving onto considering the erstwhile monster king (Cnut) when being praised for his worthy kingship and thence following his death to the resurrection in the mid-eleventh-century of anti-Danish feeling, and on to the fear of a latent threat from overseas in the post-Norman conquest period. As noted earlier the five chroniclers who have been used are John of Worcester, Orderic Vitalis, and the three chroniclers whom R. R. Davies described as 'the remarkable group of historians', William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon and Geffrei Gaimar; their works are listed in the abbreviations.⁶

⁴ Julia Barrow, 'How the Twelfth-Century Monks of Worcester Perceived their Past', in ed. Paul Magdalino, *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London, 1992), 53.

⁵ Claire Downham, 'Vikings in England', in eds. Stefan Brink and Neil Price, *The Viking World* (London, 2008), 341.

⁶ R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire, Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (Oxford, 2000), 51, 116, 196. The chroniclers are hereinafter generally referred to as John, Orderic, William, Henry, and Gaimar.

The primary aims of this research are to examine the changes made to their source materials in representing the Vikings by Anglo-Norman chroniclers in the first half of the twelfth century. For their historical guidance they all had sight of at least one of the versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which had been maintained since the time of King Alfred, and whose various versions ultimately derived from the 'Common Stock'.⁷ Were the patterns of the increased level of vilification applied to the Vikings and Danes about creating a sense of 'otherness' to be applied to the Vikings by contemporary authors, rather than the actual acts of the historical perpetrators? Also to be investigated is whether monsterisation was the chroniclers' favoured method of 'othering' the Vikings.

From the main areas of research described above there are a number of sub-aims for this research which are; to establish the pattern of 'otherness' representation applied to the Danish Vikings over the chronicle entries relating to the period 789 – 1086. To explore chronicler self-identification in terms of their personal sense of 'otherness', and their association with several identifiable *gens*. To examine the use of religion to heal opinions of what was once seen as monstrous 'otherness'. To examine the use of past threats as haunting memories which might encourage the contemporary community audience to unite together in a sense of togetherness and wider cultural construction. Consideration will be given to what type of monsters the Vikings were described as, and conversely what monstrous types they were not represented as. To investigate why there seemed to be a literary 'need' to maintain the presence of a 'monster' or monstrous character in the chronicles during periods without any significant Viking activity. Whether the re-use of the persecution patterns applied to the Danes and Vikings were also used as a political propaganda weapon during the period of 'The Anarchy'.

The structure of the thesis

This introductory chapter describes the basis of the thesis and sets out the main areas of research as outlined above. The second chapter introduces the five Anglo-Norman chroniclers studied as part of this study, John of Worcester, Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and Geffrei Gaimar; by investigating their backgrounds and their motivation to write history. The third chapter considers the 'otherness' theory of

⁷ Hereafter ASC, see also Emily Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing* (Oxford, 2017), 7; Malasree Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Rewriting Post-Conquest History* (Woodbridge, 2015), 7.

applying monstrous characteristic to the Vikings.⁸ Between chapters 3 and 4 is a case study which covers the chronicle descriptions of the ‘monsters’ involved on both sides of the St Brice’s Day massacre of 1002. The ‘other’ as ‘self’ theory is represented in the fourth chapter as seen through the representation of Cnut. The literal transformation of Cnut from a Viking monster into a holy and respected king of the English and Danes of England is considered. Chapter 5 considers the actual and latent threat of Danish ‘others’ in the post-Norman Conquest period and is considered through the representation of the Danes in the chronicles in terms of latency, past trauma and the haunting of memory. The final chapter pulls together the emergence of a pattern of ‘otherness’ descriptions and compares these patterns with the chroniclers’ own times. This conclusion considers how applicable to each period the applied ‘otherness’ theories are, and the contribution made by the individual chroniclers to the application of these theories in their work.

The chroniclers and their contribution to historiography

Emily Winkler has commented that four of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers studied here (excluding Orderic), were neither Norman winners writing of their victory over the English, nor were they traumatised post-Conquest historians, but they were individuals motivated to write a sincere record of the past.⁹ It is necessary to investigate the backgrounds, education and upbringing of the five Anglo-Norman chroniclers and to how they saw themselves fitting into the post-conquest society which was developing around them. The following paragraphs briefly describe some of the work which has been previously devoted to the five chroniclers primarily featured in this study, whilst a more thorough investigation into who they thought they were will be covered in Chapter 2. For each study of the individual chroniclers the starting point has been to use their own chronicle descriptions of where they were born and the ethnicity of their parents. For most of the chroniclers this is a far from straightforward task as comprehensive details of these aspects of their lives are not known for certain. Therefore, a degree of interpretation is required for of the small amount of detail which is available through their chronicle entries. Once these scanty details have been established from primary sources then secondary sources may be of assistance by utilising the research and opinions of scholars who have studied the individuals in detail, whilst some of this detail may be gained from the introductions to the

⁸ Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, ‘Invisible Monsters: Vision, Horror, and Contemporary Culture’, in eds. Asa Simon Mittman and Peter J. Dendle, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (Abingdon, 2016), 275.

⁹ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 5.

chronicle translations themselves. We know three of the chroniclers were monks educated in the rule of Saint Benedict. This would have put them in the constant mind-set of sin and repentance.

Following the information gained concerning the chroniclers' backgrounds and personal development an opinion as to whom the chroniclers felt that they were may be deduced. The development of this statement is an attempt to recognise whether the chroniclers saw themselves as English, Norman, or what may be termed 'New English', or Anglo-Norman. The essential test to answer is how foreign they felt themselves to be as part of a Norman-administered England. Ann Williams covered the discussion of how the English who survived the Norman Conquest adapted to foreign ways whilst preserving their native traditions and culture. Her conclusions support the view this study adopts that the chroniclers understood and played to the feelings of their audiences.¹⁰

John of Worcester

John of Worcester's chronicle forms part of the twelfth-century changes in the approaches to the causation and moral responsibility in English chronicle writing.¹¹ John's chronicle had until recent times traditionally been largely attributed to a monk of Worcester named Florence, but over the last few decades it has been generally accepted that the actual contribution of Florence still remains to be determined.¹² John of Worcester acknowledged Florence's contribution to historiography in his entry for the year 1118, but he did not expressly state that Florence actually wrote any of the work and through this particular entry he merely implied that Florence possessed well developed technical literary skills. John's acknowledgement to Florence under this year read: 'On 7 July, the Worcester monk Florence died. His meticulous learning and scholarly labours have made this chronicle of chronicles outstanding amongst others.'¹³ This is an act of deference from John to Florence for his contribution but is not an acknowledgement of authorship as was assumed in the past. Through the interpretation of this deferential act John ensured that this chronicle

¹⁰ Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1995).

¹¹ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 172.

¹² John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester, Volume 3: The Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, ed. and trans. McGurk, P. (Oxford, 1998); referred to hereinafter as 'JW, 3'; Anne Lawrence-Mathers, 'John of Worcester and the Science of History', in *Journal of Medieval History*, 2013, 39 No. 3, 255-274, 255 fn. 1 & 3, (Taylor Francis Online, accessed 15/12/13).

¹³ JW, 3, 142-3, 'Non. Iulii obiit Domnus Florentius Wigornensis monachus. Huius subtili scientia et studiosi laboris industria preeminet cunctis hec chronicarum chronica.'

would eventually be attributed to him as the main author, although his actual desire for personal renown is unclear and there is little evidence that he sought fame for himself, although of course absence of evidence is by no means evidence of absence of his personal intentions. An article by Martin Brett, together with the notes by Patrick McGurk in his translation of John's chronicles have been utilised to try to understand whether John as an 'Englishman' felt as if he was now 'other' in his native land.¹⁴ These texts have been added to by works which have focused upon the recent trend of how the writers of the twelfth century considered their past.¹⁵ Unfortunately John's view of himself still remains clouded.

William of Malmesbury

William of Malmesbury was a monk of Malmesbury and had been so since his childhood, although little is known of his early personal life. It is believed he was born c.1095 and died c.1143 as witnessed by his unfinished *Historia Novella* which stopped at the end of 1142. As a scholastic monk he undertook the writing and translation of many works such as his two most well-known works, the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, and his other main historical work which was written to remedy the ignorance of England's ecclesiastical history, the *Gesta pontificum*. His last work was the *Historia Novella* which recorded the struggle between Stephen and Matilda from the view-point of a supporter of the Empress Matilda. With a partisan view towards his patron, William offered through his *Historia Novella* an alternative stand-point to the anonymous *Gesta Stephani* which had been written in support of Stephen. Jean Blacker commented the *Historia Novella* was a propaganda piece intended to assist the unseating of Stephen.¹⁶ William is also noted for other 'lesser' works such as his translation into Latin from Old English of Coleman's 'Life of St Wulfstan', which was originally written in the vernacular after the Conquest c.1095.¹⁷ He was of mixed English and Norman parentage and when commenting upon the personage of King William, he proclaimed for himself the following attitude: 'For my part, having the blood of both

¹⁴ Martin Brett, 'John of Worcester and his contemporaries', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages*, Essays Presented to Richard William Southern, eds. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford, 2000), 101-126; also R. R. Darlington, and P. McGurk, 'The *Chronicon ex Chronicis* of "Florence" of Worcester and its Use of Sources for English History before 1066', in ed. R. Allen-Brown, *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 5 (Woodbridge, 1982), 185-96.

¹⁵ Magalino, *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth century Europe*; eds. Martin Brett, and David A. Woodman, *The Long Twelfth-Century view of the Anglo-Saxon Past* (Farnham, 2015); Lavelle and Roffey, *Danes in Wessex*.

¹⁶ Blacker, *The Faces of Time*, 191.

¹⁷ R. R. Darlington, *Anglo-Norman Historians* (London, 1947), 5.

nations in my veins, I propose in my narrative to keep a middle path'.¹⁸ To William his mixed parentage enabled him to profess a degree of objectivity. His 'middle path' implies that he recognised that the English accounts of their own history contained a bias, as likewise did the Norman histories of William of Poitiers and William of Jumièges which reflected the intentions of the author rather than that of the objective historian. Based upon the example of Orderic Vitalis' parents it has long been assumed that William's father was a Norman. Sir Richard Southern described William, as 'only half English and no enemy to the Normans'.¹⁹

William wrote from a period before 1115 until his death c.1143.²⁰ Of his major works noted above, the *Gesta pontificum* was 'completed' in 1125, and revised over the subsequent fifteen years; the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* was completed by 1126 and revised up to 1134. In 1135, he seemed to have felt that his prolonged emphasis on historical writing was inappropriate for a monk and therefore demonstrated his intention to concentrate on more 'serious' matters by writing his *Commentary on Lamentations*.²¹ However he soon returned to writing history and the *Historia Novella* was begun in about 1140 and ended abruptly, presumably with his death in 1143. From around 1135 William was less creative than he had been in the 1120s, as he continued to revise and alter his earlier works to incorporate his own changing opinions, and he thus presented a view that benefitted from his life experiences. This desire to update and revise was not uncommon in annalistic chronicles as they tended not to have a planned ending, and since most stopped with the death of their author they tended to be always incomplete.

The standard biography for William of Malmesbury has since 1987 (updated in 2003) been the work by Rodney Thomson.²² Thomson saw William as a person whose mixed cultural background led him to envisage English history as a benign process from

¹⁸ *William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum, Volume I*, eds. and trans. R. Mynors, R. Thomson and M. Winterbottom OMT (Oxford, 1998), 424-5, 'Ego autem, quia utriusque gentis sanguinem traho, dicendi tale temperamentum seruoabo'. The *Gesta Regum Anglorum* is hereinafter referred to as *WM*.

¹⁹ Southern, 'The Sense of the Past', 246.

²⁰ *William of Malmesbury, Historia Novella, The Contemporary History*, King, E., ed. Potter, K. R., trans. OMT (Oxford, 1998), xvii, fn. 9.

²¹ Rodney Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury', in eds. Lapidge, M. et al., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1999), 477.

²² Rodney M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2003).

barbarism to civilisation.²³ Within this thesis the contribution of William's work will be felt at most of its major junctures, and will reflect upon William's personal struggles with his own feelings of 'otherness' both towards the English and his paternal Norman identity. In 2012, Sigbjørn Sønnesyn, published *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, which took a different view from Thomson's more comprehensive study of William as a scholar, and attempted to place William's works into a narrower ethical literary context.²⁴

Henry of Huntingdon

Henry of Huntingdon was born in England to an English mother c.1088, in a small village to the north-east of Huntingdon.²⁵ His father was Nicholas, a Norman and the first archdeacon of Huntingdon who was a member of the Glanville family. Henry was educated at Lincoln where he rose to become the archdeacon and canon of the cathedral. Brett described his appointment as 'hereditary' which appears more to reflect his father's influence in his career progression than any automatic rights of family succession to this role.²⁶ An indication that Henry's mother was an Englishwoman is Henry's proven familiarity with the English language.²⁷ He related the fact that in his childhood he heard very old men recount tales of the St Brice's Day attack on the Danes in 1002.²⁸ The implication of this is that English was his mother tongue, or at the very least he was fluent in its spoken and written forms. When this is taken with his translation of the Old English poem of the battle of Brunanburh into Latin, the evidence of Henry's comprehension of English is undeniable.²⁹

Henry's *Historia Anglorum* was compiled largely during the reign of King Stephen and was begun around 1133. He subsequently continued his history up to Henry II's accession. Over the years until his probable death in 1154 Henry revised and re-organised parts of his chronicle. Diana Greenway has noted that Henry's conception of English history was highly thematic, with the lessons of God having been transmitted through Henry's

²³ Gillingham and Thomson cited by J. Weiss, 'History in Anglo-Norman Romance: The Presentation of the Pre-Conquest Past', in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 277.

²⁴ Sigbjørn O. Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History* (Woodbridge, 2012).

²⁵ *Henry of Huntingdon, The History of the English People 1000-1154*, Diana Greenway, (trans.) (Oxford, 2002), xiv.

²⁶ Brett, 'John of Worcester and his contemporaries', 103.

²⁷ *HH*, 'Introduction', xxvi.

²⁸ *HH*, 340-1.

²⁹ *HH*, 310-315.

central theme of plagues, with these successive plagues representing God's punishment for a sinful and faithless people.³⁰ Henry thus positioned his plagues of Romans, Picts and Scots, Angles and Saxons, Danes and most recently Normans as part of the on-going warnings for the English people rather than mutually exclusive individual events. This was summarised in Henry's statement: 'From the very beginning down to the present time, the divine vengeance has sent five plagues into Britain, punishing the faithful as well as unbelievers'.³¹ Greenway has written extensively on the life and works of Henry, notably in her translation and editing of Henry's *Historia Anglorum*, which since 1996 has been the standard modern translation. Malasree Home noted that Henry was 'most spare when it came to writing about the events of his own time' and added that such authors gave meaning to events through historiography.³²

Geffrei Gaimar

It is not clear how Geffrei Gaimar saw his own ethnicity. He was probably born in England although his use of French has made it clear he also had French heritage. Antonia Gransden thought that he was probably a Norman by birth although she offered no reasoning for such an assumption.³³ His numerous stories concerning Danes were collected from local oral traditions and were of little doubt of Danish origin themselves.³⁴ There may be an argument for a strong link to Gaimar's ethnic status as having some Danish blood in it. Perhaps if Gaimar was from a mixed Anglo-Norman family with a Norman or French father that the 'English' side of his family may have been in fact Anglo-Danish. Alexander Bell speculated that Gaimar may have had a Scandinavian father, however the more likely idea that his maternal family were Anglo-Danish has not been suggested thus far. The maternal influence on chroniclers and their grasp of earlier English tales has been established for Orderic Vitalis and implied for Henry of Huntingdon. If the same accepted assumption is applied to Gaimar's Danish or Anglo-Danish mother, it would go some-way to explain that Gaimar's Danish stories originated from a wider family tradition rather than from just his

³⁰ *HH*, 14-15, 74-5, 254-5, 264-5, 272-5, 324-5, 338-9; also, Diana Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*', in ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, *ANS*, 18, *Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1995* (Woodbridge, 1996), 110.

³¹ *HH*, 14-15, 'Quinque autem plagas ab exordio usque ad presens immisit diuina ultio Britannie, que non solum uisitat fideles, sed etiam diiudicat infideles'.

³² Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 21.

³³ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 236.

³⁴ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 210.

Lincolnshire location. Gaimar's general interest in the influence of the Danes as noted through his first recorded version of the Havelock story seems too strongly linked to this group than to be able to merely dismiss his interest in them as being 'indicative of Lincolnshire concerns'.³⁵ However, Blacker felt Gaimar added the Havelock tale to balance what was a generally unfavourable portrayal of the Danes in his work.³⁶ Gaimar's Lincolnshire influences indicate a link to those with Danish ancestry. The names of the thirty-five landholders who had sake and soke in Lincolnshire in 1066 recorded in the Domesday Book give an indication of the size of the Danish heritage of this county. In addition to Queen Edith, the bishop, abbots and earls, names such as Mærleswein, Thorgot Lag, and Toki, clearly demonstrate a strong Danish influence. By 1086 when the number of landholders in Lincolnshire had doubled to seventy only four Scandinavian names remained.³⁸ Such a reduction in the influence of those with Danish connections may have made Gaimar look to his future in the company of those French speakers who welded the most power, whilst wishing to remember the contribution to the lands around him made by the Danes. A maternal link to Denmark would help to explain Gaimar's relaxed attitude towards the English people as he showed no particular bias against the English in general, although he praised the resistance of Hereward in a manner not dissimilar to his praise of William the Conqueror.³⁹ Geffrei Gaimar's biographer and modern translator of his work has been Ian Short. Short's work and glossary updated Bell's earlier work, which remains the standard text.⁴⁰ Short noted Gaimar's 'remarkable knowledge of the archaic West Saxon *Schriftsprache* and of Danelaw traditions'; where a speculative but straight forward explanation of such 'remarkable knowledge' is that his mother had been an Anglo-Dane.⁴¹

Orderic Vitalis

To Orderic the genre of history enabled historians to 'reveal the past to future generations ungrudgingly', and that such historians 'have willingly gathered together writings for the continuing benefit of the future'. This has been interpreted that Orderic felt comfort in

³⁵ *The Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Chronicle (Leiden, 2010), Volume 1*, 656.

³⁶ Blacker, *The Faces of Time*, 86.

³⁸ *Domesday Book*, 884-5.

³⁹ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 210.

⁴⁰ Short, 'Tam Angli Quam Franci', 153-175.

⁴¹ Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, ed. and trans. Short, I. (Oxford, 2009), xiii; hereinafter referred to as GG.

writing history through association with a larger movement of like-minded individuals.⁴² Orderic wished to be remembered as being dedicated to his work and expressed this through the metaphor of a vine in a vineyard; Orderic linked his books together and represented himself from boyhood through to old age as having laboured all his life on behalf of God.⁴³ Nancy Partner described this metaphor as part of Orderic's austere descriptions of the 'laborious self-dedication required of historians'.⁴⁴ Unlike William of Malmesbury, Orderic's audience were not constantly reminded of their author's endeavours.⁴⁵ If Orderic hoped to be widely read then unfortunately he was to be disappointed as his work was relatively neglected after his death and was only re-discovered in the sixteenth-century.⁴⁶ Amanda Hingst commented, 'it is fortunate that Orderic did not have much use for earthly renown, for that of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* did not spread far outside the walls of his abbey for hundreds of years'.⁴⁷ His highly-respected modern analyst Marjorie Chibnall noted Orderic's work was too varied, too individual and too much of its age to arouse any great interest outside of the [St Evroul] community it was written for until the end of the middle ages.⁴⁸ Hingst added that his undertaking 'in both size and content, was apparently too weighty to circulate widely'.⁴⁹ Chibnall compared William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* to Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica* by saying that William's work 'was one of the most widely read histories of the period, and Orderic's *Ecclesiastical History* [was] one of the least copied'.⁵⁰

Whilst using the persona of Orderic and his works as their central theme, differing objectives have been considered by various modern publications; Chibnall's *The World of*

⁴² Amanda Hingst, *The Written World, Past and Place in the work of Orderic Vitalis* (Bloomington, 2009), xx., and notes to pages xvii-xx, 143, 43; *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Chibnall, M. OMT (Oxford, 1969-80), vol. 1., 211-2, 'preteria posteris sine invidia manifestant', 129-130, 'futuris semper prodesse uolentes scripta scriptis accumulauerunt'.

⁴³ Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis, Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, 1984), 177-8.

⁴⁴ Nancy Partner, 'Medieval Histories and Modern Realism: Yet Another Origin of the Novel', in *MLN*, 114.4 (1999), <<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/mln/v114/114.4partner.html>>, (accessed 17/03/14), 860.

⁴⁵ Jean Blacker, *The Faces of Time, Portrayal of the Past in Old French and Latin Historical Narrative of the Anglo-Norman Regnum* (Austin, 1994), 10.

⁴⁶ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 216.

⁴⁷ Hingst, *The Written World*, 135.

⁴⁸ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 219.

⁴⁹ Hingst, *The Written World*, 135.

⁵⁰ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 219.

Orderic Vitalis, Hingst's *The Written World*, and the collection of essays edited by Charles Rozier et al, *Orderic Vitalis, Life, Works and Interpretations*.⁵¹ Chibnall's work concerned monastic life and culture and its interaction with the expansion of the Norman world into England, southern Italy, and the Holy Land. Where this work is helpful to this study is Chibnall's view of Orderic's attitude towards Jews as 'other', and to the parallels that this could offer for views of Vikings.⁵² Also of interest are the references to King Stephen, indicating Orderic's favourable view of him, and his emphasis of Stephen's God-given right to rule.⁵³ Hingst's work uses Orderic's *Historia Ecclesiastica* to build her view Orderic used geographical space to provide him with a temporal framework from which he narrated historical events. Which is important to this study as it shows some limitations on the scope of Orderic's consideration of the Vikings where they lie outside of his geographical framework. The collection of essays by Rozier et al, offer various opinions on different topics associated with Orderic.⁵⁴ Although in general none of the chapters mention Vikings as their primary focus, the underlying methodological concepts demonstrated are of use to this study.

The selection rationale for Orderic Vitalis

As a monk who lived in the south of Normandy it may appear strange to include Orderic Vitalis as one of the five chroniclers referred to in this study. Orderic has been included to act as a Normandy-based foil to the four other writers all of whom lived in England. Orderic had much in common with the other four chroniclers owing to his mixed parentage, desire to record the past, and experience with Henry I's reign.⁵⁵ We know Orderic was born in England as he himself has told us that. We are also aware his father was French, and it is likely his mother was an Englishwoman. Towards the end of his life Orderic made a point of including his view of himself as English, even though his work centred around the Normans and their achievements. Whilst Orderic wrote relatively little about the Vikings and Danes,

⁵¹ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*; Hingst, *The Written World*; Rozier, et al., *Orderic Vitalis*.

⁵² Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 158-162.

⁵³ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 188-9.

⁵⁴ Rozier, et al., *Orderic Vitalis*, those chapters which relate to this study include entries on cultural memory by Benjamin Pohl, 333-51, Orderic's relationship with the English by Mark Faulkner, 100-26, the representations of personality and power of secular rulers by William Aird, 189-216, his historical writing by Giles Gasper, 247-59, and how Orderic was received in the later middle-ages, by James Clark, 352-74.

⁵⁵ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 8.

what he did record is worthy of inclusion into this study. Benjamin Pohl has recently argued that Orderic may be seen through a wider tradition of medieval historical and religious thought, and as such his works adds to the memory culture which characterised the eleventh and twelfth century Anglo-Norman world.⁵⁶ His, and the other chroniclers' works acted as pegs for memories for their readership. The fact that Orderic saw himself as 'other' by being English born but identifiable as a Norman, cements his inclusion herein as writing from the viewpoint of 'other' where 'self' would prove to be part of a new *gens* formed by children of 'mixed' marriages. In this respect Orderic is like William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, and probably Geffrei Gaimar too. Therefore, Orderic's contribution to this study is primarily as a contributor where 'other' equates to 'self' in his written word. Orderic's work was written neither at the behest of a member of the aristocracy, nor upon the instructions of a prominent member of the clergy. As such this also makes him unique amongst the five chroniclers studied here. He is also useful for specific areas where his accounts are more detailed than the other chroniclers, for example, Ann Williams described his account of Swein Estrithson's motives around the 1069 uprising as 'the fullest'.⁵⁷

Following the structure outlined above, this introductory chapter includes a literature review which analyses, and critiques work pertinent to this study. As Elisabeth Van Houts has noted, the writing of history being done exclusively by male monks in monasteries composing chronicles has now been challenged, but this study however, takes as its subject matter five male chronicle writers.⁵⁸ By the second decade of the twelfth century English chroniclers had moved away from the eleventh century 'literary standard' of vernacular Old English, and began to establish English history to be recorded in either Latin, or the contemporary vernacular of Norman French.⁵⁹ This expanded future source material from Marc Bloch's assertion that, 'Latin was not only the language in which teaching was done, it was the only language taught.'⁶⁰ In her recent analysis of the ASC (E), 'Peterborough' version, Malasree Home argued that process of formal and linguistic

⁵⁶ Benjamin Pohl, 'One single letter remained in excess of all his sins....', *Orderic Vitalis and Cultural; Memory*, in Rozier et al, *Orderic Vitalis*, 333-51.

⁵⁷ Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 35.

⁵⁸ ed. Elizabeth Van Houts, *Medieval Memories, Men, Women and the Past, 700-1300* (Harlow, 2001), 1.

⁵⁹ Mark Faulkner, 'Orderic and English', in eds. Charles Rozier et al., *Orderic Vitalis, Life, Works and Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2016), 113.

⁶⁰ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society, vol.1*, L. Manyon, (trans.) (London, 1962), 15.

adaptation in the post-Conquest versions of the ASC, 'should be seen as an organic process of change and mutation, rather than a decline of chronicling in the vernacular'.⁶¹ The period saw the end of the upkeep of the ASC, and through Gaimar's work the re-engagement of English history through the conquerors' descendants. Brett clearly stated: 'in 1066 the practice of history in England was almost dead.'⁶²

As it has been outlined why these five chroniclers are to be studied, it is important to outline the reasons why some others have been excluded. The English monk Eadmer, although contemporary with the post-Conquest events in England, only briefly covered the history of the 'incursions of foreign foes' of 'godless men'.⁶³ His brief record appears to have mirrored the ASC. As his work would not contribute to the subject of this study, Eadmer has been omitted. The Jersey born Wace concerned himself with the origin of Normandy and to justify the right of the Normans to rule England.⁶⁴ As he wrote in Normandy and into the 1170s, he does not fit into this study's focus of early twelfth-century and predominantly 'mixed heritage' chroniclers with English associations. Neither did he concern himself greatly with the activities of the Vikings in England. At the beginning of Part II of his work, Wace commented upon the Danes of Rollo's time as being, cruel, proud, unruly and lustful.⁶⁵ The anonymous work of the *Liber Eliensis* from Ely has also been largely omitted.⁶⁶ This is due to this work not being able to relate to a particular individual, and as such comparisons to the author's own feelings of 'otherness' are not able to be gauged in relation to their ethnicity.

Literature Review

Although most Victorians adopted the term 'Viking', to represent their representation of past heroic 'otherness', there are some indications that this led to a more reasoned view of

⁶¹ Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 17.

⁶² Martin Brett, 'John of Worcester and his contemporaries', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages, Essays presented to Richard William Southern*, eds. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford, 1981), 102.

⁶³ *Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England, Historia Novorum in Anglia*, trans. Geoffrey Bosanquet (London, 1964), 3-10.

⁶⁴ *The History of the Norman People, Wace's Roman de Rou*, trans. Glyn S. Burgess (Woodbridge, 2004).

⁶⁵ Wace, 13.

⁶⁶ Janet Fairweather, (trans.) *Liber Eliensis, A History of the Isle of Ely, from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth, compiled by a Monk of Ely in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 2005).

the Vikings by the time of the first quarter of the twentieth century. Andrew Wawn expressed this by noting:

The ubiquity of the term 'Viking' masks a wide variety of constructions of Vikingism: the old northmen are variously buccaneering, triumphalist, defiant, confused, disillusioned, unbiddable, disciplined, elaborately pagan, austere pious, relentlessly jolly, or self-destructively sybaritic. They are merchant adventurers, mercenary soldiers, pioneering colonists, pitiless raiders, self-sufficient farmers, cutting edge naval technologists, primitive democrats, psychopathic berserks, ardent lovers and complicated poets.⁶⁷

During the nineteenth century, a Viking could therefore represent many things to many different people. The change from the Victorian image of 'self' in the twentieth-century histories of the Vikings, into a more objective view of how such images had been formatted from the past came from papers delivered to the developing Viking interest groups. One such paper was presented by Margaret Ashdown to the VSNR in 1924, entitled 'The attitude of the Anglo-Saxons to their Scandinavian Invaders'.⁶⁸ This is considered in detail below as it is a paper which has had a large influence upon how this study has been structured. Ashdown referred to an earlier paper by William Paton Ker which had inspired her to expand upon his title of 'The early historians of Norway'.⁶⁹ Ker's 1908 article contained the contention that King Alfred, 'knew well enough the piratical and warlike habits of the Northmen'.⁷⁰ From this Ashdown drew a number of questions which she attempted to answer as the extract from Ashdown's work below demonstrates:

How far, for instance, was the king's admirable impartiality a reflection of the mind of his subjects, and how far must it be attributed to his own unusual breath of view and scientific interest? From this starting point other questions suggest themselves. Is there any evidence to show that national animosity had obscured in the Anglo-Saxons a sense of their kinship with the enemy? Did the Anglo-Saxons discriminate between the different Scandinavian peoples, and was their attitude to the country from which any particular marauding host set out necessarily a hostile one? Did they recognise that in some cases at least the marauders, if policy required, were repudiated by the ruler of the mother country?⁷¹

⁶⁷ Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians, inventing the Old North in nineteenth-century Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), 4.

⁶⁸ Margaret Ashdown, 'the attitude of the Anglo-Saxons to their Scandinavian invaders', in the *Saga-Book of the VSNR, 10, proceedings 1919-1927* (Coventry, 1929), 75-99.

⁶⁹ William Paton Ker, 'The Early Historians of Norway', in the *Saga-Book of the VSNR, 6* (Coventry, 1909), 238-256.

⁷⁰ Ashdown, 75.

⁷¹ Ashdown, 75-6, and fn. 2.

Ashdown's preoccupation with nationalistic differences, and the 'mother country', is seemingly reflective of an inter-war attitude amongst British writers. Later in her article Ashdown admitted to not knowing whether the Anglo-Saxons were conscious of whether they had known they shared a common heritage with the Vikings.⁷² Presumably Ashdown felt that Bede's view of the origins of the English via the Angles, Saxons and Jutes was not generally known by the Anglo-Saxons. Ashdown went on to quote J. R. Green's, *History of the English People* (1881), where the nineteenth-century view that the coming of the original English was a struggle between the English and the Celts, or expressed in another way, of two different races; but the conflicts between English and Viking were internal conflicts of essentially the same ethnicity.⁷³ Ashdown admitted to avoiding the answer to the question of whether the Anglo-Saxons knew how to differentiate between the countries from which the Scandinavians came, noting that such a question, 'leads to such dangerously controversial ground that I intend to avoid it'.⁷⁴ Like Ashdown this study refers to Vikings and then to Danes, and adopts an implicit view that both descriptions include Scandinavian adventurers who regardless of their place of birth, chose to be part of the forces led by Danish leaders. Ashdown's central argument was that there was a demonstrative sense of hostility towards each other by the English and Vikings. Reasons for this given were raiding, the St Brice's Day attacks, and also blood-feuds. However, Ashdown saw many of the issues as being a result of the religious differences between Christians and pagans, and a type of fear which was expressed by the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman writers of history who according to Ashdown, identified the fear of the possible collapse of Christianity in England due to the coming of the Vikings.⁷⁵ Ashdown concluded that the elements of shared kinship, together with Cnut's acceptance of Christianity, as Chapter 4 will demonstrate, allowed the Danish Vikings to integrate with the English in a manner which would not have been possible without both of these elements.⁷⁶

In 1939, C. E. Wright's view advanced Ashdown's argument from that of a generalised view into consideration of selective literature reflecting what he considered to be forming a 'saga'.⁷⁷ Wright considered such 'saga' tales to include those of Alfred and the cakes, Cnut and his visit to Ely, and of Edgar and Ælfthryth. His conclusion was that in

⁷² Ashdown, 80-1.

⁷³ Ashdown, 81, J. R. Green, *History of the English People* (London, 1881), 87-8.

⁷⁴ Ashdown, 84.

⁷⁵ Ashdown, 89, 93.

⁷⁶ Ashdown, 98-9.

⁷⁷ C. E. Wright, *The Cultivation of Saga in Anglo-Saxon England* (Edinburgh, 1939), vii-viii.

England over the period of the 'Dark Ages', there was a fairly well developed oral storytelling tradition which sat side-by-side with the written literature of the period.⁷⁸ Such development of oral storytelling fits with the development of Viking tales such as the first encounter with the Vikings in Dorset (as detailed in Chapter 3 below), which lacks an identifiable contemporary source, and the St Brice's Day attacks, which Henry of Huntingdon referred to as hearing about in his childhood from very old men, and also the possible oral origins of the Cnut and the waves story.⁷⁹ Owing to the identified Anglo-Norman axis of this study, Norse saga texts have not been included or investigated herein.

During the 1960s Peter Sawyer sought to expand the investigation of the Vikings from pagan plunderers, to bring them into a wider historical context.⁸⁰ He argued that the Vikings were not as numerous or as fierce as they had generally been depicted, with the implication from this being that their 'bad press', had originally stemmed from Christian authors stressing the accounts of pagan Viking menace and mayhem. As Sawyer sought to defend the reputation of the Vikings, he put in place a modern way to interpret the differences between the early Vikings and their Christian historians which he built upon the foundations previously laid for him by scholars such as Ashdown and Wright. A decade later Southern considered 'the strongest creative impulse in England in the early twelfth century to be historical'.⁸¹ In Southern's much referenced 1973 *Royal Historical Society* presidential address entitled 'The Sense of the Past', he considered the views of those historians contemporary to him, as well as those of the Middle Ages historians of the past in a continuation from Sawyer et al.⁸² Southern noted in the early 1970s that the 'cultivation of a sense of the past is a fairly recent development'.⁸³ Of particular relevance to this study are Southern's views contrasting the modern with the past visions of Norman Conquest England as;

The distant eye of the [modern] historian can detect many signs of continuity, but to cultivated contemporaries these signs must have been very inconspicuous. The main reaction of men who had known pre-Conquest England was one of outrage, resentment, and nostalgia.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Wright, 248-9.

⁷⁹ Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum, The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Greenway, D. OMT (Oxford, 1996); hereinafter referred to as 'HH' 340-1.

⁸⁰ Peter H. Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings* (repr., London, 1978).

⁸¹ Richard W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), 160.

⁸² Richard W. Southern, 'Presidential Address: Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 4. The Sense of the Past', in *TRHS, Fifth Series*, 23 (1973), 243-263.

⁸³ Southern, 'The Sense of the Past', 244.

⁸⁴ Southern, 246.

None of the five historians covered here had first-hand memories of pre-Conquest England, and therefore any sense of outrage, resentment, or nostalgia of the country's past, would only have been passed onto them from their relatives, notably their mothers.

Partner expanded Southern's work by examining twelfth-century writing undertaken in England and its emphasis on inventive uses and subversions of historiographical traditions.⁸⁵ Partner wrote of Henry of Huntingdon's views of the past, and how he categorised what he described as the five plagues which God had inflicted upon the people of Britain, one of which was the Danes, as outlined in his 'Danish Wars' chapter, which was followed by 'The coming of the Normans' chapter.⁸⁶ Partner's interest was in the way historical writing changed over time in England, so bears a similarity to this study's view of the changing representations of the Vikings over the same period. In contrast to Partner's approach, Gabrielle Spiegel examined four French prose histories which were written and read by one specific group, the Franco-Flemish elite of the early thirteenth century.⁸⁷ The link between these two approaches is Leah Shopkow's work which offered 'an intermediate course' between Partner and Spiegel, and was concerned with a study of local historical culture and the historical writing of the Normandy-based writers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁸⁸ What this study has gained from these three examples is to highlight the changes which may be uncovered by examining the same text from differing approaches such as the chronicler's desire to praise God, the target audience, and their geographical and political environment.

Gransden chose to refer to Vikings and Danes in her huge first volume on historical writing in England by reference to their devastating effects on the monastic communities of England.⁸⁹ In a similar tone, Elaine Treharne has commented upon the Vikings in relation to their attacks on monastic settlements.⁹⁰ Such attacks have only a cursory reference in this study and have not been considered further in any depth. Gransden also referred to King Alfred's stand against the Danes as justifying 'a certain patriotic fervour', which implies the

⁸⁵ Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments* (Chicago, 1977), 5, 7, 11-48.

⁸⁶ *HH*, 272-337, 338-411, see also pp. 9-10 above.

⁸⁷ Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text, The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997).

⁸⁸ Leah Shopkow, *History and Community, Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 4.

⁸⁹ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 278, 282.

⁹⁰ Elaine Treharne, *Living Through Conquest, The Politics of Early English, 1020-1220* (Oxford, 2012), 74.

Danes were firmly treated as 'foreign other' at the commencement of the records contained in the Alfredian ASC.⁹¹ Janet Nelson noted the idea of Viking 'otherness' was in itself a difference within a broader similarity, and such a difference progressively weakened in contemporary perceptions.⁹² She expressed the view that King Alfred was often seen as a saviour of England from the Danish, but had also welcomed Danes into his court and entourage, which from this the 'Anglo-Danish associations of blood and culture proved the malleability of identities.'⁹³ The idea of how 'otherness' is viewed runs through this thesis, and observations such as Nelson's views on the malleability of identities are helpful in supporting the argument the Anglo-Norman chroniclers used the negative depictions of the Vikings and Danes to assist with the emergence of a new united and integrated post-conquest English people.

Winkler's recent book, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing*, concerns itself with how John of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and Geffrei Gaimar substantially departed from their source material when writing their histories. Winkler deals with a comparison of the changing descriptions of the Danish and Norman conquests, and in doing so presents an argument that within two generations of the Norman Conquest, a change in writers' motivation altered the course of the reporting of history. Winkler's chapter 4, 'Within the Providential Plan', deals with the perception William had of the personal responsibility of both King Æthelred and King Harold, at the time of the respective invasions of England during their kinship.⁹⁴ William holds the two kings responsible for their own failings, and avoids blaming the English people. This investigation into responsibility has close parallels to the view of Æthelred as monstrous in the case study of the St Brice's Day massacre considered below.⁹⁵ Winkler continues her chapter by confirming Henry's explicit identification of events being due to God's plan, which is an area re-iterated herein on many occasions.⁹⁶ For John and Gaimar, Winkler argues that their use of God was as 'only a force for good, rewarding excellent behaviour', and any moral rhetoric the chroniclers displayed was 'not punitive towards failure, but generous towards effort and purpose'.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 35.

⁹² Nelson, *TRHS*, 2003, 'Presidential Address', 12-3.

⁹³ Nelson, *TRHS*, 2003, 27-8.

⁹⁴ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 106-28.

⁹⁵ pp. 105-17.

⁹⁶ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 129-47.

⁹⁷ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 149-50.

'Otherness' definition and its application to Vikings

Nothing substantive has been written at present when considering the literature available on the specific subject of Viking 'otherness' from a twelfth-century perspective. To adequately cover this type of investigation there is a need to seek theoretical models from wider fields of enquiry, and then to test these opinions and theories against the concept of Viking 'otherness'.

The Oxford English Dictionary definition of the word 'otherness' as it relates to this study is: 'The quality or fact of being other; difference, esp. from an expected norm; separateness from or oppositeness to a thing, or from or to an observer; diversity.'⁹⁸ The sister definition to this is Alterity, which essentially has a similar meaning and is the favoured term used in North America where it is defined as, 'The fact or state of being other or different; diversity, difference, otherness.'⁹⁹ In 1979 H. R. Jauss used the term 'alterity' in relation to medieval literature as 'the essential difference between the world which it opens up and the world in which we live, the extent to which old texts make us aware of the "otherness" of a departed past.'¹⁰⁰

Hugh Thomas sought to expand upon the scholarship concerning the ethnic fusion and changing identity of the English after the Norman Conquest, and in a similar vein to Gillingham's earlier work, Thomas looked at areas of historiography concerning ethnic encounters.¹⁰¹ Thomas gave a brief indication that the Anglo-Norman writers followed the pre-Conquest works and still referred to the Vikings as barbarians. He continued by looking at the specific 'otherness' of the Jews, Celts and the French. Thomas noted the Jews were separated from the English and Normans by the, 'nearly insuperable barrier of religion', despite being geographically intermingled, which is an area applicable to Danish settlers in England during the ninth century.¹⁰² Thomas identified three areas where the Jewish 'other' presence in England was used by the Normans to promote their own integration with the English. Firstly, that the presence of a religious minority in England underlined the

⁹⁸ <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/133232?redirectedFrom=Otherness#eid>> (accessed 3/6/12).

⁹⁹ <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/5788?redirectedFrom=alterity#eid>> (accessed 29/5/15).

¹⁰⁰ H. R. Jauss, 'The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literacy', in *New Literary History*, X (1979), 385-90.

¹⁰¹ Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans, Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity 1066-c.1220* (Oxford, 2008), and Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*.

¹⁰² Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 308.

shared Christian identity of the English and Normans.¹⁰³ Secondly, that anti-Semitism could be used to focus ethnic hostility away from the Normans; and thirdly, that such shared anti-Semitism served as a bond between the English and the Normans.¹⁰⁴ Such a methodology may be used through the examination of similar lines of enquiry when recording the Viking threat on the basis of their past paganism and that they were a separate ethnic group to the Anglo-Normans, and representing them as a perceived threat would help strengthen the bond between Normans and English. The Normans themselves harboured an ethnocentric feeling of cultural superiority towards the English, but this proved to be insignificant when compared to their prejudices against the Jews, Welsh and Scots.¹⁰⁵ It may be argued that hostility towards Thomas's Celtic 'other' increased directly proportionately once hostility between the English and Normans decreased.¹⁰⁶ The idea that a common enemy for natives and immigrants helped their integration is an easy one to appreciate when considering assimilation. Thomas noted that what mattered was not just the fact, but also the perception of shared interests.¹⁰⁷ Thomas concluded that images of the 'other' and hostility to other peoples' ultimately demonstrated the strength of English identity.¹⁰⁸ From this conclusion it will be argued that the exaggeration of past monstrous 'others' in the shape of the Vikings were used to fill the gap between those border threats who were real, and monstrous creatures from the past.

Interpretation of Victorian attempts to define Vikings are also to be found in Sebastian Sobecki's collection of essays concerning the identity and culture of the English.¹⁰⁹ Reference is given to a 1753 play concerning Alfred the Great, where Joanne Parker interpreted this play to be where the Vikings were represented as 'unequivocally a foreign other'.¹¹⁰ This conclusion was pre-dated by a quote from Elizabeth Elstob in 1715, where she noted there has been 'an unkind prejudice' against the Vikings, whom some

¹⁰³ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 309-10.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 310.

¹⁰⁵ eds. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, Joseph Ziegler, 'Introduction', in *The Origins of Racism in the West* (Cambridge, 2009), 19.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 310-1.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 311-2.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 321.

¹⁰⁹ ed. Sebastian I. Sobecki, *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages: Maritime Narratives, Identity and Culture* (Cambridge, 2011).

¹¹⁰ Joanne Parker in, Sobecki, *The Sea and Englishness*, 203.

embraced out of rashness, whilst others assumed such a prejudice through tradition'.¹¹¹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen made a direct link to Vikings being viewed as 'other' when he used the views of Phillippe Sénac and Matthew Bennett to construct the idea that a description of a 'Saracen' could also refer to a Viking, Vandal, or any 'other unbelieving invaders as to the practioners of Islam'.¹¹² The sense of this passage and the subsequent supporting pages effectively indicate that 'otherness' may be associated with other types of 'others', such as Vikings, black-skinned people, Muslims or Jews. In similar terms, R. I. Page observed 'a weakness of some general studies of the Viking Age is that they regard all Vikings as the same Viking'.¹¹³ By using Cohen and Page it is possible to base an assessment of how Viking 'otherness' has been defined in terms of ethnicity, time and religion. Demonstrating how the twelfth-century chroniclers utilised these terms will form an important part of this study as the researching 'self' sought to create a distinction between them and the researched 'other'. Cohen, Thomas and Gillingham have written about the post-conquest dehumanisation of those who differed from the 'English' in terms of their religion, language, customs and recent history.¹¹⁴

When considering how the chroniclers may have perceived themselves, the anonymous modern author critical of Islam known as 'Ibn Warraq' commented: 'other cultures are necessarily identified by their 'otherness', since otherwise their distinctive characteristics would be invisible, and thus the most striking differences are emphasized in the eyes, and literature, of the outsider.'¹¹⁵ Such a statement is relevant to the works of first-generation Englishmen who were commenting upon the historical players of earlier English national history from their perspective of being both the representatives of the 'victors' and the ancestral successors to the land of England themselves. Warraq's feeling

¹¹¹ Wawn, *Victorians and Vikings*, 'The want of knowing the Northern Languages, has occasion'd an unkind Prejudice towards them: which some have introduc'd out of Rashness, others have taken upon Tradition', 3.

¹¹² Phillippe Sénac, *L'image de l'autre, histoire de l'Occident médiéval face à l'Islam*, Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations Année (1984), 39,1, 215-216, and Matthew Bennett, 'First crusaders' images of Muslims : The influence of vernacular poetry ?', Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, Modern Language Studies (1986) XXII (2), 101-122, cited in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis, 2003), 219.

¹¹³ Page, 'A Most Vile People', 8.

¹¹⁴ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 11.

¹¹⁵ Ibn Warraq, 'Debunking Edward Said: Edward Said and the Saidists, or Third World Intellectual Terrorism', Institute for the Secularisation of Islamic Society, 2002, <<http://www.secularislam.org/articles/debunking.htm>>, (accessed 21/05/12), also Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 2003).

that outsiders are identified by their 'otherness' reinforces the view that the Vikings were always to be linked with 'otherness' when they were recorded. To better understand the attitudes these chroniclers showed towards the historic behaviour of the Danes this study will consider the ethnic status to which the chroniclers perceived themselves to belong. The analysis of self-identification is important as it forms part of the complicated evolution of the post-conquest English national identity. Laura Ashe identified two parts of twelfth-century Englishness, the feeling of loyalty to England and the feeling of separation from the continent in *'Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200.'*¹¹⁶ This is an important method when considering the Danes who were historically linked with a feeling of at least being part of England, and for those who had settled in England as foreigners. The attempt to remould the past by the writing of history has been addressed by Barrow in *'The Perception of the Past in Twelfth Century Europe'*; which dealt with the attitudes of the monks of Worcester and assists this study by its method of showing how English monks sought to defend their past through the re-moulding of their house histories.¹¹⁷ Drawing from Gabriele Schwab's works, we may recognise how the chroniclers' use of literature as a transformational object which transforms and redefines the boundaries of subjectivity and culture was emphasised by the Anglo-Norman chroniclers through the exaggeration of the original ASC entries.¹¹⁸

When attempting to consider how the twelfth-century chroniclers thought of themselves in terms of 'otherness' we may find their view of themselves in their own chronicles in very few places, but where found they generally point to a situation where some individual associates themselves with more than one group or *gens*. In Chapter 2 below, the five Anglo-Norman chroniclers considered as part of this study will be introduced with the emphasis of these introductions being centred upon who the chroniclers believed they were in terms of their particular *gens*. Consideration is given to whether they felt that they could be identified in terms of more than one *gens*, where *gens* are not classed exclusively in a narrow definition typical of modern concepts of nationality. It is somewhat confusing to use secondary sources to attempt to justify the theory of 'other' as 'self', when attempting to explain the identification of a post-conquest monk of mixed heritage in a country which is going through significant social change, and for some

¹¹⁶ Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (Cambridge, 2007).

¹¹⁷ Barrow, 'How the Twelfth-Century Monks of Worcester Perceived their Past', 53-74.

¹¹⁸ Gabriele Schwab, *Subjects Without Selves: Transitional Texts in Modern Fiction* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), and *The Mirror and the Killer-Queen, Otherness in Literary Language* (Bloomington, 1996).

who wrote during a Civil War between the new would-be rulers. The idea of the influence of the Civil War will not receive much attention in the body of this study. The questions raised by it will appear only in the introduction but will be visited again in the conclusion. The influence of 'The Anarchy' is however, a thread which runs throughout this study which may have influenced some of the chroniclers' histories, as they wrote in a time of political turmoil, where self-identification and one's membership of a particular group was important. Catherine Clarke has observed that 'texts produced in England during "The Anarchy" of 1135 to 1154 refer to an historical context of extreme social disorder, violence, atrocity and suffering'.¹¹⁹ The actual 'othering' by the chroniclers was carried out largely through the exaggeration of the source material, although done so with one eye on the past and the sources available, whilst the other eye seemingly looked out of the *scriptorium* window into the present. As Christopher Bollas has observed, the historian migrates from one library to another, reading the minutiae and burying himself in the texts, only to return to his familiar place, the one of great solitude.¹²⁰ This study considers the period when the upkeep of the ASC had been reduced to possibly only at Peterborough, and its very language being that of the conquered. It however, remained a valuable tool for which Anglo-Norman chroniclers could use to interpret the growing cultural assimilation of their audience.¹²¹

Monstrous theories

In 1996 Cohen edited a collection of essays entitled *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*.¹²² Within these essays and in his own preface, the idea of monsters as a representation of 'otherness' to examine culture was investigated. Although this book in the most part did not deal with medieval monsters, it introduced many aspects of monstrosity which have been used in this study. Asa Mittman paid due deference to Cohen's *Monster Theory* as, 'a phrase that serves as the title of his collection of essays from 1996 that in some ways inaugurated the field [of monster studies]'.¹²³ Following on from Cohen, Bettina Bildhauer

¹¹⁹ Catherine A. M. Clarke, 'Signs and wonders: Writing Trauma in twelfth-century England', in *Reading Medieval Studies*, 35 (2009), 55-77, 55.

¹²⁰ Christopher Bollas, *Cracking Up, The Work of Unconscious Experience* (London, 1995), 137.

¹²¹ Brian Golding, *Conquest and Colonisation, The Normans in Britain, 1066–1100* (Basingstoke, 2001), 2.

¹²² ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, 1996).

¹²³ Asa Mittman, 'The Impact of Monsters and Monster studies', in *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 2.

and Robert Mills edited a collection on the cultural uses to which monsters were put during the medieval period in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*.¹²⁴ The debate over the real significance of monsters and the monstrous was, as Kempf and Gilbert have indicated, 'why would God, who was thought to be the origin of all living things, create such aberrant creatures?'¹²⁵ Although Kempf and Gilbert's book is concerned with the imagery of fanciful monsters, the question raised above is one which would have been considered by the chroniclers referred to herein when writing their chronicles. Their responses to this question seem to be that the Vikings' monstrous nature was God's tool to inflict punishment upon the English.

Cohen contributed a chapter to *Monster Theory* entitled, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)'.¹²⁶ The use of Cohen features in Chapter 3 and has provided this study with several areas for investigation to establish whether the Vikings were portrayed as monsters, or simply as monstrous. Cohen used the 'otherness' of ethnicity and utilised the example of Ethiopians to help demonstrate their 'significant other' traits.¹²⁷ The Ethiopians had since ancient times been seen as sinners as their dark skin was associated with amongst other things, the fires of hell.¹²⁸ Such Ethiopian notions of 'otherness' were also referred to in describing how the Danes could not ever manage to keep to a treaty, when William of Malmesbury linked the Danes to Ethiopians where he used a classical expression that, 'the Ethiopian will not change his skin'.¹²⁹ In this passage it appeared that William was linking one type of established 'otherness' with Danish untrustworthy 'other'. John Block Friedman has argued that race, which includes monstrous race, is central to medieval identities, and can be read only through reference to geography, theology, and bodily morphology.¹³⁰ Robert Bartlett disagrees with this view, and feels that skin colour was 'relatively insignificant' in the Middle Ages.¹³¹ Debra Higgs Strickland has noted that the concept of 'race', where there is a genetically determined appearance, has exerted a powerful influence in the way Western cultures have perceived themselves in relation to 'others'.¹³²

¹²⁴ eds. Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, *The Monstrous Middle Ages* (Toronto, 2003).

¹²⁵ Damien Kempf and M. L. Gilbert, *Medieval Monsters* (British Library, 2015), 5.

¹²⁶ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 3-25.

¹²⁷ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 10.

¹²⁸ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 10.

¹²⁹ WM, 184-5, 'Verum, quia non mutabit Ethiops pellum suam'.

¹³⁰ Friedman, *Monstrous Races*.

¹³¹ Robert Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31:1, Winter, 2001, 39-56; see also, Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 192, 270, note 12.

¹³² Debra Higgs Strickland, 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages', in Mittman and Dendle, *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 365.

She added that Ethiopians, Jews and Saracens do not require identifying descriptions in medieval art, and reminds us that *monstrum* means 'to show', which is significant as in these three examples the 'showing' is through skin colour or Semitic looks, to Western Europeans.¹³³ It has been stated by Richard Kearney that, 'the price to be paid [by the included 'us' and the excluded 'them'] for the construction of the happy tribe is often the ostracizing of some outsider: the immolation of the "other" on the altar of the "alien".'¹³⁴ When fitting the Anglo-Norman depictions of the Vikings into such a statement, association may be made with Kearney's link between religious narratives and the scapegoating of the object of their sacrificial purgation.¹³⁵

The memories of the Vikings which helped to create the chroniclers' texts with the subsequent realisation that such memories continued to haunt the people of the present, arguably contributed to the formation of their own cultural identity. When Page delivered *A Most Vile People* in 1986, he used the works of Asser, Æthelweard, and Symeon of Durham to highlight the changes in the depictions of the Vikings by each chronicler.¹³⁶ Page concluded that:

Even within the Viking Age, or at least within memory of it, the English tradition shows the variety of opinions that could be expressed, or implied, about these peoples and the way they acted. A small amount of factual record led to diverse interpretations; it is unlikely that any single one tells the whole of what was a complex story. Twelfth-century historians would often be misleading if we had not their sources to check against. Where we know of no source we must read later writers with caution.¹³⁷

Essentially, Page was showing that each chronicler had their own reasons for writing accounts of the Vikings to emphasise what was important to them at the time they wrote with the resources available to them.

R. I. Moore's second edition of his 1987, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, was published in 2006 and by his own words represented 'a second layer of reflection and discussion'.¹³⁸ Within this first book Moore looked at how the European Christian church of the central Middle Ages, particularly in France and northern Italy, identified those who did

¹³³ Strickland, 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages', 372.

¹³⁴ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 26.

¹³⁵ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*.

¹³⁶ R. I. Page, 'A Most Vile People'.

¹³⁷ Page, 'A Most Vile People', 30.

¹³⁸ R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society, Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250* (Oxford, 1987 and 2006).
, vii.

not fit the universal Christian community.¹³⁹ Moore's approach identifies the church as a community of purpose, which is seeking to ensure the fight against paganism is kept up by using the memory of it as an inspiration. Moore identified the eleventh and twelfth century processes which produced the intellectual interests to enable the labelling, separation, capture and punishment of people who were deemed to be foreign and, in some way, harmful to Christian society. From this a concept of membership of a universal and exclusive Christian community was argued, with the test of membership for this community being to conform to a range of moral forms articulated through a universal western European language of religion. To fail this membership test was to be placed outside of this society and to being identified, marked, marginalised or even punished for ones' non-conformity. Groups who were labelled as dangerous to the Christian society included heretics, lepers, Jews, homosexuals and prostitutes. Such a test led to stereotyping, from which it may be argued that the Vikings have particularly suffered from over the succeeding centuries. Moore's classification chapter covered some methodology which is useful to the study of Vikings, namely whether it is right to attempt to account for the persecution of a group independently of other groups.¹⁴⁰ When speaking of the heretics, lepers and Jews, Moore noted an assumption that the presence of these groups became more evident in the twelfth century, and this awareness made their supposed threat more ominous.¹⁴¹ This forms the opposite to the Viking threat, which by the twelfth century had ceased to be ominous in any real sense. Where it was a threat the twelfth-century chroniclers could seek to exploit was in the memory of the people, and the chroniclers harnessed the memories of the past to bring together the contemporary factions in the land to find a sense of 'us-ness' upon which to graft the sense of a national identity. Moore noted, 'persecution began as a weapon in the competition for political influence and was turned by the victors into an instrument for consolidating their power over society at large'.¹⁴² Through the use of retrospective persecution, the Anglo-Norman chroniclers cited the Vikings for their beliefs and actions over the previous centuries. Æthelweard (d. c. 998)

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<<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/2863616?uid=3738032&uid=2&uid=4&sid=21106619558463>> (accessed 27/04/15).

¹⁴⁰ Moore, 62-3.

¹⁴¹ Moore, 63.

¹⁴² Moore, 138.

supported the memory of the past, 'so far as our memory provides proof and our parents taught us'.¹⁴³

Pauline Stafford commented that Scandinavian settlement formed the natural bulwark to Wessex's unification of the English. Thus, the twelfth-century chroniclers were inclined to use the Scandinavians of the past to help unite the peoples of post-Conquest England.¹⁴⁴ It therefore appears the Anglo-Norman chroniclers sought to label the Vikings with what Edward Said has referred to as a 'belligerent collective identity', and it follows, this led to the identification of Vikings as 'others' through an intentional act by the chroniclers to assist with the formation of a sense of national Englishness.¹⁴⁵ However, such general views were opposed by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, who whilst borrowing from the earlier writings of Bloch, made the point that concepts of national identity were basically unthinkable in the Christian Middle Ages.¹⁴⁶ *Imagined Communities* caused a reaction in a collection of essays entitled *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, where Anderson's view was countered by some academics including Gillingham.¹⁴⁷ One of the editors, Alan Murray believes the concept of a national identity might have existed but just within certain groups within the Anglo-Norman community such as the nobility or monks.¹⁴⁸ An idea formulated from Alfred Smyth's *Medieval Europeans*, which summarises all of the above points, is whether the cultural assimilation of the Normans and English was dependent upon the cultural separation of the Anglo-Danish society which existed in England before 1066.¹⁴⁹ David Roffe expressed his opinion that the Danelaw possessed a Danish culture, and that the English in some parts of it were 'Scandinavianised'.¹⁵⁰ Certainly the area of the Danelaw contained enough people

¹⁴³ *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. and trans. A. Campbell (Edinburgh, 1962), 1-2, 'in quantum memoria nostra argumentatur, et sicut docuere parentes'.

¹⁴⁴ Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest, A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1989).

¹⁴⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, xvii.

¹⁴⁶ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2006), and Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 2 vols., L. Manyon, (trans.) (London, 1962).

¹⁴⁷ Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson, Alan V. Murray, *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leeds, 1995); John Gillingham, *Conquests, Catastrophe and Recovery: Britain and Ireland 1066-1485* (London, 2014).

¹⁴⁸ 'Pers. Comm. Alan Murray, July 2015'.

¹⁴⁹ ed. Alfred P. Smyth, *Medieval Europeans, Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, 2002), 31.

¹⁵⁰ David Roffe, 'The Danes and the Making of the Kingdom of the English', in Tsurushima, *Nations in Medieval Britain*, 38.

with Danish heritage to support such a contention. Adrian Hastings in *The Construction of Nationhood*, made the connection the Normans were like the Danes in that 'they might conquer in war but in societal and intellectual terms they were quickly absorbed [into the general population of England]'.¹⁵¹ The conclusion from the question of whether England was 'Scandinavianised', or underwent 'Normanisation', ultimately appears to have resulted in both groups adding to 'Englishness'.

From the construction of Nationhood to the impact of 'otherness' on this aspect, Bartlett has produced several books and articles which fit into the general area of this study. On the subject of medieval 'otherness' in an article entitled, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', Bartlett debated the modern differences between race and ethnicity and compared them with those of medieval writers.¹⁵² His conclusions were that in the medieval past, race and ethnicity both refer to the identifications made by individuals about the groups that they belonged to.¹⁵³ Bartlett also used William's *GRA* to illustrate the twelfth-century chronicler's view of race through William's use of *gens*.¹⁵⁴ According to Bartlett, William used the word *gens* over a hundred times in this work and associated it with groups of people or national groups.¹⁵⁵ Bartlett noted the categorisation of what may be assumed to be Vikings in William's use of the description of 'barbarous and pagan tribes'.¹⁵⁶ Such a link will be explored further when considering the categorisation of Vikings as 'others'. Bartlett also alluded to this train of thought in 1993 when referring to the eastward migration of medieval Germans he noted 'it made a great deal of difference [to the existing community] whether the immigrants were conquerors or peaceful colonists, an overwhelming majority or a thin trickle'.¹⁵⁷ The same viewpoint can be argued when considering both the Viking and Norman diaspora.

The exaggeration of past Viking attacks by post-Conquest chroniclers, brought the pre-Conquest actions of the Vikings into the creation of a sense that there was still a threat to England from the 'others' across the sea, or as Cohen observed, 'the monster [which]

¹⁵¹ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood, Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1997), 44.

¹⁵² Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity'.

¹⁵³ Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 41.

¹⁵⁴ Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 43.

¹⁵⁵ Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 43.

¹⁵⁶ Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 43, and *WM*, 172-3.

¹⁵⁷ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe, Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (London, 1994), 298.

dwells at the gates of difference'.¹⁵⁸ Such an idea reinforces an important foundation of this study, that the monster comparison 'haunts' and does not simply unite past and present.¹⁵⁹ Joan Copjec is quoted in Cohen's preface through her use of, 'what Freud would call the latency of historical time with regard to its own comprehension', where latency relates to something which lies dormant waiting to emerge at some future time.¹⁶⁰ Following this logic, the Anglo-Norman view of the Vikings may be examined in terms of the latency of the Viking 'other'. The theme of the potential threat of attack from a past enemy takes the consideration of Viking 'other' into the areas of a threat from the Vikings, rather than any actual acts by the Vikings. The psychology of the latent threat of foreign invasion, bringing with it as it would all the awfulness of times past will be investigated and complemented with the view that the new English of the twelfth century may have been 'haunted' by the memory of past times. Indeed, in *The Social History of England*, the notion that England's history during this period should be understood in terms of attack, resistance and subordination, is explored by using the various references to the large range of theoretical models used by Schwab.¹⁶¹ Although this work was written by a post-war (West) German, and primarily described how the trauma caused by the Nazis was dealt with by the succeeding generations of Germans and Holocaust survivors, some of the numerous theories can be adopted when considering twelfth-century texts. One of these is Schwab's view concerning the understanding of literature as a transformational object, where her theory of literature is one of a continual process of transforming and redefining the boundaries of subjectivity and culture connected to both conscious and unconscious experience and knowledge.¹⁶² This fits with the motivation of the five chroniclers used in this study to write history from a position of religious duty coupled with an understanding that they lived in an uncertain time of significant social change.

Treharne covered the subject of conquest and its effects in *Living Through Conquest*.¹⁶³ Through her analysis of ethnic and cultural dynamics of Cnut's reign, Treharne termed the texts produced for Cnut which appeared in both English and Norse as being

¹⁵⁸ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 7.

¹⁵⁹ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 7.

¹⁶⁰ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 7, x, and ed. Joan Copjec, *Supposing the Subject* (London, 1994), ix.

¹⁶¹ eds. Julia Crick, and Elizabeth Van Houts, *A Social History of England, 900 – 1200* (Cambridge, 2011), 5, also, Gabriele Schwab, *Haunting Legacies, Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma* (New York, 2010).

¹⁶² Schwab, *Haunting Legacies*, 7.

¹⁶³ Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*.

written with 'pragmatic ethnicity', as they communicated different messages to their mutually exclusive audiences.¹⁶⁴ Treharne seems to have felt that the loss of documents written in Old English dealt a death-blow to the society which existed in England before 1066.¹⁶⁵ Such a move to eradicate the recorded knowledge of the past allowed a clear path for Latin and French records of history to be accepted as true reflections of the past, regardless of their possible sub-texts, however as Michael Clanchy has noted, 'French could never compete with English as the mother tongue of those outside the king's court'.¹⁶⁶ The dating of her sources starts in 1020 with Cnut's letter to the English, which highlighted the ethnic division between English and Danish despite Cnut's expressed desire to rule a consolidated nation.¹⁶⁷ Treharne's constituent chapters have proved useful to this study through her consideration of the treatment of the past by the post-Danish and Norman Conquest historians, but because her timeframe starts after the Danish conquest of 1016, there are still some gaps to be filled.

Donald Matthew's work, *Britain and the Continent 1000-1300*, considers the interactions between the occupants of the British Isles and the Continent.¹⁶⁸ Matthew covered such areas as the change in English interests from across the North Sea to that of cross-channel following the Norman Conquest. He also covered the marriages of Æthelred to Emma, and Henry II to Eleanor of Aquitaine, to further cement his cross-channel relationship-strengthening argument. Gillingham's *The English in the Twelfth Century, Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values*, used the works of six twelfth-century historians to concern itself with themes such as the rise of the perception of Celtic 'races' as barbarians and the emergence of a new sense of Englishness.¹⁶⁹ Gillingham, like R.R. Davies, limited his investigation to the occupants of the British Isles and Ireland.¹⁷⁰ In this respect he appears to have largely ignored any continental influence on the emergence of Englishness, as he only considered that the 'otherness' of an immediate neighbour is of fundamental importance to ethnic identity. Perhaps Gillingham felt that the end of the

¹⁶⁴ Eleanor Parker, 'Pilgrim and Patron, Cnut in post-Conquest Historical Writing', in *The Medieval Chronicle*, IX (2015), 281.

¹⁶⁵ Treharne, *Living through Conquest*, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307* (Chichester, 2013), 216.

¹⁶⁷ Treharne, *Living through Conquest*, 33-4.

¹⁶⁸ Donald Matthew, *Britain and the Continent 1000-1300: The Impact of the Norman Conquest* (London, 2005).

¹⁶⁹ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*.

¹⁷⁰ R. R. Davies, *The First English Empire*.

Danish threat in 1085 did not influence the emergence of Englishness, as 'the Scots posed a far more permanent threat.'¹⁷¹ In a physical sense this is of course true, although this leaves an area for further research into whether the memory of past events could be almost as important.

In *Beowulf & Other Stories*, Patricia Giles analysed the Anglo-Norman poem 'The song of Roland', and the heroic figure of Roland.¹⁷² Roland's brain bursting hunting-horn blowing is compared to Grendel in *Beowulf* through the medium of burst sinews of the monster.¹⁷³ This is one of the very few references which have been made linking monsters, Anglo-Normans, and the Danish associated *Beowulf*, albeit in a rather tenuous manner. Ruth Waterhouse has considered 'Beowulf as Palimpsest'.¹⁷⁴ This view reinforces the idea that the Anglo-Norman chroniclers used, and occasionally altered their copies of the ASC to enhance the 'otherness' of the Vikings. Waterhouse observed with intertextuality it is important not to presuppose that relationships between texts are only linear and chronological.¹⁷⁵ Whilst the text of *Beowulf* contains many interpretations of monstrous 'otherness' which could relate to this study, as the focus here is on the chronicles written in the Anglo-Norman period, *Beowulf* will not generally be referred to.

When considering the chroniclers' attitudes, this study will adopt a method of comparing the language used by them when recording the same event or when describing the same person. The differing language used by for example John of Worcester when variously describing a Danish King as a King of the pagans, King of the Northmen, or King of the Danes, may be analysed to demonstrate the causes behind the Anglo-Norman manner of description to enable some meaningful comparisons to be made and conclusions to be drawn.¹⁷⁶ The first recorded encounter of the English with the Danes or the chroniclers' views of Alfred's main antagonist Guthrum, and then later Swein 'Forkbeard' who overcame Æthelred, or Swein Estrithson's involvement in post-Conquest England, all lend themselves to such analysis. Adopting such a methodology will enable this study to demonstrate the attitudinal intentions of the Anglo-Normans. The writers which will be used by this study were all united in the sense that they believed only God dictated the

¹⁷¹ Gillingham, *Conquests, Catastrophe and Recovery*, 98.

¹⁷² eds. Richard North, and Joe Allard, *Beowulf & Other Stories, A new introduction to Old English, Old Icelandic and Anglo-Norman Literature* (Harlow, 2007).

¹⁷³ North and Allard, *Beowulf and Other Stories*, 459.

¹⁷⁴ Ruth Waterhouse, 'Beowulf as Palimpsest', in Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 26.

¹⁷⁵ Waterhouse, 'Beowulf as Palimpsest', 27.

¹⁷⁶ *JW*, 2, 312-13, 336-37, 456-57.

course of history and it was his intentions which led them to their interpretations of the past. Henry of Huntingdon used both the Danes and the Normans to represent two of God's five plagues sent as 'divine vengeance' to punish the sinful islanders of Britain notably considered in Partner's *'Serious Entertainments'*.¹⁷⁷

To demonstrate the application of the 'otherness' theory this study will use the depictions of the Danes in contrast to the literary treatment of those groups who rebelled against William the Conqueror be they English or French. As both groups were described in negative terms a comparison of the similarities and differences of these depictions will allow a clearer view of the actual chronicler's viewpoint or of what he was trying to convey on behalf of his patron to be analysed. As Shopkow has written, individual histories are messages within the conversation of history.¹⁷⁸ Such messages require both a sender (author), and an addressee, which was either a patron or the implied readership of the text.¹⁷⁹ Smyth commented that the West Saxons had quickly identified 'their enemies as being Danish, but until such time as those Danish invaders subsequently became colonists and began to turn to Christianity in the late ninth century, the word 'pagan' was regularly applied to them.'¹⁸⁰ The Anglo-Norman chroniclers were keen to portray the pre-Christianised Danes as pagans, heathens or barbarians. Sarah Foot has argued that when the monastic chroniclers described the violent actions of the Vikings that they were in fact emphasising such actions as 'heathen violence', and this was far more notable than violent action in an age of violence.¹⁸¹

The six chapters following the introduction, approach the umbrella topic of 'otherness' from different historical, cultural, biographical, and literary angles and theoretical perspectives. The chapters follow a view of 'otherness' from the self-identification of the chroniclers, to the treatment of Vikings as monsters, through to the persona of Cnut as pious and holy, and on to the later construction of the Danes as a latent threat to the emerging unified English nation. The chapters 3 to 6 and the case study chart the change in 'otherness' descriptions and argues there were three phases of 'otherness' notation towards the Vikings and latterly the Danes, where the monstrous Vikings become as 'self' with the English due to the reign of Cnut, and after the passing of the Danish

¹⁷⁷ Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 22.

¹⁷⁸ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 29.

¹⁷⁹ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 29.

¹⁸⁰ Smyth, *Medieval Europeans*, 29.

¹⁸¹ Sarah Foot, 'Violence against Christians? The Vikings and the Church in the ninth-century', in *Medieval History*, vol. 1 (1991), 3-16.

hegemony over England and the coming of the Normans, the Danes are seen as a latent threat from somewhere beyond the sea. Thus, the flow of these descriptions runs from monstrous to 'other' as 'self', and thence to latent threat of the 'other'. The third chapter is the largest chapter, and its content is led by the theoretical idea of the monstrous as investigated through the works of Cohen and others.¹⁸² The concept raised by Mittman that the heart of a culture is predicated upon the banishment of others is also considered.¹⁸³

The case study considers the role of the monster in the depictions of the St Brice's Day massacre and introduces the blurring of the monstrous image between the Danish settlers, invaders, and the English king and his earl Eadric. It introduces the idea that there is always a need for a monster to be represented in twelfth-century chronicles, even if the monster is the king of England.

The fourth chapter examines the idea of 'other' as 'self' as seen through the representation of Cnut. The transformation of Cnut as a monster to a holy king of the English and Danes is discussed in this chapter. John Block Friedman pointed out that in the 'Song of Roland' where the line, 'the pagan cause is wrong, the Christian right', suggested the perception of whole groups of people where made monstrous through the choice of religion.¹⁸⁴ The alteration of the treatment of Cnut in the history chronicles reflects his change from such a pagan monster into a respected Christian leader. Such a persona of Cnut is linked to the idea of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers reflecting Cnut as being perceived as 'self', whilst also still representing the 'other' on occasion.

Chapter 5 examines latency, the haunting of memory, and the effect of trauma, leading onto how the chroniclers contemporised the fear of an external threat. Also, by looking at the chroniclers' treatment of the latter stages of the Viking Age, consideration is given to how the chroniclers as children of parents who lived through violent times, actually 'remembered' the events which they did not experience themselves. Both the victims and perpetrators in such cases were the English, firstly as 'Anglo-Saxons' victimised by the Danes and then the Normans, with the Normans subsequently transforming

¹⁸² Cohen, *Monster Theory*; Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*; Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain: On Difficult Middles* (New York, 2006); Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters, Interpreting Otherness* (London, 2003); David Williams, *Deformed Discourse, The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Montreal, 1996); John Bloch Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, 2000); Mittman and Dendle, *Monsters and the Monstrous*.

¹⁸³ Mittman, 'The Impact of Monsters and Monster Studies', in Mittman and Dendle, *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Friedman, 'Foreword', in *Monsters and Monstrous*, xxxi-xxxii.

themselves into English with both the villains and victims being reflected through one literary medium of the chronicles by the Anglo-Normans.

The concluding Chapter 6 pulls together the emergence of a pattern of 'otherness' descriptions, and whether monstrous vilification, 'other' to 'self', and haunting memory were linked specifically using the Vikings and Danes; or if the Vikings just proved to be a useful vehicle to reflect the chroniclers' contemporary concerns. This pattern follows the ASC, but more importantly it is about what was added to this pattern in the first-half of the twelfth-century and why. What appears to have been added was a purposeful vilification of the pre-Christian Vikings which manifested itself through a range of criticisms, all of which stressed that sins against God would ultimately be punished. This may lead to an avenue of future research to tie-into the idea that the twelfth-century chroniclers were using the Vikings as object lessons from the past to warn those in the present to reform. The conclusion will also consider how applicable to each period the applied 'otherness' theories are and the contribution of the individual chroniclers to the shaping of these theories. Whether the anti-Viking/Danish feelings expressed by the chroniclers were consciously expressed still needs to be seen, as does whether the expressions of dislike and mistrust applied to just these two groups or to Scandinavians in general. Indeed, the actual *gens* of this group may prove to be merely accidental, as the conclusion could show that the twelfth-century message to their twelfth-century audience was the primary reason for the changes which were applied to the Anglo-Normans' source materials. To have their audience willing to believe the stories they were told, was a motivator for the chroniclers. Where the chronicles were written, or partly written, during 'The Anarchy', some changes sought to separate the views of their sources which had been written where the reigning monarch of the past and the church, were seeking to purvey a centralised message. Such unity during 'The Anarchy' was not always apparent.

The importance of this research and its distinct value within its larger field of study, relating to the twelfth-century view of the Vikings has not been undertaken before by utilising the argument of 'otherness'. However, scholars such as Page, have considered the 'otherness' attitudes shown towards Scandinavians in the eleventh-and twelfth-centuries.¹⁸⁵ A similar identification of foreigners has been discussed by Marie Therese

¹⁸⁵ R. I. Page, *'A Most Vile People', Early English Historians on the Vikings*, VSNR (London, 1986).

Flanagan in 'Strategies of Distinction: Defining Nations in Medieval Ireland'.¹⁸⁶ Flanagan identified how the Irish term for foreigners was applied to the Vikings from the eighth century and subsequently transferred to English colonists from 1167 onwards.¹⁸⁷ The Vikings were initially identified as pagans by the Anglo-Saxons, but the transferral of the idea of a foreigner from the Viking to a Norman, and then back to the Viking is a new dimension which this study will attempt to explain and justify, through the application of 'otherness' theories. Simon Roffey and Ryan Lavelle have referred to the term 'Viking' as being a 'catch-all' used by modern scholars to reflect groups who did not define themselves as part of the *Angelcynn*.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Marie Therese Flanagan, 'Strategies of Distinction: Defining Nations in Medieval Ireland', in Tsurushima, *Nations in Medieval Britain*, 104-120.

¹⁸⁷ Flanagan, 108-9.

¹⁸⁸ Simon Roffey and Ryan Lavelle, 'West Saxons and Danes: Negotiating Early Medieval Identities', in Lavelle & Roffey, *Danes in Wessex*, 9.

Chapter 2

The Identity of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers

*Now I speak to you who will be living in the third millennium... Consider us, who at this moment seem to be renowned, because, miserable creatures, we think highly of ourselves.*¹
Henry of Huntingdon

This chapter will look at the audience for whom Henry of Huntingdon, and his fellow chroniclers wrote. It will also consider whether the chroniclers thought of themselves 'highly' as Englishmen, Normans, or some other identity. How the chroniclers viewed England, or their idea or notion of England, and of the English will also be investigated. Also featured is the identification of their own textual communities, along with the concept of belonging to a *gens Scriptorum*, or what Leah Shopkow has referred to as 'the community of the learned', which may prove useful to the overall context of this study when considering the sense of a collective viewpoint concerning Viking 'otherness'.² By considering the above factors, it will be possible to establish how the chroniclers sought to justify their work as historians.

For Jacques Le Goff, the discipline of history must seek to be objective which is based upon 'historical truth'.³ Chroniclers in the twelfth century saw historical truth through accuracy and recognised this in different ways. They wrote to conform to the facts available to them, such facts were understood in terms of what might be plausible, whilst also writing with a didactic purpose to teach lessons from the past.⁴ Most historians saw the past in terms of a fight between good and evil, which was expressed through the imposition of God's will. In Orderic's prologue he wrote that, 'I have occasion to touch truthfully on some matters concerning the good or evil leaders of this wretched age.'⁵ The writers who recorded the Vikings as being both cruel and evil, according to Hugh Thomas

¹ *HH*, 496-7, 'Ad uos igitur iam loquar qui in tercio millenario, circa centesimum tricesimum quintum annum, eritis. Cogitate de nobis, qui modo clari uidemur, quia scilicet, quidam miseri, nos reuerentur'.

² Shopkow, *History & Community*, 6.

³ Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman, (trans.), (New York, 1992), xi-xii; cf. Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Sara B. Young, (trans.) (Basingstoke, 2011), 41.

⁴ Christopher Given-Wilson, *Chronicles, The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London, 2004), 2-3.

⁵ *OV*, 1, 130-1, 'In relatione quam de restauratione Vticensis coenobii, iubente Rogerio abate simpliciter prout possum facere institui; liber ueraciter tangere nonnulla de bonis seu malis primatibus huius nequam seculi.'

filled their records with atrocity stories.⁶ However, such intentional moralistic lessons were not the only expected output of historians, as their works were also used as propagandistic outputs for those who commissioned them to write. It is the ignorance or perhaps the manipulation of earlier stories by later chroniclers in the face of 'otherness' depictions which is particularly relevant.⁷ Julia Crick and Elizabeth Van Houts have stated that the sensible way to understand England's history during the Viking and Norman periods is to view it in terms of attack, resistance, and subordination.⁸

Where the separation between 'us' and 'them' is identifiable is a difficult question to answer. With the Vikings being from Scandinavia, distance was easily noted, but with those Danes who lived in England or had Viking ancestry the geographical distance was obviously not important. The conceptual distance between the writer and his description of a monstrous 'other' thus becomes of more importance.⁹ Timothy Reuter commented that in England between 871 and 973 there was already a sense of '*Wirgefüh*' or 'usness'.¹⁰ Whether after two foreign invasions it will be examined if such a sense of usness continued to be felt by the chroniclers studied here who may have felt they were: 'English by birth, but Norman by ancestry'¹¹

Motivation to write history

Of the five chroniclers featured in this study, three of them John of Worcester, William and Orderic were, like Bede, from Benedictine monasteries and shared a common background through their monastic training. Antonia Gransden positioned their histories by stating that although the Benedictines were not solely responsible for historical writing in medieval England, until the end of the thirteenth century they made by far the greatest contribution to it.¹² The fact that Bede had also entered a monastery as a young boy may

⁶ Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 27.

⁷ Karen Armstrong, *Holy War, The Crusades and their impact on today's world* (New York, 1998), 399, an example being the changes in the story of the 'children's' crusade'.

⁸ Crick and Van Houts, *A Social History of England*, 5.

⁹ Debra Higgs Strickland, 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages', in Mittman and Dendle, *Monsters and Monstrous*, 373.

¹⁰ Timothy Reuter, 'The Making of England and Germany, 850-1050. Points of Comparison and Difference', in Smyth, *Medieval Europeans*, 66.

¹¹ David Bates, *The Normans and Empire* (Oxford, 2013), 62, fn. 166, 'Giraldus Cambrensis: Opera Omnia, vii, 34', 'natione quidem Anglicus, sed cognatione Normannus'.

¹² The Benedictine influence on Orderic Vitalis is discussed in, Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 164-5, and also in a wider sense in, Gransden, 'The Benedictines and the Writing of English

also have provided some comfort for studying history to both John and Orderic, for to enter a Benedictine monastery so young and develop an interest in history could have been felt by them to be a positive association to following in Bede's venerable footsteps.

We find that John of Worcester has given us no clues to his personal background. As his Chronicle appears to have been written with an English bias it is probable that John himself was born in England of English parents.¹³ Marianus Scotus' chronicle was brought to England in the early 1080s by Robert, bishop of Hereford, and after that, Wulfstan of Worcester ordered John to continue it.¹⁴ This emphasises an important point for the writing during this period, that books travel and their message remains constant. John had been observed by Orderic working on his chronicle sometime in the 1120s.¹⁵ It was Orderic who wrote of John that he was an Englishman by birth and after entering the monastery of Worcester as a boy he had won great reputation for his learning and piety and; continued the chronicle of Marianus Scotus and carefully recorded the events of William's reign and of his sons William Rufus and King Henry to the present.¹⁶ John's goals were to interpret what had been written before him in terms of God's influence on the English people. His exaggeration of monstrous acts committed by the Vikings is quite marked and possibly influenced later chroniclers who had access to his works.

To add to the reasons why an individual would wish to record history, Orderic recounted an anecdote related to him by Abbot Thierry in which a sinful monk facing his final judgement of whether he was to go to Hell or Heaven was saved through his production of a 'huge book' (*'enormus librum'*). This underlines the importance to the religious orders of book production, and in some way, helps Orderic in his own self-justification of his life's work.¹⁷ Orderic was born near Shrewsbury in 1075. His father was a French-born priest in the household of Roger of Montgomery, and it has been assumed his mother was an Englishwoman due to Orderic's frequent referral to himself as *angligena*.³⁰ Such self-identification emphasised his English descent even though he had spent almost all

History', in *History Today*, 30, 11, 1980, <www.historytoday.com/antonia-gransden>, (accessed 21/02/2014).

¹³ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 143-7.

¹⁴ Emma Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester, c. 1008-1095* (Oxford, 1990), 296.

¹⁵ *OV*, 2, 186-7.

¹⁶ *OV*, 2, 186-7, 'in his quae Mariani Scotti cronicis adiecit, de rege Guillelmo et de rebus quae sub eo uel sub filiis eius Guillelmo Rufo et Henrico usque hodie contigerunt honeste deprompsit'.

¹⁷ *OV*, 2, 50.

³⁰ *OV*, 3, 168-9, '*Vitalis angligena*'.

his adult life in Normandy.³¹ Laura Ashe has noted there were two parts to a feeling of Englishness in the twelfth century, firstly a feeling of loyalty to England, and secondly a feeling of separation from the continent.³² The feeling of Englishness is evident in Orderic, but as he did not live in England he was not actually separated from the continent, and therefore this portion of Ashe's hypothesis does not apply to him. The identity of Orderic's mother is solely related to his *angligena* expression as Orderic did not actually mention her in his work.³³ It is possible that by *angligena* Orderic meant that he was born either in England, or English-born, which may not necessarily imply that his mother was English. Hugh Thomas has summarised the research around the influence of English mothers upon their children from 'mixed' marriages with the French and Normans.³⁴ His summary is based upon the unsupported presumption that English mothers would have passed on their language, or at least some sense of Englishness to their children.³⁵ As the evidence for this is 'almost wholly lacking', Thomas cites the possible evidence from Orderic and Henry, that their knowledge of English, and overall positive sentiment towards the English people, which could have been because their mothers' had themselves been English.³⁶ Mark Faulkner has commented that some forty years' after Orderic left England he possessed 'a somewhat shaky recollection of his childhood language', as he wrongly translated a number of grammatical details.³⁷ Faulkner continued that Orderic's proficiency in English diminished as he grew older, and owing to such attrition the English language was not a large part of his self-identity as *angligena*.³⁸

Of the five chroniclers studied here Orderic is the only one who lived most of his life outside of England, having been sent to Normandy by his father when he was ten years old. He concerned his written work mainly with his own time and that of a generation or two earlier.³⁹ His two principle works were his interpolated copy of William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, and his own larger and more ambitious *Historia*

³¹ Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 32.

³² Ashe, *Fiction and History in England*, 95.

³³ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 9.

³⁴ Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 153.

³⁵ Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 153.

³⁶ Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 153.

³⁷ Mark Faulkner, 'Orderic and English', in Rozier et al., *Orderic Vitalis*. 101.

³⁸ Mark Faulkner, 'Orderic and English', in Rozier et al., *Orderic Vitalis*. 107, 116-7.

³⁹ Jeremy Black, *Historiography: Contesting the Past; Claiming the Future* (London, 2011), 34.

Ecclesiastica.⁴⁰ We are aware that upon his arrival in Normandy that Orderic had felt very 'other' to those around him which was exacerbated by having felt that he had actually been 'excluded' from his own homeland. He himself described: 'And so, as a boy of ten, I crossed the English Channel and came into Normandy as an exile, unknown to all, knowing no one. Like Joseph in Egypt I heard a language which I could not understand.'⁴¹ From this statement, it has been assumed that Orderic hardly spoke the language of his father, and thus it follows that he primarily spoke his mother's language of English.⁴² His fear of stigmatization, scapegoating and discrimination are apparent from his recollection of this life changing event. Whilst his primary audience were to be continental, Orderic followed the Benedictine goal of praising God's will and by denigrating paganism.

Jeffrey Cohen has noted William of Malmesbury's *GRA* was not just a 'hand-cramping composition', but also 'the product of William's blood'.⁴³ William was born around the year 1095 to Norman and English parents. This gave him the ability to draw direct attention to his mixed parentage when he claimed that by: 'having the blood of both nations in my veins', justified the feeling that he was able to steer a middle path, ('*temperamentum*', literally a 'proper mixture') between the extremes of both Norman and English post-conquest propaganda.⁴⁴ Brian Golding has considered this statement to be in itself a literary device which was designed to blur the distinctions between English and Norman so prevalent at this time.⁴⁵ Cohen, on the other hand argued William reflected both identities as mingled but not yet assimilated into one body.⁴⁶ Thomson observed William has been known for his 'emphatic sense of Englishness'.⁴⁷ This comment from one of William's most renowned students and biographers asks the question how William portrayed this sense of Englishness. One method was for William to seek to alienate 'others' such as Celts in the shape of Welsh, Irish, Scots and Bretons, as well as Jews through his negative depictions of these groups.⁴⁸ Geraldine Heng commented that there

⁴⁰ Daniel Roach and Charles Rozier, 'Interpreting Orderic Vitalis', in Rozier, et al., *Orderic Vitalis*, 1.

⁴¹ *OV*, 6, 554-5, 'Decennis itaque Britannicum mare transfretavi, exul in Normanniam ueni, cunctis ignotus cognoui. Linguam ut Ioseph in Aegypto quam non noueram audiui'.

⁴² A point made by Gillingham in *Conquests, Catastrophe and Recovery*, 273.

⁴³ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity, and Monstrosity*, 54.

⁴⁴ *WM*, 424-5, 'quia utriusque gentis sanguinem traho'.

⁴⁵ Golding, *Conquest and Colonisation*, 9.

⁴⁶ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 55-9.

⁴⁷ Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, 168.

⁴⁸ Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, 168; Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 3-18; Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 307-322.

was an excessive focus on the alien minority in medieval England, which is usually attested by the focus on the English Jews.⁴⁹ William spoke of the natural division between the English and the Normans following a part of his chronicle in which he himself ‘admits’ to using his own personal viewpoint as opposed to one which he has obtained through books or word-of-mouth, when discussing the death of Godwin.⁵⁰ His next chapter contains the following observation: ‘either from the natural division between the two nations or because the fact is that the English are scornful of any superior and the Normans cannot endure an equal’.⁵¹ This is a significant statement made by a monk with both English and Norman blood in his veins. The arrogant characteristics of both ‘nations’ (*gentium*), must through the use of these words automatically separate William as a Benedictine monk from identifying himself primarily as belonging to either group. Sigbjørn Sønnesyn has offered his opinion that William perceived both *gentes* as distinct, which demonstrated to him that ethnicity was ‘deeply embedded in the constituent members of the different *gentes*’.⁵² William of course knew where his parents originated from, but it may be argued that William would have primarily described himself as a Benedictine monk living in England, whose first loyalty was to God in preference to any other forms of self-identification.

Henry of Huntingdon was the son of Nicholas, a Norman, and it has been deduced he probably had an English mother.⁵³ His father was highly influential in his life, and Henry eventually followed him as an archdeacon of Huntingdon. Henry’s father was related to the influential Glanville family, although the identity of his father is not known.⁵⁴ From his paternal side Henry was a Norman who was well connected with the ruling class in England. With an English mother, Henry would have learnt to speak, read and possibly write

⁴⁹ Geraldine Heng, ‘Jews, Saracens, “Black Men”, Tartars: England in a World of Racial Difference’, cf. *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 367.

⁵⁰ *WM*, 345-5, ‘Sed quia ad id locorum uentum est, lectorem premonitum uolo quod hic quasi ancipitem uiam narrationis uideo, quia ueritas factorum pendet in dubio’; (‘But since we have reached this point, I should like to warn the reader that here I perceive the course of my narrative to be somewhat in doubt because the truth of the facts is in suspense and uncertain’).

⁵¹ *WM*, 354-7, ‘uel propter natural utrarumque gentium discidium, uel quia ita se res habet quod Angli aspernanter ferant superiorem, Normanni nequeant pati parem’.

⁵² Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 190.

⁵³ Henry’s father is mentioned twice by name, firstly when he died and was buried at Lincoln; and secondly when recalling that Bishop Remigius had appointed Nicholas over Cambridge, Huntingdon and Hertford. *HH*, 458-9, 590-1.

⁵⁴ *HH*, ‘Introduction’, xxiii-xxv.

English.⁵⁵ Through both of his parents Henry would have understood that his father's people were those with influence and power whilst those from his mother's side generally adopted less important roles but made up most of the population. It is believed that within two or three generations of immigration, the ethnic identities of the post-Conquest English were attenuated by cultural assimilation and intermarriage.⁵⁶ Henry's parents would have been at the forefront of such integration.

Van Houts noted Henry used the ASC as his 'point of departure', and maintained its annalistic referencing.⁵⁷ However, Henry removed many dates from his translation of the ASC and substituted them with synchronisms, for example he follows the millennium with the year 1002, 1003, the fourth year, fifth year, and so on until the sixteenth year.⁵⁸ Henry was also aware of the tradition of recording a continuity with the past from both Homer and the classics, and also the Bible which acted as his sources.⁵⁹ From the pages of his *Historia Anglorum*, Henry was not explicit in his view of his own identity. However, Henry gave the impression that he was an Englishman of Norman descent. His peers tended to be Normans or those who considered themselves to be part of the Norman rulers and administrators of England. Diana Greenway summarised Henry's life by stating that he had a public career of over forty years, often at the centre of political life and in attendance at the royal court and ecclesiastical gatherings.⁶⁰

Henry devoted some two-thirds of his *Historia Anglorum* to the period before 1066.⁶¹ His view of the Normans was that they were generally 'violent and cunning'.⁶² Despite that, they were the tool by which God's plan for the English people was brought to its conclusion, 'for God had chosen the Normans to wipe out the English nation, because

⁵⁵ An example of an English translation into Latin appears in; *HH*, 358-9, with the Old English, '*Flet Engle, flet Engle, ded is Edmund*', into Latin, '*Quod sic interpretatur, "Fugite Angli. Fugite Angli. Mortuus est Edmundus"*'.

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto, 1999), 138.

⁵⁷ Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elizabeth Van Houts, *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World* (Woodbridge, 2002), 113.

⁵⁸ *HH*, 338-55; see also Diana Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*', in *ANS*, 18, 109.

⁵⁹ R. N. Swanson, *Twelfth-century renaissance* (Manchester, 1999), 55.

⁶⁰ *HH*, 'Introduction', lvi.

⁶¹ James Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), 211.

⁶² *HH*, 384-5.

He had seen that the Normans surpassed all other people in their unparalleled savagery.⁶³ Henry's view was influenced by the actions of Henry I, whom he greatly despised. In the chapter concerning his 'present time', just prior to the coming to England of Stephen of Blois (whom Henry appeared to hate even more than Henry I), Henry of Huntingdon outlined the period following Henry I's death:

In the dreadful time that followed, which was set on fire by the mad treacheries of the Normans, what Henry had done – whether in the manner of a tyrant or of a king – seemed, by comparison with worse, to be the summit of excellence.⁶⁴

Although Henry probably felt himself removed from his grandfather's generation of Normans, he did record that the Normans subdued the land and by right of kingship granted to those conquered their lives, liberty and ancient laws.⁶⁵ However, Henry was looking for a way not to be considered as a Norman himself, and not to be directly associated with what he saw as his father's people's treacherous and violent nature. To be described as an Englishman allowed him to distance himself from the Normans of both his past and present. In a sense Henry did see himself as being part of an 'other' type of national. He was not a Norman by birth but an Englishman. He understood English, yet his career as an archdeacon was the result of his Norman father's influence along with many others who were also the product of Norman influencers. Whilst, as seen above, he demonstrated a love of the country of England, this did not necessarily reflect itself in a similar love for the English people. Henry built upon the self-description of Lanfranc, who in a 1071 letter to Pope Alexander II, described himself as being a 'new Englishman', and Henry also appeared to see himself as one of the 'new English' of Norman descent.⁶⁶ Lanfranc's reference to himself as a new Englishman was set in the context of being a

⁶³ *HH*, 384-5 also 402-3, 'Elegerat enim Deus Normannos ad Anglorum gentem exterminandam, quia prerogativa seuicie singularis omnibus populis uiderat eos preminere'.

⁶⁴ *HH*, 700-1, 'Successu uero temporis atrocissimi quod postea per Normannorum rabiosas prodiciones exarsit, quicquid Henricus fecerat, uel tyrannice uel regie, comparatione deteriorum uisum est peroptimum'.

⁶⁵ *HH*, 272-3.

⁶⁶ eds. Helen Clover, and Margaret Gibson, *The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford, 1979), 36-9, 'Ego tamen nouus Anglus rerunque Anglicarum, nisi quantum ab aliis accipio', ('Now I am a new Englishman, virtually ignorant as yet of English affairs'); Gibson used 'novice Englishman', whereas my preference is for 'new Englishman'. Regarding the 'New English', see Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 99-100, 'it is apparent that William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, ... both thought of themselves as English'.

member of the English church.⁶⁷ Such people were to help lead the old style English from their sinful past which had been destroyed as a result of the coming of the Normans into a new era chosen by God, and led by Henry II to enable the new English to enjoy a holy and peaceful future.

Short is confident that Gaimar was born in England.⁶⁸ As we have no other source to know whether he was or not, the safest route is to treat Gaimar as an Anglo-Norman. Being the earliest known translator of English into French, Gaimar may well have viewed himself as being able to use his linguistic skills to facilitate a better understanding of the English past by French-speaking Anglo-Normans. Van Houts ascribed considerable irony to the fact Gaimar used the language of the conquerors to present a history grafted upon the ASC. She concluded from this that by the third generation, some grandchildren of the conquest were prepared to learn the history of their new country from an English perspective.⁶⁹ Gaimar himself probably felt that he was unlikely to be well known and concentrated his considerable powers of analysis and poetic interpretation to producing an entertaining work for his patron.

Through the chroniclers' view of themselves as being largely English, their works started a distancing of identity between the members of what might be termed the *gens Scriptorum*, and their Anglo-Norman and Norman peers. This enabled the members of such an elite group to attempt to be at the forefront of recording a new English identity. Warren Hollister recorded his view that no-where else in Europe were there such a group of historians comparable to the Anglo-Norman chroniclers. Although none were individually as eminent as Bede, through the sum of their parts their group achievement was unsurpassed.⁷⁹ Asa Mittman has offered his view that many cultural groups sought to define themselves via an ongoing process of dependent differentiation by establishing themselves in relation to their 'others'.⁸⁰ Mittman's 'others' were the Picts, Celts, Vikings and Danes as they related to the Anglo-Saxons.⁸¹ By considering this view for the Anglo-

⁶⁷ Tsurushima, *Nations in Medieval Britain*, 13.

⁶⁸ GG, 'Introduction', xiii.

⁶⁹ Van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, 131-2.

⁷⁹ Christopher Warren Hollister, 'Anglo-Norman Political Culture', in ed. Warren-Hollister *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance, Proceedings of the Borchard Conference on Anglo-Norman History* (Woodbridge, 1997), 6.

⁸⁰ ed. Asa Simon Mittman with Francis G. Gentry, *Maps and Monsters in Medieval England* (New York, 2006), 5, where Mittman cites the work of Michael Camille.

⁸¹ Mittman, *Maps and Monsters*, 5.

Norman chroniclers, it can be suggested their process of dependent differentiation was aimed against less tangible 'others' such as their own peers in the *scriptorium*.

The 'us' and 'them' viewpoints expressed in various forms by the five chroniclers studied here may also be interpreted as expressions of 'belonging and not belonging' as well as 'internal' and 'external' views of groups. The hypothesis that the use of words such as 'us' or 'them', when referring to in-group or out-group status may unconsciously perpetuate intergroup biases. This is evident in the works of the five chroniclers which provided the information on which the chroniclers of the later middle ages based their accounts of England's past.⁸² Richard Kearney has noted that those who have been included in a group ('us'), seek to ostracise those who are to be excluded ('them'), so the act of constructing a happy group is through the exclusion of the outsider.⁸³ Mittman reminded us that such writing was usually aimed for monastic contemplation, for what he describes as 'intense mental chewing' known as *ruminatio*.⁸⁴ Such monastic rumination over the issue of 'us' and 'them' could ultimately lead to a conclusion that the 'us' would be stronger together against the 'them', and therefore lead to intentional unification and bonding.

The Chroniclers' view of England, the English and 'English'

Whilst the chroniclers sought to interpret the historical facts and the over-riding pattern of God's will through their works, they were also firmly positioned by the power struggles within their society and the nature of their sponsor.⁸⁵ Whilst recognising Norman influence in England, Henry also clearly loved the physical country of England as can be felt from his glowing descriptions of the English countryside from which Greenway has concluded, 'he felt a great affection and in which he took considerable pride'.⁸⁶ When writing in old age

⁸² Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 158.

⁸³ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 26.

⁸⁴ Mittman, *Maps and Monsters*, 123.

⁸⁵ Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 19.

⁸⁶ Greenway seemed to draw this conclusion from, *HH*, 12-3, 'Hec autem insularum nobilissima cui quondam Albion nomen fuit, postera uero Britannia, nunc autem Anglia', ('This, the most celebrated of islands, formerly called Albion, later Britain, and now England'), and the first lines of his first book start with, 10-11, 'Britannia igitur beatissima est insularum, fecunda frugibus et arboribus, copiose riuis et nemoribus, iocunda uolucrum et ferarum uenatibus, ferax auium multi et diversi generis, terra et mari et fluuiis', ('Britain, then, is the most blessed of islands, rich in crops and trees, with plentiful streams and woodlands, delightful for its hunting-grounds of wildfowl and game, and teeming with many different kinds of land, sea, and river birds').

Orderic associated his mother as the land of England itself, which gave rise to his sense of melancholy belonging. As he had spent so long in a community of monks, his view of women was influenced by his view of their 'otherness', which included his own mother.⁸⁷ Golding has observed that Orderic wrote with the benefit and distortion of hindsight when describing events in England.⁸⁸ Whilst one aspect of 'us' and 'them' could be, 'us' against 'them', the extension of this area into 'us' against 'everyone', is not covered by this study. Therefore, the Anglo-Norman view of the 'otherness' of the Welsh, Scots, Irish and Bretons etc., will not be covered here in any detail. John's chronicle entry for 1070, stated that:

Some abbots were also deposed there [in East Anglia], the king striving to deprive so many Englishmen of their offices. In their place he would appoint men of his own race [*gentes personas*] and strengthen his position in the newly acquired kingdom.⁸⁹

For John, the Normans were looking to expand and consolidate their powerbases at the expense of the native English with a portrayal of the 'them and us' which is seldom seen expressed so clearly in the other chronicles. Maijastina Kahlos, in the introduction of *The Faces of the Other*, stated 'the image of the other reveals more of the shapers of the image than of the object portrayed, and therefore the attention is focused on the group, community, or culture that constructs the image of the other'.⁹⁰ Ashe observed the concept of the land of England provided a 'paradigmatic framework within which the identity of the English could cohere'.⁹¹ Similarly, Monika Otter also noted that 'topography, or the spatial setting, seems to be an unusually prominent concern in English history and historical hagiography' in this period.⁹²

Henry chose to speak of England as a country with a voice and a being, rather than of the English as the people of that country. In a long plea, Henry spoke on behalf of the land of England to the future Henry II to save it from complete ruin. Henry II was depicted as the saviour of an England which was barely alive.⁹³ The chapter contains this plea:

⁸⁷ Cohen, *Hybridity Identity and Monstrosity*, 54.

⁸⁸ Golding, *Conquest and Colonisation*, 7.

⁸⁹ JW 3, 12-3, 'Abbates etiam aliqui ibi degradati sunt, operam dante rege ut quamplures ex Anglis suo honorepriuarentur, in quorum locum sue gentes personas subrogaret, ob confirmationem scilicet sui quod nouiter adquisierat regni'.

⁹⁰ ed. Maijastina Kahlos, *The Faces of the Other, Religious Rivalry and Ethnic Encounters in the Later Roman World* (Turnhout, 2011), 5.

⁹¹ Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 59.

⁹² Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill, 1996), 3-4.

⁹³ HH, 760-3.

England, long numbed by mortal chill, now you grow warm, revived by the heat of a new sun. You raise the country's bowed head, and with tears of sorrow wiped away, you weep for joy. With tears you utter these words to your foster child: 'You are spirit, I am flesh: now as you enter I am restored to life.'⁹⁴

Henry here adopted the role of the first-person and addressed the king directly as 'you'. The foster child analogy is interesting. A foster child is one who is not necessarily directly related to the fosterer who undertakes to care for and bring-up the child in order for them to take their place in society. Within this relationship is formed a long-term bond. Children of knightly or noble status, when they reached the ages of eight to ten, were often sent to other noble families in a custom called fostering. Greenway could have also translated *alumpno* as a 'nursling', or 'disciple' which changes the emphasis of Henry's Latin words to a clearer Lord – Vassal relationship. This is emphasised more strongly by considering that *alumnus*, has been translated as foster-son, protégé, ward, or disciple, pupil, or student, it has even been noted as, a foster-father, nourisher, patron or sponsor.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the persona of King Henry represents the leader and the country willingly submits and follows his authority. Henry also wrote of an English king who did not care about background or heritage, but saw him as the spirit of England, and of whom the future of the country surely rested. In a manner such as this the Anglo-Normans thought of themselves in relation to their place in English society and their responsibility to building the future of the country.

In his chapter entitled 'the coming of the English', Henry utilised the same 'otherness' language that Bede had used to describe the early English settlers as hordes of foreigners who crowded into the island.⁹⁶ Henry's 'number of foreigners increased so much that they became a source of terror to the natives'.⁹⁷ The foreigners here being assumed to be Danes. When writing about the period around the time of King William's death and the failure of Knut to attack England, Henry observed: 'and there was scarcely a noble of

⁹⁴ *HH*, 776-7, 'Anglia letali iamdudum frigore torpens, Nunc solis feruore noui rediuiua calescens, Eris impressum terre caput, et uacuatis Mesticie lacrimis, pre leticia lacrimaris. Cum lacrimis hec uerba tuo profundis alumpno: 'Spirit us es, caro sum, te nunc intrante reuixi'.

⁹⁵ R. E. Latham, et al., (eds.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, A-H* (London, 1975), 72.

⁹⁶ *HH*, 80-1.

⁹⁷ *HH*, 80-1, 'grandescere populus cepit aduenarum, ita ut ipsis quoque qui aduocauerant, id est indigenis essent terrori'.

English descent in England, but all had been reduced to servitude and lamentation, and it was even disgraceful to be called English.⁹⁸

Audiences

Reading aloud permitted the illiterate to participate in the use of documents, whereas, reading and writing silently excluded them.⁹⁹ Regarding the audiences that the chroniclers were seeking, John's primary audience were his brother monks and those of nearby monasteries whom he considered to be in search of edifying entertainment in addition to needing an introduction to world history.¹⁰⁰ An audience such as his would have been those fortunate enough to have been educated through a monastic institutional system and would have effectively been representative of the Latinate learned elite of the Anglo-Norman realm.¹⁰¹

Orderic wrote the *Historia Ecclesiastica* over the course of three decades. In an imitation of Bede, Orderic stated that: 'I am occupied with probing and laying out the fate of the Christian people in the modern world, so I aspire to call this present little work a *Historia Ecclesiastica*.'¹⁰² The size of his undertaking belies his 'little work' comment. His finished work was, in fact, 'enormously long' as evidenced by his completion of some thirteen volumes.¹⁰³ Chibnall suggested Bede had been Orderic's greatest influence and that it was Bede who had 'pointed the way and constantly provided a model for the form and content' of his chronicle.¹⁰⁴ Orderic made use of Bede's chronicle as the basis for his record of events from the Incarnation to the early eighth-century.¹⁰⁵ He expressed in his opening preface to the first book of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* that: 'Bede the Englishman' was amongst the most famous historical writers known in his day, and stressed his desire

⁹⁸ *HH*, 401-2, 'nec iam uix aliquis princeps de progenie Anglorum esset in Anglia, sed omnes ad seruitutem et ad merorem redacti essent, ita etiam ut Anglicum uocari esset obprobrior'.

⁹⁹ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 273.

¹⁰⁰ P. A. Hayward, 'John of Worcester', in *The Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, volume 2 (Leiden, 2010), 941-3.

¹⁰¹ Elaine Treharne, 'Textual communities (vernacular)', in Crick, and Van Houts, *A Social History of England*, 341.

¹⁰² *OV*, 1, 129-130, 'modernos Christianorum euentus rimari et propalare satago, unde presens opusculum aecclesiasticam historiam appellari affecto'.

¹⁰³ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 233, 'The book was enormously long.'

¹⁰⁴ *OV*, 1, 56-7.

¹⁰⁵ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 177.

that men of his [Orderic's] own day should seek to imitate such remarkable erudition'.¹⁰⁶ In similar terms to Bede, and possibly following King Alfred's earlier translation of Orosius' world history up to 418, Orderic stressed the Orosian concept that history was the manifestation of God's will on earth, and wrote primarily to demonstrate to his audience that God always punished the sinful, but through reading history and learning from it those living in the present would have better prospects of salvation.¹⁰⁷ The best summary of this view is again contained in Orderic's prologue to his first book wherein he stated that:

Our predecessors in their wisdom have studied all the ages of the erring world from the earliest times, have recorded the good and evil fortunes of mortal men as a warning to others, and, in their constant eagerness to profit future generations, have added their own writings to those of the past... I study their narratives with delight; I praise and admire the elegance and value of their treatises.¹⁰⁸

By using well-referenced historical works Orderic sought to continue the warnings of the past and was keen to follow Bede's and Eusebius' examples by citing his sources. Amanda Hingst concluded that Orderic wrote history to provide a necessary vision of the future using events of the past.¹⁰⁹ Such identification of past events involving 'otherness' such as paganism and Viking raiders helped to form the basis of the haunting nature of the past for future generations. The wide historical scope of Orderic's work appeared to be primarily aimed at members of his own monastery, and the following long passage highlights the fact that Orderic seemed to be faced with detractors within his own monastery or possibly even his own *scriptorium* when he stated that:¹¹⁰

Everyone should daily grow in knowledge of how he ought to live, and follow the noble examples of famous men now dead to the best of his ability... So, the learned do their work out of good will and reveal past events to future generations ungrudgingly, though sometimes idle and ignorant men attack their achievements with wolfish fangs... Let denigrators, who neither produce anything of their own nor accept the work of others with good will, be silent. Let them learn what they do not know; and if they cannot learn, let them at least suffer their fellows to produce what they think fit.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ OV, 1, 129-130, 'Anglicoque Beda', 'eorum notabile sedimen sequi'.

¹⁰⁷ ed. Andrew T. Fear, *Orosius: Seven Books of History against the Pagans* (Liverpool, 2010), 9.

¹⁰⁸ OV, 1, 130-1, 'Anteriores nostri ab antiquis temporibus labentis saeculi excursus prudenter inspexerunt, et bona seu mala mortalibus contingentia pro cautela hominum notaverunt, et futuris semper prodesse volentes, scripta scriptis accumulaverunt. Hoc nimirum videmus a Moyse et Daniele factum, aliisque hagiographis... Horum allegationes delectabiliter intueor, elegantiam et utilitatem syntagmatum laudo et admiror'.

¹⁰⁹ Hingst, *The Written World*, xx.

¹¹⁰ Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 32, 'Unlike most of the other great twelfth-century historians, Orderic had no mighty aristocratic patrons in mind'.

¹¹¹ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 39, and OV, 3, 212-5.

It is evident from this that Orderic did not always have the support of his brother monks to undertake his life's work he felt a sense of open opposition to his undertaking from the very audience he was writing for. Although there is nothing explicit in this passage to justify such a view, it may be implied that both Orderic's English birth and his historical interest may have singled him out for an 'otherness' categorisation on both counts. Orderic also sought to defend his profession elsewhere in his work when he observed:

I am not able to unravel the divine plan by which all things are made and cannot explain the hidden causes of things; I am engaged merely in writing historical annals for the benefit of my fellow monks... I make a record of events as I have seen or [heard of] them for the benefit of future generations.¹¹²

William of Malmesbury appeared to have a similar attitude towards those who did not approve or appreciate his work when he said that he would, 'answer [them] with the retort which St Jerome long ago cast at the dogs that barked at him; "Let them read me if they like and throw me away if they do not"'.¹¹³ William also warned his audience:

That I guarantee the truth of nothing in past time except the sequence of events; the credit of my narrative must rest with my authorities. But whatsoever I have added out of recent history, I have either seen myself or heard from men who can be trusted. In any case, I do not greatly value the judgement of my contemporaries either way; posterity, I trust, when love and envy are no more, if it cannot praise my style, at least will pay tribute to my industry.¹¹⁴

Such a statement appears to have been drawn directly from Bede who had previously also humbly asked his reader:

if he finds anything other than the truth set down in what I have written, not to impute it to me. For, in accordance with the principles of true history, I have simply sought to commit to writing what I have collected from common report, for the instruction of posterity.¹¹⁵

¹¹² *OV*, 6, 437.

¹¹³ *WM*, 540-1, 'hoc respondeo quod olim sanctus Hieronimus canibus suis obiecit: 'Si placet, legant; si non placet abstant'.

¹¹⁴ *WM*, 16-7, 'sciat me nichil de retro actis preter coherentiam annorum pro uero pacisci; fides dictorum penes auctores erit. Quicquid uero de recentioribus aetatibus apposui, uel ipse uidi uel a uiris fide dignis audiui. Ceterum in utranvis partem presentium non magnipendo iudicium, habiturus, ut spero, apud posteros post decessum amoris et lioris, si non eloquentiae titulum, saltem industriae testimonium'.

¹¹⁵ *Bede*, 6-7, 'Lectoremque suppliciter obsecro ut, siqua in his quae scripsimus aliter quam se ueritas habet posita reppererit, non hoc nobis inputet, qui, quod uera lex historiae est, simpliciter ea quae fama uulagante collegimus ad instructionem posteritatis litteris mandare studuimus'; on the interpretation of the use of 'uera lex historiae...studimus, see

Part of William of Malmesbury's motivation was similar to John of Worcester's in that he sought to entertain and this, coupled with his desire to be truthful led him to be conscious that he should attempt not to be too tedious with his storytelling.¹¹⁶ John Gillingham, whilst noting that William's work was 'full of cynical insights into human nature and spiced with entertaining and scandalous anecdotes', has also observed that William deliberately included such digressions to reach both wider and courtly audiences who were further afield from his network of Benedictine monasteries.¹¹⁷ William never made an attempt to record God's plan for the English people in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, preferring instead to record events such as the Norman Conquest as being due to the workings of providence.¹¹⁸ William pointed to his study of history as adding, 'flavour to moral instruction by imparting a pleasurable knowledge of past events, spurring the reader by the accumulation of examples to follow the good and shun the bad.'¹¹⁹ William did not expect all of his monastic audience or even those of his wider courtly listeners to understand complex Latin phrases so was conscious to keep his Latin readable: 'that no one may complain that the obscurity of my language repels his attempt to learn the truth, I will use the casual words of everyday speech.'¹²⁰ William appeared to have considered his audience to be conversant with Latin, which probably indicates that in the main he was writing for his fellow monks who had an everyday comprehension of Latin, and that his wider audiences also read out loud and listened to scripts in Latin. In an apparent self-congratulatory tone, William made the following statement concerning his motivation to write when he compiled another of his works, the *Life of St Wulfstan*, 'So I think I have

J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, A Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988), 5.

¹¹⁶ *WM*, 462-3, 'licet fastidii discrimen immineat, dum relatori, si forte secundum dictores suos mentiatur, difficilis sit regressus ad ueniam'.

¹¹⁷ John Gillingham, 'Civilizing the English? The English histories of William of Malmesbury and David Hume', in *Historical Research*, 74, 183 (February 2001), 18-19, (Wiley Online Library, accessed 16/12/2013).

¹¹⁸ Sørensen, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 269; Jean Blacker made the point that neither God, nor divine will is mentioned in William's statement of the exemplary value of history contained in his letter to the king's son Earl Robert, to whom he dedicated his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* in, Blacker, *The Faces of Time*, 4-5, see also, *WM*, 4-5.

¹¹⁹ *WM*, 150-1, 'quae iocunda quadam gestorum notitia mores condiens, ad bona sequenta uel mala cauenda legentes exemplis irritat'; Bede, 2-3, see above, fn. 8, also, Nancy Partner, 'Medieval Histories and Modern Realism', 860.

¹²⁰ *WM*, 614-5, 'ne quis obscuritate uerborum se causetur a cognitione rerum reici, erit sermo cotidianus et leuis', his audience as monastic, see Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, 38.

done well to conceive the idea of favouring posterity with a Life of St Wulfstan... and of handing it down for eternal remembrance, however poor my style.'¹²¹ In the same prologue he also made it clear that, for as long as the sky and the stars turned around and any literature survived, that an audience for work such as his would survive.¹²² William set out 'to mend the broken chains of history'.¹²³ He demonstrated his view of history as a chain which passes from generation to generation.

In the opening lines of his prologue, Henry of Huntingdon shared his 'considered opinion' with his audience that suffering, and affliction could be relieved 'almost entirely in the study of literature'.¹²⁴ He undertook to Bishop Alexander of Lincoln that he would 'narrate the history of this kingdom and the origins of our people'.¹²⁵ Henry's use of 'our people' is significant as he is combining a reference to all the English and their recently arrived Norman masters. Although his intended audience may have appeared to have encompassed the whole of the people of England, in practice his audience was limited to those who could understand Latin. As few laymen would have been able to do this, Henry's audience would have effectively comprised members of the clergy as well as extending to the households of the nobility with strong links to Norman ancestors in the main.¹²⁶ In the preface to a letter posthumously addressed to his deceased friend Walter entitled *De Contemptu Mundi*, Henry stated that this part of his history would not be complicated but: 'Rather I shall speak with utter simplicity, so that it may be clear to many (I mean to the less well educated), and shall speak of events that you and I have witnessed.'¹²⁷ In contemplation of his audience being comprised of the *minus doctis*, Henry utilised strong story lines and plenty of dramatic incidents in his chronicle arranged in sections which lent themselves to be read out-loud at a single sitting. Henry assumed those who comprised

¹²¹ *William of Malmesbury, Saints' Lives*, eds. and trans. Michael Winterbottom, and Rodney M. Thomson (Oxford, 2002), 10-13, 'Vnde non contemprienda, sicut opinor, cura successit animo beati Wlstani episcopi Wigornensis uitam nequaquam posteris inuidere, sed eam stilo qualicumque aeternae mandare memoriae'.

¹²² *William of Malmesbury, Saints' Lives*, 12-3, 'Qua de causa pio patri lectores non defuturos arbitror dum polus rotabit sidera, dum ulla in mundo erit littera', ('Hence I think the holy father will not lack readers, so long as the sky turns, and the stars go around, and while any trace of letters remains in the world').

¹²³ *WM*, 14-15, 'voluntati fuit interruptam temporum seriem sarcire'.

¹²⁴ *HH*, 2-3, 'Cum in omni fere litterarum studio dilce laboris lenimen et summum doloris solamen dum uiuitur insitum considerem'.

¹²⁵ *HH*, 4-7, 'qui flos et cacumen regni et gentis esse uideris'.

¹²⁶ Greenway, *History of the English People*, xix.

¹²⁷ *HH*, 584-5, 'Sed loquendo omnino simpliciter ut pateat pluribus (id est minus doctis) et de his que tu et ego uidimus'; Darlington, *Anglo-Norman Historians*, 18.

this less educated group could also understand Latin, indicating his history was written for those he thought of as his intellectually inferior peers. In addition to his desire to both inform and reform, Henry also sought to entertain. His two best-known stories were those of Cnut and the waves, and the death of Henry I through eating 'a surfeit of lampreys', which passed straight into the mythology of English history.¹²⁸

Gaimar presented his work based upon his interpretation of sources in three different languages after: 'he [had] obtained a large number of copies of books, English books, by dint of learned reading, and books both in the French vernacular and in Latin.'¹²⁹ By writing in French, Gaimar's multilingualism reflected a move towards the writing of English history for the secular Anglo-Norman elite.¹³⁰ Most books and articles referring to Gaimar's work will start with the statement that his is the oldest surviving work of historiography written in the French vernacular.¹³¹ This is an indication that his intended audience were French speakers who did not necessarily have a great grasp of Latin. Short concluded that Gaimar's audience must have comprised the provincial Anglo-Norman baronage, presumably from Lincolnshire.¹³² Van Houts has commented that Gaimar's work was prepared for a patron who clearly did not know Old English and this in itself represented 'a fascinating exercise in historical writing for a mixed ethnic audience'.¹³³ Shopkow has stated that Gaimar wrote in England for an English patron Lady Constance,

¹²⁸ *HH*, 366-9, 490-1.

¹²⁹ *GG*, 348-9, 'Il purchaca maint esamplaire, livres engleis e par gramaire e en romanz e en latin'.

¹³⁰ *GG*, 'Introduction', ix.

¹³¹ Examples include: Paul Dalton, 'The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, the Connections of His Patrons, and the Politics of Stephen's Reign', in *The Chaucer Review*, Volume 42, Number 1, 2007, 23 (accessed 13/12/2013); Elizabeth Freeman, 'Geffrei Gaimar, Vernacular Historiography, and the Assertion of Authority', in *Studies in Philology*, 93, 2 (Spring, 1996), (accessed 03/12/2013), 188, and John Gillingham, 'Kingship, Chivalry and Love. Political and Cultural Values in the Earliest History Written in French: Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*', in Warren Hollister, *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 33, to name just three. Ian Short's 2009 translation of Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, ix, which modernised Alexander Bell's 1960 translation, commenced with this opening sentence: 'Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*, the oldest surviving work of historiography in the French vernacular, is all that survives of a much longer and more ambitious chronicle, which, to judge from its epilogue, had originally opened with the mythical Trojan origins of British history.'

¹³² *GG*, 'Introduction', ix, xii, Short disagrees with Bell's contention that Gaimar's patrons, the fitz Gilberts, had moved from Hampshire to Lincolnshire at the time of Gaimar's composition of the *Estoire*. If they had, then this may have provided Gaimar with some additional source material relating to Viking involvement with Wessex.

¹³³ Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', 115.

and drew upon oral traditions circulating in England, whilst Marjorie Chibnall reminded us that Constance was from a second-generation Norman family.¹³⁴ Short describes Gaimar's patrons as comprising of Lady Constance and her husband, Ralph fitz Gilbert, whom Short has presumed to be minor members of the highly influential Clare family.¹³⁵ Constance was anxious to learn more about the history of the English people, 'her past'.¹³⁶ By his work Gaimar treated the past history of the English as an integral part of Norman heritage.¹³⁷ The perceived ethnic, cultural, or national identity of this patron is probably not that straightforward to assume. Gillingham has observed that by the time Gaimar wrote the Francophone secular elite could see the Anglo-Saxon past as 'their' past, and as such this type of history became a respectable thing to study for those who comprised the non-native, French-speaking audience.¹³⁸ In the same manner Elizabeth Freeman concluded that Gaimar's use of the French language enabled the English past to become retrievable to a new Anglo-Norman audience.¹³⁹ Gaimar effectively broke the monopolistic hold that Latin had over historiography at this time and broadened the accessibility to history to a wider secular audience who had beforehand been excluded from participating in such history. The change in style away from the church-centred perspectives of the Latin chronicles contributed a new and original approach to the writing of history.¹⁴⁰ To entertain his target audience Gaimar's chronicle contained tales of the figures of Havelock, Buern Busecarle and Ælfthryth, and delivered their tales in a romanticised manner. Gaimar wrote a romance history in vernacular verse, which was intended to bring the ASC to life wherein Gransden noted he showed no bias against the English.¹⁴¹ Gaimar did not approve of the actions of Godwin but praised the resistance of Hereward.¹⁴² Short commented that the influence of

¹³⁴ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 25; Margaret Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest* (Manchester, 1999), 16.

¹³⁵ GG, 'Introduction', xi.

¹³⁶ Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest*, 16.

¹³⁷ Margaret Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England 1066-1166* (Oxford, 1986), 210.

¹³⁸ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 6.

¹³⁹ Gillingham, 'Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*', 233; see also, Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 214, and Richard W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism*, 154-5; Dominique Battles, 'Reconquering England for the English in Havelok the Dane', 189, in the *Chaucer Review*, 47, 2, 2012, (accessed 13/12/2013), Freeman, 'Geffrei Gaimar, Vernacular Historiography', 206.

¹⁴⁰ GG, 'Introduction', ix.

¹⁴¹ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 209-210.

¹⁴² GG, 262-3, 289-9.

Latin historiography inevitably influenced secular writers, with Gaimar using Henry of Huntingdon as one of his sources.¹⁴³

From the historiographical setting derived from Bede, William and Orderic sat very firmly in the categorisation of *gens Scriptorum*, a group which once included Bede himself and who were considered 'other' by the members of their own monastery or *scriptorium*. Those within this group worked on the interpretation of history rather than behaving like the more numerous *scriptorium* copyists. The difference between those who copied and those who interpreted would have been a barrier for entry into the latter's *nostra professio*, and likewise to this particular *gens*. Michael Clanchy has noted the role of the composer was distinct from that of the scribe and used a quote from the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* to support his point.¹⁴⁴ To further support the view that the members of the *gens Scriptorum* were the historical interpreters and not simply copyists, below is a quote from Sir Richard Southern's last presidential address to the Royal Historical Society:

The mistake is often made of looking for evidence of a historical revival only in the histories which it produces; and this mistake has obscured the character of the work done by these monastic scholars. Just as the finest work of the modern historical movement is to be found in editions of texts, catalogues and material and critical notes on sources, symbols and social habits, so in the twelfth century the historical revival is to be seen as a continuous process of collecting and arranging charters, transcribing documents, and carrying out minute investigations into chronology and topography, studying monastic buildings and inscriptions, assembling the texts of ancient learning, writing estate-histories, chronicles, and biographies – and only at the end of the day the histories which we all know.¹⁴⁵

Crick has summarised this statement by stating that the works of twelfth-century historians were, 'buttressed by an accumulation of mundane data', which showed significant historical awareness and skill.¹⁴⁶ Clanchy has highlighted that Orderic and William were exceptions from the normal monastic historians as they undertook their own writing.¹⁴⁷ With these elements contributing to the formation and inclusion into a specialist *gens*, Ann Williams has added her view that an important, perhaps sole determinant of personal identity in this period was one's place of residence, origin, or ancestry.¹⁴⁸ Sønnesyn has

¹⁴³ Ian Short, 'Language and Literature', in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, 212.

¹⁴⁴ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 128.

¹⁴⁵ Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing', 249.

¹⁴⁶ Julia Crick, 'Historical Literacy in the Archive: Post-Conquest Imitative Copies of Pre-Conquest Charters and some French Comparanda', in Brett and Woodman, *The Long Twelfth-Century view of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 161-2.

¹⁴⁷ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 273.

¹⁴⁸ Ann Williams, 'Henry I and the English', cf., Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 13.

confirmed his view that William had: 'abided by the general principles of truthful and trustworthy reporting propagated by rhetoric and practised by his model Bede'.¹⁴⁹ Bede, amongst others had been at pains to emphasise that his sources and informants had been reliable, and this was generally repeated by the chroniclers of the twelfth century.¹⁵⁰ One fundamental problem existed though, this being the original Greek and Roman sources for history had been written by pagans. The twelfth-century chroniclers were concerned that if they used such sources without overly emphasising the role of God that paganism might influence their audience, especially the younger readership.¹⁵¹

Textual Communities and the *gens Scriptorum*

William may be seen as belonging to what Brian Stock defined as a 'textual community'.¹⁵² This definition included the existence of differing levels of literacy within such a group, which could explain why William used 'everyday Latin' as opposed to complex or stylised language.¹⁵³ Stock's 'textual communities' lend themselves to being similar to a *gens Scriptorum*, although not the same. The essential point of difference is that a *Scriptorum* copyist is not the same as someone who uses the work of the copyist to interpret their own version of the past.

One of the most notable parts of Henry's chronicle is undoubtedly his translation into Latin of the Old English poem of the Battle of Brunanburh, and his attempt to reflect the original rhythms of the poem into his Latinised work.¹⁵⁴ His translation was one of the first attempts to record this Old English heroic verse into Latin for a post-Conquest readership.¹⁵⁵ John had previously recorded the contents of this poem but had made no

¹⁴⁹ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 264.

¹⁵⁰ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 11.

¹⁵¹ Swanson, *The twelfth-century renaissance*, 47.

¹⁵² Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), 90, 238, 522.

¹⁵³ Teresa Webber, 'Textual communities (Latin)', in Crick and Van Houts, *A Social History of England*, 330, fn. 1 contains the reference to Stock, c.f., Darlington saw William of Malmesbury's 'polished chapters' of the *GRA* and *GPA* as having been designed for 'the cultured reader', Darlington, *Anglo-Norman Historians*, 8.

¹⁵⁴ *HH*, 310-315; A. G. Rigg, 'Henry of Huntingdon's Metrical Experiments', in *Journal of Medieval Latin* 1 (1991), 60-72; and Kenneth J. Tiller, 'Anglo-Norman Historiography and Henry of Huntingdon's Translation of The Battle of Brunanburh', in *Studies in Philology*, 109, 3, Spring 2012 (accessed 03/12/2013), 173-191.

¹⁵⁵ Tiller, 'Anglo-Norman Historiography and Henry of Huntingdon's Translation of The Battle of Brunanburh', 174.

attempt to represent his account in verse.¹⁵⁶ Henry himself positioned his ‘faithful’ translation as rendering the eloquence of the ‘strange words’ used by the earlier English writers, ‘almost word for word, so that from the solemnity of the words we may learn of the solemnity of the deeds and thoughts of that people’.¹⁵⁷ In this manner Henry linked himself with the Old English scribes of the *gens Scriptorum* of their day. What the translation did do was to demonstrate Henry’s linguistic abilities and that he was uniquely trying to make the more heroic deeds of the pre-conquest English and their intentions available to the Anglo-Norman audience in a style which had not been used by John and his other contemporaries. Henry offered an apology to his audience that he had left out some past events in order that he could keep his history to just one volume rather than many.¹⁵⁸ This statement was intended as a criticism of other chroniclers’ more sizeable productions, as presumably Henry was aware of the content of William of Jumièges’ work and of the enormity of Orderic’s work from his visit to Bec. He wanted to express his own view that recording history needed to be seen as manageable and represented through a single volume to attract an audience whose opportunities to listen to such work were more limited than that of monks.¹⁵⁹

William of Malmesbury wrote that there had been little historiographical activity in pre-Conquest England, although he did acknowledge that the ASC contained ‘some records in the form of annals in the mother tongue’.¹⁶² Reginald Darlington commented that he felt

¹⁵⁶ John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester, volume II: The Annals from 450 to 1066*, eds. R. R. Darlington, and P. McGurk OMT (Oxford, 1995), hereinafter referred to as ‘JW, 2’, 392-3; and my thanks to Professor Catherine Clarke who kindly supplied me with a copy of her pre-published article, ‘Writing Civil War in Henry of Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum*’, for *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2014, 31-48.

¹⁵⁷ *HH*, 310-1, ‘De cuius prelii magnitudine Anglici scriptores quasi carminis modo proloquentes, et extraneis tam uerbis quam figuris usi translatione fida donandi sunt. Vt pene de uerbo in uerbum eorum interpretantes eloquium ex grauitate uerborum grauitatem actuum et animorum gentis illius condiscamus’.

¹⁵⁸ *HH*, 772-3, ‘Nec enim, de tot tantisque regibus neque de rebus per tot secula digestis, historie plenitudinem contexere potui, quod multos exigeret codices, sed potius historiarum adbreuiationes, ne posteros res geste prorsus laterent, in unum uolumen contraxi.’ (‘From so many great kings and events spread over such a long period of time, I could have compiled a complete history which would need to be in many books, but instead I have undertaken an abbreviated history in a single volume, so that past events may not be unknown to future generations’).

¹⁵⁹ Margaret Gibson, ‘History at Bec in the twelfth century’, in ed. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages, Essays presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford, 1981), 176.

¹⁶² Van Houts, ‘Historical Writing’, 107-8; *WM*, 14-5, ‘quaedam uetustatis inditia cronico more et patrio sermone per annos Domini ordinata’.

William's praise for Eadmer's 'history' to be undeserved and that his 'exaggerated respect [was] partly to cast slights upon others'.¹⁶³ This reflects an undercurrent of rivalry within the *gens Scriptorum*. William manipulated his audience to reflect positively on his work whilst questioning the accuracy of others. Thomson concluded that William was one of the last major figures in a tradition of Christian scholarship dominated by Benedictine monasticism, and it is this Benedictine audience that William sought to impress with his literary skill.¹⁶⁴

Only four manuscripts of *Estoire des Engleis* are in existence today (two of these being preceded by Wace's *Brut*), which has led to the conclusion that its popular success was small.¹⁷² This number needs to be taken into context however, as it may be argued Gaimar was not looking for the reputational success of the level of, say, William of Malmesbury, then a smaller number of copies aimed at a more limited audience may be considered to have been significant albeit on a more localised level. Short has argued Gaimar had not read Orderic nor used any Norman sources, which implies that Gaimar's access to larger libraries in England was limited due to his non-monastic status.¹⁷³ The further implication is that he had not travelled to Normandy for his research. Gaimar included a reference to the original ASC commissioned by King Alfred, which had been chained to part of Winchester Cathedral.¹⁷⁴ Gaimar commented further that this copy had been easy to look at but was not available to be removed.¹⁷⁵ From this comment it may follow that Gaimar was demonstrating some form of frustration at not being able to access source material in general and that he had seen this copy himself. This led to his own use of available French prose and to a copy of the ASC as his main sources for writing English history. In summary, Gaimar's major source for his *Estoire des Engleis* was the ASC, as well

¹⁶³ Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', 6, 10; also, *WM*, 14-15.

¹⁶⁴ Van Houts, 'Historical Writing'. Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, 477.

¹⁷² *GG*, 'Introduction', xvi.

¹⁷³ *GG*, 'Introduction', xvi.

¹⁷⁴ *GG*, 128-9, see also, Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth century*, 116, and Gillingham again, 'Richard of Devizes and 'a rising tide of nonsense'; How Cerdic Met King Arthur', in Brett and Woodman, *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 147-8, Antonia Gransden, *Legends, Tradition and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), 332.

¹⁷⁵ *GG*, 128-9.

as stories coming from unknown sources or oral traditions.¹⁷⁶ He followed Bede by implying that his sources were reliable because they came from a reliable place.¹⁷⁷

The models followed by the twelfth-century chroniclers were essentially an extension of those of the great Christian historians such as Eusebius, Orosius and as mentioned, in particular Bede. But by the early twelfth century the chroniclers had started to reshape the genre of history by expanding upon the examples of the past and were more responsive to the concerns of their own time.¹⁷⁸ Bede's salvation history model described a barbarian people who conquered a new land from its inhabitants and thereafter themselves converted to Christianity. This served the Anglo-Norman chroniclers as a model for their annals describing the activities of the Danish Vikings up to the time of the Norman Conquest. Anglo-Norman chroniclers wrote with one eye on the proof of past events and the other on their own future renown and didactic legacy, and by using Bede as a model they reflected the cyclical nature of England's history through the conquest and integration of the conquerors which had been modelled by Bede.

The sources used by the twelfth century chroniclers are easily split into two language bases. Firstly, there are the Old English works dominated by the ASC, and secondly the Latin works which in some cases date back to antiquity. Southern spoke of English monastic speakers feeling they were the 'custodians of the monastic past'.¹⁷⁹ Four of the chroniclers wrote in Latin with Gaimar adding a further translational twist by using both Old English and Latin sources to produce a work in French. Van Houts has concluded that the twelfth-century Normans in Normandy cared little about recording the Anglo-Saxon past, but left this to their English based compatriots. The exception to this is Orderic who from his Norman base was passionate that Anglo-Saxon heritage should be taken seriously.¹⁸⁰ For those chroniclers who were based in England, the ASC source material contained many references to Viking (predominantly Danish) 'otherness'. Thomson's commentary on the work of William emphasised that the rediscovery of Bede was an important component of Anglo-Norman historiography.¹⁸¹ Thomson also noted that by the

¹⁷⁶ Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 51.

¹⁷⁷ Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 132-3; GG, 42-3, 'si cum nus dit la vrai' Estoire', ('as the authentic written source informs us').

¹⁷⁸ Hingst, *The Written World*, xix-xx.

¹⁷⁹ *TRHS*, 23, 1973, 247.

¹⁸⁰ Elizabeth Van Houts, 'Normandy's View of the Anglo-Saxon Past in the Twelfth Century', in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 139-40.

¹⁸¹ *William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum, Volume II, General Introduction and Commentary*, Rodney M. Thomson (Oxford, 1999), 14.

end of the eleventh century Bede and the vernacular ASC had returned to both legitimacy and prominence following the Norman Conquest.¹⁸² The chroniclers whilst using Bede as their model primarily used the ASC as their major source for events in England to update the events from the time of Bede until their own times.¹⁸³ The chroniclers were all limited in their techniques of historical writing by the sources available to them, and according to Chibnall, they were mostly content to summarise and rearrange the works of earlier historians whilst also attempting to preserve oral traditions:¹⁸⁴

In the stormy times of the early Middle Ages the classics suffered a temporary eclipse... [but remerged] in the renaissance of the later eleventh and the twelfth centuries, adds to the substance of the style of approach adopted by the Anglo-Norman chroniclers.¹⁸⁵

According to Robert Bartlett, 'it was not uncommon for historians of the Norman period, looking back over the English past, to blame the Vikings for the paucity of sources that could have told them more about the Anglo-Saxon past'.¹⁸⁶ The monstrous Vikings were seen as destroyers of the written word by those whose task it was to record God's will through writing. However, owing to the fact the Vikings attacked monasteries their assaults were particularly well recorded in the monastic annals.¹⁸⁷ Noël Carroll has written: 'monsters are not only physically threatening; they are cognitively threatening. They are threats to common knowledge.'¹⁸⁸ Such an assessment can be applied to the Viking raiders who destroyed the written historical sources which had recorded the fabric of the society. Bartlett goes on to say that when looking back, the twelfth century chroniclers saw Bede as the one glorious reference in a sea of mediocrity and loss.¹⁸⁹ Ryan Lavelle has also commented upon John's chronicle that there is a connection between medieval historians

¹⁸² Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, 3.

¹⁸³ Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in eds. Harper-Bill, and E. Van Houts, *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, 107-8.

¹⁸⁴ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 194.

¹⁸⁵ Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (repr. Cambridge, MA, 1979), 93.

¹⁸⁶ Robert Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225* (Oxford, 2000), 625.

¹⁸⁷ Marie Therese Flanagan, 'Strategies of Distinction: Defining Nations in Medieval Ireland, in Tsurushima, *Nations in Medieval Britain*, 108.

¹⁸⁸ Mittman, 'The Impact of Monsters and Monster Studies', in *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 8, cf. Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror*, 34.

¹⁸⁹ Bartlett, *England under the Angevin Kings*, 625.

and the influence upon them by classical authors.¹⁹⁰ Greenway has noted that Henry was entirely dependent upon the works of other sources for 75% of his *Historia Anglorum*. About 40% was derived from the ASC, 25% came from Bede, and 10% from other written sources.¹⁹¹

The interpretation of the meaning of 'gens'

Regarding our modern translations of the chroniclers' works, Bartlett has seen that:

We must consider that it is very unlikely that William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum* will be translated into English in its entirety again within the next century and, as Latinity becomes more and more a minority attainment, that [the existing] translations of Latin texts will be the gateways to the culture of the Middle Ages much more than the texts in the original.¹⁹²

It is likely that this observation could be called a truism, possibly even a fact, as future scholars will tend to have their textual interpretations dictated to them by the scholars of the recent past who have undertaken the huge tasks of translation. Bartlett continued 'The complex and individual contours of William of Malmesbury's *gens* have been cloaked by the translator's choices of ethnic and racial terms from modern English.'¹⁹³

The current modern thinking and definitions of the Latin word *gens* have been investigated by Bartlett who has been keen to draw attention to the use by past medievalists of good grammatical English translations of medieval texts, even at the expense of literacy. When considering Mynors' 1950s translation of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Bartlett noted that 'in the space of one work by one author *gens* can be rendered 'race', 'nation', 'people', 'tribe', 'stock', or 'family'.'¹⁹⁴ Bartlett is critical of the modern reliance on past translations and stated that, 'the complex and individual contours of William's *gens* have been cloaked by the translator's choices of

¹⁹⁰ Ryan Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars, Sources and Interpretations of Anglo-Saxon Warfare in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 2010), 269.

¹⁹¹ HH, 'Introduction', lxxxv.

¹⁹² Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 31:1, Winter 2001, 44.

¹⁹³ Bartlett, 'Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 44

¹⁹⁴ Bartlett, 'Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 44; also, Strickland has noted that in the modern translation of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, *gens* or *natio* are rarely translated as race, but a footnote explains both terms may be translated as 'nation', 'race', 'tribe', 'people', or 'family', depending on context. Strickland, 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages', in *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 370, fn. 20.

ethnic and racial terms from modern English.¹⁹⁵ Bartlett noted that 'people' is a neutral choice, and 'nation' is one which is 'highly-charged'.¹⁹⁶ Reynolds has observed that the idea of nation is a product of its members' believing it exists.¹⁹⁷ Charles de Miramon has reminded us that the word 'race' does not exist in Greek and neither in classical or medieval Latin.¹⁹⁸ Unfortunately, Bartlett omitted to share with us his personal translation of the word *gens*. Bartlett also informed us that in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, William used the word *gens* and its grammatical variances about a hundred times and it follows that the word was significant to him.¹⁹⁹ When referring to descriptions of barbarians and pagans, Bartlett concluded with the view that 'blood', 'stock', and 'family' stress the breeding and pedigree connotations of *gens*.²⁰⁰ Nick Webber used the word 'people' when referring to the *gens Normannorum* implying his acceptance of this interpretational linkage.²⁰¹

As the interpretation of the word *gens* and its comprehension are very relevant to this study, here *gens* is translated in the sense of the word as meaning '(to be) part-of'. The accepted translation of the word *gens* (or '*gentes*') arguably dilutes its true meaning and the author's intentions. The word should be viewed in terms of inclusion or exclusion of a particular group from the standpoint of the author who used it. To associate oneself as *gens Anglorum* as did William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, is to profess an association and a desire to be seen as being included. In such a manner, the author in question included himself to be part of a larger group. Vilification of different groups by the same author is an act of discernible disablement. To translate *gens* to mean 'to be part-of' is arguably preferable to using different meanings which effectively dilute the original authors' interpretational meaning and intention. With the chroniclers using the words *gens* and *natio* to describe non-Christians such as Jews, Muslims, and pagan Danes; how the

¹⁹⁵ Bartlett, 'Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 44.

¹⁹⁶ Bartlett, 'Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 43.

¹⁹⁷ Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300* (Oxford, 1992), 253.

¹⁹⁸ Charles de Miramon, 'Noble dogs, noble blood: the invention of the concept of race in the late Middle Ages', in Eliav-Feldon, Issac, and Ziegler, *The Origins of Racism in the West*, 200.

¹⁹⁹ Bartlett, 'Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 42-3

²⁰⁰ Bartlett, 'Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 43.

²⁰¹ Nick Webber, 'England and the Norman Myth', in eds. Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham, *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks* (Ashgate, 2008), 212.

medieval concepts of monstrosity intersected with these descriptions will also need to be considered.²⁰²

John connected the fact that many parts of England had people of Danish descent settled there. He associated these people with a loyalty to their paternal ancestry which was stronger than any sense of Englishness, an example being when Swein Forkbeard appeared in areas such as these, the people did not resist him and indeed joined the Danes in their march from the Danelaw into conflict with Mercia and Wessex.²⁰³ Susan Reynolds has noted that the distinction between Mercia, Wessex and the Danelaw survived into the twelfth century. Reynolds concluded the borders between these areas may have been less significant than modern historians tend to suggest.²⁰⁴

An article by Michel Bouchard and Gheorghe Bogdan covered their view of the evolution of the use of the word *gens* into *natio*.²⁰⁵ They noted that initially the two terms were put forward to describe in Latin peoples from a common descent. After this, medieval authors searched for the use of appropriate terms to distinguish a barbarian 'other' from a civilized 'us', firstly to differentiate the occupants of the Roman Empire and then in terms of religious faith and Christianity. Constant amongst this is the process of 'othering' as the world divides into an 'us' and a 'them' viewpoint, and also there is the propensity to further define peoples based on language, culture and common descent.²⁰⁶ By using my own experience of an 'Englishman' living in British Columbia as a source for 'otherness', it was easy to be identified as 'other' through speech as attested by my English (or British, or non-Canadian) accent. Sønnesyn has noted; 'Linguistic differences are an immediately discernible demarcation of otherness'.²⁰⁷ Language was one of the primary and

²⁰² Strickland, 'Monstrosity and Race in the Late Middle Ages', in *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 366.

²⁰³ *JW*, 2, 472-3, 'cui sine cunctatione comes Vhtredus et Northymbrenseset Lindisienses primitus, deinde Fifburgenses, mox etiam omnis populus qui habitabat in septentrionali plaga Weatlingastrete... sibi lectos auxiliaries de deditis sumens, aduersus australes Mercios expeditionem mouit', ('without delay, Earl Uhtred and the Northumbrians and the men of Lindsey first, then the people of the Five Boroughs, and soon afterwards all the people also who live north of Watling Street... taking auxiliaries chosen from these peoples subject to him, he mounted an expedition against the south Mercians').

²⁰⁴ Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 263.

²⁰⁵ Michel Bouchard and Gheorghe Bogdan (2015), 'From barbarian other to chosen people: the etymology, ideology and evolution of 'nation' at the shifting edge of medieval Western Christendom', *National Identities*, 17:1, 1-23.

²⁰⁶ Bouchard and Bogdan, 'From barbarian other to chosen people', 20-1.

²⁰⁷ Sønnesyn, *Ethics of History*, 116.

fundamental marks of a group of people, and clearly still is.²⁰⁸ Recognising the distinction of 'otherness' based upon the spoken word, Henry following Bede, calculated that there were seventy-two different languages in the world which dated back to the division of the world amongst the sons of Noah.²⁰⁹

To be a member of a *gens* is at the same time both an act of inclusion and one of exclusion. The inclusion element is the association of oneself with a group who seem to share the same characteristics and social aims. This therefore excludes groups whose characteristics and aims are different from one's own *gens*. There also may be instances where individuals can be part of more than one *gens* and identification of the five chroniclers forming the core of this study could fit into a group called the '*gens Scriptorum*', or 'those who produce history'. Using *gens* as meaning 'part-of', other forms of this may be considered through examples contained within the chronicles of the Anglo-Normans. As history is generally written by the victors, collective identity tends to be imposed upon those who do not chose it, namely the excluded and the ostracised.²¹⁰ The recording of such cultural memory fundamentally relies upon the awareness of the past, and a desire to link multiple generations through a continuous chain of historical tradition. One example is the use of *gens Danorum piractica*, translated in the OMT *Gesta Regum Anglorum* as 'a pirate tribe of Danes'; this should be, 'a group of Vikings', or 'Vikings', which is more applicable as the subject is thus described as forming 'part-of a group of Danish pirates'.²¹¹

David Bates emphasized the Norman *gens* was built around a strong selective memory of their Viking past, which reminds us that there was still an ancestral relationship between the Anglo-Norman chroniclers and the Vikings they sought to denigrate in their records.²¹² Being described as part of the *gens perfida sarracenorum*, has been used by both Paul Sénac and Matthew Bennett to argue that such a description could also easily also refer to Vikings and other unbelieving invaders.²¹³ The interpretation of the word *gens* starts with the standpoint that the meaning of this word not should be considered from the standpoint of those who 'live in the third millennium', but from that of a twelfth century chronicler. From this theoretical stand-point the word *gens* forms part of an expression of

²⁰⁸ Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 662.

²⁰⁹ *HH*, 504-5.

²¹⁰ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 11-2.

²¹¹ *WM*, 58-9.

²¹² Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 12.

²¹³ Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 219; Paul Sénac, *L'image de l'autre medieval face à Islam* (Paris, 1983), 22-4; Matthew Bennett, 'First Crusaders Images of Muslims: The Influence of Vernacular Poetry?', 102.

inclusion, and of the exclusion of 'otherness'. In this manner *gens* may be translated as meaning 'part-of' in the sense that the subject belongs to the group and is therefore 'not-other'. However, the group itself may appear as 'other', which in most cases is the whole reason for identifying the group as *gens*. *Gens* does not represent a word for nation or a specific ethnic group defined through biological descent, as the subject may be a member of more than one *gens* without the need to be exclusively described as belonging to one group. Membership of a particular *gens* is through inclusion either by evolution, election, birth, geography, invitation or acquisition.

William believed that one *gens* may be a sub-division of a larger *gens*. Bartlett gave the examples of William calling the Northumbrians, Mercians, East Anglians, and men of Kent *gentes*, whilst also referring continually to the *gens Anglorum*, thus indicating those comprising these *gentes* belonged to more than one ethnic identity.²¹⁴ It is a valid argument by Bartlett that *gentes* do not have to be immutable.²¹⁵ An example of such ethnogenesis is the William passage which linked the Northumbrians and Angles with the Danes into one *gens*, 'then he [Edward] defeated in battle and subjected the West and East Angles and the Northumbrians, who had already grown into one nation with the Danes'.²¹⁶ In the same entry, some of the newly arrived Danes were massacred, but King Edward spared some of the previously settled Danes who were then called English.²¹⁷ William also provided a list of national characteristics which divided one *gens* from another although all the different peoples named were being brought together to go on the first crusade, 'The time had come for the Welshman to give up hunting in his forests, the Scotsman forsook his familiar fleas, the Dane broke off his long-drawn-out potations, the Norwegian left his diet of raw fish.'²¹⁸ William's notion of ethnicity and the communities that he envisioned appearing from the above quotation, are as Benedict Anderson described as forming part of an 'imagined community'.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ Bartlett, 'Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 43-44; *WM*, 128-9.

²¹⁵ Bartlett, 'Concepts of Race and Ethnicity', 44.

²¹⁶ *WM*, 196-7, 'mox Occidentales et Orientales Anglos et Northanimbros qui cum Danis iam in unam gentem coaluerant'.

²¹⁷ *WM*, 196-7, 'Denique noui, qui ductu cuiusdam Athelwoldi filii patru regisaduenerant, omnes ad unum cum eo interfecti; ueteres uel perempti uel sub nomine Anglorum reseruati.'; also, Sørnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 185.

²¹⁸ *WM*, 606-7, 'Tunc Walensis uenationem saltuum, tunc Scottus familiaritatem pulicum, tunc Danus continuationem potuum, tunc Noricus cruditatem reliquit piscium'.

²¹⁹ Sørnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 119; also, Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

Eleanor Searle has suggested that the Norman dukes exploited their neighbours' fear of Scandinavian savagery until well into the eleventh century.²²⁰ Nick Webber referred to there being an 'ideal synthesis of both Scandinavian and Frankish culture' within the use of Norman written culture.²²¹ Orderic linked the task of recounting the deeds of the Normans with a warlike nature due to them having originally issued out from Denmark.²²² Orderic linked the Norman dukes bloodline back to Rollo the Dane who is treated as the first 'one of us' (Normans), as opposed to his predecessors Hasting and Bjorn Ironsides, who were classed by Orderic as 'violent 'other'.'²²³ From the Anglo-Norman perspective, the only discernible mention of a link between Henry of Huntingdon and his historic Norman Viking ancestry came in the short passage where Henry recounted his version of the pre-battle speech made by William the Conqueror to his troops.²²⁴ Within the context of this speech, William referred to the exploits of the Vikings Hasting and Rou.²²⁵ The following quote is quite vicious in its portrayal of the quality and indeed 'otherness' of the pre-conquest English, but praises the prowess of the Vikings, and links their pagan barbarism to similar traits amongst the Normans. The linkage of 'others' as 'self', using *antecessories* is vital to the sense of this passage:

Ah! Let any of the Englishmen whom our Danish and Norwegian ancestors have conquered in a hundred battles, come forth and prove that the nation of Rou, from his time until now, have ever been routed in the field, and I will withdraw in defeat. Is it not shameful to you that a people accustomed to defeat, a people devoid of military knowledge, a people that does not even possess arrows, should advance as if in battle order against you, O bravest?²²⁶

²²⁰ Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (Berkeley, 1988), 124.

²²¹ Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman identity, 911-1154* (Woodbridge, 2005), 33.

²²² *OV*, 2, 2-3, 'Nunc autem a magistris aliud michi opus iniungitur, et de Normannicis euentibus materia porrigitur, quoniam ipsi de Dacia prodeunt non litteris sed armis studuerunt, et usque ad Guillelmi nothi, tempora magis bellare quam legere vel dictare laborauerunt.'; ('But now another task is laid on me by my masters, and the subject offered me is the deeds of the Normans, who issuing from Denmark were more addicted to the pursuit of arms than of learning, and up to the time of William the Bastard devoted themselves to war rather than reading or writing books').

²²³ *OV*, 2, 6-7.

²²⁴ *HH*, 388-393.

²²⁵ *HH*, 388-391.

²²⁶ *HH*, 390-3, 'Eia! procedat aliquis Anglorum quos centies antecessores nostri Daci et Norwagenses bellis uicerunt, demonstretque gentem Rou, ex eius tempore usque nunc, semel milicie naufragia perpessam esse, et ego uictus abscedo. Nonne igitur pudori uobis est gentem uinci solitam, gentem arte belli cassam, gentem nec etiam sagittas habentem, contra uos, O fortissimi, quasi bello ordinatam procedere?'

No hint of Henry's sense of personal Englishness is apparent within this speech, whilst Partner felt Henry's general treatment of the Danes to be 'curiously sympathetic'.²²⁷

Short has recognised that during the early twelfth-century there was still the persistence of a 'Scandinavian cultural substratum' in Gaimar's Lincolnshire, and argued that Gaimar played to this audience by employing narratives of Scandinavian interest and origin.²²⁸ This has been supported by Ashe when she expressed her view that Gaimar's work was marked by clear regionalism and localism.²²⁹ Ashe has also commented there were two parts to the evolution of twelfth-century Englishness.²³⁰ The first was a feeling of loyalty to England with the second part being a feeling of separation from the Continent. Since John Le Patourel in 1971 there have been debates over the validity of the influence of a cross-channel Norman aristocracy. To the fore of these debates have been R. H. C. Davis, Bates, Judith Green, and David Crouch.²³¹ The conclusion from their arguments is that the Anglo-Norman aristocracy saw themselves as part of a new island race and chose to move the affairs of England away from their Normandy based families. The Anglo-Norman chroniclers would have been aware of the emerging centres of power and decision making and would have made their submissions to their patrons accordingly.

Despite Henry's plea to us living in the third millennium there appears to have been a few of the chroniclers who felt themselves to be renowned during their own lifetime. Regarding their own views of themselves as renowned John purposefully looked to satisfy the literary needs of his Benedictine brothers, however by 1131 copies of his work were in the abbeys of Abingdon, Bury St Edmunds, Peterborough and Gloucester.²³² The link to Peterborough was highlighted by Home who has observed that both John and William made use of the ASC (E) text to 1121.²³³ Orderic tried to do much the same whilst battling his own detractors, but Orderic's finished work was as Shopkow put it, 'enormously long',

²²⁷ Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 25.

²²⁸ *HH*, 390-3, also, 'Introduction', ix-x.

²²⁹ Laura Ashe, review of 'Geffrei Gaimar: *Estoire des Engleis*' by Ian Short, in *English Historical Review*, 126 (2011), 126-128, (Oxford Journals, accessed 07/01/2014).

²³⁰ Ashe, *Fiction and History in England*, 95.

²³¹ Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*; R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London, 1976), 132; David Bates, 'Normandy and England after 1066', in *English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), 851-880; Judith A. Green, 'Unity and Disunity in the Anglo-Norman State', in *Historical Research* 63 (1989), 115-34; David Crouch, 'Normans and Anglo-Normans: A Divided Aristocracy?', in *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, eds. David Bates, and Anne Curry (London, 1994), 51-67.

²³² Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 148.

²³³ Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 43.

which prohibited its widespread circulation and copying.²³⁴ Darlington noted that William set himself out to become the literary successor to Bede, and Darlington's summary of this view is worth repeating: 'Malmesbury in short is a distinguished scholar, and he knows it; and in the twelfth-century, a degree of egotism is an indispensable attribute of a really eminent scholar.'²³⁵ Of the five chroniclers studied here William appears to have been most interested in being remembered in the same vein as Bede. Henry was clearly aware that his status of a non-monastical scholar may have reduced the potential circulation of his work, and Greenway felt that Henry was happy to see himself as the successor to Gildas, Bede and the ASCs, as the new voice of English history.²³⁶ Gaimar's work was retained by his patron's family which led to very few copies (if any) being available in his lifetime.

What were the chroniclers seeking to achieve through their exaggerated representation of the Vikings?

The chroniclers' presentation of past events was largely dictated by their desire to please their sponsor or target audiences. By splitting the chroniclers into three main groups, their main literary goals may be highlighted. The first group comprises of John and Orderic whose Benedictine teaching meant they wrote to glory God and to point to his plans and successes. The pair of them noted that God uses his power to punish the sinful and in the past he had utilised the Vikings as his instrument to do so. John and Orderic's audiences were therefore constantly reminded to live a holy life. The second group comprises of William and Henry, who used what might be termed the 'Anarchy factor' when describing Vikings. R. R. Davies remarked that both William and Henry constructed their histories around the unification of England theme, and defined the essential components of political and social Englishness of their 'people' and 'dear country'.²³⁷ Both William and Henry wrote for sponsors who were on opposite sides of the Stephen and Matilda conflict, and an argument may be made that both used their descriptions of Vikings to represent actions undertaken by their opposing factions and leaders in the Civil War they were living through. Thirdly if Gaimar had seen himself in a group it would have been a localised one which supported the idea of reflecting the Vikings in such a manner that the coming of the Normans was a God-sent act to save the English people from tyranny and weak leaders. In

²³⁴ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 233.

²³⁵ Darlington, *Anglo-Norman Historians*, 7-11.

²³⁶ HH, 'Introduction', lx.

²³⁷ Davies, *The First English Empire*, 94, 116, 196, fn. 11, citing Rees Davies, *The Matter of Britain and the Matter of England* (Oxford, 1996).

Gaimar's localised world the Normans were now part of the solution rather than being part of the problem.

The above sets the background for the rest of this thesis, by identifying the five chroniclers who have been used as feeling that they were part of England, and they their wish was to contribute to the continuation of the history of England and the English by writing works which would inform and entertain their audiences as to what it was to be English. By recording the trials and tribulations of the pre-Norman English people at the hands of Viking raiders and Danish invaders, once God had sent the Normans to show the English how to live properly, the integration of the invaders with the English would surely lead to a united society able to fend off and threat of attack in the future. The next chapter identifies how the Vikings and Danes were identified as monstrous in the twelfth-century chronicles starting with the first recorded raid and finishing in chapter 4 when Cnut evolved from behaving monstrously into a holy (and consequently respected) king.

Chapter 3

Viking 'otherness' and monster theory

*'history is permeated by the vague implicit idea that some people are essentially "like us" and some are very different'*¹

Nancy Partner

Robert M. Stein has observed that the historians of the twelfth century were working in a period where the social and political realities of their time made it difficult for them to explain the past through conventional historiographical categorisation.² This chapter considers the representations of the eighth to the eleventh century Vikings in the chronicles and compares these representations to the 'otherness' ideas of several monster theories. Through such a comparison some of the monster theories may help us to better understand the motivation behind the twelfth-century views of the Vikings. Such representations are considered in the context of work on aspects of 'monstrous otherness', primarily undertaken by Jeffrey Cohen.³ Engagement with works concerning themselves with monsterisation has not been applied to Vikings, and their period is one which has been under-represented in cultural studies concerning 'monstrous work'. Cohen has himself referenced Britons, Irish, Jews, Picts, Saracens, Scots and Welsh as monsters, although the Vikings themselves were not mentioned as being part of this specific categorisation.⁴ He did however comment that where the Vikings were represented as blood-thirsty foes, bereft of humanity, they embodied the abjectly monstrous.⁵

Hugh Thomas has compared the English with the 'otherness' of the Jews, 'Celts' and the French in a chapter entitled 'the image of the other', but he did not refer to any monstrous depictions of any of these three groups, nor of the Scandinavians.⁶ Through the study of the barbarian John Gillingham links the barbarian 'otherness' of the Irish, Scots and Welsh, and linked such barbarian references to similar pagan and barbarian labelling of the Vikings, but again the spectre of the monster and the Vikings remained un-

¹ Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 96.

² Robert M. Stein, 'Making History English', in eds. Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles, *Text and Territory, Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1998), 97.

³ Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*; Cohen, *Monster Theory*; Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*.

⁴ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 253.

⁵ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 6.

⁶ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 307-22.

investigated.⁷ The application of 'otherness' to those who constituted the peoples of England at this time has therefore been considered, but specific reference to Viking monstrosity has remained un-investigated.

In the first chapter of *Monster Theory*, Cohen used seven different headings to categorise monsters and their behaviour.⁸ The seven headings Cohen used were:

1. 'the monster's body is a cultural body',
2. 'the monster always escapes',
3. 'the monster is the harbinger of category crisis',
4. 'the monster dwells at the gates of difference',
5. 'the monster polices the borders of the possible',
6. 'the fear of the monster is really a kind of desire',
7. 'the monster stands at the threshold ... of becoming'.

Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills felt these perspectives allowed a range of theories which could apply to monsters of any period.⁹ Although perhaps only three of Cohen's headings could reflect this study's views of the Vikings, ('the monster is the harbinger of category crisis', 'the monster dwells at the gates of difference', and the idea that 'the monster always escapes')¹⁰, this chapter will use eight different headings to Cohen to highlight areas of investigation specific to this study:

1. Monstrous qualities which were not applied to the description of Vikings in twelfth-century chronicles.
2. Religious differences, descriptions of pagans, and the chroniclers' interpretation of the Vikings as an instrument of God to punish sinners.
3. Monstrous barbarity and its meaning, as the Vikings move away from their pagan ways, only to then be recorded as barbarous.
4. Violence, piracy and plundering.
5. The creation of two English saints through martyrdom at the hands of Vikings.
6. Evil characteristics, treacherousness, and their propensity to get drunk.
7. Comparable to beasts, both real and mythical.

⁷ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 10.

⁸ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 3-25.

⁹ Bildhauer and Mills, 'Further Reading', in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, 220.

¹⁰ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 'Thesis III, The Monster is the Harbinger of Category Crisis', 6-7; and, 'Thesis IV, The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference', 7-12.

8. Their association with ethnic differences which promote fear, such as their similarities to Saracens.

Cohen highlighted that of its many roles, the monster is the harbinger of crisis and the embodiment of difference.¹¹ As Emily Winkler has recently noted, 'crisis acts as a laboratory for the study of human nature and thought'.¹²

The encounter of 789

One area of crisis creation which will be encountered throughout the areas of investigation which follow is the description of the first encounter with the Vikings by the English around the year 789.¹³ The crisis which this encounter caused was essentially the posing of the question of how those who lived in England could deal with them? The answer involved aggressive defence of the land, bribing them to go away, acculturation, and finally the steps needed to be taken to guard against the future threat of them. The 789-recorded encounter is used here as the starting point for the representation of the Vikings from an English perspective.

Referring to the impact of the monstrous, Asa Mittman has suggested that monstrosity could be manifested in the horror of excessive violence.¹⁴ The violence which was generally associated with the Danish Vikings may have been exaggerated by the chroniclers due to their perception of the non-Christian nature of the pre-Cnut Danes.¹⁵ By the early twelfth century, when the Peterborough 'E' version of the ASC was copied from an earlier text, the chronicle entry for the year 789 appeared as follows, although we know not on what authority¹⁶:

¹¹ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, x, and 6.

¹² Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 4.

¹³ The year 789 is referred to in this study for consistency, although the ASC links the date to the reign of Beorhtric, King of Wessex, which ran from 786 to 802.

¹⁴ Mittman, 'The Impact of Monsters and Monster Studies', in *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 7-8.

¹⁵ Martyn Whittock, and Hannah Whittock, *The Viking Blitzkrieg, AD 789-1098* (Stroud, 2013), 41.

¹⁶ David Dumville, 'Vikings in Insular Chronicling', in *The Viking World*, 356.

In this year King Brihtric married Offa's daughter Eadburh. And in his days, there came for the first time three ships of Northmen from Hörthaland and then the reeve rode to them and wished to force them to the king's residence, for he did not know what they were; and they slew him. Those were the first ships of Danish men which came to the land of the English.¹⁷

Following on from the ASC vernacular sources, the first Latinised stepping stone to the Anglo-Norman twelfth-century chroniclers came from the late tenth-century chronicle of Æthelweard.¹⁸ In the late tenth century, Æthelweard provided an expanded link between the ASC and the twelfth-century chroniclers with his description of the coming of the Vikings near Dorchester.¹⁹ Immediately prior to his description of the first encounter with the Danes, Æthelweard had painted a picture of English rural 'serene tranquillity', where the local people were contentedly ploughing and even the oxen were placing their heads under the yoke just for the love of it!²⁰ Æthelweard then suddenly snapped his audience from this contented picture of a peaceful England when he recorded; 'suddenly a not very large fleet of the Danes arrived, speedy vessels to the number of three; that was their first arrival'.²¹ The ships of these first Vikings were now recorded as being specifically Danish ('*Danorum*'), and gone are any specific association with Norway, which had been implied in the earlier vernacular ASC. 'Danish' or 'Danes' appears to be the favoured twelfth-century default descriptions for 'others' emanating from Scandinavia in this period, a description which quickly replaces the description of a 'Viking', or the implication that the subject acted in that manner.²²

William of Malmesbury linked the story of this first encounter with the Danes back to the original fifth-century Anglo-Saxons, as both had landed on the coast of the British Isles for what he saw as the same opportunistic reasons of plunder and conquest. Four hundred years earlier, Bede had seen the Anglo-Saxons as God's instrument to punish the

¹⁷ ASC (E), 41, 'Her nam Breohtric cining Offan dohter Eadburge. 7 on his dagum comon ærest .iii. scipu Norðmanna of Hereðalande, 7 þa se gerefa þærto rad, 7 he wolde drifan to ðes cininges tune þy he nyste hwæt hi wæron, 7 hine man ofsloh þa; ðæt wæron þa erestan scipu deniscra manna þe Angelcynnes land gesohton', and ASC trans, 35.

¹⁸ *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*.

¹⁹ *Æthelweard*, 26-7.

²⁰ *Æthelweard* 26, 'iam innocentia pto tensi populi aruis serena cum tranquillitate dabant squalidis sulcus, et oneriferae boum costae proximo amore colla iugo subdebant'.

²¹ *Æthelweard*, 26-7, 'Aduecta est subito Danorum ardua non nimia classis, dromones numero tres: ipsa et aduectio erat prima'.

²² See Roffey and Lavelle, *Danes in Wessex*, 8-17.

sinful Britons.²³ Ruth Waterhouse made the point that a wide-ranging attack of an 'other' upon the individual and their society is important for demonstrating the terrifying perception of such attacks to the response of the 'self' to defend the fabric of their own society.²⁴ From this the tale of three boatloads of Viking raiders attacking a small group of individuals grew to symbolise the commencement of Scandinavian aggression against the whole of the English society itself.

Henry covered the 789 first-encounter with the context of the warnings before, and the actions immediately following, the first coming of the Danes. Whilst he specifically linked the Norwegians to the more northerly attacks on Lindisfarne, Henry was writing for an audience who were already aware that the Danish presence was eventually to be strongest in the East of England. Therefore, he felt it was unnecessary to mention the first landing may have been reported by later versions of the *ASC* as being by Vikings emanating from a Norwegian location, assuming of course, that he had access to one of these versions.²⁵ Henry included both the Danes and the Norwegians in his description of the attacks on Lindisfarne, and linked them both to violence and paganism:

And there arrived the pagan people from Norway and Denmark, who first brought the Northumbrians to miserable ruin, and then on the Ides of January, in the province of Lindisfarne, they put Christ's churches to fearful destruction together with the inhabitants.²⁶

Gaimar followed Henry by recording the 789 matters but in a slightly different manner. Gaimar's treatment of the incident took the story into areas which were not considered by the other chroniclers.²⁷ He began by telling his audience that, 'it was during this time that the Danes arrived to wage war on the English'.²⁸ Gaimar was making it expressly clear that the intention of the Danes from this moment on was to engage in violent conflict with the native people of England. The members of the Viking raiding party seized and secured land, as well as causing damage throughout the region. This indicates that Gaimar represented the 'raid' as part of a larger intention by the Danes ultimately to occupy or indeed conquer

²³ As also did Archbishop Wulfstan in *Sermo Lupis ad Anglos*.

²⁴ Waterhouse, 'Beowulf as Palimpsest', 35.

²⁵ HH, 'Introduction', xciv, where Greenway notes that, 'There are certainly indications that both Henry and John [of Worcester] had access to a similar lost version of the *ASC*'.

²⁶ HH, 256-57, 'postea gens pagana a Norwagia et Dacia ueniens, que prius gentem Nordhymbrensem misere destruxerunt, et post in Lindisfarnensi prouincia ecclesias Christi cum inhabitantibus horribiliter destruxerunt in idibus Ianuarii'.

²⁷ GG, 114-15.

²⁸ GG, 114-15, 'E en cel tens vindrent Daneis pur guereier sur les Engleis'.

England. Gaimar's Danes then returned home to enlist more men to come and join them in the conquest of Britain in a similar manner to William's description of these first Danes, and of Bede's descriptions of the Anglo-Saxons who had been brought over by Vortigern. William used similar language to Bede when describing the coming of Hengest at Vortigern's invitation in the fifth-century, when he recorded:

Hengest meanwhile, who was no less astute than he was ardent in battle, sent some of his men home to their own country without protest from the king, to expose the unwarlike nature of the prince and people and the riches of the island.²⁹

Gaimar's description was similar to William's and again has a parallel in the story of the original coming of the Anglo-Saxons under Horsa and Hengest, which Gaimar had also recorded.³⁰ Gaimar linked the 789 landing and subsequent call for support by the Danes back to an earlier time when the Danes had ruled Britain before the coming of the English:

And claimed that this country was part of their heritage, and that many of their ancestors had established an inheritance claim before any English had even arrived or before anyone from Saxony came to live there.³¹

The confusion between whether the Vikings were 'Northmen', Danes or Norwegians was highlighted in another description of the 789 first-encounter records. Whilst the earlier Winchester compiled, ASC 'A' version had omitted the words 'of Northmen from Hóρθaland' completely, the words 'of Northmen' were contained in all the other versions of the ASC whereas the words 'from Hóρθaland' only appeared in the E and F versions which had been copied out in the twelfth century from earlier versions. Smyth noted that the account of 789 was 'heavily retrospective in tone', and that the identity of the raiders was 'uncharacteristically confused', by the compilers of the chronicle versions indicating a confusion between Danes and Norwegians.³²

²⁹ *WM*, 24-5, 'Interea Hengestus, non minus acer ingenio quam alacer in prelio, aliquos ex suis non abnuente rege patriam remittit, qui regis et populi inertiam, insulae opulentiam exponant, ampla uenire uolentibus premia proponant', also Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225*, 625, and the 'Viking Hiatus' theory.

³⁰ *GG*, 46-7, Gaimar recorded that Cerdic, whose ancestors were Horsa and Hengest landed in England just before the year 500 AD, and that this was proven, 'sicom conte la vreise geste', ('as the authentic written source (presumably the ASC) records').

³¹ *GG*, 114-15, 'e dit ke co est lur herité, e mulz homes de lur linage urent le regne en heritage ainceis kē Engleis I entrast ne home Sesseigne I habitast'.

³² Alfred Smyth, 'Emergence of English Identity, 700-1000', in Smyth, *Medieval Europeans*, 34.

By using the first surviving recorded encounter between the English and the Vikings in 789 in terms of a Christianised country being attacked by pagans, this shows to the audiences that the sanctity of a Christian land could and had been disturbed by a physical attack by pagans.³³ The original story contained in the versions of the ASC of a group of Vikings who were aggressively dealt with by an official who met perceived aggression with aggression was probably just a minor story in Wessex before the coming of the Danes in force in the mid ninth-century and the start of the compilation of the ASC. Through the subsequent re-writing of history this first encounter came to be associated with the Danes as opposed to the Norwegians or Scandinavians in general and was embedded into the history of the English through the positive reinforcement by most of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers that national sinfulness would result in a God-sent punishment.

The conclusion to the accounts of 789 above, is that the Danes were the tool by which God punished the sinful, and the twelfth-century message is clear to its readership: punishment follows sin, so sin must be avoided. Henry appeared to include the stories of Danish aggression into the bigger picture of God's punishment of sinners. He was less tempted towards invention but chose his sources carefully to be able to emphasise the pain caused to the English due to God's displeasure. Gaimar was more sensitive to the Danish, but he appeared to have come to this view by considering that the Danes had a hereditary claim to at least a part of England. Abbo's description of the death of Edmund in his *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, which was written in the mid-980s, contained the message that King Edmund had been a sacrifice of the Danes who were acting as *ministri Diaboli*, but with God's acquiescence, and their actions may be summarised as containing an eternal message that God's will, will be done be it by the rod of God's wrath, or the people of God's wrath.³⁴

The sub-headings below will further investigate both the 'otherness' of the Vikings and Danes, and whether any degree of monstrosity may be applied to them. This chapter covers the period from the first recorded encounter with the Vikings in 789, to the Danish Conquest of 1013. This effectively blends the monstrous depictions of the Vikings over the First and Second Viking Ages into a continuous vilification of 'Scandinavian' attackers. Following the end of this chapter is a case study of the 1002 St Brice's Day massacre which

³³ Waterhouse, 'Beowulf as Palimpsest', 34-5.

³⁴ David Dumville, 'Images of the Viking in Eleventh-Century Latin Literature', in eds. M. W. Herren, C. J. McDonough, and R. G. Arthur, *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century* (Cambridge, 2002), 254.

discusses whether the English or the Danes appeared to represent the monstrous for this particular event.

Monstrous qualities not applied to the description of Vikings in twelfth-century chronicles

To start this investigation of potential Viking monstrosity, it is necessary to also describe what is not being considered. Descriptions of monsters often centre around their physical deformities such as them having two heads, being gigantic, consuming blood, or like Grendel and his mother being hideous creatures which only come alive through the re-telling of stories.³⁵ The Vikings and Danes were not described in such terms, although as will be commented upon later, William compared them to the mythical hydra, although not in a physical sense.³⁶ Therefore, within the monstrous descriptions ascribed to the Vikings we are dealing with their moral monstrosity, and the fact that they behaved like monsters when undertaking violent attacks on groups and individuals. Although Cohen has been used to frame the sub-headings of this chapter, it is not this study's intention to replicate Cohen's view of the monstrous but to utilise his framework to express a view that the twelfth-century chroniclers saw the spectre of the monster in the 'otherness' actions demonstrated through the intentions of the Vikings. However, some care in this analysis needs to be taken as David Williams noted that some medieval uses of the monstrous, amounted to simply rhetorical exercises, serving 'rather arid didacticism.'³⁷ The monstrosity of the pre-Cnut period Vikings was based upon their cruelty and wickedness, along with their pagan lack of moral awareness. Their monstrous 'otherness' is expressed mainly through violence and their paganism, but through such 'otherness' they inspired fear or dread, along with an aura of mystery to the chroniclers' audiences.³⁸

Vikings as an instrument of God to punish sinners

The monster according to Cohen threatens to destroy not only individuals, but also the cultural apparatus around which society is constituted, which in this study largely relates to the monasteries and religious communities of the chroniclers concerned.³⁹ Religious 'others' were mostly excluded from one's own culture, and the first descriptions of pagan

³⁵ Such monstrous races are outlined in Debra Higgs Strickland, 'Monsters and Christian Enemies', *History Today*, February (2000), 45-51.

³⁶ *WM*, 272-73.

³⁷ Williams, *Deformed Discourse*, 3.

³⁸ Ruth Waterhouse, 'Beowulf as Palimpsest', in Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 28.

³⁹ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 12.

Vikings were seen and depicted as being very much in this same category of religious 'otherness'.⁴⁰ The history of the Vikings signalled to the twelfth-century chroniclers that settlement from overseas could pose a threat to the Christian continuance of the nation.⁴¹ As sons and grand-sons of the Norman conquerors, the chroniclers shied away from descriptions of overseas 'others' in favour of emphasising the damage done by non-Christians. By the twelfth-century, monsters did not exclusively reflect God's will through the creation of strange and distant life forms but brought monsters into every day society through the actions of leaders and groups of Scandinavians.⁴²

The chroniclers were aware not only that Norman identity was based upon a pagan Viking origin, but that the original English had also been pagans. Therefore, these were two indicators of the monster originating from within. Such ancestry, although hidden by centuries of the Christian faith, may have still been a warning from the past, but notwithstanding their own duality with the past it was a route for the chroniclers to exaggerate the Viking cultural difference into monstrous aberration based upon their perceived underlying paganism.⁴³ The Christian Anglo-Norman chroniclers found their clearest expression of Viking monstrosity in the Scandinavians' past paganism. Until they became settlers and turned to Christianity in the ninth century, the Danes were generally described in the chronicles as pagans.⁴⁴ John of Worcester did not seek to actively differentiate between the description of Danes and the more generalised references to Scandinavians. John's frequent use of the word translated as 'pagan' is quite noticeable in his work where the Danes appear, as demonstrated by Table 1 below. As a chronological comparison, Henry of Huntingdon has been added to this table, as has the Old English from ASC (E).

⁴⁰ Richard W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1962), 3-4, and *The Making of the Middle Ages* (London, 1978), 37-42; also, Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), 59, where he referred to Islam as 'a lasting trauma' for Medieval Europe.

⁴¹ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 16.

⁴² Friedman, *The Monstrous Races*, 109.

⁴³ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 7.

⁴⁴ Smyth, *Medieval Europeans*, 29.

Table 1 – The use of *pagan* or *Dane*, for chronicle entries relating to the ninth century.

Chronicle Year	John of Worcester	Henry of Huntingdon	ASC (E)
838	Danis paganis ⁴⁵		Deniscan
841		exercitus paganorum	[840] Deniscan
851	paganorum exercitus	paganorum exercitus	heðene men
853	paganorum exercitum		hæðene here
855	pagorum exercitus	Pagani	hæpene men
860	Pagani		mycel sciphere
864	pagani hiemauerunt		
865		exercitus paganorum	hæðene here
867	Prefatus		Here
871	paganorum exercitus	Daci (thereafter Henry identifies the Danes as Daci) ⁴⁶	Deniscan
877	paganus exercitus		Here
879	magnus paganorum exercitus		Wicinga
893	exose memorie, paganorum exercitus		[892] se myccla here þe we gefyrn ær ymb spræcon
894	exercitus ⁴⁷		
896	Dani ⁴⁸		

John's chronicle entry for the year 838 was the last one where he directly described the Danes as pagans for a period up to 896. For the chronicle entries from 851 to 895, the

⁴⁵ JW, 2, 256.

⁴⁶ Whether this was a literary 'in joke' requires some further examination for Henry's descriptions after 871.

⁴⁷ JW, 2, 342-43, Jennifer Bray and P. McGurk, translated, 'Illuc enim maximam exercitus conductionem, que apud Apultreo resederat connuenisse', as, 'For they heard that the mighty mustering of the Viking army, which had settled at Appledore has assembled there'. The use of the word 'Viking' appears here to have been used as an interpretation of the original wording, and to guide a modern reader, as the original Latin assumes that the reader is familiar with the identity of the protagonists.

⁴⁸ JW, 2, 348, the return of references to the Danes.

description of the pagan raiders and their armies excluded any references to them being Danes.⁴⁹ John used the *ASC* closely for the basis of his own writing which up until 891 was an instrument generally used to praise King Alfred. In 896 the pagans are once again described as Danes, although the entry for the following year completes the descriptions of Danes as still being part of a *paganorum exercitus*, although this is likely to have been John translating the *ASC* description of the *micel hæþen here*, which had been written in the Edwardian continuation annals for the period 892-920.⁵⁰ In overall terms, John represented the Danes in a very negative manner, and where he found it necessary to record their success in a particular victory, then he offered excuses as to why they had managed to be successful, which was usually the result of some treachery. John's entry for the year 860 told of an attack on the Danes by the men of Hampshire and Berkshire where, 'the pagans were cut down on all sides. When they could no longer resist they womanishly took flight, and the Christians were masters of the place of death.'⁵¹

John used an expression denoting a pagan army moving into East Anglia from Mercia in 870, with the subsequent description of a Danish assault on the West Saxons being undertaken by, 'the pagan army of hateful memory'.⁵² It appears that John preferred to emphasise the pagan beliefs of the Danish antagonists rather than their ethnic origins, and thus he ignores their Viking identity in preference to their religious identification. Indeed, the first reference to the Viking leader Guthrum by John was that he was one of the 'three pagan kings' who had wintered in Cambridge in 875.⁵³ After the capitulation of the Danish army following the battle of Edington in 878, John identified Guthrum as the, 'king of the pagans' who was baptised a Christian as part of the terms of his surrender to King Alfred.⁵⁴ When John subsequently recorded that Guthrum had died his description of him had changed to a more inclusive view of him being 'king of the Northmen', which was a distinct improvement from Guthrum's pre-baptismal description as king of the pagans and demonstrated a change in John's attitude towards him which was caused no doubt by the

⁴⁹ *JW*, 2, 264-347.

⁵⁰ *JW*, 2, 348.

⁵¹ *JW*, 2, 270-71, 'prelio pagani passim trucidantur, et, cum diutius resistere non possent muliebriter fugam arripiunt et Christiani loco funeris dominate sunt.'

⁵² *JW*, 2, 286-87, 'Exose memorie paganorum exercitus'.

⁵³ *JW*, 2, 304-5, 'tribus paganorum regibus'.

⁵⁴ *JW*, 2, 312-13, 'Guthrum rex eorum Christianitatem subire et baptismum sub manu Alfredi regis accipere promisit', 'Guthrum their king promised that he would become a Christian and receive baptism with King Alfred as sponsor'.

acknowledgement of his baptism.⁵⁵ John was emphasising that Guthrum had through baptism been forgiven for his earlier sins and therefore felt that he should be recognised for his change to the Christian faith.

Gaimar noted that after Edington the rest of the Danes under Guthrum also asked to be baptised and offered no further evidence that these Christianised Danes ever broke the truce with Alfred. Unusually for him, Gaimar recorded the actual year this occurred as 879, thus underlining the significance of baptisms of the Danes to his audience.⁵⁶ The great confrontations between the Danes and Alfred were seen by Gaimar to be the turning-point in Anglo-Saxon history.⁵⁷ Guthrum was recorded by Henry as having seized possession of East Anglia whilst a he also recorded that new *wicingi* army had left from their resting place in Fulham to travel across the sea to Ghent.⁵⁸ This is a significant entry as it effectively differentiated between Guthrum's newly Christianised forces in East Anglia and a pagan Viking force under an un-named leader raiding the Continent. Henry appeared to have used the word *wicingi* directly from the ASC sources where the word *wicenga* occurs on very few occasions.⁵⁹ Henry described the pagan raiding army's progress across the Continent over the next three years, which was a recognition by Henry of the differences between Danish settlers in England, against the more traditional idea of Viking raiders bent on plunder and warfare. Henry used the term *wicingi* as a description of a Viking *gens* who were raiders of overseas lands. The descriptions of the more peaceful 'Anglo'- Danes who were seen as willing settlers may be traced to the 876 entries in the ASC.⁶⁰ This indicates Henry's justification of the conquerors of England that after the pain of conquest they can settle and integrate as the similarities between the Danish and the more recent Norman-French settlers are clear. Such a mental categorisation by the chroniclers appears to have been applied to the *wicingi* to help comprehend differences within the same *gens*. A *wicingus*

⁵⁵ JW, 2, 336-37, 'rex Nordmannicus'.

⁵⁶ GG, 176-77.

⁵⁷ John Gillingham, 'Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*', in ed. Warren Hollister, *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 48-9.

⁵⁸ HH, 288-91.

⁵⁹ Smyth, 'Emergence of English Identity, 700-1000', *Medieval Europeans*, 37; see also Judith Jesch, *Viking Diaspora* (London, 2015).

⁶⁰ ⁶⁰ ASC (E), '7 þy geare Healfdene Norðanhymbra land gedælde, 7 hergende weron 7 heora tiligende wæron. Rollo cum suis Normanniam penetrauit et regnauit annis .liii..'; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, M. Swanton, (trans. and ed.) (London, 2000), (E) 876, 'And that year Halfdan divided up the land of Northumbria; and they were ploughing and were providing for themselves. [Whilst] Rollo and his [men] invaded Normandy and ruled 53 years', also, D. Hadley, 'And they Proceeded to Plough and to Support Themselves': The Scandinavian Settlement of England', in *ANS* 19, 69-75.

was not the same as a *Danus* according to the Anglo-Norman thought processes, as a *wicingus* was a pagan raider, but a *Danus* was a conqueror and settler akin to a Norman. Both the Danes and the Normans were descendants of the *wicingi*, and their subsequent conquest of others (in particular, the English) gave rise to both ethnicities becoming accepted Christian settlers with hegemony over their conquered subjects. For the twelfth-century chroniclers looking back at the past, the evolution of the 'other' into 'self' through assimilation and a change in their behavioural 'otherness' fits with the concept of how the once violent and pagan may become settled and Christianised through the will of God.

Henry commenced this literary attack on the Danes through a warning of God's judgement upon the English people as a need for the English to reform. However, 'the Danish plague... followed immediately after', indicating that the English clearly had not heeded the warning and that God had then sent the Danes to punish them.⁶¹ Henry also referred to the Danes as 'God's avengers and goads', and returned to this subject at the start of his Book VI, wherein he introduced the coming of the Normans as the second part of God's plan for the English people, having firstly inflicted them with the coming of the Danes.⁶² His reasoning was:

Æthelred recognised his own and his people's weakness and was greatly afraid of future disaster. It is clear that this happened at God's command, so that evil would befall the ungodly. For the Lord almighty had planned a double affliction for the English people, which He had decided to exterminate for their compelling crimes, just as the Britons were humbled when their sins accused them. This He brought about as if laying a military ambush. I mean that on one side the persecution by the Danes was raging, and on the other the connection with the Normans was growing, so that even if they were to escape the obvious lighting fire of the Danes, valour would not help them to escape the Normans' unexpected trick.⁶³

⁶¹ *HH*, 254-55, 'An potius factum est ad correctionem gentium, ne plagam Dacorum, que proxime secuta est, correcti perferrent?' Henry's response to this was that he did not presume to explain it, but leave for God the secrets of God, 'Nos autem nichil temere diffinimus, sed Dei secreta Deo relinquimus'.

⁶² *HH HA*, 275.

⁶³ *HH*, 338-39, 'Ipse autem se suosque ualde debilitates uidebat, futuramque cladem non mediocriter horrebat. Hoc autem dei nutu factum esse constat, ut ueniret contra improbos malum. Genti enim Anglorum, quam sceleribus suis exigentibus disternare proposuerat, sicut et ipsi Britones peccatis accusantibus humiliauerant, Dominus omnipotens dupplicem contricionem proposuit et quasi militares insidias adhibuit. Scilicet ut hinc Dacorum persecutione seuiente, illinc Normannorum coniunctione accrescente, si a Dacorum manifesta fulminatione euaderent, Normannorum inprovisam cum fortitudine cautelam non euaderent'.

Henry felt God's use of pagans to do his work was good use of an acceptable medium to bring about the ultimate salvation of the English people.

During the late tenth century when Æthelweard composed his work, the Danes were beginning to be more active with their raids on England, and with the approach of the first millennium there were many people looking out for signs of the coming Apocalypse. The pagan Danish raiders slotted into this role almost on cue.⁶⁹ The Apocalypse hypothesis gave rise to a variety of expected monsters including the Antichrist and the seven-headed beast, as well as demons and devils.⁷⁰ Ryan Lavelle has noted that some sections of English society saw the Vikings as agents of the Apocalypse because they behaved and were depicted as such.⁷¹ These 'sections of society' were the primarily the monks in their monasteries who had suffered most from the Viking raids and were best positioned to record them and the events which occurred through their updating of the ASC. Prior to the twelfth century, Ælfric, Abbot of Eynsham, and Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, both identified the Viking invaders as apocalyptic punishers of the English for their moral decline.⁷² However, as agents of the Apocalypse, Gaimar made a record of the ultimate destination for the pagan Danes when, 'one hundred and forty-two of their ships sank, [they] went to Hell.'⁷³

The change of Viking representation from pagans to barbarians

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'barbarian' as a foreigner who does not share the same language and customs as the writer.⁷⁴ The definition adds that the barbarian is 'outside the pale of Christian civilisation', although in the case of the recently baptised Vikings, they could have been Christian but still outside of the Christian civilisation, due to having come from a pagan Scandinavia they remained culturally 'other' despite their baptism. William had recorded the baptism of Rollo which afforded the Viking 'an exhibition of his innate and uncontrollable barbarity'.⁷⁵ From around the point of Alfred's victory over the Danes, there was generally a change in description of the Scandinavians

⁶⁹ Æthelweard, 26-53 *passim*.

⁷⁰ eds. Bildhauer and Mills, *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, 10.

⁷¹ Lavelle, *Alfred's Wars*, 'a grave marker from Lindisfarne was made depicting the agents of the Apocalypse as Vikings', 32.

⁷² Winifried Rudolf, 'The Spiritual Islescape of the Anglo-Saxons', in *The Sea and Englishness*, 51.

⁷³ GG, 170-71, 'cent e quarante [dous] navees en sunt a dëables alees'.

⁷⁴ <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15380>, (accessed 30/07/2016).

⁷⁵ WM, 202-3, 'Vbi considerari potuit ingenita et effrenis barbaries uiri'.

from that of pagans to barbarians. In one of Orderic's few references to Scandinavians, they are referred to as having 'barbarous rulers', such as Halfdene, Ingvar and Guthrum, and 'other tyrants coming from Denmark and Norway'.⁷⁶ This demonstrates Orderic's deep-seated view of the Northmen belonging to an enduring *gens* of violent and irreligious 'others' from the north.

William recorded that a kinsman of Guthrum called Sihtric, was 'a barbarian alike in blood and behaviour'.⁷⁷ He also linked Guthrum's son Raegnald, to his father as also having a barbarian heart which made him an oath-breaker and which challenged his lord's authority.⁷⁸ Judith Weiss observed that twelfth-century historiography seemed to show 'the closer in time a writer from one people is to the preceding one, the more likely he is to depict them as barbarous, uncivilised, and punished their moral turpitude, as shown by its defeat by its own people'.⁷⁹ Weiss's observation is heavily weighted towards a Norman view of the English, but if applied to the reporting of the earlier history of the English, in that context could be viewed as an anti-Scandinavian view. It can be argued that such a shift in description pushes the emphasis of paganism out of mind, whilst emphasising the nature of the barbarian.

Gillingham has seen William's view of the Celts as being barbarians.⁸⁰ Gillingham has also noted the pagan Vikings tended to be known as barbarians.⁸¹ What is significant with William's view of barbarianism is that he expressed the view that a barbarian could still be Christian. David L. Clark has pointed out that the use of indifferent descriptions of alterity could be mistaken for knowledge and thought.⁸² When William commented on Pope Urban's call for Crusade, he grouped together descriptions of the Welsh, Scots, Danes and Norwegians, all of whom he noted lived *in nationibus barbaris*.⁸³ This is indicative of William's overall thought process and indicates that he may have never actually progressed his opinion of the Scandinavians as being barbarians.

⁷⁶ *OV*, 2, 340-41, 'barbaris sub ducibus Ingvar et Halfdene ac Gudrun aliisque tyrannis superuenientibus a Dacia uel Norregania'.

⁷⁷ *WM*, 212-13, 'gente et animo barbarus'.

⁷⁸ *WM*, 228-29, 'Sed non diu barbaricus animus in sententia mansit, quin et sacramentum lederet et dominum irritaret'.

⁷⁹ Judith Weiss, 'History' in Anglo-Norman Romance: The Presentation of the Pre-Conquest Past', Brett and Woodman, *The Long Twelfth-Century view of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 277.

⁸⁰ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 10.

⁸¹ Gillingham, 10.

⁸² David L. Clark, 'Monstrosity, Illegibility. Denigration: De Man, B. Nichol, and the Resistance to Postmodernism', *Monster Theory*, 65-6.

⁸³ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 10, 29.

Violence, piracy and plunder

Because he wrote in French Gaimar's French-speaking Anglo-Norman audience would have felt more comfortable being linked in a small way to the past conquest successes of their Danish ancestors. Despite his own literary disdain of the Latin grammar used by Æthelweard,⁹³ William did in fact follow him quite closely in terms of content in stressing that prior to contact with the Vikings, the kingdom was completely at peace. He anticipated his own subsequent entries by stating that the reasons behind the raid were to prepare the way for the large-scale invasions of the Danes in the following century, which were only halted by King Alfred. Within these passages William strongly associated the 'traditional' image of the Viking raider with that of the more ethnically defined Danish invasions of the ninth and eleventh centuries. William chose not to specifically mention the subsequent and more northerly attack on Lindisfarne, dated to around 793. However, he did refer to 'the words of Alcuin', which described that when the Danes returned home they had, 'told their fellows of the island's riches and the poor spirit of its inhabitants', which led to the subsequent arrival of large numbers of barbarians.⁹⁴ Alcuin had been the main source for the record of the 793 Lindisfarne attack, which Derek Gore observed Alcuin had, 'famously rendered in Biblical terms'.⁹⁵ The ASC for 793 made mention of whirlwinds, lightning and fiery dragons in the sky. Mittman interpreted the ASC entry referring to dragons as a manifestation of the dangers of nature.⁹⁶ However, Mittman may have been mistaken with this interpretation as the symbolic portrayal of dragons more easily fits with a warning of Viking ships with dragon heads on their bows. The Viking Danes were often recorded in what may be monstrous terms because of their wilful destructiveness and anti-social behaviour. For Henry:

The Danes swooped and rushed upon the land from all directions very frequently over a long period, not aiming to possess it but rather to plunder it and desiring not to govern but rather to destroy everything.⁹⁷

⁹³ WM, 14-5, 'prestat silere, cuius michi esset intention animon si non essent uerba fastidio'. ('The less said of him the better, I would approve his intention, did I not find his language distasteful').

⁹⁴ WM, 109, 'domum regressi ceteris insulae copiam habitatorumque ignauiam nuntiarunt, barbari, raptim copioseque insulam petentes'.

⁹⁵ David Dumville, 'Vikings in Insular Chronicling', in *Viking World*, 356; see also, Derek Gore, 'A Review of Viking Attacks', in *Danes in Wessex*, 57.

⁹⁶ Mittman, *Maps and Monsters*, 123.

⁹⁷ HH, 272-73, 'Daci uero terram undique creberrime diutissime insilientes et assilientes, eam non optinere sed predari studebant, et omnia destruere non dominari cupiebant.'

Nelson observed that twelfth-century monastic writers readily blamed the Vikings for the issues caused to the institution of monasticism through their violence in the past and quoted from the *Liber Eliensis* in a reference to the murder of nuns in Ely when, ‘the frenzied sword of the madmen was drawn across the milk white consecrated necks’.⁹⁸

Swein Forkbeard accompanied by Olaf Tryggvason entered John’s record for 994, when the two kings attacked London and tried to burn the city.⁹⁹ After the Londoners had fought them off, Swein and Olaf proceeded to lay waste to the south-east of England where, ‘they burned townships, laid waste fields and, without respect of sex, destroyed very many with sword and flame, and took great booty’.¹⁰⁰ They then seized horses and ‘rode madly about’, brutally killing women and children until King Æthelred promised to pay them a tribute of sixteen thousand pounds to cease their activities and to go away.¹⁰¹ John’s view of the invaders was that they had come to England with the sole intention to destroy and to extort money from the king. Gaimar adopted a different view and introduced Swein Forkbeard into his work as having come to England to ‘claim the kingdom by conquest’.¹⁰² John’s Danes tended to be described in slightly frenzied terms with their actions being both extremely swift and violent. He significantly expanded upon the entries of the *ASC* and in one instance added the statement that Swein’s forces ‘did the greatest damage any army could do’,¹⁰³ and recorded they specifically had orders to:

Lay waste fields, burn townships, plunder churches, slay any member of the male sex who came into their hands without any thought of pity, keep the women for the satisfaction of their lust, and to do all the evil they could.¹⁰⁴

From Normandy, Orderic echoed John’s feelings about Swein Forkbeard when he recorded that:

⁹⁸ Nelson, ‘Presidential Address’, in *THRS*, sixth series, 12, 6, ‘Protenditur rabidorum gladius in lacteal sacratæ colla.’ Translation is my own.

⁹⁹ *JW*, 2, 442-43.

¹⁰⁰ *JW*, 2, 442-43, ‘prouincia uillas incendunt, agros deuastant, et sine respectu sexus quamplures ferro et flamma absumunt, predamque ingentem agunt’.

¹⁰¹ *JW*, 2, 442-45, ‘Ad postremum uero, equos sibi rapientes, multasque per prouincias debachando discurrentes, ne sexui quidem muliebri, uel innocue paruulorum pepercerunt etati, quin uniuersos atrocitate ferina contraderent morti’.

¹⁰² *GG*, 226-27, ‘pur chalenger e pur conquere’.

¹⁰³ *ASC (E)*, 70, ‘wrohton þet mæste yfel þe ænig here don mihte’.

¹⁰⁴ *JW*, 2, 472-73, ‘uidelicet ut argos deuastarent, uillas cremarent, ecclesias spoliarent, quicquid masculini sexus in manus uenirent sine respectu misericordie iugularent, feminas ad suam libidinem explendam reseruarent, et omnia que possent mala pergerent. Quibus ita facientibus, et rabie ferna debachantibus’.

After some years in the time of Æthelred son of Edgar a terrible storm swept on the English from the north, to winnow the wheat where numerous tares abounded. For a fierce idolater Swein, king of the Danes, landed in England with a great fleet manned by pagan followers; descending like a mighty whirlwind on the unsuspecting people he drove the terrified King Æthelred with his sons Edward and Alfred and his queen Emma into Normandy.¹⁰⁵

This scene which contains the expressions translated as, 'mighty whirlwind', 'fierce idolater', and ships 'manned by pagan followers', invokes a sense of terrible unstoppable evil to the listening audience. The terrified Æthelred, together with his family appeared to have had little option but to flee for their lives to Normandy and to abandon their countrymen to an awful fate. This is quite a damning addition to the Anglo-Saxon texts which were already positioned as rather one-sided. The additions by John to the account of the ASC rhetorically damaged the view of Swein and it is apparent that John interpreted Swein's character personally detestable and by association, also saw the Danes as being totally untrustworthy. John's lengthy chronicle entry for 1013 described Swein's movement from Wallingford to Bath. No ASC equivalent exists to the statement that Swein was 'destroying and plundering whatever he came across according to his normal practice'.¹⁰⁶ John finished his entry for this traumatic year by once again referring to Swein Forkbeard as a tyrant and ignoring the ASC descriptions concerning the ineffectiveness of the English who had opposed the Danish invaders.¹⁰⁷

Descriptions of Danish tyrants and evil and foul personages flow through the pages of the chroniclers' works in a steady stream of vilifying representations. An example of this is the chroniclers' views of King Swein Forkbeard. Swein Forkbeard was king of Denmark, c. 987-1014 and also king of England for a brief period during 1013-1014. He had participated in Viking raids on England with Olaf Tryggvason in the early 990s and two decades later in 1013 brought a successful Danish army of conquest to England.¹⁰⁸ William's view of Swein Forkbeard was similar to John's, describing him as, 'no lawful lord but a most atrocious

¹⁰⁵ *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ii, 244-45, 'iterum sub Egelredo rege filio Edgari grauissima tempestas ab aquilone Anglis oborta est. Nam uesanus ydolatra Suenus paganorum applicuit, ac ut nimius turbo rex Danorum Angliae cum ualida classe super improuidos ilico irruit. Paudusque rex Egelredus cum filiis suis Eduardo et Elfredo et Emma regina in Normanniam aufugit'.

¹⁰⁶ *JW*, 2, 474-75, 'obuia queque more solito rapiendo et demoliendo'.

¹⁰⁷ *JW*, 2, 474-75, fn.9 and 10, 'Suanus tyrannus', ('the tyrant Swein').

¹⁰⁸ Simon Keynes, 'Swein Forkbeard', in Michael Lapidge, et al., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, 437.

tyrant'.¹⁰⁹ Henry's first reference to Swein concerned his attack on London in 994, and he re-appeared in his chronicle some ten years later when in 1004 he raided Norwich and was described as the man 'for whom God had destined the kingdom of England'.¹¹⁰ Swein, we are told by Henry, had always been, 'associated [with] his three companions; plunder, burning, and killing'.¹¹¹ Henry also added that the Danes 'were at all times exclusively intent on warfare'.¹¹² In 1013, Swein was acknowledged as the sole king of England, to which John added rather pithily; 'if he could rightfully be called king who did almost everything tyrannically'.¹¹³ Henry believed that the first Danes to land in England were intent on personal enrichment when he started his record with the statement that, 'in those days the Danes came to Britain with three ships, for the sake of plunder'.¹¹⁴ Where Henry diverted from the earlier records concerning the year 789 is where he tells us that the reeve, 'was the first Englishman to be killed by the Danes; after him many thousands were slaughtered by them'.¹¹⁵

John's account of the first coming of the Danes was taken almost directly from the A version of the ASC, where the raiders were, *ðæt wæron þa erestan scipu deniscra manna þe Angelcynnes land gesohton*.¹¹⁶ What he added to the original account was to stigmatise the raiders as aggressors and by concurring with his contemporary William that the raiders were not just 'Danish men', but were 'Danish pirates'.¹¹⁷ Such an association with piracy was clearly not designed to be complementary as the Latin derivative of pirate, *pirata*, means sea-borne raider or marauder; it may also refer to an enemy combatant, and particularly to Northmen or Vikings.¹¹⁸ However, the Latin derivative also has its roots in the Greek verb *pirao*, which translates as 'an attack'. It also has the meaning 'to get

¹⁰⁹ WM, 308-9, 'non esset ille dominus legitimus sed tirannus atrocissimus'.

¹¹⁰ HH, 328-29, 342-43, 'cui Deus regnum Anglie destinauerat, cum nauibus multis uenit as Norwic, et eam predauit et combussit'.

¹¹¹ HH, 342-43, 'quem semper comitabantur tres socie, predatio, combustio, occisio'.

¹¹² HH, 330-31, 'Daci uero semper et soli bello intenti'.

¹¹³ JW, 2, 474-75, 'si iure queat rex uocari, qui fere cuncta tirannice faciebat'.

¹¹⁴ HH, 254-55, 'His autem diebus uenerunt Daci cum tribus puppibus in Britanniam, predationis causa'.

¹¹⁵ HH, 256-57, 'Hic fuit primus Anglorum cesus a Dacis, post quem multa milia milium ab eisdem cesa sunt'.

¹¹⁶ See p.79, fn. 17; JW, 2, 218-19, although he adds that Brihtric was: the king of the West Saxons'; 'Occidentalium Saxonum', and he goes on to end his entry with: 'Hi primi fuerunt qui de Dania Angliam adierunt', ('They were the first to come from Denmark to England').

¹¹⁷ JW, 2, 218-19, 'Danici pirate tribus', and Page, 'A Most Vile People', 23.

¹¹⁸ D. R. Howlett, (eds.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, P-SAL (Oxford, 2005), 2289.

experience' but it is doubtful if any of the chroniclers wished to use their Latin version to mean this. It may be assumed that all the chroniclers used the references to pirates with the intention of describing the Vikings as violent sea-borne warriors. John continued to describe the Danes as pirates in his entry for the year 897, when he referred to the capture of twenty 'Danish pirates' ships'.¹¹⁹ In his description of the geography of the Baltic, Adam of Bremen had sought to explain why the area of Zealand contained so much gold:

There is very much gold in Zealand, accumulated by the plundering of pirates. These pirates, called Vikings by the people of Zealand... pay tribute to the Danish king for leave to plunder the barbarians who live about this sea in great numbers. Hence it also happens that the licence granted to them with respect of enemies is frequently misused against their own people.¹²⁰

Richer of Rheims, who had been a contemporary of Dudo, had earlier referred to Duke Richard I of Normandy as the 'duke of pirates', which appears to be associated with his Viking ancestry and thus grouping his forefathers as being piratical.¹²¹ William's 789 Danes were quintessentially Viking in their description. As noted in Chapter 2, they were described as being from the *gens Danorum piratica*, who were accustomed to living by rapine, or in other words, the epitome of pagan raiders from pre-Christianised Denmark.¹²²

When referring to the later tenth-century attacks of Swein and Olaf, William expressed his disgust at the Danish willingness to behave like pirates, as demonstrated by him when 'the Danes infested every harbour, and overran everything with the rapid movements typical of pirates, while it was impossible to know where they ought to be confronted'.¹²³ William may have drawn his inspiration for such a description from the *Royal Frankish Annals*, which had earlier recorded that the North Sea was infested with pirates.¹²⁴ By continuing the link between the Danes and pirates, William recorded that a Mercian king had 'most recently [been] driven overseas by Danish pirates'.¹²⁵ He also referred to the Danes as pirates during the record of the last few months that England had

¹¹⁹ *JW*, 2, 350-51, 'xx. naues Danicorum piratarum caperentur'.

¹²⁰ Adam of Bremen, *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, F. J. Tschan, (trans.) (Columbia, 2002), 190.

¹²¹ ed. Ernst Breisach, *Historiography, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (Chicago, 1994), 107, Marjorie Chibnall, *The Normans* (Oxford, 2000), 15.

¹²² *WM*, 58-9, 'rapto uiuere assueta'. See p.83, above.

¹²³ *WM*, 270-71, 'Danis enim omnes portus infestantibus et leuitate piratica ubique discurrentibus, dum nesciretur ubi eis occurri deberet'.

¹²⁴ Derek Gore, 'A Review of Viking Attacks', *Danes in Wessex*, 'In ipso mari quod tunc pirates infestum erat', 57-8, fn. 16, 66.

¹²⁵ *WM*, 140-41, 'nouissime a piratis Danorum ultra mare fugatus est'.

been held by an English king before Cnut, when reporting the death of Ulfcytel, 'who had already earned a lasting reputation in Swein's time when, as the first person who ever attacked the pirates, he gave men hope that they may be overcome.'¹²⁶ Both the descriptions of pagans and barbarians were substituted here for that of pirates. For John and William, the piratical attacks of the past carried with them a special significance as many monasteries had been known to have been raided. However, as Andrew Pearson has pointed out, 'the choice of religious targets on the part of the Vikings was pragmatic rather than ideologically motivated'.¹²⁷ It is only William who detailed which monasteries had been attacked by Vikings in his *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*.¹²⁸ The piratical descriptions of Danes and Vikings underline their 'otherness' but add very little to a view of them being monsters.

The creation two English saints through martyrdom at the hands of Vikings

The martyrdom of two English saints, Edmund and Ælfheah, was very clearly signposted by the twelfth-century chronicles as being at the hands of the Danes. For there to be a martyrdom, there needs to be the presence of non-Christian 'other'. The ASC entry only briefly mentioned that Edmund was killed whilst fighting the Danes and the subsequent expansion of this story to reflect his martyrdom was to appear in other later works.¹²⁹ When John described the death of St Edmund, he referred to source material which he had taken from the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* by Abbo of Fleury.¹³⁰ For David Dumville, Abbo had believed that the Vikings were the 'makers of martyrs', and were 'members of the devil' (*homines peruersitatis*), with 'wicked leaders' (*ministry iniquitatis*).¹³¹ The *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* was a more expanded work than the basic text of the ASC, but apart from this

¹²⁶ WM, 316-17, 'perpetuam iam famam meritis tempore Suani, quando primus omnium piratas adorsus spem dedit posse illos superari'.

¹²⁷ Andrew Pearson, 'Piracy in Late Roman Britain: a perspective from the Viking Age', in *Britannia*, 37, Nov 2006, 340, (accessed via Cambridge journals, 13/06/14).

¹²⁸ Julia Barrow, 'Danish Ferocity and Abandoned Monasteries: The Twelfth-Century View', in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 86-7.

¹²⁹ *The ASC*, ed. Whitelock, 46; *ASC (D)*, 24, '7 þy wintra Eadmund cyning him wið feaht, 7 þa Dæniscan sige naman 7 þone cyning ofslogon 7 þæt land eall geeodon', ('and that winter King Edmund fought against them, and the Danes had the victory, and killed the king and conquered all the land').

¹³⁰ Darlington and McGurk, *Anglo-Norman Studies V*, 190.

¹³¹ Dumville, 'Images of the Viking in Eleventh-Century Latin Literature', 254.

cross-reference, John only added the name of Inguar, 'a most pagan king' who had killed Edmund, and also a date to the ASC original entry to his own work.¹³²

William placed the killing of the East Anglian king at the hands of a pagan, Hinguar.¹³³ Henry also mentioned Hinguar had previously negotiated a truce in 868 in Nottingham, 'with fox-like cunning', to enable his army to escape back to York.¹³⁴ William recorded the story of Edmund's death and the subsequent miracles which were attributed to him in a full account because; 'Bede's span of time did not reach' this particular martyrdom, as it had occurred after Bede's death.¹³⁵ The fullest exaggeration of the original ASC entry came from Henry; it is likely that Henry also used Abbo's *Passio Sancti Edmundi* more fully than John when he described Edmund's death as; 'Then King Edmund, choosing to suffer death rather than see the desolation of his people, was captured by them and his holy body was transfixed to a stake by arrows which the pagans shot from all directions.'¹³⁶ This is clearly reminiscent of the story of the third-century saint, Sebastian, who although tied to a post and shot with arrows, survived the ordeal only to be beaten to death after he recovered. St Sebastian was an early exponent of Christianity and died for his cause. The linking of Edmund to this type of incident was intended to reflect Edmund as a martyr and saint. Henry omitted Abbo's addition that once Edmund had been shot with arrows he had then been decapitated. Henry's approach to this tale was to emphasise his view that holy martyrdom is preferable to earthly suffering under a pagan ruler. In doing so Henry was representing the Danes as an instrument of pagan aggression against a Christian king. Orderic drew attention to the fact that Edmund had fallen as a martyr to 'pagan swords'.¹³⁷ Gaimar also appeared to use Abbo as his source for this event. When he related this story, he did so with a real sense of anger towards those Danes who had committed this outrage. Gaimar recorded that Edmund and his forces had been lulled into a false sense of security by the Danes through the use of a symbolic peace-treaty. The Danes then; 'broke the truce and their promise of peace, and they [then] laid waste to the entire region.'¹³⁸ The Danes

¹³² *JW*, 2, 286-87, 'ab Inguaro rege paganissimo'.

¹³³ *WM*, 142-43, 'ab Hinguar pagno peremptus est'.

¹³⁴ *HH HA*, 282-83, 'uulpiculari astutia'.

¹³⁵ *WM*, 392-95, 'Veruntamen de sancto Edmundo, quem seculum Bedae non attigit'.

¹³⁶ *HH*, 282-83, 'Rex uero Eadmundus magis eligens mortem perferre quam desolationem suorum uidere, captus est ab eis corpusque sanctissimum sagittis impiorum ad stipitem undique transuerberatus'.

¹³⁷ *OV*, 2, 240-41, 'donec Edmundus Estanglorum rex cum duobus aliis Angliae regibus paganorum gladio martir occubuit'.

¹³⁸ *GG*, 156-57, 'tut le païs unt exillé'.

were described as ‘pagans’ and captured Edmund and held him until two of their leaders, Inguar and Ubba arrived. When Edmund’s real identity was revealed; ‘these pagan devils... were cruel enough to order him to renounce God’s religion.’¹³⁹ Edmund refused to do this and Gaimar continued to follow Abbo with the description of Edmund then having been shot with so many arrows that he resembled a hedgehog.¹⁴⁰

The capture and subsequent death at the hands of the Danes of Ælfheah, the archbishop of Canterbury, in April 1012 was a story recorded in versions C, D and E of the ASC. The basis of the story was that the Danes had besieged Canterbury and entered the city through the treachery of a man named Ælfmær.¹⁴¹ Many ecclesiastics were captured and held for ransom, then the city was ransacked and the unfortunate Ælfheah was taken to the Danish ships as a captive. The ASC entry concluded with that; ‘they kept the archbishop with them until the time when they martyred him.’¹⁴² The twelfth-century chroniclers had at their disposal two accounts from which to draw, the ASC and a Latin source by Osbern, a monk of Christ Church, Canterbury, who at the instigation of Archbishop Lanfranc in 1070 wrote the hagiographic *Vitam et miracula Alphegi*.¹⁴³ John weaved some of Osbern’s account into his own expanded chronicle entry that; ‘on the twentieth day of the siege, through the treachery of the archdeacon Ælfmær,’ the burning city fell to the Danes.¹⁴⁴ The fact that the traitorous Ælfmær was an archdeacon was new. Thomas has considered that acceptance of some form of English treachery when written by pro-English writers such as John, fits closely into a picture of the pre-Conquest moral backwardness amongst the English people.¹⁴⁵ John also copied large parts of Osbern which he elaborated with what Paul Cavill described as ‘gory detail [concerning] the devastation of Canterbury and the dreadful treatment of its citizens’.¹⁴⁶ Whilst he leaned heavily on

¹³⁹ GG, 158-59, ‘E quant ço sourent cil malfé, mult crüelment unt comandé k’il renaiast lei divine’.

¹⁴⁰ GG, 158-61, ‘tant l unt treit e tant lancé ke son cors fu si effiché des darz ke treistrent cil felon com est la pel del heriçon espés de poignantes brochetes, dont del gardin ported pometes.’, ‘So many arrows did these criminals loose and shoot at him that his body was stuck more thickly than a hedgehog’s hide is with sharp prickles when it takes small apples out of the orchard’.

¹⁴¹ *The ASC*, ed. Whitelock, 91, recorded under the year 1011.

¹⁴² *ASC (D)*, 57, and the *ASC*, ed. Whitelock, 91., ‘hi heafon þone arcebiscop mid him swa lange oð þone timan þe hi hine gemartyredon’.

¹⁴³ Frances Shaw, (trans.), *Osbern’s Life of Alfege* (London, 1999).

¹⁴⁴ *JW*, 2, 468-9, ‘Vicesimo autem obsidionis die per insidias Aelmari archidiaconi’, and Shaw, *Life of Alfege*, 59-60.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 252-53.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Cavill, *Vikings, Fear and Faith* (London, 2001), 161.

Osbern, much of John's circumstantial detail came from the ASC.¹⁴⁷ John was the earliest source to name an individual called Thurum as Ælfheah's axe-wielding executioner and added to his disgust by telling his audience that only a day earlier Ælfheah had actually confirmed his killer as a Christian.¹⁴⁸ This reinforced the idea that you cannot trust a Dane, even a Christian one, as their innate paganism will remain.

Although he had used some of the more bloodthirsty details from Osbern, John made a clear distinction between his writing of history and the hagiography of Osbern. His other contemporaries either followed John, or simply used the ASC as their source. By expanding the historical version somewhat John emphasised St Ælfheah's significance as a holy figure who could be held up as an example of a spiritual counter to the aggression of the Danish pagans. John's view of Ælfheah's antagonists was that it mattered little who they were or from whence they came, as his main point of emphasis was the fight between Christians and pagans. This is supported by the attitudes displayed by William and by the Normandy-based Orderic, who utilised a 'wolves attacking the sheep' analogy for this particular tale.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Orderic used the wolves and sheep comparison a number of times in his work where the wolves were representative of the non-Christian predators of the Christians.¹⁵⁰ Orderic referred to the Danes as wolves who; 'ravaged nearly all the island of Britain and destroyed sacred buildings, mangling and scattering the Lord's sheep'.¹⁵¹ Those who fought against the devouring packs of wolves were effectively sacrificing themselves in the battle between God and pagan. John also noted that the pagans left the protection of their fortress at Reading in 871 to seek battle with King Æthelred and his brother Alfred, where; 'the pagans were not dilatory in fighting, but like wolves, rushed out through all the gates to seek battle with all their might.'¹⁵²

William's account of the martyrdom of Ælfheah is but a fraction of the size of John's entry, but he did expand the story after the Saint's death by using the Osbern's 'Life

¹⁴⁷ JW, 2, 471, fn., 6.

¹⁴⁸ JW, 2, 470-1, 'quem confirmarat pridie', 'whom Ælfheah had confirmed the day before'.

¹⁴⁹ OV, 2, 240-41, 'cum turmis suis Angliam inuaserunt, aecclesias monachorum et clericorum concremauerunt, populumque Dei ut bidentes mactauerunt', 'invaded England with their hordes, burning monasteries and churches and slaughtering the Christian folk like sheep'.

¹⁵⁰ Emily Albu, *The Normans and their Histories, Propaganda, Myth and Subversion* (Woodbridge, 2005), 205.

¹⁵¹ Albu, *The Normans and their Histories*, 206, cf., OV, 1, 154.

¹⁵² JW, 2, 288-89, 'pagani non segnius certabant, lupino more, totis portis erumpentes, totis uiribus bellum perquirunt.'

of Alfege' as his source, which had recorded that overnight some wood which had been smeared with Ælfheah's blood had grown green again.¹⁵³ Following such a miraculous event, William's Danes immediately repented, kissed the corpse and allowed it to be taken to London as, 'their natural arrogance' had been subdued.¹⁵⁴ By exaggerating the violence attributed to the Vikings, the chroniclers formed part of a society which created an 'ambient fear' of the Vikings.¹⁵⁵ Their chronicle entries created an anxiety towards the past, which was manifested through the actions of Vikings against the population of England, and to guard against pagans and pirates became the clear message from the pages of the chroniclers.

Evil characteristics, treacherousness, and a propensity to get drunk

In the passages leading up to Gaimar's description of the activities of Guthrum, Gaimar was at his most vitriolic towards the pagan Danes, with the Danes being frequently described as 'foul'.¹⁵⁶ William used the events of Guthrum's invasions, which took place a century after the first encounter with the Danes in 789, into a calculated act of information gathering on behalf of a later unified invasion by the pagans from across the sea by stating that; 'This party had come to spy out the fertility of the soil and the courage of the inhabitants, as later became clear on the arrival of the host that spread over almost the whole of Britain.'¹⁵⁷ Henry also used the idea that the appearance of Viking ships signified trouble to come in his chronicle entry relating to the year 980 when; 'In King Æthelred's third year, seven Danish ships attacked Southampton, as forerunners to future devastations.'¹⁵⁸ When William described the first encounter of the English with the Danes, he added to the impression of implied stealth of their mission by telling his audience that they had 'arrived secretly' in their ships and had made a 'furtive landing', which had thrown the province into confusion.¹⁵⁹ By the time William composed his chronicle the 789 tale of the landing of a

¹⁵³ Shaw, Osbern's Life of Alfege, 77-79; WM, 272-3, 'uiso miraculo quo lignum aridum sanguine ipsius litum sub nocte una reuiruerat'.

¹⁵⁴ WM, 272-3, 'Ita naturali ceruicositate substrata'.

¹⁵⁵ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, viii.

¹⁵⁶ GG, 168-9, and 132-3, 'Daneis felons', 140-1, 'il fist Daneis en son tens murnes', 154-5, 'un fel Daneis si en feri'.

¹⁵⁷ WM, 58-9, 'Quae scilicet manus soli ubertatem, inhabitantium uirtutem speculatum uenerat, ut postea eius multitudinis quae totam pene inundauit Britanniam aduentu compertum est'.

¹⁵⁸ HH, 326-27, 'Venerunt autem tercio anno regis Adelredi septem puppes Dacorum, quasi prenuntie future uastationis, et predauerunt Hamtune.' Translation is mine.

¹⁵⁹ *Æthelweard*, 26-53 passim.

few Danes had been altered to represent a reconnaissance mission on behalf of the kingdom of the Danish.¹⁶⁰

After besieging Cambridge for a whole year in 875 the Danes left under a truce, following which Gaimar exclaimed; ‘just listen now to what those Danes did!’¹⁶¹ Gaimar was either surprised himself by the Danish actions or he was looking to engage his readership in what he considered to be a very important point. What they actually did was to leave for Exeter ‘stealthily under cover of darkness’.¹⁶² Gaimar thus again emphasised the sneaky nature of the Danes. Gaimar also made the point that the Danes’ word could not be trusted. After Alfred had forced them to make peace in the year 877, Gaimar noted that; ‘Then, at Christmas, the dastardly Danes, having previously sworn peace, proceeded to break it. These cursed people came back into Wessex’.¹⁶³ The significance that the Danes were not only oath breaking again, but that this was on a holy day would surely not have been missed by Gaimar’s albeit limited audience. The ASC noted that this event took place in mid-winter after twelfth-night, but Gaimar specifically applied the Christmas date to the Danes’ stealthy actions, presumably for increased reader outrage.¹⁶⁴

William stated that at the time of Edgar c. 959, the Danes had brought to England; ‘a love of drinking, although previously they [the English] had been immune from such failings’.¹⁶⁵ Cohen has noted the residence of the Danes amongst the English resulted in the English copying the Danish propensity for overindulging in alcohol.¹⁶⁶ This does sound like an exaggeration which linked the Danes to historic drunkenness and with it, the spectre of implied violence. Indeed, William continued with the consumption of alcohol theme when comparing the English to the French and Normans in condemnation of the pre-Conquest English. William outlined that for the English:

¹⁶⁰ WM, 58-9.

¹⁶¹ GG, 168-71, ‘ore öez ke li Daneis firent!’.

¹⁶² GG, 170-71, ‘Nutantre e tut en emblé a Execestre en sut alé.’

¹⁶³ GG, 170-71, ‘Puis el Nöel felon Daneis, ki pes urent juré ainceis, fruissent la pes; li deffaïé en Westsexe’.

¹⁶⁴ GG, 170-71, ASC (D), 27, ‘Her hine bestæl se here on midne winterofer twelftan niht to Cippanhamme’.

¹⁶⁵ WM, 240-41, ‘a Danis potationem discerent’.

¹⁶⁶ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 21.

Drinking in company was a universal practice, and in this passion, they made no distinction between night and day... There followed the vices that keep company with drunkenness, and sap the virility of a man's spirit... In brief, the English of those days... [were] eating till they were sick and drinking till they spewed. These last two habits they have passed on to their conquerors, whose ways in other things they have adopted.¹⁶⁷

Both John and William were Benedictines and through the wording of Chapter 40 of the Rule of St Benedict, composed in Latin in the sixth century, Benedictine monks were encouraged to abstain from drinking, but more practically they were advised to stick to moderation where alcohol was concerned:

We read it is true, that wine is by no means a drink for monastics; but since the monastics of our day cannot be persuaded of this let us at least agree to drink sparingly and not to satiety, because 'wine makes even the wise fall away', (Eccles. 19:2).¹⁶⁸

It follows that both John and William may have had reason to link drunkenness with bad behaviour and this they reflected onto the activities of the Danes. Danish drunkenness was also mentioned by Henry when he appeared to have associated the cruel killing of Ælfheah with the fact that the Danes had been under the influence of alcohol.¹⁶⁹ One of his sources, the D version of the ASC, recorded the final moments of archbishop Ælfheah by stating:¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ *WM*, 458-59, 'Potabatur in commune ab omnibus, in hoc studio noctes perinde ut dies perpetuantibus... Sequebantur uitia ebrietatissotia, quae uirorum animos effeminant... Ad summam, tunc errant Angli uestibus... in cibis urgentes crapulam, in potibus irritantes uomiam. Ex haec quidem extrema iam uictoribus suis participarunt, de ceteris in eorum mores transeuntes'.

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.osb.org/rb/text/rbemjo2.html>, (accessed 11/07/14), (website of the Order of St Benedict).

¹⁶⁹ *HH*, 350-51, 'commoti sunt Daci erga archiepiscopum, quia prohibebat pecuniam dari pro se. Erant etiam ebrii uino quod uenerat ab austro', 'the Danes were aroused against the archbishop, because he refused to be ransomed. They were also drunk with wine which had come from the south'.

¹⁷⁰ *ASC* (D), 57, 'wæron hi eac swyðe druncene, for þæm þær wæs broht win suðan. Genamon þa þone bisceop, læddon hine to heora hustinge on þone Sunnanæfen .xiii. kalendas Mai octabas pasche, 7 hine ðær þa oftorfedon 7 sloh hine þa an hiora mis anre eaxe ere mid banum 7 mid hrypera neata heafedum, on þæt heafod, þæt he mid þam dynte nyþær astah 7 his halige blod on þa eorþan feoll 7 his þa halgan sawle to Godes rice ascende'.

They [the Danes] were very drunk, for wine from the south had been brought there. They seized the bishop and brought him to their assembly on the eve of the Sunday of the octave of Easter, which was 19th April. They pelted him with bones and with ox-heads, and one of them struck him on the head with the back of an axe, that he sank down with the blow, and his holy blood fell on the ground, and so he sent his soul to God's kingdom.¹⁷¹

Ian Mcdougall has recognised that, 'arrows turn Edmund into St Sebastian in Abbo's account; in Osbern the stoning of Ælfheah transforms him into the English St Stephen'.¹⁷² The type of violence permeated against Ælfheah can be applied to what Mark Salber Phillips described as a sort of 'alienation effect'.¹⁷³ The use of bones and ox-heads was generally regarded as a way to mock or shame someone so were hardly intentional weapons of murder. If a strike with the back of an axe was intended to cause certain death, then surely a blow from the sharp side of the axe would have been favoured. Ann Williams reported a traditional method to stun an animal prior to slaughtering it, was to hit it on the head with the back of an axe and then to cut its throat.¹⁷⁴ This could represent a case of manslaughter by his reported killer Thrum, rather than murder, as the intention to kill may have not been present. Indeed, R. I. Page concluded the death of Ælfheah was, 'A classic case of an undisciplined mob wasting a valuable hostage.'¹⁷⁵

Comparable to beasts, both real and mythical

John showed that one of his influences had been the classical Roman author Ovid when he borrowed a reference to Bacchanalian fury when he used the expression that the Danes had behaved with the 'bacchanalian fury of wild beasts'.¹⁷⁶ This was part of John's

¹⁷¹ *The ASC*, ed. Whitelock, 91-2.

¹⁷² Ian Mcdougall, 'Serious entertainments: an examination of a peculiar type of Viking atrocity', in *ASE*, 22 (1993), 205.

¹⁷³ Mark Salber Phillips, *On Historical Distance* (Yale, 2013), 3.

¹⁷⁴ Williams, 'Thorkell the Tall and the Bubble Reputation: The Vicissitudes of Fame', in *Danes in Wessex*, 147 and 154, fn. 28.

¹⁷⁵ R. I. Page, *Chronicles of the Vikings, Records, Memorials and Myths* (British Museum, 1995), 142.

¹⁷⁶ [http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus-](http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus/cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=LatinAugust2012andgetid=1andquery=Ov.%20Ars%203)
[cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=LatinAugust2012andgetid=1andquery=Ov.%20Ars%203](http://perseus.uchicago.edu/perseus/cgi/citequery3.pl?dbname=LatinAugust2012andgetid=1andquery=Ov.%20Ars%203),
(accessed 11/07/14), 'Evolat, ut thyrsos concita Baccha, vias. Ut prope perventum, comites
in valle relinquit, Ipsa nemus tacito clam pede fortis init'; (With Bacchanalian fury in her
eyes, thither arriv'd, she leaves below her friends, and all alone the shady hill ascends.)

expansion on the ASC's statement that the Danes had done, 'the greatest damage that any army could do'.¹⁷⁷ His exaggeration of the earlier ASC source description is repeated below:

to lay waste fields, burn townships, plunder churches, slay any member of the male sex who came into their hands without any thought of pity, keep the women for the satisfaction of their lust, and do all the evil they could. While they were doing this, behaving with the bacchanalian fury of wild beasts¹⁷⁸

The Danes are here depicted with the adjective *debachantibus*, which described them as behaving as a group who have consumed a lot of alcohol and were behaving uncontrollably. It appears that *debachantibus* was most frequently applied to the behaviour of wild beasts. John used Ovid for a more vivid description of their awfulness than the ASC could manage.¹⁸⁰ Latin expressions using derivatives of *Bacchus* the wine god tend to reflect the worst excesses associated with pagans.¹⁸¹ The word for the festival of Bacchus, *bacchanal*, may also be used for orgy, and pagan life, whilst *bacchari* means to rave or rage.¹⁸² John's use of the fury of wild beasts represents a similar analogy to the use of wolves against a flock by Orderic above where he is representing the struggle between barbarous pagans and peaceful Christians.¹⁸³

By drawing upon the ASC 994 entry, William recorded the payment of sixteen thousand pounds to the Danes.¹⁸⁴ After he had been baptised as part of this peace settlement their Norwegian leader Olaf promised not to return, but William was not satisfied with leaving his account at that point and added a dehumanisation of the Danes through an analogy with the mythological monster, the hydra; 'But the evil could not be lulled to rest like that; for enemies were always sprouting out of Denmark like hydra's

¹⁷⁷ ASC (D), 58, 'worhton þæt mæste yfel þæt ænig here don mihte.'

¹⁷⁸ JW, 2, 472-73, 'uidelicet ut agros deuastarent, uillas cremarent, ecclesias spoliarent, quicquid masculini sexus in manus ueniret sine respectu misericordie iugularent, feminas ad suam libidinem explendam reseruarent, et omnia que possent mala peragerent. Quibus ita facientibus, et rabie ferina debachantibus.'

¹⁸⁰ Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, 108, 'In the twelfth century the wide diffusion of Ovid is one of the surest indications of the classical revival'.

¹⁸¹ Latham, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, 173.

¹⁸² Latham, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, 173.

¹⁸³ See p. 98, fn. 148 above.

¹⁸⁴ WM, 270-73, 'Quocirca obsessores afflicti et desperantes posse capi ciuitatem discesserunt, totamque prouintiam ab oriente uastantes regum ad pecuniam sedecium milium librarum soluendam coegerunt', 'As a result the besiegers were hard hit, and in despair of capturing the city [London] departed; but by devastating the whole province to the eastward they forced the king to pay sixteen thousand pounds in money'.

heads, and nowhere was it possible to take precautions.¹⁸⁵ This mythical hydra analogy was recorded in Revelation 12:3, where the coming of a seven-headed dragon is associated with evil, and where this dragon represented the devil which had been cast out from heaven, a clear example of monstrous evil.¹⁸⁶ Such a danger results from the multiplication where the hydra sprouts two heads where the previous one has been lopped off, which may be seen as giving rise to an increased incidence of disruption through the use of force against such a monster.¹⁸⁷ The hydra analogy is important as it represents the description of a monster, which in turn represents difference made flesh, and adds the twist of monstrous multiplicity and re-generation.¹⁸⁸ David Williams has written that because the head may be designated as an index of identity, then a monster with several heads may suggest a plurality of natures or multiple perspectives of some kind.¹⁸⁹ It certainly feels like William of Malmesbury was alluding to the fact that the Danish Vikings had multiple intentions behind their attacks, from looting to slaving to conquest, although their united intent was the use of terror and evil. With the acknowledgement of Olaf returning to presumably Norway, and promising never to return, the Danes are classed as the aggressors. Like the hydra, the Danes exercised their monstrosity both on land and sea.¹⁹⁰

In the first of several insect-inspired descriptions, Henry described Guthrum's Danish army in Biblical terms; 'They covered the land like locusts, and since no one was able to withstand them, they seized possession of it for themselves.'¹⁹¹ Later, Henry again used a swarm of locusts' description to describe Danish anger over the St Brice's Day attacks on their people in England in 1002, when; 'the Danes were inflamed with justifiable anger like a fire which someone had tried to extinguish with fat. So, flying down like a swarm of locusts...'¹⁹² These attacks will be covered in detail in the case study which follows this chapter, but it is worth noting here that Henry showed a preference for Biblical

¹⁸⁵ *WM*, 272-73, 'Sed non sic malum quieuit; nam semper, ut hidrae capitibus, hostibus ex Danemarkia pullulantibus nusquam caueri poterat'.

¹⁸⁶ 'And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads', <www.icr.org/bible/Revelation/12/3-9/>, (accessed 11/04/14).

¹⁸⁷ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 7-8.

¹⁸⁹ Williams, *Deformed Discourse*, 127.

¹⁹⁰ Williams, *Deformed Discourse*, 183.

¹⁹¹ *HH*, 288-89, 'Operientesque terram quasi locuste, cum nullus eis posset resistere, occupaurunt eam sibe'.

¹⁹² *HH*, 340-41, 'ira Daci exarserunt digna, sicut ignis quem sagimine uelit aliquis extinguere. Aduolantes igitur quasi multitudo locustarum'.

inspired plagues. In Henry's preface to his book five, he again utilised another insect swarm reference to continue his idea of the repeated plagues which had been sent against the English:

Therefore, Almighty God sent down upon them the most-cruel of peoples, like swarms of bees, who would spare neither age nor sex; these were the Danes and Goths, the Norwegians and Swedes, the Vandals and Frisians.¹⁹³

Henry also used the example of the painful sting in his condemnation of the inactivity of Æthelred to defend his people when after reporting the plundering and killing done by the Danes as well as observing the pointlessness of the English who tried to oppose them, Henry closed his entry for the year of 1006 with, 'King Æthelred, in sorrow and confusion, stayed at his manor in Shropshire, stung repeatedly by painful news.'¹⁹⁴ The image painted here is that the weak English king was in hiding from the marauding Danes far away from where his land and people were suffering from their ravages. Such a depiction is a continuation of Henry's Danish curse on the English people, coupled with the damning of an ineffective king. With the depiction of swarms and painful stings, Henry sought to connect to his audience in a manner which they could understand and indeed with which they could physically associate. In an agricultural society, it may be assumed that the fear of seeing a swarm of bees, or the damage that a swarm of insects could do to the crops, was a practical way in which to vividly bring home to his twelfth-century audience both the fear and the violent damage which the coming of the Danes had brought to the English people of the past.¹⁹⁵ Whilst it could be argued that Henry used a Biblical phrase to add impact to his statement, his use of swarms also carried with it a more practical message of the coming of numerous hurtful, annoying pests. Clerics would know of the work carried out by bees in making honey, but perhaps Henry is reflecting his own painful personal memory of when he was once stung? We will never know.

Ethnic differences which promote fear

Michael Uebel's study of twelfth-century responses to Saracen alterity is helpful in framing discussion of descriptions of paganism based upon his interpretation of the system of

¹⁹³ *HH*, 274-75, 'Inmisit ergo Dominus omnipotens, uelut examina apium, gentes crudelissimas, que nec etati nec sexui parcerent, scilicet, Dacos cum gothis, Norwagenses cum Suathedis, Wandalos cum Fresis'.

¹⁹⁴ *HH*, 344-45, 'Rex autem Adelred cum mesticia et confusione erat ad firmam suam in Salopscyre, sepe rumororum sauciatus aculeis'.

¹⁹⁵ See also the references to 'infestation' above on p. 21.

‘unthought’ as described by Michel Foucault.¹⁹⁶ Unthought in this sense is an attempt by the chronicler to shut the ‘other’ away from his thinking to reduce its ‘otherness’. Foucault felt that such an idea had only been applicable to historians since the nineteenth century through an imagined boundary which both encloses and excludes an unavoidable duality of the self.¹⁹⁷ On the edge of such a boundary, Uebel has suggested that it is possible to imagine monstrous ‘otherness’ as a form of twelfth-century unthought.¹⁹⁸ The twelfth-century chroniclers constructed a set of limits for the exclusion of monstrous Viking identity by focusing instead on the contrast between pagans and their own Christian identities.

Following King Alfred’s victory at Edington in 878, and the subsequent treaty of Wedmore, a boundary was agreed between the English and the Danes which ran diagonally from London north-westwards towards Derbyshire and Cheshire along the line of the old Roman road known as Watling Street.¹⁹⁹ The area to the north and east of this line became known as the Danelaw, although the word ‘Danelaw’ itself was not actually known to have been recorded until a law code of 1008.²⁰⁰ David Roffe has written of the Danelaw’s cultural identity being predominantly Danish where the society essentially comprised of the successors to Danish settlers, and English who had been ‘Scandinavianized’.²⁰¹ Roffe feels the Danes of the Danelaw actually thought of themselves; ‘less as Danes than [being] men of York, men of Lincoln, men of Nottingham’, etc.²⁰² Lavelle has also made the point that those living in the Danelaw were associated with a Danish ancestry, and he associated ethnicity with an identity created by its users.²⁰³ Lavelle along with Simon Roffey have suggested that a distinction may be made between Anglo-Danes, and ‘Scandinavian Danes’; and therefore conceptions of ‘Danishness’, such as those applied to the occupants of the Danelaw, may have been manifested at particular points in time, and/or a place where this cultural distinctiveness was useful to apply for negotiation reasons.²⁰⁴ Anthony Smith has offered the concept of ‘national sentiment’ which is where the population has little trace of

¹⁹⁶ Michael Uebel, ‘Unthinking the Monster: Twelfth-Century Responses to Saracen Alterity, in *Cohen Monster Theory*, 264-91.

¹⁹⁷ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 326-27, Uebel, ‘Unthinking the Monster’, 264.

¹⁹⁸ Uebel, ‘Unthinking the Monster’, 265.

¹⁹⁹ Roffe, ‘The Danes and the making of the Kingdom of the English’, 34.

²⁰⁰ Roffe, 34, fn. 10.

²⁰¹ Roffe, 34.

²⁰² Roffe, 40.

²⁰³ Ryan Lavelle, *Aethelred II, King of the English* (Stroud, 2002), 165.

²⁰⁴ Lavelle and Roffey, ‘West Saxons and Danes: Negotiating Early Medieval Identities’, in Lavelle and Roffey, *Danes in Wessex*, 15 and 25.

a nationalist ideology.²⁰⁵ Such an idea could be applied to the occupants of the Danelaw, who despite their common ancestry felt a 'national sentiment' of collective belonging to the English people and a desire to exhibit a willingness to be part of this group's security and welfare. The identification of a boundary (in this case geographic), between 'them and us', and its implication of housing monstrosity on the 'other side', has been considered by Cohen:

Through the body of the monster fantasies of aggression, domination, and inversion are allowed safe expression in a clearly delimited and permanently liminal space. Escapist delight gives way to horror only when the monster threatens to overstep these boundaries to destroy or deconstruct the thin walls of category and culture. When contained by geographic, generic, or epistemic marginalisation, the monster can function as an alter ego, as an alluring protection of (an 'other') self.²⁰⁶

By being on the other side of the boundary line of Watling Street to the realm of English, the Danes could be perceived by the chroniclers as lurking monsters who threatened to destroy both the category and culture of the English. However, in a practical sense the presence of a road would not be seen by most as a barrier to integration and normality. The chroniclers' view of the construction of Anglo-Danishness was coupled with a view linking such a threat back to the evolution of the piratical pagan from which it came. Certainly, the line of the Danelaw was used by the chroniclers to signify any commencement of new acts of aggression, which were usually in a north to south direction. In practice Watling Street itself would not have been a true physical boundary line but acted as a political one. There are some short but significant passages by the Anglo-Norman chroniclers concerning the retaking of the so-called 'Five Boroughs' from Scandinavian control by the English in 942. The source for this event was a praise poem contained in all of the ASC versions except for the later E and F versions entitled, 'The Capture of the Five Boroughs'.²⁰⁷ The translation of the A version of the ASC by Jayne Carroll reads:

²⁰⁵ Anthony D. Smith, 'National Identities: Modern and Medieval?', in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, 24-5

²⁰⁶ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 17.

²⁰⁷ Michael Swanton, ed. and trans. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (London, 2000), 110, fn. 2.

In this year King Edmund, lord of the English, protector of men and beloved doer of deeds, conquered Mercia, as far as Dore borders it, the Whitwell Gap and the River Humber, broad rapid river; and the Five Boroughs, Leicester and Lincoln, and Nottingham, also Stamford and Derby. The Danes were previously oppressed by force under the Northmen²⁰⁸, in the fetters of the pagans, for a long time, until afterwards, because of his worthiness, King Edmund, protector of warriors and son of Edward redeemed them.²⁰⁹

The essence of this poetic text recorded that the Danes of the Five Boroughs used to be pagans and were known as Northmen but following the arrival of Edmund they had been liberated from the Norwegians (under Olaf Guthrithson, the King of York), and thus their souls were saved when they became Christians. Alfred Smyth commented that this poem emphasised the on-going acceptance of Christianity amongst the Danish settlers in England.²¹⁰ Roffey and Lavelle offered the idea that the Danes associated with the liberation of the Five Boroughs represented a group of people who had a role to play in Alfred's kingdom which went beyond that of a subject people.²¹¹ The 'otherness' of the Norwegians is emphasised here as the *gens Danorum* with the help of Edmund are saved, although Roffey and Lavelle have also noted that 'liberation' by a southern-based 'aggrandising' English ruler could be one of the better-spun myths of tenth-century England.²¹²

The twelfth century witnessed a change in the emphasis of this entry through John's alteration of the translation where he recorded that; 'Edmund, the glorious king of the English, wrested completely out of Danish hands the five boroughs of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Stamford, and brought all Mercia under his control.'²¹³ John changed the original poem to portray the fact that Mercia was freed from the Danes and not that the Danes were freed from the Northmen. The Danes were therefore changed

²⁰⁸ Here, Carroll translates *Nordmannum* as Norwegians.

²⁰⁹ Jayne Carroll, 'Vikings wars and The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in *Beowulf and Other Stories*, 335, 'Her Eadmund cyning, Engla þeoden, mæcgea mundbora, Myrce geeode, dyre dædfruma, swa Dor scadeþ, Hwitanwyllesgeat and Humber ea, brada brimstream. Burga fife, Ligoraceaster and Lincylene and Snotingham, swylce Stanford eac and Deoraby. Dæne wæran æror under Nordmannum nyde gebegde on hæþenra hæfteclommum lange þrage, oþ hie alydde eft for his weorþscipe wiggendra hleo, afera Eadweardes, Eadmund cyning'.

²¹⁰ Smyth, *Medieval Europeans*, 35.

²¹¹ Roffey and Lavelle, 'West Saxons and Danes', in *Danes in Wessex*, 11.

²¹² Roffey and Lavelle, 'West Saxons and Danes', in *Danes in Wessex*, 11.

²¹³ *JW*, 2, 396-97, 'Magnificus rex Anglorum Eadmundus quinque ciuitates Lindicolinam, Snotingham, et Stanfordam manibus Danorum pentius Deorbeiam, Leogereceastram extorsit, totamque Merciam in sui potestatem redegit'.

from being liberated from the pagans by the unifying character of Edmund, to the actual suppressors of the non-pagan occupants of the Five Boroughs themselves.

Henry followed both the original wording of the ASC and the 942 entries of John. Henry's account was centred upon the liberation of souls through God, but he also blurred the description between the Danes and the Northmen following Edmund's recapture of the Five Boroughs; 'So he completely rooted out the Danes, who at that time were also called Northmen, and when unbelief was removed from the said cities, by God's grace he restored the light of faith.'²¹⁴ Here Henry errs towards combining the non-Christian Danes with the Northmen to make the point that religious differences were more important than the depiction of a detailed representation of their ethnic background - a case which emphasises the importance of beliefs over birthplace.

Friedman has argued that a monstrous race was central to medieval identities and this is demonstrated through geography, theology and bodily morphology.²²² Two out of three of these demonstrations may point directly to Vikings, with the third bodily morphology element explained through the comparison to Saracens. The Saracens of the 'King Horn' tale who ravaged the land and slew the protagonist's father could accurately be described as doppelgangers for the Vikings.²²³ Cohen has noted that the twelfth-century's favourite figure for 'racial and cultural otherness' was through the use of dark-skinned Saracens to represent the most troubling of contemporary enemies.²²⁴ Such thinking is reflected in the views expressed in respect of the Danes as no matter what, they were inherently barbaric and evil. Gaimar's statement that the Danes had once invaded part of Britain was intended to buttress Anglo-Norman claims to superiority and difference.²²⁵ Cohen continued that a 'Saracen' could represent a wide range of anxieties both domestic and international, which tied race to nation.²²⁶ The view of the Vikings as an alter-ego of the Saracens demonstrates a reinforcement of the message the Anglo-Norman chroniclers saw them as a representation of 'otherness' associated with foreigners.

²¹⁴ *HH*, 314-15, 'Dacos igitur qui etiam Normanni eo tempore sunt uocati, penitus extirpauit, et ab urbibus predictis infidelitate remota Dei gratia fidei fulgorem restituit'.

²²² Friedman, *Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*.

²²³ Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 282, fn. 106, from a thirteenth century Middle English romance believed to have been based upon an Anglo-Norman story of circa 1170, entitled the Romance of Horn.

²²⁴ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 61.

²²⁵ Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 219.

²²⁶ Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 219.

Sir Richard Southern suggested that the burst of Anglo-Norman historical writing in the first-half of the twelfth-century could have been a way to resolve the tensions caused by the Conquest.²²⁷ One method which this was undertaken was through the monsterisation of the historical outsider. The chroniclers used the ASC as a source of evidence which using embellishment of language 'monsterised' some historical events to portray the Vikings in an exaggerated sense of 'otherness'. Monstrosity was also used by the chroniclers as a de-familiarising device in their chronicles to emphasise the essential 'otherness' of the Vikings. The chroniclers as historians, essentially altered the record of the Vikings by using 'otherness' to influence the opinion of their audiences. Geographically, the two best-placed chroniclers for this were the Lincolnshire-based Henry and Gaimar, who lived in the old Danelaw area with its marked record of Danish influence. Their tool for this enterprise was the use of language which both created and emphasised the traits of 'otherness'.

The originators of the part of the ASC prepared during the time of King Alfred used a demonised 'Danish label' which was both current and retrospective, as in their day the Danes were the main recognised threat to peace in England. The ASC accounts of the first encounter with Vikings have been described as needing 'to be treated with some care, for the chronicle is a highly propagandistic work and there may be a strong element of 'spin''.²²⁸ Forte et al., continued by proposing that such spin may have been inserted to emphasise the idea that Wessex was, and always had been, both first victim and principal defender of the Anglo-Saxons against the terror brought by a pagan onslaught.²²⁹ Through the use of a theoretical framework to investigate the chroniclers' texts, such areas of 'spin' are more easily recognised as texts which were crafted not to necessarily represent 'reality', but to put across a point of view.

Stein drew upon R. I. Moore to explain that this period had led to literate elites beginning to conceive of secular society as homogenous, and therefore such elites could have attempted to implement a process of systematic marginalisation, persecution, expulsion and extermination of groups imagined to be 'other', to regularise their own society.²³⁰ Relating this summary to the exaggeration of the tale of the first recorded

²²⁷ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 179, where she refers to the work of Richard W. Southern, 'Presidential Address: Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 4. The Sense of the Past', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series*, 23 (1973), 246-9.

²²⁸ Forte et al., *Viking Empires*, 8.

²²⁹ *Viking Empires*, 8.

²³⁰ Stein, 'Making History English', 114.

encounter with the Vikings by the twelfth-century chroniclers lays the foundations of future marginalisation and persecution through the chronicle entries. As the chronicles continued from the first introduction of the Vikings it is difficult to find anywhere in John's chronicle an example of any representation of the Danes or their leaders which offers any positive glimpses of them at all. However, John did not actually associate Viking Danes with monsters. William of Malmesbury appeared to have assumed a certain prevalence of English unity against the threat of the Vikings.²³¹ The Vikings were thus portrayed by him as a common threat, and also as a unifying factor for the English against the threat of such a group of 'others', although Sigbjørn Sønnesyn does not think that William read his sources in this way. For Sønnesyn, William felt that the unification of the English came as a result of having a strong leader such as Alfred, who was morally and martially strong, and the presence of the Viking threat was an accidental, non-essential part of this unification.²³² William saw the earlier Danish raids on England as a calculated secret and furtive spying mission for the later assaults which would result in the conquest of the country for themselves. This was William's view of the Danish grand plan, which had been sowed and calculated by them over a number of centuries. He showed an evolution in his accounts from Viking raiders to a more imperialistic Danish approach. William noted that the Danes saw England as an island which was rich in material wealth but poor in spirit. He also saw the Danes as tyrannical who could not be trusted as they always possessed a barbarian heart. William often used non-religious descriptions of the Danes reflecting the earlier use of barbarians as synonymous with pagans and brought such similarities into the twelfth-century by re-using such expressions in his own work.²³³

To Henry the Danes were truce breakers, plunderers, arsonists and conducted themselves in secretive ways. Henry also made use of insect analogies by using the expressions that the Danes acted in swarms.²³⁴ He even extended this analogy by referring to the fact that the weak king Æthelred was himself 'stung repeatedly by painful news'.²³⁵ Henry approached the 'otherness' of the Danish Vikings in a manner which lent itself to portray them as monsters, but who were incorporated within society. This lends itself to a reflection of the monster from within, or the opposite of 'self'. Henry showed knowledge of

²³¹ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 167.

²³² Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 166.

²³³ Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 117 and fn. 99.

²³⁴ *HH*, 274-75.

²³⁵ *HH*, 344-45.

the past settlement of the Vikings, due to the area of the old Danelaw in which he grew up and resided. His chronicle was neatly divided into areas heavily influenced by God's punishment of the English by using the Danes to punish them.²³⁶ Whilst the Danish Vikings were depicted as God's instrument, their use by God as his tool was *because* of their monstrosity. The English are so bad that they need someone even worse to punish them, such as monsters. As with the other chroniclers, Henry saw the land of the old Danelaw as an area perennially loyal to the Danes through historic settlement and blood-ties. Gaimar was specific that the Danes originally set out to wage war on the English. He linked this to their hereditary claim to rule at least part of England. The Danes according to Gaimar, were always the first to begin discord and remained true to their 'national' character. Gaimar used the terminology that the Danes were evil, foul, dastardly and stealthy; Gaimar's view of the Danes as perennial raiders and plunderers of England fulfils the traditional role of the Danes as villains, and indeed, inherently monstrous.

Little commonality exists in the approach to monsterise the Danes between any of the chroniclers, except that they all used the Danes as the villains of their take on the story of the first encounter of 789. These initial three boatloads of Danes were variously described as pirates and plunderers, and as undertaking a pre-invasion reconnaissance of the land all point to the start of formatting a stereotype. The chroniclers themselves did not demonstrate any objectivity towards the interpretation of the ASC accounts and their unquestioning acceptance of Danish aggression may be explained through their desire to blame many past issues unquestioningly on this group. In overall terms, the evidence of Danes or Vikings as monsters is limited, and in some areas, non-existent. They are described in terms of their 'otherness', but this tends to stop short of a valid description of monstrosity. Through a case study of the St Brice's Day massacre what may be investigated is under certain circumstances who was portrayed as the more monstrous, the English or the Danes. The circumstances in this matter being a poorly advised king, an evil earl, and a plot against the English monarch.

²³⁶ *HH*, 326-27, for example, '*Inde interim Dominus ad iram promotus, quad facere parauerat non distulit. Veneruntque Daci ex multis partibus et operuerunt Angliam quasi nubes celi*', ('Then the Lord, once more moved to anger, did not delay what He had planned to do. The Danes came from many directions and covered England like the clouds of the sky').

A Case Study

The St Brice's Day Massacre as a case study of monstrosity¹

'an eleventh-century Gunpowder Plot'²

This section considers an apportionment of monstrous representation at a time when vilification of the Danes was at its height. A case study of the St Brice's Day massacre offers an investigation into which 'side' were considered to be monstrous and whether the chroniclers applied a degree of monstrosity to those involved when describing events which were considered of historical importance. Thus, for such events the audience were guided by the chroniclers as to whom should be considered as 'other'.

Simon Keynes has contributed extensively on the matter of the St Brice's Day massacre. One of his many articles on the matter notes that 'additional dimensions' were added to the re-telling of the story over a number of centuries.³ One such dimension was the identification of the monstrosity of those involved. The following which is also by Keynes observes:

The period saw the inception of the policy of paying tribute to the Viking forces and the extraordinary decision in 1002 to kill; "all the Danish men who were in England"; neither of these measures seems to reflect creditably on the quality of the decisions being taken at high level, and both have been duly censured by historians.⁴

Keynes also added that such payments were seen as an admission of weakness, which served only to encourage further Danish attacks. The attacks were vicious and paranoid outbursts which were bound to incite acts of reprisal.⁵

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to the guidance given to me over this case study by Jay Paul Gates (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY), and to Brian O'Camb, (Indiana University Northwest).

² Jonathan Wilcox, 'The St Brice's Day Massacre and Archbishop Wulfstan', in ed. Wolfthal, D., *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Brepolis N. V., 2000), 83.

³ Simon Keynes, 'The Massacre of St Brice's Day, (13th November 1002)', in ed. Niels Lund, *Beretning fra seksogtyvende tværfaglige vikingesymposium* (Aarhus, 2007), 32. (Hereinafter referred to as *vikingesymposium*).

⁴ Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready' 978-1016, A Study of their use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), (hereinafter referred to as *Diplomas*), 202.

⁵ Keynes, *Diplomas*, 202.

Original source material

The first of the very few near contemporary references to the St Brice's Day massacre is the charter for the monastery of St Frideswide, Oxford.⁶ The church was destroyed by fire on the day of the massacre, and King Æthelred through this charter gave the community the means to be able to re-finance the re-building of the St Frideswide church.⁷ It was issued at the royal estate at Headington on 7th December 1004, and witnessed by, amongst others, King Æthelred, two archbishops, Ælfric of Canterbury and Wulfstan of York, and the then queen, Ælfgifu.⁸ The original charter has not survived, but was copied in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries which ultimately ensured its survival with the Sawyer reference S 909.⁹ Later accounts of the St Brice's Day massacre are viewed in the context of this charter.¹⁰ In this charter Æthelred actually confesses to having given the order to murder Danes:

Since a decree was sent out by me [Æthelred] with the counsel of my leading men and magnates, to the effect that all Danes who had sprung up in this island, sprouting like cockle amongst the wheat, were to be destroyed by a most just extermination, and this decree was to be put into effect even as far as death, those Danes who dealt in the afore-mentioned town [Oxford], striving to escape death, entered this sanctuary of Christ, having broken by force the doors and bolts, and resolved to make a refuge and defence for themselves therein against the people of the town and suburbs; but when all the people in pursuit strove, forced by necessity, to drive them out, and could not, they set fire to the planks and burnt, as it seems, this church with its ornaments and its books.¹¹

This charter revealed that the victims included Danes of Oxford who had settled outside of the Danelaw, as Oxford had never been part of it.¹² It is not known for sure how many people were killed in Oxford, but they met their deaths because of mob violence who were

⁶ *EHD* 1, 545-47.

⁷ Ryan Lavelle, 'Ethnic Cleansing in Anglo-Saxon England', in *BBC History Magazine*, November 2002, 42.

⁸ Wilcox, 'The St Brice's Day Massacre', 87.

⁹ Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 33

¹⁰ Lavelle, 'Ethnic Cleansing', 43.

¹¹ ed. Spencer Robert Wigram, *The Cartulary of the Monastery of St Frideswade at Oxford* (Oxford, 1895-6), 1:2-3, 'Omnibus enim in hac patria degentibus satis constat fore notissimum quoniam dum a me decretum cum consilio optimatum satrapumque meorum exiuit cuncti Dani, qui in hac insula velut lolium inter triticum pululando emerant, iustissima examinacione necarentur, hoc que decretum morte tenus ad effectum perduceretur, ipsi qui in prefata vrbe morabantur Dani, mortem euadere nitentes, hoc Xpi sacrarium, fractis per vimvaluis ac pessulis, intrantes asylum sibi repugnaculum que contra vrbanos suburbanos que inibi fieri decreuerunt, set cum populus omnis insequens, necessitate compulsus, eos eiicere niteretur nec valeret, igne tabulis iniecto, hanc Ecclesiam, vt liquet, cum ornamentis ac libris combusserunt.'

¹² Keynes, *Diplomas*, 204.

ranged against an identified ethnic group. As these Danes were not Danes of the Danelaw, it follows they were part of a defined group within the Anglo-Danish *gens* itself. Such a hypothesis leads to an indication these ‘Danes’ may have been senior members of the local community or war leaders. It would certainly make sense that Æthelred might consider the nobility of the Danish presence to be a threat to him and his *witan*. To organise an attack upon some specific individuals would have been much easier to plan than to incite a pogrom against a complete race and would also have a much higher chance of success too. As can be seen from the account below, the idea of killing all the Danish in England, was probably an exaggeration.¹³ This second, and main source, was the ASC:

In this year the king and his councillors determined that tribute should be paid to the fleet and peace made with them on condition that they should cease their evil-doing. Then the king sent Ealdorman Leofsige to the fleet, and he then, by the command of the king and his councillors, arranged a truce with them and that they should receive provisions and tribute. And they then accepted that, and 24 thousand pounds were paid to them. And in that year the king ordered to be slain all the Danish men who were in England, on St Brice’s Day, because the king had been informed that they would treacherously deprive him, and then all his councillors, of life and possess his kingdom afterwards.¹⁴

For the ASC entry, it would seem that the peace-making process with the Danes was faced with a pair of murder plots, firstly the assassination of a king and his advisors, and the second being the extermination of a *gens*.¹⁵ As Keynes has observed, the chronicle entry for 1001 was the only one for Æthelred’s reign where there were two independent annals, one being in ASC A, the other being in the main account common to ASC versions C, D and E.¹⁶ Keynes further noted that the ASC A was a near contemporary account, whilst the D and E versions appear to have been written some fifteen to twenty years’ later.¹⁷

¹³ Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 37.

¹⁴ *ASC trans*, 86, Old English from, *ASC (D)*, 51, ‘Her on ðissum geare se cyning gerædde 7 his witan þæt man sceolde gafol gyldan þam flotan 7 frið wið hi niman wið þon þe hi heora yfeles geswican sceoldan. þa sende se cyning to þam flotan Leofsige ealdorman, 7 he ða þæs cyninges worde 7 his witenas gryð wið hi gesette, 7 þæt hi to metsunge fengon 7 to gafole, 7 hi ða þæt underfengon, 7 him mon ða gegeald .xxiii. þusend punda 7 on þam geare se cyng het ofslean ealle þa Deniscan men þe on Angelcynne wæron, on Britius mæssedæg, for ðam þam cyninge wæs gecyð þæt hi woldan hine besyrwan æt his life 7 siððan ealle his witan 7 habban siþþan þis rice.’

¹⁵ Jay Paul Gates, ‘Discursive Murders: The St Brice’s Day Massacre, Beowulf and Mardor’, forthcoming in ed. Larissa Tracy, *Murder Most Foul: Medieval and Early Modern Homicide*, 2017.

¹⁶ Keynes, ‘A Tale of Two Kings: Alfred the Great and Æthelred the Unready’, in *TRHS* 36, 202.

¹⁷ Keynes, ‘A Tale of Two Kings’, 202.

The significance of St Brice's Day?

Julia Barrow wrote an article about St Brice, part of which addressed the question why Æthelred chose this particular day.¹⁸ St Brice had been bishop of Tours from 397-442, a city which he had been forced to leave after he had made a nun pregnant. Owing to his lack of self-control, he was not an obvious candidate for sainthood, and indeed, this little-known saint came to occupy a subordinate position to St Martin.¹⁹ St Brice's Day is the 13th November, two days' after that of St Martin. November was a month where a large proportion of the livestock which could not be fed over the winter months was butchered and salted.²⁰ Bede had referred to November in his *De temporum ratione* as *Blotmonath*, 'the month of sacrifices'.²¹ In Æthelred's time, it was common for activities involving the slaughtering of animals to take place during early to mid-November. Associated with such activity were all the implements useful to also slaughter people such as knives, axes, ropes and animal pens.²² Æthelred's ability to organise co-ordinated assaults on a section of society on a particular saint's day would therefore have been made much easier as the would-be assailants would already be armed. As St Brice was the patron saint of judges, by choosing his day effectively delivered judgement day to the Danes.²³

The chroniclers' general interpretation of events

The chroniclers sought to play down the ethnic differences of the two sides, and so presented the massacre as the failure of decent Lordship, which would have been redeemable under a good king rather than attacks by Christians on Christians.²⁴ By the early twelfth century, it was almost impossible for an Anglo-Norman chronicler to understand the feelings of the writer of his ASC source who first recorded the events of 1002. The Danes had arrived in 991 as a hostile army and were paid off in 994. They then came back in force in 997 and were paid off again in the opening months of 1002.²⁵ The Anglo-Normans added the more lurid details to their source material, including the gruesome

¹⁸ Julia Barrow, 'Bishop Briccius – Saint Brice' in ed. Niels Lund, *Beretning fra seksogtyvende tværfaglige vikingesymposium* (Aarhus, 2007), 67-90.

¹⁹ Barrow, 68.

²⁰ Barrow, 83-4.

²¹ Barrow, 84.

²² Barrow, 86.

²³ Ullidtz, 1016, *The Danish Conquest of England* (Copenhagen, 2014), 296.

²⁴ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 121.

²⁵ Keynes, *vikingesymposium*, 65.

murder of Gunnhild and her family, which led to the notion that Swein Forkbeard subsequently came to England to punish the English because of this.

John shortened his version of the St Brice's Day attacks to the following as part of his chronicle entry for the year 1002; 'King Æthelred ordered all Danish settlers, greater and less, and of either sex, to be killed because they tried to deprive him and his leading men of life and rule, and to subdue the whole kingdom to their sway.'²⁶ John's take on the story of the attacks on Danish settlers was therefore linked to their attacks on the realm, and to his feelings that the Danes were looking to rule the whole country, as John knew that Swein and his son and grand-sons ultimately did. Thus, the massacre was now recorded as an indiscriminate act which was directed at the Danes, regardless of their age, sex or social standing. William was critical of King Æthelred through the king's misplaced act of attacking a proportional part of his own people which had the effect of subsequently bringing Swein and his Danes to England to avenge his sister. This view was originally proposed by William of Jumièges around 1050 who saw that Swein had launched a massive revenge attack against the English.²⁷ Part of Malmesbury's diatribe against Æthelred is set out below:

And apart from the Danes, all of whom in the whole of England he [Æthelred] had ordered, on the strength of flimsy suspicions, to be murdered on the same day (and a painful sight it was when every man was compelled to betray his beloved guest-friends, whom he had made even more dear by close ties of relationship, and to disrupt those embraces by the sword).²⁸

This inappropriate act against his own subjects and his poor leadership ultimately helped to speed Æthelred's defeat and exile. William was also aware of the St Fridewade's document issued by Æthelred and records the fire in connection with the execution of two noble Danes, Sigferth and Morcar, who had been killed after being accused of treason by Eadric *streona*.²⁹ The king had invited the two Danes to dinner, and then had servants murder

²⁶ *JW*, 2, 452-53, 'rex Ægelredus omnes Danos Angliam incolentes, maiores et minors utriusque sexus occidere iussit, quia illum suosque primates uita regnoque priuare et totius Anglie dominium sue ditioni conati sunt subdere.'

²⁷ Lavelle, 'Ethnic Cleansing', 42.

²⁸ *WM*, 276-77, 'preter Danos, quos leuibus suspicionibus omnes uno die in tota Anglia trucidari iusserat, ubi fuit uidere miseriam dum quisque carissimos hospites, quos etiam arctissima necessitudo dultiores effecerat, cogeretur prodere et amplexus gladio deturbare.'

²⁹ *WM*, 310-11, It is worth here recounting this passage; 'Sequenti magnum concilium congregatum est apud Oxenefordum Danorum et Anglorum, ubi rex nobillissimos Danorum, Sigferdum et Morcardum, interfici iussit, delatione proditoris Edrici perfidiae

them. Æthelred, or possibly Eadric, thus gained two more estates from this act. The Danes' followers, when trying to avenge their Lords, were trapped in the burning St Fridewade's and died. This story strongly links the reasoning behind the St Brice's Day massacre to Æthelred's and Eadric's capricious natures.

The date of 1002 is also significant, as it was so close to the millennium, which had carried with it an expectation of the apocalypse. Ryan Lavelle has reminded us that millennial ideas of 'apocalyptic fever' did not begin and end with the year 1000.³⁰ Æthelred's actions with his 'apocalyptic' attacks on the Danes of England, satisfied general expectation that there would be a millennium apocalypse. It is possible that Æthelred harnessed such a feeling amongst his people and directed it against Danish 'others' based upon the recognition of their past paganism, and he encouraged his Christian subjects to view the apocalypse as being directed against the 'others'.

Danish monstrosity

The threat to a community has the effect of uniting it against those who would be seen in terms of 'otherness', and this is particularly true when such 'otherness' may be interpreted as monstrosity. As Keynes has reminded us, the St Brice's Day massacre was carried out by Englishmen who had suffered twenty years of unprovoked and relentless Danish aggression, and it proved to be one of Æthelred's 'more popular decisions'.³¹ No records report that any Danes took part in the attacks upon their own people. The chroniclers drew definite ethnic lines for those involved. The English struggled with the morality of the Vikings, and using a logic rooted in scripture which permitted a justification of the massacre by focusing upon the distinction between those 'inside' and those 'outside' of the

apud se insimulatos. Is illos fauorabilibus assentationibus deceptos in triclinicum pellexit, largiterque potatos satellitibus ad hoc preparatis anima exuit; causa cedis ferebatur quod in bona eorum inhiauerat. Clientuli eorum, necem dominorum uindicareconantes, armis repulse et in turrim aeclesiae sanctae Frideswadae coacti; unde dum eicinequirent, incendio conflagrati.' ('In the following year a great council of both Danes and English gathered at Oxford, at which the king ordered the execution of two very highborn Danes, Sigeferth and Morcar, who had been accused of high treason on information supplied by the traitor Eadric. The king lured them to his dinner-table with flattering messages and there, having plied them with wine, had them killed by servants posted for the purpose; the cause of the murder was said to be greed for their estates. Their supporters, trying to avenge their lords' deaths, were defeated and driven into the tower of St Fridewade's church, where, since they could not be driven out, they were burnt to death.')

³⁰ Lavelle, 'Ethnic Cleansing', 42.

³¹ Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings', 212; Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 38.

community.³² Æthelred managed to find the confidence to take decisive action against the Danes.³³

The root of the organisation of the attacks against the Danes was the belief that there was a real and present threat against the king and his *witan* by some Danes who wished to kill them and usurp their power. As has been seen above, the St Frideswide document described the attacks as a 'most just extermination' of the Danes.³⁴ If the Danes are viewed as the monsters of the manuscript, then Kathryn Powell's proposition that 'monstrous foreign aggression [was] a particular problem for rulers', stands up to this test.³⁵ The St Frideswide account clearly associates the English with Christianity, and perhaps the irony of the Danes who may have still been thought of as still slightly pagan. But burning the Danes to death in a church, was actually a statement of a united English Christian society acting against an unwelcome group who if left to flourish, would undermine their unity and beliefs. It may be considered that the act of destroying a treacherous ethnic group would end the violence which had been occurring for over two hundred years. The policy of paying off the Danes had worked well during the periods, 995-6, 1002, 1005 and 1007-8 where no raids were recorded.³⁶ However, the payment to one Viking force, would not stop another under a different leader from attacking.³⁷ In 1002, Æthelred may have seized the opportunity which had been brought by the tributes paid to the Danes to destroy those 'others' who resided in his country.

English monstrosity

Keynes has stressed on more than one occasion his belief that the attacks were not aimed at all of the inhabitants of the Danelaw, but at the mercenaries, traders, or paid-off and provisioned members of the recent Danish armies, along with other Danes whom the king and his supporters were suspicious of.³⁸ Keynes also noted that for the previous hundred years, the racial distinctions in the Danish settled areas would have become blurred 'into a

³² Gates, *'Discursive Murders'*.

³³ Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 38.

³⁴ Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings', 205, 'cum consilio optimatum satrapumque meorum'.

³⁵ Kathryn Powell, 'Meditating on Men and Monsters: A Reconsideration of the Thematic Unity of the *Beowulf* Manuscript', in *Review of English Studies*, New Series 57 (2006), 1-15.

³⁶ Keynes, *Diplomas*, 203.

³⁷ Keynes, *Diplomas*, 203.

³⁸ Keynes, *Diplomas*, 204.

veritable Anglo-Danish community'.³⁹ As such people formed part of the community it is unlikely they were the object of Æthelred's suspicious anger.

William added another 'monster' to Æthelred's attack on the Danes in the shape of Eadric *streona*, when he added an account of Swein's invasion of England to avenge the death of his sister Gunnhild.

Gunnhild, who was a woman of some beauty and much character, had come to England with her husband the powerful *jarl* Pallig, adopted Christianity, and offered herself as a hostage for peace with the Danes. Eadric in his disastrous fury had ordered her to be beheaded with the other Danes, though she declared plainly that the shedding of her blood would cost all England dear.⁴⁰

William of Malmesbury was alone in alleging that Pallig was Swein Forkbeard's brother-in-law. Pallig was also an opportunist mercenary who had once served Æthelred and deserted him in 1001 with what ships he had collected. Pallig then changed back to the Danes.⁴¹ Æthelred may have even specifically targeted Pallig for certain death following his earlier betrayal, after he 'had made great gifts to him [Pallig], in estates and gold and silver'.⁴²

William is the only source for Gunnhild and Pallig's deaths at the hands of Eadric.⁴³ Keynes has accused William of Malmesbury of inventing the persona of Gunnhild to 'lend colour and verisimilitude to the story which he had found in William of Jumièges', which lent historical rhetoric to the notion that the Danes were determined to return shortly thereafter to punish the English for the incompetency of their king.⁴⁴ Due to the twelfth-century take on his inappropriate direction over the St Brice's Day conspiracy, Æthelred falls into the 'otherness' category of exhibiting 'pollution behaviour', which constitutes a reaction which condemns an idea which is likely to confuse a cherished classification.⁴⁵ The condemned idea in this instance being the monsterisation of the Danes where Æthelred's actions were seen to be *more* monstrous than those of the Danes whom he was attempting to eradicate. With the awful persona of Eadric *streona* in the mix, the verdict from the perceived social order of monstrosity, makes Æthelred's monstrous actions appear much

³⁹ Keynes, *Diplomas*, 204.

⁴⁰ *WM*, 300-1, 'Haec, non illepidae formae uirago, Angliam cum Pallingo marito potenti comite uenerat, et accepta Christianitate obsidem se Danicae pacis fecerat. Eam cum ceteris Danis infaustus furor Edrici decapitari iusserat, pronuntiantem quod sui sanguinis effusion magno toti Angliae foret dispendio.'

⁴¹ Keynes, *Diplomas*, 205

⁴² Wilcox, 'The St Brice's Day massacre', 82.

⁴³ *GRA: General Introduction and Commentary*, 161.

⁴⁴ Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 50.

⁴⁵ Michael Uebel, 'Unthinking the Monster', in Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 266.

worse than those of the Danish before St Brice's Day.⁴⁶ The influence that Eadric had over Æthelred has been noted by historians such as Keynes, who condemned Æthelred's faith in Eadric as being 'utterly misguided'.⁴⁷ When Henry introduced Eadric into his chronicle, he linked him to God's plan to destroy the English describing Eadric as 'a new but outstanding traitor'.⁴⁸ Keynes has commented that Eadric's behaviour during the final years of Æthelred's reign, contributed greatly to Æthelred's downfall.⁴⁹

However, if Æthelred's chroniclers had reflected him differently, then he may have appeared to be the king who facilitated God's apocalyptic rage upon those who were still linked to paganism. William singled out Swein Forkbeard as having invaded and oppressed England with 'rapine and slaughter', and who had carried off both treasure and hostages to his ships.⁵⁰ However, following this initial portrayal of Swein, William's tone later softened toward one of supportive justification for his attacks of the early millennium. Such a feeling is explained to his audience that Swein's chief purpose behind these attacks was to avenge the death of his sister Gunnhild.⁵¹ William recorded:

And for her part, she faced death with presence of mind; she never grew pale at the prospect, nor did she change expression after death, even when her body was drained of blood, though her husband had been killed before her eyes, and her son, a promising lad had been pierced by four spears.⁵²

Thus, William described how the possibly fictional Christian Gunnhild had been beheaded after her husband had been killed before her eyes and her son had been impaled on spears.⁵³ Although Henry provided no such details of the atrocities committed in 1002 (other than maiming and use of fire), he ensured he noted under his entry for 1010, that the Danes had killed everyone in Balsham, Cambridgeshire, and had taken away the children of the village and had thrown them on the points of their spears.⁵⁴ For St Brice's

⁴⁶ One of the top 10 'Worst historical Britons', as voted for by the BBC History magazine (January 2006).

⁴⁷ Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings', 213.

⁴⁸ *HH*, 344-45, 'Eodem anno Dei providentia ad perniciem Anglorum, factus est Edricus dux super Merce, proditor nouus sed maximus.'

⁴⁹ Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings', 214.

⁵⁰ *WM*, 308-9, 'Suanus interea modo quo diximus inuasam Angliam repinis et cedibus urgebat; prouintialium sbstantiae prius abrasae, mox proscriptiones factae.'

⁵¹ *WM*, 300-1.

⁵² *WM*, 300-1, 'Et illa quidem mortem presenti tulit animo, quia nec morritura expalluit nec mortua, consumpto etiam sanguine, uultum amisit; occisus prius ante ora marito et filio, commodae indolis puero, quattuor lanceis forato.'

⁵³ *WM*, 300-1.

⁵⁴ *HH*, 348-49, 'quosquos inuenerunt in eodem loco neci dederunt, puerosque iactantes super acumina lancearum recipiebant.'

Day, William demonstrated that he felt such cruelty should neither go un-reported nor un-avenged regardless of the victims' ethnicity. The fact that it had been a woman and child who had been murdered may have enhanced William's disgust; however, what was more important to him was to record that this atrocity had been carried out by Christians towards fellow Christians, a clear case of Christian monstrosity, levelled at two Englishmen rather than the Danish. It is also interesting to notice that William has implied Gunnhild died like a true Viking, showing no fear, and looking her executioner in the eyes. This act may be viewed in terms of the 'otherness' of a person who faces death without showing the fear a 'normal' person would. William's admiration for Gunnhild led directly to his view that her brother Swein Forkbeard then led the Danes to conquer England in an act of reprisal to an attempted genocide of 'his' people.

Æthelred did have a track record of monstrous behaviour. As Keynes has listed, Æthelred ravaged the area around Rochester in 986 for no apparent reason; he also blinded Ælfgar as a punishment for his father's cowardess, and he ravaged Cumberland in 1000.⁵⁵ Henry used the figure of Æthelred as the central monstrous character in his version of the St Brice's Day massacre:

King Æthelred's pride increased and his faithlessness grew; in a treacherous plot, he ordered all the Danes who were living peacefully in England to be put to death on the same day, namely the feast of St Brice. Concerning this crime, in my childhood I heard very old men say that the king had sent secret letters to every city, according to which the English either maimed all the unsuspecting Danes on the same day and hour with their swords, or, suddenly, at the same moment, captured them and destroyed them by fire.⁵⁶

Elizabeth Van Houts has concluded even allowing for an element of distortion and exaggeration caused by time, the reaction to these attacks on innocent people records an abhorrence about centrally administered violence against inhabitants with foreign origins.⁵⁷ Henry may have developed his attitude toward Æthelred using the one record outside of

⁵⁵ Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 64.

⁵⁶ *HH*, 340-41, 'rex Adelred in superbiam elatus et perfidiam prolatus, omnes Dacos qui cum pace errant in Anglia clandestine prodicione fecit mactari una eademque die, scilicet in festiuitate sancti Bricii. De quo scelere in puericia nostra quosdam uetustissimos loquiaudiuius, quod in unamquamque urbem rex prefatus occultas miserit epistolas. Secundum quas Angli Dacos omnes, eadem die et eadem hora, uel gladiis truncauerunt inpremeditados, uel igne simul cremauerunt subito comprehensos'.

⁵⁷ Van Houts, 'Invasion and migration', in *A Social History of England*, 218-19.

the ASC which refers to the massacre of the Danes in the St Frideswide charter.⁵⁸ Barrow has noted that although Henry wrote more than a century after the event that his account seems quite plausible. But, the stories he had heard from the very old men, could not have been first-hand owing to the time difference involved.⁵⁹ However, this does highlight that as a boy Henry was able to speak English.

Ann Williams has argued that Henry changed the ASC meaning behind this attack from a counter to a plot by the Danes to kill the king into 'a treacherous slaughter of peaceable folk', by a king who had broken faith with his people.⁶⁰ As noted above, Henry also recorded 'very old men' still talked of the massacre and mutilations when he was a boy growing up in the late eleventh-century.⁶¹ Although it is not likely that Henry heard such stories first-hand, the fact these stories were transmitted from generation to generation underlined the significance of the feelings roused by this event.⁶² From such recollection Henry focused his history as a life experience through 'communicative memory'.⁶³ Henry clearly showed an inclusion of selective recollection here through the need to recall the second-hand stories he had heard as a youth. This is one of the few occasions where we find one of the chroniclers talking directly about their own past.

Gaimar omitted any mention of these incidents at all, and perhaps this could be explained by the fact that Gaimar composed his work in the mid-1130s, and by then the significance of Æthelred's actions may have faded for his intended audience. Wulf Kansteiner has questioned whether the extension of individual memory may cause a misrepresentation of the social dynamics of the collective memory, which if applied to this case study may mean Henry was seeking to enhance this particular memory, whilst Gaimar chose to forget it.⁶⁴ Such editing of past events reflects where the chronicler wished to make their own point, either through commission or indeed omission. Thomas saw that the massacre of Danes whilst having been recorded, 'rather matter-of-factly', by pre-Conquest

⁵⁸ David Douglas cited Frank Stenton's work on the authenticity of this document and confirmed the exemplar was written 'in good West Saxon', *EHD* 1, 545.

⁵⁹ Barrow, 87.

⁶⁰ Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 179-80.

⁶¹ Cavill, *Vikings, Fear and Faith*, 25-6, and *HH*, 340-41, 'De quo scelere in puericia nostra quosdam uetustissimos loqui audiuius, quod in unamquamque urbem rex prefatus occultas miserit epistolas.'

⁶² Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 626.

⁶³ Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, Young, S. B., (trans.) (Basingstoke, 2011), 53-4.

⁶⁴ Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory', in *History and Theory*, 41 (May 2002), (accessed 23/07/16), 179-97.

English sources was considered a less justifiable action by the twelfth century when the threat of the Danes had faded, and the tale may be viewed as having undergone a change in its significance to the population of England over time.⁶⁵ Ann Williams noted that Henry had treated the massacre of St Brice's Day very differently to the account in the ASC when he described the attacks as being a treacherous slaughter of peaceable folk caused by Æthelred's faithlessness, whereas the report in the ASC had defended Æthelred by reporting that the king was reacting to a plot against him by resident Danes.

Case Study Conclusion

Which side was the most monstrous, the Danes for plotting to kill the king, or the English for trying to wipe out those Danes settled in England?

The St Frideswide charter provides evidence that the English did attack and kill a group of Scandinavians, at least in Oxford, and on the instructions of the king. Nowhere in the sources are there accounts of the Danes actually organising themselves and fighting back on the day. The 'cockles in the wheat', appeared to be 'lambs to the slaughter' in many respects. With orders from the king himself, English and Danish ethnicities were framed through the reporting of this event. However, the post-Conquest chroniclers blurred the constructed divides and the event emerges from their reporting as more to do with an incompetent king, and scheming groups, and a lack of morality, rather than the collective 'them' against 'us' approach.

The English appear to have been at least as monstrous as the Danes because their cold-blooded murderous actions are comparable to the violence demonstrated by the Danish Vikings over the previous centuries. Owing to the actions of the English, it is small wonder that God used the *really monstrous* Danes to punish the now merely monstrous English. Whichever way the various chronicle entries are read, there is a message of violent action undertaken against a defined ethnic group living amidst another. The English who were involved with the massacre were very aware of the past actions of the Danes and Vikings. Bribery had been attempted, as had assimilation, but as their king, Æthelred determined that as these options had not resulted in permanent peace, then annihilation was the last and best option.

Keynes wrote that the St Brice's Day massacre was 'nothing short of a crime against humanity'.⁶⁶ After this event, the next massacre recorded by the ASC was in 1036 at

⁶⁵ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 244-45.

⁶⁶ Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 64.

Guildford, when Earl Godwin and his men captured the newly arrived and doomed *ætheling* Alfred. It was recorded that his followers were captured and:

Some were sold for money, some were cruelly killed, some were put in fetters, some were blinded, some were mutilated, some were scalped. No more horrible deed was done in this land since the Danes came and peace was made here.⁶⁷

Clearly, the monsters here were English, although Godwin was married to a Dane, the English were assaulting their own Christian countrymen during a period where political subterfuge is ingrained into the story. Godwin's actions were so cruel that he was compared to the Danes.

The conclusion here concerning the St Brice's Day attack(s) is it was only the Danish leaders and their immediate households which were targeted. This follows from the story of the *jarl* Pallig. The Anglo-Norman chroniclers perceived that even after their conversion to Christianity, the innate Danish pagan character would remain. Such depictions were to change with the coming of Cnut because, as Thomas has concluded, he 'threw his weight behind Christianity'.⁶⁸ The following chapter will explore just this phenomenon and examine the change in 'otherness' representation of the Danes from monsters to 'self', as Cnut led the change in perception of the Danish from 'them' to 'us'.

⁶⁷ Translation from Keynes, *vikingsymposium*, 66; *ASC (D)*, 65, 'Ða let he hine on hæft settan 7 his geferan he eac fordraf 7 sume mislice ofsloh; sume he man wið feo sealed, sume hreowlice acwealde. Sume hi man bende 7 eac sume blende 7 heanlice hættode. Ne weard dreorilicre dæd geddon on pisan eared siððan Dene coman 7 her fryðnaman.'

⁶⁸ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, 28.

Chapter 4

The 'other' as 'self' as seen through the representation of Cnut

*'But in truth we must be careful how we use our Dane.'*¹

Frank Maitland

We have seen that the process of the depiction of 'otherness' could in certain areas be linked to the monsterisation of the Vikings by some of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers. For a monster to exist there needs to be an image of 'self', this being the opposite of the monstrous.² To use a quote from Maijastina Kahlos:

Making differences and distinguishing ourselves from the 'other' is an essential part of human thought and behaviour, for both individuals and groups. Difference is essential for making meaning; something can be defined in terms of what it is not. The image of the 'other' expresses the sense of 'self'. In other words, the 'other' is fundamental to the construction of the 'self'. The 'self' and the 'other' are mutually dependent and complementary in a ceaseless interplay with one another.³

This chapter will seek to examine the significance of the twelfth-century treatment of Swein Forkbeard's son Cnut following his accession to the English throne. The argument is that the image of Cnut was changed from being monstrous into that of a holy king through the adoption of the 'otherness' idea of 'self'. Therefore, this chapter is to be framed around Cnut's career and the personality changes attributed to him.

It is to be argued that the chroniclers changed their 'otherness' emphasis from the basis of the religious differences of the earlier pagan Vikings, into a comparison of the representation of 'self' for the Danes serving under Cnut. Such a perceived change in attitude by the chroniclers may have been linked to how they saw themselves fitting-in as part of the later post-Conquest period in which they wrote. Christopher Bollas outlined a perceptual identification of the object with its function, where the object becomes the 'envirosomatic transformer' of the subject.⁴ Cnut may be the subject, the transformers being religion and monstrosity, where the function of religion transforms the monstrous to the non-monstrous. To explain this further, we shall see how the persona of Cnut was rapidly migrated from that of a monstrous Viking into that of a benevolent king who ruled a

¹ Frank W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond* (repr. London, 1960), 176.

² Cohen, *Monster Theory*, xii.

³ Kahlos, *The Faces of the Other*, 3.

⁴ Christopher Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object, Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known* (New York, 1987), 14.

mixed-ethnic nation in peace. Such a view of the past conquest of England by foreigners with Viking heritage could have emanated through some empathy by Anglo-Norman chroniclers looking back from the twelfth century at both their own Norman roots, and those of the English of the early eleventh century who had also lived under a foreign king, as their successors were now also doing.

The point of representational change

Following the removal of Æthelred and the premature death of Edmund 'Ironside', Cnut's accession appears to have been a turning point in the literary treatment of the Danes for many of the chroniclers' subsequent entries. Cnut was king of Denmark and England, and the eleventh-century overlord of parts of Norway and Sweden. He is today known in Scandinavia as 'Knud den store', Cnut the Great. Ann Williams has commented that in the eleventh century the English royal house could trace its origins back to the seventh century, but Cnut's dynasty had no such antiquity.⁵ Charles Plummer saw the chief significance of Cnut's reign being that he prepared the way for William the Conqueror.⁶ Chris Lewis has summarised the Danish conquest of 1016 by comparing it in negative terms to that of the Norman conquest, noting that no one has ever thought the two were comparable in terms of far-reaching effects.⁷ R. Allen Brown felt the earlier Danish conquest of 1016 did not bring a new wave of settlement, but it established an Anglo-Danish aristocracy which set up tensions which were still evident in 1066.⁸ M. K. Lawson's view agrees with Ann Williams by describing the Danish conquest as 'short-lived and without significant consequences'.⁹ Elaine Treharne explained Lawson's view as ; 'a conclusion based principally on the lack of documented narrative'.¹⁰ Clare Downham by taking a contrary view has described the conquest and reign of Cnut as having transformed the 'political geography, culture and identities of the Anglo-Saxons' and as a result of this; 'the image of the Vikings has loomed large in English historical literature from the Middle Ages to the present'.¹¹ The significant consequence of the Danish Conquest was a change in the historical description of the

⁵ Ann Williams, *Kingship and Government in pre-Conquest England, c.500-1066* (Basingstoke, 1999), 123.

⁶ ed. Charles Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel, (787 – 1001 A.D.), with supplementary extracts from the others* (repr. Delhi, 2016), xiv.

⁷ C. P. Lewis, 'Danish Landowners in Wessex in 1066', in *Danes in Wessex*, 172.

⁸ R. Allen Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1969), 65.

⁹ Lawson, *Cnut*, 214.

¹⁰ Treharne, *Living through Conquest*, 57.

¹¹ Claire Downham, 'Vikings in England' in *Viking World*, 341.

conquerors from that of pagan Vikings to Christian inhabitants of England, who were ruled over by a holy king. This argument will however be tempered by what Reginald Darlington referred to in 1947 when he observed that the Anglo-Norman historians, 'embroidered bald statements to heighten [*inter alia*] the nobility of Cnut'.¹² Likewise, Emily Winkler has observed that Henry preserved Cnut from contempt as he had been a king who had given England some great legacies and separated him from the Danes who had raided and pillaged without cause.¹³

Cnut's father Swein, on the other hand, had been vilified as a pagan by the ASC and almost without exception was portrayed as a tyrannical pagan; yet the earlier associated vicious descriptions of his son Cnut's pre-regal self were seemingly quickly forgotten in the literature and excuses offered for his earlier involvement with such actions. In subsequent Anglo-Norman chronicle entries Cnut's sons were treated reasonably kindly by the chroniclers but in the post-1042 entries the Danish influence upon England was largely all but forgotten as the chroniclers prepared their work for their description and justification of the subsequent arrival of the Normans. Following the earlier work done by Sten Körner, and then Cecily Clark, the application of the subsequent statements made by Simon Keynes and later by David Dumville concerning the original script of the ASC for the period 983-1016, will also be considered in relation to the Anglo-Norman chroniclers' works.¹⁴ Dumville suggested that the original ASC entries for the period covering the Second Viking Age, and the earlier part of Cnut's reign, as well as the period up until it, was written as a whole no later than the early months of 1023.¹⁵ His statement continued that:

It is not clear whether this narrative of some thirty to forty years was intended as a continuation of the ASC of 982, or as a continuation of a derivative revision, or as a freestanding text. What is certain is that its author had not only a very clear and hostile view of the Scandinavian invaders but also a strongly negative perception of the governance of the kingdom of England, and the failings of those who bore rule, throughout the period. His writing has coloured all historiography until the present generation.¹⁶

¹² Reginald R. Darlington, *Anglo-Norman Historians* (London, 1947), 18.

¹³ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 133.

¹⁴ Cecily Clark, 'The narrative mode of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle before the Conquest', in eds. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes, *England before the Conquest. Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), and, Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings', 195-217.

¹⁵ David Dumville, 'Vikings in Insular chronicling', in *Viking World*, 353.

¹⁶ David Dumville, 'Some aspects of annalistic writing at Canterbury in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries', in *Pertitia 2*, 23-57.

Clearly Dumville could not be totally clear over the reasons why this thirty-four-year period was written up belatedly by one scribe, but the influence of this one individual has been deemed by Dumville as being significant. Simon Keynes has described this scribe as having; 'no need to offer comfort or encouragement to his audience, since the cause was already lost; he was like a dead man conducting his own post-mortem.'¹⁷ On the basis that Dumville's hypothesis is acceptable this would place the scribe in the period of Cnut's 1020 letter to the English people, and therefore the scribe entrusted to updating the ASC would have had knowledge of Cnut's 'publicised' trip to Rome in support of English pilgrims. During such a time support for Cnut as the English ruler, and the consequential discussion and vilification of his pagan and royal predecessors, would have been at its peak.

Cnut acting monstrously

The previous chapter has considered the Vikings as monsters but before moving onto the period of the recognition of the more Christian Cnut, it should be recognised as he was approaching his succession to the throne of England, monstrous descriptions continued to be applied to him and his father. An example of this was the surrender of London after its abandonment by Æthelred to Swein, which allowed John to further embellish the description of the fear the Londoners held if they did not submit to Swein; '[as] they feared his fury would be inflamed to such an extent against them that, when he had confiscated all their property, he would order their eyes to be torn out or their hands and feet cut off.'¹⁸ In his work, John constantly distinguished Cnut from his father Swein, through his own unique descriptions of Swein as being a truly terrible character.¹⁹ Beyond the threat of such acts of mutilation the following year, the ASC, recorded a similar incident, where in the entry for 1014, Cnut had put ashore hostages previously given to his (recently deceased) father after he had cut off their 'hands and noses'.²⁰ William also used this as the basis of his entry, recording that after his father's death Cnut had sailed to Sandwich and had his hostages' ears and noses cut off but added an extra exaggerated act of cruelty that

¹⁷ Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings', 201.

¹⁸ *JW*, 2, 474-75, 'metuebant enim furorem illius in tantum super se exardescere, ut, omnibus suis rebus ablatis, uel oculos illorum erui, uel manus uel pedes detruncari, iuberet'.

¹⁹ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 156.

²⁰ *ASC trans*, (C, D, E), 93, and for Old English see *ASC (E)*, 71, 'handa 7 heora nosa', John added that he had cut off their hands and ears and had slit their nostrils too', *JW*, 2, 478-79, 'illorumque minibus truncates, auribus amputates, naribus precis'.

Cnut had; 'even castrated some of them'.²¹ Castration appears to have been favoured more by the Normans as a punishment than their English predecessors. The basis of the non-castration mutilation is repeated later in Cnut's laws where a thief with a record of previous misdemeanours, in II Cnut 30.5 would find themselves in the situation where:

And if, however, he [the thief] has committed still further crimes his eyes are to be put out and his nose and ears and upper lip cut off, or his scalp removed, whichever of these is then decreed by those with whom the decision rests; thus, one can punish and at the same time preserve the soul.²²

The last part of this code tells us about the author Wulfstan's positioning of Cnut's justice to enable the punishment of the body but not the soul of the perpetrator. It is also important to recognise these laws would not contain any measures which the archbishop would find personally inappropriate.²³ Cnut's incorporation of mutilation into his law code, could be seen as having effectively neutralised his earlier actions through a legalised right to mutilate. His own previous actions were not lost on Cnut himself however, as demonstrated in his letter 1027, where his confession is expressed as:

Now, therefore be it known to you all, that I have humbly vowed to Almighty God to amend my life from now on in all things, and to rule justly and faithfully the kingdoms and peoples subject to me and to maintain equal justice in all things; and if hitherto anything contrary to what is right has been done through the intemperance of my youth or through negligence, I intend to repair it all henceforth with the help of God.²⁴

As Winkler has reminded us, whether the king was English or a foreigner, did not matter providing God endorsed them.²⁵ Henry sought to soften the image of Cnut through a justification of this act of revenge as the future king was; 'inwardly grieving', at the loss of some of his people due to an attack by Æthelred, so as a reaction he had cut off the hands

²¹ *WM*, 310-11, 'quosdam etiam euiraut'.

²² *EHD* 1, 423; OE II Cnut 30.5, c.f. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Body and Law in late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 27, 1998, 209-32, (www.cambridge.org/core/journals/anglo-saxon-england/article/div-classtitlebody-and-law-in-late-anglo-saxon-englanddiv/D58CA921971B28D8B145608DB81E0170, accessed 30/12/16), 217, fn. 31, '7 gif þonne gyt mare wure geworht hæbbe, þonne do man ut his Eagan, 7 ceorfan of his nosu 7 his earan 7 þa uferan lippan oððon hine hættian, swa hwylc þyssa swa man þonne geræde, ða þe ðærto rædan sceolon: swa man mæg styran 7 eac þære sawle beorgan.'

²³ Lawson, *Cnut*, 207.

²⁴ *EHD* 1, 417-18.

²⁵ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing*, 137.

and noses of his noble hostages.²⁶ Henry appears to have almost excused Cnut's violence as being a consequence of an earlier attack by Æthelred. Lawson made the point that once mutilated such victims would have carried the reminders of the Danish conquest around with them for the rest of their lives and in addition to his observation, such victims would need to be supported by their kin for the rest of their lives, or alternatively they would need to enter a monastery.²⁷ Asa Mittman also notes the results of such mutilations would render the recipient hideous, even grotesque, and effectively monsterise the victim. Therefore, an unintended consequence of the reports of Cnut's mutilation of his prisoners was the transferral of his own monstrousness through this monstrous act of mutilation to the disfigured appearance of his victims.²⁸ A monstrous act of mutilation could thus give rise to a physical monster transformed through the actions of a literary monster. The mutilated person may also be compared to a martyr or saintly figure, assuming of course, they survived the mutilation. A case of 'other' as 'self', or perhaps even 'self' as 'other', through a situation caused by 'others'. Richard Kearney argued the demonising of strangers may be interpreted as an obsessive revision of the past for things which occur in the present in the guise of something threatening or terrifying; and concludes what is most feared as demonic is our own 'othered self'.²⁹

The struggle to be King

The chronicle entries of 1013 tell us that 'Swein was regarded as king by all the people'.³⁰ Cnut was the first king of England who was not a member of the House of Wessex.³¹ As this is one of the few occasions where all the English-based chroniclers agreed with each other I have tabulated below who said what concerning the accession of Swein starting with the wording of the ASC and have contrasted this with the later descriptions of the recognition of Cnut when he became King of England.

²⁶ *HH*, 352-53.

²⁷ Lawson, *Cnut*, 162.

²⁸ Mittman, *Maps and Monsters*, 179.

²⁹ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 75

³⁰ This statement excludes Orderic, who in *OV*, 2, 244-45, remarks that Swein made the terrified Æthelred flee his kingdom, which may imply that Swein had then became king in his absence.

³¹ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 51.

Table 2 – The accession of Swein and Cnut compared.

Chronicler	Swein	Cnut
ASC	and all the people regarded him as full king ³²	In this year King Cnut succeeded to all the kingdom of England ³³
John	and by all the people of the English he was called, and acknowledged as, king ³⁴	In this year King Cnut undertook the government of the whole of England ³⁵
William	they [the Londoners after being abandoned by Æthelred] followed the example of their fellow countrymen and submitted themselves [to Swein]. ³⁶	In the year of our Lord 1017 Cnut began to reign ³⁷
Henry	Swein was regarded as king by all the people ³⁸	Cnut, king of the English, married Emma, daughter of the duke of Normandy and wife of King Æthelred ³⁹
Gaimar	(and so subsequently [following his acceptance by people north of the Humber] did everyone who was in England at the time [accept Swein]). ⁴⁰	<i>No express comment (see below)</i>

The chroniclers translated the Old English words *eall þeodscipe* (nation, people)⁴¹ into a Latin derivative of *populus* which they appear to have relied upon as meaning ‘all the people of the nation’, whether an actual ‘nation’ existed in practice or not. The connotations of both sets of words are similar as they relate to the idea of ‘people’, ‘community’, or ‘nation’, although to *populus* may be added the meaning of ‘people’ is in

³² ASC *trans*, 92, ASC (D), 58, ‘7 eall þeodscipe hine hæfde þa for fulne cyning’.

³³ ASC *trans*, 97, ASC (D), 63, ‘Her on þisan gear e feng Cnut cyng to eall Englalandes rice’.

³⁴ JW, 2, 474-75, ‘ab omni Anglorum populo rex’.

³⁵ JW, 2, 502-3, ‘Hoc anno rex Canutus totius Anglie suscepit imperium’.

³⁶ WM, William could not bring himself to actually say that Swein had become the king, 302-3, ‘Quocirca rebus extremis medentes compatriotarum exemplo se dedidere’.

³⁷ WM, 320-21, ‘Anno incarnationis Dominicae millesimo septimo decimo Cnuto regnare cepit’.

³⁸ HH, 352-53, ‘Suein uero ab omni populo habebatur pro rege’.

³⁹ HH, 362-63, ‘Cnut rex Anglorum Emmam ducis Normannorum filiam uxorem regis Adelredi duxit’.

⁴⁰ GG, 226-27, ‘si firent puis tote la gent ki donc erent en Engleterre’.

⁴¹ Henry Sweet, *The Student’s Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (New York, 1911), 181.

the sense of 'a people' or 'the people', or folk. By using the word as a plural, it extends to 'common people', or 'general public'.⁴² This lends itself to the conclusion that the Latin usage expanded the intention of the word *beodscipe* to confirm a sense that everyone in England supported the new foreign king. Such an interpretation may have proven popular with the chroniclers' intended audiences, as it showed an acceptance of a foreign king by the English people which would have drawn similarities with their own lifetime.

Gaimar did not expressly state that Cnut had become the sole King of England. It appears he felt that following the murder of Edmund such a matter would be obvious to the reader and contented himself with the story of Eadric *streona* and the legitimacy of the future succession of Edmund's sons. Cnut was recognised as the king without reservation, whereas when Swein took the throne it was seemingly through a gradual and somewhat reluctant acceptance of him. John, William, Henry, and Gaimar, all recognised England as being the seat of Cnut's authority, and not just an appendix added to Denmark.⁴³ Unfortunately for Swein he suddenly died at the beginning of his reign. John's entry for this year of 1014 told of Swein's death being caused by St Edmund appearing as an apparition and running Swein through with a spear which caused him to fall from his horse following which he was tormented with great pain until he died.⁴⁴ Orderic also told his audience that whilst Swein; 'was raging against the Christians', God sent an apparition of St Edmund to kill him.⁴⁵ Orderic repeated the story of God's will being channelled through St Edmund against the pagan Swein which had earlier been recorded by John.⁴⁶ Perhaps the pair had discussed this incident when Orderic visited the monastery at Worcester and had seen John at work on his chronicle Marjorie Chibnall believed that Orderic seemed; 'to have derived some of his knowledge of earlier English history from this visit' as witnessed by Orderic:

After him [Marianus] John, at the command of the venerable Wulfstan bishop and monk, added to these chronicles events of about a hundred years by inserting a brief and valuable summary of many deeds of the Romans and Franks, Germans and other peoples whom he knew.⁴⁷

⁴² Howlett, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, 2348.

⁴³ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 215.

⁴⁴ Laurence M. Larson, *Canute the Great, 995-1035, and the Rise of Danish Imperialism during the Viking Age* (repr. New York, 1912), 54, wherein Larson noted that Swein's death occurred scarcely a month after Æthelred has departed for Normandy from the Isle of Wight.

⁴⁵ *OV*, 2, 244-45, 'Suenus dum nimis in Christianos seiret a sancto Edmundo iussu Dei peremptus est'.

⁴⁶ *JW*, 2, 476-77.

⁴⁷ Chibnall, *The World of Orderic*, 36-7, *OV*, 2; 160, 186-89, 'Quem prosecutes Iohannes acta fere centum annorum contexuit, iussuque uenerabilis Wlfstani pontifices et monachi

William's audience were told that England did not have to put up with tossing in the 'sea of misery' caused by Swein's conquest of England for long as he met his end in a 'form of death which is disputed'.⁴⁸ Like John and Orderic, William included the story of the manifestation of St Edmund who appeared to Swein whilst he was ravaging East Anglia and after Swein had responded to the apparition's request to stop his ravaging in an insolent manner the Saint had struck him on the head causing him such pain that he afterwards died.⁴⁹ In William's version the Danish tyrant thus met his end in a spasm of terrible retribitional pain. Such a death may be divine retribution and revenge by St Edmund who had himself been martyred by the Danes, and provide a clear message that a Saint will always prevail over a monster albeit when God chooses the appropriate time.⁵⁰ The image of Swein in the accounts portray him as normal in appearance, but being morally monstrous.⁵¹ Henry believed that God never slept but was the true *deus irratu*s, ever ready to strike in anger.⁵² Swein's death proved his point. Following Swein's death the *witan* recalled Æthelred from Normandy and Cnut returned to Denmark but only after mutilating the hostages given to his father.⁵³ Back in Denmark, Cnut's older brother Harald was king which left Cnut as a landless Viking leader who had little option but to raise another army and attack England again which in 1015 he did.⁵⁴ Tim Bolton has suggested that there may have been a joint kingship between Harald and Cnut, but this is based solely on a few coins minted in Lund, which may date from 1014-15.⁵⁵

The annals for 1016 in the C, D and E versions of the ASC told of the battles between Cnut and King Edmund and their subsequent treaty to split the country between them. In November 1016 Edmund was killed and the first sense of a change in the chroniclers' attitudes toward the Danes and more particularly towards Cnut began to

supradictis cronicis inseruit; in quibus multa de Romanis et Francis et Alemannis aliisque gentibus quae agnouit; utiliter et compendiose narratione digna reseravit'.

⁴⁸ *WM*, 308-9, 'Sed non diu propitia diuinitas in tanta miseria siuit fluctuare Angliam, siquidem peruasor continuo ad Purificationem sanctae Mariae, ambiguum qua morte, uitam effudit'.

⁴⁹ *WM*, 308-9.

⁵⁰ *WM*, 394-95.

⁵¹ Mittman and Dendle, *Monsters and the Monstrous*, xxxvi.

⁵² Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 219.

⁵³ *WM*, 310-11, William adds, 'sic in insontes grassatus, et magnum quid egisse gloriatus, patriam petiit', ('After this outrageous attack on the innocent, boasting as though he had done some great exploit, he returned to his native land').

⁵⁴ Niels Lund, 'Cnut the Great and his Empire', *The Viking World*, 665.

⁵⁵ Tim, Bolton, *The Empire of Cnut the Great* (Leiden, 2009), 52.

emerge. The *Encomium* expressly stated that God had chosen Cnut to rule over the English, as he 'took away Edmund from the body' which allowed Cnut to reign unopposed, and to borrow an expression from Brian Golding, 'neither side blamed the referee'.⁵⁶ During the passage which covered the battles of 1016 Henry continued the negative sentiment of the ASC towards the Danes when he noted that; 'King Cnut and Ealdorman Eadric even planned to conquer by treachery him whom they were unable to conquer by arms'.⁵⁷ Henry may have been using a similarity between his record of the St Brice's Day massacre, as another story where the Danes were planning to kill the king, his advisors and then take over the kingdom which resonates with this slightly later account.⁵⁸ A few passages later Henry described how Edmund had been killed by the son of Eadric *streona* whilst Edmund was going to the toilet one night:

The son of Ealdorman Eadric, who by his father's plan was concealed in the pit of the privy, struck the king twice with a sharp knife in the private parts, and leaving the weapon in his bowels, fled away. Then Eadric came to King Cnut and saluted him saying, 'Hail, sole king!' when he disclosed what had happened, the king answered, 'As a reward for your great service, I shall make you higher than all the English nobles'. Then he ordered him to be beheaded, and his head to be fixed on a stake on London's highest tower.⁵⁹

William wrote of the traitorous Eadric, 'to whose infamy I cannot do justice', that he was strangled on the orders of an angry Cnut after he had boasted of killing Edmund.⁶⁰ In the space of just a few short chronicle entries Cnut had evolved from being the son of the tyrannical Swein and the 1014 treacherous hostage mutilator into the new honourable king of the English who punished unjust acts with a swift death for the perpetrator. Eadric *streona* here represents the monster from within the established society. He had a record of being untrustworthy and had fought for the Danes under Cnut at Sherston in 1016,

⁵⁶ *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, 30-31, 'Aedmundum eduxit e corpore'; Golding, *Conquest and Colonisation*, 1, wherein Brian Golding was describing the recording of the Battle of Hastings.

⁵⁷ *HH*, 356-67, 'Cogitauerunt etiam rex Cnut et dux Edricus, ut quem armis uincere nequibant, prodicione uincerent'.

⁵⁸ See 'Case Study', pp. 137- 54.

⁵⁹ *HH*, 360-63, 'filius Edrici ducis in fouea secretaria consilio patris delitescens, regem inter celanda cultello bis acuto percussit, et inter uiscera ferrum fugiens reliquit. Edricus igitur ad regem Cnut ueniens, salutauit eum dicens, 'Aue, solus rex'. Cui cum rem restam denudasset, respondit rex, 'Ego te ob tanti obsequii meritum, cunctis Anglorum proceribus reddam celsiorem'. Iussit ergo eum excapitari, et caput in stipite super celsiorem Lundonie turrim figi'.

⁶⁰ *WM*, 320-21, 'quem infamare non possum.'

although he was not the only Englishman to do so. John has recorded that Ælfmær Darling and Ælfgar, also fought for Cnut against Edmund Ironside at Sherston.⁶¹ Many of the Englishmen who sided with Cnut were, according to Lawson, those who were fed-up with the traumas of Æthelred's time and who just wanted peace.⁶² Keynes placed Eadric's defection to Cnut as effectively undermining the English resistance to the Danes.⁶³

Thorkell 'the Tall' was as Ann Williams has informed us, 'virtually invisible in Twelfth-Century English historiography'.⁶⁴ John introduced 'The Danish earl Thorkell' as coming to England with his fleet in 1009, closely followed by a much larger fleet under Hemming and Eliaf.⁶⁵ John does not however, refer to Thietmar's story of Thorkell's efforts to prevent the killing of Ælfheah, and omits him completely from this particular tale. William puts Thorkell as the instigator of the stoning of Ælfheah, and also positions him as a type of scheming Vortigern figure who invited Swein and the Danes to England based upon the richness of the country and the ineptitude of their king:

Thorkell meanwhile sent to invite Swein, the king in his native land, to come to England, saying that it was a splendid rich country, with a king who was asleep and snoring; given to women and wine, he thought of nothing so little as fighting, which made him unpopular with his own people and a laughing-stock to others; his generals disloyal, his subjects weak, both liable to leave the field at the first blast of the trumpet.⁶⁶

Thorkell reappears in 1013 alongside Æthelred defending London against Swein Forkbeard. Later that year, Thorkell's ships appear to have transported Queen Emma to Normandy and King Æthelred to the Isle of Wight, after which Thorkell joined Swein and 'both of them plundered and committed many crimes whenever they wished'.⁶⁷ John's feelings of no matter what they've done for the good, never trust a Dane have once again come to the fore. John exaggerated the ASC figure of twenty-one thousand pounds to thirty thousand

⁶¹ *JW*, 2, 486-87, see also Ann Williams, *The World Before Domesday, The English Aristocracy 900-1066* (London, 2008), 15.

⁶² Lawson, *Cnut*, 174.

⁶³ Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings', 215.

⁶⁴ Williams, 'Thorkell the Tall and the Bubble Reputation', 150.

⁶⁵ *JW*, 2, 462-63, 'Danicus comes Turkillussua cum classe as Angliam uenit. Exinde mense Augusto alia classis Danorum innumerabilis, cui preerant duces Hemmingus et Eglafus'.

⁶⁶ *WM*, 300-1, 'Turkillus interea regempatriae suae Suanum nuntiis accersit ut Angliam ueniat; preclaram esse patriam et opimam, sed regem stertere; illum ueneri uinoque studentem nichil minus quam bellum cogitare, quapropter odiosum suis, ridiculum alienis; duces infidos, prouintiales infirmos, primo stridore lituorum prelio cessuros.'

⁶⁷ *JW*, 2, 474-75, 'Et super hec omnia uterque illorum quotienscunque eia libeuerat, predas egerunt et multa mala fecerunt.'

pounds paid in 1014 to the fleet lying at Greenwich which was associated with Thorkell. This may have been Æthelred's payment to the mercenary Thorkell to ensure he and his queen were not captured by Swein.⁶⁸ Henry somewhat skirts over Thorkell's involvement and merely records that, like Swein, Thorkell ordered food and tribute be given to his army at Greenwich, and that later Æthelred paid this army twenty-one thousand pounds.⁶⁹

Under 1020, John recounts that King Cnut expelled Thorkell from England. He also uniquely adds that Thorkell's wife Edith was also expelled.⁷⁰ Henry noted Cnut exiled him.⁷¹ William adds that Thorkell was thrown out by the English who had been awaiting their chance to get rid of him. William also states that Thorkell was killed as soon as he set foot back in Denmark.⁷² It is generally recognised that Thorkell was exiled in 1021 and was reconciled with Cnut in 1023 when Thorkell was given custody of both Denmark and Cnut's son Harthacnut.⁷³ However, Thorkell disappears from history after this, so William may have been correct over his assassination.

Changing opinions

The accession of Cnut was treated almost uniformly by John and William although Henry blurred the chronology of this specific event and chose to link it to Cnut's marriage to Emma which created a link between Normandy and the King of England. The Danish Cnut who was a foreign invader like his Danish father, is however in general depicted by the Anglo-Norman chroniclers in noticeably more acceptable terms. There was a resistance amongst the chroniclers to depict Swein in a positive manner as there was a reluctance on the part of the English to accept his kingship which through the implication of his religious 'otherness' was the main cause of this coupled with his recorded tyrannical behaviour. On the other hand, Cnut appears to have been readily accepted with his past behaviour either forgotten or excused whilst his Christian belief and attitudes were praised.

Having won the conflict Cnut set about consolidating his position by restoring unity and a strong government to a kingdom which was wholly lacking in both.⁷⁴ John uniquely

⁶⁸ *JW*, 2, 478-79.

⁶⁹ *HH*, 352-55.

⁷⁰ *JW*, 2, 506-7, 'Canutus rex Anglorum et Danorum ante festiuitatem sancti Martini Turkillum sepe dictum comitem cum uxore sua Edgitha expulit Anglia'.

⁷¹ *HH*, 363-63.

⁷² *WM*, 320-23.

⁷³ Niels Lund, 'Cnut the Great and his Empire', in *The Viking World*, 665.

⁷⁴ *Viking Empires*, 192.

noted that when Cnut became king he 'set at rest all their old animosities', meaning such which existed between English and Danes.⁷⁵ Nothing which corresponded to this sentence exists in the *ASC*, and John must have drawn upon a lost version of the *ASC* as his source for this statement which showed how a Christian king, despite his past may be considered as a just ruler of a united Christian country. John's change from his view of Cnut as a mutilator of hostages to a pilgrimage-going holy king was recorded over the space of just a few chronicle entries. Through his extensive chronicle entry for 1016 John described a seemingly noble battle for England between Cnut and Edmund which resulted in an agreement between them for both to rule parts of the land. Here John confused the split between them and wrongly gave Wessex, Essex, East Anglia and London to Cnut.⁷⁶ After Edmund died John recorded a long and complicated story of how Cnut had succeeded him.⁷⁷ The essence of John's positioning was that Cnut had sought to secure the kingdom of England for himself and his own sons whilst Æthelred's grandsons Edmund and Edward were distanced and positioned in order that they should have their claims to the English throne repudiated. This passage is of primary importance to this study as it effectively switched the representation of the Danes from villainous troublemakers to the accepted rulers of the kingdom and legitimised Cnut as the King of England. Meanwhile, his 'English' step-sons are overlooked at this time by the historians. Paradoxically, the link Edward was to forge with the Normans, ultimately ensured England would have a Royal family who could also trace their lineage back to a Viking in the shape of Rollo.

Thus, the Danish Cnut became part of England and the grandsons of Æthelred were made to integrate themselves with the 'otherness' of the Normans (and Hungarians) owing to their exile from England. John of Worcester here may have been wrestling with his own conscious 'English' heritage by positioning the Normans as 'other' and favouring the English Anglo-Danish past. From the rest of the chroniclers' works it may be interpreted that the Normans were allocated a position of 'other' from the Anglo-Danes until they latterly conquered England and sought to become the English themselves in an 'other' to 'self' transformation'. From 1019 onwards, in an act of which reflected historical reality, John

⁷⁵ *JW*, 2, 502-3, 'omnesque ueteres inimicitias postponentes sedauerunt'.

⁷⁶ *JW*, 2, 492-93, *ASC (D)*, 63, The D version of the *ASC* for 1017 recorded that: 'In this year King Cnut succeeded to all the kingdom of England and divided it into four, Wessex for himself, East Anglia for Thorkell, Mercia for Eadric and Northumbria for Eric.', 'Her on þisan geare feng Cnut cyng to eall Englalandes rice, 7 todælde hit on feower, him seolfan Westsexan, 7 Purkylle Eastenglan, 7 Eadrice Myrcean, 7 Eiric Norðhymbran', *ASC trans*, 97.

⁷⁷ *JW*, 2, 496-97, fn. 1.

consistently recorded Cnut as *rex Anglorum et Danorum*, explicitly linking his two kingdoms. Such historiographical positioning occurred due to the recognition that the Danes had changed from their previous pagan beliefs towards a large-scale transition to Christianity, although during the period when John wrote the interpretation of this change was still seemingly dependent upon the circumstances being described and whether the Danes were to be viewed in terms of being good or bad, pagan or Christian.⁷⁸ John Gillingham has written that Gaimar had been ambivalent about Cnut whilst noting that he had on occasion treated him favourably, such as in the context of the story of his single combat with Edmund 'Ironside' and in the punishment of Eadric *streona*.⁷⁹

Even though William believed Cnut to have no God-given right to the throne of England, he also showed a degree of admiration for him despite his Danishness:

In the year of our Lord 1017 Cnut began to reign, and he reigned for twenty years. Whilst there was no justice in his succession to the throne, William noted that he arranged his life with great statesmanship and courage.⁸⁰

William showed that Cnut could aspire to an ideal of kingship, despite the vast obstacles of his distant origins and wanton destructiveness.⁸¹ The implication of a hereditary right to rule over at least part of England by the Danish is poignantly made by Gaimar, and indeed, Judith Weiss stated Gaimar put the story of Havelock at the start of the *Estoire des Engleis* to support Cnut's claim that the Danes had sovereign rights over England before the coming of the Saxons.⁸² Gillingham described the notion of a Danish claim to the English throne through prior sovereignty as 'one of the most memorable features of Gaimar's history'.⁸³

Gaimar romantically described both the battles and the final agreement between Edmund and Cnut in detail. The fictional final chivalric single combat between Edmund and Cnut to decide the fate of who would be king of England was said to have been agreed to

⁷⁸ Anders Hultgård, 'The Religion of the Vikings', in *Viking World*, 212.

⁷⁹ Gillingham, 'Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*', in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture*, 47.

⁸⁰ *WM*, 320-21, 'Anno incarnationis Dominicae millesimo septimo decimo Cnuto regnare cepit, et uiginti annis regnauit, iniuste quiden regnum ingressus sed magna ciuilitate et fortitudine uitam compnens'.

⁸¹ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 187.

⁸² Judith Weiss, 'History' in Anglo-Norman Romance: The Presentation of the Pre-Conquest Past', in *The Long Twelfth-Century view of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 277-78, fn. 23.

⁸³ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 119.

take place on a boat in the middle of the River Severn at Gloucester.⁸⁴ After the combatants had prayed and blessed themselves Cnut was ascribed this important speech by Gaimar:

Edmund, wait a moment. I am a Dane and you are English; both of our fathers were kings, both ruled over the country and each was master in the land. As long as it was in their power to do so, each did exactly as he saw fit. Our Danish ancestors, I'll have you know, have been ruling here for a very long time. Almost a thousand years before King Cerdic came to the throne, Danr was king. Cerdic was your ancestor, and King Danr was mine. A Dane held the land in on behalf of God. It was Mordred who granted Cerdic his fief; he never held it in chief, and your family is descended from him.⁸⁵

According to Gaimar the result of this great speech was an agreement between the two would-be components to split the country between them on the basis of a line formed by where the River Thames met the Fosse Way and thence a line up to Watling Street with Edmund ruling the southern part.⁸⁶ Gaimar went onto record that the two kings 'in his view' loved each other as brothers.⁸⁷ The kings agreed that the Danes would be paid off and that Cnut would have Mercia whilst Edmund kept Wessex.⁸⁸

Gaimar recorded his obvious assumptions at the start of Cnut's speech whereby the ethnicity and lineage of the two kings was specifically detailed for his audience. With that clearly stated Gaimar again raised his assertion that the Danes had in fact ruled in England long ago. This was through a God-given right to the probably fictitious Danr yet Edmund and by implication the whole of the English race had only held England through the fact that the treacherous Mordred had unjustly given the land to Cerdic. The personage of Mordred, the legendary King Arthur's nephew, had first appeared in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie* in the year 1136 and was almost immediately used by Gaimar to support his view of past Danish sovereignty. There may be an implication that Gaimar had access to a similar source to Geoffrey of Monmouth, or that both were working from an interpretation of oral tradition. Perhaps the fact that Gaimar helped to distinguish the cultural make-up of eastern England as having predominantly Danish heritage from his

⁸⁴ GG, 232-39.

⁸⁵ GG, 234-37, 'Eadmund, un poi atent! Jo suis Daneis, e tu Engleis, e nos peres furent dous reis: l'un tint la terre, e l'autre l'out, cheson en fist ço ke li plout. Tant com l'urent en poüsté, cheson en fist sa volonté, e bein sachez loingtenement l'urent Daneis nostre parent: prés de mil anz l'out Dane ainceis ke une unc l'entrast Certiz li leis. Certiz, ço fu vostre ancien, e li leis Danes fu le mein. Daneis le tint en chef de Deu, Modret donat Certiz son feu: il ne tint unkes chevalment, de lui vindrent vostre parent'.

⁸⁶ GG, 238-39.

⁸⁷ GG, 238-41.

⁸⁸ ASC (E), 74, 'Eadmund cing to Weastseaxan 7 Cnut to Myrcean'.

twelfth-century stand-point was more due to his desire to emphasise the region's differences than to the actual history of Danish colonisation.

When writing about Cnut, the mixed-ethnicity and assumed identities of the twelfth-century chroniclers could be seen to have implied a 'self' in both coloniser and colonised statuses themselves. In effect, the chroniclers could be both 'self' and 'other' whilst the reputation of Cnut offered them the opportunity to refer to him in a similar manner as 'self' and 'other'. Cnut's 'sameness' registers as English whilst his 'otherness' appears to be represented through his Danishness. It is interesting to note however that Cnut's Christian piety was also the image presented to his Scandinavian followers too. Treharne and Joanne Eleanor have both identified that the skaldic poems, whilst stressing military and martial exploits, nonetheless recognise and celebrate Cnut as a Christian king even though their audience is a Norse-speaking one.⁸⁹ Cnut's capture of the English monarchy did not exclude the native English from their positions of power, unlike that of the next conquest, some fifty years later. There were some political casualties such as those of the Christmas murders of 1017 but, as Jeffrey Cohen has observed, 'Cnut quickly realised that assimilation and parity would achieve a secure tenure more quickly'.⁹⁰

The early eleventh-century European chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg told a story that in 1018 King Cnut; 'The king of the Angles, one of King Swein's sons, massacred the occupants of thirty pirate ships – thanks be to God'.⁹¹ With this statement, Cnut had now become the defender of the north German coasts from pirates as opposed to the earlier view of the Danes as pirates, which further separated Cnut from his earlier activities. With his acceptance of peace and his opposition to his old life, let us now consider his domestic arrangements. Cnut was married twice, first to an Englishwoman Ælfgifu of Northampton whom he married before he was king of England, and second to Emma of Normandy, who was Æthelred's widow, and confusingly also sometimes referred to as Ælfgifu.⁹² Ælfgifu was

⁸⁹ Eleanor Parker, 'Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', in *The Medieval Chronicle*, 9 (2015), 281; Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 57-8.

⁹⁰ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 121.

⁹¹ 'Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Thietmari Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon', in *Die Chronik des bischofs, Thietmar von Merseburg, und ihre korveier überarbeitung*, Robert Holtzmann, (trans.) (Berlin, 1935), 503, (www.dmgh.de; accessed 25/10/13) also David A. Warner, (trans.), *Ottonian Germany, The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg* (Manchester, 2001), 366, 'In Anglis triginta navium pirate a rege eorum, Sueini regis filio, Deo gracias!'. Also note, Thietmar's own mother gave him to Saxon pirates in 994, so he carried with him a deep hate for pirates (and possibly his mother).

⁹² *HH*, 368-69.

the daughter of the Ealdorman Ælfhelm of Northumbria and it was through this marriage that Cnut intended to secure her English family's support.⁹³ Cnut's marriage to Emma was important to him as part of his establishment of the conquest of England.⁹⁴ Emma's marriage to Cnut also effectively guaranteed the survival of her two sons, whom she had left behind in Normandy and 'scrupulously ignored' thereafter.⁹⁵ The marriage also benefitted Cnut with his desire to forge closer ties for the Danes with the continent. Not only did Cnut now associate himself with the people of Normandy, but the marriage also helped him shore up his legitimacy as a ruler of England, therefore the political expediency of the marriage resonates loudly from the pages of the chronicles. William of Malmesbury commented upon Cnut's efforts to assimilate:

Thus, all England obeyed a single master, and he [Cnut] took great pains to conciliate the English, allowing them the same rights as his own Danes in order of seating, in council, and in battle. For the same reason, as I have said already, he sent to Normandy for the wife of the former king, in hopes that if his subjects owed allegiance to a mistress with whom they were familiar, they would be less disposed to repine at being ruled by Danes, while at the same time by so doing he courted Duke Richard's favour, who might think less about his nephews if he had the prospect of a further supply begotten by Cnut.⁹⁶

William may have drawn his own retrospective conclusions here, but he managed to pull most of the arguments around Cnut's marriage to Emma together in one paragraph. The views of the three chroniclers who probably had parents from different lands may be of interest when considering 'other' as 'self' in this aspect of the marriages. Unfortunately, Orderic has little to say concerning either woman so we must look towards William and Henry for some possible guidance on this area of investigation. William's main entry in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* concerning Emma is set out below.⁹⁷ He was not initially complimentary in this description of her, using an unidentified expression that, 'as for his

⁹³ Lawson, *Cnut*, 131.

⁹⁴ Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (London, 2001), 230-31.

⁹⁵ *Viking Empires*, 194.

⁹⁶ *WM*, 322-23, 'Ita cum omnis anglia pareret uni, ille ingenti studio anglos sibi conciliare, aequum illis ius cum Danis suis in consessu in concilio in prelio concedere. Qua de re, ut predixi, uxorem superioris regis e Normannia accersiit, ut, dum consuetae dominae deferent obsequium, minus Danorum susirarent imperium; simul eo facto Ricardi allitiens gratiam, ut parum de nepotibus cogitaret, qui alios ex Cnutone se suscepturum speraret'.

⁹⁷ William also recorded his comments concerning Cnut and Emma's generosity towards the church in his *GPA*.

[King Edward's] mother [Emma], long she had mocked her offspring's years of need'.⁹⁸ This passage continued with a description of Edward eventually reclaiming the Royal Treasury from his mother in a hurried and curt manner:⁹⁹

She never contributed anything out of her own resources, passing down her hatred of the father to the child; for she had loved Cnut more while he was alive and dwelt more on his praises after his death. Besides which, she had stuffed her money bags with bullion gathered from every source, with no thought for the poor, to whom she would not allow a penny to be given for fear of diminishing her pile; so, it was not dishonourable to take away what she had unjustly accumulated, that it might be a blessing to the needy and replenish the royal treasure. Although those who use such arguments fully deserve our confidence, I find that she was a saintly woman, and expended her treasure on the adornment of Winchester and perhaps other churches.¹⁰⁰

This passage firstly paints Emma as a greedy, selfish individual who enriched herself by using her powerful influence over her children and husbands. William notes that she got what was coming to her. However, he then changed his view when considering the gift of the great gold cross to the New Minster in Winchester.¹⁰¹ Through Emma's marriage to Cnut, William describes the pair as a close couple which continued even after the death of Cnut, implying Emma's loss of her love was greater than it had been for Æthelred. What William does not attempt to indicate is whether the pair, or just one of them, was considered to be 'other' by the English. Henry's view was Harold Harefoot was the son of Cnut and Ælfgifu of Northampton which is a clear indication Harold had been the product of Cnut's marriage to an Englishwoman which further legitimises Harold's right to succeed

⁹⁸ *WM*, 350-51, 'Mater augustos filii iam dudum riserat annos'. William's view here may stem from the *ASC (D)*, 67, '7 bereafedan hi æt eallon þan gærsaman þa heo ahte, þa wæron unatellendlice, for þan þe heo wæs æror þam cyng hire suna swiðe heard, þæt heo him læsse dyde þonne he wolde, ær þam þe he cyng wære 7 eac syððan', (And they came unexpectedly upon the lady, and deprived her of all the treasures which she owned, and which were beyond counting, because she had formerly been very hard to the king, her son, and that she did less for him than he wished both before he became king and afterwards as well).

⁹⁹ For an expanded version of this event, see Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*.

¹⁰⁰ *WM*, 350-51, 'nichil umquam de suo largita, hereditario scilicet iuuu et laudabat defunctum. Preterea congestis undecumque tal, entis crumenas infecerat, pauperum oblita, quibus non patiebatur dari nummum ne diminueret numerum. Itaque quod iniuste coaceruarat, non inhoneste ablatum, ut egenorum proficeret compendio et fisco sufficeret region. Haec referentibus etsi plurimum fides haberi debeat, sanctam tamen mulierem fuisse comperio, et thesaurus suos in ornamenta ecclesiae Wintoniae et aliarum fortassis expendisse.

¹⁰¹ Harriet O'Brien, *Queen Emma and the Vikings, The woman who shaped the events of 1066* (London, 2005), 151.

to the throne. What Henry omitted to discuss is Cnut married Ælfgifu before he was king, and when he was he promptly put her aside to marry Emma. John however, cast doubt upon Harold's rights of succession by recording that Ælfgifu was not capable of bearing a son herself, so took a new-born child from a priest's concubine and convinced a gullible Cnut that she had just given birth to it.¹⁰² When Cnut's second wife Emma died Henry described her as; 'Emma the Norman, the wife of kings and the mother of kings'.¹⁰³

Cnut's 'proclamations'

The ASC entry of 1018 seemed to retrospectively mark the turning point in Anglo-Danish relations. It recorded what was to be the last of the tribute payments paid by the English to the Danes, the return of some of Cnut's army to Denmark and an 'agreement' which had been reached between the English and the Danes at Oxford.¹⁰⁴

In this year the tribute was paid over all England, namely 72,000 pounds in all, apart from what the citizens of London paid, namely ten and a half thousand pounds. Then some of the army went to Denmark, and 40 ships remained with King Cnut, and the Danes and the English reached an agreement at Oxford according to Edgar's law.¹⁰⁵

After 1018 the ASC treated Cnut with the respect due to a Christian king of England despite his earlier treatment. Dawn Hadley has observed that despite his accession to the throne just a few years after a Danish army had captured and murdered Ælfheah, Cnut was presented as a king who protected the interests of the church through the law codes drafted for him by Archbishop Wulfstan.¹⁰⁶ Whilst culturally Cnut's court was strongly Danish, its basic character was firmly rooted in Anglo-Saxon traditions, thus giving us a further indication that the 'other' was moving to becoming part of the 'self' of his new

¹⁰² *JW*, 2, 520-21, 'dicebatur filius, quem tamen nonnulli asserebant non regis et eiusdem Alfgiue filium extitisse, sed eandem Ælfgiuam ex rege filium habere uoluisse sed nequiuisset, et iccirco recenter natum infantem cuiusdam presbitere sibi afferri iussisset, regemque omnino credulum fecisset, se filium illi iam peperisset'.

¹⁰³ *HH*, 376-77, 'Emma Normannigena, uxor regum et mater regum'.

¹⁰⁴ *ASC trans*, 97.

¹⁰⁵ *ASC trans*, 97 also *ASC (D)*, 63, 'On þisum geare wæs þæt gafol gelæst ofer eall Angelcynn – þæt wæs ealles twa 7 hundseofonti þusend punda, butan þam þe seo burhwaru on Lundene geald, endlifte healf þusend punda. 7 se here þa ferde sum to Denmarcon, 7 .xl. scypa belifon mid þam cyngre Cnute. 7 Dene 7 Engle wurdon sammæle æt Oxanaforða to Eadgares lage'.

¹⁰⁶ Dawn Hadley, 'Ethnicity and acculturation', in Crick and Van Houts, *A Social History of England, 900 – 1200*, 242.

country.¹⁰⁷ Hadley has observed that the law codes which included references to Danes had a political and social dimension to them which indicated ethnic identities of areas of previous Scandinavian settlement.¹⁰⁸

Bruce O'Brien has commented the; 'shape of Cnut in the twelfth century was determined largely by the shape of Cnut's laws in the early eleventh century'.¹⁰⁹

Cohen has complemented this view by noting:

The ancient law of a people could be readily a remembrance that extended back no more than a generation or two, adapted to fit current circumstances. A living, human institution, juridical power can be manipulated to constitute new communities via enfranchisement and exclusion.¹¹⁰

Cohen's conclusion from this statement is Cnut used Æthelred's earlier laws to prevent the English people from seeing him as yet another 'tyrannical foreigner', which he could achieve through a strategy of promoting accommodation and emphasising continuity.¹¹¹ This apparently worked as in his chronicle, William reported how Cnut claimed the right to keep to Æthelred's laws:

He [Cnut] was as good as his word. He gave orders that all the laws enacted by the ancient kings, and particularly by his predecessor Æthelred, should be observed in perpetuity under threat of royal fine; and for the observance of these laws, even now that times have improved, an oath is taken in the name of King Edward, not because he established them, but because he kept them.¹¹²

Hadley has commented upon the occasion of Cnut's accession to the throne of England, that his declaration the laws of Edgar were to be observed was not only in deference to a glorious king, but also because Edgar was renowned for bringing foreigners into his kingdom.¹¹³ Perhaps the linking of past English kings to Cnut could be seen as a representation of 'self' in an 'other' monarch and stems from what James Campbell has termed 'defensive nostalgia', by the chroniclers of the twelfth century.¹¹⁴ O'Brien has also

¹⁰⁷ *Viking Empires*, 195.

¹⁰⁸ Hadley, *The Vikings in England, Settlement, Society and Culture* (Manchester, 2006), 129

¹⁰⁹ Bruce O'Brien, 'Pre-conquest Laws and Legislators in the Twelfth Century', in *The Long Twelfth-Century view of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 238.

¹¹⁰ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 25.

¹¹¹ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 25.

¹¹² *WM*, 328-331, 'Nec dicto deterius fuit factum. Omnes enim leges ab antiquis regibus et maxime ab antecessore suo Egelredo latas sub interminatione regiae multae perpetuis temporibus obseruari precepit, in quarum custodiam etiam nunc tempore bonorum sub nomine regis Eduardi iuratur, non quor ille statuerit sed quod obseruarit'.

¹¹³ Hadley, *The Vikings in England*, 69

¹¹⁴ Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, 209-28.

noted Cnut's laws were translated into Latin in the late eleventh or early twelfth centuries. Several pre-Conquest works were included into the *Instituta Cnuti*, which were representative of a post-Norman Conquest interest in Cnut and his laws, and might be linked to the same feelings toward a foreign conqueror of England as were felt by William's successors.¹¹⁵ The purpose of the *Instituta Cnuti*, and also the *Consiliatio Cnuti* produced during Henry I's reign may have been to familiarise those whose native tongue was not English with the workings of English law.¹¹⁶

Cnut's changing attitude to the English is reflected in a tale where Henry is the only source in describing a campaign against the Wends fought in Denmark in 1019. Here an English element of Cnut's Anglo-Danish army led by Godwin surprised the Wends in a night-attack and routed them. Henry recorded that Cnut was so impressed by Godwin's actions, 'he henceforth esteemed the English as highly as the Danes'.¹¹⁷ This could be interpreted as a case of the 'self' recognising the abilities of the 'other' where 'self' is represented by Cnut, and Godwin and his Englishmen as 'other'. Godwin, latterly received a fair amount of condemnation largely through the death of Edward the Confessor's brother, Alfred. Godwin is well known for prospering under the protection of his wife Gytha's brother-in-law, King Cnut. Godwin was foremost in the aggrandisement of the new aristocracy which came from Cnut's disinheritance of many English nobles. Golding has noted that many of the post-Norman Conquest land pleas originally originated from pre-Conquest disputes between Godwin and some of the archbishops.¹¹⁸ Henry appears to have been keen to demonstrate Cnut's position as a benefactor to the English as he has clearly no longer classed him as 'other'.

The attitude towards Cnut's rule was also influenced by Cnut's letters to the English of 1019/1020 and 1027 as well as Wulfstan's contribution to the 'Laws of Cnut'.¹¹⁹ Lawson noted that from the 1027 letter Cnut's churchman encouraged the view of Cnut as the caring Christian king and diplomat who was seeking to amend the wayward actions of his youth.¹²⁰ Treharne has argued Cnut's transformation was central to his own legitimisation, 'from Viking usurper to authorised Christian Emperor, is the major success of the king's

¹¹⁵ O'Brien, 'Pre-Conquest Laws and Legislators in the Twelfth Century', 233.

¹¹⁶ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 157.

¹¹⁷ *HH*, 364-64, 'Quamobrem summon honore deinceps Anglos habuit, nec minori quam Dacos'.

¹¹⁸ Golding, *Conquest and Colonisation*, 84.

¹¹⁹ *EHD* 1, 414-30.

¹²⁰ Lawson, Cnut, 133.

public relations activities'.¹²¹ Largely through these self-propagandistic efforts by Cnut, he was generally treated as a just and holy king by the twelfth-century chroniclers due to his strategy of gifts to religious houses, confirmation of privileges granted by previous kings, and translations of saints' relics. Eleanor Parker has commented that Cnut, 'facing a charged political situation in the aftermath of violent conquest, seems to have implemented these strategies in an especially targeted way'.¹²² The role of primary villainy in the twelfth-century chronicles had previously belonged to the pagan Danes and their leaders such as Guthrum and Swein was around the period of Cnut, effectively passed onto Eadric. Cnut's opportunity to launch a positive personal propaganda offensive had been presented to him through the actions of Eadric and he subsequently reinforced his image by his letters to the English people to support his personal aims. Following Dumville, the entries in C, D and E of the ASC only reported that Eadric had been killed, whereas the later copied version F added he had been 'very rightly' killed.¹²³

No originals of Cnut's two letters are in existence but the 1027 letter was represented in full in the Latin chronicles of John and William.¹²⁴ According to Matthew Innes, Wulfstan's involvement with the legal provisions of Cnut were based upon the accommodation between the Danes and the English and a desire to record such an accord.¹²⁵ The letter of 1027 was described by Treharne as; 'an extraordinary statement of imperial ambition'.¹²⁶ The introduction of this letter as recorded by John is set out below:

Cnut, king of all England and Denmark and the Norwegians and part of the Swedes, to the metropolitan Æthelnoth and Ælfric, archbishop of York, and to all the bishops and leading men and to all the English people, both nobles and ceorls, greetings.¹²⁷

¹²¹ Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 34.

¹²² Parker, 'Cnut in post-Conquest Historical Writing', 274.

¹²³ ASC trans, 97, and fn. 4.

¹²⁴ *JW*, 2, 512-19, *WM*, 324-31.

¹²⁵ Hadley, *The Vikings in England*, 69, and Matthew Innes, 'Danelaw Identities: ethnicity, regionalism and political allegiance', in eds. Dawn M. Hadley, and Julian D. Richards, *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian settlement in England in the ninth and tenth centuries* (Turnhout, 2000), 72-7.

¹²⁶ Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 29.

¹²⁷ *JW*, 2, 512-13, *WM*, 324-25, 'Cnuto, rex totius Anglie et Denemarcie et Norreganorum et partis Suanorum, athelnotho metropolitano et Alfrico Eboracensi archiepiscop omnibusque episcopis et primatibus, et toti genti Anglorum, tam nobilibus quam plebeiis, salutem'.

Within this letter, Cnut confirmed that he had undertaken to establish fairness between the Danes and the English as they journeyed to Rome on pilgrimage, with the Emperor and the Pope:

Therefore, I spoke with the Emperor himself and the lord Pope and the princes who were there about the needs of all the people of my entire realm, both English and Danes, that a juster law and securer peace might be granted to them on the road to Rome, and that they should not be bothered by so many barriers along the road and harassed by unjust tolls; and the emperor agreed, and likewise King Robert, who governs most of these same toll-gates.¹²⁸

The strength of this statement is it is implicit that the Danes themselves were as Christian as the English and their pagan past was now long behind them. The explicit separation of the ethnic Danes and English was not simply a hierarchical delineation but acknowledged the presence of both Danes and English throughout the shires of England.¹²⁹ Effectively Cnut had carefully constructed a notion of himself as the penitential conqueror, protector of the pilgrims and confidant of popes and emperors.¹³⁰

From Cnut and Wulfstan's positioning, the twelfth-century chroniclers used and continued this self-created image of Cnut in their chronicles. John and William appear to have copied verbatim from either the original or a copy of Cnut's 1027 letter although John's addition of this letter is recorded under the year 1031 of his chronicle.¹³¹ William summed up his feelings towards the letter and Cnut's behaviour when he stated that this was; 'evidence of his amended life and royal generosity'.¹³² William now unequivocally saw Cnut as a person who had sinned in the past but since becoming king of the English had changed his ways and had become a Christian king worthy of respect and honour which follows the Benedictine teaching of sin and repentance.

¹²⁸ *JW*, 2, 514-15, 'Locutus sum igitur cum ipso imperatore et domno papa et principibus, qui ibi errant, de necessitatibus totius populi uniuersi regni mei, tam Anglorum quam Danorum, ut eis concederetur lex equior et pax securior in uia Romam adeundi, et ne tot clausuris per uiam artentur, et propter thelon iniustum fatigentur; annuitque postulatis imperator, et Rodbertus rex qui maxime ipsarum clausurarum dominator'.

¹²⁹ Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 33.

¹³⁰ Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 34.

¹³¹ *JW*, 2, 512- 19, also 512, fn. 1 concerning the letter dating debate, and 514, fn. 1.

¹³² *WM*, 324-25, 'apponam ad documentum emendationis uitae et regalis magnificentiae'.

Cnut and the waves

Henry saw Cnut as 'greater than all his predecessors'.¹³³ Henry used the link from Godwin in 1019 through to Cnut's letters to prove what a good king he turned out to be. Ann Williams made the connection that Henry described Cnut in similar terms to those in which Eadmer and William had described King Edgar of the tenth century.¹³⁴ Such a respect for the piety and humility of Cnut led to Henry's description of one of Cnut's 'three fine and magnificent deeds', this being the much referred to account of Cnut and the waves.¹³⁵ Henry described Cnut as lord of all Denmark, England, Norway and Scotland when the king was, 'at the height of his ascendancy, he ordered his chair to be placed by the sea-shore as the tide was coming in'.¹³⁶ The story of Cnut vainly commanding the sea has entered oral tradition and popular memory where Cnut commanded the tide 'not to rise on my land, nor to presume to wet the clothing or limbs of your master'.¹³⁷ Whilst doing so, the erstwhile monster is turned into a figure of fun through the use of comedy which neutralises his potential threat as a foreign king.¹³⁸ Henry was the first historian known to have reported this incident and also the fact that the tide continued to rise, 'and disrespectfully drenched the king's feet and shins'.¹³⁹

Henry's description of the event stresses the king's piety whilst also recognising his own limits of government. Henry can be seen as an advocate of Cnut's reign; he emphasised Cnut's holiness by putting the following statement into Cnut's mouth; 'let all the world know that the power of kings is empty and worthless, and there is no king worthy of the name save Him by whose will heaven, earth and sea obey eternal laws.'¹⁴⁰ Henry's depiction of Cnut was as a holy and respectful king who chose to place himself in a

¹³³ *HH*, 410-11, 'omnium predecessorum suorum maximus'.

¹³⁴ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 180.

¹³⁵ *HH*, 366-67, 'tria gessit eleganter et magnifice', the other two being the marriage of his daughter to the Roman Emperor, and that he secured the diminution of tolls on the way to Rome. See Lawson, Cnut, 214.

¹³⁶ *HH*, 366-67, 'quod cum in maximo uigore floreret imperii, sedile suum in littore maris cum ascenderet statui iussit'.

¹³⁷ Catherine A. M. Clarke, 'Edges and Otherworlds: Imaging Tidal Spaces in Early Medieval Britain', in *The Sea and Englishness*, 81; *HH*, 366-69, 'Impero igitur tibi ne in terram meam ascendas, nec uestes uel membra dominatoris tui madefacere presumas'.

¹³⁸ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, 18.

¹³⁹ *HH*, 368-69, 'Mare uero de more conscendens, pedes regis et crura sine reuerentia madefecit'.

¹⁴⁰ *HH*, 368-69, 'Sciant omnes habitantes orbem, uanam et friuolam regum esse potentiam, nec regis quempiam nomine dignum, preter eum cuius nutui celum, terra, mare, legibus obediunt eternis'.

position of self-humiliation to show God's dominion over all earthly creatures no matter what their social standing. Using the slightly comedic vision of the wet king stage-managed scenario effectively formed a wish-fulfilment drama wherein the once piratically monstrous Cnut had become a changed man. As Parker noted, it is not clear from the passages of Henry and Gaimar whether Cnut demonstrated he was powerless over the tide, or whether he learned that he was.¹⁴¹ Of the two chroniclers, Henry suggested Cnut's chair was intentionally placed by the shore to demonstrate his inability to control the sea.¹⁴² His earlier anger has changed to that of a patient, benevolent king. Henry finished the waves story by commenting that; 'Thereafter King Cnut never wore the golden crown on his neck but placed it on the image of the crucified Lord, in eternal praise of God the great king. By whose mercy may the soul of King Cnut enjoy rest.'¹⁴³

Henry framed the waves incident as the motivation behind the donation by Cnut of his crown to the church.¹⁴⁴ Winkler has noted that this symbolic rejection of his crown represents proof of Cnut's worthiness to accede to the English throne, should any doubters still exist.¹⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that the reference to the gift of the crown to the church first appeared in the third version of the *Historia Anglorum*, dated to c. 1140, and it can be argued that this was as a result of the period of 'The Anarchy' in which Henry wrote.¹⁴⁶ Henry's message is very clear but the question is to whom was it addressed?¹⁴⁷ It could of course be that Henry was focused upon praising Cnut, but it may be contended that Henry was making the point to his audience that through a dedication to God any king can become a renowned figure respected by their subjects. Henry was writing during the period of 'The Anarchy' and his writing implies that should a king, such as Stephen, repent their earlier sins and follow Cnut's example then they can lead a nation into peace.

¹⁴¹ Parker, 'Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', 273; *HH*, 366-67, 'he ordered his chair to be placed on the sea-shore as the tide was coming in'; 'sedile suum in littore maris cum ascenderet statui iussit'.

¹⁴² Parker, 'Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', 273.

¹⁴³ *HH*, 368-69, 'Rex igitur Cnut numquam postea coronam auream ceruici sue imposuit, sed super imaginem Domini que cruci affixa erat, posuit eam in eternum, in laudem Dei regis magni. Cuius Misericordia Cnut regis anima quiete fruatur'.

¹⁴⁴ Parker, 'Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', 272.

¹⁴⁵ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 197.

¹⁴⁶ Parker, 'Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', 290, fn. 37.

¹⁴⁷ Parker, 'Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', 272, 'the story of the waves continues to present interpretative problems. First of all, who might be the audience for such a demonstration?'

This homiletic anecdote was repeated by Gaimar in a slightly different format but showed close similarities to Henry.¹⁴⁸ Having positioned Cnut as the ‘lord over three kingdoms’ (Denmark, England and Norway) Gaimar noted that on this one occasion he met resistance to his orders.¹⁴⁹ In addition to that, his orders were ‘treated with contempt’ by the rising water.¹⁵⁰ Gaimar placed the incident not by the sea but at Westminster by the bank of the River Thames, presumably to add more gravitas to the story by setting it in a major city with many more witnesses.¹⁵¹ In his story the king stood facing the tidal river as it rose slowly towards him and as it got closer to him Cnut threatened that he would strike the river with his sceptre if it did not stop rising.¹⁵² After striking the water and becoming drenched the king retreated to a stone and ‘in the presence of his people’ confirmed that:

He who causes the sea to rise is the right and proper person to place one’s trust in and to honour. He is a just and virtuous king, whereas I am a miserable wretch. I am a mere mortal, whereas he is everlasting. Every single thing obeys his command, and he is the one whom I pray for protection.¹⁵³

Gaimar concluded this section of his work by noting that this act inspired Cnut to proceed to go to Rome as a pilgrim.¹⁵⁴ Gaimar’s depiction of this event is one of many positive aspects of his portrayal of Cnut.¹⁵⁵ Lawson believes that behind this famous story of such a planned act of piety there may be ‘a basis of fact,’ however with only the accounts of two Anglo-Norman chroniclers to base this assertion upon such factual evidence is impossible to demonstrate.¹⁵⁶ Gillingham felt that Gaimar’s treatment of Cnut and the waves was ambiguous and allowed subsequent authors to read into this story a negative depiction of Cnut as arrogant rather than the humble king previously intended by Henry.¹⁵⁷ Gillingham has also noted that ‘whatever moral Gaimar intended, he did not spell it out in the explicit manner of a Henry.’¹⁵⁸ Whilst this may be true, I do not agree with Gillingham over this

¹⁴⁸ GG, 254-57 and 419-20.

¹⁴⁹ GG, 254-55, ‘Cnuth de treis regnes sire’.

¹⁵⁰ GG, 254-55, ‘e son comandement despit’.

¹⁵¹ GG, 254-55, ‘A Londres ert desur Tamise’.

¹⁵² GG, 256-57, ‘Return arere, fui desur mei, ke ne te fere!’.

¹⁵³ GG, 256-57, ‘Cestui ki fait la mer monter deit l’om bien crere e aürer il est bon rei, jo su cheitif, home su mortel, mes il est vif. Tote rien fait le son comand, lui pri jo k’il me seit guarand’.

¹⁵⁴ GG, 256-57, ‘a Rome voil l’aler require; de lui tendrai tote ma terre’; see p. 158, above.

¹⁵⁵ GG, 420.

¹⁵⁶ Lawson, *Cnut*, 133-34.

¹⁵⁷ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 248.

¹⁵⁸ Gillingham, ‘Geoffrey Gaimar’s *Etoire des Engleis*’, 48, fn. 104.

point as it appears that Gillingham is seeking to justify such later interpretations to 'fit' his own views. Gaimar was not as explicit in his depictions of the waves story as was Henry, nevertheless the point of the story was to highlight that Cnut was an all-powerful king, who had just a few dissenters to his commands with the primary one being God on occasion.¹⁵⁹ Gillingham's comments appeared prior to Short's 2009 translation of the *Estoire des Engleis* and failed to take into account where Short added 'on one occasion' in square brackets to his translation.¹⁶⁰ Gillingham's 'ambiguous' comment may also have been fuelled by interpreting the story too literally, however Gaimar wrote in verse and therefore some lines of his prose were influenced by artistic rather than historiographical reasons.¹⁶¹

What is notable with the waves story is that it was brought to us by two chroniclers who were not Benedictine monks. Whether John, Orderic or William knew of this story and chose not to include it in their works will unfortunately never be known but it may have been omitted from their works as it did not fit in with their overall themes. The story does not sit in the category of sinfulness followed by redemption so favoured by the Benedictines; instead it reflects God's power over mortal man which may only involve the sin of arrogance where a king could attempt to command the tides. It can be argued that the Godly praise which had been lavished on Cnut culminated in this self-effacing conduct as reported by Henry and Gaimar in a strangely Benedictine manner of repentance from earlier sinfulness.

An important interpretation of this story using the background of 'otherness' is that the Danes, and in particular, the king of the Danes, had a traditional cultural link between royal power and control over the sea, and power is due to the one who rules the seas.¹⁶² For a Scandinavian king who controlled the seas, such a form of 'otherness' in controlling the elements was destroyed by such an act, and transposed Cnut into being 'normal' or seen as 'self' in the eyes of those recording his acts.

¹⁵⁹ GG, 254-55, 'and few people were to be found who dared oppose his wishes. Nevertheless, he did meet resistance and his orders were [on one occasion] treated with contempt.' 'poi trovot ki l'osout dedire; e nepurquant si fut desdit e son comandement despit'.

¹⁶⁰ See fn. 90 above 35.

¹⁶¹ For example, see GG, 256-57, 'Quant li reis vit ke trop atent, Li floz ne fait pur li nient, de la greve se trest arere', ('Understanding that he had waited too long, and that the tide was taking not the slightest notice of him, he retreated from the strand').

¹⁶² Parker, 'Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', 280.

Earlier Danes

At the hands of the twelfth-century chroniclers for the Danes in general, and specifically for Cnut, Christianity was the route used for assimilation. With the waves story underlining Cnut's piety, the chroniclers also sought to further differentiate him from the 'earlier Danes'. One telling chronicle entry concerning how Cnut was different from those Danes who had preceded him was made by William in this passage:

Over the body of the most blessed Edmund, who had been killed by *earlier Danes* (my italics), he [Cnut] erected a minister of royal magnificence, installed an abbot and monks, and contributed many and great estates; the generosity of his gifts, which remain intact to this day, ensures that that place can regard almost all the monasteries in England as beneath it. The body of St Ælfheah, buried in St Paul's in London, he lifted with own hands and transferred it back to Canterbury, venerating it with due marks of respect. Thus, he did his best to correct all the misdoings of himself and his predecessors, and wiped away the stain of earlier injustice, perhaps before God and certainly in the eyes of men.¹⁶³

Cnut's actions have been described as a political act to move the body away from that of Æthelred who also rested in St Paul's.¹⁶⁴ This is a significant passage when looked at from the perspective of a perceived change in the attitudes towards the leader of the Danes. William began by reminding his audience that St Edmund had been martyred by the Danes. However, these particular Danes were the *antiquiores Dani* which the translators of the OMT version of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* translated as 'earlier Danes'.¹⁶⁵ It is suggestive here that these 'earlier Danes' may be more accurately represented by 'Danes of the past' or 'historical Danes'. In this sense, the Danes who martyred Edmund could have been seen by William as having adopted the monstrous pagan practices of the past and could therefore be considered to represent an 'otherness' type of Dane, who were essentially different from the Danes who were contemporary with Cnut. Such 'others' belonged in the past, both in terms of time and beliefs. Lawson saw the popular cult of Archbishop Ælfheah as 'arguably an expression of hostility to Danish rule', although he was not explicit in his reasons why.¹⁶⁶ Cnut had embraced this cult perhaps to use its popularity as support to his

¹⁶³ WM, 322-23, 'Supra corpus beatissimi Edmundi, quem antiquiores Dani interfecerant, basilicam animositate regia construxit, abbatem et monachus instituit, predia multa et magna contulit; prestat hodieque donorum eius amplitudo integra quod locus ille infra se aspiat omnia pene Angliae cenobia. Corpus beati Elfegi, apud Sanctum Paulum Ludoniae tumulatum, ipse suis manibus inde leuauit, et ad propria remissum dignis assentationibus ueneratus est. Ita omnia quae ipse et antecessores sui deliquerant corrigere satagens, prioris iniustitiae neuum apud Deus fortassis, apud homines certe abstersit'.

¹⁶⁴ Lawson, *Cnut*, 141.

¹⁶⁵ WM, 322-23.

¹⁶⁶ Lawson, *Cnut*, 182.

later opposition to Thorkell. Lawson presumably saw that support for Ælfheah who had been killed by the Danes was a symbolic act to unite the English against the Danes. Should this have been so then Cnut's actions to mitigate the effects of the *antiquiores Dani* albeit those from only a decade earlier would have formed part of his plan to be accepted by the English people and consequently to be considered as 'one of us'. However, Lawson has also observed concerning Cnut's relationship with his first wife Ælfgifu that whilst Cnut proclaimed his Christian king credentials he may well have ignored the teachings of the church when it suited him.¹⁶⁷

In one attempt to recognise the sins of his earlier kinsmen, Cnut was recorded as building the abbey of Bury St Edmunds and after its construction supporting it through the donation of land and gifts. William was clearly impressed that this Danish king of England had recognised the earlier assaults on the English by his countrymen and Cnut had chosen to publicly acknowledge the past sins of his people in the hope of his, and by implication the future salvation of the English people. William did however temper his opinion of Cnut in his *Gesta Pontificum* by relating the fact that Cnut had once been laid unconscious by the dead body of St Edith, and from this act Treharne interprets that Cnut was still 'shown as a 'barbarian'.¹⁶⁸ The background to William's account was the story a sceptical Cnut who had disputed Edith's sanctity because of her father's sins, and was only convinced when her tomb was opened and the saint came to life and attacked him.¹⁶⁹ William added this was because he was a foreigner.¹⁷⁰

The fact that William chose to distance the Christian Cnut from the pagan Danes of the past demonstrated a clear divide between the past and Cnut's present in historiographical terms. Implicit in this clear change of attitude toward Cnut was the distancing of him from his own involvement with raids on England, his mutilation of hostages and the extermination of numerous English nobles back when he was judged to be an 'earlier Dane' himself. William sought to record that God could forgive these actions due to Cnut's own public contrition and reconciliation with the church. In this manner William acknowledged a king's right to behave badly providing he eventually sought a return to God's grace. Perhaps with this passage William viewed the acts of Cnut as a role model for how his own contemporary King Stephen should behave during his own lifetime

¹⁶⁷ Lawson, *Cnut*, 132.

¹⁶⁸ Treharne, *Living Through Conquest*, 39.

¹⁶⁹ *GPA*, i, 298-301, and see Parker, 'Pilgrim and Patron, Cnut in post-Conquest Historical Writing', 271-95.

¹⁷⁰ *GPA*, ii. 87, 190-91.

and following 'The Anarchy'. Herein lies an acknowledgement that the king whom William supported and who had undertaken many bad things, had an historical figure to copy whilst he obtained the crown of England. In a similar vein William saw Cnut as both a potential and practical unifying individual when he observed; 'Thus all England obeyed a single master, and he took great pains to conciliate the English, allowing them the same rights as his own Danes in order of seating, in council, and in battle.'¹⁷¹ A comparison of the integration of the Danes may be drawn from Short's article *Tam Angli quam Franci*, wherein Short noted that; 'The progressive integration of the Anglo-Normans must, somewhat paradoxically, have brought with it a growing awareness of their particular distinctiveness as a social grouping.'¹⁷² The rapid integration of the 'Cnut' Danes into English society had a head-start over the Normans of some fifty years later as they had already settled in large areas of England.

After Cnut

The chronicle entries which cover the period 1035 to 1042 contained a succession of important deaths; 1035 King Cnut, 1036 the murder of the *ætheling* Alfred, 1040 the death of Harold Harefoot and in 1042 of his half-brother Harthacnut. Referring to the death of Cnut in 1035 Henry reinforced his positive opinion of Cnut by noting that after he had reigned for twenty years Cnut had died in Shaftesbury and was buried in Winchester.¹⁷³ He continued that 'A few words must be devoted to the power of this king. Before him there had never been in England a king of such great authority.'¹⁷⁴ Cnut was contrasted with William I by twelfth-century writers as, according to Ann Williams, 'the ideal conqueror king, a foreigner who nevertheless preserved the fabric of the English Church and kingdom'.¹⁷⁵ As Lawson pointed out, the joining of Scandinavia and England through the

¹⁷¹ *WM GRA*, 322-23, 'Ita cum omnis Anglia pareret uni, ille ingenti studio Anglos sibi conciliare, aequum illis ius Danis suis in consessu in concilio in prelio concedere'.

¹⁷² Ian Short, 'Tan Angli quam Franci: Self-definition in Anglo-Norman England', in *ANS*, 18, 165.

¹⁷³ *HH*, 410-11, 'Cnut, greater than all his predecessors, reigned gloriously for twenty years', 'Cnut omnium predecessorum suorum maximus regavit gloriose xx annis'.

¹⁷⁴ *HH*, 366-67, 'De cuius regis potentia pauca sunt perstringenda. Nec enim ante eum tante magnitudinis rex fuerat in Anglia'.

¹⁷⁵ Ann Williams, 'England in the Eleventh Century', in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, 1.

rule of Cnut and his two sons was an effective joining of the long-standing links between the two areas.¹⁷⁶

Cnut's queen Emma had allegedly stipulated in her treaty of marriage that only a son of her body would succeed Cnut as king of England.¹⁷⁷ In the space of the seven years following Cnut's death England went from the peaceful reign of a respected Danish king through to power-struggles between two brothers, the death of their half-brother and finally accession to the English throne of Edward who had spent his formative years in Normandy. During the period of disputed succession between Cnut's sons Harold 'Harefoot' and Harthacnut, Harold's supporters in England prevailed whilst Harthacnut was away dealing with the threat of Magnus of Norway in his native Denmark. Harold 'Harefoot' had the support of most thegns north of the Thames in presumably the area which saw significant Danish settlement over the previous centuries. Upon Harold's succession Harthacnut's mother, the Norman Emma, was quickly exiled along with her sons from her first marriage, Edward and Alfred. John's chronicle appeared to favour Harthacnut as he recorded that Harold 'began to reign as if the rightful heir but not however as powerfully as Cnut because Harthacnut who was the heir with the stronger claim was still awaited.'¹⁷⁸ John expressed his disgust that Harold had deprived Emma of the riches that Cnut had left her by using an expression often used in relation to Harold's grandfather that he had behaved 'tyrannically'.¹⁷⁹ John's chronicle had much to add to the years immediately following Cnut's death. He elaborated upon an allegation contained in the *Encomium* and expressed doubts over Harold's true parentage and also stated that Harold's older brother Swein had not been fathered by Cnut.¹⁸⁰ John wrote that Ælfgifu of Northampton had tricked Cnut into believing that she had given him two sons. This additional information is peculiar to John, and he even went on to identify Harold's father as a mere shoemaker rather than a king.¹⁸¹ William also identified Harold's mother as Earl Ælfhelm's daughter however he did not question of the identity of his father. He was elected as king by the Danes and the citizens of London at whom William sneered at for

¹⁷⁶ Lawson, *Cnut*, 211.

¹⁷⁷ *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, 11-14.

¹⁷⁸ *JW*, 2, 520-21, 'quasi iustus heres coepit regnare, non tamen ita potenter ut Canutus quia iustior heres expectabatur Hardecanutus'.

¹⁷⁹ *JW*, 2, 520-21, 'Is tamen, adepta regia dignitate, misit Wintoniam suos constipatores celerrime et gazarum opumque quas rex Canutus Alfgiue reliquerat regine maiorem melioremque partem ademisti illi tyrannice'.

¹⁸⁰ *JW*, 2, 520-21, *Encomium*, 40-41.

¹⁸¹ *JW*, 2, 520-21.

having such frequent contacts (presumably with the Danes) that they 'had by now almost adopted barbarian ways'.¹⁸² The sense that the post-Cnut descriptions of the Danes were to revert to being negative is demonstrated here using the connection of the Londoners as being similar to Danes and therefore akin to barbarians. William's use of the word barbarian should be applied in terms as expressed by Chibnall that a Roman writer often meant by this what would now be termed 'the Other'.¹⁸³ Chibnall continued that 'the word might simply imply people of an unfamiliar culture; but it could also mean people whose customs were regarded as debased and undesirable'.¹⁸⁴ Chibnall's statement can be tested through William's view that the Londoners were too closely associated with the Danes the inference being that Danish traders had influenced the Londoners to such a degree that they had somehow been absorbed into what William considered to be an undesirable Danish sub-culture. William also referred to the existence of a (presumably Christian) Danish cemetery in London.¹⁸⁵

Henry recorded the death of King Cnut in kindly and respectful terms but departed from all the surviving copies of the ASC by describing Harold Harefoot's legitimacy king as, 'the son of King Cnut and Alfwine (Ælfifu), daughter of Ealdorman Ælfhelm'.¹⁸⁶ Henry thus ignored the questions over Harold's parentage as posed by the Benedictine chroniclers which also included the author of the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*.¹⁸⁷ He clearly did not subscribe to the propaganda which the Benedictines circulated, which highlights another

¹⁸² WM, 334-35, 'qui iam pene in barbarorum mores propter frequentem conuictum transierant'.

¹⁸³ Marjorie Chibnall, 'The Latin of William of Poitiers', in *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century*, 142.

¹⁸⁴ Chibnall, 'The Latin of William of Poitiers', 142.

¹⁸⁵ WM, 336-37, when commenting upon Harthacnut's immaturity that he had his brother Harold's corpse exhumed and beheaded and the head was thrown into the Thames where it was, 'taken in his net by a fisherman, and buried in the Danish cemetery in London', 'Id a quodam piscatore exceptum sagena in cimiterio Danorum Lundoniae tumulatur', see also, *William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum, Volume 2*, General Introduction and Commentary, R. M. Thomson (Oxford, 1999), 180.

¹⁸⁶ HH, 368-69, 'filius Cnut regis et Alwine filie Alfelmi ducis'.

¹⁸⁷ JW, 2, 520-21, ASC (D), 65, *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. Campbell, A., (Cambridge, 1998 re-print), 38-41, '[Harold], who is declared, owing to a false estimation of the matter, to be the son of a certain concubine of the above-mentioned King Cnut; as a matter of fact, the assertion of very many people has it that the same Harold was secretly taken from a servant who was in childbed, and put in the chamber of the concubine, who was indisposed; and this can be believed as the more truthful account.' 'Haroldum, quem esse filium falsa aestimatione asseritur cuiusdam eiusdem regis Cnutonis concubinae; plurimorum uero assertion eundem Haroldum perhibet furtim fuisse subreptum parturienti ancillae, inpositum autem camerae languentis concubinae, quod ueratius credi protest'.

point of difference between Henry and his peers from the *gens Scriptorum*. Winkler has observed that John and William may have known the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* or a similar source and has also noted that some stories about Cnut appear to have roots in Anglo-Scandinavian oral tradition.¹⁸⁸

Harold died in the spring of 1040 which allowed Harthacnut to succeed him and reign for just over two years, during which time he was associated with heavy taxation, inflation and political intrigue. Harthacnut's death in the summer of 1042 heralded the end of Danish rule in England and permitted the succession to the King of the English to another of Emma's sons, Edward the Confessor whom Harthacnut had previously invited to return to England the year before.¹⁸⁹ Regarding Harthacnut's accession to the throne of England John remarked that:

He prepared sixty ships, which he manned with Danish troops and came to England before mid-summer, and was joyfully received by all, and was at once raised to the throne of the kingdom, but during the period of his rule did nothing worthy of royal power.¹⁹⁰

Sixty shiploads of Danish warriors were of course, a significant number of armed supporters. William stressed his own view of the divisions between English and Danes by remarking that the 'English' put up a prolonged resistance to Harold being made king as they preferred one of Æthelred's exiled sons or Emma's son Harthacnut however, Harthacnut was held in high esteem against Æthelred's sons; 'for Æthelred's sons were now despised by almost everyone, more from memories of their father's indolence than from Danish influence'.¹⁹¹ Sigbjørn Sønnesyn felt William's account reflected there was no distinction between Danish and English interests at this time.¹⁹² It should be noted that almost the opposite view had occurred with the representation of Cnut as the son of the tyrannical Swein by the same chroniclers. Henry demonstrated his respect for the line of Cnut when he described Harold's brother Harthacnut as, 'the munificent son of King Cnut', whereas the earlier D version of the ASC had described him as a *wedloga*, or an oath-

¹⁸⁸ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 91.

¹⁸⁹ Lawson, *Cnut*, 211.

¹⁹⁰ *JW*, 2, 528-31, 'Qui nauibus .lx. paratis, et Danicis militibus instructis, ante medium estatem Angliam aduehitur, et gaudenter ab omnibus suscipitur regnique solio mox sullimatur, sed sui imperii tempore nil egit dignum potestati regie'.

¹⁹¹ *WM*, 336-37, 'nam filii Egelredi iam fere omnibus despectui erant, magispropter paternae socordiae memoriam quam propter Danorum potentiam'.

¹⁹² Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 188.

breaker.¹⁹³ Sønnesyn commented upon William's view that both the English and Danes were; 'unanimous in desiring Harthacnut as Harold's successor [due to] their antipathy towards Æthelred's sons, shared by their mother Emma.'¹⁹⁴ The fact that none of Cnut's sons survived into their thirties is also significant when considering the fate of the English crown over the generation following 1042.¹⁹⁵ Perhaps if they had lived longer, the future of England may have been different.

Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle in their discussion of Danish Royal burials in Winchester have noted the connection of the group who had been buried in the Old Minster of Winchester shared a northern origin with the Norman rulers of Normandy.¹⁹⁶ Cnut's wife Emma had been William the Conqueror's great-aunt, Harthacnut his cousin, and Earl Beorn had been the son of Swein Estrithson. This group had been buried in close proximity to each other. When their bodies were translated from the Old to the New Minster in 1093-4, two other bodies went with them, those of Richard, son of King William, and that of Edmund son of Æthelred. Such acceptance of this extended Royal family can only indicate that by the twelfth-century, the previous animosity directed against Danish Vikings had been replaced with an acceptance that at least in historiographical terms, 'they' were now very much part of 'us'.

Henry was not always in praise of the Danish as following the death of the last Danish king of England in 1042 he recorded that; 'the English nobles, joyful now to be freed from Danish rule, sent messengers for Alfred, the first-born son of Æthelred, so that he might be raised up to the crown of the kingdom.'¹⁹⁷ Gaimar wrote that upon the death of Harthacnut the line of the 'Danish heirs was extinguished'.¹⁹⁸ Not wishing to leave the finality of the Danish ruling line to any misinterpretation by his audience Gaimar illustrated the great relief the English felt to be freed from Danish dominance through an exaggerated story of Danish intimidation:

¹⁹³ *HH*, 410-11, 'munificus regis Cnut filius', *ASC (D)*, 66.

¹⁹⁴ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 188.

¹⁹⁵ Lawson, *Cnut*, 211.

¹⁹⁶ Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjølbye-Biddle, 'Danish Royal Burials in Winchester', in *Danes in Wessex*, 224.

¹⁹⁷ *HH*, 370-71, 'Proceres igitur anglorum, iam Dacorum dominio liberati, hilares, pro aluredo primogenito filio Ailredi, ut regni diademate sublimetur, nuntios mittunt'.

¹⁹⁸ *GG*, 258-59, 'donc furent mort li hair daneis'.

If a hundred Englishmen were to meet one lone Dane, woe-betide them if they did not bow and scrape to him. And were they to come to a bridge, they would have had to wait, and woe-betide them if they dared move before the Dane had crossed. And as he passed by, each one would have to bow and scrape, and anyone not doing so would be arrested and given an ignominious beating. This is the sort of subservience the English were kept in, and the Danes abused and humiliated them.¹⁹⁹

The above example served to reinforce to Gaimar's audience that the English were generally very afraid of the Danes who occupied their country. These Danes are described as ruling through fear and intimidation and made it clear to the English that they should be feared for good reason. Here Gaimar pointed out that the Danes' power came not through their numbers alone but by the fact that the king himself was a Dane which gave his countrymen licence to behave badly, however, Gaimar did not include King Cnut in this criticism.²⁰⁰ Through the use of what was essentially a Danish myth of violence where if one should cross a Dane then they would be beaten, Gaimar painted a picture of majority ethnic oppression through the medium of fear exercised by a minority group and as Robert Bartlett has commented, that at this time; 'Precedence was an important matter'.²⁰¹ Bartlett highlighted English subordination in relation to the special awareness exercised by the inferior allowing the superior to pass, and also added a further story of a brush between an Englishman and the Danish-born earl of Huntingdon on a bridge which then resulted in a subsequent premeditated murder of the Dane.²⁰²

Henry, who had been such a staunch advocate of Cnut, changed his views once Harthacnut had died and noted that the English nobles were happy to be free of Danish rule, thus opening the door to another change in written opinion with the Danes once again becoming the 'them' to the Anglo-Norman 'us'.²⁰³ This attitude is again supported by the views of Gaimar who noted after the last of the Danish heirs to the kingdom had died that; 'This caused great rejoicing among the English, since the Danes had treated them little better than serfs and often humiliated them.'²⁰⁴ Such strategic stereotyping of the Danes

¹⁹⁹ GG, 258-61, 'Si cent un sul d'els encontrassent, mar fussent nez s'il nel clinassent, e sur un pont s'è il venaient, attendeissent, mar se movreient desci ke li Danies passast! Al trespasser chescon clinast; ki nel faïst, si pris estait, huntusement hom le bateit. En tel vilté erent Engleis, sis leidisseient les Daneis'.

²⁰⁰ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 179.

²⁰¹ Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, 580.

²⁰² Bartlett, 580-81, fn. 199, *Gesta antecess. Waldevi*, 107-8.

²⁰³ HH, 370-71.

²⁰⁴ GG, 258-59, 'Grant joie en firent li Engleis, kar les Daneis vil les teneient, soventefaiz les honisseient'.

appeared after the end of the period of Danish rule by the twelfth-century chroniclers which gives rise to the notion that the chroniclers had these stories available to them to be inserted into their records, but waited until their chronicles reached the end of the Danish era of influence until doing so.

Danes were never again to rule England and the politics of the next quarter of a century were to leave references to them in all the chronicles sparse. Ann Williams noted the estrangement of the English and Danes was demonstrated by King Edward's refusal to assist Swein Estrithson in his war against the Norwegians in 1047-8.²⁰⁵ Henry followed this with his re-introduction of the notion of Danish pirates for the year 1047-8, when two Danish princes raided Sandwich possibly as a result of Edward's attitude, and then plundered Essex and afterwards headed for Flanders to sell their booty.²⁰⁶ The role of the literary villain which had been surrendered by Cnut and only partially applied to his sons was destined now to pass to the Danish-associated Godwin family until 1069 when the Danes were to appear again.

As has been demonstrated above Dumville concluded that the scribe who wrote the 983-1016 entries for the ASC does appear to have heavily influenced the historiographical writing of his subsequent chroniclers.²⁰⁷ Of the five Anglo-Norman chroniclers considered, all in general had negative views of Swein and on or after their entries relating to the period of Cnut's ascendancy to the English throne sought to forgive or excuse Cnut's earlier vicious and piratical activities. The changes in representation of the accounts of the pagan Swein to those of the pious Cnut have been clearly and often made. The pagan verses Christian battle in the chronicles was seemingly concluded by 1016 although the under-current of the Danes still being perceived as pagans continued to flow under the surface of the chronicle entries and surfaced again on occasion. The literary 'turning-point' in respect of the vilification of the Danes has been identified above on several occasions and is centred on this pagan to Christian shift. The next chapter will examine through an immediate post-Norman Conquest threat from the Danes, how the memory of the earlier traumatic Viking raids on England was promulgated and turned into a notion of the threat of danger to the English people from a group of 'others' across the sea to the east.

²⁰⁵ Williams, *The World Before Domesday*, 27.

²⁰⁶ *HH*, 374-75.

²⁰⁷ See p. 122 above.

Chapter 5

The latent threat of Scandinavian ‘others’ from the mid-eleventh century

‘the past is a foreign country whose features are shaped by today’s predilections, its strangeness domesticated by our own preservation of its vestiges’¹

David Lowenthal

The chronicle entries recounted at the end of the previous chapter which recorded the death of Cnut and his sons, we have witnessed how the chroniclers expressed the development of their feelings of mistrust which built to a fundamental dislike of the eleventh-century Danish occupiers of England. Such expressions of dislike followed their previous attempts at monsterising the Vikings, and the continuation of the monstrous concepts through which were reflected by the vilification of such characters as the English Earl Eadric *streona*, and the association of Earl Godwin with the Danes. Also, the recognition of Cnut was recognised as the catalyst of change for the Danes when his monstrous ‘other’ persona transformed into what has been argued as representing ‘self’. Whilst the image of the monster ‘haunts’ and does not simply bring the past and present together, such haunting was represented through an ongoing element of taxation which was recorded by the Normans as the Danegeld.² Treatment of how and why the prefix ‘Dane’ was added to the Anglo-Saxon *geld* will be considered in detail later in this chapter.

This chapter investigates the way in which the Danes, and occasionally their Scandinavian neighbours the Norwegians, were depicted in terms of theoretical ‘otherness’ over the twenty years from the Northumbrian rebellion of 1065 until Knut IV’s failure to invade England in 1085. Consideration will also be given to the desire by the chronicles to maintain descriptions of monstrous leaders through the unflattering depictions of Tostig Godwinson, and the Kings William I and William (Rufus) II. With the past depictions of Danish monstrous paganism now largely left behind, and the last of their kings of England having been dead for a generation, the depictions of Danish ‘otherness’ lead into the areas of the effects of past trauma and the haunting of memory, coupled with a latent threat of the Danes. These areas will be considered and tested with their relevance in Anglo-Norman chronicles against the events covering the final twenty years of direct Scandinavian involvement with the history of England.

¹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985), xvii.

² Cohen, *Monster Theory*, ix.

Past trauma and the haunting of memory

Pauline Stafford has argued that 'increased historical consciousness' results from trauma.³ Such an application can assist with the explanation of why there was such an upsurge in historical writing in the early to mid-twelfth century. Elizabeth Van Houts described the trauma of defeat and loss as being unrecorded by the first post-Conquest generation, as it had been too painful at the time to write about either directly or truthfully.⁴ Such trauma was to be 'unleashed' by an 'outpouring' of historical writing in the early to mid-twelfth century.⁵ Recording of such historical memory served as a peg for the audience to be prompted to never forget the humiliation of defeat and conquest regardless of which side their ancestor had been on. Although set in the context of Holocaust history, Marianne Hirsch made an observation which could be applied to the children and grand-children of those conquered by the Normans when she wrote, 'perhaps it is only in subsequent generations that trauma can be witnessed and worked through, by those who were not there to live it but who received its effects, belatedly, through the narratives, actions and symptoms of the previous generation'.⁶ Such trauma is transcribed through the children of the parents who had lived through violent times, such as the Norman Conquest, where the children recall events which they did not experience themselves.⁷ Such an hypothesis may be readily applied to the chroniclers studied here. Their contributions to history not only served as a national record, but also as a record of the activities of their fore-fathers, be this through either praise or scorn.

The trauma herein described concerns the post-Norman Conquest activities of the Danes and their legacy, and the haunting of the memories of the past. The first of the haunting memories to be ascribed to the Danes relate to their historic claims to the kingdom of England. Swein Estrithson was king of Denmark from 1047-1074, and, as the nephew of Cnut the Great and the cousin of Harthacnut, could claim a hereditary relationship with the kingdom of England. He was also connected to England through his aunt Gytha, who had been the Danish wife of Earl Godwin of Wessex and the mother of King Harold.⁸ Swein made a claim to the kingdom of England as he said that Edward the

³ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, 11.

⁴ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 10.

⁵ Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, 120-21.

⁶ Marianne Hirsch, 'Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory', in *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14 (2001), 12.

⁷ Schwab, *Haunting Legacies*, 13.

⁸ Barlow, *The Godwins*, 47.

Confessor had promised him the throne, as recorded by Adam of Bremen in the late eleventh century.⁹ Such a claim mimicked that of King Edward supposedly promising the throne of England to Duke William in 1052, and latterly confirmed by Earl Harold swearing such on holy relics in 1064, as recorded by the Bayeux Tapestry. Such haunting voices from the past provided texts where the text itself became the primary instrument of haunting by reminding the audience to be wary of what may occur again.¹⁰

In one of his various opinions regarding the post-Conquest English, Orderic noted they were under an intolerable Norman rule where, 'the English were groaning under the Norman yoke, and suffering oppressions from the proud lords who ignored the king's injunctions.'¹¹ Orderic here separated the figure of the king from his unruly lords and again demonstrated Orderic's views concerning respect for leadership. Orderic's outpouring of this lamentation for the lost English led to him concluding that the English solution to this 'Norman Yoke' problem was for them to turn to the Danes to request help from them based upon the Danish ancestral rights to the throne of England:

And so, the English groaned aloud for their lost liberty and plotted ceaselessly to find some way of shaking off a yoke that was so intolerable and unaccustomed. Some sent to Swein, king of Denmark and urged him to lay claim to the kingdom of England which his ancestors Swein and Cnut had won by the sword.¹²

Orderic's view was the English were incapable of ruling themselves once again but would benefit more from the return of the Danes than the continuation of their rule by Normans. This seems a strange view from a chronicler who latterly so keenly described himself as English. He would have been influenced by the histories of the Normans which led him to believe that the English could rise again under the influence of a new Rollo or Cnut. For Marjorie Chibnall, Orderic had taken this entry 'almost verbatim' from William of Poitiers, although the later part of William's work is now lost.¹³ Orderic returned to this idea of Danish hereditary rights when he recounted the events of 1069-70 by stating that Swein

⁹ *Adam of Bremen*, 123; and R. Allen Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (Boydell, 2000), 119, fn. 153.

¹⁰ Julian Wolfreys, 'On Textual Haunting', in *The Spectralities Reader*, 72.

¹¹ *OV*, 2, 202-3, 'Interea Normannico fastu Angli opprimuntur et praesidibus superbis qui regis monitus spernebant admodum iniuriabantur'.

¹² *OV*, 2, 202-3, 'Amissa itaque libertate Angli uehementer ingemiscunt et uicissim qualiter intolerabile iugum sibi hactenus insolitum excutiant subtiliter inquirunt. Igitur as Suenum regem Danorum dirigunt, atque ut regnum Angliæ quod Suenus et Chuntus aui eius armis optinuerunt reposcat expetunt'.

¹³ *OV*, 2, 202-3, n.2., and 224-29; *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, eds. and trans. R. H. C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall OMT (Oxford, 1998), 106, fn. 1.

was heavily influenced by his desire for a kingdom to which he had a claim through inheritance.¹⁴ Unfortunately Orderic got Swein's inheritance-line wrong as he stated Swein was the nephew of King Edward and Harthacnut had been his father.¹⁵ In fact Swein was not related to Edward by blood at all, whilst Swein's mother Estrith had been King Cnut's sister and therefore Swein and Harthacnut had actually been cousins.¹⁶ All Danish kings after Swein Estrithson were to be his descendants, and through Estrith he himself was a descendant of the mid-tenth century King Gorm.¹⁷ Orderic may have felt the Danes had some justification to claim their right to rule England based upon a connection to earlier Danish invasions, however his this may have resulted from Orderic's personal interest in the English, and the association of claims to the throne of England, all of which ultimately failed in the face of the Norman presence.

Henry held a different view and interpreted the Danish invasions of the past with the Norman Conquest as a testimony to God's master plan to inflict punitive corrections on the English people due to their 'compelling crimes'.¹⁸ Henry wove the Danish attacks in with the subsequent English association with the Normans through the personage of Emma. As the wife of Æthelred, and after him Cnut, Emma through her sons by both men, ultimately gave the Normans a blood-link justification to conquer England:

This He [God] brought about as if laying a military ambush. I mean on one side the persecution by the Danes was raging, and on the other the connection with the Normans was growing, so that even if they were to escape the obvious lightening fire of the Danes, valour would not help them to escape the Normans' unexpected trick. This became apparent in subsequent events, since from this union of the English king with the daughter of the Norman duke, the Normans were justified according to the law of peoples, in both claiming and gaining possession of England.¹⁹

¹⁴ *OV*, 2, 226-27.

¹⁵ *OV*, 2, 226-27, 'quin etiam proxima cognatiore ad regni cupidinem incitatas utpote nepos Eduardi regis Hardecunuti filius. Hic ingenti potential pollebat'.

¹⁶ *OV*, 2, 226-27, fn.1.

¹⁷ Birgit Sawyer, and Peter Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia, From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800 – 1500* (Minneapolis, 1993), 61.

¹⁸ *HH*, 338-39, 'quam sceleribus suis exigentibus disternere proposuerat'.

¹⁹ *HH*, 338-39, 'Dominus omnipotens dupplicem contricionem propsuit et quasi militares insidias adhibuit. Scilicet ut hinc Dacorum persecutione seuiente, illinc Normannorum coniunctione accrescente, si a Dacorum manifesta fulminatione euaderent, Normannorum inproisam cum fortitudine cautelam non euaderent. Quod in sequentibus apparuit, cum ex hac coniunctione regis Anglorum et filie ducis Normannorum, Angliam iuste secundum ius gentium Normanni et calumpniati sunt et adepti sunt'.

Henry concluded that Emma was the catalyst of change for England. As the Danes were now recognised as largely Christian, Emma facilitated the change from earlier monstrous Viking pagans, to William the Conqueror and his undoubted monstrous behaviour. The ancestral right of the Danes to rule England has been recognised by John Gillingham as one of Gaimar's recurring themes.²⁰ Gillingham also noted that 'it was this theme which lay behind some of his most memorable episodes'.²¹

The people who had been living in England during the time of the Danish invasions and then the Norman invasions had their ancestral rights ignored, with the example of the treatment of post-conquest English nobles reflecting a significant difference in how the nobility as a group had been treated by the Danes and the Normans in the representational records of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers. Through the chronicle descriptions of the use of either decapitation or disenfranchisement, the ASC emphasised the two different perspectives of the Danes and the Normans. The ASC entries for 1017 and 1020 set the scene for some righteous justification of Norman post-conquest behaviour when they were compared to that of the Danes.²² The main source for this, the ASC (D) for 1017 read:

In this year Ealdorman Eadric was killed²³, and Northman, son of Ealdorman Leofwine, and Æthelweard, son of Æthelmaer the stout, and Brihtric, son of Ælfheah of Devonshire. And King Cnut exiled the *ætheling* Eadwig and afterwards had him killed.²⁴

This same chronicle for 1020 told of more exiling when; 'then Ealdorman Æthelweard was exiled'.²⁵ Robin Fleming has remarked that, 'the Danish Conquest came to pass only after the greatest of England's families were destroyed after some thirty years [of extermination]. The chilling rapidity of the Duke of Normandy's take-over stands out in stark contrast to this lumbering defeat, and was made possible by the carnage of Cnut'.²⁶ Fleming then noted that resistance in the north and east of the country to William was due to the survival of some of the original tenth-century aristocracy.²⁷ Although the simplicity of

²⁰ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 119.

²¹ Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 119.

²² Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 7.

²³ *EHD* 1, 227, fn. 14, "F' says that he was 'very rightly' killed, 'at London'".

²⁴ *ASC (D)*, 63, 'On þisum geare wæs eac Eadric ealdorman ofslægen, 7 Norðman, Leofwines sunu ealdormannes, 7 Æþelward, Ægelmeres sunu greatan, 7 Bryhtric, Ælfeges sunu, on Defenascire. 7 Cnut cining aflymde ut Eadwi æþeling 7 Eadwi ceorla kyning', *EHD* 1, 227-28 – Whitelock's translation.

²⁵ *ASC (D)*, 63, 'þa geutlagade man Æþelward ealdorman'.

²⁶ Robin Fleming, *Kings & Lords in Conquest England* (Cambridge, 2004), 48.

²⁷ Fleming, *Kings & Lords*, 48.

these statements is hard to accept at face value, the fact the north of England around York and the eastern side of the country had a high proportion of people who saw themselves as having Danish heritage permits an acknowledgement that it was these people who were more readily able to call upon a foreign power for assistance following the arrival of the Normans.

It seemed to Henry that the Norman Conquest had been much less cruel than that of the Danes some fifty years earlier, as they had amongst other things, 'by right of kingship granted to the conquered their life, liberty and ancient laws'.²⁸ The ASC had stressed the negative results of both the Danish and Norman conquests.²⁹ The opposite view was taken by William of Malmesbury who felt Cnut's more easy-going ways were preferable to King William's savage rapacity.³⁰ According to David Bates, William of Poitiers took a contemporary contrary view to this and believed that if only the English would give King William a chance, he would prove to be a mild and merciful ruler unlike the murderer of nobility which Cnut had been.³¹ Ann Williams believes the English revolts of 1069-70 were actually too successful for the English, and the threat posed by them ultimately resulted in King William replacing the English magnates, laymen and ecclesiastics, with Normans and others whom he believed he could trust.³² At that point, an Anglo-Norman realm similar to the Anglo-Danish synthesis which had been achieved by Cnut, was no longer an option for King William.³³ Of course, this may have been King William's intention all along. Fifty years ago, Frank Barlow saw that William and his army were more foreign than Cnut and his army had been by saying that in 1066 the English did not recognise the Vikings in their new French dress'.³⁴ Although this statement carries with it any number of sweeping assumptions and generalisations, the idea the Normans were considered by the English to be more 'other' than the Danes through their foreignness is an interesting observation. According to Lesley Abrams the fight for England in the eleventh century between Denmark, Normandy and Norway produced a major realignment of allegiances. Abrams also speculated whether a sense of solidarity between Danes and Normans managed to

²⁸ *HH*, 272-73, 'uictis uitam et libertatem legesque antiquas regni iure concesserunt', Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*, 219.

²⁹ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 88.

³⁰ *WM*, 414-17, 470-71.

³¹ Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 70, cf., William of Poitiers, 156-57.

³² Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 44.

³³ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 44.

³⁴ Frank Barlow, 'The effects of the Norman Conquest', in Dorothy Whitelock, David Douglas, Charles Lemmon, Frank Barlow, *The Norman Conquest* (London, 1966), 128.

survive into Knut's day, or whether Knut's purported desire to have close relations with Normandy was an invention of twelfth-century Danish historiography by Sven Aggesen.³⁵ The recollection of the trauma suffered under the Danes was to transfer to the sons of an earl who had been favoured by Cnut starting with the rebellion against Tostig Godwinson.

Danish involvement in the Northumbrian rebellion

The last chronicle entries for pre-Conquest events which specifically mentioned the Danes were those associated with the 1065 Northumbrian rebellion. A wave of disaffection with the Earl of Northumbria was manifested in the accounts of the rebellion against Tostig Godwinson. The 1065 entry in the ASC recounted that; 'all the thegns in Yorkshire and in Northumberland came together and outlawed their Earl Tostig and killed his bodyguard, and all they could get at, both English and Danish'.³⁶ For a decade since 1055 Tostig had been Earl of Northumbria, and after ten years of Tostig's reported 'habitual ferocity', the Northumbrians revolted against him.³⁷ Tostig appears to be ably filling the monstrous depiction previously attributed to his father Godwin, and was associated with the role of a monster before it was transferred over to his now better-known brother King Harold. The description of Tostig's men was borrowed by William of Malmesbury from the ASC as comprising both *Anglos et Danos*, both of whom were cut to pieces by the Northumbrians.³⁸ Henry also concurred that Tostig's household comprised of 'both Danes and Englishmen'.³⁹ John added that two of Tostig's Danish Huscarls, Amund and Reavenswart, were caught trying to escape and were killed by the rebels.⁴⁰ John must have had access to something, or indeed someone, which supplied him with extra details such as the names of these two otherwise un-known Huscarls. Gaimar's account of the uprising was a little more confused, and recounted the people of York had harboured a violent dislike of Tostig, rather than implying any hatred against his men.⁴¹ Susan Reynolds has noted that although both English and Danes were mentioned in the chronicles, the political

³⁵ Lesley Abrams, 'England, Normandy and Scandinavia', in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, 51

³⁶ ASC (trans.), 137-38, ASC (D), 77, 'gegaderedon þa þegenas hi ealle on Eoforwicscire 7 on Norðhymbralande togædere, 7 geutlagedan heora eorl Tosti, 7 ofslogon his hiredmen, ealle þa hig mihten to cumen, ægbær ge Englisce ge Denisce'.

³⁷ WM, 364-65.

³⁸ WM, 364-65.

³⁹ HH, 384-85, 'tam Dacos, quam Anglos'.

⁴⁰ JW, 2, 598-99.

⁴¹ GG, 278-79.

difference between them did not seem to be significant at this time.⁴² If this is valid, then it should be questioned why the racial differences were recorded at all. In Earl Harold's negotiated reparations with the rebels at Oxford, it is noticeable that John did not refer to any wish of the rebels to return to their former laws laid down at the time of Cnut, despite their Danish heritage. By linking the Danes to a tyrannical earl on the eve of the Norman Conquest, the Danish were once again associated with supporting despotic and unpopular leaders who had tyrannically subdued the English people.

Danish involvement in the battles of 1066

None of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers recorded that Danes fought against William at Hastings, although Orderic appears to have alluded to it when he described in 1069 the Danish fleet was sent to England because Swein, 'was moved by the death and disaster that had overtaken his men in Harold's war'.⁴³ Prior to this the Norman writer William of Poitiers noted Danes had actually fought for Harold at Hastings when he described this campaign in his *Gesta Guillelmi*, where, 'the land of the Danes (who were allied by blood) also sent copious forces'.⁴⁴ Orderic's point that it was Swein's men who had suffered death and disaster indicates Swein supplied some men to Harold to assist with the defence of England, but this was probably to fight against their mutual enemy Harald Hardrada of Norway. This is a more plausible view than William of Poitiers', who stated the king of Denmark had sent men to Harold in the narrow time window between the battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings. A further conclusion from this passage is those Danes who had fought against the Norwegians in Yorkshire, then travelled south to oppose William at Hastings. As none of the other Anglo-Norman chroniclers associated the presence of the Danes with the events of 1066, it is plausible Orderic simply drew upon the writings of William of Poitiers and assumed there was a Danish element fighting for Harold at the Battle of Hastings. Ann Williams has suggested that Orderic may have been referring to troops supplied by the Danish magnates of York who might have been under Swein's protection.⁴⁵ It is possible Anglo-Danes from York were present at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. This also explains how they were described as 'Swein's men', and the death and disaster they suffered may be linked to the post-Conquest disenfranchisement of Anglo-

⁴² Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe*, 266.

⁴³ *OV*, 2, 224-27, 'ruina suorum qui nuper in Heraldi conflictu occisi fuerant motus'.

⁴⁴ *William of Poitiers*, 126-27, 'Copiosa quoque auxilia miserat eis cognata terra Danorum'.

⁴⁵ Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 35-36.

Danes. An unexplored hypothesis is the 'copious forces' supplied by the Danes either were, or became, mercenaries who bolstered the number of fighting men in Harold's army following his losses at Stamford Bridge. However, this may be reading too much into what Ann Williams has described as 'unanswerable questions'.⁴⁶

Van Houts felt that John, William and Henry, whilst describing the outcome of the battle of Hastings in various different ways, in overall terms blamed the defeat of the English on their sinfulness, unholy behaviour and lack of attention to God.⁴⁷ This was essentially a theological rationalisation of a collective national shame.⁴⁸ Henry used the fact that the Vikings had previously punished the English people for many centuries and that now it was the Normans' turn to continue God's work of punishing sinners, which fitted the general theme of his *Historia Anglorum*. Orderic did not follow his contemporary Norman writers, William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers, by ascribing the defeat of the English at Hastings to the superiority of the Norman race over an inferior one. On the contrary, according to Leah Shopkow, the English-born Orderic ascribed the apparent rusticity of the English down to a social decline which was attributable to the Danish invasions of the eleventh-century.⁴⁹ Emily Winkler has refined this connection further through the use of passages by Orderic which followed those concerning the martyrdom of Ælfheah and the conquest by Cnut, to justify the view of Cnut's invasion as the original cause of the later Norman Conquest.⁵⁰ This is demonstrated by the following passage from Orderic when describing Danish raids:

Other cities too were burned, and cathedrals and monasteries with all their books and treasures were destroyed. The Christian flock everywhere suffered in the storms; and falling a helpless prey to pagan wolves was cruelly torn to pieces by them. I have digressed at length, but not I hope in vain, and have summarised notes taken from earlier annals so that the patient reader may clearly understand why the Normans found the English a rustic and nearly illiterate people⁵¹

⁴⁶ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, 35.

⁴⁷ Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, 114.

⁴⁸ Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe*, 128.

⁴⁹ Shopkow, *History & Community*, 100, fn. 8.

⁵⁰ Emily Winkler, 'Invasion Narratives of Orderic and his Contemporaries', Conference entitled: *Orderic Vitalis New Perspectives*, University of Durham, 2013.

⁵¹ *OV*, 2, 244-47, 'Tunc aliae urbes cincrematae sunt; et episcopales ac monachiles aecclesiae cum libris et ornamentis destructae sunt. Grex quoque fidelium per diuersa tot procellis agitatius est; et luporum dentibus patens uariis modis horribiliter dilaniatus est. Proxilixam digressionem sed nisi fallor non inutilem protelau; et de priscis annalibus collecta recensui, ut causa manifeste pateat studioso lectori; cur Anglos agrestes et pene illitteratos inuenerint Normanni'.

The Norman historian Wace used the view expressed by Orderic that at Hastings Harold scarcely had any assistance from men from north of the Humber.⁵² Henry amplified and embellished a particularly dramatic point in his narrative, when he referred to the Danish heritage of the Normans and the Battle of Hastings.⁵³ This was one of several exhortatory speeches Henry utilised which, Diana Greenway has noted, were all reliant upon the writing of Sallust, and as such introduced a degree of ancient gravitas to the chronicle to those who recognised this style of language.⁵⁴ Henry continued this speech to include a further derisory comment which noted the English people were themselves 'accustomed to defeat'.⁵⁵ With the use of Duke William's presumably invented speech, Henry managed to weave a reference to the fact the Normans were descended from Vikings, who had also previously conquered the English some fifty years before the Normans. Duke William was Rollo's great-great-great grandson. Also through the use of this speech, Henry associated himself on one hand with the conquering Normans, and on the other with the preponderance of people with Danish ancestry, who had lived in the area from whence he himself originated.⁵⁶ Short remarked that Gaimar's 'Danish bias', gave way to a pro-English stance in his work relating to post-Conquest events.⁵⁷ Short's contribution to this debate may be summarised in his view Gaimar presented the Norman invasion as more of a union and less of a conquest.⁵⁸ Short's interpretation is supported by the view expressed by R. H. C. Davis that, 'the most remarkable feature of [Gaimar's] work is the treatment of the Norman Conquest, which he somehow manages to describe and to pass over with studied casualness'.⁵⁹ The Anglo-Norman chroniclers reflected that the coming of the Normans saved England from once-again being absorbed into a Scandinavian orbit, and therefore a disintegrating society was saved by the intervention of Duke William and his sons.⁶⁰ Hugh Thomas believes following the Norman Conquest, Scandinavian identity in England rapidly

⁵² Glyn S. Burgess, (trans.), *The History of the Norman People, Wace's Roman de Rou* (Boydell, 2004), 178.

⁵³ p.65 above.

⁵⁴ Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*', 110.

⁵⁵ *HH*, 392-93, 'gentem uinci solitam'.

⁵⁶ Diana Greenway, (trans.), *Henry, The History of the English People, 1000-1154* (Oxford, 2002), xiv – xviii.

⁵⁷ *GG*, 'Introduction', xlv.

⁵⁸ *GG*, 'Introduction', xlv.

⁵⁹ R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London, 1976), 127.

⁶⁰ Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages* (New York, 1991), 268-9.

disappeared.⁶¹ Where the chroniclers could not rely upon 'proven facts', this period highlights the use of rumour as an important form of social interaction and the significant impact upon human lives caused by rumour repetition. Orderic appeared to have propagated past rumours to encourage a view that the latent threat from Scandinavia could still exist. In a passage concerning the immediate post-Conquest period he noted:

During this time, various rumours from across the Channel were passing from mouth to mouth and causing alarm to the king, for they contained evil reports as well as good and hinted that Normans were to be massacred by the hostile English supported by the Danes and other barbarous peoples.⁶²

The association of rumour to latent threat should not be underestimated. The rumour of invasion was obviously a serious one, but also the use of misinformation, either intentional or otherwise to encourage certain reactions from the information receiver (the audience), was clearly a useful Norman tactic where they were facing potential localised opposition. Orderic's example above, records a life-threatening situation for the Normans in England, and by implication warned them to be on their guard against both the natives and foreign invaders at all times. The unwritten element to this rumour is to encourage the Normans to stay loyal to each other and to the King, and to unite against those 'others' who would seek to kill them, as latent has almost become actual. Such a direction was also associated with those authors' whose contemporary period was 'The Anarchy'.

William of Malmesbury used rumour to justify, or at least defend, King William's erstwhile monstrous actions. This example relates to a threat of attack from the Danes in the years following the Conquest:

Since a rumour had spread that Knut king of the Danes, son of Swein, was approaching, the purpose of [William's] order being to leave nothing near the seashore which a raiding pirate could find and carry off if he had to make a rapid return home or use for food if he thought he could stay longer. Thus, a province once fertile and a nurse of tyrants was hamstrung by fire, rapine, and bloodshed; the ground for sixty miles and more left entirely uncultivated, the soil quite bare even down to this day.⁶³

⁶¹ Thomas, *The Normans & the English*, 29.

⁶² *OV*, 2, 208-9, 'Rumores interim de transmarinis partibus diuersi adulitabant, et optatis molesta permiscentes regem inquietabant et ex maliuolentia Anglorum cum nisu Danorum aliarumque barbararum gentium magnam cladem Normannis orituram intimabant'.

⁶³ *WM*, 464-65, 'tum quia Cnutonem Danorum regem, filium Suani, aduentare rumor sparserat. Ea precepti rati, ut nichil circa oram maritimam predo piraticus inueniret, secum asportaturus si citius remeandum, uel fami consulturus si diutius manendum putaret. Itaque prouintiae quondam fertilis et tirenorum nutriculae incendio, preda, sanguine nerui succisi; humus per sexaginta et eo amplius miliaria omnifariam inculta; nudum omnium solum usque ad hoc etiam tempus.'

The post-Conquest assistance given by the Danes to English rebels

Following the chronicle descriptions of the Norman invasion, William of Malmesbury sought to outline the main threats to the success of Duke William and went on to describe York in 1067 as; 'the only remaining refuge for rebels', and retrospectively noted that Malcolm, king of the Scots, and the English Earls, Edgar, Morcar and Waltheof, together with English and Danish troops had 'often made a snug nest of tyranny'.⁶⁴ This description is one of William's attempts to associate non-English 'others' such as the Scots and Danes with rebellion, to offer a foil to English or Norman superiority.⁶⁵ William commenced his description of the post-conquest Danish attacks on England with a strong positional statement regarding his view of Swein Estrithson whom he said found; 'peace intolerable'.⁶⁶ The post-conquest Danes were now once again associated with barbarianism and tyranny. Whilst the Danes were still being 'other', they were now co-operating with other 'others', against the new Norman elite. John's description of the coming of the Danes to York in September 1069, states that Harold and Knut, the sons of Swein, along with Osbjorn and Thorkell, and some 240 ships, were joined by the *ætheling* Edgar, and the earls Waltheof and Mærleswein.⁶⁷

After noting Swein had fitted out a large fleet, Orderic's perception was that Swein 'had received many messengers from the English begging for help and sending subsidiaries'.⁶⁸ Orderic expanded upon these pleas by informing his audience, that Swein had amassed numerous troops from his neighbours, which included Poles, Friesians, Saxons and Lithuanians, to go to the assistance of the English.⁶⁹ The Lithuania region is said to have 'sent many auxiliary troops to the aid of the English'.⁷⁰ At this time the Lithuanians were primarily still pagan and it is interesting Orderic thought that after the king of Denmark had conquered the Lithuanians, he then enlisted these pagans to help assist the English against William the Conqueror.⁷¹ For the contemporary reader, William the Conqueror was portrayed as the Christian defender of the English who was fighting against a horde or pagan 'others' intent on death and destruction, because:

⁶⁴ *WM*, 462-63, 'unicum rebellionum suffugium', 'nidum tyrannidis sepe fouebant'.

⁶⁵ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 54.

⁶⁶ *WM*, 480-1.

⁶⁷ *JW*, 3, 8-9.

⁶⁸ *OV*, 2, 224-25, 'multotiens enim pecuniis Anglorum et obnixis precibus fuerat sollicitatus'.

⁶⁹ *OV*, 2, 226-27.

⁷⁰ *OV*, 2, 226-27, 'Leuticia quoque pro Anglicis opibus auxilliares turmas mittebat'.

⁷¹ *OV*, 2, 226-27.

In this region was a teeming race which was still blinded by pagan error and did not know the true God; ensnared by ignorance the people worshipped Wodin, Thor, Freyja, and other false gods, or rather demons.⁷²

Such a message implies an enduring pagan connection within the very soul of the Danes and their leaders. After collecting such a varied force together, Orderic told of an over-confident Swein sending a mighty fleet to England against King William.

Henry followed the ASC, with his entry for 1069, where he noted; 'there came into the Humber two sons of Swein, the Danish king, and Earl Osbjorn, his brother with 300 ships'.⁷³ This is an exaggeration on John's 240 ships, but ultimately whether it was the greater or lesser number, such a sizable force would have been large enough to challenge King William's overlordship of England if this had been their true intention.⁷⁴ Gaimar described Swein as being 'a violently aggressive man' who sent his sons to England 'bent on war'.⁷⁵ Gaimar's representation of the Danes was that they were aggressive raiders who were focused on a large-scale raid to enrich themselves in a similar manner to how their forefathers used to behave.

John also recorded another 1069 event, when Ealdred the archbishop of York died, apparently due to the terror caused by the arrival of the Danes as; 'much affected with distress at their arrival, Ealdred, archbishop of York, became very ill, and died'.⁷⁶ The fact John linked this death directly to the arrival of boatloads of armed Danes acted as a reminder to his audience of the terror which had been caused by the past exploits of such men. Gaimar described how these recently arrived Danes beat the forces led by the Englishman, Eadnoth 'the Staller':

And although I am not well enough informed to say which side fought harder than the other, I do know that the Danes emerged victorious, and that the French and English suffered heavy losses that day with many dead and killed. The Danes went on to take York.⁷⁷

⁷² OV, 2, 226-27, 'In ea populosissima natio consistebat, quae gentilitatis adhuc errore detenta uerum Deum nesciebat. Sed ignorantiaemuscipulis illaqueata Guodenen et Thurum Freamque aliosque falsos deos immo daemones colebat'.

⁷³ HH, 396-97, 'unenerunt duo filii suein regis Dacorum, et Osbertus frater suus, cum ccc puppibus in Hymbram'.

⁷⁴ JW, 3, and William Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North*, 114.

⁷⁵ GG, 294-95, 'un rei ki fu dē ire plain'.

⁷⁶ JW, 3, 8-9, 'De quorum aduentu Eboracensis archiepiscopus Aldredus ualde tristis effectus, in magnam incidit infirmitatem'.

⁷⁷ GG, 294-95, 'mais ne sai dire a escient, liquels ferit plus durement; mais co sai jo, Daneis venquirent, Franceis, Engleis le jor perirent, Mult en suntmorz e mulz oscis; Puis pristrent Daneis Everwics'.

Notwithstanding the fact that Gaimar confused the 1069 attack on York by Osbjorn's men with the ASC 1068 description of a raid on Devon by the sons of Harold Godwinson; this view of the Danish raiders fighting against both French and English opponents is notable and unique. Gaimar told his audience that:

They attacked the inhabitants of the countryside as they made their way to York, where they destroyed the fortifications that the Normans had constructed. Many a body was left bereft of its soul, for the castle wardens were killed, and only very few of them escaped with their lives.⁷⁸

The English rebels, Earl Waltheof and Edgar the *ætheling*, were recorded as having joined the Danish and then proceeded to capture 'the Castles' of York.⁷⁹ They killed many 'Frenchmen', blinded their leaders and then took them, presumably as hostages, along with treasure to their ships.⁸⁰ Gaimar's view of the Danes who served Swein Estrithson were recorded as being solely intent on dealing death and obtaining treasure. Gaimar seems to have found Swein to be a particularly loathsome king.

John revealed that a week after the death of Archbishop Ealdred, the Normans of York began setting fire to parts of the city to deny its use by the Danes and the rebels. Unfortunately, the fire got out of hand and much of the city was burned down together with the monastery of St Peter.⁸¹ John was outraged that such a building was lost through such recklessness and noted with approval that so careless an act was; 'quickly followed by heavy divine vengeance'⁸² The irony of the destruction of a monastery by the very people who were seeking to deter its attackers, was expressed by John through his exaggerated account of how the Normans were punished because of it. In fact, the Normans were trying to protect against an aggressor, and not knowingly against a tool of divine punishment. John now moved to discuss the role of the Danes without any further mention of the English rebels by representing the Danes as God's divine punishers of the Norman garrison of York. The Normans' punishment for burning down a monastery was for over 3,000 of them to be slain, only a very few, including a certain William Malet, his wife and two children were spared.⁸³ The figure of 3,000 is an exaggeration of the original ASC entries

⁷⁸ *EdE*, 294-95, 'les païsanz encontre alerent, a Everwich en sunt venuz e les chastels unt abatuz ke les Normans aveient fait: maint' alme l out de (sun) cors treit, car les wardeins furent oscis mult poi s'en eschaperent vifs'.

⁷⁹ *HH*, 396-97.

⁸⁰ *HH*, 396-97.

⁸¹ *JW*, 3, 8-9.

⁸² *JW*, 3, 10-11, 'Sed hoc ultione diuina citissime in eis uindicatum est grauissime'.

⁸³ *JW*, 3, 10-11.

where it was recorded many hundred were slain.⁸⁴ This is a trend where reported numbers in Latin texts were larger than those in the original Old English. The exaggeration in numbers may have demonstrated John's disgust and his reflection of the outcome of God's wrath against the destroyers of religious houses, no matter where such divine punishers originated. Once again, we find that it is more important to be a good Christian than anything else, and be the Danes monsters, pagans, or barbarians, if they were doing God's work, then they were acceptable, whether they be Christian at heart or not. After this large-scale raid the Danes returned to their ships with 'an immense plunder'.⁸⁵ Gaimar concluded his account of the 1069 raid by giving his audience an object lesson in retribution. The Danes and English rebels had collected a large amount of gold, silver, and 'other' booty from their attack on York which they distributed amongst themselves. They were not, however, to gain from this though as King William arrived and recaptured York, whilst killing all the Danes.⁸⁶ The attack and capture of the 'castle' at York had signified a blow against the material instrument of the Norman rule, and proved that King William needed to act in a kingly manner and lead his men in the field as a total reliance on static fortifications was not enough to suppress the spirit of the English. This is perhaps another comparison of kingly duties with 'The Anarchy' period.⁸⁷

Short translated Gaimar's explanation of the 'Harrying of the North' as, 'King William then continued laying waste everything from there right up to the River Tyne'.⁸⁸ The association with Swein's recent aggressive assault on King William's kingdom appeared to serve to justify his violent over-reaction and the devastation of large parts of the north of England. King William's politically motivated act of unthinkable cruelty can be seen in terms of his own monstrosity.⁸⁹ However, the blame for such an act, according to Gaimar, lay with the provocative actions of king of Denmark. As King William set about ravaging the north of England, John informed his audience that the king had sent messengers to Earl Osbjorn to negotiate a deal with the Danes.⁹⁰ In what John alludes to as secret negotiations between King William and Osbjorn, Osbjorn concluded a deal whereby in return for a large sum of money and the ability to forage freely along the coasts, that he would leave

⁸⁴ *ASC (E)*, 88, 'ofslogon fela huna manna'.

⁸⁵ *JW*, 3, 10-11.

⁸⁶ *EdE*, 294-97, 'Daneis, Noreis, tuz les oscist'.

⁸⁷ J. C. Holt, *Colonial England, 1066-1215* (London, 1997), 5.

⁸⁸ *EdE*, 296-97, 'Li reis Willame donc ne fine, tut ad destruit treskë [en] Tine'.

⁸⁹ Stein, 'Making History English', in *Text and Territory*, 98.

⁹⁰ *JW*, 3, 10-11.

peaceably and return to Denmark at the end of the winter.⁹¹ It is not known whether it was the Norman or Danish negotiators who first suggested the structure of this agreement. Brian Golding has suggested that Norman hostages taken at York may also have been returned as part of this deal.⁹² The ASC is silent on the matter, but John appeared to disapprove of Osbjorn's greed for gold and silver and felt it was disgraceful for him to accept such a deal.⁹³ John did not examine the advantages to William of this deal, which were he now had Danes suppressing some of the northerners on his behalf. John did dramatically set out the subsequent results of the Norman (not Danish) devastation of Northumbria where the; 'famine so prevailed that men ate the flesh of horses, dogs, cats and human beings'.⁹⁴ Perhaps it is because King William followed the Danish excursion of 1069 with his most notorious act of physical retribution towards his own English subjects that any other aspects of Osbjorn's deal with William were ignored and will remain unknown.

The Danegeld precedent previously recorded by John could explain John's chronicle entry concerning the reason behind Osbjorn's return to Denmark and may be seen as the return of a raider instead of an intended conqueror when; 'Earl Osbjorn went to Denmark with the fleet which had wintered in the Humber, but his brother Swein, king of the Danes, exiled him because he had received money from King William against the wishes of the Danes.'⁹⁵ This implies Swein was annoyed with Osbjorn for compromising the potential Danish conquest of England by accepting a pay-off from King William, like his predecessors had taken in the time of Æthelred. This is based upon an assumption that the actual 'wishes of the Danes' were to conquer the northern part of England. With York in ruins, the local population with their living memories of Danish ancestry would naturally look eastwards to Denmark for their future welfare. At this time, England produced all the food it needed and normal grain yields were sufficient to allow trade. To demonstrate the importance of such trade with Scandinavia, the modern Norwegian words for wheat and cloth are both loan-

⁹¹ *JW*, 3, 10-11.

⁹² Golding, *Conquest and Colonisation*, 41.

⁹³ *JW*, 3, 10-11.

⁹⁴ *JW*, 3, 10-11, 'fames preualuit, ut homines equinam, caninam, cattinam, et carnem comederent humanam'.

⁹⁵ *JW*, 3, 14-15, 'comes Esbernus, cum classe que in Humbre flumine hiemaurationat, Danemariciam adiit; sed frater suus, rex Danorum Suanus, illum, propter pecuniam, quam contra uoluntatem Danorum a rege Willelmo acceperat, exlegauit'.

words from English.⁹⁶ King William may have foreseen that by cutting off this supply chain then the northerners would be further punished for their rebelliousness.

Orderic took up the story of the Danish raids from more of a pro-Norman angle as, 'For a while the Danes lay in hiding', but then they were scattered by the Norman forces.⁹⁷ This sizeable force of Danes had achieved some victories but following the arrival of William and the consequent submission of the English Earls Gospatric and Waltheof; '[The English rebels'] recent allies the Danes, were now in grave peril as wandering pirates, at the mercy of winds and waves. They suffered as much from hunger as from storms.'⁹⁸ After exhausting their supplies of rancid meat and 'vile potage':

The meagre remnants of the great fleet returned to Denmark and told King Swein the woeful story of all the hazards they had endured, the terrible savagery of the enemy, and the loss of their comrades.⁹⁹

For Orderic there was no mention of Osbjorn's pay-off, but just a victory by the Normans who ejected the Danish 'others' from the land. Such a purported invasion without battles can only really be classed as a large-scale raid. The use of the reference to pirates is reminiscent of the pre-Cnut period and demonstrates that at least in Orderic's mind this trait had never left the Danes. For the same event, which John represented the Danes as divine punishers, Orderic showed them as a group who led a horde of overseas barbarians to England bent on conquest. Whilst Orderic's Danes took advantage of their numbers and gained some victories, the ultimate winners of this contest were the Normans due to their ferocity. Unlike John's opinion, Orderic's Normans were undoubtedly Godly and their opponents which included groups of non-true believers were subsequently beaten.

Henry's record of events was that after spending the winter on their ships between the Ouse and the Trent, King William arrived and drove the Danes away. After the Danes left, William 'destroyed the English of that province'.¹⁰⁰ Henry's account was similar to Orderic's in there was no deal struck with Osbjorn, just the aggressive action of King William to rid his land of the Danish menace. Henry clearly felt the Danes of 1069 were

⁹⁶ Matthew, *Britain and the Continent*, 162-63.

⁹⁷ *OV*, 2, 230-31, 'Dani aliquandiu delituere'.

⁹⁸ *OV*, 2, 232-35, 'Horum paulo ante contubernales iam periclitabantur Dani; ut uagei piratae fluctibus et uentis iactati. Vrgebat eos non minus fames quam tempestas'.

⁹⁹ *OV*, 2, 234-35, 'Tandem magnæ classis exiguæ reliquiæ Daciam repetierunt, et Sueno regi suo magna discrimina quæ perpassi sunt; ruinam sodalium flebiliter retulerunt, imiamque ferocitatem hostium suorumque'.

¹⁰⁰ *HH*, 396-97., 'Anglos illius prouincie destruxit'.

there to raid and plunder which they appeared to have done successfully. Henry considered that King William had driven them off and then punished the northern English for their part in the uprising.

The ASC for 1070 has been translated to, in the summer of that year, 'that' fleet came into the Thames, laid there for two nights, and then went onto Denmark.¹⁰¹ As a basis of comparison for the later chroniclers, the 1070 entry of the ASC reads as follows:

Then in the same year King Swein came from Denmark into the Humber and the local people came to meet him and made a truce with him, they expected that he was going to conquer the country. Then Christian, the Danish bishop, came to Ely, together with Earl Osbjorn and the Danish huscarls, and the English people from all the Fenlands came to them and thought they would conquer all the country.¹⁰²

From this entry William Kapelle made the point that according to the ASC, 'some four or five months after the harrying of Yorkshire, the men of York were still prepared to support a Danish invader'.¹⁰³ Both the raids of 1069 and 1070 ended with Swein feeling he had been let down and disgraced by Osbjorn and Hákon, as they had accepted bribes from the Normans to return to Denmark.¹⁰⁴ In an exaggeration of the ASC sources, William wrote that Swein had both of them exiled.¹⁰⁵ Home noted that John, Henry and William, all drew upon multiple source material which were frequently combined, collated, or eliminated.¹⁰⁶ William's stance was that Swein was not like the old-style Viking raider and the implication is he had wished to re-conquer and rule England in the same manner as his uncle Cnut had done before him. William wished to portray Swein as a strong, arms-length king, who in his frustration with failure had punished his two earls. Although the anger and exiling demonstrated by Swein may indicate the twelfth-century view of him, rather than the reality of the situation. To record a frustrated desire for invasion by the Danish king, creates a latent threat of it happening again, as opposed to recording Swein was pleased with his share of the spoils from such a raid. Without further written records for Osbjorn

¹⁰¹ ASC (D), 85.

¹⁰² ASC (E), 88, Most of this translation is from ASC *trans*, 151, with an acknowledgement to ASC, Swanton, 205, 'þa on þam ilcan geare com Swegn cyng of Denmarcan into Humbran, 7 þet landfolc wændon þet he sceolde þet land ofergan comen him ongean 7 griðedon wið hine. þa comen into Elig Christien þa densce bishop 7 Osbearn eorl 7 þa densca huscarles mid heom, 7 þet englisce folc of eall þa feonlandes comen to heom, wendon þet hi sceoldon eall þet land'.

¹⁰³ Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North*, 122.

¹⁰⁴ WM, 480-81.

¹⁰⁵ WM, 480-81.

¹⁰⁶ Home, *The Peterborough Version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 122.

and Hákon, invention and rumour may have taken over. J. C. Holt observed that the English rebels' best hope of reversing the events following the Battle of Hastings had lain with a renewed Danish invasion.¹⁰⁷ Once the potential for such an event had passed then all that was left to English was material for heroic legends such as those of Hereward and Eadric the Wild.¹⁰⁸

The year 1071 brought some unexpected entries in the chronicles. In what may be described as an outline of resistance to the 'other', the Ely campaign and the emergence of the heroic figure of Hereward blurred the audiences' view of who the 'others' now were in the texts. John mentions 'the most vigorous Hereward', and 'the valiant Hereward' twice.¹⁰⁹ Hereward's act of taking refuge in Ely, a location similar to Alfred's act of refuge in the Somerset marshes, followed his escape through the fens in but a few lines. John finished his entry for 1071 by describing when King William freed some of his prisoners captured at Ely, he did so 'after their hands had been cut off or their eyes gouged out'.¹¹⁰ It appears the twelfth-century chroniclers favoured only having one 'monstrous persona' present at any one time, and thus represented conflicts in terms of good or bad, with very clear boundaries of who was good and who was not.

Introducing the Breton-led rebellion against King William of 1075 the ASC included the following entry; 'It was Earl Roger and Earl Ralph who were the foremost in the foolish plan, and they seduced the Bretons to them, and sent east to Denmark for an army to support them.'¹¹¹ Mention of the support from Denmark for this enterprise does not appear in John's chronicle.¹¹² After the failure of this small-scale uprising, Earl Ralph and his wife had subsequently fled England by ship. Orderic's account of the 1075 rebellion concentrated primarily on the treachery of Roger and Ralph and the inclusion into their plot of Waltheof, the last surviving English Earl, who was offered a way to 'bring salvation to [his] people, [who were] now sunk in slavery'.¹¹³ Orderic did not specifically mention the Danes, when noting that the rebels had 'sent messengers to all far and near whom they

¹⁰⁷ Holt, *Colonial England*, 3.

¹⁰⁸ Holt, *Colonial England*, 3.

¹⁰⁹ JW, 3., 20-1, 'Hereuuardus uir strenuissimus', and, 'Hereuuardo uiro strenuissimo'.

¹¹⁰ JW, 3., 20-1, 'partim minibus truncates uel oculis erutis, abire permisit.'

¹¹¹ ASC, Swanton, 211, Swanton's 'raiding ship-army' has been changed to 'army' as this I feel translates the Chronicler's intention better, 'Ðæt wæs Roger eorl 7 Raulf eorl þe wæron Yldast to ðam unreode, 7 hi speonan þa Bryttas heom to 7 sendon east to Denmearcan æfter sciphære heom to fultume'.

¹¹² JW, 3., 24-7.

¹¹³ OV, 2, 314-15, 'omnique genti tuae quae prostrata est salutiferos'.

trusted', asking for support.¹¹⁴ William was even briefer on the rebellion itself and did not attempt to connect the Danes with any misdoings at all and even sought to distance Waltheof from the conspiracy.¹¹⁵ Henry made selective use of the ASC for his account of the rebellion, and like Orderic, noted Ralph left Norwich for the safety of Denmark, and repeated the ASC by stating that; 'Earl Ralph, however, bringing Knut, son of the Danish King Swein, and Earl Hákon, returned to England with two hundred ships. But as they did not dare fight against King William, they crossed over to Flanders.'¹¹⁶

Following the defeat of the rebels of Norwich, Archbishop Lanfranc wrote to Walcher, the bishop of Durham during late 1075 to highlight the threat of what he considered to be another inevitable upcoming Danish invasion. The tone of his letter showed that King William had not yet returned to England from Normandy, as:

I was glad at the news you sent me. Your letter told us that you have peace, which in our alarm at the many reports reaching us from many quarters we believed to be far from you. For our part, now that the Bretons are banished, and all warfare is suppressed, we live in tranquillity greater than we can recall ever experiencing since the king crossed the sea. Be assured that our lord the king's affairs are prospering and that he himself is crossing to England without delay. The Danes are indeed coming, as the king told us. So, fortify your castle with men, weapons and stores: be ready. May the Lord almighty preserve you from all evil.¹¹⁷

He ended his letter to Walcher with a quote from Psalms, 120:7, 'May the Lord almighty preserve you from all evil'. Of all his extant letters this is the only one which ends in such a manner, with Lanfranc indicating his opinion that the Danes represented the epitome of 'all evil'. The dating of this letter with its threat of imminent Danish attack pre-dates the ASC

¹¹⁴ *OV*, 2, 310-11, 'uicinis et longinquis in quibus confidebant, legatos suos frequenter destinant'.

¹¹⁵ *WM*, 468-73.

¹¹⁶ *HH*, 398-99, 'Radulfus autem consul, adducens Cnut filium suein regis Dacorum et Hacun consulem, rediit in Angliam cum cc puppibus. Sed cum non auderent contra regem Willelmum pugnare, transfretaurunt in Flandriam'.

¹¹⁷ Clover and Gibson, *The Letters of Lanfranc*, 126-27, Letter 36, 'Letatus sum in his quae dicta sunt michi a uobis. Pacem uos uestris litteris habere didicimus, quam procul a uobis esse multis multorum relationibus territi credebamus. Nos uero, expulsis Britonibus et sedatis omnibus bellis, in tanta tranquillitate uiuimus ut postquam rex mare transiit tranquillius nos uixisse nequaquam meminerimus. Res domini nostri regis in summa prosperitate esse et eum ad presens ad nos transire certissime sciatic. Dani ut rex nobis mandauit reuera ueniunt. Castrum Itaque uestrum et hominibus et armis et alimentis uigilanti ueniunt cura muniri facite. Omnipotens autem Dominus ab omni malo uos defendat.'

entries as it concerns a real threat, whereas the ASC refers to a passing threat which on this occasion, did not actually develop.

The twelfth-century chroniclers were disposed towards telling their audiences of the price to be paid for treachery against their king. With the contemporary back-drop to some of their writings being 'The Anarchy', it is perhaps not surprising that rebellion was treated in such a manner. For the chroniclers with access to the Worcester version of the ASC, they perhaps saw through the reasoning behind the scribes' wish to portray the Danes as Viking raiders of York and chose to ignore this addition because the story of loyalty to ones' Lord resonated a stronger contemporary relevance than did the recording of a then out-dated anti-Viking sentiment. John recorded the death of Swein in 1076 as a man, 'well instructed in letters, [who died] and was succeeded by his son Harold'.¹¹⁸ The ASC 1076 entry did not mention Swein's learning, but just that he had died and was succeeded by his son.¹¹⁹ John may have been referring to a lost work or tale that praised Swein for his intelligence rather than his aggression.

Danegeld

During the twelfth-century there continued to exist a memory of the past Viking raids on England through the form of the taxation known as the Danegeld. David Roffe has described this particular tax in 1086, as being the King's 'greatest single source of income'.¹²⁰ The first recorded mention of the term 'Danegeld' appeared in Domesday Book under the Lincolnshire folio 336V as, 'The King's Borough of Stamford paid geld TRE for 12½ hundreds for military service by land and sea and for danegeld'.¹²¹ The specific reference to Danegeld can therefore be traced to being post-conquest in its recognised description, as earlier references were always to *geld*, *heregeld* or *gafol*, the general Old English expressions used for tax or duty, whether like *heregeld* they were associated with the Vikings or not.¹²² As Stamford was situated in the Danelaw, this also confirms that Viking

¹¹⁸ *JW*, 3, 28-9, 'Rex Danorum Suanus bene litteris imbutus obit'.

¹¹⁹ *ASC (E)*, 91.

¹²⁰ David Roffe, *Domesday, The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford, 2000), 233

¹²¹ *Domesday Book, A Complete Translation*, eds. Ann Williams, and G. H. Martin (Penguin Classics, 2003), 883, 'in exercitu et navigio et in danegeld'. This was in a Latin record and perhaps reflects an Old English vernacular practice.

¹²² See the established arguments in such articles as: J. A. Green, 'The Last Century of Danegeld', *EHR*, 96 (Apr, 1981), 241-58; M. K. Lawson, 'The collection of Danegeld and Heregeld in the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut', in *EHR* 99 (Oct 1984), 721-38; John Gillingham, 'The most precious jewel in the English Crown, levels of Danegeld and Heregeld

forces were also disposed towards ravaging the Danelaw.¹²³ Andrew Wareham has argued that *gafol*, *heregeld*, and Danegeld do not refer to only one concept of taxation. Wareham also references Danegeld to the Northamptonshire geld roll and the *Leges Henrici Primi*, both of which were post-Domesday records.¹²⁴

Florence Harmer noted the term Danegeld ‘was in common use from the latter part of the eleventh century’.¹²⁵ The word Danegeld may well have been in general public use, however the Domesday Book entry was its first surviving ‘official’ documented appearance. In what is considered to be a forged writ, purporting to have been written during the period 1058-66, pertaining to land at Claygate belonging to Westminster Abbey, the monastic owners were recorded as being exempt from geld and Danegeld.¹²⁶ The question why the prefix ‘Dane’ was added to the words used to describe Æthelred’s original payments to the Danes of *geld*, *gafol* or *tributum* can be explained through a wish to continue the recollection of the past, and that such an established tax was associated with a threat from an outsider. In 1087, the threat from Scandinavia still existed in people’s consciousness, but by a generation later in 1131, such a threat was fading into myth, with the haunting memory kept alive through the use of the Danish prefix to a tax. By around 1177 during the reign of Henry II, the ‘Dialogue of the Exchequer’ (*Dialogus de Scaccario*), described what the Danegeld ‘is’, and why it was so called.¹²⁷ Part of this document included the idea the description ‘Danegeld’ was instituted chiefly on account of the Danes.¹²⁸ However, the *Dialogus*’ explanation continued with the notation that the Danegeld was rarely paid during the reign of King William I, or his successors. The explanation for those times was that it was charged when wars or rumours of wars arose through relations with foreign peoples.¹²⁹

in the early eleventh century’, in *EHR*, 104 (Apr 1989), 373-84; M. K. Lawson, ‘Those stories look true, levels of taxation in the reigns of Æthelred II and Cnut’, in *EHR*, 104 (Apr 1989), 385-406; M. K. Lawson, ‘Danegeld and Heregeld once more’, in *EHR*, 105 (Oct, 1990), 951-61.

¹²³ Keynes, *Diplomas*, 204.

¹²⁴ Andrew Wareham, ‘Fiscal policies and the institution of a tax state in Anglo-Saxon England within a comparative context’, in *Economic History Review*, 65, (2012), 917.

¹²⁵ Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 513-14 [1.11].

¹²⁶ Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 358-9 [93]. ‘exempt from scot and tax in shire and in hundred, from geld and from Danegeld’, ‘scotfri 7 gafollfri of [scire, 7 hundrede of gelde] 7 of dænegelde.’

¹²⁷ *EHD* 2, 524-25.

¹²⁸ *EHD* 2, 525.

¹²⁹ *EHD* 2, 525.

Nearly a century before the aborted Danish assault of 1087, Archbishop Sigeric had advised Æthelred to pay the first instalment of what was later to become known as 'Danegeld', which William of Malmesbury described such a payment in a disgusted tone; 'So Danish greed was satisfied with the payment of ten thousand pounds; and it was a disgraceful precedent, unworthy of true men, to buy with money the freedom of which no violence can rob an invincible spirit.'¹³⁰ Henry expanded upon this initial 10000-pound payment, by noting that:

This evil [the Danegeld tax] has lasted into the present day, and unless God's compassion intervenes, it will last for a long time still. But now we pay to our kings, out of custom, what used to be paid to the Danes out of unspeakable fear¹³¹

John during his long contemporary chronicle entry for 1131 stated that King Henry I 'after a troublesome ship journey', and obviously wishing to publicly repent; 'decided that the Danish tax should not be collected in the English Kingdom for seven years'.¹³² Henry I of course had a knowledge of how deadly the sea could be, and not only suspended the collection of the Danegeld, but also sought the special protection of St Edmund, who was associated with miracles at sea.¹³³ Henry I is not known to have sought friends in Scandinavia, and coupled with the fact that Denmark no longer posed any real threat to English security by this time, the king was using the past history of conflict between the English and the Danes for his own political capital through the reminder that this was originally a tax born of the threat from the Danes.¹³⁴ John continued his entry for 1131 by bringing events up to his own time by telling his audience that King Stephen, 'who now reigns', had promised by royal decree that the 'Danish tax' would never be collected again.¹³⁵ This is explained by Henry of Huntingdon when he listed King Stephen's Oxford charter, of 1135/1136 where; 'He vowed that Danegeld, that is two shillings per hide which

¹³⁰ *WM*, 270-71, 'Ita decem milia librarum soluta cupiditatem Danorum expleuere; exemplum infame uiolentia possit excutere redimere, quam ab inuicto animo nulla et uiris indignum, libertatem pecunia'.

¹³¹ *HH*, 328-29, 'Hoc autem malum usque in hodiernum diem durauit, et diu nisi Dei pietas subueniat, durabit. Regibus namque nostris modo persoluimus ex consuetudine, quod Dacis persoluebatur ex ineffabili terrore'.

¹³² *JW*, 3, 202-3, 'In regno Anglie Danicum tributum vii. annis non exigi decernit'.

¹³³ Bates, *Normans and Empire*, 30.

¹³⁴ Matthew, *Britain and the Continent*, 82.

¹³⁵ *JW*, 3, 202-3, 'Hoc etiam rex Stephanus qui nunc imperat in regali decreto suo promisit, Danicum scilicet tributum se nullatenus exacturum'.

his predecessors used to collect every year, he would remit for all time.¹³⁶ Although the Danes themselves are no longer directly represented, reference to the Danish tax again served to remind the audience of the origin of what, after all had been akin to extortion.

The latent threat of the Danes

Collective memory provides many reasons for fear, one of these being the unconscious transmission of trauma across the generations. What is considered below is the fear caused by the past actions of the Vikings, and the perceived threat by the chroniclers of similar 'others' returning one day.¹³⁷ This idea can be interpreted as 'a continuist notion', which is a thing not just lying dormant, but has already been formed in the past and is simply waiting to emerge at some point in the future.¹³⁸ Such an application to a Danish invasion, or Viking raids would have been readily available to apply through the chroniclers' works due to the volume of previous evidence of such attacks. To help define how the real threat from the Danes was verbalised in the later eleventh century, we can refer to the words used by Archbishop Lanfranc in a letter to Pope Alexander II, which was written between Christmas 1072 and Easter 1073, wherein Lanfranc stated; 'What can be discerned in the present is evil indeed; but it forebodes far worse evil to come.'¹³⁹ Although this statement was not directed towards the Danes, indeed it actually referenced more about the state of the integration of foreigners such as himself with the English; such attitudes were reflected by the twelfth-century chroniclers to shape opinions regarding the ongoing latent threat from 'others'.

An example of latency comes from Knut's threatened invasion of England in 1085. In apparently the first time it had ever been tried, King Knut attempted to mobilise an army from the whole Kingdom of Denmark to invade England.¹⁴⁰ The ASC set out the background for our chroniclers of the threat to England from the Danes in 1085:

¹³⁶ HH, 704-5, 'uouit quod danegeldum, id est duos solidos as hidam, quos antecessores sui accipere solebant singulis annis, in eternum condonaret.'

¹³⁷ Cohen, *Monster Theory*, preface x.

¹³⁸ Joan Copjec, 'Introduction', in *Supposing the Subject*, ed. J. Copjec, (London, 1994), ix.

¹³⁹ Clover, and Gibson, *The Letters of Lanfranc*, 32-3, Letter 1, 'Mala siquidem sunt quae in praesenti cernuntur, multo uero deteriora ex istorum consideration in future coniciuntur'.

¹⁴⁰ Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 215.

In this year people said and declared for a fact, that Knut, king of Denmark, son of King Swein, was setting out in this direction and meant to conquer this country with the help of Earl Robert of Flanders, because Knut was married to Robert's daughter. When William, king of England, who was then in Normandy, because he owned both England and Normandy, learnt of this, he travelled into England with a greater mercenary army of mounted men and infantry from the kingdom of France and from Brittany than had ever come to this country before, so that people wondered how this land could feed them all. But the king had the mercenaries distributed through all this land among his vassals, and they provisioned the mercenaries, each according to the proportion of his land. And people were greatly oppressed that year, and the king had the land near the sea laid waste, so that if his enemies landed they would have nothing on which to seize so quickly. But then when the king learned for a fact that his enemies were hindered and could not set out on their expedition, he let some of the mercenaries travel to their own land, and some he kept here over winter.¹⁴¹

Knut was the king of Denmark from 1080 to 1086 and was one of the many sons of Swein. Apart from the obvious fact that Knut was the son of Swein, the other reason which may have made him a propaganda target for the Norman and Anglo-Norman chroniclers was his marriage to the daughter of Robert, Count of Flanders, William I's antagonist. Flanders had previously supported Tostig's raids on England, and his invasion attempt of 1066.

John did not dwell on this potential threat to England in 1085, mentioning only that Knut, with the help of his father-in-law Robert, had prepared to come to England with a strong fleet. John stated that their enterprise had been frustrated, although he did not explain how.¹⁴² The threat of the Danes seemed to have been real and well known in 1085, and the subsequent hypothesis to the creation of William's Domesday Book and the raising

¹⁴¹ *ASC (E)*, 93, and *ASC trans*, 161, and *ASC*, Swanton, 215-16, where I have preferred 'mercenaries' to Swanton's 'Raiding-army', 'On þisum geare menn cwydodon 7 to soðan sædan þat Cnut cyng of Denmearcan, Swægnes sune cynges, fundade hiderward 7 wolde gewinnan þis land mid Rodbeardes eorles fultume of Flandran, forðan þe Cnut heafde Rodbeardes dohter. Ða Willelm Englalandes cyng, þe þa wæs sittende on Normandige forðig he ahte ægðer ge Englaland ge Normandige, þis geaxode, he ferde into Englalande mid swa mycclan here ridendra manna 7 gangendra of Francrice and of Brytlande swa næfre ær þis land ne gesohte, swa þet menn wundredon hu þis land mihte eall þone here afedan. Ac se cyng let toscyfton þone here geond eall þis land to his mannon. 7 hi fæddon þone here ælc be his landefne. 7 se cyng lett awestan þat land abutan þat sæ þat gif his feond comen upp þet hi næfdon na on hwam hi fengon swa rædlice. Ac þa se cyng geaxode to soðan þet his feond gelætte wæron 7 ne mihten na geforðian heora fare, þa lett he some þone here faren to heora agene lande, 7 sum he heold on þissum lande ofer winter'. This is an example of the level of detail included in the post-Norman Conquest *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entries.

¹⁴² *JW*, 3, 42-3.

of additional taxes has been made elsewhere many times.¹⁴³ William of Malmesbury informed his audience that when Knut became king of Denmark he did so with a degree of personal guilt owing to the failure of his involvement with the raids on England in 1069 and 1070.¹⁴⁴ William saw Knut as a would-be conqueror of England but whether this was of the whole country or only in-part was not recorded. William noted that Knut's force of 1,000 ships or more was to be assisted by Robert of Flanders with a further 600 ships, and they were to invade England.¹⁴⁵ Robert was also seen as an active threat to the Normans at that time, having been openly opposed to King William since 1071.¹⁴⁶ William also made the point that he personally had only heard about the size of Knut's fleet and therefore left his audience to make their own minds' up as to the validity of his written testimony.¹⁴⁷

King William clearly had taken the threat seriously, but the fact that he had considerable time to prepare for the coming of the Danes through his recruitment of continental European troops demonstrates that William of Malmesbury had been informed that Knut's motive was invasion. According to William, Knut was delayed for almost two years by contrary winds which were a demonstration of God's will.¹⁴⁸ William made a link between the earlier delay caused to King William with his invasion of England, which God allowed to proceed after the 'Vikings' had weakened King Harold at Stamford Bridge, which ensured William's victory. The divine plan for the conquest of the English was the same as the earlier success by the Danes, but with the Norman Conquest, Winkler has noted that the fault of the English king was much greater as the magnitude of the disaster is greater.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, if waiting two years was indeed true, then such divine intervention should arguably have served to demonstrate to Knut that such an enterprise should never be undertaken, as two years waiting for the right wind is a rather long time for a seafaring nation. William also sought to link the proposed invasion by Knut back to a hereditary claim through the recounting of a popular rumour. William stated that this rumour of Knut's invasion was because; 'the soil of which was rightly his as a relative of the elder Cnut; and indeed, he would have done so, had not God taken the drive out of his rash attempt with a contrary

¹⁴³ As one example see, Holt, *Domesday Studies*, 48.

¹⁴⁴ WM, 480-81, 'Is ueteris repulsae memor classem'.

¹⁴⁵ WM, 480-81.

¹⁴⁶ WM, 474-77 and, 480-81, Bates, *William the Conqueror*, 255.

¹⁴⁷ WM, 480-81.

¹⁴⁸ WM, 480-81, William the Conqueror's earlier invasion of England delay due to lack of winds, was not cross-referenced to here.

¹⁴⁹ Winkler, *Royal Responsibility*, 141.

wind.¹⁵⁰ In this manner the Danish hereditary right to rule in England was finally extinguished both through the success of the Norman invasion and due to God choosing to protect the English nation from any further foreign interference. Of significance to John was King William's reaction to the Danish threat:

William took into his pay from the whole of Gaul many thousands of troops, foot soldiers, and archers, collecting some also from Normandy, and returned to England in the autumn. He spread them throughout the whole kingdom, and ordered bishops, abbots, earls, barons, sheriffs, and royal officers to supply them with provisions.¹⁵¹

King William spread his mercenaries across the whole kingdom and made the church contribute heavily to the financial burden of them to be there. We may interpret King William's actions of destroying areas of England and bringing in large numbers of armed men as being acts of intimidation aimed at the English people. Whilst the ultimately abortive invasion plans were being made, William also described the reaction of William the Conqueror:

So, the king of the Danes was, as I said, the only obstacle between William and continual peace and happiness, and it was with him in mind that he hired such a great multitude of knights serving for pay, from every province this side of the Alps, that their numbers were a burden on the kingdom.¹⁵²

Warren Hollister enthusiastically associated William's use of the Latin word *stipendiarii* as being a term for a mercenary.¹⁵³ Henry was clearly aghast at the numbers of troops he had heard had been brought over as; 'it was a wonder this land was able to feed them'.¹⁵⁴ Henry re-iterated the threat posed by Knut along with Robert, Duke of Flanders, who together, 'wished to place England under their control by martial assaults', but Henry then

¹⁵⁰ *WM*, 478-79, 'debitum sibi pro affinitate antike Cnutonis solum; et profecto fecisset, nisi Deus eius audatiam uento contrario infirmasset'.

¹⁵¹ *JW*, 3, 42-3, 'rex Willelmus, de tota solidariis, peditibus, et sagittariis multis milibus conductis, et nonnullis de Normannia sumptis, autumnali tempore Angliam rediit, et eis per totum regnum diuisis, episcopis, abbatibus, comitibus, baronibus, uicecomitibus, ac regiis prepositis uictum prebere mandauit'.

¹⁵² *WM*, 482-83, referring to his entry 258.3, 'Solus eius maiestatem concutiebat Cnuto rex Danorum', also, 476-79, 482-83, 'Rex igitur Danorum, ut dixi, solus erat obstaculum ne Willelmus continua feriretur laetitia; cuius respectu tantum multitudinem stipendiariorum conducebat militum ex omni quae citra montes est prouintia ut eorum copia regnum grauaret'.

¹⁵³ Charles Warren Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London, 1986), 7.

¹⁵⁴ *HA*, 400-1, 'quod mirum uidebatur quomodo hec terra pascere posset eos' 'it was a wonder this land was able to feed them'.

told his audience that due to God's will their preparations came to nothing.¹⁵⁵ Sawyer argued that those mercenaries whom William recruited in 1085 included Scandinavians as testified by the appearance of English coins of the period being found in Scandinavian coin hoards.¹⁵⁶ Knut's failed expedition was therefore not setting out from a totally united nation, as clearly some of his subjects fought for whoever who would pay the most.

Another contemporary chronicler was the Denmark-based English exile Ælnoth of Canterbury. In his *Vita et Passio S. Canuti*, Ælnoth recorded that in the face of invasion, William had given instructions to the English to appear more like the French, presumably to act as a visible reminder to the Danes that they were facing a more numerous foe whereby; 'The English should shave their beards, change their arms and clothes to the style of the Romans, and, to delude the sight of the invaders, in everything imitate the French, whom we prefer to call Romans.'¹⁵⁷ It is interesting that a Danish-based Englishman writing in Latin referred to the Normans as French due to their language, and also as Romans, presumably due to their growing Latinised records of land holdings. Such a situation highlights the irrelevance of linguistic difference in a pan-European sense.

In a similar manner to the 1069 landing, this Danish threat presented William with an opportunity to use martial force to suppress any potential threat to his sovereignty in England, whether this be Danish, English or rebellious Norman-French. The threat of the Danes allowed William to use force to suppress his dissenters, and his methods ensured that those who may have been thinking of sedition were given no option but to think again with the appearance of large numbers of armed men who were being paid to be in their region by King William. Using the Danish threat gave King William the opportunity to ensure that areas which contained rebels could be suppressed through his own use of latent threat.

With the re-telling of this recent history by the chroniclers, the latent threat of the Danes passed to King William himself. There is an element of exaggerating the threat of the Danes in all the Anglo-Norman chronicle entries. The beneficiary of this from the perspective of character representation is King William, who is recorded as only seeking to

¹⁵⁵ HA, 400-1, 'dicioni sue Angliam Martis aggressibus suo ponere'.

¹⁵⁶ Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings*, 217-18.

¹⁵⁷ Ælnoth of Canterbury, 'Vita et Passio S. Canuti', in *Vitae Sanctorum Danorum*, ed. M. C. Gertz (Copenhagen, 1908-1912), 98-9, and the Latin translation contained in, Thomas, *The English & the Normans*, 51, 'Anglis autem, quibus non minimi desiderii aduentum uisus per omnia se barbas radere, arma et exuias ad instar Romanorum coaptare et ad deludendos Danici exercitus aduentum esse didicerat, Francigenis, quos et Romanos dici pretulimus, assimilare preceperat'.

defend the English from an overseas threat. In fact, William used this opportunity to enforce his will and to arrange for the compilation of the Domesday Book, a comprehensive taxation system to be put into place across the country. It is known that many of King William's mercenaries were sent to the east coast where their presence served two purposes, firstly that they were there to defend the land from a foreign threat, and perhaps more significantly, that they were a strong presence in an area which was known to contain both English rebels and hereditary Danish sympathisers. Pauline Stafford felt that the devastation of the east coast was due to William's fear of the positive reception the Danes may have received.¹⁵⁸ This is arguably only half of the story concerning William's true intentions. Akin to his reaction to the 1069 landings, the threat from the Danes gave William an opportunity to suppress and ensure that the areas of the east coast which may have still harboured thoughts of rebellion stayed suppressed. Thus, the latent threat from overseas 'others' acted as an excuse to justify King William's more extreme acts of reinforcing his rule. William continued the association of the Danes with piracy, together with an implication to his audience that not only were the Danes still had the potential to be piratical raiders but also would stay if given an opportunity to do so.¹⁵⁹ William also observed that; 'thus a province once fertile and a nurse of tyrants was hamstrung by fire, rapine, and bloodshed'.¹⁶⁰ William the Conqueror's choice of a 'scorched earth policy' was partly justified by William of Malmesbury to remove the potential threat of further attacks from Denmark.

William may be seen as making three points by using the exaggerated tale of Knut's inability to cross the sea from Denmark; firstly, that God was against a further invasion of England, and secondly that accordingly God was on the side of King William and the English. The third point is for two years William knew Knut was coming, so had time to make plans. William expanded the story from the ASC by recording after Knut changed his mind over invading England he attributed his problems to the use of witchcraft in his homeland.¹⁶¹ William pointed out that Knut took offence to the association of witchcraft with his subjects and that he heavily fined the nobles whose womenfolk had started the witchcraft rumours.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, 105.

¹⁵⁹ See pp. 113-14, and particularly p.173.

¹⁶⁰ WM, 464-65, 'Itaque prouintiae quondam fertilis et tirannorum utriculae incentio, preda, sanguine nerul succisi.'

¹⁶¹ WM, 480-83.

¹⁶² WM, 480-83.

John Gillingham summarised the failure to attack as, 'The Danes threatened to come again in 1085 but, as it happened they did not – a non-event which marked the end of the "Viking period" of English history.'¹⁶³ Lesley Abrams has made the point that both Swein's invasions and Knut's threatened invasion demonstrated the persistence of the Danish desire to 're-establish their hegemony in the North Sea Zone'.¹⁶⁴ However, Bates has described 'the occasional rumblings of invasions from Scandinavia' as either non-events or 'damp-squibs', from which he implies that by 1072 the English had pretty-well been completely conquered with no hope of reversing this situation.¹⁶⁵

The martyrdom of Knut

The final entry which appears in the ASC relating to an actual Danish threat recorded:

We can write many things that happened in the same year. Thus, it was in Denmark that the Danish, who had been reckoned the most faithful of all peoples, were turned to the greatest disloyalty and the greatest treachery which could ever happen. They chose and submitted to King Knut and swore him oaths, and afterwards basely killed him inside a church.¹⁶⁶

Under his entry for the year 1087 John added to the ASC version that it was on Saturday 10th July, in a church in Odense, that the Danes martyred their King.¹⁶⁷ Henry told his audience that the Danes, 'who had never before broken faith with their lord, treacherously murdered their king' in a monastery.¹⁶⁸ After describing how Knut's rumoured invasion plans had been thwarted by God's will, William's narrative switched to describing how, following the heavy fines inflicted by Knut upon noblemen whose wives had been accused of witchcraft; 'the barbarians finding these restraints on their liberty intolerable, murdered

¹⁶³ Gillingham, *Conquests, Catastrophe and Recovery*, 98.

¹⁶⁴ Lesley Abrams, 'England, Normandy and Scandinavia', in Harper-Bill and Van Houts, *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, 51.

¹⁶⁵ Bates, *The Normans and Empire*, 33.

¹⁶⁶ *ASC (E)*, 98, and *ASC trans*, 165, and *ASC*, Swanton, 221, 'Fela þinga we magon writan þe on ðam ilcan geare gewordene wæron. Swa hit wæs on Denmearcan þat þa Dænescan, þe wæs ærur geteald eallra folca getreowast, wurdon awende to þære meste untriwðe 7 to þam mæsten swicdome þe æfre mihte gewurðan; hi gecuron 7 abugan to Cnute cyng 7 him aðas sworon 7 syððan hine ealhlice ofslogon innan anre cyrcean'.

¹⁶⁷ *JW*, 3, 44-5, 'Dani suumdomnum regem Canutum, .vi. id. Iul., sabbato, in quadam ecclesia martirizauerunt'.

¹⁶⁸ *HA*, 406-7, 'numquam antea in dominum fide lesi, Cnut regem suum in monasterio quodam prodicione peremerunt'.

him in a church as he was clasping the altar and promising reparation.¹⁶⁹ The killers of this Christian king had been described as ‘barbarians’ as if to emphasise the gap between true Christians and those who may practice other faiths which made them untrustworthy. However, William showed more respect for this Knut than he had done for Swein Estrithson by describing Knut as; ‘a man devoted to fasting and almsgiving, who when dealing with law-breakers pursued the claims of the Church rather than his own; and so he was honoured with consecration as a martyr by the Roman pontiff.’¹⁷⁰ Although he did not appear to have been a popular king, through the manner of his death, Knut became the first Danish saint and provided Pope Paschal II with an opportunity to elevate the diocese of Lund to the first Scandinavian archdiocese.¹⁷¹ Knut was succeeded by his brother Olaf who; ‘ruled ingloriously for eight years’.¹⁷² Indeed, when famine and epidemic hit Denmark during Olaf’s reign, the clergy associated the fact that Knut had been murdered with this divine punishment of the Danes.¹⁷³

The transferral of the monsterisation idea to the Norman Kings of England

As noted above, the reflection of monstrosity which was transferred from one individual or group to another in the chroniclers’ texts, appointed new monsters after the end of the Danish threat to England.¹⁷⁴ Such a transferral came with the death of King William and the twelfth-century records of this event. King William was also described in the *Liber Eliensis* as leading his people to inflict terrible agonies upon the people of England after his victory at Hastings. This was carried out; ‘not only by William but by his followers, given that we know that this is difficult to speak of and perhaps, because of his monstrous cruelty, beyond belief.’¹⁷⁵ Here, not only the Norman King, but presumably his followers were the perpetrators of monstrous cruelty towards the English. Emily Albu has noted that during his early scholastic writing, Orderic made some alterations to William of Jumièges’ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, and restored aspects of Norman treachery and violence to this

¹⁶⁹ WM, 482-83, ‘quapropter barbari, libertatis suae iniuriam non ferentes, intra aecclesiam quandam altare amplexum et emendationem facti promittentem trucidarunt’.

¹⁷⁰ WM, 482-83, ‘quod fuerit uir ille ieiuniis et elemosinis contumelias; unde et ei martiris magis diuinas quam suas persequeretur deditus, et qui in legum transgressores honor consecratus est a papa Romano’.

¹⁷¹ *Viking Empires*, 366.

¹⁷² WM, 482-83, ‘Hic octo annis ignaue imperitans regnum’.

¹⁷³ Sawyer and Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 215-16.

¹⁷⁴ See p. 191.

¹⁷⁵ *Liber Eliensis*, 203.

otherwise more wholesome account. Orderic was the only chronicler who re-emphasised Rollo's Danish connection and added the monstrous story of where, in the aftermath of the siege of Alençon in 1051, the young Duke William, mutilated thirty-two captives who had taunted him over his illegitimacy by ordering their hands and feet to be removed.¹⁷⁶ However Van Houts has concluded that it was not William's illegitimate birth which caused the deep insult, but the low status of his mother Herleva.¹⁷⁷ Whichever the reason, his reaction could be deemed to have been 'monstrous'. Orderic found it important to portray William as a king who expressed his repentant death-bed dread at the recollection of his former brutality.¹⁷⁸ Orderic excused William's monstrosity and chose to stress that the Conqueror's successes were due to God's grace.

Gillingham made the point that Cnut's conquest had reinforced trends which had been apparent since the ninth century, whereas William's conquest was abrupt and signalled the massive intensification of what had previously been just a trend of a growing continental presence in England.¹⁷⁹ Despite Cnut's eradication of a selection of English nobles, many others survived, integrated, and indeed for Godwin, had prospered under a Danish king of England. It is clear from Domesday Book evidence that the same could not be said for the English nobility under King William, despite assurances given by Henry of Huntingdon. Van Houts has estimated that between a half and three-quarters of the nobility of England lost their lives in the campaigns of 1066, which effectively negated the need for William to dispose of many more, and therefore made him able to claim the moral high-ground over Cnut.¹⁸⁰ Stafford's view was 1016 appeared to be less traumatic than 1066, as 'the continuity [was] greater, the dispossession less'; and '1016 was too soon undone to stimulate long-term commitment'.¹⁸¹

Thomas Callahan commenced his 1981 article on the history of how William Rufus was made into a monster, with:

¹⁷⁶ Albu, *The Normans and their Histories*, 183.

¹⁷⁷ Van Houts, *Medieval Memories*, 9.

¹⁷⁸ William M. Aird, 'Orderic's Secular Rulers and Representations of Personality and Power in the *Historia ecclesiastica*', in Rozier et al., *Orderic Vitalis*, 201.

¹⁷⁹ John Gillingham, 'Britain, Ireland, and the South', in ed. Wendy Davies, *From the Vikings to the Normans* (Oxford, 2003), 214.

¹⁸⁰ Elizabeth Van Houts, 'The Trauma of 1066', in *History Today*, 46, 9.

¹⁸¹ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, 69.

Few writers, medieval or modern, have had much good to write about William Rufus, the second Norman king of England. Beginning in the twelfth century, chroniclers and historians have portrayed Rufus as a cruel, grasping and sacrilegious ruler.¹⁸²

The key word here is sacrilegious, as it is associated with something outside the norm and therefore, 'other'. When linked to being against the will of God, then the perpetrator of sacrilegious actions is easily monsterised. The founder of the anti-Rufus records was the Canterbury monk, Eadmer, who laid the literary foundations of the king being, deceitful, unjust, greedy, corrupt, tyrannical, and sacrilegious.¹⁸³ The only other contemporary view of Rufus comes from the E version of the ASC, where recorded for the year 1100 was the following list of complaints against him:

He was very strong and fierce to his country and his men and to all his neighbours, and very terrible. And because of the counsels of wicked men, which were always agreeable to him, and because of his avarice, he was always harassing this nation with military service and excessive taxes, for in his days all justice was in abeyance, and all injustice arose both in ecclesiastical and secular matters.¹⁸⁴

The two near contemporary views of Rufus were less than complimentary. John of Worcester did not add much to the views of Eadmer and the ASC, and neither did Henry of Huntingdon.¹⁸⁵ William of Malmesbury, used the two earlier sources and stories of Rufus which he had obtained to give a two-part description of Rufus. Until the time of the death of Lanfranc, William was complimentary about Rufus' valour in battle.¹⁸⁶ However, following the death of the archbishop, William reflected that the king's desire to do good declined, his good deeds turned to bad, and his strictness turned to cruelty.¹⁸⁷ William concluded that Rufus; 'respected God too little, and man not at all'.¹⁸⁸ Orderic, exaggerated the previously recorded negative accounts of Rufus but did not add any new detail to them.

¹⁸² Thomas Callahan, Jr., 'The Making of a Monster: the historical image of William Rufus', in *Journal of Medieval History* 7 (1981), 175-85.

¹⁸³ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, 26-121.

¹⁸⁴ ASC trans., 176, ASC (E), 109-10, 'He wæs swiðe strang 7 reðe ofer his land 7 his mæn 7 wið ealle his neahheburas 7 swiðe ondrædendlic. 7 þurh yfelra manna rædas þe him æfre gecweme wæran 7 þurh his agene gitsunga, he æfre þas leode mid here 7 mid ungylde tyrwigende wæs, forþan þe on his dagan ælc riht afeoll 7 ælcunriht for Gode 7 for worulde up aras.'

¹⁸⁵ Callahan, 'The Making of a Monster', 178, and 180.

¹⁸⁶ Callahan, 'The Making of a Monster', 178.

¹⁸⁷ Callahan, 'The Making of a Monster', 179.

¹⁸⁸ WM, 554-55, 'quia ist Deum reuerbatur, nichil homines'.

Gaimar however, was an exception to this general picture of condemnation, as he wrote in praise of Rufus.¹⁸⁹ Gaimar's Rufus; 'ruled the kingdom well and fittingly during his reign'.¹⁹⁰

The re-enforcement of the memory of the traumatic extermination of large numbers of nobles under the Danes by the chroniclers also served as a reminder to those who might have chosen to rebel against King William, or indeed, for those who were taking sides in the conflict of 'The Anarchy' which was contemporary to the readership of some of the chroniclers. Stafford has noted one of the effects of 1066 was its stimulus to the flowering of historical writing in England to demonstrate pride in the English past, where the past was invariably about events which pre-dated the drama of 1066.¹⁹¹ Sawyer argued in favour of a strengthening of post-Norman Conquest Scandinavian influence in the East Midlands where he noted there were at least thirty-nine place names which appeared to show less Scandinavian influence in the Domesday book than in later sources.¹⁹² As there is little or no evidence to show post-Conquest migrations from Scandinavia to England, then perhaps the literate chose to record place names locally the way they had heard them spoken, and such literary influences may have surfaced from their own Viking ancestry, be that from England or northern France.

Following the ending of any real threat of invasion, the Anglo-Norman chroniclers continued to refer to 'otherness' figures in their texts. Foremost amongst these were King William and his son William 'Rufus'. The figures of William and Rufus clearly have their monstrous sides which effectively filled a gap in the written history which demonstrates a 'need' to consistently have a leader who is portrayed as a monster. Such regal monsterisation leads to a hypothesis where the chroniclers depicted the first two Norman Kings of England in terms of 'otherness' to distance the general population of England from their foreign kings. This accords with a sense of population integration from the chroniclers. The earlier link between the use of 'otherness' of the foreigner, and the 'sameness' of the English people is also reflected in such monsterisation of the Norman leaders. The Norman kings themselves quickly replaced the Danes as the latent threat to English society through the ongoing continuation of their family blood lines, which led to such contemporary figures as the waring Stephen and Matilda. The chroniclers' message

¹⁸⁹ Callahan, 'The Making of a Monster', 180.

¹⁹⁰ GG, 312-13, 'e il la tint e bel regnat'.

¹⁹¹ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, 20.

¹⁹² Peter H. Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings, Scandinavia and Europe AD 700-1100* (New York, 1994), 102.

seems to plead for integration rather than conflict, and to guard against the sins of monstrous 'others', in whichever guise they present themselves.

Later representations of Danish 'otherness'

Following the death of Knut, the representations of the Danes in the chronicle sources fell silent until Latin Christendom took to the offensive with the call for crusade by Pope Urban II in the year 1096:

This year also at Easter, there was a very great stir throughout all this nation and in other nations because Urban, who was called pope although he had no seat at Rome, and countless numbers of people, with women and children, set out because they wanted to fight against pagan nations.¹⁹³

William's description of the responses of the European people to Pope Urban II's call for crusade included his last annalistic reference to the Danes.¹⁹⁴ The call for crusade also afforded the opportunity for William to voice his notion of barbarianism towards those other groups he considered to be when:

Barbarian tribes who had heard the call of Christ; in order for them to go on crusade each must abandon a national trait, the time had come for the Welshman to give up hunting in his forests, the Scotsman forsook his familiar fleas, the Dane broke off his long-drawn-out potatoes, the Norwegian left his diet of raw fish.¹⁹⁵

William certainly perceived the embodiment of different defining characteristics, as noted by Sigbjørn Sønnesyn.¹⁹⁶ Again the Danes are still associated with drunkenness. Gillingham noted that William found himself able to 'rediscover' the classical contempt of the barbarian, which he applied to many types of crusaders, whilst introducing the new concept of a barbarian who could also be a Christian.¹⁹⁷ This new definition included the Danes, who although Christian enough to go on crusade, could still be thought of as suitably barbarian enough to fit such a categorisation.¹⁹⁸ The barbarian description which

¹⁹³ *ASC (E)*, 107, and *ASC trans*, 173-74, and *ASC*, Swanton, 232, 'Ðises geares eac to þam Eastram wearð swiðe mycel styrung geond ealle þas þeode 7 fela oðra þeodan þurh Urbanusse wæs papa gehaten þeah þe he þæs setles nāping næfde on Rome; 7 ferde unarimedlice folc mid wifan 7 cildan to þi þet hi uppon hæðene þeodan winnan woldan'.

¹⁹⁴ Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, 186, and *WM*, 606-9.

¹⁹⁵ *WM*, 606-7, 'Tunc Walensis uenationem saltuum, tunc Scottus familiartatem pulicum, tunc Danus continuationem potuum, tunc Noricus cruditatem reliquit piscium.', also Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 123.

¹⁹⁶ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, 115.

¹⁹⁷ Gillingham, *The English in the twelfth century*, 10 and 29.

¹⁹⁸ Gillingham, *The English in the twelfth century*, 10.

had been applied to the pre-Conquest Danes thus reappeared in the last descriptive entry for the Danes in these sets of chronicles in a form of open-ended reference to the on-going and unchanging nature of the Danes. This demonstrates the personal attitude of one of the chroniclers who formed his opinion of the Danes from his earlier work and applied this chronologically throughout the rest of his records, despite any facts to the contrary.

Although Knut's death ended the eleventh-century Danish ambitions towards the re-conquest of England, the Norwegians under King Magnus descended upon Anglesey in 1097, and their interest in Ireland continued for another century and a half.¹⁹⁹ As for England, Norwegian fleets continued to cause an alarm at the Norman Court in 1101, and as late as 1152, King Eystein of Norway led a 'Viking' raid bent on plunder along the east coast from Aberdeen to Yorkshire.²⁰⁰ Andy Orchard has concluded that after the Norman Conquest in the literature of the period Arthur replaced Alexander the Great as the 'monster slayer, *par excellence*'.²⁰¹ Orchard also noted, that following the experiences of the first crusade, the Saracens replaced the Vikings as the objects of special literary distaste through the monsterisation of Saracen 'otherness' as opposed to the Christian 'self'.²⁰² After 1086 references to the Viking Danes were quickly dropped as focus for the chroniclers' views of 'otherness' shifted to the conflict in the Holy Land. The ending of the threat from the Viking for the previous 300 years passed almost unnoticed as monstrous Norman kings and Semitic 'others' such as the Jews and Muslim Saracens took over the role of the monstrous so recently vacated by the likes of Swein and the Danes.²⁰³ What used to be monstrous people living in England, with links to more Scandinavian 'others' across the sea, had been changed to monstrous pagans who came from a long way away, and very few had actually seen first-hand.

¹⁹⁹ Matthew, *Britain and the Continent*, 44.

²⁰⁰ *Viking Empires*, 215-16.

²⁰¹ Andy Orchard, 'Esoteric knowledge', in *A Social History of England*, 390.

²⁰² Orchard, 'Esoteric knowledge', 390; Cohen, *Monster Theory*, xii.

²⁰³ Moore, *Persecuting Society*, 110-16.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

‘Contemporary circumstances are seen in the light of the past, and the past is interpreted in the light of the present’¹

Sture Bolin

This quote by Bolin helps to summarise this research, which has focused upon the representation of Viking ‘otherness’ in five twelfth-century Anglo-Norman chronicles. It has examined these five texts and their authors in terms of how the depiction of Vikings and the Danes was portrayed using ‘otherness’ techniques in their historiographical accounts.

The three primary aims of this research were firstly to examine the changes in representing the Vikings by Anglo-Norman chroniclers in the first-half of the twelfth century, with reference to the source materials which they used (where their main source material was the *ASC*), and through these changes what motivated the twelfth-century chroniclers to alter the descriptions of the Vikings from those which appeared in their source materials. Secondly, to investigate whether it is possible to account for identified representational changes through the application of ‘otherness’ theories; and whether the vilification applied to the Danish Vikings linked to the emergence of a sense of ‘otherness’, applied to the Vikings by contemporary authors, rather than them attempting to reflect actual acts of the historical perpetrators in their chronicles. Thirdly, to explain the reasoning behind the apparent patterns of changing ‘otherness’ descriptions within the chronicles during the period considered, and the association of such a pattern with a wider cultural construction.

These primary aims gave rise to a number of sub-aims, these being to explore chronicler self-identification in terms of their personal sense of ‘otherness’, and their association with several identifiable *gens*. Another is to examine the use of religion to heal opinions of what was once seen as monstrous ‘otherness’, and to consider what type of monsters the Vikings were described as, and conversely, what monstrous types they were not represented as. Consideration has been given to examining the use of past threats as haunting memories to encourage the contemporary community audience to unite together in a sense of togetherness against a perceived common threat, and whether the use of the

¹ Sture Bolin, ‘Om Nordens äldsta historieforskning’ (Lund, 1931), 331, quoted in translation in *Medieval Scandinavia*, xv.

threat of the Danes as a pre-cautionary tale to the community of Anglo-Norman England was an intentionally independent act by the chroniclers.

This concluding chapter considers the three primary aims and associated sub-aims and discuss whether the aims and areas of this research have reached any satisfactory conclusions. Jeffery Weinstock has stated; 'it takes a village to make a monster'.² It is from statements such as this that this study has argued that the Anglo-Norman chroniclers incorporated a depiction of 'otherness' in their representation of Vikings and Danes in their histories. Through a method of historical entanglement, the chains of historiographical relationships effectively formed historical attitudes where people found themselves part of an anti-Danish society through explicit references to the past.

Janet Nelson's Presidential address to the Royal Historical Society in 2002, made the point that ninth-century writers recorded the 'otherness' of the Vikings as more about their own quest for identity, than about the Vikings themselves.³ The same may be applied to the twelfth-century chroniclers considered by this study where identity is built upon opposition to 'others' such as pagans. The following is taken from the abstract of Nelson's Presidential address to the Royal Historical Society, where it frames the concept of whether the chroniclers were more 'other' than the 'others' they described:

Successive constructions of Vikings as 'ancestors' or 'others' are shown to reveal more about quests for identity on the part of those who devised them than about ninth-century Scandinavians.⁴

When considering the nature of the application of 'otherness' in England, Sir Richard Southern spoke of the idea of national identity being associated with an experience of oppression. He then considered the fact that the English had undergone a sense of unity with their Germanic ancestry in the eighth century which had provided them with a common heritage. This commonality was remembered through literature and it was this literature that ensured the concept did not disappear from history. By the time of the Conquest, the English had a single language, a unique calendar of saints, and a royal house which traditionally ruled over them. To this list may be added that they also had a shared memory of Scandinavian attacks upon their religion, their kings and their possessions,

² J. A. Weinstock, 'Invisible Monsters: vision, Horror, and Contemporary Culture', in eds. Mittman and Dendle, *Monsters and the Monstrous*, 275. This expression is a play on an African proverb which says, 'it takes a village to raise a child'; with an implication that this action is a communal undertaking.

³ Janet L. Nelson, 'Presidential Address', 'England and the Continent in the ninth century: II, The Vikings and Others', *TRHS*, 13 (2003), 1-28.

⁴ Nelson, J. THRS, sixth series, 8, Presidential address, 1.

which was kept alive through the concept of deliverance from evil through Christ. The biggest difference for people of the eleventh and twelfth centuries was religion. Even though the Danes had been Christianised, some popular works continued the notion of their retained paganism. Twelfth-century chroniclers followed the ASC and incorporated some previously unrecorded stories, the major one being Cnut and the waves. The 'self' and 'other' models do appear to be applicable to Cnut's reign only, as after his death his sons were treated in varying ways and distrust of foreigners again surfaces in the chronicles.

As Eleanor Parker has noted, for post-Conquest historians, Cnut was a figure to whom certain common motifs could be attached.⁵ For the chroniclers studied above, stories of a foreign king who learned to be accepted by the English church as being a respectful and holy ruler had obvious contemporary appeal. Even so, the separation of Cnut from the circumstances of the Danish Conquest is strange and might only be adequately explained with reference to their contemporary surroundings. The coming of pagan foreigners to subjugate major parts of England was reflected through the descriptions of the Viking raids and invasions of the eighth and ninth centuries and culminated in Alfred's Danish wars, the baptism of the Danish pagan Guthrum, and the conquest of the Danelaw by Edgar and his sons during the tenth century. The further conflict between Æthelred and Swein and of their sons Edmund and Cnut is represented through Bede's model whereby the English are being punished by God for their sins by foreign invaders. By the early eleventh century in the case of Cnut, the invader had now become Christian. The chroniclers' reflected the more recent times in the shape of Duke William coming to invade and conquer the sinful English in yet another repeat of Bede's model. It is not possible to be certain that the chroniclers adopted a conscious attitude of exclusion towards the Vikings and Danes of the past, however, there are indications that they did. Within the chronicle descriptions of various events which involved the Vikings and Danes, there is also a sentimental feeling which seems to be demonstrated towards the Scandinavians. For the Anglo-Norman historians, the figure of Cnut represented a figure who they wished their own leaders to be associated with. Such associations included Cnut's good relationship with the English church, and a furthering of Cnut's depiction as a 'pious, good-tempered and humble king'.⁶ Parker added that the Anglo-Norman's image creation

⁵ Parker, 'Pilgrim and Patron: Cnut in Post-Conquest Historical Writing', 288.

⁶ Parker, 288.

of Cnut through the story of the waves seemed to align itself with the literary and political interests of texts produced for the Anglo-Danish court.⁷

If the hypothesis that the twelfth-century chroniclers whose works have been studied here, intentionally set out to depict the Vikings in terms of 'otherness' is true, then upon this assumption it follows that the next question is, why? To comprehend the various parallel issues which were contemporary to the early to mid-twelfth century, we need to consider that England was in the advanced process of severing its links with Scandinavia whilst looking south to mainland Europe for political guidance and trade. Can it be successfully argued that the five Anglo-Norman chroniclers consciously used the idea of monstering the 'otherness' of the Vikings? If the Danes are collectively represented as monsters, generalised and demonised, it is to enforce a strict notion of group sameness.⁸ Richard Kearney proposed in his chapter entitled 'Strangers and Scapegoats', that the scapegoating of strangers who were responsible for the ills of society effectively isolated the strangers.⁹ He continued that 'this sacrificial strategy furnishes communities with a binding identity, with the basic sense of who is included ('us') and who is excluded ('them').'¹⁰ Kearney concluded that the prize of a happy community is the ostracizing of some outsider.¹¹

The Danes had previously attacked the English lands, and at the start of the eleventh century these attacks were still to reach the zenith of their power under Cnut. That they should be 'other', outsiders, foreign or just 'different' is a quite natural reaction for the inhabitants of the England. From the first Viking description to the end of the selected chronicles, there were always monsterised figures. These were predominantly Vikings although English figures rose to monsters in periods of Danish acceptance. Once the threat of the Danes had subsided, the chroniclers turned upon the first Norman kings, William and Rufus.

Certainly religious 'otherness' was applied to the pre-Cnut Vikings. When the 'otherness' of the Vikings is linked to monsters, there are two conclusions which appear to offer themselves for consideration. The first is the monsterisation of the Vikings sought to highlight the cultural differences between them and the occupants of England. This is obvious when religion is referred to, but also, as noted above, to promulgate the idea of

⁷ Parker, 288.

⁸ Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Thesis)', *Monster Theory*, 15.

⁹ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 26.

¹⁰ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 26.

¹¹ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 26.

'us' and 'them'. When the 'other' is identified, the non- 'others' seek to unify. The second use of the monstrous depiction of the Vikings which can be argued is their use by God as punishers of the sinful. The Benedictine chroniclers were used to the sin and retribution concept, and frequently the Vikings appeared as the punishers of a sinful people. The settled Danes of Æthelred's reign were the catalyst of Æthelred's monstrous behaviour connected to the St Brice's Day massacre. From this Swein Forkbeard invaded England and punished the English for the sins of their weak king. Could it be that whenever sin was present, the Danish Vikings were connected to it? Simon Keynes has noted that from the eighth century onwards, the Vikings were viewed as a warning of the Day of Judgement, or as a punishment for the manifold sins of the English.¹² Swein Forkbeard was recorded as having been speared from his horse by the apparition of St Edmund in what could have been a saintly revenge attack on behalf of the English. M. K. Lawson links John's record of this attack as a reaction to Norman taxation of church lands, presumably as a warning from the past which again uses Danes as the catalyst.¹³

Henry of Huntingdon's differentiation between English and Norman has been said by Marjorie Chibnall to correspond to the divisions in the aristocracy at King Stephen's court.¹⁴ This could be investigated further in terms of how the Danish conquerors and the Vikings before them could prompt parallels in the period of 'The Anarchy'. Anthony Smith found that in the Anglo-Norman period there were several movements toward the unity of the people. These include a common culture, uniform laws, and stronger trading links.¹⁵ His view that the construction of new myths of a common descent are a logical step towards unification as both the English and the Normans had significant amounts of Viking blood in their historic veins. The Norman Conquest hastened the assimilation of the people previously viewed as Scandinavians into the English identity. Jeffrey Cohen cited the example given by Geoffrey of Durham who recorded that around 1110, a monk in Whitby changed his name from Tostig to William, a name which had become popular amongst the English.¹⁶ Christopher Bollas has delved deeper into how the recollection of the past retrieves the 'self' and destroys the historical details whilst saturating such details with new

¹² Simon Keynes, 'The Vikings in England, c.790-1016', in ed. Peter Sawyer, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford, 1997), 48-9.

¹³ Lawson, *Cnut*, 143.

¹⁴ Chibnall, *The Debate on the Norman Conquest*, 129.

¹⁵ Smith, 'National Identities: Modern and Medieval', 35.

¹⁶ Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity*, 23.

meaning through the very act of retrieval.¹⁷ William of Malmesbury's message was that a lack of respect shown towards one's subjects will ultimately lead to a King's downfall. As Sigbjørn Sønnesyn has noted, William had a propensity to connect the personal morality of a king to the functioning of the society he ruled, which is a view recently echoed by Emily Winkler.¹⁸

The 'otherness' descriptions were not wholly targeted towards the Danish Vikings, but for Henry of Huntingdon and possibly Geffrei Gaimar, were a function of 'The Anarchy'. The writings of Henry of Huntingdon and Geffrei Gaimar lend themselves towards a view of the Vikings as 'other', and such 'others' may be representations of the various factions involved in the struggle between Stephen and Matilda. These two chroniclers were contemporary to the events occurring around them during the Civil War. Indeed, Henry of Huntingdon as archdeacon of Lincoln, where in 1141 King Stephen was captured, must have been exposed to the discussions surrounding this event. Laura Ashe has also voiced an opinion that, 'behind the changing meanings of the stories we tell ourselves lie the reasons for their being told', which Judith Weiss expanded upon to say, 'some of those reasons may relate to contemporary issues and concerns.'¹⁹

There was a perception in the twelfth century, that 'out there' over the North Sea laid a nation waiting to attack. Be they called Vikings, Danes, Scandinavians, Northmen, pagans, or even barbarians, could essentially be seen as 'different' by the inhabitants of England, and representing a latent threat to them. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the idea that some groups of people could be classed as being 'other'; or the opposite of 'same', grew in the narrative records of the period. The 'other' is often simply identified as 'different'. 'Otherness' is seen to be imperative to national identities in the creation and sustainability of a national character in the condemnation of the 'others'. We also see the dehumanisation and demonization of groups of people, hence the earlier reference to barbarians, and links to monstrosity.

This role as the villain was passed onto the Saracens of the east as the crusades neatly followed the end of the Viking Ages. The chroniclers wrote a generation after the last Viking threat, and the likelihood of them ever actually meeting a Saracen was slight.

¹⁷ Bollas, *Cracking Up*, 144-45.

¹⁸ Sønnesyn, *William and the Ethics of History*, 176.

¹⁹ Laura Ashe's introduction in eds. Laura Ashe, Ivana Djordjevic and Judith Weiss, *The Exploitations of Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, 2010); Judith Weiss, "History' in Anglo-Norman Romance: the Presentation of the Pre-Conquest Past', in *The Long Twelfth-Century view of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, 276.

They probably would have met Scandinavian traders or recognised that many families around them were descended from them. Matthew Kempshall has observed that by the twelfth century the staple features of medieval historiography were a demonstrative combination of commemoration and instruction, denunciation and admonition.²⁰ Henry of Huntingdon added to this in an imitation of Bede's 'thoughtful listener', by referring to an 'attentive listener', who with God's help can find what to either imitate or reject by using history to find the path of moral purity.²¹ Henry contended that learning from the past could actually improve the morals of secular society and drawing on Bede noted that good men could be provoked into, 'History therefore brings the past into view as though it were present, and allows judgement of the future by representing the past'.²²

The use of 'us' and 'them', by the chroniclers was especially useful for those writing in a period of uncertainty such as 'The Anarchy', where regarding 'otherness' theory, it is possible to argue that the contemporary chroniclers used past events as pre-cautionary tales for the consequences of actions during their own times. Henry's message to his audience when describing the 1069 raid was, do not harbour the King's enemies or you will suffer when they are no longer around to offer their protection. This is a poignant message when taken in the context of it being written during the time of a twelfth-century Civil War. It may be confidently stated that a hatred for those considered to be 'other' helped the English and Normans to overcome their historical divisions and allowed them to contrast their national likeness with those who were different. By 1138 Henry of Huntingdon wrote of the victory over the Scots at the battle of the Standard by the '*gens Normannorum et Anglorum*', the joint people of the Normans and English, against what Gillingham has described as 'a newly identified set of outsiders'.

This has moved on the argument for the twelfth-century vilification of the Vikings as being based solely upon their religious 'otherness' due to paganism. Paganism was a huge factor to the chroniclers, but the other descriptions were embellishments of pagan 'otherness', using the exaggerated differences of foreigners. One area which this study

²⁰ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 164.

²¹ HH, 6-7, '*Plerumque etenim ad ipsam morum puritatem iuxta callem directum historia resiliuimus*', ('Truly, it is quite common for the path of history to lead us straight back to moral purity'); '*lector deuotando*', ('The "thoughtful listener"'), in Bede, HE, 2-3, has become the '*lector diligens*' ('attentive listener'), in the *Historia Anglorum*.

²² HH, 4-5, '*Historia igitur preterita quasi presentia uisui representat, futura ex preteritis imaginando diiudicat*', see also, Swanson, *The twelfth-century renaissance*, 56, Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 252.

implies a need for future research is around uncovering the origins of the chroniclers' source materials. Such an investigation into whether most of the chroniclers' views were formed by classical texts which had been adapted and amended over time, for example could give an insight into the importance of the stem of stories to their future branch offspring. Cohen has touched upon such links but only to the eighth century with his chapter on 'the solitude of Guthlac', wherein Cohen recounts of Guthlac's lonely life as a monk in Crowland and his accounts of demonic monsters.²³ Consideration could also be given to a study which compares Asser's descriptions of the re-conquest of England under Alfred against the Danes, to the post-Norman Conquest descriptions of the Normans defeating the Anglo-Saxons. The application of 'otherness' comparisons may also be applied to the post-Conquest English in the context of whether they saw themselves in terms of 'otherness' when faced with their new Norman Lords. An investigation of how the English perceived themselves in the post-Conquest environment they found themselves in would need careful analysis of the few Old English sources and of those Latin sources written by 'native' English to try to find the strands of a thesis.

There are three overall conclusions to this thesis. These being that the Vikings and then the Danes were always recognised in one form or another as 'other' in the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman chronicles. Secondly, the Vikings were not actually portrayed as monsters, although they were represented as acting monstrously on many occasions. Finally, a discernible pattern exists to the chroniclers' descriptions of the 'otherness' of the Vikings and thence the Danes. This starts with the Vikings' monstrous behaviour, then moves to acceptance of the 'other' as 'self' through Cnut and finishes with a remembrance of earlier times through the idea of latent threat. This thread can be traced as it weaves through the monstrous activities of Vikings, English, and the Norman kings and nobility. This study can conclude that the attempts by those who found themselves between groups found great difficulty to find a route to belong when attempting to articulate their own identity. Therefore, a shared sense of community was sought through an engendered wish to be defined as being opposed to other peoples.

To conclude the view of the treatment of the Vikings/Danes by the twelfth-century chroniclers, I will use the words of Sir Anthony Bryer, who summarised Sir Richard Southern's views on the Byzantine historians' relationship to the Muslim Turks which he recorded as:

²³ Cohen, *Medieval Identity Machines*, 116-53.

So, the Byzantines' very intimacy with the Muslims, especially Turks, translates Sir Richard's three stages into, first, a honeymoon, second a marriage, and third, not divorce, but the almost simultaneous realisation that there had been no marriage at all.²⁴

By applying the above to the parts of the twelfth-century chronicles which relate to the Vikings, the chroniclers' historical intimacy with the Vikings, especially the Danes, translates into three stages, first, the shocking justification that God had sent the Vikings to chastise the English people. Second, an enforced, or perhaps arranged, marriage with Cnut and his people. Third, not a divorce, but an almost simultaneous realisation that there had been no marriage, but merely a long engagement whilst the English people awaited the arrival of the God-sent Normans.

²⁴ Anthony Bryer, 'Greek historians on the Turks; the case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage', Davis & Wallace-Hadrill, *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages*, 472.

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