



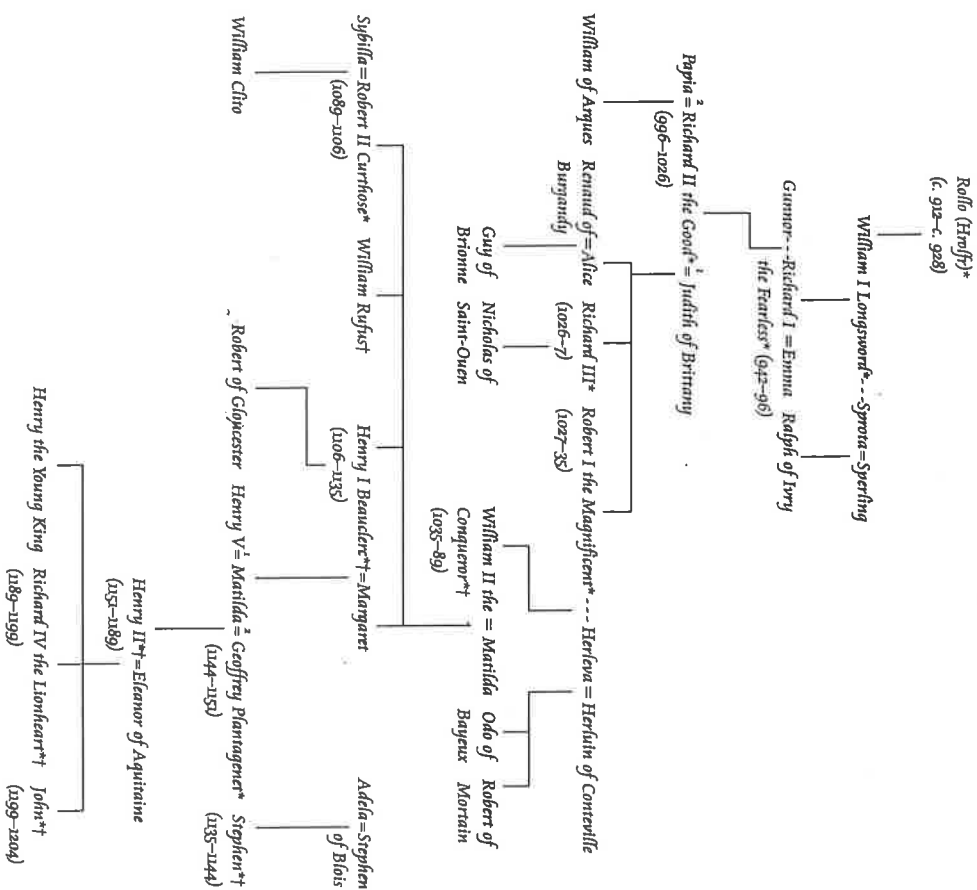
History and Community

Norman Historical Writing in the
Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

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The Dukes of Normandy (911-1204)



*Dukes of Normandy

--19th/20th Unions

Dukes of Normandy are assigned their Norman regnal years and regnal numbers

†Kings of England

Introduction: Historical Writing and the Norman Community

Historians are themselves caught in the web of history. Paul Veigne ends his consideration of classical historical writing, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths*, by asserting that, like the ancient Greeks, we modern people also believe our myths.¹ His point was not that we believe evident fictions but that our fictions are not evident to us because they are sustained by what he calls "programs of truth," systems which help people distinguish what is true from what is not. These programs of truth, however, also sustain belief in things that, viewed through a different program, would be untrue. Not all programs of truth are historical—some are religious or philosophical or scientific—and not all societies find history useful.²

1. Paul Veigne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths*, trans. Paula Wisling (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 129.

2. See Donald E. Brown, *Hierarchy, History, and Human Nature: The Social Origins of Historical Consciousness* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 19-41, for a discussion of the Indian situation; also Y. H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), 7. Both of these works address

but historical programs of truth govern the assumptions historians and readers share about what constitutes "true" history. These programs of truth belong to the intellectual *longue durée*. Histories are borne along by them like ships carried by prevailing winds, until a shift in the breeze sends them off on another tack.

While speeded forward by these gusts, however, each ship encounters local currents and eddies and each captain trims the sails in an idiosyncratic way. If histories are written within the framework of widely accepted programs of truth, they are also a response to arrays of circumstances unique to particular times and places. Histories have, to use Gabrielle Spiegel's felicitous phrase, a "social logic" and are produced by a "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."³ As Spiegel has shown for French vernacular prose texts of the early thirteenth century, there is nothing "natural" about a work of history.⁴ When a sea voyage seems propitious, the captain launches the ship, often at the behest of its owner. Like sailing a great vessel, writing a history requires both training and skill, a marshalling of considerable resources, and a weather eye to the currents and winds of politics.

Historians do not, however, have to negotiate the sea and wind entirely alone. The ships of history sail in fleets. The sailors share with their fellow travellers not only the general lore of the sea but also advice about particular stretches of water. The ships coming later wallow in the wake of those that have come before.

The Normans were in their origins great seafarers, so it is only the question of why some cultures either did not produce history or did not write works we would accept today as "historical."

3. Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 84; on "social logic," see also *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 9.

4. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 2, raises this explicitly with respect to the use of vernacular prose, but the understanding that all aspects of a work have ideological implications runs throughout her work.

firing that their historians comprised a sizeable flotilla consisting of some stately ships that sailed out toward the ocean and a multitude of small craft that hugged the shore. All felt, to a greater or lesser degree, some of the great winds that blew consistently between late antiquity and the fifteenth century, but all were driven by the local tides as well and experienced the wash of the ships that had passed through these waters before. The task of this book is to describe some of the vicissitudes of the Norman voyage in the larger sea of medieval history.

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Most studies of medieval historical writing have striven either to address the medieval historian's program(s) of truth or the web of circumstances surrounding the production of one or a few individual histories. The former project has produced a number of broad syntheses, covering all aspects of historical writing in the Middle Ages, and some studies of medieval historical genres. Studies of individual historians have also been extremely numerous.⁵ Each type of study has its advantages and its flaws. The syntheses shed a light on the commonalities of medieval historical practice, but they tend to rob individual histories of their integrity and to

5. See, for example, Herbert Grundmann's *Geschichtsschreibung im Mittelalter* (reprint: Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) which has deeply influenced the discussion of medieval historical genres, although his categories have been criticized. Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1980), and Franz-Joseph Schmale, *Funktion und Formen mittelalterlicher Geschichtsschreibung: Mit einem Beitrag von Hans-Werner Goetz* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), have contributed the most recent studies of the methods of historians and the meaning of history. Of the genre studies, most notable are probably Anna-Dorothee van den Brincken's *Studien zur lateinischen Weltchronistik bis in das Zeitalter Ottos von Freising* (Dusseldorf: Michael Triltsch Verlag, 1957) on universal chronicles and Michel Sot, *Gesta episcoporum, gesta abbatum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981). Amos Funkenstein's *Heilighen und natürlichen Entwicklung: Formen der Gegenwartbestimmung im Geschichtsbewusstsein des hohen Mittelalters* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1965), which concerns the shift from apocalyptic to evolutionary thinking among medieval historians, is one of the best of the thematic studies. The studies of individual works or historians are too numerous to list without being entirely arbitrary.

reduce them to anecdotes.⁶ Studies of particular histories treat individual works in loving detail but sometimes at the cost of failing to situate them within a larger context. The thick description of a history can be highly resonant, but it is in itself not sufficient to show what was common to many historians, what reflected an individual's particular genius or ineptitude, or indeed why the study of medieval histories matters at all.⁷ A few studies have treated groups of works, such as Gabrielle Spiegel's *Romancing the Past*, which examines four French prose histories, and Nancy Partner's *Serious Entertainments*, which uses three English twelfth-century historians to examine the writing of history in this period. Partner's interest is in the way historical writing changed with the passage of time in England. Spiegel, in contrast, is more interested in what the writing of history says to and about one specific group who produced and read histories, the Franco-Flemish elite of the early thirteenth century.⁸

As an alternative to these approaches, I offer an intermediate course, a study of a local "historical culture," the historical writing produced by the inhabitants of one community, that of Normandy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁹ Although histories are written by and sometimes for individuals, they are products of a community's life and views. This is true in an obvious way, because the

6. See Roger Ray, "Medieval Historiography through the Twelfth Century: Problems and Progress of Research," *Vivator* 5 (1974), 58–59.

7. Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 21, comments in regard to the microscopic aspect of ethnographic description, "That is not to say that there are no large-scale anthropological interpretations of whole societies, civilizations, world events, and so on. Indeed, it is such extensions of our analyses to wider contexts that, along with their theoretical implications, recommends them to general attention and justifies our constructing them." The weakness of some studies in this regard is well illustrated by Peter Edbury and John Rowe's *William of Tyre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), which is a rich study of William's history but does not show how his work relates to that of his contemporaries.

8. Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

9. The term "historical culture" comes from Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique*.

individual is shaped through socialization within a community, but it is true in a number of other ways as well. Communities are the repository of memory for their members, and in the Middle Ages, when history was what Paul Veyne calls a "vulgate" or a tradition, a report of what people remembered, history was more directly the expression of a community than it is today.¹⁰ Indeed, the maintenance and creation of traditions and histories is one way in which societies, communities, seek social order.¹¹

Medieval communities came in all sorts. Some were extremely local in character such as the community of a monastery and the body of people who interacted with it. Patrick Geary has argued recently that this sort of association, enacted through rituals of donation and participation in monastic life, played a fundamental role in preserving the pasts of the medieval elite, most of whom did not participate in the writing of history until the rise of the

10. On history as a vulgate, see Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths*, 5–15, esp. 9ff. For a modern view of the social function of memory, see James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), ix–x, and for comments on the relationship between history and memory, *ibid.*, 144–46. The classical work on the social nature of memory, which Fentress and Wickham correct, is Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper, 1980). There is a vast literature on memory and history, some of which tends to see the two forms as oppositional. See, for example, Yentshah, *Zakhor*, for a discussion of memory and history in the Jewish tradition and Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1 (1989): 12f., for a response to Yentshah. See also, Pierre Nora, "Entre mémoire et histoire: La Problématique des lieux," in *Les lieux de mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora, vol. 1 (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1984), xv–xlii, for an extremely hostile view of history.

11. See S. N. Eisenstadt, "Some Observations on the Dynamics of Traditions," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11 (1969): 451. Eisenstadt defines the acceptance of traditions as "the givenness of some actual or symbolic past event, order, or figure as the major focus of . . . collective identity." Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 45, makes similar remarks about history: "Historical discourse makes a social identity explicit, not so much in the way it is 'given' or held as stable, as in the ways it is *differentiated* from a former period or another society." De Certeau's remarks are explicitly about modern history, which makes the past into an object separate from the present, but his observation about history creating or stabilizing social identities is certainly true of medieval histories as well, as Gabrielle Spiegel's work has shown.

vernacular.¹² Monasteries were the site of much medieval historical writing, and local issues were often played out in histories before the monastic audience. Towns were another kind of local community; they produced both Latin and vernacular historical texts, and they did so in great abundance from the fourteenth century on. At the other extreme were the larger political communities. These were not initially communities at all, in that the inhabitants only gradually came to see themselves as having a shared existence. In the thirteenth century, however, the nation began to be imagined into being as a community. When this happened, chroniclers like Matthew Paris at Westminster and Primat at Saint-Denis were present to chronicle its existence. There were abstract communities as well, such as the community of Christendom (a community which seems to have emerged around the time of the First Crusade) and the community of the learned. These abstract groupings certainly influenced individuals but more subtly than the bodies that allocated resources or provided regulations or laws. For medieval France in the central Middle Ages, however, the community of the county (when the county did in fact constitute a community, which was not invariably the case) often loomed large on the horizon.¹³

12. Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 48–51, argues that the Carolingian elite family, which might have held lands widely spread across the empire, began to fragment into branches during the tenth century. As the family lost contact with the monasteries where their memory was preserved, it lost its recollection of its own past. Geary (79) points to Fulke Réchin of Anjou's comment in his fragmentary history of the counts of Anjou that he did not know much about his ancestors because he did not know where they were buried. For an illuminating study of the nexus between the elite and monasteries, see Stephen White, *Kinship, Customs and Gifts to the Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

13. For a wonderful discussion of all these types of communities, see Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). For a discussion of French regional and national identities, see Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, "French Medieval Regions: A Concept in History," *Historical Reflections* 19 (1993): 15–66, as well as the other essays in that volume. Bedos-Rezak points out that in proposing a study of the French region, she is not suggesting a particular size or definition of region (153). Indeed, the essays in the volume concern

In recent years scholars have paid considerable attention to the differences between the counties of France, the varying processes by which they formed, and the diverse bases upon which they were built. The process always involved the efforts of one or more important families, most often the descendants of the Carolingian elite (although the families did not always remember this), to enhance its power.¹⁴ However, the strategies used by the families varied, and thus the results varied also. Not all attempts to amass land and authority resulted in the creation of permanent counties or coherent communities. The Herbertian family of Vermandois, for example, amalgamated a large number of holdings in the tenth century, although these were eventually divided among the sons of Herbert II (d. 943). The counts of Blois and Champagne, however, were descended from them.¹⁵ Some counties, like Berry, did not enjoy stable boundaries for a long time, and its development changed direction in the late eleventh century.¹⁶ The authority of the ruler of a county ebbed and flowed over time, and no ruler, whatever he styled himself, whether marquis, consul, count, prince, or duke (all titles used by the Norman rulers), had irresistible authority.¹⁷

pagi and villages, as well as counties, and one essay, by Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, "The *Regnum Francie* of Sugier of Saint-Denis: An Expansive Ile-de-France," *ibid.*, 167–88, considers the evidence in Sugier's writing that "Francia" was beginning to describe more than simply the Ile-de-France.

14. For a summation of the process, see Jean Dhondt, *Études sur la naissance des principautés territoriales en France (IX^e–X^e siècles)* (Bruges: De Tempel, 1948), 1–79. For some qualifications, see Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 229–31. The work of Karl Ferdinand Werner has clarified the descent of some of the important tenth-century families. See Karl Ferdinand Werner, "Untersuchungen zur Frühzeit des französischen Fürstentums (9.–10. Jahrhundert)," *Die Welt als Geschichte* 18 (1968): 266–89; 19 (1969): 146–93; 20 (1960): 87–119. On the failure of memory of these families, see Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 50.

15. On the Herbertians, see Werner, "Untersuchungen zur Frühzeit," pt. 3, 87–115; also Michel Bur, *La Formation du comté de Champagne*, v. 900–v. 1150 (Nancy: University of Nancy, 1977), 87–125.

16. Guy Derville, *Le Berry du X^e siècle au milieu du XIII^e* (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1973), 65, 233–34.

17. On these titles, see Karl Ferdinand Werner, "Quelques observations au sujet des débuts du 'duc' de Normandie," reprinted in *Structures politiques du monde féodal (VI^e–XII^e siècles)* (London: Variorum, 1979), 698–701.

Counties developed their bodies of norms and customs and their bureaucratic institutions at different rates, so that each county became a community in the full sense at a different time. As I will argue in the first chapter, the counties where such institutions were most precocious were the earliest and most copious producers of histories.

2

The Viking settlement along the Seine in Normandy was officially recognized by the king of France around the second decade of the tenth century. However, Normandy seems to have come into existence as a community somewhat later, around 1000. The features of that community were described around the end of the eleventh century by an anonymous historian writing at Fécamp in his account of the first officially recognized Norman settlement:

[The Normans] are given the seven farthest maritime provinces by the gift and concession of Charles, the king of France, which they may improve by a settlement of their labor from abroad, and defend and protect against the invasions of assaulting barbarians When the Normans, renewed by the grace of spiritual sacraments, had accepted their provinces, they called them Normandy, *North* meaning wind in their language. First Rollo, then second William, the son of Rollo, held the dukedom of this land.¹⁸

The Fécamp Anonymous defined Normandy's community in four ways. It was religious, because Normans were all Christians. It was a geographic unit composed of seven provinces, although the seven provinces the author refers to were the seven dioceses that corresponded only roughly to the political boundaries of the duchy.¹⁹ The community also had an ethnic character, for the converted pagans comprised a foreign settlement. As a token of its ethnic

origins, the province took its name from their language. Finally, it was a political entity, the territory ruled by one individual, the duke. This description of Normandy is precious evidence that a Norman community was in ideological existence. The question is whether it also had a physical existence, what kind of existence that was, and when it came into being.

The first officially recognized Viking ruler of Normandy, Rollo (d. c. 928), received a grant of territory consisting of Rouen, its surrounds, and the Pays de Caux (the channel littoral east of the Seine).²⁰ I shall refer to Rollo and his successors as dukes for the sake of simplicity, although Richard II (996–1026) was the first to be so styled. Later grants theoretically added territories west of the Seine to the original holding but in practice to gain real control over the new lands took the efforts of several dukes. William I Longsword (c. 928–942) did not have much authority in these grants to the west of the Seine, an area where other Vikings seem to have continued to settle in effectively independent colonies through the tenth century.²¹

Succeeding dukes gradually extended Norman authority in what came to be western Normandy. William's son, Richard I (942–96), began the serious process of westward expansion. His concubine, Gunnor, later his wife, was probably the daughter of a Viking chieftain from the Cotentin. It is reasonable to assume that it was a political alliance aimed at increasing Richard's authority in that area.²² Richard II (996–1026) married Judith, the sister of

18. *Libellus de revelatione, edificacione et auctoritate Fiscamensis monasterii*, in PL 151:713.

19. The diocese of Rouen included the French Vexin, which the Norman dukes continually desired, and the diocese of Sées contained Perche, neither of which were normally part of political Normandy. See David Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London: Longman, 1982), xii.

20. Eleanor Scarle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840–1066*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 71; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 13.

21. Scarle, *Predatory Kinship*, 53–54; see also Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 9–10, 13.

22. *De moribus*, 289; Eleanor Scarle, "Fact and Pattern in Heroic History: Dudo of Saint-Quentin," *Vintor* 15 (1984): 135. Richard also enhanced his western prestige indirectly by sponsoring the reform of Mont Saint-Michel in the 960s. On the reform of Mont Saint-Michel, see *De moribus*, 290. See also Jacques Hourlier, "Le Mont Saint-Michel avant 966" in *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel* (Paris: P. Leclercq, 1966): 26–27. Cassandra Ports, "Normandy or Brittany? A Conflict of Interests at Mont Saint-Michel (966–1035)," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12 (1989): 135–

the count of Brittany, creating an ally for himself on his western border, while the count married Richard's sister. Judith's dower lands lay in many parts of the duchy, demonstrating the success of the dukes in moving beyond their power base in eastern Normandy.²³ William II the Conqueror (1035–87) was the first duke to make his authority felt relatively equally throughout the province, which he did from a new base he constructed in central Normandy.²⁴ Scholars are generally in agreement that Normandy was already geographically well defined by 1090. Normandy's ideological birth, however, was earlier, for the first Norman historian, Dudo of Saint-Quentin (c. 1015), already envisioned a Normandy roughly coincident with the later boundaries of the county.²⁵ The borders of the province were contested in both the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but the core of its territory remained a unit as long as the county existed.

The growth of Normandy as a religious community was roughly contemporary with its geographic formation. Neustria was Christian before the Viking invasions and Christianity survived their incursions, but paganism among the new inhabitants persisted until the early eleventh century. Religious institutions were devastated. Only Rouen had continually resident bishops, and all the monasteries except Mont Saint-Michel were abandoned. Saint-Ouen in Rouen seems only to have been abandoned for a few years, but Jumièges was deserted for something like fifty years. Fécamp, a community of nuns, collapsed sometime in the ninth century, to be restored as a house for men in 990. Other monasteries went underground much longer, like Deux-Jumeaux, which was reconstituted in the 1130s.²⁶

²³ has demonstrated that for a long time after the reform, Mont Saint-Michel remained as much in the Breton sphere, economically and socially, as in the Norman.

²⁴ Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 153.

²⁵ Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, 205, 222–23; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 152.

²⁶ *De moribus*, 108. The territory Dudo describes runs from the Epte to the sea. He does not mention eastern or western boundaries, but he also says that the Normans were granted Brittany. His statement may represent only what the dukes of his day laid claim to, but see Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 9–10.

²⁷ On the disappearance and restoration of Norman monasteries, see Lucien

When monasteries were reestablished, they at first took up the threads of their interrupted existence. They recovered some of their earlier holdings; to do so after a half-century of dereliction, as Jumièges did, strongly suggests that the traditions and records of the earlier monasteries were preserved.²⁷ Many of the important saints of the new Norman monasteries were the Merovingian founders. In fact, founders were given new prominence as they came to be the patrons both of refoundations and new churches.²⁸ After 1025, however, Norman monasteries moved away from Carolingian traditions and practices. Thereafter, the experiences they shared helped to create a [distinctive Norman monasticism]. All of the monasteries refounded or reformed before 1030 were recreated either at the dukes' behests or with ducal support and were subject to the religious policy of the dukes. The monasteries mostly lost or got rid of their property outside of Normandy. At the same time, they became linked to the economic life of the province through ducal gifts of revenues and tolls.²⁹ Norman abbays shared a reli-

Musset, "Monachisme d'époque franque et monachisme d'époque ducal en Normandie: Le problème de la continuité" in *Aspects du monachisme en Normandie (IV^e–XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1982), 55–74. Saint-Ouen was restored perhaps by 912 but more likely in 918. Jumièges disappeared probably in the 880s (although it was burned in 841) and was refounded in 940. Fécamp disappeared after 833 and was restored in 990. Saint-Evroul, an interesting case, survived the initial pressure of the Vikings only to be destroyed around 900. It was restored in 1030, after several earlier attempts.

²⁷ For Jumièges, see Lucien Musset, "Les Destins de la propriété monastique durant les invasions Normandes (IX–XI^e s.): L'exemple de Jumièges" in *Jumièges: Congrès scientifique du XIII^e centenaire* (Rouen: Lecerc, 1955), 1: 52; see also Lucien Musset, "Ce qu'enseigne l'histoire d'un patrimoine monastique: Saint-Ouen de Rouen du IX^e au XI^e siècle," in *Aspects de la Société et de l'économie dans la Normandie médiévale (IX–XIII^e siècles)*, ed. Lucien Musset, Jean-Michel Bouveris, and Véronique Gazeau (Caen: Centre d'Études Normandes, 1988), 123f., for Saint-Ouen's property; and Lucien Musset, "Les Abbayes normandes au moyen-âge: Position de quelques problèmes," in *Les Abbayes de Normandie* (Rouen: Société d'émulation de la Seine-Maritime, 1979), 22–23.

²⁸ For example, Fontenelle was refounded as Saint-Wandrille. On this process see Jean Fournet, "Le Culte populaire des saints fondateurs d'abbayes pré-normandes," in *Abbayes de Normandie* (Rouen: Société libre d'émulation de la Seine-Maritime, 1979), 60–61.

²⁹ On these trends, see Musset, "Les Abbayes normandes," 16–17, 22–23. See

gious culture through the Cluniac-style reforms of William of Volpiano (d. 1031), who became abbot of Fécamp around 1001, but whose influence radiated out to encompass all of the Norman monasteries.³⁰ The bonds between Norman monasteries created by a common experience of reform was reinforced by periodic exchanges of personnel. Jumièges in the period of this study provided abbots to Saint-Wandrille, Saint-Evroul, Saint-Sever in Calvados, Montebourge, Saint-Pierre-sur-Dives, and Mont Saint-Michel.³¹ Proximity also created ties. When monasteries were linked by a river system, as were Bec and Lyre, frequent contacts might ensue and monasteries might come to see themselves as particularly allied.³²

Starting in the mid-eleventh century, the Norman church was also drawn together by the centralizing efforts of the archbishops of Rouen.³³ There were no fewer than nine provincial synods held

also Musset, "Problème de la continuité," 73; "Destins de la propriété monastique," 55, on the changes of the eleventh century.

30. William was succeeded at Fécamp by one of his Italian followers, John of Fécamp (d. 1079), while another, Suppo of Fruttaria, ruled Mont Saint-Michel (1033–48). (See Musset, "Les Abbayes normandes," 17.) The role of foreigners and those educated outside of Normandy in Norman religious life was marked until the second part of the eleventh century. See Leah Shopkov, "Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1984), 12–14; and Bernard LeBlond, *L'Accession des Normands de Normandie à la culture occidentale* (Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1966), 40–71.

31. Emile Bertraud, "Moines de Jumièges, évêques et abbés," in *Jumièges: Congrès scientifique du XIII^e centenaire* (Rouen: Lecercf, 1935) 1:317–26.

32. For example, the annals of Lyre (Evreux, *Bibliothèque municipale*, ms. 60, 2v–3r) are clearly dependent on the annals of Bec. The Lyre annals list the obits of the abbots of Bec and the building of the new church at Bec in 1074 (1073 in the Bec annals). Apart from references to Lyre itself, a marginal note for the year 1147 about the third crusade next to the entry for 1104, and a few omissions, the annals of Lyre follow the short annals of Bec until 1135, whereafter the two texts diverge. See Léopold Delisle, "Les Courtes annales du Bec," in *Notices et documents publiés pour la Société de l'Histoire de France à l'occasion du cinquantième anniversaire de sa fondation* (Paris: Renouard, 1884): 93–99. On ties between other monasteries, see Jean Laporte, "Jumièges et Saint-Wandrille" in *Jumièges: Congrès scientifique du XIII^e centenaire*, 1:91–98 (Rouen: Lecercf, 1935); Paul Grammont, "Jumièges et le Bec" in *ibid.*, 1:209–16; and Hans Wolter, "Jumièges et Saint-Evroul" in *ibid.*, 1:223–32.

33. Although all dioceses had bishops again as of 990, these bishops were not

between 1050 and 1080 in Normandy, and councils were held at Rouen in 1108, 1118, and 1128. In addition to these formal and compulsory gatherings, there were other assemblies at church consecrations, ducal baptisms, and the like.³⁴ The archbishops of Rouen made their authority felt in less comfortable ways as well, as they challenged the quasi-episcopal authority of some of the Norman monasteries, including Fécamp.³⁵ Norman bishops attempted in the late eleventh century to require the abbots of their monasteries to give written professions of obedience, an innovation that abbots stoutly resisted.³⁶ The Anonymous of Fécamp was a partisan in the

all resident until mid-century. The bishops of Coutances, for example, reigned from Rouen until Geoffrey Mowbray (1048–93) took up residence in his See (Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 30). On the bishops more generally, see David C. Douglas, "The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 13 (1957): 101–15; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 101ff.

34. See Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 199. John of Avranches held councils at Rouen in 1072 and 1074; the archbishop and his suffragans also met in 1091 to elect bishop Serlo of Sées, and William Bonne-Ame held a council at Rouen in 1108. The clergy met with the duke at Lillebonne in 1080, where some ecclesiastical matters were treated, but the duke presided. On Norman councils, see Giovanni Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (reprint, Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1960), 20:33–49, 397–400, 575–78, 739–40, 1231–34, 21:185f., 273f. David Bates, "The Rise and Fall of Normandy, c. 911–1204," in *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Bates and Anne Curry (London: Hambledon, 1994), 30 and n. 47, makes reference to Raymond Foreville's argument that the infrequency of these synods in the later twelfth century is a symptom of a more general decline of Norman cohesion in the later twelfth century.

35. Fécamp, Jumièges, and Saint-Ouen had more than monastic privileges. Fécamp was exempt entirely from episcopal and secular jurisdiction and had the power to ordain priests as well as authority over rural churches, some as far west as Caen. Jumièges and Saint-Ouen also received responsibility for rural churches, although neither was as completely exempted from episcopal control as Fécamp. See Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 193–94, and map 10.

36. On the challenges to Norman monasteries, see *Gallia Christiana*, 11:208 and *Instrumenta*, 18–19 for William Bonne-Ame's challenge to Fécamp. The monks refused to comply with an archiepiscopal interdiction pronounced against the possessions of Robert Curthose in 1089, on the grounds that their abbot was absent in England and that they were exempt from archiepiscopal authority. The matter found its way to the papal court; similar challenges were made against the authority of Saint-Wandrille (*Gallia Christiana*, 11:169) and the version of the *Acts of the Archbishops of Rouen*, written at Saint-Ouen, details how Archbishop John attempted to demonstrate his authority over the monastery (Rouen, *Bibliothèque municipale*, Y.

battles between the archbishop and his monastery, which is probably why he referred to Normandy as comprising seven provinces rather than one ecclesiastical province, a tact snub for the archbishop. However, in his day, the Christian community he referred to had a strong basis in physical reality.

It is a more vexed question whether Normandy was a community in a political or ethnic sense. Ethnicity is a slippery concept today, and it was in the Middle Ages as well. Norman historians consistently argued for a distinctive Norman identity which derived from the Scandinavian origins of the Norman elite.³⁷ The degree to which the Normans really were different because of these origins is currently hotly debated. Eleanor Searle, on one side of the issue, has argued that the ducal family operated through a distinctly Germanic system of kinship alliances. Place names of Scandinavian origin replaced many earlier names, complicating the process of tracing landholdings through the Viking period. Some Scandinavian customs survived as well.³⁸

43, 9v, l. 29ff.). On John and Maurilius, see Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 210; on the shift in the role of monasteries, *ibid.*, 223. See *Gallia Christiana*, II:39 for William's controversies with Saint-Wandrille; on the battle with Pécamp, see also Mathieu Arnoux, "La Fortune du *Libellus de revelatione, edificatione et auctoritate Fiscannensis monasterii*." Note sur la production historiographique d'une abbaye bénédictine normande," *Revue d'histoire des textes* 21 (1991): 157. Saint-Evroul too was threatened by episcopal attempts to exert their authority over monasteries. Orderic Vitalis mentions that Abbot Serlo (1089–91) was never consecrated because he refused to make a written profession of obedience to the bishop of Lisieux and that Roger of Le Sap (1091–1126) also refused to make a written profession. The bishop of Lisieux, Gilbert Mamnot, was eventually forced to back down (*EH*, 5:260–64).

37. See, for example, G. A. Loud, "The *Gens Normannorum*—Myth or Reality?" *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1982): 104–16. R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), argues that the Normans who settled in different parts of Europe did not see themselves as belonging to one people, but that the historians writing in Normandy, although not greatly interested in Normans abroad, continued to stress the Viking heritage of their dukes.

38. Searle addresses these points throughout *Predatory Kinship*, but see especially pp. 1–11 and ch. 14. In her account, the main traits of Norman marriage were the significance of cognatic ties and the selection of successors from among a large pool of heirs born from multiple and simultaneous relationships. These unions varied in formality. On names, see Musset, "Patrimoine de Saint-Ouen," 125, and Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 16–18, and Jean Adigard des Gautries, "Les Noms de

On the other hand, David Bates has argued for a conscious policy on the part of the dukes to imitate Carolingian forms. Bates argues that the Normans did things differently from inhabitants of other counties, but no more than Poitevins, for instance, did things differently from Angevins.³⁹ As a minority, albeit a fairly substantial one, the Norman Vikings did not undermine most local customs. They were dependent on the local population to continue to farm in the sparsely populated area, to help them learn how best to use the land, and to provide women. Under these circumstances, rapid linguistic assimilation to French occurred.⁴⁰

The Normans were not the only people to recognize problems and opportunities presented by kin. For instance, the eleventh-century counts of Anjou used their kin cooperatively, appointed their heirs as their co-rulers while they were still alive, and sometimes fought fratricidally with them.⁴¹ Counties other than Normandy developed as strong regional identities, which were felt to manifest themselves in shared regional characteristics. At the beginning of the Black Book of Saint-Ouen, there is a list of the vices and virtues of different peoples ("De vitiis gentium" and "De virtutibus eorum"). Some of the *gentes* are members of distinct lin-

personnes d'origine scandinave dans les obituaires de Jumièges," in *Jumièges: Congrès scientifique du XIII^e centenaire*, 157–67 (Rouen: Lecerc, 1955). Scandinavian names were more common in the areas in which Viking settlement was heaviest. On customs, see Elisabeth van Houts, "Scandinavian Influence in Norman Literature of the Eleventh Century," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 6 (1984): 107–21.

39. See David Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 237 and *passim*.

40. *Ibid.*, 21.

41. Olivier Guillot, *Le Comte d'Anjou et son entourage au XI^e siècle* (Paris: Picard, 1972), 102–3 on designation; 108–111 for an account of the war between Geoffrey le Barbu and Fulk le Réchin. Jane Martindale, "Succession and Politics in the Romance-Speaking World, c. 1000–1140," in *England and Her Neighbours, 1066–1453*, ed. Michael Jones and Malcolm Vale (London: Hambleton, 1989), suggests that the family strategies of the Normans should be considered in the larger European context; see 28–30 for a discussion of the Norman and Angevin cases. Many scholars have argued for the importance of kinship outside of Normandy during this period. For example, White, *Kinship, Custom and Gifts to the Saints*, ch. 4, in discussing kinship among the donors of five French monasteries outside of Normandy, shows a similar complexity of behavior, comprising both cooperation and conflict, both the recognition of kinship and its denial.

guistic groups, such as the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, Scots, and Franks. Some, however, are regional groups, like the Poitevins, Gascons, and Normans. Categories of ethnicity and geography, therefore, blur together in this list. However, Normans felt that their Viking origins were important in creating their unique identity. In this list the Norman vice is rapacity and the virtue *communio*, the ability to act together. These characteristics clearly point to a recollection of the Viking origins of the Normans.⁴²

I have left politics and culture (the latter something which the Anonymous did not mention) until last because these are the most difficult issues and the ones about which there has been the most scholarly controversy. In what sense could the Normans be considered a political or cultural community? Before 1066, Normandy was a territorial principality. However, from 1066 to 1087, 1106 to 1144, and 1154–1204, the duke was the king of England as well. For at least part of this period, members of the Norman elite held lands on both sides of the Channel, and for the entire period, institutions did. One of the first things the Conqueror did was to award lands to Norman monasteries and to his followers and to fill the English church with Norman clerics.⁴³ French became the vernacular of the elite of England and remained so until the end of the twelfth century.

On the other hand, although Normandy and England were linked and shared a ruler, many scholars currently argue that there was only a relatively brief period during which the two enjoyed a

42. The Black Book (Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, Y. 46) is a collection of hagiographic readings which also contains one version of the history of the archbishops of Rouen. The folio on which the "De vitis gentium" and "De virtutibus earum" appears is one of two singletons (fol. A verso) that was not part of the original manuscript. On the manuscript, see CG, 1:404 and *Manuscripts dates*, 329. The manuscript as a whole was executed for Nicholas, Abbot of Saint-Ouen (1042–92), and the inserted pages may date from approximately the same time or from the twelfth century. On the ideological importance of the Viking origins of the Normans, see Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, xv–xvi. On the medieval meaning of "gentes," see Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 254–55.

43. David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 324f.

strong cultural rapprochement and that the two remained politically separate. Despite its links with England, and later Anjou and the Angevin holdings south of the Loire, Normandy continued to have its own courts, treasury, and officials and its own customs, which came into being by the end of the eleventh century and were codified in the late twelfth.⁴⁴ David Bates, Judith Green, and David Crouch have all shown that there were many members of the elite in Normandy who had no significant holdings in England. Most of those who did belonged to the wealthiest and most important class. Those beneath them were local in their loyalties and accordingly in their politics. Even among those who did have cross-channel estates, both inheritance patterns and the Anarchy contrived to split families into English and Norman branches. Rather than a steady congress between England and Normandy, the influx of Normans into England was over more or less by 1100, although there are some signs of a reverse migration in the later twelfth century.⁴⁵

Culturally the contact with England did influence Normandy somewhat, although this influence was felt even before the two territories shared a ruler. For example, English book production influenced Norman books before the Conquest, even if after the

44. On political institutions, see John Le Patourel, "Normandy and England, 1066–1144" in *Feudal Empires Norman and Plantagenet* (London: Hambleton Press, 1984), article VII. Le Patourel saw Norman institutions as influencing English ones, and vice versa, but he argued that the complexities of ruling an empire on both sides of the channel meant that each territory was forced to create separate courts, treasuries, and the like. On the law, see Emily Zack Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 223–24; Le Patourel, "Normandy and England," 21–22. The Norman custom, one of the earliest to be written, is printed in *Costumiers de Normandie, textes critiques*, 3 vols. (Rouen: E. Cagniard, 1881–1903).

45. On these issues, see Bates, "Rise and Fall of Normandy"; and David Crouch, "Normans and Anglo-Normans: A Divided Aristocracy?", and K. Thompson, "William Talvas, Count of Ponthieu and the Politics of the Anglo-Norman Realm," in *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Bates and Anne Curry (London: Hambleton Press, 1994), 19–35; 51–67; 169–84. See also Judith Green, "King Henry I and the Aristocracy of Normandy," in *La "France anglaise" au moyen âge* (Actes du III^e congrès national des sociétés savantes, vol. 1) (Paris: CTHS, 1988), 161–73.

Conquest the flow of scribes, like that of colonists, went from Normandy to England. Anne Lawrence has argued that it is possible to speak of an Anglo-Norman style of book production for the first half of the twelfth century but not before or after.⁴⁶ Architecture shows the same pattern as book production. English buildings influenced a few Norman buildings during the reign of Henry I, but influences were considerably weaker at other times.⁴⁷ Historical writing shows an identical pattern. Works of history written in Normandy circulated in England, but the number of works that flowed back across the channel were few. Most of those works, which included Eadmer's life of Anselm, Henry of Huntingdon's *History of the English* [*Historia Anglorum*], and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* [*Historia regum Britanniae*] arrived in Norman libraries during the first half of the twelfth century.

If communities have to be hermetically sealed at the edges to exist, Normandy was not a political or cultural community, but then it would be impossible ever to talk about medieval communities at all. Instead, I would suggest we think about communities as being populations organized around a center, rather like electron clouds around a nucleus. As one progressed away from the center, the strength of the attraction was lessened and if another nucleus existed, the pull might be quite strong. The Norman aristocrats whose lands lay along the borders with France, for instance, were continually troublesome subjects, as Judith Green and Kathleen Thompson have pointed out.⁴⁸ Lands on the geographic periphery were also likely to be contested and even to change hands, as happened commonly along the border between the dukes of Normandy and their rivals, the kings of France and counts of Anjou. There was a continual flow of people, materials, and ideas across the Norman border. During the eleventh century, Nor-

mandy experienced a great influx of outsiders whose contributions to "Norman" intellectual life are undeniable. Many Norman monasteries belonged to communities of prayers with other monasteries; Saint-Evroul had links to Cluny, for instance. But the common foci—the dukes, the archbishops—and the frequency of local contacts kept members of the Norman community oriented more toward each other than toward the outside, and thus they formed an identifiable community.

There is some evidence that the Normandy community was not in an entirely healthy state in the second half of the twelfth century, but throughout this period, it still retained the features that had shaped it as a community.⁴⁹ When Normandy was conquered in 1204, however, it joined the French royal demene and no longer had its own duke. While Philip II permitted the Normans to keep their customs, because the Norman dukes had been the leaders of the Norman church, important patrons of art and literature, and political leaders, their disappearance disrupted Norman traditions. One manifestation of this break was that Normandy ceased to write its own history for a century. The kings of France took their historical patronage not to a Norman house but to Saint-Denis in Paris where their royal status was celebrated. Normandy was still a geographic, religious, and ethno-regional community, but its political heart had been torn out.



If Normandy was a community, what were its histories? Medieval historians almost never defined history; the names they gave to works we call history suggest that history was a fairly amorphous field. The term *historia* occupies a broader semantic field than its English cognate, designating the portion of a saint's life used in the liturgy, the literal sense of the Bible, a pictorial narrative cycle, or simply a story, as well as writing about the past.⁵⁰ *Narratio*

46. See Anne Lawrence, "Anglo-Norman Book Production," in *Normandy and England in the Middle Ages*, 79–93.

47. Lindy Grant, "Architectural Relations between England and Normandy, 1100–1204," in *Normandy and England in the Middle Ages*, 117–29.

48. See above, n. 45.

49. For a summary of these factors, see Bates, "Rise and Fall of Normandy," 33.

50. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, fasc. 4, ed. D. R. Howlett

was a similarly broad term. It could mean histories, stories of any type, the portion of a charter containing the description of the circumstances under which it came to be granted, and testimony in court.⁵¹ The terms *annales*, *chronica*, *series temporum*, and *gesta* were not used consistently to refer to specific historical forms, as one might expect. To complicate matters, historians might use several different terms to describe the same text.⁵² That does not mean that writers confused these various uses, although Karl Morrison, in arguing that history was akin to the visual or dramatic arts conflates all of the various uses of the term *historia*.⁵³ When medieval writers made distinctions between one sort of writing about the past and another, it might be in terms of style rather than format.⁵⁴ The only discussion of history available to medieval writers was that of Isidore of Seville. For Isidore, the writing of history belonged to the study of grammar, and so most of that discussion occurs in the first book of the *Etymologies*. History was "the narration of deeds, through which things that were done in the past

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 1160–61 for *historia*, *historialis*, *historiographia* and other variants; Charles Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, vol. 4 (New edition, Paris: Librairie des sciences et des arts, 1938), 209–10. Dudo of Saint-Quentin uses the term *historialiter* to refer to a cycle of frescos (*De moribus*, 291).

51. *Notum glossarium mediae latinitatis*, fasc. I–N, ed. Franz Blatt (Hafnia: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1967), 1058–60; Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, vol. 5, 569.

52. Orderic Vitalis, for instance, used a number of different terms for histories: *historia*, *chronographia*, *chronica*, *annales*, *annalem historiam*, and *narratio*, and he refers to his own history as an *annalem historiam* (EH, 6:134, 436), a *chronographia* (EH, 1:138, 150, 3:214, 4:312), and simply as an *historia* (EH, 1:162; 4:228), although most of the text is narrative history. The history of John of Worcester, which we would tend to call a chronicle, Orderic calls an *annalem historiam* (EH, 2:186), a *chronica* (EH, 2:186, 188), a *chronographia* (EH, 2:186), an *historia* (EH, 2:186) and *annales* (perhaps) (EH, 2: 246).

53. See Karl Morrison, *History as a Visual Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

54. On the question of genre, see Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique*, 203–7. For example, chronicle and history might be distinguished one from another by the relative amplitude of the narratives or the language used by the historian (ibid., 205).

are known."⁵⁵ Isidore had his own synonyms for history, such as *monumenta* (because histories preserve the memory of things done), and *series* (from garlands of flowers gathered together—a term that may have inspired Bernard Guy to call his history, *Flowers from the Chronicles* [*Flores chroniconum*]). Isidore also discussed several genres of history, which he distinguished from one another by the units of time into which entries were divided and by whether the historian was an eyewitness to the events or merely a reporter of material from the remote past.⁵⁶ Isidore concluded by differentiating history from arguments and fables through its factuality:

There is this difference between history, argument, and fable: histories are things that have happened; arguments are things that, even if they have not happened, could happen; fables, however, are things that neither have happened nor could happen because they are against nature.⁵⁷

Isidore's comments, like those of the writers who came after, show how much semantic play there was in the terms used to describe history. For example, he used *historia* to describe the whole enterprise of writing about the past, but an *historia* could be either a work that was not subdivided into temporal units or a work written by an eyewitness. The fluidity of the nomenclature does not mean that medieval writers were completely unclear about what they were doing but that there was no commonly agreed upon system for labeling different kinds of historical works. When writers commented on history, they tended to refer to content (things that have been done), form (annalistic arrangement or narrative), and style (high style or middle style). No commentator discussed

55. For Isidore's comments on history, see Isidore of Seville, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri xix*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), vol. 1, 1:xx (hereafter cited as Isidore, *Etymologies*).

56. *Etymologies*, 1:43, 44. For example, Isidore mentions the diary (in which the time unit is the day), the calendar (the month), the annal (the year), and the history (many years).

57. Ibid., 1:41–44. For a discussion of Isidore's views of history, see Arno Borst, "Das Bild der Geschichte in der Enzyklopädie Isidors von Sevilla," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 22 (1966): 1–62.

methods which are the primary way modern historians differentiate history from other sorts of works.

So, what is a history? The answer to this question is not so clear, even to modern scholars. De Certeau, for instance, calls history a region of "rich fuzziness." However, de Certeau also offers a useful way to think about history that is consonant with Isidore's comments. History is a written discourse about the past.⁵⁸ History must be written because for medieval writers it belonged in grammar, the discipline of the written. I would add to this something that neither Isidore nor de Certeau argued directly: that histories must also be systematic treatments of the past. This qualification arises from de Certeau's reflection that histories concern origins.⁵⁹

These qualifications separate histories from the many other ways in which medieval people encountered the past. They might do so in collections of exempla, which might contain stories about the past but which were chosen for their moral lessons rather than for their chronology. In the monastic culture from which nearly all eleventh- and twelfth-century historians came, the past was present in the liturgical round that formed the monastic day, in the inscriptions and epitaphs in the monastic precinct, in the monastic obituary where dead monks and patrons mixed, in buildings the monks knew to have been constructed by this or that abbot, in the celebration of the saints, in Christianity itself. Some of these recollections of the past were written, but many were inscribed in the body as it moved through a particular space.⁶⁰ The noble adoption of toponyms in the eleventh and twelfth century is a lay counterpart of this kind of connection to the past.

58. de Certeau, *Writing of History*, 21; for discourse, see *ibid.*, 20ff.; on truth, see *ibid.*, 12 and 16, n. 25.

59. *Ibid.*, 12.

60. On this issue, see Michel Sot, "Organisation de l'espace et historiographie épiscopale dans quelques cités de la Gaule carolingienne," in *Le Mûrier d'histoire au moyen âge: Études sur l'historiographie médiévale*, ed. Bernard Guenée (Paris: University of Paris, 1977), 40. On the power of the body to evoke recollection, see Pierre Bordieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), 69.

By any definition of history, medieval or modern, certain medieval texts are history. Annals and chronicles, with their unrolling sequences of dates are as unambiguously historical as any text ever gets. They are systematic, concerned only with the unfolding of the past, and they show all the markers of being factual (one kind of truth). Other texts, however, are more difficult to classify. For example, there does not seem to be a dividing line between cartularies and serial biographies such as the *Liber pontificalis* (sometimes referred to as *gesta*), except, perhaps, a functional one, the distinction between a work written for administrative purposes and one written to evoke the past.⁶¹ The discourse of hagiography similarly overlaps the discourse of history, although in ways that scholars are still debating.⁶² A work like Christine de Pisan's *Book of the City of Ladies* is extremely difficult to categorize. Although it contains a large number of narratives about the past, these are organized according to a moral scheme—women who demonstrated reason, rectitude, and justice—rather than a chronological scheme. Christine is concerned with the origins of anti-feminism but not of female virtue which is innate.

A different sort of problem is presented by the text which to the modern reader is fiction but which medieval readers might accept as history. Jean Bodel famously paraphrased Isidore of Seville's distinction between history, argument, and fiction by averring that:

There are only three subjects heard by every man, that of France and of Britain and of Rome the great, nor do these three subjects have any resemblance to each other. The tales of Britain are light and pleasing; those of France are evidently true every day; those of Rome are wise and teach wisdom.⁶³

61. As Geary has recently and very convincingly argued in *Phantoms of Remembrance*, esp. 90–93. Polcuin himself called his cartulary of Saint-Bertin the *gesta abbatum* (102), while a similar compilation at Cluny was called a *narratio* (105), both terms commonly used for histories.

62. The literature on the relationship between hagiography and historiography is huge; on this subject and some of the issues it raises, see Appendix 1.

63. Jean Bodel, *Les Saisnes*, cited in Suzanne Fleischmann, "On the Rep-

To modern scholars, however, all three sorts of works are fiction. Similar problems arise with other kinds of texts. Would medieval readers have considered *Fulk Fitzwarren* as historical as, for example, a roughly contemporary biography, the *Life of William the Marshal*? While modern scholars confidently label the former a family romance and the latter a history, it is harder to say what medieval readers thought about the two. Modern historians themselves have been stumped about how to characterize Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*, a text that divided medieval writers as well.⁶⁴

When works lie along a continuum, a "horizon of expectations," it is always a problem to draw a boundary between what is included and excluded.⁶⁵ That does not mean, however, that contemporaries made no distinctions between texts and that we ought not to either. Medieval people did distinguish between things that had really happened and things that had not, even if they sometimes disagreed among themselves, did not come to the same conclusions that we might about what had happened, and used different criteria for judging.⁶⁶ This study will, no doubt, not include some works

representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages," *History and Theory* 22 (1983): 299 and n. 57. On *Las Sainas*, see also Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 62.

64. Robert of Torigni and Henry of Huntingdon, for instance, accepted Geoffrey of Monmouth at face value, while Gerald of Wales and William of Newburgh thought him a liar. Such decisions, however, were sometimes made as much for personal reasons as for historical ones. See Parmer, *Serious Entertainments*, 62–65, especially 64. R. W. Southern, "Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 1. The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 20 (1970): 193–94, accepts Geoffrey as a historian by medieval standards, while John Ward, "Gothic Architecture, Universities and the Decline of the Humanities in Twelfth-Century Europe," in *Principales Powers and Estates: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Government and Society*, ed. L. O. Frappel, (Adeleide: Adelaide University Union Press, 1979), 68–69, places Geoffrey within the sphere of court satire, along with Walter Map and Walter of Châtillon.

65. The term "horizon of expectations" is borrowed from Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahrt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 22–24.

66. See Fleischmann, "On the Representation of History and Fiction," esp.

other scholars might argue, with justice, are history, and it will probably include works that some would see as not properly historical.

One omission from this study requires some further comment: I have chosen not to discuss vernacular texts. The vernacular began to come into its own as a language of composition in the twelfth century. The earliest history in Anglo-Norman, Geoffrey Gaimar's *History of the English* (c. 1135), was written in England for an English patron and draws on oral traditions circulating in England, such as stories about Havelok the Dane, and on the written tradition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. It also brought English history down to 1100 and thus told some Norman history as well. Wace began his never-completed *Roman de Rou* [Roman de Rou] some twenty years later. Gaimar was a contemporary of Robert of Torigni, Wace of Stephen of Rouen. Thus vernacular works do overlap with the Latin histories that are the subject of this book.⁶⁷

However, while vernacular and Latin histories both belonged to the discourse of history, they were linguistically separate. Sociolinguistic theorists argue that language is not transparent or purely communicative. Some see language as reflecting the norms of the culture that produced it, while others see language as structuring cognition. Different sorts of language are certainly used to convey social meaning. The Humanists had available to them both Latin and the vernacular, and they used the different registers of each language as well as the languages themselves to structure their social relationships.⁶⁸ Medieval writers were aware of different registers within Latin. Historians, for example, began to avoid the high style in the eleventh century.⁶⁹ The gulf between Latin and

305–6. Fleischmann addresses directly the issue as to whether we can assume that the Middle Ages made any such distinction (278–80).

67. For a lengthy discussion of the riches of Anglo-Norman writing, see Brian Mericles, "Anglo-Norman Literature," *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1982), 259–72.

68. See Nancy Steuver, "The Study of Language and the Study of History," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (1974): 402–3, 405.

69. On the rhetoric appropriate to history, see Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique*, 214ff. William of Jumièges was already making the claim to write simply

the vernacular was so marked that literacy was only thought of in terms of Latin until well beyond the twelfth century, and Latin literacy implied clerical status. Thus medieval bilingualism was a form of *diglossia*.⁷⁰ Vernacular historians, such as Wace and Benoît of Sainte-Maure (the author of the *Chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy* [*Chronique des ducs de Normandie*]) occupied the divide between the two languages. They had read the Latin histories of Dudo of Saint-Quentin and his successors, when to read Latin well enough to translate the kinds of texts Wace and Benoît used as sources was to have the kind of linguistic competence most people in the Middle Ages did not have.⁷¹ They then transferred the material from the conventions of Latin prose narrative to those of vernacular epic and romance.⁷²

The function of the vernacular historian, at least at this initial stage, was to mediate between cultures in one direction, generally from Latin to the vernacular.⁷³ This was less true in the later Mid-

around the middle of the eleventh century (GND, 2), although that claim was much more commonly expressed in the twelfth. Spiegel argues that a similar shift of register, from verse to prose, in the vernacular during the thirteenth century was occasioned by the same mistrust of rhetoric (Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 57–64).

70. On literacy, see Herbert Grundmann, "Literacy—illiteracy: Der Wandel einer Bildungsform vom Altertum zum Mittelalter," in *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Anton Hirschmann, 1978): 1–66. The ideological terms in which literacy was seen did not necessarily fully reflect reality. Grundmann argues that women were probably more commonly literate than men. See also Michael Richter, "A Socio-Linguistic Approach to the Latin Middle Ages," in *The Materials Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1975): 69–82. Franz Bäum, "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 237–65, has refined some of Grundmann's arguments, showing that the laity could use Latin letters by having clerics read for them and thus in practice were not illiterate. For *diglossia*, see Streuver.

71. See Michael Richter, "Kommunikationsprobleme im Lateinischen Mittelalter," *Historische Zeitschrift* 222 (1976): 45.

72. See Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 5–6. This process of translation is the reason Spiegel chooses not to talk much about the Latin originals of the texts she analyzes.

73. On the difference between vernacular and Latin historiography, see Spiegel, "Social Change and Literary Language: The Textualization of the Past in Thirteenth-Century Old French Historiography," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 17 (1987), 135–36; *Romancing the Past*, 6–7.

dle Ages when the vernacular was successfully established as a language of learning. Once this had happened, it was possible, for example, for Francesco Pippino to translate the *Leire d'Eracles* into Latin for use in his Latin chronicle. However, for the earlier period, movement from the vernacular to Latin was exceptional. Stephen of Fouçères, in his life of Vitalis of Savigny, several times makes reference to his use of a written vernacular source as well as stories told him by monks at Savigny and others. In the first case, Stephen treats the vernacular text as though it were in some senses not a text at all, for he remarks just after mentioning its existence that "it is truly unworthy if [the life] of such a man were to be passed over in fruitless silence, and not be transmitted for the notice of those who come after through the use of letters."⁷⁴ Orderic Vitalis copied the Latin version of the *moniage* of William of Gellone into his history, because he felt that a Latin text was more appropriate for monks to listen to than a song spread by jongleurs.⁷⁵ Initially, then, most of the movement from the vernacular into Latin seems to be within the category of hagiography, one of the most popular literary forms. Of course, Latin texts frequently incorporated materials drawn from oral vernacular sources, particularly from epic, the outstanding example being the *Book of St. James* (*Codex Calixtinus*), which incorporated material from the *Song of Roland*. However, the authors who did this often did not make reference to these vernacular sources, which seem to have been no different than the other kinds of oral reports historians normally used.

Access to texts and control over their production was also asymmetric. When a patron who could not read Latin commissioned a history, he or she depended upon the historian to frame the work in ways that resonated appropriately. The patron necessarily could have had only the most general influence on the final shape of the work. The patron of history was not unlike an architectural patron,

74. Stephen of Fouçères, *Vita sancti Vitalis*, ed. E. P. Sauvage, *Analecta Bollandiana* 1 (1882): 357. He comments later on that he has translated the material into "more manifest letters," *ibid.*, 364.

75. *EH*, 3:218f.

who might have a list of desiderata. Only the builder, however, would have had the expertise to decide what was technologically feasible.⁷⁶ In the case of a patron like Henry II of Normandy and England who was fluent in Latin, the influence might be greater. Still, Henry's family was unusually literate and he included among his ancestors a thorough anomaly, the lay historian Fulko le Réchin of Anjou.⁷⁷ Patrons of vernacular works were not similarly hampered. They often chose a writer whose work they knew. Wace, for instance, was a denizen of the English court long before he wrote the *Roman de Rollu*.⁷⁸ The patron was in a position to be much more specific about the contents of the work and to judge the product of the commission. The resulting work, therefore, although arising from the artistry of the historian, more directly reflected the patron's own sense of his needs and desires.⁷⁹

Until the composition of the *Grandes chroniques de France* began in 1274, the venues of vernacular and Latin composition were also different. While Latin histories might be composed anywhere, in practice, most were composed in a clerical, usually monastic, context and read in clerical circles, even when the work had been commissioned by a powerful lay person. There were, of course, exceptions, such as Gerald of Wales who wrote at the court of Henry II

76. On patrons and builders, see Charles M. Radding and William W. Clark, *Medieval Architecture, Medieval Learning: Buildings and Masters in the Age of Romanesque and Gothic* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 34–35.

77. For Fulko's history, see Louis Halphen, ed. *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise* (Paris: Picard, 1913), lxxix–xc, 232–38.

78. On Wace, see René Reno Bezzola, *Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en occident 500–122*, 3 pts. in 4 vols. (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1944–63), pt. 3, vol. 1, 150ff.

79. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 6. Spiegel here makes more of a dichotomy than I would between the way patrons influenced vernacular and Latin works. She suggests that vernacular works were more partisan and less collective than Latin works. However, I suspect there was no difference in the degree to which historians, whether writing in Latin or the vernacular, wrote to please patrons. Latin works were just as partisan, just as much a product of a "social logic," as vernacular ones; it was simply that the patron had less choice and less control with Latin works. As Spiegel argues, the lay patron was unacquainted with the conventions of Latin texts but might be prepared to argue aesthetics with an author commissioned to write a vernacular work.

where there was a group of mostly clerical advisors and bureaucrats who composed a literature for their own circle.⁸⁰ In contrast, vernacular histories, although generally written by clerics (because they required access to Latin sources), were more commonly written for the court, although the court was not necessarily the only audience. Some of these authors are known, like the Métréstr of Alphonse of Poitiers and the Anonymous of Bethune, only by the names of the lords they served.

Therefore, while vernacular histories are clearly history in both a medieval and modern sense, they need to be considered as a separate conversation within the discourse of medieval history.



Individual histories are statements or messages within the conversation of history. A message requires a sender, in this case, a historian. The historian is situated in a web of education, social position, and ambition. A message also requires an addressee, sometimes an explicitly-named patron and sometimes only the readers implied by the text. The recipient also resides in a nexus of expectations, both literary and social. A history, like any other message, conveys its meaning in several ways simultaneously. The existence of the history itself implies a relationship between the sender (the historian) and the recipient (the reader or patron) and, because it is written, testifies to the importance of the contents. The language in which the information is conveyed is also richly significant and affects the meaning. The message itself has a referential function, that is, a burden of information that it attempts to convey. That information is conveyed not only by its words but by its very existence, which attests to a relationship between the addressee and addresser and by its code, in this case not only the language of composition but also by the form of the work, which conveys a portion of the meaning of the text.⁸¹ Thus the message

80. On this circle, see the comments of Ward, "Gothic Architecture, Universities and Decline of the Humanities," 67ff.

81. See Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style*

takes on a charged aspect. It would be impossible to enumerate all the ways in which this relationship with its written bond plays itself out, but it is possible to explore some aspects of it.

Because I look at histories from a number of different angles, some of which have not been previously explored, I have found no one theoretical model to guide my work. I have, instead, drawn on a number of different models from different disciplines, which I have tended to use to illuminate the Norman histories rather than to explain them comprehensively. Casting a long shadow across my work is the figure of Hayden White, whose ideas about tropes, plots, and ideology are unavoidable for those seriously interested in history's meaning and value. I have made use of theory of history, reception theory and reader-response criticism, memory theory and discussions of medieval memory, literacy theory, and some anthropological work, particularly that of Victor Turner. Although I have worked primarily from printed texts, I have been able to examine some of the manuscripts of Norman histories in the municipal libraries of Rouen and Evreux, and I have used that evidence where it sheds light on historical practice and reading.

The reader may find that my using so many different theoretical approaches results in a wavering, fragmented, and sometimes distorted image, as though one were a fish looking at the historical florilla from underwater. I suspect this is inevitable. My aim in this book is not to offer a totalizing explanation of historical writing for Normandy or to suggest that one aspect of an historian's experience is more important than any other. Everything matters all together, but each aspect of a history matters in a different way and to different degrees in the work of different historians. The relatively smooth surface of many histories masks their internal turbulence and the negotiation of different agendas within them.⁸²

⁸² in *Language*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1960), 33ff. Although Jakobson is mostly concerned with how poetic language may be distinguished from other kinds of language, I have found his schematization a useful way to break down the way texts function.

⁸². For example, Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 99–151 (but esp. 144–51), shows how in the thirteenth-century vernacular classical history, the *Fais des Romains*, the

However, as I turned these histories from side to side peering at them, I found that a generally consistent picture of what it meant to write history in eleventh- and twelfth-century Normandy emerged. In some ways writing history in Normandy was different from writing it anywhere else, if only because Normandy's community was so coherent. In other ways, Norman historians struggled with the same questions and arrived at similar solutions as their contemporaries in other parts of Europe. Their efforts shed light on the whole project of historical writing. The questions I have asked about these particular histories can be asked about other histories, just as the lessons we can draw from Spiegel's notion of "social logic" can be applied to more than the thirteenth-century vernacular prose texts she analyzes.

Finally, although I conclude that medieval historians approached history from a different standpoint than modern historians do, that they used different models of authentication, and that their works performed some different tasks than modern histories and performed differently some of the same tasks as modern histories, this does not mean that I wish to privilege our way of doing things over the medieval way. I have invoked modern practice in many places in this book because it is useful to have something to compare medieval practice to and because changes in the way people wrote history in the Middle Ages and in the early modern period underlie the modern discipline of history. But the reader should not assume along with some crude Darwinians that evolution from one thing to another means evolution from a lower form to a higher. Writing history in the modern way is better at advancing certain ends and worse at bringing about others. The past is foreign country: they do things differently there.

My first chapter is a map of historical writing in Normandy: who the historians were, what their backgrounds were, and where and tension between the ideological desire to show the Franks (who stand in for the French nobility here) as fighting nobly for their autonomy, and the plot of the history, which required Caesar to succeed in subduing the Franks, led the author to an impasse that echoed the experience of the noble audience of loss and irresolution.

when they wrote. I show that Norman histories were not randomly written but appeared at particular temporal nodes and in the institutions most connected with the Norman dukes. I close by comparing the Norman picture with historical writing outside of Normandy.

In the second chapter, I turn to the shape given to Norman history by eleventh-century Norman historians. While they presented Norman history as essentially comedic, they read and wrote history through different interpretive modes. The first Norman historian, Dudo of Saint-Quentin, presented the Norman past as an allegory in which the Normans reproduced the trajectory of other chosen peoples. William of Jumièges, in contrast, demanded that history be read literally and politically, while William of Poitiers gave his history a moral meaning.

The twelfth-century historians who are the subject of chapter three retained these three modes of interpretation, but they no longer saw Norman history as a comedy. Orderic Vitalis initiated William of Poitiers the moralist but painted Norman experience as one of decline into anarchy. Stephen of Rouen read Norman history allegorically but saw the larger picture of history as one of rise and inevitable fall. He thus took an elegiac and nostalgic tone. Robert of Torigni, after revising and extending the history of William of Jumièges, turned away from Norman history entirely to concentrate instead on universal history. However, like William, Robert wrote history to be read from a literal perspective.

The fourth and fifth chapters explore the varying assumptions of the Norman historians that helped them produce histories much different from each other. The fourth chapter considers the divergent notions of truth under which medieval historians in general, and Norman historians in particular, operated and how they authenticated their work. While histories were by definition to be true, Norman historians were not equally concerned about ensuring the truth of their work. The prime means that modern historians use to guarantee history's truth, their adherence to a commonly accepted set of historical methods, was not employed in the Middle Ages. The fifth chapter details the many models Norman

historians used to shape their own histories and the varying methods they employed to bring their histories into being.

The sixth and seventh chapters explore responses to historical texts. The sixth chapter looks at the performative aspect of historical writing, what people thought history could or should do. The power of histories did not come merely from their contents but also from their existence as physical objects, books. Books and contents both relayed a consistent message about the importance of the ducal family, mediated in social conflict, provided evidence for legal cases, and created monuments. Only Orderic Vitalis considered the possibility that history might be an abstract sort of knowledge, rather than a useful body of information. For history to be important even in this more concrete sense, however, it required readers. In the seventh chapter, I have asked who read these Norman histories and how they read them. A few Norman histories were widely read, both in Normandy and in England. Some clearly had local significance. Other works, in contrast, failed to secure a significant audience and thus could not perform the actions that historians expected them to.

The pattern of composition and dissemination of historical writing, the "social logic," of these Norman texts, all suggest that there was a sense of the ways—particularly the socio-political ways—that history might be used. History's potential lay in the ways in which it might structure social experience in the world outside of the monastery. Development of that potential, however, was frustrated by the privileging of Latin for the writing of history before the twelfth century, with a consequent failure of history to find a large audience. History was not institutionally controlled, nor was it a discipline in the senses that law, theology, and philosophy were becoming disciplines, and in the sense that history is a discipline today. My concluding chapter sketches out how, in the later Middle Ages, history came to occupy more nearly the space it occupies today.

The water murems through the rough places under the puny prow,
The tempest is foaming with the waves of the sea.

The hostile waters now play at will upon the ship,
Which is about to be harmed by this pestiferous embrace,
by the dreadful winds.

I am like the prey of the furious forces of the sea,
And the wave, violently arisen, bears upon the curved shores.
I now cling, a fearful arbiter, upon the shuddering waves.⁸³

83. *De moribus*, 175, epilogue to bk. 2.

1 History in the County of Normandy

Between 1000, when Normandy coalesced as a county and a community, and the late twelfth century, when Normandy's autonomy was eroding somewhat, Normandy produced six Latin historians who chronicled Normandy's history. Five wrote or continued histories of Normandy's rulers, while two placed the story of Normandy's past against the backdrop of universal history. In addition to these writers, whose work encompassed the county, Normandy also produced many historians whose labors reflected more local communities. The result was a burst of historical writing spread over nearly two centuries.

The first history to be written in Normandy appeared just after the millennium. Its author, Dudo of Saint-Quentin, was sent, as he tells us himself, as part of an embassy from Albert of Vermandois to Richard I. It is possible to date this journey relatively exactly. Albert's emissaries were to secure Richard's assistance in restoring Albert to the favor of the newly crowned Hugh Capet.