

Narrative strategy in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis

Submitted by Daniel Roach to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, March 2014.

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Abstract

The *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis is widely regarded as one of the most important examples of Norman historical writing. Written between c.1114 and 1141 at the monastery of Saint-Evroult on the southern frontier of Normandy, its thirteen books have a broad geographic scope, mixing events within the cloister with those taking place in Normandy, England, France, Spain, southern Italy and the Latin East. This thesis examines the question of why Orderic wrote the *Historia*. It employs close textual analysis to explore the way in which the purpose of the work is reflected in its content. Each of its four chapters focuses on a major part of the narrative. Chapter 1 examines the textual interplay between Saint-Evroult and southern Italy in books III to VII and challenges the notion that Orderic began the work with a narrow geographical horizon which only expanded in the later books. Chapters 2 and 3 are twin chapters on book IX of the *Historia*, Orderic's account of the First Crusade. Chapter 2 argues that Orderic punctuated the narrative of book IX, which was based on the *Historia Ierosolimitana* of Baldric of Bourgueil, with numerous additional passages that deliberately anchored the story in the history of Saint-Evroult. Chapter 3 suggests that book IX was a wholesale reworking of Baldric's account in which Orderic actively and carefully edited the text in order to ensure that it was suitable for incorporation into the *Historia*. Chapter 4, the final chapter, examines the effect of the reign of Henry I on Saint-Evroult in the final books of the *Historia*, books X to XIII. This chapter reveals the ways in which the history of Saint-Evroult and its network of associated houses was interwoven throughout the larger events of the reign of Henry I. It concludes with an examination of the impact of Henry's death on the final book of the *Historia*, book XIII, resulting in the burning of the town of Saint-Evroult

and instability at the end of Orderic's life. This analysis reveals the extent to which the *Historia ecclesiastica* is concerned with the history of Saint-Evroult and its monks, patrons, heroes and enemies. The narrative expands outwards to include important material on distant geographical regions, but it consistently returns to the rich history of the monastery to recount numerous different aspects of its past, indicating that such material constitutes the beating heart of the *Historia* as a whole.

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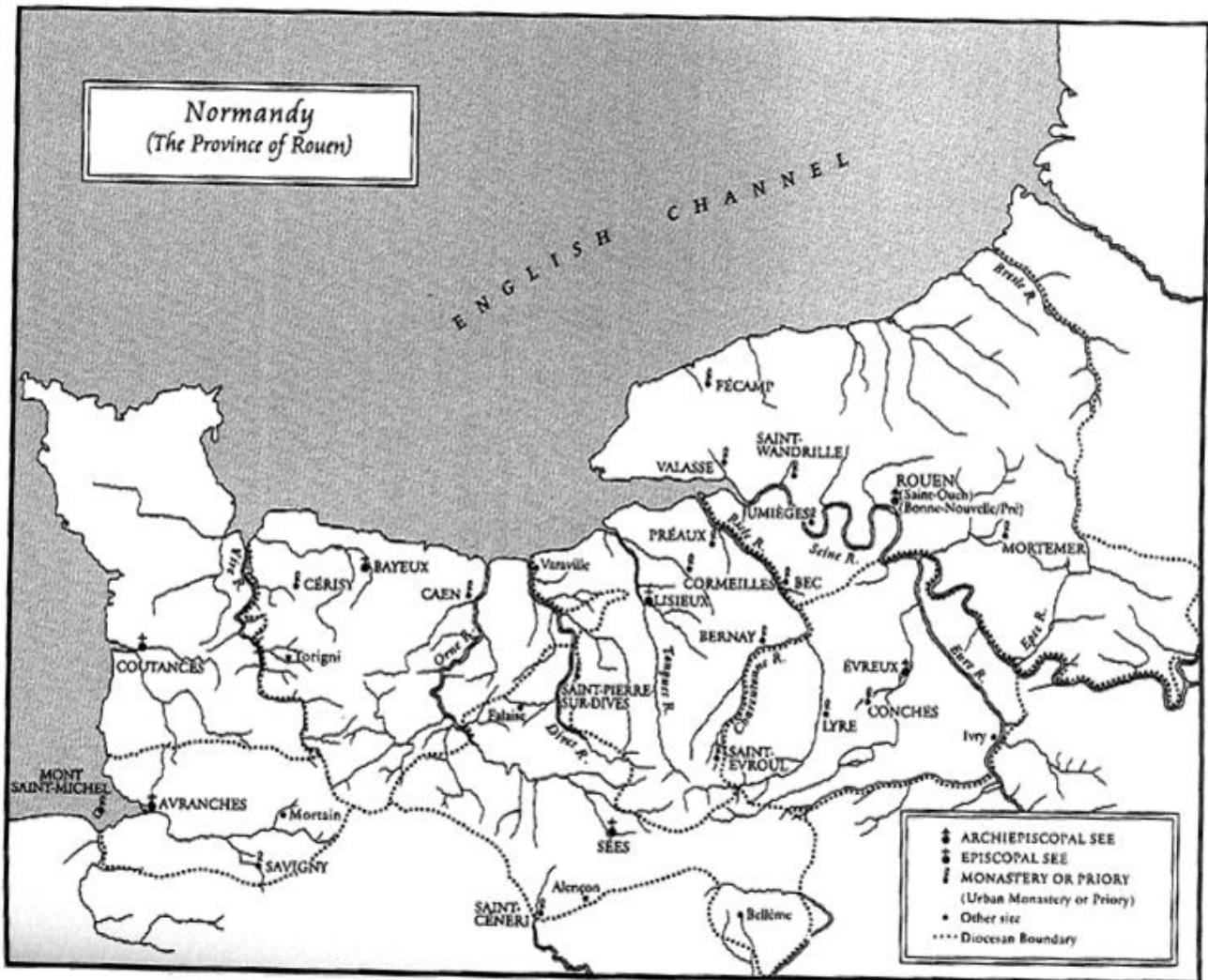
Abbreviations

Amatus of Montecassino	<i>Aimé du Mont-Cassin. Ystoire de li normant: édition du manuscrit BnF fr. 688</i> , ed. Michèle Guéret-Laferté (Paris, 2011).
Annals	Le Prévost, v, 139-72.
ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
BB	Steven J. Biddlecombe, <i>The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil: A New Edition in Latin and an Analysis</i> (unpublished PhD thesis, Bristol, 2010).
Bachrach and Bachrach	<i>The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade</i> , trans. Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach (Aldershot, 2005).
Charters	Le Prévost, v, 173-208.
<i>Chronicle of Battle Abbey</i>	<i>The Chronicle of Battle Abbey</i> , ed. and trans. Eleanor Searle (Oxford, 1980).
Dunbar and Loud	<i>The History of the Normans by Amatus of Montecassino</i> , trans. Prescott N. Dunbar and Graham A. Loud (Woodbridge, 2004).
Fairweather	<i>Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth</i> , trans. Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge, 2005).
Geoffrey Malaterra	<i>De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardi ducis fratris eius, auctore Gaufrido Malaterra</i> , ed. Ernesto Pontieri, <i>Rerum Italicarum Scriptorum</i> v (Bologna, 1927-8).
<i>Gesta Normannorum Ducum</i>	<i>The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni</i> , 2 vols., ed. and trans. Elisabeth M.C. van Houts (Oxford, 1992-1995).
Henry of Huntingdon	Henry of Huntingdon, <i>Historia Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996).
<i>Historia Ecclesie Abbdonensis</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesie Abbdonensis</i> , 2 vols., ed. and trans. John Hudson (Oxford, 2002-7).

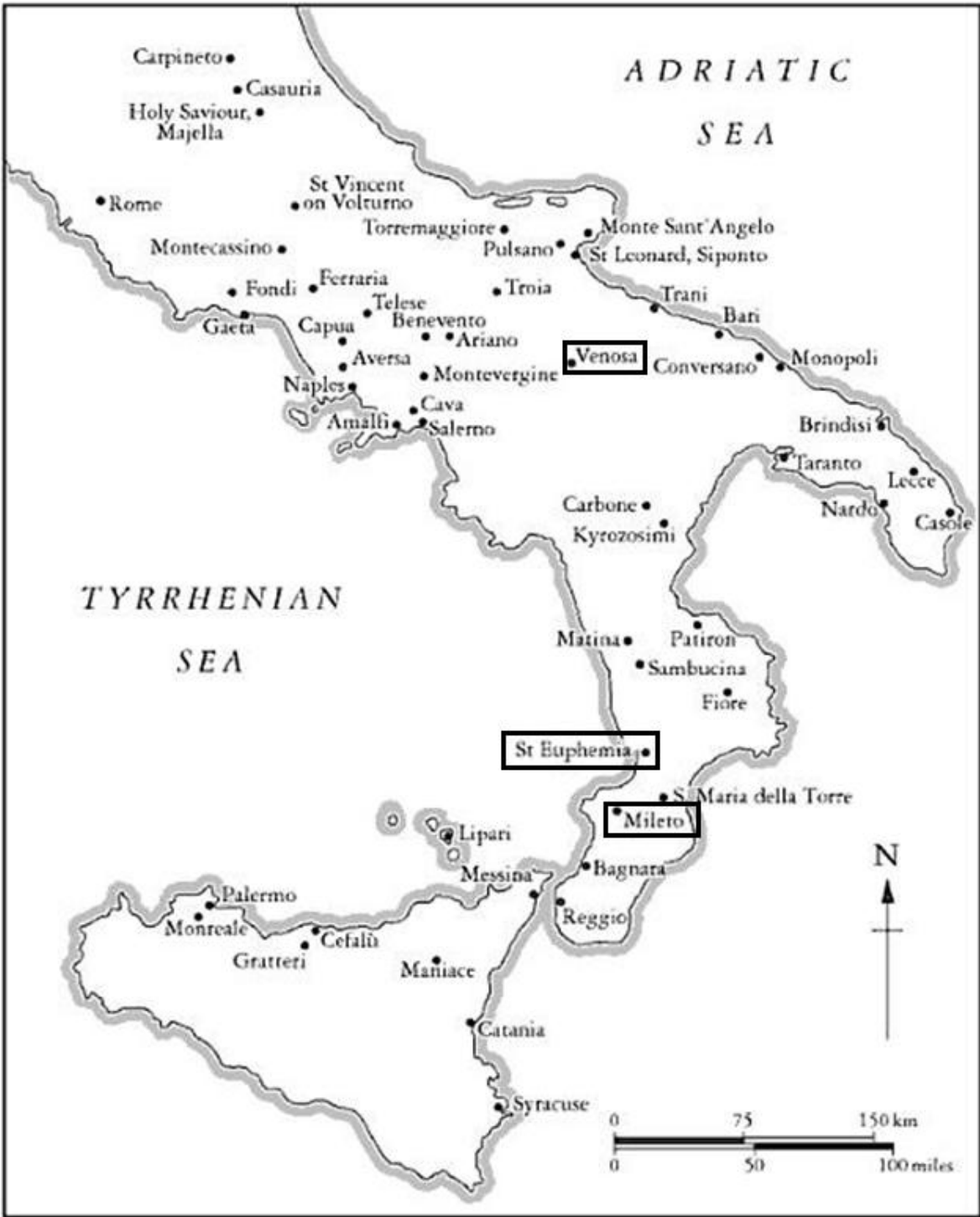
<i>HSJ</i>	<i>Haskins Society Journal</i>
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
John of Worcester	<i>The Chronicle of John of Worcester</i> , II-III, ed. and trans. R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk, (Oxford, 1995-98).
Le Prévost	<i>Orderici Vitalis ecclesiasticae historiae libri tredecim</i> , ed. A. Le Prévost, 5 vols. (Paris, 1838-55).
<i>Liber Eliensis</i>	<i>Liber Eliensis</i> , ed. E. O. Blake (London, 1962).
<i>Liber memorialis</i>	Jean Laporte, ‘Tableau des services obituaires assures par les abbayes de Saint-Evroul et de Jumièges’, <i>Revue Mabillon</i> 46 (1956), 141-88.
Necrology	‘Ex Necrologio Uticensi’, in Martin Bouquet (ed.) <i>Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France</i> , vol.23 (Paris, 1894), 484-91.
OV	Orderic Vitalis, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> , ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 Vols. (Oxford, 1969-80).
Ralph of Caen	<i>Radulphi Cadomensis Tancredus</i> , ed. Edoardo D’Angelo, <i>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis</i> 231 (Turnhout, 2011).
<i>RHC Occ.</i>	<i>Recueil des historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux</i> , 5 vols. (Paris, 1844-85).
<i>RMS</i>	<i>Reading Medieval Studies</i>
<i>SCH</i>	<i>Studies in Church History</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
William of Apulia	<i>Guillaume de Pouille. La geste de Robert Guiscard</i> , ed. Marguerite Mathieu (Palermo, 1961).
William of Malmesbury	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta Regum Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 Vols. (Oxford, 1998-9).
<i>Winchcombe and Coventry Chronicles</i>	<i>The Winchcombe and Coventry Chronicles: Hitherto Unnoticed Witnesses to the Work of John of Worcester</i> , 2 vols., ed. and trans. Paul Antony Hayward (Tempe, Arizona, 2010).

Wolf

Geoffrey Malaterra, *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*, trans. Kenneth Baxter Wolf (Michigan, 2005).



Normandy (taken from Shopkow, *History and Community*, p.viii)



The Daughter Houses of Saint-Evroult in Southern Italy
 (adapted from Loud, *Latin Church*, p.xiv)

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Introduction

The *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis is, as Marjorie Chibnall observed, ‘one of the most valuable and readable of twelfth-century historical works’.¹ Its thirteen books provide a rich and multi-faceted narrative account of the history of the monks, patrons, benefactors, heroes and enemies of the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Evroult, located in the pays d’Ouche on the often-turbulent southern frontier of Normandy. Throughout the *Historia*, this monastic material is interwoven with a vast amount of material on numerous other themes. These include: two books containing a *Life of Christ* and a history of the Apostles; the Norman conquest of England; material on southern Italy; a book-length account of the First Crusade; affairs in the Latin East in the first decades of the twelfth century; a short section on the Spanish Reconquest under Alfonso I of Aragon; finally, spanning the entirety of the work is Orderic’s account of the reigns of William the Conqueror and his sons, Robert Curthose, William Rufus and Henry in Normandy and England, and the first years of Stephen’s reign.² This thesis provides a fresh assessment of the purpose of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. It seeks to understand why and for whom Orderic wrote the work and how this was expressed in the content of the narrative. In order to do so, it examines a number of major aspects of the *Historia* and argues that the narrative strategy employed by Orderic reveals the monastic purpose and audience for which his *magnum opus* was primarily written. Where possible, Orderic consistently sought to link the narrative of the *Historia* with the rich history of the monks of Saint-Evroult and the locality in which they lived.

¹ OV I. 1.

² For more on the structure, content and dating of the *Historia*, see OV I. 45-8. On the geographic extent of the work see Lucien Musset, ‘L’horizon géographique, moral et intellectuel d’Orderic Vital, historien anglo-normand’, in Daniel Poirion (ed.) *La chronique et l’histoire au Moyen Age. Colloque des 24 et 25 Mai 1982* (Paris, 1984), 101-122.

Orderic and his Work

Most of what is known about Orderic comes from the biographical sections of the *Historia* contained in the prologue to book V and the epilogue to XIII. Orderic was born in Atcham, near Shrewsbury, on 16 February 1075. He arrived at Saint-Evroult at the age of ten, sent as a child oblate by his father, Odelerius of Orléans, in 1085, and he remained there for the next fifty-six years until his death in 1142.³ Saint-Evroult had been founded by the Giroie and Grandmesnil families in 1050 and from then on its influence had spread with that of its patrons, to Normandy, England and southern Italy. In Normandy, the abbey established monastic cells along the frontiers of the Perche, in the Norman Vexin, and in the Île de France. In England, its monks became abbots of Crowland, Thorney, St Benet of Hulme and Bury St Edmunds, and it also had contacts with Tewkesbury abbey. The monastery owned lands in Leicestershire and even founded a priory at Ware in Hertfordshire.⁴ In Italy, its monks colonised the monastery of St. Euphemia in Calabria, and were then given two further monasteries at Venosa and Mileto.⁵

Orderic seems to have spent a considerable amount of time working in the scriptorium at Saint-Evroult, handling and copying texts. In all, his handwriting has been identified in

³ OV III. 6-8, 142-50; OV VI. 466-70. For summaries of Orderic's life see OV I. 1-6, 23-9; Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Woodbridge, 1984), chs 1-2, pp.3-41.

⁴ For a short summary of these land holdings see Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550-c.1307* (London, 1974), p.152, and OV III xviii-xx. For a more detailed account see Donald Matthew, *The Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions* (Oxford, 1962), pp.29, 31-33, 53, 57, 65; Barbara MacDonald Walker, *The Grandmesnills: A Study in Norman Baronial Enterprise*, unpublished PhD thesis (University of California Santa Barbara, 1968), ch.3, pp.80-115.

⁵ For a full discussion of Saint-Evroult's links with these houses see below, pp.94-106.

thirteen different manuscripts, only two of which are extant manuscripts of the *Historia*.⁶ The remaining eleven manuscripts are a mixture of Orderic's own work and others in which he wrote only a few lines, either as a model for other scribes or in order to correct their work. Orderic's hand has been identified in original work on the annals of Saint-Evroult for the years 1087-1140 contained within the chapter-book of the monastery, copies of saints' lives, extracts from Bede, some homilies and poems, and all that survives of William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, to which he added his own interpolations between c.1109 and c.1113.⁷ It was here in the scriptorium that Orderic's interest in historical writing likely developed, and Chibnall thus viewed the time before the writing of the *Historia ecclesiastica* as 'the period of Orderic's historical apprenticeship'.⁸

As already noted, the *Historia ecclesiastica* was Orderic's most ambitious and complex work by far, with the writing process spanning the period 1114 to 1141.⁹ While the exact date when Orderic started work on the *Historia* is not known, it is clear that the first chapters of book III, which recount the foundation of Saint-Evroult, were written in 1114. Work on book III seems to have continued at a slow pace for the next decade, for reasons that are not apparent, and was not finished until 1123 or 1124. The remaining twelve books were written much more rapidly, between 1123 and 1137, with some further material added up until 1141. Books III to XIII were written consecutively but books I and II were not added until much later, in the period 1135-7. The fact that book III was the first book of the *Historia* to have been written, that books I and II were among the last, and that a number of the other books have

⁶ For descriptions of these manuscripts see OV I, Appendix 1, pp.201-3. For a full treatment of Orderic's scribal career see Denis Escudier, 'Orderic Vital et le scriptorium de Saint-Évroult', in Pierre Bouet et Monique Dosdat (eds) *Manuscrits et enluminures dans le monde normand (X^e-XV^e siècles)*, 2nd edition (Caen, 2005), 17-28.

⁷ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, I, pp.xxi, lxvi-lxxvii.

⁸ OV I. 29. See also Alison Alexander, *Annalistic writing in Normandy, c.1050-1225*, unpublished DPhil thesis (University of Cambridge, 2011), pp.133-40, 209-11, for some important qualifying remarks on Orderic's other works as his 'apprenticeship'.

⁹ What follows is a summary of OV I. 31-5, 45-8. See also Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp.152-3.

been clearly renumbered, indicates that a restructuring of the work took place in 1136 or 1137. Of the four volumes that originally made up the *Historia*, only three survive, volumes one, two, and four.¹⁰ Other than in a few exceptional places, each of these manuscripts is written in an early twelfth-century hand, identified in the nineteenth century as being that of Orderic Vitalis himself. These volumes are now held in Paris in the Bibliothèque nationale de France as MS. lat. 5506, parts I and II, and MS lat. 10913 (A), and contain books I and II, III to VI, and IX to XIII respectively. All three volumes remained in the library of Saint-Evroult until the sixteenth century, but were afterwards moved and perhaps loaned out at varying times. At the end of the seventeenth century the library was in great disorder and at some point during this period the fourth volume, containing books VII and VIII, was lost and has never subsequently been found. Fortunately, books VII and VIII survive in another extant twelfth-century manuscript, from Saint-Étienne at Caen, as Rome, MS. Vatican Reginensis Latina 703B (C), which ‘was certainly copied from the lost third volume of the Saint-Évroult manuscript’ according to Chibnall.¹¹ This manuscript is particularly important in that it constitutes the only surviving copy of books VII and VIII. Two further manuscripts containing fragments of books VII and VIII are extant. The first of these is London, British Library MS. Cotton Vespasian A xix, ff.104-21^v (V), a beautifully written and lavishly decorated fourteenth-century manuscript, which contains fragments of book VII relating to Odo of Bayeux and the death of William the Conqueror.¹² The second is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS. Lat. 4861 (E), a thirteenth-century manuscript from Saint-Taurin, Évreux, which contains Orderic’s treatise on the new monastic orders at ff.125^v-28^v, and it is thought that the material directly preceding this, in ff.123-24^v may also be derived from either the *Historia ecclesiastica* itself or from other manuscripts from Saint-Evroult.

¹⁰ What follows summarises OV I. 118-23.

¹¹ OV I. 121.

¹² For more on this manuscript, see Elisabeth van Houts, ‘Camden, Cotton and the Chronicles of the Norman Conquest of England’, in *British Library Journal* 18 (1992), 148-62, reprinted in C.J. Wright (ed.) *Sir Robert Cotton as Collector: Essays on an Early Stuart Courtier and his Legacy*, 238-52.

Editorial History of the Text

Between 1503 and 1536, Dom William Vallin, a monk at Saint-Evroult, copied the whole of books I to VI and books IX to XIII, and several more copies were made during the sixteenth century.¹³ The first complete edition of the *Historia* was published by André Duchesne in his *Historiae Normannorum scriptores antiqui*, which first appeared in 1619 and remained the basic printed text from which all other extracts were derived until the nineteenth century. In five volumes published between 1838 and 1855, Auguste Le Prévost and Léopold Delisle published their own major edition of the *Historia, Orderici Vitalis Ecclesiasticae Historiae libri tredecim*.¹⁴ Both Duchesne's and Le Prévost's editions were then used as the basis for translations of the *Historia* published shortly thereafter, including Thomas Forester's four-volume English translation. Yet these editions were superseded in the twentieth century by the monumental critical edition of Marjorie Chibnall, published in the Oxford Medieval Texts series in six volumes between 1969 and 1980. This was the first edition to preserve the original spelling and punctuation of the text and to present an English translation alongside the Latin text, and it is now widely regarded as the standard edition of the *Historia* for both scholars and students alike. More than anyone else, the work of Chibnall has led to the explosion of scholarly interest in the *Historia*. Her edition of the *Historia*, and her significant body of published research, particularly as it relates to the audience, purpose and content of Orderic's work, will be engaged with throughout this study. While our understanding of Orderic's intentions in writing the *Historia*, presented in what follows, differs from the interpretation given by Chibnall, and we have sought, wherever possible, to present a more literal translation of the Latin,¹⁵ the words of David Bates are worth repeating here. In his preface to *Normandy Before 1066*, he observed that the name of Marjorie Chibnall, alongside

¹³ What follows summarises OV I. 115-7.

¹⁴ Paris (1838-55).

¹⁵ For Chibnall's philosophy of translation see OV I. 125.

the work of other major Norman historians such as Charles Homer Haskins, David Douglas, and John Le Patourel, ‘must head any list of acknowledgements since it is on their devoted attention to the history of eleventh-century Normandy that this book tries to build. Where disagreement on general interpretation or on a point of detail has to be registered, it is done with a profound awareness that any history of the duchy which neglected or belittled their endeavours would be a miserable thing.’¹⁶

Historical Writing and the Monastic Life

As James Clark has suggested, medieval monastic communities were comprised of a diverse range of members who had arrived at the cloister via many different routes. Individuals from all levels of society were represented: young and old, rich and poor, healthy and dying, some came of their own volition, while many others, like Orderic himself, came as oblates, who entered as young children and never left. The majority of recruits into the Benedictine monastic life were tenants of landowners or prosperous peasants drawn from the region surrounding the monastery. This wide-ranging blend of individuals with different backgrounds and ages was highly unusual in the medieval world.¹⁷ Life inside the monastery was dominated by the performance of the liturgy, which encompassed the eight hours of the Divine Office – Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, Compline, Matins and Nocturns – two masses and several hours of signing together each day. It has been estimated that the Office occupied the Benedictine monks for fourteen of their daytime hours.¹⁸ Manual labour was another characteristic feature of the monastic life. The *Regula Benedicti* prescribed two

¹⁶ David Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London and New York, 1982), p.vi.

¹⁷ James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp.62-74.

¹⁸ Susan Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000-1125* (Ithaca and London, 2006), p.4; Clark, *The Benedictines*, pp.93, 193-94; for more on the subject of the liturgy see Margot E. Fassler and Rebecca A. Baltzer (eds) *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography* (Oxford, 2000).

periods of manual labour in summer, between Prime and Terce and Nones and Vespers (lasting about five hours) and one period in winter, between Terce and Nones (for about four hours). Running alongside this liturgical cycle was a cycle of regular reading, which was to be taken up after Terce and before Sext and after mealtime. Much more reading took place on Sundays, between each of the hours of the Divine Office, and in winter, when there was also an hour at daybreak given over to reading, after Prime. There was also an expectation that the brethren would engage in less formal reading during the hours of rest between Compline and Matins, with references from surviving customaries speaking of monks who read ‘in their bed’ (*in lectulo suo*). Over time, the amount of reading increased as monks engaged in less manual labour and the customaries became less prescriptive on this matter.¹⁹ The reading habits of monks were also diverse. As well as reading holy scripture and the works of the church fathers, the record of a Lenten distribution at eleventh-century Farfa reveals the variety of authors and texts even at an early date: one monk received the Pauline epistles, one the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Bede and one the Roman History of Livy.²⁰

The monastery was a stimulating intellectual environment in which the love of learning and the desire for God went hand in hand, as Jean Leclercq argued in his seminal work on the subject.²¹ Leclercq’s lectures, given in 1955-56 and first translated into English in 1961, examined the ‘identifying characteristics’ of monastic culture:²² the formation of monastic

¹⁹ Clark, *The Benedictines*, pp.106-8.

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp.110-11. For further reflection upon the influence of both classical historiography and scriptural hermeneutics upon medieval historical writing see now Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400-1500* (Manchester and New York, 2011).

²¹ Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York, 1982).

²² Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p.vii.

culture, the sources of monastic culture and the fruits of monastic culture.²³ Leclercq repeatedly emphasised the indissoluble relationship between spirituality and literature within the cloister:

There is no Benedictine life without literature...In order to undertake one of the principal occupations of the monk, it is necessary to know, to learn, and, for some, to teach...education is not separated from spiritual effort...the monastery is truly a “school for the Lord” – *dominici schola seruitii*...All of the monk’s activities, including his literary activity, can have no motivation other than spiritual, and spiritual motives are always called upon to justify all his actions...Study is ranked as one means, within a framework of others, to the end, which is eternal life.²⁴

And again:

...medieval monastic literature is, in large part, a literature of compunction, whose aim is to possess, to increase, and to communicate the desire for God. And this fact opens up to us a whole conception of monastic culture and monastic life. The latter is considered as an anticipation of celestial life, it is a real beginning of eternal life. Everything is judged according to its relationship with the final consummation of the whole reality. The present is a mere interlude.²⁵

This powerful dialectic between learning and spirituality resulted in the emergence of a vibrant monastic culture in the medieval period as monks drew heavily from scripture, the patristic tradition and classical literature to shape their identity and liturgy.²⁶ As James Clark has observed, ‘The [*Rule of Benedict*] did not itself create the learned culture that later became so characteristic of the medieval Benedictines, but the customs of language, liturgy and *lectio* that it codified created a climate in which it could flourish.’²⁷

²³ For more on medieval monastic culture and education see the essays contained in George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (eds) *Medieval Monastic Education* (London and New York, 2000) and James G. Clark (ed.) *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge, 2007).

²⁴ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, pp.17-18.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p.66.

²⁶ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p.71.

²⁷ Clark, *The Benedictines*, p.195.

Recent studies have followed Leclercq's lead in emphasising the wide array of literary sources produced and used inside the cloister. The production of historical works, while perhaps the best-known product of medieval monastic culture, formed 'part of a larger construction and transformation of memory...that is inseparable from the musical, liturgical, and hagiographic aspects of monastic textual production...[revealing] different facets of a single process: the reshaping of valued materials to produce new forms.'²⁸ A close relationship thus existed between liturgy and history, service books and narrative and archival sources. The role of liturgical texts has, in particular, received recent scholarly attention.²⁹ In her important study of the Italian abbey of Farfa,³⁰ Susan Boynton examined the connections that existed between music, liturgy, material culture, architecture, book production and historical writing, persuasively arguing that these 'manifold forms of corporate identity' within the monastic community were themselves reflected and shaped by its liturgy. A key function of the liturgy was the remembrance of fellow monks, friends, family, and benefactors, both the living and the dead, in prayer.³¹ Orderic himself drew attention to this important aspect of monastic life in numerous places throughout the *Historia ecclesiastica*. One such example, a stimulating passage located in book III of the *Historia*, concerns an important commemorative event which began during the abbacy of Osbern, the third abbot of Saint-Evroult (1061–66):

He instituted a general anniversary to be held thus each year on 26 June for the fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters of all the monks of the monastery of Ouche. On a very long roll indeed the names of all the brothers are written, when they enter into the order at God's summons; then, the names of their fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters are written down. This roll is

²⁸ Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity*, p.16.

²⁹ See, for example, Margot Fassler, 'The Liturgical Framework of Time and the Representation of History', in Robert A. Maxwell (ed.) *Representing History, 900-1300: Art, Music, History* (Pennsylvania, 2010), 149-71.

³⁰ Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity*, pp.2-3.

³¹ *Ibid*, p.5.

kept upon the altar all year, and the diligent remembrance of those inscribed on it is carried out in sight of God...The anniversary about which we speak is thus celebrated on 26 June. Both evening and morning, all the bells ring for a long time for the office of the dead; the roll of the dead is untied and laid out on the altar, and prayer is faithfully offered to God, first for the dead, and then for living relatives and benefactors and for all the faithful...The church of Ouche has assiduously observed this anniversary just as abbot Osbern instituted it up to the present day, and has eagerly passed it on to the monks of Noyon-sur-Andelle and St Georges-de-Boscherville, and its other followers.³²

As Boynton observed, ‘It is no exaggeration to say that, for ecclesiastical institutions, liturgy and ritual formed the foundation of corporate identity.’³³ This was a rich and multi-faceted environment within which to live, for it was concerned with the worship of God, the remembrance of the living and the dead, a deep love of learning and a desire to lead a godly and moral life. It was in this context that the writing of history took place.

Historical Writing in the Twelfth Century

The medieval cloister provided a fertile soil in which a love of learning could grow and develop. Paul Hayward has observed that

The writing of history within the monastic context was controlled by the needs of religious life (and of the institutions that supported it) rather than by those of history as a forensic discipline.

³² Hic constituit generale anniuersarium fieri singulis annis vi^o kal. Iulii sic pro patribus et matribus, pro fratribus et sororibus omnium monachorum Uticensis coenobii. In rotulo quidem longissimo omnium fratrum dum uocante Deo ad ordinem ueniunt nomina scribuntur; deinde patrum et matrum eorum fratrumque ac sororum uocabula subscribuntur. Qui rotulus penes aram toto anno seruatur, et sedula commemoratio inscriptorum in conspectu Domini agitur...Anniuersarium uero de quo loquimur; vi^o kal. Iulii sic agitur. Omnia signa sero et mane ad officium defunctorum diu pulsantur, uolumen mortuorum super altare dissolutum palam expanditur; et deprecatio prius pro defunctis postea pro uiuis parentibus et benefactoribus cunctisque fidelibus Deo fideliter offertur...Hoc sicut Osbernus abbas constituit, Uticensis aecclesia usque in hodiernum diem uigilanter custodit; et Nogionensibus atque Balcherensibus aliisque sequacibus suis ardentem tradidit. OV II. 114-16; for further discussion of this passage see Daniel Roach, ‘The Material and the Visual: Objects and Memories in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis’, *HSJ* 24 (2013), 63-78 at pp.66-7; Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*, pp.43-44.

³³ Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity*, p.4. See also Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p.71.

The priorities of the religious tended, moreover, to divert energies of monastic authors away from rhetorical history towards the preparation of the simpler kinds of historical text such as the breviary world chronicles...when the occasion demanded it, the very same communities that produced these texts could supply from their own ranks authors who were adept at the art of writing rhetorical history...Such extreme changes of gear would scarcely be possible if the communities that produced these chronicles were full of primitive minds.³⁴

While the writing of major works of history may have been unusual, examples of such chronicles, written by authors such as John of Worcester, Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon are, nonetheless, widely known today. Historians have stressed that it usually took a major crisis of some form, whether inside or outside the cloister, to initiate the writing of such a chronicle.³⁵ Monasteries were often located in frontier positions and the political upheavals of Normandy and England which they witnessed during this period ‘stimulated a return to the grander narratives of the distant past’.³⁶ The eleventh and twelfth centuries were a period of major change, in which monks in the Anglo-Norman world reflected upon the conquest and colonisation of their lands in a flowering of historical writing that emerged from a string of newly founded and re-founded monasteries. As James Clark has observed, these authors ‘sought to unite the documentary traces of the past with the now rich portfolio of privileges and properties that underpinned their present status. The rapid expansion of churches and convents also encouraged them to reassert the dignity and priority of their patronal saints and shrines.’³⁷ This mixing of documentary evidence from charters with written sources and oral information has received a good deal of attention from scholars, a number of whom have consciously sought to group examples of this type of narrative together, terming them “charter chronicles” or “cartulary chronicles”. Thus Jennifer Paxton has highlighted the similarities between the Fenland Chronicles

³⁴ *Winchcombe and Coventry Chronicles*, i, p.60.

³⁵ *Winchcombe and Coventry Chronicles*, i, p.55.

³⁶ Clark, *The Benedictines*, p.226.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.227.

produced at Ely, Ramsey and Peterborough in the late twelfth century, of which the *Liber Eliensis* is the most well-known,³⁸ and Graham Loud has drawn attention to five further examples written in central and southern Italy in the same century.³⁹ Chibnall herself wrote a valuable essay on the subject, at the outset of which she emphasised the futility of regarding “archival” sources as being ‘distinct’ from “narrative” sources.⁴⁰ Rather, there is a great deal of overlap between the two in cartulary chronicles, traits which also feature in Orderic’s *Historia ecclesiastica*.⁴¹ While a number of important thematic similarities are shared by these works, their structure differs markedly.⁴² What matters most for our present purposes, at the outset of our study of the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis, is the reality that examples of historical writing such as this are at once both distinct and yet also a product of their time and culture. As such, while each chronicler structured his work and arranged his content in a manner that was unique to himself, many of his priorities and emphases echoed those of his contemporaries.

Monks sometimes stated their reasons for writing about history and sometimes left them unstated. Many seem to have felt a very real need to preserve the past for the benefit of future generations. As Antonio Sennis has noted, ‘between the eleventh and the twelfth centuries the issue of what to do in order to prevent the community’s past from being engulfed by the darkness of oblivion was widely felt...Monastic chroniclers were in effect by and large well aware that the community’s memory was difficult to transmit in non-textual forms.

³⁸ Jennifer Paxton, ‘Monks and Bishops: The Purpose of the *Liber Eliensis*’, *HSJ* 11 (2003), 17-30; *eadem*, ‘Textual Communities in the English Fenlands: A Lay Audience for Monastic Chronicles?’, *ANS* 26 (2004), 123-37.

³⁹ G. A. Loud, ‘Monastic Chronicles in the Twelfth-Century Abruzzi’, *ANS* 27 (2005), 101-31.

⁴⁰ Marjorie Chibnall, ‘Charter and Chronicle: the Use of Archive Sources by Norman Historians’, in C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe et al (eds) *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney on his 70th Birthday* (Cambridge, 1976), 1-17 at p.1.

⁴¹ For a recent examination of the influence of charters in the *Historia ecclesiastica* see George Garnett, ‘Robert Curthose: The Duke Who Lost His Trousers’, *ANS* 35 (2013), 213-43, especially pp.221-229.

⁴² John Hudson, ‘The Abbey of Abingdon, its *Chronicle* and the Norman Conquest’, *ANS* 19 (1997), 181-202 at p.186.

Consequently, most of them discussed the importance of writing as an antidote for the loss of memory.⁴³ Many authors reflected on their task as a historian in the prologues and epilogues to their works and the main body of text.⁴⁴ These observations could be brief and simple in nature. Thus the unknown author of the *Historia Ecclesie Abendonensis*, a work which was probably completed in the early 1160s, prefaced the narrative with a single sentence: ‘Here begins the first book of the lands of this church of Abingdon, comprising of four hundred and fourteen years.’ (*Incipit liber primus terrarum huius ecclesie Abendonensis, continens annos ccccxiiii.*)⁴⁵ Book II of the *Historia Ecclesie* begins in almost identical fashion: ‘Here begins the second book of the history of this church of Abingdon.’ (*Incipit Liber Secundus Historie huius ecclesie Abendonensis.*)⁴⁶

In studying the reasons for the writing of works of history in the medieval period, scholars have emphasised a number of common themes which recur in the writings of these authors. Thus, in the introductory essay to his edition of the Winchcombe and Coventry Chronicles, Paul Hayward has suggested that these so-called “breviate world chronicles”, which are little known and highly annalistic in nature, may have functioned in at least three overlapping ways: firstly, as educative texts, secondly as political texts, and, thirdly, as commemorative texts.⁴⁷ Of these, Hayward placed the most emphasis on the educative function of such chronicles. Medieval monasteries were comprised of a large proportion of child oblates, most

⁴³ Antonio Sennis, ‘The Power of Time: Looking at the Past in Medieval Monasteries’, in Anne Müller and Karen Stöber (eds) *Self-Representation of Medieval Religious Communities: The British Isles in Context* (Berlin, 2009), 307-25 at pp.313-15. For more the past see also Giles Constable, ‘Past and Present in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: Perceptions of Time and Change’, in *L'Europa dei secoli XI e XII fra novità e tradizione: sviluppi di una cultura sviluppi di una cultura; atti della decima settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 25 - 29 Agosto 1986* (Milan, 1989), 135-70.

⁴⁴ For more on prologues see Antonia Gransden, ‘Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England’, in Daniel Williams (ed.) *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1990), 55-81; more generally, Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces. Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm, 1964).

⁴⁵ *Historia Ecclesie Abendonensis*, I, 2.

⁴⁶ *Historia Ecclesie Abendonensis*, II, 2. For more on the work see Hudson, ‘The Abbey of Abingdon’.

⁴⁷ *Winchcombe and Coventry Chronicles*, i, pp.29-60.

of whom would, in all likelihood, have been illiterate when they entered the monastery. Many of the abbey's resources would have been devoted to training these children for the monastic life, and Hayward has argued that some chronicles may have been used as teaching tools for adolescent oblates and novices due to the relative simplicity of their grammar and vocabulary when compared with other types of historical writing, and the range of topics which they covered.⁴⁸

It is likely that historical writing more generally was written with a moral purpose and outlook that was intended to have profound ethical implications for the lives of its readers. Recent scholarship on Orderic's contemporary, William of Malmesbury, has argued that this was especially true in the case of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. Sigbjørn Sønnesyn's monograph, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, is of particular importance here, as is Matthew Kempshall's study of the influence of classical rhetoric upon medieval historical writing more generally.⁴⁹ Sønnesyn argued that William's historical works 'may be read as conveying a uniform and profound view of the purpose and utility of literature in general and history in particular...Statements of ethical intent are sincere and constitutive of his historical scholarship.'⁵⁰ Sønnesyn wrote variously of the 'ethical thrust', 'moral core' and 'underlying ethical assumptions and principles' of William of Malmesbury's body of work as a whole, and underpinned his argument through a detailed examination of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.⁵¹ For William, reading and writing was intended to produce 'a real change in the life of the reader'.⁵² The prologue to book II of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* is

⁴⁸ Ibid, i, p. 30.

⁴⁹ Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History* (Woodbridge, 2012); Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*.

⁵⁰ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury*, pp.3-4. For similar comments see Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p.3.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.5, 96, 97.

⁵² Ibid, p.5.

particularly helpful for understanding the relationship between morality and ethics on the one hand, and history on the other, in the thought of William of Malmesbury:

having plumbed the most intimate depths of the parts of ethics, I defer to its majesty, as it is intrinsically accessible to the inquirer, and puts souls in order for living well; I hold history in particular regard, as it establishes good habits through a delightful relation of events, and, using examples, excites readers to pursue good and avoid evil.⁵³

William of Malmesbury was far from being alone in extolling the ethical benefits of historical writing. Numerous other writers provided detailed and highly rhetorical explanations for their reasons for writing, emphasising the moral and didactic value of history. Thus, in the prologue to the *Historia Anglorum*, Henry of Huntingdon, who produced six different versions of his work between 1129 and 1154,⁵⁴ wrote the following:

It is my considered opinion that the sweetest alleviation of suffering and the greatest comfort in affliction resides almost entirely in the study of literature, and so I believe that the splendour of historical writing is to be cherished with the greatest delight and given the pre-eminent and most glorious position. Nothing is more excellent in this life than to investigate and become familiar with the course of world events. Where does the grandeur of valiant men shine more brightly, or the wisdom of the prudent, or the judgement of the just, or the moderation of the temperate, than in the context of recorded deeds?⁵⁵

Henry proceeded to mine the riches of classical and biblical history, providing his readers with a string of positive and negative examples of individuals from these periods, before continuing:

⁵³ iam uero ethicae partes medullitus rimatus, illius maiestati assurgo, quod per se studentibus pateat et animos ad bene uiuendum componat; historiam precipue, quae iocunda quadam gestorum notitia mores condiens, ad bona sequenda uel mala cauenda legentes exemplis irritat. William of Malmesbury, II. prologue, p.150. Here I have preferred the translation in Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury*, p.7.

⁵⁴ For more on the different versions of the *Historia Anglorum* see Henry of Huntingdon, lxvi-lxxvii.

⁵⁵ Cum in omni fere litterarum studio dulce laboris lenimen et summum doloris solamen dum uiuitur insitum considerem, tum delectabilius et maioris prerogatiua claritatis historiarum splendorem amplectendum crediderim. Nichil namque magis in uita egregium, quam uite calles egregie indagare et frequentare. Ubi autem floridius enitescit uirorum fortium magnificentia, prudentium sapientia, iustorum iudicia, temperatorum modestia, quam in rerum contextu gestarum? Henry of Huntingdon, prologue, p.2.

So, also, in the recorded deeds of all peoples and nations, which are the very judgements of God, kindness, munificence, honesty, caution and the like, and their opposites, not only stir up the spiritual towards good and repel them from evil, but also stir up worldly men to good deeds and reduce their wickedness. History, therefore, displays the past as if the present were in sight, and it appraises the future by representing the past...Certainly, in this work the diligent reader will discover what to follow and what to flee from, and if, by God's help, he becomes a better person for his imitation and avoidance, that, to me, will be the desired fruit. Commonly, indeed, have we been returned back to the straight path of moral purity by history.⁵⁶

What comes through especially strongly here in the *Historia Anglorum*, as in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* of William of Malmesbury, are Henry of Huntingdon's feelings regarding the exemplary nature of past history and educative value of the virtues and vices of those individuals who dominated it. A further example of the stated moral purposes of chronicles can be found in the prologue to the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, completed in the 1180s, in which the author provides a clear rationale for writing. He began by explaining that a certain amount of information had long been available to the monks of the abbey of St. Martin's at Battle, which acted as 'a monument to posterity' (*ad posterorum monimentum*). Next, he noted that there were a number of gaps in this record of communal memory. The Battle chronicler informed his readers that the present work filled those gaps through oral and written sources and drew together all this material, both new and old, in one place. This enabled the monks to read about the ever-changing circumstances in which their abbey had found itself in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the midst of summarising these various

⁵⁶ Sic etiam in rebus gestis omnium gentium et nationum, que utique Dei iudicia sunt, benignitas, munificentia, probitas, cautela et his similia, et contraria, non solum spirituales ad bonum accendunt et a malo repellunt, sed etiam seculares ad bona sollicitant et in malis minuunt, Historia igitur preterita quasi presentia uisui representat, futura ex preteritis imaginando diiudicat...In quo scilicet opere sequenda et fugienda lector diligens dum inuenerit, ex eorum imitatione et euitatione Deo cooperante melioratus, michi fructum afferet exoptabilem. Plerumque etenim ad ipsam morum puritatem iuxta callem directum historia resiliuimus. Henry of Huntingdon, prologue, pp4-6.

changes in fortune, the author concluded that he had recorded these affairs ‘for the caution or convenience of posterity’ (*ad cautelam uel commodum posterorum*).⁵⁷

The moral and didactic purpose of historical writing was also frequently expressed in the main body of the works themselves. This point can be illustrated by a short examination of the *Liber Eliensis*,⁵⁸ which contains a number of episodes where the author explicitly states the purpose for their inclusion within the text. A series of such stories can be found in book II, the first relating to a young monk called Edwin who was persuaded by the Devil to leave the choir early, before completion of Compline. Possessed by a demon, he was overcome by a mad rage and attempted to violently attack the other monks as they sought to restrain him. The abbot, Siward, advised that the monks spend the night in vigil by the tomb of St. Æthelthryth, the patron saint of the abbey. By morning, Edwin had come to his senses, resulting in the vivid final stage of his cure: the violent ejection of the final remnants of the demon out of his system in a latrine, the stench of which filled the surrounding area. At the end of the chapter, the author provides the following explanation of why this story was included in the narrative:

so that the power of St. Æthelthryth should be honoured in the memory of the sane and common prayer should be frequented with the greatest devotion and no monk should wander off outside the convent at the statutory hours. For everywhere the Adversary meets us, at the ready and, if he should discover a poor little sheep wandering outside the proper limits, he attacks violently, rejoicing mightily in the losses of the church, whose warfare is as terrible to him as an encamped army in battle-array.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, p.32.

⁵⁸ For more on the purpose of the work see *Liber Eliensis*, p.1; Fairweather, pp.1-2; Paxton, ‘Monks and Bishops’.

⁵⁹ ...ut apud sanas memorias sancte Æðeldreðe potentia honoretur et communis oratio deuotissime frequentetur nullusque monachus in legitimis horis extra conuentum euagetur. Promptus enim ubique occurrit aduersarius et,

The purpose of this story is unmistakably clear, stressing as it does the reality of spiritual warfare, the power of St. Æthelthryth and the crucial role of the hours of the Divine Office in engaging in this battle. Reading of what happened to the young monk Edwin, each monk could not have failed to miss the point: common prayer was important and to be observed diligently by all monks. More generally, as the author of the *Liber Eliensis* also observed, Edwin's example was an object-lesson for the monks regarding the strength and importance of the brethren as a community, for the Devil had only been free to act once the youth had left Compline, having been hitherto repulsed by the power of the monastic community at prayer.⁶⁰ Further moral lessons are provided in the chapters that follow.⁶¹ Thus, after relating how many of the monks in the abbey first became seriously sick and then were subsequently healed by the merits of St. Æthelthryth, the author of the *Liber Eliensis* drew three conclusions from this noteworthy occurrence: 'First, our God and Lord should not, having been provoked sometime by our evils, be compelled to punish; second, that hoping in His mercy, we would not falter, neither in prosperity nor in adversity; thirdly, that we should glorify Him who inspires where He wills, whom He wills and as much as He wills. To Him be glory throughout all ages. Amen.'⁶² Finally, after much of the silver and gold, and many of the precious objects and relics of the monastery had been plundered by monks not native to the church of Ely, the author of the *Liber Eliensis* concluded that this story had been included in the narrative 'so that posterity might learn that loss of goods always results from the

si quam ultra debitos limites errantem inuenerit ouiculam, uiolenter aggreditur uehementer gaudens in dampnis ecclesie, cuius ita est ei terribilis militia, ut castrorum acies ordinata. *Liber Eliensis*, II.129, pp.208-9; Fairweather, pp.245-8.

⁶⁰ *Liber Eliensis*, II.129, p.208; Fairweather, p.248.

⁶¹ See for example *Liber Eliensis*, II.131, pp.210-11; Fairweather, p.250.

⁶² In hoc facto tria memoranda conspiciuntur: primo, ne Deus et dominus noster, irritatus aliquando malis nostris, punire cogatur; secundo, ut in misericordia eius sperantes non deficiamus nec in prosperis nec in aduersis; tertio, ut glorificemus eum qui, ubi uult, cui uult et quantum uult, spirat. Ipsi gloria per seculorum secula. Amen. *Liber Eliensis*, II.133, p.216; Fairweather, pp.257-8.

administration of outsiders' (*ut discant posterī semper fieri detrimentum bonorum in administratione externorum.*)⁶³

While it is perhaps unsurprising to hear of monastic historians extolling the benefits of the Divine Office and warning readers of the potentially dreadful consequences of missing Compline, it is important to note that these same authors could and did write just as frequently about the moral lessons to be learned from the lives of notable individuals who lived beyond the cloister. The actions of kings received particular attention in the chronicles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, for their actions and policies had major repercussions for the political, moral and religious climate of their realms.⁶⁴ The death of William the Conqueror provides a well-known case study for our present purposes.⁶⁵ The author of the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, which had been established by the Conqueror in the late eleventh century, spoke of the death of its founder in the following way:

Let us linger a little to consider this man, for whom the words conveyed are by no means sufficient to ponder the rise of this miserable life...this was a man whose magnanimity attended to the difficulty of beginning things, the strength and effectiveness of conquering, the wisdom of bringing peace to his possessions, as if devoid of each of these in general, the peril of death levelled him, as if the lowest of the low, easily penetrating the king's splendid threshold. Yet it is not satisfying to mourn his wretched condition, so I turn my pen from these things for a time; the wise man, meanwhile, is encouraged to procure eternal refuge for himself while he may.⁶⁶

⁶³ *Liber Eliensis*, II.138, p.222; Fairweather, pp.265-6.

⁶⁴ Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury*, pp.150, 171.

⁶⁵ For more on William the Conqueror see, for example, David Bates, 'The Conqueror's Earliest Historians and the Writing of his Biography', in David Bates, Julia Crick and Sarah Hamilton (eds) *Writing Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge, 2006), 129-41.

⁶⁶ Uerum ut huius consideratione paululum inmoremur, quibus uerbis huius uite miserabilis explicetur ortus nequaquam pensare sufficimus...Hunc siquidem quem magnanimitas comitabatur difficilia inchoandi, robur et efficacitas conquirendi, sagacitas possessa pacificandi, generale ut his singulis carentem letiferum substruit discrimen, ut infimi abiectum, secure regis preclarum penetrans limen. Ceterum miseram deflere non sufficiens

Here, then, is a picture of death as the great leveller to which all eventually succumb, whether important or unimportant, rich or poor, godly or ungodly. The final sentence of this excerpt encapsulates the moral lesson to be drawn from this sobering reality: he who considers himself (*sapienti*) wise should pay heed to the example of the Conqueror's death, consider their own mortality, and seek eternal life, which can be found in God alone. The breadth of the audience to which this lesson is directed is significant. This was a general lesson for all, not a specific lesson for the monks alone. It had as much relevance for those within the cloister as those without. In what followed, the chronicler provided some further reflections on the achievements of the Conqueror, noting that the King had founded three monasteries during his lifetime, the third of which was the author's own house, Battle Abbey. Yet on his death, the Abbey remained undedicated and, it seems, not as large or wealthy as its brethren had hoped, given its exalted patronage. At this point in the narrative of the *Chronicle*, the author drew out a further lesson for his readers, once again addressing the *sapienti*:

From whence any wise man is prompted to complete the good deed, which he has proposed, today while he may, for he is ignorant of whether the following day will be favourable to him. For it is more prudent to occupy the day with good deeds granted today than for a dubious hope to postpone a proposed good. Accordingly, we rejoice more surely in good deeds completed than in those proposed, which we are ignorant of whether we are able to bring about. And, indeed, it happens that for some who defer to do good when they are able, the penalty for sin prevails against them by the just judgement of God, which permits them to do that which is not expedient; afterwards it supplies neither the will nor ability.⁶⁷

conditionem, ab his interim me retorquente stilum, sapienti dum licet innuitur eternum sibi procurare asilum. *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, p.92.

⁶⁷ Unde sapienti cuilibet persuadetur bonum, si quod proposuit, id hodie, scilicet dum licet, eo quod ignoret utrum sibi crastinus suffragetur dies, peragere. Prudentius est enim hodiernum bonis concessum occupare diem quam spe dubia bonum recrastinare propositum. Siquidem et de peractis bonis securius gaudemus quam de propositis, que utrum efficere possimus ignoramus. Nonnullis etenim id accidit quod bona quando possunt dum agere differunt, iusto in eos Dei iudicio peccati pena preualente, qua quis quod non expedit agere permittitur, nec uoluntas postmodum suppeditet nec facultas. *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, p.94.

While born out of the particular heartache felt at Battle Abbey over the death of its patron and founder, this second moral lesson, this time derived from the Conqueror's unfinished actions in life, once again had a far broader relevance. The message, not merely to plan to do good, but to accomplish it in the allotted time, was certainly one for the monks to take to heart in their life under the Rule. It was also one for them to circulate as widely as possible amongst all with whom they came into contact, whether clergy or laity.

Orderic also chose to display his strong feelings about William the Conqueror on the occasion of relating his death in the narrative of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. While he usually left his readers to make 'moral-didactic connections' for themselves, this is a clear instance in which he preferred to leave nothing to the imagination, as Matthew Kempshall has observed.⁶⁸ At the end of book VII of the *Historia*, Orderic reported how William's body was squeezed into a coffin that was far too small for it and, as a result, his bowels burst open, causing a great stench that overwhelmed the crowd of bystanders at his funeral. Reflecting on this 'foul shameful' (*teterrimum pudorem*), he observed:

Adversity manifested itself amidst prosperity, so that the hearts of men might be alarmed. A king once powerful and war-like, and feared by many people throughout many lands, lay naked on the ground and abandoned by those who he had begotten or nurtured. He required borrowed money for his funeral rites, and needed the aid of a common man to procure the bier and bearers; he who had to this point abounded in so many things and with overflowing needs...and he who had ruled so many cities and towns and villages, lacked free ground for burial. His fat belly, nourished by so many delights, shamefully opened, and showed the prudent how senseless is the glory of the flesh. Accordingly, he who observed the corruption of that foul body was advised that, through the labour of salutary abstinence, he should try to obtain better things than the delights of the flesh,

⁶⁸ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, pp.403-4.

which are from the earth and will return to dust. The condition of rich and poor is alike; and death and decay attacks both similarly.

In his conclusion, Orderic turned to scripture:

Therefore do not trust in false princes O sons of men, but in the true and living God, who is the creator of all. Reflect upon the sequence books of the Old and New Testament, and take hold of the multiple examples there for yourself, what to avoid, what you should seek after. Do not hope in inequality, and do not long for plunder. If riches abound, do not set your heart on them. For all flesh is as grass, and all its glory as the flower of grass. The grass has withered, and its flower has fallen, but the word of the Lord shall remain forever.⁶⁹

Like the anonymous author of the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, Orderic emphasised that all will eventually fall victim to death and decay. Yet while the monk of Battle Abbey praised William the Conqueror in death, Orderic's account in book VII of the *Historia* is far more damning in tone. In Orderic's hands, the Conqueror's death acts not only as a warning that death comes to all, but that it also performs a further function: displaying the worth or futility of how men really lived. Orderic makes this point vividly in the narrative. The bursting open of the Conqueror's bowels functions in two ways, for just as his innards were revealed to onlookers, so too was the indulgent and decadent nature of his lifestyle made plain to the reader. This, then, provided Orderic with an opportunity to underline to his readers the transitory nature of this world and the resultant futility of putting their hopes in its princes.

Instead, they should put their hope in God who was true and living and whose word was not

⁶⁹ Inter prospera patuerunt aduersa, ut terrerentur terrigenarum corda. Rex quondam potens et bellicosus, multisque populis per plures prouincias metuendus in area iacuit nudus, et a suis quos genuerat uel aluerat destitutus. Aere alieno in funebrio cultu indiguit, ope gregarii pro sandapila et uisillionibus conducendis eguit, qui tot hactenus et superfluis operibus nimis abundauit...liberoque solo, qui tot urbibus et oppidis et uicis principatus est, caruit ad sepulturam. Aruina uentris eius, tot delectamentis enutrita, cum dedecore patuit, et prudentes ac infrunitos qualis sit gloria carnis edocuit. Inspecta siquidem corruptione cenosi cadaueris quisque monetur, ut meliora quam delectamenta sunt carnis quae terra est et in puluerem reuertetur, labore salutaris continentiae, mercari feruenter conetur. Diuitis et pauperis par est conditio, et similiter ambos inuadit mors et putredo. Nolite ergo confidere in principibus falsis O filii hominum; sed in Deo uiuo et uero, qui creator est omnium. Ueteris et novi testamenti seriem reuoluite, et exempla inde multiplicia uobis capessite, quid cauere, quidue debeatis appetere. Nolite sperare in iniquitate, et rapinas nolite concupiscere. Diuitiae si affluent, nolite cor apponere. Omnis enim caro ut fenum, et omnis gloria eius ut flos feni. Exaruit foenum, et flos eius cecidit. Uerbum autem Domini manet in aeternum. OV IV. 106-8.

subject to decay. In saying such things, it may well be that Orderic's comments here are to be considered as an actual indictment of his readers, who had attached too much of their hope and security to the person of William the Conqueror, whose death had shown him to be deeply flawed. This reading explains the quotation from Psalm 145:2 in the Vulgate which reads 'Put not your trust in princes...' It is revealing that Orderic added the word 'false' to this phrase so that in the *Historia* it became the moral of the story: 'Therefore do not trust in *false* princes...' ⁷⁰ This examination of Orderic's account of the death of the Conqueror thus reveals that he used the event to make a strong moral point at the end of book VII of the *Historia*. In what follows, this study will turn to examine the stated purposes for which the *Historia* was written.

The Purpose of the Historia

Why did Orderic write the *Historia*? For whom did he write? Or to pose the question another way, what kind of history was Orderic trying to write? These are the key questions which this study seeks to answer. In thinking about the purpose of the *Historia*, scholars have tended to argue for a broad purpose and audience for the work. Marjorie Chibnall's influence in the field makes her argument, contained in the introduction to the *Historia*, a natural point of departure for this present discussion of the matter. ⁷¹ Chibnall firmly rejected an exclusively monastic reading of the *Historia*, instead arguing that the work was written to fulfil multiple purposes:

To imagine that, because his work was begun at the command of his abbot and certain parts were addressed to his monastic brethren, he wrote exclusively for a monastic audience, would be to blind oneself to the originality of his mind, the force of his imagination, and the strength and

⁷⁰ OV IV. 108.

⁷¹ OV I. 31-9.

diversity of the historical tradition which inspired and sustained him...To whom was the *Ecclesiastical History* directed? Parts undoubtedly were a record of the monastery's endowment, patrons, and early history; an extension of the interwoven charter and chronicle that in so many houses made up the *Historia fundacionis*...Other parts were directed towards monastic needs, to provide readings for the refectory and brief *historiae* for the church services on saints' days. As for the rest, and it is a large proportion of the book, it was certainly addressed in the first instance to an audience who understood spoken Latin. The punctuation used was designed to indicate pauses and changes in the pitch of the voice; it was ideal for reading aloud...It must not, therefore, be assumed that Orderic wrote only for the monks who would hear his work read out in short sections or daily portions. They were an important, indeed an essential, part of his anticipated audience; but there can be no doubt that he looked beyond them.

She then proceeded to lay out her own, broader interpretation of the chronicle:

He looked first to the laymen of his day. Some of them could read or understand Latin; Norman and French lords placed certain of their sons in great households as squires to be trained for knighthood, and had others taught their letters with a view to a monastic vocation or church preferment...Indeed in some families literacy and training as a knight were not mutually exclusive...Secular clerks, some of them chaplains of the great...were among the literate for whom Orderic wrote, and through whom he spoke to the knights beyond the cloister...[He] wrote in part for monks of the knightly class who had been familiar with such things from boyhood; but he wrote also for secular knights, in the hope of moderating their brutality and directing their swords to the service of God...Besides this, he wrote for the monks or clerks in generations to come, who would use his work as he had used the works of Bede and Paul the Deacon...Try as he would to adapt the material to a strictly monastic or moral purpose, it continually burst the bonds of any formal or utilitarian structure...All was grist to his mill.⁷²

According to Chibnall, then, Orderic wrote for a broad audience of monastic and secular individuals, both inside and outside the cloister of Saint-Evroult: the *Historia* might have begun as a monastic history in 1114, but by the time of its completion in 1141 its author had

⁷² OV I. 38-9.

all but forgotten his initial purpose for the work, instead preferring something which was much larger and more ambitious: a narrative which chronicled not only monastic and local history, but also Norman history and ecclesiastical history.⁷³ The ever-broadening intended audience for the work thus left its mark on the content of the work:

The changing plan and gradual widening of the scope of his work left traces in the changing numbers of the books and in the wording of the prefaces, addressed sometimes explicitly to his monastic brethren and sometimes by implication to a wider circle of readers, as well as in the subject matter. When in book III Orderic first mentioned William the Conqueror and his children and the wonderful history that might be written about them he deliberately turned back to his monastic history. By the time he reached the end of that book, some nine or ten years later, he announced his intention of describing the deeds of William and the changing fortunes of the English and Norman peoples more fully. In spite of this change, the narrower purpose was to be expressed again from time to time.⁷⁴

Chibnall's arguments about the audience and purpose of the *Historia* have had a deep and lasting influence on the subsequent scholarship on Orderic.

Many scholars, in particular those writing after the publication of Chibnall's edition, have struggled to resolve the apparent tension between the content and form of the work,⁷⁵ with most benefitting greatly from the valuable information gained from reading it whilst at the same time expressing their frustration with the structure within which this information is contained. Thus, while Orderic has been praised for his creativity, originality of thought and

⁷³ For a stimulating example of monastic chronicles which may also have been written for a lay audience see Jennifer Paxton, 'Textual Communities in the English Fenlands: A Lay Audience for Monastic Chronicles?', *ANS* 26 (2004), 123-37.

⁷⁴ OV I. 33.

⁷⁵ For a detailed discussion of the relationship between content and form see Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987).

‘narrative power’,⁷⁶ he has also been much criticised for his writing style and the complex structure of the *Historia*. Antonia Gransden highlighted three categories of material in the chronicle: information on Saint-Evroult ‘to please and instruct the community there’; a secular history of Norman ‘for the benefit of all Normans’; and, finally, ‘material to edify any reader’. She observed, ‘His interests dominate the structure of his work. He did not learn from the English writers how to arrange his material according to subject-matter or chronological order. Rather he let his interests pursue their bent. He interrupts subjects, repeats himself and digresses. His work has been described as being in “prodigious confusion”. The result is a very long book, full of vivid detail and unique information but hard to use for reference.’⁷⁷ Nancy Partner went even further, writing that ‘the mass of material, arranged with evident difficulty into chronological sequence, uncontrollably shapeless, tends to drown out any particular impression. Orderic’s relation to his sources is a watery one, with the overwhelmed author swimming hard to stay on top...His history, like that of so many of his contemporaries, is full of good things – but the structure of the edifice...is hopelessly lost.’⁷⁸

These sentiments of Gransden and Partner regarding the *Historia* have been influential in more recent studies of Norman historical writing. Thus Jean Blacker quoted the section from Gransden cited above and agreed with her opinion that Orderic compared unfavourably with William of Malmesbury, writing that ‘Orderic did not share William’s almost classical sense of thematic unity as a structuring device, and his lack of preoccupation with matters of form is evident from the rambling nature of his work, parts of which were tacked on and revised

⁷⁶ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p.165.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, *Historical Writing*, p.161.

⁷⁸ Nancy F. Partner, ‘The New Cornificius: Medieval History and the Artifice of Words’, in Ernst Breisach (ed.) *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography* (Kalamazoo, 1985), 5-59, at p.15.

later without regard to their effect on the structure of the work as a whole.⁷⁹ Moreover, according to Blacker, by restructuring the work in 1136-37 and incorporating Norman history, a life of Christ and a history of the early church into the *Historia*, as well as a history of the First Crusade, Orderic ‘sought to distinguish himself from those who confined their efforts to one abbey, one nation, one campaign, or one era.’⁸⁰ These separate elements were incorporated into the *Historia* for different reasons, and in this Blacker followed Chibnall’s argument that the chronicle was written for both a monastic and lay audience.⁸¹ Leah Shopkow similarly argued for a dual audience for the *Historia*,⁸² and incorporated Partner’s perspective on the incoherent nature of Orderic’s work into her own writing on the matter. She regarded the *Historia* as a ‘fragmented text’ written by an author who had failed to integrate the numerous different parts of the work into a satisfying whole.⁸³ Alongside these critical opinions of Gransden, Partner, Blacker and Shopkow one should also note the earlier opinions of Vivian Galbraith, who described the *Historia* as ‘unreadable’,⁸⁴ and R. H. C. Davis, who regarded Orderic as an ‘eloquent’ yet ‘idiosyncratic’ historian of the Norman world.⁸⁵

Some have been less critical of the *Historia*. Thus, Emily Albu built on the arguments of Chibnall and Gransden to argue for the evolution of the Orderic’s text from an internal monastic history to a wider secular history, yet did not seem to think that the end product was an altogether bad thing. Rather, she argued, ‘The final result is an *Ecclesiastical History* that

⁷⁹ Jean Blacker, *The Faces of Time: Portrayal of the Past in Old French and Latin Historical Narrative of the Anglo-Norman Regnum* (Austin, Texas, 1994), pp.10-11; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp.136, 161, 165.

⁸⁰ Blacker, *Faces of Time*, p.17.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, pp.153-9.

⁸² Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington DC, 1997), p.231.

⁸³ *Ibid*, pp.162-3; see also pp.46-7.

⁸⁴ V. H. Galbraith, *Historical Research in Medieval England* (London, 1951), p.7.

⁸⁵ R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London, 1976), p.15.

duplicates the chaos of the Norman realm as Orderic knew it.⁸⁶ Similar sentiments have been expressed by Amanda Jane Hingst, who, suggested in her recent monograph study of the *Historia* that though ‘chaotic’ in its final form, such a work was necessary for Orderic to express his full creativity as a writer.⁸⁷ James Bickford Smith’s characterisation of the *Historia* as a ‘strange masterpiece’ thus encompasses much of the scholarship on Orderic’s *magnum opus*.⁸⁸ Indeed, Bickford Smith, like Gransden before him, has written of Orderic as having three overlapping historical personas in the *Historia*, namely historian of Saint-Evroult, historian of Normandy, and historian of the Church.⁸⁹ Yet the major contribution of his doctoral study is that it contains perhaps the most sustained study of the interpretation of the *Historia* to date.⁹⁰ Bickford Smith tackled the problem of Orderic’s working method head-on, tracking it across entire books of the work in order to understand the flow of his thought. He vividly likened this process to ‘a bumpy ride through some apparent dead-ends’.⁹¹

What emerges from this bumpy ride is that Orderic’s writing was fundamentally digressive. The narrative proceeds until mention of a person, date, historical episode or foundation about which Orderic has something to say prompts either an aside or a change of course. While the ensuing disorganisation is obvious, the interesting possibility raised by this method is that Orderic inquired as he wrote, and that these inquiries in turn led to further inquiries, and so on...If so, there would be strong arguments for Orderic’s historical project being guided not by an overarching design but by the material and subjects which he encountered, and the further areas of study these suggested to him.⁹²

⁸⁶ Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories: Propaganda, Myth and Subversion* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp.190-1.

⁸⁷ Amanda Jane Hingst, *The Written World: Past and Place in the Work of Orderic Vitalis* (Notre Dame, 2009), p.xviii.

⁸⁸ James Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society: c.1035-1087* (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2006), p.26.

⁸⁹ Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*, pp.39-60.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, pp.28-97.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.61.

⁹² *Ibid*, p.64.

Bickford Smith's analysis significantly develops the discussion about how to understand the *Historia*, for he recognised that given Orderic's method, it is unproductive to read the *Historia* as anything other than an integrated whole.⁹³ Yet, like many scholars before him, he also stressed the evolving nature of the *Historia* to the extent that he believed that any question that Orderic maintained his original intentions for the work throughout the entire writing process ought to be firmly dismissed: 'to talk of *Historia Ecclesiastica* as "planned" as one type of historical endeavour is to misunderstand it', he observed.⁹⁴

The only scholar to have hitherto argued that Orderic retained his original monastic purpose for the *Historia* throughout the writing process was Roger Ray, in his ground-breaking, yet little cited doctoral thesis, *The Monastic Historiography of Ordericus Vitalis*, completed in 1967.⁹⁵ Interestingly, Ray was working on his thesis in America at the same time as Marjorie Chibnall was editing, translating and preparing the first volume of her edition of the *Historia* for publication in England. While he was aware of Chibnall's work and corresponded with her regarding the then state of the Latin text on which his study was based,⁹⁶ Ray argued for a very different understanding of Orderic's purpose in writing the chronicle:

The *Historia* was not destined to serve a general "scholarly" audience for all sorts of intellectual purposes. On the contrary, nothing larger motivated it than the desire to fructify St. Evroul's "divine reader" and practice of liturgy. The work was written, in brief, to be used in the author's own house as still another vehicle for the monastic desire for God...bound up in all of this was also the purpose of supplying information which might make St. Evroul's liturgical practice more

⁹³ Ibid, pp.24-6, 39.

⁹⁴ Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*, p.66.

⁹⁵ Roger Ray, *The Monastic Historiography of Ordericus Vitalis*, (unpublished PhD thesis, Duke University, 1967).

⁹⁶ For more on Ray's correspondence with Chibnall and his awareness of her work see Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, p.vi, 13.

intelligent...It is this set of motivational considerations which gives the *Historia* its distinctive flavour and provides the ends determining its manner of presentation.⁹⁷

Local interest was thus a central criterion for Orderic's selection of material for the *Historia*:

he chooses some materials because they are related in some way to St. Evroul and its fortunes. Our author remains alert, in fact, to all the ways in which history touches down in his abbey and strives to interest his brothers by reference to matters of some effect for them. After all, Ordericus wrote the *Historia* to be read at St. Evroul; he could have counted all the more success if he could convey to his fellow monks lively views of *gesta Dei* impinging upon their abbey. So the local aspect of Ordericus' scholarly motive produces the "local chronicle" effect of much of the *Historia*.⁹⁸

In saying this, Ray did not believe that Orderic was 'always a local historian',⁹⁹ for he acknowledged that his *Historia* was frequently concerned with events which took place far beyond the forest of the pays d'Ouche; rather, he argued that everything that Orderic wrote was intended for a local audience, namely the monks of Saint-Evroult, and was thus viewed through this lens. 'Thus, if it was a large world indeed that stimulated Ordericus to nearly endless writing, it was a small world, that of St. Evroul, for which he destined the *Historia* and from which he derived the values it was written to preserve, and this makes a very great difference for the sort of historiography he followed.'¹⁰⁰

It has also been argued that the *Historia ecclesiastica* was unpopular with its readers, even those within Orderic's own monastery. This position stems from the fact that three of the four surviving volumes are the original holograph manuscripts, and that Orderic's work thus seems to have been little used or copied before the sixteenth century. Roger Ray sought to

⁹⁷ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, p.89.

⁹⁸ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, p.174.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p.174 n.1.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p.118.

explain this apparent ‘twelfth century neglect’, in an article published in 1972.¹⁰¹ Here he suggested that ‘while Orderic was still in the midst of actual composition he was already having trouble with his living audience there at the Norman abbey of St. Evroul...the conflict in various ways inflects the work throughout, so much so that anyone who wishes to understand the text must remain alert to the criticisms Orderic in part shaped it to counter.’¹⁰² Ray regarded the various prologues in the *Historia* as the place where this conflict could most clearly be seen, arguing that ‘real controversy’ lay behind his rhetorical attacks on opponents contained therein.¹⁰³ His critics were the monks of Saint-Evroult and his dispute with them centred on the usefulness of the *Historia* for monastic reading. They wanted a written history that was more hagiographical in nature and less concerned with secular history. In Ray’s mind, this tension remained unresolved until the very end of the writing process, despite Orderic’s best efforts. It was this which lay behind the subsequent unpopularity of the work.¹⁰⁴ Ray’s argument has had a mixed reception in the more recent scholarship on the *Historia*. Marjorie Chibnall, Jean Blacker and James Bickford Smith have, in particular, found it unconvincing, instead emphasising the rhetorical nature of the prologues.¹⁰⁵ Thus Blacker observed that ‘Although Orderic’s remarks [in the prologues] have a defensive air, these few remarks in a work of such prodigious length do not necessarily point to any prolonged or damaging dissatisfaction on the audience’s part. Apologetic *exordia* abound in writings of the period; one cannot automatically assume that real monks were being addressed, and not rhetorical straw men, and that they were highly critical of Orderic’s history.’ For her, the reason for the lack of surviving manuscripts of the *Historia* and references to Orderic in the twelfth century and thereafter, was not contemporary dislike for the work by either the monks of Saint-Evroult or by a suggested lay audience. Rather, it was

¹⁰¹ Roger Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and his Readers’, *Studia Monastica* 14 (1972), 17-33 at p.17.

¹⁰² Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and his Readers’, p.18.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.19.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.30, 32.

¹⁰⁵ Chibnall, *World of Orderic*, pp.38-40; Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*, pp.57-60.

the result of ‘a protectiveness on the part of the historian toward his manuscript’ in that he made no effort to circulate the manuscript during his lifetime but continually worked on it until shortly before his death.¹⁰⁶ While Leah Shopkow also rejected the notion that Orderic used his prologues to defend himself from specific local detractors at Saint-Evrault, she was nevertheless of the opinion that ‘Orderic’s advocacy of history does not seem to have convinced his fellow monks, for there are many indications that Orderic failed to find much of an audience in the Middle Ages for his *Ecclesiastical History*.’¹⁰⁷ To Shopkow, then, Orderic was a failure because he was unsuccessful in reaching a wider audience with his work. She suggested a number of reasons for this. The *Historia* was not an official history written at the behest of a major patron or even a Norman duke, but rather the result of the local patronage of the abbots of Saint-Evrault written for a local readership who were, at least to some extent, disenchanted with the work. Moreover, Shopkow argued that the changing nature of the *Historia*, from a monastic to a universal history, meant that the abbots would likely have had little use for the bulk of its content. Added to this was the fact that the length of the work made it difficult to read, and its loose structure meant that it was difficult to navigate one’s way through the *Historia*, or to find specific passages contained within it.¹⁰⁸

There has thus been much dispute over the purpose for which the *Historia ecclesiastica* was written. Criticism of the structure has led the work to be regarded as a universal chronicle at best and a poorly written encyclopaedia at worst. The suggestion that the work was unsuccessful because it was unpopular with its audience has further dampened opinions of the *Historia*. Scholarly regard for the construction of Orderic’s work has thus undergone

¹⁰⁶ Blacker, *Faces of Time*, pp.155-6; see also pp.159-60.

¹⁰⁷ Shopkow, *History and Community*, p.232.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, pp.233-4.

something of a shift to the pejorative over the last century.¹⁰⁹ Yet, at the same time, Chibnall's modern critical edition and translation of the *Historia*, completed in 1980, has opened up the study of the chronicle to a whole new generation of scholars, who have published numerous valuable studies regarding various aspects of the *Historia*. Chibnall herself published a great deal on Orderic,¹¹⁰ with the first of these studies published in 1958 and the last in 2011, only a year before her death.¹¹¹ Articles have appeared in recent decades, on such diverse themes as the monks and patrons of Saint-Evroult,¹¹² the Grandmesnil¹¹³ and Giroie families,¹¹⁴ Norman bishops,¹¹⁵ violence against women,¹¹⁶ Christ and scripture,¹¹⁷ hair and identity,¹¹⁸ vengeance,¹¹⁹ emotions and power,¹²⁰ and physical objects.¹²¹ Orderic

¹⁰⁹ For a summary of earlier, more positive, assessments of the *Historia* see Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, pp.2-24a.

¹¹⁰ Many of her articles have been republished in Marjorie Chibnall, *Piety, Power and History in Medieval England and Normandy* (Aldershot, 2000). Her monograph study, *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, first published in 1984, remains fundamental reading.

¹¹¹ Marjorie Chibnall, 'Ecclesiastical Patronage and the Growth of Feudal Estates at the Time of the Norman Conquest', *Annales de Normandie* 8 (1958), 103-118; *eadem*, 'Canon Law as Reflected in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis', in Kenneth Pennington and Melodie Harris Eichbauer (eds) *Law as Profession and Practice in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honor of James A. Brundage* (Farnham, 2011), 219-30.

¹¹² Marjorie Chibnall, 'Les moines et les patrons de Saint-Évroult dans l'Italie du Sud au XI^e siècle', in Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (eds) *Les Normands en Méditerranée: dans le sillage des Tancrède* (Caen, 1994), 161-170.

¹¹³ Joseph Decaëns, 'Le patrimoine des Grentemesnil en Normandie, en Italie et en Angleterre aux XI^e et XII^e siècles', in Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (eds) *Les Normands en Méditerranée: dans le sillage des Tancrède* (Caen, 1994), 123-140; Mark Hagger, 'Kinship and Identity in Eleventh-Century Normandy: The Case of Hugh de Grandmesnil, c.1040-1098', *JMH* 32 (2006), 212-30.

¹¹⁴ Pierre Bauduin, 'Une famille châtelaine sur les confins normanno-manceaux: les Géré (Xe-XIII^e s.)', *Archéologie Médiévale* 22 (1992), 309-56; Jean-Marie Maillefer, 'Une famille aristocratique aux confins de la Normandie: Les Géré au XI^e siècle', in Lucien Musset, Jean-Michel Bouvris and Jean-Marie Maillefer (eds) *Autour du pouvoir ducal Normand X^e-XII^e siècles*, Cahier des Annales de Normandie 17 (Caen, 1985), pp.175-206.

¹¹⁵ Pierre Bouet, 'L'image des évêques Normands dans l'œuvre d'Orderic Vital', in Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (eds) *Les évêques Normands du XI^e siècle* (Caen, 1995), 253-75.

¹¹⁶ Jean Blacker, 'Women, Power, and Violence in Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in Anna Roberts (ed.) *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts* (Florida, 1998), 44-55.

¹¹⁷ Elisabeth Mégier, 'Cotidie Operatur. Christus und die geschichte in der *Historia Ecclesiastica* des Ordericus Vitalis', *Revue Mabillon* 71 (1999), 169-204; *eadem*, 'Divina Pagina and the Narration of History in Orderic Vitalis' *Historia Ecclesiastica*, *Revue Benedictine* 110:1-2 (2000), 106-23.

¹¹⁸ Pauline Stafford, 'The Meanings of Hair in the Anglo-Norman World: Masculinity, Reform, and National Identity', in Mathilde van Dijk and Renée Nip (eds), *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies. Festschrift in Honour of Anneke Mulder-Bakker on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Turnhout, 2005), 153-171.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Roche, 'The Way Vengeance Comes: Rancorous Deeds and Words in the World of Orderic Vitalis', in Susanna A. Throop and Paul R. Hyams (eds), *Vengeance in the Middle Ages: Emotion, Religion and Feud* (Aldershot, 2010), 115-36.

¹²⁰ Richard E. Barton, 'Emotions and Power in Orderic Vitalis', *ANS* 33 (2011), 41-59.

¹²¹ Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

himself has been the subject of six major studies since the mid-nineteenth century, written by Léopold Delisle,¹²² Hans Wolter,¹²³ Roger Ray,¹²⁴ Marjorie Chibnall,¹²⁵ James Bickford Smith¹²⁶ and Amanda Jane Hingst.¹²⁷ This is a substantial body of work when, when taken together, provides significant insights into many different aspects of the narrative of the *Historia*. Yet it is our conviction that Orderic's overall purpose in writing the *Historia*, that is the narrative strategy which he employed throughout the work, has not yet been explained by these studies and can only be understood by a return to the text itself. Indeed, the survey of the scholarship on Orderic presented above reveals the extent to which much of the existing work has often echoed the arguments of the earlier historiography regarding the audience, purpose and structure of the *Historia*. Thus the changing purpose and widening audience of the work from monastic to secular was a position first put forward by Chibnall; the idea that it was unpopular is derived from Ray; and criticisms of the *Historia*'s structure have often cited Gransden, who herself drew from Delisle.¹²⁸

The Prologues and Epilogues of the Historia

In seeking to understand Orderic's intentions in writing the *Historia*, scholars have frequently turned to the many prologues, epilogues and other passages spread across the thirteen books in which the monk repeatedly articulated his attitude towards the developing work. As already noted, while Chibnall argued for the widening purpose and audience of the work, she nevertheless also observed that 'the narrower [monastic] purpose was to be expressed again

¹²² Léopold Delisle, 'Notice sur Orderic Vital', in *Orderici Vitalis ecclesiasticae historiae libri tredecim*, ed. A. Le Prévost, 5 vols. (Paris, 1838-55), v, i-cvi.

¹²³ Hans Wolter, *Orderici Vitalis: Ein Beitrag zur Kluniazensischen Geschichtsschreibung* (Wiesbaden, 1955).

¹²⁴ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*.

¹²⁵ Chibnall, *World of Orderic*.

¹²⁶ Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*.

¹²⁷ Hingst, *Written World*.

¹²⁸ See above, pp.23-26, 30-32.

from time to time'.¹²⁹ Similarly, Bickford Smith has recognised the problematic nature of this question, writing, 'why is it that we can see an author in his own autograph so frequently giving mutually incompatible answers to the apparently straightforward questions of what the subject and intent of his work were?'¹³⁰ On closer inspection, it can be argued that, contrary to what both Chibnall and Bickford Smith believed, there is no real contradiction between the prologues and epilogues contained in the *Historia*. Rather, a clear and multi-faceted purpose was articulated by Orderic throughout the work, one in which a wide universal historiographical framework and ethical emphasis complemented and enriched the local and monastic heartbeat of the history, rather than competing against it. What, then, were Orderic's stated aims in writing the *Historia*? In order to answer this question, and in the hope of seeking some resolution to the problems associated with it, this study will now undertake a close examination of the prologues and epilogues of the work.

Our study of the prologues and epilogues of the *Historia ecclesiastica* begins with the prologue to book I. The significance of this opening passage in revealing the overall narrative shape of the *Historia* and the strategy of its author means that much of it will be quoted here.

The prologue begins thus:

Our predecessors have, from ancient times, prudently considered all the happenings of the erring world, and have noted, for the caution of men, the good or evil befalling mortal men, and, always wishing to be useful to future generations, have accumulated their writings for writers. This, doubtless, we see done by Moses and Daniel and by other holy writers, this we find in Dares Phrygius and Pompeius Trogus and other historians of the gentiles, this also we observe in Eusebius and in Orosius *De Ormesta Mundi* and in Bede the Englishman and Paul [the Deacon] of Montecassino and in other ecclesiastical writers. I consider their accounts with delight, I praise

¹²⁹ OV I. 33.

¹³⁰ Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*, p.33; see also pp.33-39.

and admire the elegance and usefulness of their treatises, and I exhort the wise men of our time to follow their notable endeavour. However, because it is not for me to command others, I at least strive to turn away swiftly from useless things, and, exercising myself, to engage in something which might please my simple fellow students.¹³¹

Like the anonymous author of the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, Orderic wrote that the affairs of past history were written down ‘for the caution’ (*pro cautela*) and ‘profit’ (*prodesse*) of future generations; like Henry of Huntingdon, he mentioned biblical authors, classical writers and medieval historians in the same breath, highlighting the shared utility (*utilitatem*) of the works of these men for ‘the wise’ (*sapientes*). Finally, Orderic sought to align himself with the moral purposes of some of the most influential authors of past history by stating that he endeavoured to distance himself from ‘useless’ (*inutile*) things in favour of those things which would bring pleasure and benefit to his fellow students.

This ethical emphasis is also strongly manifest in the prologues to books III and IV. At the outset of book III, Orderic once again invoked the category of ‘the wise’ (*sapiens*),¹³² this time extolling the benefits of meditating on the pages of the Old and New Testaments. He exhorted the reader to imitate the example of the saints spoken of in scripture, whose deeds he recounted in books I and II of the *Historia*, which comprise a life of Christ and of the apostles, observing that ‘They followed the footsteps of the Saviour along the difficult road of virtue, and left a salutary example for us, so that, coming after them, we might hasten along the path of righteousness to our everlasting inheritance’ (*Per arduum iter uirtutem*

¹³¹ Antiores nostri ab antiquis temporibus labentis seculi excursus prudenter inspexerunt, et bona seu mala mortalibus contingentia pro cautela hominum notauerunt, et futuris semper prodesse uolentes scripta scriptis accumulauerunt. Hoc nimirum uidemus a Moyse et Danihele factum aliisque agiographis, hoc in Darete Phrigio et Pompeio Trogo comperimus aliisque gentilium historiographis, hoc etiam aduertimus in Eusebio et Orosio de Ormesta mundi anglicoque Beda et Paulo cassiniensi aliisque scriptoribus aecclesiasticis. Horum allegationes delectabiliter intueor, elegantiam et utilitatem sintagmatum laudo et admiror, nostrique temporis sapientes eorum notabile sedimen sequi cohortor. Verum quia non est meum aliis imperare, inutile saltem nitor ocium declinare; et memetipsum exercens aliquid actitare, quod meis debeat simplicibus sinmatitis placere. OV I. 130.

¹³² Orderic also addressed the *sapiens* in the prologue to book XI, see below pp.274-75.

*uestigia Saluatoris prosecuti sunt; et salutare nobis exemplum reliquerunt, ut sequaces eorum per iusticiae semitam ad perennem haereditatem festinemus).*¹³³ The theme of imitation is also present in the prologue to book IV of the *Historia*, where the churches built by William the Conqueror during his reign are said to constitute ‘an imitable example of good works for posterity’ (*bonique studii exemplum imitabile posteris*) for, not only did the King found many monasteries, we are told, but, as patron, also protected these houses against their enemies.¹³⁴

In the prologue to Book V, Orderic exhorted his readers:

Following our masters’ example, we ought ceaselessly to avoid deadly sins, and by useful study and salutary exercise to fervently sweat at that which cleanses the eager mind from vice, and, in all of life, arm against evil with glorious discipline... Thus our masters utterly condemn the enemy sloth and idleness as the enemy of the soul, and invite their followers to profitable labour and exercise by word and example.¹³⁵

Interestingly, the *maiores* of whom Orderic here spoke were Solomon, the authors of Proverbs and the Psalms, the Wisdom Literature of scripture, and also the great Roman poets, Virgil and Ovid, from whose writings he quoted in this passage. For, regarding the pursuit of discipline and study to the benefit of the soul, ‘not only Christian but also gentile poets agree’ (*non solum Christiani sed etiam gentiles poetae consonant*), he observed.¹³⁶ Such agreement, in turn, led Orderic in the next paragraph of the prologue to book V to address his abbot, Warin of Les Essarts, and it helps explain the motive he states there for embarking upon the

¹³³ OV II. 2.

¹³⁴ OV II. 190.

¹³⁵ *Maiorum exempla sectantes laetale ocium indesinenter debemus deuitare, utilique studio et salubri exercitio feruenter insudare; quibus intenta mens a uiciis emundatur, et in omne nefas uitali disciplina gloriose armatur... Maiores igitur nostril pigriciam et ociositatem animae inimicam penitus condemnant, suosque sequaces ad commodum laborem et exercitium uerbis et exemplis inuitant... OV III. 4.*

¹³⁶ OV III. 4.

writing of the *Historia ecclesiastica*: ‘I determined simply to produce something which might bring profit or pleasure to some of the faithful in the house of God, so to maintain this acquired knowledge vigilantly, that when the Lord comes to judgement I shall not be condemned with the lazy servant for hiding my talent in the earth.’¹³⁷ Orderic then proceeded to relate to his readers how, he had ‘gladly borne the easy yoke of the Lord for forty-two years’ as prescribed by the *Regula Benedicti*. Reflecting on these many years at Saint-Evroult, Orderic observed, ‘I always applied my mind to something useful’ (*xlii annis lene iugum Domini gratanter baiulaui...semper ad aliquid utile ingenium applicaui*).¹³⁸ While the sinfulness of bishops and rulers abounded during the time of Orderic’s writing, he felt that there was still much ‘useful’ (*utile*) material about which historians such as himself could write, and he here hinted at some of the subject matter to come in the *Historia ecclesiastica* by highlighting ‘the disputes of prelates and the bloody battles of princes’ (*praesulum litigia, et cruenta principum proelia*).¹³⁹ While Orderic spent almost all of his life within the confines of the monastery, there was, then, nevertheless, much beyond the walls of the cloister that he considered worthy of inclusion in the pages of the *Historia*.

The prologue to book VI of the *Historia* sees Orderic once again expounding to his readers the ethical value of studying the past and its utility for the present:

The keenness of human nature needs always to be suitably exercised with useful learning, and, by reflecting upon the past and examining the present, to be instructed for the future with felicitous virtues. Everyone should daily learn in what manner he ought to live, and take hold of the strong examples of heroes now dead to their benefit. Often many things resound in the ears of the

¹³⁷ ...aliquid quod aliquibus in domo Domini fidelibus prosit seu placeat decreui simpliciter edere, arreptum uero sedimen uigilanter tenere; ne cum seruo torpente pro absconso in terra talento dampner Domino ad iudicium ueniente. OV III. 6.

¹³⁸ OV III. 8.

¹³⁹ OV III.8.

ignorant which they think are as if unheard, and in modern times new things frequently become known in unexpected ways, in which the minds of inexperienced eyes are blind except through the turning over of [past] occurrences. So the studious investigate these hidden things and, to the favourable mind, they affirm anything of profit, which they value greatly and piously cherish. They labour out of benevolence, and reveal the past for posterity without prejudice, yet sometimes idle men attack their skill with dog-like teeth...if a benevolent posterity was able to restore [this knowledge], and leave it to recuperate, it would eagerly rise and shake off paralysis, and seek with resolute will the flower and fruit of the despised work, and ardently scrutinise it with sedulous attention...¹⁴⁰

Orderic went on to note how Jerome and Origen were forced in their writings to defend themselves against such idle critics who did not value the past but preferred, instead, for its value to remain hidden.¹⁴¹ Along with these two great Church Fathers whose names he here invoked, Orderic remained resolute about the need to write about the past for the utility of future generations. He therefore ended the prologue to Book VI with the following words:

On the human state and the fall, on the revolutions of this passing world, and on the vicissitudes of our prelates and princes, on peace and war and the manifold fortunes which do not cease to befall mankind, whatever the appointed theme, it is well-supplied for writing ... The course of the world and human affairs will be written about truthfully, and a chronicle will be composed to the praise of the Creator and just Governor of all things. For the eternal Creator still works in this way

¹⁴⁰ Humani acumen ingenii semper indiget utili sedimine competenter exerceri, et praeterita recolendo praesentiaque rimando ad futura feliciter uirtutibus instrui. Quisque debet quemadmodum uiuat cotidie discere, et fortia translatorum exempla heroum ad commoditatem sui capessere. Plerumque multa quae uelut inaudita putantur rudium auribus insonant, et noua modernis in repentinis casibus frequenter emanant; in quibus intellectuales inexpertorum oculi nisi per reuolutionem transactorum caligant. Studiosi ergo abdita inuestigant, et quicquid benignae menti profuturum autumant, pie amplexantes magni existimant. Ex beneuolentia laborant, et praeterita posteris sine inuidia manifestant; quorum sollertiam dente canino nonnunquam inertes lacerant... quod beniuola posteritas si posset restaurare, et intermissa recuperare, alacris excusso insurgeret torpore, et inuisi operis florem fructumque obnixa expeteret uoluntate, et ardentem perscrutaretur sedula perspicacitate...OV III. 212.

¹⁴¹ For a useful collection of introductory essays on the writings of the Church Fathers see now Frances Young, Lewis Ayres and Andrew Louth (eds) *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge, 2007).

and marvellously ordains all things, and of his glorious acts each one should, as it pleases him and as he is able, piously display that which divine inspiration has revealed to him.¹⁴²

Thus, whatever else one may say about his monumental work, we can say this with some degree of certainty: as with the writings of his contemporaries, Orderic's *Historia* was written to bring about real ethical change in the life of the reader, to the glory of God.

At this juncture, having noted the invocation of Jerome and Origen in the prologue to book VI of the *Historia*, it is necessary to consider the purpose of such comments, and what this may indicate about the nature of Orderic's massive writing project. Here one also recalls Orderic's citation of Virgil and Ovid alongside the Psalms and Proverbs in the prologue to book V. The list of 'ecclesiastical writers' (*scriptoribus aecclesiasticis*) encountered in our earlier discussion of the prologue to book I is perhaps most striking of all, and deserving of most comment.¹⁴³ For, at the outset of book I, Orderic provided a chain of writers that began with the Old Testament writers Moses and Daniel, continued with the Classical historians Dares Phrygius,¹⁴⁴ Pompeius Trogus, Eusebius of Caesarea¹⁴⁵ and Orosius,¹⁴⁶ and finished with Bede¹⁴⁷ and Paul the Deacon.¹⁴⁸ Why did Orderic cite these authors at the very

¹⁴² De humano statu lapsuque, de labentis saeculi uolubilitate, et prelatorum principumque nostrorum uicissitudine, de pace seu bello et multimodis qui non deficiunt casibus terrigenarum, cuilibet dictanti thema scribendi est copiosum...De cursu tamen seculi et rebus humanis ueraciter scribendum est, atque ad laudem creatoris et omnium rerum iusti gubernatoris chronographya pangenda est. Aeternus enim conditor usque modo operatur et omnia mire disponit; de cuius gloriosis actibus quisque pro suo libitu et posse pie promat quod ei diuinitus inspiratum fuerit. OV III. 214. Similar sentiments can also be found in the prologue to book IX, for a full discussion of which see below, pp.144-51.

¹⁴³ OV I. 130.

¹⁴⁴ On Dares Phrygius see Frederic N. Clark, 'Reading the "First Pagan Historiographer": Dares Phrygius and Medieval Genealogy', *Viator* 41:2 (2010) 203-226.

¹⁴⁵ On Eusebius of Caesarea see Sabrina Inowlocki and Claudio Zamagni, (eds) *Reconsidering Eusebius: Collected Papers on Literary, Historical and Theological Issues*. (Leiden, 2011); Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott (eds) *Eusebius of Caesarea: Traditions and Innovations* (Cambridge, MA., 2013).

¹⁴⁶ On Orosius see Peter van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford, 2012); see also A. T. Fear, 'The Christian Optimism of Paulus Orosius', in David Hook (ed.) *From Orosius to the Historia Silense: Four essays on Late Antique and Early Medieval Historiography of the Iberian Peninsula* (Bristol, 2005), 1-16.

¹⁴⁷ On Bede see Scott DeGregorio (ed.) *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown, 2006); Scott DeGregorio (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Bede* (Cambridge, 2010). See also

beginning of his *Historia ecclesiastica*? What do they reveal about the purpose of the work? We have already examined the way in which their example contributed towards the moral and ethical purpose for which the *Historia* was written. That Orderic regarded each of these authors as ecclesiastical historians is, perhaps, indicative of something more, especially when one considers that he called his own work the *Historia ecclesiastica*.

In considering the importance of such writers as Eusebius, Orosius, Bede and Paul the Deacon, one is quickly drawn to their contribution to the writing of universal history, with which they are so closely associated. Hans-Werner Goetz has defined a universal chronicle as follows: 'Its theme is universal history as a whole, from the beginning of the world (the creation) or at least the incarnation of Christ until the times of its author...It is characterized by its context within the history of salvation, manifested in the divine background, the division into ages (*aetates*) and kingdoms (*regna*), typological comparisons, a linear conception of history as a limited period, and a search for the position of the author's present age in the divine concept of salvation.'¹⁴⁹ As Tim Cornell, Andrew Fear and Peter Liddell have observed, 'the distinctive claim of the universal historian, in Graeco-Roman times and beyond, has been to compile an account of history which provides the broadest possible view of the past within the confines of a single work.'¹⁵⁰ Beyond such general definitions, there has been much discussion amongst scholars as to what constituted a work of universal history in practice. Thus a work could be universal in geographical scope, chronology, and/or

the recent debate on Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*: Scott DeGregorio, 'Monasticism and reform in book IV of Bede's "Ecclesiastical History of the English people"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61 (2010), 673-87; N. J. Higham, 'Bede's Agenda in Book IV of the "Ecclesiastical History of the English People": A Tricky Matter of Advising the King', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 64 (2013), 476-493.

¹⁴⁸ On Paul the Deacon see Rosamond McKitterick, 'Paul the Deacon and the Franks', *Early Medieval Europe* 8:3 (1999), 319-339. See also Paolo Chiesa (ed.) *Paolo Diacono. Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio* (Udine, 2000).

¹⁴⁹ Hans-Werner Goetz, 'On the Universality of Universal History', in Jean Philippe Genet (ed.) *L'historiographie médiévale en Europe* (Paris, 1991), 247-61 at p.247.

¹⁵⁰ Tim Cornell, Andrew Fear and Peter Liddell, 'Introduction', in Peter Liddell and Andrew Fear (eds) *Historiae Mundi: Studies in Universal History* (London, 2010), 1-13 at p.1.

theology, and its outlook on history could be utopian or dystopian, with a narrative of progress or decline. Scholars have noted that there are a number of fundamental problems with such a broad attempt at historical writing: ‘Can any writer truly escape from his own cultural context and write a dispassionate account of the unfolding of history across the world? Popular universal histories written in the West...begin with chapters gesturing towards a global history, but almost invariably turn into a narrative of Western history as they continue...Graeco-Roman works of universal history also tended to have their centre of gravity in the Greek- and/or Latin-speaking Mediterranean; peripheral “barbarian” cultures were consciously treated as marginal and only occasionally brought into the main story.’¹⁵¹ Having surveyed the writing of universal history during the medieval period, Goetz concluded that ‘Medieval universal chronicles were universal in a temporal and theological sense, but they were not really universal with regard to the spatial factor.’¹⁵² Cornell, Fear and Liddell termed this the ‘parochial tendency’ of universal history,¹⁵³ and Goetz speaks variously of a ‘restricted’, ‘limited’, and ‘narrowing’ universality in his consideration of the universal chronicles written in the medieval period by Herman of Reichenau, Sigebert of Gembloux and Otto of Freising.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, in his recent monograph on Orosius’ *Historiae aduersos paganos*, Peter van Nuffelen has drawn attention to the ‘pretension to universalism’ in the work, whose focus, in fact, lies squarely on Rome and Roman history.¹⁵⁵ For while salvation history was broad in scope and divine providence was believed to lie behind all the changes taking place in the world, God’s dealings in history dealt particularly with the Christian community, the elect: ‘Very few works of history actually do what is supposedly

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.1. For more on the theme of the “barbarian” in medieval historical writing see Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (AD 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988).

¹⁵² Goetz, ‘On the Universality of Universal History’, p.259.

¹⁵³ Cornell, Fear and Liddell, ‘Introduction’, p.1.

¹⁵⁴ Goetz, ‘On the Universality of Universal History’, pp.249, 255, 260.

¹⁵⁵ van Nuffelen, *Orosius*, p.171. An excellent recent edition of the *Historiae aduersos paganos* is *Orosius: Seven Books of History against the Pagans*, trans. A. T. Fear (Liverpool, 2010).

the essence of Christian history. Even the so-called universal chronicles are often not very universal at all: the recent events they add tend to focus on provincial matters, while the rest is a traditional narrative inherited from their predecessors. Chronicles rarely have a truly universal vision'.¹⁵⁶ The widespread diffusion and influence of works of universal history throughout the medieval world, in particular Orosius' *Historiae aduersos paganos*,¹⁵⁷ meant that this "complex universalism" permeated the historical consciousness of the period, spawning innumerable 'mixed' and 'transitional' forms of the genre,¹⁵⁸ which had often articulated a strong moral and providential interpretation of the past, while also focussing on a particular geographical area or areas.¹⁵⁹

Anglo-Norman historical writing was markedly affected by such wider universalising currents.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps the most obvious example of this influence is John of Worcester's *Chronicon*, which situated English and Norman history within a broad historical context and drew heavily from Marianus Scotus in order to do so.¹⁶¹ In a remarkable passage at the end of book III of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, Orderic recalled how he had been privileged enough to have seen the *Chronicon* for himself at Worcester, and also a manuscript of Sigebert of Gembloux's chronicle at Cambrai, mistakenly calling the author Engelbert of Gembloux (*Engelbertus Gemblacensis*). These experiences led him to provide an extended reflection on

¹⁵⁶ van Nuffelen, *Orosius*, pp.173-74.

¹⁵⁷ For further details see especially Lars Boje Mortensen, 'The Diffusion of Roman Histories in the Middle Ages. A List of Orosius, Eutropius, Paulus Diaconus, and Landolfus Sagax Manuscripts', *Filologia mediolatina* (2000), 101-200. More generally, see also Bernhard Bischoff, 'Benedictine Monasteries and the Survival of Classical Literature', in Bernhard Bischoff, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne* (Cambridge, 1994), trans. and ed. Michael Gorman, 134-60.

¹⁵⁸ Goetz, 'On the Universality of Universal History', p.248.

¹⁵⁹ For this, see for example van Nuffelen's comments on Orosius, van Nuffelen, *Orosius*, p.14.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, OV II. xxi; Marjorie Chibnall, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni', *Millénaire Monastique du Mont Saint Michel* 2 (1966), 133-39 at p.136; David Bates, 'Robert of Torigni and the *Historia Anglorum*', in David Roffé (ed.) *The English and their Legacy, 900-1200: Essays in Honour of Ann Williams* (Woodbridge, 2012), 175-184 at pp.182-83;

¹⁶¹ Martin Brett, 'The Use of Universal Chronicle at Worcester' in Jean Philippe Genet (ed.) *L'historiographie médiévale en Europe* (Paris, 1991), 277-85.

the content and significance of these two works. He wrote that John of Worcester ‘added’ (*adiexit*) material to the chronicle of Marianus Scotus on the reign of William the Conqueror and his sons William and Rufus, thus continuing the work up to his own day. Orderic noted the effort with which Marianus sought to follow in the footsteps of Eusebius and Jerome in writing a universal history that began with Creation, continued with events from the Old and New Testaments, and also mined Greek and Roman history before continuing with events up to the present.¹⁶² He praised the learning and achievements of John and Sigebert and encouraged the readers of the *Historia* to seek out their works for themselves, for he recognised they were the continuators of a rich historiographical inheritance: ‘I therefore put these freely in this writing, so that avid readers might examine those manuscripts for themselves, because they contain the fruit of great wisdom, and can scarcely be found. For they have been produced by modern men and up to this time they have not been diffused widely through circulation.’¹⁶³

There can be little doubting that Orderic deliberately sought to associate himself with such historians in the pages of the *Historia*, and, in doing so, to establish his own credentials as a author of ecclesiastical history written on a universal scale.¹⁶⁴ Books I and II provide the reader with the appropriate universal historiographical ‘introduction’ for all that they are

¹⁶² OV II. 186-88.

¹⁶³ Haec ideo huic cartae gratis indidi; ut istos codices avidi lectores inquirant sibi, quia magnum sapientiae fructum ferunt, et uix inueniri possunt. A modernis enim editi sunt; et adhuc passim per orbem diffusi non sunt. OV II. 188.

¹⁶⁴ For more on Orderic as a universal historian see also Peter Classen, ‘*Res Gestae*, Universal History, Apocalypse: Visions of Past and Future’, in R. L. Benson and G. Constable (eds) *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1982), 387-417 at pp.388-90.

about to read: a life of Christ and the apostles.¹⁶⁵ Thus, after listing the great ecclesiastical writers of past history in the prologue to book I of the *Historia*, Orderic wrote,

I plan to speak sincerely about ecclesiastical affairs as a simple son of the Church, and sedulously following the early Fathers with my measure and ability, I have endeavoured to investigate and make manifest the current fortunes of the Christian people, therefore I desired to call the present little work the *aeclesiasticam historiam*.¹⁶⁶

Like John of Worcester, Orderic sought to cover history from the incarnation to his own time, incorporating recent events in the Anglo-Norman world within the sweeping scope of the *Historia*. At the end of Book III, having praised John of Worcester for adding the affairs of the reigns of William of the Conqueror and his sons to the work of Marianus Scotus, Orderic stressed his intention to do something similar in the books of the *Historia* that followed: ‘Now, wearied, I sigh for rest, and I have decided to conclude this first book here of the *aeclesiasticae historiae*, in which my pen has truthfully drawn out things concerning contemporary and neighbouring lords and teachers. In the following, however, I will speak more broadly of King William, and will record the changes and misfortunes of the English and Normans without adulation, not seeking the honour of reward from victors nor vanquished.’¹⁶⁷

While it is clear that Orderic drew heavily on the broad universalising tradition of such writers as Eusebius, Orosius, Paul the Deacon and Bede, it is also probable that he was

¹⁶⁵ Goetz, ‘On the Universality of Universal History’, p.260; for more on beginning a chronicle in this way see Rosamond McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 2006), pp.7-9.

¹⁶⁶ De rebus aeclesiasticis ut simplex aeclesiae filius sincere fari dispono, et priscos patres pro posse moduloque meo nisu sequens sedulo; modernos Christianorum euentus rimari et propalare satago, unde presens opusculum aeclesiasticam historiam appellari affecto. OV I. 130.

¹⁶⁷ Ad requiem iam fessus anhelus, et aeclesiasticae historiae quam de contemporaneis et collimitaneis principibus atque didascalis ueraci deprompsi calamo; primum libellum hic terminare dispono. In sequentibus uero latius de rege Guillelmo disseram, miserisque mutationes Anglorum et Normannorum sine adulatione referam, nullius remunerationis a uictoribus seu uictis expetens honorificentiam. OV II. 188.

influenced by the way in which they mixed this broad universal ambition with a narrowly local approach to historical writing. Goetz observed that the ‘gap’ between the two was, in reality, often very small. Universal chronicles often lack a real geographic universality, focussing more narrowly on certain areas, while local and regional chronicles frequently seek to link local subjects with wider universal developments.¹⁶⁸ Thus, John of Worcester grafted an English chronicle to a world chronicle in order to write an annalistic work on a universal scale, yet his *Chronicon* contains a number of important passages which deal explicitly with events ‘in our church’ (*in nostra ecclesia*) at Worcester and he also provided information on nearby places such as Tewkesbury, Gloucester and Winchcombe.¹⁶⁹ Three passages in the *Chronicon* are of particular interest when considering the local emphasis within the work: the annals of 1130, 1132 and 1139. In the first, John wrote of the trial by ordeal of two members of the laity, one a woman, whose hands, though badly burnt from carrying the hot iron, were miraculously healed when placed on the tomb of St. Wulfstan.¹⁷⁰ In the second passage, John related the death of the long-serving cantor at Worcester, a monk named Uhtred, who had collapsed at mass while the author was standing at his side. We are told that this passage was included in the *Chronicon* in order to honour the memory of Uhtred,¹⁷¹ and in this way it is similar to that provided by Orderic for Arnold of Tilleul in book VIII of the *Historia*.¹⁷² Finally, in the annal for 1139, John recorded the burning of the city of Worcester by an Angevin army from Gloucester:¹⁷³

At the dawn of the day at the beginning of winter, that is the 7 November [1139], the third day of the week, while we were at divine worship in the church, and had already chanted the first Hour

¹⁶⁸ Goetz, ‘On the Universality of Universal History’, pp.260-61.

¹⁶⁹ Henry of Huntingdon provides a further example of this mixture of local material with wider currents, for which see John Gillingham, ‘Henry of Huntingdon: In His Time (1135) and Place (Between Lincoln and the Royal Court)’, in Krzysztof Stopka (ed.) *Gallus Anonymus and his Chronicle in the Context of Twelfth-Century Historiography from the Perspective of the Latest Research* (Krakow, 2010), 157-72.

¹⁷⁰ John of Worcester, III.190-92.

¹⁷¹ John of Worcester, III. 206-8.

¹⁷² OV IV. 142. For further discussion of this passage see below p.192.

¹⁷³ John of Worcester, III. 272-76.

of the day, behold, that which we had expected for many previous days, a great army of strong and mighty men came from the south, advancing from the source of evil...We, however, fearful for the ornaments of the sanctuary, with all the bells sounding, having put on our albs, carried the relics of our most kind patron Oswald in humble procession from the entrance, and, while the enemy rushed from gate to gate, we bore them to the cemetery.¹⁷⁴

This is a dramatic passage, narrated as it is in the first person, and it shares some similarities with Orderic's own experience of the burning of the town of Saint-Evroult in 1139, related in book XIII of the *Historia*.¹⁷⁵

Orderic went much further than John of Worcester in the extent to which he sought for the local to permeate into the narrative of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. For while the *Historia* was designed to remain broadly universal in geographic and temporal scope, Orderic's centre of gravity remained firmly fixed on the history of the *Viticensis aecclesiae*, the small monastic community in the pays d'Ouche on the southern frontier of Normandy where he lived and died. It was this which led Monika Otter to observe that 'Even a "universal history" like that of Orderic Vitalis is ultimately very local in its concerns.'¹⁷⁶ The local emphasis of the *Historia* forms the focus of this present study. While it was not Orderic's only intention in constructing the work, as the above survey of the moral and universal aspects of the prologues and epilogues of the *Historia* illustrates, the impact of the history of Saint-Evroult and its monks, patrons, benefactors, heroes and enemies upon the narrative of the *Historia* was profound, as will be argued in all that follows. Time and again, Orderic explicitly

¹⁷⁴ In articulo diei incipientis brume, hoc est .vii. idus Nouembris, feria .iii., dum ad laudem diuinam in ecclesia fuimus, et iam primam horam diei decantauimus, ecce quod plurimis ante diebus auribus hausimus, exercitus magnus ualde et fortis ab austro ueniens, e uagina malitie progreditur...Nos autem timentes ornamentis sanctuarii, benignissimi patroni nostri Oswaldi reliquias, albis induti, tota sonante classe cum humili processione foris extulimus, et ob hostium irruptionem de porta ad portam per cimiterium deportauimus. John of Worcester, III. 274.

¹⁷⁵ OV VI. 458-62. For detailed discussion of this passage see below, pp.312-23.

¹⁷⁶ Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill and London, 1996), p.3.

connected the monastery of Saint-Evroult and its monks with his purposes in writing the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Thus, at the outset of the work, in the prologue to book I, Orderic described the *Historia* as ‘the narration about the restoration of the monastery of Ouche’ (*In relatione quam de restauratione Vticensis coenobii*) which was begun at the initiation of the sixth abbot of Saint-Evroult, Roger le Sap, and was, on completion, presented to the seventh abbot, Warin of Les Essarts.¹⁷⁷ In the prologue to book III Orderic commented on the content of books I and II, the Life of Christ and the Apostles, observing, ‘Thus I have gladly spoken about these friends of God [at the command of] my masters; to meditate or to speak faithfully about them is pleasant and beneficial for the soul, and a sound remedy for inner sufferings.’ (*De quibus itaque amicis Dei dominis [m ede]¹⁷⁸ libenter locutus sum; de quibus meditari siue loqui fideliter iocundum est animae et commodum, de interioribus morbis salubre remedium*). Orderic then wrote that ‘Now, however, another work is laid upon me by my masters, and the subject offered is about Norman events (*Nunc autem a magistris aliud michi opus iniungitur, et de Normannicis euentibus materia porrigitur*).¹⁷⁹ Crucially, then, in books I, II and III he was writing at the behest of his abbots for the benefit of Saint-Evroult.¹⁸⁰ This point is further underlined on only the next page, where Orderic turned immediately to relate the spread of ‘the vine of the Lord of Hosts’ (*uinea Domini sabaoth*), throughout Normandy as monastic life was established in the forest of Ouche by Evroul of Bayeux at the end of seventh century.¹⁸¹ After relating much of the early history of the monastery of Saint-Evroult from the time of its refoundation in 1050, Orderic then drew book III to a close, concluding it with the following words: ‘Now, wearied, I sigh for rest, and I have decided to conclude this first book here of the *Ecclesiastical History*, in which my pen

¹⁷⁷ OV I. 130.

¹⁷⁸ The original Latin text is obscured at this point due to damage. For a facsimile of this page see OV II. ii.

¹⁷⁹ OV II. 2. For the dating of this passage see OV II. xl.

¹⁸⁰ For more on the purpose of book I and II see Blacker, *Faces of Time*, p.155; more generally, see Mégier, ‘*Cotidie Operatur*’.

¹⁸¹ OV II. 4.

has truthfully drawn out things concerning contemporary and neighbouring lords and teachers.’ (*Ad requiem iam fessus anhelo, et aecclesiasticae historiae quam de contemporaneis et collimitaneis principibus atque didascalis ueraci deprompsi calamo; primum libellum hic terminare dispono.*)¹⁸² Many of these same local themes were then explored further in books IV and V, where the narrative also incorporated events in the first years of the reign of William the Conqueror.¹⁸³

The local emphasis of the *Historia* continues throughout the work. In the prologue to book V, Orderic reiterated the task given to him first by Abbot Roger and then by Abbot Warin ‘to begin a little book on the state of the church of Ouche’ (*opusculum incipiens de statu Vticensis aecclesiae*) which incorporated for the monks there ‘the actions of their abbots and of the brothers of their house, and the small accumulation of their properties, [first] by its poor yet devout founders and slightly augmented by the great care of its fathers’ (*actus abbatum fratrumque suorum, et paruorum collectionem rerum suarum; quae ab egenis sed deuotis fundatoribus tenuiter auctae sunt ingenti sollicitudine patrum*). He then summarised the contents of the previous two books, III and IV, as containing an account of ‘the restoration of our house and of its first three abbots, with certain other occurrences of that time’ (*quibus de restauratione sedis nostrae et de tribus abbatibus nostris cum quibusdam casibus temporis illius*). Orderic’s well known comment in this prologue that he was writing ‘the deeds and events of the Normans for Normans’ (*Normannorum gesta et euentus Normannis*) also appears within a monastic context, in the midst of a passage in which Orderic speaks of the reluctance of the other monks to write a history of Saint-Evroult. This meant that he was forced to write an account of monastery and of the deeds of the Normans

¹⁸² OV II. 188.

¹⁸³ For the epilogue to book IV see OV II. 360.

for the native Norman monks to read, something which he, as an Englishman, found strange. Orderic's repeated portrayal of the *gens Normannorum* as a frequently violent people group was a subject of real interest to Orderic, as one would expect from a writer who spent the majority of his life living in a monastery in lower Normandy.¹⁸⁴

The continued monastic emphasis of the *Historia* was evidenced once more in the prologue as Orderic introduced the content of book V, the third book in the work to have been written: 'Now I shall begin a third book, from the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1075, and I shall speak about the deeds of my abbot and the community of Ouche and the events and deeds during the next twelve years, up to, of course, the death of King William.' (*Amodo tertium ab anno dominicae incarnationis M^oLXXV^o libellum exordiar; et de abbate meo ac Vticensi concione et de rebus per xii annos scilicet usque ad Guillelmi regis obitum gestis eloquar.*)¹⁸⁵

The history of Saint-Evroult was thus to be painted on a broad canvas, one in which its connections with the wider world were to be explored throughout the narrative. Further statements regarding the monastic purpose and audience of the *Historia* can be found throughout the course of book V, with Orderic writing variously that he spoke of the properties and possessions of the church of Ouche 'for the knowledge of the novices' (*nouitiorum noticae*) and 'junior' monks (*iunioribus*) there.¹⁸⁶ Finally, in the epilogue to book V, Orderic spoke of the need to continue his 'lengthy narration about the things given to the church of Ouche' (*prolixam narrationem de rebus Vticensi aecclesiae datis*) into book VI,

¹⁸⁴ For more on the *gens Normannorum* see below, p.61, 169. Detailed studies of Norman identity have been provided by Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911-1154* (Woodbridge, 2005); Ewan Johnson, 'Origin Myths and the Construction of Medieval Identities: Norman Chronicles 1000-1100', in Richard Corradini et al (eds) *Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2006), 153-64. Much has been written on ethnicity more generally. The following volumes provide a valuable starting point: Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (eds) *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800* (Leiden, 1998); Andrew Gillett (ed.) *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002); Ildar H. Garipzanov, Patrick J. Geary and Przemysław Urbańczyk (eds) *Franks, Northmen and Slavs: Identities and State Formation in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 2008).

¹⁸⁵ OV III. 6.

¹⁸⁶ OV III. 116-18, 122, 150.

‘for the knowledge of the brothers who will succeed us in labouring in the field of the Lord.’ (*noticiae fratrum qui nobis ad laborandum in agro dominico succedent*).¹⁸⁷ These comments ought also to inform the more general ethical and providential comments in the prologue and epilogue to book VI, examined above.¹⁸⁸

While book VII lacks a prologue, the epilogue echoes many of the same localising sentiments articulated the previous books, for Orderic called it ‘the seventh book of the history of Ouche’ (*septimo libro Vticensis historiae*). Book VIII would, he wrote, be concerned with the deeds of William the Conqueror’s sons.¹⁸⁹ It too lacks a prologue, continuing on from where book VII left off, with the death of the Conqueror, and the short epilogue precedes a final section on the death of Hugh of Grandmesnil, one of the co-founders of Saint-Evroult, and a summary of the varying fortunes of his sons.¹⁹⁰ However, though brief, these two concluding sentences of book VIII are, nevertheless, revealing:

Not long ago I took up the subject-matter of my writing with the church of Ouche; but I have viewed the great kingdoms of the earth as if seized with ecstasy; I have flown about far and wide in my speech and, wandering through many, have prolonged a most lengthy digression. Now, weary, however, I return to my bed, which is Ouche, and will clearly revert to certain things pertaining to us at the end of this book.’¹⁹¹

These comments vividly describe the dynamic back-and-forth nature of the *Historia*’s structure. The narrative moves outwards from the history and locality of Saint-Evroult to survey new subjects and kingdoms, reflecting the universal historiographical inheritance of

¹⁸⁷ OV III. 210.

¹⁸⁸ OV III. 212-14, 360.

¹⁸⁹ OV IV. 108.

¹⁹⁰ For more on the sons of Hugh of Grandmesnil see below, pp.111-14, 119, 233-47.

¹⁹¹ *Materiam scribendi nuper ab Vticensi aecclesia cepi, sed ampla terrarum regna uelut in extasin raptus prospexi, longe lateque oratio uolitauit, et per plura perlustrans longissimam epanalempsim protelauit. Nunc autem stratum meum quod est Vtici fessus repetam, et quiddam de rebus ad nos pertinentibus in libri calce liquido retexam.* OV IV. 334-6.

its author. Yet Orderic always returned to the pays d’Ouche and to the story of the monks there, and it is this interaction between these two worlds, the local monastic world and the world beyond the cloister, which characterises his work as a whole. He digressed geographically along a universalising plain, but it will be argued that the monastery of Saint-Evrout always remained central to the *Historia*’s narrative. The broad universal scope of the *Historia*, temporally, geographically and theologically, provided a rich narrative landscape in which he could situate the much more particular story of Saint-Evrout, enabling a wide variety of connections between the two. Orderic’s narrative moved throughout the kingdoms of the world, but the monastery in the pays d’Ouche alone was his “bed”.

This impression is further reinforced by the deeply monastic prologue to book XI, which takes the form of a long opening prayer, written in verse form as a series of thirty-nine pairs of rhyming couplets.¹⁹² Lines 5-10 are especially pertinent:

Give consideration to my prayer, I beg you kind Father, maker of the world,
I worship and entreat you, I labour to please you rightly.
Now an old man, I write the deeds of bishops and kings,
I, a sexagenarian, make them manifest to the boys.
Nothing from them I ask as recompense for such labour,
But I offer it freely, content with the love of the brethren.¹⁹³

It is significant that these verses, found at the beginning of the last prologue in the *Historia*, should express the same monastic purpose which Orderic had articulated in the first books to have been written and which he had reiterated throughout the rest of the work, a point which Roger Ray also noted.¹⁹⁴ Close study of the prologues and epilogues in the *Historia* thus

¹⁹² OV VI. 8-12.

¹⁹³ OV VI. 8. For the function of this prologue in the argument of book XI see below, pp.273-74.

¹⁹⁴ Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and his Readers’, p.27.

reveals there to be no contradiction between them. Rather, Orderic regarded each of the books as further parts of the written history of Saint-Evrault, and wrote each of them for the junior monks who were his contemporaries, and future generations of monks who would labour in the pays d'Ouche after him. This has important implications for our understanding of the varying content and wide geographical horizon of the work and the way in which it ought to be read. It indicates that Orderic's purposes for the *Historia* did not change and expand over time. Rather, throughout the writing process, Orderic sought to construct a monastic history that was built on broad universal foundations, had a strong ethical thrust to its content, and was written first and foremost for the monks of Saint-Evrault and only secondly for those who came after him. The universal and the local emphases in the many prologues and epilogues of the work need not be pitted against each other, as though contradictory in nature; rather, the one enabled and enriched the other, contributing towards the unique shape of the work in its final narrative form. If this reading is correct, it would mean that the *Historia* was not unpopular with contemporaries, nor was it unsuccessful as a work, for it satisfied the demands laid on Orderic by his abbots and fellow-monks at Saint-Evrault.

The Reception and Dissemination of the Historia

One further aspect of Orderic's purpose in writing the *Historia ecclesiastica* deserves attention here: the reception and dissemination of the work after its completion in 1141. Towards the end of the prologue to book I, Orderic articulated his hopes regarding the ways in which posterity might make use of the *Historia ecclesiastica* in future:

I firmly believe, following the conjecture of earlier writers, that someone will come who is much more perceptive than me, and more capable of the investigation of the various things which are

taking place throughout the world, who will perhaps draw out from my writings, and those of others similar to mine, that which he will worthily insert into his chronicle or narrative for the notice of future generations.¹⁹⁵

This passage makes clear Orderic's intention that his chronicle would be of use to future generations (*ad notitiam futurorum*). The notion that his work would be superseded by the writings of other historians who would incorporate portions of the *Historia* into their own chronicles is reminiscent of the passage in book III in which Orderic extolled the virtues of the chronicles of Sigebert of Gembloux and John of Worcester as works which both omitted and derived material from other sources.¹⁹⁶ According to the prologue of book I, Orderic's expectation that the *Historia* might also be used by future generations and engaged with critically by them seems to have been further bolstered by his awareness that, upon completion, a work begun at the request of one abbot of Saint-Evrout, Roger Le Sap, would in fact be examined by his successor, Warin of Les Essarts. The purpose of this was 'so that, deleting the superfluous, you may correct the disordered parts and strengthen the amended version by the authority of your wisdom' (*ut superflua delens incomposita corrigas, et emendate uestrae sagacitatis auctoritate munias*).¹⁹⁷ Once this seal of abbatial approval had been obtained, the *Historia* was free to be used by future generations, however they saw fit.

The *Historia ecclesiastica* was read and used, in differing ways and to varying extents, by a number of different writers in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. We shall begin this examination of the *Historia*'s dissemination by exploring the ways in which Orderic's narrative of the death of William the Conqueror influenced the accounts of two further

¹⁹⁵ Firmiter ex coniectura preteritorum opinor, quod exurget quis me multo perspicacior, ac ad indagandos multimodarum quae per orbem fiunt rerum euentus potentior; qui forsitan de meis aliorumque mei similibus scedulis hauriet, quod chronographiae narrationique suae dignanter ad notitiam futurorum inseret. OV I. 130-32.

¹⁹⁶ OV III. 186-88. For further discussion of the significance of this passage see above pp.43-44.

¹⁹⁷ OV I. 132.

writers, Wace and the anonymous author of the *Warene Chronicle*. Wace, the Jersey-born canon of Saint-Étienne at Caen, made use of important parts of books VII and VIII of the *Historia* for his verse chronicle, the *Roman de Rou*, which was composed in the 1160s and 1170s.¹⁹⁸ It is likely that Wace borrowed from manuscript C, MS. Vatican Reginensis Latina 703B, which was copied at Saint-Étienne at Caen in the third quarter of the twelfth century. As a result, Wace's work shares a large number of similarities with the *Historia ecclesiastica*, which have been summarised by Chibnall.¹⁹⁹ One of the closest parallels between Wace and Orderic is in their accounts of the death and burial of William the Conqueror.²⁰⁰ We have already examined Orderic's account of the death of the Conqueror and noted its deeply moralistic tone.²⁰¹ Here our interest is in examining the content and sequential flow of the *Historia* and the extent to which this is echoed in Wace. The sequence of Orderic's narrative is as follows: the Conqueror fell ill at Mantes, from exhaustion and heat, and lay sick at Rouen for six weeks before being carried outside the city to the church of St. Gervase.²⁰² Realising that he would die, he then gave a long and eloquent last speech to all present, in which William Rufus was granted Normandy and Robert Curthose was given England, while Henry was given five thousand pounds in silver.²⁰³ Finally, on the morning of Thursday, 9 September 1087, the King awoke to the sunrise and the sound of the bells of the church of St. Mary being rung for the hour of Prime, commended his soul to Mary, and died.²⁰⁴ William's body was then transported from Rouen to Caen, where the funeral procession was interrupted by a massive fire that swept through much of the city.²⁰⁵ Once the bier reached Saint-Étienne at Caen and the coffin had been lowered into the ground, Gilbert of Évreux preached a

¹⁹⁸ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, ed. and trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Anthony J. Holden (St Helier, 2002).

¹⁹⁹ OV IV. xxi-xxii.

²⁰⁰ OV IV. 78-108; Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, ll.9055-9340, pp.290-96.

²⁰¹ See above, pp.21-23.

²⁰² OV IV. 78-80.

²⁰³ OV IV. 80-94.

²⁰⁴ OV IV. 100.

²⁰⁵ OV IV. 104.

sermon in which he extolled the virtues of the dead King.²⁰⁶ It is at this point in the narrative that a certain Ascelin son of Arthur came forward from the crowd and vehemently objected to the burial of the Conqueror there, on the grounds that the King had taken the land by force from Ascelin's father and so had no right to it. This situation was only settled after Ascelin had been placated with sixty shillings, and promised the same amount for the rest of the land to which he lay claim.²⁰⁷ Next, as the body was lowered into the sarcophagus, which was both too short and too narrow, the King's bowels burst open causing an overpowering stench to fill the air, an occurrence which led Orderic to close his account of the death and burial of the Conqueror with a strong moral lesson for the reader, which was discussed above.²⁰⁸ Wace's account begins with the Conqueror being thrown against the pommel of his horse while riding through Mantes.²⁰⁹ Thereafter, his version of events closely follows that of Orderic: the Conqueror divided the Anglo-Norman realm between his sons, before summoning the magnates to his bedside and giving a speech.²¹⁰ Like Orderic, Wace wrote that the King was ill for six weeks,²¹¹ that he died as the bells sounded for the hour of Prime,²¹² and that the funeral procession was interrupted by a massive fire in Caen.²¹³ Crucially, Wace also included the speech of Ascelin, and the figure of sixty shillings that was paid to him so that the Conqueror's burial could proceed, and it is with this speech that his account of the death and burial of the Conqueror ends.²¹⁴

²⁰⁶ OV IV. 104-6.

²⁰⁷ OV IV. 106.

²⁰⁸ OV IV. 106-8.

²⁰⁹ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, ll.9077-94, pp.290-92.

²¹⁰ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, ll.9101-62, p.292.

²¹¹ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, ll.9163-64, p.292.

²¹² Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, ll.9223-32, p.294.

²¹³ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, ll.9266-78, p.294.

²¹⁴ Wace, *Roman de Rou*, iii, ll.9279-340, pp.294-6.

While Orderic's moral ending is absent from Wace's account of the burial of King William, it is present in another source which drew from the *Historia ecclesiastica*, namely the *Warene Chronicle*, whose anonymous author may have been Eustace of Boulogne.²¹⁵ Elisabeth van Houts and Rosalind Love have noted a large number of structural similarities between the narratives of the *Historia* and the *Warene Chronicle* in their recent edition of the latter text. Numerous passages in the *Warene Chronicle* seem to have been based on material in books IV, VIII, XI and XII of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, and the two texts frequently agree with each other against other sources, or provide otherwise unknown information. The fact that these borrowings span across much of the breadth of the *Historia*'s thirteen books suggests that the Warene chronicler most likely had direct access to the autograph manuscripts at Saint-Evrout.²¹⁶ We will limit our examination to the *Warene Chronicle*'s account of the death of the Conqueror and its similarities with that found in Orderic's *Historia*. The Conqueror's funeral is recounted thus in paragraph 14 of the *Warene Chronicle*:

At the funeral a remarkable thing happened which is worthy to be told, and, when well considered, illustrates clearly how human affairs revolve around so much that is accidental and how little value should be attached to temporal power when a man of vigour and such great status did not earn a free place of burial. For while the Norman-English magnates with sorrowful hearts attended the funeral of their king, a young man who was quite of humble origins rushed up, proclaiming in a clear voice that the funeral-rites for the king were unjustly being celebrated on that spot, indeed he protested that it was his land that had been taken away from his parents unjustly. The magnates were astounded at these words and summoned the man and when these matters had been thoroughly investigated and understood, they placated him with prayers and money until he conceded the place quit of any false claim. Let rich men hear these things and let them take note of how unstable the fate may be by which they control their own wealth and of

²¹⁵ *The Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Elisabeth van Houts and Rosalind C. Love (Oxford, 2013), pp.xix-xxvi. I am grateful to Elisabeth van Houts for sharing this edition with me in advance of publication.

²¹⁶ *Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, pp.xliii-xlvi.

what an uncertain end may follow them, and let them turn their hearts, even if belatedly, by repenting.²¹⁷

It is striking that, though not here mentioned by name, Ascelin's protest at the funeral, drawn from Orderic, dominates the Warenne Chronicler's brief account of the death of the Conqueror. Moreover, the lesson echoes that found in Orderic's *Historia*, that riches do not last and the reader should not set his heart upon them. The usage of the *Historia* in the *Warenne Chronicle* is significant, and adds an important further dimension to our understanding of the ways in which Orderic's massive work was used in the decades that followed immediately after its completion in 1141. In thinking about why the Warenne chronicler made use of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, van Houts and Love have noted that the 'the early years of King Henry II's reign were a time to take stock and to produce copies of historical narratives about Norman history.'²¹⁸ This argument would also seem to hold true for Wace's use of the *Historia ecclesiastica* in writing the *Roman de Rou* and it probably provides the rationale behind the copying of books VII and VIII of the *Historia* at Saint-Étienne at Caen in the codex now known as MS. Vatican Reginensis Latina 703B. Wace and the Warenne chronicler drew on Orderic's work to write about major Norman events, particularly the life and death of William the Conqueror, as has been shown above. Their usage of the *Historia ecclesiastica* for this kind of information, rather than for the mass of local information contained within the chronicle, suggests that, in the second half of the twelfth century, Orderic's work was, at least in part, recognised by these authors as providing a rich store of information on the Norman past. The fact that MS. Vatican Reginensis Latina

²¹⁷ In cuius exequiis quiddam admirabile dictu accidit dignumque relatu, quod bene consideratum satis ostendit, quanta res humana inuoluat fortuita quantumque sit temporalis paruipendenda potencia dum uir uirtutis tanteque dignitatis liberum non meruit habere sepulture locum. Etenim dum exequiis regis sui principes Normananglorum luctuoso affectu astarent, occurrit quidam iuuenis satis infimus uoce clara proclamans iniuste regi in eodem loco exequias celebrari, suam quippe esse terram sibique parentibus iniuste protestatur ablatam. Quibus uocibus principes stupefacti accersunt hominem rebusque per ordinem inquisitis et agnitis, tamdiu eum precibus et pecunia placant donec locum eundem ab omni calumpnia quietum esse concederet. Audiant haec diuites et quam instabilis sit sors qua suis dominantur diuiciis quisue eos sequatur finis incertus animaduertant et sese uel sero penitendo conuertant. *Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, para.14, p.10.

²¹⁸ *Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, p.xliv.

703B was copied at Saint-Étienne at Caen, the Conqueror's foundation and burial place, and Wace, who was canon there, probably used this manuscript for his own account of the Conqueror's death, further increases the likelihood of this suggestion.

A number of other writers also made use of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Robert of Torigni was a monk at Bec from 1128 to 1154, a house which had close intellectual and spiritual ties with Saint-Evroult, where he wrote his first historical work, the continuation of Orderic's own extension of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* of William of Jumièges. The fact that Robert did not quote verbatim from the *Historia* led Chibnall to believe that he had probably seen and taken notes from the autograph manuscripts of the *Historia* but did not have the work to hand as he wrote either his continuation of the *Gesta Normannorum* or his later *Chronica*.²¹⁹

A further example of the dissemination of the material in Orderic's *Historia* has been highlighted by Carl Watkins in his examination of the cult of Earl Waltheof of Huntingdon at Crowland abbey in Lincolnshire. Crowland was closely linked to Saint-Evroult and Orderic stayed there for five weeks (probably at some point in the second half of the 1110s), incorporating an account of Waltheof's arrest, imprisonment, execution and burial at Crowland, as well as of the abbey's early history into book IV of the *Historia*.²²⁰ Watkins examined the *Vita et Passio Waldeui Comitis*, which was probably written at Crowland c.1219 and contains the posthumous miracles of Waltheof, and argued that 'a large proportion of the *Vita Waldeui*...seems to have been based closely on Orderic Vitalis's portrait of Waltheof, indicating that Orderic probably left a copy of his history of Crowland at the monastery.'²²¹ If this was, indeed, the case, then the *Vita Waldeui* provides an important

²¹⁹ OV I. 112-5; for more on the relationship between Orderic and Robert of Torigni see Marjorie Chibnall, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni', *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint Michel* 2 (1966), 133-39.

²²⁰ OV II. xxiv-xxix, 310-50.

²²¹ Carl Watkins, 'The Cult of Earl Waltheof at Crowland', *Hagiographica* 3 (1996), 95-111, at pp.96-7.

example of the ways in which material from the *Historia ecclesiastica* was reused in the early thirteenth century to provide much of the content for a *uita*.

Two final instances of the possible dissemination of Orderic's work should be noted here: the *Liber de regno Sicilie* and the *Epistola ad Petrum Panormitane Ecclesie thesaurarium*, both written by the so-called Pseudo Hugh Falcandus. Edoardo D'Angelo has recently suggested that, as well as using the works of other writers such as John of Salisbury and Peter of Blois, Pseudo Hugh Falcandus also made use of Orderic's *Historia* on six occasions, five times in the *Liber* and once in the *Epistola*.²²² These passages describe the individual character traits of noblemen and kings, the shared characteristics of an entire race or people and their treatment of their land. Thus Roger II of Sicily's severity in punishing the wicked is deemed to be necessary, echoing Orderic's description of King Stephen's execution of Arnulf of Hesdin and ninety-three other unruly men in 1138;²²³ the treacherous nature of the Apulians and Sicilians and their eagerness to commit crime is similar to Orderic's well known description of the Normans;²²⁴ Robert of S. Giovanni is said to have endured the 'storms of persecution' and opposition in a way that may be reminiscent of those faced by Abbot Osbern at Saint-Evroult;²²⁵ the people of Sicily are said to be devouring their land, which is personified as their mother, in much the same way as Orderic spoke of the Normans;²²⁶ the two remained suggested parallels are less significant.²²⁷ Taken together, these passages are striking. They indicate that, if the author of the *Liber* and the *Epistola* did, in fact, have some form of access or exposure to the *Historia ecclesiastica*, the parts of it which he chose to

²²² Edoardo D'Angelo, 'The Pseudo-Hugh Falcandus in his own Texts', *ANS* 35 (2013), 141-61, at p.152. I am very grateful to Edoardo D'Angelo for providing me with details of the references that follow.

²²³ *La historia, o, Liber de Regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum panormitane ecclesie thesaurarium*, ed. G. B. Siragusa (Rome, 1897), p.6, l.16; OV VI. 522.

²²⁴ *Liber de Regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum*, p.30, l.11; OV VI. 24.

²²⁵ *Liber de Regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum*, p.66, l.17; OV II. 114.

²²⁶ *Liber de Regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum*, p.174, ll.5-6; OV IV. 146.

²²⁷ *Liber de Regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum*, p.80, l.5; p.136, ll.23-24; OV IV. 288; OV VI. 430.

utilise were those parts which were relatively easy to transfer from an Anglo-Norman to a Sicilian context. This suggests that, though the geographical focus of the *Historia* and the *Liber* and *Epistola* were very different, what the narrative of the *Historia* may have offered the Pseudo Hugh Falcandus was a rich and ready supply of individual and collective descriptions that could be easily adapted for his own work concerning Norman Sicily. In analysing what he termed were the ‘strategies of distinction’ between different ethnic groups in the early medieval period, Walter Pohl emphasised both the flexibility and static nature of four specific criteria: language, way of fighting, clothing and hairstyles and body signs.²²⁸ Patrick Geary has emphasised the extent to which such ideas regarding ethnicity and race were drawn from classical models, in particular that provided by Herodotus and developed by other writers thereafter.²²⁹ Orderic’s portrayal of the Normans as a *gens* ‘aware not only of its greatness, but also of its flaws’, as Nick Webber observed,²³⁰ functioned in similar fashion, for not only was it compelling, but it was also flexible enough to be used by others. Orderic had hoped that the *Historia ecclesiastica* would, in some way, be utilised by future generations, and it is clear from this brief survey that his ambitions were, indeed, realised, although in very different ways by different writers.

The Historia ecclesiastica as Text

Why did Orderic expand the *Historia ecclesiastica* geographically? How did he link the story of his monastery to such diverse events in the wider world as the First Crusade and Norman involvement in southern Italy? While the prologues and epilogues of the *Historia*

²²⁸ Walter Pohl, ‘Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity’, in Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (eds) *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300-800* (Leiden, 1998), 17-69.

²²⁹ Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton and Oxford, 2002), pp.41-92.

²³⁰ Webber, *Evolution of Norman Identity*, p.143.

ecclesiastica suggest that the two were closely linked, the exact nature and extent of this local and monastic perspective and its effect upon the content of the sprawling narrative of the *Historia* can only be understood through detailed analysis of the myriad of different passages within the work. A firm understanding of the textual nature of the written past in general, and of the *Historia* in particular, is vital here and so it is to this that we now turn. This study analyses the *Historia ecclesiastica* from a textual perspective. In this it seeks to build on and engage with the important studies of English and Norman historical writing by Nancy Partner,²³¹ Jean Blacker,²³² Monika Otter,²³³ Kenneth Baxter Wolf,²³⁴ Leah Shopkow,²³⁵ and Emily Albu,²³⁶ and, more generally, some of the fundamental arguments found in Gabrielle Spiegel's *The Past as Text*.²³⁷ Nancy Partner's *Serious Entertainments*, published in 1977, was particularly ground-breaking in this area. She was deeply critical of the way in which many modern scholars approached medieval texts:

We have simply lost contact...with everything that could allow us to approach medieval histories naturally and directly. And yet these works have continued to be read by scholars variously puzzled, bored, critical, and intrigued, because they are sources for information otherwise unavailable. They have been plumbed and sifted, often brilliantly, for the nugget of truth in the swamp of "falseness," and that ruthless and methodical dissection of medieval histories has been the first step of modern scholarship on its way to rewriting the past in newly persuasive, dispassionate, and verifiable modes...[Yet] All medieval histories contain more that is valuable to

²³¹ Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago and London, 1977).

²³² Blacker, *Faces of Time*.

²³³ Otter, *Inventiones*.

²³⁴ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Philadelphia, 1995).

²³⁵ Shopkow, *History and Community*.

²³⁶ Albu, *Normans in their Histories*.

²³⁷ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, Maryland, 1999); see also Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia, 1996); Nancy Partner (ed.) *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005).

us than scraps of verifiable information, although what that “more” is, exactly, varies from book to book and is sometimes difficult to describe.²³⁸

Such ‘ready-made’ approaches, Partner warned, ‘threaten to overwhelm the vulnerable past with the aggressive present’.²³⁹ Similar concerns were expressed by Roger Ray in a 1975 article in which he surveyed the then-current state of research into twelfth-century historiography:

the researcher takes his topic into to the index of a printed chronicle, and if it registers a relevant place, he turns there and notes whatever seems worthwhile...Recent research calls this extractive, one-dimensional reading of medieval historiography into serious question, for it has become clear that one must know a great deal about the whole text before very much can be decided with reasonable certainty about some part of it...nor will narrow incisions often suffice, since the chroniclers thought that what we call wrapping was most important and never anticipated readers with our reasons for wanting to take the wrapping off.²⁴⁰

This present study seeks to heed the warnings of Partner and Ray and approaches Orderic’s chronicle as a single, multi-faceted piece of work,²⁴¹ which requires careful and sympathetic analysis for key aspects of its meaning and significance to be properly understood and appreciated for what they are. It is as much interested in the content of the *Historia* as with the textual form in which this material is presented. It seeks not to ruthlessly dissect the text but to examine it in its wider context, in light of the chapter, section and book of the *Historia* in which it appears, and the broader trends, associations and recurring ideas which it articulates. Thus, rather than making ‘narrow incisions’ into the text, each of the following chapters examine recurring subjects of interest in the *Historia*: the relationship between

²³⁸ Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, p.4. For similar comments see also McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past*, p.4.

²³⁹ Ibid, p.6.

²⁴⁰ Roger Ray, ‘Medieval Historiography through the Twelfth Century: Problems and Progress of Research’, *Viator* 5 (1974), 33-59 at p.58; for a more extended reflection on the sophistication and complexity of medieval historiography see especially Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 1-4.

²⁴¹ See also Otter, *Inventiones*, p.5; Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*, pp.24-6, 39; Hingst, *Written World*, p.xxi.

Saint-Evrout and southern Italy, the First Crusade, and impact of Henry I on the Anglo-Norman realm. These are topics which span entire books of the narrative and so one must have a firm appreciation of the text itself in order to understand both their meaning and significance. Even book IX, which is devoted exclusively to recounting the First Crusade, is, on closer inspection, revealed to be closely linked to the preceding books of the *Historia*, and so should be read alongside these.

Each of the major subjects covered in the *Historia* is, in reality, composed of a whole string of short passages. When read in isolation, these can, at first, seem relatively insignificant. Yet they appear alongside each other and, when read together, their importance becomes apparent, revealing much about the overall narrative of the *Historia* and Orderic's priorities and intentions in writing it. In analysing the text in this way, we are examining what Gabrielle Spiegel has termed 'the moment of inscription':

This process of "inscription" (or the fixation of meaning)...represents the moment of choice, decision, and action that creates the social reality of the text, a reality existing both "inside" and "outside" the particular performance incorporated in the work, through the latter's inclusions, exclusions, distortions, and stresses. In force in a shaping a literary text is a host of unstated desires, beliefs, misunderstandings, and interests which impress themselves upon the work, sometimes consciously, sometimes not, but which arise from pressures that are social and not merely intertextual.²⁴²

Careful analysis of the content of a text can thus reveal much about the choices, decisions and processes which lay behind the composition of the narrative as a whole.²⁴³ While many of these things were unstated and impressed themselves upon a work unconsciously, as Spiegel

²⁴² Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, pp.25-6.

²⁴³ For the influence of classical rhetoric upon the selection and arrangement of material within a narrative see Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, pp.299-304.

noted, others were much more conscious authorial decisions that are repeatedly articulated throughout the work, both in the content of the narrative, and in its final form.

The twelfth century was a vibrant and distinctive period for historical writing, one of ‘re-emerging personality...in a genre that encouraged digression and quiet idiosyncrasy.’²⁴⁴ It will be argued here that this was certainly the case with Orderic’s *Historia ecclesiastica* where the back-and-forth nature of the narrative between Saint-Evroult and southern Italy, Saint-Evroult and the First Crusade, and Saint-Evroult and the Anglo-Norman realm repeatedly reminds the reader that the monastery lay at the very centre of the author’s concerns in writing the work. Elisabeth van Houts comments regarding the geographic extent of a monastic chronicle underline this point:

A chronicle of a monastery or church describes the history of the place from its foundation, or refoundation, to the author’s own time...References to outside events or persons occur only if they are directly linked with the monastery or church...References to regions relatively far from the place with which the chronicle is concerned normally occur only in connection with acquisitions or loss of land in another province, pilgrimages...by members of the community, or as news brought to the community by relatives of its members or by benefactors. Thus the geographical scope of such a chronicle is determined by the extent of the community’s property, its business interests and members’ contacts.²⁴⁵

What mattered to many monastic writers of the early twelfth century was what R. W. Southern termed ‘the web of associations’ between objects, lands, events, benefactors, saints, heroes, enemies and his own religious community: ‘the aim was a total recall of the past in order to give the community its identity in the present...they found a uniting thread, not in

²⁴⁴ Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, p.6; see also pp.210-11.

²⁴⁵ Elisabeth van Houts, *Local and Regional Chronicles*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 74 (Turnhout, 1995), p.27. For similar comments see also Clark, *The Benedictines*, p.2.

the working out of a grand design, but in the memories of small communities accumulating over several centuries...²⁴⁶ Orderic was no exception to this rule. The vast geographic scope of the *Historia* was not at odds with the monastic purpose and audience of the work, but served only to highlight the central place of the monastery of Saint-Evroult on a broader narrative canvas. This is the central argument of this study and it will be explored throughout each the following chapters.

The work of narrative theorists such as David Herman,²⁴⁷ H. Porter Abbott²⁴⁸ and Seymour Chatman²⁴⁹ has much to offer the historian who seeks to understand how authors constructed texts such as the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Herman wrote that ‘To comprehend a story, interpreters must be able to grasp the mode or modes of perspectival filtering that predominate within it...’²⁵⁰ The perspective that is promoted in the *Historia* is one which centres on Saint-Evroult. The narrative expands outwards from here, but time and again Orderic draws the readers’ attention back to his monastery. Narrative theory provides a concise vocabulary for understanding this distinctive feature of the *Historia*. Thus, in his discussion of the major interpretative processes by which meaning is incorporated into a narrative and understood by the reader, Herman drew attention to a process which he termed “contextual anchoring”, defining it as ‘the process by which cues in narrative discourse trigger recipients to establish a more or less direct or oblique relationship between the stories they are interpreting and the contexts in which they are interpreting them. Contextual anchoring...is thus a way of characterizing the interface between stories and their

²⁴⁶ R. W. Southern, ‘Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 4. The Sense of the Past’, *TRHS* 23 (1973), 243-263 at p.256.

²⁴⁷ David Herman, *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln, NE and London, 2002).

²⁴⁸ H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge, 2002).

²⁴⁹ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, 1978).

²⁵⁰ Herman, *Story Logic*, p.22.

interpreters.²⁵¹ This language is readily applicable to our study of the *Historia*. The validity of such an approach is further encouraged by Southern's earlier and strikingly similar (yet wholly unrelated) comments regarding many English historians of the medieval period that 'Their whole effort was anchored in the countryside'.²⁵² Equally, in writing the *Historia* there was a direct relationship and a shared context between Orderic and his readers, for both were monks at the same religious community: the monastery of Saint-Evrout. The *Historia* was thus written with an awareness that the monks would know many of the names of people, places, and monasteries about which Orderic wrote, and that the very mention of names such as Grandmesnil, Giroie or Bellême would trigger certain memories and responses in its readers. In short, the *Historia ecclesiastica* is a narrative whose content is firmly anchored in the monastic context of Saint-Evrout, and close textual analysis reveals that it was designed to be read as such.

Thesis Structure

This study examines the purpose of the *Historia ecclesiastica* through a detailed examination of its content. Each of its chapters focuses on a major part of the narrative and examines important thematic strands of the work which, though they occasionally contain well-known passages and events, have been little studied in their wider textual context. The chapters deliberately follow the development of the narrative of the *Historia* as it was written, beginning with the restoration of Saint-Evrout in book III and concluding with Orderic's moving epilogue to the entire work, found at the end of book XIII. Structuring the study in this way has enabled close analysis of the ways in which the geographical horizon of the *Historia* manifested itself throughout. Understanding the nature of this geographical expansion, as evidenced in the content of the work, is a matter with which this thesis is

²⁵¹ Ibid, p.8.

²⁵² Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 4', p.256; Otter, *Inventiones*, p.2.

particularly concerned, for it provides the interpretative key to understanding the purpose for which the *Historia* was written. As seen above, much of the scholarship on the work has argued that the *Historia* began as one kind of history (a monastic history for a monastic audience) and ended up as another (a universal history written for a secular audience). Chapter 1 thus examines the way in which the *Historia* began and developed thereafter. By analysing the textual interplay between Saint-Evroult and southern Italy in books III to VII it challenges the notion that Orderic began the work with a narrow geographical horizon which only expanding in the later books. Rather, it reveals that the southern Italian material was intertwined with the early history of Saint-Evroult almost from the outset of book III. This is significant, for it suggests that the broad geographical horizon of the *Historia* was conceived by Orderic as integral part of its structure from the time of its inception in c.1114.

Chapters 2 and 3 are twin chapters on book IX of the *Historia*, Orderic's narrative account of the history of the First Crusade. This has perhaps been hitherto the most-overlooked and under-appreciated part of the *Historia*, and a detailed study of it thus offers the opportunity to add much to our understanding of the value and significance of this book. Chapter 2 highlights the fact that Orderic punctuated the narrative of book IX, which was based on the *Historia Ierosolimitana* of Baldric of Bourgueil, with numerous additional passages. It argues that these passages were inserted by Orderic in order to deliberately anchor the story in the history of Saint-Evroult, thereby linking book IX to the other twelve books of the narrative. That his account of the First Crusade was no mere recapitulation of Baldric of Bourgueil's version of events is a point further reinforced by chapter 3. Recent analysis of Orderic's usage of William of Poitiers' *Gesta Guillelmi* for his account of the reign of William the

Conqueror has shown that he was no passive redactor of the work,²⁵³ and it is argued here that the same is true of the textual relationship between the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. Book IX of the *Historia* was a wholesale reworking of Baldric's work in which Orderic actively and carefully edited the text throughout, cutting individual words and phrases, as well as whole paragraphs and numerous direct speeches, in order to ensure that his account of the First Crusade was suitable for incorporation into his written history of the monastery of Saint-Evroult. That Orderic was still trying to write a monastic history in book IX is further evidenced by his careful editorial treatment of the flight of the Grandmesnil brothers, the sons of one of the co-founders of Saint-Evroult, from the walls of Antioch.

Chapter 4, the final chapter, examines the effect of the reign of Henry I on Saint-Evroult in the final books of the *Historia*, books X to XIII. Henry's long reign casts a shadow over this part of the narrative. Orderic presented the first decades of the twelfth century as a dark and often violent period in Anglo-Norman, and particularly Norman history, when the security of the monks of Saint-Evroult was frequently threatened, first by Robert of Bellême, whose defeat by Henry I dominates the narrative arc of book XI, and later, in book XIII, by the very benefactors of Saint-Evroult who had once sought to defend it. While much has been written on Henry I in the last fifty years, and recent attention has also been given to Orderic's portrayal of Robert of Bellême, there has been little study of the interaction between the two in the latter part of the narrative of the *Historia*. This chapter reveals the ways in which the history of Saint-Evroult and its network of associated houses, such as the nunnery of

²⁵³ Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis and Norman Society*, pp.66-73. For more on Orderic and William of Poitiers see Roger Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and William of Poitiers: A Monastic Reinterpretation of William the Conqueror', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 50 (1972), 1116-27; Pierre Bouet, 'Orderic Vital, lecteur critique de Guillaume de Poitiers', in C. E. Viola (ed.) *Mediaevalia Christiana XIe-XIIIe siècles: Hommage à Raymonde Foreville*, (Paris, 1989), 25-50.

Almenèches and the priory of Noyon-sur-Andelle, was repeatedly interwoven throughout the larger events of the reign of Henry I. Finally, the chapter ends with an examination of the impact of Henry's death upon the narrative of the final book of the *Historia*, book XIII. As with book IX, this is a little-studied part of Orderic's work, and it repays careful attention. For Orderic's account of Stephen's reign centred on violence committed against the townspeople and monks of Saint-Evroult, related in a dramatic passage near the end of book XIII, and this is symptomatic of the dark tone with which Orderic brought the whole work to an end.

Analysing the narrative in this way allows Orderic's authorial priorities at each stage in the writing process to come to the fore, and thus offers answers to the often problematic issue of how the structure and narrative flow of the work reflect the purpose for which it was written. This study reveals that the *Historia ecclesiastica* was a monastic history concerning the monastery of Saint-Evroult, written on a massive geographical scale. It argues that the geographical expansion of the work, first into southern Italy and later into the Latin East, was, in large part, driven by Orderic's monastic purpose for it. He set out to write the history of the monastery of Saint-Evroult, of its monks, abbots, founders, patrons, heroes and enemies and the travels, associations and involvement of these individuals in the major events of the period, such as the Norman migration into southern Italy and the First Crusade. Writing a history of their house for the monks of Saint-Evroult thus became a massive, complex, and lengthy task in which Orderic used the *Historia* to follow countless narrative threads. Where possible he linked the monastery with things that took place far beyond the cloister of the pays d'Ouche, in Normandy, England, southern Italy, the Byzantine Balkans,

the Latin East, and other places, such as Spain,²⁵⁴ which are not treated here. Yet just as the narrative expanded to include important material on these distant regions, so too it frequently returned to the local history of Saint-Evroult and events in that part of Normandy. This thesis thus examines the contribution of each of the various parts of the work and highlights the way in which Orderic integrated them into his overall writing project. In doing so, it argues that the content and form of *Historia*'s narrative indicate Orderic's primary purpose for the work: it was written for the monks of Saint-Evroult.

²⁵⁴ For more on Orderic's material on the Spanish Reconquest see Lynn Nelson, 'Rotrou of Perche and the Aragonese Reconquest', *Traditio* 26 (1970), 113-133; Lawrence J. McCrank, 'Norman Crusaders in the Catalan Reconquest: Robert Burdet and the Principality of Tarragona', *JMH* 7:1 (1981), 67-82; Kathleen Thompson, *Power and Border Lordship in Medieval France: The County of the Perche, 1000-1226* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp.54-85; Lucas Villegas-Aristizábal, *Norman and Anglo-Norman Participation in the Iberian Reconquista c.1018-c.1248* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2007), esp. pp.108-37. For the wider context see Clay Stalls, *Possessing the Land: Aragon's Expansion into Islam's Ebro Frontier under Alfonso the Battler, 1104-1134* (Leiden, 1995).

1

In the interests of the church of Ouche

From Saint-Evroult to Southern Italy in books III to VII

This chapter explores the dynamic interplay between Saint-Evroult and southern Italy in the pages of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Beginning in book III of the *Historia*, the material on southern Italy constitutes the first major outward movement of the narrative beyond the borders of the Normandy. As such, it is a natural place to begin our examination of Orderic's authorial priorities in writing this massive work. This chapter seeks to answer a number of key questions: why did Orderic write about this region? How did he maintain his monastic focus while doing so? What does this focus reveal about the *Historia*'s narrative as a whole? In seeking to understand Orderic's reasons for including so much material on southern Italy in the pages of the *Historia*, one need not look far for a textual precedent. For Orderic had already written on this topic in his interpolations into book VII of William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, which he wrote between c.1109 and c.1113.¹ As well as adding material on the foundation of Saint-Evroult by the Giroie and Grandmesnil families, Orderic also appended to this account notice of the death of William Giroie at Gaeta and the role played by his son, William of Montreuil, in Apulia.² Thereafter, he also chronicled the exile of Robert of Grandmesnil, one of the co-founders of Saint-Evroult and also its second abbot, and the foundation of the abbey of St. Euphemia in Calabria.³ Such episodes in the *Gesta Normannorum* meant that the story of Saint-Evroult overlapped with that of the Norman

¹ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, I, pp.xxi, lxvi-lxxvii; on the relationship between Orderic's interpolations into the *Gesta Normannorum* and his *Historia* see Chibnall, *World of Orderic Vitalis*, pp.176-7. For a brief overview of Orderic's material on southern Italy in the *Gesta Normannorum*, see Olivier Guyotjeannin 'L'Italie méridionale vue du royaume de France', in *Il Mezzogiorno normanno-svevo visto dall'Europa e dal mondo mediterraneo* (Bari, 1999), 143-75 at pp.148-49.

² *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, II, vii.23, pp.136-42.

³ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, II, vii.29-30, pp.152-8.

conquest of southern Italy by Robert Guiscard and his brothers in the second half of the eleventh century. These examples will be explored in greater depth below, for each of them was later reused by Orderic in book III of the *Historia* to pave the way for his narrative to expand and move outwards from Saint-Evrout to southern Italy. The story of the establishment of daughter houses in southern Italy was now enlarged to include two further houses at Mileto and Venosa. Here and in the books that followed, numerous other stories were added which recounted the involvement of the Giroie and Grandmesnils in southern Italy and even at the siege of Durazzo in the Byzantine Balkans in the early 1080s. Finally, Orderic told three stories concerning the relics of St. Nicholas, which after their translation from Myra to Bari in 1087, were appropriated by associated houses of Saint-Evrout at Venosa and Noron. The discussion of such relics and other physical objects is a theme which recurs throughout Orderic's material on southern Italy and it will receive detailed attention in this chapter.

Orderic's material on southern Italy has long been of interest to historians. Evelyn Jamison's 1938 essay, 'The Sicilian Norman Kingdom in the Mind of Anglo-Norman Contemporaries', remains the best starting place for those studying this aspect of the *Historia*.⁴ She observed that Orderic was 'incomparably the greatest' of those chroniclers who wrote about Norman Italy in the first half of the twelfth century.⁵ Of his account she wrote, 'It is a picture clear-cut and vivid of the day-to-day process of the Norman migration to the south, and he came to paint it because the actors were men and women he had known, who came and told him their adventures...It is all real to him, and through him to us, because it was accomplished by his

⁴ Evelyn Jamison, 'The Sicilian Norman Kingdom in the Mind of Anglo-Norman Contemporaries', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 24 (1938), 237-285.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.242.

friends from the valley of the Risle.’⁶ Orderic’s perspective on the Normans in southern Italy was thus profoundly locally-oriented in nature. Jamison and others such as David Douglas then cited the *Historia* to support their arguments for the unity of Norman expansion not just in southern Italy, but also in England and on the First Crusade.⁷ Such views were heavily criticised by R. H. C. Davis in his seminal work, *The Normans and their Myth*, published in 1976. Here he argued that Orderic’s perspective was both ‘eloquent’ and ‘idiosyncratic’ and blamed the monk for being the originator of this myth.⁸ While Graham Loud convincingly exonerated Orderic in this regard,⁹ the debate over “the Norman myth” has, in many ways, proven to be an unwelcome distraction to serious study of the significance of Orderic’s material on southern Italy. In his own important work, *Normandy Before 1066*, David Bates repeatedly dispelled the notion that Norman migration to southern Italy had anything to do with Norman identity: ‘the origins of Norman achievement must be found, not in some preconceived Norman *machismo*, but in the obscure recesses of the social and political structure of pre-1066 Normandy.’¹⁰ Individuals were motivated ‘not by some innate Norman drive towards conquest, but by the pressure of immediate circumstances’.¹¹ Indeed, those who travelled to southern Italy ‘usually did so for specific reasons...they frequently had nothing to do with either conquest or settlement.’¹² More recent scholarship on ethnicity and identity also supports this reading. Thus Nick Webber noted that the retention of at least some connections with Normandy by the Normans in the south affected the way in which Norman identity was portrayed within the sources from the period.¹³ What, then, was the nature of the

⁶ Ibid, p.243.

⁷ Jamison, ‘The Sicilian Norman Kingdom’, p.245, 247; David C. Douglas, *The Norman Achievement, 1050-1100* (London, 1969). See also *idem*, *The Norman Fate, 1100-1154* (London, 1976).

⁸ R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London, 1976), pp.13-15.

⁹ Graham A. Loud, ‘The *Gens Normannorum*: Myth or Reality?’, *ANS* 4 (1982), 104-116, 205-9.

¹⁰ Bates, *Normandy Before 1066*, p.237.

¹¹ Ibid, p.242.

¹² Ibid, p.243.

¹³ Webber, *Evolution of Norman Identity*, p.55.

connections between southern Italy and Normandy according to Orderic? And why did he write about them so frequently?

R. H. C. Davis argued that ‘Orderic’s picture of these family and monastic connections is so vivid that there is a great temptation to assume that it was typical, and to generalize from it, but there are strong reasons for thinking that his experience was exceptional.’¹⁴ But this begs an obvious question: what is the exact nature of the picture which Orderic presents? Brief glimpses of it were provided by Jamison¹⁵ and Davis,¹⁶ and a useful narrative overview of Grandmesnil involvement in southern Italy was provided by Walker.¹⁷ Chibnall herself published two short articles on the subject, the first on links between the monks and patrons of Saint-Evroult and southern Italy,¹⁸ and the second on the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas.¹⁹ More recently, Graham Loud has incorporated information on the daughter houses of southern Italy in his important work *The Latin Church in Norman Italy*,²⁰ while stressing the limited impact of Norman monasticism on the region.²¹ In revisiting the

¹⁴ Davis, *The Normans*, p.64.

¹⁵ Jamison, ‘Sicilian Norman Kingdom’, p.242-7; Davis, *The Normans*, pp.63-4.

¹⁶ Davis, *The Normans*, pp.63-4.

¹⁷ Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, pp.116-56; on this see also see Joseph Decaëns ‘Le patrimoine des Grentemesnil en Normandie, en Italie et en Angleterre aux XI^e et XII^e siècles’, in Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (eds) *Les Normands en Méditerranée: dans le sillage des Tancrede* (Caen, 1994), 123-140 at pp.135-7.

¹⁸ Marjorie Chibnall, ‘Les moines et les patrons de Saint-Évroult dans l’Italie du Sud au XI^e siècle’, in Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (eds) *Les Normands en Méditerranée: dans le sillage des Tancrede* (Caen, 1994), 161-170.

¹⁹ Chibnall, Marjorie, ‘The Translation of the Relics of St Nicholas and Norman Historical Tradition’, in *Le Relazioni Religiose e Chiesastico-giurisdizionali. Atti del II^o Congresso Internazionale sulle Relazioni fra le due Sponde Adriatiche* (Rome, 1979), 33-41.

²⁰ Graham A. Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.84-91.

²¹ Graham A. Loud, ‘Churches and Churchmen in an Age of Conquest: Southern Italy 1030-1130’, *HSJ* 4 (1992), 37-53 at pp.42-3, 45. This tempers the claims of the earlier Italian scholarship, for which see Ernesto Pontieri, ‘L’abbazia benedettina di Sant’Eufemia in Calabria e l’abate Roberto di Grandmesnil’, *Archivio storico per la Sicilia* 22 (1926), 92-115; Giuseppe Occhiato, ‘Rapporti culturali e risposnde architettoniche tra Calabria e Francia in eta Romanica: l’abbazia Normanna di Sant’Eufemia’, *Mélanges – L’Ecole Française de Rome. Moyen Age Temps Modernes* 93:2 (1981), 565-603; *idem*, ‘Robert de Grandmesnil: un abate “architetto” operante in Calabria nell’XI secolo’, *Studi Medievali* 28:2 (1987), 609-666.

relationship between southern Italy and the Anglo-Norman world, Loud also summarised some parts of Orderic's content on the subject.²²

Scholarship on the Normans in the south has drawn almost exclusively on the works of Amatus of Montecassino, William of Apulia and Geoffrey Malaterra and important studies of these texts have been conducted by Kenneth Baxter Wolf and Emily Albu.²³ Yet while these authors can be used to corroborate and occasionally enhance our understanding of individuals related to Saint-Evroult, it must be said that they themselves seem to have been unaware of many of these links. This is especially the case with the founding families of Saint-Evroult, the Giroie and Grandmesnils. Thus, William of Apulia made no mention of either family. Amatus provided a far fuller account of William of Montreuil's activities in southern Italy than in Orderic's *Historia*, and also some information on Robert of Grandmesnil's return to France in 1077, yet it is significant that in neither section of his chronicle did he make use of either toponymic, refer to the fact that they were kinsmen, or mention Saint-Evroult.²⁴ Meanwhile, in Geoffrey Malaterra's *De Rebus Gestis*, there are three instances in which the Grandmesnil family toponymic, *de Grantemanil*, appears in the text, all in the context of William of Grandmesnil's rebellion against Roger Borsa, and each time referring to William himself.²⁵ He referred to Robert of Grandmesnil only as 'Robert, abbot of St. Euphemia,' (*abbatem Sanctae Euphemiae, Robertum*).²⁶ Finally, while William of Apulia and Geoffrey

²² Graham A. Loud, 'The Kingdom of Sicily and the Kingdom of England, 1066-1266', *History* 88:4 (2003), 540-67 at pp.546-8.

²³ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Philadelphia, 1995); Albu, *Normans in their Histories*, pp.106-44.

²⁴ On William of Montreuil see Amatus of Montecassino, IV.25, p.366; VI.1-4, 6-8, 10-12, pp.415-19, 420-23, 424-26; Dunbar and Loud, IV.27, pp.119-20; VI.1-7, 11-12, pp.148-52, 154-55; for Robert of Grandmesnil see Amatus of Montecassino, VIII.23, p.499; Dunbar and Loud, VIII.23, p.199. Michèle Guéret-Laferté's excellent 2011 edition of Amatus seems likely to supersede that by Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis, *Storia de' Normanni di Amato di Montecassino* (Rome, 1935) and so has been cited here throughout.

²⁵ Geoffrey Malaterra, IV.xxi-xxii, pp.99-101; for more on William of Grandmesnil's rebellion see below, pp.111-14.

²⁶ Geoffrey Malaterra, II.xix, p.35.

Malaterra both recorded that Robert Guiscard was buried at Venosa,²⁷ and the latter also mentioned St. Euphemia five times in his account,²⁸ in none of these instances did they note the connection between these houses and the monastery of Saint-Evroult in Normandy. Only in Orderic's *Historia* are such links stressed.

While Orderic's coverage of Guiscard's campaigns in the Byzantine Balkans has received some notice this area is once more dominated by the accounts of William of Apulia and Geoffrey Malaterra, as well as Anna Comnena's *Alexiad*. Thus Alexios Savvides' recent study of the subject contains no analysis of Orderic's information, and this is also the case with Paul Stephenson's otherwise excellent study of the Balkan frontier.²⁹ More usage of Orderic's *Historia* can be found in the two articles by William McQueen and R. Upsher Smith Jr., where his perspective on Normanno-Byzantine relations during this period is drawn from on a number of occasions.³⁰ The fullest consideration of Orderic's interest in the Byzantine world has been provided by Michael Angold.³¹ Here Angold observed that 'He [Orderic] provides a much fuller and more considered account of the Normans in the south than he did in his version of William of Jumièges. This in turn meant that he was forced to get to grips with Byzantine history.'³² Orderic was interested in Byzantine affairs only in so far as they were an extension of his focus on the affairs of the monks and patrons of Saint-Evroult in southern Italy, as will be seen throughout this chapter.

²⁷ William of Apulia, V, lines 400-404, p.258; Geoffrey Malaterra, III.XLI, p.82; Wolf, 3.41, p.171.

²⁸ Geoffrey Malaterra, II.XIX, II.XXXVII, III.II, IV.VII, IV.X, pp.35, 47, 58, 89, 91; Wolf, 2.19, 2.37, 3.2, 4.7, 4.10, pp.95, 115, 134, 183, 186.

²⁹ Alexios G. C. Savvides, *Byzantino-Normannica: The Norman Capture of Italy (to A.D. 1081) and the First Two Invasions in Byzantium (A.D. 1081-1085 and 1107-1108)* (Leuven, 2007); Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.156-86.

³⁰ William B. McQueen, 'Relations between the Normans and Byzantium, 1071-1112', *Byzantion* 56 (1986), 427-76; R. Upsher Smith Jr., 'Nobilissimus and Warleader: The Opportunity and the Necessity Behind Robert Guiscard's Balkan Expeditions', *Byzantion* 70:2 (2000), 507-26.

³¹ Michael Angold, 'Knowledge of Byzantine History in the West: the Norman Historians (Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries)', *ANS* 25 (2003), 19-33 at pp.29-31.

³² *Ibid*, p.29.

The vast scholarship on Norman Italy has thus provided valuable insights into different parts of Orderic's material on the subject. Yet there remains a real need for all of his stories concerning southern Italy to be examined together in one place, aided by this body of secondary literature. What is required here is a close textual reading of the many passages that link Saint-Evroult to southern Italy in the pages of the *Historia*. This chapter moves beyond the surface content of such passages to consider the ways in which they have been constructed by Orderic and the significance of this for our understanding of his work as a whole. In this it pays heed to Olivier Guyotjeannin's observation that Orderic's passages on southern Italy ought to be examined and discussed in the context within which they appear.³³ It will be seen that Orderic's descriptions of the activities of the monks and patrons of Saint-Evroult suggest much about the nature and sources of his information on southern Italy, furthering our understanding of why he wrote about it so much. Loud has noted that there is 'a very marked contrast in the *Ecclesiastical History* between what Orderic said about southern Italy in the age of Robert Guiscard – which was quite a lot – and the exiguous information that he conveyed about southern Italy in his own day...Orderic appears to have been less interested in, or perhaps he knew less about, contemporary southern Italy than he was about the earlier period when there had been much more direct contact with Normandy.' Loud, like Chibnall before him, emphasised the oral nature of Orderic's information on southern Italy arguing that it was derived either 'directly or indirectly' from patrons such as William Pantulf, Ansold of Maule and Robert Giroie.³⁴ Chibnall had earlier suggested that the monk Benedict, the youngest son of Arnold of Échauffour, 'may have been the source of Orderic's information.'³⁵ For we are told in book III of the *Historia* that he was twice sent to

³³ Guyotjeannin 'L'Italie méridionale', p.147.

³⁴ Loud, 'The Kingdom of Sicily', p.548.

³⁵ OV II. xxii.

Apulia on behalf of Abbot Roger of Saint-Evrout and stayed with his kinsman, William of Tilleul, the second abbot of St. Euphemia, in Calabria for almost three years.³⁶ Yet while it is highly likely that Orderic's material about southern Italy was derived from oral information, and it may even be probable that the individuals cited above played some part in this process, along with many others, it is important to stress that Orderic never once acknowledged his sources for this part of the *Historia*. This means that scholars should resist placing too much emphasis on such arguments.

Along what lines, then, ought the discussion of Orderic's sources proceed? I have argued elsewhere that relics and other physical objects mattered a great deal to Orderic, as evidenced by their repeated prominence throughout the thirteen books of the *Historia*.³⁷ Such textual descriptions point to the continued existence of these objects in the possession of Saint-Evrout and its extended network of associated houses, and in this chapter it will be argued that the same can be seen in many of Orderic's passages on southern Italy. These objects included a bronze Byzantine cross and the rib, arm, and two teeth of St. Nicholas of Myra, all of which found their way into the collections of houses closely connected to Saint-Evrout.³⁸ The movement of such relics was enabled by the already well-established links between Saint-Evrout and southern Italy and it also served to maintain these links. That descriptions of these objects are always accompanied by an account of the circumstances surrounding their acquisition will be used to argue that much of Orderic's information regarding links between his own house and southern Italy was derived from material objects which remained in these monasteries long after physical links between the two houses had reduced to a mere trickle. Thus it can be said that it was not just stories told by the monks and patrons of Saint-

³⁶ OV II. 126-8.

³⁷ Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

³⁸ See below, pp.114-17, 123-33.

Evroult which enabled Orderic to construct this part of the *Historia*'s narrative, but also the objects which they carried.

The Foundation of Saint-Evroult and the Move Towards Southern Italy

In book III of the *Historia*, the first to have been written,³⁹ Orderic moved quickly out of his prologue into the story of the foundation of Saint-Evroult in 1050. Many Norman lords were founding monasteries across Normandy at this time, including those at Bec, Préaux, Lyre and Corneilles.⁴⁰ 'Strongly provoked by the example of these men', Orderic wrote, 'Hugh and Robert of Grandmesnil vowed to construct a monastery from the estates which they held by hereditary right, for the salvation of their souls and the souls of their ancestors.'⁴¹ News of their new-found desire soon reached their uncle, William Giroie, who advised them to build their monastery in the forest of Ouche on the southern frontier of Normandy, and along with his brother, Robert Giroie, helped them to do just that. 'So the church of Ouche grew by the merits of the blessed father Saint-Evroult and through the eagerness and effort of the sons of Giroie, increasing in every way to the glory of God'.⁴²

While the inclusion of this material at the beginning of a house history is to be expected, developments only a few pages later on in book III are somewhat more surprising. For at the end of a lengthy section relating the first donations to Saint-Evroult after its restoration and

³⁹ For the dating of book III see OV II. xv.

⁴⁰ OV II. 8-12; a longer list of contemporary foundations is provided by Orderic in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, II, vii.22, pp.130-36. For more on the wider context see Marjorie Chibnall, 'Ecclesiastical Patronage and the Growth of Feudal Estates at the Time of the Norman Conquest', *Annales de Normandie* 8 (1958), 103-118.

⁴¹ Horum exemplis Hugo de Grentemaisnilio et Rotbertus uehementer prouocati; deuouerunt et ipsi ex possessionibus quas iure haereditario possidebant, pro salute sua et pro salute animarum antecessorum suorum coenobium construere. OV II. 12-14.

⁴² Meritis itaque sancti patris Ebrulfi Vticensi aeclesia surgente, et per studium laboremque Geroianorum ad honorem Dei undique crescente. OV II. 20.

the growth of the monastery during Thierry's abbacy (1050-57),⁴³ Orderic, noting William Giroie's unswerving support for the much-criticised abbot, related how this co-founder of the monastery nevertheless left the duchy in order to visit Apulia, never to return. He did so not as the result of exile or for selfish gain, but 'in the interests of the church of Ouche' (*pro utilitatibus Vticensis aeccliesiae*).⁴⁴ While the next few pages of the *Historia*'s narrative go on to discuss some of the problems faced by Saint-Evroult during this period, as the infamous Mabel of Bellême presumed upon their hospitality,⁴⁵ this phrase is nevertheless extremely important. It acts as a sign to the reader that the narrative of the *Historia* is about to expand and in doing so, to forge out in a new direction.

The geographic expansion of the narrative into southern Italy now continues on apace. In order to move the *Historia* in this direction, Orderic provided an introduction to his material on the activities of the founders, benefactors and monks of Saint-Evroult in the Italian peninsula. Here he summarised what little he knew about the arrival of the Normans there.⁴⁶ While he began with the exile of a certain Osmund Drengot from Normandy to Apulia,⁴⁷ the rest of this passage was spent describing how a Norman named Drogo along with a hundred of his knights, returning home from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, came to the aid of Duke

⁴³ OV II. 30-52; for a useful prosopographical overview of Thierry's life see Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica* 2:273-5.

⁴⁴ OV II. 52. William Giroie's journey to southern Italy and death there conclude Orderic's account of the foundation of Saint-Evroult in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, II, vii.23, p.142.

⁴⁵ OV II. 52-6.

⁴⁶ The classic study by Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1907) remains the most thorough examination of this subject. See also Graham A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard. Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow, 2000); *idem*, 'How "Norman" was the Norman Conquest of Southern Italy?', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 25 (1981), 13-34; Einar Joranson, 'The Inception of the Career of the Normans in Italy – Legend and History', *Speculum* 23:3 (1948), 353-96; Hartmut Hoffmann, 'Die Anfänge der Normannen in Süditalien', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 49 (1969), 95-144; John France, 'The Occasion of the Coming of the Normans to Italy', *JMH* 17:3 (1991), 185-205.

⁴⁷ On the nature and importance of exile to southern Italy see Ewan Johnson, 'The Process of Norman Exile into Southern Italy', in Laura Napran and Elisabeth van Houts (eds), *Exile in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2004), 29-38.

Gaimar of Salerno when his lands were attacked by 20,000 Saracens demanding tribute from him and his people. According to Orderic, their return to Normandy along with a great deal of treasure in reward for their services inspired many other Normans to return to Italy in the hopes of making a similar fortune for themselves. Yet while they began as mercenaries fighting in the service of Gaimar and other Italian nobles against the pagan Muslims, they quickly turned against their former paymasters and began to carve out lands for themselves, ‘which are in the possession of their heirs to this day’ (*quae usque hodie heredes eorum possident*).⁴⁸ Orderic, however, was not nearly as interested in this overarching story of the arrival of Norman people in general in southern Italy as he was in the local story, that the sons of the patrons of his monastery were numbered among those who left Normandy and migrated to southern Italy in the mid-eleventh century.⁴⁹ The reality of this becomes apparent when one sees that the names of William of Montreuil, the son of William Giroie, and Arnold of Grandmesnil, son of Robert of Grandmesnil, are listed alongside Robert Guiscard and the other six sons of Tancred of Hauteville,⁵⁰ whose names are synonymous with the conquest of southern Italy.⁵¹ All of this, though, was merely preamble to Orderic’s account of William Giroie’s travel to southern Italy, his death there and the events which this triggered.⁵²

The Death of William Giroie and the Theft of Gifts for Saint-Evroult

As has already been noted, Orderic sought to highlight the role of the benefactors of Saint-Evroult and their kinsmen in his brief account of the Norman migration into southern Italy for

⁴⁸ OV II. 56-8. For more on the significance of *usque hodie* see Roach, ‘The Material and the Visual’.

⁴⁹ The most detailed prosopographical study of this remains Léon-Robert Ménager, ‘Inventaire des famille normandes et franques émigrées en Italie méridionale et en Sicile (XI^e – XII^e Siècles)’, in *Roberto il Guiscardo e il suo tempo. Relazioni e comunicazioni nelle prime giornate Normanno-sveve (Bari, Maggio 1973)* (Rome, 1975), 259-390.

⁵⁰ OV II. 58; for more on Arnold of Grandmesnil see Decaëns, ‘Le patrimoine des Grentemesnil’, p.135.

⁵¹ See for example Pierre Bouet and François Neveux (eds) *Les Normands en Méditerranée: dans le sillage des Tancredi* (Caen, 1994); Graham A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard. Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Harlow, 2000).

⁵² A point also noted by Chibnall, OV II. 58 n.3.

this was one of his main priorities in the writing of the *Historia* for the monks of Saint-Evrout. Having done so, he then moved on to relate how, in spite of his activities in southern Italy,⁵³ William of Montreuil nevertheless remained closely connected to his family's monastic foundation in the pays d'Ouche: 'This man was a friend and brother to the monks of Ouche, and had given many gifts to them before migrating from Normandy, as we previously related, and now he instructed them to send a faithful envoy to him for the protection of the gifts which he was preparing for them.'⁵⁴ It was this relationship between William of Montreuil and Saint-Evrout which caused his elderly father, William Giroie, to visit him in southern Italy some time before 1056.⁵⁵ This past action in turn provided Orderic with a great deal of information about the sequence of events which it subsequently triggered, thereby necessitating its inclusion in the *Historia*. For William Giroie travelled across the Alps to Rome and then to Apulia where he was reunited with his son 'and other friends and relatives and kinsfolk' (*aliosque amicos et affines ac parentes*).⁵⁶ There he faithfully performed his begging duties in the service of the monastery and was given 'many great gifts' (*multa et magna munera*) to take back to the needy monks at Saint-Evrout.⁵⁷ Desiring to get some of these gifts home as soon as possible, he sent one of his companions, Gunfrid, a monk from Saint-Evrout back 'with great wealth' (*magno censu*).⁵⁸ It was here that the troubles began. For on his return journey, Gunfrid was fatally poisoned while wintering at Rome and the riches meant for Saint-Evrout were stolen.

⁵³ The fullest account of these is provided by Amatus of Montecassino, IV.25, p.366; VI.1-4, 6-8, 10-12, pp.415-19, 420-23, 424-26; Dunbar and Loud, IV.27, pp.119-20; VI.1-7, 11-12, pp.148-52, 154-55.

⁵⁴ *Hic Vticensibus quorum frater et amicus erat, et quibus plura antequam de Normannia migrasset ut supra retulimus dederat, mandauit ut ad se legatum fidelem mitterent pro deferendis muneribus quae eis praeparabat.* OV II. 58.

⁵⁵ OV II. 59 n.4; for more on connections between the Giroie family and southern Italy see Chibnall, 'Les moines et les patrons', pp.161-2.

⁵⁶ OV II. 60.

⁵⁷ OV II. 60.

⁵⁸ OV II. 60.

More dramatic than this, though, and certainly of greater importance to the history of Saint-Evrout, was that William Giroie himself also died while on his return journey to the pays d'Ouche, though this time of natural causes brought on by old age.⁵⁹ William's continued remembrance at Saint-Evrout, as one of the four co-founders of the house, explains the detailed attention given to the circumstances surrounding his death in book III of the *Historia*. For Orderic tells us that 'The monks, meanwhile, having heard about the death of the founder of their church, were greatly saddened, and faithfully offered prayers and masses and other benefits for his soul to God...which their successors work fervently to observe to this day.'⁶⁰ This move from the past to the present tense in this passage, coupled with the usage of *usque hodie*, is, as I have argued elsewhere, a significant and widespread feature of Orderic's writing in the *Historia*.⁶¹ Here it is used to stress the continuous link between the early history of Saint-Evrout in the mid-1050s, and the "present" of the 1110s and 1120s at which time these first books of the *Historia* were written. Furthermore, as Chibnall noted, the Necrology of Saint-Evrout celebrated the obit of William Giroie on 5 February every year.⁶² Here in book III of the *Historia*, Orderic thus sought to stress that he and the other monks of Saint-Evrout had fulfilled their promise to pray for the soul of their dead founder. In doing so, they not only remembered his life and the vital contribution which he made to the growth of the monastery which he had founded, but they also recalled the theft of the valuable gifts for Saint-Evrout which he had entrusted to one of his companions as he lay dying at Gaeta.

⁵⁹ OV II. 60.

⁶⁰ Coenobitae autem audita morte fundatoris aeccliesiae suae nimium contristati sunt, precesque et missas et alia beneficia pro anima eius Deo...fideliter obtulerunt, quae successores eorum usque hodie feruenter obseruare satagunt. OV II. 62.

⁶¹ Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

⁶² OV II. 61 n.3. Necrology, p.484.

Orderic tells us that William called to his bedside the two remaining companions who had thus far survived the treacherous journey to and from Apulia, the knights Anquetil of Noyer and Theodelin of Tanaisie, and charged them with the safe return of the gifts to Saint-Evrout:

‘And so now, with the testimony of Theodelin, I entrust to you, Anquetil, the wealth which I have procured, that you deliver it without deceit to the lord abbot Thierry, and to Robert my nephew and the other monks of Saint-Evrout for whom I am now an exile. You are both men of Saint-Evrout and owe faithful service to it. Do not let any desire deceive you. Consider carefully that while all your companions have died, you alone survive by the merits of Saint-Evrout, perhaps so that you would faithfully show this service to him. Finally, bid farewell on my behalf to the monks of Ouche whom I love in Christ as dearly as myself, and humbly ask that they might plead faithfully to the Lord Almighty for me.’ Saying these and many other things, he produced the gold and precious vestments, and a silver chalice, and other precious things, counted them carefully, and handed them over to Anquetil.⁶³

The mention of these precious gifts is important to the narrative, for Orderic records that William Giroie died shortly thereafter, thereby leaving Anquetil in charge of returning them to the monks of Saint-Evrout. He and Theodelin finally then completed their journey back to Normandy. Anquetil subsequently visited the monks in order to inform them of William’s death in southern Italy, ‘but he was utterly silent about the riches entrusted to him, which he had already wickedly assigned for his own use’ (*sed de commissa sibi pecunia quam in usus suos iam ipse nequiter distraxerat omnino tacuit*).⁶⁴ Sometime later, Theodelin went to Saint-Evrout in order to check that Anquetil had delivered the precious gifts to the monks there. On hearing about everything which had happened in Apulia, Abbot Thierry immediately

⁶³ ‘Nunc itaque tibi Anshetille sub testimonio Teodelini pecuniam quam procuravi commendo, ut eam sine fraude deferas domno abbati Teoderico, et Rodberto nepoti meo aliisque monachis sancti Ebrulfi pro quibus nunc exulo. Ambo sancti Ebrulfi homines estis; eique fidem seruare debetis. Non uos ulla decipiat cupiditas. Sagaciter perpendite, quod defunctis omnibus sociis uestris, meritis sancti Ebrulfi uos soli superstites estis, fortassis ut ei hoc seruitium fideliter exhibeatis. Vticensibus quos in Christo sicut meipsum diligo ex parte mea ultimum ualedicite, et ut pro me omnipotentem Dominum fideliter exorent suppliciter rogate.’ Haec et alia multa dicens, aurum et pallia preciosa calicemque argenteum aliasque preciosas species protulit, diligenter numerauit, et Anshetillo tradidit. OV II. 60.

⁶⁴ OV II. 62.

summoned Anquetil to Saint-Evroult and ordered him to return everything which William Giroie had entrusted to him. Orderic relates that by this time, however, the errant knight had squandered much of the wealth, ‘but because a long time had now flown by, and Anquetil had foolishly deposited that which he was returning, he was scarcely able to regain a few of the cheaper items from those which he had taken in Apulia. With difficulty he reclaimed only the silver chalice, two chasubles, an elephant’s tooth and a griffin’s claw along with certain other things.’⁶⁵ These are not the only objects mentioned in this passage. For having confessed his guilt and begged for the pardon of Abbot Thierry and the other monks of Saint-Evroult, Anquetil was forgiven by the monks. However, this was only after he had made a generous gift to the monks in compensation for his actions. He pledged a third of the town of Ouche to Saint-Evroult and also donated ‘a silk cloak which was made into a cantor’s cope’ (*unam pallam ex serico unde cappa cantoris facta est*).⁶⁶ The story thus performs the same role in the *Historia* as a charter, documenting the acquisition of landed wealth and other valuable objects by the monks Saint-Evroult.

Orderic’s account of Anquetil’s theft of precious objects was included in book III of the *Historia* because of this story’s association with the death and posthumous remembrance of William Giroie. Yet while the recovery of some of these gifts and their safe return to Saint-Evroult brought both of these stories to an end, it is clear from the text itself that these memories lived on long in the memory of the monks of the pays d’Ouche. While it cannot be argued with certainty that the silver chalice, the two chasubles, the elephant’s tooth and the griffins claw were still in existence in and around Saint-Evroult at the time of Orderic’s

⁶⁵ Sed quia iam longum tempus effluxerat, et Ansetillus ea quae repetebat insipienter deposuerat, uix potuit recuperare pauca et uiliora ex his quae in Apulia susceperat. Calicem solummodo argenteum et duas casulas dentemque elephantis et ungulam griphis cum aliis quibusdam rebus difficulter exegit. OV II. 62.

⁶⁶ OV II. 62-4.

writing, as so many other objects seem to have been,⁶⁷ this possibility should not be entirely ignored. Of particular interest in this regard is the silk cloak which Anquetil donated to Saint-Evroult. That Orderic tells us that this was then made into a cantor's cope is significant. In saying this, he was providing his monastic readers with a small piece of information about the "afterlife" of the cloak, an item which though initially used by an individual, whose actions threatened to limit the prosperity of the monastery, eventually came to be used by the monks of Saint-Evroult for much more profitable ends.⁶⁸ Whether great or small, such details mattered to Orderic as he sought to write his history of the monastery for current and future generations of monks at Saint-Evroult. For this was a dramatic history, one in which troubles repeatedly came to the cloister of his house, like raging waves against a ship. Looking back on these tumultuous early years of the monastery, Orderic saw that these troubles always subsided, as Christ once more calmed the waves threatening to engulf his Church.⁶⁹

The Dispute Between Robert of Grandmesnil and Abbot Thierry

The next trial that Orderic recounted in book III of the *Historia* was far more serious and protracted than that just discussed. Transitioning between the two, he prefaced this new episode with the following explanation of these fresh troubles:

The ancient enemy never ceases to impugn the peace of the Church with goads of varying temptation, and through those whom he is able to subject to worldly vanity, to atrociously trouble those prudently being vigilant for the simplicity of the catholic faith and those manfully making a stand at the summit of virtue.

⁶⁷ Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

⁶⁸ For a further example concerning cantor's copes see below pp.108-9.

⁶⁹ OV II. 54.

Orderic then moved on to explain the exact way in which these troubles manifested themselves at Saint-Evroult:

So when he saw that a regular monastery had, with God's aid, arisen in the forest of Ouche and that abbot Thierry was utterly blessing young and old by his word and in his service to many souls, he was raging with the same envy which expelled the first man Adam from paradise for tasting the forbidden fruit. After the departure of William Giroie he insolently incited prior Robert against his abbot, and through great and long-lasting dissension, gravely disquieted the impressionable minds of those under the rule.⁷⁰

The Robert in question here was Robert of Grandmesnil, another of the four co-founders of Saint-Evroult, who had abandoned the world and entered the cloister as a monk and prior of his own foundation. The narrative of book III of the *Historia* thus remained squarely focussed on the activities of its patrons and benefactors during the early years of the monastery. While William Giroie had unswervingly supported both the monks and their abbot, Thierry, Robert of Grandmesnil, in contrast, came to staunchly oppose him. Though Orderic was not afraid to speak of the detrimental effect that this dispute had on Saint-Evroult, he nevertheless sought to provide his readers with a biblical framework which offered them some understanding of the causes of this otherwise surprising turn of events as the founder turned against his foundation. Robert, we are told, was temperamental, impulsive, and had a violent temper.⁷¹ Orderic says that 'he was frequently criticising his father [Abbot Thierry] in secret' (*Frequenter itaque patri suo clam detrahebat*), using the verb *detraho* to convey that he was literally 'taking away' his authority, dismantling it piece by piece.⁷² Robert, is also portrayed

⁷⁰ Antiquis hostis nunquam cessat ecclesiae quietem uariarum stimulis temptationum impugnare, et per eos quos potest mundanae uanitati subiugare, in simplicitate catholicae fidei prudenter uigilantes et in uirtutum culmine uiriliter stantes atrociter molestare. Vnde dum uidisset regulare monasterium in Vticensi saltu opitulante Deo surrexisse, et Teodericum abbatem in uerbo et operatione multis animabus iuuenum atque senum oppido prodesse, exardescens inuidia qua prothoplastum Adam per uetiti fructus gustum de paradiso expulit, Rodbertum priorem contra abbatem suum post discessum Willelmi Geroiani insolenter excitauit, magnaue dissensione diu perdurante mobiles subiectorum animos grauiter inquietauit. OV II. 64.

⁷¹ OV II. 64.

⁷² OV II. 66.

as being worldly, criticising Thierry for being concerned ‘more with spiritual than secular activities’ (*plus spiritualibus quam saecularibus negociis*).⁷³

Under extreme pressure, with only a brief period of respite in 1056-57,⁷⁴ Abbot Thierry spent much of his time at Sées, before returning one last time to Saint-Evroult, where, in August 1057, he announced that he was giving up his pastoral charge and departing on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, such was the extent of the strife at Saint-Evroult.⁷⁵ Thierry was never to reach Jerusalem, for he died en route on the island of Cyprus and was buried there. Orderic’s account of his death is significant, for it vindicates the first abbot of Saint-Evroult, underlining Thierry’s piety to the readers of the *Historia*, stressing the prominent burial position he was given before the altar in the church of St. Nicholas of Myra on Cyprus, as well as noting that many miracles took place there afterwards.⁷⁶ Most important of all, though, in this regard, are the final few sentences of this passage, which describe the way in which the monks of Saint-Evroult responded to the news of the death of the often-maligned abbot, whom many of them had mistreated at the instigation of Robert of Grandmesnil:

Moreover, when the monks of Ouche learned of the reverend father’s death, which was related on his companions’ return to Normandy, they were deeply saddened, and faithfully performed service to God for his soul, and they observe his memory on the first of August each year to this day. Also, to this day they observe with diligent enthusiasm the religious customs which the same man had learned from the teaching of Richard of Verdun and William of Dijon and also Thierry of Jumièges, and had faithfully passed on when the new church had been faithfully committed to his care, and they shrewdly engrain them into the novices who have turned to the religious life.⁷⁷

⁷³ OV II. 66.

⁷⁴ OV II. 66.

⁷⁵ OV II. 66-8.

⁷⁶ OV II. 68-72.

⁷⁷ Vticensis autem monachi postquam reuerendi patris obitum relatu sociorum eiusdem Normanniam repetentium cognouerunt, ualde contristati sunt; et debitum pro anima eius seruitium Deo fideliter celebrauerunt,

Though Thierry had been badly mistreated by the monks during his life, Orderic was thus nevertheless keen to stress that he was honoured in his death. Indeed, not only was his obit marked each year by the monks of Saint-Evrout, but, as first abbot of Saint-Evrout, his influence continued to be felt in the cloister in Orderic's day through the teaching of novices. And as was the case in the earlier example of William Giroie, this continuity of remembrance was again stressed in the text by the move from past to present tense verbs, as well as by the double usage of the term *usque hodie*.

The Exile of Robert of Grandmesnil

In June 1059, Robert of Grandmesnil was elected as the second abbot of Saint-Evrout (1059-61).⁷⁸ While Orderic had criticised his character and behaviour towards Abbot Thierry during his time of prior, he seems to have put this affair behind him for this part of the narrative of book III, writing that the monks elected Robert as abbot because of his 'manifold fitness' (*multimodam commoditatem*) for the task: not only was he respected by the monks because of his noble birth, but also because he was an able administrator who worked tirelessly for the furtherance of the monastery.⁷⁹ This was a turbulent period in the duchy more generally, with warfare between the French, the Angevins, and the Normans. It was in this context that Robert Giroie, brother of William Giroie and the third of the co-founders of Saint-Evrout to be mentioned in book III, aided by Angevin support, rebelled against Duke William in c.1059-60.⁸⁰ After he was fatally poisoned, his son, Arnold of Échauffour, continued the fight

et memoriam eius singulis annis usque hodie kal. augusti celebriter exoluunt. Religiosa quoque instituta quae ipse ex doctrina uenerabilium abbatum Ricardi Veredunensis et Willelmi Diuionensis atque Teoderici Gemmeticensis didicerat, et nouellae aeclesiae sibi commissae fideliter tradiderat; diligenti studio usque hodie obseruant, et nouiciis ad religionis conuersionem conuersis sollerter insinuant. OV II. 74.

⁷⁸ For a prosopographical overview of his life see Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, 2:275-6.

⁷⁹ OV II. 74.

⁸⁰ For more on this rebellion see Hagger, 'Kinship and Identity', p.218; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p.63. On the dating of it see Chibnall, OV II. 79 n.3.

and, having paid homage to the duke and submitted to his authority, was granted his paternal inheritance and the body of his father was returned to him, which was subsequently buried at Saint-Evrout.⁸¹

Arnold's support and the entrance of new monks into the cloister during this period, bringing the total number at the house to forty, are both things which are celebrated by Orderic in this part of the narrative,⁸² but this merely constitutes a brief textual interlude before an account of the wider troubles that developed at this time between Duke William and his magnates, in which the founding families of Saint-Evrout became deeply entangled. Orderic thus switched from the growth of his house back to the problems which it faced during this period by recounting Robert of Grandmesnil's attempt to build a great new church at Saint-Evrout in the first year of his abbacy, which would incorporate the older and much smaller church and be more befitting of the growing monastery. 'But with the storms of tribulation gathering he was forced to cease the work he had begun, which none of his successors ventured to continue on the scale or plan or in the place which the same man had determined.'⁸³ It will be seen that this image of 'storms of tribulation' (*procellis tribulationum*), which built on the earlier reference in book III to Christ's calming of the wind and the waves,⁸⁴ is one which Orderic used throughout not only this section of the *Historia* but across the narrative more generally.⁸⁵ Yet more important to the context in question, the onset of troubles at Saint-Evrout at the outset of Robert of Grandmesnil's abbacy, was the building of the new church itself, which ceased at that time. The incomplete nature of this work may itself be imbued with meaning, for it would certainly function as an apt metaphor for the way in which the

⁸¹ OV II. 78-80.

⁸² OV II. 80-6.

⁸³ Sed procellis tribulationum incumbentibus cessare ab incepto opere coactus est; quod nullus successorum eius ea mensura uel ordine seu loco quo ipse destinauerat prosequi ausus est. OV II. 88.

⁸⁴ OV II. 54; see above p.82.

⁸⁵ OV III. 116-8; VI. 86.

growing momentum at Saint-Evroult was literally halted. Having alluded to the troubles in this way, Orderic now spelt out what they were: ‘Around that same time grave dissension arose between William, duke of Normandy, and his magnates.’⁸⁶ This situation, according to Orderic, was then exploited by Roger of Montgomery and his wife, Mabel of Bellême, who turned the duke’s anger against their neighbours, Hugh of Grandmesnil, Arnold of Échauffour and Robert of Grandmesnil.⁸⁷ Each of these men was then deprived of their lands and forced into exile on the basis of trumped up charges, the latter, Orderic noted, on the evidence of Rainer, his friend and successor as prior at Saint-Evroult. With Robert of Grandmesnil gone, Duke William made Osbern, prior of Cormeilles, abbot of Saint-Evroult, a decision which the monks of Saint-Evroult begrudgingly accepted.⁸⁸

While this dramatic series of events undoubtedly marked another low point in the early history of Orderic’s monastery, it also provided him with further opportunity to once more extend the narrative of book III of the *Historia* into southern Italy. For he had previously done exactly this in his interpolations into book VII of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, beginning with Duke William’s exile of Hugh of Grandmesnil, Arnold of Échauffour and Robert of Grandmesnil before then moving on to relate how the latter was given the foundation of St. Euphemia in Calabria by Robert Guiscard, about which much more will be said shortly.⁸⁹ The historical troubles of Saint-Evroult were thus also narrative opportunities, which could and were used to great effect by Orderic in his historical writing. In the *Historia* he related how, having been exiled, Robert of Grandmesnil went first to Pope Nicholas in Rome to plead his case, before then visiting his kinsmen in Apulia. Though he had gained full

⁸⁶ OV II. 90.

⁸⁷ For more on Mabel of Bellême see below, pp.175-80.

⁸⁸ OV II. 90.

⁸⁹ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, II, vii.29-30, pp.152-8.

papal support for his cause, the exiled abbot was nevertheless unable to secure his own reinstatement at Saint-Evroult.⁹⁰ Yet Robert's command to the monks that they abandon Osbern and follow him to southern Italy met with far greater success:

Who can relate the many tribulations by which the church of Ouche was shaking, both inside and out? Behold, Robert, the founder and ruler of the same house, had been unjustly forced from his seat, was forced to roam among foreign households and a stranger to his house was promoted in his place by the secular power, who though he was skilled and religious, and fervent in the order, was nevertheless distrusted and fearful, not entirely trusting in the indigenous brothers...Almost all wished to leave; but the young and infirm, who were kept under close watch, remained unwillingly. Others, however, who were stronger, voluntarily followed their father into exile...⁹¹

A large number of the monks departed from Saint-Evroult at this time, with Orderic listing nine at this point in the narrative: Herbert and Hubert of Montreuil, Berengar, son of Arnold, Reginald the Great, Thomas of Anjou, Robert Gamaliel, Thurstan, Reginald Chamois and Walter the Small.⁹² Two further names should be added to this list: the monks Fulk and Ursus, who had previously departed with Robert of Grandmesnil at the time of his exile.⁹³ In all, then, eleven monks migrated to southern Italy.

The Establishment of Daughter Houses in Southern Italy

Once in Italy, Orderic wrote that Robert sought aid first from the Pope, then from his cousin, William of Montreuil, next from Richard of Capua, with whom he had limited success, and,

⁹⁰ OV II. 94.

⁹¹ Quis referre potest quot tribulationibus Vticensis aeclesia intus et exterius tunc quatiebatur? En Rodbertus eiusdem fundator et rector de sede sua iniuste fugatus, cogeatur uagari per externas domus, et eiusdem in loco saeculari potestate successit uir extraneus, qui licet sollers esset ac religiosus et in ordine feruidus, suspectus tamen et meticulosus non satis credebat indigenis fratribus...Pene omnes discedere uoluerunt; sed infantes et infirmiores qui artiori custodia constringebantur inuiti remanserunt. Alii uero qui fortiores erant, et maiorem licentiam usurpabant, patrem suum secuti sponte exularunt...OV II. 94-6.

⁹² OV II. 96.

⁹³ OV II. 90.

finally, Robert Guiscard, duke of Calabria.⁹⁴ This is a very important passage in book III and one that repays careful attention from a number of different angles:

He [Guiscard], however, received him [Robert] with honour as his natural lord, and many times invited him and his monks to remain there always...The aforesaid hero, as we have said, honourably received Abbot Robert with his monks, and entrusted to him the church of St. Euphemia, which stands on the shore of the Adriatic sea, where the ruins of an ancient city called Brixia are still visible, and ordered him to build a monastic house there in honour of Mary, the holy mother of God. The same duke and other Normans gave great estates to the aforesaid church and commended themselves to the prayers of the faithful, who had gathered there and would be gathering there to be in the army of Christ. Fredesenda, the wife of Tancred of Hauteville was buried there, for whom Guiscard, her son, thereafter generously gave a large estate to the same church.

Nor was this the only foundation committed to Robert of Grandmesnil's care:

The same prince also committed the monastery of the Holy Trinity, in the city of Venosa, to the aforesaid father. He [Robert], however, selected Berengar, the son of Arnold son of Heugon, a monk of Ouche, and, to become governor of the monastery of Venosa, presented him to Pope Alexander. Who, after having obtained his blessing, honourably held the office of Abbot of Venosa for as long as Alexander and Gregory and Desiderius ruled the apostolic see; then, in the time of Pope Urban, having been elected by the people, he took up the episcopate of the same city. This man, from noble stock, having been brought up from infancy under Abbot Thierry at Ouche, fought for Christ, and flourished with skill at reading and chanting and, above all, writing. Then, as we have said, following his abbot, he obtained from him the pastoral cure; the small flock of twenty monks whom he received he found to be vehemently occupied by worldly vanities and very reluctant in the worship of God. But thereafter, with the aid of God's grace, he increased the number of monks to a hundred. With great eagerness he likewise made them renowned for good virtues, so that many bishops and abbots were selected from the same monastery, and appointed to the holy mother Church to the honour of the true king and for the salvation of souls.

⁹⁴ For a further account of this see Chibnall, 'Les moines et les patrons', pp.162-4.

Finally, a third foundation also came to be linked with Saint-Evrout:

In addition, the magnanimous duke entrusted a third monastery, built in honour of St. Michael the Archangel in the city of Mileto, to Abbot Robert; which the same man committed to William son of Ingran, who was born at Ouche and promoted to clerical office there but had taken his monastic vows at St. Euphemia. And so the chant of Ouche is chanted in these three monasteries in Italy, and the monastic order is observed to this day (*usque hodie*), as the opportunity of this region and the affection of the inhabitants permits.⁹⁵

While there is much that is of interest here, this discussion will focus its attention on three related issues: the significance of the relationship between Robert Guiscard and the daughter houses of Saint-Evrout in southern Italy, the charter collections of these houses, and, finally, the implications of these two things for our understanding of the way in which the passage above ought to be read. It will be argued that this passage not only summarised memories of Saint-Evrout's influence in southern Italy, but likely also further crystallised them, constituting a satisfying, coherent and much simplified story which would have been easy to both remember and convey to the monks at Saint-Evrout.

⁹⁵ Ille uero ut dominem naturalem eum honorifice suscepit; multumque ut ipse cum monachis suis semper secum permaneret rogauit...Praefatus heros ut diximus Rodbertum abbatem cum monachis suis honorabiliter suscepit, et aecclesiam Sanctae Eufemiae, quae super littus Adriatici maris ubi ruinae antiquae Urbis quam Brixam nominabant adhuc parent sita est ei tradidit, ibique monachile coenobium in honore sanctae Dei genetricis Mariae construi praecepit. Magnas possessiones tam ipse dux quam alii Normanni praedictae aecclesiae dederunt; et orationibus fidelium qui illic congregati seu congregandi erant ad militiam Christi sese commendauerunt. Ibi Fredesendis uxor Tancredi de Altauilla sepulta est; pro qua Wiscardus filius eius quondam magnum fundum eidem aecclesiae largitus est. Idem princeps coenobium sanctae Trinitatis in ciuitate Venusia praedicto patri commendauit. Ille autem Berengarium filium Ernaldi filii Helgonis Vticensem monachum elegit; et ad suscipiendum regimen Venusiensis cenobii Alexandro papae praesentauit. Qui post perceptam benedictionem quamdiu Alexander et Gregorius ac Desiderius apostolicam sedem rexerunt, curam Venusiensis abbatiae honorabiliter tenuit; deinde temporibus Urbani papae a plebe electus episcopatum eiusdem urbis suscepit. Hic nobili parentela exortus ab infantia sub Teoderico abate apud Vticum Christo militauit; peritiaeque legendi et canendi optimeque scribendi floruit. Deinde ut diximus abbatem suum secutus, et ab ipso pastorem curam adsumptus; pusillum gregem xx monachorum quem recepit, mundanisque uanitibus uehementer occupatum et in Dei cultu ualde pigrum inuenit; postmodum gratia Dei iuuante ad numerum centum monachorum augmentauit. Tanto etiam bonarum studio uirtutum nobilitauit eos, ut ex ipsis plures episcopi et abates assumerentur; sanctaeque matri Aecclesiae ad honorem ueri regis pro salute animarum praeficerentur. Praeterea magnanimus dux tertium coenobium in honore sancti Michahelis archangeli in urbe Mellito constructum Rodberto abbati tradidit; quod ipse Willelmo Ingrananni filio qui apud Vticum natus et ad clericatum promotus fuerat sed apud sanctam Eufemiam monachatum susceperat commendauit. In his itaque tribus monasteriis Italiae Vticensis cantus canitur; et monasticus ordo usque hodie prout opportunitas illius regionis et amor habitantium permittit obseruatur. OV II. 98-102.

For Orderic, Robert Guiscard's patronage of Robert of Grandmesnil was critical to the whole story. It was he who welcomed the exiled abbot and his monks with open arms, and more than that, entrusted him with not one but three monasteries in southern Italy: St. Euphemia, Holy Trinity, Venosa, and St. Michael the Archangel at Mileto.⁹⁶ Guiscard is very highly spoken of here in these pages of the *Historia*, and his generosity towards Robert was likely a key factor in this. Orderic describes him as 'the aforesaid hero' (*praefatus heros*) and 'the magnanimous duke' (*magnanimus dux*), and the initial arrival of the monks in southern Italy and the entrusting of these houses into their care, cited above, actually comes either side of a middle section in which Guiscard's family background is briefly recounted and his military victories summarised. This latter section is particularly idealised, presenting him as having triumphed over the Lombards and Greeks and having twice defeated the Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Comnenus, in battle: 'and put him to flight with his great multitude, having conquered him in battle on land and sea' (*ipsumque terra marique bello uictum cum ingenti multitudine fugauit*).⁹⁷ This passage bears out Loud's observation that accounts of Guiscard were 'self-consciously literary ones, in which reality was, to some extent at least, subsumed

⁹⁶ The existing scholarship on St. Euphemia is of limited value, but see Ernesto Pontieri, 'L'abbazia Benedettina di Sant'Eufemia in Calabria e l'abate Roberto di Grantmesnil', *Archivio Storico Per La Sicilia* 22 (1926), 92-115; Giuseppe Occhiato, 'Rapporti culturali e risposdenze architettoniche tra Calabria e Francia in eta Romanica: l'abbaziale Normanna di Sant'Eufemia', *Melanges – l'ecole Française de Rome. Moyen age temps modernes* 93:2 (1981), 565-603; Giuseppe Occhiato, 'Robert de Grandmesnil: un abate "architetto" operante in Calabria nell'XI secolo', *Studi Medievali* 28:2 (1987), 609-666. Venosa has been well-served by Hubert Houben, *Die Abtei Venosa und das Mönchtum im Normannisch-Staufischen Südtalien* (Tübingen, 1995). For more on Mileto see Léon-Robert Ménager, 'L'abbaye bénédictine de la Trinité de Mileto, en Calabre, à l'époque normande', *Bullettino dell' "Archivio paleografico italiano"*, 4-5 (1958-59), 9-94. More generally, see Léon-Robert Ménager, 'Les fondations monastiques de Robert Guiscard', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 39 (1958), 1-116. Lynn T. White Jr. regarded the abbey of St. Agatha of Catania in Sicily as a fourth daughter house of Saint-Evrault, for which see Lynn T. White Jr., *Latin Monasticism in Norman Sicily* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1938), pp.47-8. There is, however no textual evidence within the *Historia ecclesiastica* linking the two houses, either directly or indirectly. For the one brief reference to Catania see OV II. 58; for more on Orderic's awareness of the cult of St. Agatha of Catania see Paul Oldfield, 'The Medieval Cult of St Agatha of Catania and the Consolidation of Christian Sicily', *JMH* 62:3 (2011), 439-56 at pp.442, 445, 451.

⁹⁷ OV II. 100.

by the authors' purposes and their wish to please their patrons or audience.⁹⁸ For the reality concerning Guiscard's campaigns in the Byzantine Balkans in 1081-84 was far less triumphant, and while he and his son, Bohemond, won a number of important victories against Alexius, their invasion of this region ultimately ended in failure, as will be seen.⁹⁹ In the context of his account of the establishment of the daughter houses of Saint-Evrout in southern Italy, though, this did not matter. What mattered was the link between Guiscard, the renowned Norman conqueror in southern Italy, and the monastic network of Saint-Evrout. That one of the co-founders and abbots of Saint-Evrout had engaged directly with him would almost certainly have been an extremely memorable story that was transmitted orally and lingered long in the memory of the monks of the pays d'Ouche.

This link with Guiscard in book III enlivened Orderic's narrative and supported the argument of the *Historia* by underscoring the prominent associations of his house from the time of its foundation to the present day. For he here noted that not only was the duke a keen supporter of Abbot Robert, granting him care of three monasteries, but that he and his magnates were also faithful patrons of the first foundation, St. Euphemia in Calabria, where his mother, Fredesenda, was also buried. Geoffrey Malaterra recorded that Guiscard buried two of his close companions at the recently founded abbey after their death in battle in 1065, noting that the Duke gave their horses and other property to the church at that time for the salvation of their souls.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, having recorded the death of Guiscard's brother Humphrey, William of Apulia wrote that he was buried alongside their already-deceased brothers at Venosa.¹⁰¹ Orderic seems to have known few such specifics concerning the patronage of these houses by

⁹⁸ Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, p.6.

⁹⁹ See below pp.117-20.

¹⁰⁰ Geoffrey Malaterra, II.xxxvii, p.47; Wolf, 2.37, p.115.

¹⁰¹ William of Apulia, II, lines 364-80, p.152.

the ducal circle. His coverage of Holy Trinity, Venosa here in this passage in book III focusses almost entirely on Berengar and his abilities in turning around the fortunes of the monastery. It reveals nothing about the benefactors of the house and should thus be regarded as Orderic taking the opportunity to honour one of the most able of all the monks present at Saint-Evroult during the period of Thierry's abbacy. While a number of important stories relating to Venosa feature prominently in book VII of the *Historia*, these, it will be argued, were included in order to stress links between Saint-Evroult and southern Italy, and not for any other reason.¹⁰² Yet one further glimpse of ducal association with these houses is provided in book VII of the *Historia*, where Orderic noted that Guiscard was himself later buried at Venosa, the second of the daughter houses in southern Italy, an important passage which we will return to in due course.¹⁰³ Orderic's information about the third house, St. Michael the Archangel, at Mileto, is even more limited. He refers only to the fact that a certain William, son of Ingran, another former monk of Saint-Evroult, became abbot there. The placing of all three of these foundation stories together in this way suggests that this may be all that was remembered about the subject at Saint-Evroult by the time of Orderic's writing. This did not amount to much more than a few tantalising titbits of information. The differing circumstances surrounding Robert of Grandmesnil's appropriation of St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto have been melded into one story, as though they all took place at the same time and were all granted to the abbot by Guiscard in c.1061-62.

Orderic makes no reference to the charters of these houses and so it seems highly unlikely that he had any access to them. Had he done so he would surely have used the charters to inform his account of their foundation, as is so often the case with his narrative of the

¹⁰² See below pp.114-17, 127-31.

¹⁰³ OV IV. 38; for detailed analysis of this passage see below pp.120-23.

establishment of Saint-Evroult itself.¹⁰⁴ For as will now be seen, they add further nuance and detail to the information provided about St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto in the *Historia*, and, in highlighting the differences between charter and chronicle, the historian is given greater clarity regarding Orderic's motivations in including southern Italian material in book III. Though often problematic,¹⁰⁵ the charter record for St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto confirms the essential narrative provided by Orderic about the establishment of these houses,¹⁰⁶ while also adding a great of further detail to the picture given in the *Historia*. Guiscard's foundation charter for St. Euphemia is the only charter to have survived for this house; the rest were probably lost when the abbey was destroyed by an earthquake in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁷ It is known only from two sixteenth-century notarial copies and is not dated. Yet in spite of these and other difficulties, it describes St. Euphemia as being located 'in the Nicastro valley' (*in ualle Neocastri*) near the ancient ruined city of *Lamatinum*, and not Brixia as Orderic had it. Perhaps most interestingly of all, the charter notes the donation to St. Euphemia of St. Maria *de Cipusa*, the imperial monastery of St. Elia di Melicuccà and five further monasteries at this time: St. Maria *de Gallano*, St. Peter *de Episcopio*, St. *Gregorius*, St. *Vesanatus*, and St. Nicolas. A number of other churches and lands are also listed here and Guiscard's niece, Eremburga, is also mentioned as a donor.¹⁰⁸ Noting that there was much anti-Norman feeling in Calabria in the early 1060s, Ernesto Pontieri long ago argued that Guiscard used St. Euphemia as a base from which to conquer the region. By colonising, enlarging and patronising the foundation and granting it lands and hostile

¹⁰⁴ OV I. 63-77; OV III. xx-xxiv; for more on this subject see Marjorie Chibnall, 'Charter and Chronicle: the Use of Archive Sources by Norman Historians', in C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe et al (eds) *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney on his 70th Birthday* (Cambridge, 1976), 1-17.

¹⁰⁵ Loud, *Latin Church*, p.91.

¹⁰⁶ Chibnall, 'Les moines et les patrons', p.165

¹⁰⁷ Loud, *Latin Church*, p.91.

¹⁰⁸ For this charter see Léon-Robert Ménager (ed.), *Recueil des Actes des Ducs Normands d'Italie (1046-1127)*, i, *Les Premiers Ducs (1046-1087)* (Bari, 1980), pp.38-47 no.11.

settlements such as the town of Nicastro he was thus able to gain greater control there.¹⁰⁹ While this may well have been the case, it is important to stress, as Loud has done, that the establishment of Benedictine foundations at St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto was not typical, but, rather, exceptional. One should not view such Latin houses as the primary means by which Norman domination was achieved, for numerous pre-existing Greek foundations were also generously supported by the Hauteville family during the period of conquest.¹¹⁰ A more nuanced reading than that first offered by Pontieri is thus required.

The many charters that survive from the abbey of Holy Trinity, Venosa have been edited by Hubert Houben in his thorough study of the abbey.¹¹¹ Yet they themselves are not entirely unproblematic, for the charter collection as it exists today is the result of the selections made by seventeenth-century antiquaries such as Prignano who copied only some of the charters in full, summarised many others, and may perhaps even have ignored charters which were issued by individuals of either lower or unknown social status.¹¹² Venosa was likely founded by Guiscard's elder brother, Count Drogo, in the early 1040s at which time a Norman abbot, Ingelbert, was appointed. Six charters were issued during the period 1041 to 1053, four by Drogo and two by his other brother, Humphrey.¹¹³ While Holy Trinity was thus firmly associated with the ducal house from the outset, it was reorganised by Guiscard in c.1068-9 when Berengar was appointed as the new abbot. At this point it became 'a favoured church, perhaps *the* favoured church, not only of the duke, but also of other members of his family.'¹¹⁴ Thus, ten charters survive which were issued by Guiscard between 1057 and

¹⁰⁹ Pontieri, 'L'abazia Benedettina di Sant'Eufemia', pp.94-8.

¹¹⁰ Graham A. Loud, 'Varieties of Monastic Discipline in Southern Italy during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *SCH* 43 (2007), 144-58.

¹¹¹ Houben, *Dei Abtei Venosa*, pp.230-423.

¹¹² Loud, *Latin Church*, p.88, 91.

¹¹³ Houben, *Dei Abtei Venosa*, pp.230-37 nos. 1-6a.

¹¹⁴ Loud, *Latin Church*, p.87; for his summary of the charter evidence see pp.87-8, 90.

1084;¹¹⁵ Roger Borsa, Guiscard's son and successor as duke, issued nine charters between 1081 and 1098;¹¹⁶ a single charter survives in the name of Bohemond, another of Guiscard's sons, dated May 1090.¹¹⁷ Numerous donations were also made to Venosa by kinsmen of the ducal dynasty, most notably by Counts Robert and William of the Principate, with twelve charters issued in their name between 1080 and 1112.¹¹⁸ When viewed in this light, it is hardly surprising that Orderic's claim that the number of monks at Venosa increased to a hundred during Berengar's abbacy has been regarded as 'perfectly feasible'.¹¹⁹ While Loud has noted that 'the scale and direction' of Guiscard's benefactions 'changed' in his later years, and the abbeys of St. Benedict at Montecassino and Holy Trinity, Cava, were the principal recipients of this change,¹²⁰ this is nowhere reflected in the narrative of Orderic's *Historia*. Indeed, the last passage concerning Venosa, in book VII, continues to stress the link between Guiscard and Venosa by emphasising that Robert was buried there after his death in 1085.¹²¹

Like Venosa, the charters of St Michael the Archangel, Mileto, are plentiful in number, and have been published and edited by Ménager.¹²² Mileto was initially a Greek foundation before it was populated by monks from Saint-Evroult and the Benedictine rule introduced. Interestingly, it was not one of Guiscard's foundations, as the short account in the *Historia* suggests, but it belonged to his younger brother, Count Roger of Sicily. Furthermore, the monastery was dedicated in 1080, almost twenty years after St. Euphemia, a further detail

¹¹⁵ Houben, *Dei Abtei Venosa*, pp. 237-8, 241-3, 243-4, 248-50, 250-51, 254, 254-6, 257-9, 275-6, 276, nos. 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 20, 21, 24, 44, 45.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.270-72, 273-4, 280-81, 281-2, 283, 284-7, 300, 305-7, 309, nos. 38, 41, 50, 51, 53, 54, 68, 75, 77.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.293-4 no. 60.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.267, 277-9, 287, 302-3, 303-4, 304-5, 307-9, 313-5, 316-7, 318-9, 319, 322-3, nos. 33, 47, 55, 72, 73, 74, 76, 80, 82, 84, 85, 89.

¹¹⁹ Loud, *Latin Church*, p.88.

¹²⁰ Loud, *Age of Robert Guiscard*, p.273.

¹²¹ See below pp.120-23.

¹²² Léon-Robert Ménager, 'L'abbaye bénédictine de la Trinité de Mileto, en Calabre, à l'époque normande', *Bullettino dell' "Archivio paleografico italiano"*, 4-5 (1958-59), 9-94.

about which Orderic makes no mention. The foundation charter, granted by Roger to Robert of Grandmesnil, acknowledges the abbot as ‘my kinsman’ (*consanguineum meum*),¹²³ and gives to him and his successors the lands of Castellario and Bivona, the lands of St. Gregory, the abbey of St. Nicola di Cerenzia in nearby Mesiano, an unnamed abbey in Burcia, the abbey of St. Nicodemo di Gerace, and, finally, the churches of St. Nicholai *de Caconitis*, St. Giovanni di Allaro and St. Maria *de Melicano*. The charter also grants numerous churches in Sicily, along with their lands, to the monastery of Mileto: St. George di Troina, the churches of St. Innocent and St. Philip at Mistretta, and, finally, the abbeys of St. Basilio, St. Nicholai and St. Angelo in Valdemone.¹²⁴ The next surviving charter for Mileto, dated May 1087, in which Roger Borsa granted the church of St. Phillip of Aiello to Abbot William and his successors at the monastery, is significant, as Loud has noted.¹²⁵ For it is signed by ‘William, abbot of St. Euphemia’ (*Vuidelmi abbatis sancte Euphemie*). This is William, the son of Humphrey of Tilleul and brother of Robert of Rhuddlan and Arnold of Tilleul, whose family were kinsmen of the Grandmesnil, were closely associated with Saint-Evroult, and reappear throughout the pages of the *Historia*.¹²⁶ William succeeded Robert of Grandmesnil as abbot of St. Euphemia and died in southern Italy in c.1103.¹²⁷ Just as important is the fact that the charter is signed by ‘Abbot Berengar’ (*Berengerii abbatis*) of Venosa.¹²⁸ It is certainly noteworthy that these names appear alongside each other on a charter for Mileto some twenty-five years after Robert of Grandmesnil’s arrival in southern Italy with monks from Saint-Evroult. While it is interesting that a further charter from Mileto, dated 1097, was later authenticated by Abbot John of St. Euphemia in the early thirteenth century,¹²⁹ the absence of

¹²³ Roger had married Robert of Grandmesnil’s sister, Judith, see OV II. 102-4.

¹²⁴ Ménager, ‘L’abbaye bénédictine de la Trinité de Mileto’, pp.20-24 no.4; these donations were later reconfirmed by Count Roger in charter written in 1101, see Ménager, ‘L’abbaye bénédictine de la Trinité de Mileto’, pp.41-3 no.13.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.24 no.5; Ménager, *Recueil*, pp. 212-15 no.60; Loud, *Latin Church*, p.89-90.

¹²⁶ For more on the Tilleul family see below pp.190-94.

¹²⁷ OV II. 129 n.1.

¹²⁸ Ménager, *Recueil*, pp. 213-14 no.60.

¹²⁹ Ménager, ‘L’abbaye bénédictine de la Trinité de Mileto’, pp.34-9 no.11.

any further contemporary evidence means that, aside from the references in book III of the *Historia*, the charter of 1087 remains the only concrete evidence concerning links between St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto. So while it is tempting to speculate further on the relationship between these houses, historians who consult these charters must content themselves with this slightest of suggestions that some links existed. More generally, though, the charters of Mileto reveal that the key benefactors of the house were Count Roger himself, along with key members of his circle.¹³⁰ As well as the one earlier benefaction in Guiscard's name, from 1070,¹³¹ seven charters from the period 1081-1102 are those of Count Roger,¹³² two belong to Roger Borsa,¹³³ and the remaining four were issued by Roger's supporters, Robert de Bohun, Robert Borrel, Ralph of Montepeloso and John of Théville.¹³⁴

Taken together, the charter evidence for St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto indicates that these houses were closely associated with Duke Robert Guiscard and his brother, Count Roger of Sicily. Their growth in the second half of the eleventh century was almost certainly the result of the numerous and often extensive benefactions which these documents record. Orderic stressed the role of Guiscard in the story of how these monasteries came into the possession of monks from Saint-Evrault, but made no mention of the important role of Count Roger, particularly in the establishment of Mileto. Rather, as already noted, Orderic related a number of stories concerning Venosa in book VII of the *Historia* and so it appears likely that he was far better informed about this house than he was about either St. Euphemia or Mileto. Indeed,

¹³⁰ Loud, *Latin Church*, pp.90-1.

¹³¹ Ménager, 'L'abbaye bénédictine de la Trinité de Mileto', pp.14-16 no.2.

¹³² Ibid, pp.20-24, 24-6, 26-7, 29-32, 41-3, 43-5, 45-6, nos. 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15.

¹³³ Ibid, pp.24, 34-39, nos. 5 and 11.

¹³⁴ Ibid, pp.27-8, 32-4, 40, 47-9, nos. 8, 10, 12, 16.

while three later references were made to St. Euphemia,¹³⁵ no further mention was made in the *Historia* to the monks of St. Michael the Archangel at Mileto.

Viewed in light of the charter collections of these houses, the brief and greatly compressed nature of Orderic's account of the establishment of these houses in book III of the *Historia* becomes quickly apparent. For St. Euphemia was given to Robert of Grandmesnil in the early 1060s, Venosa to Berengar in c.1068-9, and Mileto to William son of Ingran in 1080. These nuances of detail, which can be teased out of the charters, are absent from the narrative of the *Historia*. What the reader is thus left with in book III is an account of the establishment of these three houses in southern Italy, which was probably substantially derived from the way in which this important episode was remembered at Saint-Evroult over half a century after Abbot Robert of Grandmesnil's exile. The key ingredients were all present: Guiscard's vital support for Robert; his entrusting of St. Euphemia to the abbot and his monks and subsequent patronage of the house; the growth of Venosa during Berengar's abbacy; and, finally, the appointment of William as Abbot of Mileto. But, above all, what Orderic emphasises throughout this brief passage was the continued strong links between these houses and Saint-Evroult. Thus all three of the houses were given to one of the co-founders of Saint-Evroult, and monks who had begun their careers at Saint-Evroult were installed as abbots at each of them. This emphasis is continued in the final comment made here about these foundations, that the liturgical chant of Saint-Evroult 'is chanted' (*canitur*) there, and the monastic rule 'is observed' (*obseruatur*) there 'to this day' (*usque hodie*).¹³⁶ Thus, while the exile of Robert of Grandmesnil to southern Italy had taken place during a difficult period for the monastery in the pays d'Ouche, Orderic sought to show that, once more, in the providence of God, things

¹³⁵ For these see OV II. 126-8; IV. 22-4, 142.

¹³⁶ OV II. 102; for more on this see Chibnall, 'Les moines et les patrons', pp.166-7.

had been turned around for the better and the influence of Saint-Evroult had permeated into southern Italy. Here was a story from their history which the novices at Saint-Evroult would have found both informative and edifying.

The Travels and Trials of William Pantulf

About three-quarters of the way through book V of the *Historia*, Orderic related to his readers the information which he knew about a certain William Pantulf, who gave the two churches of Noron, St. Peter and St. Cyr, to Saint-Evroult in 1073. He then continued by recounting Pantulf's subsequent donations to both Noron and Saint-Evroult, and much of what he knew about the life of this generous benefactor of the church.¹³⁷ Pantulf reappears in a number of later places in the *Historia* and through his actions he is always portrayed as being favourable towards Saint-Evroult. In book VII, Orderic recounted how in 1092 he obtained a tooth of St. Nicholas of Myra for his priory at Noron, as will be seen below,¹³⁸ and in book XI he emphasised the prominent role which Pantulf played in Henry I's defeat of Robert of Bellême in England in 1102.¹³⁹ Here in book V, Orderic had already twice reiterated his desire to inform the junior monks at Saint-Evroult about the history, properties and faithful benefactors of their house.¹⁴⁰ This, then, explains the contextual rationale behind William Pantulf's inclusion at this point in the *Historia*, and also the exclusion of some of the other details about him which instead appear in later parts of his narrative.

¹³⁷ OV III. 154-64.

¹³⁸ OV IV. 72; see below pp.131-33. This incident is also briefly alluded to in book V, OV III. 162.

¹³⁹ OV VI. 24-28.

¹⁴⁰ OV III. 150.

While the first part of this passage relates the donations which William Pantulf and his wife Lesceline granted to their churches in Noron and to Saint-Evroult,¹⁴¹ it is the material which comes after this that is of most interest here. For Orderic recounted how Robert of Grandmesnil came to Normandy in 1077, accepted the pardon of King William for having unjustly exiled him, and was almost appointed as bishop of Chartres by King Philip of France but for the antipathy of the French towards Normans such as himself.¹⁴² Amatus of Montecassino, though unaware of the connection between Robert and Saint-Evroult, nevertheless noted some details concerning Abbot Robert's return to Normandy. His account is more dramatic than that in the *Historia*, for he writes that the journey resulted from Robert's own attempt to seize the wealth of St. Euphemia for himself, before being pardoned for this sin by Guiscard.¹⁴³ Orderic's primary concern here, though, was not on this occasion with the co-founder of his monastery, but with William Pantulf:

And so the illustrious Robert...returned to Apulia, and took with him William Pantulf and his nephew, Robert of Corday, and other illustrious knights. At that time Robert Guiscard was ruling in Calabria, and was obtaining the duchy of Gisulf, duke of Salerno...Moreover, he [Guiscard] received William Pantulf with honour, and promising many things to him, on account of his worth, endeavoured to keep him with him. He [the duke] made him sit next to him at dinner on Easter day and promised him three cities if he would remain with him in Italy.¹⁴⁴

Pantulf seems to have spurned these opportunities, for Orderic tells us that he returned to Normandy shortly thereafter. Importantly, Mabel of Bellême, so hated by Orderic and the monks of Saint-Evroult in the *Historia*, was brutally murdered by Hugh Bunel in December

¹⁴¹ OV III. 154-8.

¹⁴² OV III. 158.

¹⁴³ Amatus of Montecassino, VIII.23, p.499; Dunbar and Loud, VIII.23, p.199.

¹⁴⁴ Praeclarus itaque Rodbertus...Apuliam repetiit, secumque Willelmum Pantol et Rodbertum de Cordaio nepotem suum aliosque praeclaros milites duxit. Tunc Rodbertus Wiscardus Calabriae dominabatur; et ducatum Gisulfi Salernitani ducis nanciscebatur...Willelmum autem Pantol honorifice suscepit; et multa ei promittens ipsum propter probitatem suam retinere secum satagit. In die Paschae ad prandium residere iuxta se ipsum fecit; et tres ciuitates si secum remaneret in Italia illi spopondit. OV III. 158-60.

1077 while Pantulf was in southern Italy,¹⁴⁵ and on his return the knight was implicated in her death. For Mabel had taken Pantulf's castle at Peray from him, and 'a persistent malevolence had stood between them for a long time because of this injustice' (*pro qua iniuria pertinax maliuolentia diutius inter eos inhorruerat*). Added to this was the fact that Pantulf was a close friend of Hugh Bunel.¹⁴⁶ William was thus stripped of his lands by Roger of Montgomery, Mabel's husband, who sought his death. But because he vehemently denied the charges and no evidence could be found to prove either his guilt or innocence, Pantulf was forced to undergo trial by the ordeal of hot iron at Rouen. By God's will, Orderic recorded, his hand remained unscorched and he was cleared of all charges.¹⁴⁷

What is significant here is that the point which Orderic sought to stress in the narrative was that, throughout all of this, Pantulf and his family were cared for by the monks of Saint-Evrout:

However, William and his wife fled, with his sons, to Ouche and stayed there for a long time, in great fear, under the protection of the monks...And so throughout these oppressions which William and his family endured, Abbot Mainer and the monks of Ouche kindly consoled him, and aided him before God and men with all effort. So the affection shown to them by him grew stronger, and from the cloaks which he had brought back from Apulia, he presented four of the more precious of these to Saint-Evrout; from which four copes were made for the cantors in that same church, which to this day (*usque hodie*) preserve the decorum of the divine service in that same place.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ For more on Hugh Bunel, see below pp.173-82.

¹⁴⁶ OV III. 160.

¹⁴⁷ OV III. 160-62.

¹⁴⁸ *Guillelmus autem et uxor eius cum filiis suis Vticum confugerunt; ibique diu sub protectione monachorum cum magno timore demorati sunt...In his itaque pressuris quas Guillelmus et sui perpressi sunt; Mainerius abbas et Vticenses monachi benigniter eum consolati sunt, totisque nisibus apud Deum et homines adiuuerunt. Vnde amicitia erga illos in ipso firmior excreuit, et de pallis quas ipse de Apulia detulerat quatuor preciosiores sancto*

The construction of this passage is worth considering within the wider context of Orderic's stated aims in book V of the *Historia*. The concluding sentence was probably of greatest interest to the junior monks at Saint-Evroult. Once again, Orderic skilfully achieved the move from the past to the present by switching from the perfect and pluperfect to the present tense. In this way, he not only showed how William Pantulf's memory continued to be honoured by the monks of Saint-Evroult but he was also able to inform the novices of the rich history that so many of the liturgical objects had which were in daily use at the monastery. While such information was likely already known and passed on orally, the writing down of these memories ensured their continued survival, first in the text of the *Historia* and thereafter in the thoughts and speech of the monks who read it. Thus, just as the cantors' cloaks continued to be used 'to this day' (*usque hodie*) so too would William Pantulf's past association with the monks of Saint-Evroult continue to be honoured into the present.¹⁴⁹ In this instance, the need to remember that this connection had once existed in the past would only have been made all the more important as a result of the fact that William's sons did not share in their father's love for the things of the church, a point which Orderic twice made in books V and VII of the *Historia*.¹⁵⁰

William of Grandmesnil, Venosa and Memories of the Siege of Durazzo

Orderic's material about Robert Guiscard's invasion of the Byzantine Balkans appears near the beginning of book VII of the *Historia*. These two campaigns, lasting from 1081-83 and 1084-85, centred on the strategically important port city of Durazzo (now Durrës in modern

Ebrulfo optulit; ex quibus quattuor cappae cantorum in eadem factae sunt aecclesia, quae usque hodie ad diuini decorem seruitii seruantur ibidem. OV III. 160-62.

¹⁴⁹ For more on the need for memories to be written down see Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

¹⁵⁰ OV III. 164; OV IV. 72.

Albania).¹⁵¹ Situated on the Adriatic Coast directly opposite the southern Italian ports of Bari, Brindisi and Otranto, Durazzo was, after Thessalonica, ‘the greatest prize in the western Balkans’.¹⁵² The city was located at the centre of a network of fortifications which dominated the coast from Sarda in the north to Butrint in the south, constituting what Paul Stephenson has called ‘the fulcrum for the defence of the entire western seaboard of the Byzantine empire’.¹⁵³ It was thus the doorway into this agriculturally fertile and economically rich part of the Balkans. While Orderic has the dying Guiscard claim that his aim was to subjugate Constantinople itself, and to use it as a kind of stepping stone to capture Jerusalem from the Turks,¹⁵⁴ current scholarship holds that the goal of these expeditions was probably not the imperial throne. Rather Guiscard likely sought to provide further lands and titles for his followers, and most of all for his son, Bohemond, as William McQueen and R. Upsher Smith Jr. have both argued.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, Orderic’s comment that Roger Borsa, Bohemond’s brother, remained in Apulia because he was destined to inherit his father’s lands in southern Italy, is telling in this regard,¹⁵⁶ and William of Malmesbury also noted that Bohemond sought lands of his own in the Balkans as a result of the fact that Borsa was to inherit Apulia.¹⁵⁷

Orderic’s narrative of these events is prefaced by an account of the many political changes which took place in the Byzantine world in the preceding years. He related how the imperial throne was first seized by Nicephorus III Botaneiates from Michael VII in 1078, before Botaneiates was himself overthrown by Alexius Comnenus in 1081, who was to rule as

¹⁵¹ For a helpful overview see Stephenson, *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier*, pp.156-73.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.160.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.169; for more on this network of fortifications see pp.160-64.

¹⁵⁴ OV IV. 34.

¹⁵⁵ McQueen, ‘Relations between the Normans and Byzantium’, pp.438-42; Upsher Smith Jr., ‘*Nobilissimus and Warleader*’, pp.507-26.

¹⁵⁶ OV IV. 18.

¹⁵⁷ William of Malmesbury, IV.344, p.594; IV. 387, p.690.

emperor until 1118.¹⁵⁸ Here Orderic showed a high regard for Alexius, for after noting how the emperor time and again avoided being overthrown himself, he concluded, ‘So it is evidently clear to all those looking on wisely, that the man whom God defends and refreshes, no one is able to prevail over to overthrow or bring to nothing’ (*Sic cunctis sapienter intuentibus perspicue lucet, quod quem Deus defensat ac refouet; nemo deicere uel adnichilare preualet*).¹⁵⁹ Having provided this context, Orderic then launched into his account of Guiscard’s attack on Durazzo in 1081:

And so with storms of great change raging in Illyria, as we have said, and Michael stirring the Italians to help him, with tears and complaints, Robert Guiscard assembled a powerful army of Normans and Lombards from all the duchy of Apulia and Calabria, and having prepared a strong fleet, entered the port of Otranto. From there, with favourable winds blowing across the sea, he landed at Durazzo and, with the garrison vigorously opposing them, besieged the city at the end of the month of June. For in the battle he had not more than ten thousand soldiers in his army, thus he terrified his adversaries not by the number but by the courage of his men, and by invading Greece, a warlike country since the early time of Adrastus and Agamemnon. Robert Giffard and William of Grandmesnil and other most excellent young soldiers who had recently come from Normandy took part in this expedition. Mark Bohemond, Guiscard’s son from a Norman mother aided his father, commanding part of the army with provident control in his father’s absence; and was providing a sign of future virtue through his prudent action in all things.¹⁶⁰

The significance of this passage lies in the almost incidental way in which William of Grandmesnil’s name appears in it. William was the second son of Hugh of Grandmesnil, one

¹⁵⁸ OV IV. 10-16.

¹⁵⁹ OV IV. 16.

¹⁶⁰ Procellis itaque tot motionum ut diximus in Ilirico seuentibus, et Michaele Italos ad auxilium sui sollicitante lacrimis et questibus; Robertus Wiscardus ex omni ducatu Apuliae et Calabriae fortem exercitum Normannorum et Langobardorum contraxit, et ualida classe parata portum Otrante intrauit. Deinde prosperis uentis spirantibus per mare Dyracio applicuit; et oppidanis uiriliter obstantibus in fine Iunii mensis urbem obsedit. In exercitu quippe suo non plus quam x milia bellatorum habebat, nec in numero sed in fortitudine uirorum aduersarios terrebat; et bellicosam a priscis temporibus Adraستي et Agamemnonis Greciam inuadebat. Robertus Giffardus et Guillelmus de Grentemaisnilo aliique probissimi tirones qui nuper de Neustria uenerant; huic expeditioni aderant. Marcus Buamundus Wiscardi filius ex Normannica matre patrem iuuabat, partem exercitus absente patre prouido regimine ducebat; et in omnibus prudenter agens futurae uirtutis specimen prestabat. OV IV. 16-18.

of the four co-founders of Saint-Evroult, and some of the details of his eventful life were summarised alongside those of Hugh's four other sons at the very end of book VIII of the *Historia*.¹⁶¹ The significance of the Grandmesnil family to Saint-Evroult and therefore also in the pages of Orderic's narrative suggests that the inclusion of William of Grandmesnil here in book VII was, in fact, far from incidental. The prominence of their long-standing association with their foundation would almost certainly have meant that the very mention of the family name within the cloister of Saint-Evroult would have triggered a whole range of thoughts, feelings, and even conversations amongst the monks there. These would have related not only to the Grandmesnil's generous benefaction of the church at the time of its refoundation in 1050, but also to their widespread activities thereafter. Amongst these memories were likely to have been such notable events as Robert of Grandmesnil's time as prior and then abbot at Saint-Evroult and his exile to southern Italy thereafter, Hugh of Grandmesnil's participation in the Norman Conquest of England, the involvement of Arnold of Grandmesnil, son of Robert, in the migration of Normans to southern Italy, and the flight of Hugh's three sons, William, Ivo and Aubrey of Grandmesnil, from the walls of Antioch during the First Crusade.¹⁶²

Given the prominent association of the Grandmesnills with Saint-Evroult, it is interesting that Orderic made no mention of William of Grandmesnil's rebellion against Duke Roger Borsa between 1093 and 1094. Geoffrey Malaterra spent two chapters of book IV of the *De rebus gestis* recounting the course of this uprising, which was apparently triggered by rumours that the duke, who had been suffering from a life-threatening fever, had died. Seizing his chance,

¹⁶¹ OV IV. 338; for more on William of Grandmesnil see Evelyn Jamison, 'Some Notes on the *Anonymi Gesta Francorum*, with Special Reference to the Norman Contingent from South Italy and Sicily in the First Crusade', in *Studies in French Language and Mediaeval Literature Presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends* (Manchester, 1939), 183-208 at pp.199-200; Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, pp.133-42; Decaëns, 'Le patrimoine des Grentemesnil', pp.136-7.

¹⁶² See above and below, pp.233-47.

William of Grandmesnil entered the cities of Rossano and Castrovillari in Calabria and fortified them with his own men. In response, Duke Roger, having recovered his health, raised an army, and along with Count Roger of Sicily, and his own brother, Bohemond, laid siege to Castrovillari. Seeing that his situation was now hopeless, Malaterra wrote that William of Grandmesnil at last acknowledged the duke's authority and, in punishment for his actions, was stripped of his lands. Thereafter, he entered the service of Alexius Comnenus in Constantinople, before finally returning to southern Italy with great riches. Having been reconciled with the duke, William then recovered his lands once more. Malaterra's portrayal of William of Grandmesnil throughout this account is wholly negative. Greed is repeatedly given as the prime cause of his rebellion against Roger Borsa. Thus he was 'seized by the greatest cupidity', and 'sinking downwards into insolence' (*summa cupiditate correptus, in insolentiam proclivis declinans*) he rebelled. He was 'allured by shameful avarice' (*turpi illectus avaritia*), 'displaying his treachery with an impudent face' (*impudenti fronte fraudem ostentans*), and finally, Malaterra observed that William resisted ducal authority because of 'avaricious ambition, and the crooked persuasion of his wife' (*avara ambitio, sed et uxoris prava persuasio*).¹⁶³

What, then, is one to make of Orderic's silence on the matter of William of Grandmesnil's rebellion? While it may be tempting to suggest that this was a deliberate omission on Orderic's part, designed to spare the Grandmesnills and their monastery from shame, it is important at this point to remember that he had no access to Malaterra's work and so is more likely to have been simply unaware of William of Grandmesnil's actions.¹⁶⁴ The probability of this being the case is further increased by the fact that, if the *Historia* is to be believed,

¹⁶³ Geoffrey Malaterra, IV.XXI-XXII, pp.99-101; Wolf, IV.21-22, pp.199-202; see also Walker, *Grandmesnills*, pp.138-40.

¹⁶⁴ For more on Orderic and Geoffrey Malaterra see above, pp.77-8.

Orderic's knew little of the affairs of the monks and patrons of Saint-Evrout in southern Italy from the final decade of the eleventh century onwards.¹⁶⁵ While Arnold of Tilleul's stay with William may have taken place then, the latest episode concerning such individuals for which Orderic provided a date is William Pantulf's return from Apulia in 1092.¹⁶⁶ He knew much about Guiscard's campaigns in the Byzantine Balkans and the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas, but these events took place in the first and second half of the 1080s. Malaterra's account of William of Grandmesnil's rebellion thus provides scholars with a valuable episode about which they would otherwise be unaware. Yet while he presents a different side to Orderic's portrayal of William in southern Italy, this was not a side about which Orderic was entirely unwilling to write. For it will be seen that while in his account of the First Crusade he sought to temper Baldric of Bourgueil's account of William of Grandmesnil's flight from Antioch as much as he could, he nevertheless could not escape the fact that the patrons of his house sometimes acted shamefully. Yet the significance of the Grandmesnil family name nevertheless meant that their deeds were worthy of remembrance in the pages of the *Historia*. Only with this in mind can the significance of this reference to William of Grandmesnil's presence at the siege of Durazzo in 1081 be seen. The mere mention of his name, embedded as it is in the midst of this text, would have both stimulated and perpetuated the remembrance of further details concerning this notable son of the founder of Saint-Evrout.

An even stronger textual link between Durazzo and Saint-Evrout appears in the very next paragraph after Orderic's mention of William of Grandmesnil's presence there:

The Emperor Alexius, having been roused by the lament of the citizens of Durazzo, assembled a great army and prepared to assault those besieging his city on land and by sea. Meanwhile, while

¹⁶⁵ Loud, 'The Kingdom of Sicily', p.548.

¹⁶⁶ See below, p.131.

the imperial messengers were being sent out in all directions, and gathering forces of fighting men from the islands of the sea and from adjacent provinces, on a certain day Mark Bohemond advanced with fifty knights on a foraging mission, and, by chance, met with five hundred knights who were lightly armed soldiers preceding the army sent to relieve the besieged. As soon as they saw each other, they entered into bitter conflict. Then the Greeks, not able to bear the onslaught of the Normans, turned their backs and left much booty. At that time they lost the bronze cross which the Emperor Constantine, having seen a cross in the sky, had made to fight against Maxentius. And so the Normans returning from the conflict brought great joy and the hope of victory to their companions, while the Greeks, having lost their Lord's cross, had grave sorrow and disbelief; they laboured greatly to redeem it with the greatest sum of gold. However, Guiscard considered it an indignity to conduct such a trade because he valued the bronze in the cross more precious because of Christ's virtues than all gold. And so he carried this cross with him in many perils; since his death the monastery of Holy Trinity Venosa has reverently preserved it to this day (*usque hodie*), and honoured it along with the other relics of the saints.¹⁶⁷

What is striking about this passage is the way in which this whole text seems to function as an explanation for how the monks of Holy Trinity Venosa came to be the custodians of this sacred cross. The final sentence is the most important of all, governing everything which precedes it. As is so often the case in Orderic's *Historia*, the text moves from the past to the present tense in order to stress that the cross which belonged first to Constantine, then to Alexius Comnenus, then to Robert Guiscard, continued to be 'preserved' and 'honoured' at Venosa 'to this day' (*usque hodie*). In listing the previous owners of the object, the construction of this text shares some important similarities with an earlier passage in book III

¹⁶⁷ Alexius imperator Diracianorum planctu excitus ingentem exercitum aggregavit; et obsidentes urbem suam terrestri navalique praelio contereere satagit. Interea dum augustales ueredarii undique mitterentur, et cohortes bellatorum de insulis maris et de adiacentibus prouinciis contraherentur, quadam die Marcus Buamundus cum quinquaginta militibus pabulatum perrexit, et quingentis militibus qui obsessis adminiculari exercitum expediti praeibant forte obuiauit. Mox ut sese mutuo uiderunt acre certamen inierunt. Porro Danai Normannorum impetum non ferentes terga uerterunt; multasque manubias amiserunt. Tunc aeream crucem perdidit; quam Constantinus imperator pugnaturus contra Maxentium uisa cruce in coelo fecerat. Redeuntes itaque de conflictu Normanni gaudium ingens et uictoriae spem sociis retulerunt, Pelasgi autem grauissimum dolorem et diffidentiam pro amissa cruce Domini habuerunt; quam maximo auri talento redimere multum laborauerunt. Verum Wiscardus talem mercatum agere indignum duxit; quia aes in cruce pro uirtute Christi preciosius omni auro estimauit. Hanc itaque crucem secum in multis periculis portauit; quam post mortem eius cenobium sanctae Trinitatis Venusiae reuerenter usque hodie custodit, et cum aliis sanctorum pignoribus excolit. OV IV. 18.

of the *Historia*, in which Orderic, relating Robert of Grandmesnil's acquisition of 'a great psalter' (*magnum psalterium*) for Saint-Evrout, listed each of its previous owners in order to stress the illustrious history which was, in a sense, "attached" to the object itself.¹⁶⁸

Yet, here in book VII, in contrast, the history of the object is presented to the reader not in the form of a list of names, but as a story. In this instance, particularly, one senses that the lines written here by Orderic are the key layers of the story as it was remembered and retold, first at Venosa, and then later at Saint-Evrout. The way in which the passage has been constructed is particularly suggestive of this. For Orderic first briefly set the scene with the wider context of Alexius preparing an army to attack the Normans at Durazzo before then focusing quickly on Bohemond and his foraging party. In what followed, a number of details have an air of orality about them: we are told that the Bohemond and his men rode out 'on a certain day' (*quadam die*), that they encountered the advance guard of the Byzantine army 'by chance' (*forte*), and that they were outnumbered by a factor of ten to one, five hundred to fifty. Similar in nature is Orderic's statement that Guiscard would not part with cross for any amount of gold. It is highly unlikely that this was, in fact, Constantine's cross, as Orderic claimed, given that there was a long Byzantine tradition of carrying ceremonial crosses into battle. The Duke's apparent attitude towards the bronze cross is much more plausible, for as John Haldon has noted, the richly decorated nature of such crosses meant that they were 'worthwhile objects for capture'.¹⁶⁹ What mattered most to Orderic was what happened to the cross after Guiscard's death. Here, once more, the reader catches a glimpse of the close association between the duke and Venosa, and therefore also, by extension, with Saint-Evrout. Of final significance is the fact that the cross was 'honoured' (*excolit*) by the monks

¹⁶⁸ OV II. 42; for further discussion of this passage see Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'; van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, pp.114-15; see also Buc, 'Conversion of Objects', p.101.

¹⁶⁹ John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World, 565-1204* (London, 1999), p.22.

of Venosa ‘with the other relics of the saints’ preserved there. This clearly suggests that there were a number of relics in the possession of the monks at the abbey of Holy Trinity. While not necessarily a remarkable thing in and of itself, it will be seen that Orderic later substantiated this claim later on in book VII by providing further relic stories linking the relics of St. Nicholas of Myra with Venosa.¹⁷⁰ The prominence of such relic stories throughout Orderic’s material on southern Italy and the siege of Durazzo reveals just how much this centred on the survival of physical objects and other relics within the network of monastic houses closely linked to Saint-Evrault.

Having recounted how the bronze cross came into the possession of the monks of Venosa, Orderic briefly related how Guiscard defeated Alexius in battle in October 1081 before penetrating further into the Balkans and wintering in Bulgaria.¹⁷¹ While this battle was far more significant than the previously discussed skirmish, the absence of a physical object relating to it may be one reason for the comparative brevity of Orderic’s account. It is at this point in the narrative of book VII that Guiscard is called to Rome by Pope Gregory VII, which was then being besieged by the German Emperor Henry IV. Having returned to Apulia, Guiscard raised another army and attacked Rome.¹⁷² According to Orderic, he then hurried back to his army in the Byzantine Balkans, only to find his men buoyed by a further victory in battle against Alexius, in the midst of which Bohemond had been strengthened by divine aid manifesting itself in an audible voice speaking to him from heaven.¹⁷³ In the narrative of book VII this victory, coupled with the earlier successes, resulted in the

¹⁷⁰ See below pp.127-31.

¹⁷¹ OV IV. 18-20.

¹⁷² OV IV. 20-26; for more on this episode see Louis I. Hamilton, ‘Memory, Symbol, and Arson: Was Rome “Sacked” in 1084?’, *Speculum* 78:2 (2003), 378-99.

¹⁷³ OV IV. 26-8.

capitulation of the citizens of Durazzo, who subsequently sued for peace and opened the gates of the city to the Normans.¹⁷⁴

Orderic's version of events in the Balkans is highly idealised, presenting Guiscard's forces as having won important victories against Alexius, the Byzantine emperor. According to the *Historia*, the Normans were not defeated by the Byzantines; rather their campaign was undermined by the evil schemes of Guiscard's second wife, the Lombard princess Sichelgaita. She feared that Bohemond, her stepson from Guiscard's first marriage to Alberada, might usurp the claim of her own son, Roger Borsa, to the duchy of Apulia and Calabria given the strength he had shown in battle against the Byzantines. Sichelgaita thus poisoned Bohemond, only sparing his life when Guiscard threatened to kill her if she did not. She then poisoned Guiscard himself and fled from Durazzo with the Lombard contingent of the army, burning the remaining ships in order to prevent the Normans from following her. Sichelgaita's treachery was, for Orderic, the sole cause of the failure of the Balkan expeditions of 1081-85.¹⁷⁵ This highly literary portrayal of events says nothing of the much more widely acknowledged reasons for the Norman defeat at the hands of the Byzantine Emperor. For recent scholarship on Durazzo has stressed the success of the Byzantine tactics and diplomacy throughout the campaign, kindling revolt in southern Italy in 1082 and thereby forcing Guiscard to split his forces and return to Apulia to put down the rebellion. Bohemond was thus left to face the Byzantines alone, resulting in his eventual defeat at Larissa in 1083. Nor is any mention made of Alexius' crucial alliance with the Venetians, which allowed him to claw back his lands in the Balkans.¹⁷⁶ While William of Malmesbury noted the

¹⁷⁴ OV IV. 28.

¹⁷⁵ OV IV. 28-32. For more on Sichelgaita see Patricia Skinner, 'Halt! Be Men!': Sichelgaita of Salerno, Gender and the Norman Conquest of Southern Italy', *Gender and History* 12:3 (2000), 622-41.

¹⁷⁶ McQueen, 'The Normans and Byzantium', p.447; on the importance of the defeat Larissa see Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, pp.168-73.

involvement of the Venetians in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, he too stressed that the failure of the Norman campaign in and around Durazzo was due to the poisoning of Robert Guiscard by Sichelgaita. In this he went further than Orderic, writing that because Alexius was unable to defeat the Norman duke openly in battle, he used intermediaries who promised Sichelgaita gold and the hand of the emperor in marriage if she would poison her husband.¹⁷⁷ The majority of this information appears in the midst of Malmesbury's account of the First Crusade, and so it seems likely that such stories developed in the wake of that expedition when such negative portrayals of the emperor circulated widely in the many narratives which drew either directly or indirectly upon the *Gesta Francorum*.¹⁷⁸ As William of Apulia wrote that Guiscard died as the result of a fever,¹⁷⁹ the similarities between Orderic and William of Malmesbury's very different version of the events surrounding the duke's death likely convey something of the oral tradition which had grown up around these events in the Anglo-Norman world by the time of their writing.¹⁸⁰

The final scene of Orderic's account of the Norman campaigns in the Byzantine world in book VII of the *Historia* moves the action from the city of Durazzo to the death-bed of Robert Guiscard. Orderic related how the dying duke called his key nobles and kinsmen to himself and delivered a lengthy speech to them. Significantly, William of Grandmesnil was once more listed as being among them.¹⁸¹ In the speech, Guiscard first summarised his humble origins in the Cotentin before then moving on to recount his many conquests in

¹⁷⁷ William of Malmesbury, III.262, pp.482-4; IV.344, p.594; IV.387, p.690.

¹⁷⁸ For more on attitudes towards the Byzantine empire before and after the First Crusade see John France, 'Byzantium in Western Chronicles before the First Crusade', in Norman Housley (ed.) *Knighthoods of Christ: Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar, Presented to Malcolm Barber* (Aldershot, 2007), 3-16; Jonathan Shepard; 'Cross-purposes: Alexius Comnenus and the First Crusade', in Jonathan Phillips (ed.) *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact* (Manchester, 1997), 107-29; Angold, 'Knowledge of Byzantine History in the West', pp.29-32.

¹⁷⁹ William of Apulia, V. lines 284-300, p.252.

¹⁸⁰ A position also taken by Loud, 'Kingdom of Sicily', p.547.

¹⁸¹ OV IV. 32. For a later reference to William of Grandmesnil see OV IV. 168.

southern Italy and the Byzantine world. Finally, he urged the assembled nobles to choose a leader from among themselves as his successor. But according to Orderic, without Guiscard the nobles felt unable to resist the power of Alexius Comnenus and to retain the lands that the Duke had won for them. After his death in July 1085 many of the Normans entered the service of the Byzantine Emperor. While Orderic's account of the end of the Durazzo campaigns was highly literary, he nevertheless, then, accurately conveyed the fear and uncertainty of the nobles at this time, as well as the lure of Byzantium.¹⁸²

What concerns us most here, however, is the final passage of Orderic's account of this part of the narrative of book VII, in which he related the return of Guiscard's body to southern Italy and the duke's burial thereafter:

On his death, the Normans preserved his body with salt and petitioned the Emperor to return it to his country in peace. The Emperor, meanwhile, although delighted because he had been freed of his terrible enemy, nevertheless, out of duty, greatly mourned the dead duke who had never fled from battle. He kindly granted license to those who wished to return to Italy with the body of their prince and all their things; he agreed upon lavish wages with others, however, who wished to remain with him and to serve him. And so from that time those who previously boldly attacked it now gave service faithfully to Byzantium. However those returning to Apulia carried the body of the duke to Venosa, and buried it there in the monastery of Holy Trinity with great sorrow. The venerable abbot Berengar, the son of Arnold son of Heugon, was in charge of the same monastery, whom the pious abbot Thierry had educated at Ouche, and then Abbot Robert had brought to Calabria with him. Thereafter he was consecrated as abbot for the monastery of Venosa; and he

¹⁸² OV IV. 32-8. For more on Normans entering into Byzantine service at this time see McQueen, 'Normans and Byzantium', pp.445-7; more generally, see Jonathan Shepard, 'The Uses of the Franks in Eleventh-Century Byzantium', *ANS* 15 (1993), 275-305.

was also promoted, after several years, because of his meritorious life and wise doctrine, to the bishopric of the aforesaid city by pope Urban.¹⁸³

Although this passage begins as an account of what happened to Robert Guiscard's body after his death, the second half of the text is dominated by the abbey of Holy Trinity, Venosa, as Orderic once more anchored the story of the duke's siege of Durazzo in the wider story of Saint-Evroult and its monks and daughter houses in southern Italy. The significance of this point should not be overlooked, coming as it does at the end of Orderic's material on the Norman invasion of the Byzantine world. Though William of Malmesbury also noted that Guiscard had been buried at Venosa in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, furnishing his readers with an epitaph for the duke, this reference is incidental to the narrative where the subject under discussion is William the Conqueror.¹⁸⁴ And while Geoffrey Malaterra also observed that Guiscard's body was carried back to Apulia by his barons and then buried at Venosa,¹⁸⁵ William of Apulia's account is by far the most detailed retelling of these events, forming a dramatic conclusion to his poem. For he related how, after the ship carrying the dead duke sank in a violent storm, his body fell overboard into the sea and, having been recovered from the water, Sichelgaita had her husband's heart and entrails buried at Otranto and the body embalmed with sweet-smelling substances so that it would not begin to smell. Only then was Guiscard buried at Venosa alongside the bodies of his brothers.¹⁸⁶ William then concluded his vivid account by enthusiastically observing that 'The city of Venosa is resplendent,

¹⁸³ Quo defuncto Normanni corpus eius sallierunt; et cum pace reditum in patriam suam ab imperatore petierunt. Imperator autem licet laetaretur quia liberatus a terrabili hoste fuerit; defunctum tamen ducem qui nunquam de bello fugerat ex pietate multum planxit. Licentiam his qui redire in Italiam uellent cum cadauere principis sui et omnibus rebus suis benigniter concessit; aliis uero qui secum remanere sibi que seruire uellent larga stipendia pepigit. Bizantio ex tunc itaque fideliter famulati sunt; qui antea fortiter impugnauerunt. Remeantes autem in Apuliam corpus ducis Venusiae detulerunt; ibique in coenobio Sanctae Trinitatis cum luctu magno sepelierunt. Venerabilis Berengarius abbas filius Ernaldi filii Helgonis eidem monasterio praeerat; quem Teodericus archimandrita pius apud Vticum educauerat, et inde Robertus abbas secum in Calabriam adduxerat. Deinde ab Alexandro papa Venusensi monasterio abbas consecratus est; atque post aliquot annos pro merito uitae et sapientiae doctrina ad pontificatum praefatae urbis a papa Urbano promotus est. OV IV. 38.

¹⁸⁴ William of Malmesbury, III.262, pp.482-4.

¹⁸⁵ Geoffrey Malaterra, III.XLI, p.82; Wolf, 3.41, p.171.

¹⁸⁶ William of Apulia, V, lines 391-409, pp.256-8.

having been adorned with such tombs. Since Charlemagne or the time of Caesar, at any time, never has the earth produced equals to these brothers. They are buried in the church built on their orders, which brightens the beauty of this city.¹⁸⁷

While a number of writers thus connected Guiscard to Venosa because of his burial there, Orderic alone viewed this as an opportunity to once again remind his monastic readers of the links between the monks of Venosa and their own house, Saint-Evroult. For to him it was these associations which added most lustre to the name of Venosa and not the associations with the house of Hauteville. On this occasion no mention is made of any relics or other physical objects. The move from Guiscard's burial to Saint-Evroult is achieved through a brief recounting of the life of Berengar, Venosa's abbot, his education under Abbot Thierry and his travels to southern Italy with Thierry's successor at Saint-Evroult, Robert of Grandmesnil. Elsewhere, two other references provide further glimpses of links between Saint-Evroult and Durazzo: in book V, Orderic noted that Ansold of Maule, one of patrons of Saint-Evroult's dependency at Maule took part in the siege,¹⁸⁸ and in book VII, he related how Robert of Grandmesnil was fatally poisoned by St. Euphemia's Saracen baker after returning from the battle of Durazzo.¹⁸⁹ Such textual links meant that Orderic's account of Guiscard's campaigns in the Byzantine Balkans, recounted in book VII of the *Historia*, remained firmly rooted in the monastic landscape and story of Saint-Evroult. When examined together, these passages reveal remarkable similarities and demonstrate that memories of the

¹⁸⁷ Urbs Venusina nitet tantis decorata sepulchris.

A Caroli Magni vel tempore Caesaris umquam

Nullos terra pares produxit fratribus istis.

Hic subhumatorum fabricata iussibus horum

Ecclesia, cuius decor urbis praenitet huius... William of Apulia, V, lines 404-8, p.258.

¹⁸⁸ OV III. 180.

¹⁸⁹ OV IV. 22-4. While this detail is unique to Orderic, Amatus recorded an example of the abbot performing a military role, guarding Vicalvi for Count Roger of Sicily, his brother-in-law, with all of his knights, Amatus of Montecassino, VII.11, p.450; Dunbar and Loud, VII.11, p.170.

Byzantine world were likely drawn from individuals and objects which had previously been there, and that they were thus probably well-remembered first at Venosa and finally at Saint-Evrout.

The Relics of St. Nicholas of Myra at Noron and Venosa

The translation of the relics of St. Nicholas of Myra to Bari took place in 1087.¹⁹⁰ As Chibnall observed, this was ‘an event of significance for the whole Mediterranean world’.¹⁹¹ The cult of St. Nicholas was widespread in the Greek world and had long been established at Bari, which had been the last foothold of Byzantine power in southern Italy before it was finally taken by the Normans in 1071. In that same year, the Turks won a major victory over the Byzantines at Manzikert, leading to their expansion into Asia Minor. As a result of this, Myra fell into the hands of the Turks along with the relics of St. Nicholas. It was likely at this point that a plan was hatched to steal the relics and translate them to Bari. Having been seized by seamen from Bari in April 1087, the relics were then taken to Bari where a new church was built in honour of St. Nicholas which quickly became a major pilgrimage centre as the cult of St. Nicholas rapidly spread. John, archdeacon of Bari, had written his account of the translation by 1089, and other accounts also survive in Latin, Greek, and Russian.¹⁹² John of Bari’s account quickly circulated in Normandy, with copies made at Jumièges and Bec before

¹⁹⁰ For the circumstances surrounding the translation see Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1978), pp.115-27. For its subsequent importance in the Norman world see Marjorie Chibnall, ‘The Translation of the Relics of St Nicholas and Norman Historical Tradition’, in *Le Relazioni Religiose e Chiesastico-giurisdizionali. Atti del II° Congresso Internazionale sulle Relazioni fra le due Sponde Adriatiche* (Rome, 1979), 33-41, reprinted in Chibnall, *Piety, Power and History*, no.III. More generally, see Charles W. Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bari, and Manhattan* (Chicago, 1978).

¹⁹¹ Chibnall, ‘Translation of the Relics’, p.33.

¹⁹² OV IV. 353-4; for these texts see Francesco Nitti Di Vito, ‘La Traslazione delle Reliquie di San Nicola’, *Japigia* 8 (1937), 295-411.

the end of the eleventh century. A miracle collection was also produced at Bec and copies of it were made for Lyre and Saint-Evroult.¹⁹³

Orderic incorporated his own account of the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas into the narrative of the *Historia*, mid-way through book VII.¹⁹⁴ While this was based on John of Bari's *Translatio*,¹⁹⁵ it was carefully edited and abridged for inclusion into Orderic's work and, crucially, three important stories were appended to it, as will be seen below. Orderic twice acknowledged his usage of John of Bari's work in his account, in the first instance to introduce this material, and in the second, to both signal the end of his abridgement of the *Translatio* and the beginning of his own additions. It is these additional passages rather than Orderic's editorial work which form the focus of the present section of this chapter. Orderic's comments about John of Bari's account will now be included below as they provide reasons for including the extra stories he told about the theft and acquisition of some of the relics of St. Nicholas after their translation to Bari:

John, archdeacon of the church of Bari, has excellently described how, in what manner and by whom the translation was brought about. It may be agreeable to briefly excerpt from his writings and to insert a mention of so glorious an event into this little work to bring it to the notice of the studios who have not yet seen John's writings, if, by chance, it should happen that they deign to look at it.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Chibnall, 'Translation of the Relics', pp.34-6. Nortier, *Les Bibliothèques médiévales*, p.231.

¹⁹⁴ OV IV.54-68.

¹⁹⁵ For the text of John of Bari's *Translatio* see Di Vito, 'La Traslazione', pp.357-66.

¹⁹⁶ Quam translationem Barensis aeclesiae luculenter describit; Iohannes archidiaconus Barensis aeclesiae luculenter describit. Ex eius dictis libet parumper excerpere, et mentionem tam gloriosae rei huic opusculo inserere; ad noticiam studiosorum qui nondum dicta Iohannis uidere, si forte contingat ut istud dignentur inspicere. OV IV. 54.

While the first introduces this section of the narrative of book VII, the second bridges the gap between the end of Orderic's lightly edited version of John of Bari's *Translatio* and his own original material on the subject:

The aforesaid John, [arch]deacon of Bari, from whose book I have briefly excerpted these extracts, marked his work with twelve brilliant miracles; but neither he nor another was able to note all the cures and other reliefs that followed, which almighty God has mercifully shown to this day to his servants faithfully entreating him, by the merits of the most holy bishop Nicholas. Thereafter, through God's permission, many churches obtained the holy relics of the aforesaid bishop, and not only the Italians and Greeks but also other peoples sing thanksgiving to God for having obtained the sacred relics.¹⁹⁷

While Gransden acknowledged that much of the *Historia*'s content was written for a monastic readership at Saint-Evroult, she cited the first of these passages to support her argument that Orderic also included much material in his work for the general reader. To her, passages such as this accounted, at least in part, for the 'encyclopaedic quality' of the work.¹⁹⁸ Here Orderic said that he was writing for the benefit of those *studiosos* who had not yet seen John of Bari's *Translatio*. While Chibnall translated this as 'scholars' and Gransden translated it as 'students',¹⁹⁹ the Latin in this passage should not be used to support the idea that Orderic was here aiming for a wider audience. Indeed, the second passage hints that the opposite may be true and the content which follows thereafter confirms that Orderic here had a monastic audience in mind. For while he held John of Bari's account of the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas in high regard, he stressed that even the Archdeacon was not able to record all the miraculous occurrences associated with the relics. Nor was John aware of the

¹⁹⁷ Praefatus Iohannes Barenis diaconus ex cuius libro breuiter haec excerpsi, duodecim preclara miracula scripto signauit; sed nec ipse nec alius omnes sanitates et alia subsidia posteris notificare potuit, quae Deus omnipotens pro meritis sanctissimi pontificis Nicholai seruis suis fideliter petentibus usque hodie clementer exhibuit. Denique permittente Deo plures aecclesiae de sanctis reliquiis prefati presulis optinuerunt, et non solum Itali et Pelasgi sed et aliae gentes sanctis pignoribus habitis Deo grates concinunt. OV IV. 68.

¹⁹⁸ Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p.162.

¹⁹⁹ OV IV. 57; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p.162.

fact that some of the holy relics had been obtained by ‘other peoples’ (*aliae gentes*) outside southern Italy. This phrase perhaps provides the strongest indication that in writing about the relics in the *Historia* Orderic’s real focus lay elsewhere. Indeed, his aims were, once again, local in nature, a suggestion which is given further weight by a third passage at the very end of his material on the relics of St. Nicholas:

Thus we have truthfully inserted this account of the translation of the body of St. Nicholas into our work, and we faithfully implore the same worker of miracles that mindful of our remembrance of him he might have pity and intercede with God on our behalf without ceasing. Now we will return to the original subject from which we have digressed somewhat.²⁰⁰

This passage makes clear Orderic’s motivations for including an account of the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas in the pages of the *Historia*. It reveals that his interest in the event was not primarily encyclopaedic. His aim was not simply to include a copy of John of Bari’s *Translatio* into his own work for the benefit of posterity. Rather, Orderic incorporated this account into the narrative of book VII because of the close associations that existed between the monastic network of Saint-Evroult and the cult of St. Nicholas. For just as the monks of Saint-Evroult sought to commemorate the saint and remember him in all they did, so too there was an expectation that St. Nicholas himself would remember the monks in his prayers. The relationship was thus mutually beneficial. Orderic’s concern with the relics of St. Nicholas in the *Historia* was thus merely an extension of this process of prayerful remembrance, only this time it was achieved by using the written rather than the spoken word.

²⁰⁰ Haec itaque de translatione corporis sancti Nicholai ueraciter operi nostro inseruimus, ipsumque mirabilium opificem fideliter deprecimus; ut suorum memorum memor nostri misereatur, et pro nobis Deum indesinentur deprecetur. Nunc ad inceptam unde aliquantulum digressi sumus redeamus materiam. OV IV. 72-4.

Orderic sought to show how the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas was closely connected to his own monastic network. He did so by telling three stories about the theft and acquisition of some of the relics from Bari, and how they thereafter came into the possession of the monks of Holy Trinity, Venosa in southern Italy and the priory of Noron in Normandy. While Chibnall noted the presence of these stories in the *Historia*,²⁰¹ their significance to Orderic's mammoth writing project has been little studied by scholars. Patrick Geary's seminal work has shown that the theft of relics was relatively common in the medieval period, with over a hundred accounts of such occurrences surviving.²⁰² From the moment that the bones of St. Nicholas were seized from Myra, further attempts were made to steal them by the translators themselves. Orderic followed John of Bari in recounting how the progress of the sailors back from Myra to Bari had been halted at Makry by a strong northerly wind, recounting how favourable winds had only returning after many of the men had returned the relic fragments which they had stolen.²⁰³ This set the tone for what was to follow in the first of three stories told by Orderic:

For Christopher, a certain knight who took part in the translation of the noble Nicholas, retained a rib for himself in his sleeve. Having weakened not long afterwards he took refuge in the monastery of Venosa and requested and obtained the monastic habit from abbot Berengar; and he presented the rib of St. Nicholas, with himself, to Holy Trinity and recovered from the sickness.²⁰⁴

While only short, this story is nevertheless important, for it is indicative of what is to come in the following two episodes. The most important thing about it is that it centres on the abbey of Holy Trinity, Venosa, like so many other stories in the *Historia* which concern southern Italy. Orderic had thus included an extended account concerning the translation of the relics

²⁰¹ Chibnall, 'Translation of the Relics', p.36; Chibnall, 'Les moines et les patrons', p.168.

²⁰² Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1978).

²⁰³ OV IV. 64-6.

²⁰⁴ *Christoforus enim quidam miles qui translationi nobilis Nicholai interfuit; unam costam in manica sua sibi retinuit. Nec multo post infirmatus ad Venusiense cenobium confugit, monachatum a Berengario archimandrita requisivit et impetrauit; secumque costam sancti Nicholai sanctae Trinitati presentavit, et de morbo conualuit.* OV IV. 68-70.

of St. Nicholas not to reach a wider audience, but because he knew it would be of interest to the monks of Saint-Evrout. In this regard, it is interesting to note that while the holding back of relics by the original translators was said to have incurred the anger of St. Nicholas and resulted in both foul winds and presumably also the illness to Christopher described here, in the earlier instance this meant returning the relics while in the latter it was acceptable for the rib of the Saint to be appropriated by another monastery. Here, then, we can see Orderic's priorities clearly influencing the nature of his narrative and bringing one of the daughter houses of Saint-Evrout to the fore. It was this association between Saint-Evrout and Venosa which resulted in the fact that the latter was an acceptable home for them in his mind, and was certainly not to be regarded as outright theft. Rather, as he had earlier written, God himself had permitted the diffusion of the relics (*permittente Deo*) so that the monks of Saint-Evrout and its extended network of houses could also be blessed by them.²⁰⁵

The second story concerning the relics of St. Nicholas is the longest and most dramatic of the three. It shares two important similarities with the first in that it not only relates a case of theft, this time of the silver-plated arm of St. Nicholas, but the relic also once again ends up in the possession of the monks of Holy Trinity, Venosa. Orderic began the story by explaining the initial theft:

At that time Stephen, the cantor of the monastery which the aged Count Fulk had built in the city of Angers in honour of St. Nicholas, went to Apulia, and through the licence of his lord, abbot Noël, deliberately abandoned the monastic rule. Afterwards he lived as a cleric at Bari, and gained great familiarity and, later, power among the sacristans of the church of the holy bishop. Finally, having perceived the opportunity, he secretly seized the arm of St. Nicholas, which had been suitably covered with silver and kept outside the tomb as a sign to the people, and endeavoured to

²⁰⁵ OV IV. 68.

flee to France and to enrich his country and his monastery with this great treasure. However, because as soon as the citizens of Bari discovered that so great a theft had taken place, they sent out their messengers far and wide to their borders and to their friends and patrons, and anxiously tried to guard all the roads which go to France, so that the thief might not depart by any of them.

It is at this point in the narrative that Venosa is introduced into the story, for Stephen, like Christopher the sailor before him, took refuge at Holy Trinity:

Stephen diverted to Venosa and the fearful man wintered there, wishing to hide; and waiting for the fair spring weather, he became ill. Then, deficient in necessary wealth, he was forced to separate the silver from the holy relic in order to live. Meanwhile the report spread through all Italy and Sicily that the arm of St. Nicholas had been stolen by the French. Finally, while word about the theft repeatedly moved the populace, and the silver covering was seen and recognised by some men from Venosa and servants of the monks, and rumour of this resounded in the monastic community, Erembert, an active monk, rushed to the unwell ex-monk with the servants of the monastery, and, aggravated with a sudden vigour, fiercely demanded the arm of St. Nicholas as if he himself had entrusted it to him. Meanwhile the man, seeing that he had been discovered, and not knowing who he could turn to in great trouble, pale and trembling, presented the precious relic to the persistent monk. He received it with great joy and then carried it to the monastery of Holy Trinity, praising God with the monks and all the citizens, and there St. Nicholas, to this day, through his relics, miraculously helps those faithfully asking in their many needs. The aforesaid Erembert, meanwhile, was a Norman by birth, a brave knight before his conversion, and afterwards, truly, a fervent monk in the order.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Eodem tempore Stephanus cantor coenobii quod Fulco senior comes apud Andegauiam urbem in honore sancti Nicholai construxerat Apuliam abiit, et per licentiam domni Natalis abbatis sui monachile scema ex industria dimisit. Deinde ut clericus Bari habitauit; magnamque familiaritatem ac postmodum potestatem inter edituos basilicae sancti pontificis optinuit. Tandem conspecta facultate brachium sancti Nicholai quod apte argento tectum erat, et extra mausoleum ad signandum populum seruabatur furtim arripuit; et in Gallias aufugere patriamque suam cenobiumque suum tanto thesauro ditare satigit. Verum quia mox ut tale latrocinium sibi factum Bareses compererunt, longe lateque ueredarios suos ad confines suos et amicos atque patronos miserunt, omnesque tramites quibus itur in Franciam sollicito tutari ne fur huiusmodi elongaretur conati sunt; Stephanus Venusiam diuertit, ibique timidus latere uolens hiemauit; et serenum uer expectans egrotare coepit. Deinde deficiente sibi censu necessario; coactus est pro uictu distrahere argentum de sancto brachio. Interea per totam Italiam et Siciliam fama uolitauit; quod a Gallis surreptum esset brachium beati Nicholai. Denique dum de tali furto crebra locutio populos moueret, et a quibusdam Venusiensibus famulisque monachorum argentea tectura uisa et cognita esset, et in conuentu monastico rumor huiusmodi perstreperet; Erembertus impiger coenobita cum famulis monasterii ad exmonachum languentem accurrit, subitoque frendens impetu brachium

Three related things are of interest here: the relic collection at Venosa, the usage, once again, of the phrase *usque hodie*, and, finally, the description of the monk Erembert. The previous story concerning the rib of St. Nicholas, coupled with the one under discussion here, explains Orderic's usage of the plural, *pignora sua*. As well as the Labarum from Durazzo,²⁰⁷ this means that, in all, book VII of the *Historia* contains three relic stories relating to the abbey of Holy Trinity of Venosa. While Chibnall noted the long-term nature of links between Saint-Evroult and Venosa,²⁰⁸ these stories suggest that this line of argument can now be taken further. For when viewed together, it seems that there was a particularly strong relic tradition relating to this house, far more so than with either of the other two monasteries of St. Euphemia or Mileto with which Saint-Evroult was also connected. Indeed, the preponderance of such stories concerning Venosa likely explains the relative prominence of this house in the narrative of the *Historia*. The survival of such important relics and other physical objects at Venosa resulted in the circulation of stories explaining their acquisition by the abbey. For according to Orderic, these objects not only attracted pilgrims to the site in the late 1080s and 1090s, but St. Nicholas continued to heal the faithful at Venosa at the time of the writing of book VII, which is thought to have been written between 1130 and 1133.²⁰⁹ Of final interest in this passage is the attention given to the monk Erembert. While he had a forceful nature, Orderic nevertheless speaks highly of him, particularly in the final sentence where he describes his noble life both before and after conversion. The inclusion of these details about Erembert's life in the pages of the *Historia* was doubtlessly because of his crucial role in procuring a second relic of St. Nicholas for the monks of Holy Trinity, Venosa. For in so

sancti Nicholai ac si eidem commendasset atrociter exposcit. At ille deprehensum se uidet, et in tanto turbine nescius quo se uerteret; pallidus et tremens perurgenti monacho preciosum pignus exhibet. Quod ille cum ingenti gaudio recipit et mox ad cenobium sanctae Trinitatis monachis et cunctis ciuibus Deum laudantibus deuehit; ibique sanctus Nicholaus usque hodie pignora sua fideliter poscentibus in multis necessitatibus mirifice succurrit. Prefatus autem Erembertus erat natione Normannus, ante conuersionem miles strenuus, postmodum uero monachus in ordine feruidus. OV IV. 70-2.

²⁰⁷ See above pp.114-17.

²⁰⁸ Chibnall, Marjorie, 'Les moines et les patrons', pp.167-8

²⁰⁹ OV IV. xix.

doing, he not only enriched that house, but, by extension, the history of Saint-Evroult as recorded in Orderic's massive work.

The third and final story which Orderic told concerning the relics of St. Nicholas concerned William Pantulf, the benefactor of Saint-Evroult and founder of Noron about whom he had previously written in book V of the *Historia*.²¹⁰ The fact that these earlier details of his relationship with Saint-Evroult are not elucidated here suggests that Orderic was assuming this knowledge of his readers. This time the story concerns a tooth and two fragments of the tomb of St. Nicholas and relates not to Venosa but to William's foundation at Noron:

At that time a certain knight from Normandy, William Pantulf, went to Apulia and, because he greatly esteemed St. Nicholas, searched a great deal for his relics; and because his aim was pleasing to God, he obtained a tooth and two bits from the marble tomb from the translators of the relics. For he was strenuous in arms, gifted in nature, the greatest in perception and riches among his neighbours, most noted by the lords of England and Italy. And so having obtained the tooth of the great lord he returned to Normandy; and to his own estate called Noron he invited many people that would appropriately receive the relics on the appointed day. And so in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1092, the fifteenth indiction, the tooth of the cherished confessor, Nicholas, was brought from Apulia with other relics of the saints by William Pantulf, and was received with honour in the church of Noron that had been established, at a previous time, in honour of St. Peter. Roger, abbot of Ouche, and Ralph, at that time the then abbot of Sées but afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, were, in particular, invited to this, and they received the holy relics, with the great devotion of the monks and the jubilation of the laity, in the month of June, and carefully fitted it into a silver casket generously provided by the abovementioned knight. The often-mentioned relics were frequently sought out by many with fevers and other

²¹⁰ See above pp.106-9.

sicknesses, and by the merits of the cherished Bishop Nicholas, those asking in faith regained the health they desired.²¹¹

While Orderic thereafter added a further paragraph in which he related how William Pantulf's efforts to build a new church at Noron were hampered by various misfortunes and noted that he and his wife Lesceline lay buried in the cloister of his monastery there,²¹² it is his dealings with the relics of St. Nicholas which are of particular interest to us here. For his travels to southern Italy and his subsequent return to Normandy resulted in three further relics associated with the saint being introduced to the narrative of the *Historia*. These objects increase in prominence as the story develops, as they are placed in a silver casket at Noron and we are told that many were healed by them. While the sick went to Noron to be healed, stories concerning the relics travelled outwards from St. Peter's to the surrounding foundations and to Saint-Evroult, of which it was a dependency. William Pantulf's close association with Saint-Evroult may explain why Orderic says little about the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the relics, other than that he obtained them from some of the original translators. For while Christopher and Stephen, the protagonists of the two stories which precede this one, had obtained their relics through theft it was important to make clear that the friend and benefactor of the monks of the Ouche had acquired his relics through more legitimate means. Finally, a little more can be said about the placing of the relics into the silver casket on their arrival at Noron. This action of inserting the relic into the reliquary

²¹¹ Hisdem temporibus quidam miles de Normannia Guillelmus cognomento Pantulfus in Apuliam abiit, et quia sanctum Nicholaum ualde diligebat de reliquiis eius multum quesuiit; Deoque iuuante procurationem eius a reliquiarum translatoribus unum dentem et duo frustra de marmoreo tumulo optinuit. Erat enim in armis strenuus, ingenio preditus; inter collimitaneos sensu diuitiisque maximus, Angliae Italiaeque dominis notissimus. Dentem itaque tanti baronis nactus in Normanniam rediit; et ad proprium predium quod Noron dicitur plures personas ut congrue reliquias susciperent denunciato die accersiit. Anno itaque dominicae incarnationis M^oXC^oII^o indictione xv dens almi confessoris Nicholai cum aliis sanctorum reliquiis a Guillelmo Pantulfo de Apulia delatus est; et in basilica Noronensi in honore sancti Petri prisco tempore condita honorifice susceptus. Ad hanc utique susceptionem Rogerius Vticensis abbas et Radulfus tunc temporibus Sagiensis abbas sed postmodum Cantuarensis archiepiscopus accersiti sunt; et cum ingenti studio monachorum ac tripudio laicorum sanctas reliquias mense Iunio susceperunt, et in argentea pixide a supradicto milite liberaliter parata diligenter coaptauerunt. Frequenter a multis febricitantibus et ab aliis egrotantibus sepedicta pignora requisita sunt; meritisque almi presulis Nicholai pie postulantes optatam sanitatem adepti sunt. OV IV. 72.

²¹² OV IV. 72.

transformed its meaning and the nature of the memories associated with it. For Orderic noted that it was William Pantulf himself who provided the casket in which the relics were placed. In doing so, he showed that a strong mnemonic connection had been made between Pantulf and the relics of St. Nicholas, one which overrode their past association with the translators themselves.²¹³

An Enduring Textual Legacy

While this chapter has focussed its attention on the southern Italian material in the pages of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, it is important to note that Saint-Evroult's connections with the Italian peninsula left a lasting impression on a number of the other texts produced by the monks of the pays d'Ouche, many of which were written, either wholly or in part, by Orderic himself.²¹⁴ Thus, alongside the names of individuals such as William Giroie, William Pantulf, and Robert of Grandmesnil encountered above, the necrology of Saint-Evroult also contained those of Berengar, the first abbot of Venosa and later bishop of that city (*Berengarius, abbas et episcopus*), and Abbot William of St. Euphemia (*Willelmus, abbas Sanctae Eufemiae*), whose obits were commemorated on the 25 and 27 December respectively.²¹⁵ Similarly, the annals of Saint-Evroult, which were kept by Orderic himself until his death,²¹⁶ record the journey of Abbot Thierry to Cyprus in 1058, Abbot Robert of Grandmesnil's journey to Rome in 1060 and his replacement by Osbern of Corneilles, and, finally, the translation of the body of St. Nicholas from Myra to Bari, celebrated on 9 May 1087.²¹⁷ The *liber memorialis* also displays a further aspect of the relationship between Saint-Evroult and

²¹³ For a stimulating discussion of the relationship between reliquaries and memory see Amy G. Remensnyder, 'Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory', *Speculum* 71:4 (1996), 884-906.

²¹⁴ Escudier, 'Orderic Vital'.

²¹⁵ Necrology, pp.484, 486, 490-1.

²¹⁶ For more on Orderic's career as an annalistic writer see Alexander, *Annalistic writing in Normandy*, pp.133-40, 209-11.

²¹⁷ Annals, pp.157-8.

southern Italy, namely that prayers were said for the deceased monks of the abbey of Holy Trinity, Venosa, listed there along with the words ‘we must do this as if we were doing it for ourselves’ (*agendum est nobis sicut pro nobis ipsis*).²¹⁸ Finally, among the earliest roll of charters that survive from Saint-Evroult there is a charter which records the donation of a certain Guitmund *de Maisnil* and his son, Robert, of ten carucates of land to the monks.²¹⁹ While no date is given for this donation, the scribe nevertheless noted the striking detail that it took place ‘in the year in which Arnold our monk returned from Apulia’ (*anno quo Ernaldus monachus noster reversus est de Apulia*).²²⁰ This is a clear reference to Arnold of Tilleul, a long-serving monk who was a contemporary of Orderic’s at Saint-Evroult and a close kinsman of the Grandmesnil family. More details concerning his journey to Apulia are provided in book VIII of the chronicle.²²¹ There we read that Arnold travelled to southern Italy, staying at St. Euphemia with his brother, William, the then abbot, and also with his cousin, William of Grandmesnil, for the express purpose of obtaining valuable goods from the loot of his kinsmen which could then be taken back to Normandy and used to benefit Saint-Evroult.²²² As will be seen in the next chapter, Arnold reappears in a number of places throughout the pages of the *Historia*, where we see him performing similar duties for the monastery, this time in the midst of Orderic’s account of the First Crusade in book IX.²²³ Such episodes are an essential feature of the narrative of the *Historia*, linking Saint-Evroult with regions far beyond it, while all the while anchoring the story in the monastic locality of the pays d’Ouche. Orderic’s material on southern Italy was the first area in the *Historia* which he connected with Saint-Evroult in this way, but it would not to be the last.

²¹⁸ *Liber memorialis*, p.173.

²¹⁹ I have been unable to identify who these donors were.

²²⁰ Charters, no.VI, p.185.

²²¹ This journey is likely to have taken place in the 1090s, Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, p.133.

²²² OV IV. 142.

²²³ See below pp.190-94.

2

A notable and marvellous theme

The narrative of the First Crusade in book IX

This chapter explores Orderic's construction of his narrative of the First Crusade, the sole subject of book IX of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. James Bickford Smith observed that this focus on the First Crusade marked 'a new discipline' on Orderic's part.¹ This section of the thesis examines the inner workings of book IX in order to understand why Orderic incorporated an account of the First Crusade, which he based on the *Historia Ierosolimitana* of Baldric of Bourgueil, into the *Historia*. The focus throughout is on the textual significance of the additional material within book IX that is unique to Orderic. A number of key questions arise: How do Orderic's monastic priorities in writing the *Historia* manifest themselves in the narrative? More generally, how does book IX relate to the other books of the *Historia*? It will be argued that Orderic's account of the First Crusade is closely connected to the rest of the work. Detailed study of the additional material within book IX will make this point abundantly clear. For these passages are the interpretative key to understanding what it was that Orderic sought to achieve in reworking Baldric of Bourgueil's account of the First Crusade and incorporating it into the *Historia*.

The First Crusade has long been a topic of interest to historians, and numerous scholarly works continue to be written on the subject.² This vast scholarship has itself benefitted

¹ Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis*, p.37.

² The work of Jonathan Riley-Smith remains seminal; see in particular *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, 1986); Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade. The Limousin and Gascony, c.970-c.1130* (Oxford, 1993); John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, 1994); Jonathan P. Phillips, *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact* (Manchester, 1997); Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (London, 2004); Conor Kostick, *The Social Structure of the First Crusade* (Leiden, 2008); Jay Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the*

greatly from the large number of chronicles that were written in the wake of the extraordinary successes in the East: the dramatic victory after near-defeat at Dorylaeum in July 1097; the gruelling eight-month siege of Antioch from October 1097 to June 1098, followed by the decisive victory against Kerbogah outside the city walls; the climactic capture of Jerusalem in July 1099; and, finally, the triumph at Ascalon in August of that year.³ The earliest surviving narrative account of the First Crusade is the *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, which was written by an anonymous participant in the expedition and completed shortly after the events themselves.⁴ While the authorship, content and purpose of the *Gesta Francorum* continue to be the subject of much debate among historians,⁵ there can be little doubt about its influence on the subsequent profusion of historical writing on the First Crusade. For, remarkably, many of the authors who followed consciously used its narrative as the basis for their own accounts,⁶ to the extent that John France was able to write that ‘the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum* has become the “normal” account of the First Crusade...to which all others are simply related by modern writers.’⁷

Quest for Apocalypse (New York, 2011); Peter Frankopan, *The First Crusade: the Call from the East* (London, 2012). For classic overviews of the crusading movement more generally, see Hans Eberhard Mayer, *The Crusades* (London, 1972); Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071-c.1291* (Cambridge, 1999); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*, 2nd edition (London, 2005). On the historiography see Giles Constable, ‘The Historiography of the Crusades’, in Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (eds) *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington DC, 2001), 1-22; Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford, 2006).

³ For a thorough overview of these events see France, *Victory in the East*.

⁴ *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Hill (London, 1962).

⁵ Kenneth Baxter Wolf, ‘Crusade and Narrative: Bohemond and the *Gesta Francorum*’, *JMH* 17 (1991), 207-16; Colin Morris, ‘The *Gesta Francorum* as Narrative History’, *RMS* 19 (1993), 55-71; Jay Rubenstein, ‘What is the *Gesta Francorum*, and Who was Peter Tudebode?’, *Revue Mabillon* 16 (2005), 179-204; Conor Kostick, ‘A Further Discussion on the Authorship of the *Gesta Francorum*’, *RMS* 35 (2009), 1-14; Nicholas L. Paul, ‘A Warlord’s Wisdom: Literacy and Propaganda at the Time of the First Crusade’, *Speculum* 85:3 (2010), 534-66; Joshua C. Birk, ‘The Betrayal of Antioch: Narratives of Conversion and Conquest During the First Crusade’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41:3 (2011), 463-85.

⁶ A significant exception to this rule is Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford, 2007). For more on its importance see Susan B. Edgington, ‘The First Crusade: Reviewing the Evidence’, in J. Phillips (ed.) *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact* (Manchester, 1997), 55-77; and *eadem*, ‘Albert of Aachen Reappraised’, in Alan V. Murray (ed.) *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies 1095-1500* (Turnhout, 1998), 55-67.

⁷ John France, ‘The Use of the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum* in the Early Twelfth-Century Sources for the First Crusade’, in A. V. Murray (eds.) *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies 1095-1500* (Turnhout, 1998), 29-42 at p.29; for more on the influence of the *Gesta Francorum* see John France, ‘The Anonymous *Gesta Francorum* and the *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* of Raymond of Aguilers

Though the influence of the *Gesta Francorum* was great, later writers felt a great deal of creative freedom in taking its content and basic ideas and developing them as and when they saw fit. While Jonathan Riley-Smith termed this process ‘theological refinement’,⁸ it also involved the substantial development and reinterpretation of the very content of the story of the First Crusade. Principal among this second generation of historians were Robert the Monk, Guibert of Nogent and Baldric of Bourgueil who wrote their accounts, apparently independently, in the first decade of the twelfth century.⁹ The surviving evidence strongly suggests that the manuscripts of each of these histories of the First Crusade circulated more widely and in much greater number than the *Gesta Francorum*, to the extent that they were themselves used as the basis for further generations of historians to write their own accounts of the expedition. It is here that Orderic’s account of the First Crusade is situated. While much more will be said regarding the textual relationship between the *Historia ecclesiastica* and Baldric of Bourgueil’s *Historia Ierosolimitana* in this chapter and the one which follows, it is sufficient for the moment to see him as one in a long line of writers who sought to compose their own account of the First Crusade for their own ends.

Little has been written on Orderic’s account of the First Crusade. Nevertheless, the small body of research that does exist contains some valuable insights into Orderic’s account and so continues to act as the point of departure for all serious study of this aspect of the *Historia*.

The work of three scholars is deserving of particular attention here. Firstly, there is the

and the *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere* of Peter Tudebode: An Analysis of the Textual Relationship between Primary Sources for the First Crusade’, in J. France and W. G. Zajac (eds) *The Crusades and their Sources: Essays Presented to Bernard Hamilton* (Aldershot, 1998), 39-69.

⁸ Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, p.135.

⁹ *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Robert the Monk*, ed. Damien Kempf and Marcus Bull (Woodbridge, 2013); Guibert of Nogent, *Dei gesta per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1996); Steven J. Biddlecombe, *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil: A New Edition in Latin and an Analysis* (unpublished PhD thesis, Bristol, 2010). For comparison, see Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp.135-52; Elizabeth Lapina, “‘Nec Signis Nec Testis Creditur...’: The Problem of Eyewitnesses in the Chronicles of the First Crusade”, *Viator* 38:1 (2007), 117-39.

material in Roger Ray's doctoral study of Orderic, completed in 1967.¹⁰ Here Ray briefly discussed the value of Orderic's original passages, categorising his additions to Baldric's narrative as being generally 'useless' and 'erroneous'; though occasionally 'well-taken', he concluded that, in general, Orderic's changes to Baldric's account were 'not materially great'.¹¹ Secondly, Marjorie Chibnall's introduction and footnotes in the fifth volume of her edition of Orderic, published in 1975, usefully outlined some of the details regarding the textual relationship between Orderic and Baldric.¹² This brief analysis of the two texts was ground-breaking and has been foundational to this present study. Chibnall began her notes as follows: 'A considerable part of Book IX is derived from the *Historia Ierosolimitana* of Baudry of Bourgueil...and this reduces its value as a historical source. Yet it has a not unimportant place in Orderic's scheme of history and in the history of thought.'¹³ Similarly, she later observed that 'The fact that much of Orderic's account of the first crusade is third-hand reduces its value as a source. Nevertheless he contributed some information of his own.'¹⁴ Finally, she concluded, 'Orderic's individual contribution to the history of the movement, though limited and often garbled, contains some information which, when sifted out and examined critically, deserves notice.'¹⁵ The third work of note is Barbara MacDonald Walker's study of the Grandmesnil family, completed in 1968, which contains a chapter that retells the story of their participation in the First Crusade, drawing from a number of different narrative sources.¹⁶

While the fact that Orderic's account of the First Crusade was based on that of Baldric of Bourgueil is beyond dispute, the argument that book IX should therefore be regarded as being

¹⁰ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, pp.175-86.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.185-86.

¹² OV V. xi-xix.

¹³ OV V. xiii.

¹⁴ OV V. xv.

¹⁵ OV V. xix.

¹⁶ Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, pp.157-78.

of limited value is a much more contentious point. As well as the thorny issue of how one is to gauge such things as value, such a stance is further undermined by the acknowledgement that, in Chibnall's words, Orderic's account 'contains some information which...deserves notice.' What exactly was this information of which she spoke? Why is it deserving of scholarly attention? The devil is in the detail here. Orderic certainly borrowed heavily from Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana*, but it does not follow automatically from this that his borrowings limited his ability to innovate. Ray's and Chibnall's words seem to imply that Orderic copied passively from Baldric with little or no active involvement in the editorial process. Yet as will be seen in this chapter, detailed study of the two accounts reveals that such arguments have actually exaggerated the similarities between Orderic and Baldric and downplayed the significance of the original passages which he inserted throughout his narrative of the First Crusade. It is thus high time that scholars move on from here, and seek fresh answers to these questions by returning to the text of book IX itself. A re-examination of the sources has certainly proven valuable in the case of two of Orderic's most well-known contemporaries in the Anglo-Norman world, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon. For Rodney Thomson's work on Malmesbury's substantial account of the crusades in book IV of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, for which he drew on Fulcher of Chartres' earlier *Historia Hierosolymitana*, has shown that 'it has much to offer' of its own.¹⁷ Henry of Huntingdon's account of the First Crusade in book VII of the *Historia Anglorum* is similarly deserving of attention. For not only is Henry's narrative situated in the midst of his annalistic account of the first years of William Rufus' reign, but his elder brother, Robert Curthose, is also made to feature prominently in the text.¹⁸ These texts thus reveal much

¹⁷ William of Malmesbury, I, iv.343-89, pp.592-706; Rodney M. Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury, Historian of Crusade', *RMS* 23 (1997), 121-34 at p.122; see also Aryeh Grabois, 'The Description of Jerusalem by William of Malmesbury: A Mirror of the Holy Land's Presence in the Anglo-Norman Mind', *ANS* 13 (1991), 145-56.

¹⁸ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.5-18, pp.422-42. For further discussion of Curthose's role in the *Historia Anglorum*, see below pp.171-73.

about the different ways in which the story of the First Crusade was adapted for incorporation into the much larger works of two of the most important Anglo-Norman historians. While they wrote their histories for very different reasons to Orderic and tailored their accounts of the First Crusade for their own specific audiences, they nevertheless provide us with a sense of the way in which recipients of such texts could rework and reinterpret them as they saw fit.

It is fair to say that the association of texts such as Orderic's with the *Gesta Francorum* has not been regarded as a wholly positive one by modern historians. As John France has noted, it has 'subtly demoted' the value of many subsequent accounts in the minds of these later scholars.¹⁹ Yet this is a significant mistake to make, one which is now beginning to be addressed in the scholarship on the subject.²⁰ For each of the histories which used the *Gesta Francorum* 'edited and altered the text considerably...It must be stressed that many of them tended to add information and did not merely change its style.'²¹ Such texts must therefore be regarded as important works in their own right, and read on their own terms rather than simply in comparison with the text on which they drew and from which they so often evolved very differently.²² Marcus Bull has recently stressed this point, writing

...it is important simply to remind ourselves of the value of approaching the texts *qua* texts, not as data repositories from which much of what we think we know about the crusade happens to derive...We simply need to understand much more about the internal dynamics, the meaning-making processes, in sum the poetics, of these texts before we can make judgements about the

¹⁹ France, 'The Use of the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum*', p.29.

²⁰ Particularly important will be the work of Marcus Bull, Damien Kempf and Steven Biddlecombe and their forthcoming new editions of the *Gesta Francorum*, Robert the Monk's *Historia Iherosolimitana*, and Baldric of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosolimitana*. See also Jean Flori, *Chroniqueurs et propagandistes: introduction critique aux sources de la Première croisade* (Geneva, 2010).

²¹ France, 'The Use of the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum*', p.36.

²² *Ibid*, p.38.

feasibility of reading ‘through’ them...Crusade scholarship has, by and large, fought shy of this hermeneutic route...²³

Bull is right to stress the importance of first understanding the construction of the text, the way it has been built and how it “works”, before making value judgements and using it to gain a more nuanced picture of the First Crusade itself. Both are needed, but it is essential that the one follows on from the other only after a thorough understanding of the text has been gained. Making this move too soon may lead to the text being misinterpreted and devalued.

This chapter seeks to examine book IX of the *Historia* as one part of Orderic’s much larger text and to appreciate it as such. It seeks first to understand what Bull termed the ‘internal dynamics’ of Orderic’s account of the First Crusade before then examining the implications of this for our interpretation of book IX. Narrative theory is useful here, for it offers a way of understanding the major and minor building blocks with which the account has been constructed. H. Porter Abbott has termed these blocks ‘constituent’ and ‘supplementary’ events respectively.²⁴ The constituent events of the First Crusade include the Council of Clermont, the crusaders at Constantinople, the siege of Nicaea, the battle of Dorylaeum, the siege of Antioch, the capture of Jerusalem, and the final battle of Ascalon. While some of these events were more important than others in the historiographical tradition, appearing at different times in the histories and occupying varying amounts of space in the text, all played a key part in the story of the First Crusade. They constituted the established narrative of events which historians such as Orderic Vitalis inherited when they read a manuscript from the *Gesta Francorum* family of texts.

²³ Marcus Bull, ‘The Eyewitness Accounts of the First Crusade as Political Scripts’, *RMS* 36 (2010), 23-37 at p.28.

²⁴ Abbott, *Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, pp.20-22.

Alongside these major building blocks are supplementary events. These are parts of the story which may often occupy less space in the narrative and are events that are not central to its plot. They frequently occur as the result of the constituent events, triggered by a major event or plot development. As Seymour Chatman has observed, ‘It can be deleted without disturbing the logic of the plot, though its omission will, of course, impoverish the narrative aesthetically...Their function is that of filling in, elaborating, completing...they form the flesh on the skeleton.’²⁵ However, while not crucial to a story’s plot, supplementary events provide much of its meaning. They may not occupy much space in the narrative, but they are essential for understanding the way in which it ought to be interpreted. Such apparently “minor” passages are thus disproportionately important, for we cannot uncover the meaning of a plot without first understanding them. Thus Abbott has written that ‘supplementary events invariably have their own impact and can carry a considerable amount of the narrative’s burden of meaning. They also raise an interesting question that constituent events do not: Why were they included? Since they are not necessary to the story, why did the author feel compelled to put them into the narrative? Asking these questions is often a very profitable thing to do in the interpretation of the narrative.’²⁶

These insights are particularly valuable when considering Orderic’s account of the First Crusade. For in what follows it will be seen that his interactions with Baldric’s account are most strikingly apparent in and around the major events which were lifted from the pages of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. Indeed, Orderic clustered his additional passages around the key turning-points in the narrative. Thus the Council of Clermont was prefaced by Gilbert of Lisleux’s interpretation of the star-shower,²⁷ and succeeded by the synod of Rouen and some

²⁵ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, p.54.

²⁶ Abbott, *Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, p.21.

²⁷ See below, pp.151-61.

reflections on the indomitable *gens Normannorum* and the weakness of Robert Curthose.²⁸ Similarly, Orderic inserted two short passages into his account of the climactic capture of Jerusalem, the first concerning a certain individual named Hugh Bunel,²⁹ and the second relating to some relics of the Virgin Mary which were discovered at that time.³⁰ These passages provide the interpretative key to understanding book IX of the *Historia*. For by punctuating the narrative in this way, at key points in the story, Orderic linked his account of the First Crusade to the other books of the *Historia* and provided an account which aligned closely with his consistently expressed aim of informing the monks of Saint-Evrout of the rich history of their house and the individuals related to it. This is not to say that all of Orderic's additions to the narrative of the First Crusade were locally-oriented; indeed, a number were not, and these include Bohemond's desire to besiege Constantinople,³¹ Baldwin of Boulogne's capture of Edessa,³² the appearance of Cosan at the siege of Jerusalem,³³ and the songs of the Muslim women preceding the capture of the city.³⁴ Such passages were likely included by Orderic to flesh the story of the First Crusade where he felt able to do so.³⁵ While they provide extra colour and detail to book IX, they contribute little towards its meaning. Only those passages which link the story of the First Crusade back to the pays d'Ouche are central for its interpretation in the wider context provided by the *Historia* and so it is on these that this chapter will focus its attention. The precise details of how Orderic connected the history of Saint-Evrout with the story of the First Crusade will be examined in what follows.

²⁸ See below, pp.161-73.

²⁹ See below, pp.173-82.

³⁰ See below, pp.182-98.

³¹ OV V. 46-48.

³² OV V. 118-28.

³³ OV V. 158.

³⁴ OV V. 166-8.

³⁵ Orderic's reason for including his account of the capture of Edessa is thus typical, for which see OV V. 118.

The Prologue

Orderic began book IX with a prologue in which placed his account of the First Crusade within a deeply providential framework:

The eternal Creator wisely and beneficially ordains the changes of time and events; he does not arrange or alter human affairs for the pleasure of senseless men, but, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, faithfully preserves, aptly carries forward and dispenses all. This we see plainly in the winter and summer; this no less we feel in cold and heat, this we perceive in the rise and fall of all things, and can duly examine in the manifold variety of the works of God. Many accounts arise from these about the many events which are taking place in the world every day, and materials are copiously increased for keen historians to talk about.

He then continued by presenting his own attitude towards the subject of the First Crusade:

I therefore consider these things inwardly, and commit these meditations of mine to writing, for an unexpected change is taking place in our time, and a notable and marvellous theme of reference is prepared in advance for the study of those writing. Behold the journey to Jerusalem begins by divine inspiration; a single company of westerners assembles from many peoples in a marvellous manner, and one army is led together against the heathens in Eastern parts. Holy Sion is freed by her sons, who have voluntarily come from distant regions, conquering foreigners by whom the holy city was formerly being trampled and the sanctuary of God nefariously defiled. For the detestable Hagarenes, permitted by divine judgement, had long before come across Christian borders, invaded the holy places, slaughtered the Christian inhabitants, and abominably polluted the holy things with their dirty practices, but after much time they deservedly suffered the due revenge from the swords of those from this side of the Alps. Not, I believe, at any time has a more glorious subject appeared to sophists in the things of war, than the Lord has now delivered in our time to poets and scribes, when he triumphed over the pagans in the east through a few Christians, whom he roused from their own homes with the sweet desire for pilgrimage.³⁶

³⁶ *Vicissitudines temporum et rerum aeternus Conditor sapienter salubriterque ordinat, nec ad libitum infruntorum res humanas disponit ac variat, sed in manu potenti et brachio excelso pie servat, congrue provehit ac dispensat. Hoc in hieme et aestate palam videmus, hoc nihilominus in frigore et caumate sentimus; hoc in omnium rerum ortu et occasu perpendimus, et in multiplici varietate operum Dei rite rimari possumus. Inde*

Finally, having compared the crusade with both the Old Testament Exodus and the conquest of Palestine,³⁷ Orderic brought the prologue to a close by placing his own account within the wider context of First Crusade historiography as he knew it:

Fulcher of Chartres, chaplain of Godfrey duke of Lotharingia, who took part in the labours and perils of the praiseworthy expedition, has produced a reliable and truthful volume about the laudable military service of the army of Christ. Likewise Baldric, archbishop of Dol, has brilliantly written four books, in which he has truly and eloquently produced the entire narrative from the cause of the pilgrimage up to the first battle after the capture of Jerusalem. Indeed, many other Latins and Greeks have treated this most memorable subject, and have related the brilliant happenings of the heroes for posterity in their vivid writings. I too, the least of all who follow the Lord in the habitual life of religion, because I love the brave champions of Christ and am eager to exalt their virtuous acts, desire to thus begin on the expedition of the Christians for the Lord Jesus in this little work which I have undertaken on ecclesiastical matters. I am afraid of attempting an entire work on this edifying pilgrimage, and dare not promise this arduous deed, but I know not how to leave such a noble theme untouched. I am shackled by old age, as a sexagenarian, and as a monk, having been educated from boyhood in a regular cloister. In truth, I cannot, in future, endure the great toil of writing; moreover, I do not have the scribes, who would now gather my words, and thus I hasten to finish this present little work. And so I will now begin the ninth book, with God granting me the necessary help, in which I will endeavour to truthfully and in sequence relate something about the Jerusalemites.³⁸

multiplices propagantur historiae de multimodis eventibus qui fiunt in mundo cotidie, et dicacibus historiographis augmentantur copiose fandi materiae. Haec ideo medullitus considero, meditatusque meos litteris assigno, quia temporibus nostris insperata fit permutatio, et insigne thema referendi mira praestruitur dictatorum studio. En Ierosolimitanum iter diuinitus initur; a multis occidentalium populis unus grex miro modo congeritur, et contra ethnicos in Eoas partes unus exercitus conducitur. Sancta Syon a filiis suis qui de longinquis regionibus ultro exierunt eripitur, allophilis deuictis a quibus olim sancta ciuitas conculcabatur, et sanctuarium Dei nefarie contaminabatur. Detestabiles enim agareni diuino iudicio permittente Christianorum limites iam dudum transierunt, sancta loca inuaserunt; Christicolae habitatores interemerunt, spurciciisque suis abominabiliter sacra polluerunt, sed post multa tempora meritam ultionem mucronibus cisalpinorum digne luerunt. Nulla, ut reor, unquam sophistis in bellicis rebus gloriosior materia prodiit, quam nostris nunc Dominus poetis atque librariis tradidit, dum per paucos Christicolae de paganis in oriente triumphavit, quos de propriis domibus dulci desiderio peregrinandi exciuit. OV V. 4.

³⁷ OV V. 4-6.

³⁸ Fulcherius Carnotensis Godefredi Lotharingiae ducis capellanus qui laboribus et periculis predicabilis expeditionis interfuit; certum et uerax uolumen de laudabili militia exercitus Christi edidit. Baldricus quoque Dolensis archiepiscopus iiii libros luculenter conscripsit, in quibus integram narrationem ab inicio

The prologue then ends with a personal devotional prayer from Orderic, presented as five pairs of rhyming couplets in verse form.³⁹ The three main components of this preface, then, are its providential introduction, the middle section summarising the significance of the First Crusade as a theme for historical writing, and, finally, a concluding section which lays out the wider historiographical context before then focussing more narrowly on Orderic's own contribution to the field. These sections will now be the subject of close examination.

For Orderic, as for many ecclesiastical writers of his age, all of human history was providential in nature. Throughout the pages of the *Historia*, he frequently likened the monastery of Saint-Evroult to a ship being steered by God through stormy seas.⁴⁰ Here the theme of providence is examined from a different angle. Orderic's focus is on the changes worked by God regarding the seasons, the temperature and, finally, in daily events. It is at this point that the prologue makes a strong connection between providence and historical writing, divine action and human reaction. Thus not only was the First Crusade caused 'by divine inspiration' (*diuinitus*), but the event was thereafter also given to writers by God himself: 'The Lord delivered it to poets and scribes' (*Dominus poetis atque librariis tradidit*). It was this perceived providential impetus behind the subject which explains why Orderic regarded it as 'a notable and marvellous theme for exposition' (*insigne thema referendi mira*), conceived and prepared beforehand (*prestruitur*) by God himself.⁴¹ John Ward

peregrinationis usque ad primum bellum post captam Ierusalem ueraciter et eloquenter deprompsit. Multi etiam alii Latinorum et Grecorum de tam memoranda re tractauerunt, et posteritati claros euentus heroum uiuacibus scriptis intimauerunt. Ego quoque minimus omnium, qui religionis in habitu uita sequuntur Dominum; quia strenuos Christi agonithetas diligo, et eorum probos actus attollere gestio, in hoc quod cepi de aecclesiasticis actibus opusculo, Christianorum expeditionem in Domino Ihesu ordiri appeto. Integrum opus peregrinationis almae aggredi timeo, arduam rem polliceri non audeo; sed qualiter intactum tam nobile thema preteream nescio. Prepedior senio utpote sexagenarius, et in clauastro regulari educatus a puericia monachus. Magnum uero scribendi laborem amodo perpeti nequeo, notarios autem qui mea nunc excerpant dicta non habeo, ideoque presens opusculum finire festino. Nonum itaque libellum nunc incipiam; in quo de Ierosolimitanis quaedam seriatim et ueraciter prosequi satagam, Deo michi conferente opem necessariam. OV V. 6.

³⁹ OV V. 6-8.

⁴⁰ OV II. 54; III. 116-18; for more on the theme of providence in Orderic see Mégier, 'Cotidie Operatur'.

⁴¹ OV V. 4.

examined the importance of the First Crusade to the works of Otto of Freising, William of Malmesbury and John of Salisbury, in an article published in the 1980s. He observed the varying importance with which the subject was held by these and other writers: ‘the first crusade functions as the keystone of the arch of historical interpretation...it is not, as we might today be tempted to see it, a digression from their theme, but a kind of *summa* or manifest sign of it. For other historians...the first crusade formed, by stated intent, an organizing theme in its own right for historical creativity.’⁴² While it would be a mistake to view the theme of crusading as the single most important topic in the *Historia* or as the most prominent example of Orderic’s historical creativity, Ward’s comments are nevertheless helpful. For Orderic’s prologue shows that he believed that this aspect of the *Historia* served the overall purpose of his work well. It was, for him, a particularly striking way in which God’s providential workings in the world were made manifest in the text to the monks of Saint-Evroult. Thus, his account of the First Crusade was not to be some insignificant and wholly unplanned digression which detracted from the main purposes of his massive writing project, but, rather, it was a clear and manifest sign of everything he sought to achieve in writing the *Historia*.

Writing some forty years after Pope Urban II’s initial summons for an armed pilgrimage to the East, Orderic’s prologue reveals him to have been extremely aware that he was not the first to have written on the subject. Many writers had gone before him. Indeed, more than anywhere else, it is here that we are provided with the greatest insight into the way in which Orderic viewed his own position within the existing historiographical tradition of the First Crusade. While one might therefore expect some sense of insecurity to come through in his writing, and may even argue for this based on a cursory reading of the text, a closer

⁴² John O. Ward, ‘Some Principles of Rhetorical Historiography in the Twelfth Century’, in Ernst Breisach (ed.) *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography* (Kalamazoo, 1985), 103-165 at p.119.

examination reveals this to be a well-crafted introduction to book IX, which abides by many of the standard literary conventions of the period.⁴³ For, in the final part of the preface, Orderic emphasised his humility as a historian, and, in doing so, underlined to his monastic readers that he was well-qualified to write an account of the First Crusade for inclusion in the *Historia*. His argument was laid out with some skill, echoing ancient historiographical tradition.⁴⁴ The first step was to highlight the contribution of previous historians, as John Marincola has observed:

The goal...was not to strike out boldly in a radical departure from one's predecessors, but rather to be incrementally innovative within a tradition, by embracing the best in previous performers and adding something of one's own marked with an individual stamp. For the historian, the genre was both an "enabling condition" and a "restraint upon his inventiveness". Those historians whom antiquity considered great...were all seen to have accomplished...that delicate balancing act whereby they could at once remind the listener of their great predecessors and display to that same audience yet something different from those time-honoured models. For the writer was to see himself not just as an imitator, but also as a competitor.⁴⁵

While the historian could not compel belief in their account simply by what they said about themselves,⁴⁶ such attempts nonetheless remain extremely important, for they reveal how the writer sought to be perceived by others. In order to do this, Orderic, like other historians, constructed a historiographical persona for himself, placing himself in the narrative for his readers to see.⁴⁷ This identity was a cleverly assembled literary construction which was given further definition by Orderic's relationship to the other historians of the First Crusade, namely Fulcher of Chartres and Baldric of Bourgueil, and his awareness that many other

⁴³ For more on prologues see Antonia Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England', in Daniel Williams (ed.) *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1990), 55-81; and, more generally, Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces. Studies in Literary Conventions* (Stockholm, 1964).

⁴⁴ For more on this subject see John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁴⁵ Marincola, *Authority and Tradition*, p.14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p.xii.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.1.

Latin and Greek writers had also written on the subject. As we have seen, the works of Fulcher and Baldric received equal praise from Orderic. It is significant that, at this stage in the narrative, he said nothing of his textual indebtedness to Baldric or that it was the basis of his own work. While this point was later acknowledged at the end of book IX,⁴⁸ Orderic's omission of it here was likely a deliberate move on his part. At this stage, his purpose was merely to demonstrate that he was aware of the able writers who had gone before him, 'parading his learning', and thereby strengthening his position as a historian.⁴⁹ He could not afford to undermine his own authority as a writer at the very outset of his account. Rather, as Roger Ray noted, Orderic deliberately included the names of other historians in the text at this point as an 'acknowledgement' of the scholarly community which he was joining through writing his own account of the First Crusade.⁵⁰ Thus he praised the work of Fulcher and Baldric only for as long as was necessary and briefly added that many other had also written on the subject of the First Crusade, before continuing on to discuss himself and his own reasons for writing about it. Having buttressed his own position as an imitator of more established writers such as Fulcher and Baldric, it was now necessary to present himself as their competitor. For though he had have arrived relatively late to the subject of the First Crusade, he sought to demonstrate that his voice was, nevertheless, distinct.

In the final section of his prologue, Orderic sought to win over his readers by demonstrating his rhetorical skill through the utilisation of the literary theme of humility. Scholars have long recognised the presence of this and other *topoi* within the prologues of medieval chronicles, and have debated their value in providing genuine insights into the mentality of the historian. For if such declarations of modesty are merely generic rhetorical flourishes in the style of

⁴⁸ OV V. 188-90. For more on the textual relationship between Orderic and Baldric of Bourgueil see below, ch.3.

⁴⁹ Gransden, 'Prologues', p.56.

⁵⁰ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, p.176.

Classical literary convention, then there can be little that is unique about them, it has been argued.⁵¹ Yet prologues were a place for creativity as well as convention. As Antonia Gransden has argued, they shed much light on the historian and his task and therefore ‘should not be dismissed as mere verbiage’.⁵² Orderic’s prologue to Book IX is an excellent example of this, for there are many different expressions of the humility *topos* present there. Orderic described himself as ‘the least of all’ (*minimus omnium*), and twice called his sprawling work a ‘little book’ (*opusculum*). Furthermore, he appears acutely aware of his age, identifying himself as a sexagenarian and claiming to be ‘shackled’ (*Prepedior*) by old age.⁵³ At the time of writing, in 1135, Orderic was probably exactly sixty years old, in what would prove to be the final decade of his life. He had been writing the *Historia* for over twenty years and so it would not be at all surprising if, by this time, he was keen to finish the work. Chibnall’s belief that Orderic wrote part of book VIII, all of book IX, and most of Book X in a single year adds further credence to this point.⁵⁴ It would thus seem that Orderic meant much of what wrote in the prologue; his is likely an example of the genre in which reality informed rhetoric.⁵⁵

The drama of the prologue is achieved through a series of rhyming clauses which, apart from the noun *opusculo*, are all first person singular verbs that, here in their present tense form, end in ‘o’. Furthermore, it is striking that of these nine verbs, all but one is accompanied by an infinitive. Thus, the first set of three verbs emphasises the positive sense of enthusiasm about the prospect of writing about the First Crusade, ‘I love’ (*diligo*), ‘I am eager to exalt’ (*attollere gestio*), ‘I desire to begin’ (*ordiri appeto*). This then gives way to feelings of fear and doubt, ‘I am afraid to approach’ (*aggreddi timeo*) and ‘I dare not promise’ (*polliceri non*

⁵¹ For a good discussion of the main issues see Gransden, ‘Prologues in the Historiography’, pp.55-61.

⁵² *Ibid*, p.59.

⁵³ OV V. 6.

⁵⁴ OV V. xi-xii.

⁵⁵ On this point see, more generally, Gransden ‘Prologues’, pp.59-61.

audeo). The key moment of transition comes with the statement ‘but I am unable to pass over’ (*sed...preteream nescio*). The basis of this statement was the fact that the First Crusade was so noble a theme (*tam nobile thema*), that it could not be left untouched by Orderic. Finally, two negative verb constructions are used to convey that the account remains a daunting undertaking for the author, ‘I cannot endure’ (*perpeti nequeo*), ‘I do not have’ (*non habeo*). The final verb and infinitive in this sequence therefore expresses the result of this: ‘I hasten to finish’ (*finire festino*).⁵⁶ The tension between enthusiasm and timidity at the scale of the task and the glory of the topic in question is one that is thus never entirely resolved in the prologue. What does come across clearly from all of this, though, is the argument behind the rhetoric of these twin emotions, which is that the First Crusade remained a subject eminently worthy of attention in the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Orderic’s sprawling work would not be complete unless it contained an account of it. Having thus won his readers through a highly crafted prologue which mixed rhetoric with reality and humility with honesty, Orderic now launched into his account of the First Crusade.

Gilbert of Lisieux, Walter of Cormeilles and the Star Shower

Orderic began his account of the First Crusade with a unique story in which he sought to stamp his own local and monastic perspective on the narrative at the very outset. He began with a brief summary of portentous events in the world, in a passage similar to that found elsewhere in the *Historia*. Then he described the turbulent affairs of the year 1094 when warfare, rebellion, drought and famine seemed to be widespread.⁵⁷ Having done so, he then introduced the year 1095 in the same annalistic fashion, lifting the next paragraph almost entirely from the words of Baldric of Bourgueil’s *Historia Ierosolimitana*. Yet as can be seen

⁵⁶ OV V. 6.
⁵⁷ OV V. 8.

below, he considerably shortened Baldric's account, reducing it from ninety-two words down to thirty-four words:

<p>Baldric's <i>Historia</i>:</p> <p>Accordingly, in the year from the incarnation of the Lord 1095, the third indiction, on the day before the nones of April, the fourth day, on the twenty-fifth day of the moon, a great dispersal of stars was seen by innumerable observers in France, with a density they would have believed to be a hailstorm if not for its brightness. Some were even conjecturing about those that had fallen; yet we presume to affirm nothing rashly about those lying dead. Yet we know, as the truth bears witness, that someday the stars will fall from heaven. Moreover, if anyone is uncertain about the scattering and trusts us and our annals, he will discover what is written in them, that he might at least rest. However, we can assign very little to what this principally portends, particularly as it has not yet been given to us to know the mystery of God. But the movement of Christians compares through comparisons and certain other correspondences to the movement of the stars.⁵⁸</p>	<p>Orderic:</p> <p><i>In the year from the incarnation of the Lord 1095, the third indiction, on the day before the nones of April, the fourth day, on the twenty-fifth day of the moon, a great dispersal of stars was seen by innumerable observers in France, with a density they would have believed to be a hailstorm if not for its brightness. Many even supposed the stars to have fallen in order that the scripture might be fulfilled which says that someday the stars will fall from heaven.</i>⁵⁹</p>
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⁵⁸ Anno ~~siquidem~~ ab incarnatione domini millesimo nonagesimo quinto, pridie nonarum Aprilium, feria quarta, luna uigesima quinta, uisus est ab innumeris inspectoribus in Galliis tantus stellarum discursus, ut grando, nisi lucent, pro densitate putarentur. Opinabantur etiam ~~quidam~~ eas cecidisse; ~~nos tamen de earum oecubitu nichil temere praesumimus affirmare. Nouimus tamen, ueritate testante, quia quandoque stellae cadent de coelo. De discursu autem uel earum coruscationibus, si quis haesitat, uel nobis credit, uel annalibus nostris, in quibus id notatum repperiet, saltem adquiescat. Quid autem concursus iste praecipue portenderit minime diffinimus, praesertim cum nobis nondum datum sit nosse mysterium Dei. Sed per parabolas et quasdam competencias motui stellarum Christianitatis motum comparabant.~~ BB I.vii. p.141.

⁵⁹ Anno ab incarnatione Domini M^oXC^oV^o indictione iii pridie nonas Aprilis, feria iiii, luna XXV in Gallis ab innumeris inspectoribus uisus est tantus stellarum discursus; ut grando nisi lucret pro densitate putarentur. Multi etiam stellas cecidisse opinati sunt; ut scriptura impleretur quae dicit, quia quandoque stellae cadent de coelo. OV V. 8.

Having recounted this cosmic phenomenon, Baldric moved on. Yet Orderic paused here for he had much more information to include about this episode, which he added in the paragraph that followed:

Gilbert, bishop of Lisieux, an aged doctor, most-skilled in many arts, was long accustomed to observing the stars each night, and, as a wise astrologer, expertly marking down their courses. So this physician anxiously saw from afar this prodigy of the stars, and called to the watchman who was guarding his court for the others who were sleeping. ‘Do you see this spectacular sign, Walter?’, he said. But he said, ‘I see, lord, but I do not know what it portends.’ The old man said, ‘It prefigures the transmigration of peoples from kingdom to kingdom, I believe. For many will depart who will never return, until the stars return to their own orbits, from which they are now clearly falling, as is seen. Others, truly, will remain in the high and holy place, like stars shining in the firmament.’ Walter of Cormeilles related to me a long time afterwards that which he heard from the mouth of the prudent physician about the dispersal of the stars at the same moment at which the strange event happened.⁶⁰

What, then, is the historian to make of this passage? Why did Orderic deem it necessary to diverge from Baldric’s account of the First Crusade in order to include this story in the narrative?

Cosmic signs and portents were closely associated with the crusade movement from the time of its inception at the Council of Clermont. Like Orderic, Henry of Huntingdon made a textual connection between star-showers and the beginning of his account of the First

⁶⁰ Gislebertus Luxouiensis episcopus, senex medicus, multarum artium peritissimus, singulis noctibus sidera diu contemplari solebat, et cursus eorum utpote sagax horoscopus callide denotabat. Is itaque prodigium astrorum phisicus sollicite prospexit, uigilemque qui curiam suam aliis dormientibus custodiebat aduocauit. ‘Videsne’ inquit ‘Gualteri hoc spectabile signum?’ At ille, ‘Domine uideo, sed quid portendat nescio.’ Senex ait, ‘Transmigratio populorum de regno in regnum ut opinor prefiguratur. Multi autem abibunt, qui nunquam redibunt, donec ad proprias absides astra redeant, unde nunc ut nobis uidetur liquido labant. Alii uero permanebunt in loco sullimi et sancto, uelut stellae fulgentes in firmamento.’ Gualterius itaque Cormeliensis post multum tempus michi retulit, hoc quod ab ore prudentis archiatri de discursu stellarum audiuit, in eodem momento quo res monstruosa contigit. OV V. 8-10.

Crusade. His narrative of the armed pilgrimage came early on in book vii of the *Historia Anglorum* in the midst of his annalistic account of the reign of William Rufus. In order to transition from one subject to the other he ended his chapter on the seventh and eighth years of Rufus' reign with a comment relating to the latter year, 1095: 'At that time stars were seen to fall from heaven, so thickly that they were not able to be counted.' (*Eo tempore stelle uise sunt de celo cadere, ita spisse quod numerari non poterant.*) Only then did Henry begin his account of the First Crusade.⁶¹ Such wonders led Jonathan Riley-Smith to write that 'The message [of crusade] was all the more forceful for being proclaimed in the flickering light of a remarkable sequence of natural wonders, which began before Clermont, continued during the preaching in 1096 and then, after a break, resumed in the autumn of 1097, enveloping the crusade in a magical penumbra...Against this spectacular backdrop the preaching of the crusade went ahead and the news of the preaching spread.'⁶² Although the prominence and frequency of such miracles and signs of divine approval during the course of the First Crusade has long been noted by historians, much important work has been produced on the subject in recent years, stressing the relationship between the miraculous events and the narratives in which they appear.⁶³ Here it is worth noting that while these signs of divine approval survive only in the words of the text, we should not simply dismiss them wholesale as being the result of mere literary invention. For Bernard Hamilton has shown that at least one such phenomenon, the appearance of three suns simultaneously present in the sky related by Fulcher of Chartres in his *Historia Hierosolymitana*, was described in almost identical fashion by *The Times* newspaper after an occurrence in 2003.⁶⁴ Whatever their cause, such signs provided reassurance for the crusaders, both on a personal level in terms of their

⁶¹ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.4, pp.420-22.

⁶² Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, 1986), p.34.

⁶³ See especially Bernard Hamilton, "'God Wills It': Signs of Divine Approval in the Crusade Movement', *SCH* 41 (2005), 88-98; William J. Purkis, 'Stigmata on the First Crusade', *SCH* 41 (2005), 99-108; Yvonne Friedman, 'Miracle, Meaning and Narrative in the Latin East', *SCH* 41 (2005), 123-134. More generally, see Carl Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.23-67.

⁶⁴ Hamilton, "'God Wills It'", p.97; Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, p.16.

salvation, and as a sign of the on-going support of God for the crusader army throughout the course of their long and often difficult journey towards Jerusalem.⁶⁵ They became particularly important during the months of crisis experienced at Antioch in the summer of 1098, with the discovery of the Holy Lance presented in many of the narratives as the decisive factor in the eventual crusader victory against Kerbogah's army on 28 June.⁶⁶ This strong connection between the miraculous and the crusading movement retained its importance in the memories of the peoples of western Europe and was recorded in the numerous written histories composed in the decades that followed. Indeed, the remarkable successes of the First Crusade, culminating in the capture of Jerusalem in July 1099, only reinforced the sense amongst contemporaries that God had willed the undertaking.⁶⁷ Thus, as Yvonne Friedman has observed, 'Having no doubt that the success of the First Crusade was a miracle, God's intervention in history, the chroniclers' rendering of events was accordingly replete with miracles'.⁶⁸ This, then, is the context in which Orderic's account of the star shower ought to be viewed.

The episode which Orderic described has received some attention in the scholarship. Bernard Hamilton briefly noted Gilbert of Lisle's interpretation of the star-shower, writing that because the First Crusade had at that point not yet been preached, this phenomenon came to be seen as 'a kind of early warning system', both after the Council of Clermont and also during the course of the crusade itself.⁶⁹ Amanda Jane Hingst also commented on the incident, observing the 'sympathy between the heavens and humanity', with the movement of

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.91-2.

⁶⁶ For a nuanced reassessment of the importance of the Holy Lance see Thomas Asbridge, 'The Holy Lance of Antioch: Power, Devotion and Memory on the First Crusade', *RMS* 33 (2007), 3-36.

⁶⁷ Hamilton, "'God Wills It'", p.96.

⁶⁸ Friedman, 'Miracle, Meaning and Narrative', p.123.

⁶⁹ Hamilton, "'God Wills It'", p.94-5.

the stars perceived as being closely related to the movement of peoples.⁷⁰ Yet the story has not been considered in terms of its wider significance as part of the much larger story which Orderic was trying to tell. To put it another way, what does this early passage in book IX suggest about the nature of Orderic's narrative of the First Crusade as a whole? How does this story relate to the rest of the *Historia*? For although small, it will be seen this episode as one of the first parts of a much larger edifice which Orderic was intentionally building as he wrote book IX. Here the reader is afforded a first glimpse of Orderic's creativity as he added freely to the basic narrative of the First Crusade which he took from Baldric of Bourgueil.

Orderic's additional material regarding the star-shower meant that his version of this episode became substantially larger than Baldric's, and more significant in nature, totalling one hundred and twenty-four words in the Latin. The material which Orderic omitted from his account of the event concerned Baldric's unwillingness to provide a strict interpretation of this unusual cosmic event, and his disregard for those observers whom he regarded as rash for doing exactly that: 'we presume to affirm nothing rashly' (*nichil temere praesumimus affirmare*). Though unsure of the exact meaning of the star-shower, Baldric nevertheless offered his readers a general parallel between the movement of the crusader army and the movement of the stars themselves. He defended his interpretation of the phenomenon in writing that 'it has not yet been given to us to know the mystery of God' (*praesertim cum nobis nondum datum sit nosse mysterium Dei*), a clear allusion to Jesus' words in Matthew 13:11.⁷¹ Baldric thus used this scripture to stress to his readers that his was a measured and reliable interpretation of the strange event. It was this section which Orderic cut from book IX. While his interpretation of the event was, at its core, very similar to that of Baldric, he used a story of his own and had Gilbert of Lisieux provide a developed version of the parallel

⁷⁰ Hingst, *The Written World*, pp.89-91.

⁷¹ BB I.vii. p.141.

between the crusader army and the stars in the form of direct speech to the night watchman, a certain Walter of Cormeilles. The textual significance of these two individuals in the wider narrative of the *Historia* will be examined in what follows.

The subject of this passage, Gilbert Maminot, bishop of Lisieux (1077-1101), is a character who reappears throughout the pages of the *Historia*. He was Orderic's own diocesan bishop, who, we are told ordained the sixteen year old monk as sub-deacon in 1091. Orderic provided a summary of the life and character of the bishop in book V of the *Historia*, presenting a fairly balanced picture that included details of both his virtues and vices.⁷² While mentioning some of the bishop's faults, Orderic also had a good deal of respect for him. 'I could write more about his deeds', he observed, 'but I restrain my pen because I was promoted to the position of sub-deacon by him. So just as I have revealed certain reprehensible things about him, so it is fitting that I bring out the praiseworthy and imitable.'⁷³ Orderic's ordination at the age of sixteen was a deeply significant moment in his life, for he also spoke of it in book XIII of the *Historia*, in his epilogue to the entire work.⁷⁴ Gilbert is further mentioned in book X, in the context of his dispute with the monks of Saint-Evroult and the resultant consecration of Saint-Evroult in 1099, and Orderic later also noted his death.⁷⁵ When seen in this light, the significance of Gilbert's appearance at this point in the narrative of the First Crusade becomes apparent: here was an individual who was familiar not only to Orderic himself, but also to the monks of Saint-Evroult for whom he was writing. His involvement at this early point in the narrative thus provided Orderic with a clear link between the individuals within the monastic milieu of the pays d'Ouche and the history of the First Crusade. The Bishop of

⁷² OV III. 18-22. For more on the Bishop of Lisieux see Richard Allen, *The Norman Episcopate*, 2 vols., (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2009), 1:276-86.

⁷³ Plura de actibus eius scribere possum; sed reprimō calamum, quia ab ipso ad subdiaconatus gradum cum aliis ut opinor plus quam trecentis promotus sum. Unde sicut quaedam de illo protuli reprehensibilia; sic decet ut laudabilia promam et imitabilia. OV III. 20.

⁷⁴ OV VI. 554.

⁷⁵ OV V. 260-8, 320.

Lisieux's role in the story was one worth celebrating in Saint-Evrout's *Historia*. Moreover, his familiarity to Orderic's monastic readers and the fact that he was a senior churchman meant that he would also have been held in high regard for them, two details which are extremely important when considering the reporting of wondrous events such as this. As Carl Watkins noted, 'familiar kinds of witnesses were perhaps most prized when the chronicler was dealing with the most intractable and extraordinary sorts of information',⁷⁶ and this star-shower was certainly one such incident.

The same criteria also apply when it comes to the second individual mentioned in the text, a certain Walter of Cormeilles. For, rather unusually for him, Orderic revealed his source for Gilbert of Lisieux's interpretation of the star-shower in the final sentence of the paragraph, observing: 'Walter of Cormeilles related to me a long time afterwards that which he heard from the mouth of the prudent physician...' (*Gualterius itaque Cormeliensis post multum tempus michi retulit, hoc quod ab ore prudentis archiatri...audiuit*).⁷⁷ Thus, while Orderic had apparently not heard the story directly from the bishop, he sought to make it clear to his readers that his account was nevertheless drawn from the trustworthy report of the only other person who had been with Gilbert of Lisieux at the time the cosmic event happened. It has been suggested that Walter of Cormeilles may have been the successor of Ansfrid of Cormeilles, a tenant-in-chief in Domesday Gloucestershire and Herefordshire in 1086.⁷⁸ Ansfrid had likely accompanied William fitz Osbern to England in 1066, and thereby

⁷⁶ Watkins, 'Memories of the Marvellous', p.101.

⁷⁷ OV V. 8-10.

⁷⁸ I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies: A Study of their Origin and Descent, 1086-1327* (Oxford, 1960), p.86; for a more recent restatement of this argument see K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People: A Prosopography of Persons Occurring in English Documents 1066-1166 I: Domesday Book* (Woodbridge, 1999), p.155.

benefitted greatly from his conquests in these areas.⁷⁹ He was lord of Tarrington in Herefordshire at the time of Domesday's compilation, and, much later, during the reign of King Richard I, its lord was another Walter of Cormeilles. This, along with the close proximity between Lisieux and Cormeilles (a distance of about 18 kilometres), led I. J. Sanders to suggest that the Walter of Cormeilles who told Orderic about the star-shower preceding Clermont was Ansfrid's successor as lord of Tarrington.⁸⁰ However, the circumstantial nature of this evidence means that this line of argument should be treated with caution. While nothing else is known about the identity of Walter of Cormeilles other than the information provided by Orderic here in book IX, a little more may be suggested about his probable significance to the monks of the pays d'Ouche. His toponymic, *Cormeliensis*, roots him firmly in the monastic landscape of Normandy. For, as Lewis Loyd argued, the name *de Cormeliis* or *Cormeliensis* derives from Cormeilles-en-Eure, which is situated some 60 kilometres north of Saint-Evroult.⁸¹ As Orderic noted in book III of the *Historia*, the abbey of Notre Dame de Cormeilles was founded by William fitz Osbern on his lands in the diocese of Lisieux in 1060 and was thus established at the same time as Saint-Evroult itself.⁸² Significantly, the first prior of Cormeilles, was Osbern, son of Herfast, who subsequently left there in 1061 to become the third abbot of Saint-Evroult, replacing Robert of Grandmesnil, who had by this time been exiled to southern Italy.⁸³ Osbern was abbot of Saint-Evroult for just over five years, dying in May 1066. Due to his important role at Saint-Evroult, he received great praise from Orderic in book III of the *Historia*, and it is from here that almost

⁷⁹ Christopher Lewis, 'The Norman Settlement of Herefordshire under William I', *ANS* 7 (1985), 195-213 at p.202; W. E. Wightman, 'The Palatine Earldom of William fitz Osbern in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire (1066-1071)', *English Historical Review* 77:1 (1962), pp. 6-17.

⁸⁰ Sanders, *English Baronies*, p.86 n.3.

⁸¹ Lewis C. Loyd, *The Origins of Some Anglo-Norman Families* (Leeds, 1951), pp.33-34.

⁸² OV II. 12, 282; on the abbots of Cormeilles see Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, 2:79-84. It was William fitz Osbern's second foundation, after Lyre, for which see S. F. Hockey, 'William fitz Osbern and the Endowment of his Abbey of Lyre', *ANS* 3 (1981), 96-105.

⁸³ See above pp.91-94.

all of our biographical information about him comes.⁸⁴ It should also be noted that, in his move from Cormeilles to Saint-Evroult, Osbern was accompanied by a monk named Guitmund, who acted as a trusted advisor throughout the abbacy of his master and played an important role in the composition of the sung liturgy at Saint-Evroult and was thus held in high regard by the monks there. Orderic noted that seventeen years after Osbern's death, during Mainer's abbacy, the bones of Guitmund and his abbot were translated to the new chapter-house of Saint-Evroult.⁸⁵ Finally, William, the third abbot of Cormeilles also receives a later mention from Orderic in book XI.⁸⁶

It is thus clear from the pages of the *Historia* that some very real connections existed between Cormeilles and Saint-Evroult. The passages cited above on individuals from Cormeilles provide us with some precious glimpses of this relationship. While it is impossible to say exactly how strong this connection was, it is apparent that at least a part of the early history of the two foundations was closely intertwined, a point borne out by the prominence of Osbern of Cormeilles in book III of the *Historia*. His name was also listed in the necrology of Saint-Evroult for 27 May, the date of his death in 1066.⁸⁷ On this basis alone, the toponymic *Cormeliensis* was, in all likelihood, familiar to the monks of Saint-Evroult and its usage here in Orderic's account of the First Crusade in book IX is therefore of great textual significance. It constitutes a further example of Orderic rooting his narrative in the monastic landscape of Saint-Evroult, this time via the monastery's association with the name of Cormeilles. Orderic's insertion of Walter of Cormeilles at this early point in book IX thus not only added

⁸⁴ OV II.106-116, 132-4.

⁸⁵ OV II.108, 134.

⁸⁶ OV VI. 168; Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, 2:81-82.

⁸⁷ Necrology of Saint-Evroult, p.484.

a great deal of credibility to his account of the star-shower,⁸⁸ but it also tied this episode to the other parts of the *Historia*. Coming so early on in his narrative of the First Crusade, it should be seen as a clear attempt to immediately gain the trust of his monastic readers for this latest part of his work. For having read a story concerning Gilbert of Lisieux and Walter of Corneilles, the monks of Saint-Evroult could continue on further into book IX safe in the knowledge that, as with the previous eight books of the *Historia*, the narrative would be primarily concerned with relating the rich and multi-faceted history of their house. This interpretation also explains the differing positions of the star-shower in the two narratives of Orderic and Baldric of Bourgueil. For while Baldric's account of the dispersal of the stars came after Pope Urban's speech at Clermont, Orderic repositioned it to precede the Council. The significance of the star-shower is thus heightened, as the reader is given the impression that the First Crusade resulted from Gilbert of Lisieux's prophetic announcement that came before it in the narrative. Thus, while Orderic lifted the basic account of the star-shower itself from the pages of Baldric of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosolimitana*, what he did with it was very different. For redeployed in the pages of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, it not only pointed forward to the rest of the story of the First Crusade, but, ultimately, back to the world of Saint-Evroult as well.

Clermont, Rouen, Curthose and the Gens Normannorum

Having recounted the star-shower in the skies over Normandy and Northern France, Orderic next sought to demonstrate their fulfilment at the Council of Clermont. Historians have long recognised the significance of the speech of Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont in November 1095, following many of the twelfth-century chroniclers in regarding it as the

⁸⁸ For more on the reliability of witnesses see Watkins, 'Memories of the Marvellous', pp.96-7; *idem*, *History and the Supernatural*, p.40.

beginning of the story of the First Crusade.⁸⁹ Although not present in the *Gesta Francorum*, the Council of Clermont was soon added into the many later histories related to it.⁹⁰ The pope's speech providing a fitting opener to what became the narrative arc of the armed pilgrimage, beginning at Clermont and ending with the battle of Ascalon. Orderic followed this pattern, including an account of the Council almost immediately after the star-shower discussed above. In his classic 1906 study of Urban's speech, D. C. Munro argued that Orderic's account was 'obviously copied' from that of Baldric of Bourgueil and therefore dismissed it as being 'of little importance' to historians of the First Crusade.⁹¹ Yet Munro's comments were tempered by Chibnall, who wrote that 'Orderic was less dependent on Baudry of Dol than Munro implies...'⁹² Indeed, Chibnall's notes give us a general picture of the way in which Orderic's version of the speech was constructed, noting in particular his textual borrowings from Baldric of Bourgueil and some more general similarities with William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.⁹³ Even the most cursory of examinations of Orderic and Baldric's accounts of Clermont reveals major differences, most notably in terms of length. For Baldric's version of Urban's speech takes up seven pages in the modern edition of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, whilst Orderic's is much shorter, lasting for only half of a page.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Much has been written on the Council of Clermont. The early work of D. C. Munro still merits attention, 'The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095', *American Historical Review* 11:2 (1906), 231-42. For more recent analysis see H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Pope Urban II's Preaching of the First Crusade', *History* 55 (1970), 177-88; Robert Somerville's work remains essential reading: *The Councils of Urban II: Volume I: Decreta Claromontensia* (Amsterdam, 1972), 'The Council of Clermont (1095), and Latin Christian Society', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 12 (1974), 55-90, 'The Council of Clermont and the First Crusade', *Studia Gratiana* 20 (1976), 323-37 and 'Clermont 1095: Crusade and Canons', in Luis García-Guijarro Ramos (ed.) *La Primera Cruzada, Novecientos Años Después: el Concilio de Clermont y los Orígenes del Movimiento Cruzado* (Madrid, 1997), 63-77. See also Penny J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095-1270* (Cambridge, MA, 1991), pp.1-36 and Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade*, pp.13-30. On the rewriting of Urban's speech in the different narratives of the First Crusade see Ward, 'Principles of Rhetorical Historiography'.

⁹⁰ For these see France, 'The Use of the Anonymous *Gesta Francorum*'.

⁹¹ Munro, 'The Speech of Pope Urban II', pp.232, 234.

⁹² OV V. 15 n.10.

⁹³ OV V. 16-17. ns.1-3.

⁹⁴ BB I.iv. 133-139; OV V.14-16.

More fundamental interpretative differences also become apparent on closer inspection of the language of the two accounts. In Baldric, Urban's appeal is made on the basis of the close filial relations existing between western and eastern Christians, as Steve Biddlecombe has noted.⁹⁵ Thus, the very first sentence of his speech includes the following, 'Our Christians, our brothers, members of Christ, are being flogged, oppressed, injured. Your own brothers, your comrades, your womb-sharers. For you are sons of the same Christ and of the same church' (*Christiani nostri, fratres nostri, membra Christi, flagellantur, opprimuntur, iniuriantur. Germani fratres uestri, contubernales uestri, couterini uestri. Nam eiusdem Christi et eiusdem ecclesiae filii estis*).⁹⁶ While Orderic certainly seems to have advocated a close relationship between western and eastern Christians, appealing to this elsewhere in Book IX,⁹⁷ this emphasis is absent from his account of Urban's speech. Instead, Orderic had Urban say that as well as Antioch, Nicaea and Jerusalem, many other cities had also been seized, and the Christians slaughtered like sheep. He emphasised both the severity and widespread nature of the oppression of the Christians in the East, and, more unusually, in Africa. A second area of difference is in the vocabulary the two authors had Urban use to describe the oppressors of the Eastern Christians. Baldric calls them 'wicked men' (*nequam homines*), 'gentiles' (*gentiles*), and, most notably 'illegitimate and unclean Turks' (*Turci spurii et immundi*). Such phrases led Penny Cole to describe Baldric's account of Urban's sermon as 'largely a restatement of the causative importance of Muslim pollution' in triggering the First Crusade.⁹⁸ This language of religious pollution was commonly used by the chroniclers, and in this regard Orderic was no different, viewing the First Crusade as 'a

⁹⁵ BB, pp.44-46, and more generally, pp.34-51.

⁹⁶ BB I.iv. 133.

⁹⁷ Notably, at the siege of Jerusalem Orderic had Tancred say of the Eastern Christians 'they are our brothers and friends' (*Fratres nostri sunt et amici*). OV V. 170. For further such references see OV V. 48, 120-26, 168-70.

⁹⁸ Cole, "'O God, the heathen have come into your inheritance" (Ps. 78.1): The Theme of Religious Pollution in Crusade Documents, 1095-1188', in Maya Shatzmiller (ed.) *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria* (Leiden, 1993), 84-111 at, p.96, on Baldric see pp.95-7. See also *eadem*, 'Christians, Muslims and the "Liberation" of the Holy Land', pp.4-5.

purgative enterprise' in which he approved of the massacre of the Muslims at Jerusalem.⁹⁹ Yet while Baldric frequently used terms such as 'illegitimate' and 'unclean', Orderic seems to have favoured the terms 'heathens' and 'foreigners', (*ethnici* and *allophili*),¹⁰⁰ both of which are absent from the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. What this reveals is that Orderic freely deployed his own vocabulary in his account of Urban's speech at Clermont. Such differences, though small, are significant. They reveal the distinctiveness of Orderic's narrative even when viewed on a word-by-word level. The example of Urban's speech at Clermont also demonstrates the control which Orderic had over his narrative. For while he felt comfortable borrowing the overall structure of the narrative of the First Crusade from Baldric, and often lifted entire paragraphs of text from him, in doing so he remained free to innovate on a micro-level, inserting individual words into the narrative which ensured that he maintained his own individual vocabulary and perspective on events. Orderic's borrowings did not limit his creativity as a writer. He took what he wanted from Baldric, and omitted specific words and phrases that he would not naturally have used himself.

What is perhaps of most interest to this present study of Orderic's account of Clermont is its position within the wider narrative of book IX. For just as he placed the star-shower before

⁹⁹ Cole, "O God, the heathen have come into your inheritance", pp.100-1.

¹⁰⁰ Cole translated *ethnicus* as 'foreigner', "O God, the heathen have come into your inheritance", p.100, but its meaning may be stronger than this. Moreover, translating *ethnici* as 'heathens' helps to differentiate it from *allophili*. Orderic used the term *Ethnicus* forty-one times in the *Historia*, OV I. 289, where it is used almost exclusively in a crusading context, with only one reference in book II, in which the word is employed in a more general sense. Chibnall lists ten usages of the word *allophili*, OV I. 250. She translates it variously as 'foreign peoples', 'Moslems', 'pagans', 'Saracens', 'infidels', and 'heathen', For these, see OV II. 274, IV. 166, V. 4, 16, 158, 170, 180, 348 (twice), VI. 170. A more specific translation is necessary, however, for Orderic used the term *infidelis* to describe the Muslim 'infidel' in both the crusading East and in Iberia, see OV V. 338 (twice) and OV VI. 406, though it is important to note that this term was also used in a non-crusading context to describe 'unbelieving' Christians, OV II. 44. Similarly, he frequently used the term *paganus* throughout the *Historia* to describe the Muslims of southern Italy, OV II. 58, III. 86, and the Danish invaders of Anglo-Saxon England and Normandy, OV II. 240 (twice), III. 304, 326. The vast majority of references, though, refer to the enemies of the crusaders, with Chibnall citing seventy-six usages of the word in volumes V and VI alone, for all of which see OV I. 338, making it by far the most popular word used by Orderic in this regard. He also made frequent use of the term *gentilis*, on which see OV I. 298, and, to a much lesser extent, *ydolatra* and *ydolatria*, OV I. 386. Though Chibnall did not include a list of references to the word *Sarracenus* in her *index verborum*, an electronic search of the *Patrologia Latina* reveals fifty instances in the *Historia*.

Clermont rather than after, so he also tacked an account of the synod of Rouen onto the end of it, which took place in February 1096.¹⁰¹ For immediately after relating the overwhelming response to Urban's speech,¹⁰² Orderic wrote the passage below, the significance of which will be explored in what follows:

Odo, bishop of Bayeux, Gilbert of Évreux, and Serlo of Sées were present at the Auvergne council, together with envoys of the other prelates of Normandy with their excusatory letters, and having returned from there with the apostolic blessing, they carried synodal letters to their fellow bishops. Consequently, Archbishop William [Bona Anima] summoned a council to Rouen, and discussed the needs of the church with the suffragan bishops. Then all assembled at Rouen in the month of February, considered in unanimity the canons of the synod, which had been made at Clermont, confirmed each of the apostolic decrees, and issued this document for posterity...¹⁰³

Orderic then listed the decrees which were promulgated at Rouen,¹⁰⁴ before concluding with some reflections on their ineffectiveness within Normandy due to the warlike nature of the Norman people:

Thus Gilbert, bishop of Évreux, who was called "the Crane" because of his height, and Fulbert, archdeacon of Rouen publicly promulgated the decrees of the fathers, and Archbishop William and the other prelates confirmed them by their authority. Indeed, Odo of Bayeux and Gilbert of Lisieux, Turgis of Avranches and Serlo of Sées and also Ralph of Coutances sanctioned the aforesaid synod; the abbots of the whole province were also present, with the clergy and the section of the nobility desiring peace. The prelates undoubtedly established the most appropriate

¹⁰¹ For more on the synod of Rouen see Raymonde Foreville, 'The Synod of the Province of Rouen in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', trans. by Geoffrey Martin, in C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe et al (eds) *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to C. R. Cheney on his 70th Birthday* (Cambridge, 1976), 19-39 at p.31. See also Somerville, 'Clermont 1095', p.70. More generally, see Chibnall, 'Canon Law'.

¹⁰² OV V. 18.

¹⁰³ Odo episcopus Baiocensis, Gislebertus Ebroicensis, et Serlo Sagiensis, legati quoque aliorum de Normannia presulum cum excusatoriis apicibus Aruernensi concilio interfuerunt, et inde cum benedictione apostolica regressi sinodales epistolas coepiscopis suis detulerunt. Guillelmus igitur archiepiscopus concilium Rotomagi aggregavit, et cum suffraganeis episcopis de utilitatibus aecclesiasticis tractavit. Tunc omnes mense Februario Rotomum conuenerunt, capitula sinodi quae apud Clarum montem facta est unanimiter contemplati sunt; scita quoque apostolica confirmauerunt, et huiusmodi scriptum posteris dimiserunt...OV V. 18-20.

¹⁰⁴ OV V. 20-22.

laws out of a good will, but with the duke failing to enforce justice, they accomplished very little to the benefit of the tranquillity of the Church. For what they determined at that time, as has already been said, was almost void. For extraordinary discord was amongst the nobles of Normandy at that time; and a great undertaking of the discontented spread throughout the whole region and the law of the violent was to plunder and pillage. Fire and plunder devastated the whole land, so that many of the inhabitants were forced into exile, and, with the priests in flight, they deserted the destroyed parishes and desolate churches. The Norman race is untamed, and, unless restrained, it is most eager to do wrong. They strive to rule in all societies, wherever they may be, and transgressing the course of truth and faith, they are often actuated by the ardour of ambition...¹⁰⁵

What, then, is one to make of these passages? How does Orderic's account of the synod of Rouen relate to that of Council of Clermont which directly precedes it in the narrative sequence of book IX of the *Historia*?

The existing discussion of the synod of Rouen has centred on the question of Orderic's sources for his accounts of both it and Clermont. His comment that Serlo of Orgères, bishop of Sées and former abbot of Saint-Evroult, was present at Clermont led Chibnall to suggest that he 'may have been Orderic's source of information'.¹⁰⁶ More recently, however, Richard Allen has observed that 'Unfortunately, even though Orderic knew Serlo well, he provides no

¹⁰⁵ Haec itaque Gislebertus Ebroicensis episcopus, qui pro sua proceritate cognominabatur Grus; et Fulbertus Rotomagensis archidiaconus scita patrum palam promulgauerunt, et Guillelmus archiepiscopus aliique presules auctoritate sua corroborauerunt. Odo quippe Baiocensis et Gislebertus Luxouiensis, Turgisus Abrincatensis et Serlo Sagiensis atque Radulfus Constanciensis pefatam sinodum sanxerunt, abbates quoque totius prouinciae cum clero et parte procerum pacem optantium affuerunt. Praesules nimirum ex bona uoluntate commodissima statuerunt, sed principali iusticia deficiente ad emolumentum aecclesiasticae tranquillitatis parum profecerunt. Nam quaeque tunc ut pretaxatum est deffinierunt, pene irrita fuerunt. Erat enim eo tempore mira seditio inter optimates Normanniae; et discolis per totam regionem grandis conatus et uiolentum fas furari seu rapere. Incendia et rapinae totam patriam deuastauerunt, indigenarum quam plurimos in exilium extruserunt, et parrochiis destructis aecclesias presbiteri fugiendo desolatas deseruerunt. Indomita gens Normannorum est; et nisi rigido rectore coherceatur ad facinus promptissima est. In omnibus collegiis ubicumque fuerint dominari appetunt, et ueritatis fideique tenorem preuaricantes ambitionis estu multoties effecti sunt...OV V. 22-24.

¹⁰⁶ OV V. 19 n.3. For more on Serlo see OV III. 118; IV. 252-54; V. 260-66; VI. 336-40, 554; Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:435-50; Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, 2:281.

information concerning the bishop's opinion on the pope's call to retake the Holy Land, although since the council itself did not actually consider this issue, the bishop of Sées may never have felt compelled to make his own feelings known.¹⁰⁷ This lack of information weakens the suggestion that Serlo's words formed the basis of Orderic's account for either Clermont or Rouen. Had this been the case he would probably have informed the readers of the *Historia* of this fact, as he had previously done with Gilbert of Lisieux's interpretation of the star-shower in stating that his account was taken directly from the lips of Walter of Corneilles. The absence of such a sentence is telling. Orderic did not seek to make this claim in this passage and nor should those studying it. Serlo is never once privileged in either of the above passages on the synod of Rouen; rather, he is always listed in a conventional way, alongside the other bishops of Normandy at that time, Odo of Bayeux, Gilbert of Évreux, Gilbert of Lisieux, Turgis of Avranches, Ralph of Coutances and William Bona Anima of Rouen. Thus, while William Aird has suggested that Orderic's information came from either Serlo or Gilbert Évreux,¹⁰⁸ it seems more plausible to suggest that Orderic's accounts of Clermont and Rouen were informed by a number of individuals. The three bishops present at Clermont were Odo of Bayeux, Gilbert of Évreux and Serlo of Sées and so these are the most likely candidates.¹⁰⁹ Odo's death from disease in the early stages of the First Crusade, while wintering in Palermo in January or February 1097, reduces the likelihood of his involvement in this process of oral transmission.¹¹⁰ Yet there is some charter evidence linking the other two bishops to Saint-Evroult. For a charter, probably a conflation, survives from the cartulary of Saint-Evroult in which Serlo of Sées and Gilbert of Évreux retrospectively confirmed Richer of Laigle's donation of the church and lands of Laigle to the monastery. Gilbert of

¹⁰⁷ Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:439.

¹⁰⁸ William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy (c.1050-1134)* (Woodbridge, 2008), p.153 n.3.

¹⁰⁹ For more on Odo of Bayeux see David Bates, 'The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux (1049/50-1097)', *Speculum* 50:1 (1975), 1-20 and, more recently, Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:120-60. On Gilbert of Évreux see Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:226-39.

¹¹⁰ OV IV. 118, V. 210; Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:157.

Lisieux, who was present at the synod of Rouen, is also listed as a witness.¹¹¹ The charter is dated 13 November 1099, and clearly states that it was written on the day that the church of Saint-Evroult was dedicated, an important event in the history of the monastic community which Orderic recounted in book X of the *Historia*.¹¹² Though this would likely have been a time when much information was exchanged between the bishops and the monks of Saint-Evroult, Orderic says nothing concerning either Clermont or Rouen in his account of the dedication of the church and so the question of Orderic's sources must remain something of a mystery to the historian.

More important, though, is the textual significance of these passages. For the linking of the Council of Clermont with the synod of Rouen in book IX of the *Historia* reveals much about the way in which Orderic viewed the First Crusade, and also the way in which he wanted his readers at Saint-Evroult to understand it. For the narrative flows from Gilbert of Lisieux's interpretation of the star-shower to Urban's call to arms at the Council of Clermont, the synod of Rouen and, finally, ends with some reflections on the Normans and their duke which result from this. This sequence reveals Orderic's perspective on the crusade to have been a thoroughly Norman one in which each of these things were closely related. In the *Historia*, he presented an account of the First Crusade which was a product of the Norman world, flowing as much out of the decisions of the meeting of the Norman episcopate at Rouen as it did from the pope's speech at Clermont. Moreover, the presence of individuals such as Serlo of Sées, Gilbert of Lisieux and Gilbert of Évreux in this part of the text of book IX ties it closely to Saint-Evroult, for these were important individuals in the pages of the *Historia*, and therefore also in the communal history and memory of the monks of the pays d'Ouche. The

¹¹¹ Charters, no.VII, pp.195-6. For more on the charter see Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:235, n.70. On the lords of Laigle see Kathleen Thompson, 'The Lords of Laigle: Ambition and Insecurity on the Borders of Normandy', *ANS* 18 (1996), 177-199, and p.180 n.12 for the problematic nature of their early charters.

¹¹² OV V. 264-68.

significance of Orderic bridging his accounts of Clermont and Rouen with a sentence noting that Odo of Bayeux, Gilbert of Évreux and Serlo of Sées carried synodal letters from one to the other should therefore also be viewed in this light. It was likely included for the benefit of his monastic readers, to highlight the role played by these bishops and thus to root this part of the narrative of the First Crusade in the ecclesiastical milieu with which they would have been so familiar.

Orderic's comments here in book IX about the *gens Normannorum* formed an important part of the historiographical debate regarding the so-called "Norman myth".¹¹³ Thus, Graham Loud began his seminal article on the subject by quoting this passage as typical of the literary *topos* of the indomitable Norman people and their insatiable lust for power. Yet he made no comment on the location of this passage within the narrative of the *Historia*.¹¹⁴ Though at first glance apparently general in nature, the immediate context of Orderic's comments about the *indomita gens Normannorum* is the synod of Rouen, at which the Canons of Clermont were promulgated. More generally, this reflection on the Norman people comes in the early part of Orderic's account of the First Crusade, in book IX of the *Historia*. To borrow the language of Patrick Geary, Orderic's usage of the language of the *gens Normannorum* was thus a 'situational construct', whose deployment here in the *Historia* is a product of the specific narrative context in which it is being used.¹¹⁵ The link between the violent and unruly nature of the Norman nobility and the violence which Orderic had them inflicting on their own people was the Norman duke, Robert Curthose. Aird was thus right to observe that 'The point of Orderic's rhetoric was to explain why Duke Robert decided to make the journey to

¹¹³ See above, pp.75-6.

¹¹⁴ Loud, 'Gens Normannorum', p.104.

¹¹⁵ Patrick J. Geary, 'Ethnic Identity as a Situational Construct in the Early Middle Ages', *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113 (1983), 15-26.

Jerusalem.’¹¹⁶ His reflection on the Normans as an unruly people was thus not so much ‘a digression’, as Aird had earlier called it,¹¹⁷ but a return to a recurring theme in the *Historia* which was of great importance to Orderic throughout the work, and is particularly apparent in his account of the reign of Henry I in books X to XIII. For Orderic’s ideas about the insecurity of the duchy stemmed from the violence in and around the pays d’Ouche, and so while a strong ruler brought security to Saint-Evroult and also to the *Historia*’s outlook on the world, a weak ruler triggered the reverse. It was for this reason that Curthose received such heavy criticism in the pages of the *Historia*.¹¹⁸

While book IX differs little in this regard, there was, however, a need for Orderic to link his portrayal of Curthose’s ineffective rule with his participation in the First Crusade. The narrative move from the Council of Clermont to the synod of Rouen allowed him to do so. For in stressing that the synodal decrees effected little change in Normandy, Orderic created an opportunity to blame Curthose for this, thereby introducing his character into the narrative of book IX. His extensive reflection on the warlike nature of the Normans thus provided the context for Robert Curthose’s taking of the cross in 1096:

From the time of Rollo, powerful dukes have ruled the warlike Normans...Robert, however, a weak duke, fell from the vigour of his ancestors, and grew numb in sloth and weakness; he feared his provincial subordinates more than he was feared by them, and so a destructive evil proceeded everywhere in his land...Finally, Duke Robert, distressed at having seen such misfortune, and fearing still worse, having been abandoned by almost all, determined on the counsel of certain religious men to give up his land to his brother the king, and having taken the Cross of the Lord, to proceed to Jerusalem to make satisfaction to God for his sins.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p.154.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.154.

¹¹⁸ For further treatment of these ideas, see below, ch.4.

¹¹⁹ A Rollone ualidi duces prefuere Normannis pugnacibus...Rodbertus autem mollis dux a uigore priorum decedit, et pigricia mollicieque torpuit; plus prouinciales subditos timens quam ab illis timebatur, et inde

Orderic's presentation of Robert Curthose as a 'slothful and weak' (*pigricia mollicieque*) ruler comes through strongly here, for it is in this context that he wanted the duke's participation in the First Crusade to be seen.¹²⁰ Thus, rather than having a praiseworthy reason for taking the cross, Curthose's behaviour was presented as being firmly motivated by his general passivity as a ruler. For instead of attempting to solve the problems created by his own ineffectiveness he fled from them, with the implication being that he hoped his actions in the East would atone for his inactivity in Normandy. By linking Clermont and Rouen with the turbulence in Normandy in this way, Orderic thus sought to emphasise that the problems besetting the duchy could not be solved by the duke himself absenting from the situation. His perspective on Curthose at the outset of his narrative of the First Crusade was thus damning, as is so often the case in the pages of the *Historia*. And once again, it was firmly tied to some of the wider themes of this massive work: the turbulence in the Norman duchy; the varying effectiveness of the dukes in dealing with this perpetual problem; and, closely related to all of this, the way in which the monks of Saint-Evroult fared during these changes.

Orderic's portrayal of Robert Curthose contrasts sharply with Henry of Huntingdon's presentation of the Norman duke in the pages of the *Historia Anglorum*. For there Robert Curthose was given the decisive role in the battle of Dorylaeum, rallying the faltering crusader army at the moment of near-defeat and spear-heading a fresh charge against the Turks. According to Henry of Huntingdon, the result of this was that 'life returns to our men' (*Redit animus nostris*); the battle raged once again and it ended in a dramatic crusader victory.¹²¹ Ralph of Caen took this a stage further in his *Gesta Tancredi*, with Curthose not

damnosa peruersitas in terra eius passim grassabatur...Denique talibus infortuniis Rodbertus dux perspectis anxius, et adhuc peiora formidans utpote ab omnibus pene destitutus; consilio quorundam religiosorum decreuit terram suam fratri suo regi dimittere, et cruce Domini sumpta pro peccatis suis Deo satisfactorius in Ierusalem pergere. OV V. 26

¹²⁰ Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p.156.

¹²¹ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.7, pp.426-8; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, pp.174-5.

only rousing the soldiers, but also the fleeing Bohemond, the most well-known of the leaders of the First Crusade.¹²² Later, in a battle in early February 1098, noted as taking place beyond the Iron Bridge at the castle of Harim, Henry of Huntingdon listed Curthose first in the battle line, ahead of Godfrey of Bouillon and the other leaders of the crusader army, as ‘the invincible duke of the Normans’ (*dux inuictus Normannorum*).¹²³ Similarly, in the battle against Kerbogah on 28 June 1098, Curthose, although listed third this time, is the only leader to have an adjective alongside his name, ‘Robert the mighty Norman’ (*Robertus fortis Normannus*).¹²⁴ This is also the case when the crusader leaders surround Jerusalem. Here Robert’s name alone is accompanied by a superlative, ‘the most excellent duke of the Normans’ (*dux electissimus Normannorum*).¹²⁵ There are, then, a number of clear references up to this point in Henry of Huntingdon’s narrative which indicate that Curthose was intended as the hero of his account of the First Crusade. This suggestion would explain why, having recounted the capture of Jerusalem, Henry began the final chapter of his brief account of the crusade with a statement that seems to have been a natural development of these ideas: ‘Therefore they offered the kingdom of Jerusalem to the duke of the Normans.’ (*Optulerunt igitur regnum Ierosolim Normannorum duci.*) Yet, according to Henry, he refused it because of the labour involved, and God opposed him thereafter because of this decision.¹²⁶ The initially glowing reputation of Curthose was thus irreversibly tarnished, according to the *Historia Anglorum*. As Aird has noted, it is likely that this refusal of the crown was a tradition which emerged in the twelfth century as a way of explaining the crusade hero’s subsequent loss of Normandy at Tinchebray in 1106.¹²⁷ William of Malmesbury also referred

¹²² Ralph of Caen, lines 714-32, p.26; Bachrach and Bachrach, pp.46-7.

¹²³ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.9, p.432.

¹²⁴ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.15, p.438.

¹²⁵ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.17, p.442.

¹²⁶ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.18, p.442; see also vii.25, p.454.

¹²⁷ Aird, *Robert Curthose*, pp.184-6. For more on the differing portrayals of Robert Curthose in Norman historiography, particularly in the second half of the twelfth century see Nicholas L. Paul, *To Follow in their Footsteps: The Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London, 2012), pp.228-33.

to Curthose's refusal of the kingdom of Jerusalem because of the difficulties involved, and he too emphasised God's judgement on the duke for this shameful action. Moreover, while Curthose is not singled out for praise in the account of the First Crusade in Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* as he is in Henry of Huntingdon's version of events, the duke's rejection of the crown nevertheless still comes as something of a shock to the reader, as William of Malmesbury related it only after having first stressed the duke's heroics in battle against Kerbogah.¹²⁸ If such a tradition did exist, Henry of Huntingdon's account of the First Crusade in the *Historia Anglorum* was, in all likelihood, influenced by it. For, as has been shown, at the end of his narrative, his account aligned once more with Orderic's emphasis on the slothful nature of the Norman duke.

Hugh Bunel and the Siege of Jerusalem

Having overcome the period of crisis at Antioch,¹²⁹ the crusader army set its sights on Jerusalem, the goal of the whole journey, which they reached on 7 June 1099. The siege of the city was *the* climactic moment in the course of the First Crusade, the dramatic culmination of an undertaking which had begun three and a half years previously at Clermont.¹³⁰ By the time of Orderic's writing in the 1130s, this event had, as Jonathan Phillips observed, become 'so deeply ingrained in the collective memory of the West as to form a literary, cultural and political landmark'.¹³¹ It was one of the principal parts of the narrative of the First Crusade, the triumphant ending which cemented the reputation of the crusaders in the numerous chronicles which were written in the decades that followed. As with these other chroniclers, Orderic gave great prominence to the capture of Jerusalem in book IX of the *Historia*. While he generally followed Baldric of Bourgueil's version of

¹²⁸ William of Malmesbury, IV.389, p.702.

¹²⁹ For more on the siege of Antioch see below, ch.3.

¹³⁰ For a thorough overview of the siege of Jerusalem see France, *Victory in the East*, pp.325-66.

¹³¹ Jonathan P. Phillips, *The Second Crusade: Extending the Frontiers of Christendom* (New Haven, 2007), p.18.

events closely, he nonetheless made some notable departures from the historiographical tradition which he had inherited. His account of the conquest of Jerusalem includes two significant additional passages which punctuate the narrative at key moments and reveal much about Orderic's reasons for incorporating an account of the First Crusade into the sprawling written history of the monastery of Saint-Evroult.

The first of Orderic's additional passages appears at the very outset of the siege. At first he followed Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana*, relating how the various contingents of the crusader army pitched their tents on the different sides of the city, besieging it 'not as stepsons to a stepmother, but like sons would a mother' (*non tanquam nouercam priuigni, sed quasi matrem filii*), in order to free her from captivity.¹³² Before continuing his account of the siege itself,¹³³ as Baldric had done, Orderic felt it appropriate to pause the story in order to insert a passage of his own into the narrative:

At that time Hugh Bunel, the son of Robert of La Roche Mabile, a most skilled man at arms, approached the duke of the Normans and faithfully offered his service to him as his natural lord, and having been kindly received by him, he greatly aided those besieging Jerusalem with his hand and in his counsel.

Orderic then continued by recounting the circumstances by which Hugh came to be in Jerusalem at the same time as the armies of the First Crusade:

For long before in Normandy this man had cut to pieces the countess Mabel, because the same woman had violently taken away his paternal inheritance. For the great crime he had committed, the aforesaid knight fled thence, with his brothers Ralph, Richard and Joscelin, to Apulia and then to Sicily, and afterwards he withdrew to the Emperor Alexius in Greece, but nowhere was he able to remain safe for long. For William the Bastard, king of the English, with all the progeny of the

¹³² OV V. 156; BB IV.x. 297.

¹³³ OV V. 158-74.

aforesaid woman, was searching for him by sending out messengers and promising rewards and gifts to the assassins who could kill the exiled murderer in whatever lands they might find him. Consequently, the good Hugh, fearing the great king's powerful hand and long arm, left the Latin world, and, fearing the company of the baptised, he lived long in exile among foreigners, and studied their rituals and speech for twenty years. Therefore, having been received by the Norman duke he greatly benefitted his countrymen, and explained the habits of the heathens and the deceitful subterfuges and tricks which they were experienced in against the faithful.¹³⁴

Why, then, did Orderic deem this dramatic story so important as to incorporate it into his narrative of the First Crusade at such a crucial moment as the capture of Jerusalem? Who was Hugh Bunel and who was his victim 'Countess Mabel'? What is their significance to the narrative of book IX, and to the *Historia* more generally? Though the episode's originality has been noted by a number of historians including Elisabeth van Houts, who called it 'the most remarkable' of all of Orderic's additions to the story of the First Crusade, such questions have otherwise attracted little comment.¹³⁵ There thus remains a great deal left to be said about the narrative significance of the murder of Mabel of Bellême, and so it will now be explored from this wider textual perspective.

By inserting the character of Hugh Bunel at this point in his account of the First Crusade in book IX, Orderic was reintroducing a story mentioned in an earlier part of the *Historia*. For

¹³⁴ OV V. 156-58. Tunc Hugo Budnellus filius Rodberti de Ialgeio ad ducem Normannorum optime armis instructus accessit; satelliciumque suum ei utpote naturali domino fideliter optulit, et ab eo benigniter susceptus obsidentes Heliam manu consilioque strenue adiuuit. Hic enim diu ante in Normannia Mabiliam comitissam frustatim obruncauerat; quia eadem paternam haereditatem uiolenter ipsi abstulerat. Unde prefatus miles cum fratribus suis Radulfo, Ricardo et Goisleno pro ingenti facinore peracto in Apuliam deinde in Siciliam confugit; ac postmodum in Greciam ad Alexium imperatorem secessit, sed nusquam tutus diu permanere potuit. Guillelmus enim nothus rex Anglorum cum tota progenie predictae mulieris per totum orbem missis exploratoribus eum inuestigabat, et spiculatoribus honores et munera promittebat; qui exulantem homicidam interimerent, ubicumque terrarum inuenirent. Probus igitur Hugo tanti regis ualidas manus et longa brachia metuens totam latinitatem reliquit; et baptizatorum gregem formidans inter allophilos diutius exulauit, et per xx annos ritus eorum atque locutionem edidicit. Susceptus ergo a Normannico duce multum suis profuit, et mores ethnicos ac tergiuersationes subdolas et fraudes quibus contra fideles callent enucleauit.

¹³⁵ Elisabeth van Houts, *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester, 2000), 274-276; see also Chibnall's comments at OV V. xvii; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p.182 n.198.

an account of Hugh's murderous deed appears in book V, and this passage also makes clear that his victim was Mabel of Bellême.¹³⁶ The murder of Mabel of Bellême is well-known to historians of the Anglo-Norman world and there is a large literature on the subject, a fact owing in large part to the prominence of the Bellême family throughout much of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Most important here are the studies of Gérard Louise and Kathleen Thompson,¹³⁷ but there are also useful earlier articles by Jacques Boussard, Geoffrey White, J. F. A. Mason and Albert Foucault.¹³⁸ Jean Blacker's study of violence against women in the *Historia* is particularly helpful on the reasons for Orderic's hatred of Mabel,¹³⁹ and Marjorie Chibnall's survey of Orderic's portrayal of women in the *Historia*,¹⁴⁰ as well as in more general studies of Anglo-Norman and medieval women, also provide a wider context for Mabel of Bellême's murder.¹⁴¹ Yet while much has been written on the causes and dating of this event, and on Orderic's attitude towards both the Bellême in general and Mabel in particular, little has been written on the function of this episode within the wider narrative of the *Historia*. Moreover, most of the scholarship has focussed on the account of the murder in book V. But why did Orderic repeat the story in book IX? The repetition of the story suggests

¹³⁶ OV III. 134-38.

¹³⁷ Gérard Louise, *La seigneurie de Bellême (Xe-XIIIe Siècles): Dévolution des pouvoirs territoriaux et construction d'une seigneurie de frontière aux confins de la Normandie et du Maine à la charnière de l'an mil*, 2 vols., Le Pays Bas-Normand 199-200:3-4 and 201-202:1-2 (Flers, 1992-93). Kathleen Thompson, 'Family and Influence to the South of Normandy in the Eleventh Century: the Lordship of Bellême', *JMH* 11:3 (1985), 215-26; Kathleen Thompson, 'The Norman Aristocracy before 1066: The Example of the Montgomery's', *Historical Research* 60:3 (1987), 251-63. Kathleen Thompson, 'Robert of Bellême Reconsidered', *ANS* 13 (1990), 263-86; Kathleen Thompson, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême', *JMH* 20 (1992), 133-41. Albert Foucault, 'La Princesse Mabile de Bellême', *Revue des études historiques* 105 (1938), 6-16.

¹³⁸ Jacques Boussard, 'La seigneurie de Bellême aux X^e et XI^e siècles', in Charles-Edmond Perrin (ed.) *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Age dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), 43-54; Geoffrey White, 'The First House of Bellême', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 22 (1940), 67-99; Geoffrey White, 'Orderic and the Lords of Bellême', *Notes and Queries* 156:10 (1929), 165-68; J. F. A. Mason, 'The Norman Earls of Shrewsbury: Three Notes', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society* 57 (1966), 152-61; Albert Foucault, 'La Princesse Mabile de Bellême', *Revue des études historiques* 105 (1938), 6-16.

¹³⁹ Jean Blacker, 'Women, Power, and Violence in Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in Anna Roberts (ed.) *Violence Against Women in Medieval Texts* (Florida, 1998), 44-55.

¹⁴⁰ Marjorie Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic Vitalis', *HSJ* 2 (1990), 105-121

¹⁴¹ See in particular Sharon Farmer, 'Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives', *Speculum* 61:3 (1986), 517-43 at pp.521-22; Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester, 2003), pp.14-16; Jean A. Truax, 'From Bede to Orderic Vitalis: Changing Perspectives on the Role of Women in the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Churches', *Haskins Society Journal* 3 (1991), 35-52

that he deemed it to be particularly important to the overall narrative of his work. To more fully understand the reasons behind this move, the historian must return to the first rendition of the story. Only then can any sense be made of the significance of its recurrence in book IX.

Book V of the *Historia ecclesiastica* shares many similarities with books III and IV.¹⁴² In its prologue, Orderic made it clear that its content would be a continuation of the themes already recounted in the previous two books: the history of Saint-Evroult in the wider context of events in Normandy which took place in the 1070s and 1080s.¹⁴³ What followed can be divided into two closely related sections. In the first, Orderic undertook a lengthy discussion of the archbishopric of Rouen and the turbulent politics of the Anglo-Norman world in the final quarter of the eleventh century, with particular focus on the strained relationship between William the Conqueror and his eldest son Robert Curthose.¹⁴⁴ Against this backdrop, Orderic moved into the second part of the narrative of Book V, bridging the two sections with an important passage mid-way through the book in which he likened God's providential care over the monastery of Saint-Evroult during this period to a ship being steered through a storm:

The eternal arranger of all things skilfully sails and wisely steers his ship among the storms of the world, and kindly aids the labourers toiling daily in his vineyard, and imbuing them with divine grace, he strengthens them to face toils and perils. See how he providentially directs his church amidst tumultuous wars and warlike clashes and leads it on advantageously, enlarging it in many ways! The monastery in the Ouche has truly proven this, for it was planted in barren country and

¹⁴² For the dating of this book and an overview of its content see OV III. xiii-xv.

¹⁴³ OV III. 6.

¹⁴⁴ OV III. 8-116.

amongst the most evil of neighbours, but with the help of heavenly mercy it has been protected against the attempted threats of treacherous men.¹⁴⁵

Orderic reiterated this local emphasis only a few pages later: ‘I wish briefly to note down here the possessions of the church of Ouche, so that alms given faithfully might lie open to the knowledge of the novices’ (*Possessiones Vticensis aeclesiae uolo breuiter hic annotare, ut elemosinae fideliter datae pateant nouitiorum noticae*).¹⁴⁶ It is in this context, in the flow of a section concerning the fortunes of Saint-Evroult and the donations by benefactors and patrons of the monastery, that the murder of Mabel of Bellême appears.

The Bellême are repeatedly portrayed as the arch-enemies of the monks of Saint-Evroult in the pages of the *Historia ecclesiastica*.¹⁴⁷ Pierre Bauduin has stressed the importance of recognising this when engaging with the parts of Orderic’s writing that comment directly on the relationship between the Bellême and the founders and monks of Saint-Evroult, observing that ‘his information is to be taken with caution because Orderic is not neutral: he resolutely takes the side of the founders of Saint-Evroult and holds an enduring grudge against the Bellême.’¹⁴⁸ Mabel was the first wife of Roger of Montgomery, the earl of Shrewsbury. According to Orderic, she wielded a great deal of power, exercising a corrupting influence on her husband, with the result that he afflicted the monks of Saint-Evroult greatly. The monks were vulnerable during this period, for the 1070s and 1080s were difficult years for their

¹⁴⁵ Aeternus dispositor rerum nauem suam inter procellas seculi potenter uehit et sapienter gubernat; et in uinea sua colonos cotidie laborantes benigniter adiuuat, atque infusione celestis gratiae contra labores et pericula corroborat. En aeclesiam suam inter bellicosos tumultus et militares strepitus prouide dirigit; pluribusque modis augmentando salubriter prouehit. Hoc Vticense monasterium plausabiliter expertum est; quod in sterili rure et inter pessimos affines consitum est, sed ope supernae pietatis contra perfidorum minaces conatus defensatum est. OV III. 118; Mégier, ‘*Cotidie operatur*.’

¹⁴⁶ OV III. 122.

¹⁴⁷ See especially Kathleen Thompson, ‘Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême’, *JMH* 20:2 (1992), 133-41. For more on Robert of Bellême see below, ch.4.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Mais ses informations sont à prendre avec précaution car Orderic n’est pas neutre: il prend résolument parti pour les fondateurs de Saint-Evroult et contient mal une rancune tenace contre les Bellême.’, Pierre Bauduin, ‘Une famille châtelaine sur les confins normanno-manceaux: les Géré (X^e-XIII^e s.)’, *Archéologie Médiévale* 22 (1992), 309-56 at p.310.

patrons, the Giroie. According to Orderic, these problems stemmed from Mabel's poisoning of Arnold of Échauffour, the son of William Giroie, at some point in the early 1060s, from which they struggled to recover.¹⁴⁹ Earlier, in book III, he lamented this fact, 'And so, with Arnold's death, the noble family of Giroie was completely ruined; and to this day not one of their descendants has been quite able to regain the fortunes of his ancestors' (*Defuncto itaque Ernaldo tota Geroianorum nobilitas pene corrui; nec ullus posterorum stemma priorum ex integro usque hodie adipisci potuit*).¹⁵⁰ Orderic's reading of these events was thus very clear, for the affairs of the Giroie and the other patrons of his monastery were at the very heart of his writing project. He placed his account of the murder of Mabel of Bellême, which probably took place in December 1077,¹⁵¹ within the wider context of this protracted enmity between the Bellême and Giroie families,¹⁵² and its implications for Saint-Evroult:

After the fall of the Giroie family, Roger of Montgomery had possession of the whole patrimony of Échauffour and Montreuil for about twenty-six years; and at first, as long as his wife Mabel, who had always hated the Giroie, the founders of Saint-Evroult, lived, at her instigation, he was seen to be troublesome to the monks of Ouche in many ways. In the end, the just judge who piously spares sinners and severely strikes the impenitent, allowed the cruel woman, who was covered in much blood, and had violently disinherited many nobles and forced them to beg in foreign lands, to perish by the sword of Hugh, whose castle, which was situated at La Roche Mabile, she had seized, and had thus unjustly deprived him of his paternal inheritance. He was truly gripped [with rage], and gaining a great boldness, and together with his three brothers, who were esteemed for their martial worth, he entered by night into the chamber of the countess; and

¹⁴⁹ OV II. 122-24, OV III. 134.

¹⁵⁰ OV II. 124.

¹⁵¹ There has been some debate over the precise dating of this event; the most recent assessments are in agreement. Chibnall believed December 1077 to be the most likely date, OV III. 136 n.1. This assumption was based on the earlier argument in Mason, 'The Norman Earls of Shrewsbury', pp.152-6. Louise also used this date, *La seigneurie de Bellême*, 2:158. For an alternate position and a discussion of the earlier historiography see White, 'The First House of Bellême', pp.96-99, where he argues for a dating of 2 December 1079.

¹⁵² For more on this see Walker, *The Grandmesnils*, pp.26-39; Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1988), pp.179-82; Louise, *La seigneurie de Bellême*, 2:288-9, 316-17, 347-49; Matthew Bennett, 'Violence in Eleventh-Century Normandy: Feud, Warfare and Politics', in Guy Halsall (ed.) *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp.130-34. On the Giroie see Maillefer, 'Une famille aristocratique aux confins de la Normandie', and Bauduin, 'Une famille châtelaine sur les confins normanno-manceaux'.

finding her in the castle which is called Bures-sur-Dives, in bed after a pleasurable bath, he beheaded her with his sword, in recompense for his patrimony. Thus, with the murder of the deadly lady having been accomplished, many exulted at her ruin, such that the authors of the crime left at once for Apulia...The wintry season and the dark night and the flooding of the rivers impeded the pursuers; and the fugitives, their vengeance accomplished, immediately left Normandy behind them.¹⁵³

No longer under the influence of his evil wife, Orderic wrote that a radical change took place in Roger of Montgomery. He remarried, and, more importantly, resolved to be a strong supporter and patron of Saint-Evroult, granting gifts of land and wealth to the monastery once more, and Orderic concluded his account of this dramatic episode by including the charter confirming Roger's donations to the monastery.¹⁵⁴ This, then, was the context in which the murder of Mabel of Bellême was first recounted in book V of the *Historia*.

Orderic's insertion of a passage concerning Hugh Bunel's murderous exploits in book IX must be read with this context in mind, for the one account informs us of the significance of the other. To him, Hugh was a hero. For in murdering Mabel of Bellême not only did he defend his own patrimony and avenge the personal wrongs done to him, but he also functioned as the protector of Saint-Evroult at a difficult time in its history. With Mabel dead, Roger of Montgomery was freed from her evil influence and became favourable once more to

¹⁵³ Rogerius de Monte Gomerici postquam Geroiana progenies cecidit, totum patrimonium Excalfoii et Monasterioli fere xxvi annis possedit; et in inicio, quamdiu Mabilia uxor eius quae Geroianos Ebrulfiani monasterii fundatores semper exosos habuerat uixit, Vticensibus, illa stimulante pluribus modis molestus extitit. Denique iustus arbiter qui peccatoribus pie parciit, et impenitentes districte percutit, crudelem feminam, quae multo sanguine madebat, multosque nobiles uiolenter exhaeredatos per externa mendicare coegerat, permisit perire gladio Hugonis, cui castrum quod in rupe Ialgeii situm est abstulerat, et sic eum iniuste paterna haereditate priuauerat. Ille nimirum merens uehementem audaciam arripuit, iunctisque sibi tribus fratribus suis qui militari probitate pollebant noctu ad cameram comitissae accessit, ipsamque in municipio super Diuam quod Buris dicitur in lecto post balneum deliciantem pro recompensatione patrimonii sui ense detruncavit. Peracta itaque caede feralis erae, multi de ruina eius exultauere; tantique facinoris auctores confestim in Apuliam abiire...Hiemale quoque tempus et tenebrosa nox fluminumque inundations persequentes impediabant; et fugientes ultione facta Normanniam statim relinquebant. OV III. 134-6.

¹⁵⁴ OV III. 138-42.

the monastery. Orderic had noted down his desire to write down the affairs of Saint-Evroutl for the benefit of its novices at the beginning of book V, and shortly after recounting Hugh's valiant deed he had reiterated this, 'as a foreigner, I will tell the junior monks, who are natives, about their own things, of which they are unaware' (*iunioribus aduena indigenis de rebus suis quae nesciunt edisseram*).¹⁵⁵ The murder of Mabel of Bellême was just such an event, and Orderic was likely eager to remind his readers of it. Thus, when writing in book IX of Hugh Bunel's presence at the siege of Jerusalem in 1099, at the climax of the First Crusade, it seems that he deliberately referred back to an event about which he had written in the *Historia* some twenty years previously. He did so in order to underline the importance of Hugh's great deed to the monks at Saint-Evroutl and to ensure that a fresh generation of monks would be able to venerate a local hero whose murderous act had allowed Saint-Evroutl to flourish once again through the renewed benefactions of Roger of Montgomery.

This interpretation finds further support in Orderic's description of Hugh Bunel in book IX. For having just explained that Hugh was forced into exile for over twenty years for beheading Mabel, Orderic tellingly described him as *probus Hugo*.¹⁵⁶ The *Historia*'s description is thus a wholly positive one, for this adjective conveys the moral goodness, virtue and honourable nature of Hugh.¹⁵⁷ The brutality of his crime would render such a description inexplicable, were it not for the fact that Orderic states that Mabel's murder constituted the judgment of God on behalf of the monastery of Saint-Evroutl. Here, too, it is worth noting that William Pantulf, who was also implicated in the murder, was similarly described in book XI of the *Historia* as 'a good and courageous knight' (*militarem probumque uirum*) for playing a key

¹⁵⁵ OV III. 150.

¹⁵⁶ OV V. 158.

¹⁵⁷ For more on the meaning of the adjective *probus* and the noun *probitas* see the discussion in Paul, *To Follow in their Footsteps*, p.23 n.10.

role in resisting the rebellion of Mabel of Bellême's son, Robert, in England in 1102.¹⁵⁸ The parallels with Orderic's portrayal of Hugh Bunel are thus strikingly similar. For, according to Orderic, Hugh not only demonstrated his virtuous character by defending the honour of this monastery, but he proved it again by joining with Robert Curthose's Norman contingent at the walls of Jerusalem where he did much to aid the cause of the crusaders. Orderic's inclusion of this story thus constitutes one of the strongest examples of his insertion of short additional passages into the very fabric of the narrative of the First Crusade. Such a move not only heaped further praise on Hugh Bunel, but it also channelled some of the lasting glory of the First Crusade back towards Saint-Evroult.

Iger Bigod, the Monk Arnold and the Priory of Maule

Having interrupted his account of the capture of Jerusalem at the very outset of the siege, Orderic did so again as the crusaders entered the city. For while Baldric continued on with his narration of the bloody conquest of the city,¹⁵⁹ Orderic once more diverted the attention of his readers away from a moment of heightened drama in the story of the First Crusade. He did so by adding a passage to the narrative which, at first glance, seems to add little to it. Yet, as with the above-mentioned episode concerning Hugh Bunel, there is much that is of significance here when it is viewed in the wider context of the other books of the *Historia*. These textual links will be teased out in what follows. In the chaos that ensued as the crusaders poured into Jerusalem, Orderic related that the Armenian, Greek, and Syrian Christians who lived in the city fled to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, fearing for their lives. On entering the church, Tancred, one of the crusader leaders, quickly realised from their prayers that they were Christians, and ordered that they not be killed. To ensure their

¹⁵⁸ OV VI. 24. For more on William Pantulf see above, pp.106-9, 131-33.

¹⁵⁹ BB IV. xiv. 308; Benjamin Z. Kedar, 'The Jerusalem Massacre of July 1099 in the Western Historiography of the Crusades', *Crusades* 3 (2004), 15-75.

safety, he left a certain Ilger Bigod behind, along with a guard of two hundred knights, enabling him to continue in the conquest of the city.¹⁶⁰ The most interesting part of the story now follows:

Meanwhile the resident faithful, who had remained with Ilger in the church, spoke secretly to him; and seeking to have his protection, favourably led him and his companions to the holy places, namely the Lord's sepulchre and other holy places and showed him certain things which they and their ancestors had long hidden in secret places. There, at that time, Ilger found among the remaining relics, in a certain marble capital in a holy place hollowed out under the altar, a little ball of the hair of Mary, the holy mother of God, which he afterwards took to France and reverently divided among the holy places of the bishoprics and monks.

Orderic then provided a background story regarding the origins of this relic:

The untouched virgin Mother was, of course, greatly pained at the passion of Christ, her Son and Lord, and according to the ancient custom of her time and place, tore her garments, pulled out her hair, and reverently let out mournful lamentations at the death of such a loved one. But those who were nearby, namely religious women who had not long since adhered to divine discipleship, tenderly supported the weeping Mother of the heavenly King, and, embracing her, softly comforted her according to the opportunity of the time. At that time they also devoutly collected the pulled-out hairs, and carefully preserved them; John the Theologian and the other friends of Christ afterwards hid them in a safe place, because they knew this would be profitable for the salvation of many.

Finally, the passage ends with Orderic explaining why he had included this story in the narrative:

Our pen has therefore inserted this into this work because the aforesaid Ilger gave two of the holy hairs to the monk Arnold, his kinsman, at Chartres, which he displayed in the church of Maule,

¹⁶⁰ OV V. 168-70.

where many cures were granted to the sick through them. Now I will return to the continuation of our narrative.¹⁶¹

In thinking about this passage in the wider context of the *Historia*, there is much that is of interest here. Three main aspects of the text will be examined in what follows: Ilger Bigod, the monk Arnold, and the church of Maule.

What little scholarly attention has been given to this episode has focussed on the person of Ilger Bigod. While historians have not been able to properly identify who Ilger was, it seems highly likely that he was related in some way to the Bigod family,¹⁶² whom Andrew Wareham has shown emerging from the historical record in mid-eleventh century Normandy. Robert Bigod was given some minor lands in the Calvados region of Normandy for betraying his lord, William Werlenc, the count of Mortain, by revealing his plans to rebel against Duke William. However, it was in post-Conquest England that the Bigods grew in importance, for Robert Bigod's son, Roger, was sheriff of Norfolk from 1081 to 1087 and again in 1092, and also becoming a steward of the royal household in that year.¹⁶³ Their association with East Anglia was to be a long-lasting one, with Bigod earls of Norfolk in both the twelfth and

¹⁶¹ Interea fideles incolae qui cum Ilgerio in aecclesia remanserant, secretius eum allocuti sunt; et patrocium eius habere captantes fauorabiliter eum et sodales eius ad sancta duxerunt, sepulchrum scilicet Domini aliaque sacra et quaedam quae pro timore paganorum in abditi ipsi et antecessores eorum diu occultauerant eis ostenderunt. Ibi tunc Ilgerius inter reliqua pignora, in quodam marmoreo capitello instar sacrarii cauato sub ara, glomusculum de capillis sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae inuenit, quod idem postmodum in Gallias detulit, et per sacra episcopatum et cenobiorum loca reuerenter diuisit. Intacta nempe uirgo Mater in passione Christi Filii Dominique sui ualde doluit, et ueteri more gentis et temporis illius uestes scidit, crines traxit, et lugubres trenos pro tanti amici nece ueneranter exoluit. At uicinae quae aderant, religiosae uidelicet mulieres quae discipulatu diuino dudum adhererant; flentem superni Regis Genitricem pie sustentauerunt, et amplexantes eam pro temporis opportunitate dulciter confortauerunt. Capillos quoque tunc extractos deuote collegerunt, et caute seruauerunt; quos teologus Iohannes alique philochristi postmodum in tanto loco recondiderunt, quia hoc multorum saluti profuturum nouerunt. Haec iccirco huic operi calamus noster inseruit, quia prefatus Ilgerius Ernaldo monacho consobrino suo apud Carnotum de sacris capillis duos dedit, quos ille Manliensi aecclesiae ubi multae sanationes aegrotis per illos contigerunt exhibuit. Nunc ad nostrae narrationis continuationem reuertar. OV V 170.

¹⁶² OV V. 170 n.1.

¹⁶³ Andrew Wareham, 'The Motives and Politics of the Bigod Family, c.1066-1177', *ANS* 17 (1995), 223-42.

thirteenth centuries, by which time they had become one of the richest families in England.¹⁶⁴ The Bigods are mentioned a number of times in the *Historia* with three references to them in books X, XI and XII. The second of these is the most important, for there Orderic recounted the death of Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, his burial at his Cluniac foundation at Thetford in 1107, and finally, provided the epitaph written on his tomb.¹⁶⁵ The first reference noted Roger Bigod among the wise advisors to Henry I, while the third listed his son, William, among those who perished in the White Ship disaster in 1120.¹⁶⁶ Viewed alongside the reference to Ilger Bigod in book IX, it can thus be said that the Bigods were of some interest to Orderic, though they do not feature prominently in the *Historia*.

Ilger Bigod's role in the distribution of the hairs of the Virgin Mary also features in Eadmer of Canterbury's *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, his second biographical work on the life of Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury, which was completed in 1114. Eadmer introduced him as follows:

In those days, Bohemond, one of the most renowned princes of the journey to Jerusalem, came to Rouen, having in his company a certain cardinal of the Church of Rome by the name of Bruno. He had a master of the knights by the name of Ilgyrus, a brave man and of not ignoble fame among his men. This man had been known to Anselm from his youth, having received many kindnesses from him. So, being on friendly terms with him, among the many things which he disclosed about himself about wars overcome, cities captured, the situation of the places, and not a few other things which he had picked up on the Jerusalem expedition, he explained with delightful address that he had many relics of saints, and the way by which he had obtained them.

At this point the passage turned to the subject of the relics of the Virgin Mary:

¹⁶⁴ Marc Morris, *The Bigod Earls of Norfolk in the Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2005); see also the unpublished doctoral thesis of Susan A. J. Atkin, *The Bigod Family: An Investigation into their Lands and Activities, 1066-1306* (University of Reading, 1979).

¹⁶⁵ OV VI. 144-6.

¹⁶⁶ OV V. 298; VI. 304.

Among which, indeed, above all which he had, he especially boasted about the hairs of Mary, the Blessed Mother of God, of which some were borne as gifts to him from the Patriarch of Antioch, when he was master of the knights under Bohemond. And he added to this, “I would not, I confess, have thought to have dared to take these hairs had I not be moved to do this by my love of this country in which I was born and educated. For I was hoping that I would return some day and glorify my country. So now, because I have not been disappointed with that hope in God’s protection, I have determined to give two of these hairs to this church, which in all of Normandy is the centre of Christianity, two to the Abbey of the Blessed Peter and St. Auden, two to the monastery of the same Virgin of Virgins, in which, under your protection, I grew up into a man, and two to you. For the aforementioned bishop gave twelve of them to me, declaring that they were torn out by the Lady herself, when, standing near the cross of her Son, a sword went through his soul, as he asserted he had found written, according to the records of ancient writings which were held to be of great authority by them, and were kept in the archives of the church in which he was presiding.” And this is what he said.

Eadmer now related how the relics came into the possession of the Churches of Rouen and Bec:

Anselm, wholly overjoyed over this, having made arrangements which seemed appropriate with the Archbishop of Rouen and Bohemond and those from Jerusalem, returned to Bec. But because the hairs of which the aforesaid knight had spoken had been left at Chartres, where Bohemond’s family and nearly all his goods were awaiting his return, some men of the religious order were sent by the Archbishop of Rouen and the Abbot of Bec to fetch them. And it was done. With those approaching carrying those which Rouen was due to have to the same city, the Archbishop, accompanied by the canons and all the clergy of the city and with a massive crowd of the whole population, went devoutly in a long procession, and having received them with all possible honour, carried them into the Church and put them in the most sacred place. Four of these, however, were taken to Bec. Of those, Anselm took two for that same place and the remainder reverently for himself.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Eadmer, *Historia novorum in Anglia*, ed. Martin Rule, Rolls Series 81 (London, 1884), pp. 179–81: *His diebus venit Rotomagum Boemundus, unus de nominatissimis Ierosolimitanae viae principibus, habens in comitatu suo quendam Romanae ecclesiae cardinalem, nomine Brunonem. Huic erat magister militum Ilgyrus*

Finally, Eadmer ended with some personal reflections on the relics:

And to me he committed them for their protection, inasmuch as I was the keeper of his chapel and therefore responsible for its arrangement, which I do to this day. Therefore, what others may think about them I do not know. Yet I know quite certainly that the lord and reverend father Anselm always regarded them with great reverence, and I myself by experience holy and sublime have sensed something great and a mark of holiness in them to be embraced by the world.¹⁶⁸

The shared subject matter of these passages means that it is almost certain that Eadmer's *Ilgyrus* and Orderic's *Ilgerius* were one and the same person.¹⁶⁹ Both speak of this man in connection with the relics of the hairs of the Virgin Mary, and of the story of how she pulled the hairs from her head in grief during Christ's crucifixion. Both also connect Ilger to the First Crusade. Orderic described Ilger as being Tancred's *principem militiae*. Eadmer, writing about events in 1106 when Bohemond, Tancred's uncle, was in France gathering support for

nomine, vir strenuus et non ignobilis famae inter suos. Hic ab adolescentia sua notus Anselmo multa fuerat ejus beneficia consecutus. Familiariter itaque cum eo agens, inter plurima quae ipsi de superatis bellis, de urbibus captis, de situ locorum, aliisque nonnullis quae in expeditione Ierosolimitana acceperat, delectabili allocutione disseruit; quod multas sanctorum reliquias haberet, quoque modo eas adeptus fuerit, aperuit. In quibus, immo super omnibus quas habebat, praecipue gloriatus est de capillis Beatae Matris Dei Mariae, quorum aliquos sibi datos ferebat a patriarcha Antiocheno, ubi ipse magistratum militum sub Boemundo agebat. Et ad haec intulit, "Hos capillos, fateor, suscipere ausus non fuisset, si me amor patriae istius in qua natus fui et educatus ad hoc non animasset. Sperabam enim me huc quandoque perventurum, et ipsis hanc meam patriam sublimaturum. Quoniam igitur illa spe, protegente Deo, fraudatus non sum, duos abbatiae Beati Petri et Sancti Audoeni, duos monasterio ejusdem Virginis virginum, in quo sub tuo patrocinio ad aetatem hominis proventus sum, et duos tibi. Duodecim enim numero de illis mihi praefatus episcopus dedit, contestans illos ab ipsa Domina sibimet avulsos, cum juxta crucem Filii sui stans, gladius animam ejus pertransivit, secundum quod in antiquarum monumentis litterarum, quae magnae auctoritatis apud illos habebantur, et in archivis ecclesiae cui praesidebat servabantur, sicut astruebat, scriptum repperit." Et haec ille. Super quibus Anselmus admodum exhilaratus, actis cum pontifice Rotomagensi et Boemundo ac Ierosolimitanis quae videbantur agenda, Beccum revertitur. At crines de quibus praedictus miles locutus fuera, quoniam Carnoti, ubi familia et pene tota supellex Boemundi reditum ejus praestolabatur, remanserant, missi ab archiepiscopo Rotomagensi et abbate Beccensi religiosi ordinis viri sunt qui illos deferrent. Et factum est. Appropinquantibus eis qui quos Rotomagus habere debebat apportabant ipsi civitati, adjunctis sibi canonicis et omni clero civitatis cum monachis Sancti Audoeni ac totius populi innumera multitudine, pontifex longa processione devotus occurrit, et quanto potuit honore susceptos in ecclesiam detulit et sacratori loco reposuit. Quatuor autem ex illis Beccum delati sunt. Quorum duos ipsi loco, residuos Anselmus reverenter sibi exceptit. For an English translation of this passage see Geoffrey Bosanquet (ed. and trans.), *Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England* (London, 1964), pp.192-4. For more on the *Historia novorum* see Sally N. Vaughn, 'Eadmer's *Historia Novorum*: A Reinterpretation' *Anglo-Norman Studies* 10 (1988), 259-289; on Anselm and Eadmer see R. W. Southern, *St. Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, 1990), which is the second edition of his much earlier work, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer: a Study of Monastic Life and Thought, 1059-c.1130* (Cambridge, 1963).

¹⁶⁸ mihique, utpote qui cappellae illius custos eram atque dispositor, custodiendos commendavit. Quod usque hodie facio. Quid itaque de istis aliorum sensus habeat, nescio. Ego tamen cerissime scio, dominum et reverendum patrem Anselmum eos in magna veneratione semper habuisse, et meipsum sacro et grandi experimento sensisse magnum quid et mundo amplectendum insigne sanctitatis illis inesse. Eadmer, *Historia Novorum*, pp.179-81.

¹⁶⁹ OV V. 170 n.1.

his crusade against the Byzantine Empire, made no reference to Tancred. Instead, he emphasised Ilger's relationship to Bohemond, writing that he had been Bohemond's *magister militum* in Antioch. From this, Jonathan Riley-Smith suggested that Ilger fought under Bohemond's command until the victory at Antioch in the summer of 1098, then continued on to Jerusalem with Tancred in 1099, before returning to Bohemond's service and accompanying him to France in 1105-6.¹⁷⁰ Nicholas Paul has also highlighted the role played by Ilger in Bohemond's recruitment campaign at that time, arguing that he helped to raise support by courting the favour of the church in both Normandy and France. He cited the *Historia Novorum* in support of this argument, noting that the passage presents Ilger as an excellent speaker who boasted of his lord's military exploits on his visit to Anselm's court at Rouen.¹⁷¹

Yet little has been written on the textual significance of Orderic's passage, in which no connection is made between Ilger and Bohemond. While Paul regarded Ilger's appearances in the two accounts as likely being two related parts of Bohemond's recruitment drive,¹⁷² it is important to remember that what we have here are two separate relic traditions whose differences are likely the product of the texts in which they appear. Chibnall blamed Ilger for 'twisting his narrative' in presenting rival stories to Orderic and Eadmer,¹⁷³ but it may be more fruitful to approach the issue from an authorial perspective. Eadmer was writing a biographical work on Anselm of Canterbury and so this passage in the *Historia Novorum* naturally had the Archbishop as its subject. He sought to emphasise the piety of Anselm and here did so with the example of the Archbishop's reverence for the relics of the Virgin Mary and his links to the First Crusade. The passage also stresses the close relationship that existed

¹⁷⁰ Jonathan Riley-Smith, 'The Motives of the Earliest Crusaders and the Settlement of Latin Palestine, 1095-1100', *English Historical Review* 98 (1983), 721-736 at p.731.

¹⁷¹ Paul, 'A Warlord's Wisdom', p.558.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.558.

¹⁷³ OV I. 91.

between the author and his subject, with Anselm entrusting the relics to Eadmer at that time. Orderic's account differs markedly from this. For while his story regarding the relics also began with Ilger, it was used in book IX of the *Historia* to achieve a very different effect. Thus, while Orderic wrote a fair amount about Bohemond's recruitment campaign of 1106, he made no attempt to connect Ilger Bigod with it, as Eadmer had done. Instead, he recorded Bohemond's rousing call to arms at his wedding at Chartres elsewhere, in book XI of the *Historia*, and there made no mention of Ilger nor of the distribution of relics at that time.¹⁷⁴ This is not to deny that Ilger played a part in Bohemond's recruitment drive, but merely to emphasise that Orderic made no attempt to stress such links.

Orderic's reasons for inserting this passage into book IX lay elsewhere, away from Ilger Bigod. Indeed, this episode is unusual in that it is one of the few places in the *Historia* in which Orderic explicitly stated why he incorporated it into the narrative. He announced this in a highly rhetorical fashion at the end of the text, with the clause 'Our pen has therefore inserted this into this work because...' (*Haec iccirco huic operi calamus noster inseruit quia...*). Orderic revealed that he was interested not so much in Ilger Bigod, but in 'Arnold the monk, his kinsman' (*Ernaldo monacho consobrino suo*), to whom Ilger gave the relics, and 'the church of Maule' (*Manliensi aecclesiae*), where they were displayed thereafter.¹⁷⁵ Thus it was not the discovery of the relics that mattered most to Orderic, but the identity of the person in whose hands they ended up and the location in which they were then subsequently placed. For as Nicholas Paul has observed in his important recent examination of the relationship between material objects and crusading memory, 'The crusaders who selected and either carried or sent the items knew well that the environment in which crusade memorabilia was preserved was of critical importance to the role that these objects could play

¹⁷⁴ OV VI. 68-72.

¹⁷⁵ OV V. 170.

and the meanings they might hold both during and after their lifetimes.’¹⁷⁶ Relics and other objects were thus often given to local and regional religious communities with which the crusade veterans had some form of personal or devotional connection.¹⁷⁷ The destination of the relics of the Virgin Mary, related in book IX of the *Historia*, was no different. In order to fully appreciate the significance of the details which Orderic provided, it is necessary to explore them in the wider context of the chronicle. For Arnold the monk and the church of Maule were two small, yet important, parts of the world of Saint-Evroult.

Though known here only as ‘Arnold the monk’, close comparison with other passages in the *Historia* makes it clear that Orderic was here referring to Arnold of Tilleul, a long-serving monk and contemporary of his at Saint-Evroult who was likely also the source for this relic story.¹⁷⁸ Arnold features in a number of places throughout the *Historia* performing important duties for the monastery in Normandy, France, England and southern Italy, and as noted in the previous chapter, he is also referred to in the charter collection of Saint-Evroult.¹⁷⁹ The Tilleul family likely originated in Tilleul-en-Auge,¹⁸⁰ located 10km north-east of Grandmesnil and 47km north-west of Saint-Evroult. Arnold’s father, Humphrey of Tilleul, was Hugh of Grandmesnil’s brother-in-law through his marriage to Hugh’s sister Adeliza,¹⁸¹ and he seems to have been a close kinsman of Hugh’s for they fought alongside Duke William in the conquest of England in 1066 and are recorded as returning to Normandy together in 1068 in book IV of the *Historia*.¹⁸² Arnold of Tilleul was one of four brothers. Though nothing is known of his brother, Roger, other than that he was a monk of Saint-

¹⁷⁶ Paul, *To Follow in their Footsteps*, p.110, and pp.90-133 more generally.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, pp.111.

¹⁷⁸ OV V. xvii; Bickford Smith, *Orderic Vitalis*, pp.42-3.

¹⁷⁹ See above p.134.

¹⁸⁰ Loyd, *Anglo-Norman Families*, p.85 under ‘Rhuddlan’.

¹⁸¹ This was an important local alliance for the Grandmesnills as they sought to extend their power in the first half of the eleventh century, Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, pp.24-5.

¹⁸² OV II. 220; see also OV. III. 118. On Humphrey of Tilleul’s role in the conquest of England see J. F. A. Mason, ‘The Companions of the Conqueror: An Additional Name’, *English Historical Review* 71 (1956), 61-69.

Evroult,¹⁸³ a little more can be said about the third brother, William of Tilleul. For when the monk Benedict of Échauffour visited southern Italy on behalf of Abbot Roger of Saint-Evroult in book III of the *Historia*, Orderic noted that he stayed at St. Euphemia for three years, where William had been appointed as abbot after the death of Robert of Grandmesnil.¹⁸⁴ The fourth brother, Robert, is better known as ‘Robert of Rhuddlan’, after the name of his lordship in north-east Wales which he conquered on behalf of his overlord Hugh of Avranches, the Earl of Chester. Orderic went into some detail in recounting Robert’s life in book VIII of the *Historia*, for not only did he conquer in Wales, but he also donated significant lands and properties in both Normandy and in England to Saint-Evroult before his death in battle in 1093.¹⁸⁵ It seems that Robert’s establishment of a lordship at Rhuddlan may have resulted in a close association between the names of Tilleul and Rhuddlan, at least in the minds of the monks of Saint-Evroult anyway. For later in book VIII, in relating how Arnold of Tilleul provided a stone facing for the tomb of Hugh of Grandmesnil on his death in 1098, Orderic called him ‘Arnold of Rhuddlan’ (*Ernaldus de Rodelento*).¹⁸⁶

Arnold of Tilleul entered the cloister at Saint-Evroult sometime during Mainer’s abbacy (1066-89). As already noted, he appears in a number of different places in the *Historia ecclesiastica* and from these a clearer picture emerges of the important diplomatic role which he performed on behalf of the monastery. In book V, Orderic included Arnold in a list of monks of Saint-Evroult described as follows: ‘some were esteemed by nobility, and were active in the external tasks in church affairs...they were courtiers, and by their effort they acquired lands and churches and tithes for their brothers...and through them the church

¹⁸³ OV IV.136.

¹⁸⁴ OV II. 128. For more on William of Tilleul see above p.80.

¹⁸⁵ OV IV. 134-46.

¹⁸⁶ OV IV. 336.

increased in advantageous possessions and good inhabitants.¹⁸⁷ Such work was essential for the continued health and prosperity of the monastery and it seems that Arnold continued to perform this role during the abbacy of Mainer's successor, Roger of Le Sap (1091-1123). In book VIII of the *Historia*, Orderic tells us that Arnold travelled to England to obtain the bones of his dead brother, Robert, for their proper burial at Saint-Evroult, sometime after 1093.¹⁸⁸ Arnold performed a diplomatic role throughout his time at Saint-Evroult, and it seems that valuable physical objects were particularly sought after by him, for this point was emphasised by Orderic in a passage in book VIII in which he summarised Arnold's faithful labour in the service of the monastery:

The aforesaid Arnold...abandoned the knighthood in his youth; and having become a monk, he exerted himself more than all his companions in monkhood; and he lived fervently for about fifty years in the monastic order. He was truly devoted to the needs of his church, for which he often crossed the English Channel, and he travelled to Apulia and Calabria and Sicily in order that he might provide support for his church from the loot of his kinsmen. At that time, he visited William, abbot of St Eufemia, his brother, and William of Grandmesnil his cousin, and his other enriched relatives in Italy, and by gentle force he took away from them as much as he could in order that he might confer it on his monastery. In this way, he procured ornaments and other valuables for his church from the property of his kinsmen, and subjected the same kinsmen to the needs of the monastery. He endured many insults and refusals in a great many places, but although he may have been frequently impeded by a great many adversities, nothing was able to dispel him from his initial endeavour. In these and other efforts of this sort the aforesaid man strove quite boldly and founded upon his zealous effort, a stone arch stands to this day over the tomb of his brother [Robert of Rhuddlan].¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Nonnulli generositate pollebant, et exterioribus curis in rebus aecclesiasticis uigebant...curiales erant, et procuratione sua terras et aecclesias decimasque fratribus suis acquirebant...et per eos creuit aecclesia commodis rebus et bonis habitatoribus. OV III. 118-20.

¹⁸⁸ It is difficult to arrive at a more specific date for Arnold's trips to England and southern Italy, other than to say that they took place in the 1090s, see for example Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, p.133.

¹⁸⁹ Prefatus Ernaldus in adolescentia militiam deseruit, et factus monachus plus cunctis sodalibus suis in monachatu desudauit; et fere quinquaginta annis in ordine monachili feruidus uixit. Hic nimirum aecclesiae suae utilitatibus satis inhauiit, pro quibus Britannicum pelagus multotiens transfretauit, atque Apuliam et Calabriam

Having spoken of the significance of the reference to the stone arch elsewhere,¹⁹⁰ this present discussion is primarily interested in the coverage of Arnold of Tilleul's career in the pages of the *Historia* and the way in which this ought to inform our understanding of his appearance in the context of a passage in book IX on the First Crusade.

If Orderic was right in saying that Arnold was a monk at Saint-Evroult for almost fifty years, and that he entered the monastery sometime during the Mainer's abbacy, this would mean that he was at the monastery into the early 1120s. His diplomatic role at the monastery certainly seems to have continued well into the reign of Henry I. This is corroborated by a passage in book XII in which Arnold and another monk, Gilbert of Les Essarts, were sent as envoys by Abbot Roger to Henry I in England in c.1122-3, to deliver letters to the King in which the ailing abbot expressed his desire to be replaced as abbot of Saint-Evroult.¹⁹¹ Arnold's fundraising efforts on behalf of the monastery also seem to have continued throughout this time. For as well as providing a stone facing for the tomb of Hugh of Grandmesnil,¹⁹² Orderic told his readers that the chapel of St. Mary Magdalene at Saint-Evroult, completed in 1124, 'he built from his own funds and the generosity of the faithful' (*ex procuratione sua fideliumque largitionibus aedificauit*). This last passage marks Arnold's final appearance in the *Historia*, with Orderic noting that he was an 'old monk' (*antiquus cenobita*) at that time.¹⁹³ Assuming that he died shortly thereafter, his death can be placed to c.1124, which would mean that he entered the monastery somewhere around the year 1074,

Siciliamque ut de spoliis parentum suorum aecclesiae suae subsidium suppeditaret penetrauit. Tunc Guillelmum abbatem sanctae Eufemiae fratrem suum et Guillelmum de Grentemaisnil consobrinum suum, aliosque cognatos suos in Italia locupletatos adiit, ipsisque benigna ui quantam potuit ut monasterio suo conferret abstulit. Sic de rebus parentum suorum ornatus et alia commoda aecclesiae suae procurauit, ipsosque consanguineos utilitatibus monasterii subiugauit. Multas iniurias atque repulsas plurimis in locis pertulit, sed ab incepto conatu licet plurimis aduersitatibus interdum et frequenter impediretur depelli non potuit. Predictus uir his et huiusmodi nisibus sat procaciter studuit, eisque studio conditus super tumulum fratris sui lapideus arcus usque hodie consistit. OV IV. 142.

¹⁹⁰ Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

¹⁹¹ OV VI. 320-2.

¹⁹² OV IV. 336.

¹⁹³ OV VI. 340.

eight years into Mainer's abbacy. These, then, are the surviving details of Arnold's career, as recorded in the pages of the *Historia*.

Such references, found throughout the *Historia*, reveal that Arnold of Tilleul's contribution to the growth of the monastery was both lasting and visible, enduring in the presence of numerous physical objects at Saint-Evroult, including the stone facing at the tomb of Hugh of Grandmesnil, the chapel of Mary Magdalene and the arch over the tomb of his brother, Robert of Rhuddlan, which still stood in the grounds of the monastery at the time of Orderic's writing.¹⁹⁴ The relics of the Virgin Mary should also be viewed in this context. For Arnold worked tirelessly for Saint-Evroult and its interests, consistently gaining financial and material support for the monastery during his fifty years there. Orderic's account of his trips to southern Italy tell us that he returned to Normandy with 'ornaments' (*ornatus*) and other valuable 'spoils' of war (*spoliis*), and so it seems that he may have had a particular interest in this sort of item when travelling overseas. Arnold's procurement of some hairs of the Virgin Mary from his kinsman, Ilger Bigod, in book IX of the *Historia*, is thus entirely in keeping with the role he performs elsewhere in the text. For as with his earlier activities in southern Italy, his obtaining of these relics lingered long in the memory of the monks of Saint-Evroult, enabling Orderic to insert the story into book IX. Uniquely, though, Arnold's role in this part of the narrative of the *Historia* connected the story of the First Crusade to Saint-Evroult. In this way, his inclusion in this passage performs an important function in the text, mixing this much larger story with a further vignette of information regarding one of the most faithful and long-serving monks in the monastery of Ouche.

¹⁹⁴ For more on physical objects in the *Historia*, see Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

The second way in which the passage on the relics of the Virgin Mary is rooted in the world of Saint-Evroult and in the wider narrative context of the *Historia* is through Orderic's reference to the church of Maule. Though Chibnall noted the probable importance of Maule as an information centre for Orderic's information on the acquisition of the hairs,¹⁹⁵ there remains much to be fleshed out here. Two issues are of particular interest: how this information was remembered over time and the textual significance of the reference to Maule. A close examination of these matters reveals much about how Orderic ensured that his account of the First Crusade remained tethered to the rest of the *Historia*. While Jean Fournée has written a short article on the relationship between Maule and Saint-Evroult,¹⁹⁶ the priory's connection to the First Crusade has thus far received no detailed attention, for his article focussed on the history of Maule as recorded at some length by Orderic in book V of the *Historia*. The place of Maule in the monastic network of Saint-Evroult means that it is important that the details of the connection between the two houses are given here. Orderic's account of Maule came at the end of book V of the *Historia*,¹⁹⁷ included as part of his 'lengthy narrative' (*prolixam narrationem*) on the properties given to Saint-Evroult from the time of its refoundation in 1050 to the early twelfth century.¹⁹⁸ Orderic's account of Saint-Evroult's association with Maule began in the year 1076, when Goisbert of Chartres, a doctor who had only recently taken the habit at Saint-Evroult, visited his friends and acquaintances with the intent of persuading them to donate some of their wealth to the church. We are told that he focussed his efforts on Peter of Maule, who having been challenged, immediately promised to give the churches of Maule to the monks of Saint-Evroult. This benefaction was then confirmed by a charter which Orderic incorporated into the narrative. Goisbert was subsequently made prior of Maule by Saint-Evroult's then abbot, Mainer. After Peter's death,

¹⁹⁵ OV V. xvii; see also OV V. 171 n.4.

¹⁹⁶ Jean Fournée, 'Le Prieuré de Maule et les moines de Saint-Evroult', *Nos ancêtres les Maulois: chroniques du Pays de Mauldre* 23 (1990), 7-18.

¹⁹⁷ OV III. 170-210.

¹⁹⁸ OV III. 210.

his eldest son, Ansold, became lord of Maule and patron of the priory there. Orderic tells us that he fought alongside Guiscard in the Balkan campaigns before returning to France at the request of his father.¹⁹⁹ Thus, through the priory of Maule and its lords, Saint-Evroult had formed another important connection to the world outside of Normandy, not only in France where Maule was situated, but also to southern Italy and the Byzantine world. Orderic also mentioned Bohemond's arrival in France in 1106 at this point in the narrative of book V, placing it alongside Ansold of Maule's speech to the monks of Maule where he made his son, Peter, his future heir. Orderic's primary interest in doing so seems to have had nothing to do with Ilger Bigod or the First Crusade, for he made no reference to him. Rather, he sought to show that both the failure of Bohemond's campaign in 1107 and Ansold's humbling in the presence of all his barons had been portended by the appearance of a comet in the sky in February of that year.²⁰⁰ Yet is clear that there was a connection between Maule and the crusading movement. Indeed, such links existed before the relics were given to the priory. Orderic included some interesting material relating to the participation of the men of Maule in the First Crusade earlier in book IX. For after his account of the Councils of Clermont and Rouen he briefly followed the progress of Peter the Hermit who, we are told, was accompanied on his journey by Walter of Poissy, along with his kinsmen Walter Sans-Avoir and others. Walter of Poissy was Peter of Maule's son-in-law.²⁰¹ This connection to Maule probably also explains Orderic's extra information on Walter of Poissy's journey through Eastern Europe and his death at Philippopolis in Bulgaria, where 'the sign of the holy cross appeared on his body' (*signum sanctae crucis...in carne eius apparuit*).²⁰² Memories of these events lingered long enough in the cloister of Saint-Evroult for Orderic to record them in the

¹⁹⁹ OV III. 170-182; for more on Ansold's involvement at Durazzo see above, p.122.

²⁰⁰ OV III. 182-4.

²⁰¹ For more on the men of Maule and the crusades see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge, 1997), pp.93, 99-100.

²⁰² OV V. 28-30. For more on this subject see William J. Purkis, 'Stigmata on the First Crusade', *SCH* 41 (2005), 99-108.

Historia almost forty years after they had occurred and it may even be that they were crystallised and perpetuated by the on-going presence of the relics of the Virgin Mary at its dependency at Maule.

A crucial detail of this relic story in book IX was the eventual location of the relics at Maule. What Orderic was concerned about at this point of the narrative was relating the story of the First Crusade back to the story he was seeking to tell throughout the pages of the *Historia*: the history of Saint-Evrault and its extensive network of associated houses, patrons and benefactors. In this instance, the priory of Maule was the means by which he did so. That this underlying story mattered most to Orderic is evidenced by the great lengths he went to in order to link the First Crusade with Saint-Evrault, interrupting his account of the capture of Jerusalem, the climactic moment in the entire course of the First Crusade, in order to point his readers back to Arnold of Tilleul and to Maule. Thus, at one of the most important moments in the entire narrative of the First Crusade, Orderic can here again be seen punctuating it with an event which, though of minor importance to the story of the First Crusade was of far greater significance to the overall narrative of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. This, too, was why he intervened as narrator at the end of the relic story, underlining to his readers his reasons for inserting the story, namely the monk, Arnold of Tilleul, and the church of Maule.

Orderic's introduction of both Arnold of Tilleul and of the priory of Maule at this point in his narrative of the First Crusade was intentional, acting as an anchor point for his monastic readers at Saint-Evrault. From it the monks would quickly have arrived at the conclusion that they and their dependencies, such as Maule, were directly connected to the story of the First Crusade. And with the reference to the monk, Arnold, Orderic's readers could not have failed to miss the point that Saint-Evrault was now indelibly associated to the glorious

achievements of the First Crusade through the display of the relics of the Virgin Mary at Maule. For once there, Orderic stated, ‘many cures were granted to the sick through them’ (*multae sanationes aegrotis per illos contigerunt*).²⁰³ This observation is strikingly similar to those found in numerous other passages concerning relics and physical objects elsewhere in the *Historia*.²⁰⁴ It suggests that the continued existence of the relics may itself have perpetuated the memory of their discovery by Ilger Bigod, their acquisition by Arnold of Tilleul, and their display at Maule for a younger generation of monks both there, and by extension, at Saint-Evroult. The on-going nature of such links is implied by Orderic’s comments about the priory of Maule in book V, written c.1127-30, in which he observed, ‘There many monks have remained to this day’ (*Plures ibidem monachi usque hodie permanserunt*).²⁰⁵ This passage in book IX is thus one of the most significant of Orderic’s additions to his account of the First Crusade. For it was stories like this which both encouraged and enabled Orderic to incorporate an account of the First Crusade into his massive *Historia*, subtly reinterpreting his account of the expedition to suit the needs of the monks of Saint-Evroult.

‘I Have Added a Few Things...’

The material which Orderic inserted into his account of the First Crusade was significant. By punctuating the narrative at key moments he was able to introduce individuals into the story who played an important part in the history of Saint-Evroult and feature throughout the pages of the *Historia*. These included Gilbert of Lisieux, Walter of Cormeilles, Serlo of Sées, Hugh Bunel, Mabel of Bellême, Ilger Bigod and Arnold of Tilleul. In doing so, he was able to link the First Crusade to the locality in which he lived, tying it to broader themes such as the warlike nature of the Norman people and the necessity of a strong duke to rule them. This

²⁰³ OV V 170.

²⁰⁴ Roach, ‘The Material and the Visual’.

²⁰⁵ OV III. 178.

juxtaposition of local and monastic history with wider affairs within the duchy is encountered repeatedly throughout the books of the *Historia*, with the action so often moving between Saint-Evroult on the southern frontier of Normandy and the regions to which its extensive network of patrons, benefactors and monks were connected. This explains why Orderic incorporated an account of the First Crusade into the *Historia*. After acknowledging his debt to Baldric of Bourgueil at the end of book IX, he modestly noted, ‘however, I have truthfully added a few things, on which he was silent, for the notification of posterity...’ (*nonnulla uero posteritati notificanda quae tacuerat ueraciter adieci...*)²⁰⁶ While it is true that Orderic only added a few short passages to the essential narrative framework provided by Baldric’s *Historia Ierosolimitana*, his comments in the epilogue should not be allowed to mask the significance of his achievement in book IX. For by making only a small number of short insertions into the story of the First Crusade, Orderic transformed its meaning and made it suitable for incorporation into the much larger *Historia*. The ‘few things’ that Baldric did not mention were, in fact, important stories that linked Saint-Evroult to the First Crusade. Thus, while at first glance such passages may seem ill-placed and insignificant, on closer inspection it becomes apparent that it was on these firm local foundations that Orderic built the narrative of book IX. In this way, he crafted an account of the First Crusade which aligned closely with the *Historia* as a whole.

²⁰⁶ OV V. 188.

3

Following in Baldric's footsteps

Orderic and the *Historia Ierosolimitana* of Baldric of Bourgueil

This chapter examines the textual relationship between book IX of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Historia Ierosolimitana* of Bourgueil of Bourgueil. While the previous chapter explored the significance of the passages which Orderic added to Baldric's narrative, our focus here will be on his treatment of passages derived from the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. The siege of Antioch will be used as a case study for this comparison of the two texts. At the end of book IX of the *Historia*, Orderic acknowledged his usage of Baldric's work:

Up to this point, I have followed the footsteps of the venerable Baldric, and have written a truthful narrative of the famous army of Christ, which, with God's help, notably defeated the swarms of heathens in eastern parts. In many places in our work I inserted the same words of this historian, just as he had uttered them, not daring to make manifest his work in any other way, as I did not believe it to be possible for me to improve it. Yet I curtailed certain things by abbreviating them, lest the length of our appraisal burden readers in its fastidiousness, and I truthfully added a few things on which he was silent, for the notification of posterity, just as I learnt them from those who took part in these toils and trials. I decided to reverently honour the aforesaid old man, whom I knew well...¹

The penultimate sentence is of particular significance, acting as the point of departure for this present study. For here Orderic revealed three features of his method in composing book IX.

Firstly, addition: 'I have truthfully added' (*ueraciter adieci*), he observed. The full extent of

¹ Huc usque uenerabilis Baldrici prosecutus sum uestigia, et ueracem feci narrationem de famosa Christi militia, quae, iuuante Deo, insigniter debellauit in Eois partibus ethnicorum examina. Multis in locis opera nostro inserui eadem uerba sophistae, sicut deprompserat ipse, non ausus aliter eius dicta propalare, quae non credebam me posse emendare. Quaedam tamen, ne prolixitas taxationis nostrae fastidio legentes oneraret, adbreuiando recidi; nonnulla uero posteritati notificanda, quae tacuerat, ueraciter adieci, prout ab his, qui laboribus et periculis interfuerunt, edidici. Praefatum seniore, quem bene cognoui, ueneranter honorare decreui...OV V. 188-90.

these additions was seen in the previous chapter. A second was the insertion (*inserui*) of passages which were simply lifted from Baldric's narrative and incorporated verbatim into book IX of the *Historia*. A third aspect interests us here and that is the task of editing, which Orderic here described to his readers with the acknowledgement that 'I have cut by abbreviating' (*adbreuiando recidi*). This small phrase indicates much about Orderic editorial method. He cut material from Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana* and omitted it from his narrative of the First Crusade. Yet the reference to abbreviation is equally significant, augmenting our understanding of the editorial cuts which Orderic made when writing book IX. It suggests that many passages were shortened and compressed for their incorporation into the *Historia ecclesiastica*, rather than omitted from the narrative altogether.

Orderic's usage of Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana* has long been recognised by scholars. In 1855, Léopold Delisle noted Orderic's comments in the prologue of book IX where he referred to the works of both Fulcher of Chartres and Baldric of Bourgueil.² From this, Delisle argued that Orderic sought to follow the account of both writers, though due to Orderic's emphasis on Baldric in the epilogue he stressed that his influence on book IX was far greater than that of Fulcher.³ Similarly, Hans Wolter, writing in 1955, emphasised the fact that Orderic made more use of Baldric than Fulcher.⁴ Like Delisle before him, Wolter based his argument solely on Orderic's own comments at the beginning and end of book IX, rather than on a detailed textual comparison of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. It was not until 1967 that the matter of Orderic's sources began to be examined in greater depth, when Roger Ray included a comparative section on Orderic and

² See above, pp.145-9.

³ Delisle, 'Notice sur Orderic Vital', p.lxxvii.

⁴ Wolter, *Ordericus Vitalis*, p.117.

Baldric of Bourgueil in his doctoral thesis on the *Historia ecclesiastica*.⁵ Here Ray rejected the notion that Orderic borrowed from Fulcher of Chartres, stressing the absence of his name from the epilogue to book IX as evidence of this. He regarded the reference to Fulcher in the prologue as being merely ‘an acknowledgement of the scholarly work on the Crusade which Ordericus wants to join.’⁶ Scholars had placed too much emphasis on the prologue and epilogue to Orderic’s account of the First Crusade, while the main body of the narrative had all the while been neglected in the discussion.

Ray examined the text of book IX of the *Historia* alongside Fulcher’s *Historia Hierosolymitana* to settle the question of the relationship between the two texts. In order to do so, he examined the one major part of the narrative which though absent from Baldric’s *Historia Ierosolimitana* is present in both Orderic and Fulcher’s works, namely an account of Baldwin of Boulogne’s conquest of Edessa.⁷ While at first glance these passages may appear similar, closer study led Ray to conclude that the two accounts ‘diverge sharply’ from each other, differing ‘in both detail and attitude’.⁸ Chibnall reached the same conclusion on the textual relationship between Orderic and Baldric in volume V of her edition, first published in 1975: ‘he did not check Baudry’s history by any other written source, not even the *Historia Hierosolimitana* of Fulcher of Chartres, which he mentions in the preface’.⁹ While Chibnall immediately qualified this statement with a footnote in which she suggested that Orderic may have lifted a statement from Fulcher about the hereditary right of the First Crusaders to the houses they first entered during the conquest of Jerusalem, this should not be allowed to

⁵ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, pp.175-86.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.176.

⁷ OV V. 118-28.

⁸ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, pp.177-78.

⁹ OV V. xiv.

cloud the issue.¹⁰ For as she herself noted in her later comments on that passage, while Orderic gave the same information, he did so using different words.¹¹ It is far more likely that Orderic added this to Baldric's narrative using widely known oral information rather than any other written source. Thus though Orderic was aware of Fulcher's work, there is no evidence that he made use of it. Ray suggested that Orderic chose Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana* over Fulcher's *Historia Hierosolymitana* because the former aligned more closely with his purposes in writing the *Historia ecclesiastica*,¹² but it must be remembered that Orderic nowhere stated that he either read or had access to Fulcher's work. Indeed, his reference to Fulcher in the prologue to book IX is similar in nature to his comments in book III of the *Historia* regarding Geoffrey Malaterra's *De rebus gestis*, which he is also unlikely to have read. There Orderic praised Malaterra and his work in general terms, but said nothing concerning its content.¹³ In summary, then, there is no textual evidence that Orderic made direct usage of Fulcher's *Historia Hierosolymitana*, only that he was aware of its existence in general terms.

One must turn to Baldric of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosolimitana* for strong evidence of direct textual borrowing by Orderic in book IX of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Ray's work paved the way in this area, for he sought to understand the nature of Orderic's borrowings through close textual comparison of specific passages in the two texts, something which had not been attempted previously. While he cited only one example of this in his thesis, Peter the Hermit's arrival at Constantinople, Ray's conclusions were based on the study of a much wider array of material from Orderic and Baldric.¹⁴ He highlighted three features of Orderic's

¹⁰ OV V. xiv, n.1.

¹¹ OV V. 172, n.1.

¹² See below, pp.205-6.

¹³ OV II. 100.

¹⁴ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, p.181.

use of Baldric: copying, which was ‘slavish’, ‘obvious’ and ‘the rule throughout Book Nine of the *Historia*’;¹⁵ abbreviation, particularly of the many speeches in Baldric, which were either condensed or deleted;¹⁶ and, finally, addition, which in his assessment varied in its historical value. Some information was ‘useless’, some ‘plainly erroneous’, while other additions were ‘well taken’. Overall, though, Ray concluded that Orderic’s changes to Baldric were ‘not materially great’.¹⁷ Chibnall presented a similar picture in her introductory notes to book IX. Like Ray, she emphasised the derivative nature of Orderic’s account of the First Crusade, observing that ‘Orderic’s borrowings were on a scale unequalled in his use of any other source. If he rarely copied more than a sentence or two verbatim he often made only minor changes in words or word-order, and he abbreviated more frequently by omitting selected passages than by summarizing a chapter in his own words.’¹⁸ While Chibnall mentioned the presence of some original material in book IX, the significance of these passages, which were examined in the previous chapter, went unnoticed. Though brief and somewhat critical, the work of Ray and Chibnall nonetheless offers some important indications about the editorial processes that one can expect to find when examining the book IX of the *Historia* alongside Baldric’s *Historia Ierosolimitana*.

We will now turn our attention to the matter of why Orderic used the *Historia Ierosolimitana* rather than another of the narrative histories of the First Crusade circulating in the first half of the twelfth century. Ray argued that Orderic chose Baldric’s work because its tone aligned closely with that which he intended for the *Historia*, observing, ‘The choice of Crusade sources bespeaks the substance of monastic spirituality that Orderic wanted his narrative to

¹⁵ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, pp.181-82.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp.182-84.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp.185-86.

¹⁸ OV V. xiii-xiv.

have.¹⁹ To support this argument he drew attention to Orderic's comment in the epilogue to book IX that Baldric's writings and teachings roused his hearers 'to the worship of God' (*ad Dei cultum*).²⁰ While Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana* is certainly deeply theological in its content,²¹ the problem with Ray's argument is his assumption that Orderic made an informed decision based on choosing between the wide array of First Crusade narratives which he apparently had in his possession at the time of writing book IX. Though not impossible, such a situation is, nevertheless, improbable, given the complete absence of evidence for this in book IX. Moreover, it begs the question of why Orderic so heavily edited the content of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* if Baldric's authorial style and intent so closely mirrored his own aims. If that was, in fact, the case, there would surely have been no need for Orderic to insert additional passages into the existing narrative which he inherited from Baldric. That he did so is thus telling, and it weakens Ray's assertion considerably.

Why, then, did Orderic use Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana*? Having explained some of his editorial method to the reader at the beginning of the epilogue to book IX, Orderic continued his tribute to Baldric by providing a short biographical sketch of his life. He praised Baldric for his learning and piety as a monk, for which he was promoted from the abbacy of Bourgueil to the archbishopric of Dol. We are then told that due to the unruly nature of the Bretons, Baldric frequently found refuge in Normandy on the estates of Dol on the river Risle, visiting monasteries such as Fécamp, Saint-Wandrille and Jumièges while there, and preaching lively and edifying sermons.²² It was in this context that Orderic wrote, 'I decided to reverently honour the aforesaid old man, whom I knew well.' (*Praefatum seniore[m] quem*

¹⁹ Ray, 'Medieval Historiography', p.56.

²⁰ OV V. 190.

²¹ BB, pp.34-51.

²² OV V. 188-90.

bene cognoui, ueneranter honorare decreui.)²³ Little else is known about Baldric's life other than the information given here,²⁴ and one must resist the temptation to speculate too much about the friendship between the two writers. Little can be known regarding the circumstances in which they met, though this probably took place away from the pays d'Ouche. Had Baldric's connection to Saint-Evroult been more direct, as Ray suggested,²⁵ Orderic would surely have informed his readers, for this would have provided a further example of the local connections which lie at the heart of the *Historia*. What is clear from this passage is that Orderic knew Baldric 'well' and that he regarded the incorporation of his own reworked version of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* into the much larger *Historia ecclesiastica* as an opportunity 'to honour' the memory of his friend.

While Orderic's friendship with Baldric would thus have predisposed him to using the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, one should also look to the circulation of manuscripts in Normandy in the first half of the twelfth century in order to understand more about how Orderic might have gained access to a copy of Baldric's work. Here Geneviève Nortier's valuable work on the medieval library catalogues of the Benedictine abbeys of Normandy is of great use. For Nortier's research reveals that copies of *Historia Ierosolimitana* were present at the abbeys of Bec and Lyre in the twelfth century, with another at Jumièges in the thirteenth century.²⁶ Of these, the two manuscripts from Lyre and Jumièges survive as Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 1125 and Berne, Burgerbibliothek MS 155. Steven Biddlecombe designated

²³ OV V. 188.

²⁴ But see BB, pp.6-22 for an overview of Baldric's life and works.

²⁵ Ray, *Monastic Historiography*, p.179.

²⁶ Geneviève Nortier, *Les bibliothèques médiévales des abbayes bénédictines de Normandie: Fécamp. Le Bec. Le Mont Saint-Michel. Saint-Évroul. Lyre. Jumièges. Saint-Wandrille. Saint-Ouen* (Paris, 1971), p.200; for more on Bec see pp.34-60, and on Lyre pp.124-42. See also Hockey, 'William fitz Osbern and the Endowment of his Abbey of Lyre' for details of Lyre's cross-Channel influence and post-Conquest holdings.

these ‘C’ and ‘Q’ respectively.²⁷ The Bec manuscript, meanwhile, was lost sometime before the mid-seventeenth century.²⁸ Each of these monasteries had close links with Saint-Evroult, and the presence of three manuscripts of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* in Normandy suggests that there was some circulation and copying of Baldric’s work at these and perhaps also other houses in the duchy. Of the remaining manuscripts of Baldric’s *Historia* which survive, the nearest geographically to Saint-Evroult are the twelfth-century manuscripts which perhaps originated at Tours, Blois and Tiron.²⁹

Which text, then, did Orderic use? The answer is far from clear, for, as Chibnall noted, his exemplar seems not to have survived.³⁰ The loss of the Bec manuscript in the early-modern period means that there is no way of comparing its contents with that of book IX of the *Historia*. The readings of the Lyre manuscript of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, manuscript C, are sometimes similar to Orderic’s account of the First Crusade, but they differ at other points in the text. The Jumièges manuscript, manuscript Q, dates from at least the thirteenth century and so postdates the writing of book IX by a century. While Orderic’s exemplar may never be identified, analysis of the manuscript tradition of *Historia Ierosolimitana* can help to provide some important details regarding the nature of the text which Orderic would have used. For Biddlecombe has argued that Baldric’s work was composed in two stages, with a first “Bourgueil recension” composed in 1105 when he was abbot of Bourgueil, and a second “Dol recension” composed after 1107 once he was Archbishop of Dol. There are three surviving manuscripts witnesses to the first recension, and eighteen to the second. In describing the separation of the crusader army into two groups after Nicaea was taken, the

²⁷ For detailed descriptions of these manuscripts see BB, pp.84-5, 110.

²⁸ Nortier, *Bibliothèques Médiévales*, p.52, 200.

²⁹ BB, pp.92-3, 105, 108-9.

³⁰ OV V. xiv.

two recensions of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* differ markedly in the number of names included. The first recension mentions only four names, while the manuscripts in the second Dol recension list up to twenty individuals, most of them with close connections to Brittany or Normandy, reflecting ‘the new social and cultural circles in which Baldric was now moving’ as archbishop of Dol.³¹ This longer list of names is also present in book IX of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and, as such, is clear evidence that the manuscript which Orderic used stemmed from the second Dol Recension of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*.³² Also telling is Orderic’s inclusion of a passage regarding Godfrey of Bouillon’s military exploits at the beginning of the siege of Antioch. This episode is absent from the manuscripts in the first Bourgueil recension of Baldric’s work, and is present in only nine of the surviving manuscripts in the later Dol recension.³³ This further underlines the fact that Orderic used a manuscript from the Dol recension of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. Beyond that, however, little more can be known. This present study will use the critical edition of Biddlecombe, with Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS 5134 as its base text.³⁴ With this understanding in place, this chapter will now offer a detailed textual comparison of how Orderic interacted with Baldric’s *Historia Ierosolimitana* for his account of the siege, capture and subsequent battle of Antioch.

The sequence of events which took place at Antioch between October 1097 and June 1098 was by far the most gruelling part of the First Crusade for participants, and arguably also the

³¹ BB, pp.28-30; for this list of names see BB. II.i, p.173.

³² OV V. 58.

³³ For further discussion of this passage see below, pp.211-16.

³⁴ On the limitations of the previous nineteenth century *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades* edition see BB. 76-8.

most important in determining the success or failure of the entire undertaking.³⁵ Compared to the other major components of the story of the *iter* to Jerusalem it is afforded by far the most narrative “time” in the earliest accounts of the First Crusade. In contrast, the culmination of the expedition, the siege of Jerusalem, passes quickly in the text. Baldric of Bourgueil’s account of Antioch runs for some seventy-nine pages in the modern edition of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, spanning two of its four books and constituting almost 40% of the entire text.³⁶ While Orderic’s account of the First Crusade is much shorter than Baldric’s, Antioch remains prominent, occupying twenty-six pages in the Latin, roughly 27% of the narrative.³⁷ The significance of Antioch, both in the course of the First Crusade itself and in the subsequent narratives accounts of it, thus makes it fertile ground for a thorough comparison of Orderic and Baldric of Bourgueil. At the outset, it is important to stress the sheer number of words which Orderic cut from Baldric’s account of events at Antioch. For Orderic’s version of events is just over 6800 words in length, almost exactly half the size of that found in Baldric, which runs for 13600 words. What, then, was left on the cutting floor? In order to answer this question, this chapter will undertake a textual comparison of the two accounts at four important moments in the story: Godfrey of Bouillon’s exploits at the outset of the siege of Antioch, the betrayal of the city, the flight of the Grandmesnil brothers from the walls of the city and, finally, the appearance of warrior-saints in the final battle against Kerbogah. Detailed analysis of these passages will enable the historian to closely track Orderic’s editorial method and allow for wider patterns and themes to emerge.

³⁵ For a thorough overview of these events see John France, *Victory in the East: A Military History of the First Crusade* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.197-296. For a nuanced analysis of the memories surrounding Antioch in the chronicles of the First Crusade see Asbridge, ‘The Holy Lance of Antioch’.

³⁶ BB. II. viii-III. xviii, pp.187-266.

³⁷ OV V. 68-118.

Godfrey of Bouillon's Heroic Exploits at the Iron Bridge

The battle for Antioch was fierce and initially little progress was made. In March 1098, intense fighting took place between the crusaders and the Turks at the Iron Bridge, a well-garrisoned fortified bridge over the Orontes River which the crusaders needed to secure in order to take the city itself.³⁸ For the chroniclers of the First Crusade, such moments provided an opportunity to embellish their accounts with stories of individual exploits. A prime example of this comes at this point in the story when Godfrey of Bouillon, the leader of the Lotharingian contingent of the crusader army, apparently cut a Turk in half with a single sword blow. Interestingly, this story is not present in the three surviving manuscripts of the Bourgueil Recension of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. It seems to have been added by Baldric to the later Dol Recension of his work, yet it appears in only nine of the manuscripts in this branch of the tradition. Of these, eight manuscripts, B, C, D, E, F, H, I, J, contain the same thirty-six words of Latin, presented in the same word-order, at exactly the same point in the narrative. A ninth, manuscript G, one of the most unusual of all the surviving manuscripts of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* due to the large amount of additional material it contains relating to the lords of Amboise, gave a different rendering of Godfrey's heroic exploit, inserting it at a slightly later point in the text.³⁹ Orderic also inserted an account of the killing of the Turk at the Iron Bridge, basing this on the version of events which is attested by eight manuscript witnesses:

³⁸ France, *Victory in the East*, pp.205-8.

³⁹ BB II. xxvii, p.210, ns. a and g. For a description of manuscript G see BB, pp.92-3. For more detailed studies see Nicholas L. Paul, 'Crusade Memory and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Amboise', *JMH* 31:2 (2005), 127-141; Neil Wright, 'Epic and Romance in the Chronicles of Anjou', *ANS* 26 (2004), 177-189.

<p>Baldric's <i>Historia</i></p> <p>In hac siquidem pugna, ut a multis relatam est, dux Godefredus militem Turcum adeo fortiter ense percussit, ut uno ictu dimidiate corporis pars superior ad terram eaderet, pars inferior in sella adhuc residens in ciuitatem rediret.⁴⁰</p>	<p>Orderic</p> <p>Insignis <i>dux Godefredus</i> quemdam maximum bellatorem, aurea lorica indutum, in tergo <i>ense percussit,</i> validoque <i>ictu</i> per medium quasi tenerum porrum obtruncavit. Caput, cum humeris et <i>superiori parte corporis</i> a cingulo, in flumen cecidit, <i>inferiorque pars</i> super velocissimum cornipedem remansit. Equus autem, rectore carens, aspere calcaribus urgebatur, et laxatis habenis fugientes praeueniens, urbem ingressus est. Hoc totus populus, qui in muris et propugnaculis stabat, ut prospexit, valde mestus contremuit, et de tanto strenui baronis ictu plurima cum lamentis verba evomuit.⁴¹</p>
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This story was probably a well-known one, transmitted first orally and then in written form. Baldric's inclusion of the phrase 'as has been related by many' (*ut a multis relatam est*) is indicative of its oral popularity. Moreover, half of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* manuscripts in which it is found date from the twelfth century, showing that accounts of Godfrey's martial prowess and heroic reputation spread quickly in the years that followed the First Crusade.

⁴⁰ BB II. xvii, p.210 n.a.

⁴¹ OV V. 84.

These two factors suggest that Baldric considered the story a worthy addition to his second Dol recension of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. The passage was not present in Baldric's main written source, the *Gesta Francorum*. Rather, Simon John has suggested that the origins of the story are to be found in Raymond of Aguilers' *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, where he observed that Godfrey of Bouillon blocked the entrance to the bridge gate, forcing the Turks to divide into two ranks as they ascended the steps. It should also be noted that the bisected pagan is something of an epic trope featuring in the tradition of the *chansons de geste*.⁴² How Baldric heard about this we cannot know; what is clear is that in the years after the event, the story seems to have grown in popularity and accounts of it became successively embellished. Orderic's account of Godfrey's killing of the Turk is a good example of this. For rather than abbreviating the version in Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana*, as was his general custom, Orderic's account is unusual in that it adds further aspects to the story,⁴³ greatly expanding it from thirty-six to seventy-nine words:

Baldric's <i>Historia</i>	Orderic
<p>Accordingly, in this battle, as has been related by many, Duke Godfrey struck a Turkish soldier so strongly with his sword that with one dimidiating blow the upper part of the body fell to the ground, while the lower part, still remaining in the seat, returned to the city.⁴⁴</p>	<p>The distinguished <i>duke Godfrey struck</i> a certain great warrior, clothed in a golden hauberk, from behind <i>with his sword</i>, and with a powerful <i>blow</i> cut through his middle as if it were a tender leek. The head, with the shoulders and <i>the upper part of the body</i> above the belt, fell into the river, and <i>the lower part</i> remained on the most swift horse.</p>

⁴² Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, *RHC Occ.*, 3.231-309, at p.249. I am grateful to Simon John for his personal communication on this matter.

⁴³ A feature noted by Chibnall, *OV V*. xvii, 84 n.1.

⁴⁴ *BB II*. xvii, p.210 n.a.

	<p>The horse, meanwhile, without a rider, was being urged on by the rough spurs, and arriving ahead of those fleeing, with the reins slack, it entered the city. At this the whole crowd which was standing at the walls and ramparts in order to watch, trembled, greatly saddened, and cried out with great lamentations about the great strength of the baron's blow.⁴⁵</p>
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While Orderic retained the bare bones of this story, as told by Baldric, he embellished every aspect of it, further enriching the story and added to its drama, particularly at the end. Thus, while Baldric described Godfrey's victim in rather modest terms, as 'a Turkish soldier' (*militem Turcum*), in Orderic's hands this became 'a certain great warrior, clothed in a golden hauberk' (*quemdam maximum bellatorem aurea lorica indutum*). The usage of the superlative, *maximum*, to describe the Turk is also revealing, highlighting that he was one of the greatest of all the warriors on the battlefield. Duke Godfrey was also furnished with an adjective, being transformed from merely 'Duke Godfrey' (*dux Godefredus*) in the *Historia Ierosolimitana* to 'the distinguished Duke Godfrey' (*insignis dux Godefredus*) in the *Historia ecclesiastica*. This probably reflects the significance with which Godfrey was remembered after the First Crusade, when he became the first king of the nascent crusader state of Jerusalem, and also points to the fact that his feat against the Turk was a good example of what made him worthy of distinction. The description of the blow which Godfrey inflicted was also embellished by Orderic, who added extra colour to the story by saying that the

⁴⁵ OV V. 84.

duke's sword cut through the middle of the warrior 'as if it were a tender leek' (*quasi tenerum porrum*). And while Baldric briefly related how the top half of the body fell to the ground and the lower part was carried back to the city by the horse, Orderic added a number of details that made this more dramatic. The upper half of the body fell into the river and much information was added about the return of the lower half to the city: the reins were slack, the now-lifeless legs of the Turk continued to dig their spurs into the horse, and the horse travelled so fast that it arrived at the city gates before anyone else. Finally, Orderic also sought to increase the significance of this episode within the larger narrative of the siege and eventual capture of Antioch. For in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, Godfrey not only performed such a legendary exploit against a strong and renowned opponent, but he also did so in front of a large crowd of fearful Antiochene onlookers who trembled at what they saw. There is no mention of this audience in the text of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. This addition heightens the drama of the occasion, acting as an ominous sign for those within the city and an indication to the reader of the inevitability of the crusader victory. This interpretation is given further weight by Orderic's comment which follows immediately after this incident, where, speaking of the women within the city, he wrote 'The women were watching the miseries of their men from the view of the walls and ramparts and envying the successive successes of the Franks' (*Mulieres a murorum et propugnaculorum spectaculis suorum miserias prospectabant, et successiuis Francorum prosperitatibus inuidebant*).⁴⁶ Antioch was to occupy the longest single section of the narrative of book IX, and it was certainly the most gruelling part of the story of the First Crusade. But Orderic sought to underline to his readers that the crusaders nevertheless met with repeated success. The example of Godfrey of Bouillon's actions at the Iron Bridge embodied this and thus provided Orderic with an opportunity to expand on Baldric's account in order to benefit the narrative of the *Historia*

⁴⁶ OV V. 84.

ecclesiastica. Such embellishments provided an exciting incident early on in the narrative on Antioch, introducing the story with a dramatic spectacle. Comparison of Orderic and Baldric on this point thus reveals Orderic's creativity as a writer, as well as the freedom with which he went about editing the *Historia Ierosolimitana*.

The Betrayal of Antioch

On the night of 2-3 June 1098, the gruelling eight-month siege of Antioch came to a dramatic end. According to Orderic, the city was betrayed by a commander of three of its towers named *Pirrus Datianus*, who is usually known simply as 'Firuz' in the scholarship on the subject. For Bohemond, the leader of the southern Italian Norman contingent on the First Crusade, had previously struck up a friendship with Firuz and convinced him to surrender his towers to the crusader army in return for conversion to Christianity along with other promises of reward. So it was that at dawn on 3 June, a small contingent of soldiers led by Bohemond climbed a ladder up into one of Firuz's towers and, having opening the city gates to allow the waiting crusader army to enter, took hold of the city from the inside, slaughtering all who were found there.⁴⁷ This was a pivotal moment in the story of the First Crusade, and its significance and sensational nature ensured that it was told, retold and further embellished in the large number of subsequent historical narratives about the *iter*. The scholarship on the fall of Antioch has been correspondingly large. Two types of studies have dominated: those trying to determine the reality of what actually took place,⁴⁸ and those which have examined the development of the story in the chronicles from a more literary perspective. The studies of Robert Levine, Susan Edgington and Rebecca Slitt have, in particular, highlighted the value

⁴⁷ OV V. 86-94.

⁴⁸ For this approach see France, *Victory in the East*, pp.257-68; *idem*, 'The Fall of Antioch During the First Crusade', in Michel Balard, Benjamin Z. Kedar and Jonathan Riley-Smith (eds) *Dei Gesta per Francos: Etudes sur les Croisades dédiées à Jean Richard – Crusade Studies in Honour of Jean Richard* (Aldershot, 2001), 13-20.

of this latter approach and have explored the rhetorical nature of the accounts in some depth,⁴⁹ and a similar perspective will be employed here.

Some mention has been made of Orderic in the scholarship on the betrayal of Antioch. Thus Edgington and Slitt have both highlighted that the *Historia* is unique in some of the details it provides.⁵⁰ Levine's comments have also been instructive. For while he noted that Orderic and Baldric's accounts of betrayal of Antioch were both 'theatrically rhetorical', he nevertheless argued that when compared to other, more well-known chroniclers of the First Crusade, such as Baldric, Ralph of Caen and Guibert of Nogent, 'Orderic's text reflects an even greater concern with the "music" rhetoric.'⁵¹ According to Levine, then, while Orderic followed Baldric in crafting a highly rhetorical account of the fall of Antioch, he went even further than his predecessor in this area, and perhaps even further than many of the other Latin chronicles from the first half of the twelfth century. This is therefore a highly important part of the narrative at which to undertake a detailed textual comparison of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Historia Ierosolimitana*.

⁴⁹ Robert Levine, 'The Pious Traitor: Rhetorical Reinventions of the Fall of Antioch', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 33 (1998), 59-80; Susan B. Edgington, 'Romance and Reality in the Sources for the Sieges of Antioch, 1097-8', in Charalambos Dendrinos and Jonathan Harris et al (eds) *Porphyrogenita: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (Aldershot, 2003), 33-45; Rebecca L. Slitt, 'Justifying Cross-Cultural Friendship: Bohemond, Firuz and the Fall of Antioch', *Viator* 38:2 (2007), 339-49, see pp.340-41 for her binary categorisation of studies of the fall of Antioch. See also Susanna A. Throop, 'Combat and Conversation: Interfaith Dialogue in Twelfth-Century Crusading Narratives', *Medieval Encounters* 13:2 (2007), 310-325; Joshua C. Birk, 'The Betrayal of Antioch: Narratives of Conversion and Conquest During the First Crusade', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 41:3 (2011), 463-85.

⁵⁰ Edgington, 'Romance and Reality', pp.43-45; Slitt, 'Justifying Cross-Cultural Friendship', pp.347-48.

⁵¹ Levine, 'The Pious Traitor', p.78.

Orderic's account of the betrayal of Antioch is by far the longest of the four examples discussed in this chapter, amounting to almost 900 words in the Latin.⁵² Baldric's account is nearly twice as long, at just under 1800 words, owing mainly to his inclusion of long sections of direct speech from Bohemond and Firuz, and also the speech of the other crusade leaders to Bohemond, offering him permanent possession of the city if he could help them take it.⁵³ Of the nine instances of direct speech in Baldric's account, the first four, between Bohemond and Firuz, and between Bohemond and the other crusade leaders, were omitted by Orderic.⁵⁴ The fifth and six, the speech of the crusader leaders to Bohemond, and Firuz's instructions to Bohemond, were included by Orderic.⁵⁵ The seventh, Bohemond's speech to his men immediately before they climbed the ladder into Firuz's tower, was omitted.⁵⁶ Finally, the eighth and ninth sections of direct speech, both given by Firuz to Bohemond in the early stages of the occupation of the towers along the city wall, were also included.⁵⁷ In all, then, Orderic omitted five of Baldric's nine speeches from his account of the fall of Antioch. Wholesale editorial cuts such as these explain the far shorter nature of Orderic's account of the siege of Antioch as a whole when compared with that in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. They are typical of the way in which Orderic went about reducing the total length of Baldric's work as he sought to incorporate an account of the First Crusade into the *Historia ecclesiastica*, and suggest that parts of the editorial process were achieved with relative ease. In seeking to understand Orderic's overall approach to the betrayal of Antioch it will be necessary not only to examine how he filled the developmental gaps left in the plot by the removal of these speeches, but it will also be instructive to see how he treated the speeches and other scenes which were retained for book IX. To what extent were they either altered or

⁵² 'Pirrus Datianus...incogniti fuerunt', OV V. 86-94.

⁵³ 'Erat in obsessa...incogniti fuerunt', BB II. xix – xxii, pp.214-24.

⁵⁴ BB II. xix, pp.214-15, 215-16, 216-18, 218.

⁵⁵ BB II. xix, p.219, 219-20.

⁵⁶ BB II. xix, p.221.

⁵⁷ BB II. xix, p.221, 222.

left untouched? While the length of these speeches is sometimes considerable, particularly in their original form in Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana*, an examination of them is deeply instructive. Some will thus be quoted here at length, while other less important examples will be merely summarised. It is to these speeches that our study now turns.

In introducing Firuz to the narrative, Orderic followed Baldric very closely, lifting the vast majority of his opening paragraph from the *Historia Ierosolimitana*:⁵⁸

Baldric's <i>Historia</i>	Orderic
<p>Erat in obsessa ciuitate quidam admiratus, Turcorum prosapia oriundus, nemine Pirrus, qui fedus amicitie per fideles internuncios cum Boamundo iniherat. Non quia, ut reor, Boamundum aliquando uiderit, sed quoniam de eo fama uolans ad eum multa bona detulerat, et de prudentia ipsius ne utquam ambigebat. Frequenter igitur per fidos interpretes et nota intersigna loquebantur adinuicem. Hunc Boamundus aliquando ad Christianitem incitabat; aliquando ad ciuitatem reddendam multimodis pollicitationibus suadebat; et, ut uir callens, nichil intemptatum relinquebat. Nunc enim</p>	<p><i>Pirrus</i> Datianus, <i>quidam admiratus, Turcorum prosapia oriundus, in obsessa ciuitate tres turres habebat; qui foedus amicitiae per fideles internuntios cum Buamundo inierat, de quo fama uolans ad eum multa bona detulerat. Frequenter igitur, per fidos interpretes et nota intersigna, loquebantur ad inuicem. Hunc aliquando Buamundus ad Christianitatem incitabat, aliquando ad reddendam ciuitatem multimodis pollicitationibus suadebat, et, ut uir callens, nihil intentatum relinquebat. Nunc eum pro infortuniis ciuitati imminentibus deterrebat, nunc eum pro</i></p>

⁵⁸ A point noted by Chibnall, OV V. 86 n.3.

eum pro infortuniis ciuitati imminentibus deterrebat; nunc eum pro premiis copiosis, que a Deo gloriose destinantur Christianitati, alliciebat. ⁵⁹	<i>praemiis copiosis, quae a Deo gloriose destinantur, Christianitati alliciebat.</i> ⁶⁰
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While the word order sometimes differs here, Orderic added only two details to the story which are not present in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*: the surname *Datianus*, which is unique to him, and the fact that Firuz was in command of three towers within Antioch.⁶¹ Baldric's opening sentence was therefore lengthened and the word order rearranged to accommodate these changes in book IX of the *Historia*. Orderic also omitted two clauses from this opening passage, simplifying Baldric's description of the development of the friendship between Bohemond and Firuz but doing little to alter the flow of the narrative. Such light changes meant that Orderic's opening passage remained largely as Baldric had written it. This was probably due to the integral part it played in providing the background for the dramatic betrayal of Antioch. For its importance to the plot meant that there was little that Orderic could cut, and so he copied most of the paragraph verbatim, some fifty words in all.⁶²

Orderic was much more ruthless in his treatment of the numerous instances of direct speech in this section of Baldric. For having made only minor changes to the opening paragraph of this episode, he proceeded to omit all of the next four speeches from book IX in their entirety, totalling some 726 words in all.⁶³ He then changed tack, picking up Baldric's Latin mid-sentence and continuing on with a section of the narrative in which he followed the account

⁵⁹ BB II. xix, p.214.

⁶⁰ OV V. 86-88.

⁶¹ OV V. 86 n.4; Edgington, 'Romance and Reality', p.43.

⁶² 'Frequenter igitur...Christianitati alliciebat.' BB II. xix, p.214; OV V. 86-88.

⁶³ 'Aiebat itaque...nec multo' BB II. xix, pp.214-18.

of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* much more closely. Yet the extensive nature of these prior editorial cuts left a sizeable hole in the narrative which needed to be filled if the plot was to make any sense to the reader. It was thus necessary for Orderic to insert a large original section of text into the narrative in which he summarised the substance of the omitted dialogue in succinct fashion,⁶⁴ requiring only 105 words of Latin:

Finally, Firuz showed assent to his famous friend and offered his three towers to him, and promised his son as a hostage given for himself; and so that they might hasten to the beginning of the business, he regularly admonished Bohemond. The prudent Bohemond cautiously concealed his inner joy and, until the right time, restrained his face and mouth. Then, having spoken to the nobles about the difficulty of capturing the city, about the great hardship of the long siege, and about the laudable constancy of the victorious army, he urged that the rule of Antioch should be conceded by all to whichever of them, who either at a price, or by force or friendship, or by whatever trick, was able to obtain it. At that time the leaders were not acquiescent towards him, but said to him that it ought to be common to all, because all had laboured there in the general struggle. The wise lord, having heard the many objections, fell silent, and awaited an opportunity for the desired end.⁶⁵

This summary section neatly filled a gap which would otherwise have been present in the plot of the *Historia*. Orderic's readers would thus have been completely unaware of both the composite nature of the text at this point in the narrative, and also of the full extent of the careful editorial work that had taken place in order to allow the plot to continue to develop. For many of the Latin words and phrases in this summary passage were lifted directly from Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana* and altered only slightly in order for them to be

⁶⁴ Chibnall noted that this section 'briefly summarizes' Baldric's account, OV V. 86 n.3.

⁶⁵ Tandem Pirrus famoso amico assensum praebuit, et tres ei turres suas obtulit, filiumque suum obsidem daturum se spondit, et ut inceptum maturarent negotium, summopere admonuit. Prudens Buamundus intestinam laetitiam caute celavit, uultum et os ad tempus compescuit. Optimates deinde allocutus de difficultate capiendae urbis, de ingenti taedio longae obsidionis, de laudabili constantia uictoriosae expeditionis, suasit ut cuilibet suorum ab omnibus concederetur principatus Antiochiae, qui pretio, seu ui, uel amicitia, seu quolibet ingenio posset eam obtinere. Tunc seniores ei non acquieuerunt, sed communem eam omnibus esse debere dixerunt, quia generali conatu omnes ibi laborauerunt. Sapiens heros pluribus auditis conticuit, et opportunitatem optati exitus exspectauit. OV V. 88.

paraphrased by Orderic, rather than recorded in their original form as direct speech. A clear example of this is Firuz's offer of his three towers in Antioch, as well as his son, to Bohemond, in order to hasten the fall of the city:

Baldric's <i>Historia</i>	Orderic
<p>“Assencior, inquit, mandatis tuis, mi carissime. Noui enim te uirum modestum et honestum. Deinde non ignotum habeo quanti debeamus facere nomen et uirtutem amicitie, cuius idem uelle et idem nolle summus gradus est. Casus quoslibet imminentes urbi posthac michi pretendas nolo. Non sumus qui minis uestris deterreamur. Ciuitas enim ut uides inexpugnabilis est. De Christianitate tua, ad quam uehementer suspiro, quam inuictissimam uideo, et gloriosam nequaquam diffiteor, loquaris uolo. Denique, ut compendiosius loquar utque tibi satisfaciam, et animam meam in manibus inimici mei pono, et ciuitatem istam in fide amici mei colloco. Sunt sub mea custodia tres turres satis munite, quas tuis reddam apparitoribus, neue michi in aliquo discredas, filium meum obsidem</p>	<p>Tandem Pirrus famoso <i>amico assensum</i> prae-buit, et <i>tres ei turres</i> suas obtulit, <i>filiumque</i> suum <i>obsidem</i> daturum se spon-dit, et ut <i>inceptum maturarent negotium</i>, summopere admonuit.⁶⁷</p>

⁶⁷ OV V. 88.

<p>tibi transmittam, ut quos miseris securiores accelerent, at ne prodicionis redarguar, quicquid agere dispono totum Christianitati uestre imputo. Nolo autem ita incipias, quatenus fatiscens imperfecto negotio subcumbas. Sic etenim mors michi meisque immineret, et de cetero, de ciuitate reddenda nulla daretur alicui facultas. Ne differas ergo, neue dissimules, quoniam nocuit differe paratis; sed accepto et accelerato consilio, uel ex toto dimitte, uel rem maturatam perface.⁶⁶</p>	
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Here words and phrases dispersed across Firuz’s speech in Baldric’s *Historia Ierosolimitana* have been pulled together by Orderic in order to provide many of the key details contained in the sentence. These include *tres turres*, *filium meum obsidem* and the words *assencior*, *amici*, *incipias*, *negotio* and *maturatam*. Orderic employed a similar approach in the rest of this section, where he summarised Bohemond’s guarded response to Firuz’s speech, Bohemond’s subsequent speech to the other crusade leaders, and their initially unenthusiastic replies:

<p>Baldric’s <i>Historia</i> His Boamundus auditis nimium gausus est; attamen uultum et os ad tempus compescuit, ne ex inepta leticia</p>	<p>Orderic Prudens <i>Buamundus intestinam laetitiam</i> caute celauit, <i>uultum et os ad tempus</i> <i>compescuit. Optimates</i> deinde <i>allocutus</i> de</p>
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⁶⁶ BB II. xix, pp.215-16.

deprehenderetur intestinus animi motus. Locutus autem ad optimates, sic demum ora resoluit. “Videtur, patres conscripti, quod sine profundis singultibus enucleare non possum, quantis affecti simus calamitatibus, quantis incommoditatibus populus iste pereclitatur. Sed quid plebeios homines commemorem, cum uos, o illustris sanguinis stemmata, inedia palleatis, tedio tabescatis, laboribus marcescatis?...Temptet igitur unusquisque uestrum, patres conscripti, an pecunia, an amicitia, an minis, an quibuslibet ciuitatem hanc sibi uindicare preualebit angariis; eamque illi ultronei concedamus, qui hoc efficere quolibet poterit ingenio. Nam quid hic tanto moramur tempore? An que erunt subiugate ciuitatis emolumenta, si, antequam subiugabitur, totus Christianus exercitus quibuslibet mortibus exterminabitur? Igitur si meis, seniores obtinere, adquiescendum eensueritis consiliis, in medium consulite; et ei qui

difficultate capiendae urbis, de ingenti *taedio* longae obsidionis, de laudabili constantia uictoriosae expeditionis, suasit ut cuilibet suorum ab omnibus *concederetur* principatus Antiochiae, qui pretio, seu ui, uel *amicitia*, seu *quolibet ingenio posset eam* obtinere. Tunc *seniores* ei non *acquieuerunt*, sed communem eam omnibus esse debere dixerunt, quia generali conatu omnes ibi *laborauerunt*. Sapiens *heros* pluribus auditis *conticuit*, et opportunitatem optati exitus exspectauit.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ OV V. 88.

<p>urbem istam sibi subiugare poterit, concedamus et concedite; et etiam id efficaciter quilibet nostrum exequatur, rogate.” Tandem uero eloquens heros conticuit, procerum autem conuocatorum huiusmodi fuit responsum. Opinor et ipse, quia iam susplicando sermonem illum intelligentes preoccupauerant; Boamundum, tanquam sibi soli locutum, autumabant.⁶⁸</p>	
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On display here is an editing process for this speech which, though heavy, has nonetheless carefully retained those elements of Baldric’s narrative which are necessary for the story of the betrayal of Antioch to make sense to the reader. For while close comparison of the above two sections shows that Orderic cut a great deal of material from his source text, it also reveals that he plucked single words and phrases from Baldric’s *Historia Ierosolimitana* in order to summarise them in an effective and succinct manner. Such an approach allowed him not only to considerably reduce the size of his account of the First Crusade, but also, simultaneously, to preserve the key elements of the story without weakening the plot.

Orderic’s approach also allowed for some of Baldric’s themes to be developed. Thus, he composed the sentence *Prudens Buamundus intestinam laetitiam caute celauit, uultum et os ad tempus compescuit* from words borrowed largely from Baldric. Yet he added the adjective

⁶⁸ BB II. xix, pp.216-18.

prudens to describe the prudence and wisdom of Bohemond's actions, both in concealing his 'inner joy' (*laetitiam intestinam*) for having convinced Firuz to aid the crusaders, and in hiding the full extent of his strategy from the other crusade leaders.⁷⁰ Orderic summarised the speech to the leaders, perhaps feeling at liberty to do so given that, in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, Bohemond was initially unsuccessful in his attempts to trick them into relinquishing their respective claims to Antioch. The failure of the speech did not matter, for as in his dealings with Firuz, Bohemond waited patiently for the moment to come when his proposition would necessarily become the only option left amidst the growing hardships of the siege. Thus, where Baldric had stressed Bohemond's skills as an orator at this point in the narrative, describing him as 'the eloquent hero' (*eloquens heros*),⁷¹ Orderic, rather than emphasising his eloquence, which on this occasion had proved unconvincing, chose instead to highlight Bohemond's wisdom. He thus changed the adjective from *eloquens* to *sapiens*, so that Bohemond became 'the wise hero' (*sapiens heros*), one who was shrewd and calculating and willing to bide his time in order to get what he wanted.⁷²

While there was therefore no real need for Orderic to include the dialogue between Bohemond and the other crusade leaders, the speech which followed thereafter was, however, critical to the narrative. For with rumours circulating about the approach of a massive Muslim relief army, it was there that the leaders agreed to grant Antioch to Bohemond if he could somehow take it for them:

⁷⁰ OV V. 88.

⁷¹ BB II. xix, pp.218.

⁷² OV V. 88; for more on the theme of Bohemond's wisdom see Paul, 'A Warlord's Wisdom', pp.534-9.

<p>Baldric's <i>Historia</i></p> <p>“Vides quod in articulo res nostra posita sit. Si ciuitatem ergo istam uel prece uel precio, nobis etiam iuuantibus, poteris obtinere, nos eam tibi unanimiter concedimus; saluo in omnibus quod imperatori, te collaudante, fecimus sacramento. Si ergo imperator nobis adiutor aduenerit, iuratasque pactiones custodierit, periuri uiuere nolumus; sed quod pace tua dictum sit, nos eam illi concedimus. Sin autem, tue semper sit subdita potestati.”⁷³</p>	<p>Orderic</p> <p>“<i>Uides quod in articulo res nostra posita sit. Si ciuitatem ergo istam prece uel pretio, nobis etiam iuuantibus, poteris obtinere, nos eam tibi unanimiter concedimus; saluo in omnibus, quod imperatori te collaudante fecimus, sacramento. Si nobis imperator, ut promisit, adiutor aduenerit, iuratasque pactiones custodierit, periuri uiuere nolumus; sed, quod pace tua dictum sit, nos eam illi concedimus. Sin autem, tuae semper subdita sit potestati</i>”⁷⁴</p>
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What is immediately striking about this passage is that, apart from one minor omission (*ergo*) and the addition of a single phrase (*ut promisit*), Orderic's text has been lifted verbatim from the pages of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. The subsequent significance of this decision to grant Antioch to Bohemond probably explains this instance of wholesale borrowing. For the decision led to Bohemond's permanent possession of Antioch thereafter and the establishment of an independent principality there, as well as to enmity with the Byzantine emperor Alexius Comnenus, who had believed that the former Byzantine city would be returned to him on its capture by the crusaders.⁷⁵

⁷³ BB II. xix, pp.218-19.

⁷⁴ OV V. 88.

⁷⁵ For more on Antioch see Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch, 1098-1130* (Woodbridge, 2000).

More immediately, the speech of the leaders also drives the narrative of book IX forward, paving the way for Bohemond to implement his plan to take the city. In both the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Historia Ierosolimitana* the decision led to a message being sent from Bohemond to Firuz, recorded in direct speech, and to Bohemond informing the other leaders of his secret strategy, which both authors summarised. Orderic undertook some slight editing of Baldric's account here. He simplified the plot so that the brief mention of Firuz's written reply was omitted, as was some of the detail concerning the command for the crusader army to leave the camp in the guise of a foraging expedition before returning to storm the city at nightfall.⁷⁶ Thus, while in the *Historia Ierosolimitana* there was a much longer build-up to the fall of the city, achieved through extended sections of dialogue, the story unfolds much more rapidly in Orderic's version of events. This has the effect of removing much of the dramatic tension over which Baldric had laboured, giving the impression that Bohemond's plans came to fruition almost immediately. Yet this is probably an unintentional by-product of the necessarily extensive editing that took place here in order to successfully incorporate the story of the First Crusade into the much larger *Historia ecclesiastica*.

In both Baldric and Orderic, there are two main parts to the account of the taking of the city itself. The first comprises of the crusader army's withdrawal from their camp and Bohemond's speech to his men before they climbed the walls of Antioch, and contains some details regarding the men themselves:

Baldric's <i>Historia</i>	Orderic
Exercitus itaque Christianus, huiusce rei ignarus, die uesperascente castra egressus	<i>Exercitus itaque Christianus, huiusce rei ignarus, vesperascente die, castra exivit,</i>

⁷⁶ BB II. xix, pp.219-20; OV V. 88-90.

est; et per quedam deuia deductus, aurora nondum illucescente, prope ciuitatem, per compendiosa repedauit diuerticula.

Boamundus autem interim suis mandauit familiaribus:

“Hanc quam preparauero muro illi quem cernitis prudenter apponite scalam, et taciturni sapienter uos agite, et confidenter ascendite. Faciet uos tuos Pirrus amicus noster, inque suis turribus potestati uos collocabit uos. Filium suum mecum obsidem habeo, uos autem, postquam turres ascenderitis, rem reliquam peragite gladio. Nullus timeat, nemo stupeat. Scala muro adiuncta est, et uincta cum propugnaculis desuper. Properate igitur et intrepidi ascendite.”

Ascendit primus quidam Langobardus, nomine Paganus, non tamen omnino intrepidus. Nec mirum, cum et de proditione timeret, atque ad loca incognita transcenderet, et de quibuslibet euentibus formidaret, ac mortis horrorem sibi

*et per quaedam deuia deductus, ante auroram prope urbem per compendiosa diuerticula repedauit. Boamundus interim suis mandauit familiaribus ut scalam, quam praeparauerat, caute muro apponerent, et taciturni confidenter ascenderent, et reliqua, quae agenda essent, armis animisque uegeti prudenter agerent. Langobardus quidam, nomine Paganus, non sine grandi metu, primus ascendit, quem Fulcherius Carnotensis, et Rogerius de Barnevilla, ac Goisfredus Parented, de castro Secred, aliique fere LX subsecuti sunt; quos Pirrus diligenter suscepit, et in turribus suis collocauit.*⁷⁸

<p>presentem semper imaginaret. Subsecuti sunt tamen eum homines fere sexaginta.⁷⁷</p>	
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The presence of Orderic's editorial hand is once again immediately noticeable in this section of the narrative. His omissions and additions increase as the passage goes on, becoming heaviest as he describes the crusaders, led by the fearful Pagan, climbing the ladder into Firuz's tower. Interestingly, Orderic here added the names of another three men involved in the clandestine mission, namely a certain Fulcher of Chartres,⁷⁹ Roger of Barneville and Geoffrey Parented of Castel-Sagrat. Chibnall suggested that this additional information was the result of connections between Fulcher's family and Saint-Evroult, through his donation of some property to the monastery some years previously.⁸⁰ Yet the fact that this is the only reference to Fulcher in the whole of book IX would suggest that Orderic knew nothing else about his actions at Antioch, where, according to Raymond of Aguilers, he was the first crusader to enter the city.⁸¹

⁷⁸ 'And so the Christian army, unaware of this plan, went away from the castle as the day grew dark, and having been led to a remote place near the city, returned by convenient by-ways before sunrise. Meanwhile, Bohemond ordered his men to cautiously place the ladder which they had made against the wall, and silently and confidently climb it, and to carry out the rest of their plan with alert minds and weapons. A certain Lombard, named Pagan, climbed it first, yet not without great fear, and Fulcher of Chartres, Roger of Barneville, Geoffrey Parented of Castel-Sagrat and about sixty others followed. Firuz diligently received them and positioned them in his towers.' OV V. 90.

⁷⁷ 'And so the Christian army, unaware of this plan, marched away from the castle as the day grew dark, and having been led to a remote place near the city, returned by convenient by-ways while the sun was not yet dawning. Meanwhile, though, Bohemond gave this charge to his men: "This is the plan that I have made: I have discreetly placed the ladder against the wall which you see; silently, wisely go and boldly climb it. So you are aware, our friend Firuz, will then be able to position you in his towers. I will hold his brother as a hostage, but you, after you have climbed into the towers, finish the rest of the affair with the sword. Nobody fear, nobody be astonished. The ladder is supported by the wall and has been attached to the ramparts above. So hurry, and climb it undaunted!" A certain Lombard, named Pagan, climbed it first, yet he was not entirely undaunted. And no wonder, he was afraid of discovery as he climbed to that unknown place, with dread about the outcome, and always thinking, to his present horror, about death! Nevertheless, about sixty men had followed closely after him.' BB II. xix, pp.220-21.

⁷⁹ This was not the author of the *Historia Hierosolymitana*.

⁸⁰ OV V. 90 n.3; for details of the donation see OV III. 150-54.

⁸¹ Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum*, p.251.

Orderic's treatment of the crusaders, particularly Pagan, in this section of narrative is of great interest to this present study. Levine wrote that 'Paganus the Lombard, who was first up the ladder in Baldric's text, performs the same function in Orderic's, although now filled with trepidation, a feeling that was more generally distributed in Baldric's version.'⁸² Yet this claim finds no support in either text. Pagan is described as being fearful in both Baldric and in Orderic, and Orderic's comment that the Lombard was 'not without great fear' (*non sine grandi metu*) was actually an idea derived from his source text, the *Historia Ierosolimitana*.⁸³ For this phrase replaced Baldric's more dramatic imagining of Pagan's thoughts and feelings as he climbed the ladder: 'A certain Lombard ascended first, named Pagan, yet he was not entirely undaunted. And no wonder, since he was afraid of discovery, and also climbing to an unknown place, and dreading whatever the outcome, and always thinking, to his present horror, of his death. Sixty men, nevertheless, were following after him.'⁸⁴ This is a highly poetic sentence in the Latin and the end, in particular, resists easy translation. Baldric forced the word-order of the first three clauses, each time ending with a nominative masculine singular (*Langobardus, Paganus, intrepidus*). He then continued with four more rhyming clauses which expressed Pagan's continual fear with great rhetorical effect, each time achieved through the usage of the imperfect subjunctive (*timeret, transcenderet, formidaret and imaginaret*). Contrary to Levine's assertion above, these are singular verbs that relate to Pagan alone. Baldric wrote little about those who followed after him. Orderic's omission of these rhyming clauses also casts doubt on Levine's wider claim that he had 'an even greater concern with the "music" of rhetoric' than Baldric.⁸⁵ Moreover, while he furnished his summary of Bohemond's speech to his men with a series of four rhyming clauses ending with

⁸² Levine, 'The Pious Traitor', p.78.

⁸³ OV V. 90.

⁸⁴ BB II. xix, p.221.

⁸⁵ Levine, 'The Pious Traitor', p.78.

the verbs *apponerent, ascenderent, essent, agerent*,⁸⁶ these were a part of Orderic's attempt to mimic Baldric's rhetorical strategy of embellishing the story of the First Crusade with 'rhythmic, rhyming prose'.⁸⁷ For three of these verbs were drawn from the text of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, where they were uttered as commands issued from the mouth of Bohemond (*apponite, agite, ascendite*).

Though this example does, then, demonstrate a clear concern for rhetoric on Orderic's part, it does not seem that he went further than Baldric in this area. Such strategies were fundamental to the text of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* but appear less frequently in book IX of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. For while Baldric greatly expanded the account of his original source, the *Gesta Francorum*, in the writing of his *Historia Ierosolimitana*, Orderic's task was a very different one. He sought to incorporate an account of the First Crusade into his own, much larger chronicle, as just one part of it. Baldric's work was massive, and Orderic was forced to cut much of its material in order to integrate it into the rest of *Historia ecclesiastica*. This meant that he continued to cut much material from the story, even after recounting Pagan and the other crusaders' climb into the towers of Antioch. He shortened the length of Baldric's description of Bohemond as he was roused to action having lingered at the bottom of the ladder, and also that of the ladder collapsing under the weight of all the soldiers on it.⁸⁸ Yet the fact that these and other episodes were retained by Orderic demonstrates not only their importance to the plot, but it also suggests the ease with which he was able to edit the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, often heavily, without feeling that he was compromising the essential plot-line of the story of the First Crusade.

⁸⁶ OV V. 90.

⁸⁷ Levine, 'The Pious Traitor', p.69.

⁸⁸ BB II. xix, pp.221-24; OV V. 90-94.

The Flight of the Grandmesnils

Though the crusaders breached the walls of Antioch on the night of the 2 and 3 June 1098, they were unable to wrest the citadel from the surviving Turks within. Moreover, a massive relief army, led by Kerbogah of Mosul, reached the Iron Bridge on 5 June and approached the city the following day. This triggered the second siege of Antioch, in which the exhausted and much-depleted crusader army, desperately short of food and greatly outnumbered, was itself this time besieged within the city.⁸⁹ Morale within the city plummeted rapidly and, prior to the discovery of the Holy Lance, the leaders of the army may even have sought terms of surrender.⁹⁰ Stephen of Blois, who had been the leader of the expedition, had already fled to the port of Alexandretta never to return,⁹¹ and a number of other crusaders now followed suit, letting down ropes over the city walls and descending at nightfall. Yet only a few weeks later, on 28 June, the crusaders, though vastly outnumbered, decisively routed Kerbogah's army in battle and took complete possession of the city. Following this dramatic victory, the desertion from Antioch by the so-called *furtivi funambuli* appeared both cowardly and short-sighted, for the men abandoned their comrades just before the lowest point in the entire expedition turned into perhaps the most surprising victory of all. In the wake of the First Crusade, such actions were widely criticised by the chroniclers, and in this Baldric and Orderic were no exception.

The fact that members of the Grandmesnil family were amongst the deserters from Antioch means that this episode is likely to have posed a unique challenge to Orderic during the

⁸⁹ France, *Victory in the East*, pp.269-96.

⁹⁰ Asbridge, 'The Holy Lance of Antioch', pp.15-20.

⁹¹ OV V. 90, 106; for more on Steven of Blois see James A. Brundage, 'An Errant Crusader: Stephen of Blois', *Traditio* 16 (1960), 380-95.

process of writing book IX. For Hugh of Grandmesnil had co-founded Saint-Evroult in 1050, and the family had brought both fame and fortune to the monastery through its exploits not only in Normandy and England, but also in southern Italy, as has been shown above.⁹² Three of Hugh's sons, William, Aubrey and Ivo of Grandmesnil all participated in the First Crusade,⁹³ and references to their flight from Antioch are widespread in the chronicles. Thus, the *Gesta Francorum* listed William and Aubrey of Grandmesnil as having fled,⁹⁴ and Raymond of Aguilers, Baldric of Bourgueil, Guibert of Nogent and William of Tyre followed suit,⁹⁵ Peter Tudebode, the *Historia Belli Sacri* and Ralph of Caen cited all three brothers as deserters,⁹⁶ Bartolf of Nangis mentions only Ivo,⁹⁷ and Albert of Aachen only William.⁹⁸ Whatever the reasons for these textual variations, it is clear that many of the writers of First Crusade historiography felt free to edit their accounts of the desertion from Antioch as they saw fit.⁹⁹ One should expect Orderic to be no different in this regard, even more so when one considers the role of the Grandmesnil family as founders and patrons of his monastery of Saint-Evroult, whose history lies at the very heart of why the *Historia* was written.

⁹² See above, pp.94-105, 111-14. For more on the Grandmesnills see Walker, *The Grandmesnills*; Decaëns, 'Le patrimoine des Grentemesnil'; Chibnall, 'Les moines et les patrons de Saint-Évroult'; Hagger, 'Kinship and Identity in Eleventh-Century Normandy'.

⁹³ For an overview of Grandmesnil involvement in the First Crusade see Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, pp.157-78. The participation of families in the First Crusade was not uncommon, see Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, pp.81-105.

⁹⁴ *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Hill (London, 1962), pp.56-7

⁹⁵ Raymond of Aguilers, *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, ed. and trans. John H. Hill and Laurita L. Hill (Philadelphia, 1968), p.57; BB III.v, pp.236-37; Guibert of Nogent, *Dei Gesta per Francos*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1996), p.217; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. Emily A. Babcock and A. C. Krey (New York, 1943), 1:267.

⁹⁶ Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, *RHC Occ.* 3: 1-117, at p.67; *Historia belli sacri*, *RHC Occ.* 3, 165-229, p.200; Ralph of Caen, lines 2334-35, p.70; Bachrach and Bachrach, p.101.

⁹⁷ Bartolf of Nangis, *Gesta Francorum expugnantium Iherusalem*, *RHC Occ.* 3, 487-510, p.501.

⁹⁸ Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford, 2007), pp.304-5, 310-11.

⁹⁹ Carol Sweetenham has suggested that the absence of the Grandmesnills from Robert the Monk's account may have been part of a wider attempt to remove some of the *Gesta's* anti-French sentiments, as many of the other deserters were French, Robert the Monk, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, p.20. Bachrach and Bachrach have highlighted the contrast drawn by Ralph of Caen's bemoaning of the desertion of all three Grandmesnil brothers, commenting that 'This may be considered the rhetoric of the panegyric effect by which a figure or figures are depicted negatively so that another could be elevated.', Bachrach and Bachrach, p.15. It may also be that the third brother, Ivo, was added by Ralph to improve the rhythm of his verse at this point in the text. Yet this reference should not be dismissed on these grounds, as did Walker, *The Grandmesnills*, p.171, where she criticised Ralph's account for being 'exaggerated' and the result of a 'lively imagination'.

The widespread reporting of the desertion of the Grandmesnil brothers from Antioch in the chronicles of the First Crusade means that the story was probably known orally at Saint-Evroult long before Orderic gained access to Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana*. The possibility of an oral tradition surrounding this event, at least in the Norman world, is given further credence by two passages found in Ralph of Caen's *Gesta Tancredi*, written between c.1112 and c.1118.¹⁰⁰ In the first of these, Ralph noted that after the desertion of the *furtiui funambuli* from Antioch 'an edict was issued, that no one was to dare to remove the ropes, a monument of disgrace to posterity' (*Moxque fit edictum, ne quis dissoluere funes audeat, opprobrii monimentum posteritati.*)¹⁰¹ Secondly, in an earlier passage in the *Gesta Tancredi*, Bohemond is presented as warning two of the other departing deserters, Guy the Red (also known as Guy Troussel) and William the Carpenter, that because of their shameful actions, their tents would be permanently set aside for use as public latrines by the crusader army.¹⁰² While Ralph lamented the fact that the Grandmesnil brothers and the others who fled were all Normans and stressed the point that their shameful actions were a slur on the Norman name in general,¹⁰³ this posed a specific problem for Orderic in writing his own account of the First Crusade. The well-known nature of the actions of the Grandmesnil brothers, both in written and oral tradition, is likely to have meant that he felt unable to wholly omit an account of their desertion from book IX of the *Historia* as though it had never occurred, nor could he write a completely different version of events at Antioch.¹⁰⁴ The significance of the Grandmesnil family to Saint-Evroult meant that Orderic referred to their flight from the walls

¹⁰⁰ I am grateful to Bill Aird for drawing these passages to my attention.

¹⁰¹ Ralph of Caen, lines 2355-56, p.71; see also Bachrach and Bachrach, p.102.

¹⁰² Ralph of Caen, lines 1884-86, p.58; Bachrach and Bachrach, p.86.

¹⁰³ Ralph of Caen, lines 2334-35, p.70; Bachrach and Bachrach, p.101.

¹⁰⁴ For more on the power of the First Crusade in general, and the flight from Antioch in particular, to shape the way in which individuals and families were remembered see Paul, *To Follow in their Footsteps*, pp.27-8, 30, 36-9, 80-3.

of city in three separate passages, in books VIII, IX and XI of the *Historia*. The second of these provides the fullest treatment of the matter and so will be discussed in most detail here.

Orderic's handling of Baldric at this point in the narrative is thus an extremely interesting case study for examination here. The two chroniclers recorded the desertion of crusaders from Antioch as follows, with Baldric's account by far the longer of the two, totalling 279 words compared to Orderic's 147:

Baldric's <i>Historia</i>	Orderic
<p>Aggressi sunt eos Turci uehementer; iamque deficiebat dies, neque lassidabatur requies. Sic exhausta die, nox obtata terras obumbravit. Incubuit igitur Christianis magna desperatio. Alii tamen consolabantur alios, et in diem crastinam concionabantur de praelio. Aliqui tamen ultra ius et fas meticulosiores, et fratrum affectus immemores, noctu de fuga cogitauerunt, et ad tocium sue consanguinitatis et successionis ignominiam ignominiosiores aufugerunt. Non enim meminerunt quantum fuerit dedecus, fratribus et commilitonibus dimissis, amicis insalutatis, proceribus</p>	<p><i>Turci enim uehementer eos aggressi sunt. Incubuit ergo Christianis magna desperatio. Alii tamen alios consolabantur, et in diem crastinam de praelio concionabantur. Aliqui tamen, ultra ius et fas meticulosiores, ad dedecus sui noctu de fuga cogitauerunt. Willelmus enim de Grentemaisnil et Albericus frater eius, Guido Trussellus et Lambertus pauper, aliique plures hesterni belli timore perterriti sunt; et ut in crastinum aufugerent solliciti, funibus per murum demissi sunt. Unde, ad suam diuturnam ignominiam, furtiui funambuli uocati sunt. Tota nocte per abrupta praecipitiorum ambulauerunt, et cum multis comitibus ad portum Sancti Simeonis pedites,</i></p>

~~inconsultis, per murum funibus <dimitti>, uirile robur turpiter effeminari, homines antequam oporteat dementari. Nam qui quondam a preliis, sociis dimissis, fugiebant, sociorum proditores uocabantur, et plerumque capitibus in eis uindicabatur. Horum quosdam nominare non pretermittam, licet omnes nominarem, si omnes ex nomine nossem. Non enim eorum parcere debemus infamie qui sue, nimis formidolosi, non pepercerunt fame.~~

Willelmus de Grenta Masnil, et Albericus, frater eius, et Guido Trusellus, et Lambertus Pauper. Hi hesterni belli timore perterriti, et ut crastinum aufugerent solliciti, funibus per murum demissi sunt; et ad ~~perpetuam~~ suam ignominiam furtiui funambuli uocati sunt. ~~Noctis igitur illius conticinio, et funibus elapsi sunt,~~ et ad portum Sancti Symeonis pedites, manibus et pedibus excoriatis, deuenerunt. Ambulauerunt tota nocte per precipitiorum abrupta; et cum multis comitibus ~~ad portum prefatum ambulantes, deffessi substiterunt.~~ Et nautis in portu

manibus et pedibus excoriatis, deuenerunt. Ibi multas naues repperunt, et nautas, in portu uacillantes, crudelibus nuntiis terruerunt, dicentes quod a Turcis Antiochia capta esset, et ibidem Christiani a paganis deleti essent. His auditis, nautarum alii anchoris abruptis mare iam sulcabant, et carbasa crepitantes in auras obliquabant, alii pigritantes dissimulabant, omnes tamen in commune turbabantur et pallebant.

~~uacillantibus dixerunt. Erant nempe in
portu naues multe.~~

~~“Quid hic agitis, gens miseranda? Omnes
quos expectatis, decollati et deleti sunt
Christiani. Et nemo preter nos uiuus euasit;
et uos adhuc desidiosi moras agitis? Turei
Antiochiam, quam subegeramus,
obsederunt, immo ceperunt: alios omnes
decollauerunt; et nos uix eorum gladios
euasimus, dum nocte hac ad uos usque
uiam direximus. Rumpite igitur funes,
quantocius, inquam, rumpite, remisque
mare percellite, quoniam, si moras
inexueritis, quod dicimus uidebitis.”~~

The Latin of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* is highly rhetorical here. It can be translated as follows:

The Turks attacked them forcefully; that day weakened many, and it gave no rest to the weary. Thus after an exhausting day, the night chose to darken the land, and great desperation overwhelmed the Christians. Yet they consoled each other, and planned for battle on the following day. Some, however, those in whom fear exceeded right and duty, and those forgetful of their brothers' affections, decided to flee at night, and these disgraceful men fled away to the total disgrace of their kinsmen and successors.

Baldric now underlined the shameful nature of their actions:

Indeed, their shame meant that they were not regarded highly, but in disgrace, and they were shunned by their brothers and fellow soldiers, not greeted by friends nor consulted by princes, for they let themselves down over the city wall with ropes; they were men of strength who became repulsively effeminate, men, who before did what was right, were deluded. For those who were once in the battle were fleeing; having abandoned their companions, they were called traitors of their allies and the judgement of many was on their heads. I will not overlook the naming of these particular men, for it is right that all be named, if all are known by name. We are not obliged to spare them of the extremely terrible infamy from which they have craved to be spared. William of Grandmesnil, Aubrey, his brother, Guy Troussel and Lambert the Poor, these men, filled with fear from the previous day's battle and worry about the next day, were extremely terrified and they fled; they let themselves down over the city wall with ropes and to their perpetual shame were called "secret ropedancers".

Finally, the passage ended with the flight of the deserters to the port of St. Symeon, and their speech to the sailors there:

So, in the still of the night, they slipped away down the ropes, and travelling on foot to the port of St. Symeon, they arrived with their hands and feet stripped to the bone. They walked all night along the steep slopes of precipices, and, walking with many other companions to the aforesaid port, wearily stopped. And they spoke to the worried sailors in the port. There were truly many ships in the port. 'What are you doing here, pitiable people? All that which we have anticipated, the Christians have been beheaded and destroyed. And no one is alive besides us, and you, who thus far have been separated from the trouble. The Turks have besieged Antioch, which we had conquered; indeed they have captured it. They have killed all the others, and we scarcely evaded their swords, until we took the road to you this night. Thus we broke out using the ropes as soon as possible, we broke out, and urge you into the sea with your oars, because otherwise, we tell you, you will become entangled in the trouble, you will see.'¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ BB III.v, pp.236-37.

Baldric's account of the flight of the Grandmesnils is damning. It must have been extremely difficult for Orderic to swallow. How then did he interact with Baldric's text at this point in the editorial process? The account in book IX of the *Historia* reads as follows:¹⁰⁶

The Turks attacked them forcefully; great desperation therefore overwhelmed the Christians. Yet they consoled each other, and planned for battle on the following day. Some, however, those in whom fear exceeded right and duty, to their disgrace decided to flee at night. Namely William of Grandmesnil and Aubrey his brother, Guy Troussel and Lambert the Poor, and many others, who filled with fear from the previous day's battle, were extremely terrified and fled; they let themselves down over the city wall with ropes. For this, to their lasting shame, they were called "secret ropedancers". They walked all night along the steep slopes of the precipices, and walking with many companions to the port of St. Symeon, they arrived with their hands and feet stripped to the bone. There they found many ships and sailors worrying in the port, and they shocked them with bitter news, for they said that Antioch had been captured by the Turks, and the Christians there annihilated by the pagans. Hearing this, some of the sailors immediately now raised their anchors, and hoisted their sails towards the wind; others, dallying, concealed their intentions, yet all were alike in being disturbed and looking pale.

Orderic's account draws heavily from Baldric. Yet there are crucial differences between the two. At a basic level, Orderic's is half the length of Baldric's. While Baldric provided a long and thorough indictment of the deserters, closing with their speech to the sailors at the port of St. Symeon, Orderic's treatment is much shorter, editing out much of the middle of the account and summarising the speech at the end. Not only has much of the rhetoric of Baldric's account been omitted here, but so too has a great deal of the substance of his invective against the Grandmesnils and the others who fled Antioch with them. These editorial changes will be examined in what follows.

¹⁰⁶ OV.V. 96-98.

In the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, Baldric built up to the naming of ‘the traitors’ (*proditores*) with 129 words of Latin, while close analysis of Orderic’s text reveals that he deleted three-quarters of these words, retaining only that which was necessary for it to make sense. The words preceding the naming of William and Aubrey of Grandmesnil, Guy Troussel and Lambert the Poor in the *Historia* are almost wholly comprised of lines lifted straight from Baldric and quoted verbatim by Orderic. Yet careful editing has taken place here and special attention must be paid to this process in order to fully appreciate the nature of it. For while Orderic retained certain of Baldric’s sentences, he also deleted others, and this had significant implications for the meaning of the passage itself. The long middle section of the passage, which comprises 102 words in the *Historia Ierosolimitana* (*Aliqui tamen... frater eius*)¹⁰⁷ has been reduced to a composite sentence of twenty-two words composed almost entirely of words from Baldric: (*Aliqui tamen, ultra ius et fas meticulosiores, ad dedecus sui noctu de fuga cogitauerunt. Willelmus enim de Grentemaisnil et Albericus frater eius*).¹⁰⁸ By cutting entire clauses from Baldric both the extent of the treachery and its ramifications for all involved has been greatly lessened. Critical here is the omission of the sentence ‘and these disgraceful men fled away to the total disgrace of their kinsmen and successors’ (*et ad tocius sue consanguinitatis et successionis ignominiam ignominiosiores aufugerunt*).¹⁰⁹ For this stressed the fact that the actions of William and Aubrey of Grandmesnil indicted not only themselves but also their entire family. The omission of this statement was coupled with the removal of the phrase ‘and those forgetful of their brothers’ affections’ (*et fratrum affectus immemores*) in the preceding sentence, and its replacement with the new phrase, ‘to their disgrace’ (*ad dedecus sui*), with *dedecus* lifted from Baldric’s next sentence.¹¹⁰ This enabled Orderic to craft a new sentence, which although wholly composite, successfully changed this

¹⁰⁷ BB III.v, pp.236-37.

¹⁰⁸ OV V. 96-98.

¹⁰⁹ BB III.v, p.236.

¹¹⁰ BB III.v, p.236.

section of the text. The implications of the flight of the Grandmesnil brothers were thus made to appear far less severe for Orderic's readers, the monks of Saint-Evrault. For though their flight from the walls of Antioch still brought shame upon themselves in his version of events, it did not bring disgrace on the Grandmesnil family name.

As well as attempting to limit the wider implications of William and Aubrey of Grandmesnil's actions, Orderic also sought to present a more sympathetic picture of the brothers than is present in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. He followed Baldric in stressing their growing sense of desperation and fear triggered by the previous day's battle and, lifted many of his Latin phrases to convey this effectively. The lines *Aliqui tamen ultra ius et fas meticulosiores, Incubuit ergo Christianis magna desperatio, and hesterni belli timore perterriti sunt* are thus present in both works. Yet it is in his omissions that Orderic once again differs. It is because of them that his account was much less critical of the Grandmesnills than Baldric's had been. Baldric's criticism of the *furtivi funambuli* was two-fold. Not only were they condemned for their fear in the face of severe trial, but, even more seriously, they were lambasted for the fact that they abandoned their fellow soldiers in their hour of greatest need. Great desperation overwhelmed everyone in the crusader army, but both writers state that the soldiers 'were consoling' (*consolabantur*) each other and so were able to persevere and plan for battle the next day.¹¹¹ Yet only Baldric stated that the deserters were unique in being 'forgetful of their brothers' affections' (*et fratrum affectus immemores*), were guilty for 'having abandoned their companions' (*sociis dimissis*) and were therefore 'called traitors of their companions' (*sociorum proditores uocabantur*).¹¹² Thus, while fear was widespread at Antioch, in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, these men buckled under the

¹¹¹ BB III.v, p.236; OV V. 96.

¹¹² BB III.v, p.236.

pressure because they alone separated themselves from the support and encouragement provided by their brothers, which enabled the others to endure. In Baldric's eyes the punishment fitted the crime. They had abandoned the brothers, and in return their brothers abandoned them (*fratribus et commilitonibus dimissis*). It was for this reason, then, that Baldric castigated them. But Orderic may have viewed such a wholesale indictment of the Grandmesnil brothers as a step too far. It was certainly more than he wished to put in writing, for he omitted all reference of their desertion of the crusader "brotherhood" at Antioch in book IX of the *Historia*, and added the short phrase 'and many others' (*aliique plures*) to the list of those who fled, in order to emphasise that the Grandmesnills were only three among a much larger number of deserters from the siege.¹¹³

Orderic's editorial action after the naming of the Grandmesnil brothers further 'softens' the blow inflicted by Baldric, with Chibnall noting this in his changing of Baldric's phrase *ad perpetuam suam ignominiam* to *ad suam diuturnam ignominiam*, through the substitution of the adjective *perpetuam* for *diuturnam*. Yet while she thought that this switch from 'perpetual' disgrace to 'long-lasting' disgrace took place because some of those who fled Antioch later returned to the East 'and made amends' for their actions,¹¹⁴ it is difficult to find support for this assertion in the text of book IX of the *Historia*. As already noted, the shaming of the deserters was a widespread feature of the chronicles of the First Crusade. Orderic was writing in 1135, some thirty-seven years after the events themselves, by which time the ignominious reputation of these individuals was well-established. The best that he could hope to do in book IX was to limit the damage they had caused through skilful editing and omission of the most damning sections of the passage in question. What future generations of

¹¹³ I am grateful to Steven Biddlecombe for drawing the significance of this phrase to my attention.

¹¹⁴ OV V. 98 n.3.

monks at Saint-Evroult were thus left with in Orderic's version of these events was the tragic story of a group of extremely frightened individuals who crumbled under the pressure of an increasingly desperate situation. In this way, William and Aubrey of Grandmesnil were now seen to have made a poor decision which unfortunately brought shame and lasting disgrace on themselves. Yet their shame was not everlasting, nor did it tarnish the reputation of their kinsmen, the benefactors of Saint-Evroult, or their monastery. This was a far cry from the barrage of criticism they received from Baldric.

A different approach to this episode was employed by Orderic in his treatment of the Grandmesnills elsewhere in the *Historia*. The first of these passages comes at the end of book VIII, after an account of the death of Hugh of Grandmesnil in 1098.¹¹⁵ Having provided a short account of Hugh's burial and the epitaph which he composed for his tombstone, Orderic then proceeded to provide a summary of the lives of his five sons, Robert, William, Hugh, Ivo and Aubrey. While Robert, the eldest, lived to an old age, and Hugh, the third son, died in his youth, it is the descriptions of the remaining three brothers that are our primary concern here:

Robert, who was the eldest, was married three times...William, his brother, was a man of great esteem in the court of King William, and the king had such great affection for him that he offered him his niece, the daughter of Robert count of Mortain, since he hoped in this way to bind the youth to himself through the great honour of his kinship through marriage. But the arrogant young man rejected the king's plan and, with little thought, went to Apulia with Robert Giffard and many others. There he received Mabel, the daughter of Robert Guiscard, who was called Courte Louve, in marriage, along with fifteen castles, and after returning from Antioch, he died there, and he left his two sons, William and Robert, as the heirs to his honour. Hugh, a brave and honourable knight, died in his youth...Ivo at first held the paternal honour in England for a time, but later, in

¹¹⁵ OV IV. 336-40; see also OV IV. 230.

the time of King Henry, he pledged it to Robert count of Meulan. He twice undertook the journey to Jerusalem: on the first journey he endured the hardships at Antioch with his companions, on the second journey, however, he died. Aubrey, who was the youngest, learnt his letters in boyhood, but when he reached adolescence he abandoned a clerical life for a military one, in which he vigorously sought to accomplish many brave acts. He wounded Tancred, the son of Odobonus the Marquis, who was distinguished for the renown of his many virtues, so that the aforesaid young lord was, thereafter, lame for all of his life. All these sons of Hugh were tall, handsome in appearance and brave. But misfortune dogged them, and besides Robert, they did not survive to old age or enjoy peaceful felicity for very long.¹¹⁶

What is immediately striking is that this passage contains no mention of either William or Aubrey of Grandmesnil's flight from the siege of Antioch in June 1098. The one brief reference to Antioch in relation to William of Grandmesnil is wholly incidental to Orderic's summary of his life, with its inclusion coming in the midst of a sentence highlighting his significance in southern Italy and his connections to Robert Guiscard.¹¹⁷ It is included only to provide the reader with a sense of chronology – that after abandoning Normandy he settled in Apulia for the rest of his life, a period which was briefly punctuated by travel to Antioch. In this passage, his return from there was all that mattered, for it was then that his influence in the region continued as he took the hand of Guiscard's daughter, Mabel, in marriage. The only other reference to Antioch relates to Ivo of Grandmesnil, who, we are told, twice went on crusade and died in the East. Thus, in his sole explicit comment in this passage on the role

¹¹⁶ Rodbertus, qui maior natu erat, trigamus consenuit...Guillelmus, frater eius, in curia Guillelmi regis magnae aestimationis fuit, ipsumque rex adeo dilexit, ut ei neptem suam, Rodberti scilicet, Moritolii comitis, filiam, offerret. Quatenus sic iuuenem in magno honore consanguinitatis suae coniunctum retineret. Denique superbus tiro consilium regis respuit, et leuitate ductus, cum Rodberto Gifardo, aliisque pluribus, Apuliam expetiit, ibique Mabiliam, Rodberti Wiscardi filiam, quae Curta-Lupa cognominabatur, cum quindecim castellis coniugem accepit, ibique, post reditum de Antiochia, obiit, filiosque duos, Guillelmum et Rodbertum, honoris sui haeredes dimisit. Hugo, strenuus et honestus miles, in iuuentute defunctus est...Iuo paternum honorem in Anglia primo aliquandiu tenuit, sed postmodum, tempore Henrici regis, Rodberto, consuli de Mellento, inuadiauit, iter in Ierusalem bis inuit, et prima profectio, apud Antiochiam dura cum sociis tolerauit; in secunda uero, uita decessit. Albericus, qui aetate iunior erat, in pueritia litteris studuit, sed in adolescentia, relicto clericatu, ad militiam se contulit, in qua strenue plura patrare satagit. Tancredum, Odonis Boni Marchisi filium, multarum (p.340) titulis probitatum insignem, uulnerauit. Unde praefatus optio postmodum omni uita sua claudicauit. Omnes isti Hugonis filii corpore formosi et proceri, strenuique fuerunt. Sed infortunio infestante, nec longaeuitate, praeter Rodbertum, nec placida felicitate diutius potiti sunt. OV IV. 338-40.

¹¹⁷ For more on William of Grandmesnil in southern Italy see above, pp.111-14.

of the Grandmesnils at Antioch, Orderic emphasised that of the one brother who, he here claimed, ‘endured’ (*tolerauit*) the siege. This is striking. For in the context of the First Crusade he was the least well known of the three brothers, and his participation was not noted by Baldric of Bourgueil. William was already renowned for his actions in southern Italy and Aubrey of Grandmesnil was also well-known for his desertion of the crusader army; yet here at the end of book VIII, Orderic presented him as a brave lord who displayed this virtue by successfully engaging a distinguished opponent in single combat. For this was how Orderic wanted the Grandmesnil brothers to be remembered: brave, well-connected, and distinguished by their conduct in battle. By omitting the shameful actions of William and Aubrey at Antioch, he presented a picture in book VIII of the *Historia* that was much more positive than their actions in book IX would perhaps allow. Here his approach was two-fold, for not only did he omit certain shameful details, but he also highlighted the role of the lesser-known brother, Ivo, in order to ensure as best he could that any discussion about the Grandmesnil family as a whole, by the monks of Saint-Evroult, was a relatively positive one.

A further reference to Ivo of Grandmesnil’s role at Antioch comes early in book XI of the *Historia*. Here Orderic sought to highlight the firm rule of the king by providing his punishment of Ivo of Grandmesnil as an example.¹¹⁸ Ivo appeared before Henry I, guilty for having waged war in England and for burning the crops of his neighbours. As a result of these crimes, he was fined heavily and, under considerable pressure, began to consider his few remaining options. It is at this point in the text that Orderic referred to Ivo’s role at the siege of Antioch: ‘at first he was ashamed by the taunts, which were derisory towards him, for he was “rope-dancer” who, by means of the walls, had left Antioch.’ (*In primis erubescibat impropria, quae sibi fiebant derisoria, quod funambulus per murum exierat de*

¹¹⁸ For more on Henry’s rule see below, ch.4.

Antiocha.) Now added to this was the shame of having alienated himself from King Henry, and so it was that he pledged his lands to Robert, count of Meulan, and again journeyed to the Latin East, dying en route.¹¹⁹ This passage is, at first glance, somewhat surprising, particularly given the role of the Grandmesnils in founding Saint-Evrout and also Orderic's previous attempt to portray the family in a positive light in book VIII. Crucially, though, the toponymic '*de Grentemaisnil*' is absent it. Thus, while Orderic noted that Henry made an example of Ivo, he once more sought to limit the damage to a family name which was closely associated to his monastery. He drew a contrast between Henry I and his fractious nobles in book XI of the *Historia*,¹²⁰ but he did not do so at the expense of the Grandmesnils. The actions of William, Ivo and Aubrey of Grandmesnil sullied the family name by their flight from the siege of Antioch in 1098, but, whether in book VIII, IX or XI of the *Historia*, Orderic went to some lengths to ensure that they were remembered more positively by future generations of monks at Saint-Evrout. As has been seen, careful editing of Baldric's account of their desertion in the *Historia Ierosolimitana* was one of the important ways in which he sought to achieve this end.

The Appearance of the Warrior-Saints

The desperation and low morale which had resulted in the flight of the Grandmesnils characterised the second siege of Antioch. Starving and in a state of panic the army had little alternative but to ride out of the city and force a pitched battle against Kerbogah.¹²¹ In the midst of this battle, the chroniclers of the First Crusade reported the miraculous appearance of a heavenly army, led by the warrior-saints St. George, St. Demetrius, and St. Mercurius,

¹¹⁹ OV VI. 18.

¹²⁰ For more on the purpose of book XI of the *Historia* see below, pp.272-75.

¹²¹ For this see OV V. 98-110; France, *Victory in the East*, pp.277-80.

which filled the Christians with hope and the Muslims with fear.¹²² Orderic was no different in this regard. For this moment was a key part of the historiographical tradition received by him through its inclusion in Baldric of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosolimitana*. The apparently miraculous nature of this episode meant that it became an important part of the story of the First Crusade. For, encouraged by the warrior-saints, the crusaders went on to rout Kerbogah's force and, with that, took complete control of Antioch.

Baldric's account of the appearance of the saints occupies 129 words in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, while Orderic's version of events is shorter in length, running for only eighty-five words:

Baldric's <i>Historia</i>	Orderic
<p>Ecce, Deo gratias, ab ipsis montanis exire uisus est exercitus innumerabilis, equis albis insidentes, et in manibus uexilla candida preferentes. Hoc multi uiderunt Christianorum, et sicut putant gentilium; et hesitantes mirabantur quidnam esset. Tandem utrique cognouerunt signum de celo factum. Cognouerunt enim duces illius agminis, Sanctum Georgium et Sanctum</p>	<p><i>Ecce, Deo gratias, ab ipsis montanis uisus est exire exercitus innumerabilis, albis equis insidentes, et in manibus candida uexilla praeferentes! Hoc multi uiderunt Christianorum, et sicut putant, gentilium, et haesitantes, mirabantur quidnam esset. Tandem utrique cognouerunt signum de caelo factum, et duces illius agminis, sanctos martires Georgium, Demetrium et Mercurium,</i></p>

¹²² For more on these saints see Elizabeth Lapina, 'Demetrius of Thessaloniki: Patron Saint of Crusaders', *Viator* 40:2 (2009), 93-112. See also James. B. MacGregor, 'The Ministry of Gerold d'Avranches: Warrior-Saints and Knightly Piety on the Eve of the First Crusade', *JMH* 29 (2003), 219-37; *idem*, 'Negotiating Knightly Piety: The Cult of the Warrior-Saints in the West, ca. 1070 - ca. 1200', *Church History* 73 (2004), 317-45. More generally, see Christopher Holdsworth, 'An Airier Aristocracy: The Saints at War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996) p.103-122.

<p>Mercurium et Sanctum Demetrium, sua signa ferentes, precedere. Sarracenis ergo uisio—hec multum ineussit timorem; Christianis autem spem auxit meliorem. Istos animauit, illos exanimauit. Hoc qui affuerunt multi contigisse testati sunt. Non tamen omnes id—uidere potuerunt, sed quibus dominus uoluit archanum suum reuelauit. Reuelauit autem aliis ad confusionem, aliis ad instantis triumphi ostensionem. Porro mendacii nemo nos redarguat, quia nichil ex corde nostro fingimus; sed quod audiimus, hoc testamur; et testimonium nostrum, ex eorum ore qui affluerunt, uerum est.¹²³</p>	<p><i>sua signa ferentes, precedere cognouerunt. Sarracenis ergo multus timor inhesit, et Christianis spes melior creuit. Hoc non omnes uiderunt, sed multi uidentes contestati sunt. Celitus hoc apparuit aliis ad confusionem, aliis ad instantis triumphi ostensionem.</i>¹²⁴</p>
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In Baldric, the passage can thus be translated as follows:

Behold, by the grace of God, an innumerable army was seen coming from the same mountains, seated on white horses and carrying white banners in their hands! Many of the Christians saw this, and so too, they thought, did the gentiles, who were hesitating and wondering what this could be. But at last, both sides understood that it was a sign from heaven, for they recognised the leaders of that army, St. George, St. Mercurius, and St. Demetrius, who were in front carrying their standards. This sight thus struck the Saracens with great fear whilst the superior hope of the Christians rose. Our men it revived, theirs it deflated. Many who were present have testified to

¹²³ BB III. xvii., pp.261-62.

¹²⁴ OV V. 112-14.

being affected in this way. Yet not all were able to see it, for the Lord revealed his mystery to those whom he willed. He revealed it to some for their confusion, and to others to make manifest the approach of victory. Again, no one can convict us of lying, because, from our heart, we have feigned nothing; but that which we have heard, this we give as evidence, and our testimony, from the mouth of those who were present, is true.

Orderic's shorter account reads:

Behold, by the grace of God, an innumerable army was seen coming from the same mountains, seated on white horses and carrying white banners in their hands! Many of the Christians saw this, and so too, they thought, did the gentiles, who were hesitating and wondering what this could be. But at last, both sides understood that it was a sign from heaven, for they recognised the leaders of that army, the holy martyrs George, Demetrius and Mercurius, who were in front carrying their standards. Thus, great fear gripped the Saracens, and the superior hope of the Christians grew. Not all saw this, but many have attested to seeing it. This sign appeared from heaven to the confusion of some, and to make manifest the approach of victory for others.

While Orderic's editorial changes in the first half of the passage were relatively light, comparison of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* and the *Historia ecclesiastica*, provided above, reveals that much more substantial cuts have taken place in the second half, particularly after the naming of the Saints. The significance of these changes will be examined in what follows.

As in the previous example of Orderic and Baldric's differing accounts of the flight of the Grandmesnil brothers from the walls of Antioch, it is the omitted material that once more interests us most here. Particularly revealing is Orderic's omission of the final sentence of this passage in the *Historia Ierosolimitana*. There Baldric sought to underline the credibility of his account, writing, 'Again, no one can convict us of lying, because, from our heart, we have feigned nothing; but that which we have heard, this we give as evidence, and our testimony, from the mouth of those who were present, is true.' (*Porro mendacii nemo nos*

redarguat, quia nichil ex corde nostro fingimus; sed quod audiimus, hoc testamur; et testimonium nostrum, ex eorum ore qui affluerunt, uerum est.)¹²⁵ Orderic's omission of this sentence removed not only much of the rhetorical force of Baldric's passage, but also muted his claim that the account was derived from the testimony of eyewitnesses. Orderic did include a sentence in book IX composed largely of words from Baldric in which he stated that though not all saw this, 'many have attested to seeing it' (*multi uidentes contestati sunt*),¹²⁶ yet this was all he said on the matter of reliability. Whilst this may, in part, be explained by the need to greatly reduce the overall size of Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana* for incorporation into the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, it may also be indicative of the shifting locus of authority between the two writers for their respective accounts of the First Crusade. Baldric's task had been to fill 'the barren fields of the *Gesta*' with new information, ideas and motifs which suited his literary audience.¹²⁷ Such additions were probably the product of his own reflections on how he imagined the events in the East to have taken place, but they were also informed by the reports of participants, a point which Baldric emphasised in his account of the appearance of the heavenly host in the battle against Kerbogah. In the case of Orderic, meanwhile, there was no need to appeal to eyewitness attestation to support his account of this miraculous episode at Antioch. He had a lengthy written account of the First Crusade, the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, from which he could draw all that he needed. Orderic's account thus benefitted from a much more established written tradition surrounding the appearance of the warrior-saints. This afforded him with more editorial freedom and reduced the pressure on him to justify the truthfulness of his account in book IX of the *Historia*.

¹²⁵ BB III. xvii., pp.261-62.

¹²⁶ OV V. 114.

¹²⁷ BB, p.51.

Honouring Baldric's Memory

Having drawn his account of the First Crusade to a close, Orderic acknowledged his debt to Baldric of Bourgueil in the epilogue to book IX of the *Historia*. 'I decided to reverently honour the aforesaid old man...' (*Praefatum seniore...ueneranter honorare decreui*), he observed.¹²⁸ This chapter has examined the ways in which Orderic went about editing the text of Baldric's *Historia Ierosolimitana* as he sought to incorporate it into the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Close comparison of the two texts reveals that Orderic engaged closely with his friend's work. Perhaps the most immediately apparent feature of this editorial interaction is the extent of Baldric's material which Orderic omitted from book IX. Detailed analysis reveals the care and attention with which this work was done. Thus, while a number of speeches preceding the betrayal of Antioch were cut in their entirety, others were retained or paraphrased. Important decisions were made regarding the relative importance of each individual passage to the development of the plot. The example of the flight of the Grandmesnils from Antioch reveals that the editorial work involved in redacting the *Historia Ierosolimitana* was precise in nature. There, Orderic exchanged one adjective for another, omitted some of the most caustic sentences and skilfully composed new ones from the words which remained. While Orderic sought to honour Baldric in writing book IX, this instance indicates that he nevertheless felt able to alter the original meaning of Baldric's account when necessary. Examination of his account of Godfrey of Bouillon's exploits at the Iron Bridge also reveals amplification and embellishment to have been a further feature of Orderic's interaction with Baldric's text. For Orderic subtly added colourful details like the fact that Godfrey's sword had cut through the Turk's midriff 'as if it were a tender leek', and heightened the narrative significance of the episode by adding a large audience to his account. Orderic's control over the content of his narrative can also be clearly seen in his

¹²⁸ OV V. 188.

account of the appearance of the warrior-saints at Antioch, where he was dependent to a great extent on the text of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, and yet chose to omit the final sentence, probably because it mattered less to him than it had to Baldric. These case studies have therefore revealed Orderic to have undertaken a thorough and painstaking editorial process throughout in which he made case-by-case decisions regarding whether or not material was to be included, added, summarised or omitted. Such work not only shortened the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, but it also made it suitable for incorporation into the *Historia ecclesiastica*. In doing so, Baldric's memory was honoured and future generations of monks at Saint-Evrault were informed about the First Crusade, an undertaking which converged with their history at a number of key moments.

4

This fragile world

Saint-Evroult in the reign of Henry I in books X to XIII

This chapter examines the ways in which Saint-Evroult was affected by the accession, reign and death of Henry I, according to Orderic's account in the final four books of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. It analyses how Orderic linked the major events of the period to individuals and places that formed important parts of the monastic world in which he lived. In doing so, it argues that Orderic's narrative of the events of the reign is anchored in and around Saint-Evroult. His portrayal of the Anglo-Norman rulers in books X to XIII hinged on their control over Normandy, and more particularly, the way in which their actions and policies affected the monks of Saint-Evroult either positively or negatively. Even the reputation of the benefactors of Saint-Evroult rose and fell according to their treatment of the monastery. Orderic was primarily interested in the impact of Henry's rule on lower Normandy, his relationship with Saint-Evroult, and his treatment of the monks' greatest enemy, Robert of Bellême. Scholars have tended to view Orderic's local perspective as a major problem when using him as a source for this period in Anglo-Norman history, this chapter seeks to highlight the richness of the material contained within books X to XIII of the *Historia*. In spanning such a large section of the *Historia*, this chapter is similar in approach to chapter 1, which examined the nature of Orderic's material on southern Italy. Analysing particular sections of the final books of the *Historia* in this way allows the historian to explore prominent themes which recur throughout books X to XIII, and to bring them into sharp relief against the backdrop of the rest of the narrative. For the careful construction of these books, which repeatedly juxtapose major events in the history of the Anglo-Norman realm with the local

history of Saint-Evroult, demonstrates not only Orderic's skill as a writer but also his priorities as a historian.

Throughout his account of this violent period in Norman history, Orderic's concern was to show the continued endurance of Saint-Evroult in the face of the turbulence which seemed almost to engulf both the duchy and the monastery, particularly after the death of Henry I in 1135. It will be seen that books X to XIII have a strong moral dimension to them. Orderic's moralising sometimes took the form of relatively brief comments, such as those regarding the surrender of Caen¹ and the strength of support for William Clito.² It could also be much more prominent, shaping entire sections of narrative of the *Historia*, such as his accounts of the death of William Rufus and of the White Ship disaster.³ In these latter passages, the reader is encouraged to look not to the things of this world, which are transitory, but to the lasting joys and eternal security which can be found only in God.

Much has been written on the reign of Henry I. In 1962, six years before the first volume of Marjorie Chibnall's edition of the *Historia* appeared in print, Richard Southern gave the Raleigh Lecture on History to the British Academy on 'The Place of Henry I in English History'. In it he observed that 'No English king in a reign of comparable length has left so faint an imprint...on the minds of students of history as Henry I.'⁴ Southern's lecture marks the beginning of major academic interest in Henry and his reign. By the time that the final volume of Chibnall's edition was published in 1980, the American historian C. Warren

¹ OV VI. 78.

² OV VI. 200-2.

³ See below, pp.269-72, 303-6.

⁴ R. W. Southern, 'The Place of Henry I in English History', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48 (1962), 127-69. This essay was reprinted in a slightly shorter form as 'Henry I', in *Medieval Humanism and other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), 206-33.

Hollister had begun to publish what would eventually be a string of influential articles on the subject,⁵ with Henry dominating his interests until his death in 1997. Hollister's biography of Henry I was published posthumously in 2001 and his influence continues to be felt through the work of his many doctoral students.⁶ The English historian Judith Green has been equally influential in shaping scholarly understanding of the reign of Henry I, and the Anglo-Norman aristocracy more generally.⁷ Her analysis of Henry's character consciously diverged from that of Hollister.⁸ She has repeatedly stressed the serious nature of the violence and rebellion in Normandy,⁹ whereas a recurring theme of Hollister's writing, as he himself acknowledged, was to argue for near-continuous peace in the Anglo-Norman realm from the time of Henry's triumph over Robert Curthose at Tinchebray in 1106 until his death in 1135.¹⁰ The years since the publication of Chibnall's edition of the *Historia* have also witnessed a good deal of interest in the reigns of Henry's elder brothers, William Rufus and Robert Curthose, and in the reign of his nephew, Stephen. There has been much debate over the nature and character of these rulers, with Emma Mason, in particular, seeking to present a more positive portrayal

⁵ Many of these articles can be found in C. Warren Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London, 1986).

⁶ C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I*, edited and completed by Amanda Frost Clark (New Haven, 2001); two collections of essays were subsequently published in his memory: Richard P. Abels and Bernard S. Bachrach (eds) *The Normans and their Adversaries at War: Essays in Memory of C. Warren Hollister* (Woodbridge, 2001), and Donald F. Fleming and Janet M. Pope (eds) *Henry I and the Anglo-Norman World: Studies in Memory of C. Warren Hollister*, *Haskins Society Journal* 17 (Woodbridge, 2007). A fascinating article has been written in the latter volume on the close relationship that existed between Hollister and his doctoral students, for which see Lois L. Huneycutt, 'C. Warren Hollister and the Private Life of Henry I', in Donald F. Fleming and Janet M. Pope (eds) *Henry I and the Anglo-Norman World: Studies in Memory of C. Warren Hollister*, *Haskins Society Journal* 17 (Woodbridge, 2007), 1-15.

⁷ Amongst Green's many works on Henry I are *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986); 'King Henry I and the Aristocracy of Normandy', in *La "France Anglaise" au Moyen Age. Actes du 111^e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes (Poitiers, 1986)* (Paris, 1988), 161-73; 'The Piety and Patronage of Henry I', *HSJ* 10 (2001), 1-16; *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, 2006); 'Henry I and Northern England', *TRHS* 17 (2007), 35-55; 'Henry I and the Origins of the Civil War', in Paul Dalton and Graeme J. White (eds) *King Stephen's Reign (1135-1154)* (Woodbridge, 2008), 11-26. For her work on the Anglo-Norman aristocracy see 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', in John Gillingham and J. C. Holt (eds) *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich* (Boydell, 1984), 47-61; 'Unity and Disunity in the Anglo-Norman State', *Historical Research* 62 (1989), 115-34; *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁸ Green, *Henry I*, pp.14-18; see also Alan Cooper, "'The feet of those that bark shall be cut off": Timorous Historians and the Personality of Henry I', *ANS* 23 (2001), 47-67.

⁹ Green, *Henry I*, pp.89-95, 106, 118, 138-39, 146-7. See also her earlier articles 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', and 'King Henry I and the Aristocracy of Normandy'.

¹⁰ Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions*, p.x; see also Hollister, *Henry I*, p.207: 'Peace he loved, and peace he kept, perhaps more effectively than any previous prince in the annals of Western Christendom.'

of Rufus' reign than had been given in Frank Barlow's biography of the king.¹¹ Robert Curthose, who was long regarded as an ineffective duke of Normandy and a failure for never having become king of England, has also been the subject of a number of recent reassessments, including a biography written by William Aird, and articles by Judith Green, Katherine Lack, Richard Allen and George Garnett.¹² Finally, two collections of essays provide an excellent starting place for understanding the issues surrounding the reign of King Stephen,¹³ alongside the works of R. H. C. Davis, Keith Stringer, David Crouch and Edmund King.¹⁴ Here a major point of debate has been the extent of the violence during Stephen's reign, and therefore also the appropriateness of referring to this turbulent period in history as "the Anarchy".¹⁵

This considerable body of work has transformed our understanding of Henry's reign, and has added much to our understanding of the representation of the sons of the Conqueror in the chronicles of the twelfth century. Thus, Alan Cooper has provocatively argued that many of the historians of Henry I's reign hid their true feelings about him until after his death because

¹¹ Emma Mason, 'William Rufus: Myth and Reality', *JMH* 3:1 (1977), 1-20; *idem*, 'William Rufus and the Historians', *Medieval History* 1:1 (1991), 6-22; *idem*, *William II : Rufus, the Red King* (Stroud, 2005); see also Thomas Callahan Jr., 'The Making of a Monster: The Historical Image of William Rufus', *JMH* 7:2 (1981), 175-185; Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (London, 1983).

¹² William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy (c.1050-1134)* (Woodbridge, 2008); Judith A. Green, 'Robert Curthose Reassessed', *ANS* 22 (2000), 95-116; Katherine Lack, 'Robert Curthose: Ineffectual Duke or Victim of Spin?', *HSJ* 20 (2009), 110-40; Richard Allen, 'Robert Curthose and the Norman Episcopate', *HSJ* 21 (2010), 87-112; Garnett, 'Robert Curthose'.

¹³ Edmund King, (ed.) *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (Oxford, 1994); Paul Dalton and Graeme J. White (eds) *King Stephen's Reign (1135-1154)* (Woodbridge, 2008).

¹⁴ R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135-1154* (London, 1967); Keith J. Stringer, *The Reign of Stephen: Kingship, Warfare and Government in Twelfth-Century England* (London, 1993); David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154* (Harlow, 2000); Edmund King, 'The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign', *TRHS* 34 (1984), 133-53; *idem*, (ed.) *The Anarchy; idem, King Stephen* (New Haven, 2010).

¹⁵ The nature of this debate is set out in Hugh M. Thomas, 'Violent Disorder in King Stephen's England: A Maximum Argument', in Paul Dalton and Graeme J. White (eds) *King Stephen's Reign (1135-1154)* (Woodbridge, 2008), 139-70, where, as the title of the article suggests, the author argues for widespread violence during this period. In contrast, see Graeme J. White, 'The Myth of the Anarchy', *ANS* 22 (2000), 323-337. Marjorie Chibnall's comments here are instructive: 'In attempting to determine how far the reign should be regarded as a period of anarchy two aspects need to be considered: regional variations in disorder and the degree to which central government broke down.', 'Introduction', in Paul Dalton and Graeme J. White (eds) *King Stephen's Reign (1135-1154)* (Woodbridge, 2008), 1-9 at p.7.

they feared him so greatly. Yet Cooper also noted that Orderic was something of an ‘anomaly’ whose writing did not quite fit his model.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Björn Weiler has recently argued that William of Malmesbury sought to present a nuanced and didactic model for emulation in his portrayal of Henry I in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*,¹⁷ Sigbjørn Sønnesyn has argued that this ethical purpose was fundamental to all that William sought to achieve in writing the *Gesta Regum*, and Paul Hayward has highlighted Malmesbury’s skilful and deliberate usage of ambiguity and innuendo in both his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*.¹⁸ But how has Orderic featured in the scholarship? What was it that motivated him to write about the sons of the Conqueror? In seeking to answer this question, a number of scholars have, to varying degrees, noted the importance of the monastic locality of the southern frontier of Normandy in the *Historia ecclesiastica*. In the first study devoted to Orderic’s representation of Henry I in the *Historia*, Roger Ray argued that the overwhelmingly positive portrayal resulted from three closely related things: the fact that Orderic and Henry flourished at the same time, that Henry brought long-term peace to Normandy, and finally, the impact of that peace on Saint-Evroult, which Henry visited in 1113.¹⁹ As Ray observed, Orderic ‘needed peace for the easily overlooked reason that much of the violence which he chronicles transpired not far from his abbey, often within a radius of about thirty miles...and this is not to mention that hostilities sometimes became grievous interruptions right at Saint-Evroult.’²⁰ More recently, Judith Green has written that Orderic’s view that a strong ruler was needed to keep the Norman people in check ‘was conditioned by personal experience of life in a community situated in the turbulent southern marches of the

¹⁶ Cooper, “The feet of those that bark shall be cut off”, p.53.

¹⁷ Björn Weiler, ‘William of Malmesbury, Henry I, and the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*’, *ANS* 31 (2009), 157-76.

¹⁸ Paul Antony Hayward, ‘The Importance of Being Ambiguous: Innuendo and Legerdemain in William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum* and *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*’, *ANS* 33 (2011), 75-102.

¹⁹ Roger Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis on Henry I: Theocratic Ideology and Didactic Narrative’, in George H. Shriver (ed.) *Contemporary Reflections on the Medieval Christian Tradition: Essays in Honor of Ray C. Petry* (Durham, N. C., 1974), 119-34 at p.125. Similar observations regarding Orderic’s portrayal of the violence in Stephen’s reign can be found in Robert Helmerichs, ‘King Stephen’s Norman Itinerary, 1137’, *HSJ* 5 (1993), 89-97. For Henry’s visit to Saint-Evroult see below, pp.294-8.

²⁰ Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis on Henry I’, p.131.

duchy, where Robert de Bellême... was a feared neighbour of the monks. Henry destroyed the power of Robert de Bellême, and the protection he accorded the monks won Henry golden opinions.’²¹

As has been seen, Orderic had long hated the Bellême family, due to their protracted enmity with the co-founders of Saint-Evroult, the Giroie, in the eleventh century.²² Such was the strength of Orderic’s continued hatred of the Bellême that, to a great extent, his opinion of Rufus, Curthose and Henry hinged upon their treatment of Robert of Bellême.²³ As Thompson noted, ‘Again and again Robert of Bellême performs the same function, he provides the opposition, the negative force with which the ruler must contend. This formula can be seen in Robert’s relations with all the Conqueror’s sons’.²⁴ Orderic’s negative opinion of Curthose stemmed from his having released Robert of Bellême from imprisonment in 1088, an action which, in his eyes, meant that lawlessness in the region around Saint-Evroult, and in Normandy more generally, continued unabated until 1112.²⁵ This goes a long way towards explaining Orderic portrayal of Curthose as an ineffective ruler.²⁶ Rufus himself did little to stop Robert of Bellême, but rather allied with him in his war against Helias of Maine and his subsequent conquest of the county of Maine.²⁷ Henry I, however, was far less

²¹ Green, *Henry I*, p.4.

²² See above, pp.178-80.

²³ Kathleen Thompson, ‘Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême’, *JMH* 20:2 (1994), 133-41 at p.134. See also *eadem*, ‘Robert of Bellême Reconsidered’, *ANS* 13 (1991), 263-86.

²⁴ Thompson, ‘Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême’, p.140.

²⁵ OV IV. 150-62; Green, ‘Robert Curthose’, pp.108-9; Thompson, ‘Robert of Bellême’, pp.270-71; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p.121, 219; Barlow, *William Rufus*, pp.268-69; Charity Urbanski, ‘Apology, Protest, and Suppression: Interpreting the Surrender of Caen (1105)’, *HSJ* 19 (2008), 137-53 at p.139.

²⁶ Thompson, ‘Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême’, p.135, 140; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p.9

²⁷ OV V. 224-50, 252-60, 302-6; for more on Helias of Maine see Richard E. Barton, ‘Henry I, Count Helias of Maine, and the Battle of Tinchebray’, in Donald F. Fleming and Janet M. Pope (eds) *Henry I and the Anglo-Norman World: Studies in Memory of C. Warren Hollister*, Haskins Society Journal 17 (Woodbridge, 2007), 63-90; *idem*, ‘La carrière d’Hélie, comte du Maine’, *Le pays bas-normand* 101-2 (2008-9), 207-220. On Maine more generally, see *idem*, *Lordship in the County of Maine, c.890-1160* (Woodbridge, 2004).

accommodating. He expelled Robert of Bellême from England in 1102,²⁸ and having triumphed at Tinchebray in 1106,²⁹ thereafter dispossessed and imprisoned Bellême for life in 1112.³⁰ Orderic contrasted Robert Curthose and Henry's treatment of Robert of Bellême in a passage in book VIII of the *Historia*. Here, having related how Bellême was freed by Curthose before being later returned to lifelong imprisonment by his younger brother, Orderic observed that Henry I had been 'specially inspired by God to this end' (*ad hoc specialiter a Deo inspiratus*).³¹ Such, then, was the significance of the character of Robert of Bellême to Orderic and his narrative.

The location of Saint-Evroult on the southern frontier of Normandy, and its network of dependent priories and related houses, both within the duchy and beyond its borders, meant that Orderic had access to information about which we would otherwise know little were it not for its inclusion in the *Historia*. For example, it has been noted that he was extremely well-informed about warfare in the neighbouring Vexin because of Saint-Evroult's two dependent priories at Maule and Parnes, which were founded and supported by the nobility of the region.³² Thus, as well as the examples of the Giroie, Grandmesnil and Bellême families which have already been cited, the narrative of books X to XIII of the *Historia* also contains a great deal of information on individuals such as Helias of Maine,³³ Rotrou of Mortagne, his

²⁸ OV VI.20-32.

²⁹ OV VI. 82-92.

³⁰ Thompson, 'Robert of Bellême', pp.276-79.

³¹ OV IV. 158; Thompson, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême', p.140.

³² Barlow, *William Rufus*, p.378; Green, 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', p.52. For Orderic's account of how the church of St. Martin of Parnes came into the possession of the monks of Saint-Evroult see OV II. 152-56; for more on Parnes see Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'. On Maule see OV III. 170-206, and above pp.160-4.

³³ The significance of Orderic's material on Maine was noted by Barlow, *William Rufus*, pp.381-82. On Helias of Maine see Richard E. Barton, 'La carrière d'Hélie, comte du Maine', *Le pays bas-normand* 101-2 (2008-9), 207-220; *idem*, 'Henry I, Count Helias of Maine, and the Battle of Tinchebray', in Donald F. Fleming and Janet M. Pope (eds) *Henry I and the Anglo-Norman World: Studies in Memory of C. Warren Hollister*, Haskins Society Journal 17 (Woodbridge, 2007), 63-90. On Maine more generally, see *idem*, *Lordship in the County of Maine, c.890-1160* (Woodbridge, 2004).

role in the Aragonese Reconquest and the county of the Perche,³⁴ and the lords of Laigle.³⁵ More generally, the *Historia* contains a great deal of information on the region surrounding Saint-Evrault, and the violence that, according to Orderic, seems to have enveloped it for much of his time there, from the death of the Conqueror in 1087 until 1141, when he put the finishing touches to his massive work. As Roger Ray noted, much of this occurred within only a few miles of Saint-Evrault, in places like Laigle, Breteuil, Sées, Argentan, Alençon, Almenèches, Évreux, Lisieux, or even much closer to home at Gacé.³⁶ Orderic was thus acutely aware of events on the southern frontier of Normandy and, as will be seen, it was to these events that the final books of his narrative frequently turned.

A number of scholars have focussed their attention on the frontiers of the Anglo-Norman realm in general, recognising the critical role they played in the stability and instability of the period, situated as they were on the periphery of royal power. Daniel Power has recently provided historians with a thorough survey of the Norman frontier in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, containing a useful chapter on Henry's I policy in the Norman marches, which, he wrote, 'marked a watershed in the history of the Norman frontier'.³⁷ Pierre Bauduin has also written a detailed study of the frontiers of upper Normandy in the tenth and eleventh centuries,³⁸ and while there is currently no equivalent study for lower Normandy, or for the southern frontier, there have been a number of valuable studies published on the families of this region, amongst them the Bellême, Giroie, Grandmesnil and Laigle, which have already been cited above. Alongside these, the scholarship of Judith Green, in particular, has long

³⁴ On Rotrou's activities in Spain see Nelson, 'Rotrou of Perche'; for a detailed study of the Perche see Thompson, *Power and Border Lordship*.

³⁵ Kathleen Thompson, 'The Lords of Laigle: Ambition and Insecurity on the Borders of Normandy', *ANS* 18 (1996), 177-199.

³⁶ Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis on Henry I', p.131.

³⁷ Daniel Power, *The Norman Frontier in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 2004), ch.10.

³⁸ Pierre Bauduin, *La Première Normandie (Xe-XIe Siècles). Sur les frontières de la haute Normandie: identité et construction d'une principauté* (Caen, 2004).

been attuned to the complexities and significance of the southern frontier of Normandy, commenting on the matter on numerous occasions. Thus, in her important article on the Norman Vexin, she observed that life on the frontier was attractive to the aristocracy for three reasons: their allegiance was particularly important to the ruler and so they were given lands and privileges in order to ensure this; they were either given greater control over their lands, or gained it for themselves because they were further from the king's power base; and finally, because there was little effective rule in these regions, local lords were able to pursue their own independent interests. For Green, the classic example of this was the Bellême family, who, in the eleventh century, built up a large lordship in an area of no-man's land between France, Maine and Normandy and played their overlords off against each other.³⁹ More generally, Green's work on Henry I has noted that stability in the duchy could only be achieved by the arrangement of a string of alliances along the frontiers, whether with the nobility, neighbouring counts, or with the king of France. She noted the lasting change that Henry brought to the region through his restructuring of the tenurial landscape with the downfall of the lords of Mortain and Bellême and his patronage of the houses of Savigny and Saint-Evroult and the reorganisation of the diocese of Sées.⁴⁰ Yet in spite of all of this, Henry never achieved the same dominance over the Norman aristocracy as he did in England,⁴¹ something which it is important to bear in mind when reading Orderic's narrative.

Fulk of Guernanville and the Failings of William Rufus

Having provided a narrative of the First Crusade in book IX of the *Historia*, Orderic opened book X with a short account of the death of Pope Urban II in July 1099, who had initiated the

³⁹ Green, 'Lords of the Norman Vexin', p.47.

⁴⁰ Green, *Henry I*, pp.224-31, 254, 317; see also *eadem*, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, pp.134-5; *eadem*, 'Henry I and Northern England', pp.41-2.

⁴¹ Green, 'Henry I and the Aristocracy'.

armed pilgrimage to the Holy Land, before continuing to discuss papal affairs immediately thereafter.⁴² All of this, though, was merely preamble; book X sees a return to the Anglo-Norman realm, a subject that Orderic was conscious that he had strayed from in discussing affairs elsewhere:

Now, because I have already digressed somewhat from my original subject-matter, and have lingered on those events which have happened beyond the Alps in Italy and Palestine, I will return to things which have taken place in our part of the world in Normandy in England.

Having announced this, Orderic plunged into his narrative, beginning with a damning assessment of William Rufus:

William Rufus, famous for his military prowess, reigned in England after the death of his father; he forcefully subdued the rebels with the rod of justice, and for twelve years and ten months subjected them, according to his pleasure, to his authority. He was generous to soldiers and foreigners, but greatly oppressed the poor inhabitants of his kingdom; and from them he took by force that which he then lavished upon strangers. Many of his father's nobles who, by force of arms, had claimed foreign lands for his ancestors, died [during this period]; several of whom he replaced with low-born men in the place of magnates, and he exalted them by the grant of extensive lands as a reward for their flattery. He never had a lawful wife, but engaged insatiably in obscene fornications and numerous adulteries, and defiled by his shameful actions, he damnably presented an example of disgraceful lasciviousness to his subjects. On the death of bishops and archbishops, the king's supporters seized the property and all the wealth of the churches, and for three years or more ruled them entirely as part of the royal demesne. So, truly, churches lay vacant through greed for the revenues, which were stored in the king's treasury, and the Lord's sheep, deprived of their necessary shepherds, were left open to the attacks of wolves.⁴³

⁴² OV V. 192-200.

⁴³ Nunc quia iam aliquantulum ab incepta digressus sum materia, et moratus sum in his quae ultra Alpes in Ausonia gesta sunt et Palestina; reuertar ad res nostras quae in Neustria contigerunt et Anglia. Guillelmus Rufus militia clarus post mortem patris in Anglia regnauit, rebelles sibi fortiter uirga iusticiae compressit, et xii annis ac x mensibus ad libitum suum omnes suae ditioni subiugauit. Militibus et exteris largus erat, sed pauperes incolas regni sui nimis opprimebat; et illis uiolenter auferebat, quae prodigus aduenis tribuebat. Multi sub ipso patris sui proceres obierunt, qui proauis suis extraneum ius bellicose uendicauerunt; pro quibus nonnullus

V. H. Galbraith emphasised three criteria against which a king was perceived by the chroniclers to be either “good” or “bad”: his treatment of the Church, his successes in battle and, finally, his personal morality. ‘Much, almost anything, could be forgiven to a man...whose personal piety was above reproach and who did so well by the Church; not so much, but still something, to sexual sinners...who made their peace with the Church and who were at least glorious in arms; nothing at all to Rufus and John, who were anticlerical as well as immoral.’⁴⁴ William Rufus, according to Orderic, and to Galbraith thereafter, failed on two of these three counts. Although famous for his military prowess, the bulk of the above passage is given over to his failings as a king, as patron of the Church, and as a man. While these aspects of the reign have been much discussed in the scholarship on Rufus,⁴⁵ the focus here will be on the specific nature of Orderic’s grievances and the way in which these lay behind his more general criticisms of the king’s character and reign.

Of particular interest is the stress which Orderic placed on William Rufus’ mistreatment of the church, which, he emphasised, resulted in many churches remaining vacant for long periods of time.⁴⁶ Henry of Huntingdon emphasised Rufus’ greed in this area, writing, ‘For the hated king, most wicked to God and to the people, was either selling bishoprics and abbeys or retaining them in his hand and giving them at farm.’ (*Inuisus namque rex, nequissimus Deo et populo, episcopatus et abbatias aut uendebat, aut in manu sua retinens*

degeneres in locis magnatorum restituit, et amplis pro adulationis merito datis honoribus sullimauit. Legitimam coniugem nunquam habuit; sed obscenis fornicationibus et frequentibus moechiis inexplabiliter inhesit, flagitiisque pollutus exemplum turpis lasciuiae subiectis damnabiliter exhibuit. Defunctis presulibus et archimandritis satellites regis aecclesiasticas possessiones et omnes gazas inuadebant, triennioque seu plus dominio regis omnino mancipabant. Sic nimirum pro cupiditate redituum qui regis in aerario recondebantur aecclesiae uacabant; necessariisque carentes pastoribus dominicae oues lupinis morsibus patebant. OV V. 200-2.

⁴⁴ V. H. Galbraith, ‘Good Kings and Bad Kings in Medieval English History’, *History* 30:2 (1945), 119-32; see also Blacker, *Faces of Time*, p.55-7, 66-77.

⁴⁵ Barlow, *William Rufus*, pp.3, 99-100, 102-110; Mason, ‘William Rufus’; *idem*, *William II*, pp.7, 14, 232. See also C. Warren Hollister, ‘William Rufus, Henry I, and the Anglo-Norman Church’, *Peritia* 6-7 (1987-88), 119-40.

⁴⁶ See the comments of Emma Mason, ‘William Rufus and the Benedictine Order’, *ANS* 21 (1999), 113-44, at p.115.

ad firmam dabat.)⁴⁷ While the immediate context of Orderic's general indictment of William Rufus was the deaths of bishops Osmund of Salisbury, Walchelin of Winchester, William of Durham and Remigius of Lincoln, together with abbots Baldwin of Bury St. Edmunds and Simeon of Ely, and the seizing of their lands by officers of the king,⁴⁸ he soon turned the narrative to a discussion of past history that was much more local to Saint-Evroult. For after briefly explaining how Normandy came into the possession of Rufus after his brother, Robert Curthose, mortgaged the duchy to him in order to raise funds for going on the First Crusade,⁴⁹ Orderic made a point of noting that the abbeys of Jumièges and Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives were left vacant at this time.⁵⁰ While symptomatic of a wider problem in the Anglo-Norman church, it seems that these two vacancies were particularly deeply felt by Orderic, with the fate of Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives receiving especial emphasis in the text:

Meanwhile, Fulk, monk of Ouche and abbot of Dives, went to Pope Urban and lived in exile at Montecassino. His successor, Benedict by name, who had been a monk of Saint-Ouen Archbishop of Rouen, died. King William therefore appointed Etard as abbot to the monks of Dives, a monk from his infancy, and the gardener at Jumièges, who diligently served God's flock for a number of years. Yet when Fulk returned with papal letters, he [Etard] joyfully relinquished his monastic office; and having returned to the place of his conversion, the man died at a very old age. Fulk, who before his expulsion had ruled the abbey of Dives unwaveringly for twenty years, had increased the number of brothers by his skilfulness, and advanced the church in many ways. He was exiled through the envy and urging of Satan, having been unjustly accused and deposed for seven years. Afterwards, having returned, he governed his abbey successfully for another seven years, and died in England as an old man at Winchester on 3 April.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.22, p.448. For more on the theme of William Rufus' use and misuse of money see Henry of Huntingdon, vii.4-5, 19, pp.418-22, 444.

⁴⁸ OV V. 202-4.

⁴⁹ OV V. 206-10.

⁵⁰ OV V. 210.

⁵¹ Interea Fulco Uticensis monachus et Diuensium abbas Urbanum papam adierat, et apud Cassinum Montem exulabat; cuius successor nomine Benedictus sancti Audoeni Rotomagensis archiepiscopi monachus obierat. Diuensibus ergo Guillelmus Rex Etardum Gemmeticensum ortolanum ab infantia monachum abbatem dedit, qui per aliquot annos gregem Dei diligenter seruauit. Fulconi uero redeunti cum apicibus papae cenobialem

Orderic shows a great deal of interest in the character of Fulk in this passage. In this regard, it is striking that Fulk was a monk of Ouche. For Fulk was first a monk and then prior of Saint-Evroult before his appointment as the second abbot of St. Pierre-sur-Dives, in c.1078,⁵² and he appears in numerous places throughout the *Historia*. Having taken the habit at the outset of Thierry's abbacy in 1050,⁵³ Fulk became prior at Saint-Evroult during Mainer's abbacy, a detail revealed in book V. His full name was Fulk of Guernanville (Guernanville is situated 35km east of Saint-Evroult) and he was the son of Fulk, the dean of Évreux, who himself later became a monk at Saint-Evroult.⁵⁴ In book III he is noted as having played a role in the recovery of some of the precious objects which the treacherous knight Anquetil stole from the monks of Saint-Evroult,⁵⁵ and, in a separate incident, he was dispatched to be with Arnold of Échauffour as he lay dying at Courville, having been poisoned by Mabel of Bellême.⁵⁶ In book V he is seen accompanying Abbot Mainer and William Pantulf in order to obtain a confirmation charter from Roger of Montgomery,⁵⁷ and in book VI, Orderic noted that during the reign of William the Conqueror, Fulk was sent to Countess Bertha of Blois on private business.⁵⁸ As abbot of St. Pierre-sur-Dives, he was present at the Conqueror's funeral in 1087,⁵⁹ and in book VIII it can be seen that he was one of three abbots responsible for the election of Roger Le Sap as the sixth abbot of Saint-Evroult in 1091.⁶⁰ Finally, in book XI, Orderic related how all of Fulk's good work as abbot of St. Pierre-sur-Dives was undone in 1106. For his replacement, a certain Robert, bought his way into the abbacy by paying Robert

magistratum gratanter reliquit; ac ad conuersionis suae locum reuersus in decrepita aetate hominem exiuit. Fulco autem qui ante deiectionem suam Diuense coenobium xx annis rigide rexit, sollertiaque sua numerum fratrum auxit, multisque modis aecclesiam prouexit; inuidente et instigante Sathana iniuste criminatus et depositus vii annis exulauit. Deinde reuersus abbatiam suam iterum vii annis prospere gubernauit, et senex in Anglia iiii^o nonas Aprilis Guentae obiit. OV V. 212.

⁵² For the dating of Fulk's abbacy of St. Pierre-sur-Dives see OV II. 354 n.3.

⁵³ OV II. 16-20.

⁵⁴ OV III. 120-22. He was also a candidate for the abbacy, OV II. 144-6.

⁵⁵ OV II. 62. For this story of theft see above, pp.85-8.

⁵⁶ OV II. 122-4.

⁵⁷ OV III. 154-8.

⁵⁸ OV III. 336.

⁵⁹ OV IV. 104.

⁶⁰ OV IV. 254.

Curthose a hundred and forty marks of silver for the office and proceeded to convert the abbey into a fortress for his troops, selling the church's ornaments in order to pay his men their wages and causing the monks there to flee.⁶¹

Fulk of Guernanville was thus an important monk in the first fifty years of Saint-Evrout's history, and his story is threaded throughout the books of the *Historia*, for as with the earlier example of Arnold of Tilleul,⁶² Fulk's endeavours mattered a great deal to both Orderic and the monastic audience for which he wrote. In book IV, we see that his long career forged links between Saint-Evrout and St. Pierre-sur-Dives, for Orderic tells us that four of Saint-Evrout's monks accompanied Fulk to St. Pierre-sur-Dives in order to help it become established.⁶³ The histories of the two houses were thus intertwined, and, in Orderic's eyes, St. Pierre-sur-Dives owed much of its prosperity to the skill and resourcefulness of monks from Saint-Evrout, a point which was certainly worthy of inclusion in the *Historia*. Fulk, in particular, was worthy of mention, for under his direction, the church of Dives flourished despite the difficult nature of the period through which he lived, namely the reigns of William Rufus and Robert Curthose. Given these successes, it was disgraceful to think that Fulk had been unjustly exiled and replaced with a member of the clergy who had been handpicked by William Rufus.⁶⁴ While such actions were both manipulative and damaging to the Anglo-Norman clergy in general, Orderic's particular concern lay with the mistreatment of a faithful former monk of Saint-Evrout. His damning assessment of William Rufus was, to a great extent, informed by the harmful effect of the king's ecclesiastical policies on one individual: Fulk.

⁶¹ OV VI.72-4, 80-82.

⁶² See above, pp.190-94.

⁶³ OV II. 354-6.

⁶⁴ OV V. 210.

The Death of William Rufus

As is well known, William Rufus died in a hunting accident in the New Forest on 2 August 1100.⁶⁵ Orderic's account of the portents which preceded the King's death exercised a measure of influence upon later writers including the anonymous author of the *Warene Chronicle*, with which it shares a number of similarities.⁶⁶ Orderic's version of events is located mid-way through book X of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and has a strong moral thread running throughout its narrative. The first such comment pertaining to William the Conqueror and his sons comes at the end of Orderic's description of why the New Forest was called "new".⁶⁷

William I, however, after he took hold of the kingdom of Albion, as a lover of woodland, wantonly laid waste to more than sixty parishes, forced the peasants to move to other places, and established wild beasts of the forest there instead of men so that he might have the pleasure of hunting there. There he lost two sons, Richard and William Rufus, and, as has been said, his grandson Richard, and an apparition dreadfully appeared in various forms to certain people, by which the Lord openly showed that consecrated buildings, to his displeasure, had been abandoned for the rearing of wild beasts.⁶⁸

In this passage, then, Orderic makes clear that the death of William Rufus, stemmed from the sinful actions of his father, William the Conqueror, who not only drove peasants from their farmland in order to establish the New Forest, but, crucially, also caused many churches there

⁶⁵ For Orderic's account of the death of William Rufus see OV V. 282-94. For further discussion see C. Warren Hollister, 'The Strange Death of William Rufus', in C. Warren Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London, 1986), 59-75. See also Alexander Haggerty Krappe, 'The Legend of the Death of William Rufus in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Ordericus Vitalis', *Neophilologus* 12:1 (1927), 46-48.

⁶⁶ For these similarities see *Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, pp.13-14, 45-46, ns.78 and 79. More generally, see above, pp.57-9.

⁶⁷ OV V. 282-84.

⁶⁸ Guillelmus autem primus postquam regnum Albionis optinuit, amator nemorum plusquam lx parrochias ultro deuastauit, rucolas ad alia loca transmigrare compulit, et siluestres feras pro hominibus ut uoluptatem uenandi haberet ibidem constituit. Ibi duos filios Ricardum et Guillelmum Rufum nepotemque suum ut dictum est Ricardum perdidit, et multiformis uisio quibusdam terribiliter apparuit, quibus consecratas aedes pro educatione ferarum derelictas Dominus sibi displicere palam ostendit. OV V. 284.

to be ‘abandoned’ or ‘forsaken’ (*derelictas*).⁶⁹ Orderic’s usage of the phrase *pro educatione* has a double meaning here, emphasising the fact that wild beasts rather than churchmen and monks were being ‘reared’ in buildings which should have been used ‘for the education’ of religious men.

The death of William Rufus, however, occurred not only as a result of the sins of his father. As Orderic narrates it, the first appearance of the apparition portending his death came in a vision experienced by a monk of the monastery of St. Peter in Gloucester. In the dream, the monk saw a virgin, personifying the Church, throw herself at the feet of Jesus and beg that as ‘avenger of crimes and most just judge of all’ (*scelerum uindex omniumque iudex iustissime*) he might ‘avenge’ (“*uindica me*”) the ‘disgraceful pollution and brutal oppression’ to which she was at that time being subjected by the King (“*turpiter...me pollut...et immaniter affligit*”).⁷⁰ In relating the pleas of the virgin to Christ to his abbot, Serlo, the monk concluded,

“And so, hearing these words I trembled and did not doubt that divine anger soon threatens our prince, understanding the cries of the holy virgin and Mother Church to have reached the ears of the Lord, for the plunderings and shameful adulteries and the intolerable burden of other crimes, by which the king and his followers do not cease to daily transgress the divine law.”⁷¹

The shameful immorality of William Rufus himself is thus spelt out clearly by Orderic here in book X of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, and it continues to be apparent throughout the narrative sequence of the passage. The two aspects of the story which follow the interpretation of the vision are especially important in this respect. First Abbot Serlo sent

⁶⁹ For similar comments see also John of Worcester, III. 92.

⁷⁰ OV V. 284-6.

⁷¹ “Haec itaque audiens contremui, et caelestem iram principi nostro mox imminere non dubitavi, intelligens sanctae uirginis et Matris Aecclesiae clamores peruenisse ad aures Domini, pro rapinis et turpibus mechis aliorumque facinorum sarcina intolerabili, quibus rex et pedissequi eius non desistunt diuinam legem cotidie transgredi.” OV V. 286.

letters of warning to the king from Gloucester, which though they reached him on the day of his death were ignored by him, with Orderic commenting that in this Rufus was ‘forgetful that the heart is lifted up before a fall’ (*immemor quod ante ruinam exaltatur cor*).⁷² He uses this well-known biblical adage, drawn from Proverbs 16:18, to powerful effect, further underlining the point that, even when threatened with impending divine judgement, the king, in his pride, refused to pay heed to the warnings of the Church. The second aspect of the story, which dominates much of the narrative, is a sermon which Orderic put into the mouth of a monk named Fulchred of Sées, given at the abbey of Gloucester. Rather appropriately, given the moral reasoning provided by Orderic for the divine anger towards William Rufus, it is noted that this sermon was given during the feast of St. Peter in Chains, on 1 August 1100.⁷³ This was the day before the King’s death, and so Orderic’s reference to the feast day provides a fitting backdrop to the story. For it seems not inappropriate to suggest that the feast of St. Peter in Chains, which celebrated the release of Peter from imprisonment as a result of divine intervention, was here deliberately applied by Orderic as a kind of metaphor which would have profoundly shaped his readers’ understanding of the death of Rufus, causing them to see clear parallels between the two events. The sermon itself centres on the impending nature of the wrath of God against the wicked. It pictures divine anger as a bow bent against the wicked with the arrow ready to fire, concluding with a sobering appeal to ‘every wise man’ (*sapiens omnis*) to avoid the blow ‘by correcting his life’ (*seseque corrigendo*)⁷⁴ However, as with the letters of warning written by Abbot Serlo of Gloucester, the words of Fulchred of Sées’ sermon went unheeded by the king, William Rufus, who, with his final words, mocked the words of Serlo in particular and of monks in general. His immoral lifestyle of abuse of the Church, both in life and when faced with his death, led Orderic to write that, once dead, some churches bells were not rung for him, for he was

⁷² OV V. 286-88.

⁷³ OV V. 286.

⁷⁴ OV V. 288.

deemed to be unrepentant and virtually beyond salvation.⁷⁵ Whatever the truth behind Orderic's perceptions of William Rufus may have been, the moral of the story of the king's death was very clear: those who considered themselves to be wise ought to heed the words of monks such as himself; those who refused to do so, did so at their peril.

The Prologue and Purpose of Book XI

Book XI of the *Historia ecclesiastica* has a clear didactic purpose and a sustained argument throughout. While in book X, Orderic contrasted Henry with his elder brother, William Rufus, in book XI he sought to portray Henry I as one of the greatest kings ever to rule the Anglo-Norman realm, and to provide a detailed explanation of the reasons for this in the unfolding narrative. Though written immediately after Henry's death, in c.1136, there is some evidence in an earlier part of the *Historia* that Orderic had been planning to tackle this theme for a number of years previously. In book VIII, the majority of which was probably written between 1133 and 1135,⁷⁶ Orderic praised Henry for bringing Robert of Bellême to justice, stating that this was the job for which God had appointed him to be king, before stopping himself by writing, 'But more on these things elsewhere' (*Verum de his alias*).⁷⁷ Although a brief authorial aside in the narrative flow of book VIII, this comment is, nevertheless, telling. It hints at Orderic's desire to cover not only the rise of Henry I, but also the fall of Robert of Bellême in future books of the *Historia*, and highlights the close literary association between these two characters in the narrative itself. While some of the implications of Henry's treatment of Robert of Bellême have been discussed in the existing scholarship,⁷⁸ its important place in the narrative of book XI has hitherto gone largely unnoticed. Only Roger

⁷⁵ OV V. 292.

⁷⁶ For the dating of this book see OV IV. xix.

⁷⁷ OV IV. 158.

⁷⁸ See above, pp.259-61.

Ray has made brief comment on this matter, writing of Robert of Bellême that ‘the fate of this man is the most intensely studied subject in the entire book.’⁷⁹ Though Henry of Huntingdon also noted that Henry I first exiled, and then later captured Robert of Bellême before imprisoning him for life, his comments are occasional in nature, brief in length and occupy a largely unimportant place in the narrative of book vii of the *Historia Anglorum*.⁸⁰ Much the same can be said of William of Malmesbury’s brief account of Robert of Bellême’s rebellion in book v of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.⁸¹ Only in book XI of Orderic’s *Historia* does Henry’s triumph over Robert of Bellême heavily inform the overall course and content of the narrative. The exact nature of this influence will be examined in what follows.

While the subject of book XI is Henry I, it is important to stress that its argument is contained within a clear monastic framework. For the prologue to the book, the last in the *Historia*, takes the form of a personal prayer to God comprising of seventy-eight lines of verse presented in the form of rhyming couplets.⁸² Of particular interest are lines 5-10:

Give consideration to my prayer, I beg you kind Father, maker of the world,
I worship and entreat you, I labour to please you rightly.
Now an old man, I write the deeds of bishops and kings,
I, a sexagenarian, make them manifest to the boys.
Nothing from them I ask as recompense for such labour,
But I offer it freely, content with the love of the brethren.⁸³

⁷⁹ Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and his Readers’, p.28.

⁸⁰ Henry of Huntingdon, vii.24, 25, 28, pp.450, 452-4, 458.

⁸¹ William of Malmesbury, v.396-8, pp.718-24.

⁸² OV VI. 8-12. For brief comment see OV VI. xvii.

⁸³ Ad mea uota precor mundi pie respice factor,
Te colo, te quero, tibi iure placere laboro.
Pontificum regumque senex nunc scriptito gesta,
Sexagenus ego pueris ea do manifesta.
Non ab eis precium pro tali posco labore,
Sed refero gratis fratrum contentus amore. OV VI. 8.

These lines are significant. Written in c.1136, they constitute a clear restatement by Orderic of his original intentions in writing the *Historia*,⁸⁴ echoing similar statements found throughout the work.⁸⁵ Thus, while the stated focus in the final books was on ‘bishops and kings’ (*Pontificum regumque*) and the major events in England and Normandy, Orderic was still consciously writing ‘for the boys’ (*pueris*) at Saint-Evroult. Though painting on a broad canvas, the prologue to book XI acts as a reminder that the *Historia* continued to be written by Orderic in order please God, to educate his readers about the world in which they were growing up, and to inform them of the personalities and events which had shaped it.

It is also important to note that the lines of verse in the prologue to book XI also contain a strong moral and ethical dimension, reiterating the priorities articulated by Orderic at the outset of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, in the prologue to book I.⁸⁶ Lines 35-48 are, in particular, deserving of attention, for here Orderic writes concerning ‘the unwise’ (*insipiens*) and ‘the wise’ (*sapiens*):

The unwise man in vain is troubled and swiftly squanders,
But no wise man is eager for time to be squandered.
Time, indeed, is squandered by he who fashions a useless verse,
And toil is lost by him who returns no advantage.
To good the fervent elect sedulously hasten,
To study the vigilant avidly reach for the praiseworthy.
They are not forced; who freely take up their burdens,
Who take the sheaves of corn and bear them to the storehouses.
Furthermore, the horse that goes satisfactorily is not goaded,
But so that it might not stumble, by right moderation it is guided.

⁸⁴ Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and his Readers’, p.27.

⁸⁵ For a close examination of these, see above pp.47-53.

⁸⁶ See above, pp.35-6.

The difficult horse the rider urges on with sharp spurs,
He strikes it with many whips that he might force it to gallop.
Similar is the law of the Church with cherished teachers,
For the indifferent they rouse by admonitions and the swift they restrain.⁸⁷

Elsewhere in this opening prayer to book XI, Orderic lamented the widespread nature of sin and evil doing in the world in which he lived, yet here he drew a contrast between the perpetrators of this crimes and those who, instead of squandering their time, spent it, like Orderic and his fellow monks, in study. The metaphor of two types of horse, the one stubborn and hard (*durum*) and the other eager and responsive to guidance is used to great effect here. It sets up Orderic's concluding point well: it is the role of the Church to teach and train all in right moral living. His comment regarding those who waste time by composing 'useless' verse (*inutile*) is also worthy of note here. For, in stressing the uselessness of worldly living, Orderic was once again urging his readers to shun the temporary pleasures of worldly living in favour of the lasting benefits articulated by Christian teaching. In saying this, he once again echoed words from the prologue to book I, this time regarding his belief in the utility of historical writing.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ *Insipiens frustra uexatur et ocia perdit,
At sapiens nullus sua tempora perdere gestit.
Tempus enim perdit qui carmen inutile pandit,
Et labor ipse perit, qui commoda nulla rependit.
Ad bona feruentes electi sedulo currunt,
Ad studium uigiles auide laudabile tendunt.
Cogendi non sunt; qui sponte ferenda capessunt,
Qui segetum captant fascas et in horrea portant.
Ultero satis gradiens sonipes non est stimulandus ,
Sed ne labatur moderato iure regendus,
Durum sessor equum calcaribus urguet acutis;
Percutit et crebris ut cogat currere flagris.
Aecclesiae similis lex est doctoribus almis,
Nam lentos stimulant monitis celeresque refrenant.* OV VI. 10.

⁸⁸ See above, pp.35-6.

Having completed the prologue to book XI, Orderic then presented a picture of the contrasting fortunes of Robert Curthose and Henry I. Here, in the midst of this passage, the specific focus of book XI is articulated in its clearest form:

Afterwards, Duke Robert returned to Normandy, to be held in even more derision by his men than before. Indeed, he gained nothing from that expedition but fear and toil and shame. The king on the other hand, going from strength to strength, rose in every way with all success, and as his reputation spread far and wide throughout the four parts of the world, he was regarded among the greatest of kings. No king had been more powerful than him in the realm of Albion, nor more richly provided in extent of lands within that island, nor more blessed with an abundance of all things with which humans are sufficient. *With God's help, and if life remains in me, this will be clearly established in the following pages of our narrative.* He subjected all his enemies by his wisdom and courage, and rewarded his servants with riches and titles. So he pulled down many great men from high positions of power and sentenced them to be permanently stripped of their hereditary rights. On the other hand, he ennobled others of low stock who favourably complied with him, raised them from the dust, so to speak, and giving them all kinds of opportunities, exalted them above earls and great men...But just as he was a munificent rewarder of his faithful servants, so he was implacable in his enmity to those who were unfaithful, and was scarcely ever kind to those of certain guilt without vengeance on their persons or title or wealth, who wretchedly experienced this fact when they died in his fetters, and were able to ransom themselves neither through kinship or noble birth, nor through payment of money.⁸⁹

Here Orderic announced that the subject of book XI's narrative was to be the ever-increasing power and success of Henry I. Orderic's usage of three consecutive comparative adjectives

⁸⁹ Deinde Rodbertus dux in Normanniam regressus est; et despicabilior quam antea fuerat suis effectus est. In hac enim profectione nichil nisi metum et laborem atque dedecus sibi lucratus est. Rex autem in omnibus prosperitate uigens admodum sullimatus est; et longe lateque de illo fama uolitante per quattuor climata mundi inter maximos reges nominatus est. Nullus eo fuit rex in Albionis regno potentior, nec amplitudine terrarum infra insulam locupletior, nec abundantia omnium rerum quae mortalibus suppetunt felicior. Hoc in subsequentiis si uita comes fuerit, auxiliante Deo narratio nostra manifeste comprobabit. Omnes inimicos suos sapientia uel fortitudine sibi subiugauit; sibique seruientes diuitiis et honoribus remunerauit. Unde plerosque illustres pro temeritate sua de sullimi potestatis culmine precipitauit, et haereditario iure irrecuperabiliter spoliatos condemnauit. Alios e contra fauorabiliter illi obsequentes de ignobili stirpe illustrauit, de puluere ut ita dicam extulit; dataque multiplici facultate super consules et illustres oppidanos exaltauit...At sicut fidelibus retributor erat magnificus, sic infidis erat impacabilis inimicus, et uix sine uindicta in corpore uel honore uel pecunia indulgebat certos reatus. Hoc miserabiliter rei senserunt, qui eius in uinculis mortui sunt; nec pro consanguinitate seu nobilitate generis siue recompensatione pecuniarum redimi potuerunt. OV VI. 16-18.

here is telling, for he describes Henry as ‘more powerful’, ‘more wealthy’ and ‘more blessed’ (*potentior, locupletior* and *felicior*) than any of his predecessors who had sat on the throne of England. Yet the focus of book XI was not to be an analysis of Henry in relation to these other kings. Rather, this passage makes clear that the purpose of Orderic’s narrative in this part of the *Historia* was to display Henry I’s supremacy over the Anglo-Norman nobility. For while he generously rewarded those who were compliant, famously raising relatively low-born men “from the dust”, Orderic stressed that Henry justly punished those who were guilty of crimes against himself and the Church.

Orderic had specific individuals in mind when he wrote of Henry’s punishment of the nobility at the outset of book XI. In the passage that followed, he briefly noted the charges which the king brought against Robert of Pontefract and Robert Malet.⁹⁰ More time was spent recounting the fines brought against Ivo of Grandmesnil, the then sheriff of Leicester, who, as a result of this action left England and died while taking part in the crusade of 1101. Critically, though, Orderic omitted the toponymic *de Grentemaisnil* from this passage, perhaps in an attempt to lessen the disgrace brought by Ivo on the family’s monastic foundation, Saint-Evrout, as a result of both his rebellion against Henry I in 1101 and his earlier flight from the walls of Antioch in the midst of the First Crusade.⁹¹ However, the content of book XI makes it clear that, first and foremost, it was Robert of Bellême whom Orderic had in mind here. Henry I’s treatment of Robert of Bellême spans the whole of book XI, and it was to this relationship which Orderic turned after the aforementioned comments on the justice meted out on a number of other members of the Anglo-Norman nobility.

⁹⁰ OV VI. 12.

⁹¹ OV VI. 18. For further discussion of this passage see above, pp.233-47.

The Burning of the Nunnery of Almenèches

While Orderic covered Robert of Bellême's rebellion and resultant expulsion from England in 1102 at the outset of book XI,⁹² his real focus lay elsewhere, with the impact of this on Normandy:

Robert...filled with anger and grief, crossed over to Normandy and cruelly attacked those of his compatriots who had endeavoured to help their weak lord [Robert Curthose], and, with fire and slaughter, he greatly aggravated [things]. For he was like the dragon of whom John the apostle spoke in the Apocalypse, who, having been cast out of heaven, fatally exercised his bestial rage against dwellers on the earth; so this fierce inciter of violence, having fled from Britain, fell upon the Normans in his fury. Having plundered their estates for booty, burnt them with fire, and, with torture, he afflicted knights and others who he was able to capture either to death or to the mutilation of their limbs. So great was his cruelty that he preferred inflicting torment on his prisoners to enriching himself with the much money offered for their ransom.⁹³

Orderic thus presented the years immediately following the arrival of Robert of Bellême and his brothers in Normandy in 1102 as witnessing a massive escalation of violence in the duchy. Villages were depopulated and churches were burnt to the ground as Robert warred with Robert Curthose.⁹⁴ The monk of Saint-Evroult was acutely aware of the trauma of the events about which he wrote in the pages of the *Historia*. For as is so often the case with Orderic, a specific example of localised violence lay behind his general statement bemoaning the state of the duchy in the years 1102-5. In describing how Henry I had sought to root out all of Robert of Bellême's brothers and kinsfolk from England, Orderic related how the king

⁹² For Orderic's account of this see OV VI. 20-32.

⁹³ Rodbertus autem ira et dolore plenus in Neustriam transfretavit, et compatriotas suos qui mollem dominum adiuuare suum nisi fuerant crudeliter inuasit, caedibus et incendiis uehementer aggrauavit. Nam sicut draco ille de quo sinistra Iohannes in Apocalipsi scribit de coelo proiectus in terrigenas rabiem suam feraliter exercuit; sic seus lanista de Britannia fugatus in Normannos furibundus irruit. Rura eorum prediis direptis ignibus conflagrauit, et milites uel alios quos capere ualebat usque ad mortem seu debilitationem membrorum cruciatibus afflixit. Tanta enim in illo erat seuitia, ut mallet captis inferre tormenta, quam pro redemptione illorum multa ditari pecunia. OV VI. 30.

⁹⁴ OV VI. 32.

had deprived the nuns of Almenèches of their English lands due to the fact that the abbess, Emma of Montgomery, was the sister of the Bellême brothers.⁹⁵ This comment, at a moment of transition in the narrative, where the story moved from England to Normandy, enabled Orderic to successfully shift his focus towards the nunnery of Almenèches, on which his narrative was to centre over the next few pages.⁹⁶

Situated only 30km south-west of Saint-Evroult and located in the same diocese (Sées), the nunnery of Almenèches was located in a region which, according to Orderic, experienced ‘great disturbance’ (*nimia turbatio*) at that time.⁹⁷ The events leading up to the burning of Almenèches are recorded by Orderic as follows.⁹⁸ While Robert of Bellême’s brother Roger the Poitevin withdrew to the castle of Charroux after his exile from England and lived out the remainder of his life there in peace,⁹⁹ the same could not be said for his other brother, Arnulf of Montgomery. Angry with Robert for the troubles which he had endured on his behalf, Arnulf switched allegiances, sided with Robert Curthose, seized the castle of Almenèches and surrendered it to the duke. As a result of this, many of Robert of Bellême’s other supporters deserted him at this time and took the side of his brother, Arnulf, and the duke.¹⁰⁰ Robert of Bellême’s position thus became increasingly desperate, and when the duke’s retainers occupied the nunnery of Almenèches in June 1102 in order to provide stables for their horses, he saw an opportunity to strike back:

⁹⁵ OV VI. 32-6.

⁹⁶ For more on the nunnery of Almenèches see Lucien Musset, ‘Les premiers temps de l’Abbaye d’Almenèches des origines au XII^e siècle’, in Yves Chaussy (ed.) *L’Abbaye d’Almenèches-Argentan et Sainte Opportune. Sa vie et son culte* (Paris, 1970), 11-36. A recent bibliography on the nunnery can be found in Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy*, p.193.

⁹⁷ OV VI. 32.

⁹⁸ For further commentary see Green, ‘Robert Curthose’, pp.112-3; *idem*, *Henry I*, pp.75-6; for the wider context of the plundering and burning of churches in war see Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.78-91.

⁹⁹ For more on this, see Chandler, ‘The Last of the Montgomerys’, pp.5-8.

¹⁰⁰ On Arnulf’s later life see Chandler, ‘The Last of the Montgomerys’, pp.11-13.

On learning of this, Robert rushed to the spot, and setting fire to the buildings, burnt the nunnery to the ground. Moreover, he captured Oliver of Fresnay and many others whom he wretchedly afflicted, some with long and painful imprisonment, yet the rest he condemned either to death or to the loss of their limbs. Duke Robert came to Exmes with the army of Normandy and ought to have helped his supporters. At that time Robert of Lacy was captain of the knights and at his command Mauger Malherbe was in charge of the aforesaid castle. Many were glad at the impending misfortune of this odious tyrant, such that they eagerly assembled to attack him. William, count of Évreux, Rotrou, count of Mortagne, Gilbert of Laigle and all the men of Exmes, had together plotted against him, but they, whom Robert had so often harmed, could not devise a fitting punishment to do away with him in retaliation. However, Robert of Saint-Céneri and Burchard his steward and Hugh of Nonant stood up to him for a long time, and more than all the other Normans they afflicted him with losses and injuries.¹⁰¹

This passage is notable for featuring an alliance between men who repeatedly feature in the *Historia* as some of Robert of Bellême's most staunch opponents. It is no coincidence that many of them also had links to Saint-Evrout. William of Évreux founded the priory of Noyon-sur-Andelle, a dependency of Saint-Evrout, in 1108, as will be seen below.¹⁰² Rotrou of Mortagne fought with Robert of Bellême on a number of occasions, and in the *Historia* his family are always portrayed as enemies of the Bellême. They were also related to the Laigle family through marriage.¹⁰³ Gilbert of Laigle was another enemy of Robert of Bellême and the Laigles were benefactors of Saint-Evrout about whom more will be said in due course.¹⁰⁴

Robert of Saint-Céneri, meanwhile, was a member of the Giroie family who had founded

¹⁰¹ Quo cognito Rodbertus illuc aduolauit, et iniecto igne cenobium combussit. Oliuarum autem de Fraxineio aliosque plures comprehendit; quorum quosdam longo grauique ergastulo miserabiliter afflixit, reliquos uero morte seu membrorum priuatione condempnauit. Rodbertus dux cum exercitu Normanniae Oximis uenit, fautoribusque suis suffragari debuit. Tunc Rogerius de Laceio magister militum erat; cuius precepto Malgerius cognomento Malaherba predictam munitionem seruabat. Ob infortunium imminens odibili tyranno plures letati sunt; ac ut super illum irruerent auide conuenerunt. Guillelmus comes Ebroicensis et Rotro comes Moritoniae, et Gislebertus de Aquila, et Oximenses cuncti simul in illum conspirauerant, sed congruentem malis quae idem illis multoties intulerat talionem exoluere ad libitum non poterant. Uerum Rodbertus de Sancto Serenico et Burcardus dapifer eius et Hugo de Nonanto diutius illi restiterunt, et plus omnibus aliis Normannis eundem damnis et iniuriis contristauerunt. OV VI. 34.

¹⁰² See below, pp.289-93; for an earlier reference in the *Historia* see OV II. 114-6. For bibliography on Noyon see Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy*, p.180.

¹⁰³ OV IV. 160-2.

¹⁰⁴ See below, pp.318-19.

Saint-Evroult and whose enmity towards the Bellême family features prominently throughout the *Historia*.¹⁰⁵ The castle of Saint-Céneri was given to Robert of Saint-Céneri by Robert Curthose after the duke's successful campaign against Robert of Bellême in 1088, which, frustratingly for Orderic, ended with the latter's release from imprisonment rather than with his punishment.¹⁰⁶ Finally, Hugh of Nonant, a more minor figure in the *Historia*, was a neighbour of Robert of Bellême who, we are told, resolutely opposed him for many years.¹⁰⁷ Yet while portrayed as a hero here, it is striking that only a few pages later in book XI Hugh of Nonant was criticised by Orderic for apparently dominating Robert Curthose.¹⁰⁸ This led Thompson to observe that 'Orderic's sympathies always lay with Robert [of Bellême]'s opponents' in passages in which they stood up to him, regardless of how they acted in relation to others.¹⁰⁹

Interestingly, many of these men also featured alongside each other in two passages in book VIII. In the first of these, Orderic's account of Curthose's 1088 campaign, Hugh of Nonant and Robert of Saint-Céneri were placed together in a sentence listing those who were frequently attacked by Robert of Bellême, with the counts of Mortagne and the lords of Laigle's resistance also recounted in the following paragraph.¹¹⁰ The second passage is similar, focussing on Robert of Bellême's mistreatment of the monks of Saint-Evroult and his violence on the southern frontier of Normandy. Here Orderic also listed those who had defeated the lord of Bellême in battle during this period, noting the men of Exmes, Geoffrey

¹⁰⁵ See above, pp.178-80.

¹⁰⁶ OV IV. 154-6. This event was critical in forming Orderic's opinion of Curthose as weak and ineffective, see Green, 'Robert Curthose', pp.108-9, and also Thompson, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême', p.140.

¹⁰⁷ OV IV. 300.

¹⁰⁸ OV VI. 62.

¹⁰⁹ Thompson, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême', p.136.

¹¹⁰ OV IV. 150-62.

and Rotrou of Mortagne, Helias of Maine and Hugh of Nonant among others.¹¹¹ These two passages in book VIII add much to our understanding of Orderic's inclusion of these individuals in his account of the burning of the nunnery of Almenèches in book XI. For again and again they are seen resisting Robert of Bellême. Though they failed to defeat him on this latter occasion, Orderic once again stressed their eager desire to do so. Their associations with Saint-Evrout and their consistent opposition to the lord of Bellême explain Orderic's praise for them. The blame for their failure to defeat Robert of Bellême lay elsewhere. In Orderic's eyes, Robert Curthose, as the duke of Normandy, should have decisively defeated his troublesome subject on a number of occasions, including this one. But because he had not, Orderic constructed his account of the episode in such a way as to heap further shame on the eldest son of the Conqueror, criticising 'the indolent lord' (*desidem dominum*) once more for allowing his army to be defeated at Exmes.¹¹²

While the presence of a large number of the enemies of Robert of Bellême at Exmes in 1102 goes some way towards explaining Orderic's inclusion of the burning of the nunnery of Almenèches in book XI, their failure to defeat him means that it does not provide the whole answer. Why then did Orderic include this episode in the *Historia*? He provided the explanation in the final paragraph of his account, in which the reader is informed of a direct link between Almenèches and Saint-Evrout:

With the nunnery at Almenèches having been burnt to the ground as described, the fragile community of maidens scattered in distress. Each of whom, as chance and opportunity allowed, returned to the home of parents or friends. Yet Emma, the abbess, fled to Ouche with three nuns and lived there for six months in the chapel where the blessed father Évroul had lived in solitude, devoting himself to heavenly meditation. In the following year she returned again to her own

¹¹¹ OV IV. 296-300.

¹¹² OV VI. 34.

church, and with the help of God and his faithful, laboured to restore what had been ruined. This woman lived for about ten years afterwards, in which she diligently rebuilt the church of the Virgin and Mother and the conventual buildings, and brought back to the monastic enclosure all those who had been dispersed. On her death, Matilda, the daughter of her brother Philip, succeeded her, and he laboriously restored the monastery with all its buildings after it had been set alight by a second unexpected fire.¹¹³

This passage not only reveals the possible means by which Orderic came to hear of the burning of the nunnery of Almenèches,¹¹⁴ but also, more importantly, provides the reason why the story was included in the narrative of the *Historia*: the abbess Emma of Montgomery's stay at Saint-Evroult. For with the abbess' flight to Saint-Evroult, this violent moment in the history of the nuns of Almenèches came to be incorporated into the history of Orderic's house, etched in the minds of its monks, and, woven into the narrative of the *Historia ecclesiastica* many years later. Indeed, the fact that Orderic related how Emma and the other nuns stayed in the same chapel in which the monastery's founder, Évroul, had lived long before hints that their presence at Saint-Evroult and their interaction with its history added a further layer of memories to the sacred landscape about which he so often wrote in the *Historia*.¹¹⁵ The writing of this passage allowed Orderic to point his readers back to Saint-Evroult, acting as a further reminder of the local heartbeat of the work. For though Robert of Bellême remained undefeated, the members of the defenceless community of nearby Almenèches found refuge and protection in the monastery of Saint-Evroult, and because of that, they were able to begin the rebuilding process in the following year. Orderic had once

¹¹³ Concremato apud Almaniscas sanctimonialium monasterio ut dictum est; tener uirginum conuentus misere dispersus est. Unaquaeque prout facultas sibi fortuito collata est; ad lares parentum uel amicorum regressa est. Emma uero abbatissa cum ternis sanctimonialibus Uticum confugit, ibique in capella ubi sanctus pater Ebrulfus coelesti theoriae intentus solitarie degebat sex mensibus habitauit. Porro sequenti anno ad aecclesiam suam reuersa est; auxilioque Dei et fidelium eius diruta restaurare conata est. Haec postmodum fere x annis uixit, quibus basilicam uirginis et matris cum regularibus officinis diligenter erexit, et dispersas ad septa monastica monachus summopere reuocauit. Qua defuncta Mathildis filia Philippi fratris eius successit, iterumque repentino igne incensum cum aedibus monasterium laboriose reparauit. OV VI. 36.

¹¹⁴ For more on women and memory see, in general, Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Basingstoke, 1999).

¹¹⁵ For more on this landscape see Roach, 'The Material and the Visual'.

more arranged his material so as to highlight the important role played by his monastery in this turbulent episode in Norman history.

The Sermon of Serlo of Sées

With the situation in Normandy deteriorating rapidly, Orderic related that Henry I crossed over to the duchy in early 1105 in order to seize it from his brother.¹¹⁶ At this point in the narrative of book XI, in the build-up to the conflict between the two brothers, Orderic placed a long and significant speech into the mouth of Serlo, bishop of Sées, his former abbot at Saint-Evroult.¹¹⁷ While the second half of the speech is well known for its remarkable appeal to Henry and his noblemen to cut their effeminately long hair,¹¹⁸ this should not be allowed to detract from more important questions regarding the purpose of the speech as a whole. ‘It clearly has a significance of its own, quite apart from the question of strict historical veracity’, as C. W. David observed almost a century ago.¹¹⁹ Why, then, did Orderic choose to insert Serlo’s speech at this important juncture in the narrative, directly preceding his account of Henry’s conquest of Normandy? Without a clear answer to this question, the historian is left, like Cooper, regarding the hair-cutting as ‘a strange scene...almost entirely lacking in coherent context from Orderic.’¹²⁰ It is therefore essential to view this unusual episode in light of the wider context of the unfolding narrative of the *Historia*. Some insightful comments have been made in this regard. Stafford tentatively suggested that Serlo’s abbacy at Saint-Evroult was ‘one factor determining Orderic’s sympathies and perspectives on these

¹¹⁶ For context see Green, *Henry I*, pp.78-82; Hollister, *Henry I*, 185-6.

¹¹⁷ OV VI. 60-8.

¹¹⁸ Pauline Stafford, ‘The Meanings of Hair in the Anglo-Norman World: Masculinity, Reform, and National Identity’, in Mathilde van Dijk and Renée Nip (eds), *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies. Festschrift in Honour of Anneke Mulder-Bakker on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Turnhout, 2005), 153-171. More generally, see Robert Bartlett, ‘Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages’, *TRHS* 6:4 (1994), 43-60 at pp.50-51.

¹¹⁹ C. W. David, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1920), p.163.

¹²⁰ Cooper, ““The feet of those that bark shall be cut off””, p.55.

events.¹²¹ Hollister believed that the speech was much more than a simple display of royal propaganda, commenting that ‘Serlo, self-exiled from his diocese by the excesses of Robert of Bellême, had good reason to complain about the violence and chaos in the duchy, conditions from which he and some of his associates were suffering personally.’¹²² More recently, Charity Urbanski has called Serlo’s speech ‘The most comprehensive exposition of Orderic’s argument...in favour of Henry’s interference in his brother’s duchy’. Like Hollister, she was attuned to the wider context of Orderic’s hatred for Robert of Bellême in the *Historia* and the violent nature of the southern frontier of Normandy, and also noted that Serlo was a former abbot of Saint-Evroult.¹²³

Serlo features prominently throughout the *Historia*, having first been a monk, then prior and finally abbot at Saint-Evroult (1089-91) before his election as bishop of Sées (1091 until his death in 1123).¹²⁴ For much of his episcopal reign he was tormented by Robert of Bellême, who had long laid claim to the bishopric of Sées.¹²⁵ It was this conflict which provided the immediate background to Serlo’s sermon to Henry and his magnates in book XI of the *Historia*. For Orderic wrote that Robert Curthose, recognising that he was powerless to stop Robert of Bellême ravaging the duchy, made peace and gave him the bishopric of Sées. Such was Robert’s tyranny in the region and pressure on Serlo that the bishop excommunicated the lord of Bellême before going into exile in England in 1103-4.¹²⁶ Orderic repeatedly emphasised the escalation of violence in Normandy during this period, and when he did so

¹²¹ Stafford, ‘Meanings of Hair’, p.168.

¹²² Hollister, *Henry I*, p.186.

¹²³ Urbanski, ‘Apology, Protest, and Suppression’, p.140.

¹²⁴ For an overview of Serlo’s life and career see Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, p.281; Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:435-50.

¹²⁵ Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, 1:435-44.

¹²⁶ OV VI. 46.

Robert of Bellême was invariably portrayed as being at the centre of things.¹²⁷ So it was that Orderic recorded the following in the paragraph directly preceding Serlo's speech:

Holy Church was greatly oppressed during these troubles, and she frequently looked on at the funerals of her innocent offspring and the irreparable ruin of souls; she prayed, lifting up her heart and pure hands to her bridegroom, who rules the heavens, to come to her aid. The tearful lament of mournful Normandy was carried across the sea, and the king of England was summoned by the pleas of the desolate.¹²⁸

While Robert Curthose was slow to act in the face of the troubles that Robert of Bellême was causing throughout Normandy, Henry is described as being exactly the opposite, as 'the active king' (*impiger rex*), not unwilling or indolent, but quick to respond to the problems within the duchy. His fleet landed in Normandy in the spring of 1105, and on his arrival at Carentan, Serlo rushed to offer his services to the king.¹²⁹ It was at this point in the narrative that Orderic inserted Serlo's Easter sermon. By doing so, he deliberately presented the former abbot of Saint-Evroult as the mouthpiece for his grievances against Robert of Bellême. In Orderic's capable hands, these grievances were magnified, becoming those of all the Norman faithful.¹³⁰

With the king and his magnates seated, Serlo, saddened at the sight of peasants' belongings in the church, began to speak:

¹²⁷ See for example OV VI. 56-60. For Orderic's exaggeration of Robert of Bellême's troublemaking in Normandy more generally, see Thompson, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême', pp.137-8.

¹²⁸ Inter haec sancta aecclesia uehementer opprimebatur, et dum funera innocuae prolis irreparabilesque ruinas animarum frequenter contemplantur; leuatis cum corde puris manibus sponsum suum qui coelis praesidet ad auxilium suimet deprecabatur. Lacrimabilis planctus lugubris Normanniae trans fretum diffusus est; et querimoniis desolatorum rex Anglorum accitus est. OV VI. 60.

¹²⁹ OV VI. 60.

¹³⁰ For some brief comments on the significance of speeches in the writing of both Orderic and William of Malmesbury see Mason, *William II*, p.15.

‘The hearts of all the faithful should rightly mourn, who see the trampling of the holy mother church and the destruction of wretched people. Behold it is sufficiently apparent in this building that the region of the Cotentin is being miserably plundered, indeed that all Normandy, subjected by profane bandits, is without an able ruler. The church of God was once called a house of prayer, but now you can see that it has been shamefully filled with worldly goods, and the building in which the holy sacraments alone should be carried out has been turned into a public storehouse for lack of a just protector. The congregation is neither able to reverently bow the knee before the altar, nor stand comfortably and devoutly, as is fitting before divine majesty, because of all the kinds of things which the defenceless populace has brought into this house of the Lord, for fear of wicked men. And so the church has become the refuge of the populace, although not even in church is it completely safe for them.’¹³¹

As Chibnall noted,¹³² in describing the effect of the violence on the Church, Orderic drew a direct parallel with the episode in the Gospels in which Jesus bemoaned the state of the Temple in his day and forcefully drove out those who were to blame for it.¹³³ Thus, through Serlo, he sought to convey the sheer extent of the problems within Normandy in 1105. Who, then, was the originator of these troubles? Orderic made his argument clear in the words of Serlo which followed:

‘For this very year, Robert of Bellême burnt to the ground the church of Tournay in my own diocese, as is well known, and killed forty-five men and women inside it. I recall these things, grieving over them in the sight of God; indeed, I relate them too, my lord king, to your ears, so that your spirit may be kindled by the zeal of God and strive to imitate Phineas and Mattathias.

¹³¹ ‘Omnium corda fidelium merito lugere debent, qui sanctae matris aecclisiae conculcationem mestaeque plebis deiectionem uident. Ecce satis apparet in hac domo; quod miserabiliter depopulatur Constantini regio, immo tota Normannia prophanis subdita predonibus rectore caret idoneo. Domus orationis olim dicta est basilica Dei, quam nunc potestis cernere turpiter impletam immunda suppellectili; et aedes in qua solummodo diuina sacramenta debent peragi pro penuria iusti defensoris facta est apotheca populi. Conuenientes nequeunt ante aram genua reuerenter flectere, nec delectabiliter et deuote ut deceret ante diuinam maiestatem astare, pro multimodis speciebus quas inerme uulgi huc in domum Domini contulit pro sceleratorum timore. Praesidium itaque uulgi facta est aecclisia; quamuis nec in ipsa sit ei securitas perfecta.’ OV VI. 60-62.

¹³² OV VI. 62 n.1.

¹³³ Matthew 21:12-13 and Mark 11:15-17.

Rise up in the name of the Lord, not slowly, and rescue your ancestral land and the people of God from the hands of the most wicked.’¹³⁴

Robert of Bellême was to blame for the violence in Normandy. It was because of him that the Norman Church lay in a state of disrepair. As with the earlier case of the burning of the nunnery of Almenèches, here, too, a specific crime lay behind the general descriptions of widespread panic and insecurity contained within Serlo’s speech. Such atrocities called for a quick response, and Serlo’s call for Henry to not be slow (*Haud segnis*) to respond was a clear allusion to Robert Curthose’s passivity in this area. For in Orderic’s eyes, Normandy was ‘without a fit ruler’ (*rectore caret idoneo*) during Curthose’s reign,¹³⁵ not because of any general problems facing the duchy at that time, but because of the Duke’s failure to deal with the particular problem of Robert of Bellême. By structuring the speech in this way, Orderic sought to show that Henry’s invasion in 1105 was focussed on bringing Robert of Bellême to justice and thereby restoring peace to the duchy. Curthose’s treatment of Robert, the enemy of Saint-Evroult, justified such a move in the narrative of book XI of the *Historia*, and this explains why Serlo’s assessment of the duke’s character came after his indictment of his most troublesome parishioner. For in the *Historia*, the one resulted from the other. Serlo of Sées’ sermon is thus concerned with much more than just the effeminately long hair of Henry and his magnates. By positioning it at a critical juncture in the narrative of book XI, Orderic furnished himself with an opportunity to skilfully present his argument against Robert of Bellême through the mouth of a character of much importance to the history of Saint-Evroult. For Serlo had spent much of his life as the abbot of that community, and so it was natural for Orderic to present him as the spokesmen for the monks, articulating their enduring hatred

¹³⁴ ‘Hoc enim in anno Rodbertus de Belismo aecclesiam de Tornaco in mea scilicet diocesi concremauit, et in eadem xlv promiscui sexus homines extinxit. Haec gemens in conspectu Dei recolo, haec etiam domine rex ideo in auribus tuis enarro; ut animus tuus zelo Dei accendatur, et Phinees atque Matathiam eiusque filios imitari conetur. Haud segnis in nomine Domini exurge, paternam haereditatem iusticiae gladio tibi nanciscere, et de manu pessimorum auitam possessionem populumque Dei erue.’ OV VI. 62.

¹³⁵ OV VI. 62. The principle of *idoneitas* was widely employed in eleventh- and twelfth-century papal discourse, see I. S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073-1198* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.313-18.

towards Robert of Bellême and his family, and, indeed, perpetuating it in written form some three decades after Henry's seizure of Normandy.

William of Évreux and the Priory of Noyon

Having recounted Henry's victory over Robert Curthose at Tinchebray in 1106,¹³⁶ Orderic continued with an account of how Robert of Bellême, in desperate need of an ally after the capture and imprisonment of Curthose, made a failed attempt to persuade Helias of Maine to side with him against the king.¹³⁷ He then noted that, at this time, Henry brought all his enemies low,¹³⁸ and went on to illustrate this point with the example of Robert of Montfort, who, knowing his own guilt, fled to Bohemond, one of the heroes of the First Crusade, in Apulia and was partly responsible for the failure of his new lord's campaign in the Byzantine Balkans in 1107.¹³⁹ This link between Robert of Montfort and Bohemond allowed Orderic to insert a good deal of material on the Latin East at this point in book XI of the *Historia*.¹⁴⁰ Having done so, he returned to his account of the reign of Henry I. He picked up the story immediately after Tinchebray, detailing the King's council at Lisieux in 1107, some details concerning the abbots of Fécamp (for the third abbot, William of Rots, died on his return from the council), and finally noted that the troubles in the vacant bishopric of Lisieux eased after Henry's triumph due to the appointment of John, the archdeacon of Sées, as bishop.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ OV VI. 82-92; for more on the significance of Tinchebray see Green, *Henry I*, pp.89-95; see also Hollister, *Henry I*, pp.199-203, and, more generally, Véronique Gazeau and Judith A. Green (eds) *Tinchebray 1106-2006. Actes du colloque de Tinchebray (28-30 septembre 2006)* (Flers, 2009).

¹³⁷ OV VI. 94-8.

¹³⁸ OV VI. 98-100.

¹³⁹ OV VI. 100-4.

¹⁴⁰ OV VI. 104-36.

¹⁴¹ OV VI. 136-44.

While much ground was thus covered by Orderic in this middle part of the narrative of book XI, the ensuing content of the narrative returns the *Historia ecclesiastica* to the subject of how Saint-Evroult and its network of associated religious houses fared during and after the reign of Henry I. A striking example of this comes in a section that follows on from the events just described, which relates the story of the foundation of the priory of Noyon-sur-Andelle by William of Évreux.¹⁴² Orderic began his account as follows:

William, count of Évreux, now at a ripe old age and rightly fearing the fate of his inevitable end, resolved, at the instigation of his wife Helwise, to build a house for God on his own land, in which chosen monks might be able, with true devotion, to worthily serve the King of kings. So the two of them, the husband and his wife together, sought advice and assistance on this matter from Roger, abbot of Saint-Evroult, and specifically asked for twelve monks for the building of a monastery at Noyon. And so the same number of brothers, with the aforesaid abbot, came there on 13 October, and in that uninhabited place which the locals called 'Buscheron', they occupied the chapel of St. Martin, the archbishop, and lived there according to the monastic rule. Indeed, there they happily received several men of different ages, coming to convert, and gladly showed them the way of life according to the rule of St. Benedict.

Yet this situation later took a turn for the worse with the building of a new church at Noyon:

But just as cornfields endure many hardships from sowing up to reaping, and not all seeds will thrive in like fortune, or perish in a common misfortune, but grow with difficulty having been afflicted by the varying hardships through the winter storms and the summer heat, so men in individual orders or communities are tossed about by different storms, neither commonly blessed in like prosperity nor, on the other hand, shaken severely by a like misfortune. In the year of our Lord 1108, the first indiction, the aforesaid count, with his wife, began the great church in honour of Mary, the holy Mother of God, and spent a large amount of his wealth to complete the work, but with worldly disturbances severely hindering him, he was unable to finish it.

The building project was hampered by an unfortunate series of circumstances:

¹⁴² OV VI. 146-54. For a brief bibliography on Noyon see Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy*, p.180.

In the end, because the aforementioned count and the countess Helwise completely destroyed the royal castle at Évreux, and offended the king in other things in which their fealty to their master had faltered and was not well observed, they were exiled to the county of Anjou. With the building of the monastery, these disturbances caused great detriment, and the death of both of them not long after led to the desolation of many. The countess, who died first, rests at Noyon; the count, however, died a little later, having been struck down by apoplexy, without the viaticum, and his corpse rots at Fontenelle with his father. Afterwards, since the aforesaid lord died without children and Amalric, his nephew, did not have the king's favour because of his temerity, the king took the county of Évreux into his own possession. Yet this saw the greatest wickedness, as is manifestly recorded in the following pages, and the city with all the surrounding region was exposed to plundering and fire. So the monastery which the aforesaid count began at Noyon, as has been said, remains unfinished up to this day, under the priors Robert and Roger and Ralph.¹⁴³

Orderic then completed this section of the *Historia* by relating details concerning the lives of the priors of Noyon. And because Robert, the first prior of Noyon, later became abbot of

¹⁴³ Guillelmus Ebroicensium comes iam senio maturus, iure metuens ineuitabilis exitii casus; instinctu Heluisae coniugis suae Deo decreuit in proprio fundo domum aedificare, in qua electi alonazontes cum uera religione Regi regum congrue possent militare. Unde ambo maritus uidelicet et uxor eius consilium et auxilium super hac re a Rogerio abbate sancti Ebrulfi petierunt, et duodecim monachos ad construendum apud Nogionem cenobium nominatim postulauerunt. Illuc itaque totidem fratres cum prefato abbate iii^o ides Octobris conuenerunt, ibique in deserto loco quem Buscheronem incolae nuncupauerunt, ad sancti capellam Martini archipresulis regulariter uiuere ceperunt. Plures autem diuersae aetatis ad conuersionem uenientes ibidem benigniter susceperunt, eisque uiam uitae secundum sancti regulam Benedicti gratanter ostenderunt. Ceterum sicut segetes a satione usque ad messionem plures iniurias perferunt, nec omnia grana pari fortuna proficient, siue consimili infortunio pereunt, sed uariis per hibernos imbres et estiuos ardores iniuriis afflicta difficulter crescunt, sic homines in singulis ordinibus seu congregationibus diuersis turbibus agitantur, nec parili prosperitate communiter beatificantur, nec simili rursus infortunio conquassantur. Anno ab incarnatione Domini M^oC^oVIII^o indictione prima; prefatus consul cum coniuge sua ingentem basilicam in honore sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae cepit, et de sua pecunia magnam quantitatem ad explendum opus erogauit, sed mundanis infestationibus grauiter impredientibus perficere nequiuit... Tandem quia predictus comes et Heluisa comitissa dangionem regis apud Ebroas funditus deiecerunt, et in aliis quibusdam causis in quibus erilis fidelitas non bene seruata titubauerat regem offenderunt; exheredati de Normannia bis in Andegauorum regionem exulauerunt. Quae perturbationes construendo coenobio ingens detrimentum contulerunt, et non multo post exitus amborum ad desolationem multorum secuti sunt. Comitissa nempe defuncta prius apud Nogionem quiescit, comes uero postmodum apoplexia percussus sine uiatico decessit, et cadauer eius cum patre suo Fontinellae computrescit. Porro quia prefatus heros sine liberis obit, et Amalricus nepos eius pro temeritate sua gratiam regis non habuit; Ebroicensem comitatem rex proprietati suae mancipauit. Unde maxima ut in sequentibus manifeste referam malicia creuit, et ciuitas cum tota circumiacenti regione depopulationibus et incendiis patuit. Monasterium autem quod predictus comes ut dictam est apud Nogionem cepit; sub prioribus Rodberto et Rogerio atque Ranulfo usque hodie imperfectum consistit. OV VI. 146-8.

Thorney in England, he also appended what he knew about the location and history of Thorney and its abbots to the end of the episode.¹⁴⁴

The way in which Orderic wove the story of the establishment of the priory of St. Martin's Noyon into the narrative of book XI reveals much about the emphasis on local and monastic material within the *Historia* as a whole. For Noyon's close links to Saint-Evroult meant that its story was as much a part of the history that Orderic was trying to write as the many other monastic houses encountered in earlier parts of the work, such as those at Neufmarché, Heundicourt, Noron, Parnes, Maule, Boscherville, Crowland, Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives, Almenèches, St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto.¹⁴⁵ And as with these, the story of the establishment of Noyon was presented against a much broader background, this time the turbulent aftermath of Henry I's victory at Tinchebray. It was this interaction between the two that resulted in the building of the church of Notre Dame de Noyon, which though begun in 1108, was still unfinished when Orderic came to write about it almost thirty years later. The story allowed him to further explore the impact of Henry I on the network of houses associated with Saint-Evroult, this time through its effects on the monastery's dependency at Noyon-sur-Andelle. In this regard, the final sentence of his section on Noyon was telling, for he wrote: 'And so, having said these things about our friends and well-known companions, I will return to the sequence of annalistic history, from which I have digressed somewhat.' (*His*

¹⁴⁴ OV VI. 148-154.

¹⁴⁵ As well as these textual links, in all, by 1130, the *liber memorialis* of Saint-Evroult contained the names of about eighty houses of monks and nuns with which it was joined in prayer unions. This manuscript survives and is contained within the composite volume known as the chapter-book of Saint-Evroult, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. lat. 10062. For an edited version of the text see Jean Laporte, 'Tableau des services obituaires assurés par les abbayes de Saint-Evroult et de Jumièges', *Revue Mabillon* 46 (1956), 141-88. For more on the significance and extent of this network see also OV I. 85-7. Much work has been done on *libri memoriales*; a good place to start is Véronique Gazeau, 'La mort des moines: sources textuelles et méthodologie (XI^e-XII^e siècles)', in Armelle Alduc-Le Bagousse (ed.) *Inhumations et édifices religieux au Moyen Age entre Loire et Seine* (Caen, 2004), 13-21. See also David Rollason et al (eds) *The Durham Liber Vitae and its Context* (Woodbridge, 2004). On the relationship between monks and their benefactors more generally, see Emilia Jamrozik and Janet Burton (eds) *Religious and Laity in Western Europe, 1000-1400: Interaction, Negotiation, and Power* (Turnhout, 2006).

itaque dictis de amicis et notis sodalibus, regrediar ad annalis hystoriae seriem unde sum aliquantulum digressus.)¹⁴⁶ Orderic's acknowledgement that he had digressed from a chronological account of Henry's seizure of Normandy and defeat of Robert of Bellême reveals the importance of this episode to him. For he did so not due to some kind of authorial carelessness on his part, but because of the high value which he placed on expounding subjects that were closely related to the history of Saint-Evroult. His digression was thus a result of intent rather than accident. For monks from Saint-Evroult had established the abbey of St. Martin at Noyon, and Orderic's statement that the building of the great church 'remains unfinished to this day' (*usque hodie imperfectum consistit*), reveals that he was aware of the continued lack of progress made there even into the mid-1130s.¹⁴⁷

Henry I's Visit to Saint-Evroult, the Downfall of Robert of Bellême and the End of Book XI

After the account of Noyon, the narrative of book XI moves forward fairly rapidly, with Orderic spending some time recounting affairs in France between 1108 and 1109,¹⁴⁸ before going through the years 1110-12 in quick succession.¹⁴⁹ Events in France were important because they impinged greatly on Normandy.¹⁵⁰ For William Clito, son of the imprisoned duke, Robert Curthose, posed a serious threat to Henry I's claims to Normandy while he lived, and was supported in this by Robert of Bellême and Helias of Saint-Saens.¹⁵¹ Though

¹⁴⁶ OV VI. 154.

¹⁴⁷ OV VI. 148.

¹⁴⁸ OV VI. 154-68.

¹⁴⁹ OV VI. 170-74.

¹⁵⁰ For more on this subject see Marjorie Chibnall, 'Anglo-French Relations in the Work of Orderic Vitalis', in J. S. Hamilton and Patricia J. Bradley (eds) *Essays in Medieval History Presented to G. P. Cuttino* (Woodbridge, 1989), 5-19.

¹⁵¹ For more on William Clito see Sandy Burton Hicks, 'The Impact of William Clito upon the Continental Policies of Henry I of England', *Viator* 10 (1979), 1-21; for more Robert of Bellême's role in the rebellion of 1110-12 see Thompson, 'Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Bellême', pp.137-8; Thompson, 'Robert of Bellême Reconsidered', pp.278-9.

important, Orderic was now nearing the end of book XI and so these events in this latter part of its narrative unfolded quickly. For having said at the outset of the book that he would show how Henry had brought all of his enemies to heel,¹⁵² Orderic now sought to come full circle in the narrative, and to rearticulate his appreciation for Henry I in a series of short yet important passages which he placed at the end of book XI. The first of these passages recounted Henry's visit to Saint-Evroult in 1113, thus affording Orderic the opportunity to link the central character of book XI to the monastic community in which the author of the *Historia* spent so much of his life.

The significance to Orderic of Henry's visit to Saint-Evroult has not been lost on scholars. Roger Ray wrote that the monk was 'delighted' and 'impressed' by the king's interest in the renunciatory life.¹⁵³ More recently, Judith Green has observed that the attention given to Saint-Evroult by Henry 'was doubtless one of the reasons why the abbot [Roger Le Sap] set Orderic to work on his *History*',¹⁵⁴ and has stressed Henry's appreciation of the complexities of the southern frontier of Normandy and also the effectiveness of his patronage of Saint-Evroult.¹⁵⁵ This was not merely an event of great historical significance that lingered long in the memory of the monks of Saint-Evroult, but was also something which came to occupy an important place in the narrative arc of book XI, being positioned at the end. The implications of this will be discussed in what follows. First the passage itself:

In the year of our Lord 1113, the sixth indiction, Henry, king of England came to the Ouche, accompanied by many of his nobles, and there celebrated [the Feast] of the Purification of Mary, the blessed mother of God, with great cheerfulness. He sat in the cloister of the monks for a long time, diligently considered their establishment and, having examined the regularity of their

¹⁵² OV VI. 16; see above p.276.

¹⁵³ Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis on Henry I', p.125.

¹⁵⁴ Green, *Henry I*, p.3.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp.126, 228, 231, 268.

religious life, praised them. With him there also were his nephews Theobald and Stephan, Conan the Breton and William, bishop of Exeter, and several other earls and magnates with their nobles.

Orderic then went on to relate how a charter was issued by the king at this time:

Then, at the suggestion of Robert, count of Meulan, the king commanded a charter to be made and everything which the abbey of Ouche possessed on that day to be briefly listed in it. This was done. Then Arnold the prior and Gilbert of Les Essarts took the charter to the king at Rouen. He willingly confirmed it, making the sign of the cross, and handed it to his magnates who were present to be similarly corroborated. Thus Robert, count of Meulan, and Richard, count of Chester, Nigel of Aubigny and Goel of Ivry, William Peverel and Roger of Thibouville, William of La Lande and Robert the king's son and many others subscribed. This charter was doubtlessly made on the advice of wise men against greedy heirs, who, each year, were snatching back the alms of their relatives and constantly forcing monks to plead [their case] to the great diminishment of the churches' possessions. Therefore the king signed this written testament with his seal and by his authority forbade that no one was to implead the monks for those possessions which his royal edict had confirmed, unless provoked by a general action in the king's court. At that time, he also gave sixty salted hogs and ten measures of wheat to the monks of Ouche, and ordered John, bishop of Lisieux, to supply the wheat to the monks at Argentan, which he carried out willingly and without delay. So having celebrated the feast at Ouche, as has been said, the king went on to survey the boundaries of his territory and to strengthen the weaker parts of the land against robbers and enemies.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Anno ab incarnatione Domini M^oC^oXIII^o indictione vi; Henricus rex Anglorum procerum multitudine suorum stipatus Uticum uenit, ibique purificationem sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae cum magna hilaritate celebravit. In claustrum monachorum diu sedit, esse eorum diligenter consideravit, et perspecta religionis moderatione illos laudavit. Sequenti uero die in capitulum uenit, societatem eorum humiliter requisivit et recepit. Ibi fuerunt nepotes eius Tedbaldus et Stephanus, Conanus Brito et Guillelmus Exoniensis episcopus, et alii plures consules et optimates cum suis proceribus. Tunc consilio Rodberti comitis de Mellento rex iussit cartam fieri, ibique omnia quaecumque Uticensis abbatia ipso die possidebat breuiter colligi. Quod et factum est. Deinde Ernaldus prior et Gislebertus Sartensis Rotomagum regi cartam detulerant. Ipse uero libenter eam cruce facta firmavit, et optimatibus suis qui aderant crucis signo similiter corroborandam tradidit. Subscripserunt itaque Rodbertus comes de Mellento et Ricardus comes de Cestra, Nigellus de Albinneo et Goellus de Ibreio, Guillelmus Peberellus et Rogerius de Tedboldiulla, Guillelmus de Lalunda, et Rodbertus regis filius et alii plures. Haec nimirum carta consilio sapientum facta est contra cupidos haeredes, qui singulis annis elemosinas parentum suorum diripiebant, et cum magno rerum aecclesiasticarum detrimento monachos crebro placitare cogebant. Unde rex prescriptum testamentum sigillo suo signavit, et ne quis ad placitum monachos de his rebus quas edicto principali sancit, nisi in curia regali prouocaret generali auctoritate prohibuit. Tunc etiam lx bacones et decem modios tritici Uticensibus monachis dedit, et Iohanni Luxouiensi episcopo ut triticum monachis apud

Green has observed that ‘This was an important visit for the monks, as well as a tremendous opportunity to catch the king’s eye, but it was also important for the king to establish his authority in the region and his patronage over the abbey.’¹⁵⁷ Chibnall suggested that this notable event may have provided ‘the incentive’ for the writing of Orderic’s *magnum opus*, given that the king’s visit in 1113 preceded the composition of the earliest chapters of book III, which she thought were composed in 1114-15.¹⁵⁸ Jean Blacker and Leah Shopkow followed her in this, with the latter stressing that ‘the impetus for its composition was the return of the properties of the monastery [by Henry] following the arrest of Robert of Bellême in 1113.’¹⁵⁹ This argument has been most recently articulated by George Garnett, who described Orderic as a ‘star-struck monk’ as a result of his description of the King’s visit.¹⁶⁰ While the textual link between Henry’s visit to Saint-Evroult and Robert of Bellême’s arrest was made by Orderic, with the one following the other at the end of book XI, as will be seen in the next section, one cannot escape the fact that the idea that the events of 1113 triggered the writing of the *Historia* is nowhere supported in the text itself. On no occasion in this episode does Orderic inform the reader of his feelings regarding the visit nor does he refer to himself in the first person. Moreover, the passage is relatively brief in length. Orderic may well have been ‘star-struck’ by Henry’s visit to Saint-Evroult, but one should not attempt to make a case for this from the narrative of the *Historia* itself. Readers of Orderic’s work should, instead, content themselves with an appreciation of the textual importance of this passage, for it constitutes a key part of the narrative crescendo to book XI.

Argentomum erogaret precepit, quod ille libenter et sine mora adimpleuit. Celebrata uero ut dictum est apud Uticum festiuitate; fines regionis suae rex perrexit uisere, et infirmiora terrae contra hostes et latrunculos munire. OV VI. 174-6.

¹⁵⁷ Green, *Henry I*, p.126.

¹⁵⁸ OV I. 32.

¹⁵⁹ Blacker, *Faces of Time*, p.154; Shopkow, *History and Community*, p.47.

¹⁶⁰ Garnett, ‘Robert Curthose’, p.236, see also p.230.

This passage textualises an important moment in the history of Saint-Evrout, not only in recounting Henry's visit to the monastery, but also in the great emphasis it places on the charter which the King issued to the monks.¹⁶¹ Orderic's focus was less on the document itself and more on the background to its issue. He provided some intriguing details regarding this. Of particular interest here is his comment that the charter was written to counter 'greedy heirs' (*cupidos haeredes*) who were taking back alms which, in previous generations, 'their relatives' (*parentum suorum*) had given to support the needs of the churches within Normandy.¹⁶² It is striking that Orderic mentioned no specifics here, but rather speaks in general terms throughout. No names are given either of the perpetrators of this damaging policy, nor of the churches affected. The reader is thus given surprisingly little information concerning this problem, other than that there was a general diminution of the church wealth and possessions at this time, caused by unnamed heirs of unnamed families. What then is the historian to make of this? Much light is shed on this matter when it is read alongside the event which proceeds directly from it in the narrative, the downfall of Robert of Bellême. While this will be discussed in greater depth in what follows, it is important now to highlight Orderic's comment that, after Robert's capture and imprisonment, the annual grant of his father, Roger of Montgomery, of thirty Manceaux shillings for the lights of the church of Saint-Evrout, was restored. It is significant that Robert of Bellême is there referred to as Roger's 'iniquitous heir' (*iniquus heres*).¹⁶³ This reveals that the complaint about 'greedy heirs' was, in fact, a veiled reference to the way in which one heir, Robert of Bellême, treated one church in particular, Saint-Evrout. The charter drawn up to protect Saint-Evrout and the downfall of Robert of Bellême are thus two things which are closely connected in Orderic's writing, something which further helps to explain the positioning of the two events alongside each other at the end of book XI. It is also significant that Orderic ended his account of Henry

¹⁶¹ This charter survives and is printed in Charters, no. VII, pp.196-9.

¹⁶² OV VI. 174.

¹⁶³ OV VI. 180.

I's visit to Saint-Evroult with the king departing from Saint-Evroult in order to strengthen the borders of the duchy against 'enemies and robbers' (*hostes et latrunculos*).¹⁶⁴ This should likely also be seen as another reference to Robert of Bellême, presaging his downfall in the passage of the *Historia* that was to follow immediately thereafter.

Having previously discussed affairs in France prior to his account of Henry's visit to Saint-Evroult in 1113,¹⁶⁵ Orderic now returned to this subject in order to set the stage for the final act of book XI, the downfall of Robert of Bellême in 1112 and his lifelong imprisonment thereafter. He transitioned from Henry's visit to Saint-Evroult to his account of the downfall of Robert of Bellême by beginning with the phrase 'At that time' (*His temporibus*),¹⁶⁶ implying that the one followed on sequentially from the other. Yet, as Chibnall noted, this was not, in fact, the case, 'Orderic has gone back in time without committing himself to any year.'¹⁶⁷ This manipulation of the chronology of events, with the narrative moving from 1113 to 1112 unannounced, was a necessary move on Orderic part. For it allowed him to furnish book XI with a dramatic ending which emphasised the providence of God in the judgement of Robert of Bellême. To understand this final section of the narrative, one must first appreciate the situation in Normandy in 1112. As Daniel Power has helpfully elucidated, the complexities of the Norman marches were exacerbated by the combination of four different factors: the unfinished conquest of Maine and the rivalry with the counts of Anjou on the southern frontier; strengthening Capetian power along the eastern borders; Henry's rivalry with his nephew William Clito, for whom there was substantial sympathy throughout Normandy; and, finally, these things were made all the more serious by an exceptionally

¹⁶⁴ OV VI. 176. For more on the Norman frontier in the reign of Henry I see Power, *Norman Frontier*, pp.366-87; Green, *Henry I*, pp.224-31.

¹⁶⁵ OV VI. 154-66.

¹⁶⁶ OV VI. 176.

¹⁶⁷ OV VI. 176, n.4.

large number of inheritance claims to the critically important border lordships of Evreux, Breteuil, Ivry and Laigle.¹⁶⁸ Having recounted various aspects of this complex situation to his readers,¹⁶⁹ Orderic reintroduced Robert of Bellême into the narrative:

At that time Robert of Bellême brought forth his great malice, which he had fostered by long reflection, and openly rose up against the king, whom he had hitherto blandished with potent deceits. Robert was a powerful and cunning man of excessive avarice and cruelty, an implacable oppressor of the church of God and of the poor, and if the truth was told, unequalled in his malice in the whole Christian era. Indeed, this man, having broken his bond of fealty, openly committed perjury, for he deserted Henry, his natural lord, who at that time was troubled on all sides by many enemies, and aided Fulk of Anjou and other public enemies of his lord by both his counsel and his troops. So he was summoned before the aforesaid king on 4 November at Bonneville and was rightly accused [of the following things]: why he had been working against his lord's interests, why he had not come to his court having been summoned three times, why he had not rendered account as the king's vicomte and officer for the royal revenues pertaining to the vicomtés of Argentan and Exmes and Falaise, and other charges; and by the just judgement of the royal court he was consigned to close imprisonment for great and innumerable crimes which he was unable to deny he had committed against God and king. And so with the tyrant captured, who was disturbing the land and preparing to add worse crimes to these many pillagings and burnings, the people of God rejoiced, having been rescued from this robber's yoke, and gave thanks to God their liberator and wished a long and healthy life to king Henry.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Power, *Norman Frontier*, pp.374-5.

¹⁶⁹ OV VI. 176-8.

¹⁷⁰ Tunc Rodbertus Belesmensis ingentem maliciam quam diutina curiositate fouerat extulit, et contra regem cui hactenus uenenosis simulationibus blandiebatur ceruicem palam erexit. Erat idem potens et uersutus nimiaeque auariciae et crudelitatis, aecclesiae Dei pauperumque oppressor impacabilis, et si dici fas est temporibus Christianis in omni malicia incomparabilis. Hic siquidem rupto fidelitatis uinculo periurium palam incurrit, dum naturalem dominum suam Henricum qui tunc a multis undique infestabatur dereliquit, et Fulconem Andegauensem aliosque domini sui publicos hostes consilio et uiribus adiuuit. Unde a prefato rege pridie nonas Nouembris apud Bonamuillam cur inique in dominum suum operatus fuerit, cur ad curiam eius ter accersitus non uenerit; cur de regiis redditibus ad uicecomitatum Argentomi et Oximorum Falesiaeque pertinentibus ut regis uicecomes et officialis rationem non reddiderit, et de aliis reatibus rationabiliter impetitus est; iustoque iudicio regalis curiae pro immensis innumerisque facinoribus quae negare nequiuit tam in Deum quam in regem commissis artissimis uinculis traditus est. Capto itaque tyranno qui terram turbabat, et multiplicibus rapinis ac incendiis adhuc addere peiora parabat; erepta de iugo predonis plebs Dei gaudebat, Deoque liberatori suo gratias agebat, et Henrico regi longam bonamque uitam optabat. OV VI. 178.

Orderic then continued by noting how, with Robert of Bellême captured, Henry proceeded to seize his fortress at Alençon.¹⁷¹ The focus of his narrative was once again fixed firmly elsewhere, on the positive implications of the King's actions for Saint-Evrout:

Moreover, he gladdened the churches of God at Ouche and Sées and Troarn which for a long time had been groaning under the grave oppression of a ferocious master, by calm alleviation, and resealed with their churches and tithes and all other possessions which had been unjustly lost. Indeed, he restored to Saint-Evrout the thirty Manceaux shillings from the revenues of Alençon for the lights of the church, which Earl Roger [of Montgomery] had granted to his son Robert [of Bellême] to be given each year in the period of Lent, and all the other things which the same Earl had confirmed in his charter, but his iniquitous heir had wickedly taken by force.¹⁷²

The point being made by Orderic at the end of book XI is clear. The primary beneficiary of the downfall and imprisonment of Robert of Bellême was the monastery of Saint-Evrout, as well as, to a lesser extent, the neighbouring monasteries in the surrounding region. Henry's decisive action in this regard was worthy of remembrance because by bringing Robert to justice 'he gladdened' (*exhilaravit*) the monks of Orderic's monastery, who are consistently presented throughout the *Historia* as being at enmity with successive generations of the Bellême family.

Only with a firm appreciation of this in place can the significance of the dramatic final scene of book XI be fully understood: the burning down of the fortress of Bellême. Having been

¹⁷¹ OV VI. 178.

¹⁷² Aecclesias uero Dei Uticensem uidelicet ac Sagiensem et Troarnensem quae sub graui oppressione ferocis eri diu gemuerant serena releuatione exhilaravit, et aecclesiis decimisque cum aliis possessionibus quas iniuste amiserant resaisiuit. Sancto enim Ebrulfo reddidit xxx solidos Cenomannensium de redditibus Alencionis ad luminaria aecclesiae, quos Rogerius comes concedente Rodberto filio suo singulis annis dederat in capite quadragesimae, et caetera omnia quae idem comes in carta firmauerat, sed iniquus heres nequiter abstulerat. OV VI. 180.

granted the fortress by Louis VI of France when the two kings met at Gisors in March 1113,¹⁷³ Henry thus proceeded to besiege Bellême on the 1 May:

Theobald, count of Blois, and Fulk of Anjou, and also Rotrou of Mortagne and other illustrious magnates came to the help of the Normans, and surrounded the fortress with their troops, and on the third day entered it as conquerors. It was the Invention of the Holy Cross, and the king had ordered the whole army to rest from attacking the fortress and the exercise of battle. But the soldiers of counts Theobald and Rotrou, who had not heard the king's edict, took up arms, and some of the knights of the garrison came out from the fortress to do battle in single combat. As the besiegers boldly charged against them and they, wheeling around their horses, fled swiftly toward the east gate, they were struck down and killed at the entrance to the gate by their pursuers; and the doors, prevented from closing by the multitude of enemy lances, were held back and left inwardly open. Immediately the royal army entered with loud shouts and boldly took a great part of the fortified town. Then, because those who were defending the citadel were continuing to resist, it was set on fire, and the noble stronghold, which Robert [of Bellême] had long ago fortified and enriched greatly, was utterly burnt to the ground. And so the victorious Henry returned to England having established peace with all his neighbours, and for five years he governed the kingdom beyond the sea and the duchy on this side in great tranquillity, and his friends devoutly offered faithful praise to the lord God of hosts who orders all things mightily and pleasantly. Amen.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ OV VI. 180. For more on the meetings between English and French kings in the twelfth century, on which much has been written, see Christopher Holdsworth, 'Peace-making in the Twelfth Century', *ANS* 19 (1997), 1-17; J. E. M. Benham, 'Anglo-French Peace Conferences in the Twelfth Century', *ANS* 27 (2004), 52-67; John Gillingham, 'The Meetings of the Kings of France and England, 1066-1204', in David Crouch and Kathleen Thompson (eds), *Normandy and its Neighbours, 900-1250. Essays for David Bates* (Turnhout, 2011), 17-42.

¹⁷⁴ Tedbaldus uero comes Blesensis, et Fulco Andegauensis, atque Rotro Moritoniensis, allique preclari optimates Normannis suppetias uenerunt, et cum suis agminibus oppidum circumdederunt, ac tertia die uictores ingressi sunt. Inuentio quippe sanctae Crucis erat, et rex omnem exercitum ab assultu oppidi et exercitio belli quiescere iusserat. Sed milites comitum Tedbaldi et Rotronis qui regis edictum non audierunt arma sumpserunt, oppidani quoque milites singulari certamine dimicaturi de castro egressi sunt. Porro dum obsidentes in illos fortiter irruerent, et ipsi regiratis equis ad portam orientalem uelociter fugerent, in ipso introitu portae ab insequentibus percussi et deiecti sunt; et ualuae hostilium multitudine lancearum ne clauderentur sustentatae et penitus reseratae sunt. Protinus regalis exercitus nimia cum uociferatione ingressus est; et magnam partem munitionis uiriliter nactus est; Deinde persistentibus his qui arcem seruabant ignis iniectus est; et nobile oppidum quod Rodbertus iam dudum summopere munierat et ditauerat funditus concrematum est. Victor itaque Henricus firmata pace cum omnibus uicinis suis in Angliam remeauit, et quinque annis in magna tranquillitate regnum ultra mare et ducatum citra gubernauit, amicis fideliter deuote laudantibus Dominum Deum sabaoth qui omnia fortiter suauiterque disponit. Amen. OV VI. 182.

This paragraph marks the end of book XI of the *Historia*. Its position there strongly suggests that its inclusion was a deliberate move on Orderic's part, placed there in order to provide a satisfying conclusion to an argument which he had been developing throughout the entire narrative of that book. It was one which the monks of Saint-Evrout would surely have appreciated given the prominence of the Bellême in their history and the significance of Henry I's charter to Saint-Evrout, about which they had just been reminded.

While the imprisonment of Robert of Bellême marked the end to any real threat he might have posed to Saint-Evrout in the 1110s, Orderic underlined the total nature of his downfall with his account of the burning down of the stronghold of Bellême, which, as he emphasised in the text was 'utterly burnt to the ground' (*funditus concrematum est*). In this way, the burning of Bellême and the imprisonment of its lord mirror each other in their finality. For with the enemy of Saint-Evrout now decisively defeated, Henry, too, was victorious, and peace in his realm was guaranteed. According to Orderic, the king's 'friends' (*amicis*) praised God in response to this providential turn of events. In the absence of Robert of Bellême, the monastery was once more free to flourish in the new-found peace and security which Henry I had brought to the duchy, just as it had previously done after the murder of his mother, Mabel of Bellême, in the late 1070s.¹⁷⁵ Orderic was thus able to bring book XI to an end just as he had begun it, in an attitude of worship and praise to the One whose sovereign hand seemed to him to have 'mightily and pleasantly ordered all things' (*omnia fortiter suaviterque disponit*) to the benefit of Saint-Evrout. Book XI of the *Historia* thus constitutes one of the most sustained articulations of the primary thrust of Orderic's work, with the narrative so often returning to Saint-Evrout and the associated families and monastic foundations in the region surrounding it.

¹⁷⁵ For more on the murder of Mabel of Bellême see above, pp.173-82.

The White Ship Disaster

Having already highlighted the presence of strong moral lessons in Orderic's account of the death of William Rufus in book X and in the prologue to book XI,¹⁷⁶ this study will now examine his account of the *White Ship* disaster, located mid-way through book XII, discussing similar emphases contained within the narrative. The sinking of the *White Ship* in 1120 was an event which had great ramifications for Henry I, in particular his plans for the Anglo-Norman succession, for in the tragedy, Henry I's son and heir, William Adelin, drowned along with his illegitimate son, Richard of Lincoln, and many others.¹⁷⁷ Orderic's account of the sinking of the ship contains strong moral overtones throughout.¹⁷⁸ Henry and his company of courtiers and noblemen crossed the English Channel at Barfleur on 25 November 1120. Henry had been offered the services of the *White Ship* but, having already chosen a vessel to make the journey for himself, it was instead used to transport Henry's sons, William and Richard, with, in all, about three hundred individuals on the ship at the time of its sinking. According to Orderic, the sailors asked William Adelin for wine to drink and so quickly became drunk, resulting in rash behaviour and irreverence towards God:

For there were fifty experienced rowers there, and headstrong marine guards who had already found their seats in the ship were rowdy, and forgetful of themselves because of drunkenness, were scarcely acknowledging anybody respectfully. Alas, how many of them had minds empty of pious devotion towards God, who tempers the unruliness of the sea and the raging of the wind. They drove away the priests, who came there to bless them, with other ministers who were

¹⁷⁶ See above, pp.

¹⁷⁷ For more on the significance of the White Ship disaster see Green, *Henry I*, pp.164-89.

¹⁷⁸ For the entire account see OV VI. 294-306.

carrying holy water, with disgraceful and insulting jeering, but a little after they received punishment for their derision.¹⁷⁹

Though different in context from Orderic's account of the death of William Rufus, the moral thrust of this passage shares an important similarity with it. The drunken irreverence of the sailors and guards on board the *White Ship* towards the priests meant that they not only derided the Church but also spurned the blessing which they offered. In Orderic's eyes, the resultant sinking of the ship, with the loss of almost all on board, stemmed from their profound lack of devotion towards the God who controlled the wind and the waves and so could ensure their safety. Their ignorance of Him both in general, and at this critical juncture when the priests came to bless their cross-Channel journey, directly sealed their fate. Orderic's description of Thomas, the *White Ship*'s captain, is thus a damning indictment not only of him, but of all on board the vessel: 'he was trusting in his own strength and that of his companions' (*in uirtute sua satellitumque suorum confidebat*).¹⁸⁰

According to Orderic, only two men survived the sinking of the ship, a butcher from Rouen named Berold, and Geoffrey, the son of Gilbert of Laigle. In briefly focussing his narrative on the survival of Berold it may be that, here too, Orderic sought to make a didactic point to his readers. For he states that Berold 'who was poorer than all...he alone from the great company saw that day' (*qui pauperior erat omnibus...de tanto solus consortio diem uidit*).¹⁸¹ The poverty of Berold contrasts sharply with the wealth and great size of the company of men aboard the *White Ship*. If, indeed, this is a deliberate strategy on Orderic's part, it acts as

¹⁷⁹ Periti enim remiges quinquaginta ibi erant, et feroces epibatae qui iam in navi sedes nacti turgebant, et suimet prae ebrietate immemores uix aliquem reuerenter agnoscebant. Heu quamplures illorum mentes pia deuotione erga Deum habebant uacuas; qui maris immodicas mderatur et aeris iras. Unde sacerdotes qui ad benedicendos illos illum accesserant aliosque ministros qui aquam benedictam deferebant cum dedecore et cachinnis subsannantes abigerunt, sed paulo post derisionis suae ultionem receperunt. OV VI. 296.

¹⁸⁰ OV VI. 296-98.

¹⁸¹ OV VI. 300.

a further reminder of the temporary nature of riches and the folly of putting one's trust in wealth, for the only person who survived the disaster was the poorest of all.

The final aspect of Orderic's account of the *White Ship* disaster to be examined here is an excerpt from his verse reflection upon the tragedy, which once again stresses the folly of riches and trusting in one's own strength:

O grief immeasurable! Neither nobility nor wealth
Brings back to life, those whom the wave of the sea has drowned.
Fine purple linen rots in the abyss;
He whom the King begot, has become food for the fish;
So fortune plays with those trusting in their own strength.
Now it gives, now it takes; now it lifts up, then it crushes.
What is the use of a large number of nobles, or wealth, or glory in things,
Or your form, there William?
Royal beauty has faded and the sea has snatched it;
That which you had been and that which you were going to be.
Damnation threatens those in the gloomy waters,
Unless heavenly pity willingly spares them.
With their bodies overwhelmed, if their souls received the gift of salvation,
They would be glad; sadness would be distant.
Certain salvation of the soul gives true joy
To those who remember their own dear ones;
But it is a great sorrow that the human mind does not know,
Whether rest comes to those who are engulfed by the sea.¹⁸²

¹⁸² O dolor immensus; nec nobilitas, neque census
Ad uitam reuocat, quos maris unda necat.
Purpura cum bisso liquida putrescit abisso;
Rex quoque quem genuit, piscibus esca fuit;
Sic sibi fidentes ludit fortuna potentes.

The *White Ship* disaster shocked both Orderic and his contemporaries alike. ‘All lament’ (*omnes generaliter plangunt*) the death of William Adelin, he observed, noticeably writing in the present tense.¹⁸³ There was much reflection on the tragedy in the chronicles of the period. For his part, Orderic, as is so often the case in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, urged his readers to shun worldly glory and wealth and, instead, look to God for the lasting joys which flowed only from ‘certain salvation’ (*certa salus*).

The Death of Henry I and the Narrative of Book XIII

While the reign of Henry I is presented in the pages of the *Historia* as bringing great peace to Normandy, his sudden death in 1135 appears to have come as a shock to the chroniclers of the period. Thus, in book X of the *Historia Anglorum*, Henry of Huntingdon observed, ‘in the most dreadful time that followed, which afterwards was kindled by the mad treacheries of the Normans, whatever Henry had done...seemed, in comparison with worse, to be most excellent.’ (*Successu uero temporis atrocissimi quo postea per Normannorum rabiosas prodiciones exarsit, quicquid Henricus fecerat...comparatione deteriorum uisum est peroptimum.*)¹⁸⁴ Similar sentiments were also expressed by the anonymous author of the

Nunc dat, nunc demit; nunc leuat, inde premit.
 Quid numerus procerum, quid opes, quid gloria rerum,
 Quid Guillelme tibi forma ualebat ibi?
 Marcuit ille decor regalis et abstulit aequor;
 Quod factus fueras quodque futurus eras.
 Inter aquas istis instat damnatio tristis,
 Ni pietas gratis celica parcat eis.
 Corporibus mersis animae si dona salutis
 Nactae gauderent ; mesta procul fierent.
 Certa salus animae uerum dat tripudiare
 His bene qui karos commemorant proprios.
 Hinc dolor est ingens humana quod inscia fit mens,
 An requies sit eis quod quatit uda Thetis. OV VI. 302-4.

¹⁸³ OV VI. 300.

¹⁸⁴ Henry of Huntingdon, x.1, p.700. See also Henry of Huntingdon, x.5, p.710; for more on this subject see Catherine A. M. Clarke, ‘Writing Civil War in Henry of Huntingdon’s *Historia Anglorum*’, *ANS* 31 (2009), 31-48.

Gesta Stephani Regis et Ducis Normannorum.¹⁸⁵ Orderic was no exception. Henry's death cast a long shadow over his account of events in Stephen's reign in book XIII of the *Historia*. Here the tone of the narrative plummets rapidly. A number of the passages included in book XIII present the years from 1135 until 1141, when Orderic stopped writing, as the darkest chapter in the history of Saint-Evroult. Violence ravaged the town of Saint-Evroult, and the monastery itself was almost burnt to the ground by some of its benefactors. This final section of this chapter will thus explore the effect of Henry's death on the narrative of book XIII of the *Historia*, the last book in the work. Much of this final book was written in 1136 and 1137 and events thereafter were then added year by year. When Orderic wrote the epilogue to the entire work in 1141, Stephen, whom he regarded as the rightful ruler of the Anglo-Norman realm, was languishing in prison having been captured at Lincoln.¹⁸⁶ Orderic died the following year, at a time when the "nineteen long winters" of Stephen's reign were far from over. There was to be no resolution for him to the problems which the duchy endured in the years following the Henry's unexpected death. The tone of this book therefore differs radically to the books that preceded it, and the *Historia* ends on a far less optimistic note than it began. While Orderic has been noted as 'the key source' for events in Normandy during Stephen's rule,¹⁸⁷ the fact that his account of Stephen's reign only covered the years 1135-41 has meant that book XIII been little studied.¹⁸⁸ Yet there is much that is of interest here. Though modest in his praise of Orderic's account of the period, Haskins nevertheless recognised something of its value, commenting that it was 'vivid enough, both in its general summary and its concrete examples, and its venerable author saw no hope of better days

¹⁸⁵ *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. K.R. Potter and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1976), i.pp.2-4. For more on the *Gesta Stephani* see King, 'The *Gesta Stephani*'; Davis, 'Authorship of the *Gesta Stephani*'.

¹⁸⁶ OV VI. xvi-xix.

¹⁸⁷ Edmund King, 'Introduction', in Edmund King (ed.) *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (Oxford, 1994), 1-36 at p.2.

¹⁸⁸ King, 'Normandy', p.3. See also Jim Bradbury, 'The Early Years of the Reign of Stephen, 1135-9', in Daniel Williams (ed.) *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1990), 17-30 at p.17; Marjorie Chibnall, 'Normandy', in Edmund King (ed.) *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (Oxford, 1994), 93-115 at pp.93-4.

when he brought his work to its noble close in 1141.’¹⁸⁹ While little studied, Orderic’s account of the years 1135 to 1141 is valuable not only for our understanding of the situation in Normandy during this period, but, perhaps more importantly, for examining the implications of Henry’s death for the community of Saint-Evroult as described in the narrative of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. As in book XI, Orderic’s monastic interests come to the fore, on a number of occasions, with the shock of the King’s death and the violence of Stephen’s subsequent reign regularly finding expression in the regions surrounding Saint-Evroult.

The significance of Henry’s death is anticipated in the narrative from Orderic’s account of the natural disasters that befell Normandy in 1134 onwards. The year began with a heavy snowfall which resulted in deep snow-drifts that hindered people from leaving their homes and rendered many churches inaccessible. Six days later the winds changed and the snow melted suddenly, causing the rivers to flood their banks.¹⁹⁰ Later that year, in June, there was an unbearable heat-wave which dried up streams and pools and led to a local tragedy near Saint-Evroult: ‘In our vicinity, where news comes readily to us, thirty-seven men were drowned in pools and river waters’, Orderic wrote.¹⁹¹ These deaths clearly troubled him, for he admitted that he struggled to understand the way in which this incident fitted specifically into God’s providential rule over all things.¹⁹² Yet this comment should not be read as part of a general unwillingness on Orderic’s part to provide an interpretation of this occurrence, as

¹⁸⁹ Charles Homer Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, MA, 1918), p.128.

¹⁹⁰ OV VI. 434-6.

¹⁹¹ In nostro quippe uicino unde rumores ad nos facile peruolarunt, xxxvii in stagnis seu fluminibus homines limphis intercepti sunt. OV VI. 436.

¹⁹² OV VI. 436.

Watkins has suggested.¹⁹³ Rather, it formed an important part of the larger narrative framework of book XIII, presaging the death of Henry I.

After discussing the drownings, Orderic continued on to relate a strange series of local tragedies which were caused by a terrible thunderstorm in August of that year, with only women struck by the resultant lightning. He provided two vivid examples of this, the first in the village of Planches, on the border between the bishoprics of Lisieux and Sées, and the second, in the village of Guêprei. In order to add credibility to this rather unusual phenomenon, Orderic informed his readers that he was staying at nearby Le Merlerault at the time and viewed the corpse of the first victim for himself in order to be certain of the facts before recording them. Regarding the second instance, at Guêprei, Orderic wrote that he had been informed by reliable witnesses, whose names were too numerous to record individually.¹⁹⁴ As Chibnall noted, Saint-Evroult held the churches at both Le Merlerault and Guêprei, both of which were located only a few miles south-west of the monastery.¹⁹⁵ In this further instance, then, an event of national importance, the death of the king, was, in the pages of the *Historia*, linked closely to events of significance to Saint-Evroult. For while Orderic also recorded fires and other natural disasters further afield in France and in Flanders,¹⁹⁶ it was these local tragedies which most strongly informed his narrative. Having described the effects of this portentous weather of 1134 on the world in which he lived, Orderic then began to move the narrative ever closer to the death of Henry I by stressing that a number of famous princes died during this period, including Robert Curthose and Alfonso I of Aragon.¹⁹⁷ He then turned to events of the year 1135 and continued to emphasise the twin

¹⁹³ Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, pp.14-15.

¹⁹⁴ OV VI. 436-8.

¹⁹⁵ OV VI. 438, ns.1 and 2.

¹⁹⁶ OV VI. 438-40.

¹⁹⁷ OV VI. 440.

themes of ominous weather phenomena and the death of princes in his narrative. Thus on 28 October 1135, a violent wind sprang up, lasting for a day, which tore down many trees and damaged the roofs of numerous buildings. According to Orderic, wise men interpreted it as a sign that God was about to punish men for their sins, and lay low princes and their peoples like the trees blown over by the wind. This comment was immediately followed in the narrative by the near-death and subsequent surprise recovery of King Louis of France, directly preceding the account of Henry's death.¹⁹⁸

After suddenly being taken ill at Lyons-la-Forêt, Henry died on the night of 1 December 1135. His body was then carried to Rouen and from there to Caen, before being taken across the Channel and buried at his foundation at Reading in January 1136.¹⁹⁹ Only once he had recounted these details did Orderic begin to articulate the significance of this event for the duchy:

Behold, having truly described the manner in which the glorious father of the country died, I will now briefly set out, in dactylic verses, the troubles of stubborn Normandy, which the pitiable mother country suffered wretchedly from her viperous offspring. For as soon as Normandy heard that its firm prince had died in the first week of the Advent of our Lord, on the same day, its people rushed out greedily like ravenous wolves to plunder and wickedly ravage.²⁰⁰

As indicated, Orderic followed this passage with forty-four lines of verse in which he lamented Henry's passing and the widespread violence which it triggered. He ended these lines on a more hopeful note, praying that God would provide the Norman Church with as

¹⁹⁸ OV VI. 446-8.

¹⁹⁹ OV VI. 448-50; for more on the death of Henry I see Hollister, *Henry I*, pp.467-77; Green, *Henry I*, pp.219-23.

²⁰⁰ Ecce ueraciter descripto qualiter obierit gloriosus pater patriae, nunc dactylicis uersibus breuiter pangam contumacis erumnas Normanniae, quas misera mater miserabiliter passa est a uiperea sobole. Quae nimirum mox ut rigidi principis cognouit occasum in Aduentus Domini prima ebdomade, in ipsa die ut rapaces lupi ad praedas et nefandas depopulationes cucurrit audissime. OV VI. 450.

able a patron as he had been, one who would protect the monks of the land and punish the wicked.²⁰¹ An excerpt from this passage is worth quoting here, for the lines relate closely to the major themes of book XIII:

Wicked robbers rejoice in the death of the patrician,
Greedy thieves run to and fro, ready for evil,
And even now they think that no master can henceforth restrain them by law,
On the contrary, I say, in this matter they are deceived.
The eternal law of the Almighty Ruler is everlasting,
And he will suddenly give the Church a good patron.
With the prince having been taken from them, the order of monks beseeches
Wisdom, with tears, to turn for the pardon of sins.
Most High God, restrain these frenzied servants of destruction
So that they are not able to accomplish that which they wish.
Behold, frenzy rages, it calls all men and drags them toward sin,
Restrain them so that they do not have the strength to complete the action they choose.
O Christ, give us a leader who will love and preserve
Peace and justice, and lead your people back to you.
Strike the backs of the puffed up with the rod of justice
That your people are able to serve you in safety. Forever Amen.²⁰²

²⁰¹ OV VI. 450-52. This passage further undermines Cooper's reading of Orderic, for which see Cooper, "The feet of those that bark shall be cut off", pp.53-6.

²⁰² Pro nece patricii fures letantur iniqui,
Predones auidi discurrunt ad mala prompti,
Iamque putant quod nullus eos erus amodo iure
Arceat, e contra refero falluntur in hac re.
Aeternum regis ius permanet omnipotentis,
Aecclesiaeque bonum dabit ipse repente patronum.
Principe sublato monachorum supplicat ordo
Fletibus ad ueniam scelerum flectendo sophyam.
Summe Deus cohibe ne possint seua patrare
Ceui cupiunt rabidi famulantes perniciei.
Ecce furit rabies, uocat et trahit ad scelus omnes,
Comprime ne ualeant actu complere quod optant.
Christe ducem prebe qui pacem iusticiamque
Diligat ac teneat, populumque tuum tibi ducat.
Iusticiae uirga turgentum percute dorsa
Vt secuta tibi tua plebs possit famulari. Semper amen. OV VI. 452.

These verses make clear that, in Orderic's mind, and in the pages of the *Historia*, Henry's sudden death in 1135 left a void which no one, not even Stephen, could fill. Having lost its patron, Saint-Evrault was once more left exposed to wolves. The subsequent difficulties experienced by the monks of Ouche were the direct result of the absence of a strong leader who would defend them. This personal prayer thus reveals much about the way in which Orderic sought to make sense of the difficult years that followed Henry's death, and to codify them for the members of his own monastic community, many of whom would, in all likelihood, have lived through them. In two recent articles, Catherine Clarke has argued that a number of twelfth-century texts written either during or shortly after the violence of Stephen's reign, including Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* and the Peterborough Chronicle 'inscribe responses to traumatic experience', both individual or collective.²⁰³ Orderic's response, contained in the latter part of book XIII of the *Historia* will be examined in what follows. For the late 1130s were extremely difficult years in Saint-Evrault's history when the violence reached the very cloister of the monastery.

The Burning of the Town of Saint-Evrault

A recurring theme of this part of book XIII is the fact that although Stephen had succeeded Henry as King of England and duke of Normandy, the duchy, in Orderic's eyes, remained leaderless. Thus he wrote that violence broke out in December 1135, immediately after Henry's death, for 'with the king [Stephen] nonetheless occupied in England, Normandy was without a ruler.' (*rege uero nichilominus in Anglia occupato rectore Normannia caruit.*)²⁰⁴ Again, in describing the escalation of this violence amongst the Norman magnates in 1136, Orderic wrote that it occurred while Stephen 'delayed' (*remoraretur*) crossing over to

²⁰³ Catherine A. M. Clarke, 'Signs and Wonders: Writing Trauma in Twelfth-Century England', *RMS* 35 (2009), 55-77 at p.56; see also *eadem*, 'Writing Civil War'.

²⁰⁴ OV VI. 454.

Normandy,²⁰⁵ for he was ‘occupied across the sea by the many cares of his kingdom’ (*qui trans pontum multimodis regni curis occupatus erat*).²⁰⁶ While Orderic’s portrayal of Stephen thus stands in sharp contrast to his presentation of Henry’s immediate action in crossing over to Normandy in 1105 to sort out the problems there,²⁰⁷ it is likely that this should be regarded as being less of a personal indictment of Stephen and more a reflection of the scale of the problems which flared up in Henry’s absence. Stephen was occupied by the same problems which Henry had dealt with so capably, yet he was less successful in tackling them.²⁰⁸ Orderic’s portrayal of him thus further supports the earlier argument of book XI, emphasising Henry’s unparalleled skills as a ruler.

In saying these things, Orderic was, as is so often the case throughout the *Historia*, building up to an episode in the history of Saint-Evroult, this time the burning of the town of Saint-Evroult and the spread of the flames as far as the church itself. In a recent examination of the monasteries of Northern England during the reign of King Stephen, Janet Burton has stressed that this was a period when, on occasion, these foundations ‘did not rise above prevailing violence but became part of it’.²⁰⁹ The violence at Saint-Evroult provides a striking further example of this. For Orderic, the violence of Stephen’s reign was no distant reality, but something which was very real both for him and the other monks at Saint-Evroult and probably difficult to recount in the pages of the *Historia*. This would certainly explain why

²⁰⁵ OV VI. 456.

²⁰⁶ OV VI. 458.

²⁰⁷ See above, p.284.

²⁰⁸ For some brief comments regarding Orderic’s portrayal of Stephen see Bradbury, ‘Early Years’, p.18; Stringer, *Reign of Stephen*, p.6; King, ‘Introduction’, p.3; *idem*, *King Stephen*, p.73.

²⁰⁹ Janet Burton, ‘Citadels of God: Monasteries, Violence, and the Struggle for Power in Northern England, 1135-1154’, *ANS* 31 (2009), 17-30 at p.18; see more generally, Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, pp.78-91. For further responses to the violence of Stephen’s reign see Paul Dalton, ‘Civil War and Ecclesiastical Peace in the Reign of King Stephen’, in Diana Dunn (ed.) *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain* (Liverpool, 2000), 53-75; *idem*, ‘Ecclesiastical Responses to War in King Stephen’s Reign: The Communities of Selby Abbey, Pontefract Priory and York Cathedral’, in Paul Dalton, Charles Insley and Louise J. Wilkinson (eds) *Cathedrals, Communities and Conflict in the Anglo-Norman World* (Woodbridge, 2011), 131-149.

his account of the burning was preceded by quite a large amount of material that provided an explanatory framework for an audience who would have been deeply traumatised by the event itself. Situating the episode in the direct aftermath of Henry's death in the narrative flow of book XIII provided a causal explanation for the burning. It allowed Orderic to stress the violent nature of the Normans when lacking a strong ruler and also to highlight the resultant vulnerability of the Church, specifically his church, Saint-Evroult. Orderic added a heightened sense of drama to the narrative as he transitioned from discussing the general disorder in Normandy in 1136 to the violence that engulfed the pays d'Ouche in May 1136, signalling this move in the following paragraph:

From the Birth of Our Lord [Christmas 1135] up to the octave of Pentecost, in the absence of the king, who was occupied across the sea with the many cares of the kingdom, Count Theobald accepted a truce from the count of the Angevins; and in the meantime the Norman army was eagerly awaiting the king's arrival. However, having reached the end of the truce, all the people were bewildered, and, deprived of a ruler who would lead them, did not know what to do. For malevolent thieves were longing to see the day in which they would be able to freely steal and plunder the things of others. However, the unarmed and the kind and the simple people were greatly fearing that which the rapacious sons of Belial, without the fear of God, were wishing to do.²¹⁰

This, then, was the manner in which Orderic prefaced his account of the burning of the town of Saint-Evroult. Introducing it in this way meant that it was not only the unarmed people of Normandy who were left fearing what was to come, but also Orderic's readers, the similarly defenceless monks of Saint-Evroult.

²¹⁰ A Natale Domini usque ad octabas Pentecosten pro absentia regis qui trans pontum multimodis regni curis occupatus erat, Tedbaldus comes a comite Andegauorum treuias acceperat, et interim regis aduentum Normannica phalanx auide adtendebat. Finito autem termino treuiarum omnis plebs attonita erat, et rectore uiduata quid ageret ignorabat. Nam maliuoli fures desiderabant illum diem uidere, quo res alienas libere possent furari seu rapere. Inermes uero et benigni ac simplices admodum metuebant, quod rapaces filii Belial absque Dei timore optabant. OV VI. 458.

This violent episode in Saint-Evrault's history will now be quoted here in full here:

Robert Bouet, a certain famous archer associated with Richer of Laigle, who more than his archery skills was more detestable for the greatness of his acts of wickedness, was receiving to himself many scoundrels and fierce servants for the slaughtering of men and for the daily completion of acts of villainy. This man blindly violated the week of Pentecost, which the Holy Spirit glorified by giving sevenfold grace to the disciples of Christ, with abominable acts, and ignorant of the future, he was eager to do worse things. Now just as good men were beneficially set alight by the flame of the Spirit of the Paraclete to love of God and of neighbour, so bad men by a demonic spirit hurried to brutal acts and to all evils.

Orderic now went on to relate the specific details of their crimes:

Consequently, fifteen days before the calends of June, the robbers ran like wolves towards their prey, and attacked not the country of warlike knights, but tried to carry off, without warning, the herds peacefully grazing in the fields of the cowled monks. Yet just as they were swift to shed blood, so by the just judgement of God they suddenly found grief and misfortune in their ways. Thirty brigands plundered the property of the simple people in the Ouche, but with the rising clamour of the shepherds, the townsmen rushed there, seized twelve of them and hung seven of them from a single oak tree. There Robert Bouet was strung up, with six of his accomplices, on the impulse of the incensed people, and he immediately received such a reward for his crimes. Behold, those who in their temerity were not afraid to defile the seven sacred days of Pentecost, and were so eager to oppress their unarmed neighbours by plunder and murder, perished when the same number were hanged at the same time following the second day of the feast. The men of Laigle heard of this on that same day, amassed together for vengeance for their comrades with great fury, and suddenly ran together to the Ouche region, and without warning, set fire to the town of Saint-Evrault, and there, in a moment of time, eighty-four houses were turned to ashes.

The narrative now contrasted the actions of the monks with the attackers:

The weeping monks were ringing their bells, singing psalms and litanies in the church, because they were fearing the destruction of their monastery was to come next. Others went to meet the knights, begging with tears that they be excused from the punishment of the culprits, and

beseeking them with humble words, were offering lawful rectitude and satisfaction for the offence. The attackers, however, were raging like madmen; blinded by fury they were shouting at the monks, and showing no concern for sound words of reason; rather, certain of them were wanting to wound the religious servants of God, having first thrown them from their horses. In the end, without reverence for God, they made an attack on the village, and violently entered and plundered its spoils, and thoroughly burnt down the dwellings inside the gates, as has been said.

Next, Orderic provided some damning reflections on the perpetrators, and also some important comments on the effects of the attack on the monastery of Saint-Evroult and the wider community of townspeople:

Warfare of this kind, which took up arms against innocent monks and their men, and which avenged the most wicked oppressors who were seeking to perpetrate all kinds of evils, rightly brought disgrace on the avengers of the brigands. Richer, godson of the monks, exhibited such service to his godfathers, and so he begged for the soul of Bouet, the famous thief and murderer, and of the other impostors, and this was the kind of offering he offered to the church in which he had been baptised. Baldric, who was the priest of Laigle, led his parishioners into abhorrent crime; he was the first to set the lodgings of another priest on fire, and so, by his lead, dragged them headlong into the pit with him. The excessive flames came up to the church, but by the compassion of God, a strong opposing wind arose, and drove the masses of flames another way, to the rejoicing of the many people watching. And so the church and the monastic buildings, with the books and church essentials, were saved, and to these the desolate locals fled with their families, and waited for better times to come in the providence of God.

Finally, Orderic brought the passage to a close by stressing that the humiliation of the guilty followed shortly thereafter:

The men of Laigle, however, became rich and inflated from the spoils of Ouche, but they did not exult for long. For in the same month they attacked Sées and Gacé, and fought against Roger of Tosny many times, but after the sack of the village of Saint-Evroult they were not attended by a favourable outcome; instead, by the judgement of God, they often met with a diminishing of their men through ruin or capture. Deservedly, they who fought against the simple and those without,

and had not spared them for fear of the divine, afterwards found the most strong and warlike champions when they were not seeking them, about which, with disgrace and derision, they frequently heard from the knights they met: ‘Come here, knights. For we are not cowled or tonsured monks, but knights in arms challenging you to battle. We are your companions [in arms], you should see what we can do.’ They often blushed with shame at taunts of this kind, and many of them died having endured hard blows, so that some were roused to repentance by the downfall of others.²¹¹

²¹¹ Rodbertus cognomento Boetus quidam famosus sagittarius Richerio Aquilensi adhaerebat, et multos nebulones indomitosque garciones ad strages hominum et latrocinia cotidie peragenda sibi asciscebat, qui quanto sagittandi peritia maior, tanto in nequitia erat detestabilior. Hic septimanam Pentecostes quam septiformi gratia discipulis Christi data Sanctus illustravit Spiritus, temere uiolauit nefariis actibus, et futuri nescius inhiabat peioribus. Nam sicut boni flamma Spiritus Paracliti ad amorem Dei et proximi salubriter accendebantur, sic mali demonico spiritu debachantes ad omne nefas rapiebantur. Igitur xv kalendas Iunii predones ut lupi ad predam cucurrerunt, et non bellicosorum rura militum inuaserunt, sed armenta per agros cucullatorum quiete pascentia protinus abducere conati sunt. Verum sicut ipsi ueloces ad effundendum sanguinem fuerunt, sic iusto Dei iudicio contritionem et infelicitatem in uis suis repente inuenerunt. Apud Vticum xxx latrunculi praedam simplicis populi diripuerunt, sed orto clamore pastorum burgenses irruperunt, et xii ceperunt, ex quibus vii ad unam quercum suspenderunt. Ibi Rodbertus Boatus cum vi complicitibus suis impetu feruentis populi sullimatus est; talique triumpho pro facinoribus suis ilico potitus est. Ecce qui vii sacros dies Pentecostes contaminare non reueriti sunt; seuaque temeritate rapinis et homicidiis inermes proximos conculcare nimis exarserunt, sic eodem numero sequenti feria secunda simul suspendio perierunt. Quod Aquilenses ut ipso die audierunt, pro ultione sociorum cum nimio furore conglobati sunt; subitoque Vticum conuolarunt, ac ex improviso burgum Sancti Ebrulfi succenderunt, ibique lxxxiiii domus in puncto temporis in cineres conuersae sunt. Monachi flentes campanas pulsabant, psalmos et letanias in basilica cantabant; quia monasterii excidium mox instare sui formidabant. Alii obuiam militibus egressi supplicabant, cum lacrimis sese de punitione reorum excusabant, et humilibus uerbis obsecrabant, rectitudinem quoque et satisfactionem pro reatu legitimam offerebant. At illi ut amentes furebant, excecati furore in monachos fremebant, et nichil sane rationis intendebant, immo quidam eorum religiosos Dei seruos de caballis deiectos ledere uolebant. Tandem absque Dei reuerentia in uillam assaultum fecerunt, et uiolenter ingressi spolia rapuerunt, et habitacula ut dictum est penitus intra portas concremauerunt. Huiusmodi militia uindicibus latronum merito in obprobrium conuersa est; quae contra innocentes monachos et eorum homines armata est, et pessimos plagarios qui omne nefas perpetrare satagebant ultra est. Richerius monachorum filiolus talem famulatum patris suis exhibuit, et sic pro anima Boati famosi furis et homicidae aliorumque impostorum orauit, et huiusmodi oblationem ecclesiae in qua idem baptizatus fuerat optulit. Baldricus quoque Aquilensis presbiter ad facinus parrochianos execrabile preiuit, in hospitium alterius sacerdotis primus ignem immisit, et sic preuius per preceps in baratrum suos secum pertraxit. Nimietas flammaram ad basilicam usque peruenit, sed miseratione Dei contrarius uentus surrexit, globosque flammaram multis aspectantibus et gaudentibus alias expulit. Basilica itaque et monachiles officinae cum libris et utensilibus aecclesiasticis saluatae sunt, ad quas desolati contribules cum suis familiolis confugerunt, et meliora secundum Dei prouidentiam tempora prestolati sunt. Aquilenses uero spoliis Vticensium diuites et turgidi facti sunt; sed non in longum exultauerunt. Nam in eodem mense super Sagium et Guaceium irruperunt, et contra Rogerium de Toeneio sepius certauerunt, sed post depopulationem uillae Sancti Ebrulfi prosperum euentum non assecuti sunt; immo pernicie seu captione suorum imminutionem iudicante Deo plerunque incurrerunt. Merito qui contra nudos et simplices dimicauerunt, nec eis pro diuino metu pepercerunt, postea fortissimos et pugnaces athletas non querentes inuenerunt, a quibus cum obprobrio et derisione a militibus sibi obuuiis frequenter audierunt, ‘Huc uenite milites. Non enim cucullati seu coronati sumus; sed milites in armis uos ad bella prouocamus. Socii uestri sumus; experiri debetis quid agere possimus.’ Improperiis huiusmodi crebro erubuerunt, et plures eorum duros ictus perpassi corruerunt, unde nonnulli ad poenitentiam aliorum deiectione lacessiti sunt. OV VI. 458-62.

There is much that is of interest here. What is perhaps most immediately striking is the role of Richer of Laigle and the other men of Laigle in the attack, as a reprisal for the hangings of Robert Bouet and six of his accomplices. While Robert's ill-fated raiding in the Ouche region dominates the first half of the narrative, it was the later actions of his lord, Richer, which shocked Orderic most. Although they were never a major Norman family, Kathleen Thompson's study of the lords of Laigle has highlighted their ambition against the backdrop of perennial instability in southern Normandy.²¹² The town of Laigle was located 14km east of Saint-Evroult, and the Laigles were generous benefactors of the monastery who were praised by Orderic in earlier parts of the *Historia*. In book III of the *Historia*, Orderic recorded the donation of a valuable horse to the monks of Saint-Evroult by Engelnulf of Laigle and his wife, Richvereda, after the death of their eldest son, Roger, in c.1059.²¹³ It was at Laigle in 1077 or 1078 that Robert Curthose, according to Orderic, suffered the humiliation of being urinated upon by his two brothers, William and Henry, a story which is further linked to Saint-Evroult through the notable role played by Ivo and Aubrey of Grandmesnil in urging Curthose not to stand for such an insult.²¹⁴ After Engelnulf of Laigle's death, he was succeeded by his second son, Richer, whose own death in battle, at the siege of Sainte-Suzanne in 1084, is related by Orderic in book VII of the *Historia*, in a passage which stressed his virtuous nature and love for the church, as well as providing a record of the lives of his children and grandchildren.²¹⁵ Furthermore, Orderic detailed an important story in book VIII in which Richer's brother, Gilbert of Laigle and his nephew, also named Gilbert, successfully withstood Robert of Bellême as he besieged the castle of Exmes in early 1090.²¹⁶ Finally, Gilbert of Laigle was present at the dedication of the church of Saint-Evroult on 13

²¹² Thompson, 'Lords of Laigle', in particular her conclusion, pp.198-9.

²¹³ OV II. 82. Although no date accompanies this information, two other events that precede and succeed this donation in the narrative are clearly listed as taking place in 1059, see OV II. 74, 88. For more on Engenulf see Thompson, 'Lords of Laigle', pp.179-80.

²¹⁴ OV II. 356-8; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, pp.71-3.

²¹⁵ OV IV. 48-50; Thompson, 'Lords of Laigle', pp.180-82.

²¹⁶ OV IV. 200-2; Thompson, 'Lords of Laigle', p.182.

November 1099, and a number of scholars have noted the survival of a charter in the cartulary, likely a conflation, which combines a fresh donation given at the dedication with a confirmation of the earlier benefaction of Richer of Laigle.²¹⁷ Prior to book XIII of the *Historia*, then, Orderic's portrayal of the Laigles was a wholly positive one, both in their donations to the monastery and in their opposition to its chief enemy, Robert of Bellême. Richer of Laigle's involvement in the burning of Saint-Evroult in 1136 thus comes as something of a shock to the reader and is likely to have also been wholly unexpected by the monks. Thus, by highlighting the role of the Laigles, especially the action of Baldric, the priest of Laigle, in starting the fire which engulfed the village of Saint-Evroult, Orderic showed just how bad things were for the monks of Saint-Evroult during the first years of Stephen's reign. For even the benefactors turned on the monastery during this period.

Analysis of the language of the passage itself reveals a great deal about the way in which Orderic not only remembered the fires of 1136 but also how he sought to make the sequence of events memorable to future generations of novices at Saint-Evroult who had not witnessed them. Catherine Clarke's work has highlighted the use of metaphor in chronicle accounts of trauma, where the chronicler attempted to conceptualise and articulate the 'inarticulable'.²¹⁸ What is of particular interest in the case of Orderic is the way in which he used the imperfect tense to achieve the same effect. This appears mid-way through the passage in the verbs used to describe the contrasting response of the monks and the men of Laigle immediately after the burning of the town of Saint-Evroult, at the moment in which the monks thought their monastery would be the next building to be destroyed. For while the perfect tense is employed elsewhere, both before and after this moment, it is striking that there is a cluster of

²¹⁷ For the charter see Charters, no.VII, pp.195-6; for discussion see OV. V. 268, n.1, Thompson, 'Lords of Laigle', p.180, n.12, and Allen, *Norman Episcopate*, p.235, n.70.

²¹⁸ Clarke, 'Signs and Wonders', p.61.

eleven imperfect verbs at this point in the text.²¹⁹ The seven verbs associated with the weeping monks are *pulsabant*, *cantabant*, *formidabant*, *supplicabant*, *excusabant*, *obsecrabant*, *offerebant*, that is ‘ringing’, ‘singing’, ‘fearing’, ‘begging’, ‘excusing’, ‘beseeching’, and ‘offering’. The four verbs relating to the men of Laigle are *furebant*, *fremebant*, *intendebant*, *uolebant*, who were thus ‘raging’, ‘shouting’, (not) ‘giving attention’, and ‘wishing’. In examining Orderic’s characterisation of individuals within the pages of the *Historia*, Jean Blacker noted that his descriptions often ‘serve to heighten the dramatic tension of many scenes, by injecting a quality of emotional realism’ into the narrative.²²⁰ Though she made no reference to the burning of Saint-Evroult, this passage provides a striking further example of this feature of Orderic’s writing. The imperfect verbs add a rhythm and drama to the narrative which is sometimes difficult to render into English. They were likely incorporated into the narrative in order to convey something of the crisis that the monks had faced as the flames grew ever nearer to their church. For it is noticeable that many of the verbs are auditory and sensory in nature,²²¹ describing sounds that create strong visual images: the monks ringing the bells,²²² singing psalms and litanies and begging the men of Laigle to spare them; the attackers raging like madmen and shouting at the monks. Their inclusion thus helps to create a particularly memorable scene in the mind of the reader of the *Historia*, which conveys at least something of the trauma of the whole affair. It is impossible to know the precise extent to which reality and mentality have been mixed here. Yet the

²¹⁹ Four imperfect verbs are also used at the outset of the passage, *adherebat*, *asciscebat*, *accendebantur*, *rapiebantur*, OV VI. 458. These convey the growing sense of impending trouble.

²²⁰ Blacker, *Faces of Time*, p.66. For more on medieval emotions see especially the many works by Barbara H. Rosenwein: *Anger’s Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1998); ‘Worrying About Emotions in History’, *American Historical Review* 107:3 (2002), 821-45; *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2006). See also the essay contributions to the debate in *Early Medieval Europe* 10:2 (2001), pp.225-56.

²²¹ For more on references to noise in twelfth-century sources see Richard E. Barton, ‘Making a Clamor to the Lord: Noise, Justice and Power in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century France’, in Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado (eds) *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White* (Aldershot, 2010), 213-35, for references to *clamor* in the *Historia*, see pp.215-6.

²²² For more on the ringing of bells see John H. Arnold and Caroline Goodson, ‘Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells’, *Viator* 43:1 (2012), 99-130.

repeated usage of the imperfect tense strongly suggests that the anger of the attackers and the spreading of the flames through the town of Saint-Evroult were recurring memories in the mind of Orderic and his contemporaries. Clarke has observed that such traumatic episodes ‘defy relegation to the past’.²²³ At the very least, the passage ensured that this shocking event would be replayed over and over again in the minds of the monastic community there. For the burning of the village of Saint-Evroult was a recent occurrence in the monastery’s history and with its inclusion in book XIII of the *Historia*, it was unlikely to be soon forgotten.

Another striking linguistic feature of this passage is the usage of lupine imagery at the very outset of Robert Bouet’s attack on the monastic lands in the Ouche region. Orderic wrote that he and his men ‘ran like wolves towards their prey’ (*ut lupi ad predam cucurrerunt*) as they sought to seize the grazing herds belonging to the monks.²²⁴ Emily Albu has drawn attention to the prominent nature of such wolf imagery in Norman historical writing, and has also emphasised its recurrent nature in Orderic’s *Historia*. In all, Albu noted almost forty instances in which wolves appear throughout the *Historia*, usually to describe the predatory nature of individuals Normans, and frequently in association with the effects of William Rufus and Robert Curthose’s bad rulership of the Anglo-Norman church. Significantly, Albu also noted the increased usage of this metaphor in the later books of the *Historia*.²²⁵ ‘In the most distinctive of his wolf metaphors, Orderic probes at the core of woes that torment his memory. These images link wolves explicitly with fugitive and rebels, tricksters and traitors.’²²⁶ Robert Bouet’s attack on the monks of Saint-Evroult constitutes an important and hitherto largely overlooked example of Orderic’s usage of wolf imagery in precisely this

²²³ Clarke, ‘Signs and Wonders’, p.61.

²²⁴ OV VI. 458.

²²⁵ Albu, *Normans in their Histories*, pp.37-46, 205-9.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, p.209.

way.²²⁷ Its appearance in the narrative conforms to the pattern suggested by Albu, for the framing context of the story was Stephen's absence from Normandy, and thus the lack of order in the duchy. The attack on Saint-Evroult was the natural result of this and so the wolf imagery was used metaphorically to describe the enemies of Saint-Evroult. Yet while the wolves were imaginary, it is striking that their prey were the very real 'herds' (*armenta*) grazing peacefully in the fields surrounding the town. One need not stretch the meaning of the passage to see that the herds' owners, the monks, are here being portrayed in their role as the shepherds of the flock, not only in the literal sense, but also in the theological sense of the term, regarding their spiritual care for their threatened community, Saint-Evroult. There was thus a natural connection between the biblical language relating to the sheep and the wolves, and the very real travails of the monastic life.²²⁸ While Orderic was certainly concerned by the negative effects of poor rule on the Anglo-Norman monasteries as a whole, this study of the *Historia* has revealed that he was particularly concerned for the welfare of his own monastery, and those houses with which it had close links, such as Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives.²²⁹ Orderic thus took the malleable lupine imagery and used it to highlight the plight of the monks of Saint-Evroult in book XIII of the *Historia*.

Notions of divine providence also feature prominently in the passage, just as they recur throughout the *Historia* as a whole. For 'the compassion of God' (*Dei miseratione*) changed the direction of the wind and protected the church of Saint-Evroult from burning; the 'just judgement of God' (*iusto Dei iudicio*) led to the downfall of Robert Bouet and his men; and it was 'by the judgement of God' (*iudicante Deo*) that the men of Laigle came to their ruin after

²²⁷ Albu noted the presence of the wolf metaphor in this passage but made no comment regarding its significance, *Normans in their Histories*, p.208 n.38.

²²⁸ Albu, *Normans in their Histories*, p.207.

²²⁹ For more on Saint-Evroult and Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives see above, pp.263-8.

plundering in the pays d'Ouche.²³⁰ Though this was an extremely dark period in Saint-Evrault's history, with no resolution in sight at the end of the *Historia*, this belief in providence is likely to have been much comfort to the monks. For, according to Orderic, the survival of the church and the monastic buildings prompted the locals to believe that God would intervene once more on their behalf, and to wait for better days that would eventually come to them according to 'the providence of God' (*Dei prouidentiam*). There is thus a small glimmer of hope here in the text. Generally, though, reading this final section of the *Historia*, one gets the feeling that Orderic was growing weary of the trials once more facing his monastery and the duchy more generally. For in book III he had spoken of these as storms beating against the church during its early history,²³¹ and at the close of book XIII they had yet to subside.

The Fragility of the World at the End of the Historia

Just as the violence engulfing the duchy continued to be a dominant theme of book XIII even after the fires at Saint-Evrault had died down, so Orderic's world weariness is something which recurs in the narrative. Once again, the events took place not far from Saint-Evrault. For Orderic related how Geoffrey, count of Anjou, crossed the river Sarthe with a large army of Angevins and invaded Normandy in September 1136, wreaking havoc in the duchy for thirteen days.²³² The violence centred on the region of Lisieux, and Orderic began by recounting attacks on Carrouges, Écouché, and Asnebec, all to the south-west of Saint-Evrault, before spending more time on the attack on Montreuil, with which the monastery had long been associated through its benefactors. He continued to closely chart the movement

²³⁰ For more on the speech at the end of the passage which highlighted the shame which the men of Laigle heaped on themselves by attacking Saint-Evrault, see Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, pp.15-16.

²³¹ OV II. 54. For the context of this reference see above, p.88.

²³² OV VI. 470.

of the Angevins through the region, now listing places which were north of Saint-Evroult, namely Les Moutiers-Hubert, the city of Lisieux itself, and, finally, Le Sap.²³³ The attention given in the text to Le Sap is particularly important, as the churches of St. Peter and St. Martin there were both given to Saint-Evroult as part of William Giroie's original gift to the monastery at the time of its refoundation in 1050.²³⁴ These connections were likely further strengthened by the fact that the fifth abbot of Saint-Evroult, Roger Le Sap, originated from there and ruled as abbot until 1122, having served as a monk at Saint-Evroult for the previous fifty-five years of his life.²³⁵ Given this context, it is no surprise that much of Orderic's account of the Angevin attack on Le Sap focusses on the plundering and burning of the church of St. Peter and the atrocities perpetrated against its priests.²³⁶ This violence in and around Lisieux was also accompanied by further atrocities to the north-west of Saint-Evroult in the diocese of Évreux, perpetrated by Roger of Conches at La Croix-Saint-Leufroi and Vaudreuil.²³⁷

Immediately after recounting this violence in the surrounding regions of Lisieux and Évreux in 1136, Orderic gave full expression to his world-weariness while reflecting on these events:

How changeable are the vicissitudes of this present life! Secular joys soon pass away and desert in a moment those who desire them greatly for themselves. Worldly honour, in the manner of a bubble, bursts and disappears, and taunts and disappoints those coveting it for themselves. So lovers of the world follow after corruptible things, and so they are corrupted by the steep heights of vice, and suddenly fall to be dirtied in the deepest depths. And when with difficulty they laboriously attain the heights of haughtiness, then, puffed up in vain, they are hurled down in a

²³³ OV VI. 466-74.

²³⁴ OV II. 34, 44-6. Charters, no.II, pp.175-6.

²³⁵ OV IV. 254, VI. 326-8; for an overview of Robert's life and career see Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, 2:281-4.

²³⁶ OV VI. 470-72.

²³⁷ OV VI. 474-6.

moment, and [leave] only fitting stories to those remaining who enjoy life and breath, which are spread about them in many places by eloquent narrators. And so the Almighty Creator instructs dwellers on the earth, and beneficially educates them in many ways, so that they might not fix the anchor of their hope on this fragile world, nor cling lethally to its transitory delights or gains. We have not here a lasting city, as the apostle says, but we seek one that is to come.²³⁸

What is perhaps most significant about this passage is what it reveals about the way in which Orderic sought to comprehend and interpret the violence which he saw taking place all around him in the mid-1130s. The direct quotation of Hebrews 13:14 in the last sentence is of particular importance in this regard. While this part of the passage is clearly lifted from Hebrews, the preceding sentence also seems to contain clear allusions to this New Testament letter. The anchor as a metaphor for hope finds its origin in Hebrews 6:18, while avoidance of the ‘transitory delights’ of this world (*transitoriis delectationibus*) seems to echo the example of Moses in Hebrews 11:25-26. There we are told that Moses chose to be afflicted with the people of God rather than to pursue the fleeting pleasures of sin, for he was looking to a better reward, the lasting city to which Orderic also refers here. While in Hebrews the anchor metaphor is used to highlight the sure and firm foundation believers have in Christ, it is interesting that here in book XIII of the *Historia*, it is used in a negative sense to stress the folly of putting all one’s hope in the unstable Norman world of the late 1130s. Orderic’s usage of scripture at this point in the narrative thus reveals his attitude to the fresh waves of violence that accompanied the first years of Stephen’s reign to have been somewhat dispirited. Yet his allusion to “the lasting city” in Hebrews indicates that he was not entirely without hope during this period.

²³⁸ Vicissitudines presentis uitae quam mutabiles sunt. Secularia gaudia cito transeunt, eosque a quibus summopere affectantur in puncto deserunt. Mundanus honor instar bullae subito crepat ac deficit, sibi que inhiantibus insultat atque decipit. Amatores mundi sic corruptibilia sequuntur, sic per abrupta uiciorum gradientes corrumpuntur, subitoque sordentes in ima labuntur. Et dum sullimes fastus laboriose uix adipiscuntur, inde nequicquam tumentes in momento precipitantur, et concinnae solummodo narrationes inter residuos qui uitalibus auris perfruuntur, ab eloquentibus de illis passim sparguntur. Omnipotens itaque creator terrigenas instruit, et pluribus modis salubriter erudit, ne in hoc fragilis seculi pelago anchoram suae spei figant, neque transitoriis delectationibus siue lucris letaliter inhereant. Non habemus hic manentem ciuitatem ut dicit apostolus, sed futuram inquirimus. OV VI. 476.

These themes of violence and change, and its effects on the church in Normandy, particularly in the dioceses of Lisieux, Évreux and Sées, are reappear a number of times in the remainder of book XIII of the *Historia*.²³⁹ Thus, while on one occasion we read that peace was restored to Normandy in July 1137 after Stephen's arrival there in March of that year,²⁴⁰ this proves to be only momentary, as the peace is almost immediately disturbed only a few paragraphs later on in the narrative.²⁴¹ Thereafter, Orderic's account of Stephen's reign alternates between England and Normandy,²⁴² before culminating in the king's defeat and capture at Lincoln in February 1141.²⁴³ Great changes took place at Saint-Evroult during this period, and this information is interspersed throughout book XIII's account of the war between Stephen and Matilda. The most important of these passages concern the deaths of successive abbots of the monastery during this turbulent period, Warin of Les Essarts in 1137, and his replacement, Richard of Leicester, in 1140.²⁴⁴ Finally, we are told of John, bishop of Lisieux's death in 1141.²⁴⁵

The fact that the see of Lisieux remained vacant seems, along with the imprisonment of Stephen, to have been the cause of much concern to Orderic as he brought the narrative of the *Historia* to a close. For in his moving epilogue to the entire work he wrote:

Behold, worn out by old age and infirmity, I long to finish this book, and clear reasoning demands that this should be done on account of many things. For I am now completing the sixty-seventh year of my life in the worship of my Lord Jesus Christ, and while I see princes of this world oppressed by grave misfortunes and great opposition to themselves, I myself, strengthened by the

²³⁹ OV VI. 476-86.

²⁴⁰ OV VI. 486.

²⁴¹ OV VI. 490-94.

²⁴² OV VI. 510-38.

²⁴³ OV VI. 538-46.

²⁴⁴ OV VI. 486-90, 536-8. For more on Warin of Les Essarts and Richard of Leicester see Gazeau, *Normannia Monastica*, 2:284-6.

²⁴⁵ OV VI. 550.

grace of God, revel in the security of subjection and poverty. Behold, Stephen, king of England, is lamentably detained in prison; Louis, king of France, conducting an expedition against the Goths and Gascons, is constantly troubled by many cares. Behold, too, with the bishop of Lisieux having died, his chair is without a bishop, and I know not when or by what kind of bishop it will be filled. What more can I say? Amid these things, Almighty God, I turn my speech to you, and suppliantly appeal to your clemency that you might have pity on me. I give thanks to you, most high King, who freely created me and ordained my years according to the good pleasure of your will. Truly you are my King and my God, and I am your servant...²⁴⁶

Orderic's anxiety at the end of the *Historia* was, then, caused by many things (*pluribus ex causis*). While the three things stated here combine the local and the national, it is typical of Orderic's writing that the vacant bishopric of Lisieux occupies as much space as Stephen's imprisonment. In the midst of all of this uncertainty, Orderic once again drew great reassurance from God as he drew the *Historia* to a close. Thus, though the king of England was imprisoned, he turned his attention once more to the King of kings, who ruled over all things, regardless of the troubles then facing the Anglo-Norman realm. The raging flames had reaching Saint-Evroult only a few years previously and the monks were now once more exposed to attack for as long as the bishopric of Lisieux remained vacant. Orderic responded by once more reaffirming his vows to God and reminded himself of 'the security of subjection and poverty' (*securitate subiectionis et paupertatis*) which had accompanied him throughout the whole of his monastic life in the pays d'Ouche.

²⁴⁶ Ecce senio et infirmitate fatigatus librum hunc finire cupio, et hoc ut fiat pluribus ex causis manifesta exposcit ratio. Nam sexagesimum septimum aetatis meae annum in cultu Domini mei Iesu Christi perago, et dum optimates huius seculi grauibus infortuniis sibi que ualde contrariis comprimi uideo, gratia Dei corroboratus securitate subiectionis et paupertatis tripudio. En Stephanus rex Anglorum in carcere gemens detinetur, et Ludouicus rex Francorum expeditionem agens contra Gothos et Guascones pluribus curis crebro anxiat. En presule defuncto Luxouiensis cathedra caret episcopo, et quando uel qualem habitura sit pontificem nescio. Quid amplius dicam? Inter haec omnipotens Deus eloquium meum ad te conuerto, et clementiam tuam ut mei miserearis suppliciter exoro. Tibi gratias ago summe rex qui me gratis fecisti, et annos meos secundum beneplacitam uoluntatem tuam disposuisti. Tu es enim rex meus et Deus meus, et ego sum seruus tuus...OV VI. 550-52.

Conclusion

In a well-known passage at the end of book VIII, Orderic observed,

Not long ago I took up the subject-matter of my writing with the church of Ouche; but I have viewed the great kingdoms of the earth as if seized with ecstasy; I have flown about far and wide in my speech and, wandering through many, have prolonged a most lengthy digression. Now, weary, however, I return to my bed, which is Ouche, and will clearly revert to certain things pertaining to us...'¹

These sentences, written mid-way through the writing project, articulate Orderic's own reflections regarding the nature of the content and form of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and encapsulate the key textual strategy which this study has argued is present throughout the work: the dynamic back-and-forth movement of the narrative between the monastery of Saint-Evroult and events elsewhere in the world. Orderic often drew attention to this through his frequent use of 'digression' rhetoric. Yet the nature and length of his digressions suggests that they were not incidental to the narrative, but, rather, formed a fundamental part of the work as a whole.²

Close study of the narrative of the *Historia* throughout this thesis reveals the inherent similarities between the way in which Orderic wrote variously about events in southern Italy, on the First Crusade and in the Anglo-Norman world. The history of Saint-Evroult and its monks, abbots, patrons, benefactors, heroes and enemies was time and again interwoven with

¹ Materiam scribendi nuper ab Vticensi aecclesia cepi, sed ampla terrarum regna uelut in extasin raptus prospexi, longe lateque oratio uolitauit, et per plura perlustrans longissimam epanalempsim protelauit. Nunc autem stratum meum quod est Vtici fessus repetam, et quiddam de rebus ad nos pertinentibus...liquido retexam. OV IV. 334-6.

² For more on the importance of rhetoric in medieval historical writing see especially Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, pp.1-33.

events of wider importance such as the translation of the relics of St. Nicholas of Myra to Bari in 1087, the siege and conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 and Henry I's conquest of Normandy in 1105. Saint-Evroult's very real links with these and many other events constitute the beating heart of Orderic's chronicle, informed and sustained as they were by a rich array of oral memories, written texts and physical objects which have left a lasting mark upon its narrative. This can be seen when one examines the numerous individual episodes of which the *Historia* is composed, such as the death of William Giroie and the theft of precious objects by the treacherous knight Anquetil; Robert of Grandmesnil's exile from Saint-Evroult and the foundation of monastic houses at St. Euphemia, Venosa and Mileto; William Pantulf's acquisition of a tooth and two fragments of the tomb of St. Nicholas for the priory of Noron; William of Grandmesnil's involvement in the siege of Durazzo; Gilbert of Lisieux's prophetic interpretation of the star-shower which preceded the Council of Clermont; Hugh Bunel's murder of Mabel of Bellême and his appearance at the siege of Jerusalem in the service of Robert Curthose; Arnold of Tilleul's acquisition of some relics of the Virgin Mary for the priory of Maule from his kinsman Ilger Bigod; the flight of the Grandmesnil brothers from the siege of Antioch; Fulk of Guernanville's abbacy at St. Pierre-sur-Dives during the reign of William Rufus; the burning of the nunnery of Almenèches; the sermon of Serlo of Sées; William of Évreux's unfinished priory at Noyon-sur-Andelle; Henry I's visit to Saint-Evroult; the downfall of Robert of Bellême; the drownings in the pays d'Ouche preceding the death of Henry; and, finally, the burning of the town of Saint-Evroult. Such stories manifest the rich and multi-faceted nature of the *Historia*, and underline the primary concerns of its author and the purpose for which the work was written. For each story was anchored in the locality of the monastic community in which Orderic lived and died and was intended for the edification of present and future generations of monks at Saint-Evroult. Its vast geographic scope was designed to show them the manifold ways in which

their monastery had been, and continued to be, closely connected to the major events of the wider world.

The local emphasis of the *Historia ecclesiastica* was strengthened and, indeed, enabled by the rich historiographical inheritance to which Orderic was exposed. He was acutely aware that a long line of historians had both gone before him and that his writing had been markedly influenced by their aspirations to write history on a universal scale, within a providential framework so that its content had a strong moral thrust to it which would not only inform but edify the reader. In many places in the narrative of the *Historia* he repeatedly warns the reader to shun the things of this world and to avoid putting their trust in wealth or even the security offered by the rule of a strong king such as William the Conqueror or his son, Henry I. Orderic's many years of surveying the Anglo-Norman world and beyond from his vantage point in the cloister of Saint-Evroult had taught him that the world in which he lived was fragile and the things within in it would not last. Thus, instead of pursuing temporary worldly pleasures, which was folly, Orderic sought to turn the attention of his readers to eternal realities. It was God alone who provided a secure and lasting city in which believers could dwell eternally. Here Jean Leclercq's reflections on the medieval monastic desire for God align closely with those articulated by Orderic:

what motive prompts this journey to the beyond? The desire to avoid the pains of this life? Not at all: they are but an occasion for desire. One must surmount them, rise above them up to God...if desire for God is ardent, it is also patient. It grows under the trial of time. One must learn to wait for God in order to love Him the more and to take advantage of the passage of time to become ever more open to His plenitude.³

³ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, p.31.

Such, also, were the views which Orderic sought to inculcate in his monastic readers. His ultimate goal in writing the *Historia ecclesiastica* was to point his readers not to Saint-Evroult itself but to the God who had providentially sustained the monks of Saint-Evroult throughout their history. From the vantage point of his own 'bed', the cloister of the *aecclesia Vticensis*, he surveyed events and lands far beyond the pays d'Ouche as he awaited the eternal joys to come.

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