

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

EUROPE

AROUND THE YEAR

1000

EDITOR PRZEMYSŁAW URBAŃCZYK



WYDAWNICTWO DiG

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INTRODUCTION

Przemysław Urbańczyk*

Building a body of co-authors of this volume appeared rather a tedious job because I wanted „native” scholars to comment upon the situation in their regions at the turn of the first millennium A.D. Not having at hand an organized group of people who could have a chance to sit together and establish some ground for common understanding, I had to operate as an agent imposing rules that would ensure the coherence of the volume. It seems the title itself was not instructive enough — some authors even questioned the logic and mathematical basis of the notion „year 1000”. Thus, I decided to give all of the authors a sort of a *carte blanche* with the only restrictions put on the chronological limits (10th–11th century) and geographical separation of the neighbouring areas. Instead of listing points and topics that would have been expected to appear in each chapter, I left the structure and contents up to each author limiting my interventions to minor comments.

Thus, some of the authors offered comprehensive descriptions of their regions around the 1000 A.D. while others attract our attention to some specific aspect(s). Some authors concentrated on the very year while others present long-range chronological perspectives. Some tried to reconstruct the atmosphere of the turn of the first millennium while others analysed the way of looking at that period at the turn of the second millennium (see the chapter by Christian Lauranson-Rosaz). Some focused solely on the area „given” to them while others could not resist the temptation to sneak around „their” territory. Some built an almost linear casual chain of development while others offer a choice of important „moments” of history. Some presented detailed descriptions while others wrote broad-sketched essays.

The result achieved is a surprisingly rich panorama of the whole of the continent broken into relatively separate areas. The richness of individual perspectives reflects the richness of possible views that could have been chosen. Reading this volume one may realise how complex the picture of our continent was at a time when Europe was taking the shape that we know today. There is no one key to describe this period, and there is no single explanation of the formation process that took place a thousand years ago. Each time it was a personal decision of the particular author to adapt a specific

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strategy of tackling the problem of the „year 1000“. One may argue that some areas are left untouched or that some problems are omitted, or that some important aspects did not attract enough attention. Many similar reproaches may be well sustained. However, this shows only that writing history is a rather difficult task that has to be undertaken over and over again.

*

A crucial moment of the final stage of giving this volume a structure came when a decision on how to order the chapters had to be taken. Having some idea at the very beginning I was losing self-confidence when the texts started to flow through the e-mail network. There was not any obvious continental „order“ or clear hierarchy that might be accepted as a ruling factor. Taking geopolitics, religions, languages, economy, geography, culture, demography or military potential and organisational achievements into the sole focus would make our examinations of Europe around 1000 A.D. quite differentiated ones. And none of them would be a universal one.

The reason is that Europe of the 10th century had a very complex and dynamic structure and it is impossible to pinpoint some areas, some personalities or some events that might be accepted as decisive factors of that period. Any arbitrary choice made in this respect may be easily overruled because it would reduce the panorama to a very local perspective. I am afraid that there is no good solution that could be generally accepted.

The strength of the west-European historiography with its immense riches of written sources resulted in a biased view of the continent as promoted in countless books and articles. Almost unexclusively, their authors equal „Europe“ with its western and southern parts while the vast areas east of Elbe and north of Danube remain largely obscure. This attitude produced an artificial division of the continent, which somehow follows the split of the Cold War period. This division that sits deep in the mindsets of contemporary historians produced a broken picture of Europe, which seems to be very difficult to uproot. In this volume I collected papers dealing with all (?) important regions of the „literate“ Europe at the turn of the first millennium A.D. I also changed the point of observation „looking“ around from the central position.

When studying the geopolitical situation by the turn of the first millennium, one might say that Europe consisted of the two cores of two mighty empires that both claimed continuation of the ancient Roman legacy and both promoted the universal Christian ideology, however divided into Latin and Greek orthodoxies. They were surrounded by more or less stable states organised by and around local dynasties that aimed at carving out territories that might have been safely handed down within the ruling clans. Even though some general Carolingian model might be defined, there were many varieties of execution of political domination and structuring of geopolitical relations.

Superficial analysis of the religious sphere in the late 10th century would point to Christianity as the dominant ideology. Despite its unprecedented expansion (chapter by Jerzy Strzelczyk) the Christianity of that time, although formally still undivided, showed deepening splits due to different interpretations of doctrine and different views on the execution of rituals. Despite its domination, Christianity also faced challenges from two other monotheistic religions that conquered bridge-heads in Islamic Al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula, and in Judaic Khazaria on the east-European steppes. Besides, despite extensive proliferation of Christianity, much of the northern and eastern regions of the continent were still inhabited by pagans who did not leave any vernacular historical evidence. All these four religious systems were the objects of political manipulations that resulted in an interesting variety of local solutions and unexpected alliances.

Ethnic and/or linguistic divisions offer yet another level of analysis that cross-cut both political and religious structures (chapter by Paul Bibire). Demographic and cultural dynamism triggered during the Migration Period resulted in several centuries of fluctuations, replacements and mixing of various traditions that included also Asiatic elements that flowed „constantly” through the vast steppe zone. Thus, very few regions might have „claimed” uninterrupted continuation of local tradition, which makes most of the modern nationalistic references to some direct origin from ancient roots rather questionable. In reality most of the historically confirmed peoples originated from poly-ethnic agglomerations that accepted a more or less uniform culture and language promoted by the ruling elites.

Studying the economic level of the social organisations does not help much to grasp some clear-cut divisions of the continent. Either we may achieve some very general classification, which does not explain real differentiation or, we may submerge ourselves in the immense details of the local networks data. Thus, it is very difficult to convey studies, that have both the continental scale and the concrete dimension of tangible facts. An example of such work is offered here by Stanisław Suchodolski.

Neither does geography offer any clear key to historically meaningful divisions. Complicated horizontal and vertical dimensions make Europe a very complex spatial structure, even if there are some common aspects to be studied (chapter by Tomasz Ważny). There are areas that pose natural challenges that might have determined cultural development — the Hungarian steppe-lowlands and the North Atlantic coasts are just two extremes of such a list. But the concepts of west, north, east, south or central Europe, despite geographic terminology, are artificial constructs serving contemporary political classifications rather, than reflecting past reality.

Facing such problems, I chose an unorthodox itinerary way of presenting our continent as it looked around the turn of the first millennium. The journey will start from the eastern edge of Europe and then follow an anticlockwise spiral that will end in the centre of the continent.

Thus, we will start our inspection in the far east, where the Khazars organised a mighty „empire” that left its visible legacy even if it was destroyed before 1000 A.D.

(chapter by Vladimir Petrukhin). From there we will visit Rus', where a Scandinavian elite managed to create a stable territorial organisation (Oleksiy Tolochko). Transylvania, despite its key position between the eastern and western influences, is difficult to describe due to the vague historical evidence (Florin Curta). The Balkans where Bulgaria enjoyed a short period of heroic development, was still under the surveillance of Byzantium that was experiencing a period of glory (Panagiotis Antonopoulos and Charalambos Dendrinos). Only along the western edge of the region some Slavic principalities sustained their relative independence (Peter Štih). In Italy the period was marked as the time of extraordinary personalities (Claudio Azzara). Political leaders in the Iberian Peninsula were engaged in the direct clash of the Islam and Christianity (Amancio Isla)¹.

In England a relatively peaceful period allowed reorganisation of the state structure (Simon Keynes), while Scotland still observed a rather dynamic development of political situation (Barbara Crawford). Ireland, after ages of turbulent history enjoyed a short time of „unity” imposed by a mighty leader (Dáibhí Ó Cróinín).

In the North Atlantic European civilisation gained a foothold in America (Birgitta Linderöth Wallace) just when the Icelandic centre of the region accepted introduction of Christianity (Orri Vésteinsson). In Norway the Viking traditions were still lively both in politics and economy (Claus Krag). Small Denmark, strategically placed at the Baltic straits, played the leading role along the north–European water–ways (Else Roesdahl). Sweden, somehow retarded politically, was very active as an east–west and north–south transition area (Wladyslaw Duczko).

The central part of Medieval Europe was undergoing radical changes in the violent process of transforming social, economic, religious and political structures; process that led to the appearance of a quite new geopolitical situation. New states, new dynasties, new territorial borders, a new religion and a specific response to external challenges exemplify very well the multi–dimensional dynamism of the time in question (Herwig Wolfram).

The area between Elbe and Oder was the last pagan enclave in the Christian Europe (Christian Lübke). Poland rose to the status of the regional power (Andrzej Pleszczyński), while Bohemia lost its former position as the geopolitical leader (Dušan Třeštík). The Magyars, who just fifty years earlier terrorized the continent managed to build a strong state with all necessary imponderabilia (Marianne Sághy). However, the mighty core of the continent was occupied by the Ottonian empire trying to control all its neighbours (Ludger Körntgen).

*

The precise time perspective indicated by the title of the present volume may suggest that a thousand years ago people in Europe were aware of the „great jubilee”, which should have provoked some „millennial” effects observed as joyful celebrations or, just

¹ The obvious absence of Francia in this list resulted from the decision of the French author to choose a different topic for his text (see chapter by Christian Lauranson-Rosaz).

opposite, a mass hysteria driven by apocalyptic fears and chiliastic visions. Contrary to the popular opinion and suggestions by some authors, the written sources do not support such a view, as it is stressed by numerous authors present in this volume.

This mistake is a product of our tendency to project our own opinions and prejudices even in a distant past, which results in unsupported interpretations. We simply tend to legitimise our own behaviour by looking for its confirmation in the past. Thus, we take for granted that ancient people were „the same” and we furnish them with entrepreneurial behaviour of free market agents. It seems obvious that, if we find the Y2K threshold important, then „Y1K” must have been as important for people who lived at that time, especially when the Apocalypse warned of the Satan who was imprisoned for a thousand years. However, it just seems that the year 1000 passed „unnoticed”!

The reason for such a situation was that various parts of the continent had different time counting methods even though there were some general rules introduced by Christianity (with some similarities to Judaism and Islam due to the common roots in the Book). The linear concept of time was a revolution that changed „natural” perception based on observation of seasonal cycles and constant exchange of generations. Hence, not repetition but purposeful development was accepted as the foundation of Christian cosmological constructs. The world, time and the humanity were placed between two clearly defined points — the Creation and the Final Judgement. Thus, not sustaining the Present but striving for the Future should have led the activities of the Faithful. This might have been the driving force of medieval development.

The linear concept of time that is purposeful and controlled by God strengthened historical thinking, making scholars look for a universal time counting system. Trying to find the Beginning they proposed different methods that were often incompatible (see introductory paragraphs in chapters by Antonopoulos, Dendrinis and by Tolo-chko). Our system of measuring time according to the Anno Domini rule invented by Dionisios Exiguus was only one of several options available for Europeans a thousand years ago. This is worth remembering if we are to understand that reality.

*

It is our natural tendency to view the world through our own life experiences and from our local point of view and historians are far from being free from such a biased way of thinking about the past. The histories that we produce are often some national if not nationalistic interpretations where current state borders and geopolitical relations, structure our visions of the past. It is very difficult, if possible at all, to free ourselves from the burden of the regionalisation of modern world. Thus, we tend to describe the past in current categories of effective territorial control and stable geopolitical structure.

Such a picture, however, is far from what the situation some thousand years ago was like. We should imagine that there was not much stability on the supra-local level because there was usually no paramount power able to sustain one well-defined economic, ideological, social or political model. It was a world with no clear ethnic,

linguistic or religious boundaries. There were no nation-states and not even stable state borders. Europe around the year 1000 was a boiling complexity, from which its modern geopolitical structure was emerging. The co-authors of the current volume understand this very well, when they describe their parts of the continent not in terms of delimited areas but as dynamic and changeable political organisations.

That period of the great instability was also a time of rulers whose ability, charisma and good luck made them famous personalities of regional histories. The year 1000 is distinguished by the number of outstanding persons who were active on the geopolitical stages. Never (?) before or later have so many magnificent rulers lived at the same time in various parts of Europe:

Vladimir the Great, who christianised Rus' and founded the state built on a mixture of Scandinavian, Slavic, nomadic and Byzantine traditions; **Samuel** of Bulgaria, who in the short time period created an ephemeral regional empire; **Basil II**, who raised the glory of the Byzantine Empire to the level that had not been seen since the times of the emperor Justinian the Great; **Peter II Orseola**, who reinforced the position of the Venetian Republic between the German and Byzantine empires; Pope **Silvester II** (Gerbert of Aurillac), who was one of the prominent scholars and mentor of emperor Otto III; **ibn Amir al-Mansur** — the real ruler of the Cordoban Caliphate and invincible enemy of the Christian armies; **Æthelred II**, who was the effective organiser of the English state and introduced its modern name *Ænglaland* in common use; **Brian Bórma** — the only man in Irish history who deserved the title of a king of Ireland; **Olav Tryggvason**, who laid the foundations for the Norwegian North Atlantic empire; **Sven Forkbeard**, who started the formation of the Danish North Sea empire; **Boleslaw the Brave (Great)**, who won battles against his all neighbours making Poland a regional power; **Vaik-Stephen**, who converted the Hungarians and organised them into a stable kingdom; and **Otto III** — the propagator of the visionary idea of the restoration of the Roman Empire.

Most of these men never met each other, even though they were regionally closely related by opportunistic dynastic marriages, which supported diplomatic relations and reinforced geopolitical alliances. These marriages promoted the formation of an inter-regional culture of the ruling elite, that played their games with no respect to any national interests. For it was the world of dynasties and not of nations. Most of the common people had no idea and no interest in supra-local politics even if they participated in rallies that executed some political control. On the other extreme, most of the rulers had no idea and no interest in continental politics that engaged the popes and emperors.

Europe of the year 1000 was very much different from the Europe that we know today. Let's start a journey across the continent as it looked during that fascinating time.

LE DÉBAT SUR LA „MUTATION FÉODALE”: ÉTAT DE LA QUESTION*

Christian Lauranson-Rosaz**

Deux siècles après la Révolution française, qui en avait fait un usage polémique, la féodalité suscite toujours la passion de la controverse. On a même parfois l'impression qu'elle reste à abolir... Même pour les historiens qui persistent à penser qu'elle existe, la féodalité pose encore un problème, réel ou imaginaire, celui de sa naissance, qui en fait risque fort de gouverner en partie celui de son existence. Y a-t-il eu une crise ou au moins un moment manifeste de l'histoire à partir duquel on peut parler de féodalité, de féodalisme, de société féodale? Ou si l'on préfère, et avec les nuances que cela peut impliquer chez tel ou tel auteur, y a-t-il eu une révolution ou une mutation féodale?

Éric Bournazel et Jean-Pierre Poly¹

Nombre d'historiens (et parmi eux quelques illustres) demeurent soumis à un modèle — la „société féodale”. Comme tout modèle rigide, il les pousse à forcer le trait, à transformer les évolutions en ruptures (par exemple la France de l'an mil), à interpréter toute variation dans le style ou le volume de la documentation comme l'indicateur de bouleversements sociaux. La coupe est pleine quand on fait ressurgir le mythe des terreurs de l'an mil!

Dominique Barthélemy²

Plus qu'un simple système politique, la féodalité est conçue par les médiévistes comme un ensemble d'institutions et de relations concernant toute la société, dite alors

* Cette étude tente de faire le point sur un des débats historiographiques les plus complexes de ces dernières années: elle ne prétend évidemment pas être exhaustive, et son auteur espère ne pas avoir trop déformé la pensée des protagonistes d'un débat aussi passionné. Une version espagnole de cet essai (*La „mutación feudal”: una cuestión controvertida*) est parue dans le n°4 de la revue „Historiar” (janvier 2000), Barcelone, 1999: 12–31. Notre approche de la question est évidemment française, pour un problème essentiellement français, ou tout au moins avant tout méridional.

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¹ *Les féodalités*, Paris 1998. Introduction: 6 et 9.

² *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu?*, Paris 1997a, 4^e de couverture.

„féodale”³; une société dont le point focal est pour certains la dislocation de l'autorité publique, entre le X^e et le XII^e siècle, une sorte d'„anarchie” engendrée par une crise socio-politique, la „mutation féodale”, alors que d'autres refusent cette idée de crise, ne percevant pas de changement majeur entre les temps carolingiens et le XII^e siècle, et allant même jusqu'à nier la notion même de féodalité.

Depuis quelques années, s'est ainsi instauré un débat, à la fois salubre et malsain, quant à la nature de la féodalité occidentale, particulièrement française. Malsain parce qu'évidemment quelque part idéologique⁴, donc orienté; salubre parce qu'il permet aux spécialistes de revisiter la féodalité, tout au moins dans son fondement, ses origines, objets mêmes du débat.

Glosant le texte qui introduit cet article, nous dirons que pour les historiens qui persistent à penser qu'elle existe, mais aussi finalement pour les autres, la féodalité pose ainsi le problème — réel pour les uns, imaginaire pour les autres — de sa naissance: y a-t-il eu une crise, ou au moins un moment manifeste de l'histoire à partir duquel on peut parler de féodalité, de féodalisme, de société féodale? Ou, si l'on préfère, et avec les nuances que cela peut impliquer chez tel ou tel auteur, y a-t-il eu une „mutation féodale”?⁵

Deux opinions s'affrontent ainsi:

Les uns considèrent que l'instauration de la seigneurie châtelaine, à l'aube du XI^e siècle, constitue une rupture. Ils plaident pour la „mutation”, voire la „révolution féodale de l'an mil”⁶: au changement du caractère des sources, ils font correspondre un changement socio-politique de même ampleur, qui tend à maintenir et renforcer la

³ J.-Fr. Sirinelli, directeur de la collection des Presses Universitaires de France (*Histoire générale des systèmes politiques*) dans laquelle est paru l'ouvrage *Les Féodalités*, rappelait, dans le premier volume de cette collection (*Les empires occidentaux*, dir. J. Tulard): „Les systèmes politiques incluent l'analyse des grandes constructions institutionnelles, mais également l'étude de leur soubassement social et culturel: le socle économique ou les rapports sociaux, assurément, mais aussi, et c'est là l'un des aspects essentiels de cette entreprise collective, les idéologies, les cultures politiques, les représentations et les valeurs”.

⁴ Fr. Autrand, D. Barthélemy, Ph. Contamine (1991: 103) écrivent fort justement: „Premier aspect du retour du politique, en association avec «la société», le «pouvoir» figure plus souvent que l'«économie» dans le libellé de thèses récemment soutenues ou en cours. Pour la période féodale (XI^e-XII^e siècle), c'est une consécration de la référence mâconnaise: le phénomène de la seigneurie châtelaine occupe une place centrale dans l'histoire de ce temps, même si l'on doit reconnaître avec J.-P. Poly et É. Bournazel, qu'il n'est pas seulement politique”.

⁵ D'après É. Bournazel et J.-P. Poly 1998.

⁶ Le concept de „révolution féodale” serait dû à G. Duby, qui l'aurait utilisé pour la première fois dans son ouvrage *Les trois ordres ou l'imaginaire du féodalisme* (Paris 1978: 183-205). L'expression se rencontre en fait déjà bien avant lui et même avant Marc Bloch: ainsi au début du siècle, sous la plume de l'historien M. Boudet, dans son introduction au *Cartulaire du prieuré de Saint-Flour* (Monaco 1910): au chapitre VII (p. CVII sq.) Il décrit le déchaînement des violences seigneuriales sur la planèze de Saint-Flour autour de l'an mil de manière on ne peut plus „mutationniste”. Il voit même une première „révolution” en Auvergne dans les années 950, ce qu'a montré à son tour l'auteur du présent article, dans sa thèse, *L'Auvergne et ses marges (Velay, Gévaudan) du VIII^e au XI^e siècle. La fin du monde antique?*, Le Puy-en-Velay 1987.

domination de classe de l'aristocratie. Cette opinion, qu'on peut dire „à tendance marxisante” en nuancant l'expression⁷, est celle de Georges Duby⁸ et de ses émules, Pierre Bonnassie et Jean-Pierre Poly entre autres: ils pensent qu'une société de type antique a duré jusqu'en 980–1030 (Mâconnais) ou 1020–1060 (Catalogne, Provence) et datent du XI^e siècle les grands débuts de tout ce qui fait la „société féodale” caractéristique: début du servage (appelé plus souvent „dépendance”), début de la chevalerie, voire même, dans le Midi, début des relations féodo-vassaliques. Pour mieux souligner le changement, le „mutationnisme”⁹ est ainsi essentiellement lié à deux soucis: prendre acte de la ré-interprétation romanisante du haut Moyen Âge qu'ont récemment faite certains historiens¹⁰ et conserver la notion „marxisante” d'une opposition entre l'antiquité et le féodalisme¹¹.

Les autres mettent l'accent sur une certaine continuité avec le X^e siècle¹²: à l'instar de la „vieille école” historique française¹³, qui plaçait la période féodale entre 877 et 1214, et y voyait seulement le renoncement à des apparences d'ordre public, la féodalité étant en place depuis un siècle, en germe depuis cinq siècles. Pour ces „traditionalistes”,

⁷ Voir nos remarques sur la question *infra*.

⁸ Lequel apporte des vues nouvelles à la question en 1973 dans *Hommes et structures du Moyen Âge*, recueil de ses nombreux articles, et dans *Guerriers et paysans (VII^e–XII^e siècle)*. Premier essor de l'économie européenne (repris en 1988 dans les deux volumes *La Société chevaleresque et Seigneurs et Paysans*).

⁹ L'expression „mutationniste” — et son corrélat „anti-mutationniste” — servant à désigner la thèse de la „nouvelle école” est due à D. Barthélemy. Comme le note si justement S. Carocci, „tant de dénominations historiographiques devenues ensuite canoniques ont été créées de l'extérieur, par des critiques désireux de mieux qualifier leur cible polémique” (1997a: 49–91).

¹⁰ Les „hyper-romanistes”. *Infra*.

¹¹ D. Barthélemy 1995: 350: „Qui peut nier la part prise par le marxisme à l'élaboration du *mutationnisme sociologique*, c'est-à-dire celui de G. Duby (1953/1971 et 1978), de P. Bonnassie (1976) et du manuel de 1980? Le concept de «révolution féodale» est fait pour penser la transition brutale d'un «mode de production» à un autre, de l'esclavagisme «antiquisant» à la «seigneurie» médiévale”. Cf. à cet égard l'ouvrage majeur de P. Dockès (1979) „Marxiste” est un mot fort polysémique (et certains marxistes pensent que d'autres marxistes ne le sont pas): un élément minimal de définition est qu'être marxiste implique de se dire marxiste (même si c'est seulement un marxisme méthodologique). Or aucun des „grands mutationnistes” ne se réclame du marxisme: cela est évident pour Jean-François Lemarignier, mais aussi pour Jean-Pierre Poly et Éric Bournazel, qui sont „a-marxistes” (il n'y a pas *mode de production* à l'index de *La Mutation*) et Pierre Bonnassie (dans son article sur *l'esclavage*, les marxistes, ce sont visiblement les autres). Pour Georges Duby, sa leçon inaugurale au Collège montre qu'il adhère à une conception, disons matérialiste et dialectique de l'histoire, facilement traductible — il y a même des emprunts manifestes — dans les termes du marxisme, mais qu'il n'adhère pas à ce qu'on appelle couramment „le marxisme”. D'autre part, la *Leçon* est une construction *a posteriori*: Georges Duby n'est certainement pas marxiste dans *Le Mâconnais*. Guy Bois est sans doute „marxiste” au sens vernaculaire, mais ce n'est pas un „grand mutationniste”. Quant à Marcellin Boudet, il n'était marxiste à aucun des sens possibles du mot.

¹² Les „mauvaises coutumes”, en particulier, sont relativisées, et la paix de Dieu devient un terrain d'entente entre seigneurs laïques et ecclésiastiques plutôt qu'une conspiration des puissants ou la récupération d'une résistance paysanne. D. Barthélemy (1999) vient tout juste d'exposer ses thèses sur la Paix de Dieu dans son dernier ouvrage.

¹³ On la situe de 1840 à 1940, de Guizot à Fustel de Coulanges. Sur cette école, Guy Bourdéd et Hervé Martin 1983b: 83–113. Sur sa vision du „féodalisme”, cf. A. Guerreau 1980: 43 sq.

rien n'étaye vraiment la thèse mutationniste d'un déchaînement de violence et d'une hausse brutale des prélèvements seigneuriaux, vers l'an mil. Parmi eux, certains ont un discours „anti-mutationniste” parce que sinon anti-marxiste du moins conservateur, soucieux de demeurer dans la lignée de la „vieille école” — Dominique Barthélemy en est le plus évident représentant —, tandis que d'autres, qualifiés d'„hyper-romanistes”, se focalisent davantage et de manière très institutionnelle sur la question de la permanence de l'Antiquité¹⁴. Karl Ferdinand Werner, Élisabeth Magnou-Nortier ou Jean Durliat sont de ceux-là¹⁵.

De manière aussi institutionnelle, un autre débat, plus large et qui ne recoupe pas nécessairement le précédent, est celui qui oppose de manière tout aussi dichotomique les historiens quant à la définition de l'État du haut Moyen Âge, dont la „principauté” du XI^e siècle est l'héritière: „chefferie de village étendue à tout l'univers”¹⁶, guerrière et prédatrice pour certains (mutationnistes), continuation majestueuse de l'Empire romain, avec ses titres, ses formulaires et sa fiscalité pour d'autres (hyper-romanistes)¹⁷? Entre la vision „mutationniste” (celle des „chefferies”) et la vision „hyper-romaniste” (celle de la justification „antique” du commandement), il y a place pour de nombreuses gradations, notamment la vision „classique” de la dégradation du pouvoir carolingien au profit de principautés territoriales tirant leur légitimité autant des délégations de fonctions que de la conquête. N'est-ce pas celle d'un Jan Dhondt? C'est toute la question de l'origine et de la nature des pouvoirs médiévaux, une question évidemment essentielle pour mieux comprendre à la fois la mise en place et le fonctionnement des structures féodales.

Le débat est ainsi complexe parce que polymorphe; depuis une dizaine d'années, il a débouché sur une polémique, „une discussion au demeurant difficile parce que fondée sur des «malentendus conceptuels»”.

¹⁴ Une permanence qui n'est pas innocente puisqu'elle contrecarre du même coup le schéma marxiste du passage de l'esclavagisme au féodalisme.

¹⁵ K. F. Werner 1984, et surtout, récemment 1998; É. Magnou-Nortier 1974; J. Durliat (dans une optique quelque peu différente de la précédente) 1990. — Sans être des „hyper-romanistes”, certains auteurs ont beaucoup insisté sur la permanence de la romanité durant le haut Moyen Âge: M. Ruche, pour les V^e-VIII^e siècles: 1979; Chr. Lauranson-Rosaz, pour les VIII^e-XI^e siècles: 1987; G. Bois, pour l'an mil: 1989.

¹⁶ G. Duby, *Les sociétés médiévales: une approche d'ensemble*, [dans] G. Duby 1973a: 368. Cf. aussi l'article révélateur de D. Barthélemy 1986: 37-50. Il s'attaquait déjà, deux ans avant d'entamer sa croisade la „mutation féodale”, à un autre „paradigme perdu”, celui de (la lutte de) l'état contre la féodalité. Il disait notamment, en une conclusion significative: „L'âge lignager, pour violent qu'il ait été, ne comportait certainement ni plus ni moins de désordre que tout autre époque. Je l'imagine volontiers comme un temps de palabres et d'arrangements, assez favorable au maintien de grands équilibres et à l'exercice d'un sens pratique plus tard délaissé...”.

¹⁷ Dans ce sens, outre É. Magnou-Nortier 1981: 79-115; 1982: 21-66; 1984: 53-118 [en particulier cette III^e partie, pour le pouvoir], K. F. Werner 1998 et J. Durliat 1990. Voir aussi les trois volumes issus des rencontres organisées par É. Magnou-Nortier à Lille: *Aux sources de la gestion publique* (Université Charles-de-Gaulle-Lille III, coll. *Travaux & Recherches*). Tome I: *Enquête lexicographique sur fundus, villa, domus, mansus*, Lille 1993; t. II: *L'invasio des villae ou la villa comme enjeu du pouvoir*, Lille 1995; t. III: *Hommes de Pouvoir. Ressources et lieux du Pouvoir (V^e-XIII^e siècles)*, Lille 1997.

Nous remonterons à la genèse du débat, avant d'en montrer les grandes étapes, de 1975 à 1990, de 1991 à 1994, de 1995 à aujourd'hui...

1. LA GENÈSE DU DÉBAT. *De François Guizot à Georges Duby...*

Le débat commence en fait, au lendemain de la Révolution française et de l'abolition de la féodalité, avec la „vieille école” historique¹⁸, celle qu'illustrent, de la Monarchie de Juillet à la fin de la III^e République, de grands ténors de l'Histoire de France, dont François Guizot (1787–1874) ou Numa–Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889).

Construit peu avant 1840 par le premier, le „paradigme de la vieille école”¹⁹ insiste sur la crise du pouvoir royal entre 860 et 890: „l'ordre carolingien s'effondre alors, laissant le champ libre à une «société féodale»; déjà en formation depuis longtemps, elle parvient dès lors à sa maturité, et elle occupe deux siècles pleins, avant d'être altérée par le roi, l'Église, les communes et les défrichements pendant le XII^e et le XIII^e siècle. Le paradigme stimula efficacement la recherche, notamment sur la *villa* et sur le servage...”²⁰.

La force des études régionales fissure le modèle ancien dans les années 1930: en 1938 Charles–Edmond Perrin et André Déléage soulignent les transformations du ban et de „la seigneurie rurale” vers l'an mil²¹; en 1939 Roger Aubenas oppose les châteaux publics du X^e siècle à la privatisation de l'an mil, à l'avènement d'une „seconde zone de féodalité”²².

Cette même année 1939 paraît enfin et surtout l'œuvre fondatrice et mythique de l'historien Marc Bloch, *La société féodale*²³. Sans être lui-même vraiment révolutionnaire, il vient donner une autre vision du phénomène féodal et donc du Moyen Âge en tant que l'un des pères fondateurs de ce qu'on a appelé la *Nouvelle histoire*, celle des *Annales*, dont on sait l'importance et la force novatrice dans la pensée historique

¹⁸ Cf. A. Guerreau 1980. Il faudrait aussi évoquer les conceptions du XVIII^e siècle en matière de féodalité, avec notamment les écrits de Boulainvilliers ou de Montesquieu: É. Magnou–Nortier 1993: 321; J.–P. Poly et É. Bournazel 1998: 17.

¹⁹ Nous reprenons ici les termes et l'analyse historique de D. Barthélemy 1995: 353.

²⁰ D. Barthélemy, *loc. cit.*

²¹ Ch.–E. Perrin 1935, notamment p. 666 (à la fin du X^e siècle en pays germanique, passage de l'immunité et du ban domanial ancien au ban seigneurial). A. Déléage 1941, notamment p. 525–536.

²² R. Aubenas 1938: 580. L'idée était déjà présente trente ans plus tôt chez M. Boudet, *op. cit.*: CLXVII, n. 2.: „Commencée sous Charles le Chauve par Bernard I^{er} comte d'Auvergne, elle s'était constituée au X^e siècle, dans une seconde phase, au profit des vicomtes et de quelques seigneurs particulièrement puissants: elle se généralisa sous le roi Robert II au bénéfice des viguiers, des membres de familles vicomtales, et des principaux propriétaires du sol”.

²³ Paris 1939. Rééditions 1940, 1966, 1967, 1968, etc. Marc Bloch préfère au terme „féodalité” l'expression „société féodale”.

française²⁴. La féodalité est désormais „vécue” selon un modèle en soi „mutationniste”, puisqu’on l’articule autour de deux âges, avec une féodalité carolingienne et une féodalité classique à partir du X^e siècle, la transition s’effectuant sur fond de mouvements de classes et de liens de dépendance: le lien est ainsi rompu, au moins idéologiquement, avec la „vieille école” historique.

Les lendemains de la Seconde Guerre mondiale ne font que confirmer le divorce, avec l’ouvrage majeur de l’historien du droit belge François-Louis Ganshof, *Qu’est-ce que la féodalité?*²⁵, et de son homologue français Jean-François Lemarignier: ce dernier vient donner une analyse juridique de ce que l’on n’appelle pas encore la „mutation féodale”, en insistant sur le passage de la loi à la coutume dans le contexte de faillite du pouvoir carolingien; il propose finalement de déplacer d’une centaine d’années en aval la phase cruciale du processus de désagrégation de l’ordre politique²⁶. De son côté, un autre historien belge, Jan Dhondt procédait à la même analyse de la faillite du pouvoir carolingien en s’appuyant sur les aspects régionaux du phénomène politique²⁷.

Mai 68 est proche. La grande „révolution culturelle” de la société française aura évidemment des répercussions de taille sur l’historiographie du Moyen Âge féodal par son analyse „structuraliste” de la société, et ce sont naturellement les „structures féodales” qui retiennent l’attention, tant sur le plan européen que dans le cadre français²⁸. Alors que vient d’être significativement rééditée la somme de Marc Bloch et que paraît l’ouvrage plus institutionnel et classique de Robert Boutruche, *Seigneurie et féodalité*²⁹, arrive sur la scène de l’histoire un nouveau médiéviste français, le plus grand de ces dernières décennies, Georges Duby, dont la magistrale thèse sur le Mâconnais, parue en 1953, n’est vraiment révélée qu’à sa deuxième édition, en 1971, lorsqu’il entre au Collège de France et produit des écrits remarquables sur les sociétés médiévales et l’an Mil³⁰. Après l’analyse juridique du „mutationnisme”, c’est son

²⁴ G. Thuillier et J. Tulard 1990; G. Bourdé, H. Martin 1983a: 171–226.

²⁵ Bruxelles 1944, rééd. 1947, 1968, etc.

²⁶ J.-Fr. Lemarignier 1951: 401–410. Deux autres historiens du droit suivront ses développements: P. Ourliac 1993 (n^os 1, 4, 5, 6 et *passim*); O. Guillot (élève de Lemarignier) 1992: 231–246. Notre propre étude *Les mauvaises coutumes d’Auvergne (fin X^e–XI^e siècle)*, „Annales du Midi” 102, n^o 192, oct.–déc. 1990: 557–586, et *Des „mauvaises coutumes” aux „bonnes coutumes”*, [dans] *La coutume au village*, Actes des 20^{èmes} Journées Internationales d’Histoire de l’Abbaye de Flaran (4,5, 6 sept. 1998), à paraître. Pour l’Italie, G. Tabacco 1960: 397–446; G. Sergi 1995a: 245–271. Sans oublier les dernières journées de Spolète consacrées à la féodalité...

²⁷ *Études sur la naissance des principautés territoriales en France (IX^e–X^e siècles)*, [Bruges 1948] ont beaucoup fait progresser la vision question de la genèse de la féodalité. Voir aussi son approche mutationniste dans *Le Haut Moyen Âge (VIII^e–XI^e siècles)*, éd. française revue et mise à jour par M. Rouche, Paris 1968.

²⁸ Cf. R.-H. Bautier 1991: 54–55.

²⁹ Paris, 2 vol., 1968 et 1970.

³⁰ *Des sociétés médiévales. Leçon inaugurale prononcée au Collège de France*, Paris 1972, rééd. dans *Hommes et structures du Moyen Âge*, Paris 1973: 361–379. Sont aussi remarquables son recueil de textes commentés sur le Millénaire (1967) et „son” *Histoire de la France* en trois volumes (Paris 1970–1971).

analyse „sociologique” qui est initiée, Georges Duby soulignant bien — trop pour certains — le désordre et la violence sociale qui accompagnent l'avènement des temps féodaux classiques.

L'idée de „révolution féodale” était en marche...

Elle va tout de suite trouver des adeptes: dans la foulée du Mâconnais de Georges Duby, les années 70 voient apparaître une série de monographies régionales³¹, dont certaines remarquables, comme en 1975–1976 la Catalogne de Pierre Bonnassie ou la Provence de Jean–Pierre Poly, deux auteurs qui vont faire désormais figure de chefs de file de l'école dite „mutationniste”. Auparavant, certains auteurs ou maîtres moins remarqués avaient pourtant eux aussi tracé la voie, creusant plus ou moins profondément le sillon³²: parmi eux il convient de citer de nouveau Jean–François Lemarignier, qui „révolutionne” profondément l'histoire du droit médiéval, l'étude du pouvoir et des structures et suscite de nombreux disciples³³.

Hors du domaine francophone, des travaux de valeur sont aussi venus donner leur propre vision des féodalités, une vision évidemment différente, pour des zones de l'Occident médiéval où les structures de pouvoir ont un autre visage, ce qui contribue bien souvent à „brouiller les pistes”³⁴.

Des colloques ont bien sûr accompagné de très près ces publications, dont les plus notoires pour notre propos furent le colloque de l'École française de Rome de 1978, *Structures féodales et féodalisme*³⁵ et la rencontre franco–britannique de Bordeaux de l'année suivante, *Sociétés et groupes sociaux en Aquitaine et en Angleterre*³⁶.

La première œuvre véritable de Georges Duby est un article paru en 1946/7 et dans lequel déjà toute sa réflexion sur la mutation féodale était en germe: 1946: 149–194, et 1947: 15–38.

³¹ Chronologiquement, de 1975 à 1987, ces monographies régionales sont: P. Bonnassie 1975–1976; J.–P. Poly 1976; M. Bur 1977; Y. Sassier 1980; M. Aubrun 1981; R. Mussot–Goulard 1982; D. Barthélemy 1984; A. Debord 1984; Chr. Lauranson–Rosaz 1987.

³² Divers travaux de détail s'étaient ainsi appliqués aux structures sociales ou économiques de telle région ou de telle ville, ou à des aspects particuliers des problèmes du „pouvoir”: G. Fournier 1962; G. Beech 1964; A. R. Lewis 1965; M. Garaud 1967; R. Sanfaçon 1967; R. Fossier 1968; O. Guillot 1972; A. Chédeville 1973; G. Devailly 1973; P. Toubert 1973; É. Magnou–Nortier 1974. Plus récemment: A. Chédeville et N.–Y. Tonnerre 1987; M. Bourin–Derruau 1987; Cl. Duhamel–Amado 1995, à paraître; J. J. Larrea 1998; A. Catafau 1998.

³³ 1970 (1^{ère} éd.). Pour ses autres travaux, voir J.–Fr. Lemarignier 1995. Au nombre de ses disciples figurent D. Barthélemy, É. Bournazel, J.–P. Brunterc'h, O. Guillot, H. Guillotel, O. Guyotjeannin, J.–P. Poly, Y. Sassier.

³⁴ Hors du cadre „franco–occitan”, en terres anglo–saxonnes, germaniques ou impériales, nous renvoyons pour le débat qui y présente d'autres aspects, aux beaux chapitres écrits dans *Les Féodalités (cit.)* par G. Giordanengo, *Les féodalités italiennes* (p. 211–262), Fr. Pellaton, *Féodalité et Empire romain germanique* (p. 263–311) et É. Bournazel, *La royauté féodale (en France et) en Angleterre* (p. 389–510). Et la péninsule ibérique est encore un autre monde: J. Salrach, *Les féodalités méridionales: des Alpes à la Galice* (p. 313–388). Nous y viendrons.

³⁵ *Structures féodales et féodalisme dans l'Occident méditerranéen (X^e–XIII^e siècles)*. Bilan et perspectives de recherches. Colloque international C.N.R.S. et École Française de Rome (Rome, 10–13 octobre 1978), Rome 1980.

³⁶ Bordeaux, Fédération historique du Sud–Ouest, 1979.

Sur un plan moins général, un colloque „régional” du CNRS sur les *structures sociales de l'Aquitaine*³⁷, anticipant sur les monographies des provinces méridionales, avait dès 1969 donné un ton particulier au discours des auteurs décrivant la mutation féodale dans cette aire géographique bien particulière, des auteurs bientôt qualifiés de „méridionalistes”. Car c’est paradoxalement des provinces traditionnellement réputées comme sinon étrangères du moins réticentes aux pratiques et institutions féodales que va venir s’affirmer le „mutationnisme”.

2. LE „DÉBAT” DE 1975 À 1990. La révélation du „paradigme” mutationniste...

Une fois brossé ce rapide tableau de l’historiographie moderne de la féodalité, qu’en est-il des idées qu’elle véhicule? C’est toute l’affaire du fameux „débat” qui agite le milieu historique depuis une vingtaine d’années seulement, mais de plus en plus fortement depuis dix ans, du fait de la réaction de certains auteurs au „paradigme mutationniste” et à son „totalitarisme”...

L’année 1975 est un tournant en ce sens qu’elle voit intervenir dans ce qui devient „le” débat, des éléments étrangers, américains en l’occurrence: d’un côté Perry Anderson, qui, dans *Passage from Antiquity to Feudalism*, reprend de façon dialectique l’opposition marxiste classique entre infrastructures et superstructures, de l’autre sa collègue Elizabeth A. R. Brown, qui, dans une publication fort documentée, *The Tyranny of a Construct: Feudalism and History of Medieval Europe*³⁸, entend démontrer que la féodalité est — seulement — une construction théorique³⁹: en se libérant des „tyrannies” conceptuelles, on peut borner l’histoire à la seule description „objective” des faits.

Pendant ce temps, Georges Duby reprend ses thèses⁴⁰. Il s’intéresse de près à la mise en place de la société féodale avec la question des origines de la tri-fonctionnalité qui va conditionner si fortement le monde occidental („clergé, noblesse et tiers-état”)⁴¹.

³⁷ *Les Structures sociales de l'Aquitaine, du Languedoc et de l'Espagne au premier âge féodal*, Colloque C.N.R.S., 1969.

³⁸ „American Historical Review” 79, 1974: 1063–1088.

³⁹ Ce qui n’est pas sans nous rappeler l’ouvrage immédiatement postérieur d’A. Guerreau 1980: du XI^e au XIII^e siècle, l’Occident chrétien connut un essor global et massif, de mieux en mieux connu mais inexpliqué. „Analyser ce vide camouflé et évaluer l’ensemble de la crise radicale des médiévistes et modernistes, tel est le propos (de l’ouvrage)... Un premier axe de réflexion le conduit à rechercher les conditions d’utilisation de tel ou tel concept dans la pratique des médiévistes et modernistes des XIX^e et XX^e siècle, à montrer les transformations internes des concepts propres à l’étude du féodalisme et les rapports de ces transformations avec l’évolution des principales tendances de l’idéologie bourgeoise. Dans un deuxième temps, l’auteur met en place un système d’hypothèses susceptible de rendre compte rationnellement des réalités de l’Europe féodale. Trois rapports sociaux principaux sont pris en compte: le rapport de *dominium* des seigneurs sur les paysans; les rapports de parenté et de pseudo-parenté, les multiples aspects du rapport de l’Église au reste de la société”.

⁴⁰ Cf. son article consacré aux *Féodalités méditerranéennes*, dans „Le Monde” du 27 octobre 1978.

⁴¹ G. Duby 1978. Cet ouvrage pionnier, qui s’appuie sur les études de G. Dumézil, va susciter de nombreuses études, notamment celles de D. Iogna-Prat sur les origines carolingiennes de la tri-fonctionnalité (1986–I: 101–126), de J.-Y. Batany (1963: 933–938) et de Cl. Carozzi (1978: 682–702) sur les états du monde et la rhétorique de cet imaginaire social à travers les vues de divers auteurs du X^e au XII^e siècle.

La mutation féodale de Jean-Pierre Poly et Éric Bournazel, parue en 1980 et rééditée en 1991⁴², n'avait pas d'autre propos que de rappeler que s'il y a un „système féodal”, c'est qu'il existe un jeu des institutions féodales par rapport au reste de la société. Ses auteurs — des historiens du droit, la précision est d'importance⁴³ — y ont mis l'accent sur les changements profonds et parfois brutaux survenus autour de l'an mil dans le royaume de France, prolongeant en cela les travaux de leur maître Jean-François Lemarignier et ceux de Georges Duby qui, l'un et l'autre, voyaient là une césure historique majeure.

La somme de Robert Fossier, *L'enfance de l'Europe: X^e-XII^e siècles, aspects économiques et sociaux*, paru deux ans plus tard dans la même collection *Nouvelle Clio* des P.U.F., fait moins de bruit, malgré son volume double; la même année était réédité (pour la cinquième fois en français!) *Qu'est ce que la féodalité?* de François-Louis Ganshof.

1987 est aussi l'année de la „commémoration” du millénaire d'Hugues Capet. Le colloque international C.N.R.S. tenu de juin à septembre, successivement à Paris, Senlis, Auxerre, Barcelone et Metz⁴⁴, s'il n'a pas été spécialement consacré aux questions féodales, a néanmoins fortement mis l'accent, plus que sur Hugues Capet, sur l'an Mil et les mutations qui s'y opèrent en France...

Peu de temps après, en 1989, la parution de l'ouvrage suggestif mais méthodologiquement discutable de Guy Bois, *La mutation de l'an mil*, joue sans conteste le rôle de détonateur⁴⁵: postulant „la croyance apparente... qu'on pouvait reconstruire un tournant de toute l'histoire d'Europe à partir de quelques chartes concernant un village bourguignon”⁴⁶, il va faire l'objet de très violentes critiques⁴⁷, notamment de la part

⁴² J.-P. Poly et É. Bournazel 1980, rééd. 1991, publiée en plusieurs langues...

⁴³ Voir les réserves qu'ils font aux conceptions de Ganshof et de Bloch, dissociant trop droit et société. Ils proposent une réinterprétation des deux âges féodaux. *Ibidem*: „Ce qu'il y avait, selon nous, de féodal dans le premier âge de M. Bloch c'était sa fin: le temps où, en de nombreuses régions, s'établissait la seigneurie banale, justicière; le temps où, tandis que se généralisait dans la couche supérieure de la paysannerie l'usage du fief et de l'hommage, le reste des manants était massivement repoussé vers la dépendance ou la servitude. Le temps d'une crise sociale, au sens le plus large du terme, à laquelle l'Église, par le mouvement de paix et de trêve, tentait de répondre. Alors s'affirmaient définitivement les rapports féodaux, alors se mettaient en place les institutions qui allaient régir, ou prétendre régir, la société dans les siècles qui suivraient; alors s'établissait, avec le second âge de Marc Bloch, une société véritablement féodale”.

⁴⁴ Le colloque a donné lieu à des actes fort utiles. Cf. bibliographie.

⁴⁵ G. Bois 1989. G. Duby écrivait notamment, en préface de l'ouvrage: „G. Bois construit avec soin, clarté, prudence, un modèle. Il ose proposer l'explication globale, entièrement neuve, cohérente, d'une transition, ou plutôt d'une révolution. Il esquisse la théorie de ce passage qui substitua au système social «antique» cet autre système que nous continuons d'appeler féodal”. G. Bois avait déjà fait paraître en 1976 un ouvrage remarqué, mais consacré à la fin du Moyen Âge: *Crise du féodalisme. Économie rurale et démographie en Normandie orientale du XIV^e siècle au milieu du XVI^e siècle*.

⁴⁶ T. Reuter 1997: 177-195.

⁴⁷ *L'an mil. Rythmes et acteurs d'une croissance*. Numéro spécial de la revue „Médiévales” 21, automne 1991. Avec les contributions suivantes: M. Bourin, *L'an mil: continuité, tournant ou révolution? discussions autour d'un livre controversé* (p. 5-10); B. H. Rosenwein, *Le lit de Procuste de Guy Bois* (p. 11-16);

d'Alain Guerreau, avec sa mise en garde contre le mythe de la „tempête sociale” autour de l'an mil⁴⁸.

Le débat va changer d'allure...

3. DE 1991 À 1994. „Mutationnistes” et „anti-mutationnistes”: le duel

Nous sommes en 1991: cette année même sort la nouvelle édition de *la mutation féodale* de Jean-Pierre Poly et Éric Bournazel. C'est véritablement alors que dans une violente diatribe, Dominique Barthélemy lance sa polémique „anti-mutationniste” en publiant dans les *Annales* une „note critique” sur l'ouvrage: „La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu?”⁴⁹.

Non sans avouer que jusqu'en 1988, lui-même était sous l'emprise du „paradigme dominant” qu'est devenue la mutation féodale, il clame que ce paradigme doit être remis en cause⁵⁰: „Les auteurs (de la *mutation féodale*) reconduisent un modèle qui en 1980

É. Zadora-Rio, *Essor démographique, croissance agraire et archéologie* (p. 17–20); M. Hillebrandt et F. Nieske, *À la recherche de personnes perdues...* (p. 21–25); Chr. Wickham, *Mutations et révolutions autour de l'an mil* (p. 27–38); P. Bonnassie, *Mâconnais, terre féconde* (p. 39–46); L. To Figueras, *Un regard périphérique sur la mutation de l'an mil* (p. 47–53); A. Verhulst, *Europe carolingienne et Europe méridionale* (propos recueillis par M. Bourin: 55–61); Y. Morimoto, *Réflexions d'un historien japonais sur le livre de Guy Bois* (p. 63–68); N. Gauthier, *L'Antiquité se prolonge-t-elle jusqu'à l'an mil?* (p. 69–76); R. Fossier, *Réflexions sur un „modèle”* (p. 77–79); B. Lepetit, *C'est arrivé à Lournand* (p. 81–89); G. Bois, *Réponse* (p. 91–108).

⁴⁸ Lournand au X^e siècle: histoire et fiction, „Le Moyen Age” 96, 1990: 519–537. Une „critique saine et pénétrante” pour D. Barthélemy... en tout cas aussi violente que son pamphlet de 1980: *Le féodalisme. Un horizon théorique*.

⁴⁹ *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu? Note critique*, „Annales ESC”, mai–juin 1992: 767–777. Rééditée dans l'ouvrage déjà cité du même titre *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu?* (Paris 1997). Signalons également les deux thèses de D. Barthélemy, avec une optique qui n'était pas encore „anti-mutationniste”: 1984; 1993. — Notons que les „Annales” ont refusé à Jean-Pierre Poly et à Éric Bournazel leur droit de réponse à l'article de D. Barthélemy de 1992: c'est la vénérable „Revue historique de droit français et étranger” qui leur a permis d'en user en leur ouvrant ses pages deux ans après „l'attaque” (*Que faut-il préférer...*, et *Post-scriptum...*, *infra*).

⁵⁰ *Avant-propos: une note critique*: 13–28. En 1986 cependant, D. Barthélemy avait écrit un article où il commençait à développer certaines de ses idées futures: *L'État contre le „lignage”...* (cit.). „Du point de vue de l'histoire des sciences, la façon dont les choses se sont passées est parlante. C'est une progression à petits pas, de façon empirique et discrète et en partant de l'étude modeste des institutions. Ce processus graduel et fort long (en gros trente ans: les «Trente glorieuses») ne s'explique ni par la tradition française des thèses régionales, ni parce qu'il y avait un grand secret qu'on n'aurait pas osé dire trop fort par respect pour la mémoire tutélaire de Marc Bloch. Ce qui est frappant c'est que pendant toute ces années d'élaboration, il n'y a, que je sache, aucun débat idéologisé, et même pas de débat du tout. Le débat idéologisé vient après coup quand «on» s'aperçoit qu'il y a eu changement de paradigme, que ce changement est couvert par un grand nom (Duby) et que, du coup, il est loisible, sous ce couvert, d'interpréter la question d'un point de vue plus ou moins ouvertement marxiste (le livre de Bois et la polémique qu'il déclenche dans «Médiévales»). Il y a là un bon exemple de la façon dont se font les changements de paradigmes dans les sciences qu'on dit humaines”. D. Barthélemy a bien raison de dire qu'il n'a longtemps rien vu du paradigme ni de son emprise sur lui, tant le paradigme s'est installé discrètement...

stimulait la recherche⁵¹ mais qui aujourd'hui la bloque⁵²... la question est de savoir s'il n'est pas temps d'en changer, de lui en préférer un autre". Il argumente son discours selon un plan en 4 points:

1. *La théorie mutationniste*. Alors que Marc Bloch, reprenant la chronologie traditionnelle de la période féodale du XIX^e siècle (877–1214), en donne une interprétation plus sociologique que ses prédécesseurs, soulignant l'inflexion de 1050, Georges Duby transforme cette inflexion en rupture, et autour de l'an mil, quoique avec ajustement. En revanche, les deux thèses de Pierre Bonnassie (Catalogne 1975) et de Jean-Pierre Poly (Provence 1976) sont pour Dominique Barthélemy „l'expression la plus achevée du mutationnisme”⁵³. Et voici comment il résume la théorie mutationniste dont les modalités régionales peuvent différer, le mouvement étant partout le même:

Vers le milieu du X^e siècle, les auteurs situent, après Jean-François Lemarignier⁵⁴ et Georges Duby, une dégradation décisive des institutions publiques. Les grands (dont on a pourtant démontré qu'ils descendent des titulaires d'honores carolingiens) confisquent la justice et les châteaux. Ils créent une nouvelle forme de pouvoir, privé et patrimonial, la seigneurie banale. Ils se trouvent ainsi à même de frapper à mort toute la sociabilité rurale traditionnelle et disloquent la paysannerie libre et alleutière qui, depuis des siècles, résistait à leurs coups de boutoir; dans sa strate supérieure, ils recrutent leurs hommes de main. Ces cavaliers, *milites*, valets du terrorisme seigneurial, sont appelés à se muer progressivement en une chevalerie: au cours du XII^e siècle, ils se construisent une idéologie et se rapprochent de la noblesse. Mais dès le XI^e siècle, ils se déploient en bon ordre féodal, moyennant quoi le fief devient quelque chose de plus spécifique que jadis, et d'héréditaire. D'un autre côté, les paysans non libres, dont Jean-Pierre Poly et Éric Bournazel, tout comme Pierre Bonnassie, pensent qu'ils n'étaient plus qu'une poignée mais qu'ils subissaient encore un authentique esclavage, se trouvent affranchis de cette condition dès lors qu'ils se

⁵¹ „La première édition de ce livre est un jalon fondamental dans l'effort accompli pour penser plus positivement la «féodalité», effort poursuivi depuis lors par la *Legal Anthropology* américaine et dont l'origine se trouvait déjà chez M. Bloch et G. Duby” (*ibid.*). „À peu près seules en France, les *Annales* ont ouvert leurs colonnes à un premier bilan de cette école” (*ibid.*, note 3 citant –1133).

⁵² „La seconde édition de *La mutation féodale* (1991) n'a rien changé à l'architecture d'ensemble ou de détail. Elle s'enrichit seulement de quelques paragraphes nouveaux en petits caractères, enchâssés dans les développements. Jean-Pierre Poly et Éric Bournazel discutent les thèses d'Alessandro Barbero sur la chevalerie et la noblesse et d'Élisabeth Magnou-Nortier sur la servitude; ils adoptent le modèle de Pierre Bonnassie sur les deux servitudes; ils intègrent les apports de Dominique Iogna-Prat sur les sources auxerroises du schéma trifonctionnel d'Adalbéron de Laon et de Gérard de Cambrai, et ceux d'Olivier Guyotjeannin sur la chancellerie capétienne du XI^e siècle” (p. 14).

⁵³ Ces deux „pionniers” ont été immédiatement et plus ou moins largement suivis par d'autres: M. Bur, Y. Sassier, D. Barthélemy (!), A. Debord, Chr. Lauranson-Rosaz (*op. cit.*).

⁵⁴ Ce n'est pas un hasard s'il fut le maître de J.-P. Poly, d'É. Bournazel et même de D. Barthélemy! Auteur d'écrits déjà fortement mutationnistes (1951) il écrivait déjà en 1980 dans sa préface à la thèse d'Y. Sassier (*op. cit.*: VIII): „Ainsi l'Auxerrois est-il à ranger parmi les régions ayant subi ce que l'historiographie actuelle tend à appeler la *mutation* des années 1025–1030 qui, par-delà des prolongements carolingiens dépassés, a contribué à donner un autre visage à la société”.

rapprochent des alleutiers en déroute. Très vite cependant, après un bref hiatus chronologique, tous les non-cavaliers se retrouvent pris dans les liens d'une dépendance un peu floue, mais sévère et durable, vouée en outre à se dégrader, en certaines régions et à l'aube du XIII^e siècle, en un „nouveau servage”. Les critiques qui s'ensuivent sont sévères: le lien entre la „mutation de l'an mil” et les nouvelles idées du temps (hérésie, érémitisme, littérature courtoisie) n'est ni clair ni démontrable... les apports des auteurs eux-mêmes ne vont pas tous dans le sens de la brusque „mutation” autour de l'an mil; ils donnent aussi des matériaux aux tenants de l' „ajustement”... Au chapitre sur la vassalité et le fief, le mutationnisme est bien tempéré... ne peuvent nier ni la continuité de cette noblesse qui surplombe les paysans mais aussi, selon eux, les simples chevaliers, ni la permanence d'un discours chrétien sur la soumission à l'ordre établi. Par conséquent, et comme il arrive dans la plupart des livres, les conclusions d'ensemble sont beaucoup moins nuancées que les développements particuliers.

2. Soulevant le problème des sources, Dominique Barthélemy s'interroge à propos du changement dans le style qui marque les documents du XI^e siècle: les „mutationnistes” tiennent-ils assez compte de la différence d'information?⁵⁵ Dans „la disparité frappante entre le style «officiel» du X^e siècle et ses quelques prolongements dans le XI^e siècle d'une part, le style plus libre et plus narratif des notices du XI^e siècle d'autre part”, Georges Duby voyait l'indice d'une crise des institutions publiques⁵⁶. Pierre Bonnassie surestime l'intensité de la violence sociale dont le changement de style serait le révélateur? Jean-Pierre Poly et Éric Bournazel vont trop loin en faisant du changement de vocabulaire un moyen de dater précisément la mutation (l'irruption du mot *consuetudo* désignant les „mauvaises coutumes” trahirait la hausse brutale du prélèvement seigneurial, un des grands thèmes „mutationnistes”)⁵⁷.

3. La question du changement social tourne pour D. Barthélemy autour de celle des liens de dépendance, faussée pour lui par l'ambiguïté du vocabulaire et sa pseudo-mutation, derrière l' „illusion documentaire”⁵⁸. „Que la substitution de *feodum* à *benefi-*

⁵⁵ Questions de style évoquées dès 1953 par G. Duby 1988b: 9. D. Barthélemy est revenu récemment sur cette question: *Une crise de l'écrit? Observations sur des actes de Saint-Aubin d'Angers (XI^e siècle)*, „Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes” 155, 1997: 95–118. Publié également dans *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu?* (chap. 2: 29–56: „De la charte à la notice», à Saint-Aubin d'Angers”). D. Barthélemy parle de la commune fascination qu'éprouvent les deux chefs de file du „mutationnisme”: Bonnassie et J.-P. Poly, pour la „mutation” documentaire des années 990 (*Encore le débat...*: 353).

⁵⁶ „La crise, c'est cette véritable révolution qui fit s'installer, dans le bruit et la fureur, ce que nous appelons la féodalité” (G. Duby 1981: 59).

⁵⁷ Pour le vocabulaire, cf. l'ouvrage indispensable, bien que „nordiste”, de K. J. Hollyman 1957, et le classique et tout aussi indispensable dictionnaire de J. Fr. Niermeyer 1976.

⁵⁸ Sur l' „illusion documentaire”, cf. *infra*. Cf. également la remarque d'É. Bournazel et J.-P. Poly (1998): „le X^e siècle était-il déjà féodal? Certes, il existait bien, depuis les temps carolingiens, des *vassi*, des *fideles*, des *beneficia* et des *fei*, mais ces divers éléments ne formaient pas encore une structure/un système dominant”. L'argument de l' „illusion documentaire” est très utilisé par les anti-mutationnistes et plus généralement par les opposants à une vision violente de l'an mil, vision qui pour eux est due du filtre que nous impose le discours des clercs, leur „propagande”: les *milites* sont les ennemis des moines.

cium marque une étape décisive dans le développement du droit féodal, qu'est-ce qui le prouve vraiment?". „L'ascension des *milites* est un mythe historiographique... (comme) celui de la paysannerie libre... la question du passage global de l'esclavage au servage a-t-elle un sens?" Autant d'interrogations qui seront reprises plus longuement dans des articles postérieurs sur le servage⁵⁹ et la chevalerie⁶⁰.

4. Le problème de l'„ordre public" antérieur à l'an mil est aussi faussé par les textes: la floraison de la convention privée est un fait purement documentaire dû à l'extension de l'écrit, à un meilleure archivage; l'ordre apparent du XI^e s. est en fait assez proche du X^e: il faut renoncer à la fois à l'idée d'un point de rupture dans l'histoire de la justice vers l'an mil, et à celle d'institutions publiques antérieures assez fortes/autonomes, même s'il y a place pour une série d'ajustements et de redéploiements des institutions judiciaires. Transfert, en matière judiciaire, des comtes et vicomtes vers les seigneuries châtelaines, comme il y a eu ajustement en matière militaire au X^e s.

En conclusion, pour Dominique Barthélemy, *Que faut-il préférer au mutationnisme?* (note critique qui tourne à la présentation d'une contre-modèle). Ainsi en archéologie, les fortifications de terre peuvent tout autant avoir maintenu un système social (perpétuant la fameuse „oppression des puissants") que l'avoir transformé (aggravant cette oppression). Les rapports de domination ont-ils été en France entre 980 et 1060 radicalement transformés? Non... Il n'y donc a eu ni „mutation", ni „révolution", ni „bouleversement", il y a eu „ajustements successifs": „les grandes structures institutionnelles — judiciaires ou militaires — et sociales — formes de dépendance — ont été entre 980 et 1060 non pas été bouleversées, mais simplement remaniées".

Naturellement, les auteurs de *la mutation féodale* vont aussitôt croiser le fer avec leur contradicteur: ils exposent point par point leurs réponses à ses attaques, dans un article qui reprend l'intitulé même de la conclusion de leur nouvel adversaire: „Que faut-il préférer au mutationnisme?"⁶¹. Ils réaffirment ce que D. Barthélemy tient pour des mythes historiographiques: l'existence d'une paysannerie libre nettement distinguée de la noblesse et des dépendants, l'ascension des *milites*, le passage de l'esclavage au servage; en ce qui concerne l'ordre public, pour lequel D. Barthélemy invoque les études de la *legal anthropology* venues d'Amérique ou d'Angleterre, É. Bournazel et

Cf. B.H. Rosenwein, T. Head et Sh. Farmer 1991: 764–796. Les controverses sont fortes qui touchent au mouvement de la Paix de Dieu, mouvement subversif initié par les clercs. *Infra*.

⁵⁹ D. Barthélemy 1992: 233–284, réimp. dans *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu?...*, IV. *Le servage et ses rites*: 93–171. — *Les autodédications en servage à Marmoutier (Touraine) au XI^e siècle*, Ph. Contamine, T. Dutour et B. Schnerb (éd.), Commerce, finances et société (XI^e–XVI^e siècle). Recueil de travaux d'histoire médiévale offerts à M. le Professeur H. Dubois, Paris, Publications de l'université de Paris–Sorbonne, 1993: 397–415, réimp. dans *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu?...*, III. *Enquête sur des asservis volontaires*: 57–92.

⁶⁰ D. Barthélemy 1994a: 101–134, réimp. dans *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu? ...*, V. *Le mot miles et l'histoire de la chevalerie*: 173–191, et VI. annexe. — D. Barthélemy 1994a 1994b: 15–74, réimp. dans *La mutation féodale a-t-elle eu lieu?...*, VII. *Chevalerie et noblesse autour de l'an mil*: 219–296.

⁶¹ D. Barthélemy 1994c: 401–412.

J.-P. Poly renvoient précisément à celles-ci pour mieux battre ses arguments en brèche⁶². Et d'ajouter, concernant le mot même objet du litige: „dans la dialectique du temps, il n'y a pas de cause finale ou de dernière instance; il n'y a qu'un mouvement qui nous emporte, et il a parfois de terribles accélérations. Ces accélérations notables du changement social, nous les appelons, faute d'un meilleur terme, une mutation...”⁶³.

Le débat s'est ensuite élargi, de façon plus argumentée, entre historiens italiens et allemands d'abord⁶⁴, anglo-saxons ensuite: outre-Atlantique s'affrontent dans le champ clos de la revue *Past and Present* Thomas Bisson, seul contre ses adversaires „anti-mutationnistes”, Stephen White — „managé” par Dominique Barthélemy qui a fait le voyage — Timothy Reutter, Chris Wickham⁶⁵. Notons que dans la bataille, ce dernier n'en accepte pas moins l'idée d'un changement historique: „Il y avait là, si vous voulez, quelque chose comme une mutation (*something here had, if you like, mutated*)”⁶⁶... L'existence d'un changement majeur de structure dans la pratique politique

⁶² „Il nous semble qu'il biaise un peu les travaux qu'il cite”: W. Davies et P. Fouracre, étudiant les procès du haut Moyen Âge ouest-européen, ont trouvé un important décalage entre les textes normatifs et la pratique (1986). — P. Geary, en insistant sur l'effectivité des plaids de „convenance” au XI^e siècle, a montré que l'affaiblissement de l'État n'était pas forcément une catastrophe (1986: 1107). — Th. Bisson 1994: 42. T. Bartlett suggère que l'ordalie peut être l'arme d'un État en croissance, pas assez fort pour imposer la peine (1986). — Pour S. White, l'essor de la *laudatio parentum* semble bien renvoyer à une mutation sociale (1988). — B. Rosenwein, analysant les complexes stratégies du „donner et retenir” chez les familles nobles du Mâconnais évoque certes des „ajustements”, mais sans pour autant nier les crises sociales (1989). — Le lien entre mutation sociale et hérésie, peu évident pour Dominique Barthélemy, est au centre de l'étude de B. Stock sur l'émergence de la „literacy” au XI^e siècle (1983).

⁶³ Sur la question de l'„illusion documentaire”, É. Bournazel et J.-P. Poly remarquent: „Comment pouvons-nous, mille ans après, discuter du «réel historique» si nous doutons qu'il ait un lien avec la documentation? Réalistes, nous? plutôt «nominalistes». *Stat pristina rosa nomine, nomina nuda tenemus*”.

⁶⁴ Sur le „débat”: C. Violante et J. Frieds (éd.) 1993; A. Barbero 1995: 73–86; D. Barthélemy 1996: 59–81; S. Carocci 1997a, et 1997b: 167–198. — Citons aussi les contributions majeures à la connaissance de la féodalité italienne: C. Violante 1953, et 1991: 329–385; G. Tabacco 1969: 5–38 et 203–218; et G. Tabacco 1993; C. Violante, *La signoria rurale nel contesto storico dei secoli X–XII*, [dans] *Strutture* (cit.): 7–56, et *Introduzione. Problemi aperti e spunti di riflessione sulla signoria rurale nell'Italia medievale*, [dans] *La signoria rurale...* (cit.): 1–9; P. Cammarosano 1974; A. Settia 1984; G. Sergi 1986, et 1995; Fr. Menant 1993; S. Carocci 1993. — Pour l'Espagne, où le „débat” n'a pas (encore) été vif: J. A. García de Cortázar 1979 (*Historia de España Alfaguara*); M. A. Ladero Quesada 1989: 435–460; J. M. Mínguez Fernández 1985, 2: 7–32; A. Barbero et M. Vigil 1978; R. Pastor 1980; C. Estepa Diaz 1985. Voir aussi le vol. VI de *Studia Historica/Historia Medieval*, publié par l'Université de Salamanque en 1988. Pour une vue plus générale de la question du féodalisme en terres hispaniques, *En torno al feudalismo* (cit.), et E. Serrano (dir.) 1993. Noter pour la Catalogne les importantes contributions de J. M. Salrach 1987; 1991: 191–262; 1995: 9–54; 1997: 25–55; *Les féodalités méridionales*, (cit.); 1998: 9–28.

⁶⁵ Th. Bisson 1994: 42, suivi par deux critiques de D. Barthélemy et S. D. White (*Debate „The Feudal Revolution” I–II*, „Past and Present” 152, 1996: 196–205 [I] et 205–223 [II]), puis de deux autres de T. Reutter et Chr. Wickham (*Debate „The Feudal Revolution” III–IV*, *ibid.* n° 155, 1997: 177–195 [III] et 196–208 [IV]), avec une réponse de Th. Bisson (*Reply*: 208–225). Chr. Wickham avait déjà produit trois ans plus tôt une critique objective des thèses „mutationnistes” — notamment sous l'aspect économique — à l'occasion de la parution de l'ouvrage de Guy Bois: *Mutations et révolutions aux environs de l'an mil*, „Médiévales” (cit.) — Pour le monde germanique, où la féodalité est encore une chose différente et plus tardive, cf. l'excellente synthèse de Fr. Pellaton: *Féodalité et Empire romain germanique*, [dans] *Les féodalités...*: 263–311.

⁶⁶ *Loc. cit.*: 201.

ne doit pas être dénié pour une large proportion du continent”. Et il remarque fort justement les conséquences possibles d’un tel déni: „Cela pourrait inciter des gens à écrire comme si le changement historique n’avait pas existé du tout”.

A ce stade de la discussion, comme on pouvait s’y attendre, un certain nombre d’évidences méthodologiques — par exemple, l’existence de dissymétries chronologiques ou spatiales côtoient une foule de remarques originales et stimulantes. Y revient une critique qui n’est pas sans intérêt pour des historiens de culture française et leurs lecteurs, au moment où l’Europe tente de se constituer: L’accent mis sur une période particulière de crise (dans la féodalité) est une préoccupation propre aux Français... On peut aller plus loin: l’accent mis sur l’an mil et les transformations qui y sont associées tire en France son importance de l’imagerie française du centralisme national. La France du Nord — et de plus en plus celle du Midi — est comme le pivot de la féodalité parfaite, une des principales contributions françaises à la civilisation européenne et de la sorte émotivement cruciale dans l’érudition française, comme c’est le cas pour l’État-nation chez les Anglais, ou pour la cité chez les Italiens... Les Français semblent souvent envisager le monde féodal décentralisé comme le moment de chance de l’Europe au Moyen Age central, celui de l’expansion économique, des Écoles parisiennes, et d’une construction de la nation, nouvelle et plus durable par Philippe Auguste et ses héritiers... Quand commença véritablement ce monde est par conséquent une question rien moins qu’ordinaire dans la culture historique française⁶⁷.

La même opinion prend chez un autre des critiques de Thomas Bisson la forme d’une „satire légère”: „Comme nous en avons tous l’intime conviction, l’histoire de l’Europe médiévale est essentiellement l’histoire de France. Tout commence en France, depuis l’administration, l’architecture et la chanson arthurienne jusqu’aux Universités et au moulin à eau en passant par la chevalerie, les croisades et les châteaux. L’histoire politique du haut Moyen Age est l’histoire mérovingienne et carolingienne. Les Carolingiens finissent en 987 plutôt qu’en 887/8 ou en 911. Vient ensuite un léger hoquet avant qu’un nouvel ordre soit rétabli — et fort heureusement il le fut — dans la seconde moitié du XII^e siècle. C’est un hiatus, une tache dans une carrière par ailleurs impressionnante, qui exige une explication, et une explication bonne pour l’histoire de France le sera bien sûr pour l’histoire d’Europe”. Mais si la description est semblable à celle qui a précédé, le diagnostic est différent: „La mutation féodale est un produit dérivé d’une tradition historiographique française très particulière, celle des monographies régionales” qui était celle des fondateurs de la revue *Les Annales*, qui, selon

⁶⁷ Chr. Wickham, *loc. cit.*, qui semble faire référence principalement à R. Fossier 1982. Chr. Wickham n’en accepte pas moins l’idée d’un changement historique: „Il y avait là, si vous voulez, quelque chose comme une mutation... L’existence d’un changement majeur de structure dans la pratique politique ne doit pas être dénié pour une large proportion du continent”. Et il remarque fort justement les conséquences possibles d’un tel déni: „Cela pourrait inciter des gens à écrire comme si le changement historique n’avait pas existé du tout”. De Chr. Wickham, voir aussi sa contribution au numéro de „Médiévales” consacré à l’an mil (*cit.*), „Mutations et révolutions aux environs de l’an mil”.

l'auteur, auraient „délibérément enjoint d'éviter" toute étude des gouvernants et de leurs actions⁶⁸.

Pour Thomas Bisson, il s'agit „de définir et d'expliquer les sociétés à forte expansion en Europe d'après l'an mil: qu'y avait-il en elles d'ancien ou de nouveau, de changeant, et quels facteurs ou «moteurs» de changement pouvons-nous discerner? Ainsi conçu, le problème peut sembler avoir connu une relative éclipse depuis l'époque de Haskins et de Bloch. En fait, les travaux de Gerd Tellenbach, R. W. Southern, Georges Duby et Karl Schmidt, durant le dernier demi-siècle, ont tous tendu à redéfinir le problème en termes de facteurs spécifiques émergeant après les temps carolingiens pour transformer l'Europe, pour «faire le Moyen Age». La découverte qu'en certaines régions, les structures et la nature du pouvoir changeaient aux alentours de l'an mil n'était pas juste une aberration française: c'était la conséquence d'un effort général des historiens pour sonder plus profondément les grandes permanences qui caractérisaient les vus de leurs prédécesseurs du début du siècle"⁶⁹.

C'est alors que paraît l'ouvrage „dérangeant" de Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and vassals*⁷⁰. L'ouvrage ne fait en réalité que reprendre *explicitement* les thèses d'Élisabeth Brown niant la féodalité: „Le système féodal ne s'est jamais formé. On rencontre les matériaux de cet édifice qui n'a jamais été véritablement élevé"⁷¹. Susan Reynolds part en guerre contre les „juristes académiques", et, dans un très vaste panorama européen, remet en question les „lunettes féodales des historiens". Distinguant mot, concept et phénomène, elle considère les mots comme le moins important, s'attachant à „distinguer si un concept est celui des contemporains ou le nôtre"⁷². En France, Élisabeth Magnou-Nortier fait un compte-rendu élogieux de *Fiefs and Vassals*, déclarant de manière générale⁷³: „Les systématisations juridiques puis idéologiques... créent des fictions historiques dont les médiévistes ont été les victimes, et dont a pâti par leur faute

⁶⁸ T. Reuter, *loc. cit.* Plaidant à juste titre pour un élargissement de l'histoire européenne, l'auteur estime qu'on pourrait „probablement laisser en dehors de la discussion les Celtes, les Slaves, les Magyars et les Scandinaves".

⁶⁹ Th. Bisson, *loc. cit.*

⁷⁰ S. Reynolds 1994. Compte-rendu d'É. Magnou-Nortier 1996: 253. Cf. ci-après...

⁷¹ Dans sa note 10, S. Reynolds ne citait essentiellement que les travaux de W. Kienast et les siens.

⁷² É. Bourmazel et J.-P. Poly 1998: 6, n. 3: „L'auteur pense, construire une théorie nouvelle de la propriété comme *aggregates of different sorts of rights*, inspirée par l'étude de *serious modern students of comparative law and property*; étude qui lui permet de dresser *My check-list (which) contains the following rights: the right to use and manage, the thing... the right to its produce or income; the right to pass it to one's heirs and the right to alienate or dispose it to others*, etc.; parmi les savants «sérieux», ne figure aucun romaniste connu, tels Guarino ou Kaser; exemple remarquable de la démarche «idéologique» qu'elle dénonçait en introduction...".

⁷³ É. Magnou-Nortier 1996: 253-348. Son article cité, „La société dans Montesquieu et M. Bloch...", montre dans quelle perspective elle se situe. Cf. aussi, par exemple 1987: 237-256. Elle remarque que „depuis quelques années, des travaux ou des études plus ponctuelles ont rouvert les grands débats de la première moitié de ce siècle sur le système féodo-vassalique, l'État féodal et les «lois féodales»".

une connaissance plus fiable des sociétés médiévales, autrement dit l' « Histoire réelle »... Ce sont donc les historiens de l'époque moderne qui ont créé „les notions de « gouvernement féodal », « lois féodales », « société féodale » » à partir des „œuvres... des juristes académiques”⁷⁴. Autrement dit, ni la crise féodale, ni même la féodalité n'ont existé⁷⁵. C'est le début d'une autre vision des hautes époques, celle qu'on va surnommer „hyper-romaniste”, puisqu'elle entend non seulement gommer la crise de l'an mil et la féodalité, mais encore démontrer une survivance intacte de la romanité bien au-delà de cet an mil, jusqu'à la „pseudo-renaissance du droit romain!”

Une note critique de Dominique Barthélemy, qui est une sorte de second compte-rendu de l'ouvrage de Susan Reynolds après celui d'Élisabeth Magnou-Nortier, vient rajouter à la confusion qui commence à caractériser le débat: on connaît en effet les accointances d'Élisabeth Magnou-Nortier avec les „hyper-romanistes”, parmi lesquels on est d'ailleurs souvent fondé de la compter; or, la note critique de D. Barthélemy vient s'attaquer à cette école, en plaçant le débat sur le terrain de l'anthropologie juridique⁷⁶: „En apparence, Susan Reynolds se place aux antipodes des hyper-romanistes qui veulent « réinterpréter la société féodale » à l'aide du Code Théodosien exclusivement. Il n'y a pour eux que des fidélités et des bénéfices d'État, et de grandes règles de droit public dictent les chartes de l'an mil”⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ Sur la méthode de ces „reconstructeurs de l'Histoire”... É. Bournazel et J.-P. Poly 1998: 8 notamment.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: 7: „En fait, la société, au moins en France, surtout en France méridionale — et n'est-ce pas l'essentiel de la civilisation? — serait restée romaine, et les changements ne seraient qu'apparents. Ainsi, pour reprendre un exemple crucial, des taxes seigneuriales, des banalités. Il s'agit là, certes, de prélèvements qui sont en droit fondés sur la puissance publique. De l'origine, on passe à l'identité: de tels prélèvements seraient en fin de compte identiques à la fiscalité du Bas-Empire. Les polyptyques sont des cadastres fiscaux, le *vilicus*, les *fevales* sont des agents du fisc. Mais qu'entend-on par fisc: peut-on comparer les maires ruraux du sire de Marle au XII^e siècle et l'appareil fiscal du Bas-Empire, l'administration du préfet du prétoire des Gaules, avec ses bureaux affairés à prévoir le budget annuel et à établir l'impôt de répartition, relayés ensuite par ceux des vicaires des diocèses, puis des gouverneurs de province? Les « mauvaises coutumes », les « toltes », les « forces » des châtelains et de leurs cavaliers dont nous parlent les textes comme d'une nouveauté? Propagande monastique intéressée, clunisienne, liée à une Réforme qui aurait mis en péril la saine tradition de l'Église. Certains textes, telles les *querimoniae* catalanes, ne sont pas l'œuvre de *scriptoria* monastiques? Il suffit de les ignorer. Passons de la fiscalité au droit: un capitulaire de Charlemagne cite un passage de Gaius, le grand jurisconsulte romain, *Gaius noster*, que reprendra le *Digeste* de l'empereur Justinien. Rome au II^e siècle, Byzance au VI^e, Aix-la-Chapelle au IX^e... le Droit n'aurait donc pas changé...”

⁷⁶ *La théorie féodale à l'épreuve de l'anthropologie (note critique)*, „Annales HSS”, mars-avril 1997, n° 2: 321-341. Voir la remarque de P. Bonnassie qu'au marxisme moribond se substitue une certaine anthropologie historique, nouvel Évangile pour interpréter le silence des sources... „Réponse” à l'intervention de D. Barthélemy, dans *Les origines de la féodalité. Hommage à Claudio Sanchez Albornoz. Actes du colloque de Bordeaux de 1995*, Madrid, Casa de Velazquez (volume n° 69 de la collection), Universidad de Alcalá, 2000.

⁷⁷ Mais la limite entre „mutationnistes” et „hyper-romanistes” est-elle si nette, mis à part le fait que les seconds ne verraient pas de rupture en l'an mil? Où placer les thèses d'un P. Geary ou d'une É. Magnou-Nortier, ou plus modestement celles d'un Chr. Lauranson-Rosaz? Pour ce dernier, cf. la remarque de Dominique Barthélemy (*La théorie...*: 334): „tel développement de Chr. Lauranson-Rosaz sur le *beneficium ad stipendium publicum* ne rejoint-il pas dangereusement la négation hyper-romaniste de l'évolution culturelle du Haut Moyen Âge?”. On voit à quel point les classifications par écoles sont dépassées: J.-P. Poly et É. Bournazel 1995: 361-362.

Autre voix discordante dans le débat que celle d'un grand historien du droit méridional Paul Ourliac, récemment disparu, qui réfute la négation de la féodalité mais pas l'„anti-mutationnisme”⁷⁸: „On ne peut redire avec Guizot que la féodalité n'a jamais existé, mais au premier âge féodal de Bloch elle n'existait pas encore et au second âge féodal, elle n'est plus qu'un décor vide, construit par les juristes, pour affirmer les droits du roi. On ne peut même pas croire à une révolution féodale, si ce n'est, comme le dit Thomas Bisson, à sa «révélation conceptuelle»”⁷⁹.

4. DE 1995 À AUJOURD'HUI: *Vers l'apaisement?*

Durant l'année 1995, Dominique Barthélemy tente de relancer la polémique dans un article intitulé „Encore le débat sur l'an mil!”⁸⁰. L'introduction est acerbe, suivie d'un discours incisif: il commence par réaffirmer la vraie nature du „mutationnisme”, sa filiation „marxisante”, de Marc Bloch au „mutationnisme sociologique” de Georges Duby qui s'oppose à la „vieille école” historique en se focalisant sur la grande rupture du Xe siècle⁸¹. Il ne s'agit pas d'exclure de l'Histoire toute „mutation” forte, mais seulement celle de l'an mil, et de mettre en cause la manière précise dont elle est décrite en opposant un ordre public, autour duquel au X^e siècle encore, s'organiserait la stratification sociale, à une „société féodale” née de la violence et tissée de liens purement privés. La vulgate des années 1980 laisse de côté certaines étapes (la seconde moitié du IX^e, l'accélération de la fin du XI^e et du XII^e siècle et certaines modalités du changement historique: alleu, servage, chevalerie); elle perpétue une vision trop négative et rétrospective de la société féodale: produits de l'imaginaire de nos sociétés, il faut démystifier l'anarchie féodale, les terreurs et les terrorismes de l'an mil. Les juristes sont trompés par l'illusion documentaire des lendemains de l'an mil — un style nouveau ne révèle-t-il pas des institutions déjà nées, des conflits et des liens sociaux que le précédent ne permettait pas d'appréhender? — alors que pour eux le grand tournant n'est-il pas précisément, à la fin du XI^e siècle, la renaissance du droit et l'effort de juridisation des rapports sociaux qui accompagne la „genèse de l'État moderne” et précède l'élaboration d'un droit coutumier?⁸² Les discours sur la „perte des repères”

⁷⁸ P. Ourliac 1995: 1–21

⁷⁹ P. Ourliac 1995; la référence à Guizot renvoie à la citation faite n. 10: „Le système féodal ne s'est jamais formé. On rencontre les matériaux de cet édifice qui n'a jamais été véritablement élevé”.

⁸⁰ D. Barthélemy 1995: 349–360.

⁸¹ „Le concept de «révolution féodale» est fait pour penser la transition brutale, d'un «mode de production» à un autre — de l'esclavagisme «antiquisant» à la «seigneurie» médiévale. Et si, depuis vingt-cinq ans, les historiens cherchent avidement des indices de crise sociale dans la France de «l'an mil», c'est bien parce qu'ils sont guidés par la théorie des périodes critiques”.

⁸² D. Barthélemy est revenu récemment sur la question: *La Renaissance du XII^e siècle n'aura pas lieu*, 2000. À la suite de Chr. Wickham, il se lance dans une nouvelle critique de „l'hyper-romanisme”. Cf. son intéressante remarque (*La théorie...*: 323 n. 9) lorsqu'il note, à propos d'un article de K. F. Werner (1985: 186): „*Honor* lui semble rester une charge publique, mais ne confond-il pas la pérennité des mots avec celle des concepts?”. Et de citer R. Koselleck (1990: 106): „Des mots qui durent ne constituent pas un indice

légaux et la „rupture des liens sociaux”, appliqués à l’an mil, ne font que lui prêter le visage des tourments et des angoisses de l’an 2000⁸³.

Dans son réquisitoire, Dominique Barthélemy aborde un des problèmes les plus aigus et les intéressants du débat, celui de la spécificité méridionale, pour lui un leurre: la part croissante des études sur le Midi favorise beaucoup l’idée d’un avant-mil „non féodal”, soit du fait des sources elles-mêmes, soit par la force d’un présupposé méridionaliste qui attribue „à une spécificité occitane ce qui, dans les sources, fait discordance d’avec le modèle féodal «classique»”⁸⁴.

À l’encontre de cette opinion, se dresse précisément une véritable cohorte de „méridionalistes”, issus en grande partie de l’école de Pierre Bonnassie, dont les recherches sont à l’unisson... Consensus réaliste ou aveuglement collectif?

Une bonne et claire synthèse de la „crise” féodale sur le „versant méditerranéen de la chrétienté latine”, a été donnée récemment par le médiéviste catalan Josep Salrach⁸⁵:

suffisant de la stabilité des réalités” ... Les développements de Dominique Barthélemy sur la continuité des mots *servus* ou *miles* ne relèvent-ils pourtant pas de l’erreur qu’il dénonce ici chez un maître éminent?

⁸³ „Un intérêt néo-romantique pour les spasmes religieux millénaristes” vient à présent relayer les historiens mutationnistes. Sont visés ici évidemment les travaux de R. Landes, élève de P. J. Geary: 1996: 57–77 et 1997: 163–179. Cf. la récente communication de P. Riché, *Millénarisme autour de l’an mil*, au colloque de la Fondation Singer-Polignac des 25–26 mars 1999, *Millénaires, messianismes et millénarismes*. Cf. aussi récemment, *La grande peur de la fin du monde*, numéro spécial de la revue „L’Histoire” (n° 228, janvier 1999), avec notamment la contribution de l’anti-millénariste S. Gouguenheim, *Les terreurs de l’An Mil ont-elles existé?*: 44–49; se référant à son *An Mil* de 1967, l’auteur écrit de Georges Duby, jugé responsable de l’erreur: „Il (y) fait sien la thèse d’une «inquiétude diffuse». Tout en ne croyant pas aux terreurs de l’An Mil, il met en lumière une série de signes (missions d’évangélisation, mouvement de la Paix de Dieu) annonçant la montée des angoisses dans le courant du XI^e siècle... L’An Mil constitue dès lors une rupture, faisant succéder un temps d’espoir, marqué par les pénitences et les érections d’églises, à une ère d’angoisses et de chaos... En 1978 (*Les trois ordres...*: 179), il réaffirme l’existence de peurs apocalyptiques dans la période 1000–1040... G. Duby ouvrit néanmoins la voie à d’autres chercheurs qui offrent désormais à leurs lecteurs le vaste panorama des boulevards de l’apocalypse. Ainsi, les partisans de l’existence d’une violente mutation féodale (P. Bonnassie, J.-P. Poly) voient une preuve de celle-ci dans les commotions spirituelles qui prirent selon eux la forme de mouvements apocalyptiques: la floraison des hérésies ou les ébranlements de la Paix de Dieu. Mais on peut rétorquer, avec Karl Ferdinand Werner ou Dominique Barthélemy, que ni les hérésies, ni les textes de la Paix de Dieu ne trahissent d’aspiration messianique: rien dans les canons rédigés alors n’exprime de crainte ni d’espoir apocalyptique. D’une manière générale, faut-il le rappeler, se soucier de son salut ne signifie pas qu’on croit imminente la fin des temps. Oublierait-on que le christianisme est une religion eschatologique?”. Richard Landes écrit (1997: 176, n. 3): „Il y a peu de débats historiques dont les résultats ont été aussi décisifs pour aussi longtemps. En dépit de maintes études qui trouvent de multiples indices d’attente apocalyptique aux alentours de l’an mil, les médiévistes continuent à nier qu’il y ait eu quelque attente apocalyptique importante à cette époque”. Cf. aussi ses remarques dans 1992a: 355–377, et 1992b: 5–27. À l’opposé, cf. les efforts pour se débarrasser de la question de D. Barthélemy: 1997b: 3–35... et ceux de S. Gouguenheim, dans son récent ouvrage *Les fausses terreurs de l’an mil. Attente de la fin des temps ou approfondissement de la foi?*, Paris 1999.

⁸⁴ D. Barthélemy 1995: 353, et n. 29. Il annonce une étude où il reviendra sur le „présupposé méridionaliste”: *Nouvelle contribution au débat sur l’an mil en France*, [dans] *Les origines de la Féodalité. Hommage à Claudio Sanchez Albornoz...* Sur les aspects pourtant bien „mutationnistes” de monographies méridionalistes telles que celles de P. Toubert (1973), Cl. Duhamel-Amado (1995) ou M. Bourin-Derruau (1987), pourtant invoqués par D. Barthélemy. *Supra*.

⁸⁵ *Les féodalités méridionales: des Alpes à la Galice*, *Les féodalités*: 313–388 (ici p. 320–321). Cf. aussi

L'Occident de l'Antiquité tardive et du haut Moyen Âge se transforme mais, malgré les changements produits avant le X^e siècle, la société occidentale nous semble encore reconnaissable par ses origines. Selon nous, entre les Alpes et la Galice, la chute se produisit autour de l'an mil: un peu avant dans certaines zones et un peu après dans d'autres. La fin du système social antique et la naissance de la féodalité n'arrivèrent pas imperceptiblement et sans douleur. Des forces sociales et politiques opposaient de la résistance. La confrontation sociale fut donc inévitable et son éclatement constitue un indice du changement.

La principale manifestation de la crise fut la fin de la *potestas publica*, et sa transformation territoriale — entendons une faillite du pouvoir — dans un ensemble territorial politiquement unifié, jusqu'alors détenu par une seule autorité (roi ou comte). Les responsables furent les barons qui, voulant posséder les ressources publiques, soit attaquèrent de front l'autorité, soit la vidèrent de son contenu. La faillite de l'autorité royale ou comtale fut aussi celle de la garantie du droit et de la justice traditionnels. Rois et comtes qui, auparavant, présidaient souvent les tribunaux, en disparurent ou n'en tinrent plus aussi souvent qu'auparavant; quand ils le firent, ce fut pour rendre la justice à la manière des barons. La transformation de la justice montre, en quelque sorte, le triomphe des intérêts privés de l'aristocratie au détriment de ceux de la société ou de l'État. C'est ainsi que la justice se transforma alors en un puissant instrument d'affaiblissement de la propriété alleutière paysanne et des libertés.

Naturellement, pour imposer ces changements, les nobles durent augmenter le nombre de leurs guerriers, en même temps qu'ils écartaient la classe paysanne de la fonction militaire'. Une mutation sociale comme celle que nous décrivons devait, pour se consolider, protéger les guerriers par des privilèges qui garantiraient légalement leur reproduction, et, à l'inverse, maintenir la majorité de la population soumise à un régime d'exploitation qui bénéficierait à la seule minorité militaire. Pour faire tout cela, il fallait enfermer les paysans dans des catégories légales dégradées (servitudes) et les encadrer dans des seigneuries.

L'objectif poursuivi par les grands n'était autre que l'appropriation des surplus paysans. Il s'agissait, d'une part, d'incorporer les petits alleux aux grands patrimoines de l'aristocratie, partant, d'étendre le régime de la tenure et d'augmenter le volume des revenus et, d'autre part, de s'approprier les anciennes charges publiques, c'est-à-dire détourner, au profit des lignages aristocratiques, les bénéfices de la juridiction publique (impôts sur les personnes, leurs biens et activités et les amendes judiciaires), transformer les services anciens (surtout militaires) en prestations et profiter de la rupture de l'ordre traditionnel pour introduire de nouvelles charges jusqu'alors inconnues ou indues (exactions, mauvaises coutumes).

Plus que par le rapide „post-scriptum” d'Éric Bournazel et Jean-Pierre Poly⁸⁶ où s'expriment avant tout des réserves contre les classifications trop globalisantes en

les deux importantes contributions de P. Toubert et P. Bonnassie au colloque de Rome de 1978, *Structures féodales...: Discours inaugural. Les féodalités méditerranéennes: un problème d'histoire comparée* (p. 1-14); *Du Rhône à la Galice: genèse et modalités du régime féodal* (p. 17-56). Rappelons aussi, pour ce qui est des sources, l'utile recueil coordonné par M. Zimmermann 1992.

⁸⁶ *Post-scriptum (cit)*.

écoles (marxisme, marxisants, l'école „hyper-romaniste”, la *Legal Anthropology*, la „vieille école” française...) ⁸⁷, c'est par un ouvrage que les „mutationnistes” vont riposter à la dernière attaque de Dominique Barthélemy: *Les Féodalités*, paru en 1998, se veut et réussit à être une brillante synthèse de leur vision. Pour les nombreux auteurs qui y ont collaboré, „de toute évidence, un même mouvement entraîna, entre le X^e et le XIII^e siècle, l'ensemble des sociétés européennes”.

Depuis, le débat piétine quelque peu: les thèses paraissent inconciliables et l' „horizon théorique” ne risque guère de s'élargir. Les positions restent tranchées, et elles devraient d'autant plus le rester que c'est du Midi que viennent les récentes recherches, avec les actes de divers colloques à tendance „méridionaliste” tenus ces dernières années: celui de Bordeaux d'octobre 1993, celui de Toulouse-Conques de juillet 1998 ⁸⁸, celui de Spolète d'avril 1999 ⁸⁹...

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La synthèse ici tentée des travaux et directions de recherche touchant à un débat qui demeure à la fois dense et abstrait, est évidemment rapide, inévitablement partielle, sûrement partielle. Bien des thèmes ont été à peine mentionnés qui auraient dû être développés, touchant au cœur même du débat sur la mutation féodale: celui du devenir des structures politiques carolingiennes et de la difficile application des concepts de „public” et de „privé” au phénomène seigneurial conçu en termes politiques (*fevum* sive *fiscum*); celui économique de l'implantation de la seigneurie banale, avec le problème du prélèvement aristocratique, dans le contexte de la dynamique économique incontestée du X^e siècle; celui, conséquent, des mutations sociales, avec la question de la servitude et de la dépendance honorable, de la survie ou de l'écrasement de la paysannerie libre; celui plus général et plus délicat de la persistance de l'Antiquité dans les structures comme dans les mentalités de l'an mil, avec toutes les nuances régionales qu'il faut y apporter...

C'est un lieu commun de dire que les analyses, à être trop théoriques ou dialectiques, courent le risque de l'abstraction, de l'opacité, et surtout du manichéisme. Les typolo-

⁸⁷ La remarque est tout à fait judicieuse: peut-on classer dans une même école idéologique les thèses „hyper-romanistes” de K. F. Werner, J. Durliat, É. Magnou-Nortier, M. Rouche ou Chr. Lauranson-Rosaz? *Supra*. Dans leur précédente réponse (*Que faut-il préférer...*: 409 et n. 25), É. Bournazel et J.-P. Poly 1994 dénonçaient déjà „tous ces -ismes (marxisme, juridisme), maniés sans grande conviction, (qui) encombrant le débat souhaité plus qu'ils ne l'éclairent”.

⁸⁸ *Le Fief dans tous ses états. Fiefs et Tenures assimilées dans l'Europe méridionale (Italie, France du Midi, Espagne) du X^e au XIII^e s.*, 6-8 juillet 1998.

⁸⁹ *Atti delle Settimane di Studio* (8-12 avr. 1999), XLVII. *Il feudalismo nell'alto medioevo*; Spolète 2000. Notamment l'article de P. Bonnassie, *Sur la genèse de la féodalité catalane: nouvelles approches*: 569-609. Rajoutons les très nombreuses contributions des derniers *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* (n° 170, avril-juin 2000; 171, juillet-septembre; 172, octobre-décembre 2000, avec comme titre unique *Regards croisés sur l'an mil*), ainsi que le n° 37 de la revue „Médiévales” (automne 1999), *L'an mil, en 2000*.

gies, les représentations idéologiques, les révisions chronologiques, ont leurs limites... sans oublier que nos imaginaires politiques, institutionnels, juridiques, économiques, sociaux, mentaux ne seront jamais ceux de nos ancêtres de l'an Mil:

Mutantur mores hominum, mutatur et ordo, disait Adalbéron de Laon⁹⁰...

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THE CHURCH AND CHRISTIANITY ABOUT THE YEAR 1000 (THE MISSIONARY ASPECT)

Jerzy Strzelczyk*

I

Historians of our European cultural circle usually place the caesura between the early and full (developed) Middle Ages at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries. While from a global point of view this caesura can be justified, which I will attempt to demonstrate in a moment, from the point of view of different features of the historical process, is the degree of the obviousness of this differs. In the history of the Church the real caesura falls a little later, about the middle of the eleventh century with the Gregorian reform and the beginning of the Investiture Controversy. The tenth century did not form a caesura in the process of the creation of Christian doctrine and thought, and one may even suggest that from this point of view it was even a period of stagnation. In this respect, the Church shared the fate of the rest of the whole of western civilisation in the „Dark Ages”, the „century of iron”. The tenth century prepared the way, however, for the cultural watershed of the eleventh century which was the basis for an American scholar to propose „yet another [tenth century] renaissance”, maybe less spectacular than the Carolingian one, but more significant than the latter in that it did not concern just the intellectual elite but was at the very basis of social existence¹.

Let us remind ourselves of the most important elements justifying the caesura „about 1000 A.D.” Firstly: the internal factor; during the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries Latin Europe for the first time in several centuries (at least since the appearance of the Huns in the second half of the fourth century) was released from the threat of destructive and disorganising raids of peoples from outside, or from the fringes of Europe (Saracens [Moslems] from the south, Vikings from the north, Magyars from the east). This does not mean that the Moslem and Viking threats disappeared definitively, but they changed their scale and character. European peoples could now develop in more favourable conditions. While talking of conditions for development, it is worth noting also that approximately in the eighth century A.D. there was a warming of the

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¹ See: R.S. Lopez 1951.

climate, known among climatologists as the Little Climatic Optimum (in the scale of the post-Glacial period). This favoured vegetation and agriculture and allowed obtaining better economic effects, the increase of cultivated areas and the widening of the area of certain agricultural products. When from the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the European climate underwent a clear worsening (the beginning of the so-called „Little Ice Age”, lasting at least to the middle of the nineteenth century), the European economy was dealt a heavy blow², but that was in the fourteenth century. In the tenth and eleventh centuries (if one may use a personification), Latin Europe from the position of a victim attacked by external forces took on a more active pose. The Crusades, at the very end of the eleventh century were to break out in the Near East, but which had been a reality in the Pyrenean peninsular for some time previously, were a phenomenon with many aspects. From a certain point of view, that which is of interest to us here, they can be seen as the first dramatic attempt at expansion of Latin Europe to the east, based as it was in authentic religious ideals, but also undertaken in the interest of more earthly interests.

Secondly: the tenth century sees the preparation of deep-rooted long term economic and social processes (the deepening and spread of feudal structures) and these processes were beginning to have an effect. In the eleventh century, these processes were to bear fruit in an unprecedented and obvious increase in the tempo of the development of Latin Europe. That Europe had until then for many centuries been undergoing a process of agrarianisation and deurbanisation (which had begun in Antiquity and was accelerated by the collapse of the social structures characteristic of that period and by the disruptions of the Migration Period, and the laying down of the foundations of the new Medieval order). Europe had become one „great village” with an almost totally agrarian structure, an almost totally natural economy, lacking towns and industry. It was comparatively „younger”, poorer, uglier and „inferior” sister of the two remaining Mediterranean civilisations (Byzantine and Islamic). It was in the eleventh century that this Europe took a huge step forward, gradually catching up (and later even excelling) the others.

Thirdly: the elements concerning the organisation of the state. The tenth century appears on the surface to be significantly different from its predecessor. The ninth century saw the imposing and successful attempt (the first after the collapse of the order of Antiquity) at the political organisation and considerable integration of the more important Latin-speaking Europe by the Carolingians, and the splendour of the „Carolingian Renaissance” — literature, art and science. The tenth century was the „age of Iron” (*saeculum ferreum*), the Dark Age (*saeculum obscurum*) — dark not merely in the sense of the cognitive possibilities available to historians, but also in the sense of more primitive relationships and the „lack of enlightenment” of our tenth century ancestors. When the Carolingian unity began to crumble and then collapse, when a period of renewed and universal anarchy in social relationships came (deepened for

² See: E.P. Borisenkov, V.M. Paseckiy 1988: especially p. 55ff.

some time, as we mentioned above, by intruders from outside), when the light of the splendid but chronologically and geographically limited Carolingian Renaissance was extinguished, it would seem that the development of Latin Europe became retarded. A symptom of this regression may be the situation that in the period from about 920–960 as far as we know, nothing of any great interest in the fields of intellectual development or literature appeared in Latin Europe. But it is precisely in these areas that, by various means, the tenth century saw the sowing of the seeds of the new. The ninth century was in many ways still looking back to traditions which were still Roman. In the tenth century, precisely on the foundations of the disintegrating Carolingian Empire, a new order of Early Medieval Europe developed, and this is our third element forming a caesura. It took on finally and irreversibly a pluralistic character, and also in the political system which it accepted — despite all the later variability — the basic and permanent character which is still visible on today's political maps³. About the year 1000 the political map of Europe for the first time begins to take on the characteristics of the present one. In the course of the ninth and tenth century, the processes leading to the formation of the state (the visible symptom of leaving behind the tribal system „beyond history”) took in the whole of Slavdom and Scandinavia and Hungary. From this period, the Europe until then composed of „Romans + Germans” grew by the addition of a third, mainly Slav, segment⁴. If we allow ourselves a little apparent tautology, about the year 1000 Europe becomes Europe, the process of bringing a considerable part of the European continent into European civilization was reaching an end.

II

The processes of the maturing and political consolidation went together with, and was mutually aided by, a fourth element: the Christianisation of Europe. This was a long term process. We may agree that at the beginning we are dealing with an „externalised”, formal and declarative „initial” Christianity. The „second” stage of „real” Christianisation, that is the internalisation of the Christian faith among the faithful was to take place only later (and in the opinion of many investigators never completed and one may question whether it was possible to complete). The process lasted through the whole of the first millennium of the Christian era, coinciding with the times of the decline and fall of the civilisation of Antiquity and the Roman world, it filled the whole Early Middle Ages. It was not a continuous nor linear process; one may demonstrate several phases of especially dynamic development of Christianity in the first millennium. The first was connected with the Apostolic and post-Apostolic beginnings, dominated by the powerful figure of St Paul of Tarsus, though our perception of the degree of this domination is to some extent the result of the biased approach of the sources which without doubt distort a more complex reality. The second

³ See: G. Labuda 1977: 63–90, and the masterful analysis of the processes of nation-formation: B. Zientara 1985.

⁴ See: J. Szűcs 1995; J. Kłoczowski 1998.

phase falls in the fourth century when the discriminations and persecution from the Roman state had ceased and declaration as a Christian became a condition of participation in public life. Until the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries, with small exceptions on the eastern fringes (Armenia, Ethiopia) and western limits (Ireland) of the known world, Christianisation was accomplished only in the territories belonging to the Roman Empire, even after its disappearance in the west. At the end of Antiquity this led to the identification of the earthly order of things, *orbis Romanus*, *Romanitas* with the Christian (*Christianitas*), which was eloquently expressed by Prudentius, a Christian poet of the fourth and fifth centuries:

But between Roman and barbarian is such a difference
as between a four-legged beast differs from man
mute from the articulate [...]

(*Contra Symmachum* II, 816–818)⁵

This was a view which Augustine of Hippo thought it was desirable to refute in his main work, *De civitate Dei*, in which he rigorously differentiates between the earthly order (*civitas terrena*), and the Divine (*civitas Dei*), at the same time „bringing Christianity out of the Roman backwaters”. In the pontificate of Gregory I the Great (590–604), and with his decisive participation, the third stage of Christian expansion was initiated, this time already beyond the Roman limes, firstly to Britain. This stage was to last with differing intensity throughout the seventh and eighth centuries, and would be conducted by the Irish and Anglo-Saxon Churches in the British Isles, as well as by the Papacy in alliance with the Frankish state. The main results were the Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxons and Germany. At the end of the eighth century Christianity began to reach Slavic peoples, at the beginning to the South Slavs.

The fourth and decisive phase falls in the tenth century, and its result was the Christianisation of nearly the whole of Slavdom (with Poland and Russia), Hungary and Scandinavia. About the year 1000, the main areas of the European continent were already Christian. Only the „pagan wedge” on the east and south coast of the Baltic resisted this tendency. This was an extensive triangular enclave of West Finnish peoples, Balts and Slavs with its point reaching as far to the west as the region of Hamburg. This zone begins to be eroded only at the beginning of the twelfth century (Elbe region, Pomerania; in the thirteenth century the Baltic and Finnic peoples also succumbed). About the year 1300 only Lithuania and Samogitia remained pagan⁶. Excepting the unhappy split between the Eastern and Western Churches and the spread of heretic movements, religious unity of Medieval Europe was prevented only by Moslem territory in Spain on the Mediterranean islands and southern Italy (though

⁵ All but one of the translations of the primary sources included here have been translated from the Polish texts supplied by the Author: translator's note.

⁶ See: J. Strzelczyk 1997; L.E. von Padberg 1998.

diminishing under the pressure of the Christians) and the Jewish Diaspora (a new and considerably more damaging Moslem threat appears for Christian Europe together with the appearance of the Ottoman Turks who in the fourteenth century occupied almost all of the Balkans and in the middle of the fifteenth century finally bring the existence of the Eastern [Byzantine] Empire to an end).

III

It may appear surprising that the huge missionary success of the Western Church, which is expressed in the huge areas of Europe brought into the Christian community and under obedience to Rome, fell in a period of the history of the Church itself which was by no means of interest and was by no means a turning-point (let us mention only, since it is not the theme of this article, that the development of the missionary activity of the Eastern Church developed in a parallel manner with its most significant success being the Christianisation of Russia⁷). In the history of the Western Church the time for change only came, as I said earlier, with the middle of the eleventh century, together with the Gregorian reform. In the centuries preceding this reform the situation in the Church and its Papal centre was far from satisfactory. In the Christian states the Church had long before achieved an indivisible control over the souls of the faithful, as well as a strong position both in the material sphere (land ownership) and in social prestige, but only at the expense of maintaining close connections with secular powers and apparatus of the state. Bishops and the abbots of the great monasteries were also influential state officials, obliged by the rulers to fulfil various services, offices, foreign missions, and (personal!) participation as royal vassals during military expeditions etc. Some of them also understood the needs of education and culture. These mannerisms were imitated by clerics of lower orders (priests and the abbots of lesser monasteries), and also the lesser feudal officers. Those who founded or equipped spiritual institutions thought that they had rights to them similar to ownership rights (the system of so-called private churches; German *Eigenkirche*). In such conditions, situations arose allowing corruption, where churches, monasteries and bishoprics were treated as the means of support of members of a particular family, to the appointment of unsuitable people to ecclesiastic positions, to the use of Church property for private purposes (especially in a situation when in accordance with the general practice of the time of the raising of

⁷ See: Ch. Hannick 1978: 279–359. We would be lead even further from our subject by a consideration of the missionary movement directed towards Central Asia and later the Far East by the Nestorian Church which has tended to be forgotten in the traditions of the great churches of the west (and here I am thinking also of the Orthodox Church). See: W. Hage 1978: 360–393. Only modest remnants of this survive today, see: R.G. Roberson 1998: 25–28 (the Eastern Assyrian Church), if however we would like to find in the history of Christianity a Church which in a territorial sense, and before the era of European colonialism had achieved the most spectacular successes, this honour would undoubtedly be awarded this Church, isolated from the main body of the Church.

families by at least the lesser diocesan clergy and the disregard of celibacy also by not a few members of the episcopate) and also in the light of the excessive attention paid by the bishops and other prelates to political and economic matters and to neglecting of their pastoral duties, which threatened — which was clear already by the eleventh century — alienation of a significant part of the Christian community, especially in the lower ranks of society from the influence of the Church and even in fact leading to resurgence of paganism. It is not surprising therefore that in the course of the tenth century and in the eleventh century, calls for the reform of the Church became more vociferous, neither is it surprising that in the Church itself, there were some who did not meet such calls with much enthusiasm.

The Church in the West was at this time very difficult to control. It was after all only unified in an idealistic sense, though not in organisation. It was in reality a sum or federation of local Churches. The position of bishops, and especially the metropolitans, was very high — at least in the ecclesiastical hierarchy (though these matters appeared differently in connection with secular position). The Apostolic see however had very little possibility of influence over the local churches. From the eighth to the twelfth centuries no general councils were called, the institution of Papal legates was only just forming and they were only sporadically sent out, and this was most frequently connected with local initiatives (sometimes it was more convenient to rely on Papal arbitration). The Popes had in practical terms very little influence on the appointment of bishops and abbots, even the regulation of the cult of the saints was not yet (but soon was to become) the province of the Apostolic see. One of the few possibilities of the assertion and widening of the authority of the Papacy over the local churches was the awarding of the pallium — the symbol of authority of the metropolitans — the issue of which was connected with the swearing of an oath to „St Peter”. Rome was the popular object of visits, though not to visit individual Popes, but the grave of St Peter. The Popes were generally regarded as authorities in matters of the Faith, but they were not allowed to interfere with matters which were the concern of the ecclesiastical dioceses and provinces. We should add that there was, sometimes intense, rivalry between the Roman and Constantinopolitan churches even in Italy itself.

The development and success of missionary activities gave the Papacy certain new opportunities, in that this would lead to the formation of more and more new ecclesiastic organisational links, not always linked with the old „autonomic” ecclesiastical provinces, and these new provinces obviously could not be created without the participation of the Papacy. New chances were also created by the relationships linking some of the local churches with the Papacy (especially the Anglo-Saxon Church, created as we know on Papal initiative) and political factors (the most important of which was connected with the alliance from the middle of the eighth century between the Papacy and the Carolingians ruling the Frankish Empire). It must be said that the Papacy was not always able to benefit from these chances. The tenth century, at least part of it — which even the most ardent supporters of that institution admit — was in the history of the Papacy an exceptional period, in a negative sense. Of course it would be an

inadmissible simplification to see the reasons for the decline of Papal authority merely in the personal characteristics of successive Popes, though it would be easy to find examples of individuals undeserving or unsuitable to fulfil the role (writers sometimes draw attention to the inexperience and indeed sexual misdemeanours of the Roman Papacy of that period). A deeper cause of the bad state of the Papacy of the period was however (as in the Church as a whole) an excessive degree of involvement in purely secular matters. The Popes, bishops of Rome, the patriarchs of the west, were also the rulers of the Papal state (*patrimonium sancti Petri*) in the central part of the Apennine peninsula and whether they wanted or not became involved in (and sometimes even the pawns of) a complex political game conducted particularly by the influential aristocratic, and often rival, families of Rome (the best known being the Crescentius family and the Counts of Tuscany). The annexation of Italy and Rome by the German king Otto I, although it meant the subordination of the Papacy to the protection and suzerainty of the Emperor, released it to a considerable degree from the need to get involved in (and compromised by) the local, Roman, political contest. Because the Emperor was also interested in a „controlled” reform of the Church and therefore made sure that the suitable persons gained the throne of Peter (despite temporary — to the middle of the eleventh century!) problems and misunderstandings, this created reasonably suitable conditions for the reviving of the trends towards reform and giving them a deeper character, though not always one approved by the monarch⁸. It is a paradox that the effectual decentralisation of the western Church and the relative marginalisation of the role of the Papacy, in the existing primitive conditions of inter-regional communication and the particularism then current in Europe, made the fate of the Church independent of the successes and failures of its central institution, about which it is probable that very few outside of Italy or Europe knew very much.

IV

Let us leave aside the question of the relationship between the Christian world of the year 1000 to the two main religions still existing in Europe and beyond it, that is Judaism and Islam⁹, and also to the more distant Buddhism¹⁰, or — beginning from the first half of the thirteenth century — the religion of the Mongols. Here we are interested only in the meeting, and — in real terms — the confrontation, of the Christian world view with the local, pre-Christian, pagan belief systems in those areas of Europe where in later centuries these beliefs found themselves in direct mutual contact. This confrontation¹¹ is for several reasons not easy to study scientifically. Among the problems may

⁸ On the situation of the Papacy about 1000 A.D., see: G. Tellenbach 1984: 165–177.

⁹ There is a huge scientific literature, see among the latest the collective work *Religionsgespräche...* 1992. Among the work done by Polish scholars, there are different studies by L. Winowski, among them the posthumous publication (L. Winowski 1985).

¹⁰ See: D. Scott 1985: 88–100; also — from a different perspective: T. Hahn 1978: 213–234.

¹¹ I consider the numerous studies of H.-D. Kahl among the basic new works in this field, especially 1978: 11–76, and of L.E. von Padberg (some of which are cited below in the relevant footnotes).

be mentioned heuristic ones, resulting from the paucity and partisanship of the source material available to the historian. The scarcity of these sources is a reflection of a general lack of written materials for the Early Medieval period as a whole (especially with regard to two particularly „Dark Ages”, roughly-speaking the seventh and tenth centuries), which is a result not only of the low pace of intellectual activity but especially literacy in society as a whole¹². This is not, however, the whole explanation. There was also a clear distaste among Christian authors — who in the early Middle Ages with few exceptions belonged to the clergy — concerning writing about paganism (as a work or invention of Satan). Our Gallus Anonymus still at the beginning of the twelfth century, ending his brief sketch of the history of our country before the Baptism of Poland and Mieszko I, after describing the sad fate of king Popiel and his family wrote: „But let us not dwell on the history of a people whose recollections are lost in the forgetfulness of the centuries and who mistaken idolatry has condemned, and pass briefly over it to the recording of matters which faithful memory has preserved”¹³. The partisanship of the sources means that the evidence, and therefore descriptions of events and opinions, we have is presented almost entirely from the Christian point of view, while the other side — living entirely fully in the sphere of oral culture was illiterate and unable to express itself in that medium and, it follows from this — unable to present its own point of view and its version of events. This is to some extent supplied by the material traces connected with the lives (especially their religious life of pagan peoples, such as the images of gods, the remains of temples and other cult places, ritual objects, iconographic representations on everyday objects and — in recent decades especially intensively studied and very useful for our problem — bracteates)¹⁴. Christian authors who to some degree considered the confrontation between Christianity and local religious cults, and a few of whom (which only apparently conflicts with what has been said above about the general paucity of evidence), wished and were able to present very valuable, sometimes very detailed information, sometimes from personal observation, were concerned mainly to present the triumph of Christianity and not the real and sometimes very difficult passage of events during the confrontation. There were two possible approaches to this problem. The first relied on maintaining a silence concerning the opponent, condemning him to a *damnatio memoriae* which was connected with, and was typical of, the early stages of Christianity in newly-converted countries, where the influence of the old religion had not been entirely eliminated, and its supporters

¹² The picture appearing from the reading of the excellent book of P. Riché 1995 is so suggestive, that the reader may easily forget, that it concerns a narrow intellectual elite, while the vast majority of secular society (including its highest circles) lived totally in a world of oral tradition, which left very few traces in the sources. On this second, unwritten (which does not necessarily automatically mean primitive) cultural model of the Middle Ages, see M. Richter 1994.

¹³ *Galli Anonymi Chronica* 1,3. Or is the reticence of the foreign writer concerning the discussion of pagan history also a figure of speech hiding a real lack of information? Wincenty Kadłubek, a Pole, and in addition Bishop of Cracow, writing a century later did not have such scruples.

¹⁴ The work of the German scholar K. Hauck in this field has been especially valuable, especially in his great cycle of studies under the title *Zur Ikonologie der Goldbrakteaten*. See his synthetic article: *Brakteatenikonologie* (1978: 361–401).

(especially priests, especially strongly connected with it), although now practiced underground, formed a real threat to Christianity, new and weak, and in addition often imposed by force. The second method, however, was the highly-exaggerated demonisation of pre-Christian cults, ascribing to it all manner and usually extremely negative characteristics, ignoble deeds and crimes. It was with such a „picture” of the pagan cult of the Elbe region Slavs for example which was received by the reader of the „open letter” of the bishops and nobles of Saxony in 1108, calling for a crusade against these peoples:

„When they celebrate their holy days, their sorcerers say during the feast: ‘Our Pripegela desires heads! He must be satisfied by such an offering!’ This Pripegela is, as they hold, Priapus and the shameless Belfegor. After beheading Christians before their altar of profanity, they take cups full of human blood and screaming with a terrible voice proclaim: ‘Let us celebrate this joyous day! Christ has been overcome! Our undefeatable Pripigela is victorious’ [The name Pripigala is otherwise unknown, and is presumably a distortion of the name of some Polabian god or other — J.S.]”¹⁵.

There is no doubt whatsoever today that the meeting of Christianity and pre-Christian religious systems of Europe outside the former limes had a very dramatic character, it was a real confrontation. From a historical point of view (and I will not here discuss the theological aspects), it would be an extreme simplification to ascribe any superiority to Christianity over paganism. The fact that it was Christianity which was to prove victorious was the result of many interreacting (or at least acting in parallel) circumstances. We should not however go to the opposite extreme and categorically negate the persuasive power of Christianity, it probably gave better answers to the questions posed by more spiritual individuals, concerning moral, or even existential questions (such as concerning justice, equality in the eyes of God, immortality). We recall the scene described by the Venerable Bede (*Hist. eccl. gentis Anglorum* II,13) as having taken place during the meeting of the *Witan* (gathering of the nobles) in the court of the king of Northumbria in 628 before the decision was taken to convert to Christianity. We have no guarantee of course as to the authenticity of the story, but it represents the vision of a historiographer of the beginning of the eighth century. At the request of King Edwin, the High priest Coifi was first asked to speak, and he — which in itself is interesting — spoke out strongly against the previous cult¹⁶. The pagan gods — in the opinion of their main priest — had proven completely powerless, and since they had proven useless, it was wise to follow the advice of the king and accept the new religion. The arguments of the high priest of the vanishing traditional religion of the Northumbrians were taken from the arsenal of the pagan concepts, evaluating the gods from a purely utilitarian point of view. This is one of the main characteristics of primary

¹⁵ See: P. Knoch 1974: 1–33 (with a German translation of the text); G. Labuda 1975: 233–269 (on p. 234–236 Latin text); G. Constable 1999: 283–299 (with an English translation of the text).

¹⁶ This is probably the only case of the description of the conversion of a pagan priest — representatives of a social group particularly hated by the chroniclers — known to us in any detail.

(primitive) cults, less valuably labelled „pagan”. Their orientation was purely temporal and thus utilitarian; god and gods are only „important” and worth worship if they look after the interests of their worshippers, but — and this is also a fact of fundamental importance — not in an individual sense (at the level of individual human beings), but in the sense of a community, social group, such as clan, tribe, nation. In opposition to this, the „revealed” religions, among them Christianity, without totally negating their „utility value” in the same temporal manner (the grace of God can accompany people on earth too, as was — and is — generally expected), they have from the beginning a totally different basic perspective, an eschatological aim which is not temporal, but eternal; the function of religion is not to provide the believer with well-being in this world, but to lead to eternal happiness, to eternal life in heaven. Probably this concept, so different from the experience and expectations of people used to the „archaic” perspective was one of the more important obstacles forming a barrier hindering mutual understanding and conversion to Christianity. But, if we are to believe Bede, already at the beginning of the seventh century in the Northumbrian court, when the pagan High Priest Coifi admitted the uselessness of the old religion, one of the nobles present — surprisingly a layman — was able to perceive and publicly demonstrate the deeper sense of the new beliefs:

„Your majesty [...] the present life of man on earth [...] seems to me like the swift flight of a single sparrow through the banquet hall where you are sitting at dinner on a winter’s day with your thanes and counsellors. In the midst there is a comforting fire to warm the hall; outside, the storms of winter rain or snow are raging. This sparrow flies swiftly in through one door of the hall, and out through another. While he is inside, he is safe from the winter storms; but after a few moments of comfort he vanishes out of sight into the wintry world from which he came. Even so, man appears on earth for a little while; but of what went before this life or of what follows we know nothing. Therefore if this teaching has brought us any more certain knowledge, it seems only right that we should follow it”¹⁷.

Not only this evidence from the written sources, so engaging in its simplicity warns us against the hasty rejection of the possibility of the appearance in archaic, pagan, societies deeply reflective attitudes, seeking answers to the deeply hidden expectations or leanings of an existential nature. We must consider how typical such attitudes might have been; there is no doubt that reflections of the type described could have occurred to only a few individuals. Let us remember, however, that in the ninth century among the Saxons so stubbornly resisting Christianity in only the second generation of Christians, appeared Gottschalk of Fulda (or of Orbais) one of the deepest (and also most controversial) thinkers of his epoch¹⁸. It was the first and second generation of Christians who were among those who exhibited the greatest sacrifice for the new belief,

¹⁷ Translation from L.S. Price 1955: translator’s note.

¹⁸ For him, see: J. Szurlezyk 1990a: 41–56, and 1990b: 27–40.

and complete subjugation to its demands (it is enough to recall the two Poles among the Five Martyred Brothers of 1003)¹⁹.

From all this, it seems there is no doubt that we cannot ascribe the final triumph of Christianity entirely, or even mainly, to its spiritual superiority, especially as there is much which suggests that paganism was in general satisfactorily able to fulfil the spiritual needs and expectations of its followers. In practice the decisive factors were not purely spiritual but „external” ones, the mutual power relations and the political circumstances surrounding the confrontation between two, pagan and Christian world-views. This confrontation took place, generally-speaking, in situations where the Christian side had the advantage. The societies of the pagan world, politically fragmented, and usually in an ineffective pre-state stage of development, stubbornly looking back towards their past, were forced to take on the Christian societies well aware of their unity and power, organised (though not always, and not always to the same degree) into strong and effective military political entities (first the Roman and later Byzantine states, the Frankish state under Charlemagne and the Carolingians, the German state starting from the Ottonian dynasty, Poland against the Pomeranians, Denmark against the peoples of the eastern shores of the Baltic, the state of the Teutonic Knights against the Prussians and Lithuanians etc.). How adequately Bishop Daniel of Winchester summed up the principles which should guide the missionary in his teaching in a letter addressed to the St Winifred-Boniface, „Missionary of Germany” in about 723–724 when he wrote:

„This also should be demonstrated: If the gods are all-powerful, good and just [as the pagans assert], they not only reward their followers but also punish those who deny their existence. And if in reality they do these things, why do they spare the Christians, who over nearly all the earth led people away from their worship and destroyed their idols? And why do they, that is the Christians, possess fertile countries and lands, bearing wine and oil in abundance, blessed with all types of treasures; while they however, that is the pagans and their gods, are left only the countries suffering from the cold, in which they falsely believe they still rule while they have been driven from the whole of the earth? The power of the Christian world should be shown and compared with that of those few who have remained followers of the old madness”²⁰.

The greater the successes of the Christian side (especially on the battlefield, but also when the standard of living of Christian cultures was compared with that of pagan ones), the more convincing to the pagans sounded the arguments concerning changing sides. Missionaries frequently used to this advantage the full, which it was also easy to express as a threat. St Lebuin, an Anglo-Saxon, active among the pagan Saxons at the end of

¹⁹ Benedict of Benevento and four other followers of St Romuald (the founder of the Camaldolese Order) who were sent from Ravenna to evangelise the Slavs of Pomerania, where they were murdered: translator's note.

²⁰ This letter (number 23 in the editions) has been preserved in the correspondence of St Boniface. For the text together with a German translation: *Briefe des Bonifatius* 1968: 78–84.

the eighth century told the *thing* (traditional gathering of the people of that tribe) that if they became Christians:

„Just as you Saxons have not had kings over you, there will be no king who will defeat and conquer you. If you do not become His [God's], I tell you this: already near you is a king ready to attack your country, he will plunder it and lay it waste, he will destroy you by various wars, drive you into exile, disinherit and kill, and will give your inheritance to whosoever he wishes; you will be his subjects and of his descendants”.

This was a prediction about the immanent military campaign by Charlemagne, who „with an iron tongue” (that is by fire and sword) „converted the Saxons”. The Apostle of Pomerania, St Otto of Bamberg at the beginning of the twelfth century was able to effectively manipulate the attitudes of that pagan people by utilising the threat of the military intervention by the Polish prince Bolesław the Wry Mouth (Krzywousty).

On the other hand the factor of external Christian intervention, whether invasion or threat was not always sufficient. We recall that the Christian side not only had successes and victories, but also it defeats, as for example in the northern Elbelands (Polabia) at the end of the tenth century, when the Slavs there (the Veletians–Luticians and Abodrites) by an armed uprising shook off for a century and a half German rule and together with it Christianity, or this time for considerably shorter time but equally painful for the young church in Poland in the 1030s. Above all however we know cases, and Poland is one of the best, of almost voluntary conversion to the new beliefs, without visible or decisive direct influence of external factors. It was once a popular view that Mieszko I, deciding to accept baptism, was mainly trying to protect his state and his rule against the threat of German intervention or influences from the German church or state. We now know that in the 960s when these fundamental questions were considered and decisions taken, there was very little possibility of a Polish–German conflict, and if external politics played any role in the decisions taken by the ruler of the Polanians, it is more likely that the problem was in the severing of a potential alliance between the Czechs and the Veletians which was an unsafe situation for the state of Mieszko I (and for the German state).

In normal political conditions more important than the contemporary needs of foreign policy were motives concerning and necessities of internal policy. Christianity was not only a specific highly organised religious system, but also a valuable world view capable of having an effect on its own society. Those who led pagan societies and steered — or were trying to steer — consolidative processes were well aware of this. We should remember that at the end of the first millennium A.D. over large areas of central, eastern and northern Europe, the process of state–formation were accelerating; until then, these areas had been at the stage of clan societies. It is an especially notable fact that we do not know of a single convincing case of a successful voluntary (i.e., not enforced from outside) conversion to Christianity of a Slav people at the stage of clan–tribal society. It was the founder–rulers of medieval states such as Mieszko I in Poland, Olav Tryggvason in Norway, Vladimir the Great in Russia, St Steven in Hungary, which led their nations to the new belief.

We understand their intentions and determination in the fight with the forces of the old order, in the interests of the new, Christian one. We do not exclude, obviously, personal motives, internal conviction of the values of the new belief, or (though often overstressed in later tradition) the influences of Christian spouses such as Dąbrówka in Poland or Anna Porphyrogenita in Russia²¹, or the powers of persuasion and determination of the missionaries, but it is difficult to doubt that in taking what was certainly a difficult decision concerning the break with the existing beliefs and the system of values connected with it, the expected social consequences of the conversion were the ones which counted most.

Were, however, these results (so desirable from the point of view of the ruler) entirely assured, easy to predict and obvious for the actors on the contemporary political scene? At first they merely complicated the situation (or at least could complicate matters). For most of society, the new cult was something completely foreign, unknown or little known, and not wanted at all. Archaic societies were basically agricultural, living in conditions of relative mutual isolation and characteristically by nature conservative, also with the rhythm of their lives so closely — and seemingly permanently — intertwined (and maybe especially in the sphere of belief) with the natural rhythm of nature. In contrast to the populations of towns and other concentrations of population which had long been also places of interchange of ideas and competition between beliefs, rural populations always and everywhere were rejected „novelties”, and were distrustful of, and often hostile towards them. It is no accident that the Latin word „paganus” meaning „country dweller”, „villager”, took on a secondary meaning in the course of the Christianisation of the Roman Empire, which was a term accepted in different European languages to refer to a non-Christian, a follower of one of the primary religions. Mieszko I, who we may treat here as a representative of the whole group of the „uniter-princes” and Christianisers, would have to take into account that the decision to accept Christianity would in the short-term antagonise a considerable portion of his own society.

Certainly in atypical situations, the balance of losses and gains could have looked differently to a ruler. Among these may be counted the Slav society on the island of Rügen, where (at least in the better-known twelfth century) royal power attained independence, though curbed by the influences of the priests of Svanthvit, it is not surprising that they relatively easily came to terms with the Danish conquest and Christianisation, since in the new conditions they prospered so well²². It cannot be excluded that a similar situation may have applied in the case of the territory of the Veletian (Lutician) tribal union beginning from the end of the tenth century, where a specific kind of theocracy of the priests of Svarožic was created in the mysterious Rethra-Riedegost (mysterious because, despite quite full descriptions in the German

²¹ For the earlier phases of the Middle Ages, we can point to the thorough monograph of C. Nolte 1995.

²² From the extensive scientific literature on the subject of the Rugian pagan cult see only: J. Banaszkiewicz 1996: 75–82; A.L. Miś 1997: 105–149.

sources, it has still not been located). This theocracy (earlier than that on Rügen) was different in that the priests and the popular element (the *wiec*) which was dominated by them were effectively able to eliminate all rivalry to their power from the tribal leaders.

The rulers knew what they were doing and it seems that they saw the long-term benefits which Christianity would bring, and these were various. Christianity „ennobled” the state and its ruler, only Christianity allowed access to the community of Christian states and peoples, and thus to the advanced civilisations of main parts of the contemporary world. Only the Church could supply the ruler with educated people, able to read and express themselves in writing, to serve as envoys, and prepare documents. While Christian rulers, when the situation required it, were able to enter alliances with pagans (perhaps the clearest example is the alliance made at Quedlinburg in 1003 between the extremely pious, and even later canonised, German king (later Emperor) Henry II and the pagan Veletians–Luticians, which was directed against Bolesław the Brave the Christian king of Poland), but in general Christian rulers despised the pagans. In the seventh century the ambassador of the Frankish king Dagobert I rejected the proposition of Samo, the leader („king”) of the Slavs, to enter an alliance; he is said to have replied haughtily that it was not possible for „Christians and servants of God to enter an alliance with dogs” (Fredegar IV, 48), a remark which was to cost the Franks dearly. Tradition recounts of Bořivoj the semi-legendary prince of the Czechs that when he was invited to the court of Svatopluk, the Christian prince of Moravia, he was not allowed to sit at the same table as the other diners, but *ritu paganorum ante mensam pavimento iubetur insidere*²³. The great uprising mentioned elsewhere in this article of the Elbeland (Polabian) Slavs of 983 and subsequent years started, if we are to believe Adam of Bremen and Helmold of Bosau, mainly as a result of the conceit and treachery of Theoderich (Dietrich), the Saxon margrave of the Northern March, who first promised the Abodrite prince a relation of the Duke of Saxony as a wife, and then retracted his promise under the pretext that „a relation of the duke should not be given as a wife to a dog!” Even the German chroniclers do not disguise their disapproval of the behaviour of the margrave, all the more so as they were aware of the huge misfortune that this behaviour was to bring.

Even more significant, and an extremely desirable consequence of Christianisation for royal power was the sacral enhancement of the person of the ruler. In Germanic societies this was but an extension (although in a new Christian guise) of ancient pagan conceptions of the sacral genesis of royal power (*Sakralkönigtum*); this concept would however have been foreign to Slav societies, to whom in the pre-Christian period the concept of a sacral element in this context would have been difficult to understand. Always, however, the Christian ruler became somebody incomparably more distinguished and dignified than the ordinary pagan leader. The latter—regardless of whatever titles (most often „king”, *rex*) he had been given in Greek or Latin documents, was

²³ The so-called *Christian's Legend* (end of the tenth century?), c. 2.

simply a depositary of the will of „the people” (or, more realistically, above all the tribal aristocracy, appointed and dismissed by the *wiec*), the killer of a „king” must pay wergeld just as for any other member of the tribe (except a much higher amount). The Christian ruler, no matter whether a prince or a king was also and above all the assignee of the power of God. He ruled not only as a result of „consent” of the people but also as by a spiritual dignity, part of the „sacrum”, he was also responsible to God for the salvation of his people. Attacks on the person of the Christian ruler were not only a crime in the eyes of the law, but also a deadly sin, and the crime itself could only be punished by death. The ruler and his family, „appointed” by the Providence of God, even in pagan societies (for example Piast and his family in the version recorded for the first time by Gallus Anonymus) is raised up above the whole of the rest of the society and even above all other potential rivals for royal power. Despite the extreme atrophy of royal power under the later Merovingians, the *coup d'etat* of Pepin of the Carolingian dynasty in the middle of the eighth century was seen as an usurpation and required especial measures to legitimise it (approval of the Apostolic see, and the sacralisation of their kingship). It is not necessary to explain how advantageous the Christianity of the ruler was.

Another aspect was the unity of the state. The uniting of tribes, an extremely important process, but in general poorly-known in the sources, was an extremely difficult, even titanic task accomplished by blood and toil. The degree of coherence of the freshly (and with such difficulty) united state was still not great, it was rather a conglomerate of extremely varied (in a multitude of aspects) territories and peoples, often connected with each other only by the autocratic will of the ruler, breaking any resistance. Not without reason have early states been compared to a monstrous roller crushing the society and removing irregularities. In the longer term the roller, the sword and destruction do not suffice, other factors must be brought into the service of the state, chiefly ideological, above all religious ones. Paganism, with its characteristic particularism, was absolutely impossible to use in this way, although some rulers initially had such intentions. Vladimir of Russia for example became convinced of this when he tried to raise Perun, one of his pagan gods, to the role of the highest god (the „uniting-god”) of the Russian lands. The attempt to introduce henotheism (one god above all others) did not succeed. The great prince began to look around for other religions, and as is well known, after mature counsel (which is described, though we do not know how accurately, by the author of the *Russian Primary Chronicle*), the choice fell on (Byzantine) Christianity. Indeed, Christianity as a monotheistic religion, in the eyes of which in theory all people are equal and also — which is just as important — as a *f o r e i g n* religion (developed somewhere else and thus is an implant in the areas where it spread), fulfilled a role which no pagan religion could have done as the support of „uniter-princes”.

Since the balance of the advantages of accepting Christianity was decidedly greater than the threats, why did the process of the Christianisation of Europe take so long, and why was it so difficult and non-linear, what was the reason for such a strong resistance, why were there so many martyrs, and what was the cause of the cases of apostasy?

There was one characteristic common to (or similar in) both early Medieval Christianity and paganism: both of them regarded themselves not so much a matter of the individual conscience but a necessary element of the integration of whole groups of humans. Christian missionaries were not dealing with „secular” peoples, but with peoples with clearly-defined religious structures²⁴. The sacral was too important an area of community life to allow a free choice of religion; the god of the ruler should have been the same god as the rest of the community. It is necessary to differentiate several contexts of Christian missions. Missions of the first model occurred where there were strong external influences behind or accompanying the missionaries. This was the model of the conversion of the Saxons in the times of Charlemagne, the Icelanders in the times of Olav Tryggvason, the Pomeranians in the times of Bolesław The Wry Mouth, the Elbe Slavs in the time of Henry the Lion, The Prussians and Lithuanians in the time of the Teutonic Knights. Christianity was accompanied by conquest sometimes preceding it and sometimes following it. Apart from collaborators, who quickly came to terms with the new powers, Christianity was seen by the majority of the people as something foreign and hostile, as an agent of a foreign, self-dependent power. This aroused resistance, and passivity (expressed by apparent, imposed conversion), when however the external pressure was temporarily or permanently removed, the new religion was rejected as a foreign imposition, priests were expelled or murdered, churches were destroyed, and the old cult was resumed.

Sometimes the enforced mission was just a cover for a lightly-camouflaged brutal conquest, which rather hindered than aided real Christianisation. The Slav prince of the Wagrians complained to Gerold, the Bishop of Stargard (Oldenburg in Wagria) when the latter tried to persuade him to accept Christianity:

„Your words, honourable bishop are the words of God and intended for our salvation. In what way can we set out on that way, oppressed as we are by such a huge evil? If you would understand our troubles, listen patiently to my words; the people you see are your people, and it is meet that we should inform you of our dire situation [...]. Your princes loot us with such severity, that because of tribute and the strongest subjugation ‘better for us is death than life’ [Mt 6, 9]. For this year we, the inhabitants of this tiny territory, have paid the [Saxon] prince the thousand *grzywien* [of tribute], and further the count [of Holstein] hundreds, and we have still not paid all, but they daily press us and cause us harm until complete destruction. In what manner can we find time for this new religion, to build churches and accept baptism, we who daily

²⁴ See: L.E. von Padberg 1994: 290–312, especially 310.

expect to be swept from the face of the earth? If only there was somewhere that we could escape to! If we were to cross the [river] Trave, we would meet a similar defeat, if we cross the Peene, it would meet us there. What remains for us but to leave the land and go into the sea and live in its depths? [see Psalm 138: 8–9]. Where is our fault in that, if we have been driven from our homelands, that we are driven to the seas and taking the means to survive from the Danes and merchants sailing the seas? Is it not the fault of the prince who has driven us to this?" (Helmold I, 84).

Despite the changed historical context, this was nothing less than a return to the situation of the missions from the period of the late, Christian, Roman Empire, when Christianity in practical terms equalled the political affinity to the system of the Roman state; at the same time it was a departure from the evangelical call *docete omnes gentes*, since „all” means to the edges of the inhabited earth. Gregory the Great returned to this principle and from that time (the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries) it was a constant element of the programme of the Church (particularly the Roman) and for several centuries it was impossible to separate missionary work and politics and the conquest of pagan countries and it is doubtful that the Church authorities were interested in resigning from the support of the secular powers.

The second model of Christianisation operated where there was not decisive pressure from the outside, but a significant role was played by the pressure applied internally by the native leaders of a society. Such a model applied for example to those Slav states which — like Poland — achieved their own nationhood and came to Christianity „of their own volition”, which does not — of course — exclude organizational help and the employment of personnel from the outside. From the point of view of the society exposed to Christianisation, the difference between the first and second models need not in fact have been so visible, pressure is after all pressure, and an awareness of the need for a sacral unity between the people and their ruler however probably played a certain role.

The third model of Christianisation applied when missionaries had to work in foreign and hostile (or at least neutral) environment, that is in areas which had their own power structures, but where the leaders were hostile to, not inclined to support, or at best not interested in, Christianity. It was only in this third model (where there was no authority from a power directly supporting the missionaries), that arguments and persuasion really counted; in such situations, the supporters of the old and new beliefs were in a similar position. It is difficult not to notice that the experience of history have many times proven the futility of attempted Christianisation carried out in such conditions (for example the activities of St Willibrord among the Frisians and Danes, St Ansgar among the Swedes, and to a certain degree also St Adalbert and St Bruno of Querfurt among the Prussians and Yatvingians).

Missionaries and Christian writers often as it were belittled the pagan gods, generally representing them as the products of human hands which are not in any position either to harm nor help, there even appears sometimes a note of regret for the pagans, who not only had condemned themselves to damnation, but were also seeking help or support

from their lifeless and completely useless idols. Thus the considerable role of the „mission of action” in the history of the missions, it was an easier and quicker way than teaching (the catechism) to convince the pagans of the efficacy of the new religion and an immediate demonstration of the impotency of their gods or the power of the Christian god. This would explain the sometimes surprising (though only apparently so) zeal with which some missionaries destroyed or defiled pagan sanctuaries or images (the most famous example of this is probably cutting-down by Winfried-Boniface of the famous Thor’s Oak at Geismar), or the command of prince Vladimir of Kiev to have the image of Perun flogged and dumped into the Dniepr so soon after he had set it up and commanded it to be worshipped. Even if, as was so often used effectively against them in polemic, the images and sanctuaries themselves were lifeless and useless products of human handicraft, pagan cult was the work of the devil himself. There is no possibility of discussion with the work of Satan, it has to be rooted-out and suppressed, and with all available means.

The principle of „the lesser evil” would explain much, and we have no basis for suspecting that always and everywhere this was simply opportunism. In the Middle Ages (and later, until the Second Vatican Council) the doctrine of the undivided monopoly of the [Roman] Church in the Salvation of souls prevailed. This meant that in the view of the Christians, the huge groups of non-Christians (and in practice also members of other Churches as well) as a *massa perditionis* was condemned to damnation. The imperative of Christianisation was, or at least should be a moral injunction, a fulfilment of the fundamental principle of the gospels, which is the love of one’s fellow man; for some it was a categorical imperative to which they devoted their lives and were willing to give up their lives for. At the same time, as the Gospels tell us nobody knows the day of the end of the world and the Last Judgement. While the Church (as the result of experience) did not approve, and even forbade, calculation when it would occur and in principle did not encourage chiliastic tendencies, it was unable to root them out entirely from the spiritual life of Christians. In certain historical situations, especially considerable external threats or natural disasters (plagues, famine, heavy winters, floods, crop failures) they appeared with greater force. They sometimes formed an expression of spiritual opposition against the official church, which was too strongly connected with the existing socio-political order. But, as it would appear, Pope Gregory the Great himself, in formulating the return to the doctrine of the universal character of the salvationist mission of the Church, found himself under the influence of a conviction of the approach of the end of the world²⁵. The approach of the end of the first millennium of the Christian era did not actually give rise, as sometimes hastily assumed in earlier studies, to some general eruption of chiliastic moods but did arouse however some specific reactions among certain people of a more religious nature²⁶. *Veniet, veniet dies Domini sicut fur cito* — declared a contemporary visionary, referring to the Second Epistle of St Peter (II Pet. 3:10).

²⁵ See: L.E. von Padberg 1994: 301ff.

²⁶ See: W. Sulikowska 1960: 23–43; J. Fried 1989: 381–473; G. Duby 1980, Polish translation: M. Malewicz (G. Duby 1997).

What else resulted in the spread of Christianity often encountering such great resistance?

It would seem that both sides were speaking different languages. I do not have in mind the real linguistic barrier between missionaries and the natives, which was sometimes so great that it was impossible to overcome without a translator (this must have been the situation in the case of Irish missions among the Picts or Anglo-Saxons, the Germans in the Elbe lands²⁷, or St Adalbert among the Prussians), while elsewhere (for example in the case of Anglo-Saxon missionaries among continental Saxons, Constantine and Methodius among the Moravian Slavs, or the hypothetical Czech missionaries who came to Gniezno together with Dąbrówka), these problems seem not to have occurred at all or only to a slight degree. I have in mind rather the completely different conceptual apparatus which was used by both sides, and which — to use today's jargon — we would describe as „incompatible”.

We recall the important role played in the pagan belief systems by the concept of usefulness. A good god was useful to „his” people. It was not enough for him to be favourable, he had to also be useful, and effective. Between the gods and the communities of his worshippers there was a magical bond, strengthened in all societies employing these archaic beliefs by the principle of mutualness (*do ut des*). The worshipper had the hope of obtaining the favours of the god by sacrifices, prayers and magic acts. If the god was not able to reward the sacrificial gift, and the worshipper was not able to ensure this mutuality by magic, it would appear that the god had either turned against his people, or had proven to be powerless. In primary religions there is nothing which suggests a pretension to exclusiveness with reference to other religious systems. As a consequence of this there is also a lack of any tendency whatsoever towards proselytism, that is the desire to convert others to a particular belief. Other gods, the gods of other peoples, are exactly the same reality as one's own, except their competence does not extend to „us”. Their potential to be harmful could be countered by attempts to „domesticate” them, to join them to one's own belief system, to one's own pantheon, not necessarily at once instead of, but alongside or even above, the traditional gods. Primary religions are open to foreign influences and patterns, if the latter are regarded as acceptable.

Sometimes such openness was regarded by Christian eyes as blasphemous. When in the middle of the ninth century in Sweden the fate of the mission conducted by St Ansgar was in the balance, the pagan gods — who were threatened by a certain

²⁷ Although we know of several attempts by German missionaries and churchmen to master Slav languages, see for the southern Elbe region: K. Hengst 1992: 397–406. Concerning the northern Elbe region. Adam of Bremen and after him Helmold state that the Abodrite prince Gotschalk (1043–1066) himself delivered a sermon to his people in the Slav language „for he wished to explain [...] those questions which the bishops and priests had presented in a manner difficult to understand” (Helmold I, 20). The priest Bruno about the middle of the twelfth century knew „both the language and customs of the Slavs” (Helmold I, 84).

proportion of the natives accepting the message announced by the Christian missionaries — sent through their „spokesman” (who claimed to have been present at the meeting of the gods) the following message to the *thing* (gathering of the people):

„You have for a long time enjoyed our favour, and for a long time — due to our care your country has prospered in peace. You made sacrifices and the required offerings to us and your attentions were appreciated. Now, however, you refuse us your customary sacrifices and even rarer do you voluntarily make us offerings. What makes us even more angry, however, is that you have introduced the new [Christian] god and raised him up above us. If you wish to retain our favours you must increase the neglected sacrifices and bring us greater offerings. Do not accept the cult of another god, with his hostile teachings and do not serve him! If however, you require other gods, and we are not sufficient for you, we have unanimously agreed to accept among us Eric, who was once your king and that he would be counted as one of the gods”²⁸.

When in 1156, Henry the Lion the duke of Saxony urged the Slav princes to accept baptism, we are told „Niklot [d. 1160 — J.S.], the prince of the Abodrites answered him ‘Let God who is in heaven be your God, while you will be our god and that will be enough for us [John 14: 8]. You worship Him and we will worship you’, the duke however interrupted those blasphemous words”²⁹.

While in the first example, due to the domination of paganism in the middle of the ninth century, the „offer of the gods” was accepted, and the late king Eric, popular among the people was deified, and according to the gods’ wishes, the teachings of the Christian missionaries was rejected, in the middle of the twelfth century the similar offer of the Abodrite prince to one of the most powerful rulers of the German Empire had to be turned down.

It was probably with great surprise that the pagans received the refusal of the Christians to similar offers of a „compromise”. They probably could not understand the universalistic aspirations of the Christian God, who would not accept any other gods not only „above him” but also „besides” or even „under” Him.

And yet, there must often have been pagan-Christian religious syncretism in the transitional period. Even if the written sources were to fail us (which is not the case) archaeology would provide eloquent enough proof³⁰. Syncretism, which was naturally

²⁸ Rimbert, *Life of St Ansgar*, c. 26; *Quellen* 1978: 86–89.

²⁹ Helmold I, 84.

³⁰ The famous „royal” burial in a boat at Sutton Hoo near Rendlesham a royal power-centre of the kingdom of the East Angles (one of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms), included in its contents both pagan elements (the helmet with religious images) and Christian (for example a sword with a representation of the Triumph of the Cross, connected with the story of Constantine the Great and two silver spoons with the names „Saulos” and „Paulos”). In the opinion of many investigators this may be the grave of Raedwald whose complicated relationship with the Christian religion is presented by the Venerable Bede who notes his syncretism (*Hist. eccl. gentis Anglorum* II, 15): *Christo seruire uideretur et diis; in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi et arulam ad uictimas daemoniarum*. „Aus Sicht der Kirche verharrete er [Raedwald] zwischen Saulus und Paulus, aus Sicht des Heidentums setzte er einen religiösen Mischprozeß in Gang” (see: L.E. von Padberg 1995: 265–266). Maybe more evocative — for it records the wider social range of such syncretism is the finding of metal moulds for the casting of both crosses as well as Thor-hammer amulets.

evaluated by Christian observers (almost all of them churchmen!) very critically as a rejection of one of the basic tenets of the Faith, created no problems from the point of view of the pagans, who perceived the Christian God as just one of the gods, although more powerful than others. Even for those first Christians (ignorant of, or not understanding, or maybe not approving, the theological sanctions against polytheism, or perhaps being forced by a certain political situation to tolerate syncretism), situations where there may be altars in the same place (or at a certain distance from one another) dedicated to Odin and Christ, or Svarožic and Christ, need not necessarily have been unacceptable. In contrast to Christian authors who were only interested in presenting the triumph of their beliefs (that is, the effect of the confrontation with paganism), the latter was treated not as a subject of interest in its own right, but as the antithesis of Christianity and the work of the Devil. It was usually only in this spirit that it was sometimes attempted — if at all — to describe the cult that was to be replaced by Christianity. There is no doubt that in practice there must have been many situations of conflict, impossible to resolve according to the wishes of one of the sides, and situations requiring radical and unconventional resolutions, especially from the point of view of Christian orthodoxy³¹.

One somewhat typical situation was the marriage between a pagan ruler and a Christian princess of a neighbouring polity of from further afield³². As a rule the condition for allowing such a marriage to take place imposed by the Christian party was the assurance of the freedom of worship of the wife in the husband's court. This was in expectation of the conversion, under the influence of a pious wife and those around her, of the pagan ruler (who it sometimes happened was persuaded, and sometimes not). In practice, this must have meant that the wife was accompanied by Christian clergy and a retinue, for whom it was necessary to create conditions to organise a centre of the Christian cult in the residence of the ruler (which most often was a place which was at the same time a pagan cult site). In this way a „Christian enclave” was created in a pagan country. The Eucharist took place adjacent to sacrifices to pagan gods, and both sides had to tolerate this situation for a shorter or longer time. An apparently incomprehensible phenomenon observed frequently by contemporary authors is a schism in the ruling family, as the father accepted Christianity, but his son or sons remained faithful to the old beliefs. The fact that they remained in the father's court however showed that they were not acting against the clear wishes of their father, although it must have been obvious that such a situation could only have led to conflict. It is difficult not to see such situations as expressions of some form by which the ruler secured himself against the consequences of his conversion and an expression of his care for the dynasty and the wish to protect its future as it were against all possibilities. If in the future the supporters of paganism were to gain power, the dynasty would have

³¹ These examples are cited in the work of L.E. von Padberg 1995: 249–278. Interestingly similar cases concerning the manner of Christianising of Iceland are presented in the work of K. Düwel 1978: 249–275.

³² See the monograph of C. Nolte 1995.

a „ready” candidate for power. Besides this, the eventual aid of the pagan gods may still be required, but they would lose power if the whole dynasty rejected their cult.

Further situations provoking a conflict of loyalty and orientation were military failures (especially at the hands of a pagan opponent) or natural disaster which affected the people and the ruler which had decided to accept the new belief. These failures in the opinion of contemporary observers raised questions about the legitimacy of Christianity (had the rejection of the old („one’s own”) gods been worth risking or indeed provoked their revenge?). These situations created ideal conditions for the activation of forces of the old pagan order of things. Fear of the revenge of the old gods, angered by the appearance of Christian missionaries, was a fairly general phenomenon. According to Bruno of Querfurt (*Second Life of St Adalbert*, c. 25), the Prussians chased the missionaries off their lands declaring that „because of such people our soil will not give a harvest, trees will not bear fruit, new animals will not be born and the old ones die”.

The occurrence of possible conflicts was not always avoided by a situation when a ruler allowed a missionary to operate within his state, but did not unequivocally support the mission and put no pressure on his people to accept the new beliefs. The possibilities of the effective operation of Christian missionaries was usually restricted, and the pagan priests had many opportunities to conduct an effective campaign against them (let us recall the „offer” of the Swedish gods mentioned a bit earlier), even if by the proposition of adding Christ to the existing pantheon.

VII

It seems that scholarship has not always seen with adequate clarity yet another area where there may have been a conflict between Christian and pagan value systems. This affected different areas of Europe to varying degree. This concerns the degree to which pagan cult was often connected with regional centres of power, and power was created by „aristocratic circles regarding themselves and regarded as close to the world of the gods”. For these circles, sometimes in their own opinion and that of society as a whole seen as descended from the gods themselves, the idea of a God/Man coming from the common people and who died in disgrace, by crucifixion — a death worthy of a slave — may have seemed very provocative, something highly unseemly. In addition, the acceptance of Christianity automatically implied (in the framework of the existing concepts) a break of the highly important links with the ancestors. An excellent witness of these moral conflicts is provided by the anonymous (from the eighth or beginning of the ninth century) *Life of St Wulfram of Sens* (*Vita Vulframni*), describing how close he came to baptising the known enemy of Christianity and the Franks — the Frisian prince Radbod (d. 719):

„and when this Radbod was ready to accept Baptism, he asked the holy Bishop Wulfram [...] where one would find the large number of kings, princes and nobles of the Frisian people: in the heavenly region which he [the bishop] had promised he would

find himself if only he would believe and be baptised, or [...] damned in Hell. The Blessed Wulfram answered him 'do not be deluded noble prince; God has already decided the number of his chosen ones. Your predecessors, rulers of the Frisian people who died without the sacrament of baptism have certainly been sentenced to damnation. He who believes in Christ and is baptised will be joyous with Christ for centuries'. When he heard this the unbelieving prince, who had already started to enter the font, removed — it is said — his foot from the basin and declared that he could not reject the chance of companionship of his predecessors as rulers of the Frisians in order to sit in the Kingdom of Heaven with a small group of paupers. For this reason he preferred not to believe so easily in the new faith but rather would remain faithful to that those beliefs which the whole nation of the Frisians had long preserved"³³.

The Bishop thought he was using an effective persuasive argument (the danger of sharing the fate of pagan ancestors), but the proud Frisian leader treated it as an insult, placing the need to maintain the sacral link with the ancestors above his eternal salvation together with „the Christian paupers”.

VIII

In the two or three centuries before the year 1000, and later in the slightly slower expansion of the Christian states on a local scale, as a result (among other things) of the expansion of the Vikings, the process of the confrontation of paganism and Christianity in Europe became more intense. Christian expansion northwards and to the east was able to oppose a „pagan expansion” to the south and west. The latter was unable, however, to prevent the spread of Christianity, but took on in some areas of the pagan world (for example in the region of the Elbe and among the Baltic peoples) an unexpected power of resistance and an aggressive stance which was so shocking for the Christian world. Positions became entrenched and the pagans, attacked and pushed-back, adopting certain elements derived from Christianity³⁴, in order to survive. They developed a higher form of organisation of the cult (temples, images, henotheism, „warrior gods”, and a theocracy of priests), which demonstrate not only a considerable degree of resistance, but also — in certain situations — expansion. They also demonstrate, at least in certain milieux, the conceptual attractiveness of some of these

³³ MGH SSrerMer V, 668.

³⁴ There are various approaches in science concerning the degree of the influences of Christianity on late paganism. H. Łowmiański for example, in his fundamental study *Religia Słowian i jej upadek (w. VI–XII)*, Warszawa 1979, regards the degree of influence as considerable. He regards, among other things, henotheism the personalisation of gods, their polycephalism and even the characteristics of certain gods (Trzygłów — a reflection of the Holy Trinity?, Świętowit — St Wit?, Tjarnoglofi [a god mentioned in one of the Nordic sources] — „Crowned with Thorns”, and thus Christ?) as possible results of the influences of Christianity on Polabian paganism (See: S. Rosik 1995, as well as the dissertation of that author entitled: *Interpretacja chrześcijańska religii pogańskich Słowian w świetle kronik niemieckich XI–XII w. (Thietmar, Adam z Bremy, Helmold)*, Wrocław 1998 (printed: Wrocław 2000).

characteristics of Christianity. When at the beginning of the seventh century (and thus at the very beginning of the history of European missionary activity), St Armand attempted to preach the Gospel to certain (Carinthian or Danubian area?) Slavs, nobody wanted to hear him, but at the same time nobody was concerned to stop him by putting him to death. Several centuries later this dispassion no longer existed and was replaced by hostility. The „peaceful” missions (as St Ansgar tried to accomplish in Scandinavia, St Wojciech (Adalbert) and St Bruno of Querfurt on the south shore of the Baltic, or other less well-known but equally unfortunate would-be missionaries such as the Irishman [Scot] Jan, bishop of Mecklenburg sacrificed in 1066 to the god Svarożic in Rethra-Riedegost, or Bernard the Spaniard — mocked and flogged and driven out of Pomerania at the beginning of the twelfth century) failed to produce any results. The future of the missions was in the hands of such people as St Otto of Bamberg — the missionary of the Pomeranians at the beginning of the twelfth century, or Christian — the missionary of the Prussians in the thirteenth century, who were able to merge missionary zeal with good organisation and powerful support.

Translated by Paul Barford

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THE LANGUAGES OF EUROPE AROUND THE YEAR 1000 A.D.

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The only direct evidence for languages of the past beyond a century or so before the present comes from written or incised documents of that time. Not many European languages were recorded by or before 1000 A.D. The present discussion must reflect this imbalance of evidence, and is unavoidably written from a western European perspective. Indirect evidence, from languages recorded subsequently, may often be used, but only by inference using reconstruction.

By the beginning of the present era, dialects of the Indo-European family were spoken across most of the continent of Europe, as they are now, with a few relict languages such as Basque and possibly Pictish left from the prehistoric period. The classical languages, Greek and Latin, dominate at the beginning of the period, and other languages which they superseded, or north beyond their Mediterranean world-view, are hardly known other than as Greek and Roman grammarians, historians and geographers chose to give any record of them. This changes completely with the conversion, fragmentation and then collapse of the Roman Empire. The political movements within Europe which may have involved large-scale population movement, the Migrations, were largely completed by the end of the first millennium A.D., and the population-map of Europe seems already to have been drawn in general outline. The first wave of „barbarian” and other invasions that brought about the end, or at least the complete transformation, of the classical, Mediterranean-based civilisation of Greece and Rome, had been completed, whether these were from the north, the Germanic invasions, from the south-west, the Moors, or from the east, the Huns, Avars and Alans. The later waves of invasion, the Vikings from the north and the Magyars from the east, ultimately followed by the Turks, were in the first two cases almost complete, and in the last already threatening. The political entities set up by these invasions, and their interaction with such surviving political institutions as had remained, were already becoming stable. The Christian church had set up its own institutions, which were initially dependent upon the administrative structure of the Roman empire, but with the monastic movement in the late Roman period it had created very durable alternatives to this.

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Already at the end of the first millennium A.D., most of the dialects were geographically and politically in place which were to provide the basis for the modern languages, cultures and political institutions of Europe. Some of them were even beginning to gain or regain the political and cultural status which defines them as languages, though this development became largely concomitant with perceived linguistic identity within the emerging nation-state. Language was then as now a medium not merely of cultural but of political identity; for most of the period it was also significant as a criterion of religious adherence.

Greek was already of political status, in that it had become the defining language of the Byzantine Empire as well as, initially, of Orthodox Christianity. Latin, the imperial language of the western Empire, lost political function with the fragmentation of the Romance-speaking areas, though it retained an institutional role within the western Church. English was by far the first of the Germanic languages to be defined as the language of a political entity, the kingdom of the English, in the tenth century, though this development had begun earlier and was already apparent to Bede in the eighth century. And, with the exception of Greek, as a language acquired cultural and political functions so it sometimes seems to have begun to lose an identifying role as a criterion of religious adherence. The Armenians and Goths used their own languages for Christian purposes from the fourth century onwards, and the same process began in England and Ireland, and spread from there into Scandinavia and continental Germania, where Latin was used as a language of liturgy and scholarship, but not of common Christianity. Equally the early missionaries to the Slavonic peoples enabled them to use their own languages for some Christian purposes.

In outline, it is possible to speak of several broad areas of linguistically defined culture across Europe at the end of the first millennium A.D.: Greek, Romance, Germanic and Slavonic, with several smaller areas, mostly peripheral to these and often situated in areas geographically isolated by sea, mountains, forest or fen. Greek remained important in the south-east of Europe, though its cultural dominance had shrunk with that of the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church. It remained of high status far beyond the boundaries of its actual use, however, at least amongst scholars and churchmen, both in the Christian and Islamic worlds.

Latin also retained great importance far beyond the former boundaries of the Roman Empire, for in a form fixed in the fourth century A.D. or so, it was also the ritual language of western Christendom, and so, like Greek, was used as a language of religion and scholarship throughout much of Europe, including for instance the areas of western Slavonic and Magyar. The Latin-derived Romance dialects, which were to become the Romance languages, remained dominant in northern and central Italy, and had largely displaced Greek further south in the Italian peninsula; they were also important in the northern Adriatic basin, and in Moorish-dominated Iberia, as well as in a subsequently isolated area in the Carpathian mountains, there giving rise to modern Romanian.

The Germanic invasions of northern Europe, spreading originally from southern Scandinavia and the northernmost parts of modern Germany, had at the fall of Roman

power crossed the Rhine, occupied the whole of Gaul, across the Pyrenees ruled much of the Iberian peninsula, and had briefly even established political power in north Africa. Southwards across the Alps they penetrated northern Italy, while eastwards they spread down the Danube as far as the Black Sea and the Ukraine; in their expansion southwards and eastwards, these peoples encountered not only the Byzantine empire and the Slavs, but also the advancing Huns. The Franks, easily the most important political power in western Europe for the second half of the first millennium, had self-consciously adopted a „Roman” identity, and also for the most part Latin dialects, which were to become French and Provençal. Germanic peoples other than the Franks had also ultimately adopted Romance languages when they settled within the old boundaries of the western Roman empire, so for instance the Lombards and Ostrogoths in northern Italy or the Visigoths in Iberia. The only enduring exception to this pattern were the English in Britain. Germanic peoples beyond the boundaries of the Roman empire retained their own languages, as did the English.

Eastern Europe was divided from Germania between the Baltic and the Carpathians by the great forest still remembered as Mirkwood, and the fens surviving in small part as the Pripet Marshes. Partly beyond these natural barriers speakers of the Slavonic languages, which perhaps originated near the Baltic, were advancing southwards towards the Danube and across it into the Balkans and Macedonia after the Hunnish invasions; they ultimately reached the Adriatic by the latest at the tenth century. Speakers of Slavonic also were moving east, and by the tenth century had reached at least the areas between Novgorod and Kiev. Further east, across the Black Sea and around the foothills of the Caucasus mountains, other languages survived, some of which, like Armenian, are Indo-European and attested early; others of which are not Indo-European at all.

The languages of the Celtic diaspora had probably ceased to be spoken almost anywhere on the European mainland by this period, but remained in the west and north of the British Isles, and are recorded in this period as Old Irish and Old Welsh; emigrants from Britain had restored a Celtic language, Breton, in Armorica, present-day Brittany, whether or not this had any possible continuity with earlier Gaulish. In the Balkans and perhaps also parts of southern Italy, Albanian remains to the present day, though another Indo-European language, so-called „Illyrian”, had probably long since ceased to be spoken there. On the south-eastern Baltic coasts were and are to be found a very archaic group of Indo-European languages, the „Baltic” group of Lithuanian, Latvian and Old Prussian.

In the north-eastern Baltic coastlands, the Finno-Ugrian languages which were to become Sami, Finnish and Estonian were certainly already long-established, and had been in contact with Germanic languages since the prehistoric period, although they must be of western Asiatic origin. Other, older-established languages sometimes remained in geographically or politically isolated corners of Europe. Basque, a non-Indo-European language, survives to the present day around the Pyrenees. Pictish, in eastern Scotland, may like Basque have preserved traces of

a non-Indo-European language, although if so it also was certainly strongly Celticised, to judge by its few remaining monuments.

The Hunnish invasions from the Asian steppes of the third and fourth centuries A.D. left little discernible linguistic residue in Europe; their main recorded impact was upon eastern Germania, and they destroyed the short-lived Gothic empire in the Ukraine. The Magyar invasion of the late ninth century onwards was the only one which established stable and lasting political institutions; the language of the Magyars is Finno-Ugrian, Hungarian, and it is the only survivor of the many invasions from the Steppes. Because so many invasions (of Scythians, Huns, Avars and Alans, and then Magyars, westward into central Europe, Goths eastward from the Danube basin, and Vikings southward from the Baltic) had swept across the flat and fertile lands of the Ukraine, their early linguistic history, before Slavonic dominance, is the more difficult to determine.

The early Islamic invasions had not affected eastern Europe seriously, since the Byzantine Empire had remained throughout the first millennium A.D. as an ever-weakening bulwark against any threat from the south and east. However, the Moors had assaulted western Europe, putting an end to the short-lived Germanic kingdoms in north Africa, conquering the Iberian peninsula and destroying their Visigothic kingdoms; they then invaded Francia, only to be withstood by the Franks. The Moorish invasions seem to have involved political and cultural domination but not population-movement, and they left little linguistic mark other than in vocabulary even on the areas of Iberia which they ruled for many centuries. Only after the fall of Byzantium were the Turks able to invade eastern Europe, but that was yet to come.

The *koine* or Common Tongue of Hellenistic Greek was itself derived from Attic, the Greek dialect of the region around and including Athens. It was the language of the New Testament and of the Eastern Roman Empire; consequentially it also became the basis for the liturgical language of the state church of the Byzantine Empire. It was therefore preserved by the political structures of the Byzantine empire, and then the religious institutions of the Orthodox church. The other ancient Greek dialects vanished almost entirely. Although the grammar was somewhat reduced from that of classical Greek, it remained a conservative language in vocabulary, syntax and morphology, though undergoing fundamental phonological changes, many of which seem to have started early. The ancient voiceless aspirates had become voiceless fricatives; intervocalic voiced stops underwent „lenition” and became voiced fricatives, as did the semi-vowel *w*, which had developed from *u* when it was the second element of a diphthong. The vowel-system largely collapsed, with the reduction of many front vowels to *i*: a process termed itacism.

Latin, an Italic language of central Italy, was already in the classical period sharply divided into a formal register, the classical language defined and fixed by the grammarians, and the normally spoken language, vulgar Latin, which retained many features which appear in early dramatists such as Plautus, and which re-appear in the post-classical language. Classical Latin was the language of Roman culture and law, and hence

of the administration of the Western Roman Empire. Dialects of vulgar Latin were spoken throughout northern and central Italy, and also in Roman Gaul and Iberia, in all cases apparently largely or completely superseding earlier Celtic languages. In Roman Britain, however, vulgar Latin may have been rather little spoken, and Celtic languages survived in considerable vigour. Roman Christianity adopted a semi-formal variety of Latin, which was defined above all by Jerome's translation of the Bible. This gave rise to Church Latin, the liturgical language of the Western Church. The western church survived the political collapse of the Western Empire with its institutions relatively intact, and in both east and west the church showed considerable institutional resilience and innovation, with not merely the survival of urban-based episcopal organisation, but the development of new organisational structures within the monastic movement. This provided a basis for the organised conversion of pagan northern Europe. The monasteries also proved to be an enduring means of maintaining and extending scholarship, and were to become thereby the foundation for the origin and early development of the medieval universities of northern and western Europe. They therefore ensured that Latin remained the language of western scholarship into the modern period.

Within the areas where vulgar Latin was spoken, it continued to develop and to disintegrate into dialects. There probably remained a vertical continuum between the Latin of the Church and the vernacular dialects for many centuries, so that Latin could remain as a formal register and the proto-Romance dialects as informal registers, and so the fiction could continue that everyone still spoke Latin. This was reinforced by the development of a new political entity in the eighth century: the Holy Roman Empire of the Franks. The Franks appear themselves to have been a „new” tribal entity formed by the coalescence of earlier groups, and they provided themselves with a Trojan origin-legend directly parallel with that of Æneas. With Charlemagne's coronation by Pope Leo III in 800, an event of legendary status, the Franks claimed to be the direct successors of the Christian Roman Empire in western Europe. Even at the outset their Holy Roman Empire was a higher-level entity than that of the tribe, kingdom or even the earliest emerging nation-states; kings and client-states operated in various degrees of allegiance or alliance beneath its over-arching structure, and it made an actual or implicit claim to have political authority over the entire area where the Pope claimed spiritual authority: co-terminous with western Christendom, excluding only the British Isles. This model of supra-national identity within an area of shared ideology and culture has proved extraordinarily durable, and is now once again politically dominant.

By no means all the peoples of the Holy Roman Empire spoke Latin or Latin-derived dialects, but its unifying principle was Roman Christianity, distinguished and unified by Latin. In the later medieval period, the rise of the nation-state, needing to distinguish itself by means of a distinct language, destroyed the convenient fiction of linguistic unity and gave rise to the separate Romance languages, of Old French and Provençal, and later to Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian and the smaller languages surviving in the southern Alps.

Latin itself retained its vocabulary, syntax and morphology, but phonologically seems to have developed concurrently with the proto-Romance dialects of informal speech. These dialects inherited a distinct vocabulary from Vulgar Latin, which was in the case of the French and north Italian dialects much supplemented from Germanic, which arguably also affected their syntax. Loss of paratonic syllables reduced their inflectional systems. Phonologically they were marked by the simplification of consonant-groups, and by the „lenition” of intervocalic stop consonants; Latin *w* had become a bilabial fricative during the classical period, and so coalesced with intervocalic *b*, usually as the sound *v*; however, Germanic *w*, especially initially, became *gw* and later *g* in Romance. Palatalised stops tended to become fricatives. Loss of post-vocalic nasal consonants usually involved the development of nasalised vowels. From around the fourth century A.D., vowel-length came to be dependent upon syllable-structure, a change sometimes known as the „Quantity Shift”, which replaced an older system of distinctive vowel-length. So short accented vowels were lengthened in „open” syllables, where only a single consonant followed, and long vowels were shortened in „long” syllables, where more than one consonant followed. This led to a system where all syllables were of approximately the same length. The development, shared in broad outline, was to spread across all the languages of western Europe, being completed in Icelandic by the early modern period.

Germanic seems to have been a branch of Indo-European remarkably uninfluenced by other languages. A consonant-shift, the First Germanic Sound-Shift, „Grimm’s Law”, changes all inherited stop consonants while retaining systemic contrasts intact. This distinguishes Germanic most obviously from other languages of the Indo-European family, and has been attributed without good reason to Finno-Ugric influence, but it is much more easily explained in terms of the internal logic of the Indo-European consonant-system, and is paralleled in Armenian and again in the Second Germanic Sound-Shift. The vocabulary of Germanic shows no Finno-Ugric input, and little from elsewhere. It had a few Celtic loans, e.g. English *rich*, and a few „wander-words” from the Caucasus region or the Mediterranean: a very small number of Christian words directly from Greek (English *church* from Greek *kuriakos* is the best example), and some Latin words which must have entered Germanic across the frontier of the Rhine, largely to do with Roman trade, architecture and food, e.g. English *cheap*, *tower*, *street*, *cook*, *pepper*, *cheese*. Germanic had acquired a word-initial dynamic accent, and consequentially underwent reduction and loss of word-final unaccented sounds, which in turn caused attrition of the inflectional system. In common with some other Indo-European languages, it reorganised the *a* and *o* sounds, in this case the long vowels as long *o*, the short as short *a*. In other respects, however, the language was fairly conservative: in particular the „strong” verbs, such as English *ride*, *rode*, *ridden*, preserve Indo-European vowel-alternations seen more clearly only in Greek.

The Germanic languages seem to have undergone early divisions during the Roman period, so that they differ considerably in their earliest recorded forms. These are in runic inscriptions from Denmark from the second century A.D. onwards, and Gothic,

known mostly from the translation of the Bible attributed to Bishop Wulfila, the Arian apostle of the Goths, and dated to the second half of the fourth century, written in a special Gothic alphabet modelled mostly on Greek uncial; this survives only in fragmentary form in an Italian manuscript of the sixth century. At this stage there was probably fairly complete mutual intelligibility across the entire area, with perhaps the exception of Gothic.

The conventional three-fold division into North Germanic (Scandinavian), East Germanic (known only from Gothic), and West Germanic (High German, Low German [Old Saxon], Frisian and English) may reflect divisions brought about by migrations of the late Roman period; it conceals as many distinctions and similarities as it reveals, and for this reason may have been superimposed over earlier dialect-distinctions, and it was itself certainly modified by later developments. East Germanic, Gothic, vanished from the written record after the sixth century, though some words from a Gothic dialect still apparently spoken in the Crimea were recorded by a passing Flemish diplomat in the sixteenth century; this was presumably a relict area remaining from the Gothic empire in the Ukraine destroyed in the fourth century by the invading Huns.

West Germanic was itself divided in two by the Second Germanic Sound-Shift, a wide-ranging consonant-shift of the late pre-literary period that distinguished High German from all other Germanic languages. The dialects which were to become Old English, Old Frisian, and to some extent Old Saxon in north Germany, had a much closer and continuing relationship with Scandinavian, so much so that they can be grouped together as „North Sea Germanic”.

Those Germanic peoples which settled within the boundaries of the former Roman Empire, in Italy, Gaul and Iberia, seem soon to have become Christian, lost their own languages and come to speak proto-Romance dialects. However, this was not true in Britain, where in the fifth century the invading English brought their own Germanic language, where Latin did not survive in any form other than in a few toponymic elements, and where the existing Celtic languages retreated to the western extremities, Cornwall and Devon, Wales, northern England west of the Pennines, and to Scotland. English loans from the Celtic languages of Britain are also very few, and most of these are or began as place-names, most often of natural features, e.g. English *down*.

It is unclear why Britain developed so differently from elsewhere in the Roman Empire, but some of the reasons may be political and religious. Here alone Christianity did not survive the Germanic invasions other than in the Celtic relict areas; this may in part be related to the apparent collapse of Roman urban organisation prior to the invasions, so that no or few administrative institutions survived for the English to take over; there is very little evidence for non-urban monastic institutions in late Roman Britain, which might otherwise have provided an alternative structure for the survival of Latin-speaking Christianity in England. Like the Irish, therefore, the English learned Latin, after their Conversion in the seventh century, as a school-room language; they studied it through the medium of their own language even from the earliest times, and at least in England, English was a fitting medium for Christianity. And like the Irish,

the English missionaries to Frisia and continental Germania took this scholarship and these linguistic attitudes with them; they are therefore shared with the speakers of Old Saxon and Old High German, and subsequently with the peoples of Scandinavia at their conversion to Christianity.

Old English, Old Saxon and Old High German all developed early vernacular written literatures, and in all three cases the languages became vehicles for scholarship alongside Latin. This is most clearly visible in Old English, mostly because its records survive much more fully. Early texts were most commonly English glosses to Latin texts, dating from the late seventh century onwards, and simply show that difficult works were being studied with English commentary and discussion in the class-room. Bede himself is said to have translated St John's Gospel into English as he lay on his death-bed. Some Christian poems in English are also certainly early. Later, at and after the revival of education by King Alfred at the end of the ninth century, English seems to have been dominant as the language of Christian scholarship, and large collections of sermons and translated educational works survive, as well as a very fine corpus of vernacular Christian and secular poetry. By the time of abbot Ælfric, at around 1000 A.D., scholarly literature such as handbooks of medicine and a grammar of Latin were written in English.

King Alfred the Great and his immediate successors laid claim to the kingship of all the English, since the other kingdoms had all been destroyed by the Viking invasions; by the second half of the tenth century this claim matched reality with the submission of the Viking kingdoms of the Danelaw. English therefore became the defining language of a nation-state, arguably the earliest in western Europe after the end of the Roman Empire. This status was lost late in the eleventh century, after the Norman Conquest and the partial integration of England into a French-speaking Norman and Plantagenet empire, but it was regained at the loss of that empire, at latest by the fourteenth century.

Old Saxon also has surviving Christian poetry, particularly an epic verse life of Christ, the *Heliand*. Old High German has many surviving glosses, and some verse sermons, though very little secular material survives; Middle High German was to produce a large and fine literature in the high Middle Ages. Frisian is not recorded in the early period.

The peoples of the North Germanic area, those who had remained in Scandinavia at the time of the Migrations, on the evidence of their early runic inscriptions, spoke an archaic and conservative form of Germanic which shows no observable dialect-differentiation. This language underwent a period of sudden and rapid change during the seventh to eighth centuries, which is to some extent documented in the inscriptions; these changes produced Old Norse, the language of the Vikings.

The Vikings spread from Scandinavia in the eighth to eleventh centuries A.D. Whatever the original causes and enabling circumstances of their expansion, its primary engine was probably trading in slaves largely taken in the Baltic coastlands and the British Isles. They went east across the Baltic and then south down the river-basins of

the Dnieper and Volga to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, perhaps founding the kingdom of Russia in the process of establishing trading-routes to the Byzantine Empire and the eastern Mediterranean, to the Caliphate of Baghdad, and to the Silk Road from China. They went west and south, to the British Isles and Francia, conquering most of Britain and Ireland at various times, and founding or reviving trading and industrial centres such as Dublin or York in the process of establishing trading-routes as far as south as Iberia. Further, these „North-men” established a firm foothold in northern Francia, the Duchy of Normandy, whence Norman rulers were subsequently to conquer such realms as England, Naples and Sicily, and briefly the Holy Land itself. The Vikings went west across the Atlantic, through the Northern Isles of Scotland and the Faroe Islands, to Iceland, Greenland, and, very briefly, to North America.

The language of the Vikings, Old Norse, survives almost intact as modern Icelandic; Faroese and the Germanic languages of modern Scandinavia, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish, are directly derived from it. It left a very deep mark on English, to the extent that modern English could also to some degree be claimed as its descendant; its influence can also be traced in modern Russian and to some extent French. Dialect-divisions appear in the runic inscriptions of the tenth century, showing a distinction between the „eastern” dialects that were to give rise to Danish and Swedish, and the „western” dialects of Norwegian and the Atlantic colonies.

Viking settlers in Christian Britain, Ireland and Francia seem immediately to have accepted Christianity, though Viking social and legal institutions set up in the „Danelaw” in England, and in northern Scotland, seem to have ensured that Norse remained spoken at least there for some while. The main influence of Norse on English, for instance, is not visible in the written record until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which probably shows that both languages had continued to be used and were distinct and separate in England until then. Varieties of Norse, Norn, continued to be spoken in the Northern Isles of Scotland until the eighteenth century, and the Shetland Norn is partly recorded. The Norsemen were converted to Christianity, by missionaries from England and north Germany, at around the end of the first millennium A.D.: the Danes in the late tenth century, Iceland by act of its national assembly in the year 1000 (or possibly 999), Norway in the first three decades of the eleventh century, Sweden by some time in the twelfth century.

In the twelfth to fourteenth centuries the Icelanders produced a vast and varied written literature in their dialect of West Norse, purporting to document their own and the Viking past, and recording a fairly large amount of poetry from the pre-Christian period. This literature has defined all subsequent perception of the Viking world, as well as the identities of several of the modern Scandinavian nations. The monarchies of Sweden and Denmark used this literature in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to provide themselves with legendary antecedents, and it re-defined the modern nation of Norway when it was re-discovered by romantic nationalism in the nineteenth century. Current pan-Scandinavian political and economic movements are based upon a linguistic and cultural identity represented in this literature.

The development of all the Germanic languages was characterised by a reduction of unaccented endings which continued throughout the medieval period, to greatest effect in English and Danish, least in Icelandic. The syntactic information which had been carried by inflections came increasingly to be conveyed by „function words” such as auxiliary verbs or prepositions, and latterly also by increasingly complex and rigid rules of word-order. None of the Germanic languages borrowed much vocabulary during the early period, other than technical terms for items and concepts specific to Christianity, and even here they showed considerable inventiveness in creating new terms from their own stock. In their phonology the consonant-systems remained largely stable, apart from the consonant-shift of Old High German and a slow but widespread tendency to change the articulation of palatalised stops to fricatives or even a semi-vowel. The vowel-system of all the Germanic languages recorded at the time shows parallel developments, accented vowels being changed to become more like a following unaccented vowel, which was often subsequently lost. In particular all the languages apparently independently underwent a vowel-change called *i*-mutation (Ger. *umlaut*), caused by a following unaccented *i*, at approximately the same time in the seventh century. This produces vowel-alternations such as in English *man*: *men*, *whole*: *heal*, *health*, *gold*: *gild*.

There is no certain evidence for survival of any Celtic language on the mainland of Europe by the late Roman period; only in the British Isles were Celtic languages still spoken. Here they had become divided into two groups, *q*-Celtic or Goidelic, and *p*-Celtic or Brythonic, dependent upon whether they retained Indo-European *q* as such or as *p*. This alternation is far from unusual: a similar distinction appears in Italic between Latin and languages such as Oscan and Umbrian; in Greek *q* had developed to *p* before back vowels, but changed to *t* before front vowels; Germanic usually shows *hw* from *q*, but not infrequently *f* from *p*.

The Goidelic branch of Celtic was Irish Gaelic, but from the late Roman period onwards the Irish had begun to expand eastwards, making temporary inroads into Cornwall and west Wales, but establishing the kingdom of Dalriada in Argyll in western Scotland, and bringing their language and their distinctive form of Christianity with them. This was to form the ultimate basis for the kingdom of the Scots, by amalgamation of these Scotti with the Picts of eastern and northern Scotland by the late tenth century A.D. There was further expansion of Gaelic into the Isle of Man and the Western Isles of Scotland (the Hebrides) after the end of Viking hegemony there, by at latest the thirteenth century.

After the coming of the English to Britain, Brythonic Celtic was spoken in Cornwall and Devon, in the whole of Wales, in the kingdom of Strathclyde which stretched from Chester to Dumbarton, in a small enclave of the eastern Pennines, Elmet around modern Leeds, and Pictish may in part or whole also have been Brythonic. Refugees from the English invasions of Britain also brought Brythonic to Armorica, now Brittany, where it survives as Breton. Strathclyde Welsh was eliminated by the expansion of the English from the south and east, by the expansion of the Dalriadan Scots from the north-west,

and by Viking emigrants from Ireland settling in the Wirral and the Solway Firth region at the end of the tenth century. Pictish and the Picts simply vanish from the record at around the same time. Cornish died out as a birth language in the eighteenth century, while Manx Gaelic survived until the early twentieth century; Welsh, Irish and Scots Gaelic survive to the present day but have very limited numbers of native speakers.

The Celtic peoples of both Britain and Ireland, in their many fragmented kingdoms, had been converted to Christianity in and immediately after the Roman period, before the English invasions cut them off from mainland Europe. Ireland had particularly little contact with western Roman Christianity after conversion, simply because the heathen English isolated them; early monasticism therefore developed in a distinctive way there. Irish expansion of the seventh and eighth centuries was accompanied by much religious activity: Irish missionary foundations included the monasteries of Iona on the west coast of Scotland, and Lindisfarne on the north-east coast of England; from there missionary bishops converted the English and taught them to write. Irish missions also went to mainland Europe, as far as St Gallen in Switzerland and Bobbio in northern Italy, where they established monasteries and centres of learning. Latin was the primary language of this Irish missionary activity, but Irish itself seems to have been used early for Christian purposes, and Old Irish developed a large sacred and secular literature, even though this mostly survives only in much later versions. Old Welsh is hardly known from texts of the period, though there are Middle Welsh versions of very ancient poems, one of which (*The Gododdin*) deals with events of the sixth century; Middle Welsh itself developed a rich literature.

Both Goidelic and Brythonic borrowed some Latin vocabulary, especially Christian terminology. Old Irish was morphologically a very conservative language, but both Goidelic and Brythonic underwent major phonological changes of their consonant-systems. In particular both developed consonant-alternations in word-initial position (consonant mutation), originally caused by sandhi-assimilations with preceding sounds, but at the loss of the preceding sounds these became grammatically functional in their own right. Both languages also show „lenition” of intervocalic stop consonants. They underwent vowel-changes caused by interaction with following sounds, and, strikingly, Brythonic *i*-affection is very similar in cause, date and effect to Germanic *i*-mutation mentioned above.

Speakers of the Slavonic languages seem to have started a long and gradual expansion in eastern Europe from somewhere near the southern shores of the Baltic, and Slavonic seems to have a specially close relationship with the Baltic languages, though it also shares a number of features with Germanic. Slavonic is conventionally divided into East (primarily represented by Russian), South (e.g. Slovenian, Serbo-Croat and Bulgarian), and West (e.g. Polish, Kashubian, Wendish or Sorbian, Czech and Moravian), though the unity of West Slavonic is questionable. This geographical division probably began around the sixth century A.D., though the different dialects probably remained mutually intelligible until at about the eleventh century. The apostles of the Slavs, saints Cyril and Methodius, worked in Moravia among speakers

of West Slavonic in the middle of the ninth century. Their disciples converted the Slavonic people known as Bulgars (though they had acquired that name from Tatar invaders from the east) during the reign of Tsar Boris (852–884). These missionaries devised two alphabets for representing Slavonic languages: the Cyrillic alphabet based on Greek uncial, and the Glagolitic alphabet based on Greek minuscule, used in particular for Old Church Slavonic (Old Bulgarian). This was the only Slavonic language significantly attested in the written record before the twelfth century, since it was the language of the First Bulgarian Empire set up by Tsar Simeon (893–927); it was taken to the Ukraine and Russia by Bulgarian missionaries at and after the conversion of the Kievan state in the late tenth century. It became a liturgical language across the Orthodox Slavonic world thereafter. An early vernacular written literature in this language was produced in the late tenth and eleventh centuries onwards, of religious translations and sermons. The Czechs, Poles and Croats came under forceful political influence from the Holy Roman Empire, and largely adopted Roman Christianity, using Latin for liturgical purposes; when they came to write their own languages, they mostly used the Roman alphabet. Polish was written sporadically from the twelfth century onwards, and a papal bull of 1136 survives, written in the Roman alphabet, though little else survives before the fourteenth century. Czech is also known from the twelfth century, but the records are very slight until the fourteenth century; most of these are also in the Roman alphabet, but a few fourteenth-century Bohemian examples of Glagolitic survive. These languages also show many further loan-words from German. Russian Church Slavonic begins to appear in texts from the eleventh century onwards (the Ostromir Gospels of 1056–1057), but Russian was not written as a distinct language until the fifteenth century.

Slavonic was a *satem*-language: that is, together with Baltic, Albanian, Armenian and Indo-Iranian, it did not distinguish Indo-European labio-velar stop consonants from velar stops (perhaps similar to the distinction between the initial consonants of English *quash* and *cosh*), but it distinguished possibly original Indo-European palatal stops from velar stops (perhaps the distinction between the initial consonants of English *kill* and *cull*), by changing these original palatal stops into fricatives. This distinction between original palatal and velar stops was not maintained in Greek, Italic, Celtic, and Germanic (neither in Anatolian nor Tocharian, two Indo-European language-families which fall outside the geographical and chronological range of this discussion). A process of palatalisation and reduction of palatal stops to fricatives was repeated within Slavonic. It shares some early features with Germanic in other respects, in particular an early change of short *o* to *a*. In vocabulary it has many early loans from Germanic, extending as late as very early Christian terminology.

The Baltic languages, Lithuanian, Latvian (Lettish), and Old Prussian, are not recorded before the sixteenth century A.D., though Old Prussian died out before 1700. They are very archaic Indo-European languages of the *satem*-group, and presumably were spoken in approximately the same geographic positions where they were sub-

sequently recorded: that is, the south-eastern coasts of the Baltic, isolated from the south by forest and fen, and bypassed to the north by the Gulf of Finland.

Albanian, not recorded before the early modern period, is another relict language surviving in a relatively isolated pocket of the western Balkans. It also is a *satem*-language, and is the sole surviving representative of a separate branch of Indo-European. Its subsequent survival is probably not only due to relative geographical isolation, but in part also to the Islamic identity of its speakers, acquired after the Turkish invasions, contrasting strongly with the Orthodox Serbs to its north and the Orthodox Greeks to the south, as well as the Catholic Croats further north and the Catholic Italians west across the Adriatic.

Armenian is an Indo-European language of the western Caucasus, recorded from the fourth century A.D. onwards, at and after its Conversion to Christianity, with a translation of the Bible written in an alphabet devised for the purpose from Greek models. This, especially contrasting with its Islamic neighbours to the south and east, and subsequently its Russian Orthodox neighbour to the north, ensured that the language became identified with the culture and religion of its speakers. Although it is a *satem*-language, the only surviving representative of a separate branch of Indo-European, it underwent a consonant-shift very comparable with the First and Second Sound-Shifts of Germanic, though certainly independent of these. Its vocabulary is much influenced by Persian and Tatar.

The Finno-Ugrian languages of modern Europe are not recorded early. Finnish and Estonian form with Sami a Western group of this family. They were not written before the sixteenth century A.D., but must have been in close and continuing contact with Germanic and Baltic since the beginning of the Christian era and possibly earlier: Finnish preserves forms of loan-words from Germanic which are more archaic than anything which survives in Germanic itself, e.g. *rengas* „ring”, *kuningas* „king”. Indeed, although the structure and grammar of Finnish are entirely non-Indo-European, a large proportion of its vocabulary is Germanic. This contact with Germanic and Baltic may show that Finnish was spoken in approximately its present geographic position during much of this period. Sami (formerly known as Lappish) is known from the eighteenth century onwards, but again has been subject to much influence from Germanic, largely Swedish, vocabulary.

The Magyar invasions of the late ninth century A.D. introduced a southern Finno-Ugrian language into Europe, Hungarian. Any relationship between the Magyars and their predecessors, the Huns, who invaded Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., is uncertain, though the Huns are usually rather thought to be related to the Turks. Ironically, the most famous name associated with the Huns, Attila, is itself Gothic: a diminutive form of Gothic *atta* „father”; the name itself may originally have been an affectionate title, and might indicate an incorporation of the Huns into the Germanic world, an incorporation certainly shown in Germanic legend. The Magyars, who themselves fled from invasions of the Ukraine, crossed the Carpathians into Pannonia around 895, where they settled. This divided the northern and southern Slavonic

peoples. From there they harried westwards into Francia, reaching the Rhone and the Loire, and southwards across the Alps into Italy. They were conclusively defeated in 955 near Augsburg by Emperor Otto I; this led to consolidation of a Hungarian monarchy in Pannonia. Although there was Greek missionary activity amongst the Hungarians, it was the coronation of St Stephen by Pope Silvester II in 1000 A.D., with the agreement of Emperor Otto III, which firmly integrated the Hungarian monarchy into western Catholicism, into the Holy Roman Empire, and into the administrative and ecclesiastical world of Latin; in the high Middle Ages it also came under the secular dominance of Middle High German. Accordingly, apart from one twelfth-century text, the Hungarian language was not well recorded until the fifteenth century, and was subject to much influence from German.

The present discussion, partial and superficial though it necessarily must be, shows remarkable linguistic and cultural continuity up to the present day from the distribution established by around the year 1000 A.D. What the peoples of Europe actually spoke and speak, depends on geographic and historical accident; the languages to which they give their allegiance demonstrate the identities created by and in conjunction with their political, social, cultural and religious institutions. Statehood, which was only beginning to emerge by the year 1000, is arguably the least important of these. Relatively local tribal identities, often associated with the institution of monarchy, clearly still counted for much, but supra-national political entities were also created during the previous millennium and provided models which remained very durable. Literatures could set up, maintain, and re-create such identities. And the churches of eastern and western Europe created not merely the physical circumstances for written scholarship and literature, but centres of ideological allegiance, which affected perception of linguistic identity. These identities built the languages of modern Europe.

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CHANGE OF TRANSCONTINENTAL CONTACTS AS INDICATED BY COINS IN THE BALTIC ZONE AROUND 1000

Stanisław Suchodolski*

Coins are an exceptional object of study when discussing the year 1000. They can be dated with a greater accuracy than any other archaeological material. Owing to that it is possible to quite precisely analyse the money, that would have circulated in the Baltic zone a thousand years ago. Large quantities of that coinage are known to have been gathered there, besides — it was considerably varied, as it would come from countries separated from one another time and again by thousands of kilometres¹. Out of that bulk, let us select ten exemplary coin types the dates of striking of which might be determined as the year 1000 or the years possibly the closest to it. It is only oriental coins that at this time bear an accurate date (390 and 391 of the Hijra = 999/1000 and 1000/1001 A.D.). Western coins can be dated chiefly on the basis of the years of the reign of the rulers which they had been issued by. However, time and again it is possible to obtain more detailed information by means of the titles, that the said rulers acquired in due time (prince — king — emperor). Another chance appears if the chronology of the successive types within different reigns is known (the best known cases occur in the Anglo-Saxon and Bavarian coinage), or if a given type can be associated with a certain event, known from written sources (Poland, Hungary).

Yet, a question may arise — does it make any sense to analyze money struck exactly at the turn of the millennium? Was the situation prevailing at that time representative for a longer period, or just the other way round — were there any significant changes coming about at that time which would account for our attention being focused precisely upon the year 1000? Further doubts may pertain to the purposefulness of comparing coins struck in countries so far away from one another not merely geographically, but also different in respect of their history, culture and economic development. One may give affirmative answers to the foregoing questions. Of course, it would be difficult to state that in 1000 an economic revolution came about. It is rather a process, which was occurring within a few decades that is to be dealt with here; but the process came to an

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¹ R. Kiersnowski 1960; B. Hårdh 1996.

end around 1000. The process consisted of the stream of Oriental money — so far flowing in rapidly to the Baltic zone — being replaced by an analogous monetary inflow from Western Europe. The latter was being supplemented to an increasingly larger extent by local money both in the form of coins and the so called *hacksilver*, i.e. broken ornaments and silver bars. The term „local coins” should be understood as those struck in the countries along the Baltic coast (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Poland), but also in Central European countries (Bohemia, Hungary) and Eastern European ones (Kievan Rus')². A characteristic feature of these coinages is that they are met over a single area, or even in the same finds, and on this basis one might infer that they would fulfil analogous functions. This is why discussing them side by side here seems to be fully justified. Besides, this provides also a chance to compare not only the appearance of the coins, but the manner of their issue as well. Last but not least — this makes us ponder on the causes of the re-orientation mentioned above, the consequences of which must have been extremely significant.

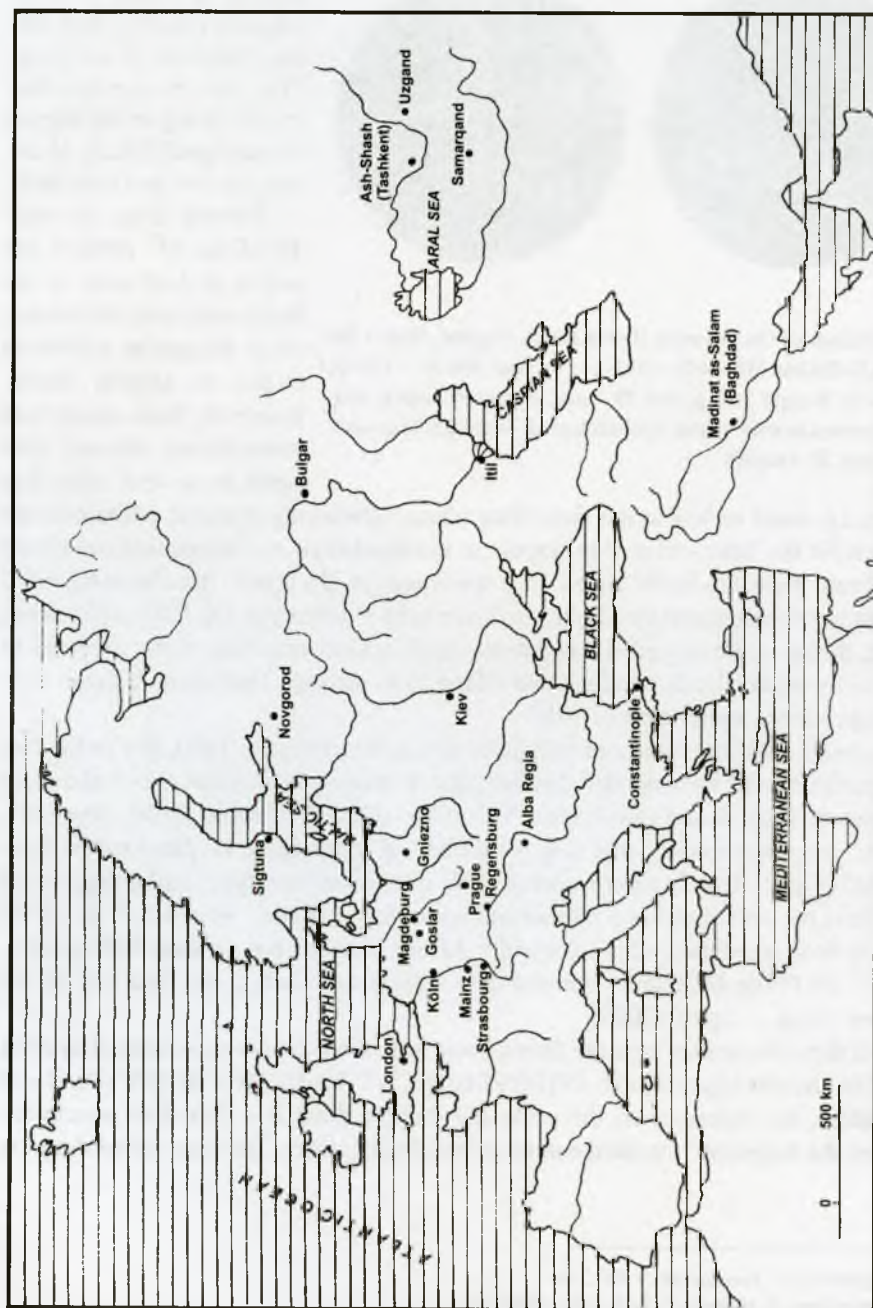
We will start our review from the coins which in the 9th up to the middle of the 10th centuries almost completely dominated in the Baltic zone markets, i.e. Arab dirhams. So far they are known from several hundred finds which provided a total of over 300 000 specimens. Most of them have been found in Russia (c. 200 000 specimens), Sweden (c. 70 000), Poland (26 000), in the Elbe Region, i.e. between the Oder and Elbe Rivers (7000), Denmark (4000), Latvia (2000), Finland (1625), Estonia (1350) and in Norway (400)³. In the second half of the 10th century the inflow of dirhams considerably decreased, just to come to a stop at the beginning of the following century. First they started to disappear in Sweden (from c. 960), then in Poland (c. 980), northern Russia (c. 990) finally in southern Russia (c. 1000). The last wave of Oriental silver was much smaller than the previous ones and was actually of no importance. It reached the Baltic Sea at the turn of the 10th century. The youngest dirham found in Norway bears the date 1001/2, in Denmark — 1002/3, in Poland — 1005/6, in Sweden — 1012/3, and in Russia — 1030/1. Apart from their late chronology, the common feature of those coins is their atypical origin. If a large majority of earlier dirhams had been struck in the Omayyad, Abbasid and especially Samanid mints, the youngest dirhams were issued by the mints of the new states that came into being in place of the old ones owing to the Turkish Qarakhanids and Ghaznavids, as well as the ^cUqaylids, Simjurids and Marvanids⁴.

Figure 1 shows a dirham of the Qarakhanids, a dynasty which reigned over a relatively extensive area in Central Asia. It was struck in Uzgend by Nasr I ibn Ali-Ilekhan (382–403 = 992–1013) in the year 396H. = 1005/6 A.D. Diameter 25,7 mm, weight 2,83 g. The coin is exclusively epigraphic, i.e. it does not bear any images, both its dies remarkably abounding in inscriptions. Their contents are of two kinds. Some pertain to the so called register data, that is to say information on who struck the coin,

² S. Suchodolski 1971.

³ T.S. Noonan 1988: 440; R. Wiechmann 1996: 78.

⁴ T.S. Noonan 1988: 417ff.; W. Łosiński 1993: 4ff., 33–35; R. Wiechmann 1996: 78.



Selected mints in Eurasia in about 1000 A.D.



Fig. 1. Dirham of Qarakhanids (Ilek Khans), Uzgend, Nasr I ibn Ali-Ilekhan (382–403 = 992–1013), year: 396 H. = 1005/6 A.D. Weight 2.83 g, size 25.7 mm. Found at Serock, Mazowieckie voiv. (State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw). Phot. B. Tropillo

decades, i.e. more or less at the same time when dirhams disappeared. Miliaria are no match for the latter either with respect to the number of specimens that have been found. From the entire Baltic zone c. 710 specimens in 226 hoards have been recorded so far (to be supplemented by 112 later miliaria by Constantine IX, 1042–1055, from a single, though quite untypical hoard discovered on Gotland). Half of the coins fall to only two Swedish islands: Gotland and Öland (346 pieces). Then come Estonia with its 189 specimens and Poland — 138⁶.

It is fairly difficult to sort out miliaria struck the closest to 1000, due to the fact that Byzantine coins were not dated at that time. It is obvious only that they had to bear the names of Basil II and Constantine VIII (976–1025). Following Philip Grierson's research, one might assume that they would belong to his Class IV dated to the years 989–1025 (Fig. 2). It includes considerably few miliaria, their type similar to previous ones (Class II), yet struck upon thinner and wider flans (28 mm, weight 2.52 g). So far it has not been possible to chronologically differentiate the few variants belonging to Class IV. In Philip Grierson's opinion they were also struck in the first half of the emperors' reign — up to 1000⁷.

Upon the obverse they bear the facing busts of both the emperors separated by a big cross. The circular legend reads: $\epsilon\eta\tau\omicron\nu\tau\omega\eta\iota\kappa\alpha\tau'$ BASILEICCΩ $\eta\varsigma\tau'$ (Basil and Constantine, be victorious in this). On the reverse there is a five-line inscription including the emperors' repeated names alongside their titles. The place of minting has

where and when. The contents of the other kind are religious in nature; they contain quotations of the Koran. The coin in question was found during archeological excavations at Serock, Mazowieckie voiv. as a stray find⁵.

Starting from the middle of the 10th century, the inflow of Arab coins to the Baltic zone was decreasing, silver Byzantine miliaria began to appear there. However, their career was remarkably shorter and came to an end after five

⁵ A. Kmietowicz, F. Kmietowicz 1968: 316.

⁶ I. Hammarberg, B. Malmer, T. Zachrisson 1989: 16f.

⁷ P. Grierson 1973: 611, 632.



Fig 2. Byzantine miliaresion, Constantinople, Basil II and Constantine VIII (976–1025), diam. 28 mm (after W. Wroth 1908)

not been determined, but it has been generally taken for granted, that all miliaresia were struck at the Constantinople mint.

The Russian prince Vladimir (980–1015) based his coinage upon Byzantine patterns. This happened after he had been baptized in 988, perhaps due to his marriage to Anne, a sister of emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII (989). Coins by the said prince and his sons are very rare. So far only 11 gold and about 330 silver coins are known. They occurred in 25 finds over the area of ancient Rus' and in 9 foreign finds — in the Baltic zone⁸.

It is difficult to determine which of these coins were struck in 1000. From among the four Classes of Vladimir's coins struck between 988–1015, Class II seems to be the closest to that date. It includes nominally silver coins, they were, however, actually made from an alloy (copper with an admixture of silver) or just copper (Fig. 3). Upon the obverse they bear an image of the prince on a throne. On the other side Vladimir's device, a variation of that of the Rurikovichs, has been placed. The inscription had been made in the Russian language using the Cyrillic alphabet (usually with errors). It starts on the obverse and continues on the reverse: **ВЛАДИМИРЪ НАСТОЛЕ—АСЕ ЕГО СРЕБРО** (Vladimir on the throne, behold his silver). Although the name of the mint was not mentioned, there is no



Fig. 3. Rus', Kiev, Vladimir I (980–1015), „Serebrennik”, diam. 26 mm (after M.P. Sotnikova: 49, nr 58)

⁸ M.P. Sotnikova, I.G Spasski 1982.

doubt that the coins were made in the capital city of Kiev. Diameter c. 26 mm, weight c. 2.8 g.

The first coins to reach the Baltic Sea from the other side i.e. from the West, were the relatively few Carolingian denarii. Starting from the second half of the 10th century large numbers of coins of the German Empire followed suit. More than 250 000 of them have been recorded in 1200 finds so far: in Sweden (c. 93 000), Poland (c. 84 000), Russia (c. 33 000), in the Elbe Region (over 22 000), in Estonia (c. 10 500) and Denmark (c. 9500)⁹.

From among all those coins specimens of two types representing Swabian and Bavarian coinage have been picked out. The first coin (Fig. 4) has on its obverse a crowned bust of the emperor Otto III (996–1002) alongside his name and title: OTTO



Fig. 4. Germany, Strasbourg, Otto III (983–1002) and Bishop Alvin (999–1001), diam. 18 mm (after B. Kluge 1991, Nr 482)

IMP[erator] AVG[ustus]. The reverse presents a schematic church; in the circular legend there is the name of Alwich, bishop of Strasbourg (999–1001): ALIVVICVS E (Dbg 943; B. Kluge 1991, 482). Thus the coin is known to have been struck in Strasbourg, in 1000 or thereabouts. Diameter 18 mm, weight 1.23 g.

A Bavarian denarius by the later king and emperor Henry II (1002–1024) may be dated with slightly less accuracy (Fig. 5). Since he bears here the blundered title of a duke (*Heinricus dux*), the coin must have been struck



Fig. 5. Bavaria, Regensburg, Duke Henry IV (995–1002), diam. 19 mm. Brzozowo Nowe hoard, Mazowieckie voiv. (State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw). Phot. T. Biniewski

before his coronation in 1002, i.e. in the years 995–1002. Upon the obverse there is a cross, a schematic chapel to be seen on the reverse. In the circular legend there is the blundered name of a locality: *Regina civitas* (Regensburg). (Dbg 1071, W.R.O. Hahn 1976, 25; B. Kluge 1991, 268). Diameter 19 mm, weight 1.17 g.

Bavaria influenced the organisation of mintage first in Bohemia (about 970), then in Hungary (about 1000). Bohemian coins were meant chiefly for the local market, however, many of them were directed to the north, to the Baltic coast. This is to be seen in the distribution of finds; more of them (though with fewer coins in each) occurred abroad. In Poland alone, about 200 finds have been recorded including c. 3200 specimens¹⁰.

⁹ B. Kluge 1999: 196; S. Suchodolski 1990.

¹⁰ D. Albrycht–Rapnicka 1968: 159–177; F. Cach 1970–1982.

Bohemian coins struck in 1000 should be looked for among the issues by Boleslav III (999–1003). However, the point is that we cannot differ them at all from issues of two other Boleslavs who ruled earlier (Boleslav II, 972–999) and later (Boleslaw the Brave, 1003–1004). I presume that the coins that most probably might be attributed to Boleslav III bear a cross on one side, with a chapel on the other (F. Cach 1970, 202) (Fig. 6). The images are accompanied by the name and title of the emitter (BOLEZLAVS DVX) and the name of the moneyer together with minting place (MIZLETA PRAGA). Diameter 18 mm, weight 0.95 g.



Fig. 6. Bohemia, Prague, Boleslav III (999–1003), diam. 18 mm

Most Hungarian coins from the 11th century have been discovered over the areas north of the boundaries of their own state, chiefly in Moravia (c. 1600 pieces), in Poland (c. 1000), in the Elbe Region (c. 250) and in Sweden (113)¹¹. The oldest of them were struck by Stephen I (997–1038), to whom three different types have been attributed. We are interested most here in the one discovered latest, only thirty years ago¹² (Fig. 7). Upon the obverse it bears a hand holding a lance with a banner. The contents of the image are explained by the circular legend: + LANCEA REGIS (king's lance). On the reverse there is a travestied chapel of the Bavarian type. The circular legend informs that the coin had been struck in a royal city (REGIA CIVITAS) which probably is identical with Alba Regia, i.e. today's Székesfehérvár. It is easy to notice the specific manifestation of messages connected with the king; although his name is not mentioned, there is no doubt, that the first crowned ruler of Hungary, Stephen I, is signified here. One might even guess that the coin was struck on the occasion of his coronation, which took place towards the end of 1000 or at the beginning of 1001. Of course these are not commemorative issues as such (for these would come in only much later); it is rather the ruler's attempt to create his own coinage, that is to say an investment of a propaganda character, following the patterns that prevailed in Christian Europe at that time. The diameter of the oldest Hungarian coins amounts to approx. 20 mm, average weight 1.26 g.



Fig. 7. Hungary, Stephen I (997–1038), Alba Regia, diam. 20 mm (after L. Kovács 1996)

¹¹ R. Kiersnowski 1960: 227f.; L. Huszár 1967: 175–200; S. Suchodolski 1971: 128f.; G. Hatz 1974: 40.

¹² S. Suchodolski 1991: 164–176.



Fig. 8. Poland, Gniezno, Bolesław the Brave (992–1025), diam. 18 mm (National Museum, Cracow)

The beginnings of Polish coinage are older by a few years than the inception of minting in Hungary. Recently the earliest coins have been referred not to Mieszko I (960–992), but as late as his son Bolesław the Brave (992–1025)¹³. Coins from the time of his reign are very rare. Up to now about 250 pieces are known; they occurred in 67 finds, chiefly Polish. These coins cannot be reliably dated, thus they might be referred merely to the early, middle, or late part of his reign. What we are interested in

most is the unique denar with the prince's head and the name BOLIZAVS (Fig. 8). Upon the reverse there is a cross surrounded by the legend: GNEZDVN CIVITAS (diameter 18 mm, weight 1.67 g). All experts agree that this is how the name of Gniezno, then the capital city, has been written down. There is, however, a controversy as to why the decision was taken to emphasise the name, because Polish coins of the time do not usually include information on the striking place. The simplest explanation, though not the only one, associates that exceptional case with an exceptional event, which took place in Gniezno in 1000. It was then that a synod with the participation of the Pope's legate, emperor Otto III and Bolesław the Brave was held. It legalised the Polish Church metropolis with Gniezno as its main centre, where the relics of a new martyr, St Adalbert, had been kept for three years.

In respect of the number of extant specimens, Anglo-Saxon coins are second only after German ones among the western money that flowed in the Baltic zone due to re-orientation of the silver stream in the Viking period. In 931 finds about 57 thousand pence have been identified; out of that number as much as a half falls to Gotland with the remaining part of Sweden, almost a quarter — Denmark¹⁴. The fact that a large part of that silver left England and reached the Continent not due to trading activities, but as a tribute paid to the Vikings, is of a lesser importance. Further distribution was dictated by economic concerns.

At the turn of the 10th century, Anglo-Saxon coinage was remarkably developed and well-organised¹⁵. Every six years about 90 mints would successively issue types whose dating has been rather successfully accomplished. Thanks to that pence struck in 1000 may be looked for not among all of Æthelred II's (978–1016) coins, but only among his coins of the *Long Cross* type, which is referred to the years 997–1003 (Fig. 9). Upon the obverse they bear the king's bust alongside his name and title (*Æthelraed rex Angl[orum]*), upon the reverse there is a cross with long arms together with the name

¹³ S. Suchodolski 1967: 65–194; 2000.

¹⁴ M. Blackburn, K. Jonsson 1981: 149.

¹⁵ Cf. recently D.M. Metcalf 1998.

of the moneyer and the name of the locality he worked in, e.g. + *Osulf mo[netarius] Lvnd[ene]*. Diameter 19 mm, weight 1.75 g.

Rulers of three Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Sweden and Norway would also look to Anglo-Saxon patterns, when about 995 they started their own coinage¹⁶. This was due to the inflow of coins from England accompanied by the inflow of moneyers. The name of one of them — Godwine — appears on the oldest coins by Svend Tveskaeg, king of Denmark (c. 986–1014), Olav Tryggvason (995–1000), king of Norway and Olof Skötkonung (c. 994–1022), king of Sweden. The next type of the latter ruler, referring to the *Long Cross* type by Æthelred II, may be dated for about 1000 (Fig. 10). Olof's bust is surrounded by a slightly deformed inscription including his name and the title

of the king of Sigtuna (+OLFAF ON SIDEI). On the reverse, around the long cross, there is the name of one of the moneyers who worked in Sigtuna (+THREGR ON ZIT). Coins bearing the names of Scandinavian rulers are extremely rare and were of almost no importance in circulation. Coins also following the patterns of Æthelred II's pence, yet generally characterised by mistaken inscriptions, are more numerous. As combination of dies

implies, some of them were also struck in Sigtuna, others in Scania. Thus the former are of Swedish origin, the latter — Danish. Both include coins struck about 1000.

What do the coins struck in the East and in the West a thousand years ago look like in comparison with each other? The former, since they bear no images, are sure to be more monotonous and less effective. However, they surpass the western denarii in respect of weight, and above all — the accuracy of dating (dates, as a permanent element of the die, are to appear on European coins only after almost five hundred years!). On certain western denarii there is, however, additional information: the name of the moneyer, which is quite unknown in dirhams. The moneyer, according to the ancient



Fig. 9. England, Æthelred II (978–1016), Dzierżążnia hoard, Mazowieckie voiv., diam. 19 mm. Phot. T. Biniewski (State Archaeological Museum, Warsaw)



Fig. 10. Sweden, Sigtuna, Olof Skötkonung (994–1022), diam. 22 mm, 1.74 g (after B. Malmer 1989)

¹⁶ B. Malmer 1989; J. Jensen Steen (ed.) 1995: 22–27.

Merovingian tradition, was responsible as well for the quality of the coins he had made himself, or perhaps those the production of which he had supervised¹⁷.

The quality of coins, i.e. the amount of pure silver they contain, was remarkably good both in the East and in the West. The silver fineness was still only slightly lowered. This is fully accounted for by the fact that coins taken abroad could be accepted only on the basis of their metal value. The almost copper Russian „serebrenniki”, which, however, were meant for local use, are an exception here. In respect of weight, dirhams were twice as heavy as denarii. The former referred to the standards of Abd al-Malik's reform of c. 695 (2.97 g), the latter to the standards introduced by Charlemagne around 790 (1.7 g). It is interesting, however, that if dirhams within three hundred years became heavier, denarii lost weight within two hundred years. The latter process should be regarded as a typical one. Yet, it is difficult to explain why it would follow a different pattern in the East. Perhaps the still substantial silver reserves and their relation to gold were the cause?

*

We should now turn to the causes of eastern coinage having been replaced by that of the West, i.e. the great re-orientation mentioned at the beginning. The issue was presented already a hundred years ago to be vividly discussed by many researchers in the following years¹⁸. However, they would do it while pondering over other issues rather than approaching it as a separate one, their suggestions — although there are many correct arguments in them — are not totally convincing. Complex investigations are necessary which will need a longer time. Here I will only try to briefly present the problem, re-arranging certain views, with no attempt to solve this undoubtedly very complicated matter.

Apparently the problem seems to be very simple — Oriental silver stopped flowing westward, for its resources were exhausted or directed elsewhere. This is how the assumption on the great metal crisis that occurred in the eastern Caliphate came into being. A.K. Markov was the first to set it forth; it was later developed by R.P. Blake and P.H. Sawyer¹⁹. In Blake's opinion the main cause lay in political events: the fall of the Samanid state therefore the areas abounding in silver mines having been taken over by the Qarakhanids and Ghaznavids. The latter supposedly directed the stream of silver to India, which caused the metal to be drained from the entire Islamic East. Other events, such as the expansion of Kievan Rus' eastward and the destruction of the state of the Bulgarians and Khazars, were — in Blake's opinion — of secondary importance.

Suppositions on silver being exported to India have not been confirmed by metallographic analyses. Moreover, large scale investigations into metal mining in the former

¹⁷ Cf. P. Grierson 1991.

¹⁸ Cf. B.S. Saipanov 1976: 53–65.

¹⁹ A. Markov 1910: II–III; R.P. Blake 1937: 298ff.; P.H. Sawyer 1962: 115f.

Soviet republics of Central Asia proved that silver mines had not been exhausted, only to be intensively exploited still in the years to come, it seems that merely certain limitations to exploitation of certain mines may be spoken about²⁰. On the other hand it has been pointed out that silver coinage was continued by the Qarakhanids after they had taken over the silver-bearing areas of the Samanid state. Originally the coins of the new rulers were of a better quality, yet, starting from approx. 1020, the fineness thereof began to fall. It was only then, i.e. twenty five years after the inflow of silver to Rus' had been put to a stop, that the silver crisis in Central Asia supposedly came about²¹.

The assumption that mines had not been exhausted led certain researchers to the conclusion that the use of increased amounts of silver on the internal market was the cause of the ceasing of the export of silver. Growth of demand for money was allegedly implied by the economic development to be observed in Central Asia in the 11th–13th centuries²². In other words the shortage of metal was rather relative. It was acute despite the still intensive exploitation and export having been stopped.

Other authors saw the causative force in changes of trading between the East and West. In Alfred Lieber's opinion extremely crucial was the fact that the Turkish conquerors of the Samanids' state stopped importing Turkish slaves, who until then had been the backbone of all Muslim armies. Due to that the peoples of the steppes, who would mediate in such bids, had been deprived of silver resources. Thus they had no means to purchase goods from the Khazars and Bulgarians, where they would meet the Scandinavians. Changes coming about in Rus' — consolidation of the state and its Christianisation — still added to the issue. All the foregoing supposedly led to a change of trading routes and erosion of Scandinavian trade²³.

On the other hand Ryszard Kiersnowski stated, that competitive western silver was the main cause of the fall of eastern trade. It would chiefly come from the newly-discovered rich mines in the Harz Mountains near Goslar in Saxony. Thus its way to the Baltic markets was much shorter than that of Oriental silver. In effect it was "cheap" enough to oust the latter from circulation²⁴. Indeed, dirhams were to first stop flowing to Scandinavia, the region where German denarii appeared earliest. Next the same phenomena correlate in West Slavs and finally in Rus'. However, critics of that theory pointed out the fact that correlation between western and eastern coins was different. There was no competition between them; the former took the place left by the latter. This is most obvious in the example of northern Rus'. Dirhams vanished in southern Rus', although denarii never appeared there at all²⁵.

Causes have been looked for also in the mental sphere. Receivers of Oriental coins supposedly lost their confidence in them due to the worsening of the silver fineness of

²⁰ M. Dekówna 1971: 487–489, 497.

²¹ T.S. Noonan 1988: 435–437.

²² E.A. Davidovich 1960: 116–117; M. Dekówna 1971: 497–500.

²³ A.E. Lieber 1981: 25; 1990: 210; M. Michiner 1973: 11.

²⁴ R. Kiersnowski 1960: 78f., 124–126.

²⁵ F. Kmiotowicz 1972: 73–78; T.S. Noonan 1988: 439–444, 447.

younger Samanid dirhams, and silvered copper specimens, struck by the Ma'munids in Khwarazm, having appeared on the market, as well as counterfeits made by private persons²⁶.

The presented hypotheses may be listed according to qualitative or geographic criteria. Thus the causes of the stop of the inflow of dirhams to the West supposedly were of the following nature:

1. political (states of the Samanids, Volga Bulgarians and Khazars having been destroyed, routes having been broken by nomads, consolidation of the Russian state);
2. economic (exhausted silver mines, growth of demand for money in Central Asia, erosion of Scandinavian trade, cheaper competitive western silver);
3. cultural (Christianisation of Rus', no confidence in Oriental coins).

The same causes may be also specified in a different way, according to the place they might have come about. This might have happened either

1. at the source of the silver stream (exhausted mines, fall of the Samanid state, growth of internal demand for money, no demand for Turkish soldiers), or
2. on the way (destruction of the states of the Bulgarians and Khazars, routes having been blocked by nomads), or
3. at the end of the way, at receivers of silver (competitive western silver, Christianisation, loss of confidence in Oriental coins, erosion of Viking trade).

It is plain to see that despite so many hypotheses set forth, none of them accounts totally for the phenomenon in question. This is also what the researchers who put them up felt. Therefore they were generally of the opinion that many factors coincided here, the most significant of them to be picked out. Let us try to follow that trail and to eliminate the least convincing hypotheses.

Receivers of Oriental silver on the Baltic coast did not initiate any changes. It is plain to see that they did not lose their interest in silver flowing in from outside, they merely changed Oriental silver to that from the West. Moreover, their commodities were still attractive enough to acquire it. One should bear in mind that the goal of their contractors was not to take silver away, but to purchase with it the goods they needed, i.e. presumably slaves and furs²⁷.

Christianisation of Rus' and other states of the Baltic zone was of no importance here. Likewise the alleged loss of confidence in dirhems. The worsening of their quality was fairly small and probably was not even noticed by the receivers. There are so few counterfeits in the Baltic finds that they could not have influenced the assessment of the quality of Oriental money.

The obstacles to be come across on the way are of no significance either. Needless to say that had trading been still profitable, there would have been other agents who would have chosen different routes.

²⁶ T.S. Noonan 1988: 438, 446.

²⁷ See recently A. Nazmi 1998.

We are coming to the conclusion, that the main cause of the ceasing of the inflow of dirhams to the Baltic zone lay at the very source, i.e. in the Caliphate. We already know that the alleged exhaustion of mines or the fall of the Samanids' state — which came about after the export of silver had come to an end — were of no decisive importance. Likewise the economic growth of the area, which is dated for as late as the 11th–12th centuries. Even worse, also at that time no growth of the share of silver in internal turnover is to be observed, maybe even just the reverse — a more acute shortage of it is plain to see as time went by²⁸. Thus we still do not know what became of the silver that had not been sent to the West. Anyway, it is not our aim whatsoever to follow its further ups and downs.

The signs of the crisis appeared as early as the middle of the 10th century; they were connected with the fall of the output of silver in one (yet very important) region — Ilak near ash–Shash. This did not mean that the Samanids had been deprived of their cash resources, however, the internal metal balance — quite strained even before — might have been disturbed. For example silver from the still actively working mines in the area of today's Afghanistan is known to have been meant for striking multiple dirhams, which were almost exclusively used on the internal market²⁹.

One might suppose that the general cause for eastern merchants to stop contacts with their Baltic partners lay in the fact that they ceased to pay. In a new situation (less silver, growth of its price?), the goods imported till then (slaves, furs) might have turned out to be too expensive, thus they had to be replaced by analogous, yet cheaper ones, as they would come from shorter distances. Or perhaps demand for them came to an end, due to the political changes that came about after the Samanids' state had been conquered by the Turks?

Regardless of what had really happened, it is beyond any doubt that the cause of the breaking–off of the inflow of Oriental silver to the Baltic zone lay in the East. Western merchants just used the situation they faced, offering silver from new mines for the same goods. The extremely effective course of that re–orientation seems to confirm Franciszek Kmietowicz's argument that the main role in this process was played by Scandinavian Varangians³⁰. As a result of those changes, the countries around the Baltic became bound up with the economy of the West.

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²⁸ A. Markov 1910: II–III; E.A. Davidovich 1960: 102ff.; B.S. Saipanov 1976: 58–64; on the contrary: A.E. Lieber 1990: 207–212.

²⁹ M. Michiner 1973; see also E.A. Davidovich 1960: 108–114; 1966: 118–131.

³⁰ F. Kmietowicz 1968: 71–83.

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WOOD AND CLIMATE OF THE YEAR 1000 A.D.

Tomasz Ważny*

Historical events were usually related to the climate and natural events. So let us look at the world of plants in the year 1000 A.D. and get some information from this objective source.

Trees systematically register the history of climate in their annual rings, which are produced during the vegetative period. Single annual rings consist of porous earlywood formed in spring and more compact latewood formed in summer (Fig. 1). The strength of relationship between tree-rings and climate depends on the species and its genetic preferences. Studies of those relationships and reconstruction of climate are the objects of dendroclimatology — one of the most important subfields of dendrochronology.

The wood that grew exactly in 1000 can be located in two possible ways: by studying trees which are over 1000 years old or by analysing wood used in the construction of historical objects, or from subfossil trunks. The first kind of study material, trees over a millennium of age does not exist in Europe with only few exceptions but dendrochronological studies which are made in North America and Southern Hemisphere are based on such ancient but still living trees. An allocation of growth rings to the corresponding calendar years needs to be matched to a master chronology for the proper species of wood. The master chronology is a continuation of records of the modern tree established, by the overlapping older ring patterns.

A schematic presentation of this method is shown in Fig. 2. The year 1000 has been shown against the background of a longer time axis — from 950 to 1050. This can illustrate the nature of the year 1000 for trees. At the same time there is information about climate. The information of the International Tree Ring Data Bank (ITRDB) collected in the World Data Center–A for Paleoclimatology (WDC–A) were the main sources for the following analysis supplemented by the author's data.

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

The data for this part of the world are very poor because only two time series coming from ITRDB reach the year 1000. One was made for Tasmania and the second for Argentina.

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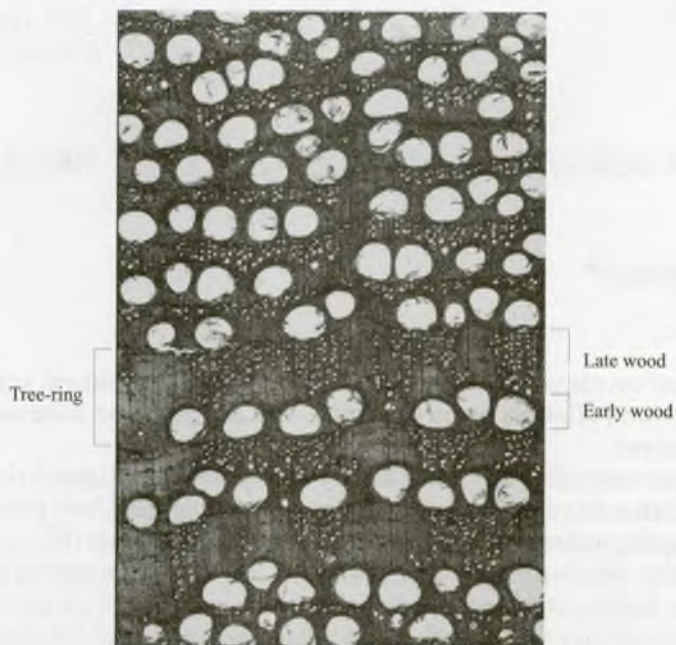


Fig. 1. Cross section of oak. Band of large early wood vessels is easy to distinguish from the late wood

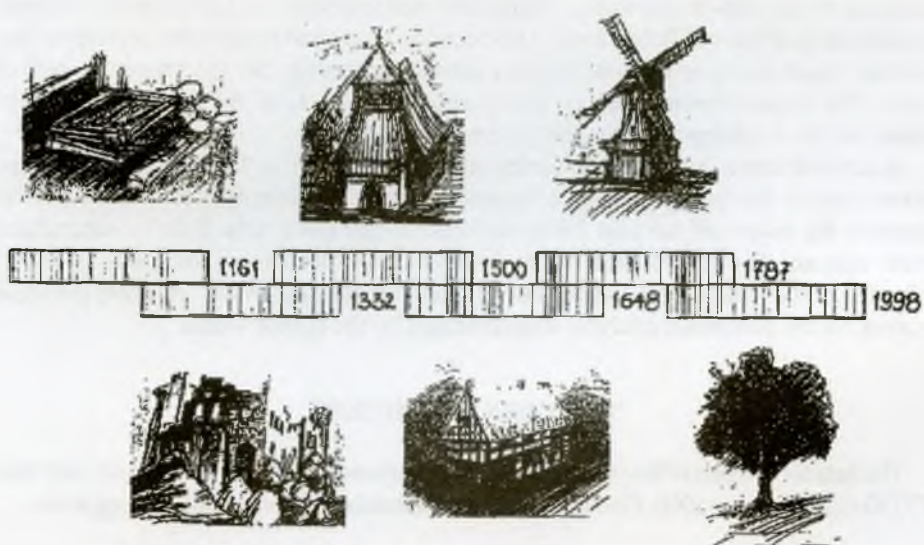


Fig. 2. Principle of chronology development

Data from Tasmania are based on research on Huon Pine trees (*Lagarostrobos franklini* C.J. Quinn,) which grow on Mount Read in the western part of the island. Subfossil logs allowed this sequence to be continued back to 300 B.C.¹ The reconstructed past temperature change is representative for wide part of Southern Hemisphere — from Australia to New Zealand.

A part of the time series, which includes years 950–1050 is shown in Fig. 3. The average temperatures of the warm season in the year 1000 was much lower than the

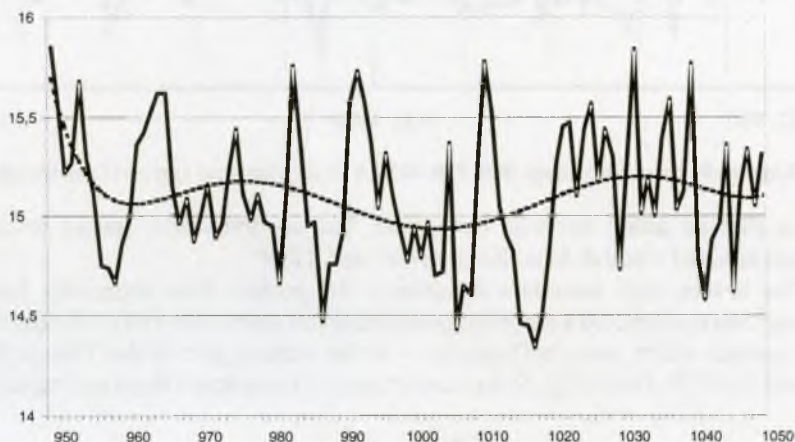


Fig. 3. Tasmania temperature reconstruction for warm season (E.R. Cook et al. 1995). Dashed line shows long-term trend

average value compared with the temperature of the previous and following year. Year 1000 started a cooler decade, but distinct cooling down is indicated only for the years 1014–1020.

Boninsegna² constructed the chronology of Patagonian cypress (*Fitzroya cupressoides* Molina Johnson). Those trees grew slower in 1000 than in the preceding and following years, but the significant minimum of growth happened in the year 1007 (Fig. 4). Narrow ring widths result from low temperature conditions in this part of South America and confirm that the year 1000 was cooler in the Southern Hemisphere.

ASIA

The Asiatic continent is an area with few tree-ring chronologies longer than 1000 years back. In the beginning dendrochronological studies were concentrated at the

¹ E.R. Cook et al. 1995.

² J. Boninsegna 1996.

Rio Cisne, Argentina

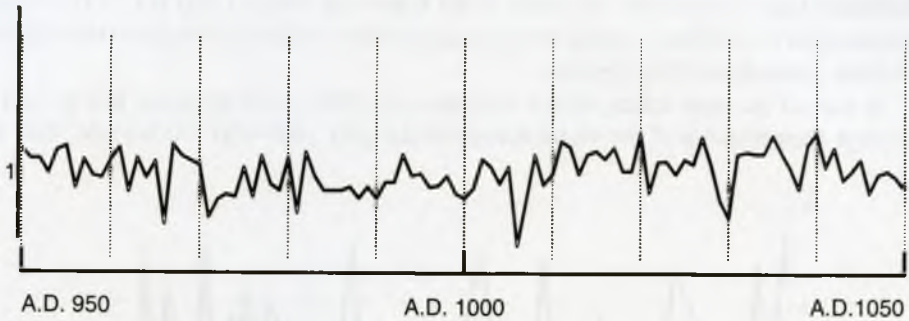


Fig. 4. Ring-width index chronology from 950–1050 A.D. of patagonian cypress (J. Boninsegna 1996)

Siberian Plateau along northern timberline, but in 1990s also spread in the high mountain areas of Central Asia: Karakorum³ and Tibet⁴.

In the severe high mountain conditions, the juniper lives especially long, and Bräuning⁵ has constructed a chronology covering the years 449–1994 A.D. for the trees of this species which grow in Qamdo — in the western part of the Tibetan Plateau. The period of 950–1050 (Fig. 5) we may observe a remarkable deep and rapid growth

Qamdo, Tibet

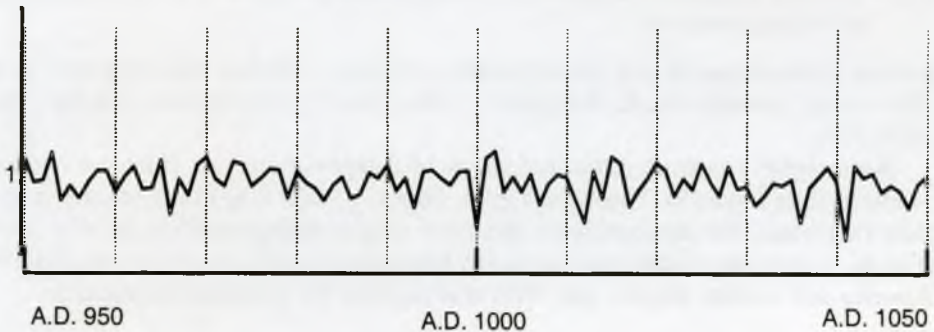


Fig. 5. Ring-width index chronology from 950–1050 A.D. of *Juniperus* (A. Bräuning 1999)

reduction of those trees exactly in the year 1000. The ring width index fell down near 50% and it was the deepest growth reduction during the whole period. In the next two

³ J. Esper 2000.

⁴ A. Bräuning 1999.

⁵ A. Bräuning 1999.

years, the trees showed clear signs of recovery after such an unfavourable weather. Unfortunately, from the climatological point of view, unambiguous interpretation of the obtained results is impossible. Juniperus trees growing in such an arid area as the Quamdo region responded positively to spring and early summer precipitation⁶. On the other hand, those trees grow at a height of 4350 m with extremely strong solar radiation.

EUROPE

The main species in European dendrochronology is oak. The oldest living oak trees only sometimes reach the age of 400 years, but the oak timber always was a very valuable material used for constructions. Apart from this, deposits of subfossil oak trees lie in peat and valleys of European rivers. That is the reason why the longest tree-ring chronology in the world has been established exactly for Central European oak and reaches back to 8480 years B.C.⁷

In European tree-ring patterns, the year 1000 A.D. is not so distinctive as in other continents. It was a little worse year for trees than the previous and next years. In the zone between France, Holland, Germany and Poland the oak's tree rings in 999 and 1001 A.D. were about 10–15% wider than in the year 1000. This slight decrease of 1000 didn't transgress the borders of natural variability of tree-ring widths from the point of view of 950–1050 years. A typical illustration of central European wood formed in 1000 A.D. is shown in Fig. 6. The annual band of wood from Scandinavia and England formed in the same year is not distinguished by anything special. In Ireland ring patterns obtained from archaeological material looked more favourable for trees than adjoining years. Those regional differences however were not a result of climate differentiation in Europe 1000. In fact British oak trees mostly react to temperature and moving to the east with increasing continental influence on climate. We can observe the increasing response of precipitation of the vegetation period on trees.

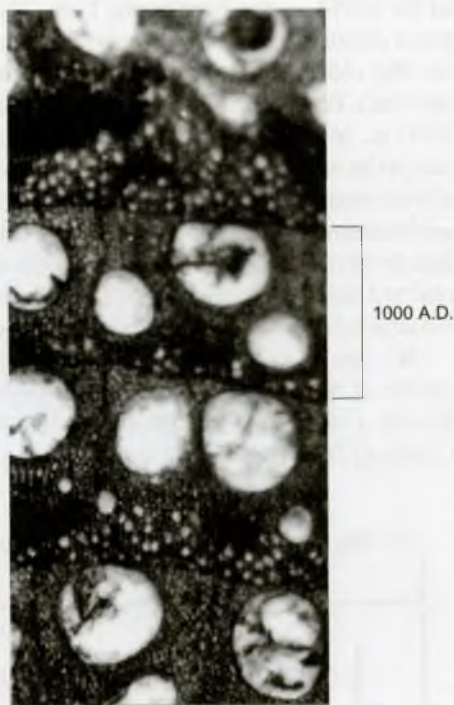


Fig. 6. Wood of the year 1000 A.D. formed by oak growing in NW Poland and found in medieval building phase of Szczecin

⁶ A. Bräuning 1999.

⁷ M. Spurk et al. 1998.

Another valuable source of data in Europe is pine trees growing near the northern border of their existence in Scandinavia. Detailed data for those tree-ring chronologies have not been published yet.

NORTH AMERICA

North America is characterised by substantial climate differentiation and, at the same time, by conditions which allow trees reach a huge size and an age of thousands years. Climatic differentiation means that different trees had varied reaction to the conditions in 1000 A.D. Of course of most interest was to examine how the oldest trees in the world — the Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus longaeva* D.K. Bailey) — behaved in the years discussed here. Bristlecone Pine can reach an age over 4000 year and these trees are the oldest living organisms in the world, (and not Giant Sequoia as in popular opinion). Bristlecone Pine appears in The White Mountains in California at a height of 3000 m. In those conditions the length of the vegetation period is about 6 weeks and this is the only time for formation a new xylem layer for trees. Their huge vital strength allows them to live in extreme arid and cold conditions. The turn of the first and second millennium A.D. seemed to be favourable for those trees although 5 years later it was bad for them and in the worst year, 995 A.D. an average annual ring of analysed trees reached only 0,01 mm. For Whitebark Pine (*Pinus albicaulis* Engelm.) growing in the Yosemite National Park in California, the year 1000 was favourable too.

We see a similar reaction among the trees in the east part of North American continent. Weymouth Pine (*Pinus strobus* L.) from Ontario in Canada registered slight growth reduction although significant reduction of annual rings appeared in Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum* (L.) Rich.) from Georgia and North Carolina (Fig. 7).

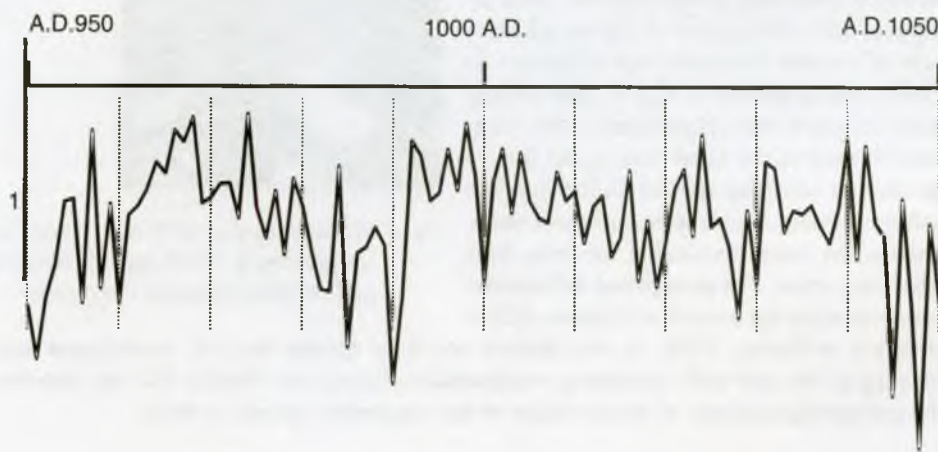


Fig. 7. Ring-width index chronology from 950–1050 A.D. of baldcypress (after D. W. Stahle et al. 1996)

To summarise the information from all continents except Antarctica about the wood of the year 1000 A.D., we have to admit that it was in general an unfavourable period. Because trees mainly react to climatic conditions it is possible to conclude that the mentioned year had worse conditions than the previous and the next year. It should be remembered that we are talking of the period of the Medieval Warm Epoch — a significant warmer time with possible problems with water supply. Further more detailed conclusions considering the climate of the period requires detailed analyses of wood from the 10th and 11th centuries and to supplement it with more complete information from other sources of climatic information (ice cores, pollens, corals etc.).

The information about climate written by tree growth is a more objective and authentic record than the information from chronicles, where heavy local rainfall looked like a catastrophic wet summer and three days of freeze seemed to be extremely cold winter. In the case of this special date of the year 1000, the analysis of the wood from that year was a good opportunity to look at the organic material precisely dated and distinguished from 999 and 1001 A.D. There are only few cultural remains about which we can state with real certainty that they originated exactly from 1000 A.D. The dendrochronological analyse of wood and timbers make this possible.

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THE DECLINE AND LEGACY OF KHAZARIA

Vladimir Ya. Petrukhin*

Khazaria determined the fortunes of Eastern Europe in the 7th to 10th centuries. The Khazars were a small nomadic Turkic people who lived in the outlying districts of the great Turkic Khaganate¹; by the seventh century they were able to strengthen themselves in the Northern Caucasus, withstand the attacks of the Arab conquerors and even rival Byzantium in the North Black Sea area and lay claims to the power over almost all the peoples of Eastern Europe.

The real power of the Khazars spread over the Black Sea steppes from the Volga delta and the foothills of the Caucasus to the Middle Dniepr and even the Danube region. The influence of the Khazars forced the Turkic Bulgars, who had dominated the steppes to migrate with Asparuch horde over the Danube where they founded a Bulgarian state on the Danube and to the area between the Volga and the Kama, where the Volga Bulgarian state was created by the tenth century. The Bulgars, who stayed in the Black Sea steppes and the Iranian Alans who lived in the Northern Caucasus and were partly resettled by the Khazars to the Don steppes formed the basis of the population of Khazaria: they left the archaeological monuments of the so-called Saltovo–Mayaki culture spread over the Khazarian territory including the Taman' peninsula and the Eastern Crimea — the Black Sea regions earlier dominated by Byzantium².

The peoples who lived in the forest–steppe and even in the forest zone had to pay tribute to the Khazars: these were the Poliane, Radimichi and Severianie — the Slavs of the Middle Dniepr and the Viatichi of the Oka region. The Khazars sought to spread their domination to the North — to the lands of the Finnish Ves' which were rich in furs: the Khazarian king Joseph mentioned the Ves' among his other tributaries describing Khazaria in his letter to the Jewish high official in Cordoba Hasdai b. Saprut in the early 960s³.

The Khazarian rulers belonged to the noble Turkic clan of Ashina: the aristocratic parentage and the actual power over many peoples of eastern Europe gave them the right to the title of the *khagan* — the ruler of a „nomadic empire”, which in the early

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¹ Cf. among the latest works — A.P. Novosel'tsev 1990; P. Golden 1990: 256–284; S.G. Klyashtorniy, D.G. Savinov 1994.

² See S.A. Pletneva 1999.

³ See P.K. Kokovtsov 1932.

medieval diplomatic hierarchy was similar to the title of the emperor. In the Byzantine diplomatic protocol the Khazarian khagan occupied the second place among the non-Christian rulers — just after the caliph of Baghdad⁴. At the same time, the Arab sources register a paradoxical „diarchy” in the Khazarian khaganate: the khagan was a nominal ruler, a sacral king (for this reason James Frazer described him in „The Golden Bough”), and lived almost without quitting his palace with his wives and concubines being „magically” responsible for the prosperity of his kingdom. The actual ruler of the khaganate who commanded the army was the leader with the Turkic titles *beg*, *bey* (*khagan-bey*) or *shad*. Such a diarchy was characteristic of the Turkic⁵ and many other early medieval traditions. In the Cambridge letter — the Hebrew document of the early 960s close to the so-called Jewish-Khazarian correspondence between Hasdai b. Saprut and king Joseph — the Khazarian khagan is called „the judge”⁶ and can be associated with the Old Testament Israelite leaders of the period of Judges.

The Khazarian rulers succeeded in strengthening their domination in Eastern Europe making use of the geopolitical situation of the time, especially the interest of Byzantium in an ally able to withstand the impact of the nomads of Eurasia, the Magyars and the Pechenegs. Soon the Khazars adopted the mode of settled economy and urban life in their subject centres in the Caucasus — Belenger, Samandar and in the Greek towns in the North Black Sea — under their domination there were Phanagoria, Germonassa — Khazarian Tamatarkha, ancient Panticapeos — Kerch and others. By the mid-ninth century with the assistance of Byzantine engineers and, obviously, their Alan subjects, they constructed a system of fortresses in the Don basin, the main one being Sarkel (Sharkel): this system controlled the central region of the khaganate and the domain of the khagan whose brick palace was in the capital — Itil in the Volga delta⁷.

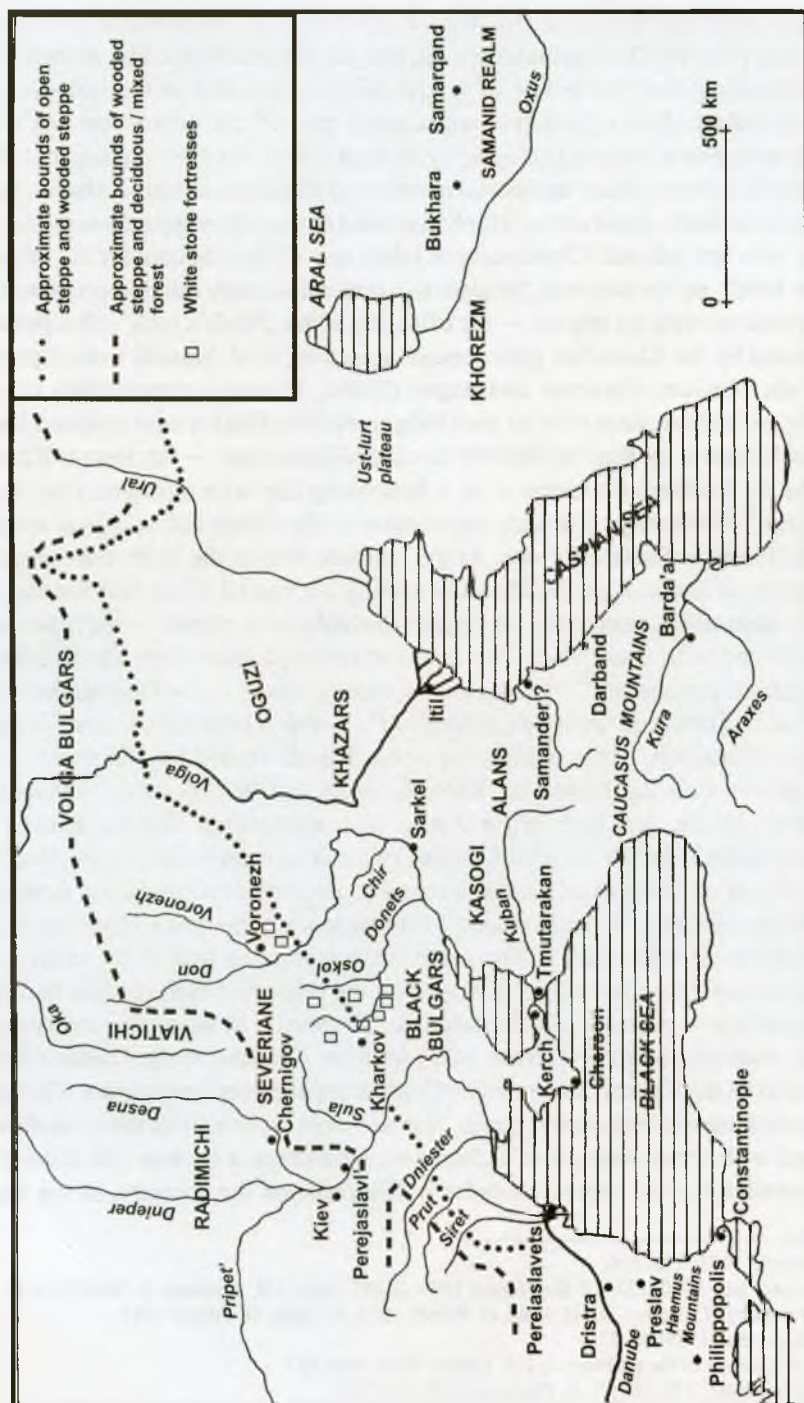
„The choice of faith” — the state religion — by the Khazarian rulers was a unique event in the early medieval world. The rival of the Moslem states in the Caucasus and Christian Byzantium in the Black Sea, the khagan chose a „neutral” written religion — „Mosaic law”, or Judaism, which was spread in the Jewish city communities in the North Black Sea region (and in the Transcaucasia) from the late classical epoch. In modern historiography the time and the significance of the Khazars’ conversion to Judaism have provoked never-ending disputes. On the basis of the archaeological data one can demonstrate the disappearance by the mid-eighth century of the Khazarian pagan monuments — the burial mounds and other complexes. This probably marks the conversion of the Khazars and their rulers to Judaism. A well-informed Arab author of the mid-tenth century (al-Masudi) dated the spread of Judaism in its orthodox rabbinical form to Harun al-Rashid’s reign (between the eighth and ninth centuries); in any

⁴ D. Obolensky 1998: 184.

⁵ Cf. P.B. Golden 1993: 211–233.

⁶ N. Golb, O. Pritsak 1982.

⁷ See S.A. Pletneva 1986.



The European steppe in about 1000 A.D.

case, when after 860 the future enlightener of the Slavs Constantine (Cyril) appeared in Khazaria with the Christian mission, the khagan was surrounded by Jewish scribes.

The statement that the choice of Jewish religion had led to the isolation of the Khazarian ruling classes from the pagan major part of the population has become a commonplace in modern historiography, though it does not take into account the fact (Gennadiy G. Litavrin drew my special attention to this) that not only Judaism, but also Christianity or Islam could not be widely practised among the steppe nomads. Anyhow, the ruler who had adopted Christianity or Islam was obliged to convert his subjects to the „true faith”; on the contrary, Judaism as a non-missionary religion permitted some normal relations with the pagans — the offspring of the „Noah’s sons”. This possibility was realized by the Khazarian government: according to al-Masudi’s description⁸, in Itil Jewish, Moslem, Christian and pagan (Slavic, Russian) communities coexisted alongside each other, each with its own judges, etc. Ibn Haukal who reported the utter defeat of Khazaria by Rus’ in 968/969 described Samandar — the former Khazarian capital in the Northern Caucasus — as a flourishing city with mosques, churches and synagogues⁹. Obviously, this early experience of the ethnic and religious symbiosis was significant for Eastern Europe. At the opposite side of the lands once dominated by Khazaria, in Slavic Kiev (by the tenth century the capital of the Old Russian state) a Jewish-Khazarian community, Varangian Christians and pagans — the Slavs and the Rus’ coexisted with each other. The above-mentioned letter from the Kievan Jewish-Khazarian community¹⁰ was signed — among others — by Gostjata bar Kjabar Kohen, etc.¹¹ The name seems an „oxymoron” — like: a proselyte, either Slavonic or Khazarian (Kabarian, if the patronymic name Kjabar should be compared — after O. Pritsak — with the ethnonym Kabars), could not belong to the kohanim, the descendants of the first high priest Aaron. The supposition that the Kievan Jews belonging to the kohanim adopted Slavonic (Khazarian) names is still accepted¹².

The spread of Judaism in Khazaria remains a complicated problem: there are no Jewish antiquities proper (tomb-stones, etc.) among the numerous archaeological finds of the Saltovo-Mayaki culture. The more striking was the find of the tenth century nomadic necropolis in Vojvodina (Chelarevo): the bricks put in the burials had certain Jewish symbols — pictures of menorahs, etc. Obviously, in the tenth century a group of Judaic nomads migrated with the Magyars from Khazaria to the Danube: they are supposed to be the Kabars mentioned by Constantine the Porphyrogenitus, a Khazarian tribe of rebels against the central power¹³; it was even believed that their rebellion was connected with some attempts of Judaisation. Nowadays it is clear that Judaism was not responsible for the internal disorder in Khazaria; on the contrary, in the alien —

⁸ V.F. Minorski 1963: 192–196.

⁹ A.P. Novosel’tsev 1990: 221. Cf. *Ibn Haukal* 1939, II:393; trans. J.H. Kramers, G. Wiet 1964, II: 384.

¹⁰ It was found by N. Golb — see N. Golb, O. Pritsak 1982; N. Golb, O. Pritsak 1997.

¹¹ A.N. Torpusman 1989: 48–53.

¹² Cf. the discussion of the problem — L.S. Chekin 1990: 386–387.

¹³ Cf. I. Erdeli 1983: 174–181; S. A. Pletneva 1999: 216–217.

Christian — confessional encirclement of Central Europe the Kabars showed their fidelity to the written — Mosaic — law.

The decline of Khazaria in the tenth century was connected more with the consolidation of the East-European peoples and states which had received the impulse for their development to a large extent under the Khazarian aegis, rather than with the weakening of the central — „Judaic” — power. The peoples of Eastern Europe took the road to civilisation. In the first half of the tenth century the Alans of the north-Caucasian region adopted Christianity from Byzantium, and though Aaron, king Joseph's father, suppressed the rebellious vassal (Joseph wrote even about the Judaisation of the Alans) the hegemony of Khazaria was evidently moving to its end. In the mid-tenth century, the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus¹⁴ wrote that Byzantium should make use not only of the Alans, but also of the Black Bulgars, the former Khazarian subjects in the Azov region, against Khazaria. In the 920s another Khazarian vassal — the Volga Bulgars appealed to the caliph of Baghdad for Islamisation; in 921/922 the caliph's embassy arrived¹⁵. In the steppe the situation was even more troublesome: from the west, Khazaria was threatened by the Pechenegs, whose roaming territories bordered on Sarkel, from the East, i.e. from beyond the Volga, — by the Oguz hordes¹⁶. But the main Khazarian rival was growing in the north: from the ninth century the rulers of Rus' were laying their claims to the title of the *khagan*¹⁷. The Finnish tribe Ves' was obliged to pay tribute not to the Khazars, but to the Russian princes; Russian trading stations appeared in Bulgaria on the Volga and, obviously, in Sarkel: Rus' was striving for the markets of Baghdad and Constantinople. In early 960s king Joseph glorified the Khazarian power and to a certain degree claimed the desire to be the main power in the area. He wrote about the Russian threat: „I protect the mouth of the river (Itil — the Volga, V.P.) and prevent the Rus arriving in their ships from setting off by sea against the Ismailites (Moslems — V.P.) and (equally) all (their) enemies from setting off by land to Bab („the Gate”, Derbent — V.P.). I wage war with them. If I left them (in peace) for a single hour, they would crush the whole land of the Ismailites up to Baghdad...”¹⁸. The opposition was doomed to end in a decisive conflict.

The Russian Primary Chronicle — „Povest' vremennykh let” (PVL), with its typical poor coverage of Khazarian topics, does report extremely briefly about prince Sviatoslav's campaign, fatal for Khazaria. Under 964 it tells us that Sviatoslav started out to the Oka and the Volga and subjugated the Viaticchi — the settlers of the region. Then „Sviatoslav started against the Khazars; having known that the Khazars had set off with their prince — the khagan [...], Sviatoslav overpowered the Khazars and seized their town — Belaya Vezha. He won both the Yasi and the Kassogi”. The Khazarian town should obviously be interpreted as their capital Itil (Atil) on the Lower Volga; Belaya

¹⁴ Constantine Porphyrogenitus 1989: Ch. 10, 12.

¹⁵ A.P. Kovalevskiy 1956.

¹⁶ A.P. Novosel'tsev 1990: 219ff.

¹⁷ A.P. Novosel'tsev 1982: 150–159.

¹⁸ P.K. Kokovtsov 1932: 102.

Vezha (the Russian name of the Sarkel fortress) became a Russian town. The prince conquered the Yasi (the Alans) and the Kassogi (the Adygeis) on the North Caucasus; probably, Tamatarkha, the Russian Tmutarakan', was also subjugated to Kiev. Obviously, Sviatoslav had crushed the khagan's domain — the territory described in king Joseph's letter — with Sarkel on its west frontier and Itil (Atil) as the winter camp¹⁹. Thus the prince made a circular raid through the Khazarian dominions moving from the Lower Volga to the Don and returned to Kiev²⁰. Russian troops stayed in Khazaria even after the summer 968, when Sviatoslav with his main forces moved to Bulgaria on the Danube (according to Ibn Haukal, the war continued in 969²¹). They also destroyed the former Khazarian capital in the North Caucasus — Samandar.

The Rus' obviously could not secure their positions in the Lower Volga region. The Arab historian of the first half of the thirteenth century Ibn al-Asyr wrote — based on the earlier data of Ibn Miskwayh — that in 965 (after the khaganate had been crushed by Sviatoslav) „a tribe of the Turks attacked the land of the Khazars and the Khazars appealed to the people of Khoresm, but those did not render help and said: 'You are infidels (al-Kuffir), but if you adopt Islam we shall help you'. They adopted Islam, except their king, and then the people of Khoresm rendered them help and forced the Turks to give up, and after that their king also adopted Islam”²². Evidently, here are implied the pagan Khazars: those of the Jewish faith were not infidels, but „the people of Scripture” (Ahl al-Kitab): for this reason the Moslem author marks out specially the Khazarian Judaic king, who adopted Islam separately from his people. „The tribe of the Turks” should be interpreted the most probably as the Uzi (Oguzi), who were roaming in the steppe on the left bank of the Volga between Khoresm and Khazaria²³. Ibn Haukal describes the disastrous effects of the crushing of Bulgaria on the Volga and Khazaria and the flight of the people to the neighbouring regions. With the support of the mighty ruler of Azerbaijan Shirvan-shah Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Azdi, the Khazars were able to return to Atil (Itil) and became his vassals (according to the earlier version of Ibn Haukal's work, the Khazars thought about ratifying a vassal treaty with the Rus')²⁴. Shirvan-shah Muhammad waged an active policy in Dagestan in 981–989, in 988 he seized Derbent though the emir appealed for help to the Rus' (Russian troops sailed to Derbent down the Volga in 18 ships²⁵). Anyhow, the Khazars were converted to Islam and by the end of the tenth century Khazaria was divided between the Moslem states, nomadic hordes and the Rus'.

¹⁹ S.A. Pletneva 1986: 49–50; Cf. S.A. Pletneva 1978.

²⁰ Cf. M.I. Artamonov 1962: 426–428; A.V. Gadlo 1994: 54–57. The mention of the second Sviatoslav's campaign against the Viatichi under 966 is the result of the later division of the Chronicle text (the so-called Primordial Chronicle) into yearly records (cf. V.Ya. Petrukhin 1995: 103ff.).

²¹ T. M. Kalinina 1976: 90–101.

²² A.P. Novosel'tsev 1990: 222.

²³ A.P. Novosel'tsev 1990: 225–226.

²⁴ A.P. Novosel'tsev 1990: 228.

²⁵ A.P. Novosel'tsev 1990: 228.

Russian princes maintained the traditions of the eastern policy of Sviatoslav and his predecessors. According to the Primary Chronicle, Vladimir Sviatoslavich needed to subjugate the Viaticchi twice²⁶; moreover, his campaign against the Radimichi (984) had obviously completed the activities of Russian princes in „princely overmastering” of the former Khazarian dominion. To the east of the Dniepr the campaign against the Bulgars of the Volga, the repetition of Sviatoslav’s campaign, became the logical continuation of these activities. „The praise in memoriam to prince Vladimir” — „Pamyat’ i pokhvala knyaz’u Vladimiru” by Jacob the Monk, a work usually dated (with certain doubts) to the eleventh century, contains some other interesting data. Unlike the chronicler, Jacob dates the victorious Vladimir’s campaigns from the period after Baptism (988). „The Lord’s arm” helped the prince who „defeated the Radimichi and laid tribute on them, defeated the Viaticchi and laid tribute on them, seized the Yatvingians (a Lithuanian tribe) and defeated the Silver (contrasted with the Black? — V.P.) Bulgars, set off against the Khazars, defeated them and laid tribute on them”²⁷. It is not very clear to what extent these data correspond to actual military activities of the prince²⁸ — with the fact that the Chronicle knew nothing about his campaign against the Khazars — and to what extent it is a modification of the Chronicle ascribing the heroic deeds of the pagan prince Sviatoslav to the Christian prince Vladimir. It is clear from the data in the Chronicle that Vladimir, who had to conclude peace with the Bulgars, could hardly continue his campaign against the Khazars on the Lower Volga. At the same time the above-mentioned participation of a small Russian unit in the events in Derbent in 987–988 demonstrates the traditional importance of the Caspian region for Rus’.

The Byzantine line of Old Russian policy was also traditional and even more important. Here prince Vladimir came across the same problem as one of the first Khazarian khagans: the relations with the Christian and Moslem neighbours demanded a certain „choice of faith”. The motif in the Chronicle concerning the choice of faith is dated to the situation after the war of 985, when the envoys from the Moslem Volga Bulgars arrived in Kiev to conclude a peace treaty with Vladimir: it was not a mere missionary action — the Moslems could not conclude a legitimate treaty with the pagans (the concept of an „unmotivated” arrival of the Bulgarian envoys disregards the historical context of the chronicle²⁹). The Bulgarian envoys obviously made the conversion of the pagan prince Vladimir to the „true faith” — a condition that the peace treaty would be concluded — in this context the missionary aspirations were adequate to the historical situation.

The attempts of German missionaries to convert Rus’ to Christianity also had a tradition: according to Vladimir’s answer to the embassy of the „Germans from Rome”, the „fathers” of the prince (to be more correct, his grandmother Olga) did not adopt their faith.

²⁶ *Povest’ vremennykh let*: 38 under the years 881–882.

²⁷ *Biblioteka literatury Drevney Rusi* 1997: V.1, 322.

²⁸ Cf. A.P. Novosel’tsev 1990: 223–231.

²⁹ A. Arkhipov, 1995: 27; V.Ya. Petrukhin 1999: 73–85.

Correspondingly, the character of the Jewish embassy („Khazarian Jews”) needs a thorough historical analysis, especially in view of the fact that in Old Russian (and Byzantine) literature it is almost the single mention of Judaism of the Khazars (or in Khazaria³⁰; cf. on Constantine the Philosopher’s polemic with the Jews in the face of the khagan)³¹. Scholars used to interpret the acknowledgement of the Jews that „their land” — Jerusalem — was given to the Christians as the evidence of the later origin of the whole motif of the Jewish embassy: in fact, Jerusalem was captured by the Christians in the course of the first Crusade in 1099³². This statement, anyhow, should be rejected as a misinterpretation for the two major grounds: firstly, the polemic on faith is included in the Novgorod I Chronicle as well as in PVL and therefore it forms a part of the text of the so-called Primary Chronicle of 1095. Secondly, the Crusaders were Latin Catholics, and the First Crusade was undertaken when the Greek — Latin (and Russian — Latin) polemic became especially intensive after the schism of the Greek and Latin Churches in 1054. The whole dispute corresponds to the traditions of this polemic, and the seizure of Jerusalem by the Crusaders could hardly be interpreted by the chronicler as the establishment of the Christian rule over it, especially in view of the fact that the town was won from the Moslems and not from the Jews. More likely, the chronicle polemic on faith reflects the traditional „imperial” Byzantine claims on the Holy Land: actually, the Greek Philosopher tells in his „Speech” that the „Romans” (*Rhomaioi* — the self-name of the Byzantine Greeks) took possession of the land of the Jews³³. Thus, the chronicle motif of the Khazarian Jews followed not the construction dated from the early twelfth century, but an early tradition.

Nowadays after the find of the letter from the Kievan Jewish-Khazarian community, the local Kievan sources of this tradition become quite obvious. Sometimes a special purpose is perceived even in the chronicler’s words about the Khazarian Jews stating, that they had heard about the arrival of the Bulgars and the Germans to Vladimir. In fact, it was a mere rhetorical device typical of the chronicle debates on faith: according to the chronicle, after the Jews arrived, the Philosopher commissioned by the Greeks also speaks about the rumours he had heard. The Philosopher „had heard” only about the German and Bulgarian embassies: Vladimir recounted to him the results of the Jewish embassy and listened in reply to the „Philosopher’s Speech” with its traditional anti-Jewish polemic. Despite the widespread opinion³⁴ the Jewish activity could not match the missionary work of the Latins and the Moslems: the missionary work was not characteristic of the Judaic tradition (this was noticed even by Vasilii N. Tatishchev³⁵). It was prescribed to warn those who wanted to adopt Judaism of the persecutions of the Jews for their faith (and not to claim that their desires became true) —

³⁰ L.S. Chekin 1994: 34–42.

³¹ A. Arkhipov 1995: 17 ff.

³² *Povest’ vremennykh let*: 454; cf. I. Berlin 1919: 134–135.

³³ *Povest’ vremennykh let*: 40.

³⁴ Cf. *Makariy* 1994: 230ff.; V.N. Toporov 1995: 517f.

³⁵ V.N. Tatishchev 1994: 231.

cf. the motif of dispersion of the Jews for their sins in the Jewish–Khazarian correspondence. At the same time the Jews were allowed (and even obliged) to work to encourage the worldwide observance of the so-called Noahic laws (the prohibitions against blasphemy, idolatry, murder, robbery, adultery, etc.) — the laws obligatory for the gentiles — the descendants of the biblical forefather; the Judaic Mosaic law proper, i.e. the observance of the Sabbath, the circumcision, etc., were not included in the Noahic laws. On the contrary, the chronicler makes the Khazarian Jews not only preach the Mosaic law, but even state that Christians believe in Jesus crucified by the Jews — the statement characteristic of the anti-Judaist — Christian — polemic (actually, it was continued by the Philosopher). The trick to which the Khazarian Jews resorted shows a sort of their „historical method”: they declared the Holy Land with Jerusalem as its centre to be „their land” — with the fact that Khazaria was crushed and its centre was seized by a Russian prince. At the same time this trick enabled Vladimir to expose the Jews: having known that because of the Lord’s ire the Jews were dispersed, the prince asked in anger whether they wanted the same lot for Rus’. (This motif became characteristic of the later Russian scribes — the accusation against the Jews of striving for a perdition of the adherents of the other faith).

With the fact that the story about the embassy of the Khazarian Jews was obviously inserted by the monk–chronicler into the context of the anti-Judaic polemic, the actual historical context should be also taken into account — the context of the late first millennium A.D., when the choice of faith took place in Kiev. In the Christian World it was an epoch of millenarian expectations³⁶, but the Jews in the early Middle Ages were no less eschatologized. The rumours about a Judaic Khazarian kingdom at the edge of the oecumene had strengthened these eschatological expectations, the more they were mixed up with the legends of the return of the ten lost tribes of Israel, etc. — and the Spanish Jew Hasdai b. Shaprut wrote about these sorts of things to king Joseph. Kiev, moreover, was directly connected with these eschatological legends. Constantine Porphyrogenitus tells us the Jewish name of the town was Samvatas, which was similar to the name of the Sambation river of the Talmudic legends — beyond it the ten lost tribes were condemned to live in exile. In the epoch of the ruin of Khazaria and the all-round eschatological expectations the Kievan community enrooted in the Slavic–Russian world could participate in a traditional medieval inter-confessional dispute despite the traditional Jewish prohibition of the missionary work³⁷.

The notions in historiography about the real possibilities of spreading and even propagation of Judaism in Rus’ present an obvious overstatement. Rus’ was guided by the Byzantine cultural model and adopted from Byzantium not only Christianity but also the active (polemical) rejection of other confessions; the polemic on faith as well as the „Sermon on Law and Grace” by Ilarion are full of this rejection³⁸. The anti-Jewish

³⁶ A.Ya. Gurevich 1984: 133, 158.

³⁷ V.Ya. Petrukhin 1999: 73–85.

³⁸ S. Franklin, J. Shepard 1996: 209f.

rhetoric of the „Sermon” was actual so far as Rus’ became the successor of the Khazarian khaganate: the Russian princes — Vladimir and Jaroslav — had obtained the right to the title of khagan (Ilarion titles them this way), but for Christian Rus’ and for the „new” Russian people the state religion of Khazaria was the Old Law.

Between the tenth and the eleventh centuries the Russian state was making continuous efforts to keep under control the regions subjugated by Sviatoslav. In 1022 the prince of Tmutarakan’ Mstislav enthroned there by his father Vladimir Sviatoslavich in 988 had to set off once more against the Kassogi, and they submitted to the Russian prince. In 1024 when Mstislav interfered in the princely struggles and laid claim to Kiev, he came to Rus’ „with the Khazars and the Kassogi” striving for „restoration” of the Khazarian dominion. The Kievans rejected the prince and the „restoration” failed; Mstislav had to settle in Chernigov on the Dniepr’s left bank³⁹.

The Byzantine sources report about the intensification of the imperial policy in the region of the north shore of the Black Sea in the early eleventh century: in 1016 Basil II with the support of the prince Vladimir’s „brother” Sphengos sent a fleet to subjugate the „Khazarian land”, and its ruler — „archon” George Tsula was defeated⁴⁰. Judging from the fact that the seals of George Tsula — the „strategist of Cherson” have been found in Cherson, this „archon of Khazaria” was a Byzantine ruler of the former Khazarian dominion in the Crimea who separated from Constantinople⁴¹. It should be stated that from that time, the name „Khazaria” was not applied to the Khazars proper — it became a traditional name for the Byzantine dominion in the Eastern Crimea⁴². The Khazars were mentioned for the last time in the Russian chronicle under 1083: they were carrying on an intrigue against the Russian (Chernigov) prince Oleg Sviatoslavich, though on a Byzantine seal Oleg was titled the „archon of Matrakha, Zikhia and the whole Khazaria”⁴³: here Matrakha (the Byzantine name for Khazarian Tamatarkha and Russian Tmutarakan’) was separated from „Khazaria”.

The disappearance of the Khazars with the fall of the Khazarian khaganate was not a unique event in the history of Eurasia: the Khazars followed the historical fortunes of many peoples in the Eurasian steppes, beginning with the Scythians, the first known in history, and up to the Mongols, the last conquerors (in Eastern Europe their „empire” occupied almost the same area as Khazaria in its heyday). Their unique fate was connected with the „choice of faith”, and the interest in the Khazarian heritage in the connection with the history of the Judaic ethno-confessional communities in Europe has remained. At times this interest was of such contemporary importance that it brought about certain mystifications — the fabrications of old manuscripts: a famous nineteenth century Karaite collector Abraham Firkovich was accused of such fabrications — obviously, he „invented” the text reporting about the prince Vladimir’s embassy to

³⁹ *Povest’ vremennykh let*: 64–65.

⁴⁰ *Ioannis Scylitzae*: 354.

⁴¹ Cf. M.I. Artamonov 1962: 435–436; A.V. Gadlo 1994: 84–85.

⁴² See, in particular, the twelfth century Arab author al-Idrisi — I.G. Kononova 1999.

⁴³ V.L. Yanin 1970: 26f.; for the further history of Tmutarakan’ see G.G. Litavrin 1965: 221–234.

Khazaria for the trial of the Judaic (Karaite) faith⁴⁴. Firkovich strived to prove the Khazarian (non-Judaic) origin of the European Karaites though the sources openly reported about the rabbinical cult of the Khazars. On the contrary, Arthur Koestler's romantic concept of Khazars as the „thirteenth” tribe of Israel made them the ancestors of the European Ashkenazim. After the Holocaust, this concept strived to unmask anti-Semitism with the help of a „rational” argument: the Turkic-speaking Khazars were not Semites.

The attempts to discover the heirs of the Khazars among the European Jews can be hardly considered well-grounded (such attempts have been made even recently, in particular in the exotic conception by an Israeli linguist P. Veksler; see the discussion on this conception during the symposium on Khazaria in Jerusalem, 1999)⁴⁵. Khazarian relations were actually limited with Byzantium and the Transcaucasia: it was very difficult for Hasdai b. Saprut to send his mail to the king of Khazaria passing Byzantium — via Europe and Rus'⁴⁶. The Khazarian state really did exist at the edge of the oecumene — on the fringe of the world of the Early Medieval Civilisation. And at the same time in the medieval Eastern Europe, Khazaria was the first to take the road of this Civilisation.

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⁴⁴ A.Ya. Garkavi 1876.

⁴⁵ V.Ya. Petrukhin, A. Fedorchuk 2000.

⁴⁶ A. Kaplony 1996: 140–168.

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KIEVAN RUS' AROUND THE YEAR 1000

Oleksiy Tolochko*

A MISSING YEAR

If the year 1000 ever really happened, it went completely unnoticed in Kievan Rus'. This was not only because no particularly significant event was recorded under that year (and we may safely assume nothing important happened, at least from the contemporary's point of view), but because no such year was ever accounted for.

It may seem odd, since converted to Christianity in 988, Rus' had already discovered the concepts of linear time and of a calendar to measure it. In fact, the very notion of history as a human experience stretched from Creation to Salvation, and at the same time as a record of this experience divided into and measured by an endless row of years, each with its unique number, was introduced just shortly before the year 1000. Yet unlike its immediate neighbours, who received Christianity from what much later would be called the West, Rus' obtained the new faith from Byzantium, thus joining the family of Eastern Christian nations. As a result, Rus' adopted the Byzantine calendar, that is one whose first date was set with the creation of the world, which was believed to have happened 5508 years and four months before the birth of Christ. So when the countries of the West observed the year 1000 A.D., the nations of Eastern Orthodoxy, including Rus', lived in the year 6508.

To complicate things further, two different „years” were simultaneously in use. One, „Byzantine”, started the year on 1st September, another one started the year on 1st March¹. Hence, anyone who intends to write about „Kievan Rus'” in the year 1000' is immediately confronted with what appears to be a technical, but actually is a substantial problem: Just which one of the Primary Chronicles' entries refers to the event of that year? Our options range from March 999 to February 1001.

We may only wonder how the calendar, undivided into two eras might have affected people's perception of history and their place in it. Would those who lived in 6508 „from the creation of the world” have had a deeper sense of history than those who lived

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¹ The best discussion of the various dating systems found in Kievan sources is still the rather old book by Berezkhov: N.G. Berezkhov 1963.

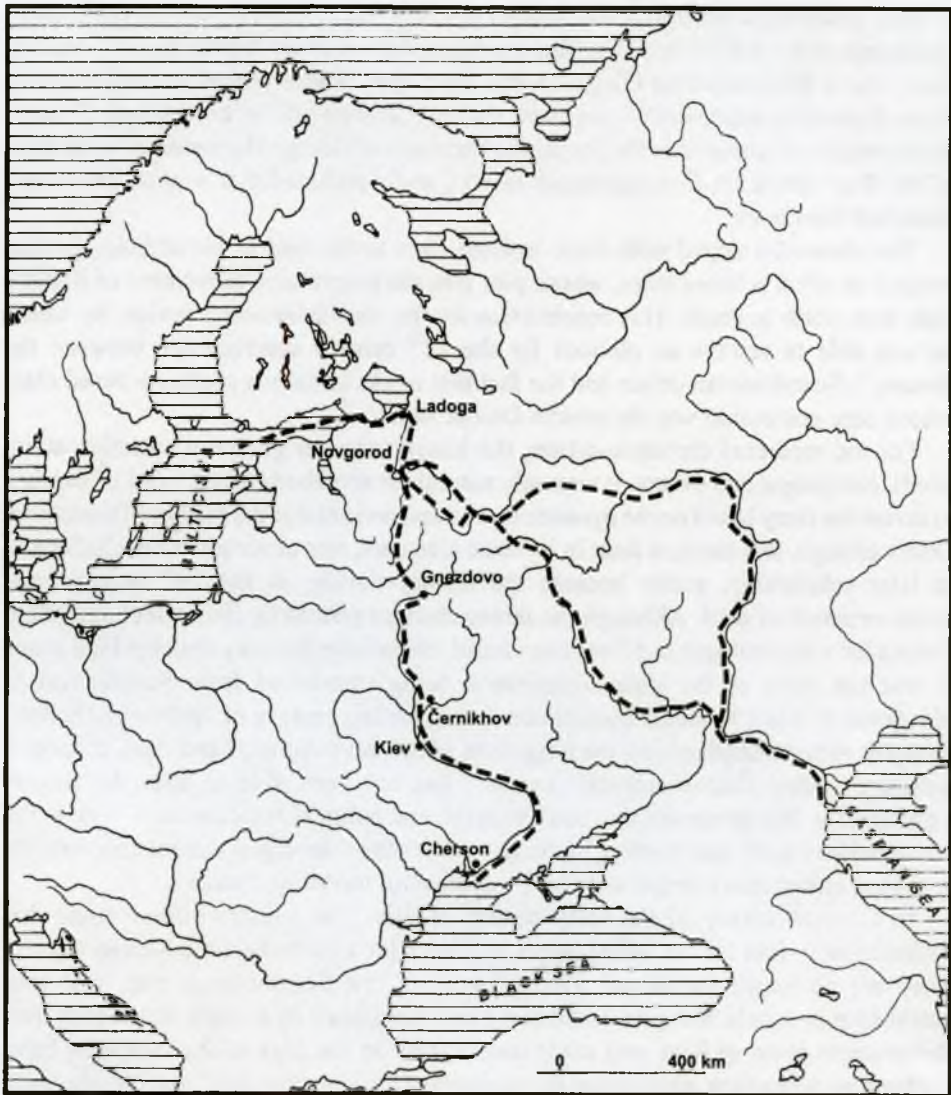
in 1000 A.D.? Did they even dwell on such matters? One thing is certain however. Rus' existed not in the end of the first millennium, but rather in the middle of the sixth. Conveniently sheltered by the absence of a round number, Rus' did not experience any millenarian sentiments, nor even a mood of *fin de siècle*: after all, 6508 was just the beginning of a century, not the end². No special meaning had been attached to the year with such an unremarkable number. The calendar Rus' was using extended to the year 7000 (1492). It was widely believed in the Eastern Church that the world would exist for seven thousand years, and all available eschatological literature expected the coming of Messiah no sooner than the seventh millennium was over. Like those in the West, who had recently adopted the Dionysian era and were touched by millenarian sentiments, Rus' too lived in the last millennium of mankind, but, like the rest of Eastern Christendom, it still had a long way to go. True, there would be false alarms, like the arrival of the Cumans (Polovtsy) in the late 11th century, regarded as the sign of the approach of Armageddon, or the Mongol's first appearance in Eastern Europe in 1223, similarly understood as the revelations of Methodius of Pathara coming true. But it was not until the late 15th century that the advancing year of 1492 would force some people in Eastern Europe to seriously consider the possibility of the world's end and prepare themselves for that exciting possibility. They would be as disappointed however, as their colleagues in the West may have been some five hundred years earlier. (Writing in the first days of Y2K, one can appreciate the sense of a slight disappointment from a much anticipated promise never delivered).

RUS' BEFORE THE YEAR 1000³

When Russian history emerged in the 19th century as a scholarly discipline, it adapted the simple but attractive version of the earliest Kievan history offered by the Primary Chronicle. As the story goes, the Novgorod Slavs unable to overcome internal disorder, invited a prince from Scandinavia, who came „with his clan”, put an end to all disputes, divided the land between his relatives, and thus established first civic and political organization in Eastern Europe. When the founder of the dynasty Rurik and his brothers died, their relative Oleg in 882 took Rurik's son Igor, still a minor, and went South. Here, he spotted a small town of Kiev, killed the local princes Askold and Dir, and established his — and apparently Igor's — rule over the land of the Poliane, the local Slavs. The dynasty was brought to its final destination, and the dynastic name — Rus' — arrived there too. The Kievan state was born.

² A very useful general survey of eschatological ideas, both in the West and in Eastern Christendom (with the special emphasis on the year 1000), is the article by A.A. Vasiliev 1942–43: 462–502. See also P. J. Alexander 1964: 1–8; 1985. A recent Russian addition to the topic is the corresponding chapter in A.L. Yurganov 1998.

³ The following section is based on a more detailed discussion of the earliest Kievan history by the author, see: O. Tolochko, P. Tolochko 1998.



Kievan Rus' at the turn of the first millennium

When the chronicler some time in the late 11th– early 12th century first attempted to write the earliest history of the Kievan princes, he knew only a few things about that distant past. He knew that while the dynasty had come from Scandinavia, since the times immemorial, it had ruled over the southern city of Kiev. He also knew some names: those of the founder of the dynasty and his brothers (Rurik, Sineus and Truvor), preserved in the genealogical legend of the Kiev house, and he knew that before that

dynasty established itself in Kiev, another dynasty had ruled here, whose last princes apparently were Askold and Dir. The chronicler further knew that in the 10th century there was a Kievan prince Oleg and still later Igor, whose names he had found in Ruso-Byzantine treaties of 911 and 944, the only „documents” at his disposal. Finally, the chronicler discovered in the Byzantine chronicle of George Hamartolos the account of the Rus’ attack on Constantinople in 860, and concluded that it must have been launched from Kiev.

The chronicler coped with these isolated facts to the best of his abilities, having created in effect a linear story, whose plot was the progressive movement of Rurik’s clan from north to south. This construction for the chronicler was a device, by which he was able to resolve an obvious for the 12th century contradiction between the dynasty’s Scandinavian origin and the fact that it was initially a southern-based clan, whose core possession was the middle Dniepr valley.

For the medieval chronicle-writer, the history was *res gestae*, a narration about deeds, campaigns and events. It was only natural for somebody in the late 11th century to invent the story based on the dynastic legend and present it as the history of the nation. Oddly enough, this story, at least in its basic elements, was never seriously challenged in later scholarship, partly because the history-writing of the 19th century was event-oriented as well. Although the minor changes (primarily the corrections of the chronicler’s chronology) had been introduced, essentially the story remained the same. It was the story of the state organization being transferred from Scandinavia to Novgorod to Kiev. Even the domination during the last century of the Marxist historiography with its emphasis on the long-term social developments and deep economic structures rather than accidental „events”, has not been able to alter the picture significantly. It is presumed that two territorial and political associations — one in the Novgorodian north and another in the Kievan south — emerged almost concurrently and were united into a single state by the southward travelling dynasty.

In a recent survey of the early history of Rus’⁴, its authors offered somewhat different story line for the initial stages of what later were to become Kievan history. They are no longer concerned with the story of one Scandinavian clan, who first established its rule in Novgorod, and in the next generation by a single attack took over the southern town of Kiev and made this fortress on the edge of the steppe its base. Rather they focus their attention on the problem of the notorious Rus’, people who gave the future state its very name and who for some time were apparently the dominant group of this state. Who were Rus’ and what was their land? The Rus’ were mercantile and military communities of Scandinavians who in ever increasing numbers started to penetrate eastern Europe sometime in the ninth century in their pursuit of Oriental silver. Thus, the territory of eastern Europe entered the light of history with the small bands of traders and warriors, who traversed the East European plain along the river routes in their attempt to organize long-distance trade between northern Europe and the Orient.

⁴ S. Franklin, J. Shepard 1996.

These groups of Scandinavian merchant-warriors were largely responsible for the information about certain people called Rus' in Byzantine and Oriental sources. Thus, the early Rus' history follows here a rather well documented story, largely reconstructed due to the impressive archaeological discoveries of the last decades, of the Scandinavian presence in Eastern Europe, their gradual advance toward the south and east, establishing of their trading outposts along the Volhov — Volga route, and their occasionally military encounters with the Byzantines, the Khazars and the Arabs.

The story of a long distance trade in the 9th– 10th centuries, launched and largely maintained by the Scandinavians is a fascinating one indeed. Unfortunately, it has very little to do with the history of the Kievan state. While it is true that the first political organism in Kiev was created by one of the wandering bands of Scandinavians, who by some accident diverted from their regular route from Baltic to Caspian sea and found themselves in the midst of the Dniepr Slavs, the link between their following history and the Oriental trade of Scandinavians is impossible to establish.

In fact, the history of Scandinavian Rus' trading along the Volga route with the Orient and the history of Kiev Rus' trading with Byzantium along the Dniepr route are two different Rus' histories. For Scandinavians trading along the Volkhov–Volga route, the northern forests between the Baltic and middle reaches of the Volga were the lands of opportunity and of economic exploitation, but their concerns lay elsewhere, either in Scandinavia or in the Orient. The Scandinavian Rus' who settled in Kiev organized a completely different trade system, whose extreme points were Kiev and Constantinople. The two systems functioned along the different river routes and targeted different markets. However, the most important difference between the two was the place of east European territories in the whole enterprise. While for their northern colleagues eastern Europe was a mere transit point, for Kievan Rus' Slavic territories were the final destination or the point of departure, depending on the perspective.

Scandinavians trading along the Volkhov–Volga route functioned as the middlemen within three different regions — northern Europe, eastern Europe, and the Orient — and were capable of offering to each some unique commodity it lacked. Their ultimate goal was, of course, Oriental silver, badly needed in Europe. Scandinavia, however, had nothing to offer for dirhams, while eastern Europe had — furs. Simplifying a bit, we can imagine a Scandinavian entrepreneur, who brings, say, Frankish swords to the middle Volga region, exchanges them for furs there, takes the furs further south, and exchanges them for silver in some town on a southern Caspian shore, and finally brings silver back to northern Europe, thus concluding the transaction.

Recent archaeological studies have established that the Volkhov–Dniepr artery, the famous route „from Variagians to Greeks” did not function up until the very end of the tenth century (and, it should be noted, the whole notion that the Dniepr linked Byzantium and Scandinavia is a result of misreading of the corresponding chronicle passage). During the whole of the ninth and the greater part of the 10th century, these were two different and still separate routes: the north-oriented Volkhov route and south-oriented Dniepr route to Byzantium. Thus, like his brethren trading with the

Orient, a Kievan entrepreneur too badly wanted to reach out to the luxury markets, in his case of Byzantium. Unlike northern Rus', however, Kievan Varangian, having been cut off from Scandinavia with its Frankish swords, had nothing to offer to the locals in exchange for furs to begin with. He had to organize the collection of furs in some other way, and the only other way available was military domination over the local population.

That would probably explain why the Scandinavians did not create any viable political organism along the Volga–Volkhov route, while the Kievan group of Rus' from the start emerged as a dominant political force in the middle–Dniepr, soon to consume all of eastern Europe, effectively terminating the Scandinavian long–distance trade there.

Our modern conventions of thinking about the state force us to imagine the Kievan state as a territorial organization even in its earliest stages. Thus, Rus' history of the 10th century is usually presented as steady territorial expansion. Partly the chronicler who speaks of victorious campaigns of Kievan princes against various Slavic tribes is to be blamed, partly modern historical maps that necessarily depict the state as a territory, are responsible for this distorted image. In fact, up until the very end of the 10th century Kiev did not possess any significant territory, nor needed one. The princes of the tenth century Rus' state who had already managed to launch a number of impressive military attacks on Constantinople, in reality controlled only the territory within the walls of the Kiev castle.

We have a fairly good contemporaneous description of what Rus' state was like in mid–10th century, composed by an intelligent observer, who probably based his knowledge on an insider's information. In his treatise „*De administrando imperio*” the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus described the year–cycle of Rus' activities as following:

When the month of November begins, their chiefs together with all the Rus' at once leave Kiev and go off on the 'poliudie', which means 'rounds', that is, to the Slavonic regions of the Vervians and Drugovichians and Krivichians and Severians and the rest of the Slavs who are tributaries of the Rus'. There they are maintained throughout the winter, but then once more, starting from the month of April, when the ice of the Dniepr river melts, they come back to Kiev. They then pick up their single–strakers, as has been said above, and fit them out, and come down to Romania⁵.

Thus, even that late in the century the Rus' appear to be a rather small group, consisting of the princely clan and its military retinue. They all live in a single town, in winter „all of Rus'” embark on collecting tribute from the surrounding tribes, and the source of their well–being is the ability to organize convoys of ships in the summer to sell what had been collected on the markets of Constantinople. Although for the

⁵ Gy. Moravcsik (ed.) 1949: 63. I took a liberty at correcting the „Russians” of translation to the more appropriate „Rus'”.

outsiders it might have seemed that they were a nation different from surrounding Slavs (and perhaps they still largely retained their distinct Scandinavian character), in fact, the picture is that of socially and military dominating class. This was rather a cosmopolitan community, which also set it apart from the Slavic communities around. Although predominantly Scandinavian, it included — as can be sensed from the lists of names in treaties of 911 and 944 — individuals of Slavic, Baltic, and Finno-Ugric extractions. Some of these people were pagan, while some had already become Christian.

When did this Rus' emerge as a political organization? The answer offered long ago by the chronicler and still largely valid for those who write on early Kievan history, is that the princely clan emerged in Novgorod in the 860s and in the course of expanding its territory southward, came to Kiev in the early 880s. The chronology of the Primary Chronicle, however, is an artificial construction, called into being to create a coherent chain of consecutive reigns of those few Kievan princes, whose names were known to a historian of the turn of the twelfth century, and we are not necessarily obliged to follow the results of the imagination of a medieval writer. Thus, the simple genealogy of Kievan princes, where Rurik had only one son Igor, who in turn had only one son Sviatoslav is the result of the chronicler's lack of knowledge. From other — and what is important, contemporaneous — sources we know that the princely clan must have been a more numerous institution, including other members, of whom by the end of the 11th century only one name survived, that of prince Oleg, but even his proper relationship to Igor was already forgotten.

The Kievan history of the tenth century as presented by the Primary Chronicle is mythical. In fact, the only texts that document Kievan history before the 970s are two Ruso-Byzantine treaties (911 and 944 respectively) and Constantine Porphyrogenitus' description of the embassy of princess Olga to Constantinople in the 940s or 950s. Thus, we are left with few facts to build upon, but facts that we know for certain.

While entertaining the princess Olga, the widow of Igor, in Constantinople the emperor noted that she was accompanied by other princesses, her relatives. He also mentioned her nephew, although failed to note his name. This image of a large princely clan is further supported by the emperor's insistence that among Olga's retinue, there were 22 envoys of princes of the Rus', the latter, we may safely assume, being Igor's kin.

This figure corresponds to the number of envoys sent by Igor himself just a few years earlier to endorse the treaty of 944. The envoys were sent by „the Rus' princes” (called variously in the text as „*knyniazhie*”, „*vsiakoie knyniazie*” or even „*knязi i boyarie*”) and the text of the treaty meticulously records which prince sent which envoy. The number is the same as in the Constantine's account — 22 envoys. Moreover, from the text of the 944 treaty we learn that prince Igor had two nephews (whose names are rendered as Igor and Yakun), while some other distinctively princely names mentioned in the list most probably were that of Igor's relatives too. (Actually their number in the treaty is 25, but we have to decrease it by three: by the time of Olga's embassy, Igor was dead, Olga was present in person, as was one of the „nephews”,

obtaining the same figure of 22 as in Olga's embassy). The picture is that of a rather large and stable group of relatives and in-laws, who collectively control Ruso-Byzantine commerce.

The list of Rus' envoys (called „*soly*”) is followed in a treaty of 944 by a list of merchants („*gostie*”), 25 in total. In addition to the right to be represented by the envoys, members of the group apparently had a privilege to send one merchant each. By the time of Olga's trip to Constantinople, each member of the clan was able to send two merchants, since their number in Olga's entourage was 44.

The earliest Ruso-Byzantine treaty of 911 lists a group of 15 individuals (yet undivided) sent to Constantinople to negotiate the peace. These fifteen envoys represented there what the text calls „the Rus' clan” later described as „the grand prince Oleg and all the illustrious and great princes under his sway” (this same family is called „the Rus' clan” in the treaty of 944 too). As one would expect, the number of envoys is lower in 911, since it reflects the state of the family one generation earlier than the treaty of 944 does. Also — as again one might expect — some of the individuals of the 911 list could be identified among the signatories of the 944 treaty and at least two members of the 911 princely clan — Fast and Gudy — were still alive in 944.

In the light of these findings, we can better understand the composition of the Kievan society, the notorious yet enigmatic Rus' of the sources. It consisted of the princely clan, which at the middle of the 10th century included about two dozen male members, the retinues of those (the envoys, „*soly*”, most probably came from this second category), and a slightly larger number of merchants. All in all, even by the most optimistic estimation, „all of Rus'” described by Constantine Porphyrogenitus as dwelling in Kiev can not have exceeded two hundred individuals. Of course, if we add to this figure members of households, clients and slaves, we would probably get a higher figure, but still that would be rather small community.

The structure of this community fits well into the general picture of Rus' as portrayed by Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Two groups feature prominently: the group of warriors and the group of merchants, each servicing a different sphere of the Rus' activity. The first was crucial for the Rus' ability to collect tribute from vast Slavic territories, while the second was instrumental in ensuring of its subsequent sale in Byzantium. They all shared the profit, but they were not the owners of the business. The group that „owned” the state was the princely clan, which employed both groups. This clan was also responsible for the drafting of the business plan and for implementing it: the series of military attacks on Byzantium ensured a profitable market, while military raids on Slavic tribes must have secured the successful harvesting of the tribute.

It was this clan then whose corporate property the Kievan state was. It was not yet a territorial organisation though. The members of the clan were the shareholders in a business enterprise. What they owned was not the lands and not even the power, but stocks in a partnership, whose membership was limited to a genealogically defined group. The Kievan polity, the Rus' state of the 10th century appears to be a symbiosis of political domination and economic enterprise, organised and controlled by a rather

narrow circle of individuals. These two spheres of Rus' state are distributed seasonally at that: in winter the warrior group is engaged in accumulation of merchandise, which during the summer would be shipped by the merchant group to Constantinople to be sold there. The Kievan state was a family owned company, equipped with its own administration, military forces, laws, and its own aborigines to exploit. The parallel that immediately comes to mind is that of European colonial companies of modern times.

If our estimation of the princely clan is correct, we can then attempt to establish the approximate time when this clan originated as a political organisation, in other words, when the Kievan state was born (or the company was founded?). Knowing that by the late 940s — early 950s the clan included 22–25 members, and assuming that they were the descendents of one common forefather, we can estimate how many generations it must have taken to accumulate this number. From the later practice of Rus' princes, we know that it normally took three generations to grow to this size. Assuming that each generation was responsible for 20 years, we end up with the total of 60 years. However, unlike later Christian houses, wealthy Scandinavian families of the Viking Age (as well as contemporaneous Slavic ones) were rarely monogamous ones, which opens the possibility that the clan members were born by different mothers. Besides, the assumption that all the members of the group are the descendents of a single ancestor is only a theoretical one. The founder of the family could have come to Kiev, as the chronicler would have put it, „with his kin”, that is with his brothers and nephews. So, our two dozens of clan members could have been the descendants of several individuals of the first generation. Finally, the time-span of generations must have overlapped. All these adjustments should cut our initial figure of 60 years significantly.

Thus, it appears that the family originated some 35–40 years before it was first documented in the treaty of 944. The Rurikid clan must have established itself in Kiev during the first decade of the 10th century, shortly before making its first international appearance under the walls of Constantinople in 907 and concluding its first treaty of 911. The Kievan state of the Rurikid clan appears to be a relatively new one, much younger than the conventional chronology of the Primary Chronicle would suggest.

How to interpret these findings? In later chronicle tradition of the 11th century there was a vague recollection that before the Rurikids came to Kiev, there was another dynasty ruling there, apparently too of Scandinavian origin. The last princes of this dynasty — Askold and Dir — were reported to have been killed by Oleg in 882. Nothing certain is known about this initial Varangian group in Kiev. We can only speculate that it was this group, whose envoys (Swedes as it turned out) are reported by *Annales Bertiniani* (sub anno 839) to have arrived to Constantinople in 838. Some twenty years later, in 860, Rus' launched an attack on Constantinople. Judging by these two instances, the nature of the first Rus' regime in Kiev must have been similar, if not identical, to the regime of the Rurikids of the tenth century. It too must have been warrior-merchant community, marshalling resources from vast Slavic areas along the Dniepr river and engaging in long-distance trade with Byzantium.

Some time between the 950s and 970s dramatic events must have taken place in the house of Rurik, which changed the fortunes of the family. The genealogical tree of Rurikids was pruned so drastically, that only Igor's son Sviatoslav and his immediate family survived (so, we may assume that Sviatoslav's three sons were not the first ones who invented family feud). In Sviatoslav's 971 treaty with Byzantium no princes are mentioned.

Another important development took place in the 940s: the family acquired its first possession outside Kiev, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus noted that Igor's son Sviatoslav governed in Novgorod. Yet another territorial acquisition took place in 950s: the land of Drevliane immediately to the west of Kiev was added to family estate. By 970s, Sviatoslav was able to send his son Oleg to rule there.

Sviatoslav is sometimes called „the last Viking” on the Kievan throne (although his portrait in the *Historia* of Leo Diakonis resembles more that of the nomad warrior). He spent his adult life campaigning all over the Eastern Europe against the Khazars, the Alans, the Bulgarians and the Byzantines, and was killed by the Pechenegs in 972 on his way back from the Balkans.

The reign of his son Vladimir (978–1015) changed the appearance of Rus' dramatically. Like his forefathers, Vladimir too was a warrior and a merchant. He subjugated virtually all of eastern Europe to his rule, thus turning Rus' into a territorial state for the first time. He is credited by the chronicle with large scale urban construction, changing not only his capital Kiev, but numerous castles and towns of the now expansive realm. It is Vladimir who is responsible for the familiar shape of the Kievan state, today easily to be found in any textbook.

Like all his ancestors before, Vladimir too considered a victorious raid on Byzantium to be his ultimate achievement. Unlike the previous attacks, however, Vladimir's capture of the Byzantine city of Cherson had lasting consequences for the future Rus' history. The result was Vladimir's marriage to a sister of the Byzantine emperor, his baptism and the conversion of whole of Rus' in 988.

As the legend goes, the first seeds of doubt were planted into Vladimir's mind by a missionary from Constantinople who presented the prince with a vivid picture of the Second Coming. Thus, the very notion penetrated Rus' just shortly before the year 1000, which is the primary topic of this essay. Yet the swift conversion eased the princes' anxiety and put off the frightening deadline into the indefinite future.

DISCOVERING HISTORY

Meanwhile, the year 1000 (6608) was yet another year in a long row of similar years and was not marked with any special significance. Two events were recorded that year; both are deaths, both of the deceased were women, one of whom otherwise unattested. We read, „Malfred died. In this year died also Rogned, Yaroslav's mother.” The second woman was a prominent member of the Kievan elite — prince Vladimir's wife — but

as the story goes, she was only the first among equals and by the year 1000 already rejected at that. St Vladimir was notorious for his numerous simultaneous marriages while still a pagan. As to the identity of the first woman, we can only guess as to who she was and why her death is noted at all among the only two recorded events of that year⁶. Most probably, she (like Rogneda) was one of Vladimir's many wives—turned—concubines after the prince's conversion⁷ (if we are to believe Thietmar of Merseburg, a German historian of the early 11th century, who insisted that Vladimir never quit his pagan habits). In any event, both records hardly rise to the level sufficient to inaugurate the advent of a new millennium.

One is disappointed to find these two very mundane events featuring so prominently exactly at the point at the chronicle where we would expect it to become for the first time a truly historic record. One is further puzzled to discover that the next fifteen years are filled with similar records or simply left blank. After all, never before was Rus' better equipped for the task of keeping record of its own history. The Kievan state spent a century and a half of its initial history as a pagan polity. Now, having been exposed to Christianity, a whole new culture of written text, Rus' for the first time acquired the necessary intellectual equipment (people prepared for the job of writing history, and a public capable of appreciating it). We would anticipate that the last fifteen years of St Vladimir's reign would be better recorded for posterity. And yet, the advent of the new culture produced such an unexpected effect.

Although the inhabitants of Kiev were not aware of the new millennium's coming, it seems that by some strange coincidence it did make its appearance in historical records. The entry of the year 1000 clearly marks a sudden change in the style of chronicle-writing. The change is the more obvious, if we compare these entries with previous accounts: colourful, heroic, some even may say epic. We would expect something similar or even more engaging since the entries of the early 11th century might well have belonged to a contemporary or at least an observer not far removed from the events. We would expect the chronicle to provide an increasingly full account of history, more complete and accurate. In a word, we would expect a historical narrative. Instead, we are presented with a plain annalistic account.

Indeed, the last years of St Vladimir's reign must have been a rather peaceful time. The major projects were already in the past. All the campaigns had been undertaken,

⁶ Curiously enough, the compiler of the famous but largely unreliable 16th century Nikon Chronicle, no less puzzled by the obscure „Malfred” than his later colleagues in the 20th century would be, concluded that Malfred must have been a man and a mighty warrior at that. Ironically, the hero's name in Nikon Chronicle is rendered as „Malvred”, „small harm”, thus preserving his (her) feminine nature.

⁷ The editors of the 1950 edition of Primary Chronicle (as in the following footnote), similarly puzzled, conjectured after Aleksey Shakhmatov that „Malfred” could have been yet another name for Vladimir's mother, otherwise known in Rus' sources as Malusha. However groundless, the hypothesis was accepted by a number of subsequent scholars. In his recent study of Vladimir's family, Omeljan Pritsak conjectured that Malfred must have been one of prince's two Czech wives (O. Pritsak 1995: 585, 588). Unfortunately, the scholar did not present his reasons for this conclusion.

the territories assembled and pacified, Byzantium humiliated in the attack of 988, the new faith adopted, and the Cathedral erected. One should not expect these fifteen years, when one generation was about to pass away and the next one was yet to learn how to kill, to be an exceptionally turbulent period. And yet we are disappointed.

Let us examine these records.

6506	
6507	
6508	Malfred died. In this year Rogned, Yaroslav's mother, died also.
6509	This year died Izyaslav, son of Vladimir and father of Bryachislav.
6510	
6511	In this year died Vseslav, son of Izyaslav and the grandson of Vladimir.
6512	
6513	
6514	
6515	The saints were brought to the Church of the Holy Virgin.
6516	
6517	
6518	
6519	The tsarina Anna, wife of Vladimir, passed away.
6520	
6521	
6522 ⁸	

The sharp departure from the previous style is so obvious that some scholars even suggested that we are dealing here not with the chronicle text as such, but rather with the *synodikon*⁹ of some Kievan church, utilized by the chronicle-writer without any change. Most probably, it is believed, the chronicler incorporated a *synodikon* (or some other records) kept in the Tithe church, the towering undertaking of Vladimir, which in these early years served both as Kiev cathedral and princely mausoleum. While this belief is very hard to substantiate¹⁰, the suggestion that the entries of 998–1014 might

⁸ I am following here an English translation by Samuel H. Cross, although for the purposes of my study it might be somewhat misleading, since the translator omits the „empty” years or collapses them into entries with records. The original text was published in *Polnoie sobraniye russkikh letopisiei* 1927; one may also consult V.P. Adrianova-Perets (ed.) 1950 (an annotated edition aimed at wider public).

⁹ A *Synodikon* is a church registry for the remembrance of the souls in the Liturgy.

¹⁰ Such was the opinion of the famous Russian philologist A.A. Shakhmatov 1908: 162–164. The scholar advanced his view (first expressed some half century before) as a mere plausible hypothesis, but his authority on everything that concerned the old Kievan chronicle-writing was so indisputable, that it soon became a standard belief. The conjecture, however, is highly problematic. Shakhmatov suggested that the person, who first put these records together into the *synodikon*, must have collected them by reading the inscriptions on the princes' tombstones in the Tithe Church. That, however, would yield only the names and the dates of deaths. Later another person must have incorporated the *synodikon* into the chronicle, while providing

have had some textual existence outside the known chronicles (or even their previous stages) is important. It may indicate that in these records we are dealing with the relics of some of the earliest monastic annals kept in the Tithe Church, where the deaths of the mighty patrons were being recorded alongside the events important to the church alone. Indeed, the beginning of our list almost coincides with the completion of the Tithe church (996) and it is very homogeneous at that: only the events that had the importance to the Tithe church are recorded, and not a single incident, in which the Tithe church had not interest, made its way to the list. It would not be completely groundless therefore to assume that our sixteen entries are the only surviving witnesses of the Tithe church annals (probably, the beginning)¹¹.

One may suspect that before the *Primary Chronicle* took its final shape in the early twelfth century, the year 6522 (1014) was not the last in our row of similar annalistic accounts, that in its initial stage the chronicle must have been much closer to the form of annals than it is now. The text of the *Primary Chronicle* is the cumulative result of the several chroniclers' efforts, and evolved during the eleventh to twelfth centuries. The later authors did a good job at concealing their predecessors' work, but the chronological layers still could be established with some accuracy. In fact, Aleksey A. Shakhmatov, the celebrated student of old Rus' chronicle-writing, suggested that the entries of 998–1014 are the relics of the chronicle, which preceded the *Primary Chronicle*. However, his attempt to show that the entries in question originated in the so-called *Initial Chronicle*, composed in the second half of the eleventh century, was not entirely convincing. It is not clear, whether the entries of 998–1014 were incorporated into the earliest of chronicles, reconstructed by Shakhmatov, the so-called *Ancient Chronicle* (ca 1038), although it is quite possible. Judging from Shakhmatov's reconstruction, its author must have written in a purely annalistic style¹².

comments on the deceased's relations to other members of the clan. Now, while it is quite possible that someone may have kept historical records in the Tithe Church, Shakhmatov's construction is too complex to be true. And its first stage is the weakest. From what we know, no inscriptions on the princes' sarcophagi were being made (at least, not a single one has been archeologically discovered yet). Equally unlikely that those tombstones would have been exposed to public's eye. The custom was to bury under the church's floor, leaving no visible traces of the grave. Moreover, Shakhmatov's conjecture can not explain how the record on transferring of the saints' relics to the Tithe Church made its way into the *synodikon*. It definitely could not have been read in tombstones. To save his idea, however, the scholar suggested that the entry appears in a corrupted form. He preferred the reading of the *Novgorod First Chronicle* (which he generally believed to witness the text older than the *Primary Chronicle*): „si” („these”, meaning mentioned above) instead of „sviatii” (saints). Thus, according to Shakhmatov, in 1007 remains of those princes mentioned in previous entries had been moved to the church, not some saints' relics. Although this correction would make all the records uniformly report on departed Rurikids (and thus more likely to have originated in *synodikon*), still it does not make the entry of 1007 a text we would expect to find in a *synodikon*. Besides, the individual reading of the *Novgorod First Chronicle* is opposed by all the available copies of the *Primary Chronicle*, and more likely is a result of a later scribe's error rather than the ancient reading.

¹¹ Interestingly enough, the idea that the Kievan chronicle-writing started in 996 at the recently completed Tithe church, has (although for different reasons) already been expressed, see: L. Cherepnin 1948: 331–333.

¹² See Shakhmatov's reconstruction of the *Initial Chronicle* in his *Povest' vremennykh let, 1: Vvodnaya chast. Tekst. Primechaniya*, Petrograd 1916.

Anyone familiar with the text of the *Primary Chronicle* could not only detect in our sample the absence of big events, so characteristic of its account of the tenth century, but also the chronicler's prudent effort to remain strictly within the circle of known facts, to limit himself to those events only, whose date could be established and whose place on the chronological scale could be found. We may even sense the author's sheer fascination with the flow of time and regularity of calendar. Even if no event happened, the year happened and that itself was something worth noting.

True, the entries of 998–1014 do not yield the full story of the time (and modern scholarly reconstruction of what was „really” going on may not necessarily confine itself to this set only¹³), but they have another value. If they fail to tell us about history as it happened, they might tell us something important about the history as it was perceived and lived, and about the emerging historical consciousness and rising awareness of time.

A modern reader (as most historians of Kievan Rus' are) is disappointed by the lamentable incompleteness of the list. Moreover, he is annoyed that no causes for even those few recorded events are provided, no connections between them made, and no stories told. In a word, he is amazed to find how little history — if any — this list contains. Our list is a classic example of such imperfect history produced by those who could not keep their books right and lacked necessary basic skills. For an empirical historian there simply is not enough „history”¹⁴. (It is worth noting that the standard English translation of the *Primary Chronicle* by Samuel H. Cross in observance of this convention drops „empty” years altogether). Thus, virtually all the general surveys of Kievan history rarely stop here, quickly moving instead to the next chapter — the exciting story of St Vladimir's sons, their fierce struggle for their father's throne, the martyrdom of SS Boris and Gleb, and the final victory of the most pious of them, Yaroslav.

Our list, borrowed from the *Primary Chronicle*, strikingly resembles the one from the *Annals of Saint Gall* analysed by Hayden White in his celebrated essay on annalistic perception of history. In both, a number of years are left blank, without mentioning any even that might have occurred within them. In both, no distinction between natural phenomena (death) and human facts (the transfer of the saints' relics) is apparent. In both, we do not know who recorded the events, or when. Finally, there seems to be no hierarchy, nor a sense of the events' relative importance. They appear in order of occurrence, and only temporal sequence seems to communicate their proper meaning. Thus, we may take some liberty at extending White's observation about the nature of the annalistic notion of history to our chronicle.

Why is our list a „bad” history after all? Which of our expectations does it betray or not confirm? To use Hayden White's words, we cannot but be struck by the old

¹³ See, for example, the most recent survey: O. Tolochko, P. Tolochko 1998.

¹⁴ The late Dmitry S. Likhachev, the commentator of the 1950 edition of the *Primary Chronicle*, working from the same assumption, tried to improve this obviously defective history by supplementing it, entry after entry, with spurious accounts from the *Nikon Chronicle*. In this manner, the story definitely became fuller, but at the same time more fictitious. See: *Povest' vremennykh let*, 2: 469–470.

writer's „apparent refusal, inability, or unwillingness to transform the set of events ordered vertically as a file of annual markers” into the stories, historical narratives¹⁵. Not only are the sheer amount of facts too small to satisfy us. Facts are not enough to make a history — what we need is the links between them, and some sense of causal explanation (be that Divine Providence, human ambitions, economic necessity, or even „laws of history”). What we need, in a word, is narrative storytelling, which would integrate separate facts into the whole and thus would provide proper meaning to them. Narrative discourse is exactly what the annalistic account is obviously lacking (which in turn disqualifies it from being viewed as a „good history”).

What the modern reader usually fails to understand, however, is that the annalistic discourse is not simply the infantile stage of the same narrative discourse, but that it represents a different notion of history — one that probably precedes our narrative one, but is quite accurate and realistic in its own right. To cite White,

The regularity of the calendar signals the ‘realism’ of the account, its intention to deal in real rather than imaginary events. The calendar locates events not in the time of eternity, not in kairotic time, but in chronological time, in time as it is humanly experienced. This time has no high points or low points; it is, we might say, paractactical and endless. It has no gaps. The list of times is full, even if the list of events is not¹⁶.

White also states that

The list of dates can be seen as the signifieds of which the events given in the right-hand column are the signifiers. The ‘meaning’ of the events is their registration in this kind of list. This is why... the annalist would have felt little of the anxiety which the modern scholar feels when confronted with what appear to be ‘gaps’, ‘discontinuities’, and lack of causal connections between the events recorded in the text. The modern scholar seeks fullness and continuity in an order of events; the annalist has both in the sequence of the years. Which is the more ‘realistic’ expectation?¹⁷.

We may ask ourselves further, if the old writer really lacked the „grand story”, the „meta-narrative” into which he inscribed his disconnected facts? Were the „empty years” equally empty and meaningless to him, as they are to us today? Our modern habit is to rank the years and to discriminate between those more and less important. Clearly, what makes the year unique — or distinguishable for that matter — is not its number, but the location of the event (which happened that year) in a bigger story. The event might be a beginning of some great and famous story or a culmination of it. Thus, the year would be remembered as an important date (more significant than the years of the beginnings and ends of lesser stories). Without an event attached to it the year is just a regular time-span like millions of others. But what if the story turned out to be

¹⁵ H. White 1981: 6. Reprinted in H. White 1987: 1–19.

¹⁶ Ibidem: 8.

¹⁷ Ibidem: 9.

wrong (as is usually the case in a trade where so many stories compete for the same set of years)? The celebrated year is stripped of its importance and plunged into obscurity.

Christian history is the story that moves from Creation through the Fall, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, toward the Second Coming. At the time our chronicler writes, however, all the stops are already made, and only the final destination is still in the future. For him, writing in the last millennium, the year was unique simply by the virtue of its unique number, which brings Mankind one step closer to the ultimate end and the focus of human history — the coming of the Messiah. There were no empty years on this road. Humans may have not been heroic or virtuous enough as to leave the memorable traces of their activity, but history happened nevertheless. We may only imagine the fascination of the neophyte, who upon discovering that he lives in time and history, both of which moves, was eager to play with new devices: the calendar and chronology.

Now we may not denounce the chronicle passage in question for what it lacks, but appreciate it for what it does contain: a snapshot of a history as it was experienced.

I would not go so far as to suggest that the concept of history as presented by our sixteen years, meets both modern requirements of history: it is factual, and possesses a certain meta-theory (although in a certain sense it does meet both). It is certainly a deeply pre-modern notion, very soon to be abandoned in favour of more narrative style of writing. What I do insist however, is that (from the historian's perspective) this long-neglected part of the chronicle presents a better history than those much more picturesque accounts that flank it. Those vivid stories (upon which too much in modern historiography of Kievan Rus' rests) were based at best on either oral tradition, or *vita*; at worst on the chronicler's own imagination. In either case they were inserted into the chronicle text much later in the century (or even at the beginning of the next one) by an author (or authors) far removed from the time described. Although, for example, the stories of Vladimir's conversion or the bloody feud of his sons are reported with more details and without gaps in chronology, we can no longer distinguish in them facts from inventions, description from ideology, and stories from fables.

The part of the chronicle within 998–1014 (whatever its provenance), on the contrary, betrays the hand of a contemporary. It was among the earliest to make its appearance in the chronicle, and the events themselves were definitely the first ones ever to be put on paper in Kiev. What is even more important, they are the witnesses of that earliest state of Rus' culture, when history had just been discovered.

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TRANSYLVANIA AROUND A.D. 1000

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„The historical and contemporary distortions of archaeological practice graphically illustrate the limits of the archaeology as storytelling metaphor: one story is not as convincing as another”¹. There are no cases in the archaeology of medieval Eastern Europe to which this chilling remark cannot apply. Few, however, would be a better case in point than Transylvania and the neighbouring regions around year 1000. To be sure, despite recent attempts, the dominant paradigm in archaeological interpretation in Romania and Hungary is still culture history². Besides a strong influence of the German school of archaeology, with its emphasis on drawing lists of cultural traits to be used for ethnic attribution, archaeologists working in the medieval history of the area do so under a double tyranny, that of the state and that of the written document. The study of archaeology as a discipline in the service of the state has only begun and the political implications of the archaeological work are still obscured by the lack of a conceptual framework for carrying this type of analysis³. In this paper, however, I will focus on the „tyranny” of the written document.

„Text-driven archaeology” is a phrase frequently employed to describe the work of medieval archaeologists⁴. In the case of Transylvania, two particular texts seem to absorb the attention of both historians and archaeologists: the so-called Long Life (*Vita Maior*) of St Gerard and the *Gesta Hungarorum*⁵. Bits and pieces from later Hungarian Chronicles, especially from *Chronicon Pictum*, or from Byzantine sources help scholars fill the gaps in the historical narrative. Only Anonymus (the name conveniently chosen to refer to the unknown author of the *Gesta*)⁶ and subsequent chroniclers cover the history of both Transylvania and the neighbouring regions. Chapter 10 of the Long Life

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¹ Ph.L. Kohl, C. Fawcett 1995: 6.

² See B.G. Trigger 1989: 148–206. For the culture-historical approach and the influence of the German school in Hungary, see J. Lászlóvsky, Cs. Siklódi 1991: 274, 276–279, and 287.

³ See P. Barford 1993: 257–270; F. Curta 1994: 225–310; P. Dolukhanov 1996: 200–213.

⁴ B.K. Young 1992: 135–147. See also J. Lászlóvsky, Cs. Siklódi 1991: 279.

⁵ *Vita Maior Sancti Gerardi* 1938: 480–560; G. Silági, L. Veszprémy (eds) 1991.

⁶ The literature on Anonymus is enormous and century-old. For a bibliography of the most recent studies, see G. Thoroczkay 1995: 117–173.

of St Gerard contains the episode of Achtum (also referred to as Ajtóny in the Hungarian literature) pertaining to the history of the region in western Romania and southeastern Hungary now known as Banat. Unlike Anonymus' narrative on the Hungarian conquest of Transylvania, the episode of Achtum has long been accepted as the work of a contemporary⁷. Anonymus seems to have had knowledge of this episode, but not of other parts of the Long Life of St Gerard⁸. Moreover, the much earlier, so-called Short, Life of St Gerard does not contain the Achtum episode. It has been suggested, therefore, that this episode was inserted into the original, but not extant, Life of St Gerard (of which the Short Life is only an adaptation) from a different source, arguably from some legend attached to the name and family of Sunad (Csanád). Indeed, the Long Life leaves the impression that it was Csanád and his successors, not Gerard, who took advantage of the conflict between Achtum and King Stephen of Hungary. Achtum was a powerful pagan „king” who had „taken his power from the Greeks” (*accepit autem potestatem a Graecis*) and had been baptised in the Orthodox faith. His base of power was at Morisena, an urbs on the Mureş/Maros river. He had established an Orthodox monastery dedicated to St John the Baptist, the monks of which were later moved to make room for St Gerard and his newly established bishopric of Morisena. Achtum is said to have challenged the Hungarian king. Csanád had been loyal to him, but later switched sides and at the head of a large army sent by King Stephen eventually defeated and killed Achtum. He was subsequently given substantial grants of land in the newly conquered territories of his former lord. With his help, Bishop Gerard began his mission in Morisena (now conveniently re-named Csanád, modern Cenad) and established a new monastery dedicated to St George in a place later called Oroszlános, most probably after the carved lions decorating its gates⁹. In any case, the Long Life clearly associates Gerard's promotion as bishop to the formation of the Csanád missionary bishopric, in the aftermath of Achtum's defeat. Following the Ottonian model of using bishops in secular policies, King Stephen viewed the newly founded bishopric as a means to support the political, secular organization of the area¹⁰.

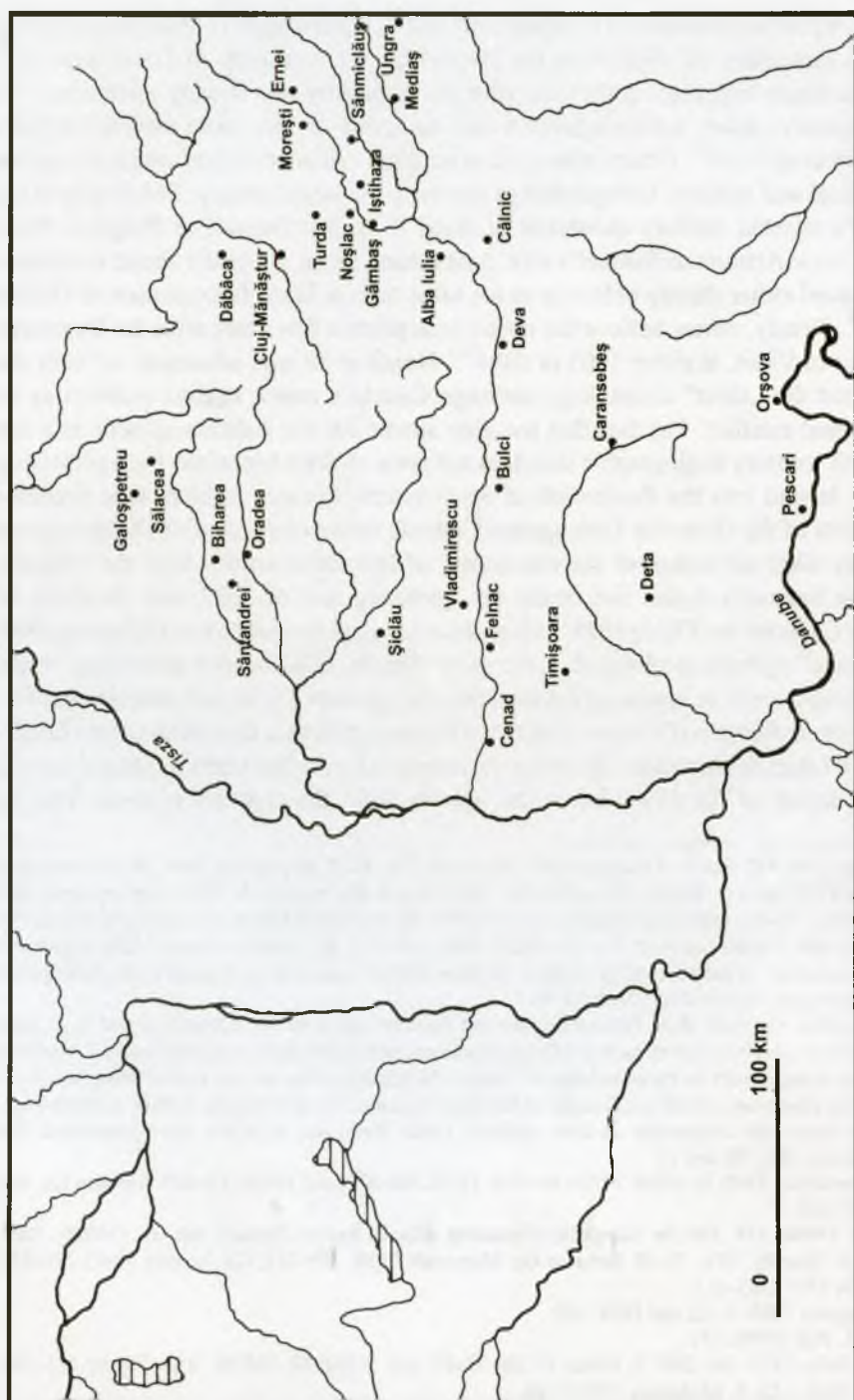
Leaving aside Achtum's ethnicity (Bulgar, Khazar, or Pecheneg), the only major controversial issue is the date of the conflict between Achtum and Csanád acting on behalf of King Stephen. The Long Life makes it clear that the conflict pre-dates Gerard's appointment as bishop, which is known from other sources to have taken place in 1030. On the other hand, Achtum is said to have been baptised in the Orthodox faith

⁷ For a survey of the earlier literature, see C.A. Macartney 1938: 1–35 [the study was reprinted in C.A. Macartney 1999: 65–99]. The Long Life of St Gerard is a compilation of different sources which was edited in the early fourteenth century. See L. Csóka 1974: 141–142; E. Marosi 1999: 36. For the importance of the Long Life for the history of eleventh-century Hungary, see J. Horváth 1974: 147–163.

⁸ For Gerard, see, most recently, L. Mezey 1994: 213–228.

⁹ For Oroszlános, see M. Takács 1993: 47–60. For St Gerard and monasticism, see J. Leclercq 1973: 3–22. For Byzantine monasticism in Hungary, see also A. Avenarius 1993: 114–120. For the bishopric of Csanád, see C. Juhász 1930 and G. Cotoşman 1935.

¹⁰ Z. Kosztolnyik 1981: 20 and 38. For King Stephen's ecclesiastical policies, see Gy. Györffy 1994.



Transylvania, Crisana and Banat (c. 950–1050 A.D.)

in Vidin, which was conquered by Basil II in 1002¹¹. Following his conversion, Achtum built the monastery of Saint John the Baptist for a community of Greek monks¹². Csanád's attack took place some time after the monastery was already established. As a consequence, many scholars favor a late date, one or two years before Gerard's appointment of 1030¹³. Others attempted to read the evidence of the Long Life against the political and military background of the early eleventh century. Pointing to King Stephen's attested military assistance of Basil II against Samuel of Bulgaria, these scholars view Achtum as Samuel's ally. As a consequence, Csanád's attack is conveniently placed either shortly before or at the same time as Basil II's conquest of Ochrid (1018)¹⁴. Finally, others believe the attack took place a few years after the Byzantine take-over in Vidin, in either 1003 or 1004¹⁵. Needless to say, advocates of both the „long” and the „short” chronology envisage Csanád's attack against Achtum as an interregional conflict. The fact that the only source for the Achtum episode is a late fourteenth-century hagiographic text does not seem to deter historians from projecting a family legend into the *Realpolitik* of Southeastern Europe. Achtum thus becomes a champion of the Orthodox faith against Catholic encroachment, while King Stephen cunningly takes advantage of the withdrawal of Byzantine armies from the Balkans, following Samuel's defeat and death, the Pecheneg raid of 1027, and the death of Emperor Constantine VIII in 1028¹⁶. Romanian scholars see Achtum as the last member of a „native” dynasty established in the early 900s by Glad, who is mentioned in the *Gesta Hungarorum* as opposing the invading Hungarians¹⁷. The fact that *Gesta* refers three times to Achtum (Ochtum) and twice presents him as a descendant from Glad's lineage is taken at face value. In doing so, Romanian scholars seem to ignore the fact that the author of the *Gesta* borrowed heavily from the Achtum episode. This he

¹¹ Scylitzes: 346–347. See W. Treadgold 1997: 523 and 952 n. 52; P. Stephenson 2000: 65. For Achtum's baptism in Vidin, see Gy. Kristó 1981: 129–135. That Achtum was baptized in Vidin may appear as odd, for Vidin was a far less important bishopric than neighboring Sirmium, where a new, episcopal church was erected just after Basil's conquest. See Cs. Bálint 1991: 116–117. By contrast, Ferenc Makk argues that Achtum was acting on behalf of King Stephen. He sees Achtum's baptism as Stephen's acknowledgment of Basil's conquest. See F. Makk 1994: 25–33.

¹² *Graeci* refers to monks from Byzantium, not just from anywhere in the Orthodox world (e.g., from Bulgaria). As late as 1044, Gerard preached through an interpreter, but his appointment as bishop of Morisena seems to have been based on his knowledge of Greek, which is otherwise attested in his *Deliberatio supra cantum trium puerorum*, a theological essay on the Song of Daniel. For this treatise, Gerard used the works of Pseudo-Denys the Areopagite in their original, Greek form, not in Scot's Latin translation. See Z. Kosztolnyik 1981: 29 and 47.

¹³ C.A. Macartney 1938; E. Glück 1976a: 89–116; 1979: 243–279; and 1980b: 82–100. See also I.A. Pop 1996b: 137–138.

¹⁴ I. Bóna 1994b: 128. For the Hungarian–Byzantine alliance against Samuel, see Gy. Györffy 1964: 149–154; R. Iljovski 1991: 75–99. See also Gy. Moravcsik 1958: 206–211; Gy. Székely 1967: 291–311; Gy. Györffy 1971: 295–313.

¹⁵ A. Madgearu 1993: 5–12; and 1998: 205.

¹⁶ E.g., I.A. Pop 1996b: 137.

¹⁷ See G. Báko 1975: 241–248; E. Glück 1976b: 73–87; and 1980a: 82–100; M. Rusu 1984a: 181–195; I.A. Pop 1996b: 125; A. Madgearu 1996: 5–22.

probably knew from a version of the Life of St Gerard, which was both earlier and different from the Long Life. Moreover, everything the author of the *Gesta* has to say about Glad is taken directly from this episode. The reference to Vidin in relation to Glad (*de Bundyn castro egressus*) reproduces Achtum's association with, and baptism in, Vidin. The reference most evidently originated in the Achtum episode. Most likely, the author of the *Gesta* knew nothing about Glad, except that he was Achtum's ancestor. He nevertheless modeled Glad's portrait after that of Achtum in the Life of St Gerard¹⁸.

This is also true about the genealogy established in the *Gesta* linking Tuhutum, the early tenth-century conqueror of Transylvania to Gyula („Geula”), King Stephen's grandfather, and the „lesser Gyula”, who apparently ruled in Transylvania during Stephen's reign. Stephen eventually attacked the latter, dispossessed and captured him and his family. Shortly thereafter, he established the first bishop of Transylvania, following the personal intervention of the papal legate¹⁹. The author of the *Gesta* seems to have relied on the *Annales Altahenses*, whose author borrowed in turn from *Annales Hildesheimenses*, the only contemporary source to mention Stephen's attack against *rex Geula* in A.D. 1002. Like the Achtum's episode, the genealogy linking Tuhutum to Gyula in chapters 24 to 27 of the *Gesta Hungarorum* most likely derives from a local legend associated with the Gyula family. To be sure, disentangling the Gyula episode is more difficult, precisely because this legend seems to have been blown out of proportions and linked to an earlier confusion between a family name and the name of a military rank in the Magyar federation of tribes. Gyula is described in Emperor Constantine VII's *De administrando imperio* as a dignity, not as a name²⁰. The mid-tenth-century Gyula paid a visit to the emperor in Constantinople. He was baptised and was given an Orthodox bishop named Hierotheos, who accompanied him back to „Tourkia”²¹. The story is confirmed by finds of lead seals mentioning several bishops of „Tourkia”²².

Was the Gyula of the mid-tenth century in any way related to King Stephen's enemy of 1002? As shown below, the archaeological evidence was manipulated to support the idea that both Gyulas were local rulers in Transylvania. The mechanism of this manipulation is relatively simple. The Gyula of 1002 is specifically mentioned in relation to Transylvania²³. He is also said to have refused to convert to Christianity, on

¹⁸ C.A. Macartney 1940: 116 and 154. Menumourut's figure is also sketched mainly on the basis of the Achtum character in the Life of St Gerard. See Macartney 1938: 32.

¹⁹ For the bishopric of Transylvania, see more recently G. Entz 1994: 101–105. The date traditionally assigned to the foundation of the bishopric is 1009. The first episcopal church dedicated to Saint Michael erected in Alba Iulia must have been completed by that time.

²⁰ *De administrando imperio*: 178. See L. Varady 1989: 36–38.

²¹ Scylitzes: 239. Scylitzes' account was reproduced in a twelfth-century polemical treatise, which placed Hierotheos' mission before the arrival of the Latin mission. As a consequence, Gyula's visit to Constantinople is dated between 948 (the date of the karcha Bulchu's visit) and 972 (the date of the first Latin mission to Hungary). See I. Bóna 1994b: 121–122.

²² N. Oikonomides 1971: 527–533; Catalogue of Byzantine Seals...: 169; I. Báan 1995: 1167–1170. See also Gy. Györffy 1976: 169–180.

²³ Z. Kosztolnyik 1981: 15.

which grounds he was later captured and imprisoned by King Stephen. The Hungarian name of one of the most important cities in Transylvania, now known as Alba Iulia, is Gyulafehérvár. The first part of this name obviously refers to Gyula, and archaeological excavations in Alba Iulia unearthed a round church on the southern side of the thirteenth-century cathedral. On the double assumption that this church must have been associated with the Orthodox, rather than the Catholic faith, and that it must be of the mid-tenth century, Romanian archaeologists and historians placed the „first” Gyula in Transylvania and turned him into a local, if not truly native, ruler²⁴. Hungarian historians, on the other hand, insist on equating the „lesser Gyula” of the early eleventh century with another character, known as *Procui senior*, who is said by Thietmar of Merseburg to have been King Stephen’s *avunculus*²⁵. István Bóna rejects the idea of the mid-tenth-century Gyula as a ruler of Transylvania. He believes Hierotheos established himself in the Hungarian Plain east of the Tisza river, for the memory of the Magyar chieftain was preserved in the name of the modern city of Gyula located in that region²⁶. But since Gyula also appears in the Hungarian name of Alba Iulia, Bóna invents a third Gyula, who allegedly moved to Transylvania shortly after John Tzimiskes’ defeat of Sviatoslav, the prince of Kiev, in 971. Closer now to his Byzantine ally, the third Gyula built the rotunda from Alba Iulia, to which Bóna and Romanian archaeologists alike assign a date in the middle or the second half of the tenth century²⁷. Others conjure Transylvanian chieftains out of several characters named Kean, who appear in *Gesta Hungarorum* and subsequent chronicles²⁸.

Despite many textual problems raised by these sources, archaeologists eagerly undertook the task of providing evidence presumably supporting the interpretation favored by historians. Kurt Horedt and Radu Heitel regarded the Alba Iulia rotunda as the foundation of the first Gyula, who converted in Constantinople and brought bishop Hierotheos with him to Transylvania²⁹. Heitel attributed a male burial from Gâmbaş and several finds of so-called Carolingian swords to Gyula’s retinue of Magyar warriors³⁰. He further „illustrated” Stephen’s conquest of Transylvania with the sin-

²⁴ E.g., R.R. Heitel 1994–1995: 417. This interpretation has recently been challenged on archaeological, numismatic and sigillographic grounds. See A. Madgearu 1994: 147–157; 1998: 203. For Gyula and Alba Iulia, see also Ş. Pascu 1971: 66–74. Another theory has Transylvania as an independent *Hungarian* state until King Stephen’s conquest. See I. Bóna 1987: 17–32.

²⁵ Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicle*, VIII 3. For Gyula as Procui, see Gy. Kristó 1993a: 69; I. Bóna 1994b: 126; Gy. Györffy 1994: 99. According to the *Gesta Hungarorum*, Gyula was captured by King Stephen and kept in prison for the rest of his life. By contrast, Procui was expelled from his estates, given back his wife, and later appointed warden of a frontier fort by King Boleslav I of Poland. As a consequence, he cannot possibly be the same person as Gyula. See C.A. Macartney 1938: 26.

²⁶ I. Bóna 1994b: 123 with n. 20.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 125.

²⁸ Gy. Kristó 1993a: 70 and 1993b: 15–28. For Kean as a corrupted form of *kagan* to be identified with Samuel of Bulgaria, see C.A. Macartney 1938: 20 and 25. See also Gy. Hazai 1961: 76 and 1996: 215–219.

²⁹ K. Horedt 1954: 487–512; 1958a; 1958b; and 1986. See also R.R. Heitel 1975a: 343–351.

³⁰ R.R. Heitel 1994–95: 428. Heitel seems to ignore the existence of earlier finds from Alba Iulia, for which see J. Novák 1944: 108–111. For other isolated finds, equally ignored by Heitel, see A. Popa 1961: 221–232. For tenth-century sword finds in Transylvania, see K. Horedt 1968: 422–426.

gle-naved church found in Alba Iulia to the west of the St Michael Cathedral. To Heitel, the map distribution of isolated finds of swords of Petersen's classes S and X, sword fittings, and niello-ornamented spearheads reveals the routes followed by the invading armies³¹. Similarly, István Bóna believes that the long sabre with a curved hilt was a typically Hungarian weapon, but admits that the „conquering Hungarians” already had „Western” weapons, such as Viking, double-edged or Byzantine swords. While criticizing Romanian archaeologists for their obstinate focus on illustrating *Gesta Hungarorum* with archaeological finds, Bóna nevertheless speaks of a „Hungarian archaeological culture” and identifies the first Hungarian settlements in Transylvania by means of grooved-rim vessels and clay cauldrons³².

Bóna's pervasively Kossinnist approach has its roots in a long tradition established by the „Budapest school” of archaeology³³. His obstinate focus on ethnic interpretation and political agenda did not go unnoticed and were promptly denounced³⁴. Nonetheless, Bóna's remark that the driving force behind medieval archaeology in Transylvania was *Gesta Hungarorum* did not fall on deaf ears. A leading Romanian medievalist, Radu Popa, undertook the task of continuing Bóna's efforts at demolition. In a devastating critique published first in Romanian, then in German, Popa accused Romanian archaeologists of having paid lip service to Ceaușescu's regime and of having manipulated the archaeological evidence to meet the demands of his nationalist policies in Transylvania³⁵. One of Popa's targets was the group of archaeologists excavating the early medieval hillfort at Dăbâca, near Cluj-Napoca. During the late 1960s through 1989, the site was repeatedly identified with the capital city of Gelou, a Romanian duke mentioned in *Gesta Hungarorum* as having opposed the conquest of Transylvania by

³¹ For swords, see G. Nagy 1906: 129–135; K. Horedt 1958b: 139; N. Vlassa 1965: 669–671; K. Horedt 1967: 509–510; A. Kiss 1987: 206–207. For sword fittings, see M. Roska 1944: 102–108. For spearheads, see Z. Székely 1971: 143; R.R. Heitel 1992: 141–144. For tenth-century niello-ornamented artifacts, see also K. Mesterházy 1981: 211–223.

³² I. Bóna 1994b: 132 and 159–160. For finds of grooved-rim vessels, thought to be of eastern (Saltovo-Mayaki) origin, see P. Iambor 1985–1986: 589–598. For clay cauldrons, see P. Diaconu 1964: 249–264; I. Fodor 1975: 250–265 and 1977: 323–349; M. Blăjan, E. Dörner 1978: 123–138; A. Lukács 1984: 320–330; M. Takács 1986 and 1991–92: 447–485. Only recently have Hungarian and Romanian archaeologists become aware of the wide-spread use of clay cauldrons in areas with no connection to the Carpathian basin and Transylvania. See G. Postică 1985: 227–240; V. Spinei 1990: 327–342; L. Doncheva-Petkova 1990: 101–111; V.A. Kuznecov 1990: 255–274.

³³ J. Lászlósky, Cs. Siklódi 1991: 279. Bóna's guiding principle seems to be Kossinna's famous concept of *Siedlungsarchäologie*. See G. Kossinna 1911: 3. For Kossinna, see also L.S. Klejn 1974: 7–55; U. Veit 1989: 39.

³⁴ R. Harhoiu 1987: 119–129 and 1990: 291–297.

³⁵ R. Popa 1991: 154–188 and 1992: 11–30. Besides Ștefan Pascu, who led excavations at Dăbâca and authored a two-volume history of medieval Transylvania, Popa's attacks were directed against Ștefan Olteanu. For a sample of Olteanu's scholarly output, see Ș. Olteanu 1984: 193–198. Olteanu's reply, published only after Popa's death in 1992, typically reiterates the culture-historical agenda of Romanian archaeologists in the 1980s. See Ștefan Olteanu 1993: 375–385. Popa's harsh critique was in fact part of a much larger debunking process currently taking place in the Romanian historiography. See, for example, L. Boia 1997. To my knowledge, there is nothing comparable in Hungarian historiography, at least not in Medieval Studies.

Tuhutum. Romanian archaeologists made every possible effort to turn Dăbâca into a Transylvanian Troy and to prove that the *Gesta* was a reliable source for the medieval history of (Romanian) Transylvania. Popa criticized not only this historicist stance, but also the manipulation of the archaeological evidence in order to match the historical record. Moreover, despite extensive excavations designed to produce substantial evidence of a Romanian occupation of the site prior to the Magyar conquest, to this day no results have been published, except a preliminary report, more than thirty years old now³⁶. Popa, however, did not endorse Bóna's criticism. Bóna claimed that no ninth- and very few tenth-century artifacts were found on the site. He also accused Romanian archaeologists of hiding the evidence that did not match their interpretation of Dăbâca as Gelou's capital city. In fact, the evidence published so far, albeit poorly, *does* contain evidence of a ninth-century occupation of the site. Nor is it clear what particular finds would have served Romanian nationalism and given substance to Bóna's accusation. The impression the attentive reader will get from reading the 1968 archaeological report is that, far from cunningly distorting or destroying the evidence, the excavators were overwhelmed by the complexity of the site and embarrassed that no substantial evidence was found to prove the *Gesta* right. This may also explain the rather confusing description of both the site and its history. There are four enclosures at Dăbâca, each one associated with earthwork fortifications and, at least in the case of the second enclosure, with a palisade partially erected on top of the earthen rampart of the first enclosure. The latter seems to have been restored at least once, at an unknown date. Two hearths found behind the rampart were associated with two pairs of silver, bell-shaped pendants with filigree ornament most typical for ninth-century Moravian artwork³⁷. The palisade built on top of the first rampart as part of the second enclosure is the only defense work to have produced clearly datable artifacts, namely a silver penny of King Peter (1038–1041 and 1044–1046). Excavators, however, insist that, by the time the third enclosure was built at 170 m away from the first one, the palisade and the second enclosure had been abandoned. At this point, they seem to have been completely confused by their own sloppy work, because they dated the third enclosure to the ninth or tenth century, while also claiming that it post-dated the second enclosure³⁸. Moreover, another earthen rampart said to have included both the first and the second enclosures was coin-dated to the reign of King Coloman (1095–1116). In the absence of an accurate publication of the site and with no dendrochronological analysis of wooden remains from the palisade — a technique recently applied with notable success to early medieval hillforts in Poland³⁹, it is very difficult to assess the

³⁶ Ș. Pascu *et al.* 1968: 153–202. See also Ș. Pascu *et al.* 1965: 449–450 and 1971: 157–174; P. Iambor 1984: 197–209. For Dăbâca and Gelou, see M. Rusu 1971: 1131; 1973: 109–117; 1978: 159–171; and 1984b: 189–207.

³⁷ Ș. Pascu *et al.* 1971: 158–159, pl. II (for pendants), and fig. 4/1, 5, 7, 10, and 11 (for other associated finds).

³⁸ Ș. Pascu *et al.* 1971: 159–160 and 169. The same ceramic assemblage attributed to a sunken hut found outside the third enclosure is said to have been found in a different place to the southeast.

³⁹ M.J. Dąbrowski, K. Ciuk 1972: 445–462; T. Ważny, D. Eckstein 1987: 147–159; M. Krapiec 1992: 131–137; M. Dulinicz 1997: 137–144; A. Kukliński 1995: 237–254; M. Krapiec, J. Poleski 1997: 117–137. See also J. Henning and K.-U. Heussner 1992: 314–337.

importance of the earliest occupation of the site. Nor is it possible to establish a functional relation between various ramparts, as some of them may have been in use at the same time, as a motte and bailey fort. The same is true for Cluj-Mănăstur, an earthwork fort probably built in the early eleventh century, as suggested by a coin minted for King Stephen and other associated artifacts⁴⁰. The earthwork or timber forts at Călnic, Moigrad, Șirioara, Albești, and Biharea have not produced any conclusive evidence concerning their initial occupation⁴¹. The fort excavated since 1975 at Vladimirescu, near Arad, was restored once, as the rampart was considerably enlarged. Fragments of clay cauldrons were found in a sunken hut dug into the restored rampart. At that time, eleventh-century burials had already appeared within the area previously enclosed by ramparts⁴². The situation at Bulci and Pescari is also far from clear, despite the claims of Romanian archaeologists that the latter was Glad's capital city⁴³. On the other hand, no open settlement excavated in Transylvania produced evidence safely dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century. More often than not, archaeologists have relied on clay cauldrons as diagnostic types to suggest a date within a large chronological bracket between the tenth and the twelfth century⁴⁴. It is not without interest that except Dăbâca no other ceramic assemblage in Transylvania has produced Byzantine glazed pottery of the kind identified on sites south of the Danube river⁴⁵. The fragments of glazed pottery from Dăbâca were associated with a pectoral cross, an artefact also conspicuously absent from tenth- and eleventh-century assemblages in Transylvania⁴⁶. Equally rare are tenth- and early eleventh-century coins. Only a few such coins are known so far: a copper coin struck for Emperor John Tzimiskes

⁴⁰ P. Iambor, Ș. Matei 1983: 131–133; I. Bóna 1994b: 163. See also P. Iambor, Ș. Matei, A. Halașu 1981: 129–150.

⁴¹ D. Popescu 1965: 604; M. Rusu 1974: 265–279; and M. Rusu, Ș. Dănilă 1972: 47–66; Gh. Baltag 1979: 101. The literature on Biharea is vast, but not very useful for establishing the chronology of the site. For a brief survey of the earlier literature, see M. Rusu 1960: 7–25. See also S. Dumitrașcu, L. Borcea 1974: 57–64; S. Dumitrașcu 1980: 137–145; 1981: 71–81; and 1986: 194–201.

⁴² M. Zdroba, M. Barbu 1976: 53–54; M. Barbu 1980: 155. For other finds, see also E. Dörner 1970: 447–458; M. Barbu, M. Zdroba 1977: 17–24; and 1979: 185–186; E.D. Pădureanu 1979: 145–180; and 1985: 27; M. Barbu, E. Ivanof 1980: 68–81; A. Bejan 1995.

⁴³ Ș. Matei, I. Uzum 1973: 141; I. Uzum 1980: 132. For Bulci, see I. Ferenczi, M. Barbu 1978: 70–73 and fig. 3. See also I. Uzum, Gh. Lazarovici 1974: 47–55; I. Uzum 1979: 215–224.

⁴⁴ Ciugud: K. Horedt 1951: 196 and 221 pl. III/3–9; Sf. Gheorghe-Bedeháza: K. Horedt 1951: 203–204, 224 pl. VI/5–7, 10, and 228 pl. X/4, 5; Ungra: R. Popa, R. Ștefănescu 1980: 496–498, 497 fig. 1, and 498 fig. 2. Sânmiclăuș: Gh. Anghel, M. Blăjan 1977: 286, 297, 299, 303, and 304 fig. 11/2. Felnac: M. Zdroba, M. Barbu 1976: 47–50 and pl. III/2. Șeitin: M. Blăjan, Șt. Bozian, C. Șiclován 1976: 423–432. Zăbrani: V. Boroneanț 1976: 57–69. Alba Iulia: S. Haimovici, M. Blăjan 1992: 209–210 and 210 fig. 2. See also M. Blăjan, E. Dörner 1978: 123–138; S. Dumitrașcu 1978: 51–111.

⁴⁵ Ș. Pascu et al. 1971: 168–169 and fig. 6. Glazed pottery appeared on contemporary sites in Banat. See I. Uzum 1974: 40; M. Blăjan, E. Dörner 1978: 131. See also M. Bajalović–Hadži–Pešić 1997: 139–154.

⁴⁶ Ș. Pascu et al. 1971: fig. 5/1. Only one other pectoral cross is known from Transylvania, a stray find from Saschiz. See A. Zrinyi 1976: 144. By contrast, pectoral crosses are relatively common artifacts on tenth- and eleventh-century sites in the Tisza plain and Banat. See Z.S. Lovag 1971: 143–164; A. Bejan, P. Rogozea 1982: 213–216 and pls. I–III; G. Marjanović–Vujović 1987: 28. See also Z. Lovag 1985: 225–233; K. Mesterházy 1994: 117–128.

(969–976); a *nomisma histamenon* minted for Emperor Basil II and dated between 990 and 1025; a copper coin minted for John Tzimiskes, but over-struck for Michael IV (1034–1041); and the above-mentioned silver pennies of Kings Stephen and Peter⁴⁷. All other coin finds are from the second half of the eleventh century, possibly its last years⁴⁸.

The lack of secure dates is particularly frustrating in the case of the settlement(s) excavated in various residential areas of the modern city of Alba Iulia, because of a possible association with the cemetery recently found in the same area⁴⁹. Still unpublished, this extraordinarily large cemetery is known only from brief descriptions, with neither plans, nor a detailed catalogue of finds. About 900 burials have been attributed to the third interment phase (known as „the third cemetery”). Many of them had stone constructions imitating cist burials, often with *spolia* from Roman ruins. Besides a pot of the so-called Cierna type, similar to that found in a warrior burial in Przemyśl, lock-rings with S-shaped ends, and perforated medallions similar to those found in Gașpetreu, nothing else is known about this important cemetery, otherwise dated on unknown grounds between the second third of the tenth century and the early 1000s⁵⁰. The presence of lock-rings with S-shaped ends, however, points to interesting

⁴⁷ Copper coin of John Tzimiskes, from Mediaș: E. Chirilă et al. 1967: 459. *Nomisma* of Basil II, from Alba Iulia: V. Pavel 1977: 666. Copper coin over-struck for Michael IV, from Moigrad: C. Preda 1972: 404. Silver pennies of Stephen and Peter: I. Bóna 1994b: 163; Ș. Pascu et al. 1971: 164. Two sites in Banat, Timișoara and Caransebeș, produced a copper coin minted for Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959) and a gold coin struck for Emperor Romanus III Argyros (1028–1034), respectively. See B. Mitrea 1967: 202 and C. Preda 1972: 397. Gold coins of Basil I, Romanus I, Nicephorus II Phocas, and Basil II, most likely from a scattered hoard, are said to have been found in Orșova. See C. Preda 1972: 405. I. Bóna (1994b: 132–133) pointed to chronological significance of silver coins allegedly sewn to the garments and found in tenth-century warrior burials excavated at Siclău, near Arad. In fact, out of twelve burials excavated there in 1958, only two (nos. 7 and 9) contained thin pieces of silver, which Bóna interpreted as coins. Neither one of these two burials, however, contained male skeletons, and there were no associated weapons. Moreover, the silver „coins” were found by the right hand in burial no. 9 and on the chest in no. 7. Needless to say, it is not even clear that these were actual coins, much less how they can be used to date the burial assemblages in which they were found. See M. Rusu, E. Dörner 1962: 705–711.

⁴⁸ Two burials in the eleventh- and twelfth-century cemetery from Cluj-Mănăstur produced pennies of Andrew I (1046–1060) and Ladislav I (1077–1095), respectively. See P. Iambor, Ș. Matei 1983: 135–136. The latest coins in the Sântandrei hoard, which also includes *nomismata* struck for Emperor Constantine IX (1042–1055), are pennies of Ladislav I. See C. Preda 1972: 408. Two other hoards, Turda and Frata, contain pennies of Ladislav I. See Gh. Anghel, A. Hopârtean 1970: 51–53; E. Chirilă, V. Feneșan 1974: 43–49. A silver coin of Romanus IV (1068–1071) and a copper coin of Constantine X (1059–1067) are stray finds from Vădaș and Mediaș, respectively. See C. Preda 1972: 411 and 459. Finally, a silver penny struck for King Ladislav I was found at Bodrogu Nou, in Banat. See M. Blăjan, E. Dörner 1978: 124. For Byzantine coins in Hungary, see I. Gedai 1968: 145–150; and 1991: 645–656. For the early coinage of Hungary, see Ch. Turnwald 1967: 23–27; J. Hlinka 1968: 65–77; I. Gedai 1974: 41–49; K. Jonsson 1988: 65–102; S. Suchodolski 1990: 164–176. For late eleventh-century Hungarian coinage, see also J. Hunka 1996: 59–84.

⁴⁹ For excavations in Alba Iulia, see D. Protase 1956: 15–43; Gh. Anghel 1969: 469–482; R.R. Heitel 1975b: 18–19; M. Blăjan, A. Popa 1983: 375–380; R.R. Heitel 1985: 215–231; R.R. Heitel, D.D. Ovidiu 1986: 187–189; S. Haimovici, M. Blăjan 1992: 207–230.

⁵⁰ R.R. Heitel 1994–95: 417 and 423. For Przemyśl, see A. Koperski, M. Parczewski 1978: 213–230. For Gașpetreu, see N. Chidioșan 1965: 237–243.

parallels with other Transylvanian finds long considered to represent the easternmost assemblages of the so-called Kóttlach culture. This is particularly the case of the burials found in the early 1900s at Deta, near Timișoara and of the small cemetery excavated in 1969 at Sălacea, which also produced artifacts with enamelled decoration⁵¹. These funerary assemblages have been dated to the tenth century, possibly to its second half. This further raises the question whether or not such large cemeteries as the one excavated in Alba Iulia could in fact belong to the first phase of those funerary assemblages known as the Bjelo Brdo culture, which are most typical for late tenth- and eleventh-century Hungary, Slovakia, and northern Croatia. Recent research has shown that in Croatia, Bjelo-Brdo-type assemblages already appear in the mid-tenth century, as indicated by a coin minted for Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus from burial 344 from the large cemetery at Vukovar-Lijeva Bara⁵². The absence of published data to allow comparisons and toposeriation analysis precludes any definite conclusions. The same is true for the burials accidentally found at Gâmbaș, Lopadea Nouă, Deva, Căpeni, Noșlac, Ereteghin, Iștihaza, and Oradea⁵³.

To generalize from this evidence is not easy. Clearly, no firm conclusions could be drawn on the basis of brief excavation reports or succinct descriptions of very large cemeteries that are not yet published. On the other hand, there seems to be little doubt that occupation of some, if not all, sites began much earlier than A.D. 1000. While this may be true for the earliest habitation phase at Dăbâca, it remains unclear whether or not that phase also coincided with the first fortification of the site. Perhaps the most frustrating consequence of the present situation is that, with no detailed publication of key sites such as Dăbâca or Alba Iulia, it is impossible to engage in middle-range research. For instance, the current state of affairs precludes such type of analysis as settlement pattern, long viewed as an important strategy for interpreting the archaeological evidence as reflecting social institutions of interaction of control⁵⁴. Indeed, while the most critical approach to the literary evidence would still have to accept the existence around A.D. 1000 of some form of political authority in Transylvania and the

⁵¹ Deta: L. Mărghitan 1985: 40–41 and 41 fig. 2. Sălacea: N. Chidioșan 1969: 611–615. The pair of lock-rings with S-shaped ends was found in burial 17, the earring with enameled pendant is from burial 4. For the Kóttlach culture and the problems associated with the interpretation of burial assemblages of this kind, see H. Dolenz 1960: 733–749; P. Korošec 1979 and 1990. István Bóna interpreted this evidence as „part of the booty from [Hungarian] raids or goods purchased for money” (1994b: 134). By contrast, R.R. Heitel (1994–95: 428) viewed such finds as evidence of pre-Hungarian contacts of the Romanian and Slavic population of Transylvania with the eastern Alpine area of Austria and Slovenia.

⁵² For the Bjelo Brdo culture (so called by Lubor Niederle), see B. Szöke 1959: 32–47; A. Kiss 1973: 327–340; □ Tomičić 1992: 113–130; and 1993: 32–42.

⁵³ K. Horedt 1986; 1958b: 101; and 1956: 101–116; I. Andrițoiu, I.P. Albu 1969: 57–71; Z. Székely 1971: 143 and 144; D. Popescu 1965: 595; A. Zrinyi 1976: 139; S. Dumitrașcu 1983: 57. For toposeriation, see F. Djindjian 1985: 119–135.

⁵⁴ G.R. Willey 1953 and 1989: 167–182; B.G. Trigger 1970: 237–262; I. Hodder, C. Orton 1976. See also B. Stjernquist 1985: 223–238; P. Meduna, E. Cerna 1991: 388–395; M. Gojda 1990: 219–235. For settlement pattern analysis in the archaeology of Eastern Europe, see Z. Kobyliński 1987: 121–155; E. Neustupný 1994: 248–258.

neighbouring regions, so far archaeologists have been unable to identify any focal points of social and political interaction. Even if we were to admit that Dăbâca existed as a fort before the Hungarian conquest, it remains to be explained what was the role of the fortification within the local network of settlements, why was it erected in the first place, or what its function was. Merely assigning Dăbâca to Gelou does not explain anything. Similarly, few archaeologists seem to be aware of the fact that the current debate about the exact date of the Alba Iulia rotunda is an archaeological *cul-de-sac*. The existence of this building raises many more problems of interpretation than mere chronology. It has been suggested that the Alba Iulia rotunda be associated with churches found on Moravian sites, such as Mikulčice or Staré Mesto⁵⁵. If so, the existence of this church would require an explanation of social and political change in ninth- or tenth-century Transylvania at a conceptual level, that no archaeologist has yet attempted to reach. In the light of this explanation, whether Gyula moved to Transylvania only in the last few decades of the tenth century, as Bóna has it, or was already there by 950, has very little, if any importance. Similarly, the debate around the exact date of King Stephen's war against Achum has no real meaning for archaeologists. What matters is to identify the economic and social configurations that attracted King Stephen's aggressive intervention against such localised forms of power. Without an understanding of these configurations, the archaeology of Transylvania around A.D. 1000 has little chance of becoming a storytelling metaphor. Indeed, with no firmly secured time framework to guide the narrative, no archaeologist working in the area has been able to produce a story more convincing than another.

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⁵⁵ The literature on ninth-century Moravian churches is vast. For a brief survey, see V. Richter 1965: 209–229.

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THE EASTERN ROMAN EMPIRE AT THE TURN OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM*

Panagiotis Antonopoulos**, Charalambos Dendrinos***

The turn of the first millennium found the Eastern Roman Empire, or Byzantium as is commonly known, at a turning point in its long history¹. The year 1000/1 A.D., which falls within the reign of Basil II (976–1025), one of the most brilliant military emperors of the Macedonian dynasty, coincides with the continuation and consolidation of the victories of the previous decades, and the extension of Byzantine authority in the Balkans with the reconquest of Bulgaria. Under Basil's capable leadership, Byzantium would reach the apogee of its power for the first time since the reconquests of Emperor Justinian I (527–565). There is no doubt that for the people of East Rome, and in particular of the capital city of Constantinople, the New Rome, the turn of the millennium marked the reassertion of an era of glory.

In this period, Byzantium encompassed parts of the Eastern Roman Empire. Despite oriental influences, Greek language and culture had long prevailed throughout its realm, to the extent that the West referred to it as *imperium Graecorum*². The Byzantines, however, regarded themselves as the true Romans, and their God-protected ruler, the *basileus* and *autocrator Romaion*, as the only legitimate emperor and heir of Constantine I (312–337) and his successors. This sense of tradition and continuity of Roman political order, Hellenic culture and Orthodox Christian faith permeated and defined all expressions of Byzantine life and culture, despite the changes and developments that took place during its over a thousand years' history.

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¹ The conventional term „Byzantium” and „Byzantine” derives from the ancient Greek colony of Byzantium near the Bosphorus, where Constantine I built the capital of the Christian Roman Empire in 330 A.D. This term, coined by 17th century Western scholars who saw no continuity of *Romanitas* in the East after the fall of Rome (476), was used primarily in a political sense, to distinguish the Eastern from the Frankish Empire, recognized as the heir to the Roman Empire in the west.

² The term consistently appears ever since the later 9th century in western sources. Thus, the Byzantine Emperor was addressed by the Papacy as „Imperator Graecorum” (866), but also as „Imperator novae Romae” (1054) and „Imperator Constantinopolitanus” (1073, 1089); cf. A. Tăutu (ed.), *Acta Romanorum Pontificum* 1943: nos. 323, 372, 375, 382.

Byzantium experienced none of the millennial hysteria which is generally supposed (though contrary to historical evidence) to have pervaded most of western Europe in the year 1000³, for the simple reason that the current universal system of dating by *The Year of the Lord, Anno Domini* (A.D.), that is numbering years from the birth of Christ, was a novelty at the time. In fact this system, invented by the eastern monk Dionysius Exiguus in the year 525, in the process of calculating the dates of the future celebration of Christian Easter, did not come into use in the West until much later, while eastern Christendom adopted it well after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453⁴.

For centuries Christian communities continued to use in their daily lives a variety of chronologies and dating systems current in the pagan Greco-Roman world⁵. In addition to these, the indiction system, a fifteen-year cycle introduced originally under Diocletian for taxation purposes, was adopted extensively in the Christian world. At the same time, the Old Testament provided Christians with two systems of dating that linked the people of the New Israel with their Biblical tradition: first, counting by generations (1 Chronicles 9:1) and secondly, and most importantly, counting back from *The Year of the Creation of the World, Anno Mundi* (A.M.), a chronological scale that went back to the divine act of Creation (Genesis 1–2). The latter system spread fast in the Christian world and soon prevailed in Eastern Christendom⁶.

Sextus Julius Africanus (160/80–240) was the first Christian chronicler to introduce the concept of the Christian era, followed by the Church historian Eusebius (260/5–339/40), who established a similar historical chronology, calculating the period between the Creation and the birth of Christ as consisting of 5,499 years. This method of reckoning, known as Alexandrine, was further developed by Panodorus and Annianus (4th–5th c.), who placed the creation of the world on 29 August 5494 and 25 March 5492 B.C. respectively. Eventually, the „Byzantine” or „Roman” era, whose origin is disputed, became the commonly accepted chronological system in the Empire⁷. This system reckons that the creation of the world occurred on 1 September 5,508 years before the birth of Christ. Thus, the beginning of A.D. 1 coincided, conveniently, with the beginning of the indiction cycle of the year 5508 B.C. Accordingly, 1 September A.D. 1000 coincided with the beginning of 6508 A.M.⁸

³ See A. Vasiliev 1942–43: 478–487.

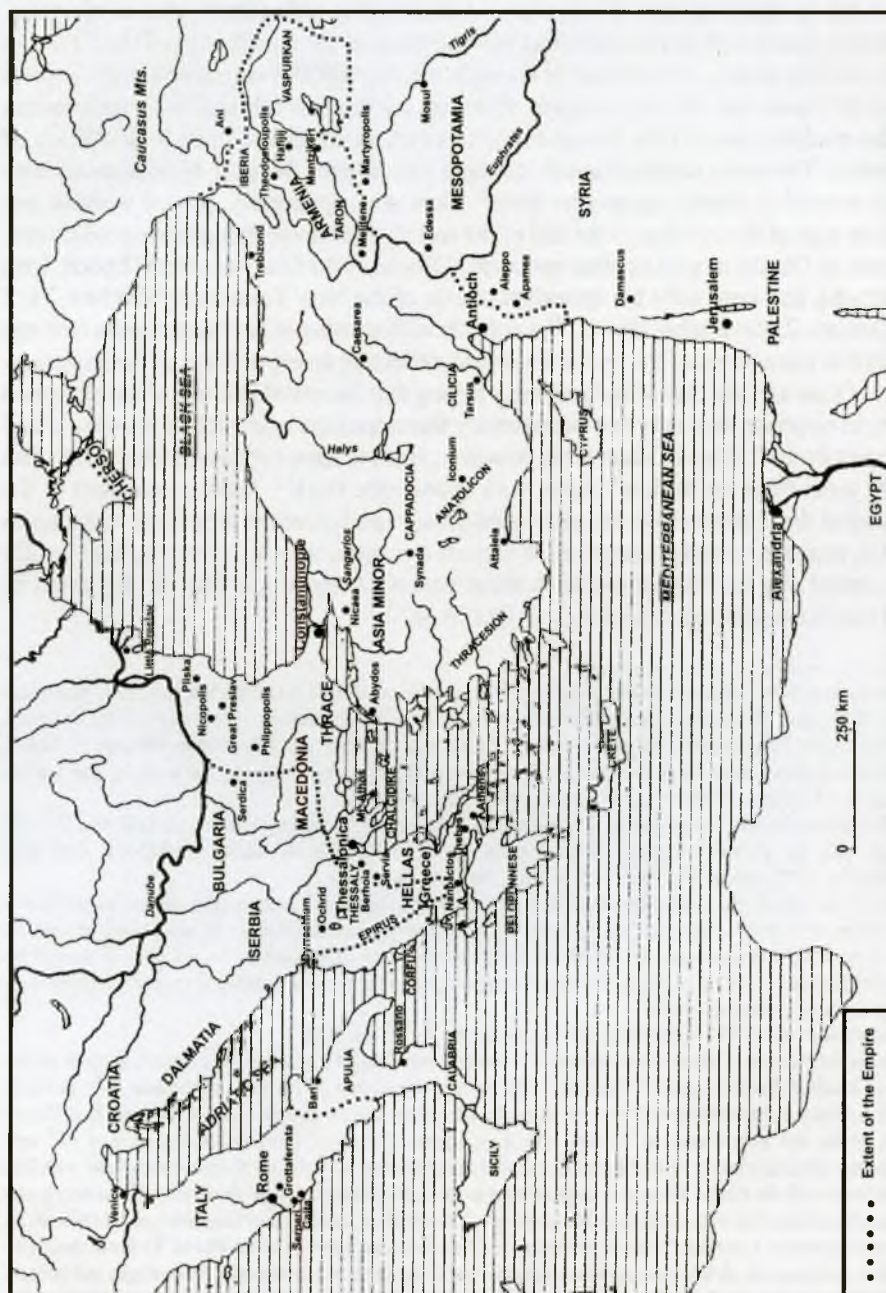
⁴ A. Vasiliev 1942–43: 476–478, 487; J. Herrin 1987: 4–5; G. Declercq 2000: esp. 97ff.

⁵ The regnal year of the emperor or of the local ruler, the succession of Roman consuls, or the four-year cycle of Olympiads, as well as local eras such as the Seleucid era, which prevailed in Syria, and the Diocletian era, which was used widely in Egypt. For dating systems in the Byzantine world see V. Grumel 1958; J. Herrin 1987: 3–6; ODB 1991: 448–449; G. Declercq 2000.

⁶ V. Grumel 1958: 3–25, 56–71; J. Herrin 1987: 3; G. Declercq 2000: 25–48.

⁷ A. Vasiliev 1942–43: 467–469; V. Grumel 1958: 56–128; J. Herrin 1987: 3–4; G. Declercq 2000: 26–34, 49–95.

⁸ In our current Gregorian calendar, with the year starting on 1 January, A.D. 1000 fell between 1 January 6508 and 31 December 6509 A.M. According to other dating systems used in the Eastern and Western Empire at the time, the turn of the millennium coincided with the following years: Antiochean era: 1048;



The eastern Roman Empire at the turn of the first millennium

These systems of chronology gave rise to apocalyptic fears associated with the year 6000 A.M. as early as the 2nd century. According to Africanus, whose historical chronology spans over seven millennia (on the basis of the seven days of the Creation and the seventy weeks of the Book of Daniel), the year 6000 was to witness the Second Advent of Christ and the Apocalypse, followed by the seventh and final millennium with the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven, as described in St John's Book of Revelation. The same eschatological message linked with the year 6000 appears also in other second to fourth-century writings⁹. That year, apparently, passed without any particular sign of the coming of the end of the world, thus discrediting those predictions.

Based on Daniel, as well as other apocryphal Books of the Old Testament (Enoch, Ezra and Baruch), and especially the apocalyptic texts of the New Testament (Matthew 24, 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 20:1–3)¹⁰, a considerable number of later apocalyptic writings circulated in many areas of the Byzantine world, reflecting an expectation of the approaching end of time and the Day of Judgement, a feeling that increased in times of adversity and tension, in response to events that occasionally threatened the existence of the people and the Empire itself¹¹. None of these texts, however, seem to have connected 6508 A.M., that is 1,000 years from the birth of Christ, with apocalyptic fears¹². Some predictions of the future end of the world were in fact expressed some years before the turn of the millennium (ca. 995), and were closely connected, as in most Byzantine apocalyptic texts, with the fall of the capital city of Constantinople, without however ascribing a date for this event or indeed mentioning the approaching year 1000 A.D.¹³

Alexandrine era: 6492; Greek or Seleucid era: 1311; Diocletian era, or era of the Martyrs: 716; Armenian era: 449; Hijri year: 391; Georgian era: 6609. Phenomena recorded in sources of the time include two total solar eclipses, on 7 April and 30 September 1000, a total lunar eclipse on 12 December 999 and 12 March 1001, followed by a partial lunar eclipse on 5 September 1001. It is also recorded that a comet was visible in France on 14 December 1000: see V. Grumel 1958: 254, 464, 472.

⁹ *Epistle of Barnabas* (2nd century), the *Commentary on the Book of Daniel* by Hippolytus of Rome (2nd–3rd centuries) and the *Divine Institutes* of Lactantius (d. ca. 317). See A. Vasiliev 1942–43: 466–467; G. Podskalsky 1972: esp. 8–10, 79ff.; G. Declercq 2000: 39–44.

¹⁰ It should be noted that, with the exception of the early „chiliastic” writers, the mainstream Church interpretation of St John's Revelations from the 3rd–4th century onwards stressed its allegorical aspect. Its earliest Byzantine interpretation in which no reservations were expressed as to whether it should be incorporated in the canonical books of the New Testament, dates from the beginning to mid-6th century with Oecumenius: see C. Belezos 1999.

¹¹ P.J. Alexander 1968: 997–1018; repr. in P.J. Alexander 1978: art. XIII.

¹² The most important of these texts were the Christian versions of the *Sibylline Oracles*, known as the *Oracle of Baalbek* (beginning of 6th century); the Syriac *Revelation of Pseudo-Methodius* (7th century), a popular text that appeared in two Greek versions, and developed in the course of the 9th century in different versions under the title *Vision of Daniel*; the *Apocalypse of Leo of Constantinople*, in two (9th and 12th-century) versions closely related to the Greek *Visions of Daniel*, as well as a Syriac Apocalypse with less close relations with the Greek *Visions*; a large section in the *Life of Saint Andrew the Fool* (10th century); and two texts of uncertain date of composition, the *Oracles of Leo the Wise*, attributed to Emperor Leo VI (886–912), and Pseudo-Ephraem's sermon *On the Last Times, the Antichrist and the End of the World*. To these should be added other astrological, alchemical and oracular texts (under the titles of *seismologia*, *brontologia* and later on *calendologia*), which proliferated extensively in the Empire. For editions of these texts see bibliography. Generally see P.J. Alexander 1978: art. XII–XVI; P.J. Alexander 1985; G. Podskalsky 1972: 51–56.

¹³ In the *Patria* of Constantinople, a text on the origin of the city, composed by an anonymous author (though

Historical periods cannot be divided into self-contained sections, for the rise or decline of a state or nation has its roots in the past, in the previous decades or century. Likewise, the turn of the millennium found the Byzantine Empire in the last stages of an expansion in the East along the Euphrates, the Cilician mountains and the Caucasus, while victories at sea had secured the reconquest of Crete and Cyprus from the Arabs.

It was this Empire that Basil II (976–1025), the elder son of Romanus II (959–963), inherited with his brother Constantine VIII (1025–1028)¹⁴. On acceding to the throne, at the age of eighteen, Basil was entirely unprepared to exercise his duties, for up to that time he had played a merely decorative role under the two usurpers and brilliant general Emperors Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969) and John I Tzimisces (969–976). It is very fortunate that Constantine, who „appeared to be apathetic, lazy, and devoted to a life of luxury”, was content to leave the government of the State to his brother, who in contrast „always gave an impression of alertness, intelligence, and thoughtfulness”¹⁵.

During the first nine years of his reign, Basil ruled under the shadow of his great uncle and chief adviser, the *parakoimomenus* (Lord Chamberlain) eunuch Basil, whose remarkable personality and serious nature left an indelible impression on the character of the young Emperor. Following some disagreement, Basil removed the *parakoimomenus* from the political scene and assumed authority, in the process proving himself an outstanding statesman.

The early period of his reign was marked by a successful insurrection in the Balkans, that brought about the formation of a new Bulgar State under the capable leader Samuel. At the same time a series of rebellious movements by ambitious generals, who represented the wealthy landed aristocracy of Asia Minor, threatened the unity of the Empire. The first rebellion, by general Bardas Sclerus, was dealt by Basil the *parakoimomenus* and the general Bardas Phocas (979), while the second, which involved at its last stage both generals, was crushed by Emperor Basil himself at the battle of Abydos (989), followed by a peaceful settlement which put an end to the civil strife.

for a long time it was falsely attributed to George Codinus), among the descriptions of various monuments there is an interesting reference to mysterious hieroglyphic and astrological inscriptions and bas-relief images, which supposedly predicted its last days: Ps.–Codinus, *Patria Constantinopoleos* 1907: 175–180, 191, 194, 206. Cf. Ch. Diehl 1929–30: 192–196; A. Vasiliev 1942–43: 493–494; S.I. Kourousis 1969–70: 211. On the *Patria* see A. Berger 1988. See generally A. Pertusi 1988.

¹⁴ For the main contemporary historiographical works dealing with Basil's reign see bibliography (primary sources). For modern works see in general the old monograph by G.L. Schlumberger 1900; A.A. Vasiliev 1928: 366–457; J.B. Bury 1974; J.M. Hussey (ed.) 1966: 175–192; G. Ostrogorsky 1989²; 3rd repr.: 298–315; R.J.H. Jenkins 1966: 301–332.

¹⁵ The historian Michael Psellus left a unique portrait of each of the two brothers, based on his own youthful recollections and on reports of members of the imperial circle: Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*. I: 1–4, 22, 29, 35–36; II: 1–3, 6–9, ed. with French trans. by E. Renauld, Paris 1926–1928, repr. 1967: 2–4, 13–4, 18, 22–3; 25–7, 28–30; English trans. by E.R.A. Sewter 1966: 27, 29–30, 39, 43, 48–49, 53–54, 56–58.

Having secured his throne from his internal opponents, Basil was free to concentrate on the reduction of the revived Bulgarian Empire under Samuel. During the next decade Basil was able to strengthen the position of his Empire. Through the marriage-alliance (989) between his sister, the *porphyrogenita* princess Anna, with Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, the Emperor secured the northern frontiers, bringing the newly-converted Kievan Rus' in the religious, cultural and political sphere of the Byzantine „commonwealth” of Orthodox Christian nations, an event of great importance for that time, and by far greater for the centuries that followed. In the East he secured the annexation of the principality of Taron (990) and repulsed the attacks of the Fatimids on the Syrian frontier (995), while in the West he secured the Adriatic for the Empire by concluding a treaty with Venice (992).

Meanwhile, Samuel, gradually succeeded in expanding his dominion in central Greece, advancing as far as the Peloponnese, without serious opposition. In 997, however, the distinguished Byzantine general Nicephorus Uranus was able to score an important defeat on Samuel by the banks of the Sperchios river in central Greece, advancing into the heart of Bulgaria. This victory proved decisive in the course of the prolonged war. Up to 1001 Samuel withdrew from any operation in Macedonia and eastern Bulgaria, in order to strengthen his position in the west by force and diplomacy. In 998 Basil marched once more to the east to restore control against the attacks of the Fatimids, following the slaying of the Byzantine governor of Antioch Dalassenus and the massacre of his troops during a campaign in Apamea. The Emperor reached Syria in September 999, and by December he was able to re-establish his authority, appointing his victorious general Uranus governor of the city¹⁶.

The year 1000 found the forty-two year old Basil himself in winter quarters at Tarsus. In the early months of that year the first trade agreement between Byzantium and the Fatimid rulers of Egypt and Syria was concluded, thus anticipating a revival of movement between Europe and the Holy Land. On Easter Day (31 March) David, prince of Tao (or Tayk'), was assassinated. Once the news reached him in April, the Emperor marched to the north-east to secure his sovereignty. The Georgian and Armenian potentates were gathered at the Hafjij fortress. After a bloody battle between the Varangian unit of the Byzantine army and the Iberian troops, Basil succeeded in regaining control, and appointed Bagrat, King of Abasgia and Prince of Karthli, governor of the principality, including the lands of Vaspurkan, conferring him, as in the case of his murdered predecessor, the title of *curopalates*¹⁷. In late autumn of the same year, the Emperor returned to Constantinople by way of Theodosioupolis (modern Erzerum). Meanwhile, a major Byzantine force, under the command of the patrician Theodorokanos and the *protospatharios* Nicephorus Xiphias, succeeded in capturing

¹⁶ Around this period Uranus composed a military treatise under the title of *Taktika*, covering field tactics, sieges and raids, part of which is based on his own experience during military operations of the Byzantine army in the east (chapters 56–65): ed. with English trans. by E. McGeer 1995: 79–167.

¹⁷ See in general W. Felix 1981: 45–49, 131–135.

three major strongholds in Bulgaria, the Great and Little Preslav and the former Bulgarian capital Pliska, thus restoring Byzantine control in the area¹⁸.

At the turn of the millennium the Byzantine Empire extended from the Danube and Cherson in the north; to Euphrates as far as the city of Antioch and the island of Cyprus in the south; from the eastern reaches of the Black Sea, Iberia and the annexed principalities of Taron and Vaspurkan in the east; to the eastern part of the Serdica in the Balkans and southwards to Greece (excluding Thessaly and Epirus), through Philippopolis and Thessalonica, all the way down to Naupactos, the Peloponnese and the island of Crete to the south, including the Byzantine possessions in Apulia and Calabria in Southern Italy and part of the Adriatic coast in the northwest (see map)¹⁹.

The year 1001 signaled the major Byzantine counter-offensive. Imperial forces regained Berhoia and Serbia and in autumn Bulgarian garrisons in Thessaly were rooted out. Within the next four years, with the eastern frontiers secured, the Byzantine army and diplomacy would succeed in strengthening the western part through military victories and alliances, restoring virtually all the eastern half of the Balkans to the Empire, though the Bulgars would be finally crushed only by 1014, by which time most of Samuel's state had been incorporated into Byzantium. The remainder, including the principalities of Serbia and Croatia, were to follow soon. This success would have been extended further had Hungary been included in the Byzantine „commonwealth". This opportunity, however, was lost, and the Byzantines had to be content with King Stephen's tolerance and respect for Orthodox Christianity in his realm, after his official conversion to the Latin Church in 1000/1²⁰.

Having devoted almost half of his life on continuous military campaigns, Basil had finally achieved one of his primary aims, which he regarded as „an exceptional gift granted by God"²¹. It is true that Basil conquered Bulgaria by ruthless methods, which won him the name of *Bulgaroctonos* (the „Bulgar-slayer"). But as Psellus remarked, Basil II „was more of a villain in war time, more of an emperor in time of peace"²², and proved this by the measures he adopted for the newly annexed country. As part of the reconciliation, he excused his new subjects from paying their taxes in gold as in the rest of the Empire, accepting payment in kind, for otherwise they would be unable to pay them. Moreover, Basil re-established the Bulgarian Patriarchate of Ochrid, abolished by John I Tzimiskes, as autocephalous archbishopric, not subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople, though the Emperor reserved the right to appoint its incumbent. In this way, he succeeded both in appeasing his new subjects and keeping the Bulgarian Church under Byzantine control²³.

¹⁸ John Scylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum* V: 26–27, 1973: 343–344; John Zonaras, *Annales* 1897: 559–560; Michael Glycas, *Annales* 1836: 576; George Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium* 1839: 452–453; Jahja of Antioch, *History* 1932: 461.

¹⁹ We would like to thank Mr A. Theophilou of Grade S.A., Athens, for the design of this map.

²⁰ See the chapter on Hungary in the present volume.

²¹ See H. Hunger 1964: 72, no. 94, with reference to the *prooimion* to Basil's Novel (30) of 1020.

²² Michael Psellus, *Chronographia* I, 34, 1926, repr. 1967: 21; English trans. by E.R.A. Sewter 1966: 47.

²³ See N. Oikonomides 1988: 317–326.

Despite his preoccupation with the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Eastern frontier, Basil II's intention was to reinforce the remaining Byzantine territories of Apulia and Calabria in southern Italy, and Sicily, which had been grouped under a governor, the *catepan*, for the eventual recovery of Sicily from the Arabs²⁴. These provinces had been threatened in the past also by the German Emperor Otto I (962–973), who failed in his attempt to conquer them (962). Diplomatic negotiations for co-operation and recognition of his imperial title by the Byzantine Emperor were unsuccessful. The most he gained was a wife for his son Otto II (967–983), Theophano (972–991), the niece of John I Tzimisces and a member of one of the great families of the landed aristocracy²⁵.

Her son Otto III (996–1002) was brought up as a true Byzantine *porphyrogenitus*, convinced of the sacred character of his imperial dignity. He dreamed of the *renovatio imperii Romani* with Rome as the centre of his Empire, in the tradition of the Byzantine Empire²⁶. Part of this plan was a marriage-alliance with the Byzantine imperial house. Negotiations began in 996 with a view of Otto III marrying one of Constantine VIII's daughters, since Basil was unmarried (and was to remain so to the end of his life). Despite the ecclesiastical complications between Rome and Constantinople at the time, the negotiations continued²⁷. Sometime after 998, a new German embassy, headed by Archbishop Arnulf of Milan, arrived in Constantinople, and an agreement was concluded, with Basil's niece, the *porphyrogenita* Zoe, been given as bride. However, this marriage-alliance was prevented by Otto III's premature death in 1002 (as St Nilus, the Calabrian Greek abbot and founder of the Monastery of Santa Maria Grottaferrata [1004], had foreseen when the young emperor visited him in Serperi, Gaita, in 999)²⁸.

Meanwhile, in the year 1000 the Patriarchal throne of Constantinople was vacant since Patriarch Sisinnius II's death in 24 August 998, and it was to remain so until it was occupied by Sergius II (June/July 1001–1019)²⁹. It seems that during that period the Emperor, who had the privilege of nominating the Patriarch, was away leading his army. A similar situation had occurred some years earlier, when Basil allowed the patriarchal throne to remain unoccupied between 991 and 996. This is not surprising, given Basil's domination over the Patriarchs, whom he chose carefully, especially in matters that concerned the relations with the Church of Rome.

Despite the various problems and the widening gap between the two major ecclesiastical centres, relations between the papacy and Constantinople continued to be

²⁴ See W. Felix 1981: 190ff.

²⁵ On Theophano and the relations between Byzantium and the West ca. 1000, see A. Davids (ed.) 1995. On Basil II's policy towards the West see I.G. Leontiades 1997.

²⁶ See J. Irmscher 1997.

²⁷ The Letters of Leo of Synada, head of the Byzantine embassy to Otto III's court are most illuminating on these events: Leo of Synada, *Correspondence* 1985: Letters 1–13.

²⁸ See Bartholomaeus, *Life of Saint Nilus the Calabrian*, 89–91, 1991: 288–290.

²⁹ Cf. G. Fedalto 1988: 7. See also Leo of Synada's Letters to the Patriarch of Antioch and to Basil II [Leo of Synada, *Correspondence* 1985: Letter 32, p. 52, lin. 11ff.; Letter 54, lin. 8–12].

relatively good. This was largely due to the fact that until the accession of Sylvester II to the papal throne (999–1003), the Roman pontificate was facing one of its worst crises. Both Otto III, due to his Byzantine connections, and the Roman aristocracy, who opposed his presence and influence in Rome, could not afford to challenge Byzantium, which was emerging as the strongest single power in Europe. Things, however, would change with the accession of the Salian dynasty in Germany and the emerging reforms of Cluny, but, above all, by the increasing discontent of the maritime towns of southern Italy with the Byzantine authorities.

The main controversial dogmatic issue, the addition of the *filioque* clause to the Creed, which was gradually being accepted by the Latin Church as an official doctrine, came once more to the fore, causing further enstrangement between the two Churches. The divergent views on whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, according to the teachings of the Greek Fathers, or from the Father *and the Son* (*filioque*), as the Latin, primarily German, theologians taught, were based mainly on the fundamental difference in perception of the Holy Trinity³⁰. As a result of this dispute, the name of the German Pope Gregory V (996–999) and subsequently of those Popes who under German influence adopted the *filioque* doctrine, were not commemorated in the Constantinopolitan diptychs, though it may be possible that simply no papal Systatic Letters with the declaration of faith were dispatched to Constantinople. The last Pope mentioned in the diptychs of the Church of Constantinople is John XVIII (1004–1009).

In addition to the divergent views on doctrine between the two Churches, there was also a difference of perception of ecclesiastical organization, which was strengthened under the Cluniac reformers, fervent advocates of the Latin claims of the papal primacy, extending beyond the honorary status of the Bishop of Rome as „*primus inter pares*” recognized by the Eastern Patriarchs. The Byzantines were fully aware of this problem and attempted to settle it some years later, in 1024, with Patriarch Eustathius’ (1019–1025) proposition to Pope John XIX (1024–1032) for a mutual recognition of the status of the two Churches, on the basis that Constantinople was universal „in its own sphere” as Rome was „in the world”, which might have been accepted by the papacy had it not faced opposition by the western reformers³¹.

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In the area of religion and spirituality the turn of the millennium coincided with the rapid growth of large monastic houses on Mount Athos and a revival of the movement towards mystical theology, represented by one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of Orthodox mystics, St Symeon the New (or Young) Theologian (949–1022).

For the Byzantines monastic life, devoted to ceaseless prayer and worship of God, represented the perfect Christian life. Withdrawn from the distractions of secular world,

³⁰ See Ph. Sherrard 1995: 61–72.

³¹ See S. Runciman 1997: 28–37; J.M. Hussey 1990: 121–123.

a monk sought *hesychia* (inner-quietness), in pursuit of self-purification and the attainment of knowledge of God. A development of the late third-century ascetic movement, which became widespread originally in the Eastern parts of the Empire (Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Syria), Byzantine monasticism evolved in two traditions: the solitary ascetic community (*lavra*), characterized by a loose affiliation among the hermits, and the organized monastic community (*coenobion*) under the direction of an abbot (*hegoumenos*), though there was sufficient flexibility in passing from one mode of monastic life to the other³².

During the mediaeval period, Byzantine monasticism was particularly strong in Asia Minor as well as Constantinople itself, Greece and the islands, parts of the Balkans and Southern Italy. Mount Athos, placed on the Chalcidike peninsula in northern Greece, was regarded a famous monastic centre even before St Athanasius the Athonite (b. ca. 925/30) arrived there around 957/8. According to the earliest surviving documentary sources related to Athonite monastic foundations, it appears that at least from the end of the 9th century, together with solitary hermits and groups of monks, more permanent monastic houses had been established, while the monastic community as a whole enjoyed imperial privileges, as the *Sigillion* of Basil I (883), and later on the Act of Leo VI (908) and the chrysobulls of Romanus I (934) and Constantine VII (957/8), affirm³³.

The founding of the Great Lavra in 962/3 by St Athanasius, at the instigation and with the support of his friend general Nicephorus Phocas, was a turning-point in Athonite history, in the sense that a fully organized coenobetic house of the reformed type, regulated by St Theodore the Studite (759–826), was established firmly on the „Holy Mountain”, re-invigorating communal monastic life, which in turn led to the emerging of new monasteries. An important aspect of St Athanasius’ contribution to Athonite monasticism was that within his foundation he made provision for monks who wished to follow their solitary vocation, combining both modes of monastic life, though stressing its communal character. In his *typicon* (foundation charter) a certain number of hermits were allowed to dwell outside and apparently not far from the monastery, maintaining at the same time their association with the community, continuing being under obedience to the *hegoumenos*. Provision for their material needs was made by the monastery, while they were allowed to have a disciple who would serve them. In this respect St Athanasius followed the old tradition established by St Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), departing from the Studite strictly coenobitic model³⁴.

Soon, increasing numbers of monks were attracted to the „new Lavra”, which with Nicephorus II Phocas’ accession to the throne in 964 became an imperial monastery, the first to be granted this privilege. Its dominant position in the community of the Holy Mountain was recognized in the *Tragos*, the imperial charter issued by John I Tzimisces in 970–972, the first constitution of the Athonite community, regulating administrative,

³² See J.M. Hussey 1990: 335–368.

³³ See D. Papachrysanthou 1975: 1–163; R. Morris 1995; A. Bryer, M. Cunningham (eds) 1996.

³⁴ K. Ware 1996: 3–16.

estate and financial issues³⁵. In the course of time Athonite monastic foundations had accumulated substantial property, through absorption of smaller monasteries, donations, bequests and purchases, such as the one recorded in the act of the sale of a field to the monastery of Iveron, dated April A.D. 1001 (A.M. 6509), 14th indiction³⁶. By the time St Athanasius died (ca. 1001), according to his biographer more than three thousand monks were living on Mount Athos³⁷, while forty-six monasteries are recorded to have existed³⁸. Monks from other nations were also attracted, Italians, Georgians, Armenians and Slavs, who gradually established their own monasteries, turning Athos to an ecumenical centre of Orthodox monasticism, strengthening the Byzantine position in the area³⁹.

At the same time St Symeon the New Theologian's teachings on man's mystical union with the divinity, in the realm of religious experience and not of intellectual contemplation, gave fresh impetus in the long tradition of Orthodox mystical theology. The idea of man's *theosis*, deification, the attainment of direct knowledge of God through the experience of divine illumination, revealed in the form of a vision of uncreated light, became the focal point of Symeon's life and thought, reflected in his own writings, composed in prose and verse, and in his *Life*⁴⁰.

Union with God is the purpose of human life, and true life starts with the renunciation of worldly pleasures, accompanied by bodily, mental and spiritual discipline, introspection and penitence, followed by a flow of tears that cleanse and comfort the soul, in order to attain a state of total control over self-indulgent desires. Having attained a state of *apatheia*, the elimination of passions, the purified man would be able to pass on to the second stage, that of *theoria*, the contemplation of the world in humility, love and faith, before reaching the ultimate stage of *theologia*, the mystical union with the divinity in the form of the vision of divine light, the revelation of, and participation in, God Himself in his divine energy – which Symeon described to his monks as himself had experienced a number of times⁴¹.

Symeon emphasised that the gift of divine illumination is offered to all those who have faith in Christ, the Word of God, who became man so that man can become God, the source of every grace, regardless to their status, education and vocation, be they monks or laymen, provided that they would be willing to pursue this difficult task, though he personally chose the monastic life as the most suitable environment for him,

³⁵ Ed. D. Papachrysanthou 1975: 95–102, 202–215 (text and notes).

³⁶ J. Lefort, N. Oikonomidēs, D. Papachrysanthou with the collaboration of H. Métrévélis (eds) 1985: 175–179, no. 12. See also A. Harvey 1996, 91–97.

³⁷ Athanasius of Panagiou, *Life of St Athanasius the Athonite*, Vita A, 238, 1982: 114.

³⁸ D. Papachrysanthou 1975: 86–93.

³⁹ See N. Svoronos 1987.

⁴⁰ Nicetas Stethatos, *Life of St Symeon the New Theologian* 1928. For editions and translations of Symeon's works see bibliography.

⁴¹ See for example his Catechesis 20, Symeon the New Theologian, *Catecheses* 1964: 344–345, English trans. by J. Hussey 1937: 224–225. Generally see B. A. Krivochéine 1980, English trans. by A.P. Gythiel, *In the Light of Christ*, St Vladimir's Seminary, New York 1987; W. Völker 1974.

living in a disciplined community, detached from the secular world. In this hard inner struggle, the role of the elder father as spiritual guide was essential for Symeon, as himself had experienced with his own spiritual father Symeon the Studite (known also as Eulabes, „pious”), whom he venerated as a saint, a conviction that led him to initiate his cult after the latter’s death, not without facing strong opposition by members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy⁴². The year 1000 found Symeon as *hegoumenos* at the monastery of St Mamas in Constantinople, guiding his monks in their spiritual struggle with great austerity and discipline, of a kind that forced his monks to take their complaints to Patriarch Sisinnius. In the years that followed, Symeon had to defend himself against further accusations (1005), which eventually led to his exile to Asia Minor (1009), where he ended his days in a small monastic community that he founded, composing most of his *Hymns*, in which he recorded his spiritual experiences⁴³. But let us now turn to more worldly subjects.

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At the turn of the millennium Byzantine economy was reasonably stable. Constantinople, situated at the crossroad of the trade routes between east and west, was the commercial centre of the Christian world. Goods of every kind were flowing in the city *via* the sea route through the Mediterranean and that of the Rus merchants through Russia and the Baltic Sea. Internal commerce and industry also prospered at the hands of Greek merchants and the well-organized guilds, under the strict economic and social control of the government⁴⁴. Thanks to the famous *Book of the Eparch* of Emperor Leo VI (886–912), a manual of government regulations on commerce and industry controlled by the prefect of Constantinople, we have a very good picture of the Byzantine guild system, which aimed primarily at securing a constant and stable supply of basic goods for the State and the market at controlled prices and quality standards, rather than forming a monopoly in favour of the artisans themselves⁴⁵.

Among the most highly esteemed guilds which parade in the *Book of the Eparch*, are those involved with daily needs, such as bakers, grocers, butchers, dealers in pork, fishmongers, carpenters, gypsum workers, marble masons, painters, locksmiths, saddlers, wax-chandlers, soap-chandlers and inn-keepers. Other important professional groups include bankers, money-changers and money-lenders, notaries and pharmacists, as well as those dealing with luxury goods, such as jewellery, precious metals, perfumes, linen textiles and above all silk, a profession that enjoyed high specialization, with special silk stuff merchants (*bestiopratai*), merchants of manufactured silk goods imported from Syria and Bagdad (*prandiopratai*), merchants engaged in the raw silk trade (*metaxopratai*), raw silk dressers (*katartarioi*) and silk dyers (*serikarioi*).

⁴² See H.J.M. Turner 1990.

⁴³ A.J. van der Aalst 1995: 314–336.

⁴⁴ See in general A. Harvey 1989.

⁴⁵ Leo VI, Emperor, *The Book of the Eparch*, I. Dujcev (ed.) 1970, ed. with German trans. by J. Koder 1991.

Through his deputy, agents and assessors the eparch was responsible of checking and enforcing the fixed prices and quality standards and measures. The guildsman, whose trade activities were restricted to only one type of item, was permitted to make a profit, while imperial workshops monopolized certain luxury goods and, as it appears, the manufacture of arms. The extensive state control over Byzantine economic life secured sufficiency in the market and provided a system of regulations for the protection of the State, merchants and private consumers, putting at the same time certain limits to the unrestrained desire for profit and excessive competition, which often led to the accumulation of great economic and, subsequently, social and political power in the hands of a few, which resulted to social tension and upheavals⁴⁶.

During the fifty years of Basil II's reign the Byzantine gold coin, the *nomisma* (successor of the *solidus*), issued by the imperial mint at Constantinople, enjoyed great stability, maintaining its intrinsic value since the times of Anastasius I (491–518), and was accepted as the international currency throughout the mediaeval world⁴⁷. The gold *nomismata* circulating at the turn of the millennium comprised the standard full-weight *histamenon* and the inferior light-weight *tetarteron* (the latter had been introduced by Nicephorus II Phocas). Both coins circulated simultaneously and, with the exception of their weight, they were of the same purity of gold, fabric, module and design. Despite minor differences the *nomismata* of this period form basically a uniform type. The obverse consists of the facing bust of Christ Pantocrator and the reverse of the facing busts of the two co-emperors holding a long patriarchal cross between them⁴⁸. The gold *histamenon* circulating at the turn of the millennium belongs to the class struck between 989, following Basil's victory at Abydos, and most probably 1001, after his return from his victorious campaign in the East (DOC, Class III, no. 3) (Fig. 1). The respective *tetarteron* belongs to two types: the first was issued over the years 989 and probably 1001 (DOC, type D) and the second, with minor differences, from ca. 1000 to 1005 (type E). The silver *miliaresion* circulating at that time (representing the intermediate value between the gold *nomisma* and the copper *folles*) belongs to the final issue of Basil's reign, between 989 to 1025 (DOC, Class IV, no. 20c.1) (Fig. 2).

The copper *folles* struck during that period was of the anonymous „Rex Regnantium” type, introduced by John I Tzimisces. A substantial increase of its weight and, one



Fig. 1. Gold *histamenon* of Basil II and Constantine VIII (DOC, Class III, no. 3), (a) obverse, (b) reverse. Courtesy the Numismatic Museum of Athens

⁴⁶ On the political potential of guilds in the life of the capital city see S. Vryonis Jr. 1963: 289–302.

⁴⁷ See Ph. Grierson 1973: 599–633; M.F. Hendy 1985: 424–429, 506–512.

⁴⁸ We would like to thank the Director of the Numismatic Museum of Athens Dr Ioannes Touratsoglou for his kind permission to reproduce the coins in Figs 1–2, and Miss Yiorka Nikolaou for her generous advice and assistance on this subject.



Fig. 2. Silver *miliaresion* of Basil II and Constantine VIII (DOC, Class IV, no. 20c.1), (a) obverse, (b) reverse. Courtesy the Numismatic Museum of Athens

assumes, of its value at some stage, may be related either to Basil's victory at Abydos, or with a drying up of the issue of the silver *miliaresia* later on⁴⁹.

Shortly after the year 1000, as a result of the Byzantine conquests, various routes, both by land and sea, were made secure, which encouraged the expansion of commerce and pilgrimages. At the same time Basil issued measures in order to protect the small farmers from the powerful landed magnates, thus securing the regular flow of taxes, which the landed magnates were

reluctant to pay. Though economic prosperity brought about a growth in urban life, peasants remained the backbone of Byzantine society, both as farmers and soldiers, with the village community as the basis of rural organization. Already by the first half of the 10th century this structure had begun to be undermined by the expansion of the large landowners, who absorbed the holdings of small farmers, turning the free peasant owners into dependents.

The Byzantine epic of *Digenis Akritas* gives a picture of the life of the wealthy magnates in Cappadocia⁵⁰, while the contrasting condition of the Anatolicon *theme* (administrative unit) around the year 1000 is depicted in Leo Synada's correspondence. In his Letter to Basil II, Leo reports:

...we do not produce olive oil; this is something we have in common with all the residents of the Anatolicon theme. Our land does not yield wine because of the high altitude and the short growing season. Instead of wood, we use 'zarzakon', which is really dung that has been processed, a thoroughly disgusting and smelly business. All the other requisites for the healthy or infirm we solicit from the Thracesion theme, from Attaleia, and from the capital itself. ... do not let your great, most royal, and critical mind allow me to live like an animal, feeding on barley, hay, and chaff. For the farmland around Synada doesn't even yield wheat, but only barley⁵¹.

The first to realize that the expansion of the large landowners at the expense of the free peasantry would have serious repercussions on the social, financial and military stability of the Empire was Romanus I Lecapenus (920–944). In a series of measures

⁴⁹ See D.M. Metcalf 1965: 1–40; Ph. Grierson 1973: 600–601.

⁵⁰ This is the oldest written composition of any length in a form of Modern Greek. Though dated around the turn of the second millennium, it draws from earlier (9th–11th century) material, a substantial part of which may be based originally on oral sources: *Digenes Akritas* 1971; see R. Beaton 1989: 29–48. Cf. archaeological evidence of 11th century great mansions excavated in Cappadocia, in T.F. Mathews 1998: 91–93, figs. 70–71. See also R.G. Ousterhout 1997: 192–199.

⁵¹ Leo of Synada, *Correspondence* 1985: Letter 43, lin. 7ff.

he issued (Novels of 928 and 934), he attempted to prevent further acquisition of peasant lands by the magnates. By the time of Basil II, however, some of these laws had fallen into abeyance or repealed by Romanus I's successors. In the Novel he issued in 996 Basil revived Lecapenus' laws, strengthened and extended them further⁵². In 1002 he restored a decree, traced as far back as the times of Nicephorus I (802–811), concerning the mutual warrant tax called *allelengyon*. Based on the principle of the village community being held liable for land taxes if an individual defaulted, the „powerful” (*dynatoi*) were now held responsible for the taxes of the „poor” (*penetes*) if the latter were unable to pay them. However, the *allelengyon*, which met strong opposition also by the Church⁵³, was enforced only for a short period of time. In the first half of the 11th century Romanus III Argyrus (1028–1034), in order to gain the support of the higher clergy and landed nobility, repealed the edict.

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The military successes, wealth and stability of the Empire under the Macedonian dynasty was reflected in learning and the arts. Under imperial patronage and modelled on the ideals of classical antiquity, this dynamic cultural movement, commonly referred to by scholars as the „Macedonian Renaissance”, involved all aspects of scholarly and artistic activity and creativity⁵⁴.

Despite Basil II's contemptuous attitude towards learning and education, the long tradition, fostered especially by his distinguished predecessors Basil I (867–886), Leo VI the Wise (886–912) and his son Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959) with their circle of encyclopaedists, continued to give its fruits⁵⁵. In the words of Michael Psellus (1018–1096), the outstanding intellectual figure of the period, „no small crop of orators and philosophers sprang up in those times ... who cultivated literature for its own sake and as an end in itself”⁵⁶.

The revived interest in classical literature gave a new impetus in the production of manuscripts for the transmission of classical texts, which in turn generated a need for the compilation of reference works, dictionaries, grammars, commentaries, encyclopaedias and florilegia. Moreover, University studies in Constantinople, re-organized by the caesar Bardas in the mid-ninth century to provide teaching in philosophy, grammar, geometry and astronomy, continued under the scholar Emperor Constantine VII, who also promoted the study of music, arithmetic, medicine and law⁵⁷.

⁵² Basil II, Novel (996), in N. Svoronos (ed.) 1994: 200–217; partial English trans. by D.J. Geanakoplos 1984: 245–247, no. 174.

⁵³ John Scylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum* 1973: 347; John Zonaras, *Annales* 1897: 561; Michael Glycas, *Annales* 1836: 576–577; George Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium* 1839: 456.

⁵⁴ See K. Weitzmann 1971a: 176–223; E. Voordeckers 1995: 231–243.

⁵⁵ For the revival of learning during the 9th–10th centuries, see P. Lemerle 1971.

⁵⁶ Michael Psellus, *Chronographia* 1926, repr. 1967: 18; English trans. by E.R.A. Sewter 1966: 44.

⁵⁷ See P. Lemerle 1971.

Rhetoric was a branch to which the Byzantines had devoted great attention. Epistolography, orations of every kind, and all other forms of rhetorical art occupy a large part of the literary production of the Macedonian period. The tastes of the highly educated circles of those times are best reflected in the collection of about 3,700 epigrams with over 23,000 verses from classical, late antique and Christian Greek authors, compiled ca. 940, known as *Anthologia Palatina* from the principal extant Heidelberg manuscript, *Palatinus graecus 23*⁵⁸. Contemporary poetry, on the other hand, represented by Christopher of Mitylene (ca. 1000–1050/68), one of the most distinguished Byzantine poets, did not lack in elegance and fine wit⁵⁹.

Hagiography was another very popular literary genre, which appealed to both the learned circles and the masses. Around the mid-10th century 148 texts of Saints' *Lives* and *Passions* of Martyrs, included in the festive calendar of the Orthodox Church, were selected and reworked by Symeon *Metaphrastes* (Translator) in the language and the rhetorical style of his day. This conscious *mimesis*, an imitation of the language and style of the great classical Greek authors, known as *atticizing*, had long become the model on which Byzantine writers composed their works, with varying degrees of success⁶⁰. At the same time the popular language spoken in every-day life was evolving along a different, though parallel, path. No written evidence of the living language of those times has survived, apart from very few transliterated lists of words recorded by foreigners⁶¹. Vernacular language, however, must have retained its vigour as reflected in the epic poetry of *Digenis Akritas*.

Education held a prominent place in Byzantine life and was not reserved only for the court and the higher classes, though its main aim was to train students for a career in the court, the civil service and the Church. Byzantine education at the turn of the millennium appears to have comprised elementary instruction in language and the rudiments of grammar (*encyklios paideusis*) followed by „higher” studies in rhetoric and philosophy (*teleotera mathesis*). Later on Psellos would distinguish grammar as a separate intermediary stage.

A collection of 122 letters by an anonymous professor, written during the times of Romanus I Lecapenus (920–944) and preserved in a unique late 10th-century manuscript in London (British Museum, *Additional Manuscript 36749*), gives a fascinating picture of his hard profession and secondary school life and education in Constantinople at this time⁶², which seems to have remained almost unchanged in the next fifty years, as information provided in the Life of St Athanasius the Athonite seems to confirm⁶³. Writing towards the end of his career and at an advanced age, our professor found

⁵⁸ *Anthologia Palatina* 1928–94. For the Heidelberg Manuscript and its scribes see Al. Cameron 1993: 97–120.

⁵⁹ E. Kurtz (ed.) 1903; E. Follieri 1980.

⁶⁰ See M. Mullett, R. Scott 1981.

⁶¹ See M. Jeffreys 1996: 133–149, esp. 135–136.

⁶² See now A. Markopoulos (ed.) 2000. See also P. Lemerle 1971: 46–261; N.G. Wilson 1983: 140ff.; A. Markopoulos 1989.

⁶³ Athanasius of Panagiou, *Life of Saint Athanasius the Athonite* 1982: Vita A: 7–17, Vita B: 1–7.

a solace in his books, his teaching and letter writing. Through his correspondence emerges the image of a hard-working, conscientious, though somehow melancholic and resentful academic, leading a lonely life with his servant. Together with his teaching load and administrative work as director of his school, he still found time to compose his own works when he felt like it, and used to send them to friends. In addition, he copied manuscripts, though he admitted that his script was far from calligraphic, and did some editorial work for the Patriarch, collating manuscripts in order to restore the text (of a Patristic work) on the basis of the best variant readings. As one would expect, our bibliophile used to borrow and lend books to friends, buy and, if necessary, sell some of them. His students seem to have been enjoying great freedom in their school years, paying little attention to their teacher's advice and reprimands, preferring to spend their time in the market place, where in one case they were caught playing truant by one of the parents, rather than studying in the class. His bitter experience with his academic colleagues, who competed very hard to attract more students (he mentions three more such schools in Constantinople), is also reflected in his letters, as is his constant worry concerning his fees, which depended on the generosity of the families of the students and, as it appears, on sponsors, both ecclesiastical and secular, which were often paid with much delay, if ever. These letters provide also interesting information on the organization of secondary schools, headed often by one teacher, who sometimes taught more than one disciplines, namely grammar, poetry and rhetoric, often assisted to a large extent, as it appears, by a group of older students in the same school, who supervised and corrected the work of their fellow-students, taking decisions on a collegial basis. Also it appears that there was no age limit for attending a school, though to be able to pay fees was necessary.

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In the same area of scholarship and education, closely connected with book production, the revival of interest in classical learning and the development of the minuscule script, which enabled scribes to economize in both space and time, generated an enormous copying activity. It is essentially to the scribes of this period, monks, clergy and laymen, who worked copiously on their own or in groups, in organized *scriptoria*, that we owe the survival of the rich treasury of classical scholarship and literature in the centuries that followed, and indeed to our days⁶⁴.

Though it is always difficult to distinguish the boundaries between writing styles, since habits and practices develop gradually over a long period of time, certain noticeable changes in Greek minuscule hands can be identified from around the mid-10th century onwards. By this time the distinct individuality that characterized the different minuscule styles that had developed, gave its place to a more formal minus-

⁶⁴ See L.D. Reynolds, N.G. Wilson 1968: 50–59; N.G. Wilson 1983: 79–148, esp. 85–88, 120–140.

cule. Mixed with certain capital letterforms, used alongside with their pure minuscule forms, this script continued to develop throughout the 12th century, producing at least five main variations of the same basic style, marked by great regularity: a round, simple, easy type of hand, which is found in manuscripts produced in both the eastern and western provinces; a similar type, though more solid, round, symmetrical and aesthetically pleasant, giving the impression of uniform round beads strung together, and hence referred to as „Perlschrift”, which served as the model for all later formal hands; a thick, heavy type, which was reserved almost exclusively for liturgical manuscripts; a flat and disjointed type (found mainly in later, twelfth and thirteenth-century manuscripts), which enabled scribes to accommodate the flourishes of the musical notation which accompanied such texts; and a lighter, looser and less compact type, that was used extensively in the 12th century, when Byzantine scribes started introducing certain modifications, which characterized later personal hands. Together with this formal minuscule, certain individual, rather scholarly, hands appear in manuscripts copied by both anonymous and known monks and professional scribes, though these represent idiosyncratic variations of the same formal style rather than form particular groups⁶⁵.

Among the provincial centres of copying activity ca. 1000, those of Southern Italy and Sicily held a prominent place. Centred around the Greek monastic communities established in this area for centuries, two distinctive minuscule styles developed during that period: that of the re-invigorator of Byzantine monasticism in Italy and famous calligrapher St Nilus the Calabrian, a style that was followed by his disciples; and another, differing from provincial hands of the eastern parts of the Empire, characterized by a marking contrast between thick and thin strokes in the design of the letterforms, produced by a broad western type of pen, as well as by the use of western decorative motifs⁶⁶.

Among the bulk of extant Greek parchment manuscripts from that period which have been catalogued⁶⁷, only very few can be precisely dated to the turn of the millennium on the basis of their *colophons*, that is, subscriptions added by the scribes on completion of their work, such as codex *Scorialensis Y. IV. 2*, containing the *Ladder of Paradise* by St John of Climacus (7th century), a classic of Orthodox spirituality, which was „copied by the hands (!) of Euthymios the sinful presbyter on the 28th of the month of May, Tuesday, in the year 6508 (A.M.=1000 A.D.), indiction 13th” (fol. 155)⁶⁸.

Colophons were not always easy to read, for sometimes Byzantine scribes preferred to hide their identity and other information, concerning the provenance and production of the manuscript, occasionally also confidential information, by placing part, or the

⁶⁵ See R. Barbour 1981: XIX–XXIII, on which this brief survey is mainly based. See also H. Hunger 1954: 22–32; repr. in H. Hunger, *Byzantinische Grundlagenforschung*, London 1973: art. I; E. Follieri 1977: 139–165; J. Irigoin 1977: 191–199.

⁶⁶ See R. Barbour 1981: XXI–XXII; R. Devreesse 1955.

⁶⁷ The supply of paper appears to have been limited at that time. The earliest dated document on paper is the extant imperial chrysobull of 1052: see N.G. Wilson 1975: 1–3 with n. 12 (citing F.J. Dölger and J. Karayannopoulos 1968: 27).

⁶⁸ For a brief description of this manuscript, which is preserved in the Real Biblioteca of Escorial in Spain, see G. de Andrés 1967: 85–87 (with bibliography), no. 476; cf. F. Evangelatou–Notara 1982: 144, no. 117.

whole of their subscriptions in cryptograms, to be revealed only to those readers who knew, or would be able to, decipher the code. These scribes often employed a conventional cryptographic system, based on the principle of substituting the cryptographic alphabet with Greek letters which sometimes represented also numbers⁶⁹. Such an example is the *colophon* in our second codex, *Parisinus graecus 1085*, fol. 272v, the first part of which, for some reason, appears in cryptogram, stating that the manuscript „was copied by the hand of Leo the cleric, in the land of Egypt”, followed by the date of its completion in non-cryptographic form, „in the year of the world 6509, thirteenth indiction” (Fig. 3)⁷⁰. In the absence of a reference to the month, A.M. 6509 coincides with A.D. 1000/1. Apparently, Leo had miscalculated either the year or its indiction, since the thirteenth indiction coincided with A.M. 6508, that is A.D. 999/1000, though in cases of such inconsistencies in manuscripts of that period the indiction number is found more often to be accurate⁷¹. This provincial manuscript, written in „Perlschrift”, indistinguishable from hands that copied in Constantinople, the principle centre of book production in the Empire, contains the *Questions and Answers* by Anastasius of Sinai (end of sixth to beginning of seventh century), an interesting theological manual, that circulated extensively in monastic and other circles, as the rich manuscript tradition shows⁷².

The quality of book production of that period, and indeed of any period, finds its best expression in the splendid illuminated manuscripts⁷³. Among the achievements of Byzantine miniature illumination, codex *Vaticanus graecus 1613*, containing the *Menologion* of Basil II, is regarded as one of the finest examples of Constantinopolitan

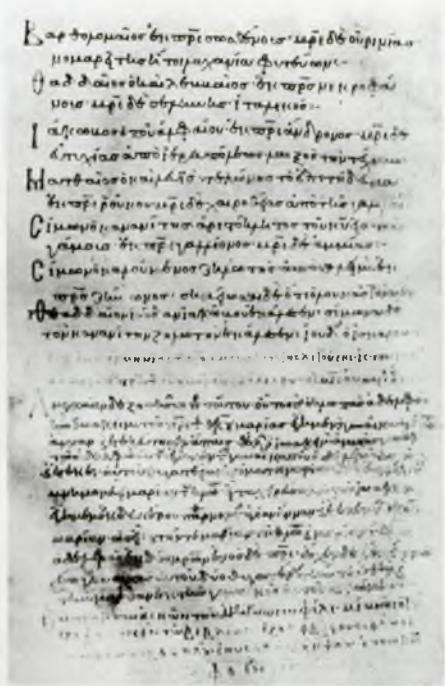


Fig. 3. Codex *Parisinus graecus 1085*, fol. 272v, Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions and Answers*. Reproduced from K. and S. Lake 1935: pl. 255. Courtesy the Gennadius Library, American School of Classical Studies. Athens

⁶⁹ R. Devreesse 1954: 43–44; E. Mioni 1973: 92–94.

⁷⁰ The reproduction of the facsimile in Fig. 3 (K. and S. Lake 1935: pl. 255) is by kind permission of the Gennadius Library, American School of Classical Studies, Athens.

⁷¹ Cf. R. Barbour 1981: xxxv.

⁷² For a brief description and bibliography on this manuscript, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, see R. Barbour 1981: 15, no. 54; cf. F. Evangelatou–Notara 1982: 144, no. 118.

⁷³ See in general K. Weitzmann 1971a: 176–223.

art and may have served as the model for other „imperial” illuminated *menologia*. A group of eight artists, who have signed their work, executed 430 miniatures on the 434 extant folios following a strikingly uniform style⁷⁴. On fol. Xr a prefatory poem contains the name of the Emperor, who had received or commissioned this sumptuous manuscript during his reign (976–1025)⁷⁵.

Another famous illuminated manuscript connected closely with Basil II is the Psalter contained in codex *Marcianus graecus* Z, 17. This manuscript, which was presented to



Fig. 4. Codex *Marcianus graecus* Z, 17, fol. IIIr, Psalter, Miniature with the *Triumph of Emperor Basil II over the Bulgars*. Courtesy the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice

the Emperor after his victory over the Bulgars (1018), contains the well-known miniature with the triumphant general Emperor on gold ground, standing over and above the vanquished Bulgarian lords, who prostrate themselves at his feet (fol. IIIr). Flanked by military saints and the two generals of the heavenly hosts, the archangels Gabriel, presenting him with a lance, and Michael, bestowing his imperial crown, Basil secures the heavenly crown bestowed by the Pantocrator Christ: a reflection of the victorious Emperor in full glory (Fig. 4)⁷⁶.

The portrait of the Evangelist Mark on the parchment Lectionary leaf now preserved in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (Md. *W.530a*)⁷⁷, datable to ca. 1000, is a fine example of the creative adaptation of the classical and hellenistic heritage by Byzantine artists of the period, representing an intermediate stage between the imi-

tation of these models and their transformation to more abstract, spiritual and transcendental forms, which would reach its culmination around a century later. St Mark, on a plain gold background, dressed in his

⁷⁴ See I. Ševcenko 1962: 245–276.

⁷⁵ This manuscript, preserved in the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, has been studied extensively by art historians: see I. Spatharakis 1981: no. 35, with full bibliography and reproductions of a selected miniature from each of the eight painters (figs. 66–73). See also D.G. Katsarelis 1997: 100–101, no. 55.

⁷⁶ See I. Spatharakis 1981: no 43 (with full bibliography). We would like to thank Dr S. Marcon, Head of the Manuscripts Section of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, for her kind permission to reproduce this miniature.

⁷⁷ Originally this single leaf was part of *Athens, National Library*, cod. 2552 (formerly *Serres, Prodromos Monastery*, cod. 17). It was removed sometime after 1919, and was finally purchased from L. Gruel by H. Walters: K. Corrigan 1997: 102–103, no. 57.

classical tunic, is depicted seated on a cushioned bench with his left arm raised to his chin in a speculative pose, while his right arm rests on an open codex placed on his lap, his hand holding a reed pen, by which he has copied one line of text on the parchment. On the lectern the prototype of his Gospel book lies open, and on the desk some of his writing tools, an ink tray and a compass. In contrast with the calm posture of the body, his thoughtful face stares outward to the reader with an expression of intensity (Fig. 5)⁷⁸. This image of the Evangelist as an author and scribe reflects in a most characteristic way the cultural, aesthetic and spiritual ideals and values of both the artist and his *milieu*⁷⁹.

Codex Mosquensis, Historical Museum, Muz., 3644, containing the *Tetraevangelion* (the four Gospel Books) decorated with portraits of the Evangelists, is another illuminated manuscript which was copied at the turn of the millennium, though the dating of

its miniatures is questionable. According to the *colophon* the codex was copied by the scribe Nicolaos the monk, who completed it „on 14th of the month of October, in the year 6508 (A.M.=1000 A.D.), thirteenth indiction” (fol. 219v). Here three of the Evangelists are depicted once more as scribes in the process of copying: St Mark writing, St Luke dipping his pen in an inkpot and St John in repose. The three miniatures, which are of a different, lower, quality both in form and execution from those decorating the aforementioned *de luxe* manuscripts, have been repainted, and the folios that contain them (62v, 103v and 170v respectively) have been inserted in the codex at some stage⁸⁰.



Fig. 5. Walters Art Gallery, Lectionary parchment leaf Md. W.530a, Portrait of the Evangelist Mark. Courtesy the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

⁷⁸ Thanks are due to Ms C. Pratt of The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, for providing us with the photograph with St Mark's portrait, and for her kind permission to reproduce it in Fig. 5.

⁷⁹ G. Vikan 1992: 81–118, esp. 97–9 with fig. 18.

⁸⁰ See I. Spatharakis 1981: no. 33 with figs. 62–63. Cf. F. Evangelatou–Notara 1982: 140, no. 95.

Together with the *Tetraevangelion*, service books held a central position in the Byzantine liturgical life and book production. The most venerated among these liturgical books is the Gospel Lectionary, for which a permanent place was reserved on the altar table rather than in the library. The Lectionary belongs to a different type of illustration system, with the artistic stress placed primarily on calligraphy and ornament. Though miniatures are not contained in early Lectionaries, presumably so that the reader is not distracted, they gradually appear later on. Eventually, Lectionary manuscripts were produced in a more embellished form than any other of the service books. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Lectionaries of the period is their uncial lettering. It is remarkable that despite its wide replacement by the minuscule in the course of the 9th century, uncial script continued well into the 11th century, used this time mainly for the copying of liturgical books and especially Lectionaries, with the large letterforms facilitating the reader in the dim light of the candles in the church, adding at the same time greater dignity to the content. One of the most sumptuous Lectionaries datable around the year 1000 is codex *Sinaiticus* 204, preserved at St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. This luxurious codex was copied in a golden uncial of superb elegance, decorated at certain important parts with golden headings, consisting of fine filigree-like patterns. In addition to this decoration, a separate gathering preceding the text contains full-page miniatures of a most refined style, which depict Christ, the Mother of God, the four Evangelists and St Peter of Monobata. Given the excellent state of preservation of the miniatures and the fact that the text comprises only a selection of the Gospel readings, it is doubtful whether it was actually used for reading in the service. It is more probable that it was produced as an altar implement, to be carried around by the priest in the procession of the Little Entrance during the holy liturgy, while an ordinary copy was used for the Gospel reading⁸¹. Other illuminated Greek manuscripts datable to ca. 1000 are codices *Parisinus graecus* 230 (Commentary on the Gospels); *Turin, University Library B. I* 2⁸²; *Athos, Dionysiou* 588 (Gospel Book) and *Iberon* 1 (Lectionary)⁸³.

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Byzantine artistic creativity around the year 1000 continued to flourish under the auspices of the Emperor, reflecting the important role of art in this highly cultivated and sophisticated society as well as its significance in supporting imperial ideology.

⁸¹ For an analytical description of the manuscript see K. Weitzmann, G. Galavaris 1990: 42–46, no. 18, with figs. 92–108, colour plates III–VIII; K. Weitzmann 1935: 28, 30, 32 with figs. 209, 211, 212; K. Weitzmann 1975: 98–99 with figs. 49a–b, 50. See also R. Barbour 1981: XVI–XVIII.

⁸² K. Weitzmann 1935: (Paris Ms.) 29 with pl. XXXIX, figs. 213–216; (Turin Ms.) 28, 30, 32 with pl. XXXVIII, fig. 210.

⁸³ For these manuscripts, preserved in the libraries of the Monasteries of Dionysiou and Iberon on Mount Athos, see S.M. Pelekanides, P.C. Christou, Ch. Mauropoulou Tsionimis, S.N. Kadas 1973: (Dionysiou Ms.) 220–230, 447–448, figs. 278–289; 1975: (Iberon Ms.) 24–29, 293–295, figs. 1–6.

The style of this „imperial” art is characterized by a taste for splendour and display. It is presented in a variety of forms both for religious and secular use, from the monumental decoration in churches, to icons, liturgical vessels, crosses, reliquaries, caskets, plaques, jewellery, pyxes and textiles, which are of diverse material, such as ceramic, glass, marble, ivory, gold, silver, enamel, precious and semiprecious stones, pearls and silk⁸⁴.

Two fine examples of religious art produced around the turn of the millennium show the extent to which Byzantine artists had mastered highly demanding techniques such as the cloisonné enamel, and at the same time reveal their love for contrast and brilliance of colours and a passion for delicate modelling. First, the gold and cloisonné enamel pendent reliquary–cross, with the representation of the Mother of God standing in prayer, flanked by the busts of St Basil and St Gregory the Thaumaturgus (Wonder–Worker) at the back (the front plaque is missing). It is said that it derives from the Great Palace in Constantinople, found during excavations at the site, and is now preserved at the British Museum (M&LA 1965, 6–4,1)⁸⁵. Secondly, the silver gilt *enkolpion* with cloisonné enamel on a gold plaque with St Demetrios (at the front) and St Nestor (at the back). A product of a Constantinopolitan workshop, it came originally from the church of St Sophia, before it was taken as booty during the sack of Constantinople by the Franks in 1204. It is now preserved in Domschatz, Halberstadt, in Germany⁸⁶.

Ivory sculpture is another area on which Byzantine artists left their mark. Among the fine examples of ivory workmanship datable to ca. 1000 is the plaque with the Dormition of the Virgin, now in Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum (Kg. 54:216)⁸⁷. Ceramics, on the other hand, with their simple design and pleasant, unpretentious style, reflect popular taste. Human and animal scenes together with other pictorial themes decorate all kinds of pottery. Datable around the same year are the three plaques preserved at the Musée du Louvre, Section des Antiquités Chrésiennes, with the

⁸⁴ See in general the introductory articles on Byzantine art of the period in the catalogue published in conjunction with the exhibition „The Glory of Byzantium”, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 11 March–6 July 1997, with fine photographic reproductions of artefacts produced in Byzantium and the neighbouring peoples, a number of which are datable to the end of 10th beginning of 11th century (items cited by catalogue numbers or pages in H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom (eds) 1997): panels: nos. 1–2, 9–10; icon: no. 65; frescoes: nos. 15–16; processional crosses: nos. 23, 25; chalice: no. 32; ivories: nos. 33, 78–79, 81–87, 91, 98–103, 106, p. 222, 153–158, 159, 304, 305, 307, 323; bronze: no. 119; silver: nos. 37–38, repoussé, with gilding and niello: no. 300, with gold and cloisonné enamel: nos. 41, 107, 109, 110; gold: nos. 168–169, gold and niello: nos. 120, 173; gold and cloisonné enamel: no. 121; mosaic: p. 35, no. 13; cameo: nos. 128–129; glass, silver gilt and pearls: p. 220; sardonyx, gold and enamel: nos. 177–178; ceramic: no. 180.

⁸⁵ R. Loverance 1988: 48, pl. 59; D. Buckton 1994a: 150–151, no. 165.

⁸⁶ See W.D. Wixom 1997b: 161–162, no. 108.

⁸⁷ *L'art byzantin* 1964: 185, no. 92 (with references to similar Byzantine ivories). See also no. 100, p. 189, the low-relief ivory with the Virgin and Child enthroned, dated ca. 1000, preserved in the Städtisches Altertumsmuseum in Mainz (1517), a fine example of Ottonian sculpture modelled on the Byzantine style of the period. Cf. the two similar ivory panels with Christ Pantocrator, attributed to the same artist or workshop, which are datable to the end of 10th c., preserved at Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Department of Applied Arts (M. 13–1904D) and the Musée du Louvre, Département des Objets d'Art (MRR 421): D. Buckton 1994b: 143–144, no. 154; S. Taft 1997: 136, no. 83. Cf. also the ivory statue with the Mother of God, probably from Constantinople, dated to late 10th or 11th century, London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Sculpture Collection (702–1884): A. Eastmond 1994: 145, no. 156.

depictions of the Virgin and Child (AC. 83), a bunch of flowers (AC. 86) and a headband decorated with animals (AC. 87). Also two plaques preserved in Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, with a Saint (possibly Proclus) (48.2086.2) and St Nicolas (48.2086.1), and two fragments of plaques, with St Ignatius (48.2086.7) and a human head (48.2086.10), date around the turn of the millennium, as does a plaque with a cross, now in Istanbul, Arkeoloji Müzesi (6167)⁸⁸.

We have already referred to the prominent place of Byzantine silk industry, which was monopolized by imperial workshops that manufactured the splendid vestments for the emperor, the imperial family and the dignitaries of the court, as well as silk hangings for the palace. Silk was also used as imperial gifts to foreign rulers, implying a recognition of their status by the Byzantine Emperor⁸⁹. Two well-known silk textiles dated during the reign of Basil II are the lions silk from the shrine of St Heribert (d. 1021), archbishop of Cologne and an intimate of Otto III, preserved in Cologne, Diözesanmuseum; and that preserved in Düsseldorf, Kunst Museum (16523) also with striding lions in facing pairs⁹⁰. Perhaps the most famous silk textile, of superior quality and advanced weaving technique, is the imperial elephant silk from the shrine of Charlemagne (d. 814), preserved at Aachen, Munich Treasury, with a design of elephants in medallions, believed to have been placed in Charlemagne's tomb by Emperor Otto III in the year 1000. Though it is difficult to ascertain the precise date that it arrived there, it has been suggested that it might be connected with one of the diplomatic exchanges between Byzantium and the German Emperors, the earliest proposed being that during the negotiations for the marriage of Otto III with Basil's niece Zoe, or even later in the 11th century⁹¹. Other magnificent silk textiles dated around the turn of the millennium include the chasuble which possibly belonged to St Albuin (975–1006), with the design of spread eagles in black on purple ground, now preserved at the Cathedral Treasury in Brixen/Bressanone⁹²; and the Auxerre eagle silk from the reliquary of St Germain (d. 448), preserved at St Eusèbe, Auxerre⁹³.

Byzantine art of the period was greatly admired and imitated by the neighbouring Christian nations⁹⁴. Moreover, the contact between Byzantine and German culture through the marriage of Theophano with Otto II (972), appears to have had reinforced Byzantine influence on Ottonian art⁹⁵. The same influence was exercised on Romanesque painting, later on, towards the end of the eleventh century⁹⁶. There is no doubt that at the turn of the millennium Byzantium, and in particular Constantinople, The Queen of cities (*he Basileuousa*), was indisputably the centre of Christian European culture and civilisation.

⁸⁸ *L'art byzantin* 1964: 488–491, nos. 598*–605.

⁸⁹ For silk textiles of the period see A. Muthesius 1997: 163ff., nos. M54, M59–62, M65, M68–74, M76, M7, M81–83, M85–88, M90. See also A. Muthesius 1995.

⁹⁰ See A. Muthesius 1997: 181–182, nos. M53–54.

⁹¹ See A. Muthesius 1997: 38–39, 183, no. M58.

⁹² See A. Muthesius 1997: 49, 184, no. M62.

⁹³ See A. Muthesius 1997; H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom (ed.) 1997: 224–6, no. 149.

⁹⁴ See respective chapters in H.C. Evans, W.D. Wixom (ed.) 1997. See also E. Kiss 1999: 301–314.

⁹⁵ See O. Demus 1970: esp. 79ff.; J. Lafontaine-Dosogne 1995: 211–230.; W.D. Wixom 1997a: 434–449.

⁹⁶ See K.E. Tsiropoulos 1980; for a discussion on Byzantium and the West in the year 1000, see *ibid.*: 15–20.

The Byzantine world was primarily a Christian world. Byzantine life was centred around the church, where, in an atmosphere of mystical unity, clergy and congregation, together with the invisible celestial world, formed the Church, the Body of Christ, and celebrated the holy liturgy partaking in the holy sacraments, through which the faithful were bestowed the divine graces by the Holy Spirit. The church building, be it a small chapel, the *Catholikon* of a monastery or a large church, is a symbol of this unity and transcendence beyond the visible world, embracing the essence of Byzantine spirituality. For the Byzantines the world (*cosmos*) reflected, as the word indicates, the orderly universe. The Church of Christ was „heaven on earth” and church buildings represented an image of the heavenly order. The cross-in-square plan, symbolized the universe, with the dominant image of Christ Pantocrator (*Ruler of the universe*) in the central cupola, and the heavenly chorus of angels, saints and martyrs on the vaults and the walls beneath. A prominent place, in the apse above the sanctuary, was reserved for the image of the Theotokos (Mother, or literally Bearer, of God), while the walls were decorated with frescoes depicting scenes from the life of Christ and of the Virgin, which presented the most fundamental doctrines of the Church to the faithful in pictorial form⁹⁷.

Several churches of the period have survived in Greece, among which those of the Holy Apostles in the Athenian Agora, of the Theotokos at Hosios Loukas in the district of Phocis and of Saints Jason and Sossipatros at Corfu are datable to around the turn of the millennium⁹⁸.

Under the shadow of the Acropolis and in close distance from the temple of Hephaestus in the Athenian Agora, the church of the Holy Apostles was built by an unknown Byzantine architect (Fig. 6)⁹⁹. This church is a unique building both in terms of „sophistication and imagination”. Its architectural plan consists essentially of a combination of a tetraconch and a simple Constantinopolitan cross-in-square with its arms of equal length. The angle chambers are consequently square and the octagonal Attic-type



Fig. 6. Church of the Holy Apostles, Athens.
Photo A. Zachos

⁹⁷ Ch. Diehl 1948: 182–183; G. Spintzing 1989: 12–24; L. Safran (ed.) 1991.

⁹⁸ See H. Megaw 1931–32: 90–130.

⁹⁹ A. Frantz 1971: 18–21.

dome is supported by four free-standing columns. The variation which makes the building unique is the addition of apses to all four arms of the cross directly to the main vaults, which opens up space in every direction, providing additional space in the sanctuary and stressing at the same time the centralized design of the plan. The masonry throughout the building, a careful cloisonné which consists of porous limestone containing a large quantity of sea shells, and the ornamental brickwork, which include simple geometric and „Kufesque” designs, give the building a distinct character.

It is very probable that this plan derives from the church of the Theotokos at Hosios Loukas, which is regarded as „the most important building of the Constantinopolitan style ever built in Greece” (with the exception of churches in Thessalonica and Mount Athos, which were directly influenced by Constantinople)¹⁰⁰. The church of the Theotokos served as the model for other church buildings of this type in Greece, which, though following the same plan, employed different construction methods. A number of similar elements in the church of the Holy Apostle and that of the Theotokos, such as the masonry, which follows the same patterns, as well as the triple arcaded windows for the main apse and double in other places, along with the two-light grouped windows in the dome, indicate that the two churches were linked closely¹⁰¹.

The church of Saints Jason and Sossipatros at Corfu, though following a different architectural plan, a cross-in-square of the two-columned Greek type, is another example of the same type of masonry. On the basis of the great similarities of the „Kufesque” brickwork among the three churches, it has been suggested that master masons from Thebes or Athens, possibly the same who worked on the churches of the Theotokos and the Holy Apostles, were involved in the construction of the church at Corfu¹⁰².

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This glorious period closed with Basil II’s death in 1025. By then the might of the Eastern Roman Empire extended from the Adriatic to the mountains of Armenia and from the Danube to Euphrates. Byzantium was undoubtedly the leading power in Europe and the Middle East. Within the next fifty years, however, the Empire experienced a period of political, social and economic disintegration¹⁰³.

The emperors who succeeded Basil, with the exception of Isaac Comnenus (1057–1059), proved ineffective. They made no attempt to check the landed magnates, who in the course of time absorbed the free peasantry, with detrimental results to the socio-economic structure and military strength of the Empire. The abolition of the *allelengyon*, the extensive use of the *pronoia* system (property granted for a defined period of time to notable Byzantines as a reward for specific services rendered) and the

¹⁰⁰ A. Frantz 1971: 21–26; E. Stikas 1970.

¹⁰¹ A. Frantz 1971: 21–23, 25.

¹⁰² P.L. Vocotopoulos 1966–69: 149–174; A. Frantz 1971: 25.

¹⁰³ See G. Ostrogorsky 1989²: 320–350.

rise of tax farming contributed further to the economic instability and decline. The internal strife between the civil aristocracy of the capital and the provincial military nobility continued, with the former prevailing in the second and third quarters of the 11th century. In the process the civil aristocracy undermined the army, which formed the basis of support of the rural military magnates. Military *themes* were converted into tax paying communities (e.g., Iberia and the region of Mesopotamia), which not only weakened the defences, but also led a large number of farmer-soldiers to go over to the Seljuk Turks, while with the gradual abolition of the native army, emperors increasingly recruited foreign mercenaries, who were far too expensive and of questionable loyalty. In this way, the very structures that had in the past enabled the Byzantine army to reverse its defensive wars to offensive campaigns were dismantled. In addition, the annexation of Bulgaria and the Armenian kingdom of Ani removed their important role as buffer states. This process of disintegration coincided with the emergence of new forces on all fronts. This became apparent in 1071, with the defeat of the Byzantine forces both in the west, by the Normans who captured Bari, the last imperial stronghold in southern Italy, and in the east at Manzikert, near Armenia, by the ever-advancing Seljuks.

Within the next decade the Empire found itself in a desperate state, both internally and externally. In its long history, however, Byzantium had showed great tenacity to overcome greater dangers. In those critical moments the Empire was saved by a brilliant general and an outstanding statesman, Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118), who, in the words of his daughter, *porphyrogenita* princess and historian Anna, was determined „to restore his Empire, to bring it again to a safe anchorage after its terrible buffeting, and by God’s aid to break up, like waves spent on the rocks, the enemies who in their madness had risen up against him”¹⁰⁴, which he achieved to a remarkable degree, leading the Empire successfully to the second century of the second millennium.

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¹⁰⁴ Anna Comnena, *Alexiad*, 1937: 131, Engl. trans. by E.R.A. Sewter, *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*, Penguin Books 1969, repr. 1987: 125.

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DER OSTADRIATISCHE RAUM UM DAS JAHR 1000

Peter Štih*

Am 9. Mai 1000, am Tag Christi Himmelfahrt, stieß in Venedig eine Flotte unter der Leitung des Dogen Petrus II. Orseolus in Richtung Dalmatien in See. Nach einer kurzen Zwischenlandung in Grado, wo der Doge vom Patriarchen Vitalis empfangen wurde, segelte die Flotte nach Istrien. Sie übernachtete vor Poreč, und auf die Bitte des dortigen Bischofs Andreas besuchte der Doge mit seinem Gefolge die Stadt. Noch am selben Tag segelte die Flotte in Richtung Pula weiter. So wie am Vortag gingen die Schiffe an einer kleinen Insel vor dem Stadthafen vor Anker, und Bischof Bertaldus eilte herbei, um den Dogen zu begrüßen. Die Fahrt ging dann weiter bis zur Stadt Osor auf der Insel Cres in der Kvarnerbucht, wo die Einwohner der Stadt und der nahen romanischen und slawischen Kastelle schworen, daß sie unter der Herrschaft des Dogen bleiben wollten. Die nächste Station der venezianischen Flotte war Zadar, wo der Doge vom Prior und Stadtbischof sowie den führenden Personen (der Provinz Dalmatien) empfangen wurde. Darunter waren auch die Bischöfe der beiden anderen Kvarnerinseln Rab und Krk, mit den Prioren ihrer Städte; sie alle leisteten dem Dogen den Treueid auf das Evangelium. In die Stadt kamen auch Abgesandte des kroatischen Königs Krešimir III. (ca. 1000 bis ca. 1030), die dem Dogen Frieden anboten und ihn vergeblich von seinem Angriff abzubringen versuchten. Aus Zadar segelte Petrus II. Orseolus mit seinem durch romanische Dalmatiner verstärkten Heer zunächst zur nahen Insel Pašman und anschließend nach dem dieser Insel gegenüber liegenden Biograd, dem wichtigsten kroatischen Stützpunkt an der Adriaküste. Die dortigen Einwohner leisteten vor den Augen der Besatzung des kroatischen Königs, die keinen Widerstand leistete, dem Dogen den Untertanenschwur, dasselbe gilt für die Abgesandten von der Insel Vrgad. Die nächste Station auf dem Weg der venezianischen Flotte war Trogir, wo sich die bereits bekannte Szene wiederholte: der Bischof und die Stadteinwohner leisteten dem Dogen den Treueid. Unter den Anwesenden war auch Svetoslav Surinja, der ehemalige kroatische König, der von seinen Brüdern Krešimir III. und Gojislav abgesetzt worden war. Svetoslav, der offensichtlich seine Herrschaftsansprüche aufrecht erhielt, bemühte sich bei den Venezianern um politische Unterstützung, leistete dem Dogen den Schwur und überließ ihm seinen Sohn Stefan als Geisel. Aus Trogir

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segelte die venezianische Flotte weiter in die Nachbarstadt Split. Der Doge wurde vom Erzbischof und einer Menge von Klerikern und anderen Stadtbewohnern feierlich empfangen; alle leisteten ihm den Treueid. Auch Abgesandte des narentanischen Fürsten erschienen vor ihm und baten um die Freilassung von vierzig Leuten aus ihrem Fürstentum. Diese wurden vom Dogen erst nach einem Treffen mit dem narentanischen Fürsten und anderen führenden Persönlichkeiten freigelassen, nachdem diese versprochen hatten, daß sie weder die Fahrt der venezianischen Schiffe auf ihrem Weg behindern noch von ihnen Tribut für die friedliche Fahrt erheben würden. Die nächste Station der venezianischen Schiffe auf ihrer Fahrt entlang der dalmatinischen Küste war die Insel Korčula, wo der Doge die Einwohner allerdings mit Gewalt unterwerfen mußte. Widerstand leisteten auch die Einwohner der Insel Lastovo, die als Seeräuber besonders gefürchtet waren; auch sie wurden mit Gewalt unterworfen. Auf der Insel Majsan in der Nähe von Korčula erschien auch der Erzbischof von Dubrovnik vor dem Dogen und leistete mit seinem Gefolge den Treueid. Nach diesen Erfolgen kehrte der Doge nach Venedig zurück¹.

Diese Beschreibung der Expedition der venezianischen Flotte nach Dalmatien, die der vorzüglich informierte Kaplan und Vertrauensmann Petrus II. Orseolus, Johannes Diaconus, in seinem *Chronicon Venetum* überliefert, gibt Aufschluß über die Verhältnisse an der ostadriatischen Küste und in ihrem unmittelbaren Hinterland zwischen Venedig und Dubrovnik um das Jahr 1000. Dieser herrschaftlich und strukturell stark differenzierte Raum lag am Berührungspunkt der Interessensphären der beiden europäischen Großmächte: des Oströmischen und des Weströmischen Reiches.

Zwischen beiden versuchte Venedig das Gleichgewicht zu halten. Der Dukat Venedig, der Ende des 10. Jahrhunderts die Lagunen und Inseln zwischen den Mündungen der Etsch und Brenta im Westen und dem Isonzo im Osten umfaßte und dessen Zentrum die vom offenen Meer durch die Lidi getrennten Inseln um Rialto bildeten, stand schon seit den Gotenkriegen des Kaisers Justinian I. im 6. Jahrhundert zunächst unter der realen und später der formellen Herrschaft des Kaisers in Konstantinopel². Allerdings hatten die Venezianer verschiedene Rechte und Besitzungen auch außerhalb des Dukats, auf dem Festland, das ein Teil des *Regnum Italicum* war. Dort mußten sie die Herrschaft der italischen Könige anerkennen in der zweiten Hälfte des 10. Jahrhunderts der sächsischen Ottonen³.

Petrus II. Orseolus, der im Jahre 991 zum Dogen gewählt wurde, erhielt bereits ein Jahr später von den Kaisern Basileios II. und Konstantin VIII. ein Chrysobull⁴, das in der Geschichtsschreibung als Stützpfeiler der venezianisch-byzantinischen Beziehungen im 11. Jahrhundert betrachtet wird⁵. Durch die Urkunde bekam Venedig Privilegien im Handel mit Byzanz, als Gegenleistung verpflichtete es sich, dem Ostreich mit der

¹ *La Cronaca Veneziana...*: 156–160; dazu s. E. Sestan 1965: 87ff.; L. Margetić 1983: 217ff.

² R. Cessi 1965: 405ff.

³ M. Uhrlirz 1959: 108f.

⁴ *Urkunden...*: nr 17.

⁵ A. Pertusi 1965: 123.



Die Expedition der venezianischen Flotte nach Dalmatien im Jahre 1000
 Legende: - - - Die Fahrt der Flotte

eigenen Militär- und Transportflotte in der Adria Unterstützung zu gewähren. Noch im selben Jahr regelte der Doge auch die Beziehungen mit dem Westreich. Die auf Intervention der alten Kaiserin Adelheid im Namen ihres minderjährigen Enkels Otto III. ausgestellte Urkunde⁶ stand in der Tradition der *Pacta Veneta*, der Verträge der Herrscher des *Regnum Italicum* mit Venedig, von denen die älteste erhaltene von Kaiser Lothar I. im Jahre 840 ausgestellt worden war⁷. Das Paktum Ottos III. bestätigte nicht nur den Vertrag seines Vaters Otto II. mit Venedig aus dem Jahre 983, sondern erweiterte auch die Rechte Venedigs.

Die guten Beziehungen zwischen dem Westreich und Venedig wurden noch vertieft, als Otto III. auf seinem ersten Italienzug im Jahre 996 die Patenschaft für den zweitgeborenen Sohn Petrus II. Orseolus übernahm und der Doge *compater* des Kaisers wurde⁸. Einen Höhepunkt dieser Beziehungen stellte 1001 der geheime Besuch des Kaisers beim Dogen in Venedig dar⁹, mit dem die geistige Verwandtschaft zwischen den Orseoli und den Ottonen gefestigt wurde, denn nun fungierte der Kaiser auch als Pate der Tochter des Dogen. Die Initiative für diesen in jeder Hinsicht ungewöhnlichen Besuch, der nur wenigen bekannt war und in größter Heimlichkeit stattfand, kam schon im Frühsommer 1000, als Johannes Diaconus als Abgesandter seines Dogen dem Kaiser in Como einen Besuch abstattete und ihn informierte, daß sein Herr zu einer militärischen Expedition nach Dalmatien aufgebrochen sei. Johannes begleitete Otto III. nach Pavia, wo sich die Nachricht über die großen Erfolge des Petrus II. Orseolus verbreitete. Vor seiner Rückkehr nach Venedig benachrichtigte der Kaiser den Johannes, er wollte sich mit dem Dogen in dessen Territorium treffen¹⁰. Das Thema des geheimen Gesprächs (*colloquium secretum*) des Kaisers mit dem Dogen ist nicht bekannt. Wahrscheinlich stand es mit Ottos politischem Programm der Erneuerung des Kaiserreichs der Römer (*Renovatio imperii Romanorum*) in Zusammenhang. Der Kaiser wollte vermutlich auch den Dukat Venedig auf ähnliche Weise in sein Reich einbeziehen wie ein Jahr zuvor Polen und unmittelbar vor dem Besuch in Venedig auch Ungarn, als er gemeinsam mit Papst Silvester II. dem Großfürsten Stefan die Königskrone schickte¹¹.

Petrus II. Orseolus, eine der bedeutendsten Persönlichkeiten seiner Zeit, hatte in Venedig eine monarchengleiche Stellung. Schon sein gleichnamiger Vater war, bevor er sich heimlich in ein spanisches Kloster zurückzog, in den Jahren 976–978 Doge (im Jahre 1731 wurde er als einziger Doge von Venedig heiliggesprochen). Zwei Söhne des Petrus II. Orseolus waren nacheinander seine Mitregenten, während die beiden anderen die bedeutendsten kirchlichen Ämter im Dukat inne hatten: des Patriarchen von Grado und des Bischofs von Torcello. Sein ältester Sohn Johannes war mit einer byzantinis-

⁶ *Die Urkunden Otto des III.*: nr. 100.

⁷ Eine Liste der erhaltenen Pakta s. bei H. Kretschmayer 1905: 431ff.

⁸ W. Giese 1993: 233.

⁹ *Regesta Imperii II/3. Die Regesten...*: nr 1407d, e.

¹⁰ *La Cronaca Veneziana...*: 160f.

¹¹ W. Giese 1993: 237ff.; G. Althoff 1996: 156ff.

chen Prinzessin, einer Nichte des Kaisers Basileos II., verheiratet, der jüngere Otto mit der Schwester des ungarischen Königs; der aus dieser Ehe geborene Petrus Orseolus wurde 1038 ungarischer König. Außerdem war seine älteste Tochter Hicela mit Stefan, dem Sohn des abgesetzten kroatischen Königs Svetoslav, verheiratet, mit dem sich der Doge in Trogir getroffen hatte, wobei ihm dieser seinen Sohn als Geisel überlassen hatte. Mit diesen Familienverbindungen traten die Orseoli vorübergehend in den erlesenen Kreis der „Familie der Könige“ ein. Nach dem Tode des Petrus II. Orseolus im Jahre 1009 trat sein Sohn Otto seine Nachfolge als Doge an. Er herrschte bis 1026, als er von der „antimonarchischen“ Opposition abgesetzt wurde. Das bedeutete das Ende der dogalen Monarchie, die durch drei Dogenfamilien Particiaci, Candiani und Orseoli verkörpert wurde. Diese entscheidende Wende in der venezianischen Verfassungsgeschichte bewirkte, daß Venedig als Republik und nicht als Dogenmonarchie Großmacht wurde¹².

Doch zurück zur Expedition der venezianischen Flotte im Jahre 1000. Die erste Station auf dieser Fahrt war Grado. Diese kleine Inselstadt war Ende des ersten Jahrtausends der östlichste Ort des venezianischen Dukats¹³ und Sitz des Patriarchen von Grado, der dem nach Dalmatien aufbrechenden Dogen das siegreiche Hermagoraszeichen übergab (*victrix sancti Hermachorae signum*)¹⁴. Hermagoras war nach einer nicht vor dem 5. Jahrhundert entstandenen Legende ein Schüler des Evangelisten Markus und erster Bischof von Aquileia, der um das Jahr 70 den Märtyrertod erlitten haben soll¹⁵. Mit der Übergabe des Zeichens wollte der Patriarch demonstrieren, daß er der legitime Nachfolger des hl. Hermagoras und somit der rechtmäßige Patriarch von Aquileia sei; mit diesem Titel bezeichnete sich seit dem 6. Jahrhundert der Metropolit von Aquileia. Denn Ansprüche auf dieses „apostolische“ Erbe erhob auch der Patriarch im nahen Aquileia, das von Grado aus bei schönem Wetter mit bloßem Auge zu sehen war. Die Anfänge dieser jahrhundertelangen Auseinandersetzung gehen auf das Jahr 568 zurück, als der Patriarch von Aquileia vor den in Italien eindringenden Langobarden ins byzantinische Grado floh und es zur *Aquileia Nova* erklärte. Im Jahre 607 kam es zu einer Doppelwahl: neben dem Patriarchen in Grado, unter dessen Metropolitage-walt die Bistümer im byzantinischen Reichsterritorium in Venetien und Istrien standen, gab es noch einen Patriarchen in Aquileia im langobardischen und später fränkischen Teil der ehemaligen Metropole. Auf der Synode in Mantua im Jahre 827 wurden zwar dem Patriarchen von Aquileia die Bistümer im seit 788 fränkischen Istrien zugesprochen, was in der Folge die kirchliche und politische Entwicklung Istriens geprägt hat, doch war damit die Auseinandersetzung mit Grado, das auf der Synode Aquileia als gewöhnliche Pfarre (*plebs*) untergeordnet wurde, keineswegs beigelegt¹⁶. Mit wechselndem Glück existierten Aquileia und Grado nebeneinander als zwei, von Kaisern

¹² R. Cessi 1963: 332ff.

¹³ *Die Urkunden Otto des II.*: nr 300.

¹⁴ *La Cronaca Veneziana...*: 156.

¹⁵ R. Brato 1999: 41ff.

¹⁶ H. Krahwinkler 1992: 67ff., 158ff.

und Päpsten anerkannte Patriarchate. Einen Höhepunkt erreichte dieser Streit nach der Jahrtausendwende, als Ursus, ein Sohn Petrus II. Orseolos, Patriarch von Grado war: Im Jahre 1024 nahm Poppo, einer der markantesten Patriarchen von Aquileia, Grado ein, raubte es aus und unterwarf es seiner Gewalt. Die Lateransynode im Jahre 1027 unterstellte Grado dem Patriarchat von Aquileia als Pfarre „in alle Ewigkeit“, doch bestätigte Papst Benedikt IX. schon im Jahre 1044 das Patriarchat von Grado erneut, und dessen Patriarch setzte unter dem Schutz der Dogen die Auseinandersetzung mit dem rivalisierenden Patriarchen von Aquileia fort¹⁷.

Istrien, die nächste Station der venezianischen Flotte, war eine Region unter der Herrschaft des Kaisers des Westreiches. Wie schon im Altertum, gehörte es auch um die Jahrtausendwende zu Italien und war ein Teil des *Regnum Italicum*. Als *Histria Italiae provincia* wird es in der berühmten, auf Purpurpergament geschriebenen und in Wolfenbüttel aufbewahrten Urkunde bezeichnet, mit der im Jahre 972 Kaiser Otto II. in Rom seiner Braut, der byzantinischen Prinzessin Theophanu, eine überaus reiche Morgengabe widmete¹⁸. Petrus II. Orseolus machte mit seiner Flotte in Poreč und Pula Station, nur um dort zu übernachten. Dabei lief er mit der Flotte nicht in die Häfen dieser Städte ein, sondern ging davor vor Anker. Erst auf die ausdrückliche Bitte des Bischofs von Poreč hin ging er an Land, nur um mit seinem Gefolge die noch heute bestehende, dem ersten Bischof von Poreč, dem hl. Maurus, geweihte und Mitte des 6. Jahrhunderts von Euphrasius erbaute Basilika zu besuchen; in Pula betrat er Stadtboden überhaupt nicht, der Bischof kam ihm vielmehr persönlich entgegen. Der Doge legte offensichtlich großen Wert darauf, daß seine Rast in der Herrschaft Ottos III. unterstehenden Istrien, nicht als unfreundliche oder sogar feindselige Handlung interpretiert werden konnte. Von einem Treueid der istrischen Städte an den Dogen konnte natürlich keine Rede sein; solche Schwüre nahm er erst entgegen, nachdem seine Flotte auf den Kvarnerinseln das byzantinische Dalmatien erreicht hatte.

Der Doge wurde in Poreč von Bischof Andreas empfangen. Dieser war aus der Hofkapelle, dem am Kaiserhof wirkenden Kreis von Klerikern, in dieses Amt eingesetzt worden¹⁹. Als Bischof von Poreč wird Andreas erstmals im Jahre 991 in der Urkunde eines an der Mirna-Mündung abgehaltenen Gerichtstages (*colloquium*) erwähnt, aus der die Herrschafts- und Verwaltungsstruktur der Halbinsel um die Jahrtausendwende erhellt²⁰. Den Vorsitz in der Versammlung führte Werihent, Graf von Istrien (*Histriensium comes*), der die öffentliche Gewalt in der Provinz innehatte. Werihent wird wohl dem Verwandtschaftskreis der Eppensteiner-Ebersberger angehört haben, der Anfang des 11. Jahrhunderts alle Schlüsselpositionen der Macht im Herzogtum Kärnten und seinen Marken innehatte²¹. Mit ihm beginnt eine Reihe von istrischen (Mark) Grafen, die aus Familien des bayerisch-deutschen Raumes stammten, innerhalb derer dieses

¹⁷ H. Schmidinger 1954: 3ff.; M. de Grassi 1997: 186ff.

¹⁸ *Die Urkunden Otto des II.*: nr 21; W. Ohnsorge 1983: 147ff.

¹⁹ J. Fleckenstein 1966: 73.

²⁰ *Codice Diplomatico Istriano...*: nr 85.

²¹ P. Štih 1999: 106ff.

höchste Amt der Provinz erblich war. An der Versammlung nahmen auch Bischöfe und Machthaber (*locopositi, scabini*) der Städte teil, welche die Grundstruktur der Provinz bildeten. Istrien war eine Gemeinschaft von Städten (und Kastellen), über denen nur noch die markgräfliche Gewalt stand²², was sich schon im Placitum von Rīāna/Risano aus dem Jahre 804 zeigte, auf dem vor *missi dominici* Karls des Großen Beschwerden istrischer Städte und Kastelle gegen Bischöfe und den Dux der Provinz behandelt wurden²³. Im Gegensatz zu Italien und so wie in Dalmatien gelang es auch in Istrien den Bischöfen nicht, die Stadtherrschaft zu erlangen. Eine Ausnahme bildete Triest, wo dem Bischof im Jahre 948 von König Lothar II. alle öffentliche Gewalt samt Gerichtsbarkeit und Einnahmen verliehen wurde²⁴. Auch in Pula scheint der dortige Bischof die Stadtherrschaft innegehabt zu haben: Als Petrus II. Orseolus vor Pula erschien, wurde er von Bischof Bertaldus *utroque honore* begrüßt²⁵, was bedeuten könnte, daß er ihn als Bischof und als Stadtherr begrüßte²⁶.

Kontakte Venedigs mit Istrien und deren Bedeutung für beide Seiten sind schon sehr früh belegt. Bereits im *Pactum Lotharii* aus dem Jahre 840, in dem rechtliche und handelspolitische Beziehungen zwischen Venedig und den benachbarten Städten des italischen Königreiches geregelt wurden, sind die Istrienser an erster Stelle genannt²⁷. Der Prozeß der Zunahme des venezianischen Einflusses auf der Halbinsel ist aus dem Versprechen (*promissio*) der Einwohner von Koper aus dem Jahre 932, daß sie dem Dogen jährlich hundert Amphoren besten Weins schicken werden, ersichtlich²⁸. Schon im folgenden Jahr erwirkten die Venezianer, daß der istrische Markgraf und Vertreter istrischer Städte, die zuvor dem venezianischen Eigentum, Schiffen und den Menschen in Istrien mit Gewalt Schaden zugefügt hatten, mit ihnen eine Vereinbarung schlossen, die den Venezianern ungehindertes Wirtschaften auf ihren istrischen Besitzungen ermöglichte. Venedig bediente sich eines sehr wirksamen Mittels, um die Vereinbarung zu erreichen: der Handelsblockade²⁹. Die wirtschaftliche Bindung Istriens an Venedig war schon in der ersten Hälfte des 10. Jahrhunderts für die Städte der Halbinsel lebenswichtig, sie war ein Vorbote der politischen Unterwerfung aller Städte an der Westküste Istriens (außer Triest) durch die Republik des hl. Markus im späten Mittelalter.

Aus Istrien segelte die venezianische Flotte zur Stadt Osor auf der Insel Cres. Die Kvarnerinseln, von denen Cres, Rab und Krk die wichtigsten waren, gehörten schon zu Dalmatien. Die ehemalige römische Provinz Dalmatien war in den Ostgotenkriegen Kaiser Justinians I. um 538 unter byzantinische Oberhoheit geraten. Wegen der slawisch-awarischen Besiedlung des Westteiles der Balkanhalbinsel Anfang des

²² E. Mayer 1903: 270ff.

²³ *I Placiti del „Regnum Italiae“*...: nr 17; H. Krahwinkler 1992: 199ff.

²⁴ *Die Urkunden Lothars I. und Lothars II.* ...: nr 11.

²⁵ *La Cronaca Veneziana*...: 156.

²⁶ B. Benussi 1897: 637.

²⁷ *Capitularia regum Francorum* 2: nr 233.

²⁸ *Codice Diplomatico Istriano*...: nr 70.

²⁹ *Codice Diplomatico Istriano*...: nr 71.

7. Jahrhunderts gelangte der Großteil der Provinz unter slawische Herrschaft. Die Slawen lebten in den neu eroberten Gebieten in sogenannten Sklavinien, die oft bis zur Meeresküstereichten³⁰. Das byzantinische Dalmatien schrumpfte damit auf eine Reihe von Städten an der ostadriatischen Küste, denen es außer der Provinzmetropole Zadar nicht gelang, die gesamten Stadtterritorien (*agri*) zu behalten, und auf die Inseln davor. Seit dem letzten Viertel des 9. Jahrhunderts stand an der Spitze der Provinz ein von Konstantinopel entsandter Stratege. Dalmatien war einbezogen in die Themenverfassung, und die byzantinische Herrschaft in dieser in geographischer und politischer Hinsicht peripheren Provinz des Kaiserreiches festigte sich nur vorübergehend³¹. Seit 879 mussten die dalmatinischen Städte von Osor bis Split auf Weisung des Kaisers Basileios I. an die kroatischen Fürsten einen Tribut entrichten, der ursprünglich dem Strategen zustand³². Mit diesem Tribut erkaufte sich die auch weiterhin unter byzantinischer Herrschaft stehenden Städte eine friedliche Kohabitation mit dem kroatischen Hinterland. Dem Strategen verblieb nur noch ein Symbolbetrag und seine Stelle wurde geschwächt. Einen ähnlichen Tribut entrichteten auch die Einwohner von Dubrovnik an die Fürsten von Hum und Travunien. Die Existenz des Themas war wegen der territorialen Zersplitterung und der Teilung in ein Gebiet nördlich des slawischen Narentaniens um die Neretva-Mündung, das auch die großen mitteldalmatinischen Inseln umfasste, und ein Gebiet südlich davon ständig gefährdet. Die geographische Teilung brachte auch die politische mit sich; vermutlich kurz vor dem Jahre 1000 waren die süddalmatinischen Städte schon zum Thema *Dalmatia Superior* mit der Metropole Dubrovnik zusammengeschlossen³³. Auf diese Änderung ist vielleicht auch die Tatsache zurückzuführen, daß im Gegensatz zu Vertretern einiger anderer norddalmatinischer Städte die Repräsentanten von Dubrovnik nicht nach Zadar kamen, um in der Metropole der neuen *Dalmatia Inferior* dem Dogen von Venedig den Treueid zu leisten; der Erzbischof von Dubrovnik kam Petrus II Orseolus erst entgegen, als dieser die süddalmatinischen Inseln erreichte³⁴.

Gegen Ende des 10. Jahrhunderts war die im Nordwesten liegende *Dalmatia Inferior* praktisch selbständig und die byzantinische Herrschaft dort mehr oder weniger nominell. Der letzte aus Konstantinopel entsandte Stratege, der in Zadar residierte, wird zwischen 971 und 975 erwähnt; bereits 986 hatte der Prior von Zadar als Stadtoberhaupt schon den Ehrentitel Prokonsul von Dalmatien (*prior adque proconsul Dalmatiarum*)³⁵. Die Änderung ist symptomatisch, auch weil sie die größere Autonomie der dalmatinischen *civitates* andeutet, die außer der ummauerten Siedlung, in der auch der Bischof residierte, noch ein bestimmtes Territorium umfassten und einen einheitlichen Rechtskreis darstellten. Prior und Bischof waren der höchste geistliche und weltliche

³⁰ N. Budak 1990: 130ff.

³¹ J. Ferluga 1978: 165ff.

³² Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando...*: c. 30.

³³ M. Barada 1949: 93ff.

³⁴ J. Ferluga 1978: 198.

³⁵ *Codex diplomaticus...*: nr 31.

Vertreter in der ziemlich einfachen Machtstruktur einer Stadt³⁶. Anlässlich der venezianischen Expedition im Jahre 1000 waren es folglich diese beiden, die im Namen ihrer Stadt dem Dogen den Treueid leisteten. Nach 1069 hatten die Prioren von Zadar keinen byzantinischen Titel mehr, der die Verbundenheit und Einheitlichkeit des Themas *Dalmatia Inferior* nahelegen könnte. Das Thema war in mehr oder weniger selbständige und autonome Städte zerfallen, in denen sich die Macht allmählich in den Händen der Adels- bzw. Patrizierfamilien konzentrierte. In der byzantinischen politischen Theorie waren die dalmatinischen Städte noch im 12. Jahrhundert dem Kaiser in Konstantinopel untertan. Tatsächlich gerieten jedoch die Kvarnerinseln schon im letzten Viertel des 11. Jahrhunderts unter die Herrschaft des kroatischen Königs Zvonimir, während sich die Herrschaft über die mitteldalmatinischen Städte zu Beginn des 12. Jahrhunderts der ungarische König Koloman erkämpfte³⁷.

In kirchlicher Hinsicht unterstanden die Bischöfe der dalmatinischen Städte bis zum Beginn des 10. Jahrhunderts der Jurisdiktion des Patriarchen in Konstantinopel, der Bischof im kroatischen Nin war aber wahrscheinlich ein Suffraganbischof des Patriarchen von Aquileia³⁸. Auf die Anregung des Papstes hin wurde in Anwesenheit zweier seiner Legaten im Jahre 925 auf einer Synode in Split, an der neben dalmatinischen Bischöfen auch der *episcopus Chroatorum* aus Nin teilnahm, die Errichtung einer neuen Kirchenprovinz vereinbart, zu deren Erzbischof und Metropolit der Bischof von Split gewählt wurde, der sich als einziger auf die Apostolizität seiner Kirche (Salona) berufen konnte. Dem neuen Metropoliten war auch der Bischof von Nin untergeordnet. Da sich dieser jedoch den Beschlüssen der Synode widersetzte, löste Papst Leo VI. im Jahre 928 sein Bistum auf³⁹; es wurde erst im 11. Jahrhundert erneuert, als auf kroatischem Boden noch die Bistümer von Biograd und Knin errichtet wurden. Die Wahl von Split und nicht von Zadar zum kirchlichen Zentrum Dalmatiens stellte einen Bruch mit der byzantinischen Tradition dar, nach der die politische Metropole zugleich auch kirchliche war. Was noch wichtiger war die Synode hat in kirchenrechtlicher Hinsicht Kroatien und Dalmatien vereint und fortan fest in den Rahmen der römischen Kirche eingebunden. Ein Grund für die Wendung nach Rom kann auch die stärkere ethnische, sprachliche, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Bindung der dalmatinischen Städte an Italien als an das entfernte Byzanz gewesen sein. Allerdings zerfiel durch die Gründung des Erzbistums Dubrovnik die einheitliche Kirchenprovinz Dalmatien schon um das Jahr 1000 wieder⁴⁰. Das erste Zeugnis der neuen Verhältnisse könnte gerade die Beschreibung der venezianischen Expedition durch Johannes Diaconus sein, in der es heißt, daß die Abordnung der Stadt Dubrovnik vom Erzbischof von Dubrovnik, *Ragusiensis archiepiscopus*, geleitet wurde⁴¹.

³⁶ E. Mayer 1903: 224ff.; L. Steindorff 1984: 40f.

³⁷ N. Klaić ²1975: 378f., 404 ff., 511ff.; L. Steindorff 1984: 49ff.

³⁸ N. Budak 1993: 223ff.

³⁹ *Codex diplomaticus...*: nr 23, 25, 26, 27.

⁴⁰ Gesichert erst 1022: *Codex diplomaticus...*: nr 44.

⁴¹ *La Cronaca Veneziana...*: 160.

Im Hinterland der dalmatinischen Städte lebten die ethnisch differenzierten, politisch in Sklavinien organisierten Slawen, über die aus der Mitte des 10. Jahrhunderts äußerst wertvolle Nachrichten der byzantinische Kaiser Konstantin VII. Porphyrogenetos überliefert⁴². Die südlichste der Sklavinien war Dioklien oder Zeta; der erstere Name leitet sich von der antiken Stadt *Dioclea* ab, der letztere ist identisch mit dem Namen des wichtigsten Flusses dieses Gebiets. Dioklien erstreckte sich zwischen dem Thema Dyrrhachium und Kotor. Im gebirgigen Hinterland grenzte es an Serbien, während die Küstenstädte, wie Ulcinj, Bar, Budva, Ende des 10. Jahrhunderts noch immer unter byzantinischer Herrschaft standen. Sie gerieten erst später unter die Herrschaft der dioklitianischen Fürsten, denen in Byzanz so wie anderen slawischen Fürsten aus diesem Bereich der Titel eines Archon zustand⁴³. Überhaupt hatte Byzanz in der behandelten Zeit in Dioklien noch den beherrschenden Einfluß. Die Machtentfaltung von Dioklien begann erst um die Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts mit der Erweiterung auf benachbarte Sklavinien (Hum, Travunien, Raška) und auf die Küstenstädte. Seinen Höhepunkt erreichte Dioklien unter Michael, der von Papst Gregor VII. im Jahre 1078 die Königskrone erhielt, und unter seinem Sohn Bodin, als Bar im Jahre 1089 Sitz eines Erzbistums wurde⁴⁴.

Eigene politische Einheiten an der süddalmatinischen Küste waren auch die weniger bedeutenden Sklavinien Travunien und Hum beziehungsweise Zahumlje, die beim byzantinischen Dubrovnik aneinander grenzten. Sie erstreckten sich entlang der Küste und in deren gebirgigem Hinterland zwischen der Bucht von Kotor (Dioklien) und der Mündung der Neretva. Jede der beiden hatte einen Archon, doch verloren sie schon um die Mitte des 11. Jahrhunderts ihre politische Selbständigkeit. Diese auf längere Zeit zu erhalten, gelang nur Narentanien, das seinem südlichen Grenzfluß Neretva benannt war. Die Nordgrenze zu Kroatien bildete der Fluss Cetina. Narentanien umfasste auch die großen mitteldalmatinischen Inseln Hvar, Brač, Korčula und Mljet⁴⁵. Die *Narentani*, die von ihren Nachbarn auch *Pagani* (Heiden) und *Mariani* (Küstenländer) genannt wurden, hatten einen Herrscher, der in den Quellen als *dux*, *rex* und *iudex* bezeichnet wird. Der Besitz der mitteldalmatinischen Inseln ermöglichte ihnen die Kontrolle über die ostadriatische Küste. Narentanien entwickelte sich schon sehr früh zu einer bedeutenden Seemacht. Es ist nicht auszuschließen, daß schon die Slawen, die 642 mit Schiffen ins langobardische Benevent segelten⁴⁶, aus dem narentanischen Raum kamen. Die ersten Konflikte der Narentaner mit venezianischen Handelsleuten reichen in die ersten Jahrzehnte des 9. Jahrhunderts zurück. Einen ihrer Höhepunkte erreichten sie 887, als der Doge Petrus Candianus bei einem misslungenen Versuch, die narentanische Seemacht zu brechen, ums Leben kam⁴⁷. Die Venezianer konnten sich eine friedliche Seefahrt entlang der ostadriatischen Küste nicht mit Gewalt sichern,

⁴² Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando...*: c. 29–36.

⁴³ J. Ferluga 1976: 301.

⁴⁴ C. Jireček 1911: 210ff.

⁴⁵ N. Klaić ²1975: 212ff.

⁴⁶ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum*: IV, 44.

⁴⁷ *La Cronaca Veneziana...*: 110, 112f., 128f., 136.

sondern mussten dafür im 10. Jahrhundert sowohl an die Narentaner als auch an die Kroaten einen besonderen Tribut entrichten, der erst von Petrus II. Orseolus abgeschafft wurde⁴⁸.

An Narentanien grenzte im Nordwesten Kroatien, das bedeutendste Fürstentum unter den erwähnten Sklavinien. Seine Konturen zeichneten sich in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 9. Jahrhunderts, als es in die fränkische politische Sphäre geriet, etwas deutlicher ab. Als erster *dux Chroatorum* ist Mitte des 9. Jahrhundert Trpimir belegt⁴⁹, der Stammvater des Herrscherhauses, das die Kroaten mit einigen Ausnahmen bis zum Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts regierte. Nach dem Zusammenbruch der Oberherrschaft der fränkischen italischen Könige suchte um 880 Fürst Branimir, der das Gleichgewicht zwischen dem Weströmischen und dem Oströmischen Reich halten mußte, seine politische Stellung durch Anlehnung an Rom zu festigen. Er fand bei Papst Johannes VIII., der auch hinter Methodios' Aktion in Pannonien und Mähren stand, Unterstützung. Die politische Orientierung seiner Nachfolger war wechselhaft, bedingt durch die Lage Kroatiens zwischen den beiden großen Mächten. Im 11. Jahrhundert wurden allerdings die Beziehungen zu Ungarn, das Slawonien zwischen der Drau und der Save beherrschte, immer bedeutender⁵⁰. Mitte des 10. Jahrhunderts erstreckte sich Kroatien in einem etwa 100 Kilometer breiten Streifen zwischen den Flüssen Raša in Istrien und Cetina südöstlich von Split und reichte in Richtung Slawonien bis nach Gvozd. Seine wichtigsten Zentren Nin, Biograd und Šibenik lagen am Meer, im Hinterland lag nur Knin. Es war in vierzehn Županien gegliedert, denen Župane, Älteste, vorstanden. Elf Županien lagen südlich des Flusses Zrmanja und waren unmittelbar dem kroatischen Fürsten beziehungsweise König untergeordnet. Über die drei nördlichen Županien, die im Raum des ehemaligen Liburnien lagen, herrschte ein Ban⁵¹, eine Einrichtung, die noch aus der Zeit der Avarenherrschaft stammen könnte. Zwischen etwa 970 und 995 herrschte in Kroatien als König Stefan Držislav, der seinem Vater Michael Krešimir auf dem Thron folgte. Držislavs Mutter, Königin Helena, die in Solin bei Split, im Territorium des antiken Salona, die Kirche des hl. Stefan errichten ließ, in der die kroatischen Könige beigesetzt wurden, stammte vielleicht aus der Patrizierfamilie der Madier aus Zadar, deren Angehörige von Ende des 10. Jahrhunderts hohe byzantinische Titel, wie Prokonsul, Stratege, Protospatharios, führten⁵². Auch Stefan Držislav, in dem Byzanz einen Verbündeten gegen den makedonisch-bulgarischen Zaren Samuel suchte, soll von Konstantinopel die Titel Eparch und Patrizier erhalten haben⁵³, doch scheint mit diesen hohen Titeln nicht die Herrschaft über die byzantinischen dalmatinischen Städte verbunden gewesen zu sein. Diese standen überhaupt nie unter der Herrschaft der kroatischen Könige; nicht einmal Tomislav, der erste kroatische König (um 910–930), dem manchmal der Titel eines byzantinischen (Pro)Konsuls zugeschrieben wurde⁵⁴.

⁴⁸ *La Cronaca Veneziana*...: 149.

⁴⁹ *Codex diplomaticus*...: nr 3.

⁵⁰ I. Goldstein 1995: 252ff.

⁵¹ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando*...: c. 30.

⁵² F. Šišić 1925: 486.

⁵³ *Historia Salonitana Maior*...: 107.

⁵⁴ J. Ferluga 1978: 186.

Auf den Tod Stefan Držislavs folgte in Kroatien eine Zeit der Krise und Instabilität, welche auch die dalmatinischen Städte zu spüren bekamen. Der Nachfolger Držislavs war sein Sohn Svetoslav Surinja, der die Krone jedoch bald verlor. Die Herrschaft übernahm die Partei seiner beiden Brüder Krešimir II. und Gojislav. Die politische Instabilität Kroatiens wurde auch vom Dogen von Venedig ausgenutzt. Er weigerte sich, den Tribut, der von den Venezianern an die Kroaten und Narentaner für die unbehelligte Seefahrt entrichtet wurde, weiterhin zu bezahlen. Es kam zu Auseinandersetzungen, und die Venezianer entsandten 997 eine kleinere Flotte nach Dalmatien, die Vis einnahm und plünderte⁵⁵. Andererseits scheint es dem kroatischen König Krešimir III. mit Hilfe der Narentaner und eines Heeres des Zaren Samuel, das 998 über Oberdalmatien bis nach Zadar vorgedrungen war⁵⁶, gelungen zu sein, vorübergehend die Kontrolle über einige dalmatinische Städte zu erlangen. Abgesandte dieser Städte baten den Dogen von Venedig, sie „von der Strenge der Slawen zu befreien“. Im Gegenzug erklärten sie sich bereit, seine Herrschaft anzuerkennen⁵⁷. Im Frühjahr 1000 begab sich darauf die venezianische Flotte auf die eingangs beschriebene Reise.

In der venezianischen Überlieferung wurde die Expedition des Petrus II. Orseolus schon sehr früh als Beginn der Herrschaft Venedigs an der Adria verstanden, was eine Voraussetzung für Venedigs Großmachtstellung war. *Sposalizio del mare*, das Fest der Vermählung des Dogen mit dem Meer, welches die venezianische Seeherrschaft symbolisiert, soll zum Gedenken an diese Expedition entstanden sein⁵⁸. Tatsächlich leisteten die dalmatinischen Städte von Osor bis Dubrovnik dem Dogen den Treueid, und die Kroaten und Narentaner, deren Kaperschiffe die Fahrt der venezianischen Schiffe entlang der dalmatinischen Küste gefährdeten, wurden mit Gewalt unterworfen. Petrus II. Orseolus fügte nach seiner siegreichen Heimkehr seinem Titel *dux Veneticorum* noch den Titel *dux Dalmaticorum* hinzu und machte damit seine politischen Ansprüche geltend. Allerdings hat Byzanz, das in seiner politischen Theorie noch auf seiner Oberhoheit über Venedig bestand, letzteren Titel nie anerkannt und wandte sich in seinen Urkunden an den Dogen weiterhin nur mit dem venezianischen, nicht jedoch mit dem dalmatinischen Titel. Auch die dalmatinischen Städte erkannten weiterhin die Oberherrschaft Konstantinoples an, denn die Bischöfe von Zadar, Krk und Rab verpflichteten sich gegenüber Petrus II. Orseolus, an Feiertagen, wenn in Kirchen die *laudes* gesungen werden, den Namen des Dogen zu preisen, doch erst nach dem Namen des byzantinischen Kaisers⁵⁹. Recht haben könnte Andrea Dandolo, Doge von Venedig und Chronist, der Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts der Beschreibung des Johannes Diaconus die Nachricht hinzufügte, die Venezianer hätten für ihren Feldzug eine Erlaubnis des byzantinischen Kaisers gehabt⁶⁰. Jedenfalls hatten sowohl Venedig als auch Byzanz ein Interesse an der militärischen Aktion: Venedig wegen der Kontrolle über die Seewege, Byzanz wegen der Festigung der ins Wanken geratenen Herrschaft in Dalmatien. Wie dem

⁵⁵ *La Cronaca Veneziana*...: 153.

⁵⁶ *Letopis popa Dukljanina*...: c. 36.

⁵⁷ *La Cronaca Veneziana*...: 155f.

⁵⁸ H. Kretschmayer 1905: 268.

⁵⁹ *La Cronaca Veneziana*...: 157.

⁶⁰ *Documenta historiae Chroaticae*...: 428.

auch sei, die erste venezianische Herrschaft über die dalmatinischen Städte war von kurzer Dauer. Im Jahre 1018 erreichte Otto Orseolus zwar, daß ihm die Kvarnerstädte erneut den Treueid leisteten⁶¹, doch nach dem Fall der Orseoli im Jahre 1026 war Venedig nicht mehr imstande, die Adriapolitik seiner letzten monarchischen Dogen fortzusetzen.

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⁶¹ *Codex diplomaticus...*: nr 37–40.

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IMPORTANT FIGURES IN ITALY IN THE YEAR 1000

Claudio Azzara*

On the 2nd April 999, through the influence of Emperor Otto III, Gerbert of Aurillac became Pope, taking the name Sylvester II. Born in Auvergne, Gerbert was one of the leading scholars of his day, especially in the fields of science and mathematics. As well as being the Abbot of Bobbio, he had also been *magister* in the school of Reims that had become famous under his rule, and then archbishop of the same city. Called to the court of Otto III, Gerbert had been a true spiritual guide for the young emperor and one of his most trusted advisers. The emperor first placed him at the head of the prestigious archbishopric of Ravenna, and then at the very apex of Catholic Christianity as the successor of Pope Gregory V, who had also been chosen by Otto.

The throne of St Peter was therefore occupied by a cultivated intellectual who was a strong advocate of the reassertion of prerogatives of the Roman church. He was thus an ideal partner for an emperor who, in his turn, wished to make Rome the renewed capital of Christianity, emulating the historical, or rather mythical figure of the great Christian emperor Constantine I. Following the sanctified model of Christian monarch, of which Constantine was considered the prototype, Otto III saw himself as being on an equal standing with the apostles (*isapostolus*), or as *servus Jesu Christi* or *servus apostolorum*. He aimed at *imitatio sacerdotii*, believing himself invested with an almost priest-like authority as the representative of God on earth. All this led him to a process of *renovatio imperii*, in terms of its structures and ideology, that ran spontaneously and naturally parallel to the *renovatio ecclesiae* promoted by the Pope, in so far as the two spheres were considered indivisible in this ideological prospective¹. It was no chance that Gerbert, committed as he was to the great plan of collaboration with the new Constantine, should choose the same name — Sylvester — as the pope who almost seven hundred years earlier had stood at the side of the man who had first opened up the Roman Empire to Christianity.

Otto III's universalism therefore contained strong religious overtones and revolved around Rome, considered the city exemplifying and perpetuating the tradition of the ancient imperial universalism joined to that of universalism of the Christian faith.

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¹ R. Morghen 1955: 13–35; P.E. Schramm 1975³; M.C. De Matteis 1988: 425–452.

At the same time, the direct involvement of the German king in Italian affairs was an immediate consequence of the political responsibility of the role of the emperor, in which the crowns of Germany and Italy were united. Following the same principle, for instance, Otto II had been called on to intervene with his army in southern Italy against the Saracens, leading to the disastrous defeat at the hands of the Muslims in Calabria in 982.

The anachronistic project of Otto III and Sylvester came to an end with the death of the emperor at only 23 years of age, on the 23rd January 1002, followed by the death of the Pope just over a year later. During their lifetimes, the plan was pursued with great enthusiasm, attracting many allies, but also meeting much resistance, especially from the mixed group of lords that had prospered in the political vacuum following the collapse of the Carolingian Empire (which formally closed with the death of Charles the Fat in 888) and that had much to gain from the weakness of imperial power in Italy².

In the last year of his life, Otto III was forced to stand up to the rebellion against him and the Pope by the inhabitants of Tivoli, probably instigated by the powerful Roman Crescenzi family, who had for some time controlled the city of Rome and influenced the papacy. The young king had already had to combat a powerful member of the family, Crescentius II, on his coronation as emperor in 996. Five years later, Otto and Sylvester II were even forced to leave Rome in upheaval because of the revolt against them and spend Christmas at Todi in nearby Umbria, until the German troops escorted them back to the city of St Peter.

The most momentous example of a lay aristocrat in the kingdom of Italy hostile to the reintegration of imperial authority into the peninsula was Arduin, Marquis of Ivrea. Born in about 955, son of Dado, the count of Pombia who governed a small district in north-western Italy near the city of Novara, in 990 Arduin managed to succeed his cousin Conrad *Conone* at the head of the much more important march of Ivrea. Formed in the years of the greatest tumult in the life of the post Carolingian *Regnum Italiae*, this area covered, with the duchy of Pombia, the *comitatus* of Ivrea, Vercelli, Ossola, Stazzona, Bulgaria and Lomello, as well as a vast part of present-day Piedmont³.

In affirming his authority, the new marquis had soon clashed with the two important bishops of the region, Peter of Vercelli and Varmondus of Ivrea. The clash with Peter took place in 996–997 and concluded dramatically with the murder of the bishop by Arduin who, according to a traditional account that soon became widespread, even tried to burn his rival's body as a sign of contempt. It was quite evidently a dramatic gesture, the importance of which — at least as far as the burning of the body was concerned — was perhaps exaggerated by the first accounts, as Peter's body might simply have been burnt in the fire in the cathedral. Nonetheless, it served Arduin's enemies to brand him permanently with infamy as an unyielding and impious enemy of the ecclesiastical institutions and the empire that supported them. The sinister reputation of the marquis of Ivrea was certainly not improved by another dispute shortly after with the other

² G. Tabacco 1988: 307–338. For a general survey on Italy in the year 1000, see: C.W. Previté-Orton, 1968: 148–178; G. Tabacco 1974: 1–274; V. Fumagalli 1978b; C. J. Wickham 1981; O. Capitani 1986; L. Provero 1998.

³ G. Arnaldi 1962: 53–60; G. Sergi 1971: 637–712; G. Sergi 1975; L. Provero 1994: 577–627.



Italy in 1000 (after C.J. Wickham 1981: XIV, map 3)

bishop, Varmondus, which did not have the same bloody results, but which nevertheless led to the double excommunication of Arduin by the bishop.

Arduin's actions against the two powerful bishops were brought about by his desire to block their restoration of the ecclesiastical patrimony, set out along the lines of the more general political policy promoted by the Ottonian dynasty in Italy. And, not surprisingly, those who allied themselves with him in this struggle were the medley of local forces that saw in a political, economic and territorial re-consolidation of the bishoprics a threat to their own positions of strength. In this phase of the conflict, both the emperor and the Pope attempted to keep their distance, letting the matter take its course as much as possible at a local level. Pope Gregory V, whose direct intervention had been requested by Varmondus of Ivrea, merely issued a generic admonition against an individual the Piedmont bishops had claimed „nothing divine or nothing human” in him, as his behaviour had clearly demonstrated.

But just when it seemed, that Arduin's success was complete, Otto III was induced to alter his position, probably after weighing up the risks involved in strengthening such a formidable adversary. The admonitions of the important figure of Leo, Bishop of Vercelli, were probably also instrumental in changing the sovereign's opinion. Leo, even before coming to the bishopric of Vercelli sometime between mid 998 and mid 999, had already proved himself to be a close collaborator of Otto, the mainspring behind many of the monarch's political initiatives and the author of numerous documents on his behalf regarding very important questions, thus earning himself the nickname of *episcopus palati*.

Leo led the attack on Arduin by reviving the accusations held against him of being the assassin of Bishop Peter. Between mid April and early May 999, a synod was convoked in Rome during which Arduin was called to defend himself personally before the emperor and Pope Sylvester II. The synod closed with the banishment of the Marquis of Ivrea, branded as *hostis publicus*, and with the proclamation of the confiscation of his property and that of his followers. However, Arduin was not discouraged by all this and not only did he continue to persecute the bishops in his region, but he also openly defied the authority of the emperor, gathering his followers closely around him in a safe refuge in the remote protected valleys of the Canavese area. The sudden death of Otto III opened up to the rebel marquis new and undreamed — of possibilities so that on 15th February 1002, a few weeks after the young sovereign's death, Arduin was crowned king of Italy in the Church of San Michele in Pavia, also laying claims to the imperial title. In his new role, he set in motion a political policy that on the one hand was suddenly respectful of the prerogatives of the bishops, now seen as possible supporters of his own power, as he had once been of the Ottonians and, on the other hand, strove to break and weaken the old jurisdictions of the counts.

Arduin's adversaries were not long in forming themselves around Bishop Leo of Vercelli, appealing to Henry, King of Germany and the future Emperor Henry II, to come to Italy to defend them from the man they considered an usurper of the throne. It was only in the spring of 1004 that Henry decided to move southwards with his army, which was sufficient to make Arduin's supporters take flight without even fighting, proof of the extreme fragility of the followers of the Italian king. On 12th May, Henry

himself was crowned king of Italy. Defeated, Arduin disappeared from the political scene only to reappear fleetingly just nine years later, when he attempted an unsuccessful sudden attack on the towns of Vercelli and Novara. After this last defeat, Arduin could do nothing but retire to a monastery in Piedmont, at Fruttuaria, where he died soon after on 14th October 1014. In the 19th century, during the years of Italian unification and the wars of independence against the Habsburg Empire, Italian historiography transformed Arduin's historical figure into the mythical figure — totally without any foundations — of the last medieval Italian king to have fought for the „liberation” of the peninsula from the German emperors.

Arduin was the champion of an old Italic aristocracy that tenaciously defended its own political powers and was hostile to the full spread of the imperial authority in Italy. However, other figures also prospered during the same period in the shadow of the power of the Ottonians⁴. One example of this was the Canossa family, low-ranking aristocratic Longobards originally from the Apennines near Lucca, represented in this period by Tedaldus (988–1012). The family's fortunes had begun in the 960–970s with the founder, Adalbert–Atto, to whom Otto I had granted the *comitatus* of Reggio, Modena and later that of Mantova. With Tedaldus's successor, Boniface, the Canossa family seemed to have completed their own rapid political and economic ascent, managing to control vast territories on the Po Plain and in the Apennines, stretching from the Cremona–Modena axis in the north to Tuscany in the south⁵. And it was in Tuscany that Marquis Hugh (969–1001) consolidated under his own rule a united prosperous district that included the rich cities in the Arno valley. The marquis had reorganised an efficient management of his possessions, ensuring the correct administration of justice and the control of the unruly lords. At his death, however, as he left no direct heirs, the political and territorial unity he had created was broken up (in the last years of his life he had already donated vast lands to various monasteries), and in 1027 the title of marquis was granted to the above-mentioned Boniface of Canossa by Emperor Conrad II. Boniface's personal power remained more to the north, in the heart of the Apennine region.

Hugh soon earned himself the reputation amongst his contemporaries and his descendants for being extremely pious and just. Peter Damian recounts that the marquis would travel through the countryside incognito, questioning the peasants to ensure that his instructions were correctly carried out by his officials. It seems he enjoyed conversing on religious matters, had a propensity to founding monasteries, even allegedly performed miracles in his youth, and perhaps would have liked to become a monk himself. He was therefore a faithful supporter of Otto III's politics, especially where the moral reform of the clergy and the re-establishment of general order in the imperial territories was concerned, thus reversing the attitude of his own father and predecessor Hubert, who had instead been closer to the anti-imperial attitudes common to much of the Italic aristocracy.

⁴ V. Fumagalli 1978a,b.

⁵ For an introduction to the important Canossa family, see: V. Fumagalli 1971 and 1978a: 27–37; O. Capitani 1978: 3–23. On Tedaldus and Boniface, in particular, see: M.G. Bertolini 1970: 96–113.

Following the political tradition established by his grandfather Otto I, Otto III intervened firmly in the tumultuous events that took place in southern Italy. His illustrious predecessor had striven at length to reunite the fragmented lands of *Langobardia minor*, at the time divided up into a number of principalities as a result of the disintegration of the ancient unitary domination of the Lombards of Benevento⁶. During this phase of reunification, the emperor had taken advantage of the actions of his ally Pandulf *Capodiferro*, Prince of Capua and Benevento, who had managed to control the vast lands under his rule. Otto I had granted Pandulf the duchy of Spoleto and the march of Camerino and, later, the Prince of Capua had also acquired Salerno. In exchange he had given the emperor military support during the campaigns conducted against the Byzantines in the vain hope of driving them out of southern Italy.

Pandulf had therefore created a vast territory in central-southern Italy, reuniting after more than a century the old Lombard duchy of Benevento and adding to it Spoleto and Camerino. Nevertheless, at his death in 981, the unity that had with such difficulty been forged was disintegrated and the lands were once again divided up into the previous partitions (Pandulf's descendants retained only Capua), leaving the emperor unable to prevent this destruction. After the defeat of Otto II in Calabria by the Muslims, the various potentates of Lombard origins in southern Italy were left to their own devices for at least fifteen years until the new project of reform proposed by Otto III, who availed himself of another Capuan, Ademarius⁷.

Born in Capua, the son of a clergyman named Balsamus, Ademarius was brought up at the court of Otto II, where he was educated with the future Otto III, of whom he was a close childhood companion. As soon as Otto III came to the throne, he rapidly promoted his old friend's political fortunes, while also making use of him to carry out his own plans. In December 998 the emperor granted Ademarius the important march of Spoleto and, the following year, entrusted him with the leadership of an expedition to the regions of southern Italy, with the task of subjecting the principality of Capua and the duchy of Naples to imperial authority.

On his arrival in Capua, Ademarius was received by the local prince Laidulf, who in his presence swore an oath of allegiance to the emperor, before accompanying him towards Naples, where together they captured Duke John IV and bore him with them. However, at this point, openly violating their agreements, Ademarius overthrew Laidulf, sending him and all his family and followers into exile beyond the Alps, and claiming for himself the principality of Capua in March 1000. Ademarius thus managed to bring together under his own rule almost all the territories that had been united in the past by Pandulf *Capodiferro*. But the success of Otto III's envoy was much more temporary than that of his predecessor, if it is true that in July of the same year the inhabitants of Capua rebelled under the new prince and forced him to flee, replacing him with Landulf V, a descendant of the old Capuan princely dynasty. All traces of Ademarius have at this point been lost; even his role as the marquise of Spoleto is not

⁶ A general survey of *Langobardia minor* can be found in: N. Cilento 1971; V. von Falkenhausen 1980: 251–364. On the evolution of a single, significant, principality, see: H. Taviani-Carozzi 1991.

⁷ N. Cilento 1960: 266–267.

recorded after December 999. He had a fleeting appearance on the political scene of southern Italy, an unworthy emulator of Pandulf *Capodiferro* and unfortunate instrument of Otto III's unfruitful attempts to impose his authority on that territory.

However, the concrete results of the explicit endeavours of the Ottonian dynasty to impose order on a south divided up between Lombard tradition and Byzantine and Muslim elements clearly declined with the passing of time. Although Otto I made some important accomplishments, mainly thanks to the boldness of his ally Pandulf, his successor Otto II badly gambled everything in the only expedition undertaken and, finally, the influence in the south of Otto III, who had dreamed of a more general *renovatio imperii*, ended confusedly in the space of a few months.

At the other extremity of the Italian peninsula from Ademarius's Capua, in the north-eastern corner where the Venetian lagoon faces the Adriatic sea, in 991 the Venetian duchy was ruled by Peter II Orseolo, who would remain in this office until 1008, revealing himself to be one of the most important dukes (or *dogi*, as they are known in Venice) in the city's history. He was elected by acclamation of the popular assembly, ending a long period of civil struggles between rival families and factions that had fifteen years earlier even led to the assassination of one of his predecessors Peter IV Candiano, whose body had been exposed to public scorn in the Rialto area, the commercial and economic centre of the lagoon duchy. Mediaeval Venice, the *ducatus Venetiarum*, was not a single city — as is often thought considering the form Venice has today — but rather a group of different centres spread throughout the lagoons of the upper Adriatic, whose political, religious and commercial reference was increasingly centred on the group of islands known as Rialto, which generally corresponds to present-day Venice. This was where the duke's palace and the basilica built to house the remains of St Mark stood, both greatly adorned by Peter II.

The rule of Peter II Orseolo coincided with the period of greatest political, economic and social growth of early Mediaeval Venice⁸. It was during these years, that Venice grew from a regional power to become a centre of Mediterranean importance, opening up new political frontiers and laying the foundations for the commercial activity that would reach its height in a later period by exploiting the trade of the crusades. Inland and marine commerce continued to prosper even during the years of greatest domestic unrest, creating new wealth and aiding a general development of the whole Venetian society, the importance of which in this period must not be overestimated, but was certainly sizeable. Peter II Orseolo consolidated the outer borders of the duchy and, at the same time, re-established internal institutional order, ensuring the correct and full functioning of the existent bodies, after years of paralysis and corruption due to the clashes between the groups fighting for power.

What is most noteworthy, however, was the ability of Venice, a small close-knit centre that had formed „in the intestines of the empires”, to use the words of Leopold Von Ranke⁹, to act with increasing authority and incisiveness as an interlocutor of the major powers of the time. Firstly, the city was careful to maintain its privileged

⁸ G. Ortalli 1980: 339–428, and 1992: 725–790; S. Gasparri 1992: 791–826.

⁹ L. von Ranke 1878: 3–113.

relationship with its „mother” Byzantium. Venice was a Byzantine city not only because it had evolved as a western province of the Empire in Constantinople, but also because its whole culture was intrinsically Byzantine. With the progressive disengagement of the Eastern Empire from the western regions, Venice had had to take on the role the empire had previously played in the Adriatic Sea. It had as a consequence gradually developed as an independent entity, whilst remaining under the protection of Constantinople, which continued to be its main point of reference in terms of trade. And it was under Peter II that trade reached a new peak for the Venetians, sanctioned by the golden bull of Emperor Basil II issued in 992, which granted Venice privileged conditions in trade with Byzantium. The link was further strengthened by the marriage celebrated between John Orseolo, Peter's son, and a Byzantine noblewoman related to the imperial family¹⁰.

At the same time as the close links were being forged with the Eastern Empire, during the rule of Peter II Orseolo the relations with the Western Empire were also stabilised, after the dangers faced by Venice in the preceding period when the lagoon city seriously risked being absorbed by the expansionist ambitions of the Saxon emperors, especially Otto II. Otto III, on the other hand, not only renewed the Venice's traditional privileges and commercial rights, confirming also the mainland territories, but even went so far as to guarantee a kind of political protection of the duchy in the controversies over borders it had with its mainland neighbours (like, for example, the enterprising Bishop of Belluno). He stressed his friendly relations with Venice with highly symbolical — and political — gestures like that of acting as godfather to the younger son of the doge, who was given the name Otto¹¹.

Otto III also travelled to Venice in person in April 1001, as a guest of Peter II Orseolo, to hold political talks, the subject of which is unknown to us. It has been suggested, that on this occasion the Emperor requested of his counterpart an increased Venetian participation in Italian affairs, backing his own position in the peninsula. If this was indeed true then it is clear that Peter chose to maintain a more marginal role, whilst continuing cordial relations with the empire, avoiding too great an involvement in making alliances that clashed with the natural vocation and concrete interests of the Venetian duchy, which looked to the sea and benefited from its intermediary position between the various major political forces.

At the end of the 10th century, the Arab geographer Ibn-Hauqal referred to the Adriatic Sea as *Giûn al-Banâquîn*, or the Gulf of the Venetians, thus recognising the full dominion of the ex-subjects of Byzantium over this sea that the fleet of Constantinople was no longer able to control directly. It was precisely the consolidation of the dominion of the Adriatic that was the main aim of Peter II Orseolo, whose greatest military campaign was the conquest of Dalmatia, the home of the pirates that were a serious obstacle to the safety of trading routes. The imposition of Venetian hegemony on the Dalmatian coast after the successful military expedition and the subsequent destruction of the corsairs' bases earned Peter the title of *dux Veneticorum et Dalmati-*

¹⁰ D.M. Nicol 1988. On the golden bull and other treaties between Venice and Constantinople, see: M. Pozza, G. Ravegnani 1993.

¹¹ G. Rösch 1982. On the relations between Venice and the emperors of the Saxon dynasty, see also: G. Ortalli 1990.

corum, which was granted in 1000 and immediately recognised by the chanceries of the Western Empire and the Papacy. With the great doge's achievement, medieval Venice's commercial and maritime role and the direction of its future development were definitively drawn up.

The most barren and unhealthy areas of the western Adriatic coastline, including the Classe marshes and the Venetian lagoon, and above all the swamp areas of the Po Delta between Ravenna and Comacchio, had for some time been chosen for various experiences of Christian eremitic life precisely because of their inaccessibility and the harshness of the living conditions they imposed on those who came to live there. Amongst those who retreated to these inhospitable lands in search of spiritual reflection was Romuald, who became one of the most important figures of medieval eremitic life¹². A member of an aristocratic family, son of Sergius, duke of Ravenna, Romuald had chosen the monastic life against his father's will, entering the monastery of St Apollinare in Classe. He had left this monastery shortly afterwards in protest against the monks' disorderly behaviour and their lack of respect for the severe Benedictine rule. He had therefore chosen a hermit's life, seeing it as a higher form of religious experience, and wandered throughout the Ravenna region on pilgrimages until at least 1001. Then he moved to Istria, near Parenzo, and three years later returned to Italy and settled in the mountainous area of the Apennines, staying in Val di Castro, Camaldoli, Mount Pietralata and Sitria near the hermitage of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana. He died in about 1027 or perhaps a year earlier.

According to hagiographic tradition, Romuald's decision to leave Italy for Istria was for the most part a direct consequence of his disagreements with Otto III. Attracted by the holy man's fame, the emperor had travelled to the monastery of Pereum, an island in the swamps near Ravenna where Romuald had interrupted his incessant travelling for a brief period. Otto was seeking some form of spiritual comfort from the famous hermit as he had been shaken by the reproach he had received from Saint Nilus because of way he had treated John Philogatos, who had been removed by force from the papal throne (where he had been put by the Crescenzi family) and replaced with Gregory V.

The story of the meeting between Romuald and Otto seems to follow the typically Old Testament confrontation between a great prophet and a representative of temporal power. The hermit, enraged and indignant at the impious, sinful Emperor, could only order him to do penance as reparation for the error he had committed. Otto, greatly influenced by the hermit's personality, even went so far as to contemplate abandoning the secular world and choose the path of a monastic *conversio*. However, going beyond the emotion of the moment, there was a fundamental lack of comprehension between the two great figures for reasons that cannot entirely be identified. Otto III's intention to found a new monastery on the small island that was becoming increasingly crowded with pilgrims and religious figures, did not match Romuald's eremitic ideal that he had tried to reproduce in the north Adriatic marshes and in the Apennine mountains, that harsh solitude the ancient fathers like Saint Anthony — whom he had known through Cassian's *Collationes* — had found in the Egyptian desert.

¹² G. Tabacco 1965: 73–119.

Romuald sought a kind of ascesis obtained through the complete union of contemplation and penitence of the paradigm of early Christian monasticism. He encouraged the establishment of small autonomous groups of hermits in isolated places where they lived in individual cells around a common church, living a life of rigid discipline, continual mortification of the flesh, unceasing prayer and reading of the Psalms. They were intense free spiritual experiences that were, however, unable to transform themselves into institutional orders, unlike what took place, for example, with the consolidation of the Camaldolese order thanks to the work of Peter Damian. Romuald was unable to find a balance between the anxious search for a direct contact with God and structures within which to channel this investigation. Indeed, he feared that the immediacy of the experience could be damaged by the limitations imposed by an institution of some kind. Here, too, he recalled the prophets of the Old Testament, who provided an example that was so lofty it was difficult to reproduce, and who admonished sinners most severely but failed to provide their followers with precise prescriptions.

In the Italy of the year 1000, the eremitic life, which was very widespread and was inspired by various cultural themes (in southern Italy, for example, there was a strongly-rooted Greek tradition), was by no means a homogeneous phenomenon but rather a series of individual paths, albeit all brought together by a common religious tension. Romuald was, without doubt, the most important figure in the vast galaxy of experiences and, although he did not found any precise institutions, in putting forward the crucial question of the difficult conciliation between Christ's message and the tools of this world, he left the legacy of a motif stemming from the very roots of Christianity that was widely recognised during his lifetime and was to nourish the 11th century reform movements and the most important developments of late medieval spirituality¹³.

Translated into English by Geraldine Ludbrook

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WARFARE AND OTHER PLAGUES IN THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AROUND THE YEAR 1000

Amancio Isla*

We associate the Christian territories of the Iberian Peninsula around the year 1000 with the threat posed by Ibn Abi Amir. This important figure, who rose to the rank of *hajib*, the highest office below that of caliph, had effective control of the Umayyad caliphate of Cordoba and, until his death in 1002, exercised real power at the expense of the actual caliph, Hisham II. Ibn Abi Amir made around fifty military expeditions into Christian-controlled areas of the Iberian peninsula and has passed into history under the name al-Mansur, or in Spanish, Almanzor. In other words, the *Victorious One*.

In the year 985 he raided the city of Barcelona. It is difficult not to be captivated by the literature. One document dating from 989 refers to a church that „was sacked by the Saracens in the year they destroyed Barcelona”. Another refers to the time when Barcelona perished — „*quando Barchinona interiit*”¹.

Documents from several regions endorse the impact of al-Mansur's campaigns. One from León dating from the year 988 relates the events of a couple of years earlier, when Andalusian troops destroyed that city and the monastery of Eslonza, „stealing all the treasures and setting fire to it”. Another from Coimbra remembers how „the Muslims ... devastated the cities ... and all the holy places”².

In August 997 the *hajib* plundered the city of Santiago de Compostela. In the summer of 1000 he defeated an army led by Sancho García, the Castilian count, in Cervera, between the river Douro and Burgos, and entered the city.

These campaigns did not even end when al-Mansur died in 1002. They were continued by his son, Abd al-Malik al-Muzaffar, until he too died in 1008. In the year 1003 the new *hajib* reached Pallars in the far northeast of the peninsula before roaming the plains of Barcelona. In 1006 he waged a campaign against the region of Pamplona and in the following year he gained an important victory against a Christian army in Clunia, south of Burgos.

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¹ F. Udina (ed.) 1951: num. 212 and 232.

² J.M. Mínguez 1976: num. 340; *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica* 1967: 119.

Contemporary sources like the chronicle of Sampiro, and even those written a century later, remember with bitterness the sacking and ruination that al-Mansur perpetrated. „He destroyed churches, monasteries and palaces and burnt them by fire”, wrote the bishop at the beginning of the 11th century. One chronicle written a century later describes the disasters of the time: „... all divine cult was lost, all the glories of the Christians, all the treasures amassed in the churches were scattered...”³. It is easy to understand, then, why a brief entry in one Castilian annal referred to al-Mansur’s death in 1002 thus: *sepultus est in inferno*⁴.

This is a deep-rooted image in traditional historiography, which emphasises the Amirid devastations and contrasts them sharply with the events after 1008, i.e. the *fitna*, or break up of the caliphate in al-Andalus. In this way, a period of great splendour was immediately followed by a period in which the Christians, who had had to endure the attacks of the Amirid army, were now the victors.

One of the first questions we must answer, therefore, is how after thirty years or so of constant and devastating raids, the Christians were able to make such an immediate recovery. There is no need to discuss here all the internal problems that afflicted al-Andalus at that time, but it would be interesting to attempt an analysis from a less polarised viewpoint than one that simply contrasts the times of splendour and times of decline in the Christian populations of the north of the peninsula.

The first point that must be borne in mind is that there had been regular Christian incursions into al-Andalus since the end of the 9th century. The chronicle written by Ibn Hayyan records some of the raids into Andalusian territory made by Ordoño II, the king of León (d. 924). It also mentions campaigns waged by the kings of Pamplona. In fact, the chronicler reports that the Andalusian expeditions were made in response to the predatory actions of the Christians and says that when the *caids*, or generals, of Abd al-Rahman III attacked, the Christians were caught off guard, accustomed for so long to a feeling of security brought on by the absence of a military response from Cordoba⁵. However, despite the consolidation of a power in al-Andalus that was capable of retaliation, the Christian expeditions continued throughout these decades.

The activities of king Ramiro II of León (d. 951) were not only for collecting booty. Ibn Hayyan records that his alliances and attacks were designed to exacerbate the differences between the Cordovan caliph and his governors, provoking weaknesses and exploiting them⁶.

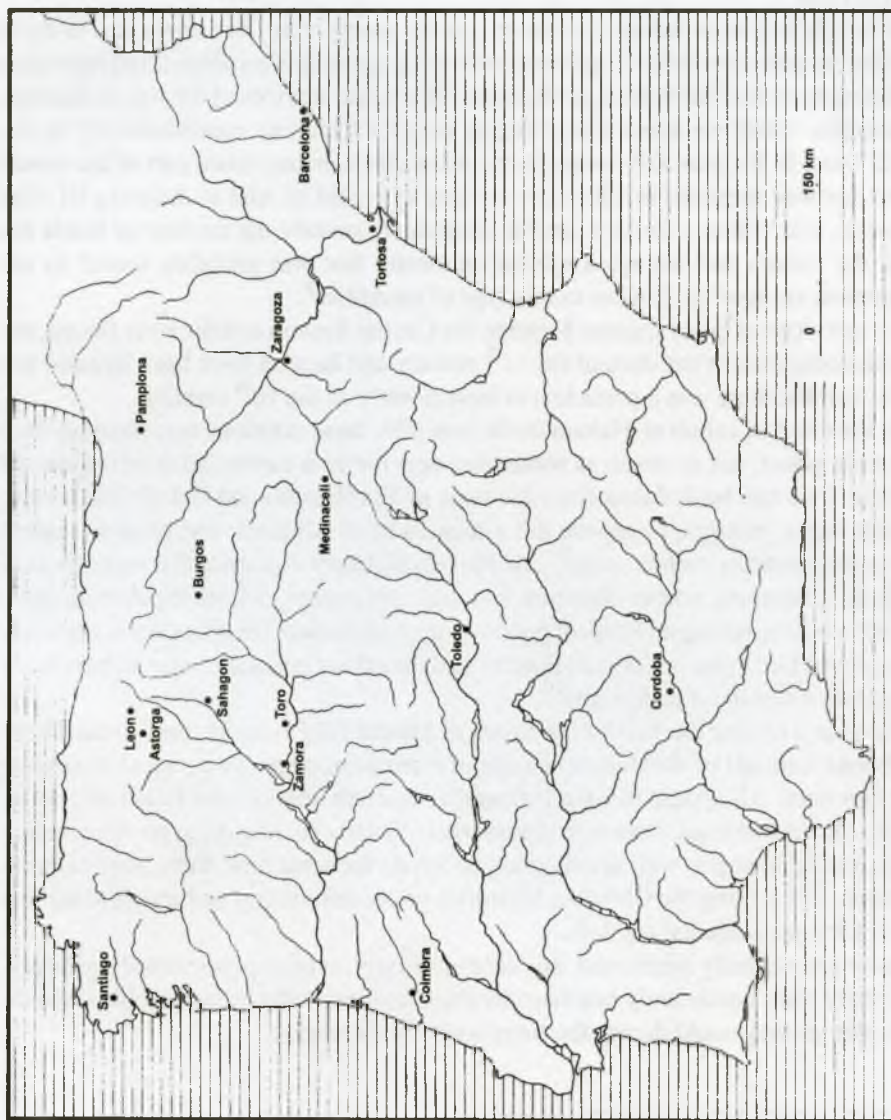
These Christian military interventions were not only led by the king but also by the counts. Those led by the counts of Castile perhaps stand out the most, but counts from other parts of the kingdom of León and from the Catalan regions were involved. Before the middle of the 10th century, count Suñer of Barcelona was collecting taxes from the

³ Sampiro 1952: 345; *Historia Silense* 1959: 175f.

⁴ *Chronicon Burgense* XXIII: 307ff.

⁵ Ibn Hayyan 1981: 105.

⁶ Ibn Hayyan 1981: 274.



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Andalusian city of Tortosa and was so confident of continuing to do so, that he awarded a tenth of them to the see of Barcelona. These taxes were paid in response to the threat that attacks from the Christian north supposed for these regions of the lower valley of the river Ebro⁷.

Although they were led by their counts, some groups may have taken part in these activities on their own behalf, operating without a centrally coordinated strategic plan and aiming to extract booty from al-Andalus. This is perhaps true of the city of Zamora, for example, which we know was a staging post for Christian expeditions led by the king of León. In the year 938 troops from Zamora were an important part of the armed retinue that was surprised in Christian territory by a caid of Abd al-Rahman III. The chronicler, not without a certain lust for vengeance, stresses the number of heads cut off by the victors and betrays a special animosity that was probably rooted in the protagonism enjoyed by Zamora in this type of enterprise⁸.

The activities of cities situated between the Central System and the river Douro, the so-called *concejos*, in the wars of the 11th century and beyond have been stressed but not the fact that there was a precedent at least as early as the 10th century.

On the death of caliph al-Hakam in the year 976, these activities may have become more widespread, not so much as something new but as a continuation of traditional practices. This can be deduced from the texts of Ibn Bassam and Ibn al Jatib⁹, who, although eager, perhaps, to expose the weakness of al-Mushafi, one of al-Mansur's rivals in his upwardly mobile career, nevertheless highlight a practice that was common among the Christians, whose objective was to obtain resources from the Andalusians, by directly appropriating all kinds of goods, extracting ransom for prisoners or demanding payments like those in Tortosa. Slavery and the sale of prisoners seem to have been an integral part of these campaigns¹⁰.

The year 977 saw the first of the series of around fifty Amirid campaigns. These expeditions were led by al-Mansur at a rate of more than one per year. Some were even made in winter. All appear to have had similar motives and to have followed similar patterns. On the one hand, there were the internal objectives of acquiring greater prestige and exhibiting power, as well as collecting booty. At the same time, there were external objectives, like putting the Christian territories under submission and trying to set one band of Christians against another.

As we have already mentioned, this kind of activity, at once political and predatory, had already been consistently practised by the Christians, who in fact continued to do so, as often as they could during the latter part of the century.

⁷ A. Fàbrega (ed.) 1995: num. 30.

⁸ Ibn Hayyan 1981: 318.

⁹ L. Molina 1981: 209.

¹⁰ Count Borrell of Barcelona was able to assemble thirty Andalusian prisoners and send them as a gift to caliph al-Hakam in 971. These captives, who were probably already enslaved, did not necessarily come from the count's own raids *Annales palatinos* 1967: 44.

In 981 al-Mansur faced the final military obstacle that stood in the way of his ambition to achieve full power in al-Andalus. Galib, a *mawla*, or client, of Abd al-Rahman III, who had distinguished himself in Cordoba in the service of the Umayyads, opposed the *hajib*'s increase in power. García Fernández, the Castilian count, and the king of Pamplona, both of whom supported Galib, controller of the border regions near Medinaceli in Soria, took part in this conflict. Diplomatic ties to a neighbouring power were perhaps not the only things that triggered this Christian aid. Promises to relinquish fortified towns, which usually formed the basis for bargaining in treaties between Christians and Muslims, may also have been involved, as well as — it is after all conceivable, and why not? — payments in cash or promises of such payments. In other words, the Christians not only continued to exploit internal weaknesses in al-Andalus but may also have begun to participate as mercenaries in internal Andalusian conflicts, something that was to occur later during the time of the *fitna*, when armies led by Ramón Borrell, the count of Barcelona, or Sancho, the count of Castile, were richly paid by different contenders to the caliphate.

After one or two early confrontations were favourable to Galib and the troops of Navarre and Castile who supported him, the *hajib*'s victory at Torrevicente, between Atienza and Gormaz, in July of the year 981 served as a prologue to a series of military expeditions against the Christians. Chronicles frequently refer to the huge numbers of prisoners taken back to al-Andalus by the army, as well as to the enormous destruction and countless deaths. We know from one reference in the chronicle of Ibn Idhari that al-Mansur was known in al-Andalus as „the importer of slaves” and that the same behaviour was expected of al-Muzaffar, his son and heir. The poem that lists al-Mansur's campaigns is especially interested in the number of captives — particularly female ones — that these campaigns delivered. As well as taking prisoners from the Christians, the Andalusian armies seized all manner of cattle from them. Ibn al-Kardabus highlights the importance of cattle, clothes, weapons and riches, as well as people, in the *hajib*'s booty¹¹.

Some Christians also enlisted in al-Mansur's armies. Christian aristocrats were involved, for example, in the 997 campaign against Santiago de Compostela¹². The 12th century chronicle from León, the somewhat inaptly named *Historia Silense*, reports that there were many *milites* in al-Mansur's army¹³. King Vermudo II was aware of this phenomenon and complained bitterly of the aristocrats in his kingdom who „had crossed over to the side of the Muslim king to destroy the Christian kingdom”¹⁴. On other occasions certain members of the nobility were criticised for such behaviour and charges were brought against them, as in the case of Osorio Díaz, who had joined the Muslims against people and country, *adversus gentem et patriam nostram*¹⁵. However,

¹¹ Ibn Idhari 1993: 20; L. Molina 1981: 230ff.; Ibn al-Kardabus 1986: 27, 25.

¹² R. Dozy 1889, I: 189.

¹³ *Historia Silense*: 174.

¹⁴ J.M. Ruiz Asencio (ed.) 1987: num. 581.

¹⁵ J.M. Andrade (ed.) 1995: num. 266.

Christians continued to fight on the side of the Andalusians throughout the government of al-Muzaffar; we know, for example, that people from Castile and León were involved in the campaign against the count of Barcelona in 1003¹⁶.

At the end of these expeditions, al-Mansur shared some of the booty or some previously prepared gifts among his Christian warriors. In this way this powerful Muslim governor behaved just as any Christian monarch would have been expected to behave — as a leader of military ventures and distributor of acquired riches; wealth that frequently went into the hands of nobles opposed to the king of León. In these years — the end of the 10th century and the beginning of the next — while king Vermudo II (d. 999) and later Alfonso V, who succeeded his father while still a child, were unable to mobilise expeditions against al-Andalus, al-Mansur recruited aristocrats from the Christian kingdom for his armies and shared out the spoils.

Al-Mansur also intervened in the internal conflicts of the kingdom of León. As the *Chronicon Iriense* claims and is confirmed by Ibn Jaldun, the *hajib* must have finally made a pact with Vermudo II, who was thus able to sit on the throne in León¹⁷. He maintained constant pressure on the king and for some time even exacted a yearly tax. He supported rebels against the king. With Muslim collaboration, García Gómez, a member of the family of the counts of Saldaña, seized power in León for a short time. In the year 998, García Gómez signed a document near León with Abu-l-Ahwas, whom al-Mansur had appointed as head of the garrisons at Zamora and Toro¹⁸.

Basing his argument on the mission Sancho undertook to Cordoba, Dozy suggested that the *hajib* might also have supported Sancho's revolt against his father, the Castilian count, García Fernández¹⁹. However, this visit was made in 992 so the evidence is too weak to prove that it actually triggered the revolt in 994. A different matter entirely is whether the *hajib* stirred up disagreements within the family of the counts of Castile.

A daughter of Sancho Garcés II of Pamplona and a daughter of Vermudo II were sent to Cordoba to join al-Mansur's harem. This shows how anxious the Christian principalities were to obtain al-Mansur's goodwill. There was nothing particularly novel in that, however, as women of the ruling Christian families had been sent to Cordoba throughout the 10th century, but now their destination was not the caliph's palace but the *hajib*'s own residence. These unions did not prevent mutual attacks from taking place, however. Nor had they done so in previous decades.

The *Dhikr bilad al-Andalus* numbers al-Mansur's military operations at around fifty. They must have occurred at a rate of more than one a year²⁰. We do not know the site of all these campaigns, partly because of the difficulty in identifying place names, but we do know that some of them were attacked repeatedly. Zamora, for example, was raided five times, while Coimbra, Toro, Astorga and León were each attacked three

¹⁶ Ibn Idhari 1993: 13.

¹⁷ R. Dozy 1889: 100.

¹⁸ J.M. Mínguez (ed.) 1976: num. 356.

¹⁹ R. Dozy 1889: 189.

²⁰ L. Molina 1981.

times. In fact, these repeated hostilities indicate that some of them were not particularly successful or destructive. The *Annales Portugalenses veteres* confirm that three consecutive campaigns were needed to destroy the city of Coimbra completely²¹. This therefore suggests that some of the military successes described in Arab sources owe themselves more to an attempt to extol the feats of the *hajib* than to record effective victories of the Andalusian army.

Also in the strictly military context we have to clarify a number of points. The sources frequently allude to a phase of battle in which the Andalusian armies were close to defeat. These are of course literary references but they must have been credible and probably reflected what had actually happened in some battles. In the attack on León in 982 Ramiro III had some initial success and the victory at Cervera in the year 1000 was not achieved without a number of heavy losses²². Therefore, at least on some occasions, the Christians were capable of confronting the Andalusian armies with some chance of success.

The series of Amirid campaigns against the Christian territories seems to suggest a complete annihilation of the reigns of power and, naturally, of any ability to reply, but we know that this was definitely not true.

The Christians did not neglect the tradition of meddling in Andalusian political problems and felt able to play a hand in the conflicts that were threatening the *hajib*'s position. In the year 989 a plot was hatched, led by the Muslim governors of Saragossa, Abd Allah Ibn Mutarrif, and Toledo, Abd Allah, who was known as *Piedra Seca*. They were joined in conspiracy by one of al-Mansur's own sons, who was also called Abd Allah. When the plot was uncovered and the governor of Saragossa executed, al-Mansur's son was given shelter by the Castilian count, García Fernández, while *Piedra Seca* was given shelter by Vermudo, the king of León. Ibn Jaldun confirms that Vermudo had broken free from the *hajib*'s subjugation in 988, a situation that prompted a campaign against Zamora and Toro. Taking in one of the conspirators was therefore a clear act of defiance and a decision that reflects Vermudo's skill in tackling his problems, most of which were caused or magnified by al-Mansur²³. It is true that al-Mansur's military pressure forced them to hand over their refugees shortly afterwards. Count García Fernández did so in 990 but the king of León was able to delay handing over *Piedra Seca* until 995 when, embroiled in a new period of internal turmoil, he must have felt he had no choice²⁴. However, the simple fact that king Vermudo and the Castilian count had thought about causing the *hajib* problems shows that the imbalance of power in favour of al-Andalus was a long way from being accepted as a permanent or invulnerable situation.

²¹ *Annales Portugalenses veteres* 1947 : 293.

²² *Historia Silense*: 175; J.M. Ruiz Asencio 1968: 31ff., 49; E. Levi Provençal 1950: 426f.

²³ A. Isla 1999: 59ff.

²⁴ L. Molina 1981: 259.

Some Muslim activities were probably in response to looting by Christians. Ibn Abi Amir's initial campaigns, which were intended to increase his own personal prestige, appear to be linked to previous attacks by Christians²⁵. We also know that in those years some Christian leaders tried to organise attacks against al-Andalus. It seems that Count García Fernández was preparing one such operation when he was wounded and captured in 995²⁶. Al-Muzaffar's campaign of 1003 was a response to the frontier activity of the count of Barcelona.

In the year 1000 count Sancho, García Fernández's son and heir, mobilised an impressive army comprising people from Navarre and, led by García Gómez of Saldaña, from León. This coalition indicates a depth of preparation and a desire to triumph that, in the end, did not materialise. However, when analysing these years, we must not forget that, after what are considered two decades of constant, destructive attacks, the Christians were still capable of organising a competitive army. Although difficulties did exist, we must dispel any notion that the Christian territories were in a state of catastrophe.

Other testimonies from a variety of sources also prove that the Amirid era was not such a critical time for the Christian society in the north. Although we cannot determine the economic trends of the period very accurately, it appears that there was no great downward turn. Without going into their significance, we know that the references in Catalan documents to gold coins, *pesas de auro*, or *mancusos*, date from this time²⁷. In the northwestern lands of the Peninsula, where it was normal not to use currency in transactions documented in deeds, this practice was maintained. Also, in León, where there had always been frequent mention of silver coins, *argentos* or *denarios* still appeared.

It is true that references to *mancusos*, often called *yafaris*, do not necessarily mean that these coins had a real and practical use, but it does seem that they actually became more frequent at this time, especially at the end of the 10th century after the campaigns of 985 and 1003, while the majority of the few references to silver coins in the northwest date back to the last quarter of the 10th century. Therefore, the raids of al-Mansur and his son do not seem to have greatly impoverished Christian society or altered it in any significant way.

One of the more visible effects of the Muslim campaigns was an increase in the number of prisoners taken by the Amirid army. Vermudo II of León frequently complained that this phenomenon was a direct result of the Muslim attacks supported by his rebellious magnates. The captives could later be ransomed by their friends, relatives or the Church, a practice that meant payments of enormous sums of money. For example, one hundred and fifty silver solidi were paid in 986 to rescue one of these unfortunates, while fifty silver solidi were paid to Jews apparently acting as intermediaries in this type of operation, although the perpetrators in this particular case may have been

²⁵ E. Levi Provençal 1950: 404.

²⁶ L. Molina 1981: 259; *Anales Castellanos*: 26.

²⁷ P. Bonnassie 1975–76, 2: 372.

Norman raiders²⁸. Al-Mansur's conquest of Barcelona produced a considerable number of prisoners, to whom there are frequent references in the documents of the time. These prisoners generated both direct donations and indirect ones, i.e. alms, to secure their release. The need to liberate prisoners was therefore added to the need to care for pilgrims and the poor. In fact, such a tradition had already existed in the Catalan regions before 985, which shows their familiarity with this kind of situation.

We are not trying to underestimate the negative impact of the Muslim raids. The devastation wrought by al-Mansur and his son, Abd al-Malik al-Muzaffar, caused considerable loss of life, harvests and cattle. Famine was not uncommon. Generally speaking, the attacks brought about the need for those affected to reconstruct what had been destroyed. Buildings had to be repaired and new liturgical equipment such as cloth and sacred vessels had to be purchased. To meet the most urgent needs — the threat of famine, for example, and the costs of repairs, churches were forced to dispose of some of their properties.

Documents of the time from all over the Peninsula refer to sales of church and monastery lands for the purpose of raising money. In 989 the monastery of Sant Pere de les Puelles near Barcelona exchanged land for a vineyard and thirty *solidi* to pay for the restoration of the church, *propter necessitatem de restauratione ecclesie*²⁹. Obviously, there may now be no documentary evidence of these sales since the Church would have had no particular interest in saving documents relating to property that they had sold. One document, however, records the ruin of the monastery of Eslonza and has been preserved because its lands eventually passed to the monastery of Sahagún and was kept amongst the charters there. The monastery of Eslonza was forced to sell property in 988 to replace the livestock stolen by the Andalusian army, not for money but for a substantial herd of livestock comprising one horse, eight oxen and two hundred sheep³⁰.

In the year 1006 the great monastic foundation of Sahagún agreed to sell one of its properties to Rodrigo Díaz to obtain funds for the acquisition of another property and to maintain the monks and the church, *mittamus aut in alia hereditate aut in sufficientia fratrum aut in sustentationem ecclesie*³¹.

Other, less important, monasteries found themselves in the same situation. During these years a number of sales were made in the León region by abbots, but such sales were not very common at other times. It is precisely because they were so infrequent we should remember the canonical prohibitions — and because they were so concentrated at this time that we are led to believe that they were in fact connected with al-Mansur's campaigns. After the initial impact, smaller monasteries, and to some extent larger ones, were forced to shed resources in order to survive. Similar situations

²⁸ A. Ubieto Arteta (ed.) 1976: num. 99; *Portugaliae Monumenta Historica*: 148.

²⁹ F. Udina (ed.) 1951: 212.

³⁰ J.M. Mínguez (ed.) 1976: 340.

³¹ M. Herrero de la Fuente (ed.) 1988: 386.

very probably affected peasant families and even members of the aristocracy, but it is difficult to find documentary evidence for this.

In the year 1003 the monastery of Valdesaz sold a *curtis* it held in the city of León that had been destroyed and bought another one that was in good condition. The new property was probably in as good a condition as the first one before its destruction but we must suppose that the monks, unable to afford the refurbishment, had to make do with a smaller court³².

There are many more examples. In 1004 an abbot named Fruela, from a monastery whose name is not mentioned, sold a mill and the following year got rid of half of his home. In 1005 abbot Adulfus sold a court within the walls of the city of León for twenty-two silver solids. In the year 999 abbess María sold properties to another abbess for three silver solidi³³.

In another document the buyer of the court in Valdesaz, one Amorus, who was a *maiordomus*, is said to have continued acquiring land and was probably connected with the monastery of Santiago in León³⁴. The buyer of one of abbot Fruela's properties and abbot Adulfus' court was called Salamona. She is found in documents of the time acquiring various other properties that later passed to the monastery of San Vicente in León that was founded by Salamona, who later became its abbess. Fruela's other property had already been purchased by Servandus, the same presbyter who had acquired half of abbot Fruela's house.

As we have seen, the lands owned by some monasteries became the property of others. In the year 1000 the abbot of the monastery of Vega de San Juan sold property to the monastery of Sahagún. In 1003 the monastery of Cillanueva sold property to *domina* Cita³⁵. Larger monasteries, or perhaps the more fortunate ones, gained possession of goods that had previously belonged to other monasteries that were damaged by Muslim raids.

On other occasions, the goods were acquired by the aristocracy. This is the case of Eslonza, for example, and of Munio Flainiz, who in 1005 obtained properties from abbot Kardelus³⁶ and who is mentioned around this time in documents from León for acquiring a substantial estate that became the foundation for the family fortune of his descendants.

Such sales may have been needed to stave off the famine caused by poor harvests. Some references to bad years around the turn of the century are preserved in some northwestern documents³⁷. This situation may not necessarily have affected the region of León but we have records that point to high prices of agricultural products there and this is a common situation at times of bad harvest.

³² J.M. Ruiz Asencio (ed.) 1987: 635.

³³ J.M. Ruiz Asencio (ed.) 1987: 640; 647; 646; 584.

³⁴ J.M. Ruiz Asencio (ed.) 1987: 659.

³⁵ M. Herrero de la Fuente (ed.) 1988: 373; 382.

³⁶ J.M. Ruiz Asencio (ed.) 1987: 655.

³⁷ A. Isla 1992: 215.

A northwestern document dating from the year 1001 speaks of times of famine, *dies sterilitate fame*. Another refers to *annos malos*³⁸. We know that at such times, although certain measures of grain or wine are stated as prices in the documents, in practice other, much smaller, measures may have been exchanged. For example, one chart from León that has been preserved in the archives of the monastery of Sahagún states that, although the price of a sale was two *modii*, the seller only received two *quartarii*: *accepi de uos precio llos quartarios de ceuera in duos modios*. We can deduce a similar event from a document from Otero de las Dueñas that dates from the year 1001³⁹. Scarcity such as this must have exacerbated the damage caused by the Amirid raids.

In the county of Barcelona there is a reference to a possible drop in land prices. Before the attack of 985, Eldefredo loaned twenty-two *mancusos* and obtained a plot of land as security. When the debt was not repaid he sold it for fifteen *mancusos*⁴⁰. These are very isolated examples, however, and there does not appear to have been a sharp drop in prices in the Barcelona region. Although land prices may have dropped slightly, in the long term they probably remained stable due to normal economic growth factors and the limited amount of land available in the Catalan counties.

Interestingly, in the Catalan area sales made by the counts of Barcelona, especially Borrell (d. 992) and, to a lesser extent, by his son, Ramón, are frequent. Sales had been consistently made in this region throughout the 10th century but these multiplied in the last two decades. The counts were undoubtedly affected just as the monasteries of León were. The devastation wrought by the Amirid armies required expenditure to pay for the subsequent repairs. In the year 988 count Borrell sold property for gold and silver and spent it on repairing Barcelona castle⁴¹.

Similar emergencies were probably behind the count's decision to sell off other belongings. However, sales were not limited to the period after 985, which suggests that there was a tradition of selling land to solve cash-flow problems.

Al-Mansur's military expeditions reflect the growth, both demographic and economic, of Christian society, for if there had been no consolidated growth, Muslim attacks, so interested in booty and slaves, would not have taken place. Moreover, without this development the Christians would not have been a threat and would not have been able to overcome the raids or their effects.

These raids were destructive, however. Goods such as cattle had to be bought to restore the losses, damage had to be repaired and ransom had to be found for the many prisoners taken by the Andalusians.

Members of the aristocracy and, above all, the religious institutions were therefore forced to sell off some of their properties. Some were unable to withstand these difficult times and fell into ruin. Although the main targets for Muslim attack were those centres

³⁸ J.M. Andrade (ed.) 1995, 205, 302.

³⁹ M. Herrero de la Fuente (ed.) 1988: 393; G. Del Ser Quijano (ed.) 1994: 41§.

⁴⁰ A. Fàbrega (ed.) 1995: 191.

⁴¹ A. Fàbrega (ed.) 1995: 178.

where the armies expected to find sufficient riches i.e. cities and monasteries — which explains their bitter complaints — peasant families were also affected. Many found it difficult to meet their needs and pay off their debts. They therefore lost their land and saw their social situation deteriorate when they were forced to become tenants. Some, on the other hand, may actually have found themselves in a better position after inheriting the estates of dead or captured relatives.

Such a dynamic land market led to the build-up of property by some families. In the years immediately after 985 bishop Vivas of Barcelona, for example, made a large number of acquisitions. Families of the aristocracy and the Church benefited from these circumstances. In general the trend was to accumulate property at all levels of society, but this was especially true for the aristocracy and the Church. This reinforced current trends, both in land ownership and in the conditions of the peasants.

The power of the kings and counts was also affected by the Muslim attacks and costs had to be met. However, much land was left without an owner and passed to the lords. The charter known as the *fuero* of Espeja, which was probably drawn up around 1030, describes this kind of situation. We are told that some vassals of the count of Castile perished in the battle of Cervera in the year 1000 and, as there were no descendants, their goods passed to the count⁴². Peasants' non-payment of debts also encouraged this stockpiling of land. Some of the land that count Ramón of Barcelona disposed of came from property he had acquired as a result of deaths and disappearances during the Amirid assault on Barcelona.

The outflow of gold and silver to al-Andalus and the cost of reconstruction required the aristocracy and the Church hierarchy to increase their supply of precious metals. Al-Mansur's campaigns and those of his successors were a drain on this supply and may have been a crucial factor behind the Christians' activities during the *fitna*. The continuous need for gold and silver in Christian society encouraged the military intervention in al-Andalus that finally altered the balance of power in their favour.

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⁴² A. Ubieto Arteta (ed.) 1963: 159ff.

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APOCALYPSE THEN: ENGLAND A.D. 1000

Simon Keynes*

The equivalent in Anglo-Saxon England of Y2K, known in its own day as M, fell just over half way through the eventful reign of King Æthelred the Unready (978–1016). By the standards of the early middle ages, it is a period for which the historian has at his disposal a considerable wealth and variety of primary sources, ranging from the products of an active royal administration (charters, law-codes, and coins) to works of extended prose in Latin and the vernacular (including saints' Lives and homilies, as well as annals and chronicles). It is also a period which witnessed the production of some fine manuscripts, many of which survive to tell their separate tales, and the building of some major churches, most of which do not. So seemingly propitious were these times for the advancement of scholarship and material culture that conventional dating expressions, such as „late-tenth-century”, „c. 1000”, „s. x/xi”, or „early-eleventh-century”, are found attached to some of the most important or spectacular of the surviving relics of the Anglo-Saxon period; and it is all the more striking, therefore, that the people were suffering, at precisely this time, from one of the most sustained campaigns of unprovoked aggression ever visited upon the English by the agents of a foreign power. The question arises, under these circumstances, whether the English paid any attention to the approach and passing of the Millennium in A.D. 1000, or whether, in fact, they had other things on their collective mind.

THREE VIEWS OF ENGLAND, C. 1000

It may be instructive at the outset to listen in turn to three voices representing the different perspectives of three of those who lived through some part or all of the reign of King Æthelred. The first voice is that of Æthelweard, ealdorman of the Western Provinces, who produced a Latin chronicle for the benefit of his distant cousin Matilda, abbess of Essen, probably during the course of the 980s¹. Æthelweard had been appointed an ealdorman in the mid-970s, and sooner or later was entrusted with responsibility for Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall. It seems that Matilda had

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¹ A. Campbell (ed.) 1962.

been moved to re-establish contact with her English cousins, and that Æthelweard had informed her „about what is known of our common family, and also about the migration of our nation”. Now she had written to Æthelweard himself, and in return he had embarked upon the production of a Latin *Chronicle*, which, although based squarely on a manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, represents a considerable literary and historiographical achievement in its own right. Æthelweard writes in his preface of „the reaffirmation of our relationship” (*de iteratione propinquitatis nostræ*), and conceived his work as one which would celebrate the ruling dynasty to which they both belonged. The narrative itself is arranged in four books. Book I begins with the Creation, and moves rapidly on past the birth and death of Jesus Christ to the Roman conquest of Britain. We are told how the Britons invited the Saxons to help them against the Picts and Scots, and how the Saxons presently rebelled against them; subsequent events are presented in an annalistic framework, and are pursued as far as the 590s. Books II and III are distinctive for the sense they provide of peoples coming together. In Book II Æthelweard turns „to the qualities of our own race”, reviewing events from the arrival of St Augustine to the marriage between Beorhtric, king of the West Saxons (786–802), and Eadburh, daughter of Offa, king of the Mercians (757–796). Book III begins with the first arrival of Danes, in Beorhtric’s reign, and deals thereafter with the fortunes of the Mercians and the West Saxons in the first half of the ninth century, paying special attention to Ecgbrecht, king of the West Saxons (802–839), and Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons (839–858). In Book IV, which is longer than the earlier books, Æthelweard set out to show his cousin „the origin of those descended from our family”. He begins with the sons of Æthelwulf, in the second half of the ninth century, and brings the narrative to its climax with the death of King Edgar in 975. A pair of chapter-headings in the transmitted text of the chronicle suggests that Æthelweard may have intended to take the narrative beyond 975, into the reigns of Edward the Martyr and Æthelred; but for whatever reason he seems in the event to have kept an account of his own times to himself. In general terms, Æthelweard’s chronicle thus represents a view of the distant and more recent past from the perspective of one writing in the early years of Æthelred’s reign, before the renewal of Danish activity had made much impression. There is no mistaking the sense of dynastic pride with suffuses Æthelweard’s exposition, and the absence at this stage of any pronounced antipathy towards the Danes (beyond disparaging remarks about what he understands to be their heathen practices). More significant for our immediate purposes is, however, Æthelweard’s commitment to the political integrity of the land in which he lived: „And so Britain (*Brittannia*) is now called England (*Anglia*), taking the name of the victors” (*Chron.* I.4). The remark is symbolic of the truth that the kingdom of the English had by now acquired its territorial identity as the kingdom of England, and its ruling elite the pretensions to match.

The second voice to which we should listen is that of an anonymous poet, writing in the aftermath of the battle of Maldon in August 991². If a historian may venture to

² D. Scragg (ed.) 1991.

express his opinion of what is first and foremost a literary text, it is that the poem takes its place in what must have been a lively debate among those interested in the conduct of the nation's affairs. The poet seems to have been concerned, at one level, to comment upon the strategy or tactics involved in warfare against the Danes: while he was aware of the reasons which led some to buy them off with silver and gold, he was in no doubt that it was better to stand firm, and fight; yet he seems to have been critical, in this instance, of the ealdorman who gave too much ground in allowing the Vikings across the causeway onto the mainland. The poem can be read at another level as an indictment of the behaviour of those who deserted their companions, set beside approbation of the loyalty which others showed towards their fallen lord. Yet there was at the same time a larger loyalty which in the mind of the poet lay beyond that with which he was principally concerned. Ealdorman Byrhtnoth (*yrre and anræd* „the angry and resolute one”) declared his intention to defend „this homeland, the kingdom of Æthelred, my lord's people and his country” (*ethel thysne, / Æthelredes eard, ealdres mines / folc and foldan*). Later, in reporting the ealdorman's death in battle, the poet exclaims: „Then the head of the army had fallen, Æthelred's earl” (*Êa wearð afeallen / thæs folces ealdor, / Æthelredes eorl*), reminding the audience again of the transferable loyalty which was owed to the king, who remained unseen. These are not (in my view) the lines of a poet disillusioned by years of folly, compounded by treachery and incompetence, lamenting the passing of an old code of behaviour as he realised that he looked defeat in the face. Rather, they are the lines of a poet who wished to make known what he thought about the cowardice of some, but whose intention was none the less to instill in his audience a sense of pride in the courage of others, and whose devotion to his king was unswerving.

The third voice is that of the anonymous chronicler responsible for the remarkable account of the Danish invasions during Æthelred's reign, extending in its coverage from the resumption of the raids in the early 980s to the capitulation of the English in 1016, and transmitted to posterity as part of the composite work known as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*³. It is clear that the author of this account was writing after the final defeat of the English, that he had his own understanding of the reasons behind the calamitous outcome of events, and that his selection and presentation of these events was determined in large measure by judgements that he made in retrospect. It is also apparent from the one year (1001) for which we happen to have an independent account, in another manuscript of the *Chronicle*, that a particular sequence of events might be presented in a different way when seen from a more strictly „contemporary” perspective, and that the doom and defeatism which pervades the account by the main chronicler might not necessarily have been representative of any general view which obtained fifteen or twenty years earlier. It is, however, the voice of the defeatist chronicler which lies behind all later accounts of the reign, from the twelfth century to the present day; and in acknowledging the influence of this account one can but register the importance of keeping it firmly in its own context. Even so, the voice we hear is not bitter, or

³ D. Whitelock (ed.) 1979: 232–251.

resentful, or overtly critical of the king. It is the voice of one who identified with the cause of the English people, and, after over thirty years of almost uninterrupted warfare, it is still the voice of one who knew that his loyalty was owed to the king.

„ÆTHELREDES EARD”

The respect shown by ealdorman, poet, and chronicler for the office or person of the king himself was the product of a long and complex process of development which had its roots deep in the eighth and ninth centuries⁴. A kingdom „of the West Saxons” created by King Ine and consolidated by King Ecgberht had been transformed by King Alfred the Great, in the 880s, into a kingdom „of the Anglo-Saxons”, and by King Æthelstan, in the 920s, into a kingdom „of the English”. This process was accompanied by the gradual emergence of a sense of common identity and purpose which had helped in the tenth and early eleventh centuries to bind the people together, especially when they were threatened by external forces; though it is a moot point whether this was accomplished by design, through the efforts of those in positions of power and influence to implement their visions of political unity, or whether it came about in response to irresistible forces which had in their own way determined the unfolding course of events⁵. Whatever the case, there can be no doubt that the „kingdom of the English” was by the time of Æthelred’s accession, in 978, a political entity of a kind which set it apart from its neighbours. The term most generally used in the ninth and tenth centuries to denote the land inhabited by the English people was „Angelcynnes land”, which remained in common usage for some time, but by the end of the tenth century the term „Englaland”, corresponding to Latin *Anglia*, was beginning to make an impression in vernacular prose. The term signifies a conceptual advance from a land which took its identity from the people who lived within it, to a land which had come to acquire an identity of its own; by the same token, the king of such a land was not only the leader of his people, but the ruler of a territory which had recognised boundaries and institutions particular to itself.

The accompanying map is an attempt to convey a visual impression of the kingdom of the English in the late tenth century. Two of the natural features central to any understanding of the period are the rivers Humber and Thames. The River Humber still marked the major divide between the north and the south; and although coinage was struck in the king’s name at York, the king’s writ may not have reached much further. From the Humber northwards to the Tees, much would have depended on the ability of the king’s ealdorman to contain any independence of spirit entertained in the former

⁴ For an illustrated survey, see J. Campbell (ed.) 1982. See also S. Keynes 1995: 1842, and S. Keynes 1999: 456484. For further guidance, see M. Lapidge, J. Blair, S. Keynes, D. Scragg (ed.) 1999, and S. Keynes 1998, of which the latter is also available on the Internet at www.wmich.edu/medieval/rawl/keynes1/index.html

⁵ For further discussion, see, e.g., P. Wormald 1983: 99129; and S. Foot 1996: 25–49.

kingdom of York, and the king himself would have needed to keep an eye on the political aspirations of the archbishop. The major players beyond the Tees were the bishop of Chester-le-Street (relocated from 995 at Durham) and the secular powers based at Bamburgh; but in truth distressingly little is known of these most northerly regions of the kingdom, and one is left to imagine that conditions differed markedly from one area to another, depending on proximity to or distance from centres of royal and ecclesiastical authority. In the south, the River Thames had lost none of its importance as the major waterway which gave prosperity to the kingdom, leading downriver to the major emporium of London and the markets beyond. In 957, thirty years after the first political unification of England, the Thames had been recognised as a natural boundary when the kingdom was divided between Wessex and Mercia, a status accorded to it again in 1016 and 1035. Many of the major roads which had originated under Roman rule in Britain were still being used in the Anglo-Saxon period, also leading most naturally to London; and among them, there is reason to believe that Watling Street was recognised in Æthelred's reign as the boundary between „English” England and the area regarded as „Danish”. It is on this basis that we may recognise a distinction, within England, between Wessex and Mercia, and a larger distinction between „English” England and the Danelaw. A law-code drawn up in the name of King Æthelred, probably in the late 990s, was issued „at Woodstock in Mercia, in accordance with English law”⁶. A complementary law-code was drawn up at Wantage, in Berkshire, at about the same time, with intended reference to the territory of the „Five Boroughs” (Lincoln, Leicester, Nottingham, Stamford and Derby), representing a kind of political identity which had emerged, during the tenth century, in the original heartland of Danish settlement in the southern part of the Danelaw⁷. A charter which records how the king and his councillors had gathered at Cookham, in Berkshire, probably in the mid-990s, brings them there „from far and wide, both West Saxons and Mercians, Danes and English”⁸, acknowledging diversity while at the same time suggesting overall uniformity. It would be mistaken to imagine that the currency of these basic distinctions in the late tenth century reflected residual tension between Wessex and Mercia, or racial cleavage between English and Danes. These were labels, denoting regional as opposed to political or ethnic identities. The divisions which counted perhaps more than any others, and which gave Æthelred's kingdom its most distinctive organising principle, were the shires, hundreds, and tithings. The shires south of the Thames, and of the former kingdoms of East Anglia and Essex, were of ancient origin; but it was the extension of this system into the former kingdom of Mercia, and into the „Danish” areas of the east midlands, that constituted one of the most significant aspects of the development of royal

⁶ *I Æthelred*: 52–55.

⁷ *I Æthelred*: 64–71; also translated in D. Whitelock 1979: 439–442 (no. 43).

⁸ P.H. Sawyer 1968: no. 939; translated in D. Whitelock 1979: 580 (no. 121). A revised and updated edition of the main part of Sawyer's list, prepared by S.E. Kelly, is available on the Internet at www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/

government and local administration in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. There is every reason to believe that the whole system was in place at the time of King Æthelred's accession, in 978, and that it provided a remarkable degree of institutional and social coherence at least to the southern part of the kingdom as a whole. Within each shire, the county town from which the shire generally took its name, and which almost invariably had its own mint, was part of a patchwork comprising other towns, villages, and separate estates, inhabited by people who owed services to the king, to a religious house, or to a prosperous layman, and who lived their lives according to a regular routine of meetings, of shire and hundred, under the watchful eye of the shire-reeve (or sheriff). We begin to understand what it meant to be in „Æthelredes eard”.

Needless to say, life in Æthelred's England was no pastoral idyll of innocent people enjoying security and freedom until obliged to defend themselves against forces minded (in the words of the chronicler for 1002) to take their lives and possess their kingdom afterwards. Few modern scholars would underestimate the pretensions entertained by (or on behalf of) successive kings from Alfred onwards, or the determination with which they sought to extend their power over their people. Indeed, it is fast becoming axiomatic that the efforts of these kings resulted in the creation of institutions which in combination might be dignified as an organised and structured „state”⁹. It remains the case, however, that the aspirations extended further than the practice, and that the appearance concealed a different reality. We might like to believe, for example, that kingship was an office defined by particular powers and responsibilities, and that the people in some sense „chose” the king. What mattered during a king's lifetime was the perceived suitability for the throne of any members of the immediate royal family, the politics within the family and the royal household, and the king's own inclination (or otherwise) to designate a successor. What counted in the aftermath of a king's death, on the other hand, was the place that a surviving atheling (or king's son) held with respect to the dominant faction at court, and his ability to command the support of those who remained in positions of power and influence. The network of personal relationships which would affect the directions taken by the new king began to assume its distinctive shape, with tension between interests or factions that were long established and interests or factions that were new. Yet this was only part of the king-making process. A king, once „chosen” in this sense by his people, was formally consecrated by agents of the Church, and henceforth the people were bound by the tenets of their Christian faith to respect his person and obey his will. For his part, the king was solemnly bound by the terms of his coronation oath to ensure that the Church and all the Christian people would hold true peace, to forbid acts of robbery and iniquity to all orders of men, and to enjoin justice and mercy in all judgements¹⁰. It was axiomatic, at the same time, that once a king had been consecrated, the people could not shake his yoke off their

⁹ See, in particular, the seminal papers by J. Campbell 2000; see also P. Wormald 2000: xiii–xxii, at xvii–xx.

¹⁰ For a text and translation of a version of the „Second Anglo-Saxon Coronation Order”, see J. Wickham Legg 1901: 30–42.

necks¹¹. This, or something like it, would have been the background to each new reign in the tenth century, and much else would have depended on whatever circumstances happened to unfold thereafter.

Beneath the exalted level of the king and his immediate family, society as a whole was made up of a land-owning nobility (including those who were accorded special status as the king's thegns, and those who rose to higher office), a substantial free population (including those known as *ceorls*), and a much larger body of the semi-free or enslaved. The most important officials were the ealdormen, appointed by the king, with power extending over a district, perhaps comprising several shires, and the reeves, also appointed by the king, who represented his interests over his own estates and within each shire. There was always scope, moreover, for the upwardly mobile: a slave could earn his freedom; if a *ceorl* prospered, he might be able to gain recognition as a thegn; while a thegn could gain higher office in the king's household, or as the king's representative in a shire, and might even rise to become an ealdorman. Fortunate men may have been helped on their way by marrying well, or even by marrying into the royal family; and at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, one ealdorman in particular made it all the way to the top. It was also possible to slip down the hierarchy, through one form of misfortune or another. Among those who remained near the lower end of the scale, horizons would have been limited to the immediate vicinity in which a person lived and worked; but many thegns must have moved more widely through the kingdom, and some of them held estates scattered across several shires. The pattern of any man's life was determined, of course, by the particular circumstances in which it was lived: animated by whatever bonds of kinship, lordship, and friendship applied in each case; regulated by the laws of the king, and the church, and by the nature of whatever services had to be performed for others; punctuated by the passing of the seasons and the passage of the years; and terminated by illness, act of violence, or (with luck) old age. It was, inevitably, a society in which women and children were closely dependent on the men who had immediate responsibility for their welfare; yet it was at the same time a society in which the interests of women and children were respected, and in which women were often able to hold more than their own.

Yet in what practices, institutions or offices lay the king's ability, or otherwise, to exercise power over his people, and determined his success, or failure, in the maintenance of social order? The powers of kingship had long been exercised by the stately (or not so stately) progress of the king and his immediate household through his kingdom; for it was in this way that the king made effective use of his scattered resources, and could be seen to be displaying his majesty and discharging his responsibilities. The royal itinerary, in so far as it can be reconstructed from surviving evidence, included royal estates, towns, and other places in the heartland of the kingdom, as well as places further afield, and shows in this way where the king was able to make his presence felt, in what parts of his kingdom he may have made rather

¹¹ D. Whitelock 1979: 92–56 (no. 239b).

less of an impression, and how the effort was made to accommodate both urban and rural interests¹². The royal entourage might often have been a small group, moving inconspicuously through the countryside; but on (perhaps) five occasions during the course of a year, probably including some the major religious festivals, the king and his household would have been joined by archbishops, bishops, abbots, ealdormen, reeves and thegns, from throughout the land, for a general meeting of the king's councillors (*witenagemot*), lasting for several days. We should not imagine that these were proto-parliaments, or assemblies where debate was conducted and decisions reached according to proto-democratic procedures; far from it. Rather, it was on such occasions that intrigue, faction, corruption, and other pressures played on the king and his councillors as they determined what course of action to follow, or how best to resolve a dispute, or (more simply) where to go next; it was also on such occasions that kings, in formal display, would have made pronouncements about the law, and issued the charters which run in their names. Of course there were places, like Winchester, which might have been of particular importance to particular kings, or to particular factions within the kingdom; but while kingship seems to have retained its essentially itinerant nature throughout the tenth century, it was during this period that London was acquiring the political status commensurate with its long-established economic importance, which led to its emergence in the early eleventh century as something approximating to the capital city of the realm.

Understanding of the nature of late Anglo-Saxon society depends largely on the evidence of law-codes, or rather on our reading of those codes which have happened to survive¹³. The great law-book issued in the name of King Alfred (871–899) is symbolic of the aspirations entertained by those at court: it was programmatic, yet it was also intended to serve a practical purpose¹⁴. The law-codes of his successors in the tenth century were more clearly reactive, produced in response to perceived difficulties and needs, as procedures were replaced, modified or enforced in the light of experience and changing circumstances¹⁵. It might be possible by the careful selection of a particular sequence of clauses from a particular set of codes to create the impression that arrangements and principles which can be dignified as a legal system were imposed from above, at what might be regarded as a remarkably early stage. The more pragmatic view is, however, that the practices deemed conducive to good order which obtained in the kingdom by the late tenth century were the end-result of a process of development which had extended over a period of many years, sometimes in response to a local practice and sometimes in response to a central or royal initiative. There was much emphasis from the outset on the importance of keeping ones „oath and pledge” (*his ađ and his wed*), of unspecified import, but perhaps including an oath to respect the peace (*friđ*) as set down in the kings

¹² For royal itineraries in the tenth century, see D. Hill 1981: 85–91.

¹³ For a magisterial survey of this material, see P. Wormald 1999a; see also P. Wormald 1999b.

¹⁴ F.L. Attenborough (ed.) 1922: 62–93 (laws of Alfred) and 3661 (appended laws of Ine).

¹⁵ For law-codes of Edward the Elder and Æthelstan, see F.L. Attenborough (ed.) 1922; for law-codes of Edmund, Edgar, and Æthelred, see A.J. Robertson 1925.

laws, which the people of a shire swore to a reeve, and an oath of loyalty which the people as a whole swore publicly to the king. It is also apparent that successive kings strove to uphold the terms of their coronation oath by issuing regular injunctions against theft, corruption, dishonesty, perjury, treason, blood-feud, and other forms of anti-social behaviour, demonstrating how determined they were to make royal authority felt in all aspects of public order. Punishments for malefactors of one kind or another included imprisonment, a fine for disobedience to the king (*ðæs cynges oferhyrness*), generally 120 shillings, payment of a fine equivalent to a man's wergild (200 shillings for an ordinary freeman, 1200 shillings for a thegn), forfeiture of property, mutilation, and death. Acting in the shadow of his father's law-book, King Edward the Elder (899–924) issued instructions to his reeves about proper practice in particular cases, and urged his councillors to ensure that his orders were carried out as intended; the general impression is of a king experimenting with procedures which were still in their infancy, in a kingdom which was still very much in the making. The law-codes of King Æthelstan (924–939) suggest how practices at the centre and in the localities may have been stirred up by the transformation of the kingdom „of the Anglo-Saxons” into the kingdom „of the English”. It remained a basic principle that every man would stand surety for his own men (III Æthelstan, ch. 7); yet what applied in the shires may not necessarily have applied in a thriving borough. It was at about this time that the men of London are known to have formed themselves into groups of ten men (each including one chief man), and into larger groups of ten such „tithings”, each with its own additional „hundredman”. Members of the „peace-guild” took responsibility for each other's good behaviour, and took it upon themselves to bring wrongdoers to justice; all the chief men of the tithings, and all the hundredmen, would assemble once a month in order to review how the whole system was working. In the reign of King Edmund (939–946), we find explicit reference to a general oath of loyalty to the king (III Edmund, ch. 1), symbolising a perception of kingship as a glorified and generalised form of lordship; we also find that every man was still required to act as surety for his own men, and for all men on his estates, on penalty of the standard fine (III Edmund, ch. 7). The significant change came in the 960s, during the reign of King Edgar (959–975). We now encounter in the law-codes an organised system of shire-courts (meeting twice a year), borough-courts (meeting three times a year), and hundred courts (meeting once a month), coupled with an insistence that every man should have his surety (*borh*), who would hold him to the performance of every legal duty. This was the kind of arrangement which still obtained in Æthelred's reign; and the provision, in Cnut's reign, that every man should belong to a tithing and be brought within a hundred, with a surety who would hold him, as before, to the performance of every legal duty, was perhaps a different way of saying much the same thing. We see here, quite clearly, the origins of the frankpledge system attested in the twelfth century, and represented then by the „sheriffs tourn” and the „view of frankpledge”. It should be recognised, however, that the tendency among historians, from William of Malmesbury onwards, to project the chief elements of a working system back into the distant past is often based on little

more than a wishful thought; and that while we may wish to give credit to King Alfred for setting a process in motion, we should not imagine for a moment that he knew from the start how things would turn out, or deny his successors in the tenth century distinctive roles of their own.

Another view of the kingdom of England is provided by the arrangements that existed for the holding of land, and for the defence of the kingdom against external attack¹⁶. It was axiomatic in the tenth century that all land was either „folkland” (land subject to customary law) or „bookland” (literally „land held by charter”). Folkland was subject to various customary burdens which were to the benefit of the king and his officials (such as payment of food-rents, rendering of the proceeds of justice, and an obligation to give sustenance to the king’s men as they went about their business), and could not be alienated outside its holder’s family (with preference given to the male line). Bookland, on the other hand, was a more privileged and desirable form of tenure, exempted by the terms of the charter which created it from the customary obligations or restrictions which were incumbent upon folkland, with the important exception of the three burdens which pertained to the defence of the kingdom (service in the army, building or maintenance of fortresses, and building or maintenance of bridges), and held by its owner with freedom of disposition in perpetuity to whomsoever he or she wished. The land of a wealthy thegn or ealdorman would have comprised estates of folkland as well as bookland; in addition, a person might have held someone else’s land from that other person, as a form of „loanland”. So when, as the end of his days approached, a thegn or ealdorman wished to make known his intentions about the disposition of his property after his death, he could set aside his folkland, which would pass on in accordance with customary procedures, and deal in his will only with his bookland (and other forms of property at his own disposal). The king acquired his naturally more substantial holdings of folkland and bookland both within his family, and by virtue of his office; but just as he also acquired bookland by gift, purchase, and exchange, and additionally by forfeiture from the casualties of legal process, so too was he able to give it or sell it to religious houses of his choice and to all those persons who enjoyed his favour. The king’s charters, or grants of bookland, have much, therefore, to reveal about his dealings with the great and the good of his kingdom, and the attached witness-lists enable us to identify those who were in regular attendance upon him. Yet they also make a larger point. While many of the customary burdens incumbent upon holders of folkland operated essentially to the benefit of the king, by virtue of his royal office, the so-called „common” burdens, which pertained to the defence of the kingdom, and which were incumbent upon holders of folkland and bookland alike¹⁷, were represented in charters not as services owed to the king, or lord, but as services performed for the common good of the people. There is no suggestion here that all land

¹⁶ N. Brooks 1971, reprinted in his *Communities and Warfare, 700–1400*, London 2000.

¹⁷ For a rather different view, that military obligations were imposed by kings upon holders of bookland (and that folkland was land lent by the king to his warriors), see R.P. Abels 1988.

belonged to the king, and a real sense in which the political entity was seen to be the people themselves. It was, of course, a deep-rooted perception of the „state“, and to change it would take an act of military conquest.

Our view of the kingdom of England in the closing years of the tenth century is otherwise conditioned by our understanding of its most pervasive institution. The Anglo-Saxon Church in the last quarter of the tenth century was well organised, well staffed, and well integrated into the social, political and economic fabric of the kingdom¹⁸. The archbishops and bishops took their places in a well-ordered ecclesiastical hierarchy, and played their appointed roles in national and local affairs, travelling to meetings of the king and his councillors, presiding with the ealdorman at biannual meetings of the shire court, and superintending the provision of pastoral care at the parish level. Many of those who became bishops in the late tenth century had been trained as monks, and some of the episcopal churches were served by communities which were themselves largely or entirely monastic in composition, notably Winchester (from 964), Sherborne (from 998), Worcester, and Canterbury. Churches served by single priests were established on many estates, and communities of secular clergy, or of monks, or of nuns, had proliferated throughout the land, observing rules or practices that doubtless varied from place to place. Within this wider and more permissive context, the hard-line monastic reform movement which had gathered momentum in the 960s, and which had been given a sense of direction in the early 970s¹⁹, was making its impact in the spread of newly-founded or reformed houses throughout southern England, creating new opportunities for the development of learning and culture, and in various ways advancing the social and political interests of the newly-unified kingdom²⁰. Many of the major religious houses located in Wessex, Mercia, and the south-east, such as Glastonbury, Bath, Malmesbury, Abingdon, Pershore, St Albans, Westminster, and Canterbury, were ancient foundations united again in their adherence to the Rule of St Benedict, and in their loyalty to the king, and soon became the focal points of localised cults and identities. The same applied in the fenlands, where ancient houses such as Ely, Peterborough, and Crowland were reformed or refounded, to be joined by newly-established houses at Ramsey, Thorney, and elsewhere. Yet for all the appearance of uniformity, the profiles of the various communities were generally quite distinctive. Shaftesbury, founded by King Alfred, retained its particular association with the upper echelons of West Saxon society; Malmesbury was the resting-place of King Æthelstan, which may have affected its ability in the later tenth century to secure all the patronage that it needed; Glastonbury thrived during the reigns of Edmund and Eadred, but was eclipsed during the reign of King Edgar by the power-houses at Abingdon and Winchester, which did especially well when their interests were promoted by Æthelwold, abbot of Abingdon (954–963) and bishop of Winchester (963–984);

¹⁸ For an excellent survey, see F. Barlow 1979².

¹⁹ T. Symons (ed.), 1953.

²⁰ For a recent review-article, see C. Cubitt 1997: 77–94.

Ely prospered not least by virtue of its standing as the resting-place of St Æthelthryth, becoming a focus of identity for the men and women of Cambridgeshire, as well as a major social and economic force in the region; and so on. The process by which the more successful religious houses came to accumulate their vast endowments of land lost some of its momentum in 975, when the death of King Edgar upset the stability of the realm and unleashed an outbreak of resentment, affecting some houses more seriously than others; but this had little effect on the vitality of the reform movement itself, which in many respects continued to go from strength to strength.

THE REIGN OF KING ÆTHELRED THE UNREADY

Æthelred, younger son of King Edgar, was chosen king in succession to his murdered brother Edward, in March 978, and was formally consecrated king, at Kingston-upon-Thames, in May 979²¹. He was at the time about twelve or thirteen years old, and there is reason to believe that Bishop Æthelwold, in particular, remained the dominant influence at court, acting perhaps in close association with the king's mother, Queen Ælfthryth. Following the death of Bishop Æthelwold, in 984, the king seems to have fallen in with another faction at court, and to have moved off in directions which he later came to regret. He would appear, by this time, to have married a certain Ælfgifu, daughter of Thored, ealdorman of Northumbria, producing with her a large family of several sons and several daughters; among them, the first-born son was named Æthelstan, reflecting what may have been the prevailing view of King Æthelstan as the founder of the new political order. The more ominous development was, however, the renewal of Viking activity in England²². After the trials and tribulations of an earlier age, the English had enjoyed a rest from external invasion, and used the time well in rebuilding their society, their culture, and their kingdom. But the raids had resumed in the early 980s, and soon got worse. In 991 a large fleet arrived in Kent, worked its way around the coast, defeated Ealdorman Byrhtnoth at the battle of Maldon, and went north in 992/3, before returning south to London in 994. The crisis in the early 990s may well have been one factor among others which brought Æthelred to his senses; for by 993 the king seems to have recognised the error of his former ways, and to have resolved to make amends. We move into a period of the king's reign, extending through the Millennium, from *c.* 993 to *c.* 1006, when the king (now in his late twenties and thirties) took counsel (as we shall see) from an interesting range of distinguished men. In 994 the English came to terms with the Danish army, as a result of which some of the Danes appear to have entered into King Æthelred's service, as mercenaries hired to defend the country against any other invading forces, with their main base off the south coast on the Isle of Wight; but in 997 the Danes turned against their employers, and resumed

²¹ On the reign of Æthelred, see D. Hill (ed.) 1978; and S. Keynes 1980.

²² S. Keynes 1997: 48–82, 73–76.

their activities with a vengeance, until eventually driven from the country, by plague, in 1005. It was a period, therefore, when the minds of the English must have been concentrated by the ever-present threat of a Danish army in their midst: overtly hostile in 991–994, under some form of control in 994–997, and overtly hostile again in 997–1005. To read the chronicler's account of Danish activities in England, during this period, is to realise how much the English must have suffered from their unwanted attentions, and how the chronicler despaired of the measures undertaken by King Æthelred's government: „And ever, as things should have been moving, they were the more delayed from one hour to the next, and ever they let their enemies force increase, and ever the English retreated inland and the Danes continually followed; and then in the end it effected nothing — the naval expedition or the land expedition — except the oppression of the people and the waste of money and the encouragement of their enemies". Any need, in 999, for apocalyptic fantasies about the impending Millennium would have been eclipsed by a more immediate reality.

The challenge, in historical terms, is to bring all the different aspects of a most interesting period into relationship with each other, and to work out what on earth was going on. If it is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which provides the basis for our understanding of the course of Danish activity in England during this period, and the king's law-codes and coins which show how royal government continued to function without much sign of strain, it is the king's charters which afford a view of his dealings with churchmen and laymen, and which show who were most regularly in attendance upon him²³. Many of the first generation of the reformers, including St Dunstan, St Æthelwold, and St Oswald, had died by the mid-990s, but there were others trained with them or under them who now held high office, and who can be seen in some cases to have exerted an important influence in affairs of state. Their names do not trip lightly off the tongue; but in their day Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury (995–1005), [St] Ælfheah, bishop of Winchester (984–1005), [St] Wulfsig, bishop of Sherborne (993–1002), Lyfing, bishop of Wells (998–1013), Ælfweard, abbot of Glastonbury (975–1009), Ælfsige, abbot of the New Minster, Winchester (988–1007), and Wulfgar, abbot of Abingdon (990–1016), were prominent among the movers and shakers of Æthelred's regime. All of them participated in meetings of the king's councillors, and many of them enjoyed a share of the grants of lands and privileges which came from the king. Yet the most closely approachable figures in the kingdom at the turn of the century were the four scholars who are known to us from their own writings. Two had been pupils of St Æthelwold at the Old Minster, Winchester. Ælfric of Cerne, in Dorset, later abbot of Eynsham, was active in the 990s, and in the first decade of the eleventh century, and has long been renowned as the author of a large number of vernacular homilies, saints' Lives, and other improving or educational works²⁴. Wulfstan of Winchester, who wrote mainly in Latin, was also active in the 990s, and is renowned as the author

²³ S. Keynes 1993: Tables LIX–LXIV.

²⁴ For an account of Ælfric and his work, with further references, see M. Godden 1999: 89; see also M. Godden 1994: 130–162.

of a long poem on St Swithun and as the author of the earliest and most important *Life* of St Æthelwold²⁵. The two other scholars of the same period appear to have been trained in the fenland abbeys of eastern England. Byrhtferth, monk of Ramsey, was an expert in all matters to do with ecclesiastical computation, and has been identified, on stylistic grounds, as the author of major works of history and hagiography (including a *Life* of St Oswald)²⁶. Wulfstan was bishop of London from 996 to 1002, and, on becoming archbishop of York (1002–1023), held for a while the bishopric of Worcester (1002–1016); his origins are unknown, but the fact that he was buried at Ely abbey, in the fens, might be held to suggest an original connection with that region²⁷. Wulfstan was active as a homilist in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, culminating with his famous „Sermon of the Wolf to the English”, first preached in 1014²⁸; from about 1008 he had also drafted legislation for King Æthelred, and subsequently did the same for King Cnut. The writings of these men are matched by the extraordinarily high standards of book-production represented by the finer manuscripts written and decorated during this period, while elaborate building works, such as the decorated tower of the New Minster, Winchester, dedicated in the 980s, suggest that architects and church-wrights were not lagging very far behind.

It is more difficult, of course, to say much about the laymen at King Æthelred's court, although one senses that among them were men of stature and real distinction. The death of Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, at Maldon, in 991, and the death of Ealdorman Æthelwine of East Anglia, in 992, had deprived the kingdom of its two most senior ealdorman, and brought into prominence the king's kinsman Ealdorman Æthelweard, who was now the senior ealdorman in the land, and who held this position until his death or retirement *c.* 998. We have already seen how Æthelweard had been moved, probably in the 980s, to produce a Latin chronicle of English history for the benefit of his distant cousin Matilda, abbess of Essen; and it is not difficult to imagine why he refrained from fulfilling what might once have been his intention to bring his narrative onwards into Æthelred's reign. Æthelweard is also renowned as the patron of Ælfric, monk of Cerne. It was he who asked Ælfric to produce a translation of the book of Genesis, and of the book of Joshua, and it was he, with his son Æthelmær, who asked Ælfric to produce his compendious „Lives of Saints”²⁹. It is interesting to think of Æthelweard, in the 990s, reflecting upon the tale of Joshua leading the people of Israel into the Promised Land, overcoming their enemies, and renewing their covenant with the Lord. It is, moreover, a reasonable presumption that Æthelweard might have found time to peruse Ælfric's homily on the „Prayer of Moses”, which forms part of the „Lives of Saints”, and not merely a wishful thought, therefore, that the ealdorman would have taken to heart how Moses „raised his hands in prayer, and Joshua had the victory, and

²⁵ For an account of Wulfstan of Winchester, with further references, see M. Lapidge 1999b: 494.

²⁶ For an account of Byrhtferth of Ramsey, with further references, see M. Lapidge 1999a: 78–79.

²⁷ For an account of Wulfstan of York, with further references, see A. Orchard 1999: 494–495.

²⁸ D. Whitelock (ed.) 1979: 928–934 (no. 240).

²⁹ W.W. Skeat (ed.) 1881–1900, reprinted in 2 vols., Oxford 1966.

slew the heathen". Nor did Ælfric miss this opportunity to draw an implicit analogy between Joshua's struggle against the Amalekites, and the struggle of the English people against the Danes; indeed, the whole of his homily on the „Prayer of Moses" is a call to laymen and churchmen alike that in times of such distress Christians must pray, as Moses did, if they are to overcome their enemies. None of the other ealdorman active in the period 993–998 makes anything like the same impression. A complement of seven ealdormen is listed in a charter for Wilton abbey, dated 994, and contemporary designations of the first five of them are found in a charter for the Old Minster, Winchester, dated 997³⁰; Æthelweard himself, styled ealdorman „of the western provinces"; Ælfric, styled ealdorman „of the provinces of the men of Winchester", meaning Hampshire, or perhaps Hampshire and Surrey (the diocese of Winchester) with Wiltshire and Berkshire (the diocese of Ramsbury); Ælfhelm, styled ealdorman „of the provinces of the Northumbrians", based doubtless at York, but with overall authority extending beyond the Tees to the Tyne and the Tweed; Leofsige, styled ealdorman „of the East Saxons"; and Leofwine, styled ealdorman „of the provinces of the Hwicce", meaning Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The two other ealdormen who attested in 994 were Northman, who was probably responsible for the central part of Northumbria, between the Tees and the Tyne (including Durham), and Waltheof, who was probably responsible for the more northerly part of Northumbria, between the Tyne and the Tweed (including Bamburgh). Curiously, there is no sign of any other ealdormen holding office in the 990s, or for some time thereafter, until the appointment of Eadric Streona as ealdorman of Mercia in 1007. It follows that substantial parts of the kingdom were not covered at this level of the secular hierarchy, including Sussex, Kent, the whole of East Anglia, and large parts of Mercia and the east midlands. Under these circumstances, one can but imagine that the king's interests in such areas were represented by lesser officials.

No less important than Ealdorman Æthelweard were the king's thegns, who can be identified among the beneficiaries of and witnesses to his charters; those consistently prominent in the witness-lists are likely to have held high office in the king's household. Interestingly, the most prominent among them in the period from 994 to 1005 was none other than Æthelmær, son of Ealdorman Æthelweard, and co-recipient with his father of Ælfric's „Lives of Saints". Æthelmær had been involved in the endowment of the monastery at Cerne, Dorset, in the late 980s, and had recruited Ælfric, monk of the Old Minster, Winchester, to take charge of the teaching there. So, given Æthelmær's position at court in the late 990s, it is interesting to imagine what *he* would have made of some of the material in the „Lives of Saints": not just the „Prayer of Moses", but also the definition of *Iustum bellum* as „just war against the cruel seamen (*flotmenn*) or against other peoples who wish to destroy the land", in the account of the Maccabees, and the passage in praise of the saints of England, in the „Life of St Edmund"³¹. In the

³⁰ P.H. Sawyer 1968, nos. 881 (Wilton, 994) and 891 (Old Minster, Winchester, 997).

³¹ W.W. Skeat (ed.) 1966: nos. XIII, XXV and XXXII.

early years of the eleventh century Æthelmær founded an abbey at Eynsham, in Oxfordshire, and installed Ælfric as abbot; most interestingly, his retirement to Eynsham in 1005 coincides with the departure of the Danish army from England in the same year, and was closely followed by something approximating to a palace revolution in 1006, engineered by Eadric Streona. The second most prominent thegn of the period was Ordulf, brother of the late Queen Ælfthryth, and thus the king's maternal uncle. He had been involved in the foundation of a monastery at Tavistock, Devon, in the early 980s³², which was burnt down and ransacked by the Danes in 997; curiously, though no doubt significantly, Ordulf vanishes from the witness-lists in 1005, as if he too had decided at that time to retire from public service. Another consistently prominent thegn was Wulfric Spot, brother of Ealdorman Ælfhelm, who founded an abbey at Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, probably in the late 990s. Wulfric disappears from the witness-lists in 1002, for the excellent reason that he died probably in that year. His will, preserved at Burton abbey, reveals much about his family and friends, about the great extent of his properties, and about his faith in the king whom he asked to be lord of his monastery; the king's charter confirming the foundation, issued in 1004, points firmly in the same direction³³. The assumption must be that a king who was surrounded by men such as Ealdorman Æthelweard, Æthelmær, Ordulf and Wulfric is likely to have been at one with them in the identification of their common interests. It is more difficult to penetrate further down the social hierarchy, to the level of the reeves and other thegns, but perhaps we should be content that we get as far as we can.

It is not easy from this distance to judge the conduct the kingdom's affairs in the 990s, under the guidance of these men. It was their decision to buy off the Danish army in 994, as had been done previously in 991, and it was their policy to employ the army as a defensive mercenary force thereafter, with rather unsatisfactory consequences. Yet the quality of the coinage in the 990s (represented by the „Crux” type, current c. 991–997, and the „Long Cross” type, current c. 997–1003) is not suggestive of a kingdom on its knees. Moreover, it is apparent that the king and his councillors were trying hard, at just the same time, to bring some kind of order to the realm: not so much by imposing greater control over the Danelaw, as by setting down some of the different practices which obtained in areas of „English” and „Danish” law. Most interestingly, there are clear signs of a quickening, at this time, of precisely those kinds of activity which were calculated to earn divine favour. Having broken free from the influence of those who had influenced his actions in the earlier years of his reign, Æthelred now gave his ear to a different party, better disposed towards the interests of the Church. He was moved (or prevailed upon) to confirm or to renew earlier grants of lands and privileges to particular churches, or to grant them lands and privileges which they had not enjoyed before. The institutions which benefited in this way during the 990s included Abingdon abbey (993, 999), the see of Cornwall (994), Wilton abbey (994),

³² P.H. Sawyer 1968: no. 838 (Tavistock, 981).

³³ P.H. Sawyer 1968: nos. 1536 (will of Wulfric) and 906 (Burton abbey, 1004).

Muchelney abbey (995), the see of Rochester (995, 998), St Albans abbey (996), the Old Minster Winchester (996, 997), the see of Sherborne (998), and doubtless several others whose charters have not chanced to survive. It is no less striking that there was an increased incidence, in the 990s, of the various practices associated with the development of the cults of saints. In this connection, the fact that Ælfric produced his „Lives of Saints” in the mid-990s, for Ealdorman Æthelweard and his son Æthelmær, is not likely to be without significance. Moreover, the earliest *Lives* of the three leading exponents of monastic reform — St Æthelwold (d. 984), St Dunstan (d. 988), and St Oswald (d. 992) — were all written c. 1000, as if the need was felt for the intercession of some more recent English saints. The churches themselves owed their separate identities to a combination of factors: not only the circumstances of their original foundation, and the connections of present patrons, but also the associations of those known to have been buried there, and the vitality or efficacy of the cults of those saints whose relics were known to be venerated there. A healthy rivalry arose between neighbouring churches, as they vied with each other in accumulating relics of saints who could be relied upon to protect the interests of the public, and thereby to promote their own. Most strikingly, there was an increased incidence in the ceremonial translation of holy relics from a lesser to a greater place, or from a less important part of a church to a more conspicuous location. St Cuthbert at Durham in 995, St Æthelwold at Winchester in 996, and St Edith at Wilton in 997 were among the saints whose relics are known to have been translated in the late tenth century; to which one might add St Edward at Shaftesbury in 1001, St Oswald at Worcester in 1002, and St Ivo at Ramsey also in 1002. All this in combination represents a marked change from the 980s, and seems to reflect a significant intensification of religious fervour among the English. The evidence is analagous in certain respects to the enthusiastic promotion of the cults of saints on the continent, in the late tenth century, as the „Peace of God” movement got under way in Aquitaine and elsewhere³⁴, but although there was good contact between Aquitaine and England³⁵, it might not be advisable to push the analogy too far.

THE APPROACH OF THE MILLENNIUM

In accordance with standard doctrine, the Danish invasions would have been regarded as a form of divine punishment for the sins of the English people, giving those in high places an impeccable pretext for urging the people to invoke saints for help and to mend their errant ways. The question arises, however, whether other factors helped in any way to concentrate the collective mind, and whether indeed it was the impending Millennium which made everyone more than usually aware of the need to do good in the sight of God, and to honour the saints who could intercede on their behalf at the

³⁴ *Rodvlfí Glabri Historiarvm Libri Quinque* 1989: esp. 194199, and T. Head and R. Landes (eds) 1992.

³⁵ G. Beech 1990: 81–101.

Last Judgement. After all, the English were well accustomed to being told that the end of the world was nigh. In June 601 Pope Gregory the Great apprised Æthelberht, king of Kent, of a particular reason why he should encourage the English people to adopt Christianity: „Besides, we would wish your majesty to know that the end of the world is at hand, as we learn from the words of Almighty God in the holy scriptures. As the end of the world approaches, many things threaten which have never happened before. These are changes in the sky and terrors from the heavens, unseasonable tempests, wars, famine, pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places. Not all these things will come about in our days, but they will all follow after our days”³⁶. King Æthelberht would doubtless have been impressed by the Pope’s cosmic ultimatum, and was moved, therefore, to give much-needed support and protection to St Augustine and his fellow missionaries. A few years later, in the kingdom of the Northumbrians, one of King Edwin’s chief men famously likened the life of man (in his pagan state) to the flight of a sparrow through a hall, coming from the cold unknown into the warmth, and then going out again into the cold unknown³⁷; the point being, of course, that he was impressed by the superiority of Christian teaching in such matters. The rhetoric of the Last Days was certainly compelling, as much for what it promised as for what it threatened, and we may imagine that it always exerted a strong influence on the faithful. Those who entered Bede’s church at Monkwearmouth, in the late seventh century, would have seen the north wall decorated with scenes from St John’s vision of the apocalypse, including a representation of the Last Judgement³⁸; but unfortunately the English seem to have left the visualisation of the Last Days largely to their own imaginations. Most people would have relied on readings from the Bible to tell them how to recognise the coming of the end, and what awaited them thereafter. The disciples had asked Jesus, as he sat upon the Mount of Olives: „when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” They were told how they would hear of wars, and rumours of wars, though the end was not yet. „For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places.” (Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 21). Many must have been familiar, moreover, with St John’s statement that Satan would be loosed from his chains after a thousand years (Rev. 20), even if it would have been difficult for them to know what construction to put upon it. It became a commonplace of Christian teaching, however, that the „sixth age” of the world, in which we live, extended from the Nativity to the coming of Antichrist; and although the official line had long been that the end of the sixth age was known only to God, there were texts on the subject which stated quite explicitly that the sixth age would extend for a period of 999 or 1000 years³⁹. There is no good evidence, in England, of any kind of mass hysteria as the Millennium

³⁶ *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History...* 1969: 110–114.

³⁷ *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History...* 1969: 182–184.

³⁸ *Venerabilis Baedae...* 1896, I: 369–370; J.F. Webb, D.H. Farmer 1983: 190–191.

³⁹ For further details, see S. Keynes (ed.) 1996: 99.

approached. Yet a draftsman of charters issued in the name of King Edgar, in the 960s, invoked the imminence of the world's end as a pretext for an act of giving⁴⁰, and, in much the same vein, the author of a vernacular homily expounded his view that the end was nigh, pointing out that the greater part of the sixth age had already passed, in as much as he was writing in the year 971⁴¹. We need not doubt, therefore, that in the 990s at least some of the God-fearing people in England would have been getting distinctly apprehensive. In dedicating his „First Series” of homilies to Archbishop Sigeric (990–994), Ælfric stressed the need for good teaching, „especially in this age, which is the ending of this world”⁴², and he made much the same point in the „Prayer of Moses”. We cannot even begin to know what thoughts passed through the heads of the people at large. The „Peace of God” movement, which had swept through parts of France in the last quarter of the tenth century, seems to have made little impression in England, perhaps because the problem was not felt to lie in any failure of royal government. We need not doubt, on the other hand, that some parish priests issued their own dire warnings of impending doom. The fact remains that in the 990s the Danish threat was of the most immediate concern to the English people, and that it was not so much God's judgement which they feared, but His mercy and support which they craved.

The world did not end in the year 1000; but if anyone breathed a sigh of relief, he or she would soon have been preoccupied again with the continuing struggle against the Danes. In 1002 King Æthelred sought to secure a good relationship with Normandy by taking Emma, sister of Duke Richard, as his second wife, leading to the birth of two more æthelings (Edward and Alfred) and to all manner of further political complications. The strength of anti-Danish feeling among the English is demonstrated by the so-called „Massacre of St Brice's Day”, in 1002, targeted not at „Danish” settlers in the Danelaw, but more probably at merchants and at members of the army, based in various places, who were proving to be rather unreliable as mercenaries. The sense of relief that must have been occasioned by the departure of the Danish army in 1005 is concealed by the „contemporary” chronicler's embittered remark that it „let little time elapse before it came back”; and it may have been once the crisis was thought to have passed that Æthelmær and Ordulf decided to retire from public life (if only, in the former's case, for the time being). It was at about this time, in 1005 or 1006, that Ælfric, now abbot of Eynsham, told a layman called Sigweard *at Eastheolon* that he had translated the book of Judith into English, „as an example to you men that you too should defend your land with weapons against the invading army”⁴³. Other readings of the text were available, as Ælfric made clear in the translation itself; but it is interesting, none the less, that he was now extending to others what he had previously practised on Ealdorman Æthelweard and Æthelmær. It is no less intriguing, in the same connection,

⁴⁰ S. Keynes 1980: 70–76.

⁴¹ *The Blickling Homilies...* 187–480: 119.

⁴² *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies...* 1997: 174.

⁴³ S.J. Crawford (ed.) 1922: 48.

to find that a vernacular poem on Judith originally preceded *Beowulf* in the *Beowulf*-manuscript; sadly, too much is lost from the beginning of the poem to be quite sure what its import was intended to be⁴⁴.

The complications attendant upon the sustained presence of a Danish force in England, from 991 to 1005, at times as a raiding force and at times as a mercenary force, are likely to have had a more profound effect on the English than the supposed imminence of the ending of the world; and in the same way there was far more at issue throughout this period than just the competence or otherwise of the king himself. In the closing decade of Æthelred's reign, Danish activity took a turn for the worse⁴⁵. After the departure of the Danish army in 1005, there followed two invasions of England, by forces if not yet bent on conquest then certainly intent upon taking advantage of earlier experience. The first, in 1006–1007, led (it seems) by a certain Tostig, was bought off with a payment of 36,000 pounds. The second, in 1009–1012, materialised in the form of a pan-Scandinavian force known to contemporaries as „Thorkells Army”, and was bought off with a payment of 48,000 pounds. The combination of the two raids, in quick succession, was devastating. It is, indeed, the immediate response to the second invasion, in 1009, which provides the most moving and eloquent testimony of feelings which must by now have spread among the English people. The king and his councillors instituted an extraordinary programme of public prayer, for the three days before Michaelmas: the people were to process barefoot to church, the votive mass „Against the Heathen” was to be said in religious houses throughout the land, and all were to sing the psalm „Why, O Lord, are they multiplied?” There was even a special issue of coinage, invoking the Lamb of God and the Holy Spirit, apparently timed to coincide with the programme of prayer⁴⁶. It is possible that the influence of practices associated on the continent with the „Peace of God” was beginning to make itself felt, and it may be no coincidence that in charters of 1011–1012 we find a special form of chrismon seemingly intended as an invocation of the peace of Christ⁴⁷. Alas, it was all to no avail, and the two raids simply prepared the ground for what was to follow. First Swein Forkbeard and then his son Cnut invaded England, in 1013–1014 and 1015–1016, and between them finished the job. As for the Last Days, the official line remained that only God knew when the sixth age of the world would reach its end. There was nothing, therefore, to prevent Archbishop Wulfstan, in the midst of crisis in 1014, from repeating the ultimatum deployed over four hundred years earlier, by Pope Gregory the Great. „*Leofan men...*”, „Beloved men, realise what is true: this world is in haste and the end approaches; and therefore in the world things go from bad to worse, and so it must of necessity deteriorate greatly on account of the people's sins before the coming of Antichrist, and indeed it will then be dreadful and terrible far and wide throughout the

⁴⁴ For further discussion, see A. Orchard 1995: 112.

⁴⁵ S. Keynes 1997: 73–76.

⁴⁶ S. Keynes 1980: 216–219.

⁴⁷ S. Keynes 1978: 165–173.

world”⁴⁸. For Wulfstan, the Danes were the sons of Gog and Magog, and their invasion of England a sign of impending doom; and unlike some others, he knew full well that more was to be gained, in the long run, from harping upon the imminence of the end, than from predicting its occurrence in a particular year.

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⁴⁸ D. Whitelock (ed.) 1979: 929 (no. 240).

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ALBA: THE KINGDOM OF SCOTLAND IN THE YEAR 1000

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Scotland at the end of the first millennium A.D. was a nascent medieval nation state consisting of an astonishing variety of peoples and cultures. This reflected the turbulent history of the previous centuries when tribal movements in north Britain had created that varied ethnic mix. Mountainous regions do of course become the last bastion of tribal groups and threatened languages. The upland valleys of hilly countries provide refuges for peoples under pressure from succeeding invaders, where they can maintain their cultural individuality and avoid being swamped or exterminated by mobile predators. When a mountainous region is surrounded by seas — as Scotland is — and very accessible to new arrivals from across open water, then the cultural pattern of older peoples and recent settlers is particularly rich and the population mixture even more diverse. So in the centuries of the post-Roman era north Britain was subject to population movements from the west (Scots coming across from northern Ireland), from the south-east (Angles spreading up from north-east England), from the north (Scandinavians moving over the North Sea into the Northern and Western Isles, and the north and west Mainland), while a mixed breed of Celtic-Norsemen (the Gall-Gaethil) later added their particular cultural influence to south-west Scotland and the central Lowlands.

These arrivals, speaking Gaelic, Anglian and Norse (or a mixture of the three!) impacted strongly on the native British population, masking the indigenous tribal culture. The place-names of north Britain are thus more diverse and eclectic than any other part of north Europe. They provide the raw evidence of these dramatic ethnic changes, although they do not of course reveal how the changes occurred. The historical sources should do that, but Scotland is not well supplied with early written sources and the later chronicles are not always reliable. Once the place-names of Scotland have received the proper study which they deserve, and have been fully recorded, the colourful strands of the ethnic tapestry which represents the medieval Scottish nation will be more clearly revealed¹.

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¹ The modern standard text book is W.F. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names* (1976), although W.J. Watson 1926, is still an extremely valuable source. New and important contributions to the study of Scottish place-names have been recently published in *The Uses of Place-Names*, S. Taylor (ed.) 1998.

The linguistic pattern of these place-names is dominated by the Gaelic language throughout the west and north-eastern, central and south-west Scotland. Indeed in the year 1000 Gaelic culture was probably at its most dominant, resulting from the successful take-over of Pictland by Gaelic-speaking Scots who had moved east from their homeland in Argyll in the 9th century. The leaders of the Cenel n'Gabrain branch of the Dal Riadan Scots came through the passes of the central Highlands into Strathearn, Angus and Fife in the mid-ninth century, traditionally led by Kenneth MacAlpin, who was regarded as the founder of the medieval Scottish dynasty². The Cenel Loairn branch of the Dal Riadan Scots expanded north-east at much the same time, along the rift valley called the Great Glen which cuts through Druim Alban („the spine of Britain”), to the fertile lowland plains of Moray and the peninsula of Ross. At least, later genealogies of the Moray dynasty suggest that it believed its origins to have lain in the Loairn district of central Argyll³. The ensuing spread of Gaelic throughout the whole of present-day central, eastern and north-east Scotland resulted from the dominant political position which the Scots won for themselves; the lack of surviving Pictish place-names is more indicative than anything else of the submerging of Pictish power-structures and culture beneath this all-powerful Gaelic presence⁴.

The Picts had ruled a most impressive political coalition of smaller tribal kingdoms in east Scotland from the Firth of Forth to the River Spey during the seventh and eighth centuries, but the demise of their powerbase and collapse of their society coincided with the arrival of the Viking raiders in the waterways of eastern Scotland⁵. We hear in the *Scottish Chronicle* of some devastating defeats by Danish and Norse armies in the mid-ninth century. Cause and effect are not clearly understood, but Norse place-names in the Hebrides clearly reveal that much disruption must have occurred around the coasts of Argyll in the same period. This disruption was the probable cause of the Cenel n'Gabrain's success in dominating the joint Scotto-Pictish kingdom which emerged out of the maelstrom. The political vacuum that existed in eastern Scotland was filled by the members of Kenneth MacAlpin's dynasty who moved from their vulnerable heartland in Argyll to the fertile arable lands of the central Lowlands, where resources were available to provide the effective defence and provisions needed for a polity under threat. Viking warbands had over-run several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and there was no inherent reason why they should not have over-run the Celtic ones also. But they did not succeed in dominating the Scots permanently, and once more the place-name evidence provides us with stark evidence of where the Scandinavian-speaking peoples did take the best land and where they did not. Norwegian Vikings took the Northern and Western Isles and spread onto the north Scottish mainland, but neither they nor their Danish cousins succeeded in getting a permanent hold in southern Scotland. There

² See recent important chapters by D. Broun and A. Bruford in E.J. Cowan and R.A. McDonald (eds) 2000.

³ D.P. Kirby 1975: 20; A. Grant 2000: 97.

⁴ T.O. Clancy [forthcoming].

⁵ Ibid.

it was the Gaelic-speaking kings and aristocracy who rapidly imposed their own culture and tongue, and replaced the Pictish place-names for the most part with their own.

Scotland south of Forth and Clyde has a different history, and it was the British kingdom of Strathclyde which maintained some independence from Gael, Angle and Viking, despite losing its capital stronghold on Dumbarton Rock to the Vikings in 870. On the east coast the Northumbrian kings extended their rule over Angle and Briton in the sub-kingdom of Bernicia, even conquering lands north of the Forth for a period in the 7th century⁶. This fluidity of tribal movement, the rise of conquering warlords and absence of political structures is what marks out the „Dark Ages“ of European history. Considering this situation, and considering the complex geographical pattern in north Britain it is quite remarkable that by the year 1000 the kingdom of Scots was in the making.

The heartland of the kingdom was in the eastern lowlands north of the Forth, around the broad sea estuaries and the river valleys of Earn and Tay which open up the central Highlands, and extending along the east coast as far north as Buchan. Expansion south of the Forth was the main direction for territorial gain in the century following the Scottish takeover, and Edinburgh fell into the hands of the Scots, who also consolidated their hold over Lothian, in the third quarter of the 10th century. This opened the way to opportunity for raiding and conquest which occupied the attention of the kings of Scots for decades until the southern frontier was established on the River Tweed by Malcolm II in 1018 and thereafter⁷.

Northwards beyond the River Spey lay the territory of the Gaelic dynasty of Moray, the greatest rival of the Scottish kings who eventually won overall power briefly under Macbeth in 1040⁸. The southern kings seemed compelled to confront their northern cousins from time to time, and resulting encounters were frequently disastrous in consequence. As in many other circumstances they looked to forge alliances with the warlords on the far side, the earls of Orkney in this instance. This Norwegian dignity was held by a powerful family which had created a formidable dynastic maritime empire out of the Viking colonies in the Northern Isles, and on the northern Mainland. Indeed at the end of the tenth century the earls had expanded south-west from the Orkneys to the Hebrides, and for periods of time dominated the islands as far south as the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea. In their drive to expand southwards they clashed with the rulers of Moray and several dramatic incidents are recorded in the saga of the earls (Orkney-inga Saga). The kings of Scots and the earls of Orkney were two powerful allies who combined forces to crush Moray between them: their usefulness to each other is reflected in a marriage alliance (again recorded only in the saga), which was to take place between Earl Sigurd II („The Stout“) and a daughter of Malcolm II in the first decade of the eleventh century.

⁶ C. Lowe 1999.

⁷ A.P. Smyth 1984: ch.7.

⁸ G.W.S. Barrow 1975.

ALBA. A NEW NAME FOR A NEW POLITICAL UNIT

The political pattern in the year 1000, therefore, was of a dominant Gaelic dynasty in the central Lowlands which had survived the Viking turbulence of the 9th and 10th centuries, and then consolidated its dominant position by expanding southwards and subsuming the client kingdom of Strathclyde and Anglian Bernicia. The northern rival was for the moment occupied with its own problems on its own northern frontier. The kings responsible for this highly successful situation were undoubtedly great warriors, but were great state-builders too. One of the most dramatic pieces of evidence for their statecraft is the creation of the term „Alba” for the newly-combined kingdom of the Picts and the Scots, a term which appears in the sources c.900. Pictish terminology was dropped and in its place there was „adopted a new vocabulary based on the word *Alba*”, an old Gaelic term for Britain, but taken now to apply to the area between the Forth and the Spey, and east of *Druim Alban* (the „ridge of Britain”)⁹. We do not know who devised the use of this old term for a new political unit, but it is understood to be a very significant change of terminology, indicating a conscious development of a new territorial concept: a manifestation of a new Scottish dynastic pretension.

Three features of this new kingdom should be emphasised. Firstly, there is the increasing centralisation of the regime, with formerly independent sub-kings being cast, from early in the tenth century, as *mormaer* (Gaelic for „great steward”). However, the names for the *mormaers*’ provinces, Moray, Strathearn, Mar, Buchan, Angus and the Mearns, suggest that there was a new, and perhaps more centrally-administered structure organised in place of the old Pictish provincial divisions. Again it is the period of Viking raids and disruption, necessitating efficient military organisation, which is likely to have been the main reason for this development¹⁰. The concomitant of this was, of course, the need for strong leadership, the streamlining of inheritance of authority and the reins of power under the control of one kindred, within increasingly tight bounds. Secondly, there is the Gaelic nature of the political, social and cultural characteristics of the new, united kingdom (symbolised by the Gaelicisation of the „pit” place-names), and resulting in the rapid demise of the distinctive Pictish cultural forms (symbolised by the cessation of Pictish symbols on sculptured stones), with the Pictish language being the first to become extinct in the British Isles in the historical period¹¹. Thirdly there is the marked use of the church as an instrument of kingship. The movement of Columba’s relics from Iona to Dunkeld in the central Highlands by Kenneth MacAlpín in the mid-ninth century and the evidence for the granting of ecclesiastical privileges by the kings in the tenth century reveal to us a pattern of synergetic relationships between cult and dynasty, based on the mutual support services provided for each other by kingship and ecclesiastical hierarchy; a process which is

⁹ D. Broun 1994: 21.

¹⁰ B.E. Crawford 2001 [forthcoming].

¹¹ K. Forsyth 1997.

well-known and attested in all other Christian kingdoms of eastern and western Europe in this period. Learned clerics provided administrative support, conducted inauguration ceremonies at power centres like Scone and „advocated an ideology which ...supported the aspirations of kings”¹².

A short dynastic Chronicle („*The Scottish Chronicle*”), a near-contemporary account of the combined kingdom of Dal Riada and the Picts, is „a self-conscious history of that kingship” which looks emphatically to Kenneth Mac Alpin as the founding father, and goes up to the reign of the second Kenneth, son of Malcolm, at the very end of the tenth century¹³. This is one of very few written sources to have survived from this period, which is still mostly unilluminated by contemporary texts, except for the problematical king lists¹⁴. However uninformative these are about the historical events surrounding the reigns of the kings they list, they do at least tell us that male descendants of Kenneth I dominated the inheritance of the kingdom, and that there was no sharing of power. Strong rule was essential for the preservation of integrity and effective resistance to the invader. This concentration of political authority allowed the growth of territorial lordship, and earlier provincial divisions were brought firmly under the overlordship of one dynasty.

The king-lists also reveal the passing of power between different collateral descendants of Kenneth MacAlpin: a practice which cannot have been conducive to peaceful reigns or firm kingship. According to a later chronicler, John of Fordun, Kenneth II (971–995) attempted to create a more directly-regulated succession system, and gained the agreement of the nobles to establishing a direct line to *his* collateral descendants, even if an heir were under age¹⁵. We can imagine that his ecclesiastical advisers would have been behind such a move, although the role of the church in these events is never mentioned. Any such agreement did not prevent Kenneth from meeting a violent death however, „killed by trickery and craft, at Fettercairn: falling by the deceit of Finella, Cuncar’s daughter” later elaborated into an amazing account of a mechanical trap which loosened cross-bolts when the king touched it, with fatal consequences¹⁶. After his death in 995 the kingship nonetheless passed to rival dynastic segments before Malcolm (II), mac Cinaeda (Kenneth II’s son) got hold of power and held it for several decades in the early eleventh century. He successfully, if brutally, forced the descent through his daughter to his grandson (Duncan) who succeeded in 1034. Although the MacAlpin control was then broken by Macbeth’s seizure of power in 1040 it was re-asserted by Duncan’s son Malcolm III in 1054 and was thereafter securely held by the one dynastic line¹⁷.

¹² S. Foster 1996: 100.

¹³ B.T. Hudson 1998: 129–161.

¹⁴ M.O. Anderson 1980.

¹⁵ Repeated by Walter Bower, *Scotichronicon*, Book IV, chap.2, D.E.R. Watt (ed.), 2: 369–371.

¹⁶ Entry inserted into the Chronicle of Melrose, with Fordun’s later fantastical account, translated in A.O. Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, I, 1922, reprinted 1990: 513–515.

¹⁷ M. Lynch 1991: 49–50.

A familiar Irish aspect of the dynastic inheritance was the arrangement called „tanistry” (Gaelic *tanaise* = „second, next”), whereby the heir-in-waiting from another segment was acknowledged, and could be given a portion of the kingdom to govern meanwhile. It has been traditionally believed that the kingdom of Strathclyde may have provided a power-base for such heirs-designate, but the only certain example of this situation is Duncan, grandson of Malcolm II, who is called „king of the Cumbrians”. Without doubt the fall of the capital of Dumbarton to the Vikings in 870 had struck a severe blow to the old British kingdom, and in the fraught period of Scandinavian invasion it seems to have come under the control of Kenneth MacAlpín’s descendants. But the native dynasty re-asserted itself in the later tenth century and Strathclyde continued to possess something of an independent existence until the death of Owain the Bald in 1018¹⁸.

NATIONAL ICONS

Although the kingdom of Scotland in the year 1000 A.D. was known as Alba, this was a political term devised for the construction of a state identity and cannot have inspired much sense of national identity. To the Anglo-Saxon chronicler of this period the northern king was a „king of Scots”, and we have to ask if any sense of „Scottishness” was beginning to develop at this time in the heartland of the northern kingdom: if not — which is most unlikely — in the territories coming under the same political overlordship south of the Forth and Clyde. If any sense of „Scottishness” existed it would be fostered by the Gaelic stamp of ecclesiastical structures and personnel. These were developed in the centuries after the take-over of the Pictish kingdom, for the Gaels moved into Pictland with their own strong and distinctive culture, of which devotion to Columba was an important part. Some of Columba’s relics were carried east, and a „new Iona” was created around their enshrined resting-place at Dunkeld, a strategic location at the junction of Highland and Lowland territory on the River Tay¹⁹.

Columba was not, of course, to become the national icon of the kingdom of the Scots: that honour was bestowed on the apostle Andrew, whose cult was fostered in the tenth century at the ecclesiastical centre of Kinrymont on the east coast, later to become St Andrews²⁰. Twelfth-century foundation legends suggest that relics were brought here in the eighth century²¹, but we can look to the tenth-century king Constantine II (900–c.943) as the promoter of this potentially significant cult. He was a powerful and long-lived warrior who led military expeditions south into Northumbrian territory, fighting battles on the River Tyne, and who must therefore have been well aware of the ecclesiastical centre of Hexham with its famous abbey church dedicated to St Andrew. He then retired among the community of Culdees (Ce’li De’), preparing to die „in the

¹⁸ A. MacQuarrie 1993: 1–19.

¹⁹ D. Broun 1999: 95–111.

²⁰ Several important contributions in S. Foster (ed.) 1998, discuss the obscure origins of the cult.

²¹ M.O. Anderson 1974: 3.

house of the apostle"²², at the developing ecclesiastical centre at Kinrymont/St Andrews. This suggests clear devotion to the very Roman saint of Andrew in the royal house of Alba.

Yet, it appears from a later Irish account of the battle of the Tyne in 918 that Columba retained a role as protector of Constantine's army, for the saint's staff was carried into battle with the Scots on that occasion, helping to bring them victory. The staff „was therefore called *Cathbuaid* (meaning „battle triumph” in Gaelic), from that time onwards; and it was a fitting name, because they often gained victory in battles through it”²³. Although this was tradition as handed down in Ireland where the strength of belief in the power of the saint was predominant, we can certainly see from the occurrence of the name Malcolm (Mael Coluim = „servant of Columba”) in the Scottish dynasty during the tenth century the clear significance of Columba's name to one branch of the royal line.

CHURCH AND CULTURE

The strong Gaelic culture brought east by the Scots and implanted particularly around their ecclesiastical centre at Dunkeld came into contact with Northumbrian strands of influence in the east coast Lowlands, which had been an influential part of the Pictish kingdom's political and ecclesiastical make-up. The mingling of the Gaelic and Northumbrian elements can be best appreciated in the sculptural traditions, the fullest material evidence to have survived from early medieval Scotland. The tenth-century cross-slabs of Fife, Angus and Strathearn retain the secularity of the magnificent Pictish symbol stones, if in an attenuated form²⁴. These no longer include the abstract symbols which had clearly lost their significance in a new political world, but the scenes of hunting and horsemanship are still there, emblazoned with the religious symbol of Christianity. The free-standing cross adorned with its Celtic patterns has derived much from the Gaelic world, and the patrons who commissioned these marvels of sculpture wished to combine elements from both western and eastern aspects of the Scottish hybrid. There are other sculptural traditions also, very much alive at this particular period of time, and visible to those who search them out in forgotten corners of country churchyards. The „hogback” tombstones, scattered among the oldest ecclesiastical centres and with a magnificent collection displayed in the church at Govan, on the R. Clyde, provide mute evidence of some mixed Scandinavian element in the heartland of the Scottish kingdom²⁵. This grouping would seem likely to have been involved in a trading network, commercial activities deriving ultimately from the old

²² B. Hudson 1994: 82

²³ A.O. Anderson 1922, I: 408.

²⁴ There are innumerable books illustrating the sculpture of this period. See for example L. and J. Laing 1993, revised ed. 1994.

²⁵ J. Lang 1972-4: 206-235; B.E. Crawford 1994a: 103-112.

Viking world; but the stones tell us of Christianised and settled communities of people with Norse or Danish ancestry who had adapted to the societies with which they had traded, but who clung to important cultural identifiers as their burial markers near their coastal and estuarine trading bases.

There is little which can definitely be said about the structure of the church organisation in this period of Scottish history. The Age of Saints was over, but the cults associated with these saints formed important spiritual foci for the state and church, alongside the development of Roman cults such as Peter and Andrew, which helped to add prestige and an international aura to a dynasty's standing²⁶. Yet the establishment of bishoprics and the structure of dioceses does not seem to have much in common with the order of the Roman church. Bishops existed, but might also be abbots (in the Irish manner), and it was only slowly that the bishop at Kinrismund emerged as the chief bishop of the Scots²⁷. The medieval dioceses show a most extraordinary and eclectic territorial pattern, with detached parishes sometimes lying well outside the diocesan boundaries. This suggests an unordered development built up over centuries and which must have been in response to demands and requirements of individual bishops' needs which we do not fully understand today.

It has recently been said that the tenth-century Scottish church „appears to have been isolated and left behind” at a time when the upheaval of the reform movements in England and on the Continent was transforming the church at large, and creating the vastly-changed relationship between church and state which laid the basis for the new medieval society of the eleventh century²⁸. The Scottish church at this time did have its own groups of clergy, probably mostly of a „secular” variety, living in communities in the regional ecclesiastical centres at Brechin, Dunkeld, Dunblane and St Andrews. These were the Culdees, whose antecedents lay in the earlier Ce'li De' movement in Ireland, but the movement seems to have developed in many different and various ways. They were also based in the older episcopal centres such as Muthill and Abernethy, while more eremitic groupings sought out isolated bases such as Inchaffray and St Serf's island in Loch Leven²⁹. The first surviving documentary evidence for royal land grants, the grant of estates in Fife to the Culdees of Loch Leven by Macbeth and his wife Gruoch „queen of the Scots” reveals the royal regard for such communities³⁰. The ecclesiastical situation in Alba, quite detached from the new monastic broom sweeping through much of northern Europe, was to last until the late eleventh century when Malcolm III's Anglo-Saxon queen, Margaret, instigated efforts to introduce monks from Benedictine communities in England, and to found monasteries on reformed lines³¹.

²⁶ A. MacQuarrie 1997.

²⁷ B. Webster 1997: 55.

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 56

²⁹ I. B. Cowan 1975: 17; A. MacQuarrie 1992: 110–133.

³⁰ A.C. Lawrie 1905, V: 5–6.

³¹ B.E. Crawford 2001[forthcoming].

POWER CENTRES

The component parts of the north British tribal pattern which came together to form the kingdom of Alba would all have had their ecclesiastical and secular power centres³². Earlier ones such as Iona went through a period of difficulty during the Viking disruption. But despite the move eastwards of the Scottish kings, and the new Columban cult-site founded at Dunkeld, Iona still retained some sort of symbolic importance even though detached and isolated from the heartland of the kingdom of Alba. It is recorded that several of the tenth and eleventh-century kings were taken there for burial³³. Govan on the Clyde was also a power centre for the Strathclyde kings, as recent excavations and sculptural assessment are beginning to make evident: that position was superseded by Glasgow, a short distance upriver, at a later date, and Govan's earlier status all but forgotten³⁴. The northern province, or kingdom, of Moray had its own central places, one of which is even recorded in Columba's visit to the court of Bridei, near the River Ness in the late sixth century, although the actual site of the royal fortress is disputed³⁵. Further north still, the ecclesiastical centre at Tarbat in Easter Ross is also yielding evidence of its former significance from sculptural fragments unearthed in recent excavations³⁶.

In the heartland of the combined kingdom of the Picts and the Scots documentary evidence shows there to have been meeting places, residences, important churches at different locations. Some of them, such as Forteviot in Strathearn, were probably of importance in the Pictish period, when Strathearn was the heartland of the Pictish province of Fortriu³⁷. Once again, sculpture found at the presumed site of the royal residence (carved arch), and still standing on a nearby hill-side (the Dupplin Cross), bear witness to royal patronage and public display of power and belief³⁸. Not far away the site of Scone is well-known as the inaugural place of the medieval kings of Scots with its artificial mound (Boot Hill) and enigmatic stone (removed to London by Edward I of England, and recently brought back to Edinburgh)³⁹. This was an important meeting-place certainly at the very beginning of the tenth century when the king and bishop met there to declare their commitment to the maintenance of church laws and church rights⁴⁰. But despite its clear significance as an assembly site for the kingdom of Alba, confirmed by the later foundation of a royal monastery nearby, Scone never became a capital location. Kinrinvie/St Andrews, on the east coast, became something more in the way of a dynastic power centre with its rise in importance during the reign

³² S. Driscoll 1998.

³³ B. Webster 1997: 54–55.

³⁴ S. Driscoll 1998.

³⁵ Adomnan, *Life of Columba*, chaps. 40a, 82a.

³⁶ M. Carver 1998: 29–37.

³⁷ L. Alcock 1982: 211–239; 1992: 215–287.

³⁸ L. Alcock 1996: 455–457; K. Forsyth 1995: 237–244.

³⁹ R. Welander. (ed.) *The Stone of Scone* [forthcoming].

⁴⁰ B. Hudson 1998: 156.

of Constantine II (900–943) who was buried there. Edinburgh was only to come into Scottish hands at the end of the tenth century. It is not until the later eleventh century, with royal patronage under Malcolm III and Margaret, and a new monastic foundation, that Dunfermline in the south of Fife became the dynastic centre and burial place of the Scottish dynasty, symbolically looking south across the Firth of Forth.

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

One of the most poorly recorded aspects of the kingdom of the Scots in the year 1000 A.D. is the commercial and economic situation. The absence of any royal coinage from the northern kingdom (until the twelfth century), indicates a society not poor in resources, but without any sophisticated structure of monetary exchange, and perhaps with little international commercial involvement. This is particularly striking when Scotland in the year 1000 A.D. was closely connected to political units which, in the case of Anglo-Saxon England was firmly tied to a royal currency and had been for a long time, and in the case of the kings of Dublin and Norway had very recently started to mint coins. Even the kings of Man established their own mint (in the Isle of Man) for a period of forty years from c. 1025. If the striking of coinage is linked with royal status and it is true that „Medieval coinage represents royal prerogative and prestige, and perhaps even royal propaganda“⁴¹ why did the kings of Scots not indulge in this act of self-aggrandisement? Kenneth II and Malcolm II had long stable reigns and were active in ensuring that their dynastic position was firmly based politically. Would their own coinage not have enhanced their economic power-base? The continuation of this coinless state right through the eleventh century suggests that for them and their successors — Macbeth and Malcolm Canmore — the minting of coins was one facet of self-aggrandisement which was of little concern to them.

In this respect — as in others — it might be very relevant to look at the pattern of native kingship in Ireland, where minting was not an activity indulged in either. One assumes that trading towns established by the Vikings around the eastern and southern Irish coasts were where the main commercial activity was conducted, and from which the native kings benefited. In the late tenth century that trading network still extended along the west coast of Scotland, and the earls of Orkney had a role to play in transshipping goods east to Norway from their earldom, which acted as a nodal point for trade to and from Scandinavia, to the North Atlantic and south through the Hebrides to Ireland. The Viking silver hoards, which have received a great deal of attention in the past twenty years, demonstrate where the activity was taking place. The majority of tenth-century hoards are from the west of Scotland and the majority of eleventh-century hoards are from the north⁴² with only a handful from south-eastern Scotland.

⁴¹ M. Cubbon 1999: 218.

⁴² J. Graham-Campbell 1995: 62.

Despite the great difficulties involved in analysing the reasons for the deposition of hoards, and for their non-recovery, the stark conclusion from this distribution is that there was not much trafficking in silver going on in the heartland of the kingdom of Alba. Whatever economic activity was taking place must have been by exchange of commodities. This picture demonstrates more clearly than any political analysis how western and northern Scotland were part of another world (and how mis-leading it is to include the Northern and Western Isles in the medieval political term „Scotland”).

Some of the silver wealth of the Viking world was certainly percolating through to the central Lowlands, probably by the routes which the Vikings had used since the ninth century; and it seems most probable that it was being carried by Hiberno-Norse traders based in the Irish Sea zone. Some of these hoards consist of Hiberno-Norse coins⁴³, giving a sure indication of the place of origin, and probable pointer to the identity of the carriers. But what do they indicate in terms of activity? Were they the result of economic exchange within Alba, or were they merely being transported through the kingdom en route elsewhere? There is a total absence of any known trading centres from this period in the Scottish kingdom: excavations at the monastic centre at Whithorn in the very south-west, (really a part of Strathclyde) show it to have been closely tied into an Irish Sea network⁴⁴. The economic circumstances in the heart of Alba at this time are a great deal more obscure than those prevailing in the waterways around the kingdom.

What does this lead us to say about society? If we come back to the theme of the opening paragraph we can stress again the diversity of the component parts of the kingdom of Alba in 1000 A.D., and the different forms of speech which distinguished the Anglian south-east, the Brittonic south-west, the Gaelic west, the Pictish east and the Scandinavian north. Although these distinctive tongues were being smoothed out at that very time, with Gaelic becoming the language of the court and administration, there must have been many cultural expressions of difference in the component parts of the kingdom. Unfortunately these are hidden from us, because the material culture is rarely uncovered by excavation. At this point in time there is very little archaeological evidence for the settlements⁴⁵, the houses and the domestic circumstances of the peoples in central and eastern Scotland, although Norse sites in the islands are increasingly being found which date to the tenth and eleventh centuries⁴⁶. We do not even have any churches which can be dated irrefutably to this period. It has to be assumed that life was little different from the earlier Iron Age which has produced more evidence of settlement, once again in the Northern and Western Isles. Looking to later medieval evidence we can be fairly certain that the agricultural patterns of existence as revealed in documentary sources of the twelfth century are based on long traditions: these would continue to underlie any political changes which were to occur in the intervening period⁴⁷.

⁴³ M. Metcalf 1995: 24.

⁴⁴ P. Hill 1997: 52–56.

⁴⁵ S. Foster 1996: 58–61.

⁴⁶ See for example 1998 Interim Report of *The Norse Settlement and Pictish Cairn at Kilpheder, S. Uist* produced by the Dept. of Archaeology and Prehistory, University of Sheffield.

⁴⁷ G.W.S. Barrow 1981: 11.

The role of women in this phase of Scottish history is similarly poorly recorded in documentary sources, and even the queens are completely anonymous until the Kirkness charter provides us with the name of Macbeth's wife (Gruoch). His successor's wife, the Anglo-Saxon Princess, Margaret, has of course her own „Life” which reveals some precious glimpses of a queen's role in the life of the court as well as her remarkable intervention in Church affairs⁴⁸. There are one or two representations of women on Pictish stones from an earlier period, giving clear indications of some women's high status in society⁴⁹, and there is literary and archaeological evidence from the northern world to give us further sources to draw on when trying to estimate the valued role of women in the different cultural traditions of north Britain⁵⁰. Of course, as in every other part of Europe it was a man's world.

If we conclude with an assessment of the reign of Malcolm (11) MacKenneth, who ruled Alba from 1005–1034, we have enough to tell us that this king of Scots had contemporary renown as being in some ways a model of early medieval kingship⁵¹. A powerful warrior who was lauded in the „Prophecy of Berchan” as „enemy of Britons, scourge of Norse, voyager of Islay and Arran”, he ranged widely in his military campaigns both north and south. He lived at a time when the Danes were dominating the waterways and raiding around the coasts of England in what is known as the „Second Viking Age”, eventually conquering the rich and ancient kingdom of England under Swein „Forkbeard” and Cnut „the Great”. Cnut's ambitions knew no bounds and it is very probable that he set his sights on controlling the Scottish kingdom too—strategically placed on the sea route to Norway. He led an expedition to Scotland in 1031, at which Malcolm, Macbeth and a king from the Western Isles all submitted to him⁵², as a result of which all three must have come to terms (agreeable to Cnut) and were allowed to stay in power. A French chronicler, Ralph Glaber, suggests that there had been warfare between Cnut and Malcolm for some time prior to this meeting, and he knew that Malcolm was a great warrior, as well as „a truly Christian king”. He believed that the two came to terms on the advice of Duke Richard of Normandy (Cnut's brother-in-law), even suggesting that Cnut stood as sponsor at baptism to an otherwise unrecorded son of Malcolm's⁵³. Here is some evidence for the status which Malcolm was perceived to have in the wider European framework, and that status undoubtedly must have resulted from his ability to survive the threat posed by the all-conquering Cnut, with the far-reaching ambitions. The Annals of Tigernach even call Malcolm „the honour of all the west of Europe”⁵⁴, and later tradition accorded him the kingly role of lawmaker⁵⁵. All kingdoms reflected the reputation of their ruler, and Alba was by Malcolm II's reign acquiring a place on the European stage.

⁴⁸ T.C. Clancy and B.E. Crawford 2001 [forthcoming].

⁴⁹ S. Foster 1996: illus. 70.

⁵⁰ J. Jesch 1991.

⁵¹ B. Hudson 1994: ch.5.

⁵² Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (E), s.a. 1031; B. Hudson 1992.

⁵³ Rodolphus Glaber, *Historia Libri Quinque* 1989: 54–56.

⁵⁴ *Early Sources*, I, 572.

⁵⁵ B. Hudson 1991: 121.

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IRELAND C. 1000

Dáibhí Ó Cróinín*

The tenth and eleventh centuries have usually been seen as a second Dark Age in Irish history, a period of decline after the so-called „Golden Age” of the seventh and eighth centuries. The Vikings — the *bêtes noires* of Irish history — were for a long time believed to have been responsible for a collapse in the social and political fabric of Irish society in the years following their first attacks on Irish coastal monasteries and settlements. This view was most directly stated by D.A. Binchy, in a famous lecture on *The Passing of the Old Order*¹:

I am convinced that the coming of the Norsemen had a profound — one might even say a shattering — effect upon native Irish institutions. Indeed, the title of this lecture has been deliberately chosen to suggest that the older order of Goidelic society, as mirrored in the Irish law-tracts, was drastically altered by the events of the ninth and tenth centuries.

This „old order” that Binchy talked about had distinctive features which he described as follows:

In pre-Norse times, [wrote Binchy] all wars, tribal, inter-tribal and inter-provincial alike, followed a curiously ritual pattern. They were hedged around with taboos: one did not continue the fight after one’s king had been slain; one did not annex the enemy’s territory or confiscate any of his lands; one did not dethrone the ‘sacred’ tribal dynasty; one refrained from attacking a number of ‘neutral zones’ on enemy soil — the monastic settlements, the property of the ‘learned castes’ (*áes dána*), and so on. Now, however, the Irish found themselves faced with an alien foe who respected none of the traditional conventions. Hence war as waged by the invaders was more ‘total’, to use a modern term; ancient taboos were ignored; no holds were barred. Before long the native kings themselves were using these ruthless and efficient fighters as allies in their own quarrels, and, inevitably, came to adopt the new tactics².

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¹ D.A. Binchy 1962: 119–132.

² D.A. Binchy 1962: 123.

Modern historians — with one recent exception — have poured scorn on this view of Irish history³. The general view, in fact, is that the Vikings were absorbed into the social, political and cultural life of Ireland within a century of their arrival, and by the end of the tenth century they were regarded as a normal feature of the native cultural landscape. Whether that society was appreciably influenced by the violent methods of the first (and later) Scandinavian raiders is difficult to assess.

Viking methods of warfare were certainly adopted by Irish kings⁴. This must have been inevitable, since they frequently fought as allies. Ecclesiastical sanctuary was less often respected⁵. In 939 and 940 Donnchad mac Néill, on hostings into Brega, destroyed Fennor and Dunleer, actually killing a priest in the church at Fennor. In 953 the men of Munster joined the Vikings in an attack on Clonmacnois. In 970 Domnall went on a hosting into Meath and destroyed „all its churches and forts”. It appears also as if churches were more and more regarded, like any secular centres, as places from which troops might be mustered for retaliatory raids. In 995 the men of Fernmag and Airgialla plundered Armagh and carried off 2,000 cows, burning the monastery’s *fid-nemed* („sacred tree”). Monastic cities were sometimes battlegrounds for opposing factions: this was the case, for example, with the Uí Echdach and the Uí Nialláin at Armagh in 986, with the kings of Fernmag and Cenél nÉogain at Armagh in 988, and with Máel Sechnaill of Meath and the king of Luigne at Downpatrick in 993. We hear more about Patrician houses perhaps because of the nature of the annalistic record, but similar battles were probably happening elsewhere. Monastic sanctuary was being violated, while taboos on violence within the monastic city were being broken by Irishmen as well as by foreigners. The monastery was becoming yet another target in an increasingly „dirty” mode of warfare. Sometimes the older ways lingered on, with their taboos: when, for example, Máel Sechnaill carried off the shrine of Patrick from Ardee to Áth Sige in 985, he had afterwards to make good the loss on the instruction (*riar*) of Patrick’s heir, and to obtain absolution for his „crime”. But such reminiscences of a bygone age were rare; often it must have seemed that the patron saint was powerless to protect his foundation.

Whatever about the actual incidence of violence against churches, it is almost certainly the case that native Irish kings and their dynastic followers did adopt some of the „un-native” methods first practised by the Vikings, e.g., the capture and later ransoming (or, failing payment, murdering) of important clerical figures. While it can easily be demonstrated that clerics were not infrequently victims of inter-dynastic rivalries in the pre-Viking period, the Vikings appear to have introduced the notion of demanding ransom for such people. In 824 Éitgal, an anchorite (or abbot?) of the remote Kerry island monastery on Sceilg Mhichíl, was captured by Viking raiders; he died

³ For the exception, see A.P. Smyth 1999: 1–38. A new general survey of the subject is: H.C. Clarke, M. Ni Mhaonaigh, R.Ó Floinn (eds) 1999.

⁴ See T. M. Charles-Edwards 1996: 26–51.

⁵ For this and what follows I have drawn on K. Hughes 2001.

shortly afterwards from hunger and thirst⁶. In 832 Congalach mac Echach (of Lough Brickland, Co. Down) „was slain afterwards at the ships” („killed while trying to escape” would be the modern euphemism), while in 842 the abbot of Clogher was taken prisoner by the Vikings and later died at their *longphort* of Annagassan (Co. Louth). These were probably all ill-starred attempts to extort payment from the local political ruling dynasties for the safe return of such people⁷; unfortunately, the clerics concerned were either not sufficiently well-connected, or simply unlucky. So too — by their lights — were the Vikings, but they „hit the jackpot” shortly afterwards, in 845, when they succeeded in capturing Forannán, abbot of Armagh, arguably the most important clerical figure in Ireland. He was taken „along with his relics and companions” and brought by ship to Limerick. In this case the tactic worked, for in the following year (according to the annals) he was released „with the relics of Patrick”. There can be no doubt that in Forannán’s case a ransom was paid to secure his release; and since he was the leading Irish churchman of his time, that ransom must have been substantial⁸.

The question — raised above — whether the native Irish adopted such tactics themselves, or were encouraged by the „example” of the Vikings, is answered already in 842, when (the Annals of Ulster record) the abbot of Annagassan was „fatally wounded and burned by heathens [i.e. Vikings] *and Irish*” (my italics). A century later, in 940, Coibdenach, the abbot of Killeigh (Co. Offaly) was drowned in the sea off Dalkey Island, in Dublin Bay, „while fleeing from the foreigners”. In this case, however, the native Irish involvement was at one remove: Coibdenach had been taken prisoner the previous year by Cellachán mac Carrthaig, the king of Munster, and subsequently sold on to the Vikings of Dublin, who held him captive on the offshore island until his ransom might be negotiated. Coibdenach’s demise would seem to indicate that his status was inadequate to force payment for his release; his attempt to take matters into his own hands came tragically unstuck.

Thus it could be said that the church generally, in the period before the year 1000, had lost some of the privileges it had once enjoyed. The annals illustrate the occurrence of modifications in the administrative structures, which were certainly not caused — though they may have been encouraged — by the effects of Viking raiding and later settlement. This is especially evident in the matter of plurality of ecclesiastical offices. There had been occasions in the eighth century when particular individuals had held ecclesiastical appointments in two or more churches. Between 863 and 900 in the Annals of Ulster there are fourteen recorded instances: typical examples are Tuathal mac Feradaig, abbot of Rechru (Lambay Island) and Durrow (850); Muirchertach mac Néill, abbot of Derry et *aliarum civitatum* (882); and Cellach mac Ailella, abbot of Kildare and Iona (865). Usually it is abbacies that are held jointly; occasionally a man

⁶ For this, and what follows, see D. Ó Cróinín 1995: 234ff.

⁷ For supporting evidence that this was Viking practice, see the *Vita Findani*: 502–506; D. Ó Cróinín 1995: 249–250.

⁸ See A.P. Smyth 1999: 23–24.

is *economus* (steward) in one house and *princeps* (abbot) in another, or *secnap* (chosen successor in the abbacy) in one and *princeps* elsewhere, or even bishop and scriba („biblical scholar”) in one and *princeps* in another. Of course, these offices may have been held conjointly, and not in succession. The Irish annals are laconic on the subject, and it is difficult to know whether they give only the office (or offices) the man held at his death, or whether something more is implied. There may be a deliberate distinction in the use of the word *antea* in an entry of 848: „Fínsnechtae of Limerick, anchorite, and before that king of Connacht, died” (*ancorita et rex Connacht antea mortuus est*). Here the annalist seems to imply that, although Fínsnechtae died an anchorite, he had been king of Connacht before entering the church (presumably on his retirement — or expulsion — from the kingship). This formula is not used in the records of ecclesiastical pluralities; the distinction, therefore, may have been deliberate, rather than accidental.

Plurality of office-holding, then, is not new in the last few decades of the tenth century, and may be explained by various hypotheses. It might have been caused by a shortage of suitable candidates; if we believe the annalists’ accounts of captures and killings in the generations following 795, this may provide a possible explanation. Or it may have been caused by the need to combine livings to make a more economically profitable appointment. If the wealth of churches declined under the Viking impact, ambitious dynasties may have tried to secure the resources of more than one house. It appears from the annals as if pluralism fell sharply after the 950s. This may be due to annalistic convention; but it seems likely that, as prosperity increased in the latter part of the century, the need to combine offices decreased.

Such combinations of offices were, for the most part, personal and temporary. The abbeys were often relatively near, but not always: Terryglass and Clonfert, Clonard and Duleek, Kildare and Killeigh are within fairly short distances of each other, while the „Louth and other churches”, and „Kildalkey and other churches” mentioned in the annals may have been in each others’ vicinity; Kildare and Iona, on the other hand, were not. For periods in the tenth century the abbot of Armagh had secured control of the *paruchia* of Columcille. Máel Brigte died in 927 as *coarb* of both Patrick and Columcille⁹, and towards the end of the century, in 989, Dub dá Leithe, Abbot of Armagh, took the *coarbship* of Columcille, „with the consent of the men of Ireland and Scotland”. This union was not permanent, but the tenth century shows Armagh building up her power throughout Ireland, extending her claims to tribute in both south and north, with the support of the major overlords. This was a period when, in the political sphere, the power of over-kings was growing at the expense of minor kings, a development that had begun before the Viking age, but which must have been given added impetus by ninth-century conditions. Individuals needed a powerful lord to protect them; so too did churches. A tendency to build up overlords, clearly recognisable in the world, may also have been followed by the church.

⁹ For discussion, see M. Herbert 1988. Her conclusions, however, are not always to be followed.

This development happens to be most obvious in the case of Armagh. In the pre-Viking age the *cána* (the „taxes” claimed by prominent churches from their subjects) had been promulgated by a number of different churches. In the tenth-century annals we hear only of circuits by the abbot of Armagh. As in the ninth century, Armagh had her *máer* („steward”, i.e., collector of dues) in Brega. He is mentioned in the Annals of Ulster at 922 (the abbot of Dunleer), in 924 (the abbot of Monasterboice), and in 929 (the bishop of Duleek and Lusk), while in 973 the annals tell that Abbot Dub dá Leithe went on a circuit (*for cuairt*) of Munster to collect his tax (*riar*). A similar right to tribute was being exercised in Cenél nÉogain: in 947 a bell-full of silver was given by the Cenél nÉogain to Patrick. Abbot Muirecán went on a circuit of the Cenél nÉogain in 993, when he conferred the degree of king (*co ro erlegh gradh righ*) on Áed mac Domnaill in the presence of Patrick’s congregation. Thereafter he made a great circuit of the north of Ireland.

It appears from this that the abbot of Armagh had established his rights in Munster, supported by the king of Cashel, and that his superiority was recognised throughout the country. When he made his circuit of all Ireland in 1005–6, therefore, Brian Bóruma recognised the claims of Patrick’s successor (*co tarait oighreir samhtha Patraic ocus a comharbai*), and his secretary, Máel Suthain, recorded them in the Book of Armagh in the presence of Brian *imperator Scotorum*. Brian was thus the first king to control the forces of both church and state north and south.

Throughout the tenth century, then, some of the dividing lines between church and secular society were becoming blurred. We have seen Irishmen as well as Vikings invading sanctuary, raiding churches and secular settlements without distinction, as if there was little difference between the two. In some monasteries, for which we have detailed abbatial lists, we can see a principle of hereditary succession being adopted very much as if the abbacy were a secular kingship. In the second half of the tenth century the Clann Sínaig family came back into power in Armagh. This kin-group was a branch of the Uí Echdach, one of the leading peoples of Airgialla, the territory in which Armagh was situated. Dub dá Leithe began his period of office in 965. After a comparatively short intermission his nephew Máel Muire succeeded in 1001. After this the family held the abbacy until 1137, often succeeding in the collateral branch. It seems that these abbots were not married priests but laymen. They often controlled other important offices in the monastery, that of *fosaírchinnech* (sub-prior), master of the schools and head of the guest-house. Another Airgialla kin group, the Uí Bresail, frequently filled the position of *seclap* (vice-abbot)¹⁰.

The position at Clonmacnois was somewhat similar. Here we find the kin of Mac Cuinn na mBocht, in the mid ninth century, appearing as anchorites, „scribes”, and *airchinnaig* (administrators of ecclesiastical lands) of Eclais Bec. Then in 955 Dúnadach died, a bishop of the same kin. His brother was *airchinnech* of Eclais Bec and his son head of the schools. His grandson died as *anmchara* („confessor”) in 1024,

¹⁰ The „classic” treatment of the subject is T. Ó Fiaich 1969: 75–127.

and Conn na mBocht, the famous ecclesiastic whose sons dominated Clonmacnois in the second half of the eleventh century, was directly descended from him¹¹. Some at least of these men were definitely in orders, but had sons who succeeded them.

The Vikings did not cause this pluralism in the Irish church, but by carrying off churchmen and, even more, by destroying church wealth, they may well have created the conditions that favoured its growth. Another practice that had begun before the period of Viking settlement is found occasionally recorded in the ninth century. This is when a king combined his royal office with a monastic (or episcopal) appointment. Cathal mac Dúnlainge, king of Uí Chennselaig, made war on Ferns in 817, and when he died in 819 his obit described him as king of Uí Chennselaig and *secnap* of Ferns. In 836 Fedlemid mac Crimthainn, king of Cashel and supposedly a member too of the Céli Dé reform movement, entered into the abbacy of Cork, while in the same year Dúnlaing, also termed abbot of Cork, „died without communion” in Cashel (the seat of Munster royal power); the two entries seem to be related (did Dunlaing die in captivity?). Muiredach mac Máeldúin (d. 863) was not only king of Airthir but also *secnap* of Armagh, which lay within his kingdom. Muiredach, king of Leinster (d. 885), was also abbot of Kildare, the most important monastery within his overlordship. Perhaps the best-known example of the trend was Cormac mac Cuilennáin (d. 908), king and scholar-bishop of Munster, author of a famous glossary. These instances may indicate the secularisation of the church, but if so, it had started before the real effects of the Vikings could have been felt. Similarly, the inheritance of abbatial office from father to son may be seen in the eighth-century annals, and it continued in the ninth century¹². Slane, Trevet, Dunshaughlin, Kilmoone, Killeslin, Lann Léire, Clondalkin, and probably Lusk, Emly, Monasterboice, and Kildalkey are all places where the annals show family inheritance. Although the statistical evidence is surprisingly meagre, we have to conclude that, in the first period of Viking raiding (between 795 and about 865), the population and wealth of vulnerable monasteries were both badly hit.

That Viking methods were adopted also in other respects is clear from the annals for 847, which record that the reigning „high-king”, Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid attacked and slaughtered a band of renegade Irish warriors who were marauding the countryside around Lough Ramor (Co. Cavan) „in the manner of the heathen” (*more gentiliū*). By the second half of the tenth century, such behaviour had become the norm, and the *Gall-Gáedil* (mixed bands of Vikings and native Irish) have become a regular feature of the annalistic accounts. Furthermore, alliances between Irish and Viking kings were also the norm — despite the fact that Irish poets and propagandists still liked to portray their masters as heroic „freedom fighters” in the struggle to overthrow the heathen foreigner. The annals record three separate occasions between 980 and 993 on which the „high-king” of the time, Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, captured the Viking town of Dublin, but despite the annalist’s claim that „foreign power

¹¹ For discussion, see J.V. Kelleher 1971.

¹² See K. Hughes 1966.

was ejected from Ireland” as a result (*roladh nert Gall a hÉrinn*, AU 980), in fact Máel Sechnaill made no such attempt either to destroy the city or expel its inhabitants. True, the first Viking settlement of Dublin had been destroyed eighty years previously, by the king of Brega (a kingdom north of present-day Co. Dublin); the event was marked by the Annals of Ulster with the stark statement: „The heathens were driven from Ireland, i.e. from the fortress of Dublin ... and they abandoned a good number of their ships, and escaped half-dead after they had been wounded and broken”. Dublin lay deserted afterwards for a period of fifteen years, until Sitric son of Imar re-entered it in 917. The second settlement of Dublin, two miles downstream from the earlier *longphort*, was located on the site of the famous Woodquay excavations of the 1970s, and in the half-century following its re-foundation the town became one of the most important commercial centres in Europe.

The period following Dublin’s re-foundation saw profound changes in Irish society and in Viking attitudes to that society. Irish kings now preferred to see the „foreigners” of Dublin as a source of wealth and tribute, rather than as simple enemies to be annihilated, and the success of the various pretenders to the „high-kingship” of Ireland was, in future, to be gauged by the effectiveness of their control over the city¹³. The reason was obvious: although the Vikings never established anything like the same degree of control in Ireland that they did in the north of England or on the continent, their commercial activities brought rich rewards to the rulers of the Viking cities of Dublin, Limerick, Waterford and Wexford, with the result that there were rich pickings for any Irish king who could establish a strong grip on those towns, and on Dublin in particular. Thus, when in 980 Máel Sechnaill crushed the Dublin Viking king Amlaíb Cuarán (945–980), a battle in which „very great slaughter was inflicted on the foreigners” (including the loss of Amlaíb’s son Ragnall), the result was only that Amlaíb abandoned the kingship and retired — significantly enough — to the famous Irish monastery of Iona, off the western Scottish coast, where he ended his days „after penance and a good life”.

The contrast with the neighbouring island could hardly have been greater: where the Vikings in the north of England had carved out the Danelaw, which they ruled effectively without opposition, in Ireland they never succeeded in establishing much more than a bridgehead in each of the Viking towns. And whereas in England „a staggering Danegeld of 48,000 pounds” was exacted by way of a general levy from the English to the Danes, to be handed over in London after Easter 1012¹⁴, in Ireland the corresponding levies were exacted from the Scandinavians, not by them. Thus, after Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill’s capture of Dublin in 989, following a twenty-day siege, the Viking inhabitants gave him „whatever he wished for as long as he was king: an ounce of gold from every garth on every Christmas Eve for ever”¹⁵, while in an Irish poem relating the various dues and rights of Irish kings, the Irish poet boasted that „three

¹³ See S. Duffy 1993: 13–18.

¹⁴ See A.P. Smyth 1999: 24.

¹⁵ *The Annals of Tigernach* 1896: 346 (s.a. 988).

ounces of the tax were left in the gardens of the Foreigners; Dublin is thrice plundered on account of it by the Irish"¹⁶.

These accounts, however, have to be set in context: their propaganda element should not be allowed to obscure the fact that, in the half-century or more preceding the year 1000, the Vikings had — as we remarked above — become gradually assimilated into the norms of Irish life. By the later tenth century the Vikings in Ireland were Christian¹⁷. This was probably so already, in fact, by 921, for when Godfrid (Górsdör) of Dublin plundered Armagh in that year he spared the ecclesiastical buildings and the *céli dé*. After the battle of Tara in 980, the defeated king Olaf (Amlaíb, Anlaf) Cuarán of Dublin retired to Iona: „Amlaíb son of Sitric, high-king of the foreigners of Dublin, went to Iona on pilgrimage and died after sanctification and penance"¹⁸. The conversion of the royal house of Dublin is perhaps the most obvious proof of the growing interaction between the two peoples, and there is evidence also from runic inscriptions on the Isle of Man and in Scotland that Vikings there had been christianised early, and that a pattern of inter-marriage with the native population was well-established¹⁹. The most famous example in Ireland itself was the triple marriage of Gormlaith, daughter of the Leinster king Murchad mac Find²⁰. The genealogists recorded that she was first married to that Amlaíb Cuarán who was king of Dublin until ousted in 980, then to Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill, Uí Néill high-king and conqueror of Amlaíb, then finally to Brian Bóruma (alias Brian Boru), who in turn replaced Máel Sechnaill as the leading political figure in Ireland c. 1000. These blatantly political liaisons became the subject of a witty epigram:

Three buck-leaps were made by Gormlaith
which no other woman shall do until Doomsday:
A buck-leap into Dublin, a leap into Tara,
a leap into Cashel, the plain of mounds above all.

*Tri léimend ra-ling Gormlaith,
ní lingfea ben co bráth:
léim i nÁth Cliath, léim i Temraig,
léim i Cassel, carnmaig ós chách.*²¹

Christianity must have filtered through, perhaps via captives, or, more probably, through friendly contacts with the Irish aristocracy. The interchange of Viking and Irish

¹⁶ *Lebor na Cert. The Book of Rights* 1962: 116–117.

¹⁷ For the chronology of the conversion of the Scandinavian peoples generally, see now Ch. Radtke 1999: 3–34.

¹⁸ The assertion by Ch. Doherty that Olaf deliberately adopted the trappings of Irish kingship (with reference, e.g., to his epithet *Cuarán*, supposedly copied from Uí Néill royal inauguration rites — first recorded in the sixteenth century! — involving the use of a royal slipper (*cuarán*) is not supported with any real evidence; see Ch. Doherty 1999.

¹⁹ For the evidence, see D. Ó Cróinín 1995: 263ff.

²⁰ See now D. Ó Cróinín 2000: 212–224.

²¹ Text in *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae* 1962: 13.

family and personal names that took place during this period also points to close personal connections between the two populations²². The Amlaíb into whose bed Gormlaith made her „buck-leap” had been baptized, and his daughter and grandson bore Irish christian-names: Máel Muire and Gilla Ciaráin. Other Viking chiefs were giving their sons the names of Christian saints, such as Gilla Pátraic, son of Ivar of Waterford, or Gilla Ciaráin, son of Glún Iarainn of Dublin, who fell in the battle of Clontarf. Sitric „Silkenbeard” (Sigtryggr Silkiskeggi) had Brian Boru as a step-father, and there is a possibility that Brian may have given his own daughter to Sitric in marriage²³. Far from being a pagan ogre, Sitric was a paragon of Christian virtue: he is credited with having founded Christ Church cathedral in Dublin, and the coins minted in Dublin during his reign (989–1036) — the earliest known Irish coinage, based on the pennies minted by contemporary English kings — bear the sign of the cross. A daughter, Caillech Finnén (a distinctively Irish name) was apparently a nun, and he himself is reported by the annals as having visited Rome on pilgrimage in 1028²⁴.

By the close of the tenth century, following a century and more of assimilation, the Viking pressure on the Irish church was lessening. We still hear of attacks, but they are not on the scale of the previous half-century, when, for example, in 948 the abbot of Slane was taken prisoner and died in gentile hands; in 950 the bell tower of Slane was burned (together with a particularly fine bell and the crosier of the patron saint), and the rector and many people were burned (they may have taken refuge with the monastery’s valuables in the tower). In 951 Godfrid of Dublin plundered Kells, Downpatrick, Ardraccan, Dulane, and Kilskeer and other churches, and took a great number of captives (the annals say 3,000) and booty of cows and horses, gold and silver. All the same, the impression from the annals (though obviously dependent on the hazards of statistical frequency), is that there are fewer such attacks than in the ninth century²⁵. The principal reason for this, undoubtedly, was that Irish over-kings were increasing their power and were able to respond with major victories, as in 980 when Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill won the battle of Tara, or in 989 when — as we remarked above — he won the battle of Dublin, or again in 999, when he and Brian Bóruma defeated the Vikings in the battle of Glenn Máma. But perhaps equally significant was the fact that the Vikings had become firmly established and part of the Irish political scenario. Irishmen were constantly using the „foreigners” as allies against other Irish kings, so that Dublin became one more kingdom among the other Irish kingdoms.

The defeat of the Dublin Vikings in 980 did, however, mark a significant setback for them; they were to suffer a second, more significant setback in 1014, when they were defeated by Brian Bóruma in the famous Battle of Clontarf. The battle marked the

²² See B. Ó Cuív 1988: 79–88.

²³ See D. Ó Cróinín 1995: 266–267.

²⁴ This evidence is ignored by A.P. Smyth 1984: 210–214 and A.P. Smyth 1999: 36–37. Smyth tends to overplay the „bloody barbarism” of the Scandinavians in this latter article.

²⁵ For discussion of the annalistic evidence, see C. Etchingham 1996, and the critique of this approach by D. Ó Corráin 1998: 296–339.

dramatic climax of a remarkable political career for Brian: he and his family, the Dál Cais, represented the epitome of the new political forces that were coming to the fore in the years before 1000. When the dynasty made their first appearance in the annals (under their older name, Déis Tuaircert), it was in a report of their defeat at the hands of the Vikings in 836. But in the years following that initial setback Brian's father and brother had carved out a position of power in their native Munster, at the expense of the old-established Éoganacht dynasties. The untimely death of Brian's brother, Mathgamain, in 997, saw Brian elevated to the position of dynastic leader, and he spent the following years challenging the established rulers of the rest of Ireland. In 1002 he successfully overcame the ruling „high-king”, Máel Sechnaill mac Domnaill; in 1005 he was in Armagh, on the occasion of an expedition to the north, when he received the temporal and political blessings of the Armagh church — the most important in the country — by a generous donation of twenty ounces of gold. As we remarked above, he used the occasion to have his secretary, Máel Suthain, make an entry in the Book of Armagh (believed to be a relic of St Patrick) in which Brian was described as *imperator Scottorum*.

The high-point of Brian's career, however, was the Battle of Clontarf. Long presented as the great Irish triumph in the long-running „Resistance Movement” against Viking oppression²⁶, in fact it represented a Pyrrhic victory for the Ua Briain dynasty, which was to suffer disastrous losses in the encounter, including the death of Brian himself. The contemporary historical sources make clear that the battle had nothing whatsoever to do with patriotic resistance to the Vikings; in fact, Brian was allied with the Vikings of Limerick against the men of Leinster and the Norse of Dublin, whose king, Sitric, was no less than his own step-son²⁷. The Dál Cais — like most other Irish dynasties of the period — had no qualms about allying with the Vikings if there was political or military advantage to be had from such alliances; Brian's „public image”, therefore, was wholly fictitious, the result of later Ua Briain propaganda which sought to present the eponymous ancestor as a lone adversary of the Viking „terror”.

There is no evidence whatever that Brian was in any sense an innovator, either in Irish politics or in military affairs. On the other hand, the period around 1000 did see something akin to standing armies take the field in Ireland — something which had never been available to previous Irish kings, because of the limited economic resources at their disposal. Earlier kings with ambition to stamp their authority on their rivals, such as Báetán mac Cairill (572–581), had undertaken sporadic lengthy military expeditions (in Báetán's case, from the far north-east as far south as the ancient Munster „capital” of Emly [Co. Tipperary]), and he allegedly received tribute both from the Irish and from Scotland at his fortress of Lethet²⁸. Máel Sechnaill mac Máele Ruanaid

²⁶ The term „Resistance Movement” is actually used by N. Chadwick, in an otherwise very useful article, *The Vikings and the western world* (1962: 13–42, p. 31).

²⁷ For valuable critical assessments of the battle, and its significance, see J. Ryan 1938: 1–50, and A.J. Goedheer 1938.

²⁸ *Corpus genealogiarum Hiberniae* 1962: 406; D. Ó Cróinín 1995: 50–51.

(845–862) — arguably the first man to make good his claim of being king of all Ireland — likewise conducted lengthy campaigns against his enemies north and south. But these undertakings do not appear to have been on the scale of Brian’s all-conquering campaign that took him to Armagh in 1005. And yet, the Dál Cais territories in north-west Munster from which Brian and his dynasty originated were not significantly wealthier than those of his rivals — far from it, in fact. However he managed it, then, Brian’s economic resources — and his determination to use them for extended military purposes — would seem to have had another source: most likely the tribute-wealth paid by the Viking towns such as Limerick (where the O’Briens were later — and perhaps already in Brian’s time? — to have their principal royal residence). The triple-complex of Béal Boru, Killaloe and Kincora which formed the strongpoints of Ua Briain power along the river Shannon in west Munster were alike fortress, royal residence and dynastic church — „a unique combination outside the Scandinavian towns of Ireland” (though not necessarily so in a European context, of course)²⁹.

Doubtless many of these developments were brought about (or perhaps speeded up) by the activities of the Vikings in previous decades, and the necessity — forced on Irish kings and their peoples — to adopt new and more radical methods in the fight against the better-armed and more mobile invaders. But the more fundamental changes that affected the entire country (and not just those parts in which Viking influence was to be felt) had deeper roots, and probably resulted from longer-term shifts in Irish society. Unfortunately, these changes are seldom visible in the archaeological or written historical records of the period. The economic growth on which such expansion was presumably based is all but invisible in the historical documents (a possible exception is the extensive genealogical records from this period, which may, e.g., be tribute-lists of a kind)³⁰, and there is nothing to indicate any marked increase in agricultural activity c. 1000, nor any corresponding increase in population. Nevertheless, Irish kings do begin to show an interest in the apparatus of power: Brian, after all had a secretary, and referred to himself as *imperator Scottorum*, a term not previously used of Irish kings³¹, and which may bespeak a familiarity with contemporary political developments in continental Europe. „But will Irish stability and royal authority stand comparison with that of either of the first two Henrys [of England]?”, as Kathleen Hughes once asked?³² Without the kind of royal or private charters so plentiful in other European countries³³, with no public or private administrative records, no memoranda or estate lists, no inventories or *descriptios*, no geld-rolls or burghal hideage, no equivalent of the

²⁹ J. Bradley 1994: 170–179.

³⁰ The suggestion of B. Ó Cíobháin 1987–88: 364–66.

³¹ Though Adomnán of Iona, in his *Vita Columbae* (c. 700?), did refer to king Oswald of Northumbria as „imperator Britanniae”.

³² K. Hughes 1972: 190–193.

³³ The earliest formal Irish charters date from the end of the eleventh century, and Latin charters first appear in the twelfth century — though there is some evidence which suggests that charters or deeds may have existed already in the eighth century; see D.Ó Cróinín 1995: 165.

Domesday Book, no coinage or royal mints — conspicuously ignoring the example given them by the Viking kings of Dublin from 997 on — nothing, in other words, which might give grounds for a plausible comparison with the royal powers and prerogatives of Anglo-Norman or continental kings, it is difficult to answer Kathleen Hughes's question without appearing ridiculous. And yet, as we saw above, Brian had his secretary, Máel Suthain (if not necessarily a central writing-office or something akin to a chancery), and there is evidence too in the terminology of the time that kings were now levying taxes, raising military musters, introducing legislation, making and deposing kings, and placing puppet administrators in charge of rival kingdoms, all of this accompanied by the introduction of new terminology of subordination and office-holding which one would otherwise expect in a proto-feudal society³⁴.

For its part, the church as an institution had changed very little. The instances of pluralism and of „secularisation” that used to be seen as the result of the Viking pressure had certainly begun well before the Vikings arrived. The church was still richly endowed and powerful. Its organisation, however, was neither monolithic nor centralized: instead of one single hierarchical system there was a marked diversity of structures, institutions, and jurisdictions; but that need not be seen as evidence for anarchy. Great achievement in the cultural sphere is not incompatible with periods of seeming anarchy in the political sphere (as Bede's achievement in early eighth-century Northumbria proves). In the case of churches and monasteries such as Armagh, Clonmacnois, Clonard, Cork, and many others, that survived without a break over half a millennium, in changing and often difficult circumstances (for example, the Viking wars), we can say that they not only survived but functioned to extraordinary effect as bearers of a genuinely spiritual Christian tradition. Hereditary succession to church office, and especially to the rule of great monasteries, had begun at least by the seventh century (and was equally prevalent in Anglo-Saxon England and in the Germanic kingdoms of Frankish Gaul). In this respect, Ireland was no different from any other country in Europe. Irish churchmen, however, played a major role in society as lawmakers (in Latin and in the vernacular), theologians, biblical scholars, advisors of kings, patrons of the arts, and as creators of a fine literary culture (in Irish and in Latin). In the upper echelons of society — in Ireland, as elsewhere in Europe — clergy and laity shaded imperceptibly into each other, and it is wrong-headed and quite anachronistic for modern historians to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the two categories that was not perceived by contemporaries. Though such clerics may have appeared „evil and adulterous” in the eyes of Bernard of Clairvaux (a none too savoury individual himself), hereditary succession did not necessarily make for bad government, or bad morals — and even Bernard had to reluctantly admit that these Irish churchmen were learned „in their own way”.

³⁴ See especially D. Ó Corráin 1978: 1–35. It is neither appropriate nor necessary to enter here into the debate generated by Susan Reynold's book (1989), which I believe to be misguided in its basic premise.

Learned Irish ecclesiastics in the pre-Viking age usually (though certainly not always) wrote in Latin; by the end of the tenth century the use of the vernacular language had come more to the fore. Now, while they still wrote often in Latin, they appear just as frequently to write in Irish (though it is quite erroneous to say that Irish had *replaced* Latin by this time as the language of instruction). It is not surprising to find that in this period the content of ecclesiastical learning has changed as well. The fusion of church and secular society that we have seen in abbatial succession is nowhere clearer than in the literature of the time. Irish literary culture was the most diverse and sophisticated in Europe, to the extent that Latin and the vernacular enjoyed equal status in the schools, while native and ecclesiastical genres of composition were practised side-by-side.

Scholarly literature was also still being written with a clerical audience in mind, but Irish men of learning were quite open also to the attractions of sagas and stories, in poetry and in prose, from their own tradition. Such men were keenly interested in the Irish past. Human history, they accepted, began with the Creation; but this presented no problem of belief: the tradition (*senchus*) of pre-Christian Ireland simply had to be fitted into the biblical time-scheme. That scheme scholars knew (and accepted literally) as it was recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Their own *scéla* or *senchus* („ancient tradition in narrative form”) had much in common with some of the Old Testament. The story in the *Lebar Gabála* („The Book of the invasions of Ireland”), which purports to recount Ireland’s history in pre-Christian times, was intended to provide a native equivalent to the Old Testament history. It was preserved from at least the ninth century on in various versions, and even made its way to Britain and the continent, for the British-Latin writer Nennius knew it, and Irish scholars in Europe also mention it³⁵. *Saltair na Rann* („The Psalter of the Verses”, dating from c. 985?) is Old Testament narrative seen through Irish eyes, adding details which make the stories fit the social and legal assumptions of the Irish author’s own time and culture. Thus the author brings the ancestor of all the Gaels to graze flocks in Egypt, makes Adam fast against God to win forgiveness, or David demand legal sureties from Saul before he goes to fight Goliath. It also draws on a remarkable number of otherwise rare or wholly unattested biblical apocrypha. These are only two of the principal compositions of the period; but Irish schools read their Latin grammars too alongside their vernacular prose and verse. Scholars like Israel Scottus, one-time teacher and confidant of Archbishop Bruno of Köln (brother to the emperor Otto the Great), composed treatises *De anima* and *De Trinitate*, and is probably the same Israel from whom Dubinsi, bishop of Bangor (Co. Down, d. 953), learned the rules of a game called *alea evangelii* („gospel dice”) which is preserved (with an illustrative diagram of the board and pieces) in a manuscript now in Oxford. This Dubinsi allegedly learned the game while sejourning at the court of the Anglo-Saxon king Æthelstan³⁶. According to two leading authorities, „Es gab in Irland im XI.-XII. Jahrhundert noch klösterliche Schulen, in denen ebensolche

³⁵ See J.J. Contreni 1984: 51–54; repr. in 1992: chap. XVII.

³⁶ For a different interpretation of Israel’s career, see M. Lapidge 1992: 97–114.

Artes-Studien wie in guten festländischen und englischen Schulen betrieben wurden”³⁷. This was also the period when some of the great Irish literary works were being composed or compiled.

During the tenth and early eleventh centuries the church regained some of its wealth and authority. The church of Armagh in particular gained a position of preeminence. But the separateness of the church was diminished, her abbots sometimes married and not in orders. In our terms, there was laicisation of the church and clericalisation of kingship and society, but such concepts were largely foreign to the society in which these very processes were taking place. „The laicisation of abbacies in Ireland and the feudalisation of bishoprics and abbacies in Europe had the same origin, the wish of the local ruling families to obtain and retain control of the rich property of the churches, and their manipulation of law and custom to that effect”³⁸. Only conscious reformers — in Ireland and elsewhere — saw the categories as quite distinct. The survival of the Céli Dé movement into the period shows that the spiritual life in Ireland was by no means dead, but the contemporary changes in the church in Europe led almost inevitably to a need for institutional, rather than merely personal, reform. That was to come in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries — with disastrous consequences for church, state, and people in Ireland.

Strikingly absent from all this discussion is the one element, that students of European history familiar with this period might expect: the „legend of the year 1000”, the myth of a general panic (not unlike the one that we witnessed recently!) which is supposed to have gripped the people of Europe as the year 1000 approached, supposedly driving them into a frenzy of religious fervour which drove them in vastly increased numbers on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and resulting ultimately in the Crusades and all that followed in their wake. Like those of other European countries, the Irish annalsistic records have nothing to say about an alarm produced by the impending millennial year, though they do have remarkable information about a panic in the year 1096 — precisely the year in which Peter the Hermit’s call to arms (taking up the earlier call of Pope Urban II at Clermont, in November 1095) in order to recover the Holy Land from the hands of the Moslems in a holy crusade, led to the first dreadful anti-Jewish pogroms in the Rhineland cities of Lotharingia. The Annals of Ulster read:

Great fear upon the men of Ireland before the Feast of John in this year, until God spared [them] through the fastings of the *comarba* of Patrick [‘successor’, i.e., bishop of Armagh] and of the clergy of Ireland besides.

The Annals of the Four Masters give more details:

The Feast of John fell on a Friday this year; the men of Ireland were seized with great fear, and the counsel taken by the clergy of Ireland, with the *comarba* of St Patrick at their head, in order to save them from the mortality which had been

³⁷ B. Bischoff, L. Bieler 1956: 216–220.

³⁸ The verdict of J.F. Kenney 1929; repr. 1993: 748.

predicted to them from a remote period, was to command all in general to observe a three-day total fast, from Wednesday to Sunday, every month, and an [ordinary?] fast every day till the end of the year, except on Sundays and great feast-days; and they also gave alms and many offerings to God, and many lands were granted to churches and the clergy by kings and princes. And so the men of Ireland were saved for that time from the fire of vengeance.

The Annals of Clonmacnois add one detail to the measures taken by the clergy: „They also appointed certain prayers to be daily said”³⁹.

As Kenney pointed out, obviously there can have been no occasion for such extraordinary alarm in the fact that in 1096 the Feast of the Decollation of John the Baptist (August 29) fell on a Friday, since it would do so every twenty-eight years. But a remarkable Irish chiliastic text of the period, the so-called „Second Vision of Adomnán”, remarks that the time of danger was when this occurred in a bissextile (i.e., leap) and embolismal (i.e., having an extra intercalated lunar month) year at the end of a cycle. The first two of these conditions were fulfilled in 1096, but not the third (as it was the fourteenth, not the nineteenth year in the then universally observed nineteen-year cycle). No doubt the great epidemic of the 1095 — which had raged for the best part of the year — had unnerved many in Ireland, to the point where they were susceptible (like their contemporaries in Europe) to the ravings of their clerical superiors. Whatever its origin (and there is a whole cycle of stories which „explain” why this vengeance was to fall with peculiar force on Ireland)⁴⁰, the penultimate sentence in the Annals of the Four Masters no doubt explained the true motivation behind the scare. By that date, however, the millennium was long since past, and other forces were at work in Ireland which were to bring the forebodings of 1095–1096 to a grim fulfilment.

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³⁹ Annalistic citations from J.F. Kenney (repr. 1993: 750).

⁴⁰ See J.F. Kenney (repr. 1993: 750–753).

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VINLAND 1000 — A EUROPEAN OUTPOST IN NORTH AMERICA

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For the Norse, arriving in North America around the year 1000, the notion of a millennium having elapsed since the birth of Christ would not have existed. Their time reckoning was in terms of summers and winters, summer beginning around mid-April and winter in mid-October. Their chronological references were local major events, familiar to everyone. Thus Greenland was settled by Eric the Red „fourteen or fifteen years before the adoption of Christianity in Iceland” (*The Greenlanders’ Saga*), and Eric’s son Leif set out to explore areas beyond Greenland in the summer that King Olav Tryggvason of Norway fell at the Battle of Svolder or a summer or two thereafter. At that new millennium, the family of Eric the Red pushed the boundaries of the European world to the point that, for the first time, the population of the world encircled the globe. It is not strange that the final linking happened out of Greenland. Distances are short at the top of the globe, compared to the sea expanses at the equator. Greenland was new to the Norse, although its verdant valleys in many ways suited their Icelandic lifestyle. While Greenland offered new resources such as caribou and large herds of walrus, lumber was in even shorter supply than in Iceland. The new surroundings invited exploration, and the scouting of the North American coast was simply an extension of other forays into the unknown parts of Greenland¹. Three new areas entered into the consciousness of the Norse world. Farthest to the north and closest to Greenland was Helluland, Land of Stone Slabs. A couple of days sail south from there was Markland, Land of Forests, and after another two days, one reached Vinland, Land of Wine.

The name Vinland evokes romance and mystery, a forgotten paradise on the boundary between legend and reality. For more than 150 years scholars and amateurs have debated its location and very existence. As we enter into the third millennium of our era, Vinland is emerging again from the mist and becoming an increasingly known entity. The greatest step on the way was the discovery, in 1960, of the L’Anse aux Meadows site in Newfoundland by Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad. The site has been

* Parks Canada

¹ T.H. McGovern 1980–81: 285–308.

extensively excavated, first by the Ingstads during the years 1961 to 1968, and later by Parks Canada, 1973 to 1976. However, archaeological research over the past two decades on Norse sites in Greenland and Iceland has been almost equally important as it has given us a new and more faceted picture of the Norse society against which the Vinland phenomenon must be gauged.

Much can still be gleaned from the written sources, chiefly the Vinland sagas², when we combine that evidence with the archaeological physical evidence. In the following we will use this combined evidence to recreate the short episode of Norse expansion into legendary Vinland around the year 1000.

THE GREENLANDERS' SAGA

Once in Greenland, the Norse were bound to detect the existence of North America. Contacts with Iceland and Norway were maintained, and all traffic had to round the southern point of Greenland, an area fraught with navigational difficulties. It was only a matter of time before a ship was blown off course towards the North American coast. According to *The Greenlanders' Saga* this happened to the Icelandic trader Bjarni Herjolfsson as he set out from Iceland in the late summer of c. 985. Bjarni's father Herjolf was one of the land owners who had emigrated to Greenland with Eric that year. After three days along the east coast of Greenland, Bjarni's crew lost sight of land. Fog enveloped the ship, and winds tossed it in unknown directions. When the weather cleared, the crew sighted a level and heavily forested coastline. Norse navigational techniques allowed them to determine latitude, so it was not difficult for Bjarni to realize that their position was south of Greenland. He therefore worked his way north along the coast for five days at which point he steered east, almost certainly close to the latitude of his father's estate (c. 60°), and after four days the ship landed at Herjolfsnes.

Although Bjarni's discoveries aroused a great deal of interest among the Greenlanders, it took another fifteen years before they could be explored. It is easy to understand the delay. Clearing of land, building construction, the propagation of livestock and food supplies were the necessary priorities. Predictably, it was one of Eric's sons, Leif, who took the first initiative to investigate the areas sighted by Bjarni³. According to *The Greenlanders' Saga*, Leif purchased Bjarni's ship and recruited a crew of thirty-five for the voyage. Retracing Bjarni's steps but in the opposite direction, the crew first observed a barren coastline characterized by large glaciers and a shore entirely of large rock slabs. This can only be the eastern coast of Cape Chidley, the northern tip of

² The Vinland sagas are known primarily in two versions, *The Greenlanders' Saga* and *Eric's Saga*. Based on eleventh-century oral traditions, both were written down independently of each other in Iceland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. *Eric's Saga* is known from two manuscripts, Skalholt Book and Hauk's Book. The Vinland sagas exist in several English translations. One, which is close to the original text, can be found in G. Jones 1986.

³ As paramount chieftain of Greenland, only Eric could have authorized such a venture.



Fig. 1. Map showing the location of L'Anse aux Meadows and the projected locations of Helluland, Markland, and Vinland

Labrador, north of latitude 58 north, which is also north of the treeline. According to the saga, Leif said, *I shall now give the land a name, and call it Helluland* (Land of Stone Slabs). By establishing a name, Leif claimed control over the area. En route, Leif would also have sighted Baffin Island and Resolution Island, so these areas are also likely to have been included within Helluland.

The next area named by Leif was Markland, Land of Woods. The physiographic characteristics here were a flat country covered with forests and with a coastline of white sands. Descriptions of subsequent expeditions make it clear that Markland is central Labrador, including the area on both sides of Hamilton Inlet. After another two

days Leif's ship arrived at a destination where he decided to make camp. *Búdir*, „booths”, were erected, and the camp was named *Leifsbúdir*, „Leif's Booths”, or „Leif's Camp”. A *búð* was a structure used by Icelanders wherever they needed accommodations for a short time only, for instance during *thing* or market sessions. A cross between tents and houses, a *búð* consisted of walls of sod roofed over with large tarpaulins suspended over portable tent posts. Finding the location a handy one, Leif later decided that the expedition would spend the winter there, and the booths were replaced with large, winter halls.

Leif's first explorations out of Leifsbúdir were cautious. The immediate surroundings were surveyed on day trips. Although events are contracted in the sagas, it is obvious that later explorations took the group so far south that wild grapes were encountered. This led Leif to name the entire area Vinland, „Land of Wine”. The expedition stayed over the winter, returning to Greenland in the spring.

On the next Vinland expedition, led by Leif's half brother Thorvald, the explorers ventured west and north. Thorvald and a small group travelled west in the ship's boat where they observed great expanses of wood, growing along sandy beaches, and many islands and shallows. They did not encounter a single human being, although they saw a wooden frame looking something like a hay rick, which must have been made by people. The only coasts along the Atlantic seaboard that would have been almost empty of people in the eleventh century are the coasts of eastern Quebec. Thorvald and his group returned to Leifsbúdir to spend the winter. The next summer Thorvald conducted the big ship „eastwards...and north around the land”. On this journey the group ran into nine native people, whom they called Skrälings, sleeping under over-turned skin boats. The Norse killed eight of them. Later, Skrälings launched a revenge attack from a large fleet of skin boats, and Thorvald was killed by a Skräling arrow. If one combines *The Greenlanders' Saga's* description with that of the same event in *Eric's Saga*, it becomes obvious that Thorvald was killed in Markland, just north of Kjalarnes and inside what is now Hamilton Inlet.

The subsequent expeditions to Leifsbúdir were less exploratory and more exploitative. Lumber was a major commodity sought, as were grapes, and the expeditions collected „every valuable commodity they could lay their hands on and the ship carry.”

Three additional expeditions are described in *The Greenlanders' Saga*, all by members of Eric's family. All used Leifsbúdir as base. All asked to take over Leifsbúdir, but were told by Leif that they could use Leifsbúdir but that he, Leif, maintained ownership. This in effect means that he was anxious to assert control of the Vinland resources.

The third expedition, organized by Leif's brother Thorsten to retrieve Thorvald's body never reached its goal. After being storm-driven all summer, Thorsten returned in October to Greenland where he died in a few months. A year later his widow, Gudrid, married an Icelandic trader, Thorfinn Karlsefni, who had arrived at Brattahlid for business. Together they undertook the fourth expedition⁴. They were out for two or three years, and their son Snorri was born in Vinland. This expedition ran into a large

⁴ As Eric's daughter-in-law Gudrid was also a member of Eric's family.

body of Skrælings. After an initial friendly trade, relations deteriorated into fights, and several Skrælings were killed, as was Karlsefni's trading partner Snorri Thorbrandsson. The fifth and last expedition to Vinland was by Leif's half sister Freydis and her husband Thorvard in partnership with two Icelandic traders, Helgi and Finnbogi. This expedition presumably ended in disaster, with Freydis' crew killing all the Icelanders, including the few women who were part of the crew.

ERIC'S SAGA

The Eric's Saga version of the Vinland Sagas was compiled in support of the canonisation of Thorfinn Karlsefni's and Gudrid's descendant Bishop Björn Gilsson of Holar⁵. Consequently the roles of Karlsefni and Gudrid have been magnified. Leif Ericson has been reduced to the accidental discoverer, blown off course en route from to Greenland, and the four expeditions that reached Vinland have been combined into one led by Karlsefni. Even so, the two versions are strikingly complementary, and *Eric's Saga* is in some aspects less contracted than *The Greenlanders' Saga*, offering enlightening details of Vinland. It describes two settlements: Straumfjord (Fjord of Currents) in the north, and Hóp (Tidal Lagoon) in the south. It also mentions two places north of Straumfjord and two days' sailing south from Markland: a cape they name Kjalarnes (Keel Point) because the travellers found the keel of a ship there, and Furdustrandir (Marvel Beaches), so named because it took such a long time to sail past them. *The Greenlanders' Saga* mentions only Kjalarnes. It explains that the keel had been left by Thorvald after it had become damaged and replaced with a new one.

Straumfjord was located at the mouth of a fjord. In the middle of the fjord was an island, Straumey (Island of Currents) around which there were strong currents. There were other islands as well and so many sea birds⁶ that there was hardly room to set foot between their eggs. On the mainland mountains and tall grass were everywhere. There was little or no snow, and the livestock could graze out of doors on an island all winter. In spite of that the winter was harsh for the Norse because they had collected no provisions, and the hunting and fishing failed. In the spring they went into the fjord for supplies, fishing on the sea, collecting eggs, and hunting on the mainland.

Straumfjord was used as a base for further exploration in the summer. It was an over-wintering place to which the expeditions returned before the onset of winter. The expeditions went in several directions. One group of ten men went north with Thorhall the Hunter by way of Furdustrandir and Kjalarnes. From there they intended to take a westerly course but got caught up in a storm, ending up in Ireland where they were enslaved. Another group consisting of forty men under Thorfinn Karlsefni went south along the coast, because he thought that the land to the south was more expansive and he thought that it was wise to explore in both directions. After a long time of travelling

⁵ Ó. Halldórsson 1978: 393; 1992.

⁶ The Hauk's Book version of *Eric's Saga* says „eider ducks”.

south they came to a place they named Hóp where they stayed for two months before returning to Straumfjord late in the summer. Meanwhile Karlsefni's trading partner Bjarni and a hundred men with him as well as Karlsefni's wife Gudrid had stayed behind at Straumfjord to lay up supplies for the winter. Later Karlsefni set out north past Kjalarnes with one ship and then to the west to look for Thorhall the Hunter. They observed mountains which they thought were part of the same range as the mountains at Hóp, and about the same distance from Straumfjord as Hóp. They proposed to explore these mountains further, but returned to Straumfjord and spent the third winter there after the death of Thorvald from an arrow, shot by a „uniped”, presumably a Skræling.

Hóp was an inviting place. What gave it its name were the extensive sandbars at the mouth of a river estuary behind which were shallow lagoons, so shallow that the ship could not enter into the river except at high tide. A stream flowed down from the land into a lake, and from the lake into the sea. Sailing into the estuary they found self-sown wheat growing wherever the ground was low and grapes growing wild wherever it was hilly. There were forests, with all kinds of animals⁷ and brooks full of fish. On the shore, they dug pits at the high water mark, and as the tide went out, they caught halibut (or flounders) which had become stranded in the pits.

There is every reason to believe that *Leifsbúðir* is Straumfjord and Hóp rolled into one. Its function was the same as that of Straumfjord, a base for further explorations, but its physical description contains elements of Hóp. There is a stream flowing to the sea from a lake, and big shallows, making it impossible for the ship to reach the shore except at high tide. The ship is moved into the stream and from there into the lake. A point of land extends to the north and, beyond it is an island. There is also forest bordering a lake. There is salmon, bigger than anyone had ever seen, in both the lake and the stream, and at some distance from where they make their camp, grapes grow wild. The climate is benevolent, with no frost in the winter and the grass hardly withering. The winter days are longer than in Greenland and Iceland, the sun rising already at breakfast time and setting at afternoon-meal time.

The people going to Vinland were not colonists. Although settling may have been a long-term goal, their immediate intentions was not settling but exploration and exploitation. This is clearly spelt out in both sagas, which state that profits and „honor” were the driving forces. Long-term self-sufficiency was not contemplated, so most of the provisions necessary were brought along. The only instance showing settlement intent is the episode with Karlsefni in *The Greenlanders' Saga* where it is said that „they intended to settle if they could”. Also the composition of the Vinland expeditions indicates that their purpose was exploration and exploitation. The expeditions consisted of work crews, not families. Commanding the expeditions was a leader, usually the ship owner. The leader might have been accompanied by his or her spouse. At times, the leader was in partnership with Icelandic traders, also owners of a ship. The bulk of the

⁷ The word in Old Norse is *dýr*, which sometimes, incorrectly, is translated as „deer”. *Dýr* simply means „animal”.

crew was hired for a specific voyage, the remuneration being a share of the profits. In addition there were some of the leader's estate hands. Some, like Eric the Red's Thorhall the Hunter, had specific skills. Others, like the German Tyrkir, were slaves. The expeditions included a few female domestics, but most participants were males.

*

The L'Anse aux Meadows archaeological evidence makes it possible both to corroborate the stories of the Vinland sagas and fill in some of the details they have left out. L'Anse aux Meadows is definitely the Straumfjord of *Eric's Saga* and that part of Leifsbúdir that corresponds to Straumfjord. The site dates from the time of the Vinland voyages, the radiocarbon parameters being 980 to 1020⁸. Like Straumfjord and Leifsbúdir, it is a large settlement built to accommodate up to three ship loads of people. Like Straumfjord and Leifsbúdir, it served as a permanent base from which other areas were explored and to which one returned in the winter. Its occupants mirror the Vinland exploration crews in that they were work crews, not families. Women participated but most were men. Like the Vinland crews they were socially stratified, with one or two leaders at the top, male workers, and people of inferior social standing, probably including slaves. Even the physical setting corresponds to that of Straumfjord. As one enters the Strait of Belle Isle from the north, it does indeed have the appearance of a fjord. In its middle is an island, Belle Isle, and strong currents, with the Strait acting as a valve pushing water in and out of the Gulf around the island⁹. The site of L'Anse aux Meadows is on a shallow bay. On its northern side it is bordered by a long flat point. Beyond the point are a couple of small flat islands and one higher island forming a distinct landmark. Before the area was permanently settled in the 19th century, these and other islands in the strait were favorite roosting places for birds and were covered in eggs. A small brook winds its way into the bay from a lake about 1 km inland. Before modern grazing and mowing were introduced, the entire site was covered in tall grass. There are low mountains on both sides of the strait, and, until the twentieth century, forests grew close to the site. The climate has been classified as near-arctic¹⁰, but with highly regional and periodical fluctuations¹¹. The experiences of 1998 and 1999 have taught us that with the climate only a couple of degrees warmer than normal, the area can be free of snow in winter.

Yet it is not the topographic features of the site that indicate that this site is Straumfjord, as similar features occur in hundreds of places along the Atlantic seaboard. It is the archaeological remains that tell the story. If we were to construct a site such as that described for Straumfjord in *Eric's Saga*, and, in part, for Leifsbúdir

⁸ C.S. Lindsay 1987; B. Linderöth Wallace 1991: 182.

⁹ W.I. Farquharson 1966.

¹⁰ F.K. Hare 1952: 36–88.

¹¹ C.E. Banfield 1981: 125.

L'ANSE AUX MEADOWS National Historic Site

- Slag
- Iron Rivet
- Artifact
- Worked Wood, Debitage
- Wood Artifact
- Butternuts
- Wood Artifact and Debitage Concentration

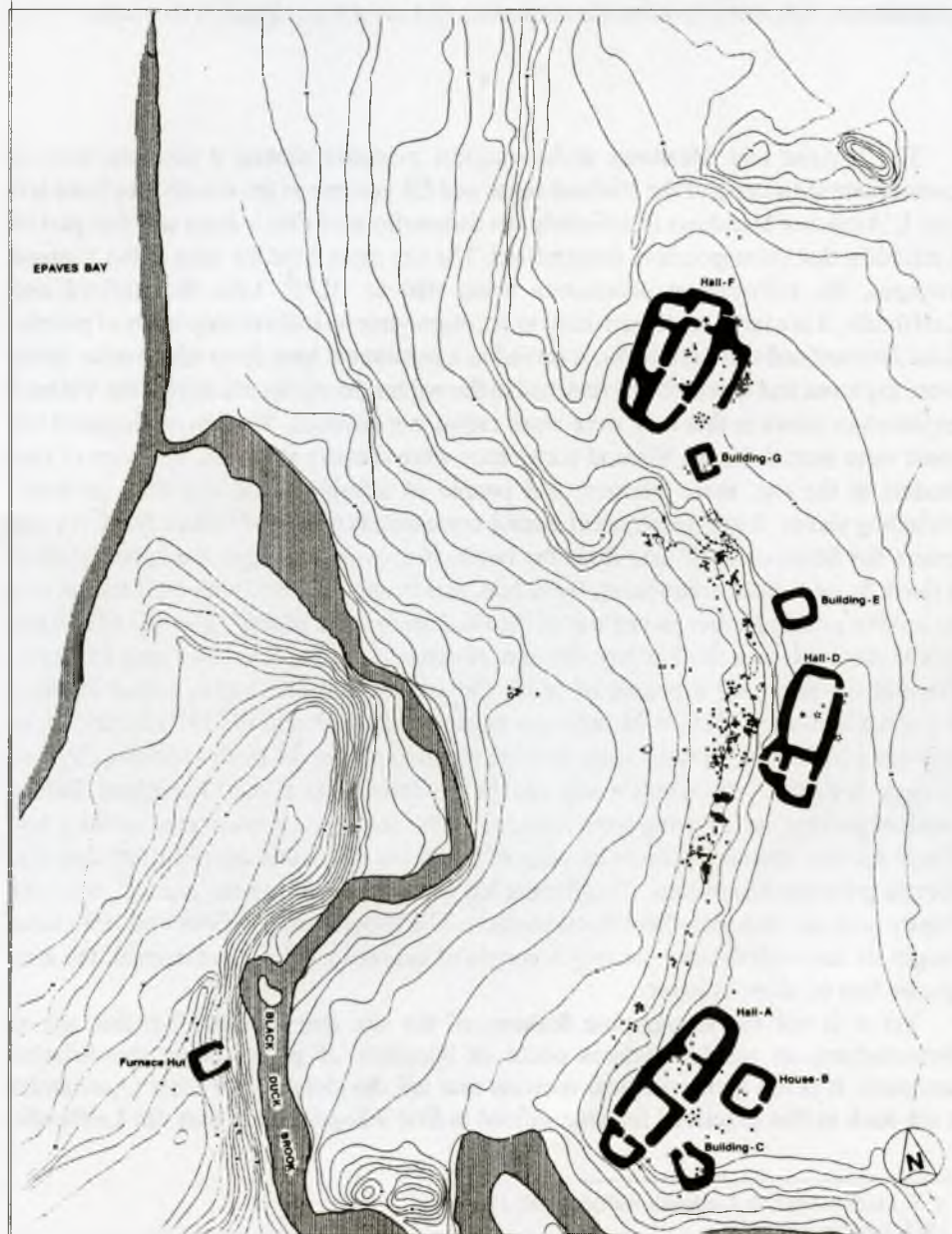


Fig. 2. Plan of the site and the distribution of artifacts. Plan by B. Gallant and B. Wallace

of *The Greenlanders' Saga*, we would come up with a site precisely like L'Anse aux Meadows. Its size and complexity make it inconceivable that it would *not* be mentioned in the sagas. At L'Anse aux Meadows, the Norse built three separate complexes, each consisting of a large hall, A, D, and F, flanked by a hut, C, E, and G. Hall A also had a small house, B close to it. The buildings are all located on the driest part of the site, an old beach terrace about 100 m in from the shore. The terrace is only about 20 m wide. On its inland side it is bordered by a soft, tussocky sphagnum peat bog, on the seaside, by a funnel-shaped wet sedge peat bog. The halls were built at the very edge of the terrace above this bog and are so evenly spaced that one suspects that they were built at the same time for three separate, but not quite equal parties. The inequality lies in the size and layout. Both halls A and F are the kind used by the elite. Hall F is the largest of the two. With a floor space of about 160 square meters, it contains three living/sleeping rooms, all in a row: a small, private one at the end, and two large communal ones in line with it. All have a fireplace in the middle of the floor. Eating took place in the central living/sleeping room, which had the classical Norse „longfire” consisting of a hearth of large stone slabs, a stone-lined ember pit, and a cooking pit for the roasting of food. The diet had consisted primarily of whale and seal¹². Adjacent to the private sleeping quarters was a workroom, possibly a separate kitchen. It had a stone oven made of cobbles over a fire chamber lined with slate slabs. Next to this room were one large and one small storage rooms¹³. The only feature was a storage pit in the corner of one of the rooms. Otherwise whatever was stored there has left no trace. On the inland side of the hall was an open-ended shed, built as a lean-to for repair work on one of the ship's boats¹⁴.

It is almost certain that F is the hall Leif built for himself and that this was the hall used later by his siblings. Among the small discarded objects left behind were four fire strikers of jasper. One is of jasper from Western Iceland, but the rest were made of West Greenland jasper as was a fifth piece in the adjacent hut G¹⁵. This is in contrast to halls A and D, where the fire strikers were all from Iceland. Hall A was also an imposing structure, 29 m long on the outside and containing four rooms. One was a small, private sleeping chamber like that in hall F, and two were large living/sleeping rooms. A fourth room may have been used for minor smithing¹⁶. The presence of Icelandic fire strikers may indicate that this was the hall of Karlsefni's Icelandic partner Snorri Thorbrandsson and perhaps later the unfortunate Helgi and Finnbogi¹⁷. Hall D is a more democratic structure. It is smaller than the other two, about eighty-eight square meters, and there is only one living/sleeping room. Another room was for storage, and one was a carpentry

¹² A.M. Rick 1977; A. Spiess 1990.

¹³ The smallest of these storage rooms has not previously appeared on plans of the site. Only parts of its walls remained, but it can clearly be distinguished on pre-excavation photographs.

¹⁴ B. Linderroth Wallace 1991: 184–185; B. Wallace 1999: 38.

¹⁵ K.P. Smith et al. 1999.

¹⁶ B. Linderroth Wallace 1991: 173, 176.

¹⁷ *The Greenlanders' Saga* states, however, that Helgi and Finnbogi built their own hall farther inland, closer to the lake.

shop. This dwelling is what we would expect for that part of the expedition crew that participated for a share in the profits.

All three halls were well built, with thick sod walls and a substantial interior frame, with interior rows of posts supporting the roof. At least eighty-six trees would have been felled to create these posts, and about 1100 cubic meters of sod would have had to be cut for the walls and roof. Other building elements in the halls would have been woven branches or birch bark as underlie for the roof sod, sleeping/sitting platforms in the living/sleeping rooms, and, at least in hall F, panelling in these rooms. Together the assembling of these materials would represent a substantial effort.

Some of the hands may have lived in the small house B as it is the kind of house used by people low on the social scale. Hut C is simple but equipped with a fireplace, which suggests that it served as living quarters, perhaps for slaves. Slaves such as the German Tyrkir were indeed part of the Vinland crew, and certain chores, such as the digging for building sod, were usually performed only by slaves (*Rigsthula*)¹⁸.

Hut E had both a corner oven and a fireplace by a wall. In Iceland such a structure would probably have been a weaving hut. Here we are less certain. A collection of nineteen egg-sized stones in one corner could possibly have been loom weights, but they could also have been net sinkers. Cod was caught for food as evidenced by a cod vertebra in the longfire in hall D next door¹⁹. The presence of the fireplace indicates that it may have been used for accommodations for working people.

Hut G was similar to E. It, too, had a fireplace by a wall and could have been the living quarters of some of the work crew.

One activity on the site that is not mentioned in the sagas was iron manufacture. It took place in a hut on the other side of the brook, closer to the sea. It was a simple square hut, dug into the terrace and left open towards the brook. It sheltered a small primitive furnace for the smelting of iron. The furnace consisted of a frame of stone slabs set on edge and tightened in the corners with local kaolin clay. Below the frame was a shallow pit in the sand. Local bog iron was smelted here to make iron. The production was a small, one-shot venture as evidenced by the small amount of smelting slag found around the furnace and on the slope down to the brook in front of the hut. It had been rather inefficient, with at least eighty percent of the iron remaining in the slag²⁰. The fuel was softwood charcoal produced in a nearby pit-shaped kiln. It is more than likely that the iron was needed for new boat nails. All ninety-eight [nine] iron fragments found on the site were boat nail fragments. They were concentrated in the F–G complex. X-ray photos show that the nails had been purposely removed via chisel blows cutting their roves, the same way it was done for instance at the Swedish site of Paviken²¹. All of these nails were of a different iron than that available on the site. The only whole nail

¹⁸ Digging was such a typical slave chore that a freed slave sometimes was called a *grefleysingr*, one freed from digging (P.G. Foote, D.M. Wilson 1970: 76).

¹⁹ The Norse used both net fishing and fishing with hooks.

²⁰ H. Unglik, J. Stewart 1979: 350.

²¹ P. Lundström 1981: 74–81.

found, which had never been used, was made of local iron. It was found outside the carpentry shop of hall D, and had probably been lost among the carpentry waste. In contrast to the fragments, this nail was made from local iron. The sagas indicate that the Vinland expeditions comprised anywhere between 35 and 65 men plus a few women²². L'Anse aux Meadows had the capacity to house between 65 and 90 people. This was a large proportion of the entire Greenland colony, which had only 400 to 500 people²³. Even if half of the L'Anse aux Meadows expedition members were Icelandic, its population was as much as 10% of the homeland community. When we further consider the fact that the expedition members were men and women in their best working age, with no children or elderly people, it becomes obvious that L'Anse aux Meadows was a significant drain on the fledgling Greenland colony. The mother land would not have had sufficient additional labor to spare for more bases, another reason why L'Anse aux Meadows must really be *the* Vinland base.

One of the most striking aspects of L'Anse aux Meadows is the lack of barns and byres. In Iceland or Greenland, large halls such as those at L'Anse aux Meadows would have had large barns and byres nearby. Furthermore, there were no enclosures or other structures associated with domestic animals. Analysis of the eleventh-century vegetation could detect no disturbances such as those which would result from grazing, but no such disturbances were found²⁴. The sagas indicate that livestock brought for provisions grazed outside all winter. The only food remains identified at L'Anse aux Meadows were from whale and seal²⁵, and a cod vertebra which shows that some fish was eaten as well. This diet agrees with that specified for Straumfjord where much of the food came from hunting, fishing, and a stranded whale²⁶.

L'Anse aux Meadows was a base for further exploration in several directions, a sort of transit station between Vinland and Greenland. Its occupants ventured as far south as northeastern New Brunswick. The proof for this lies in three butternuts and one butternut burl cut with a metal tool²⁷ found within the Norse waste deposits, in four different locations. The butternut tree, *Juglans cinerea*, is a New World species of walnut, sometimes also called white walnut. This tree has never grown closer than

²² The figure 160 given in *Eric's Saga* is probably inflated by the combination of four expeditions into one. Karlsefni and his partner Snorri Thorbrandsson used the same ship and crew of 40 as they had brought to Greenland. Another 40 went with Bjarni Grimolfsson and Thorhall Gamlason. The third ship (the ship on which Gudrid had arrived in Greenland) was used by Thorvald Ericson. It is unlikely that this ship could have accommodated a crew of 80.

²³ N. Lynnerup 1998: 115, 118.

²⁴ J.H. McAndrews, A.M. Davis 1978; A. Robertson 1978.

²⁵ The identification of a fragment of a posterior scapular border as that of domestic pig, A.S. Ingstad 1977: 266 has since been shown to be invalid, see: A. Rick 1977; A. Spiess 1990, tentatively identifies it as a seal. This also throws doubt on the identification of a second bone, now lost (A.S. Ingstad 1977: 265), as that of a pig.

²⁶ The Norse were not well equipped to hunt whale, but they actively pursued stranded whales by monitoring beaches.

²⁷ The Old Norse for burl is *másr*, *mausir*. *Eric's Saga* mentions *másr* brought from Vinland to Norway by Karlsefni.

northeastern New Brunswick and the north shore of the St. Lawrence River east of Quebec City. We may recall that Hóp was characterized by a river estuary with sheltered shallow tidal lagoons, and, some distance into the river, low-lying fields of self-sown wheat and higher areas of forest and wild grapes. Eastern New Brunswick is precisely such an area. Long narrow sandbars line the coast, protecting the river estuaries, and behind them are sheltered lagoons, *barrachois*, so rich in wild life that a National Park has been established there. Prominent among the rivers are the mighty Miramichi on the bay with the same name and Restigouche on Chaleur Bay. Here all resources described for Hóp and Leifsbúðir can be found. The Miramichi was once noted for immense quantities of salmon²⁸. The self-sown wheat of the sagas, is probably a North American variety of lyme grass, *Elymus mollis*²⁹. The area has great forests, now in part depleted by four centuries of cutting. Hardwood species dominate, and the stands are tall and straight, the kind of lumber that is of great value even today. Most important, along the river banks, grapes used to grow wild in the areas where the L'Anse aux Meadows explorers would have found butternut trees. The importance of wine in Norse society has been overlooked in Vinland research. In a non-market society, such as that of the Norse, power and influence rests in large measure on control of commodities, gift-giving, ostentatious display of luxury goods, and lavish feasting. Wine is an exotic fare and, in preindustrial societies, has traditionally been a resource used by chieftains to enhance their status³⁰. Wine was imported from the Rhinelands and France into all parts of Scandinavia, but because of its expense, it was dispensed only by the elite. For newly established chieftains like Eric the Red and, after him, Leif, the chance to possess their own supply of wine, would have been a major attraction³¹. Walnuts were another status food imported into Greenland from continental Europe, so butternuts would have been another desirable luxury article.

Scholars have puzzled over the fact that in addition to picking grapes, the Norse cut *vinvið*, which literally means „grape wood”. While grapevines may have been useful for ropes, it is obvious that the saga is talking of real lumber, and that this lumber is one of the major resources harvested. However, many wild grapevines growing close to

²⁸ An intensive study of fish bones on New England and Maine sites has shown that salmon was not present in these areas before the seventeenth century. C.C. Carlson 1996: 23–29.

²⁹ A commonly cited suggestion that self-sown wheat was wild rice, *Zizania aquatica* or *palustris*, see F. Schübeler 1859: 21–29 and repeated by many others, the latest being P. Berghörsson 1997: 181–186, is far-fetched. Wild rice grows in lakes, not on land, and resembles rice, a cereal unknown to most Norse. It bears no likeness to wheat.

³⁰ P.E. McGovern 1998: 28–34.

³¹ H. Ingstad's suggestion in *Westward To Vinland* (1966), 151 that Vinland is *Vinland* with a short „i” referring to *vin*, pasture, and that the word occurs in Viking Shetland has recently been revived by the historians M. Stefánsson 1997: 9 and E. Lönnroth 1996. Norse linguists have shown this assertion to be incorrect and that the word is *Vinland*, Wine Land with a long vowel (G. Holm 1997; A. Crozier 1998: 37–66.) Holm as furthermore pointed out (op. cit.) that Pasture Land would not be *Vinland* in Old Norse but *Vinjaland* (in singular) or *Vinjarland* (in plural). Nor is *vin* a Viking Age form in the Shetlands (G. Fellows-Jensen 1984: 148–68; 1993: 501–502).

trees in a pristine North American setting, cling to and wind their way up the tree trunks. The visual result is that of grapes growing on tall trees, the *vinvið* of the sagas.

While harvesting grapes Karlsefni and his people came in contact with large groups of Aboriginal people, carrying bundles of fur and approaching in skin canoes. North-eastern New Brunswick, especially Miramichi, was one of the major population centers in the Atlantic region³² the people being the ancestors of the Mi'kmaq. Prior to the seventeenth century, at least some Mi'kmaq used skin canoes³³.

The L'Anse aux Meadows site gives us the key to the location of Vinland. Vinland is the coastal strip surrounding the Gulf of St Lawrence. It includes the islands of the Gulf: Prince Edward Island, the Magdalenes and Anticosti, and there is little doubt that the expeditions setting out from L'Anse aux Meadows explored all of these areas. The place that gave rise to the name Hóp, however, must have been in New Brunswick, and it was here they came in contact with the resources that gave Vinland its name. A glimpse at a map will show that the Gulf forms a natural route into the temperate zones of North America to anyone following the coast south from Baffin Island and northern Labrador. The Strait of Belle Isle is a funnel leading into the Gulf, and the entire Gulf can be circumnavigated if one begins and ends the voyage in L'Anse aux Meadows. Within the Gulf, a new ecological zone unfolds, warmer and richer than found in Newfoundland and eastern Quebec. The Danish Resen map of 1605 also indicates that the Strait of Belle Isle led into Vinland. The map, which presumably is based on the same original as the c. 1590 Icelandic Stefansson map, has incorporated geographic knowledge gained from sixteenth-century explorations and collated it with what Resen knew of the Vinland voyages. Helluland is the area around Warwick Sound, that is southern Baffin Island. Markland is the area south of there, in central Labrador. Of Vinland, only its promontory is shown, called the Promontorium Vinlandia. The word promontory indicates that it was part of a larger entity. The Vinland promontory cannot be anything but Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula, as shown by its relative size, latitude, and, not the least, the proximity to New France and the Gulf of St Lawrence just south of it³⁴. The Strait of Belle Isle is portrayed as a fjord, with no outlet to the Gulf. It may be that the route to the richest part of Vinland had fallen out of memory by Resen's time. What is clear, however, is that L'Anse aux Meadows had not. Although the grapes were elsewhere, L'Anse aux Meadows was the major Vinland settlement, the place from which the rest of Vinland and even areas of Markland were explored. Its size and complexity make it highly unlikely that there ever were other equally substantial settlements.

The Vinland sagas are explicit that the voyages were soon abandoned. The Norse did not feel safe among the large groups of Aboriginal people inhabiting the land.

³² P. Allen 1980; 1992.

³³ R.H. Whitehead 1991: 20.

³⁴ As the Vinland Peninsula clearly is north of the Gulf of St Lawrence, it cannot be Cape Cod as suggested by several writers, a fact also demonstrated by its relative size.



Fig. 3. The Hans Poulsen Resen map of 1605. There is little doubt that 'Promontorium Vinlandia' is Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula. Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen

L'Anse aux Meadows may have been meant to last but was not long in use, having only thin cultural deposits, few artifacts, and small garbage heaps. The abandonment of the site was planned and nothing was left behind except for small lost trinkets and waste material. This, too, is in accordance with what we know of Straumsfjord. „So they made ready to leave, setting their hearts on their own country" (*Eric's Saga*).

It is not difficult to understand why the Greenlanders would soon give up on Vinland. Demographic studies have shown that it takes a minimum of about five hundred people to establish a successful settlement in areas of no allies and where the sustenance economy has to start from scratch³⁵. With a total more than that critical number, the Greenland colony was not sufficiently large to split further. Another major factor is the distance to the desirable resources of Vinland. The distance from Greenland to L'Anse aux Meadows was two-thirds of that from Greenland to Norway; the distance to Hóp is longer than that to Norway. In many ways the route to L'Anse aux Meadows and Hóp was more difficult than that to Norway, with coastal currents and packs of ice. More important, however, was the cost of ships and manpower. The links with Europe were vital, but traffic between Norway and Greenland was not an easy matter, and it is obvious that only a few ships crossed the ocean every year. It would have been difficult to expand this traffic equally far in the opposite direction. The traffic to Europe had to take precedence because of the many things that could not be obtained in Vinland: luxury metals and textiles, lumber, weapons and armour, tools, glass, ceramics, and many staples foods such as flour, honey, and spices. Contacts with Europe were also paramount for social and religious reasons. Moreover, the incentives for a more distant colony would have been poor. Greenland was sparsely populated, and the persons wealthy enough to sponsor distant settlements had all the land they could wish for in Greenland. Aside from lumber, grapes, and walnuts, Vinland had nothing to offer that could not be obtained at home or brought in from Norway. In the dawn of a new millennium, however, the memory of Vinland lives in the sagas and the archaeological record.

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THE CONVERSION OF THE ICELANDERS

Orri Vésteinsson*

In mid-summer of the year 1000 A.D.¹ the chieftains and leading householders in Iceland were holding their annual assembly, called the *Alþing*, in *Þingvellir* in the southwest part of the country. When the proceedings had started, news came that two chieftains who had spent the winter in Norway, had taken land and were intent on converting the Icelanders to Christianity. Some felt that the sacred assembly place should be defended against such blasphemers — one of whom had composed an unflattering ditty about the goddess Freya the previous year — but in the event the newcomers entered the assembly place unhindered. The next day they announced that the Norwegian king, Olav Tryggvason, wanted the Icelanders to convert to Christianity. This immediately caused a split among the assembled leaders, with a Christian party wanting to do the king's bidding and a heathen party which promised to resist all change. The two parties declared that they would not abide by the same laws any more and both walked away from the Law Rock, where the proceedings normally took place. The Christian party asked their leader to spell out their new Christian laws but he declined and instead gave the leader of the heathen party some silver and asked him to decide on the matter. The heathen leader thought long and hard and afterwards gave a famous speech. He explained that it was a deplorable state they found themselves in and that two laws in a single country would be impossibly complicated in practice: „If we sunder the laws, so will we sunder the peace” — he said. He therefore proposed a compromise whereby the Icelanders should accept Christianity, nominally at least, but heathen practices — worshipping heathen gods, eating horse-flesh and infanticide — would not be banned as long as they were conducted in private. This was accepted and henceforth the Icelanders were Christians².

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¹ A good case has been made that the conversion actually took place in 999 A.D. (Ó. Einarssdóttir 1964) but here the traditional date will be used.

² *Íslenzk fornrit* I: 15–17.

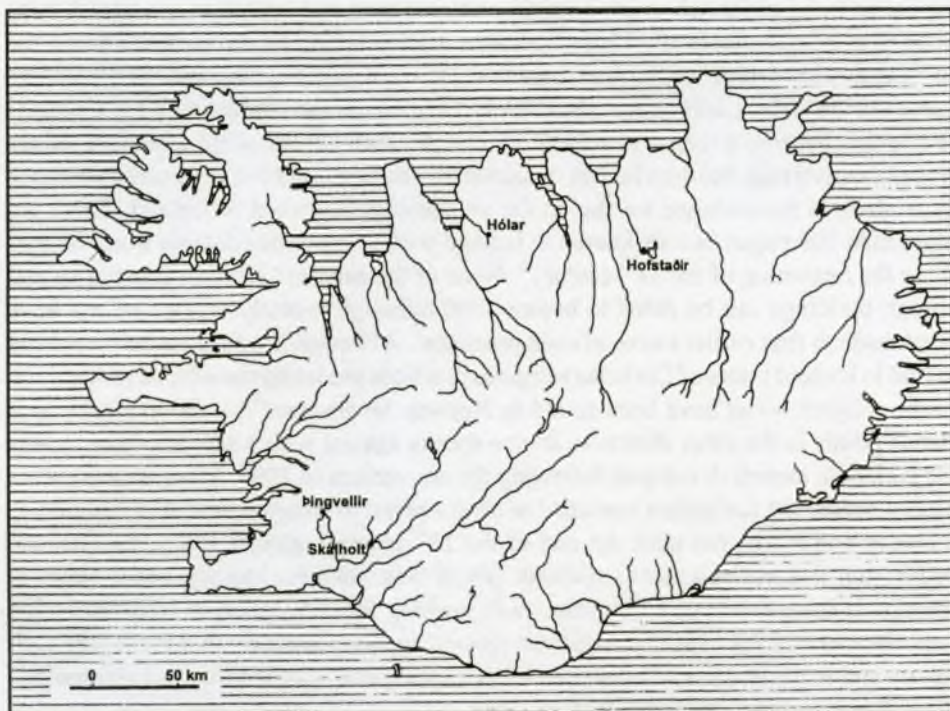
WHY CONVERT?

This is the story of the conversion of the Icelanders as the priest Ari *fróði* Þorgilsson related it in his short treatise on the history of the Icelanders, *Íslendingabók*, written in the 1120s. This is the only source on these events and all other accounts are both later and based on Ari's authority. Ari was born in 1066 or 1067 and was therefore somewhat removed in time from the events he described, but his sources were good. He had been brought up by one Hallr Þórarinnsson who was — according to Ari — born in 996 and remembered his own baptism at the age of three. Ari's main teacher was Teitr Ísleifsson (d. 1111), a grandson of the chieftain who brought King Olav's message to Iceland in that fateful summer of 1000. This Teitr was also the son of Iceland's first native bishop, Ísleifr Gizurarson (d. 1080), and the brother of the next one, Gizurr Ísleifsson (d. 1118). These three belonged to the family of the Haukdælir, chieftains of the western part of the southern plain and the most prominent family in Icelandic politics from the 11th to the 13th centuries. It is obvious that Ari's little book was written under the influence of his powerful mentors, and while it is possibly not a conscious effort to glorify them, their influence on Ari's life, and indeed his contemporaries, was such that they were bound to figure prominently in this earliest written account by an Icelander. Having briefly outlined the settlement of Iceland in the late 9th century, with primary emphasis on establishing a tight chronology, Ari sketches constitutional developments in the 10th century, the establishment of the Alþing in 930 and constitutional reform around 965. After describing the conversion in 1000 he becomes concerned only with the church and its development, the ordination of the first Icelandic bishop in 1056, the establishment of the first see in Skálholt after 1080, the introduction of the tithe in 1097 and the establishment of the second see of Hólar in 1106. All these events were dominated by the Haukdælir and while we can be sure that Ari does not play down their influence, it is also clear that they were the first Icelandic chieftain family to take full advantage of the new religion and use it to build an institutional church which in turn helped them to maintain and increase their temporal powers³.

The rise of the Haukdælir in close association with the church, was one of the principal effects of the conversion in 1000. Ari, his learning and his book, are also products of this development and it is clear that his account is coloured by a well moulded family tradition among the Haukdælir. It is therefore a document not only of the Haukdælir's involvement in the introduction of Christianity in Iceland but also of their views about the past.

In this light it is interesting to note that while Ari emphasises the development of the Church in Iceland in his treatise, his interpretation of the events at the Alþing in 1000 draws the attention primarily to the political side of the issue. There is no talk of a victory of Christianity, eternal salvation of the Icelanders or anything else to indicate that Ari was relieved that the era of heathendom had ended and that a new and more

³ O. Vésteinsson 2000a: 19–24.



Iceland at the turn of the first millennium

enlightened age had been introduced. To Ari the victory was that of good common sense and of law and order: a dangerous split had been avoided by the good faith and cool-headedness of the country's two most prominent leaders.

The rather secular outlook evident in Ari's account has led later commentators to view the conversion in 1000 as primarily a political event. The interpretation favoured by many since the 19th century is that the Icelanders made the decision to convert to Christianity on purely practical grounds; they were under pressure from the Norwegian king and decided to do his bidding in order to preserve their trade arrangements with Norway and other Christian kingdoms. It has also been pointed out that while the Icelanders may have been perfectly heathen in 1000 they perceived that change was afoot in Northern Europe, Christianity was winning and they felt that they could not afford to become a pagan backwater.

Another contradicting view holds that Ari misleads us deliberately, that he omits from his account that the Icelanders were already to a considerable degree Christian and that the decision taken at the Alþing in 1000 was merely a formality. This view has less to recommend it — mainly because there are no sources to support it. Thirteenth century traditions mention a number of Christian settlers, primarily people who were

supposed to be of British or Irish origin or Norse who had settled in the British Isles prior to moving to Iceland⁴. These traditions are too late to be of much use to us, the 13th century historians may have assumed — just as we might — that some of the settlers came via the British Isles where they would have come into contact with Christianity. While this became a theme in saga literature (heathen heroes adopt Christian values without converting, heathen heroes renounce all religion and believe in common sense etc.)⁵ there is no evidence for this in the archaeological record in Iceland. There are more than 300 pagan burials known in Iceland with grave goods datable from the mid 9th to the beginning of the 11th century⁶. None of the earliest Christian cemeteries and church buildings can be dated to before 1000 although recently serious efforts have been made to find earlier traces of such practices⁷. Although it would not be surprising to find in Iceland traces of Christian religious practices predating the official recognition of the religion — as have been found in Norway for instance⁸ — the evidence as it stands points in the other direction. It also speaks against such a scenario how slowly the Icelandic church developed following the conversion in 1000. More than 50 years passed before the Icelanders managed to send a priest to Bremen to seek ordination as a bishop and it was not until the end of the 11th century, almost 100 years after the conversion that ecclesiastical structures (fixed sees, schools, literacy, tithe) begin to emerge. If there had been a Christian party pushing for conversion in 1000 they were very slow in making capital out of their victory. It seems unlikely that there was such a party and in the absence of unequivocal archaeological evidence we must assume that the Icelanders were largely heathen in 1000.

What then made them take such a momentous decision? Was it pressure from abroad, political expediency, concerns for trade relations or all three maybe? The key to understanding this question is to realise that in 1000 the Icelanders probably did not have a very clear idea of what the effects of their decision would be⁹. Viewed in this way the story of the conversion of the Icelanders becomes very revealing of the sort of society that existed on the very margins of the habitable world at the end of the first millennium.

ROYAL PRESSURE

There is reasonably good historical evidence of the missionising activities of King Olav Tryggvason of Norway (d. 1000). He was a true viking king, a pirate who after successful raiding and pillaging abroad returned to Norway with a questionable claim to a rather vaguely defined throne and a mission to introduce Christianity in order to

⁴ J. Jesch 1987.

⁵ see L. Lönnroth 1969.

⁶ K. Eldjárn 2000.

⁷ S. Kristjánsdóttir 1998; O. Vésteinsson 1999.

⁸ B. Solli 1995.

⁹ S. Línal 1974: 248.

justify his demand for temporal authority. A similar story was repeated time and again in the history of the Christian missions in Northern and Eastern Europe. A prince recognises the importance of having a cause to support his claim to temporal power. A claim which would otherwise simply be one of many based on military power, or individual worth and influence. Religion is a splendid rallying point, it makes the conflict nicely two sided — either you are for me or against — and it adds all sorts of worthy issues to a cause which would otherwise be simply self-aggrandising and sordid. As in many other lands the introduction of Christianity in Norway coincided with the introduction of effective royal power. The champions of Christianity sought recognition as kings of a unified Norway and were opposed by more home-grown and conservative chieftains who saw no need for either a new religion or an extra tier of authority above them.

There is no reason to doubt that King Olav included Iceland in his schemes. To him it would have been like any other part of the Norse world he sought to conquer and in doing his bidding the Icelandic chieftains were acknowledging King Olav as the nearest authority. It is doubtful, however, that this nod to the king had any more meaning than that. The king was of course in no position to make good any threats beyond making life difficult for those Icelanders who came to Norway. A military expedition from Scandinavia to Iceland would have been out of the question — an idea supported by the fact that no one seriously thought of trying this until the 16th century — both on grounds of logistical and navigational difficulties and because it simply was not important enough. It is reasonable to assume that the Icelandic chieftains realised this; they were in no serious danger from any real or imagined threat from the Norwegian king. It was however in their interest to maintain good relations with whoever was in charge in Norway. The Icelanders still had relatives in Norway with whom they maintained ties, leading unavoidably to disputes over inheritance. In addition, most of their trade — the importance of which is however difficult to assess — seems to have been with Norway. The importance of these ties is borne out by a treaty about the special status of Icelanders in Norway and vice versa signed in Norway in the 1080s but which purported to originate in the reign of King Olav Haraldsson (d. 1030)¹⁰.

So, we have the Norwegian king bringing pressure to bear on the Icelandic chieftains. According to Ari, King Olav had already sent a missionary to Iceland and when he failed to make much impact the Icelandic envoys were sent with the king's message in the hope that a direct threat would be more effective than a missionary. The chieftains had every reason to take this message seriously but it is unlikely that they would have acquiesced if they felt strongly that their way of life was being challenged in any fundamental way. And if they were not Christian — and we have already seen that there are no grounds to think that they were — what does this tell us about their society?

There are two issues which we can hope to understand better by reflecting on how the conversion of the Icelanders was achieved. One is the religion of the islanders and the other is their political structure at the close of the 10th century.

¹⁰ *Grágás* 1b: 195–199; B. Þorsteinsson 1983.

RELIGION IN 10th CENTURY ICELAND

In the 13th century, Icelandic scholars constructed an elaborate view of the past. From the building blocks of genealogy, geography and retrospective analysis they created a background for the Sagas of the Icelanders, which are primarily set in the late 9th to early 11th centuries. While religion plays an insignificant part in these stories it is one of the background props employed by the authors. Descriptions of heathen practices and cult settings are plentiful and at first glance this evidence could be taken as quite convincing. It is not however and has been shown to be based largely — and possibly entirely — on extrapolation from the authors' own reality. The Church was an enormously important and pervasive presence in the life of 13th century Icelanders and the saga-authors were simply unable to imagine a society without such a structure. They therefore presupposed that in heathen times there must have been temples where there were churches in their own times, pagan priests where there were Christian priests, pagan rituals where there were Christian masses and feasts. While it is impossible to refute this picture out of hand, it can be shown that it is clearly a literary construct and that the actual evidence this view is based on was extremely meagre if not totally non-existent¹¹. It is a fact that modern views of pre-Christian religion in Scandinavia and Iceland draw largely on this literary heritage and even though people have for a long time been aware of the limited value of the sagas in this respect, they still exert an influence on our minds and the picture of pre-Christian religion they offer has been remarkably difficult to shake off. The reason is that no clear alternative has been suggested. If there was not a religious organization, differing from Christianity mainly in content rather than structure, what sort of religion was there then?

We can be sure that there was a religion in pre-Christian Scandinavia and what is more; a degree of cohesion in religious ideas. Burial practices suggest that the Norse had ideas about the afterlife, and that there was a degree of uniformity in this respect although there were also considerable regional variations — for instance as to whether the corpses were cremated or not. The burials suggest a ritual, that of interring the dead with objects and possibly animals. The act of interring certain objects with the dead implies religious ideas: what happens to us when we die? — what is the purpose of this life? and the next? The objects must have been thought to have some function (practical or symbolic) for the dead and this sort of general approach to death must have been shared by the culture as a whole although ideas about what this meant in detail may have varied. A more concrete sort of evidence comes from the imagery and runic texts found on various objects and standing stones. Such texts and imagery can in many cases be linked to the mythological stories, the Eddic poetry, preserved in 13th century and later manuscripts. It can hardly be doubted that the basic content of these myths was widely known in Northern Europe in pre-Christian times and they were for a long time the basic subject matter of artistic imagery¹². There was clearly a set of deities with certain attributes, there were mythological heroes and a set of stories dealing with the

¹¹ O. Olsen 1966.

¹² e.g. S. Margeson 1980; P. Meulengracht Sørensen 1986.

exploits of these characters. There was therefore in the Norse world a common heritage with clear religious connotations and it is reasonable to assume that the people who emigrated to Iceland in the 9th and 10th centuries shared this heritage and that it was alive and well at the time of the conversion.

We have therefore a culture with the same general approach to the afterlife and a common heritage of legends which no doubt included a world-view, explanations of the world's phenomena and a gallery of gods with different attributes. Within this framework there is plenty of room for speculation about the part this religion played in real life. Was there a priesthood which preserved the ancient lore and made sure that the populace believed by making them take part in rituals? Or was religion primarily a private affair, meaning different things to different groups and individuals?

There are basically three manifestations of heathen religion which scholars have sought to establish: temples, pagan priests and sacrifices. The temples have proved elusive. While 19th century scholars — particularly in Iceland — had no trouble identifying the archaeological remains of heathen temples, more recent scholarship has discounted all of these and there is now widespread agreement that buildings built specially to house religious ceremonies did not exist in the pre-Christian Norse world¹³. In the past 20–30 years attention has however been drawn to unusually large buildings, halls more than 30 m in length, which have been excavated in several places in Scandinavia and Iceland¹⁴. Such buildings are much too large to have been built for the every-day use of an ordinary household and there seems to be a consensus that the large halls must have been constructed by chieftains in order to be able to preside over large feasts. The argument is that holding feasts was one of the principal ways chieftains built up and maintained their power — a notion strongly supported both by the sagas and anthropological parallels. Many scholars have felt the need to add that these feasts must have had a religious nature — influenced no doubt by the saga literature. They then see heathen religion as the mechanism through which the chieftains managed to exert influence over their followers. While the archaeological evidence does not necessarily point in that direction, it is a plausible enough scenario.

This ties directly with the second notion, that of the pagan priests. While the idea that there was a special class of heathen priests, distinct from the secular rulers, has been floated, it really went out the window with the purpose-built temples and most scholars, from Maurer¹⁵ to Sigurðsson¹⁶, have preferred to believe in chieftain-priests, particularly for Iceland. While ideas about the exact nature of this symbiotic role are necessarily vague, the essence is that the chieftains doubled as priests at least when religious gatherings took place, a role which made them the centre of attention and gave them power over the proceedings. This authority was then either the basis of their

¹³ O. Olsen 1966; A. Friðriksson, O. Vésteinsson 1997.

¹⁴ Overview in S. Brink 1996: 243–247.

¹⁵ K. Maurer 1852.

¹⁶ J.V. Sigurðsson 1994.

temporal power or it augmented it to a considerable degree. The argument for this dual role is based primarily on the term *goði*, the word used for chieftains in Iceland. The word is clearly related to the term *goð* meaning god or diety. Why would the chieftains have a title indicating some godly connection if there was not a religious element in their role? It has also been pointed out that in Christian times the Icelandic chieftains managed to combine the roles of secular ruler and Christian priest with remarkable ease and this would be even more understandable if this symbiosis was one which had its roots in the heathen period.

The notion of heathen chieftain–priests is totally unverifiable, and although it is in itself quite plausible, it is hardly useful to load much scholarly baggage on such a gaunt horse. It is of course impossible to tell from archaeological evidence of ritual behavior — and as we shall see some such evidence exists — whether those who were in charge of the proceedings were themselves also chieftains, whether they were priests who were quite distinct from the chieftains, or whether they were just the neighbour's son doing his turn as the one who had to wear a silly costume and recite obscure poetry when everybody else got drunk and had a good time. Archaeology offers the only way forward here and we must therefore set aside notions which are not verifiable with its methods. Instead we must carefully weigh those scraps of archaeological evidence that are available against compatible pieces of historical evidence.

Apart from circumstantial evidence such as the size of the large halls, scholars have used finds like gold bracteates with religious motifs to suggest that the halls were places of religious ceremonies¹⁷. This is not as straightforward as it may seem however. Objects of art made of precious metals are primarily evidence of wealth, and possibly power. The motifs reflect religious ideas, but whether these were just manifestations of the general cultural heritage of the people who manufactured, owned and deposited them or whether they had a specific function in some religious ceremony is impossible to say. It is therefore unsafe to suggest that gold bracteates or other such finds imply that religious acts took place or that there was a religious organisation.

Although archaeologists have not tried hard to find evidence for the third possible manifestation of heathen religion, sacrifice, it is this which in fact has turned up. In the excavation of the large hall at Hofstaðir in NE-Iceland more than 10 cattle skulls — many of them with the horn cores intact — have been retrieved from outside the walls of the hall, their location and wear suggesting that they were placed at short intervals on the turf walls along the whole length of the building. Again, as with the objects of art, this in itself only implies something about the cultural heritage, about taste and sense of decoration. In addition to the decorative skulls a pile of skulls has been found associated with a complete sheep–skeleton with the head severed from the rest of the body in an abandonment phase of one of the hall's adjacent rooms¹⁸. This is unusual waste in a culture which quite meticulously found a use for every scrap of meat and

¹⁷ e.g. G. Stamsø Munch 1991.

¹⁸ G. Lucas (ed.) 1999.

bone and it is very unusual discarding practice. From the principal midden deposit so far excavated at Hofstaðir come a series of cervical vertebrae (three sheep or goat, one cattle) with a highly atypical butchery pattern.

The cervical (neck) vertebrae from [the midden] are cut right through in a plane perpendicular to the mid line, with the third cervical vertebrae being sheared through by a powerful blow. This would have beheaded the animal, producing a dramatic if wasteful fountain of blood. Cutting the head off an animal the size of a cow or bull would require a good deal of strength and skill, and one of the sheared third cervical cattle vertebrae was in fact struck (from above) twice—the first blow cutting about half way through, and the second (at a slightly different angle) cutting diagonally through the vertebral body and lateral processes. ...When vertebrae were struck [after the animal had been killed], this was usually in the process of splitting the carcass along the mid line or removing racks of ribs from the thoracic vertebrae, and cut marks tend to follow an orientation roughly parallel to the mid line of the body¹⁹.

This butchery practice would have been very wasteful in terms of spilt blood — normally the animal would first be knocked unconscious by a blow to the head and then its throat would be carefully cut and the blood collected into a vessel to be used as food in a variety of ways. It is next to inconceivable that the slaughter of livestock by striking the neck with an instrument like a sword or axe was normal practice. It is more plausible to interpret this as evidence for the ritual slaughter of animals. We are then reminded again of the decorative skulls lining the outsides of the walls of the hall and the common practice of interring beheaded animals in graves, a practice famous from the Oseberg ship burial, but also common in Icelandic pre-Christian graves where horses are sometimes interred with the head severed from the body²⁰.

There are two principal inferences which can be drawn from this evidence. On the one hand it is hardly a coincidence that evidence of ritual slaughter is found at a high status site. It supports established notions that the homes of chieftains were also the sites of religious display of one sort or another. On the other hand, the beheading of animals and the symbolism of animal skulls reveals an emphasis which is not readily apparent from the literary material. This may be because scholars have not been looking for this sort of emphasis, being more intrigued by the myths and legends, but it suggests that our ideas about what pagan religion was about may be somewhat warped if not totally off the track.

The thing that irks this author is that if religious practice were ingrained into the power structure — as the Hofstaðir evidence might be said to indicate — why did the Icelandic leaders feel so free to abandon this system when only the slightest pressure was applied to bear on them? If the hosting and directing of religious feasts was one of the corner — stones of the chieftains' powers would they not have fought to preserve

¹⁹ T. McGovern 1998.

²⁰ K. Eldjárn 2000: 308–311.

a system that had served them well — as it seems some of their Scandinavian counterparts did quite vigorously?

A model can be proposed where these apparent contradictions dissolve. It is an attempt to accept all the different sorts of evidence at their face value and is articulated in a way which is meaningful for the archaeological discourse — if we persist in discussing heathen religion in terms of the literary evidence we will not be able to make sense of the increasing body of archaeological evidence in this field. The model is deliberately conservative and tries to incorporate those old ideas which still seem to be current in scholars minds — without dragging them into the light and weighing their plausibility we will not be able to discard them.

AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

In Scandinavia at the outset of the Viking age we have a late iron age society with a developing political hierarchy and an upper class which is capable of trading, making war and marriages over long distances. The values and perceptions of the people engaged in this business are different from those of the majority of the population which never leave their hamlet, fjord or valley settlement. What is more there has developed a shared set of values and perceptions among these upper echelons of society, embodied in a set of mythologies which in turn were made permanent by specialists retained by the aristocrats; poets, stone- and wood cutters, metal workers and jewellers. It is simplest to ascribe the bulk of the preserved literary and illustrative evidence for heathen religion to this relatively small part of Nordic society. It is then true to say that the effect of these myths has been much greater on the post-heathen development than it ever was on heathen society. The mythologies of society's upper strata will have had an important function to ensure a certain cohesion and unity among the rulers and their retainers, something designed mainly to set them apart from those who were under their sway, but they will not have been related to the religious ideas and rituals exercised by the populace at large. They may well have been drawn from — and in turn may have influenced — the general ideas shared by all levels of Norse society but they will not have borne much relation to the basic religious practices of ordinary people. It is this „lower” level of religion that we might hope to find traces of in the archaeological record, and it is this religion which we need to understand if we want to appreciate the relationship between power and religion in Norse heathen society.

It is likely that all sorts of remnants of heathendom persisted in the Nordic countries long after Christianity had been accepted as their official religion. It is therefore natural to start our search in the collection of laws which can be expected to deal with those actual practices which were still a menace to Christian society. According to the Christian Law Section of *Grágás* — the laws of the Icelandic commonwealth preserved in mid to late 13th century manuscripts but containing much material that must be considerably older — it was forbidden to:

- worship heathen deities (*vættir*) — as in dedicating one's property to others than God and his saints.
- indulge in magic or sorcery — as in casting spells to influence oneself or one's property
- cast spells — as in cursing people or livestock so that they die or become sick
- charm stones to influence people or property.
- believe that stones could bring one and one's property good luck
- to believe in animals
- to go berserk (*Grágás* 1a, 22–23)

Writing in the opening years of the 13th century a north Icelandic monk described the efforts of the first bishop of Hólar, St Jón Ögmundarson (1106–1121), to eradicate heathen practices which still had not been uprooted by that time. St Jón „completely forbade evil and ancient ways, heathen worship, sorcery and magic... He also forbade every sort of superstition which ancient men had connected with the rising of the moon or the sun, or to name the weekdays after heathen men or gods...”. Furthermore it is mentioned that St Jón campaigned against a game involving men and women exchanging lewd poetry, but it is not clear whether the objection was to the immorality alone or whether the game was also considered heathen (*Biskupa sögur* I, 165, 237). In the byre at Hólar one of the stalls was always empty because any cow that was bound to it died. When St Jón heard this he ordered that a cow be tied to the stall. When the animal promptly died, he had his men repeat the process twice but after the third cow died the phenomenon did not reoccur „and thus did Bishop Jón conquer this terror, with his faith and resolve.” (*Biskupa sögur* I, 172). In a late 13th compilation about the conversion of the Icelanders, based on Ari's *Íslendingabók* and many other sources, we are told that the first missionaries encountered a family who worshipped a stone, claiming that their protecting spirit lived in it (*Biskupa sögur* I, 5, also 39–41). The missionaries also confronted a berserk who was able to walk on fire and threw himself on his sword without hurting himself but when a missionary consecrated the fire and blessed the sword the berserk was burnt and impaled himself on the sword (*Biskupa sögur* I, 16).

These examples are by no means exhaustive and they may reflect as much high-medieval ideas about heathendom as traditions about actual practices. What is interesting is that there is no mention of the sort of religious practices described by Adam of Bremen, with human and animal sacrifices and the worship of idols. There are many such descriptions in the 12–13th century saga literature but they are always vague on detail and content, never actually explaining what was involved in the supposed rituals and what were the ideas behind the practices. We are already on much firmer ground with the laws and the other scraps. These sources describe a religion which is primarily expressed in individual acts, beliefs held and acts committed to influence one's own life and one's surroundings, either aggressively or defensively. The communal aspect is missing. An earlier generation of scholars would probably have considered the list of heathen practices in *Grágás* as the last sorry remnants of a once great belief system,

that all the good stuff with Odin and Thor, human sacrifices and blood-stained idols had been eradicated and the legislators only needed to concern themselves with petty vices like charming stones and playing at being berserk.

Instead of assuming a great edifice which has problematic sources to say the least and of which no clear traces can be found in the archaeological record, it seems to me much simpler to explore what sort of heathen religion we come up with if we take the description in *Grágás* and comparable sources as a rough guide to what heathen religion really was.

We have already seen that this is partly a semantic problem — where do we draw the line between religion and general cultural values and perceptions in Viking age society? Instead of trying to solve the problem by arguing from the very limited evidence it is easiest to decide that heathen religion was simply those practices and beliefs which disappeared after the heathens had converted to Christianity. That which they continued to cultivate (Eddic lore basically) should accordingly not be considered to have belonged to the realm of religion — it was rather upper-class culture, no doubt faithfully preserved by those very same princes and chieftains who championed Christianity in the Norse world.

If Odin and the Asgard pantheon were largely irrelevant to the majority of the Norse populace, we can surmise that their religion was in a fundamental way different and that its focus was primarily local and personal. That is, people believed in evil and benevolent spirits inhabiting groves, trees, stones, waterfalls or other local natural phenomena, parts of buildings and even particular individuals among their own livestock. This belief was only relevant to a very small group of people, the inhabitants of a single farmstead, estate or hamlet. The relationship between the believers and their deities may have varied and can have ranged from simply maintaining the belief to complex rituals, according to local custom and individual taste. It is of course likely that this aspect of heathen religion was much more firmly embedded in the society of the Scandinavian homelands than in the colonies in the North Atlantic and this may account for the much firmer resistance to the introduction of Christianity in Scandinavia than in Iceland. In Iceland deep-rooted attachments of this sort will only have been beginning to develop when Christianity was introduced and it is likely that it was primarily individual belief in such phenomena that had to be suspended in the wake of the conversion, rather than communal attachments.

The individual aspect of Norse heathen religion should not be underestimated. If we are dealing with a religion which allowed an individual to imbue any object or animal with a private spirit, a deity that only protected and advised that individual and was maybe not even known of by others, then it is easy to understand why organised resistance to a new and comprehensive religious system like Christianity was so limited. On the one hand, if religion was primarily a private affair it will have been difficult to make a stance against change on grounds of communal welfare or common interest. On the other it seems from Ari's account that the Icelandic chieftains at the Alþing of 1000 simply did not conceive of Christianity as a religion which was going to replace

theirs. It is tempting to suggest that they conceived of Christianity as a religion set to replace the royal ideology, the Asgard pantheon, which had scant relevance to them or their followers. The compromise decided on in 1000 was that the heathens would be allowed to continue to practice heathen rites in private. If heathen religion was primarily a private affair beforehand, whether private to the individual or to the household, this will therefore not have been much of a change. We should then perhaps consider Christianity not as a religion which replaced another but as a religion which was added on to the existing system. For the generation which actually underwent conversion there may therefore not have been any apparent conflict between their old ways and the new belief.

There are still suggestions in the archaeological and literary sources which may seem to contradict this picture. It is clear that heathen burial practices ceased quite abruptly after the conversion in 1000 and the eating of horse-flesh also discontinued, although the Icelandic archaeological record does not allow us to state how quickly after the conversion this practice had been eradicated. It may well be that the placing of grave-goods with the dead was a practice that had limited meaning among the heathen Norse, that it was just a custom continued for custom's sake. But it could also be that in the case of the afterlife Christianity was a clear winner, that it offered a much clearer and more promising prospect than the rather grim outlook that seems to have been the Norse heathen version. Whichever it was, it seems that burial rites among the heathen Norse were not firmly integrated into a comprehensive religious system, there was no death cult, and it may even be that death was considered a subject to be avoided, that loved ones were equipped as well as possible to deal with whatever befell them in the afterlife, but that this was not dwelt on and people did not generally have very clear ideas about what happened after death. If so Christianity will have been a relief to many and again the converts may have felt that obtaining Heaven could be done without giving up their personal deities or household lore.

The eating of horse-flesh, or more precisely the cessation of this consumption, is potentially a more significant issue. It seems that the Christian missions in Northern Europe seized on this practice as one to be eradicated at all costs, and with the acceptance of Christianity came a taboo against eating horse-flesh. The archaeological record indicates that horse-flesh was eaten in pre-Christian times in Iceland but we do not know whether this was considered to have a religious significance. The evidence from Hofstaðir suggests that it was primarily cattle and to some extent sheep and goats that were ritually slaughtered and presumably ritually consumed. Horses are commonly found in heathen graves in Iceland — a trend more marked in that country than other Norse lands — and although they are sometimes found decapitated, the slaughter no doubt having been ritual in some sense, their carcasses rarely show further evidence of butchery. The significance of horses in the graves therefore seems primarily to have been as mounts for the deceased to get about in the afterlife. There is thus not a clear connection between the internment of horses in graves and the religious significance of eating horse-flesh, and it may be that the latter was not in fact a significant component to heathen religious practice. It seems more likely that people with a south European

background felt that eating horse-flesh was repugnant for cultural rather than religious reasons — much as eating cats or dogs is still a taboo for most Europeans although there is no clear religious idea behind the taboo — but that they did not make this distinction and felt that no true Christian could possibly indulge in such reprehensible table manners.

The same probably holds for infanticide — the third heathen practice which Ari says was allowed to be conducted in private after the conversion. It is difficult to see how infanticide could be a part of heathen religion. There seems instead to have been a tolerance for abandoning new-born babies for economic and social reasons in Norse pre-Christian society (as in the Norwegian Borgarthing Laws — *Norges gamle love* I, 339). This was revolting to the Christians, who as a result fought against it and no doubt exaggerated the importance of the practice to emphasise the civilising effect of Christianity.

My conclusion on what sort of religion was practised by the Icelanders in the 10th century is therefore that it was primarily a private affair, that it was not a comprehensive set of ideas with a common focus of devotion, but much rather very diverse and mostly ill-defined ideas which could be tailored to individual needs. Some believed in stones in their pouch²¹, others in a local waterfall, some spirits were entirely private while others were shared by a household and those who did not have a private spirit to guide them could use magic to influence their environment. This solution would account for a) the list of heathen practices in *Grágás*, b) why the conversion to Christianity was formally accomplished in a society that was still in effect heathen and c) the lack of archaeological evidence for heathen practices.

I have deliberately left out discussing the evidence for ritual slaughter, and — by implication — ritual feasting. It seems to me that these practices are more correctly considered as political rituals, rituals that were manifestations of political ideologies and would not have been classified as religious by the heathens although they would soon fall into that category after Christianity had been introduced.

POLITICAL POWER IN 10th CENTURY ICELAND

In most countries where Christianity was introduced in the middle ages, the conversion became an opportunity for political factions to draw up clear battle lines. That this did not happen in Iceland may suggest that political power was so underdeveloped on the island that no one considered there to be political capital to be gained from opposing the move. It is at least clear that political power was very slow to develop in Iceland and the political system that developed there in the 10th–13th centuries was characterised mainly by the inability of the chieftains to create permanent power structures and the difficulty the contenders for power had in subduing each other. It was only in the

²¹ Stones found in the burials at Selfoss, Ytra-Garðshorn and Eyrarteigur may be of this nature — K. Eldjárn 2000: 75, 157, 161–162, 232.

mid-13th century that a few chieftains were able to establish control over more than one region in the country, and even then they had troubles and preferred to acknowledge the Norwegian king as their overlord.

The slow and painful development of centralised power in Iceland is in part supported by the archaeological evidence. The earliest sites, farmsteads and burials, are all characterised by material poverty and there were no monumental grave mounds or other such symbolism to indicate territorial overlordship²². There seems however to have been clear social and probably political differentiation, evidenced by the variation in size of the early long-houses. The smallest are 60–90 m² and the larger ones are up to 120 m² whereas the Hofstaðir long house is in a class of its own, about 270 m². The unusual size of the Hofstaðir hall must indicate that those who built it were either chieftains or wanted to become leaders in their area. The evidence for ritual slaughter found at Hofstaðir has already been described. It indicates that apart from impressing visitors with the economic strength and vision of the builders, the hall's function was to be the venue for large gatherings, feasts.

Feasting is a well documented aspect of Norse culture, a social institution that lived on long into the Christian period. Basically the feast must have been a means to meet other people in a society where settlements were scattered and most people lived out their entire lives in small and stable groups. As a result the feast was an enormously important institution. It was not only relief from the tedium of everyday life where the rules governing social conduct were temporarily suspended, it was also an occasion to exchange news and ideas and to make all sorts of arrangements between settlements. It is no wonder that those who sought to wield power in this society made efforts to patronise such gatherings. Effective patronage of a feast — no doubt achieved by plentiful food and beer and probably entertainment as well — was the key to political power, especially in terms of gaining authority over near-equals, other landowners and their tenants²³ as well as in terms of adding to the cohesion and sense of common interest among the dependants of the feast-holder. It is reasonable to assume that some of the feasts at least had a religious or ideological significance. The Yuletide feast for instance was clearly connected to the winter solstice and it is likely that the chieftains holding the feasts sought to reinforce these sort of linkages and even add religious significance where there was none before. To what extent they were successful in this and to what extent the people gathered at the feasts were conscious of the connection is impossible to say. Considering that devotion and spirituality seem mainly to have been private, it seems unlikely that the religious aspect of the feasts was of overriding importance. Ritual slaughter which may have taken place at the feasts as a matter of course, should be seen in terms of its entertainment value. There was a feat involved in accomplishing the decapitation, the fountain of blood will have been impressive and fascinating and the extravagance implied by the spilling of precious blood will have put the feast-holder

²² O. Vésteinsson 2000b.

²³ On patterns of landownership in 10th century Iceland see O. Vésteinsson 1998.

in a good light. We don't need to add religious connotations to understand this behaviour — it is completely explicable in terms of politics.

That the Icelandic chieftains sought to augment the religious significance of these events is likely and this may be the true significance of the term *goði* — it may have been a term chosen by the chieftains themselves in an attempt to support the idea that theirs was a function sanctioned by the gods. And that would not be the first time temporal rulers attempted such a ruse.

CONCLUSIONS

The conversion of the Icelanders in 1000 A.D. is a truly remarkable event. Its uniqueness can be made to throw light on Icelandic society at the time, an analysis that has consequences for our understanding of Norse society in general. A model has been proposed where the mythology most people would associate with Norse heathen religion is considered to have been primarily upper class culture. As such it would have had limited relevance for religion as practised by the majority of the population. Instead religion was for the most part a private affair, either of the individual or the household. This sort of religion will not have been the focus of communal celebration but much rather individual devotion, and may to a considerable degree not have involved any ritual acts. It would be much less likely to come into conflict with Christian teachings than the traditional model for Norse religion (that of chieftain-priests and temples or temple-farms) and makes Ari's account of the conversion much easier to understand. Furthermore it is suggested that while feasting was an extremely important part of the Norse political system, the rituals involved are better explained in terms of politics rather than religion. It can be added that even if the chieftains may have tried to add a religious significance to the proceedings they had not been successful to the extent that it made it uncomfortable for them to adopt Christian symbolism when that time came. Where many have seen a continuity between supposed heathen chieftain-priests and the ordained chieftains of 12th century Iceland it makes more sense to see the continuity of function, i.e. Christian religious observance was to a large degree associated with feasting and the Christian chieftains sought to patronise such gatherings just as they had always sought to patronise any gathering.

This is in many ways an opportunistic approach, it involves only rearranging of the relevance of the different sorts of evidence, and is not based on much original research. It is however a serious attempt to make the most sense of the available evidence and create a setting which makes new evidence meaningful. New evidence in this field is bound to be primarily archaeological and we need therefore to have a clear view of the possible scenarios so that useful evidence is not simply dumped into the hazy sphere of things ritual, and is instead made use of to build a plausible picture of the past.

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NORWAY AT THE THRESHOLD OF WESTERN EUROPE

Claus Krag*

In Norwegian history the year 1000 A.D. is an important one, and is moreover significant in more than one way. In the first place it was the year of the battle at Svold, fought between the Norwegian king Olav Tryggvason (995–1000) and a victorious coalition of the Danish king Sven Forkbeard, the Swedish king Olof Skötkonung and the Norwegian earl Eirik Hakonsson of Lade (in Trøndelag). This dramatic event, when King Olav ended his life plunging into the sea from his famous ship „The Long Serpent”, became legendary, and was later celebrated in poetry as well as prose. Secondly, the year 1000 means a lot in modern Norwegian historiography. In a field where written sources are mostly late, dating from the 12th and 13th centuries — and as a result the chronology of early history is rather vague, the death of Olav Tryggvason seems to be one of the earliest established dates, even if the circumstances around the battle, and also the exact location of it, have been a matter of intense debate¹.

At this time Norway was still marked by the Viking Age and the activities typical of that age. From the beginning of the outward Scandinavian expansion the Norwegians had played quite an important role. The attack in 793 of Vikings from Hordaland in Western Norway on the English monastery at Lindisfarne has often been considered the starting point of the Viking Age in Western Europe. Norwegian Vikings continued to give their contribution in the following years, as plunderers, merchants, craftsmen and settlers, covering a large area all the way from France to Greenland.

Olav Tryggvason took part in the reinforced Viking attacks on England towards the end of the 10th century, under the leadership of the Danish king Sven Forkbeard. Olav was among the recipients of the exceptionally large tributes of *danegeld* which the English paid to the Vikings in 991 and 994. Then, however, Olav and his group of Norwegians suddenly changed sides, and joined King Æthelred of England *against* the Danes. This new alliance is appropriately reported in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*²:

Then the king sent Bishop Ælfheah and Ealdorman Æthelweard for King Olav, and hostages were given to the ships meanwhile. And they then brought Olav to the king at Andover with much ceremony, and King Æthelred stood sponsor to

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¹ P.S. Andersen 1977: 102–106.

² D. Whitelock (ed.) 1979: 235.

him at confirmation, and bestowed gifts on him royally. And then Olav promised — as also he performed — that he would never come back to England in hostility.

After this Olav Tryggvason returned to Norway, in 995, just in time to take advantage of an internal uprising against the tyrant ruler Earl Hakon of Lade (the father of Olav's later opponent at Svold), who had now ruled the northern and western parts of Norway for more than two decades. Olav Tryggvason thus became king, and also sole ruler, even if Sven Forkbeard claimed that he still had rights as the overlord of Norway, the same way his father had had before him. Olav, as a result of this, had powerful enemies, and five years later they joined forces against him at Svold. Sven was the most formidable among them, fighting for the royal title, while Eirik wanted revenge for his father as well as to take his place as the *de facto* ruler of the greater part of Norway, on behalf of Sven.

Three of the most powerful forces of Norwegian — and Scandinavian — political history in the late 10th and early 11th centuries were active at Svold. There was the Danish dynasty of kings, who in a row fostered such mighty rulers as Harald Bluetooth (ca. 958–987), Sven Forkbeard (987–1014) and Canute the Great (1014/19–1035). They were all kings of Norway as well as Denmark, at least for periods of their lives. We also meet Eirik Hakonsson, representing the Norwegian dynasty of earls at Lade. They were the real rulers of important regions for almost a hundred years, from around 935 to 1029, ending with the death of Earl Hakon Eiriksson. Finally there was King Olav Tryggvason himself, fighting for an independent Norwegian kingdom.

The struggle for a separate kingdom in Norway had started earlier, in the late 9th century, with the legendary Harald Fairhair (d. ca. 932), and had continued under his successors. Mostly, however, this undertaking had met with failure, dependent as it was on Danish weakness for any success at all. Only the death of Canute the Great in 1035 brought a final change. At that time the decline of Danish royal power in the whole of the North Sea area created new possibilities for an independent Norwegian dynasty. After 1040 the Norwegian king Magnus the Good even managed to get himself elected as king of Denmark. But this also demonstrates quite clearly that Denmark and Norway still in many respects were seen as one common ground for political activity³.

The later Norwegian and Icelandic historians and saga writers, from the 12th century onwards, noticed the various contributions of several past kings in creating an independent Norwegian kingdom, and wanted to connect those early kings with the kings of their own day. Accordingly they developed the idea of a coherent dynastic line, all the way from Harald Fairhair to the Norwegian kings of the 13th century. The anonymous author of the saga *Fagrskinna* (the „Fair Vellum”) from around 1220 expressed this idea in a famous passage about Harald Fairhair⁴:

³ C. Krag 1995: 179, 225.

⁴ B. Einarsson (ed.), 1985: 58.



Scandinavia at the turn of the first millennium

Harald, son of Halfdan the Black, became king after his father. He was then a young man measured by his years but at the same time in full possession of the maturity, dignity and courage a king ought to have. His hair was voluminous with a special colour and looked very much like silk. He was a most handsome man, exceptionally strong, and as tall as can be seen from the stone on his grave, which is nearby Haugesund. He was a very wise man, both foresighted and fearless, as well as lucky. He set up as his goal to become sole master of the land of the Norwegians, and the country is raised to honour by his descendants until this day, and so shall it be for all times to come.

From what we have of contemporary evidence, mostly skaldic poems, it seems however clear that the dynasty of Harald Fairhair never rooted properly. Harald was indeed followed as king by his two sons, first Eirik Bloodaxe (who died in England in 854, after a long exile) and then Hakon the Good. Hakon was succeeded by the sons of Eirik until the Danish kings and the earls of Lade took over around 970. But at the same time it is quite obvious, contrary to what the sagas say, that the *later* Norwegian kings — Olav Trygvasson (995–1000), Olav Haraldsson (St Olav; 1015–1028/1030), Harald Hard-ruler (1046–1066), and the descendants of the latter who formed the Norwegian dynasty of the 11th to 13th centuries — were not in fact descended from the first Harald⁵.

Another assumption made by the saga writers, that Harald Fairhair unified all of Norway as a sole ruler, is just as false. The nucleus of Harald's kingdom was the southwestern part of Norway, from just south of Stavanger (where at Hafsrfsjord — maybe in 872 — he fought his most famous battle) up to the district of Sogn, north of Bergen. Whatever influence Harald had further north he exercised through his „earls” (of which a few are mentioned), or through other magnates who were, just like the earls, only partly under his control.

In the southeastern part of Norway, in the Viken-area centred on the Oslofjord, neither Harald nor his successors seem to have had any power at all. As early as 813 we read in Frankish annals that Vestfold, on the west side of the Oslofjord, was part of the Danish kingdom⁶. During the 9th and 10th centuries several petty kings in the Oslofjord region submitted at least for periods to the Danish king, as their feudal lord. Later on, when the saga writers of the late 12th century claimed that Halfdan the Black, Harald Fairhair's father, came from Vestfold, the effect of that allegation at the time was to strengthen, ideologically, the Norwegian position in Viken. With Vestfold as the ancestral land of the royal family, the demands for a overlordship in South Norway brought forward by the Danish king Valdemar the Great (1157–1182), based on what he declared to be ancient prerogatives, were substantially weakened.

Each of the Scandinavian countries took a long time to be definitely formed. Certainly a strong royal power had developed in Denmark at an early stage, but it was based on personal rule and therefore exposed to continuous change. It did not include

⁵ C. Krag 1989: 288–301.

⁶ R. Rau (ed.) 1987: 102.

more permanent institutions or a developed political structure. The Danish predominance in Southern Scandinavia during most of the Viking Age was the result of greater resources, in money as well as man power, combined with a strategically favourable position. The process of unification in Norway was slower and later, for several reasons. Norway was more unfavourably situated, at a greater distance from the Christian world from where the impulses to state formation mainly came. Besides the sheer length of the country (covering a distance similar to that from Copenhagen to Sicily), quite naturally, beset the unification of the country with a multitude of obstacles. This was not the case in the more concentrated Danish area⁷.

Before Norway became a kingdom, the country was a unit in another sense — not ethnically but geographically. From an ethnic perspective, the Norwegians themselves did not differ much from the Danes, Swedes or Goths (Norway also contained a population of Samis, as did Sweden, a people of a different stock whose way of life contrasted in the same degree to that of all other Scandinavians). Even in the High Middle Ages the three Scandinavian languages were called by a common epithet for „Danish tongue”. The oldest written source of any length for Norwegian history, from the end of the 9th century, clearly confirms the primary role played by geography in the development of Norway. Here the name of the country and its inhabitants are mentioned for the first time. This source is the story told to King Alfred of England just before 900, by a man called Ottar. He came from Halogaland in the north of Norway as a visitor to England where he became one of the king’s men. His story was included in the English translation of a famous world history originally written by the Spanish monk Orosius⁸.

Ottar said that he lived farther to the north than any other Norwegian. Once he had sailed on from where he lived, to see what was ahead, he had at first passed only a sparse Sami population. Then he had turned eastward and seen wide stretches of totally uninhabited land. Only after a total journey of eleven days — three days to the north, another three days to the east, and then finally five days to the south — he and his men again had reached settled land, on the other side of a large river. This must have been the mouth of the Northern Dvina, in the White Sea.

The purpose of Ottar’s journey had not been merely explorative. As he told King Alfred, he and his men were in search for new hunting grounds, with walrus as their primary target, since products of arctic hunting were their primary source of wealth. Besides that, the chieftains of Northern Norway, according to Ottar, regarded as their most valuable possession the „tax” which they regularly forced from the neighbouring Sami population, consisting mainly of valuable furs and ropes made of skin.

With such costly goods the chieftains used to travel south, all along the Norwegian coast, to the port of *Sciringes heal*, on the western shore of the Oslofjord, or to *Hæþum* (Hedeby) in South Jutland. Before he arrived in England Ottar had visited both trading centres. He describes the passage from north to south as *Norþweg* („North-Way”),

⁷ N. Lund 1995: 204.

⁸ J. Bately (ed.) 1980: 13–16.

saying what a long journey it was. Even with favourable wind it took more than a month if a person did not sail at night. All the way down to Skiringssal Ottar had had *norþmanna land* („the land of the Norwegians”) on his left hand. The country was extremely narrow. In the north the cultivated land was often no more than 3 „miles” (i.e. Old English miles; approximately 4,5 km) from the sea to the mountains. Further south the inhabited belt could extend to about 30 „miles” (45 km), or more. Only in its southeastern parts the country really broadened up and became 60 „miles” (90 km) wide, or more. From Norway on his way to Hedeby Ottar had passed into Danish waters.

It was no wonder that it took time to create some kind of popular unity over such vast distances. Nor is it at all odd that the southeastern parts of Norway tended to be more linked to the rest of south Scandinavia, especially Denmark, than it was to western or northern Norway. When the Danish kings were strong, they had a better chance of controlling the southeast of Norway than had their potential rivals from further up the Norwegian coast.

When Olav Tryggvason arrived in western Norway he had a fair chance of establishing a royal power of some significance. He was the son of a petty king in the Danish influenced Viken (his father had been killed when Olav was a child), and in possession of the necessary royal status. He came with his own resources as well as the support of the English king. With just moderate efforts he could therefore fill the empty space left behind by the dead Earl Hakon. Besides Olav very soon formed an alliance with the most powerful and influential man in Norway, Erling Skjalgsson from Sola (near Stavanger), giving Erling his own sister, Astrid, in marriage. Erling had family connections along the coast all the way to northern Norway.

Although it did not last for more than five years, Olav Tryggvason's reign had some significance in the process of creating a more permanent Norwegian kingdom. This was mostly due to his achievements as a Christian king. For generations a more vague Christian influence had made itself felt, chiefly in the coastal districts. And now, at this late stage, every marked step forwards in Christianization always meant that new ground was permanently gained for Christianity — as well as for the royal power in alliance with it. Olav brought bishops and clergymen with him from England, and had churches built. Three churches in particular are mentioned in the later sources, probably to be trusted in this matter. The first is situated at Moster (in central Western Norway), the second at Selja (in the northern part of Western Norway), and the third at Nidaros (in Trøndelag). These locations are not accidental. Olav chose them because they were strategically important, and useful as corner stones for a country wide church organisation. From places like these the king could control the greater part of the „North-Way”, including the rich agricultural region of Trøndelag.

The defeat of Olav at Svold in 1000 did not lead to any kind of backlash for Christianity in Norway. We see that Earl Eirik was a Christian too, a fact that leaves Earl Hakon — Eirik's father who had been killed in 995 — as the last heathen ruler of Norway. The Danish kings Sven and Canute were of course Christian kings in Norway just as they were in England or Denmark.

The saga writers later emphasized the importance of the two „missionary kings”, of whom they regarded Olav Tryggvason as the first and Olav Haraldsson (St Olav) as the second. Furthermore, they modelled the relation between the two on that between John the Baptist and Jesus Christ — the first Olav had prepared the ground for his more illustrious successor who was destined to play the decisive role⁹. The sagas even told that Olav Tryggvason, shortly after his arrival in Norway, had baptized then newly born Olav Haraldsson. This was probably why they dated the birth of the second Olav to 995. From archbishop Eystein Erlendsson (d. 1187), who wrote a *vita* of St Olav, we know that Olav was christened only as a young man in Rouen in Normandy, supposedly in 1013/14¹⁰.

The role played in Norwegian history by Olav Haraldsson — or St Olav — is rather bewildering. He came to Norway in 1015, under circumstances very similar to those of Olav Tryggvason’s arrival in 995, that is from England (where he too had alternately joined both sides) bringing with him substantial resources, mainly of money. This he put into use buying himself both military support and friends. He also could take advantage of a power vacuum in Norway, now as a result of Earl Eirik’s engagement in England to help his brother-in-law Canute to conquer that country. But when Canute had completed his conquest, and later ascended to the Danish throne as well as the English, Olav Haraldsson, no more than Olav Tryggvason before him, was able to resist the most formidable royal power in the north of Europe. Canute conspired with the bulk of the Norwegian aristocracy, and when he landed with a large fleet in Norway, probably in 1028, Olav immediately fled to Russia. When he tried to come back two years later, after the premature death of Earl Hakon Eiriksson in 1029 (son of Earl Eirik who had died in England some years earlier), his attempt failed. He fell at Stiklestad in Trøndelag, in another battle that became legendary, on 29 July 1030, against a much larger army consisting of peasants from the region and chieftains, with their followers, from all over the country. They were supported by Canute.

From this point of view Olav Haraldsson’s government looks like a complete failure. Later events, however, proved that to be wrong. The Danish rule of Norway lasted only a few years this time, collapsing completely by the time Canute died. In 1035 the son of Olav, Magnus Olavsson (1035–1047), became king. At the same time the dead Olav Haraldsson emerged as St Olav — soon to be titled „the eternal king of Norway” (*rex perpetuus Norvegiae*). Magnus was later succeeded as king of Norway by his uncle, Olav’s half brother Harald Sigurdsson (1046–1066; with the cognomen „Hard-ruler”). The later kings of Norway were his descendants.

All this gives importance to the rule of Olav Haraldsson even if it was short and mostly met with defeat at the time. Olav, however, contributed significantly to the Norwegian unification process in other respects as well. Before him the Norwegian church still was not definitely organized. Olav’s role as a missionary king therefore was

⁹ L. Lönnroth 1963: 65.

¹⁰ G. Storm (ed.) 1880: 128.

to establish this church, all over the country, laying the foundations for a lasting ecclesiastical organization including both buildings and personnel. In this he was effectively assisted by his court bishop, the Englishman Grimkell, who also served the Norwegian church after Olav's death. Besides, Grimkell was active in bringing Magnus Olavsson to power in 1035. As a church organizer Olav Haraldsson thus completed the work of several of his predecessors, especially Olav Tryggvason.

Contrary to previous rulers of the „North-Way”, Olav Haraldsson had his main family connections in Eastern Norway. Consequently, early in his reign he fastened his grip on that part of the country. The skaldic poems tell that he killed or drove away more than five petty kings only in Hedmark. Therefore Olav's government also meant the welding together of the different regions of the country. Thus, by the 11th century, Norway was developing into a kingdom very much like other European kingdoms — with relatively fixed borders and ruled by a Christian king cooperating with the Church.

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DENMARK — A THOUSAND YEARS AGO

Else Roesdahl*

In the year 1000 (or 999) one of the most famous battles of Scandinavian history was fought, at Svold. It was a sea battle at an unknown place in Danish waters between three Scandinavian kings, all of whom were Christian. Sven Forkbeard of Denmark and the Swedish king Olof Skötkonung were on one side, together with the Norwegian earl Erik Hakonsson, while Olav Tryggvasson, king of Norway, was on the other. The battle, its background and the many heroic deeds which took place there are described and elaborated in skaldic poetry and later sagas. Olav was killed and Danish supremacy over Norway was once again established. This supremacy lasted until Sven's death and was then regained, lost and once again regained by his son, Canute. On his death in 1035 it finally reverted to Norway.

As in the rest of Scandinavia, the time around the year 1000 was a period of deep cultural change in Denmark. The political world was unstable; society was on the move; new ideas of more centralized royal power and government were tried out; new settlements were established and others abandoned or restructured; new technology was introduced; new attitudes to life and death spread and, importantly, a new religion — Christianity — accepted. A series of exceedingly lucrative raids on England, raids which had started about a decade earlier and attracted large numbers of Danes and other Scandinavians, was in full flow (although in the year 1000 itself no raid took place).

The magnificent Old Norse poem *Völuspá* (The Prophecy of the Sibyl)¹ expresses the spirit of this age of transition. The poem describes in pre-Christian terms, in splendid and colourful imagery, the history of the world from its creation to its end, Ragnarok, when the Gods are destroyed, and a new and happy world emerges.

DENMARK

Denmark had been a kingdom for a long time². It comprised the Jutland peninsula north of the river Eider. To the south, behind the fortified rampart known as the

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¹ R.I. Page 1995: 204–212; G. Steinsland, P. Meulengracht Sørensen 1999.

² Surveys of Vikings and Viking Age Denmark include E. Roesdahl 1982; P. Sawyer 1988; P. Sawyer (ed.) 1997; E. Roesdahl 1998². Most aspects mentioned in this article are treated there and further references can be found there.

Danevirke, were the Danes' neighbours, Saxons, Frisians and various Slav tribes. To Denmark also belonged Fyn, Sjælland and about five hundred other islands of varying size, as well as Skåne and Halland (now South Sweden). The waters connecting the various parts of Denmark are comparatively sheltered. Ships could sail comfortably there in most weathers, without losing sight of land. Passage from one part of the kingdom to another was no great adventure. Nor did land transport present great difficulties, for Denmark is flat — its highest point is 173 m above sea level. From ancient times the Army Road (or Ox Road) ran along the spine of Jutland, and there were many other roads. All this was a vital precondition to the formation of the Danish kingdom.

The country formed the southern part of what is now known as Scandinavia, a region which had many features in common (although there were some regional differences). Among the common features were language, names, writing, an ancient religion, an aristocratic culture, visual arts and poetry. Denmark was the southern gateway to Scandinavia and thus had far more political and cultural contacts with Continental Europe than Norway and Sweden. Many European influences, including Christianity, reached Denmark first. Norway around the year 1000 was in the final process of unification under one king; it was also becoming Christian. Sweden, on the other hand, still had a long way to go in both matters. Denmark also controlled the sea route between the Baltic on one side and the North Sea on the other. There was easy access to many lands, an access from which Denmark had always profited. At the turn of the first millennium Denmark was a country with vast international experience in many fields and many lands, an experience which included the raids and trade of the first two hundred years of the Viking Age.

THE SOURCES

The sources for our knowledge of Denmark and the Danes a thousand years ago are varied and scattered. The sagas — great literature — provide dramatic stories of many events and personalities, mostly from Norway or Iceland. But some relate to Denmark around the year 1000. The sagas, however, were written about two hundred years or more after the turn of the millennium and are obviously, therefore, not trustworthy as eye-witness accounts. They do, however, preserve some of the attitude to life of the people of the period and tell of some of the period's major political dramas. They also contain contemporary and well-preserved skaldic poetry, which gives unique information on the period's aristocratic ideals. Other contemporary Scandinavian sources consist of inscriptions on rune-stones, although the fashion of raising rune-stones was in rapid decline in most of Denmark around the year 1000. The inscriptions are brief and usually strictly formulaic. A typical inscription would record the name of the person (usually a man) who raised the stone, and the name of the dead person in whose honour it was raised (usually also a man). It would state their relationship and end with an epithet of the dead person. Other written sources which help to reconstruct the story of Denmark at this period comprise accounts by foreign clerics on Viking activity, or



Denmark at the turn of the first millennium

concern themselves with religious matters in Denmark. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, for example, tells of the Viking adventures in England; while some continental or British chronicles of eleventh century date trace the history of Denmark and Danish kings back to the 10th century.

During the last fifty years archaeology has provided an ever growing body of evidence concerning many aspects of Viking Age Denmark — settlement and subsistence, towns and trade, ships and land transport, clothing and visual arts, material expressions of wealth and prestige, and much more. Dendrochronology (dating by measuring and comparing the annual growth of timbers and defining the date of the felling of the tree) has further provided a number of exact dates which allow us to point out certain peak periods of innovation and change. One of these is the time around the year 1000.

THE KING AND HIS FATHER

At the turn of the millennium Sven Forkbeard was king of Denmark. He reigned c. 987–1014 and succeeded his father Harald Bluetooth after a successful rebellion which led to Harald's death. During Harald's long reign (his father Gorm died in 958/59) many changes took place and crucial new ideas were introduced. He ordered the official conversion of Denmark to Christianity c. 965 and erected a series of great monuments in Jelling, in Jutland, in honour and memory of his parents, but more



Fig. 1. King Harald Bluetooth's rune-stone in Jelling. The third face with picture of Christ above the last text line which says „and made the Danes Christian”.
Photo: National Museum of Denmark

particularly of himself³. These monuments comprised two huge mounds, a spacious church and a grand rune-stone commemorating Harald's deeds in runic script. The same pyramidal stone also has splendid pictures of a large animal and of Christ (Fig. 1). In the 960s he also refortified the Danevirke against the enemies to the south, and c. 980 built a bridge at Ravning Enge (it was nearly 800 m long and more than 5 m wide). About 980 he built four unique circular fortresses (Trelleborg, Nonnebakken, Fyrkat and Aggersborg) in different regions of the country. He revitalised the minting of Danish coins. He held the overlordship of Norway for some time. He married a Slav (Abodrite) princess and was a political ally of her father, Mistivoj. However, from about 970, the long-standing flow of Arab silver from the East by way of Russia ceased. He also lost a war against the Germans in 974, but regained power in the borderlands in 983; his son, Sven, was probably the leader or one of the leaders of the army at this time. He initiated grand and innovative royal prestige architecture on an unprecedented scale, in order no doubt to emphasize new ideas of strong royal power and to create places of memory. Later written sources tell that the reason for the rebellion against him (led by Sven) was the heavy burden he had placed on the Danes. In the light of the enormous works just described, this may well be true⁴.

The new regime of Sven seems to have made a clean break with many aspects of Harald's reign. Sven was ready for new approaches to a rapidly changing world. Not a single great monument seems to have been built by him; instead he achieved the conquest of England. The prestigious fortresses and Ravning bridge fell into disrepair and oblivion; no more royal burials took place in Jelling, which seems to have reverted to a normal royal estate after its brief period of glory under Gorm and Harald (a reversion which explains why so much is preserved there). The centre of power moved east to Sjælland and Skåne, and, according to the late eleventh-century chronicler Adam of Bremen, it was in Roskilde that King Sven had Harald buried, in a church which had been built by Harald and which is a predecessor of Roskilde Cathedral, where kings and queens are still buried today.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity had come to stay. The change of religion was a response to radical social, economic and political changes in the country. New structures of power and government were being introduced. Inspiration and pressure came from Christian Europe, and Christianity was intimately linked with it and provided one of the tools of change: a written culture gradually superseded the traditional orally-based culture. Christianity also stimulated new ideas of a hierarchical and centralised society built around the king and a structure well-suited to spread the new ideas⁵. There is no

³ K.J. Krogh 1993.

⁴ E. Roesdahl 1994: 25–50; 1996; N. Lund 1997: 156–181.

⁵ The meaning of the conversion and of the two religions is masterly treated by P. Meulengracht Sørensen 1997: 202–224; on aspects of the archaeology, see E. Roesdahl 1997: 229–248.

evidence that Sven was a zealous Christian; but the new faith continued the steady progress which had come some way during the reign of Harald. In 988 bishops of Schleswig/Hedeby, Ribe, Århus and Odense are mentioned. Soon there was also a bishop in the eastern part of the country, in Skåne. In ecclesiastical matters Denmark was formally subject to the German archdiocese of Hamburg–Bremen, but Sven favoured English clergy, much against the will of the archdiocese. Anglo–Saxon influence was strong in early Christian Denmark.

Heavenly salvation was the aim of life and death of a Christian, and it is therefore not surprising that Christian burial customs were adopted quite quickly. By the turn of the millennium burial normally took place in a Christian cemetery with a distinct boundary marked by a ditch or fence. At the same time the cross replaced the pagan Thor's hammer as a religious symbol, a symbol which was for some time applied to secular use in the form of pendants and encolpions, and on coins, brooches and runes–stones and even on battle axes. Church buildings, however, were slow to appear. In pagan times religion was part of ordinary life and rituals were performed privately in the open air or in the homes of all levels of society and by men and women alike. There was also open air public cult and sacrifice, part of which entailed drinking and eating from the sacrificed animals, which was performed in a chieftain's halls. Christianity, with its specialised buildings for worship and ceremony (churches) and its special cult leaders (the clergy, always male) performing entirely different rituals represented a very different type of religion, and around the year 1000 the traditions of pagan cult and paganism itself were undoubtedly still strong. Many who remembered pagan times were still alive.

Churches were built in towns such as Lund (Trinitatis Church, built in 990, has been excavated)⁶ and probably on some royal and other aristocratic estates, as at Jelling. They were all built (as were the houses) of wood; the earliest record of a stone building in Denmark tells of a church in Roskilde built c. 1030 by Sven's daughter Estrid. Churches were probably also constructed for mass baptism — perhaps one of them was in Tamdrup in Jutland where Poppo (who converted and baptised king Harald) was venerated around 1200; at that time he had a splendid gilt shrine. But it was probably not before the formal division of Denmark into bishoprics c. 1060 that churches were built throughout the country. One such church has been excavated at Hørning in north Jutland and is dated by dendrochronology to c. 1060. 9,3 m long it was the first building on the site of the present church.

WRITING AND VISUAL ART

With Christianity came books. Christianity was based on holy books written in the Latin script and in the Latin language. This was a literacy entirely different from that based on the use of runes and of the native language in a society where culture was basically orally transmitted. Runic writing⁷, which had probably originated in the 2nd

⁶ M. Cinthio 1997: 113–134.

⁷ E. Moltke 1985; 1993.

century A.D., did not, however, die out. The script in the Viking Age had only 16 characters, which meant that there was an inadequate range of letters to represent the sounds of the language. Probably, however, as a result of challenge from the Latin script, the number of runic characters was increased around the turn of the millennium.

At the same time there seems to have been a growth in runic literacy. Short inscriptions — on various functional objects, on wooden sticks or on discarded animal bones — are now found much more frequently. The use of runes continued in some parts of society well into the fourteenth century or even later, but for official communication Latin script and the Latin language were used. The earliest evidence for this is



Fig. 2. Coin minted by Sven Forkbeard in c. 995. It has the picture, name and title of the king on one side and the name of the moneyer, Godwine, who was English, on the other side together with the cross. Script and language are Latin. The type imitates contemporary English coins. Drawing: Brita Malmer. After B. Malmer 1968. Scale 2:1

seen on the coins minted by Sven Forkbeard in c. 995 (Fig. 2)⁸. The king's name and title and the moneyer's name are given in Latin script and in the Latin language, while one side of the coin also bears the king's portrait and the other a cross. The type was based on English coins, which were at the time acquired in vast quantities in raids on the west. In terms of literacy, however, there was still a long way to go. The earliest-known charter of a Danish king in Denmark was not issued until nearly a hundred years later — a deed of gift by king Canute II (St Canute) to St Laurence's Church in Lund in 1085.

Christianity and its international character also influenced visual art. From around the middle of the tenth century traditional Scandinavian animal art (which also comprised birds) increasingly incorporated west European plant motifs in its repertoire. Around the turn of the millennium a new style, the so-called Ringerike style, developed out of the earlier Mammen style. The Ringerike style⁹ was deeply influenced by the English Winchester style which must have become well known in Denmark from objects acquired in the current raids in England, but more especially from illumination

⁸ J. Steen Jensen (ed.) 1995: nos. 1–2.

⁹ S.H. Fuglesang 1980; D.M. Wilson, O. Klindt-Jensen 1980²: 134–146; D.M. Wilson 1995: 152–183.



Fig. 3. Bird ornament in the Ringerike style on mount from a drinking horn found in Aarhus.
After S.H. Fuglesang 1980, Pl. 20

in holy books produced in England and brought to Denmark by English clergy. Florid plant ornament became ever more important. The main motifs consist of large animals, birds, snakes and ribbon-like animals, caught up in lush tendril-like foliage. The creatures often sprout tendrils from various parts of their anatomy (Fig. 3). It is a vigorous art, full of movement. As a result of western European influence the animals became more naturalistic; their features are easily distinguishable, although it is often impossible to decide their exact species. At the same time human representations — of Christ and of kings (the latter on coins) — gained new and lasting importance. Stylistic influences, however, also went the other way. During the period when England was under Danish control (1016–1042), and even after it, a taste for Scandinavian art developed there, influenced by the many resident Scandinavians.

FARMS, VILLAGES, ESTATES AND TOWNS

The economic basis of Denmark was agriculture and the basic wealth was land, on which cattle, pigs and sheep were bred, and crops were grown. Excavations have shown that while villages were predominant in most of the country, some regions had many single farms. The normal farm consisted of a main building with living space at one end and a room for animals at the other. This building would be situated in the centre of a fenced plot and a number of ancillary buildings were spread out over the farmyard or alongside the fence. In Vorbasse¹⁰, in central Jutland, an entire village has been excavated. It seems to have been typical of its time, and comprised six or seven farms, on either side of a common road or green, which was accessed by a porch or gate. Some time around the turn of the millenium or in the early 11th century, however, the village was restructured. The farmyards were much enlarged; the main buildings now housed only the farmer, his family and his servants, while animals were placed in separate byres and stables. As the old tradition of man and animals being housed under one roof ceased, a new way of living was introduced. By the end of the Viking Age the whole village of Vorbasse moved about half a kilometer to the site the present-day village.

¹⁰ S. Hvass 1986: 529–542.

It is not known if the Vorbasse farms were individually owned, or if they were subject to a lord. But the pattern, which is known in many other places, demonstrates that large-scale planning of settlements was normal — both structure and site might be subject to change. In some places entirely new settlements, often named after a man and with the suffix *-thorp* (for example Karlstrup/Karl's thorp), were established between the existing ones, sometimes after the clearing of forest. The excessive demand for good oak timbers for building and ships would have helped this process through deforestation.

Chieftains' or kings' residences of this period are also known. The basic lay-out was similar to that of a normal farm, but also had a large hall for entertainments and feasts (including religious feasts). There would also be many auxiliary buildings for various purposes, including buildings which would house visiting chieftains and their retinue. Craftsmen working in all sorts of materials, including precious metals, were employed here, and large numbers of high-quality objects are found, as are coins. One such residence was situated on the shore of lake Tissø in Sjælland¹¹ (the lake is named after the pagan god Tyr). Among the vast number of high quality objects was a gold neckring, which weighs two kilograms. Other finds, including some small figures of pagan significance, strongly suggest that the residence was connected with a pagan cult. The site was abandoned in the early 11th century. The exact social status of the owner is unknown, but there is no doubt that the family was among the highest ranking in the kingdom.



Fig. 4. Reconstruction of the great hall in Lejre. Drawing: Holger Schmidt. After T. Christensen 1991b

Another partly excavated residence in Lejre, also in Sjælland, was, according to later written sources, a royal centre¹². Here was found an immense hall with a floor area of 500 square metres (Fig. 4). In the early eleventh century the German chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg tells of great public pagan sacrifices which had taken place in Lejre. These are comparable to those which, according the late eleventh-century account by Adam of Bremen, took place in Old Uppsala in Central Sweden. The main site at Lejre was still being used in the eleventh century, but major structural changes suggest that the cult centre and other important functions of the royal residence had been transferred to Roskilde late in the previous century, at some time after the conversion. Roskilde became a major centre. Churches were built there, served by many

¹¹ L. Jørgensen, L. Pedersen 1996: 22–36; 1999: 5–11.

¹² T. Christensen 1991a: 163–185; 1991b; S.W. Andersen 1993: 7–142.

clergy. Royalty and their followers stayed there and were buried there, a bishop was installed, coins were struck, and a town grew up as a consequence of the many functions now centred there.

The end of the tenth century saw the rapid emergence of other new settlements. These were either planned as towns or were developed as towns from a royal estate (with all its functions). The only earlier towns had been Hedeby, Ribe and Århus, all in Jutland. Now, together with Roskilde, Viborg (in central Jutland), Odense (in Fyn), Lund (in Skåne) and others were established. Similar foundations occurred in Sweden and Norway — Sigtuna, Trondheim and Oslo are examples¹³.

The shift of site of a power centre, as from Lejre to Roskilde, seems to be closely paralleled at Uppåkra, where the centre shifted to Lund. The place-names, however, of Viborg (which means „sanctuary hills”) and Odense (which means „Odin’s sanctuary” — Odin was the chief pagan gods) suggest site continuity, at least within the area, from pagan to Christian times. Settlement was unstable; new ideas were tried out; tradition was fighting innovation.

TRADE AND TRANSPORT

One of the motors of this new series of towns must have been a rapidly growing trade. It is not possible to define the commodities in detail, but agricultural products and certain types of textile must have been among them. It is also clear that many objects used in daily life by normal people were manufactured by specialist or semi-specialist craftsmen and therefore traded — combs, for example, and shoes, brooches, iron locks, iron cooking pots and other tools, knives and weapons. Imported objects comprised soapstone cooking pots, whetstones and quernstones from Norway, and other quernstones from the Rhineland. Luxury items, such as glass, came from the Rhineland; silk came from the east, walrus ivory from newly settled Greenland, and furs from many places.

Much trade undoubtedly took the form of barter, but silver according to weight was increasingly used as a means of payment. This could take the form of jewellery (whole or fragmentary), ingots, coins of any provenance (often nicked or bent before a transaction in order to investigate its purity), or indeed any other object so long as it was made of silver. Danish silver hoards from around the turn of the first millennium usually contain large numbers of very small bits of silver, including half or quarter segments of coins. Such finds demonstrate that silver was now used even for transactions of very small economic value. The composition of the hoards also show that it was becoming normal to pay with money (be it whole, half or even smaller pieces of coins) without weighing it¹⁴. The minting of coins did not really take off in Denmark before about 1020, during the reign of Canute. But, as has already been mentioned, coins minted on the basis of an English model was introduced by Sven c. 995. For some time the need

¹³ H. Clarke, B. Ambrosiani 1991: 46–89.

¹⁴ B. Hårdh 1996.

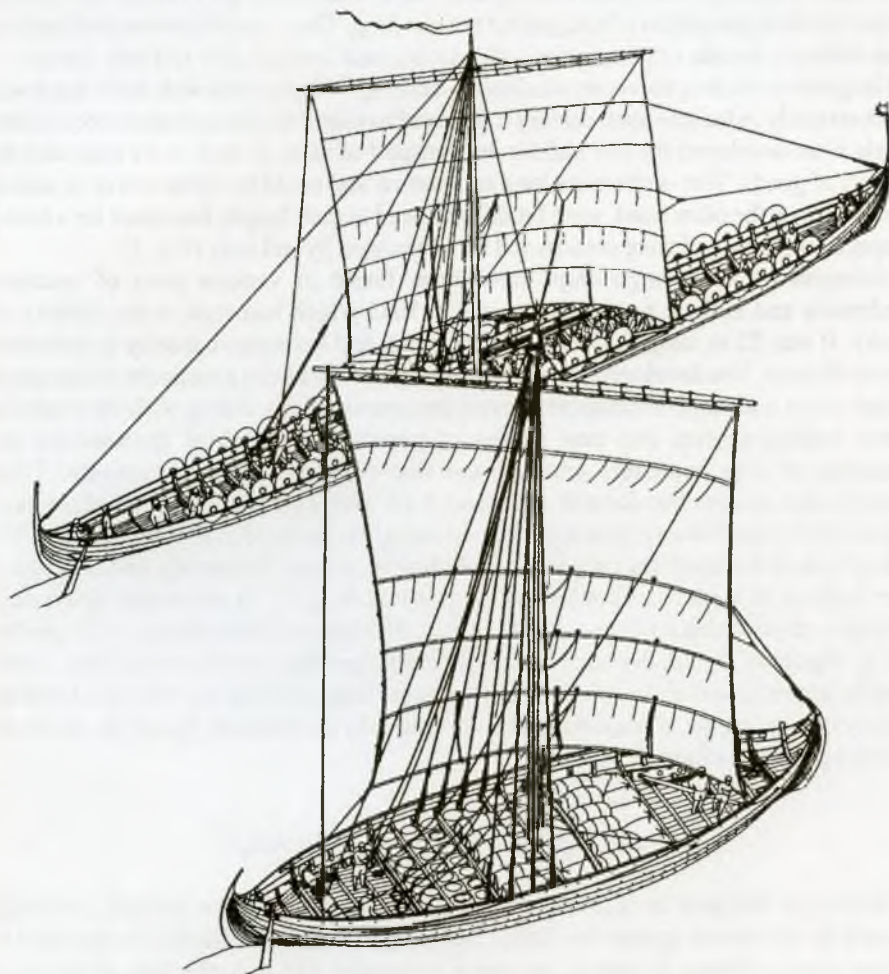


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of two ships found in the Hedeby harbour. Top: a 30 m long war-ship built in c. 985. Bottom: a 22 m long cargo-ship built in c. 1025. Drawing: The National Museum Centre for Maritime Archaeology, Roskilde

for coins was mainly satisfied by a great influx of foreign coins which, around the year 1000, were predominantly of English and German origin¹⁵.

The means of transport had developed dramatically. A series of bridges were built in Denmark; the first and largest, built c. 980 at Ravning Enge has already been mentioned. Although they must have greatly eased the crossing of rivers and marshy valleys, the first generation of bridges did not last long. They would have needed serious repair within a decade or two, but this did not happen; instead they fell into disuse.

The great revolution, however, was in ship-building¹⁶. Recent research show that it was almost certainly in the late tenth century that Scandinavian ships became more specialised. Vessels were developed for war and for the transport of men, as well as for trade and the transport of goods. War-ships were long and narrow and could be either rowed or sailed; cargo-ships, on the other hand, were broad compared to their length, had space for a heavy and spacious cargo, and were constructed for propulsion by sail only (Fig. 5).

Examples of such cargo-ships have been found in various parts of southern Scandinavia and include a ship constructed c. 1025 which had sunk in the harbour of Hedeby. It was 22 m long, 6,25 m in beam (max.), and her cargo capacity is estimated at about 60 tons. The development of such ships must have been a response to the needs of large-scale trade and of transport of everyday commodities. Along with the evidence of new trading centres and new means of payment, these ships demonstrate the emergence of new economic patterns and fast-growing economic activity. Their existence also implies that Danish waters were relatively peaceful — there must have been no great risk of losing ship and cargo at sea when becalmed. This must imply that the king was in full control of his realm including its waters. A warship was also found in the harbour at Hedeby. About 30 m long, it was only 2,7 m in breadth and would have had a crew of about 60 men. It was built c. 985 and is of exceedingly high quality both in respect to the timber used and in its craftsmanship. It was a high status ship, meant to impress, and may well have been a royal ship. Its final use was as a fireship. Having been set alight, it must have been drifted into the harbour during an attack on the trading centre around the year 1000.

KING SVEN, DENMARK AND ENGLAND¹⁷

Chronicles disagree as to Sven's reign. Some take a negative attitude, probably coloured by his revolt against his father and his promotion of English as opposed to German clergy. Others, however, are entirely positive and describe him as the most fortunate of kings, probably coloured by the fact that he was the ancestor of later Danish kings and by his conquest of England. Some facts about him can, however, be recovered.

¹⁵ J. Steen Jensen (ed.) 1995.

¹⁶ J. Bill 1997: 182–201; O. Crumlin-Pedersen 1997; 1999: 11–20.

¹⁷ Political and military aspects of Sven's reign are treated in a number of recent works, often together with the history of Canute, see e.g. S. Keynes 1991: 81–113; *Medieval Scandinavia* — „Sven Haraldsson (Forkbeard)”; S. Keynes 1994: 43–88; N. Lund 1994: 27–42; P. Sawyer 1994: 10–22; S. Keynes 1997: 48–82; N. Lund 1997: 156–181.

The marriages of Sven and of his children illustrate the deliberate marriage policy and the political sphere of interest of the Danish kings at that time. This comprised Norway, Sweden and the lands to the south of the Baltic and, increasingly, England. Normandy also played a role. Sven himself married a Polish princess who had become a Swedish queen, the widow of king Erik Sejrssæl. He died c. 993 and had conducted a series of attacks on Denmark. Erik's successor, her son Olof Skötkonung, was therefore Sven's stepson, which probably gave Sven some political influence in Sweden. The legendary Sigrid Storråde may have been another wife of Sven.

Four children of Sven are known. The elder son, Harald, succeeded Sven as king of Denmark in 1014 and died in 1018; otherwise little is known of him. A second son, Canute, was born c. 995 and was with his father during the great campaign in 1013, when England was conquered. He himself reconquered England in 1015–1016 and reigned there with great success until his death in 1035. From 1018 Canute the Great was also king of Denmark, which was much influenced by England, and many Danes and other Scandinavians held high office in England or formed part of his retinue, returning to their homelands with much wealth. In 1017 Canute acquired some sort of legitimacy as ruler of England by marrying Emma of Normandy, widow of the former English king Æthelred (Fig. 6). His first wife was also English, Ælfgifu of Northampton. Sven's daughter, Gytha, married the Norwegian earl, Erik Hakonsson, who fought with Sven at the battle of Svold in 1000; he also took part in Canute's conquest of England in 1015–1016 and became Earl of Northumbria. Another daughter, Estrid, married Duke Robert of Normandy, who repudiated her. Either before or after this event she married the Danish earl Ulf, who spent some time with Canute in England. He returned to Denmark in the early 1020s, probably as protector of Canute's young son, Harthacnut and ruler on behalf of him. Ulf played an important role in Scandinavian politics, plotting with the kings of Norway and Sweden against Canute who had him killed in Roskilde in about 1027.

However, although England was very much at the centre of Danish interest in the year 1000, Scandinavian politics was basic to its interests. Nobody then could have



Fig. 6. Contemporary drawing of king Canute and queen Emma from the New Minister Liber Vitae. The British Library, London

guessed the outcome of the English adventures, which resulted in outright conquest a dozen years later. It was probably not even thought of at the time. England had been raided intermittently since 980 by Viking groups of various origin, led by various chieftains. In 991 the raids gathered momentum. From then on a Viking army seems to have stayed in England, though with different leaders and occasional breaks — as in 1000, when it went to Normandy, and in 1005, when there was a famine in England. Men from all over Scandinavia took part in the raids. In 991 and 994 Sven Forkbeard and Olav Tryggvason (not yet king of Norway) were among the leaders and extracted vast amounts of silver in payment for peace. 10.000 pounds of money (probably in gold and silver) was paid in 991 and 16.000 pounds were paid in 995, money which helped Olav to become king of Norway. Sven also returned to England in 1003.

Payments to the invaders increased greatly. In 1007 a „great fleet”, which had arrived the year before, was bought off with the sum of 36.000 pounds; while 48.000 pounds were paid in 1012 to an „immense raiding army” which had arrived in 1009, led by the Danish chieftain, Thorkell the Tall. The army then „dispersed as widely as it had been collected”. England must have seemed an unending source of wealth and in 1013 the country, which under its king, Æthelred, faced enormous internal problems, was ripe for conquest. In the summer of that year Sven again set out from Denmark. By the autumn he was acknowledged as king of England and died there in February 1014. The English dynasty resumed the throne, but Canute regained power in 1016 and reigned as King of England until his death in 1035. The exploitation and conquest of England around the year 1000 has since been celebrated as Denmark’s greatest military and political achievement. It was also a crucial motor for fast innovation and cultural change in Denmark at the time — English silver provided enormous wealth and the many cultural, political and religious influences from England ultimately caused Denmark to become a major player in the life of Christian Europe.

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A.D. 1000 — THE POINT OF NO RETURN FOR THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN

Władysław Duczko*

There are times in history when societies which had been living for hundred of years according to the ancient patterns start to change at a rapid pace. The tenth century A.D. in Europe was such a time. New kingdoms were created one after another, their rulers converted to Christianity and in such a manner the model of western civilisation spread across the continent. In that century, this trend of changes also reached the Scandinavian North and the kingdom of the Swedes — the Svear. Due to a severe lack of contemporary written sources, little is known about this important period of Swedish history. Almost all that is of value for the historian is to be found in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesie pontificum* by Adam of Bremen from the 1070s¹. Very few events are however mentioned here, it is not always easy to distinguish what is real and what invented, the names of kings are reported but there is little about their deeds and not enough about the chronology of their reigns. The chronology of events in Sweden up to the year 1000, and even long after, is mostly of an elusive nature. This is an unfortunate situation and one can understand why the younger generation of Swedish historians refuses to take an interest in this period, leaving virtually all the research to the archaeologists. This is a heavy responsibility, but not impossible to exercise, as the results of investigations from the last decade have been demonstrating. This appears especially clearly in the study of the political history of the tenth and eleventh century, the subject we are going to deal with in this chapter.

In Nordic historiography the year 1000 has always been seen as a symbolic turning point in the developments of Scandinavian kingdoms. It was because of one event, a naval battle known in the sagas as the battle of Svold, a violent clash between the Danish King Sven Forkbeard, and Olav Tryggvason, the great Norwegian Viking who had ended the traditional Danish overlordship by making himself the independent ruler of Norway. The conflict of interest was solved on the waters of Öresund where King Olav lost his life and King Sven regained a hegemonic status for the Danes. In this

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¹ Adam of Bremen 1917.

famous battle there was one more royal participant. The Swedish king Olof Skötkonung was fighting on the side of Sven Forkbeard. His participation was not however voluntary. Olof was a stepson of King Sven, and in a subordinate position: when Sven needed his military support, Olof could not deny it to him. How was it possible for such a somewhat dishonourable situation for the Swedish kingdom to happen? Before the strange story behind this situation can be told, we have to make acquaintance with the land of Svear.

Until the mid-tenth century A.D., Sweden was a kingdom of a type which rapidly became anachronistic in the North: decentralized, with weak royal power controlled by the *ting* and chieftains, and of course still pagan. The kingdom was a kind of federation of more or less independent provinces creating the *sveavälde* — the hegemony of Svear. The core of this federation, called Svetjud, (hence the Latin name Suecia), consisted of three main territories north of the Mälars Lake, later known as Uppland. All those lands had numerical names: *Tiundaland*, *Attundaland* and *Fjädrundaland*, each created of a number of *hund* — ten, eight, and four — entities put together for the sake of common military organization². *Tiundaland* was the most important part, due to the great density of population, and because here was situated the politico-cultic center of Svear — Gamla (Old) Uppsala. Under the authority of the kings of Svear were also other lands around the Mälars Lake, *Västmanland* in the West, and *Södermanland* in the south³. To the *sveavälde* were also attached two southern provinces of the Goths, West Goths — *Västergötland*, and the East Goths — *Östergötland*. For a long time, to the end of the Medieval Period, the Goth provinces had their own laws, systems of measurement and weight, administrative divisions and royal taxation⁴. Both these lands came quite early on under strong Danish influence, which could be seen (among many other things), in the fact that the entities in the system of district division were not *hund*, as was the case in Svealand, but *härad*, as in Denmark. Many more people acknowledged the power of the Svear. The island in the middle of the Baltic Sea, Gotland, renowned for its special variant of Norse culture, its own political structure (without kingship) and its strength and great volume of mercantile activities, paid tribute to the Svear⁵. The other Baltic island, Öland, also with its own original traditions, was also (if temporarily) under the authority of Svealand. The territories in the north, the provinces of Hälsingland, Ångermanland and Jämtland, were kept under the control of the Svear, though culturally and economically they were much closer to Norway. The population of these provinces consisted of sedentary agriculturists (Germanic) Norse people and the hunter-gathering Samis, the Lapps⁶.

Sweden proper had very favourable geographical conditions, which promoted unity of the people: the long coast, the centrally placed Mälars Lake with plenty of waterways

² T. Anderson 1982: 52–66.

³ E. Hjärke 1953: 91–183.

⁴ T. Lindkvist 1991: 137–145.

⁵ I. Jansson (ed.) 1983.

⁶ I. Zachrisson 1994: 173–179.



Southern Scandinavia at the turn of the first millennium

leading to the interior, the eskers (protruding elongated post-glacial formations suitable for settlement and excellent as roads). To this natural factor should be added another one which acted as a powerful tool of preservation of traditional society — the centre in Old Uppsala. This place reached its high status in the sixth century A.D. when a much older centre was taken over by new rulers. The establishing of this centre was a result of the strategy of competing local elites seeking a common place that could focus functions of social institutions, a point where responsibility for preserving internal tranquillity could be shared together. To respond to the new requirements the centre was rebuilt in grand style. It became a monumental complex consisting of several long houses, some of them ceremonial halls on artificial terraces, a wooden wall on a stone foundation screening it from the north and three huge mounds raised on the top of a protruding esker⁷. This centre became the focal point for the whole region and after a while acquired a great fame, not only as a place of worship of fertility deities but also as a residence of the kings of Uppsala, the Skilfings, later known as Ynglings. The Viking-age kings, since the late eighth century were only indirectly connected with this most famous dynasty but they managed, however, to inherit the prestige of the heroic kings of the past, and were ruling as venerated *konunger*, taking part in the cultic ceremonies as religious leaders. Uppsala had enormous prestige and its significance for the identity of the Svear was such that the kingdom itself was called *upsalariki*, the kingdom of Uppsala⁸. The kings of Svear had access to the several estates known as *upsala öd*, the riches of Uppsala, which together with the considerable income from the judicial functions, and not to mention profits from the regular plundering expeditions, secured them a special position in society. Despite this exclusive position, Swedish kingship was weak, and the king was not a personification of superior authority. As Adam of Bremen (*Gesta...* 4: 24) put it: „They (Svear) have kings of ancient family. Their power, however, is dependent on the will of the people — what everyone has approved by common agreement the king must confirm...”⁹. The assembly, the *ting*, was an arena where the power of the big men, the chieftains, was exercised, manipulating other participants (the farmers) by threats and gifts. The king was playing the same kind of power game with the help of dependent people, but the sum of influences of the many chieftains was usually too large for him to overcome. The kingship in Sweden was not hereditary and each new king had to be elected at the common *ting*. Traditionally (as was general in all Germanic societies), the possible candidates were collected from one royal family. The members of this family were elected if they accepted the rules; if they broke them, the *ting* could feel free to throw such an unreliable king out. We know that this happened several times.

The characteristic feature of the Swedish kingship during the Viking Age was the rule of two kings, one in Uppsala, and one in Birka. The latter was the main port of the

⁷ W. Duczko 1998: 12–23.

⁸ W. Duczko 1997a: 409–418.

⁹ R.I. Page 1995: 43.

kingdom of Svear, founded in the late eighth century A.D. on the little island, Björkö, on the Mälars Lake¹⁰. For more than two hundred years this place had focussed eastern and western trade. At the same time it was an important centre of handicrafts: combs, beads, and most of all metal jewellery were produced here and distributed throughout the region. Being an interregional town, it attracted a German mission, which established here a church with services for local and foreign Christians. Behind the foundation of Birka was the royal family and some chieftains. On the neighbouring island of Adelsö the royal estate at Hovgården was turned into the residence of the king, which was watching the town on the Björkö across the waters of the lake. The king had on the spot a personal agent, the *praefectus regni*, who guarded the life and property of foreign merchants, collecting taxes and tolls, making use of the right of preemption, and representing the king on the *ting*. The kings were protectors of the town, and by giving guaranties of security to the foreign traders made it possible for it to function. The involvement in Birka made those kings economically strong and much more influential than their more prestigious brothers, the kings of Uppsala. Because of Birka's interregional significance, the Adelsö kings were contacted by foreign potentates and this meant that western writers could record their names. This does not mean that Uppsala was abandoned. It continued to be the political and cultic centre of Svear but failed to attract the attention of foreigners and until the eleventh century its existence was not recorded in the written sources. But the kings were still there, acting as the main rulers of the Svear. In the late tenth century it was one of them who took over Birka and actively helped to end its existence.

Swedish society, as all other Norse societies of the Viking Age, was an unequal society with a hierarchic structure characterised by the presence of groups with different status. At the top were chieftains and the royal family, then farmers and at the bottom slaves, the thralls. In such societies the rights of the members were determined by belonging to a family and of the position occupied in it. The inheritance of kinship went through the male and female lines. The bilaterality of this system means that the thesis which was once accepted that Germanic societies were to an extreme degree kin-based was wrong¹¹. The kin played an important role by protecting — economically and legally — its members; by combining families it took care of resources. It was not, however, the bonds of a kin, which were the strongest glue of society. The bonds between people were founded on fidelity and submission, the relations were always those of superior and subordinate, like between patron and client.

The most characteristic trait in society of Svear was the lack of radical changes in the composition of the population and generally in the structure of social organisation. Although their society was not stagnant, it was not developing as rapidly as was the case with Denmark. Being close to the continent and the British Isles, the Danes became deeply involved in a variety of contacts with the post-Roman, town-based western

¹⁰ L. Holmquist Olausson 1992.

¹¹ K. Helle 1998: 254f.

centres of power and culture, and thanks to this could evolve much vigorously than the rest of the North.

The fact that Sweden proper, the Mälars Lake valley, was far from the civilization of western Europe was one of those determinants which affected the circumstances of the particular development of the Svear. Due to their geographical position, even their external dynamism was channelled in a different direction, to the east. Numerous peoples — Balts, Finno-Ugrians, Slavs and Turks populated this part of the continent, all divided into small tribal entities. The only exception was the distant Empire of the Khazars north of the Caucasus. Contacts with this eastern world of forests and steppes was of great importance for the Svear, but its impact on their internal developments was, as far as we can see, of a restricted nature, not at all comparable with the impact of the West on the Danes. This different orientation, close interaction with more archaic societies was responsible for the relative retardation of Sweden.

The developments in other parts of Scandinavia towards a new kind of society, the Christian *regnum* of continental type, went faster and further. First at the end of the tenth century Swedish kings reached the stage at which they were able to introduce new elements and turn them to a solid base of power. The actual structure was sound and strong enough to remain inviolate. The efforts of the first Christian Swedish kings were met with suspicion and their actions were closely watched. But sometimes the circumstances were more favourable for the kings, which gave them more space for conducting transformations according to their wishes. It seems that such situation occurred in Sweden in the second part of the tenth century.

It was at this time, close to A.D. 1000, that the most visible changes make their appearance. One of them was abandonment of the traditional set of female ornaments: pairs of oval brooches, equal-arm and three-arm brooches, and even some parts of the dress. This change was significant. Ornaments represented an ideological unit, and their disappearance must then be related to ideological changes, such as the reaction to the increasing impact of Christianity. The relative suddenness of this disappearance should be connected with the transformations occurring in the innovative centres in Denmark. The Danish jewellery-makers had a leading role to play among Norse craftsmen, and were responsible for disseminating new designs in the whole of Viking-age Scandinavia. It was in Denmark during the reign of King Sven Forkbeard (987–1014 A.D.) that new types of ornaments were introduced thus starting new trends in the Swedish workshops. Another factor, which influenced the direction of the changes, was the collapse of the trading and crafts centre in Birka. The output of its workshops, which had been usually either distributed throughout Svealand or copied by local metal workers, made this part of the material culture of Svear very homogenous. When those central workshops were gone, it took very short time for the traditional ornaments to vanish.

The impact of Christianity strongly influenced the burial customs. Inhumation, which for hundreds of years had been practised by some groups of aristocracy now begins to appear alongside the dominating cremation. The cemeteries in Svealand show that the two ways of treating the dead were employed in the same place until the

mid-twelfth century. The changes in spatial organization of settlements which were introduced at about the same time reflect the ongoing recasting in the structure of family and organisation of labour; this is manifested in the tendency to replace the core of long houses with a number of small houses built in various techniques¹².

During the late tenth century the nature of the long engagement of the Svear in Russia also undergoes change. Since the middle of the eighth-century A.D. the Svear had been establishing various activities in the eastern part of the continent. They were moving among predominantly Finno-Ugrian people and it was from them that they got a new name — Rus'. Close to the Gulf of Finland they founded a trade and handicraft town Staraia Ladoga, and slowly begun to expand, settling the strategic areas leading towards the lower Volga and Don. Here, on the great markets of the Bulgars and Khazars they could sell their merchandise: furs, swords, wax and, most of all, slaves. The profits were huge indeed, it was certainly worthwhile forcing various people in the forest zone of the North to pay the Rus' tributes in goods attractive for eastern customers in the Baghdad caliphate. Already in the early ninth century, some of the groups of the Svear-Rus' created an organisation, the kaganate of Rus'. Its head had a title well known in the steppes, a *kagan*, taken from the ruler of the prime power of the region, that is the Empire of Khazars. The residence of the *kagan* of Rus' was in the north, close to the Ilmen Lake, near the future Novgorod¹³. It was from here that the Rus' started to expand to the south along Dnieper River, reached Kiev and turned it to their main town. During the tenth century they consolidated their rule competing with the Khazars, from which they took over the tributes paid by the Slavonic tribes, and eventually created the principality of Kiev, the first state of the East Slavs.

The main prize of the Svear during the first two hundred years of the Viking Age in Russia was the millions of silver coins (dirhams) produced in the eastern Islamic Caliphate and, later, in the Samanid Central Asia¹⁴. After that the eastern trade reached its zenith in the mid-tenth century, there was sharp decline of the transfer of the coins to the Baltic. It did not mean that the trade activities of Swedes in Russia ceased altogether, in some way they continued, but at the same time the affinities of the ruling Rus' with Scandinavia became weaker as the members of the dynasty became slavized. Although the prince of Kiev Vladimir the Great was still employing Scandinavian mercenaries, but he was no longer interested in maintaining contacts with the Svear: no special privileges in trade, no sentiments because of the dynasty's Norse background.

Now, it is time that we return to King Olof Skötkonung and his unfortunate state of dependency with regard the Danes. This was not a new situation for the Swedish kings. The first one who got into trouble was the grandfather of Olof, King Emund, who according to Adam of Bremen was bound with the Danish king Harald Gormssen Bluetooth by an alliance. Most probably it was during this time that Harald established

¹² G. Andersson 1998: 361, 363.

¹³ S. Franklin, J. Shepard 1996: 38f.

¹⁴ T. Noonan 1994: 215–236.

on the Scandinavian west coast, at Skagerrak, in Östergötland and in Svealand, a system of estates called *Tegneby*, the residences of the thegns, agents personally dependant on him¹⁵. The challenge to this overlordship came from King Olof's father, Erik. In the late 970s he and his brother Olof were joint rulers of the Svear, Erik as a king of Uppsala, Olof of Birka. When Olof died, Erik refused his son Björn access to his father's share of the kingdom. Instead he gave him some war-ships and sent him abroad. This was the first step in Erik's plan to get more power by introducing changes, which could increase his authority, and last but not least help him to get rid of the Danish influences. It seems that he knew how to do this. He attempted to tie the local chieftains to his person by offering them higher status, he built a new centre of power, and tried to unify people around it. Strangely enough, he succeeded with most of this. The circumstances were favourable to him and more than any king before he could operate relatively freely.

When his brother's son Björn was out of the way Erik, now sole ruler, did two things in rapid succession: by withdrawing royal protection he caused the fall of the town of Birka, and soon afterwards he has founded his own town, Sigtuna. Birka was already much impaired because of the crisis in the eastern trade and the general collapse of the old system of ports of trade in the Baltic region, but Erik's decision was certainly decisive for the town's disappearance. His own town, Sigtuna was a stable creation, which survived until our days. It became a new residence of the first Christian kings, an important centre of trade and crafts, the site of the first mint in Swedish history and during the second part of the eleventh century also a bishopric.

In 983 King Harald became even more powerful when he re-conquered Schleswig from the Germans. This event alarmed King Erik in Sigtuna. He started to search for allies and found one: Mieszko I of the Piast dynasty, the founder of the Christian state of Poland. Mieszko was a feared ruler, accepted as a partner by German Empire and in close cooperation with it fighting against the rebellious Polabians, who were the allies of King Harald. What kind of practical solutions Mieszko and Erik were planning we will never know, but the seriousness of their intentions was demonstrated by establishing of dynastic bonds: Mieszko's daughter, Sventoslava (Świętosława), was given to King Erik. She came to the newly erected town of Sigtuna, where in 984 she gave birth to a boy, the future King Olof¹⁶. This was the beginning of a very peculiar story that influenced developments in Sweden, Denmark and England.

Sventoslava was a royal woman. Her father was one of the most successful politicians of Slavic Europe, her mother was a daughter of the Czech king Boleslav I of the Přemyslid dynasty, a warrior, ruthless politician and the murderer of his brother Vaclav (later made a saint). With such a background it is difficult to imagine that her life would be dull and uneventful. It was not. Although she left very few traces in written sources — we cannot even be sure if Sventoslava was her real name — it is possible to reconstruct her life to some extent. Her significance was never acknowledged by the

¹⁵ C. Löfving 1991: 147–156; W. Duczko 1995: 625–662.

¹⁶ W. Duczko 1997b: 129–135.

Norse historiography. Instead we find her alter ego, one Sigrid Storråda, an invention of the Icelandic medieval writers which obscured the real Sventoslava. The Sigrid of the sagas was a powerful woman, proud and of independent stature, violent too. These features could have been Sventoslava's own.

In 985, when Sventoslava's son was about one year old, King Harald decided to punish Erik for his anti-Danish activities. As a tool of revenge he used Björn, the Swedish ruler's expelled nephew. Harald provided him with the army of warriors and sent him against Svealand. Near Uppsala, on the *Fyrisvallir*, after a violent battle Björn lost most of his men and eventually his life. King Erik was triumphant and acquired an appropriate name, Segersäll (the Victorious). His relations with the Danes became even more complicated after 986, when King Harald died of wounds after a rebellion of Danish aristocracy led by his son Sven. Sven, known as Forkbeard, had a tough time to establish himself as a king. In the early 990s he was at war with Erik Segersäll, but after successfully plundering England, he regained authority in his country and could begin the royal career anew. Erik died c. 995 leaving his kingdom to his only son Olof. Though he was only about eleven, the Svear accepted him as a king. He started at once acting like mature ruler, which indicates the presence of some good advisers. His Polish mother was not among them. After the death of her husband, Sventoslava left Sweden and moved to Denmark where she married King Sven. In the following years she gave birth to four children, among them the future king of England, the creator of the North Sea Empire, Canute the Great¹⁷. What was the reason for Sventoslava marrying this old enemy of the Svear? She was, perhaps, not feeling comfortable in Sweden, possibly because of the problems in her marriage with Erik — note that she had with him only one child — or because of some other disappointments, or only because of her difficult character. Now, as a young widow of royal standing she was facing the usual problem: she could not marry somebody lower than a king. Sven was an apt candidate who was also interested in marrying her. By taking Sventoslava he got a royal bride and at the same time became a stepfather of King Olof of Sweden. All this was the shortest way of putting the young ruler in Sigtuna in a position of dependency. Sven was able to manifest this in different ways. Already from the beginning, he helped Olof to organize the minting of coinage, a special sign of royal authority at this time unknown among Svear. Sven's own English mint-masters were working in Sigtuna where a mint was founded and imitations of Æthelred's pennies were produced¹⁸.

In the year 1000 Olof Skötkonung was mature, about sixteen, and ready for doing his duty as a warrior. In this capacity he was invited by his stepfather to take part in the war against Olav Tryggvason. Olof could not refuse, collected his fleet and went south. Sven won the battle but Olof was not entirely pleased. He knew that by this great victory the Danish king would be even more powerful, which would mean less freedom for the king of Sweden.

¹⁷ K. Jasiński 1992: 94–100.

¹⁸ B. Malmer 1995: 9–26.

He was right. Now when Olof was mature it was time to find him a wife. Olof had already proved his sexual maturity by having a concubine, an Edla, a captive daughter of a Slav chieftain. With her Olof had a son Emund, future king of the Svear. King Sven's matchmaking was a sophisticated piece of diplomacy of power. He decided that new queen of Sweden would be Estrid, daughter of a prince of Abodrites, a West Slav people having a strong tribal federation near the Danes, with whom they were allies. Their co-operation had for quite a long time been intimate. King Sven himself was of Abodrite blood, after his mother Tove, a daughter of prince Mstivoj. Sven arranged everything as it suited him, Estrid was wed to Olof and had with him a son Jacob Anund, which became a king after his father.

According to Adam of Bremen, Estrid was a good Christian, which was of significance for Olof. Eight years after the battle of Svold, 1008, he took the opportunity to make decisions he was hitherto reluctant to take. He knew that it was time that he should promote more extensive Christianization of the Svear, and, most of all, it was time to present himself as a real Christian. In his early youth to be manifestly Christian was still not entirely correct for a king of the Svear, but now it seems the situation was different. He was waiting for an opportunity and in the meantime asked his uncle, Duke Bolesław the Brave of Poland, if he could do something for him. This possibility arose when a German bishop and future saint Bruno of Querfurt came to Poland to stay with him. Bruno was heir of a Saxon aristocratic family, a monk and a very active missionary bishop operating among the most fearful nomadic people. He visited his close friend Bolesław for a rest and planning new missions. His royal host had some ideas concerning the latter but at the moment he had to wait. Bruno had just finished five months of successful, though full of horror, encounters with nomadic Pechenegs on the Ukrainian steppes and was definitely not ready for a fresh expedition. But he could send others in his name. Bolesław mentioned his nephew Olof of Sweden, which Bruno found interesting. The mission led by two Germans, a bishop and a monk was sent over the Baltic Sea. We can read about what happened subsequently in a letter Bruno wrote to the German king Henry¹⁹. Bruno stated that the king of Svear was baptised, his children too and even „one thousand” people from seven districts. It was a great success and nothing could stop Olof from proceeding much further: he wanted to establish a bishopric in Uppsala. This was a very drastic step but a necessary one because when Uppsala became Christian there would be no obstacle for the conversion of Svealand. But first, according to the rules, Olof had to obtain acceptance from the *ting*. And here the problems began. The chieftains and the people were definitely hostile, an anti-Christian rising was soon provoked and Bruno's mission was terminated. Olof's attempt has failed, it was apparent that Svealand was not ready for the drastic changes initiated by their king. The failure made overt royal striving for the conversion of the Svear impossible for many decades.

¹⁹ J. Karwasińska (ed.) 1973: 97–106.

Yet, the catastrophe was not total. There was in fact a point, which helped Olof out. The *ting* at Uppsala forbade him to continue his Christianization action in Svealand, but at the same time allowed him to do it in another province, in Västergötland. It was, as they thought, a smart solution. How could they know that by this decision they started a very peculiar development, which in the long run made it possible to transform *Svetjud* to something they so much dreaded. By letting King Olof build a church structure far from Svealand, they gave him the opportunity for creating a foundation for the Christian kingship in the southern provinces. At the end of the eleventh century, first Västergötland, then Östergötland became areas of activity for the kings busy building their Christian *regnum*. The Svear were consequently conducting their traditional policy: they elected the kings under the condition that they would stay away from Svealand. Only in the thirteenth century did the kings and the kingship return to Svear, with sword in hand. Many of the old local aristocracy were killed and after this there was no any longer any hindrance for the medieval kingdom of Sweden to develop in its core lands.

King Olof Skötkonung's fight at the side of King Sven in A.D. 1000 was his last fight for Danes. It mobilised him for taking bold and far reaching decisions, which directed his kingdom on a road which the chiefs and people of Svealand tried to avoid. But it was not possible to hinder this change. The kingdom had already passed the point of no return and was moving, though not smoothly, not along a straight line but with irregular jumps, towards its new fate.

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THE POLABIAN ALTERNATIVE: PAGANISM BETWEEN CHRISTIAN KINGDOMS

Christian Lübke*

When in spring of the year 1000 the Roman emperor and German king Otto III making a pilgrimage to the tomb of the holy martyr Adalbert¹, the bishop of Prague, who had died three years before, visited the Polish ruler Bolesław the Brave in his capital Gniezno, this seemed to be a symbol for the completion of Christianization of the whole European continent. Since not only did Otto raise Bolesław to become his close *cooperator imperii* but also sanctioned the formation of the Polish church headed by an archbishopric in Gniezno, and moreover coincidentally in Hungary an archbishopric was founded in Gran/Esztergom and prince Stephen was crowned to be a Christian king. But within three years after this, the image of a unified Christian Europe under the leadership of the Roman emperor was destroyed, when Otto died and his successor Henry II followed quite different guidelines in his politics. The most radical step in fulfilling this change came at Easter 1003. Then king Henry in Quedlinburg welcomed some legates of the pagan Polabian Luticians, who had been common archenemies of both before: of the Roman Empire with its German, mainly Saxon provinces west of Polabia and of Poland in the East. The Luticians in 1003 became allies of Henry, the highest secular representative of Christian world, who now waged war against Bolesław of Poland for altogether more than 15 years.

It was some years later (in 1005), when our witness of these times, the well-informed bishop and chronicler Thietmar of Merseburg, mentioning the Luticians as allies of the king in a campaign, felt himself obliged to give his readers some information *qui sint vel unde huc venerint*². Thietmar started to answer this question by mentioning their centre located in the lands of one of the Slav tribes of Polabia: *Est urbs quaedam in pago Riedirierun Riedegost nomine*. There, i.e. in the region of the Redarians in the eastern parts of present-day Mecklenburg, a wooden sacred shrine (*fanum de ligno*)

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¹ Adalbert, whose original Slav name was Vojtěch (in Polish: Wojciech), had been killed April 23^d 997 by pagan Prussians. There have been a lot of publications on the occasion of the millennium of his martyrdom, e.g. Adalbert von Prag 1997 and D. Treštík, J. Žemlička (eds) 1998.

² *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, V, cap. 31; C. Lübke, Regesten III: no. 366.

served by special priests (*ministri*) had its place in the stronghold Riedegost, which is better known under its disfigured name Rethra³. Thietmar, having described exactly the constructive elements of the temple, the statues of the gods and the details of the cult-actions (adoration of a sacred horse, performance of oracles by throwing lots), furthermore knew, that each part of the Lutician lands had such a shrine. But Riedegost had precedence over all the rest of them, because this was the place where the Luticians made their farewells and welcomes to the warriors and where the priests made their obligatory oracles and sacrifices. Ties bound to this special fortress formed solidarity amongst all *qui communiter Liutici vocantur*, who did not tolerate a secular ruler over their community (*Hiis autem omnibus ... dominus specialiter non presidet ullus*). Consequently we never learn the name of any leader of the Luticians, nor even the name of any Lutician individual at all. At the end of his chapter dealing with the Luticians, Thietmar mentioned, that they were warriors (*milites*) who had been servants of the emperor in distant times but now were free people (*quondam servi nostrisque iniquitatibus tunc liberi...*).

Thietmar's knowledge about the former servitude of the Luticians refers to a time not so far away, when the name of this people was not yet in use. Because, it is only a notice in the annals of Hildesheim referring to the year 991, where this ethnonym is first testified. We only have two clues to reconstruct the earlier condition of those societies, who later formed the Luticians. The first one is the name of the Redarians, which was mentioned several times in tenth century since 929; the second one is the knowledge of later chroniclers that there was another name of the Luticians, i.e. Weletians (*Wilzi*)⁴, and that four tribes on this site and on the other side of the river Peene (in the perspective of Adam of Bremen) formed the community: *Chizzini et Circipani and Tholosantes et Retheri*⁵.

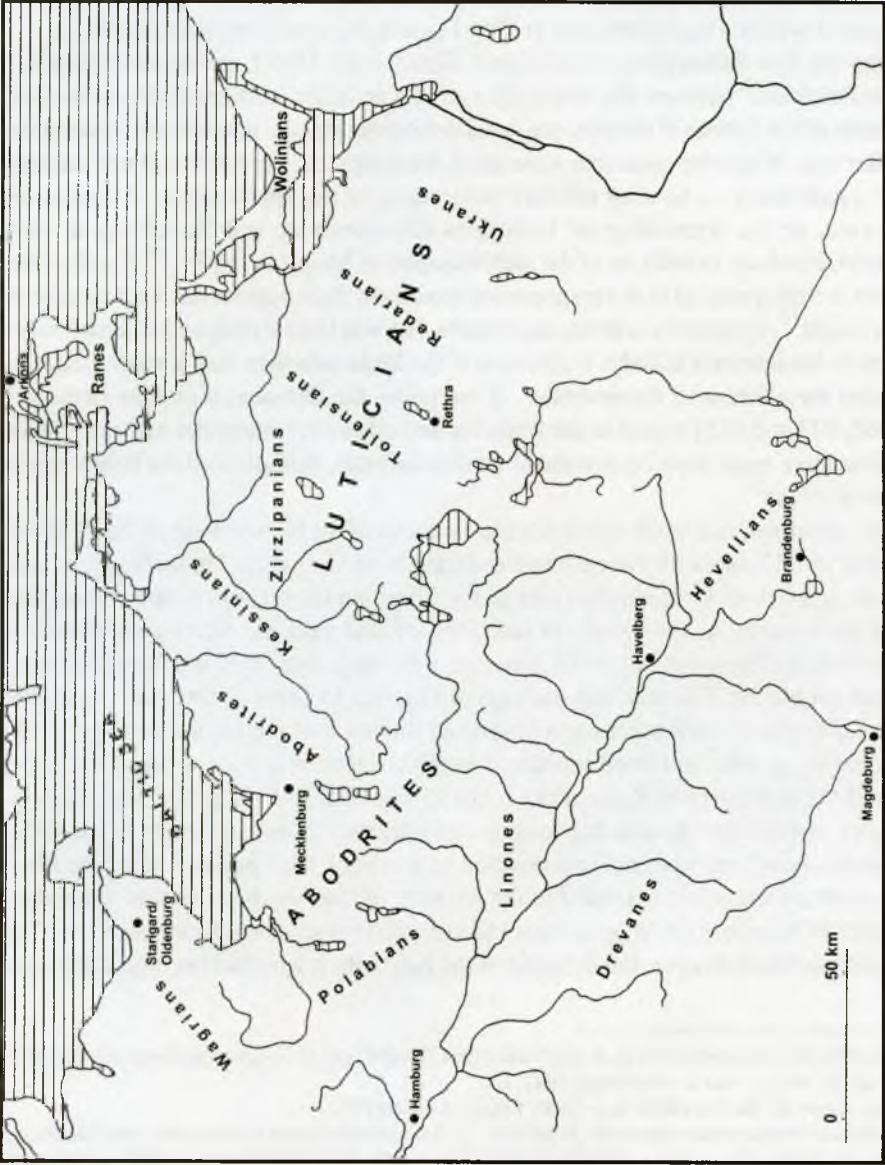
If we start with the Weletians, we can recognise an alliance of four Slav tribes (*Vuilci, in qua ... regiones IIII*), too⁶, which had been defeated already by Charlemagne, who however, made no efforts to baptize these pagan Slav societies. The Weletians, which were in neighbourhood and rivalry with the Abodrites, were then under the authority of the Carolingians, which decided about their highest political representatives who, however, were assigned by an assembly (*populus*) of the community itself. Later the Weletians slipped away from the supremacy of the empire, but in tenth century they were not acting as a political unit any more. Apparently the alliance broke up and the individuals living at the former Weletian territories showed more affinity to their separate tribes, the most powerful of which between the Elbe and Odra dominated the region of the river Havel at the beginning of the tenth century. It was the Hevellians

³ *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, VI, cap. 23.

⁴ *Magistri Adam Bremensis...*, II, cap. 21.

⁵ *Magistri Adam Bremensis...*, II, cap. 22: *Ultra Leuticios, qui alio nomine Wilzi dicuntur*. This is why scholars partly think of a strict continuity of the Wilzi-Luticians — see e.g. G. Labuda 1977: 430–436; in a different way: W. H. Fritze 1993: 23–25.

⁶ *Magistri Adam Bremensis...*, III, cap. 22.



Polabia at the turn of the first millennium

ruled by a famous and obviously already Christian dynasty, who had their seat in Brandenburg (on the river Havel) and had marital connections with the Czech Přemyslids in Prague and, some decades later, with the family of Dietrich (of Haldensleben), markgrave of the (Saxon) northern mark; moreover the later archbishop Wilhelm of Moguntia was an illegitimate son of Otto I. and a princess from Brandenburg⁷.

When the first Saxon kings in Germany, Henry I and Otto I, extended their power over the Polabians⁸ between the rivers Elbe and Saale in the west and Odra in the east, in the lands of the former Weletians one special tribe stood at the head of their resistance: the Redarians. Whatever measures were used, the kings and emperors did not succeed in their pacification — be it by military campaigns, or the appointment of legates, or markgraves, or the foundation of bishoprics (Brandenburg and Havelberg in 948, Starigard/Oldenburg in 968), or of the archbishopric of Magdeburg (968)⁹. Finally Otto the Great in 968 appealed to the magnates of Saxony to fight against the Redarians with all their might¹⁰, apparently without any results. His son Otto II resigned and paid more attention to his interests in Italy; it seems as if the Redarians then had a good chance to reorganise their forces in the seventies. If we go by the Ottonian diplomas (from the years 965, 973 and 975) related to the Redarian and other Slav provinces in the northeast of Polabia there must have been a stable economic basis, that allowed the tribes to pay a tribute in silver¹¹.

So it is obvious, that the Redarians were the focus of the big uprising of the Polabian Slavs that in 983 shocked the eastern borderlands of Germany. Undoubtedly it was paganism and hatred for the authorities of the Christian church and of the empire that formed the motives of the revolt. In late June of that year the Slavs conquered the stronghold Havelberg and killed the garrison; three days later they attacked Brandenburg and put bishop Folkmar and markgrave Dietrich to flight. Then they plundered the episcopal sees in both places and ransacked the tomb of the former bishop Dodilo of Brandenburg, who had been murdered in 980. The rebels even crossed the Elbe, destroyed the monastery of Kalbe and a lot of strongholds and villages in East Saxony, but finally lost a battle against the Saxons and retreated to the other side of the Elbe. The Saxons, however, were not in a position to win back their power east of the Elbe. On the contrary the revolt extended to the territory of the Abodrites so that the bishop of Starigard/Oldenburg (in Wagria, East Holsatia) left his see some years later, too. The princes of the Abodrites (*i.e.* the dynastie of the Nakonids), who had become Christians

⁷ The list of tribes and peoples living „to the North of the Danube” called *Geographus Bavarus* states four *regiones* of the Wilzi — see A. Nazarenko 1993: 13.

⁸ The best survey on the Hevellians is given by Ludat: H. Ludat 1971.

⁹ The historical contemporary ethnonym „Polabians” (*Polabingi*) only meant a Slavic tribe near Ratzeburg. In an extended sense, *i.e.* as a name of all Slavic tribes between the rivers Elbe/Saale and Oder and between the Baltic Sea and the ridge of the highlands, it only appeared in 19th century and is used in Polish and Czech languages today; cf. C. Lübke 1993: 17–43.

¹⁰ For further information see C. Lübke, *Regesten*, II, cf. Tome V (Index).

¹¹ *Diplomata Ottonis I...*, no. 355; C. Lübke, *Regesten*, II, no. 146.

in the seventies at the latest, had to deal with a strong influence of paganism on their society and joined the uprising at times. Hamburg was destroyed by prince Mstivoj at this time¹². It was only the southern Polabian lands east of the Saale (*i.e.* of the Sorbs and Lusatians) which remained under the rule of the Saxons. Only more than 150 years later would Christian bishops come back to Brandenburg, Havelberg and Oldenburg.

We do not have any concrete information about what was going on after 983 in the lands where the revolt was successful, but it seems to be very clear that within the next years — in the eyes of their Saxon neighbours — the Polabians in the North turned from a bundle of tribes to a strong and well-organised federation, whose members were called (and in all probabilities called themselves) by a new name: Luticians¹³. It is possible, that with regard to this Slavonic name, the Luticians, in a sense, went back to the older name of the Weletians. This suggestion is strengthened by a phrase in the chronic of Adam of Bremen, who noticed, that the four tribes mentioned earlier were called *Wilzos ... sive Leuticios* because of their bravery (*a fortitudine*)¹⁴. The etymology of both names is not totally clear, but there seems to be a certain parallelism: *Wilzi* may be traced back to the Slavonic word *vľci* „wolves”, whereas *Leutici* is linked with Slavonic *ľjut-* „ferocious”. If we take into consideration the immense importance which ethnic communities attach to their name and to the myth of their origin, this changing of the name must be interpreted as a demonstration of something new.

So, just as the name signals a new start of the community, the cultic rites described by Thietmar of Merseburg indicate a totally new quality of Slav paganism, whose external symptom was the architectural forming of cult places instead of traditional worship of natural and domestic deities. The beginnings of this cult can be dated to early Slav times, but it displayed its complete potency only in the late tenth century. This phenomenon left its traces in written sources and in the archaeological evidence to a degree that cannot be paralleled in the entire area of Slavdom. This includes the remains of some twenty temple-like constructions, the most famous of which was Riedegost–Rethra¹⁵ and later on Arkona on the isle of Rügen. If we examine the structures of religion, in general this indicates a period of transition from local natural deities to powerful gods called by personal names, a phenomenon that is — if we consider the opinions of scholars of religion — characteristic for a new perception of the conditions of sphere and appearance. Religion then regulates the relations to the transcendents and helps to stabilize the world around and to legitimize institutions as elements of stability. The differentiation of gods in such cases depends on the ability of individuals to arrange themselves according to their political system, cult, legal norms and economic order¹⁶.

¹² *Diplomata Ottonis I...*, no. 295; *Diplomata Ottonis II...*, nos. 31, 118; C. Lübke, *Regesten*, II, nos. 131, 167, 184; compared to this tribute the tribes in the South of Polabia paid their tributes in kind.

¹³ C. Lübke, *Regesten*, II, nos. 220–24.

¹⁴ *Magistri Adam Bremensis...*, III, cap. 22: *...qui ab illis (i.e. populi Winulorum) Wilzi, a nobis dicuntur Leutici*.

¹⁵ *Magistri Adam Bremensis...*, III, cap. 21, schol. 16.

¹⁶ It is not certain where Riedegost was located, but there is some archaeological evidence, that the centre of the Redarians was situated at the southern part of lake Tollense in Mecklenburg cf. V. Schmidt 1992. As a survey: M. Müller-Wille 1989, Heft 3.

In Eastern Europe — in Moravia, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary and in Kievan Rus' — such a system with new institutions developed in the ninth–tenth century: new communities and states ruled by Christian princes and their dynasties. Looking at these societies it seems as if there were quite similar attempts in Polabia, something like a Polabian alternative with pagan characteristics. Such attempts could have been based not on undisputed monarchic power in a certain *regnum*, as we can observe in the new states, but on the formation of a common — ethnic, if not national — identity in a socially more extended sense.

Some years ago Anthony Smith in a large-scale comparative study on the formation of ethnies located the kernel of *ethnicity* in a foursome of myths, memories, values and symbols being reflected in characteristic forms, styles and genres expressing a certain historical configuration of the population¹⁷. As he found out, there is one special kind of ethnie, which are formed by communities with vertical, demotic structures stressing vehemently their ethnic, unifying bonds and setting them apart from the others: foreigners and enemies. Frequently this subtype of ethnie forms tribe-confederations whose clan-chiefs are bound to their retinues and to the warriors in general by great unifying experiences in war and migration. Most decisive for the preservation of the demotic structure of such societies are the existence of a special corps of priests on the one hand and the mass-mobilization of population in case of defence as a standard of warfare on the other hand¹⁸.

Actually we can find signs of such an ethnic identity at the Luticians. Probably the name of the Luticians was connected to traditions of war, if not to their own origins, and undoubtedly, the temple in Riedegost formed an basic element of their ethnicity, too. As related to the sphere of religion it seems as if Luticians more or less consciously imitated Christian symbols and fighting with the help of similar weapons, competed with Christianity. As Christians had episcopal cathedrals and parish churches and monasteries Luticians had an impressing temple in their *metropolis*¹⁹ Riedegost and other shrines for the local worship, in each case serviced by a special priesthood. The adoration of Christian holy patrons finds its parallel in the shaping and personal naming of gods whose protection applied to certain regions; related to this it must be pointed out, that — as Thietmar knew — the names of the gods had been fixed at their statues in Riedegost, which is a very unusual phenomenon for an illiterate society. Moreover Luticians did not only use sacred standards (*vexilla*) in their campaigns but carried with them an idol of a goddess which recalls the cult of virgin Mary²⁰. Finally the destruction of competing Christian symbols by the Luticians corresponds to the practice of Christian missionaries. Even contemporary Christian witnesses like Bruno of Querfurt,

¹⁷ A. Smith 1989.

¹⁸ A. Smith 1989: 13–14.

¹⁹ A. Smith 1989: 87.

²⁰ *Magistri Adam Bremensis...*, III, cap. 51.

Adam of Bremen and Helmold of Bosau were fully aware of the fact that there were astonishing parallels revealed by the competition between Christianity and paganism²¹.

Moreover one important factor of the Lutician's specific identity was the marked hostility (*magna inimicitia*)²² to representatives of Christianity who at the same time were officials of the emperor's power. So if the Luticians sacrificed priests and bishops this meant not only presentation of a gift to their gods but moreover demonstration of their own power. The uniting force of such proofs of power is impressively visible in an episode told by Wipo in the times of Konrad II: when in a duel perceived as sentence of a god, the Lutician *paganus* defeated the Saxon *christianus* the pagans got *in elationem et audaciam*²³.

Thietmar of Merseburg assigned to the Luticians a special way of life that he called *libertas more Liuticio*²⁴. One decisive element of their *libertas* is related to the political organisation: The Luticians, who did not tolerate monarchic power, came together to general meetings (*ad placitum... omnes concordant*) to discuss problems of the community and to make decisions. In this point we meet again with older constitutional structures, which had been valid at the Weletians (as well as at the Abodrites and Sorbs) at the beginning of ninth century. Then it was the *populus* that appeared as the highest political body of the Slav tribes, that not only elected, but also controlled the princes²⁵. There is a lot of evidence that in the *populus* there were represented first of all the *primores* and other free people. The leading group of the *primores* (or *meliores*, *praestantiores*, *seniores*, i.e. „elders”, in Slavonic *starejšiny*) probably represented the settlement communities, which we find in the 95 *civitates* that formed the Weletian *regio* in the terminology of the Bavarian Geographer (mid ninth century)²⁶. The *civitates* should be considered as units of settlement, to which belonged a stronghold as major topographical and strategic element²⁷. The „elders” were the masters of the strongholds and the chiefs of the clans (Slavonic *rody*), which can be concluded from the relations in other territories inhabited by Slavs. Kij, the legendary founder of Kiev, described in the Kievan *Povest' vremennykh let* for example maybe regarded as their prototype²⁸, and the description of the prologue to the *Povest'* — „Each one lived in his clan at its places, and each one ruled his clan all by himself” — can be referred to the Polabian Slavs in general and to the Luticians in tenth century, too. There is, even if the special title of an „elder” is not transmitted by it, a valuable document of Otto III dated 993 A.D., which indicates that the whole *paeninsula Poztupimi*, i.e. nowadays Potsdam with the peninsula in the river Havel, formerly belonged to a person named

²¹ Thietmari Merseburgensis..., VI, cap. 22–3, VII, cap. 64.

²² See more at C. Lübke 1995: 83–85.

²³ Wiponis gesta Chuonradi II..., cap. 33; C. Lübke, Regesten IV, no. 614.

²⁴ Thietmari Merseburgensis..., IV, cap. 13.

²⁵ Thietmari Merseburgensis..., VIII, cap. 5.

²⁶ For more details cf. C. Lübke 1997: 115–124.

²⁷ A. Nazarenko 1993: 13.

²⁸ H. Brachmann 1996: 55–73.

Chotemysl. On the basis of the archaeological findings, a stronghold also belonged to the property of Chotemysl. So, we may assume that he was one of the typical representatives of the *primores*²⁹.

If we consider the situation of 983 it was totally unexpected that it was a distinguished Saxon knight (*miles inclitus*) named Kizo, who crossed the lines in the year 983 and became commander of Brandenburg by order of the Luticians³⁰. Kizo thought to have been treated unjustly by markgrave Dietrich which gave him the reason for his action, that shows simultaneously that the border-lines between Christians and pagans were not as sharp as one may judge, if follows from the clerics' descriptions. Already two decades before, in the fifties and sixties of tenth century, a famous Saxon nobleman, Wichmann, had acted as army-commander for the Polabian and Baltic Slavs, fighting against the emperor and the Saxons and against the Polish prince Mieszko, too³¹.

Obviously, the Luticians were not acting on blind rage, but were capable of following realistic guide lines in their politics. In the beginning, after Otto II had died in December 983 in Italy, the rebels profited from the lack of stability in Germany, where duke Henry of Bavaria disputed right of the small Otto III to the throne. But when Otto and his family had stabilised their power and recovery of the Polabian territories was rated very high in his program, Brandenburg stood in the centre of the Luticians' defensive actions against the troops of the empire and its allies for the next years³². At the same time the Luticians succeeded in extending their influence on the Abodrites' land and in the South, came into closer contact with the Czech prince Boleslav II, who in 990 tried to repulse Polish pretensions to Silesia and Cracow. When in the summer of this year Boleslav led his troops to the middle Oder regions, a corps of Luticians gave him military assistance, which, however, did not help him in the eyes of the empire's government acting as an arbitrator in the Czech-Polish conflict. While Boleslav carried on negotiations with a legation of the empire's government the Luticians pleaded for the death of their Saxon enemies, and when the Czech prince dismissed the Saxons in peace a corps of two hundred selected Lutician warriors followed them and they were lucky to escape to Magdeburg. What their fate could have been if they had fallen into the Luticians' hands is shown by another episode from the same period: When Boleslav had conquered a stronghold in Silesia he handed its captive commander over to his pagan allies, who sacrificed him to their gods³³.

The existence of the Luticians had already cleared the front-lines of the main powers in central Europe, since the interests of the empire's government and of the Saxon authorities on the one hand and of the Polish Piast dynasty on the other coincided in Brandenburg. Markgrave Dietrich, who had his seat in this place, had married his daughter Oda to prince Mieszko already in the seventies and another daughter,

²⁹ W.H. Fritze 1960: 182; C. Goehrke 1992: 152.

³⁰ *Diplomata Ottonis III...*, no. 131; C. Lübke, Regesten III, no. 281.

³¹ *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, IV, cap. 22; C. Lübke, Regesten III, no. 226.

³² Cf. C. Lübke, Regesten V (Index: Wichmann der Jüngere).

³³ H. Ludat 1971; C. Lübke, Regesten V (Index: Brandenburg).

Mathilda, to a Slav nobleman called Pribislav who probably was a member of the old Hevellian dynasty of Brandenburg. When Dietrich died in 985 there was no formal appointment of a successor; it rather seems, as if Mieszko himself took the position of his father-in-law and helped Otto III in his fights against the pagans (in 985 and 986). This is why he was registered in the necrologium of Fulda as *Misicho marchio*³⁴ on the occasion of his death in 992.

When Mieszko's son prince Bolesław the Brave ascended the throne there was a certain alteration in Polish politics, because in the beginnings of his government he was in struggle with his stepmother Oda and her sons who had been named as successors by Mieszko. This is why Bolesław was not interested in bringing back the counts of Haldensleben in their former position in Brandenburg. But nevertheless the Polish prince soon followed his father's footsteps and continued the alliance with Otto III against the Luticians, who had been an ally of his Czech enemy and — being aligned with the Wolinians and Pomorians — could become a serious rival at the mouth of the Odra, too. Besides, this an alliance with Otto, which was based on the common hostility to the Luticians, got Bolesław backing related to armed conflicts in the East.

So in 995 the Polish ruler participated in the planned campaign against Polabia side by side with Otto III and Boleslav (II) of Bohemia. It was on this occasion that the tensions between the Přemyslid dynasty and the Slavníkid family of bishop Adalbert of Prague appeared before the European public for the first time, when Adalbert's brother Sobeslav (Sobebor) complained about the Přemyslids' actions against his family. But Boleslav II then even profited from Sobeslav's absence and struck a blow (September 28th) against the castle of Libice, where all Slavníkids being present there were killed. The surviving members of the family sought and found protection with Bolesław the Brave: bishop Adalbert of Prague who originally planned to do missionary work in the lands of the Luticians but then went to the Prussians, where he suffered his martyrdom; Radim-Gaudentius, a half-brother of Adalbert, whom Bolesław in the year 1000 named to be the first archbishop of Gniezno; and Sobeslav, who, fighting side by side with the Poles, was to be killed in Prague in 1004. The course for this development had been set during the campaign against the Luticians in 995, and one of the consequences of the constellation of powers, which had been consolidated then, was the meeting of Otto III and Bolesław the Brave in Gniezno five years later.

But the vision of Gniezno lost its validity on March 28th 1003, when Henry II formed his alliance with the pagan Luticians. This was to be decisive for the future development of east central Europe. In the short run it prevented Poland from expanding to the West up to the river Elbe and from consolidating definitely its territories won in the times of Mieszko and Bolesław.

In the medium range the acceptance of the results of the 983 uprising produced an undecided state related to the future fate of Polabia, where the pagan Polabian alternative existed for more than 150 years. But in this period the Luticians were not capable of

³⁴ *Thietmari Merseburgensis...*, IV, cap. 11–3; C. Lübke, *Regesten III*, nos. 251–255.

producing more than the preservation of their way of life. Their identity was focussed on the temple in Riedegost, which took a high-valued symbolic place similar to the place of the dynasties in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. But at the same time Riedegost formed the core of the Luticians' failure, because in 1056/57 they started a civil war which rose from the predominance of the Redarians and which marked the beginning of the decline of the federation. It then became visible that the older identity of the single tribes, too, had survived and even appeared to be stronger than Lutician ethnicity that had been created in a so to speak programmatic way corresponding to the special historical situation of the second half of the tenth century. But what was important is that for a long time the Luticians prevented the submission of the Polabian regions, especially in the North, to its neighbours, be it the Empire with Saxony, be it Bohemia, Poland or Denmark which expanded to Polabia at times. Finally in the lands of the Polabian Slavs — as it were as a new alternative compared to the historical options — there arose new territorial states of powerful aristocratic dynasties — the Wettinians, Askanians und Welfs, which was much easier to realise in the conquered lands. Here it was possible to apply new methods of colonisation regardless of traditional structures in settlement and agriculture.

In the long term it was as a consequence of colonisation and of the expansion of the Askanians to the Polish and Pomoranian territories east of the Odra that Germany, now including older Slav elements, expanded to the east and Polabia grew into a new main land of Germany³⁵.

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³⁵ C. Lübke, Regesten III, no. 269.

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NEW PEOPLES AROUND THE YEAR 1000

Herwig Wolfram*

No doubt, František Graus should have been the author of this essay. As the incumbent of the Kaegi chair in Basel, the Prague-born medievalist had already written on the emergence of the western Slavic peoples long before the *Wende*, and his untimely death¹. Of course the topic is such an ideological burden because it has been the turf of too many nationalists from every country involved, who have abused it as an historical justification for all kinds of chauvinistic claims². Thus we must all but dispense with the older literature, because its presentation of history always leads to debates which are „in part, as is typical of questions of nationality, emotionally charged; thus it is not possible to simply refer to these studies, rather it is the sources themselves which must be drawn upon”³.

The zone of contact between the Roman–Germanic and Slavic–Nomadic worlds ran from the west coast of the Baltic Sea down to the upper Adriatic. This was not a borderline, but rather a broad hem, which appeared to cut through the European continent from north to south. In reality it stitched the two halves into an indivisible whole. This was the result of the continental hegemony achieved by the Carolingian empire that secured the area between the Pyrenees and the Elbe and Enns Rivers. The defence of the Carolingian empire and expansion of its domination did not exclude each other in neither theory nor practice. The frontiers were institutionally structured through a system of marches aimed at consolidating the vastly expanded realm of the Franks. However, it is not always clear if the term „*marca*” as it was used in official Carolingian language referred to the border organization of an „old” country of the Frankish Kingdoms or to an independent border system created out of newly-acquired territory⁴; perhaps the distinction did not really matter to contemporaries if there was only one word for both.

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¹ I wish to express my deep gratitude to Ian Wood, Leeds, and John Eldevik, UCLA, whose competent help came just in time. See in particular F. Graus 1980a, and F. Graus 1965: 5ff., as well as H. R. Guggisberg 1992: 9ff.

² See most recently K. Görich 1997: 95f., esp. n. 4.

³ F. Graus 1980a: 45.

⁴ Cf. Thietmar, *Chronicon*, VIII, 18, who says that it was the Babenberg Henry I (994–1018), *qui marcham inter Ungarios et Bawarios positam tenuit*.

In 805 the Capitulary of Diedenhofen/Thionville listed all the frontier posts where trade with Slavs and Avars was permitted and, at the same time, from which an export ban on particularly valuable aggressive and defensive weapons was to be enforced. These posts formed a line that began in Saxony west of the Elbe River, then continued to the Thuringian Forest, came down to present-day Bamberg, and to the Danube in Regensburg, as well as to the mouth of the Enns River in what is now Upper Austria. These places marked the inner boundary of the Carolingian empire from which a frontier region had to be controlled, regardless whether it was established as an independent march or not⁵.

The Ottonian restoration of the east-Frankish kingdom was built „somehow” on the remnants of its Carolingian predecessor. Indeed, the links of tradition are sometimes so difficult to trace that the word „somehow” seems appropriate and one might even think that the Ottonian marches were new institutional creations. Especially on, and east of, the Elbe and Saale Rivers the marches consisted of *Burgwarde*, districts controlled by a castle, and integrated with newly founded bishoprics, a density of organization the Carolingians had never achieved. That is to say, the Ottonian marches arrived at a political and military consolidation, which in this area had never existed before⁶. The situation on the lower Elbe was considerably different from that between the upper Elbe and Saale and opposite Bohemia and Hungary. While there were independently organized Ottonian marches in the south down to the Austrian and Carantanian borders, the frontier in the north was far less consolidated, so that until at least the 12th century the statement „a march is a *land* in the making” really had little relevance here⁷.

For all the ethnic formations along the eastern borders of the Empire a question of survival arose in the 10th century: „Would they be able to overcome the old tribal structures? Would the isolated tribes and peoples move on the path towards larger political entities or not? Would they assert themselves against the East-Frankish-German kingdom, which was increasingly becoming an European hegemonical power stretching its hand energetically towards the East?”⁸

The area in which German, and particularly Saxon, power established itself was *Germania*, „one of the three largest regions of Europe”, as Adam of Bremen put it⁹. The classically educated Anglo-Saxon Boniface had counted all the peoples between the Rhine and Vistula Rivers — thus all the Slavs west of the Vistula — as part of *Germania*¹⁰. The „largest province” of *Germania* by the 11th century was — again according to Adam — a *Slavonia*, which also included Bohemia and Poland even east of the Oder River. This Slavic territory was inhabited by peoples with common customs

⁵ H. Wolfram 1995a: 175–85, esp. 181f. M. Hardt 2000: 39–56, esp. 41ff.

⁶ C. Lübke 1993: col. 302f. H. K. Schulze 1983: col. 1101ff.

⁷ Cf. O. Brunner 1973: 201f. (quote). H. Wolfram 1995a: 191f. Cf. n. 4 above.

⁸ H. K. Schulze 1994: 229.

⁹ Adam, *Gesta* II, 22 (19), Schol. 19 (20), according to Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* I, 1.

¹⁰ H. Wolfram 1995b: 323 at n. 239, accd. to *Bonifatii epistolae* n. 45 and 58; p. 72 and 108 or 130 and 172; E. Ewig 1979: 327f.



Central Europe at the turn of the first millennium

and language and was ten times as large as Saxony, a territory that comprised „no small part of *Germania*” and was in any case twice as large as the area inhabited by the eastern Franks. Adam of Bremen, to whom we owe these observations, had furthermore interpreted Paul the Deacon in a most interesting way: he equated the Wends–Slavs with the Vinnil Longobards as well as their Vandal enemies. Thus he arrived at a popular etymology for the name of the Wends as well as at a double ordering of the Slavs within the ancient ethnography of *Germania*. Finally, Adam connects the huge Slavic territory with the ecclesiastical province of Hamburg–Bremen, even though he has to admit that *Sclavinia* extends „from our diocese of Hamburg” eastward through countless and endless regions down to Bavaria, Hungary and even Greece¹¹. Adam could base his view on papal decisions and East Frankish synods of the 9th century, which, following the unification of Hamburg and Bremen and the establishment of an archbishopric, made its occupant the „legate and vicar of the Apostolic See to all the nations of the Swedes, Danes, and Slavs”¹². Furthermore, Adam even draws the Swedes, in addition to the Slavs, into *Germania*. Again, the author finds support for his ideas with the help of popular etymology that allowed him to equate the Swedes with the Suebians. Adam did not draw on Tacitus directly¹³, but rather on Solinus and Orosius¹⁴. The „similar sound” of tribal names had been used since antiquity to create associations between the most disparate peoples. Using this „etymological method”, Adam could view the Sueones–Swedes as the Suebians of Roman times who then were actually the most important peoples of *Germania* — an approach which may have come that much easier to Adam as he himself was a German of „Suebian” descent¹⁵.

The German word *Ostpolitik* is a heavily loaded term. The German *Drang nach Osten* appears to have had a long history up till the moment that all these motives and dealings culminated in the incomprehensible events of the 20th century. Anyone who looks for the origins of these crimes and the intellectual framework that engendered them could assume at first glance that they are to be found in high medieval sources. However, the authors at the turn of the first millennium, such as Thietmar of Merseburg, and Wipo, the biographer of Conrad II, or somewhat younger observers like the Czech Cosmas of Prague, or the Polish Anonymous, all depict the German–Slavic wars as hard, bloody and often brutal conflicts. However, these depictions differ neither in terminology nor content from those of the internal feuds among the Danes, Saxons, Bavarians, the pagan Slavs between the Elbe and Oder, or the Christian Poles, Hun-

¹¹ Adam, *Gesta* I, 1 and II, 21 (18); cf. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* I, 1 and 7–9. On Slavic areas as parts of *Germania*, see too F. Graus 1980a: 164, following *Vita prior. s. Adalberti*, ch. 1, a source likewise from the 11th century.

¹² Adam, *Gesta* I, 27 (29).

¹³ The apparent excerpts from Tacitus (cf. *Germania*, chs. 4, 9f. and 11) in Adam, *Gesta* I, 6f., come from the *Translatio s. Alexandri*, chs. 1f. Cf. W. Wattenbach, W. Levison, H. Löwe 1990: 711ff.

¹⁴ See R. Wenskus 1967: 255ff. Cf. H. Wolfram 1988: 19ff.

¹⁵ Adam, *Gesta* IV, 21. Cf. IV, 35 (34), Schol. 150f. (on Adam’s ancestry). On the „etymological method”, see H. Wolfram 1988: esp. 28ff.

garians and Bohemians. There simply was no nationalism, let alone chauvinism dividing this world. Rather the same ethnic pathos affected all sides that deployed similar pre-national strategies and institutions such as the exchange of hostages, payment and refusal of tribute, marriage contracts and breaking them off, transfer of property with and without bonds of vassalism, in order to create peaceful conditions, however difficult or temporary they might be¹⁶. Just to name two examples: The great Scandinavian king Canute I and the Polish king Mieszko II were first cousins and both additionally carried the Christian name *Lambertus*¹⁷. Richeza married Mieszko in 1013; she was the niece of Otto III, granddaughter of Otto II and Theophano, and great-granddaughter of Otto the Great. Her Lotharingian father, Ezzo, was a descendant of the Carolingians¹⁸.

Depending on one's historical-philosophical approach, it can be viewed as the dialectic of history, its irony, or yet another historical contradiction, that the three invasions of early medieval Europe by nomadic peoples who acquired the Carpathian basin and united it with Roman Pannonia ended up leading to the consolidation, and even modernization, of the target of their attacks. Or in other words: The „Hunnish Alternative” restrained the Germanic migrations for some time, extended the lifespan of the western Roman Empire about two generations, and ensured the survival of Constantinople. At the same time, the Hunnic leadership encouraged a process of consolidation and state-formation among their own *gentes*, as well as those on Roman soil¹⁹.

The Avars led the Slavs towards eastern and central Europe as far as the Peloponnese, and up to the walls of Thessalonica and even Constantinople. Yet, after the middle of the 6th century, the time of chaotic invasions and of conditions without treaties came to an end for more than two centuries. Of course at no time did the Avars control all the Slavs. However, in defending themselves against the Avars, and interacting with them, the first Slavic peoples, such as the Carantanians, emerged²⁰. Most of these first Slavic peoples lost their autonomy, at the very latest, with the collapse of the Avar realm to the Franks or Byzantines but not for good²¹.

Finally, through their attacks on the central European empire, the Magyars helped foster the emergence of an equally ranked *Scлавinia* alongside *Italia*, *Gallia* and *Germania*. In freeing themselves from *Germania*, they allowed the formation of west-Slavic peoples as they exist today²². Admittedly, such a view is so unusual that

¹⁶ See esp. H. Ludat 1995: 3ff., as well as the genealogical tables in the cover pocket. Cf. F. Graus 1980a: 54 (Bohemia) and 73ff. On use of hostages, see C. Lübke 1984/88, IV, n. 633; on betrothals and breaking them off, see IV, nn. 623 and 631.

¹⁷ H. Ludat 1995: 175f., n. 514, esp., following Adam, *Gesta* II, 35; Schol. 24 and II, 52, Schol. 37.

¹⁸ H. Ludat 1995: 87ff. Cf. C. Lübke 1984/88, III, nn. 337, 461 and 463–465, and K. Görich 1997: 125 and 159.

¹⁹ H. Wolfram 1997b: 123ff.

²⁰ H. Wolfram 1997a: 279ff. and 1995b: 301ff.

²¹ W. Pohl 1988: esp. 43ff., 94ff., 225ff., 237ff., 312ff. H. Wolfram 1995a: 39ff., and 1995b: 306ff.

²² Cf. P.E. Schramm, F. Mütterich 1983: 203ff., n. 106 and nn. 109ff. While the author of the older *Vita prior s. Adalberti*, ch. 1, has the saint coming from a *Scлавinia* as part of *Germania*, the more recent account of Brun von Querfurt, *Vita altera s. Adalberti*, ch. 1., gives *Boemicae terrae* as Adalbert's homeland.

it may encounter some reluctance or doubts. But the „challenge and response” pattern has the advantage of explaining why „new” peoples emerged in the 10th century, and in such a short period of time²³. This happened within, and because of, the interaction between the central European empire and the „land-taking” Magyars, with the result that there existed Germans, who are not taken into account here, and Hungarians, as well as Poles and Czechs as „new” peoples²⁴. Originally, a multiplicity of ethnic and social-legal systems and entities predominated. Wherever this multi-centred order could not be overcome, or where segmented societies, such as that of the Slavs east of the Elbe, ossified in fending off Christianity, no „new” peoples emerged²⁵.

The fall of the Avars around 800 allowed the formation of a Slavic commonwealth between the Sava and the upper Morava Rivers; yet only the Moravians and, to some extent, the Bohemians²⁶, were able to develop an advanced political entity and successfully undergo a name-forming ethnogenesis. Even the destruction of the Moravian realm by the Magyars could not entirely disrupt this process around the year 900²⁷. The stimulus for the formation of the Moravian polity had been a Christianized monarchy that successfully brought its peoples to the new faith thus consolidating its zone of influence²⁸. In a similar way, albeit with more lasting results, the equally structured principalities of the Prague Přemyslids, the Polish Piasts, and Hungarian Arpads brought about the creation of „new” peoples.

To be sure, the individual circumstances of these processes were not the same everywhere²⁹. It was true of all three formations, however, that from their first appearance in the written sources they were recognized as fully-fledged political entities. This statement is particularly true in the case of Poland. When Mieszko I (ca. 960–992) is first mentioned in 963 in a battle between Slavs and Saxons, the prince of the Poles is characterized as the lord of a mighty polyethnic *gens*³⁰. Around the same

²³ Cf. F. Graus 1965: 63. On preconditions within Bohemia, see *ibid.*, 52f.

²⁴ W. Pohl 1994: 12f., correctly cautions to fundamentally differentiate between the shaping of this „new” peoples and earlier ethnogeneses. The definitive work addressing the transition from an early medieval *gens* to a medieval people also called *gens* by the sources, has yet to be written. See H. Wolfram 1998b: 609, n. 7; cf. F. Graus 1980a: 11–16, 17ff. We must also keep in mind that these „new” peoples were still largely open systems. The Pomeranians e.g. in 1000 were still not Poles (F. Graus 1980a: 67f., cf. s.v. Pommern, p. 259). Furthermore, Slavs subjected to Hungarian rule were called *tótok* (sg. *tót*) by their masters, a term deriving from the Germanic word *theotisci*. Cf. Gy. Györfly 1988: 23, and H. Wolfram 1998a: esp. 118ff.

²⁵ F. Graus 1980a: 51ff. (Bohemia), 64ff. (Poland), and 73f. (Elbe Slavs); F. Prinz 1984: 49ff., and Gy. Györfly 1988: 19–31. These excellent treatments by both Prinz and Györfly have the disadvantage of not including notes. On the question of „Bohemian tribes”, especially the Slavnikids in Bohemia, see F. Graus 1980a: 192f. and 204ff. The author appears to fight against the notion, albeit unspoken, that the so-called Bohemian tribes were not Czechs. Yet this is not the problem here; rather, as in the *Descriptio civitatum...* (*Geographus Bavarus*), identifiable groupings of different ethnic, social, as well as legal structures are named, whereby verifiable information appears alongside simple names. See E. Herrmann 1965: 212–221, and F. Graus 1980a: 191f. The „fragmentation” of the Slavs was also described around 973 by Ibrahim ibn Yaqub. See G. Jacob 1927: 4 and 15f.

²⁶ Cf. *Annales Fuldenses*, a. 845.

²⁷ Cf. F. Graus 1980a: 7, 39 and 45 as well as 142, n. 25. H. Wolfram 1995b: 315ff., and 1995a: 87ff. and 168ff.

²⁸ F. Graus 1980a: 41ff. H. Wolfram 1998b: 608ff., esp. 615 and 623.

²⁹ See F. Graus 1980a: esp. 82ff.

³⁰ C. Lübke 1984/88, II, n. 122. F. Graus 1980a: 65.

time, the Jewish merchant from Spain, Ibrahim ibn Yaqub, travelled through the Slavic territories and described in Arabic „the city of Prague, built with stone and limestone...the largest marketplace of any of those countries”. He also admired the strict organization of Mieszko’s rule in Poland. This widely travelled observer was most impressed by Mieszko’s 3000 armoured horsemen, whose weaponry and discipline stopped opponents outnumbering them 100 times in their tracks. The Polish prince could also afford economically to support his followers³¹ along with their male and female descendants quite generously. The social security system of the Polish army must have been a striking success.

Ibrahim’s report begins with the geographic and political description of the Slavic world. Originally, they had been united under one king, but later, through discord, they split into many tribes. Thus runs the typical explanation of ethnic diversification. At the time of writing, four kings ruled: an unnamed king of the Bulgarians; Boleslav I, „king of Prague, Bohemia and Cracow”; Mieszko I, „king of the North”; and the Abodrite prince, Nakon, „far to the West”. The latter’s land is „cheap and rich in horses, which they export from there”. „They are well-armed with weapons, especially armour, helmets and swords”. Otto I in this context is only „the king of Rome”, from whom the author, in a candid conversation, gets „genuine information” about the Amazons, „the city of women located west of the Rus”³².

If the Jewish merchant counted the Abodrite prince among the four Slavic kings of his time, it shows that the Slavic peoples on the Elbe, Vltava and Oder, as well as in the Balkans, had shaped up as similar political-military powers. These realms came into view as they opened up to Christian mission and began to be christianized from the top down. Indeed, the conversion of the Frankish king, Clovis, through his queen Chrodechild, an event which itself, to some extent, followed the pattern established by Constantine the Great, became the foundation saga of the Merovingian kingship³³ and served now as an example for the west-Slavic and Hungarian conversions. The Christian princely family of another Elbe Slavic tribe married one of their kin, Dragomir, in 906–907 to the Bohemian prince Vratislav I (915–921). This marriage produced Saint Vaclav³⁴. In 963–964 Mieszko I married Vaclav’s niece, the daughter of the Czech prince Boleslav I (929/35–967/72), „who proved her name in her deeds. Dobrava means in Slavic, which in the German language would be „the Good one”. When this believer in Christ recognized that her husband was still trapped in the various errors of paganism, she considered, in her simple way, how she might bring him to the faith”³⁵. Seen from the late 11th century, Gisela, daughter of the Bavarian duke and sister of emperor Henry II, played the Chrodechild role for the Magyars: „She married

³¹ B. Lewis 1982: 94 f. and 315 n. 10. I owe Robin Vose, Notre Dame, the reference to this important book. Cf. R. Wenskus 1967: 365ff., as to *comitatus*.

³² C. Lübke 1984/88, II, n. 139; G. Jacob 1927: 11–15.

³³ H. Wolfram 1997b: 208ff. Cf. here, and for the following, R. Wenskus 1967: 265, n. 796.

³⁴ C. Lübke 1984/88, II, n. 7.

³⁵ Thietmar, *Chronicon* IV, 55 (35). C. Lübke 1984/88, II, n. 125, where the „correct” etymology of the name Dobrava is also discussed.

the Hungarian king and convinced him to have himself and his men baptized; in the font, he received the name Stephen. Through his merits he later became a saint". It should also be mentioned that Stephen's mother, Sarlot-Beleknegini, had already been baptized, whereas her also baptized husband, Géza, still worshipped pagan demons together with the Christian God. As it so happened, Sarlot's baptismal priest came from Byzantium, which was perhaps reason enough for Thietmar of Merseburg to be ill-disposed towards her³⁶.

Thus not only did the emergence of large territorial polities happen in Bohemia, Poland and Hungary, but it could have done so among the Elbe Slavs as well, had it not been for a devastating setback there in the summer of 983. At that moment a pagan backlash occurred that led to the shaping of the Lutician federation³⁷. The power of the Luticians can be seen in their serving as allies of King Henry II while simultaneously being ready, and capable, of expansion. Pagan groups attacked the Christian Abodrite prince, a successor of Nakon, toppled him and his family, and ended up sparking, even among the Abodrites, a radical pagan reaction and the creation of another non-monarchic Lutician tribal polity along the lines of *libertas more Luticio*³⁸.

The rejection of a „German” Christianity³⁹ may have had a lot to do with economics. There are simply too many complaints by high-ranking Saxon clerics about how missionary efforts among the Elbe Slavs failed because of the „pride” of the margraves and their followers, especially their lust for wealth for us to ignore the possibility⁴⁰. Fear of foreign domination and exploitation were evidently a decisive factor in the pagan backlash; but there was also the considerable weakness of the Slavic dynasties involved⁴¹. The Elbe Slavic nobility, the *priores*, did indeed have a privileged position, but could only put their will into effect through persuasion in a general assembly⁴². Any speech barrier could not have, or could hardly have, been factor in the rejection of Christian missionaries. We hear over and over again about Slavic preachers and sermons in the Slavic language⁴³.

Having refused to accept Christianity, no Elbe Slavic clergy came into being and therefore no literate „speakers” were available. Yet these experts were needed precisely in order to ensure the making and identity of a „new” people around the year 1000. In other words, because the Elbe Slavs did not have a Christian dynasty like the Piasts, Přemyslids or Arpads, along with their ecclesiastical organization, they also had nobody like Cosmas

³⁶ Adam, *Gesta* II, 43 (41), Schol. 32 (33) (quote). On Géza and Sarlot, see A. Avenarius 1999: 129 and n. 433, as well as Thietmar, *Chronicon* VIII, 4 (3). Cf. P. Geary 1998: 447f.

³⁷ C. Lübke 1984/88, III, nn. 220–226. Adam, *Gesta* II, 42 (40)ff.

³⁸ C. Lübke 1984/88, IV, n. 537. Thietmar, *Chronicon* VIII, 5 (4) (quote). Adam, *Gesta* II, 43, Schol. 30; cf. II, 48.

³⁹ F. Graus 1980a: 79, nn. 293–297.

⁴⁰ F. Graus 1980a: 76–79. See esp. Thietmar, *Chronicon* III, 17 (10) (explanation for the „defection” of the Luticians). Adam, *Gesta* II, 42 (40)f. Schol. 27.

⁴¹ Adam, *Gesta* III, 53 (52), who suggests the same situation in Scandinavia.

⁴² C. Lübke 1984/88, IV, n. 525a. Thietmar, *Chronicon* VII, 64; cf. VI, 25 as well as Adam, *Gesta* III, 20, Schol. 71.

⁴³ See Adam, *Gesta* III, 20 (19), and also „two monks from the Bohemian woods”, who dared preaching in the Lutici political-religious centre Rethra and did so in the Slavic language. See *ibid.*, Schol. 71.

of Prague, no Gallus Anonymus (even if non-native), and no dynastic-oriented literary culture as the Hungarians had⁴⁴. Adam of Bremen observed this deficiency first-hand when he remarked that it was King Sven Estridson, a Danish foreigner, who was to hold the entire history of the Slavs in his mind as if it had been written down⁴⁵.

In the first half of the 10th century the Hungarians had not only reached the Sorb tribes, with whom they exerted strong pressure on the Saxon–Thuringian heartland, but the Magyar riders had pushed on into Bohemia and into North Germany as far up as Bremen⁴⁶. It was not until the summer of 929 that King Henry I could begin to shift the strong Bavarian influence in Bohemia in favour of the Saxons⁴⁷. It took, however, decades of fighting until Henry's successor, Otto I, was able to integrate Boleslav I's Bohemia within East Frankish rule to such an extent that the Czech *duces* became vassals of the empire and, at the same time, sponsors of the Christian mission. Moreover, because the Hungarians even plundered and devastated the land of their Slavic allies, Boleslav offered not only Bohemian fighters, but also Sorbs, to support Otto the Great in the battle against the Hungarians at the Lechfeld on August 10, 955⁴⁸. In 973, the year he died, Otto I received both Mieszko I of Poland and Boleslav II of Bohemia at a royal assembly in Quedlinburg. There they held discussions about the creation of an ecclesiastical organization in Bohemia, namely in the Přemyslid capital of Prague⁴⁹. Early in 976 Willigis, the archbishop of Mainz, consecrated the first bishop of Prague. The church in Regensburg lost its traditional missionary field, but Bohemia's relations with the empire were clearly strengthened by this decision⁵⁰. It also appears that the Prague Přemyslids received a second bishopric at that time in the North–Moravian city of Olomouc. Northern Moravia was apparently Bohemian perhaps even as far up as the area around Cracow, before the whole of Moravia became Polish from 1003 to 1029⁵¹. There was no lack of either Hungarian or Bavarian attempts to check Bolesław the Brave's assault along the March River downstream to the Danube in 1015–1017. While the Babenberg margrave Henry I defended his well-documented claims north of the Danube at least as far as the present-day Austrian–Moravian border, the Hungarians probably pulled back into the area east of the March so that the Polish prince brought a large portion of Moravian territory under his control and won the Moravian upper-class over to him⁵².

⁴⁴ F. Graus 1980a: esp. 15f. and 83; see too 260 s.v. Gy. Györffy 1988: 5ff. and 192ff.

⁴⁵ Adam, *Gesta* II, 43 (41).

⁴⁶ C. Lübke 1984/88, II, nn. 5f., 14.

⁴⁷ C. Lübke 1984/88, II, nn. 27–29.

⁴⁸ C. Lübke 1984/88, II, nn. 48, 80, 85 and 98.

⁴⁹ C. Lübke 1984/88, II, n. 163; Thietmar, *Chronicon* II, 31; *Annales Altahenses*, a. 973. Cf. Gy. Györffy 1988: 82ff.

⁵⁰ C. Lübke 1984/88, II, n. 186.

⁵¹ Gy. Györffy 1988: 83, and F. Graus 1980a: 49, and n. 71–75 and 192 with ref. to DD. H. IV, 390. C. Lübke 1984/88, II, n. 139 (King of Prague, Bohemia and Cracow). Ibid. 4, n. 589 (conquest of Moravia).

⁵² Thietmar, *Chronicon* VII, 19; C. Lübke 1984/88, IV, n. 496 for August 3, 1015: Defeat of the Poles. In the summer of 1017, members of Bolesław the Brave Moravian entourage took revenge on the Bavarians, a conflict which paved the way for the German–Polish campaign of 1017. See Thietmar, *Chronicon* VII, 57; cf. C. Lübke 1984/88, IV, n. 520, where this side-show war is not addressed. The same is true of Thietmar,

To combat the pagan backlash of 983, the imperial government first entered into a coalition with the Polish Piasts. An attempt to draw in the Christian Přemyslids did not succeed, however, because Bohemian–Polish rivalry was too intense.⁵³ The high point of cooperation between the empire and the Poles took place „with the splendidly showcased meeting between Otto III and Bolesław the Brave in the year 1000”. This led to a drastic enhancement of the Polish prince and made him a „lord”, and, if not a king like the Hungarian Stephen I, then a king-like ruler even ranking over the German dukes⁵⁴. The foundation of the archbishopric of Gniezno, along with the suffragan bishoprics of Kołobrzeg (Kolberg), Cracow, and Wrocław (Breslau), formed the legal basis for this action, even if much of the scheme did not initially get beyond the parchment it was written on⁵⁵. Whichever legal battles in the church — particularly with regards to bishop Unger who had been passed over — still remained to settle here and there, this act represented the recognition of *Sclavinia*, especially of Poland, as an ecclesiastical province in its own right; in other words, the foundation of a Polish church ranked above the solution sought for Prague⁵⁶. Another part of the preparations for the move to Gniezno was an agreement between the leading advisors to Pope Sylvester II and Otto III to have the emperor use the title *servus Iesu Christi* in Poland, which made Otto III „equal to the apostles”. The imperial policy was certainly not introduced onto entirely virgin ground. Mieszko I had already laid the groundwork for his own church organization in 990/92 when he placed Gniezno, all the territory under his control, and his family under papal protection⁵⁷. Clearly, as far as the ranking of Gniezno over Prague was concerned, two interpretations are possible. One is that a Slavic archbishopric had originally been planned for Prague, *the principalis urbs Sclavorum*⁵⁸. The other has the bishopric of Prague and Moravian Olomouc — both suffragan bishoprics of Mainz in name — attached firmly to the Bohemian–Přemyslids’ ecclesiastical authority⁵⁹.

Just a few months after Gniezno, Stephen I (997–1038) caught up, in legal terms, through the foundation of the archbishopric of Esztergom–Gran, which he achieved

Chronicon VII, 61 where again men from the Moravian entourage of the Piast push into Bohemia, but are captured by a margrave Henry, caused to flee, and lose all their plundering of men and goods. These conflicts are certainly connected with *ibid*, VIII, 4 where Hungarian–Polish border skirmishes are mentioned very generally and over the course of which the maternal brother of King Stephen changed sides, but was nevertheless treated magnanimously by the Hungarian king. The conflicts described here could only have taken place at the banks of, or near, the Morava River because the margrave Henry mentioned in *ibid*, VII 61 in 1017 was surely the Austrian Babenberg. This observation is supported with VII, 63 where the like-named margrave Henry of Schweinfurt had already died on Sept. 18, 1017 after a long illness. On these matters from a Hungarian perspective, see Gy. Györffy 1988: 166ff.; K. Lechner 1994: 60, and n. 4, cf. 318, n. 4 reports on these events based only on the literature and is not aware of the story in Thietmar. Cf. DD.H. II, 22 (Babenberg claims north of the Danube).

⁵³ Cf. F. Graus 1980a: esp. 55; K. Görich 1997: esp. 101ff.

⁵⁴ K. Görich 1997: 95 (quote), 98f., and 148ff., and J. Fried 1989: 56ff. and esp. 123–125. See too C. Lübke 1984/88, III, n. 337.

⁵⁵ J. Fried 1989: 81–117ff. Cf. Gy. Györffy 1969: 97, and n. 75.

⁵⁶ C. Lübke 1984/88, III, nn. 338f., J. Fried 1989: 81ff. and 144ff.

⁵⁷ H. Wolfram 1973: 156ff. C. Lübke 1984/88, III, n. 255.

⁵⁸ J. Fried 1989: 87ff.

⁵⁹ F. Graus 1980a: 49f., 57ff., and 192f.

with the approval of both the emperor and the pope. Nearly half a decade had passed since the Arpad leader Vaik had been baptized as Stephen and had undertaken to bring the Hungarian ruling house into close contact with its western neighbours. While his father Géza was still alive, Stephen married Gisela, the daughter of Henry the Quarrelsome and sister of his likewise-named son, who himself became duke in 994–995. Because this union took place with the approval of the Ottonian royal court, and Stephen's brother-in-law later became emperor Henry II, it created a lasting basis for good relations between Hungary and the empire. Stephen's kingdom presented no problems for the empire and vice versa⁶⁰. An influx of Christian missionaries, as well as an official entourage, arrived with the Bavarian Gisela. The influence of these „guests” ranged from important military know-how and strength — it was with Bavarian support that Stephen seized power after his father's death — to charter production and legislation. The recognition of Hungary as a Christian kingdom simultaneously brought about the founding of the ecclesiastical province of Esztergom following the coronation of Stephen in 1000 or 1001 as the first Christian king of the Hungarians⁶¹.

At the turn of the millennium, three ethnic identities had emerged permanently in Central Europe to the extent that we can speak of peoples and label their political units as kingdoms. Without question, it was only the Hungarian kingdom of Stephen I that was recognized early on by the emperor and the pope, and thus fully legitimated. The visionary policy of Otto III may have sought the same status for Bolesław the Brave; indeed, at the most there was a „secular” elevation to kingship, a type of „semi” advancement in rank, which the Piast completed on his own only at the end of his life in 1025⁶². Despite the technical-legal distinctions, both rulers — the Arpad as well as the Piast — might have received a lance as royal insignia, as well as a sign of recognition on the part of Otto III⁶³. The latter allegedly sent Stephen a crown as well, and the question remains open as to whether or not he did this together with Pope Sylvester II. But this was certainly not the case since Thietmar's general remark does not allow such an interpretation⁶⁴.

After Mieszko II succeeded his late father in 1025, he made himself king as well. It is possible that at this time he, the son-in-law of the Lotharingian count palatine, Ezzo, was presented with a liturgical manuscript by Mathilde, the sister of Queen Gisela and wife of the Duke of Upper Lotharingia. The image on the dedication page depicts an enthroned, crowned ruler with a sceptre⁶⁵. As a matter of fact, Conrad II, who fought Mieszko II until his political undoing in the hope of getting him to relinquish the Polish coronation insignia⁶⁶, never refused Ezzo's daughter Richeza the title of queen.

⁶⁰ J. Fried 1989: 67.

⁶¹ Gy. Györffy 1988: esp. 123ff., and 1969: esp. 101ff. J. M. Bak 1996: col. 112. S. Weinfurter 1999: 90, and n. 95. A. Adamska 1999: 178 f. On Stephen's baptism, see Ademar of Chabannes, *Historiae (Chronicon)* III, 31. Cf. R. Wenskus 1967: 365ff. („Guests”).

⁶² Wipo, ch. 9. C. Lübke 1984/88, IV, nn. 575f. J. Fried 1989: esp. 65ff.

⁶³ J. Fried 1989: 126ff.

⁶⁴ See the different interpretation of Thietmar, *Chronicon* IV, 59 (38) by J. Deér 1966: 195ff.

⁶⁵ B. Kürbis 1989: 318–338. Following H.K. Schulze 1994: 340, see plate III. On the marriage of Mieszko II to Richeza, the granddaughter of Otto II, see H. Ludat 1995: 207 s.v., and C. Lübke 1984/88, III, n. 465.

⁶⁶ C. Lübke 1984/88, IV, n. 600. Wipo, ch. 29.

Otto III had perhaps envisioned a similar advancement in rank for the enfeoffed Bohemian Přemyslids. It never came to pass, however⁶⁷. The Přemyslids had supported the anti-kingship of the Bavarian Henry the Quarrelsome. However, Henry's dreams of kingship had evaporated by 985, and the Bohemians had to give up their opposition to Otto III by 987 at the latest⁶⁸. One result of this was that the Bohemian prince became a vassal of the powerful margrave of Meissen, Ekkehard I. This failure set the mechanisms of division and internal conflict into motion. It was as a result that the bloody conflict between the Přemyslids and the Slavnikids arose, in the course of which the family of St Vojtech–Adalbert was almost entirely wiped out⁶⁹. In a counter-move, if not as a direct result, Přemyslid Prague was lost to Poland between 1003 and 1004. It was not until the fall of 1012 that the Přemyslid Ulrich, staking everything on king Henry II, received Bohemia from him in fief, so that peace was to some extent restored⁷⁰. In view of the anti-Ottonian and anti-Piast policies, not to mention the internal conflicts in Bohemia, it is understandable why in 1000, Otto III still did not want to involve himself with Bohemia. To say nothing of further developments, however, this setback had little impact on the status of Bohemian–Czech identity.

Although Bohemia did not feature in Otto III's broader territorial policy, the emperor evidently did consider a third option. In the year 1000, but after the visit to Gniezno, at almost exactly the time that the Hungarian kingdom was recognized, Otto went to Venice for top-secret negotiations. The Venetians had undertaken successful naval expeditions along the Dalmatian coast. It is not unreasonable to assume that the emperor considered a similar royal or quasi-royal role for Venice on the upper and middle Adriatic, to that which he had already planned for Poland and Hungary in their respective spheres of influence. How the Croats were supposed to fit into this system remains entirely unknown. Nothing is said of Byzantium either, which, after the death of Otto III, was able to launch a naval attack against Croatia from the Apulian city of Bari⁷¹. However, the wife of the Doge after 1009 was — and here the circle is complete — the sister of the Hungarian King Stephen I. The Doge himself was named, not coincidentally, Otto Orseolo, as his father, Peter II, took great pleasure in his particularly good relations with Otto III⁷².

The young emperor's early death put a halt to the realizations of any such plans, if indeed they ever existed. The relations between the empire and Venice cooled considerably under Henry II and worsened dramatically under his successor, Conrad II. Hostility broke out over a question of church law, namely whether Venice, having its „own“ patriarchate in Grado, should retain an independent ecclesiastical province, or, along with Grado, become a „parish“ of mainland Aquileia⁷³.

⁶⁷ J. Fried 1989: 18, and n. 25 and 87ff.; cf. n. 58 above.

⁶⁸ C. Lübke 1984/88, III, nn. 227–232, and 245.

⁶⁹ F. Graus 1980a: 204ff.

⁷⁰ C. Lübke 1984/88, III, nn. 251–255, 301, 313f. (cf. 323a), 329, 358f., 387, and 455.

⁷¹ J. Fried 1994: 598, and 1989: 18, n. 24 and 63, n. 36; G. Althoff. 1996: 155ff.; G. Röscher 1982: 14ff. Cf. H. Wolfram 1992: 164 (Byzantine attack on Croatia).

⁷² Dandolo, *Chronica* IX, 203; cf. G. Röscher 1993: col. 1476.

⁷³ H. Bresslau 1967, I: 150ff. On Grado as a „parish“ of Aquileia, see DD. Ko. II, 205. Cf. H. Zimmermann 1985: n. 561; 2, 1058f., as well as P. Kehr 1927: 88f.

However important such an ecclesiastical province, an archbishopric, may have been, it was not an indispensable criterion for the emergence of an independent political unit. At least as important for the „new” peoples was whether or not they possessed a capital. Indeed, the significance of Prague exceeded that of all other comparable centres. „And again we see in central Europe a highly differentiated development: a long fluctuation between Poznań, Gniezno, and Cracow in Poland, whereas the new foundation of Prague was effective immediately in Bohemia. Here both secular and ecclesiastical centres converged”⁷⁴. But neither did the Hungarian kingdom have a prominent centre that could be compared to Prague. Still, Stephen I gave his royal headquarters in Esztergom over to the archbishop and chose a new residence at a more conveniently located estate in Székesfehérvár, designed to serve as the new political and sacral centre of the kingdom. His final resting place is located in the three-nave basilica which the holy king had built there and where his successor, Péter, son of the Doge, was crowned as the first in a long line of Hungarian kings⁷⁵.

All three „new” peoples of central Europe had in common the fact that the bishops always remained dependent on the ruler so that they supported his power both in theory and practice. The later „Scandinavian” model by which „resistance against the rulers fused with the struggle against Christianity” already worked in all three cases⁷⁶. But at the same time, as in Scandinavia somewhat later, there emerged the idea of a national saint as the eternal ruler of the land, a very significant idea in the institutionalization of medieval countries. This is especially true of the Přemyslid saint, and all-round central European prince-martyr, Vaclav, in Bohemia. Saint Stephen would later play a similar role in Hungary, without having suffered martyrdom, while the Slavníkid martyr, Saint Adalbert of Prague, whose bones were supposed to rest in Gniezno, was able to exercise his patronage over Poland only with great difficulty, as his relics were stolen and „repatriated” in 1039 by the Bohemian prince Břetislav⁷⁷. It was exactly during this Czech-Polish war that Břetislav issued his decrees, „probably the oldest legislative texts of the Slavic world”. Thus, the old pattern of Roman statehood and barbarian ethno-genesis, *arma et leges*, still or, rather, also worked around 1000. The same holds true for Hungary where the „efforts at drawing up law codes” start with Saint Stephen constituting „the foundation of the new monarchic and Christian order”. There is, however, no evidence for similar Polish legislation, and „the origins of the Polish royal chancery are unclear”, too⁷⁸.

⁷⁴ F. Graus 1965: 53ff.

⁷⁵ Gy. Györfy 1988: 179ff., and 202.

⁷⁶ F. Graus 1965: 55f.

⁷⁷ F. Graus 1965: 57ff.; 1980a: 66f., and 1980b: 205ff., esp. 208–213.

⁷⁸ A. Adamska 1999: 178f. For *arma et leges* see H. Fichtenau 1957: 26–29 and 199f.

CONCLUSION

Despite an extraordinary polyethnicity, with multi-central, segmentary structures, dynastic rulers were able to establish themselves in Poland, Bohemia and Hungary during the 10th and beginning of the 11th centuries. These rulers, unaffected by the extent and duration of any vassalistic ties to the empire, set up monarchies, in the sense of „single rulership”, and thus, becoming „law-givers,” achieved the Christianization of their peoples from the top down. This sort of policy was possible due to the centralization of rule, which resulted in fundamentally improved economic conditions from which the monarchic princes took advantage to a hitherto unknown degree. This allowed the formation of an effective *comitatus*, which, to a considerable degree, consisted of, and relied on, „foreigners” — *hospites*⁷⁹. There were numerous Saxon „defectors” to the Polish army while Bavarian foreigners saved the kingdom of Stephen I against Hungarian usurpers after 997 as well as against the Emperor Conrad II in 1030. The centralization of rule did not always result in the formation of a capital like Prague, however it did promote the development of places of memory identified with both the secular power and sacred spheres. This in turn led to the rise of a cult of the national saint, the eternal ruler of the land. The identification with the land, the practical as well as theoretical territorialization, was more important than a common language, as is particularly clear in the cases of the Poles and the Czechs, who understood each other perfectly well. Although such territorialization led to fragmentation in the German empire, the same process in Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary was connected with the creation of „new” peoples along with their permanent political and national identity and existence. It took a considerable time before this was thought of in terms of a trans-personal „crown”, before anyone, first in Hungary, later on in Bohemia and Poland, began to think and act within the categories of an „eternal” *corona regni*⁸⁰.

REFERENCES

ABBREVIATIONS

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⁷⁹ Cf. R. Wenskus 1967: 365ff.

⁸⁰ J. Karpat 1961: 232ff., 237ff., and 239ff., as well as 257ff.

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MGH = Monumenta Germaniae historica

MIÖG = Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung

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POLAND AS AN ALLY OF THE HOLY OTTONIAN EMPIRE

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In April 997 in the northern borderland of Poland, close to the town of Gdańsk, a far-reaching event had taken place: a missionary, relative and also a friend of emperor Otto III, St Adalbert, bishop of Czech Prague, had been killed in the land of the pagan Prussians (the region east of the Baltic's Vistula mouth)¹. His death came to be widely known among Ottonian Empire's elites, who showed religious zeal before the approaching end of the first millennium of Christianity. The martyr's body was bought by prince Bolesław the Brave — the missionary's patron — and buried in Gniezno, then the capital city of Poland. Soon after these events Pope Sylwester III canonized Adalbert, thanks to the personal pleas of Otto III. The emperor worshipped the new saint and wished to ensure his cult a bigger influence²; on the other hand, he also had some political intentions considering the country and the monarch who had sent the bishop with the mission. Those needs made Otto III decide to make a pilgrimage „in order to pray at the saint's grave”³. His visit became one of the most momentous events in the history of Poland, and its political consequences served as legislative foundations to the rise of the Piast dynasty. The Saxon chronicler Thietmar gave the briefest and also the most accurate appraisal of the significance of Otto III's actions for Poland's ruler, Bolesław the Brave (992–1025) and his successors. He wrote, „Let God forgive the Emperor that by making a lord of a tributary prince he raised him to such a high position”⁴. The negative evaluation of the Emperor's actions arose from the chronicler's dislike of the Polish prince. The reason was most certainly Thietmar's solidarity with Otto's successor, Henry II (King since 1002 and Emperor 1014–1024), who fought long-lasting and fierce wars against Bolesław the Brave. Thietmar owed to Henry the office of the Bishop of Merseburg (1004–1018).

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¹ More about St Adalbert for example: Tropami Świętego Wojciecha 1999; P. Urbańczyk 1997: 155–162; 2000: 202–225. See also Adalbert von Prag 1997.

² The significance of the cult of St Adalbert for Otto III's policy — K. Görich 1998: 381–430, 406–408.

³ The devotional motive of Otto's expedition to Gniezno is emphasised by all the sources; see J. Strzelczyk 2000: 34–39.

⁴ Thietmar 1953: 263–264, (V,10) text Latin–Polish; Latin–German in *Thietmar von Merseburg, Chronik, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 9, W. Trillmich (ed.), Berlin 1966.

Thietmar's assessment strongly affected the interpretations of Otto III's actions, advanced in the past by some German historiographers. Many scholars of that circle accused the Emperor of being naive in his treatment of the Polish prince, who allegedly tricked the inexperienced (born 980) and excitable Emperor into yielding to his „Christian propaganda”⁵ — the latter went too far in elevating the prince⁶. Thus, instead of keeping the „barbarians” in the right status of their subordination to the Empire, the Emperor, as a result of his politics, granted them independence to the detriment of his own state. The tenor of this standpoint is aptly rendered by the Saxon chronicler's statement about Bolesław the Brave: „The fact that his father and he himself were bound to us [...] by great friendship did us more harm than good in the past, and it will be to no good in the future. Therefore, friendly as he is towards us from time to time, as soon as an opportunity and place come up, he will openly wait for our undoing”⁷.

On the Polish side the way of thinking about the importance of the Gniezno meeting (especially in publications popularizing science) was not often free from prejudice also in the past, which followed from the „official” view of the history of Polish–German relations with the dominant model of the German as an everlasting enemy of Poland. Theses were generally accepted that could be reduced to an empty proposition that Otto III, „a half–Greek” and thereby devoid of „Teutonic pride” granted independence to Poland⁸. It was not noticed on principle in all this that in Otto III's plans, which were accepted by Bolesław the Brave, the Piast state was to become a part of the Empire, whereas the term „independence” in its modern sense cannot be applied at all to depict the medieval world.

These judgments have recently given way to a more objective approach⁹. The present study is intended as part of this process. We shall also seek to demonstrate that the Polish–German rapprochement, which culminated at the Gniezno meeting, was by no means accidental. It was the result of decades of friendly relations, while Otto III's policy towards Bolesław the Brave was not a whim of an „excitable youth”¹⁰ but rational reckoning well rooted in his contemporary reality.

Our analysis will start with a somewhat paradoxical proposition in view of the foregoing statements. Thietmar's attitude may have been justified to some extent. Both he and his contemporaries had good reason to feel surprised at the rapid career of the Piast dynasty that accepted Christianity as late as in 966 through Bolesław the Brave's father, Mieszko I (? — 992). Also the power of the Great Poland (*Wielkopolska*) Polane,

⁵ Although D. Claude applied this term to describe Archbishop of Magdeburg Taginon's (1004–1012) attitude, the phrase itself reflects the historian's assessment of some Saxon nobles' favourable policy towards Poland. — see: D. Claude 1972: 252.

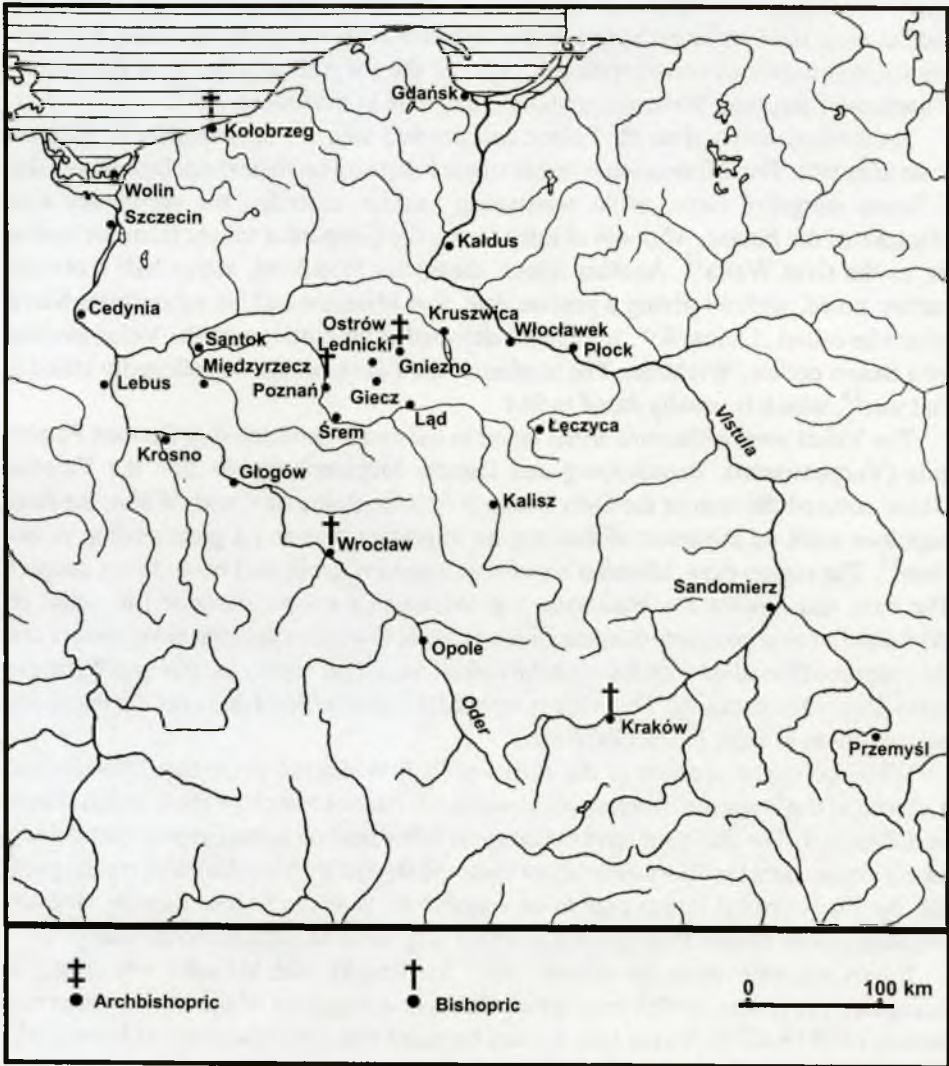
⁶ D. Claude 1972: 189–198; W. Schlesinger 1962: 73–74. W. von Giesebrecht 1929: 632.

⁷ Thietmar 1953: 583 (VIII,2).

⁸ The bibliography of works by older Polish historians is collected and widely commented upon by G. Labuda 1987: 505–510; 1988: 426–514.

⁹ K. Görich 1997: 95–167. C. Lübke 1993: 59–90. And earlier H. Ludat 1971.

¹⁰ The review on Otto III's portrait — G. Althoff 1996: 1–18.



Poland at the turn of the first millennium

the ancestral tribe of the Piast family, was not yet firmly established at that time. Recent dendrochronological dating of the oldest Polanian strongholds show that the political organization of the state did not go back further than 940¹¹. That time the Piast dynasty controlled only Central Great Poland, having later extended its domination over

¹¹ Z. Kumatowska 1995: 7–18.

Kuyavia (*Kujawy*) and Mazovia (*Mazowsze*). The oldest sources show that in the 960s the Polanian state strove to expand primarily towards the west and northwest. Archaeological investigations corroborate this trend, at the same time pointing at the cultural closeness of the, then Slavonic, areas on either side of the Oder river¹².

Somewhere down-river the Polane encountered their stronger western neighbours soon after 960. The information is rather vague because Thietmar states laconically that a Saxon margrave Gero, while conquering Lusatia, extended his supremacy over Mieszko of the Polane, who was obliged to pay the Germans a tribute from his land as far as the river Warta¹³. Another Saxon chronicler Widukind, active half a century earlier, noted, without giving a precise date, that Mieszko and his subordinate Slavs, whom he called „Licicaviki”, were twice defeated in the battles with the Veleti assisted by a Saxon outlaw, Wichman. The brother of the Polish prince was allegedly killed in that war¹⁴, which is usually dated to 964.

The Veleti were a Slavonic tribal union in the area of present-day German Pomerania (Vorpommern), Brandenburg and Eastern Mecklenburg. At first the Veletian Union covered the area of the Oder's mouth into the Baltic Sea, with Wolin, the most populous town on the coast of that sea, an important port and a great trading emporium¹⁵. The region drew Mieszko's warriors eager for spoils and booty like a magnet. The next war against the Wolinians and Wichman's troops, described in detail by Widukind, was a complete success of the Polane. Owing to the ingenious tactics and the support of the allied Czech troops, Mieszko I routed the enemy ca. 967 and Wichman was killed while escaping. This victory opened the road to Pomerania for the Piasts and enabled them to seize control of Wolin.

While giving an account of the events of 967, Widukind wrote that Mieszko was a „friend of the Emperor” (*amicus imperatoris*)¹⁶. It is not clear how these words should be understood. The title must have meant some subordination to the Empire (particularly, taking into account the information about some tribute paid by Mieszko). Yet, we can guess that the Piasts proved in that case to be valuable allies of the Saxons fighting long and exhausting wars against Polabian Slavs, whom they failed to subjugate completely.

It was not only upon the alliance with the Empire that Mieszko was trying to strengthen his power. In 965 he married Dobrava, a daughter of the Bohemian prince Boleslav I (935–972). A year later he was baptized through the agency of Bohemia¹⁷. The Přemyslids were excellent allies for the Piast state. The strong princes of Prague controlled not only Bohemia itself but also Moravia, and the whole southern region of

¹² M. Dulinicz 1994: 31–49.

¹³ Thietmar 1953: 89 (II, 29).

¹⁴ *Widukindi Res gestae saxonicae* III, 66: 170.

¹⁵ L. Leciejewicz 1984: 107–116. W. Filipowiak 1995: 93–104.

¹⁶ *Widukindi Res gestae saxonicae* III, 69: 172.

¹⁷ The place of Mieszko's baptism has not been established. According to one of the theories it could have happened in Regensburg, which had the ecclesiastical supremacy over Bohemia then — J. Dowiat 1997; F. Dvornik 1960: 15–28.

the future Poland: Upper and Lower Silesia and Cracow with its traditional territory stretching as far as the Bug and Styr rivers in what is now present-day Ukraine. Even though their supremacy over that vast area was superficial, often indirect, yet Boleslav I was still the most powerful ruler in the region. Muslim merchants from Spain came to Prague seeking slaves and animal furs, paying the local elite with silver and articles of luxury. We owe to one of them, Ibrahim-Ibn-Jaqub (a Moorish Jew in the service of the Khalif of Cordoba), the oldest description of the Czech capital (which was allegedly built with stone and lime, and was the most abundant in merchandise) and the information on other countries in Central Europe, including the state of Mieszko I. The following words were written about the Polish prince by the chronicler:

As far as the realm of Mieszko is concerned, this is the most extensive of their [*i.e.* Slavs] lands. It produces an abundance of food [...]. The taxes collected by the King from commercial goods are used for the support of his retainers. He keeps three thousand heavily armed men divided into detachments [and one hundred of them values as much as ten hundred of other warriors] and provides them with everything they need, clothing, horse, and weapons. If a child is born to one of them, the prince provides it with its pay from the very birth, irrespective of the sex of the baby¹⁸.

The traveller probably overestimated the wealth and importance of the Piast State, but it is a fact that marriage with Dobrava, the country's baptism and victory over the Luticians were great military and geopolitical successes. Mieszko's political significance as an ally was so valuable for Otto I's Empire that even though the supremacy over the Polish state was maintained, the Piasts were granted some significant degree of independence and were not disturbed, while building their political power. In 968 the Polish bishopric was established (the Czechs, already Christians for over a century, obtained their own as late as in ca. 973–977). Records make no mention of bishop Jordan being dependent on some German metropolitan diocese, which may imply that the legitimization of his work came directly from Rome¹⁹. In those circumstances it indicated the autonomy of the country and the real power of the superior to the local Church. Mieszko I consistently maintained his links with the papacy although at the same time he strove hard to stay close to the German court, while still trying to expand his state. That attitude proved crucial for the rapid development of the career of the Piast dynasty: such an orientation very soon revealed its virtues. In 972 there was a clash between the Polish troops with the detachments of Hodo, Margrave of Lusatia, attacking the Polanian dominions. In the vicinity of a locality called *Cidini* by Thietmar²⁰, the German army was routed. Perturbed by the defeat of the Margrave, his former tutor, the Emperor summoned Mieszko in 973 to Quedlinburg to appear in court. The dispute

¹⁸ *Relacja Ibrahima Ibn Jakuba...* 1946: 50. German edition: G. Jacob 1927.

¹⁹ Ch. Warnke 1980: 136–137.

²⁰ Thietmar 1953: 93 (II,29).

cannot have had particularly adverse consequences for the Polanian prince: there is no mention in the records that he was forced to give in to Hodo. We only learn that in order to keep peace he had to send his son as a hostage to the Emperor's court²¹.

Otto I died soon after the Quedlinburg meeting and Henry the Quarrelsome laid claim to the crown. At first, following his Czech ally, Mieszko supported the Bavarian prince, but didn't take any intensive action. Active involvement of the Czech prince Boleslav II (972–999) resulted in devastating raids of the victorious Otto II. Evidently, by staying away from the conflict, the Polanian ruler had been able to attain a better geopolitical position.

The Empire faced urgent problems in the south, in Italy. It was therefore essential to find an appropriate ally in the East. The choice was obvious. In 979 Oda, the daughter of Dietrich, the lord of the German North March, was released from the cloister and married Mieszko I, newly widowed after Dobrava's death. The family of his new spouse had the most eminent Saxon parentage and Mieszko joined the exclusive circle of *consanguineorum* (relatives) of the Ludolfingians²².

Now a weakened Bohemia became a potential area of expansion. The Piasts were, however, forestalled by others interested in seizing some of the widespread areas belonging to Prague's rulers. Thus in 981 the Prince of Kiev, Vladimir, occupied, almost unopposed, the eastern part of the vast territory controlled by the Přemyslids: the area near Przemyśl in the Carpathian Foothills and the lands around the Stryk and Bug rivers²³.

In 983 emperor Otto II died and Henry the Quarrelsome claimed the throne again. And again, Czech Boleslav II fervently supported his neighbour. In Polabia, when news came about the defeat of the select imperial troops in Italy (Cotrone) and subsequently, about the Emperor's death, a great rebellion of the Slavs broke out. The rebels burned churches and killed Christian priests. Pagan practices were restored. During the fight the political organization of the Veletian Union was changed: historians have since used the term Lutician Union. A similar pagan reaction soon occurred among the Abodrites (the western neighbours of the Luticians). The Polabian tribes, often hostile to and fighting with one another, formed an alliance and jointly attacked the Germans. Brandenburg (Slavonic Brenna) and Havelberg (Hobolin), the sees of Slavonic bishops, were captured and burned. The whole structure of the church, patiently built up by Otto I, ceased to exist. The insurgents also attacked Saxony itself. They destroyed Hamburg and many other borderland towns, including Kalbe with the former monastic home of Oda, Mieszko I's wife²⁴.

At the same time, the Czechs, supporting Henry the Quarrelsome, captured Meissen and a large part of Saxon Lusatia. Thus, in practice, although without political agree-

²¹ The review of the events on the German–Slav borderland, and the opinions of scholars on this issue by C. Lübke, *Regesten* II: 226–229 (no 162, 163).

²² D. Borawska 1981: 79–102.

²³ *Povest' vremennykh let*, I, 1950: 58. The review of the latest opinions on this note — W. Makarski 1996: 76–86.

²⁴ C. Lübke, *Regesten* III: 18–22 (no. 222–24).

ments, an anti-Saxon bloc emerged, which grouped together the Bavarians, Czechs, and the Polabian Slavs²⁵. This alignment was extremely dangerous also for the Polish state. Especially alarming for the Christian dynasty must have been the victories of the pagan Luticians, the oldest and most threatening enemies of the Piasts. Fortunately for the Polish rulers, the faithful supporters of Otto III won in the Empire (the Rohr meeting in June 984).

From then on events happened very quickly. The Polish prince recognized Otto III's supremacy and presented the Empire's ruler with a camel as well as with other gifts at the Quedlinburg convention²⁶. From 985 on, each of the Emperor's major expeditions against the Polabians included Mieszko I with numerous troops as part of the Saxon army. At the same time the Piasts decided to turn against their former Czech allies. It is believed that the Polish army had a considerable contribution in the restoration of the German rule in Lusatia²⁷. Meissen, recaptured from the Přemyslids, fell to Margrave Ekkehard, who was soon to be in charge of the Empire's eastern policy and the Emperor's most favored lay lord in the Empire²⁸.

Some time before 990 (the exact date is not known) the Piasts attacked and captured all the Přemyslid domains north of the Sudeten and Carpathian Mountains. We know of this thanks to Thietmar, who mentioned German reinforcements, led by Ekkehard, Giselher the Archbishop of Magdeburg and other Saxon magnates, who were sent by Empress Theophano as assistance against the Czechs who demanded the return of their territories²⁹. The German troops were too weak (they were surrounded by Boleslav II's army anyway) to give significant military support to the Poles. Yet, their participation meant an informal approval of the Piast expansion at the expense of Přemyslids.

Shortly before his death the Polish prince donated the whole of his state (called in the source *Civitas Shinesghe* — Gniezno state), including his last territorial acquisitions, to St Peter³⁰. The exact nature of Mieszko I's bestowal is not known: the document has been preserved only in a fairly general transcript made a century later in the Roman curia. Scholars have been still arguing what exactly it was supposed to mean³¹. There are only two things here that are indeed certain. This donation was an act of the piety of the aging prince, and his bestowal also integrated the whole of his vast and varied dominions, of which the lands seized from the Czechs originally belonged to the Prague diocese. It was an ingenious measure. Donating the whole country to St Peter temporarily dismissed claims of the diocese of Mainz from which the territory was carved, which had to remain compliant with Rome's authority. Nonetheless, that legal act

²⁵ K. Görich 1997: 109–112.

²⁶ C. Lübke, Regesten III: 40 (no 239).

²⁷ C. Lübke, Regesten III: 36–37 (no.236), 40–41 (no. 239).

²⁸ G. Rupp 1996: 54–70, 162–165, 179–182.

²⁹ Thietmar 1953: 159–165 (IV,11–13).

³⁰ The reconstruction of the Latin text was suggested by B. Kürbisówna 1962. See also C. Lübke, Regesten III: 65–66 (no 255a).

³¹ Ch. Warnke 1980: 127–128.

created a closer link between Poland and the Apostolic See, which gave hope for further advancement of the country: establishing a metropolitan diocese and acquiring the crown for the Piasts. There are no grounds to believe that this action was made without the consent of Empress Theophano, who was then in charge of the Empire's politics³². Her acquiescence resulted from the Polish ruler's position in the system of alliances, mustered by the Empire's elite, that were meant to stabilize the situation on the Empire's eastern borders. Mieszko I was not the only ally among the Slav neighbors. We know that present-day Brandenburg, formerly the land of the Stodorane tribe, was ruled by local dynasts that were strong adherents of the Saxon Ludolfingians. They were numbered among the relatives of the German royal house³³. It is supposed, that from among them came Emnilda³⁴, the wife of Bolesław later nicknamed the Brave, a daughter of an otherwise unknown Slavonic prince Dobromir. Mieszko I effected the marriage of his eldest son to that woman ca. 987. This was, after the prince's matrimonial match with Margrave Dietrich's daughter, another marriage binding the Piasts to the Saxon nobility and the Ludolfingians themselves at the same time. The political alignment was reinforced by the sacred sphere: the Piasts became tied devotionally with the Ottonian's major centers of worship in the east of the Empire. Their names written down in obituaries form the evidence of their donations for these foundations. Mieszko I's name was noted in obituaries in Fulda, the most renowned abbey in Germany³⁵. Bolesław the Brave was a brother of the Magdeburg canons³⁶, and his name can also be found in the obituary of the monastery of St Michael in Lüneburg, the major foundation of the Billung family, the line which possessed the hereditary dignity of Dukes of Saxony. These facts had important political consequences. The common worship organized a sort of lobby then, rooting it in ecclesiastical circles³⁷.

Several months after Mieszko I's death Bolesław the Brave (992–1025), carrying on the pro-imperial policy of his father, sent numerous Polish troops to participate in Otto III's expedition against the Polabian Slavs. In 995 Bolesław himself led his warriors aiding the imperial army in their fight against the Abodrites³⁸. The only discord that disturbed the almost idyllic Polish–German relations during the reign of Otto III, which can be found in the sources, is a certain document issued by the King in early December 995. The Empire's monarch, while delimiting the borders of the Meissen bishopric, incorporated into it a sizable part of Silesia, then belonging to Poland³⁹. That document must have expressed the German court's disapproval of the Polish ruler.

³² See J. Fried 1991: 361–370.

³³ H. Ludat 1971: 12–13.

³⁴ K. Jasiński 1992: 86–89.

³⁵ F.J. Jakobi 1978: 792–887, 850. G. Althoff 1984: Diagramm 1. Simultaneously, the Empire's elites acknowledged him as their companion — see: J. Banaszkiewicz 1993: 91–109.

³⁶ Thietmar 1953: 363 (VI,33); see: D. Claude 1972: 250–251.

³⁷ More about this problem: A. Pleszczyński 1996: 3–22, 10–11.

³⁸ C. Lübke, *Regesten III*: 128–129 (no 299).

³⁹ W. Schlesinger 1962: 71.

The reason was apparently the response to the news about the driving out from Poland of Oda, Mieszko I's widow, and her sons. We know from Thietmar that the old ruler divided his lands before his death between several princes. However, Bolesław, Dobrava's son, did not want to co-rule the country with his stepbrothers. „With his fox cunning”⁴⁰, as the chronicler put it, he unified the country. But Thietmar failed to say when that happened⁴¹. The dating of this fact to the late autumn of 995 permits an understanding of why the Polish prince faced only minor consequences on the part of the Germans. The Emperor was simply occupied with far more important matters than claiming the rights of his distant relatives. The situation in the west of the Empire required his personal attention. He was also planning an expedition to Rome, where German rule had to be restored and he was to be crowned emperor.

Bolesław the Brave may have been directly prompted to expel his brothers by the absence of German intervention in the Czech affairs. For, in September 995 there were serious disturbances in Bohemia. The Přemyslid troops captured and burned Libice, the centre of the Slavnikid family⁴² (this line owned a vast estate on the east of the ethnic Bohemia, which enjoyed an almost independent legal status)⁴³. The only survivors were prince Sobieslav, who found asylum in Poland, and the bishop of Prague, Adalbert–Wojciech, who had left the country after his conflict with the Czech prince. The Slavnikid family were relatives of the Ludolfingians and their fall meant in effect the lessening of the German influences in Bohemia and the damage to the Empire's prestige.

Again the hostile attitude of the Přemyslids towards the Ottonians improved the relationship of the Piasts with the German court. Friendly contacts were soon resumed. A sign of the improved relationship was bishop Adalbert's decision, made at the court of Otto III, to arrive in Poland, from where he would set off on his mission to the pagans. Originally he planned to go to the Luticians because the Germans were particularly interested in their conversion to Christianity. However, persuaded by the Polish ruler, he eventually went to the Prussians, where he was killed on April 23, 997. The rest of the story has already been revealed, Bolesław the Brave bought back his body — later legends have it that — for the equivalent of its weight in gold — and had it buried in the main church of the capital city of Gniezno.

That decision became the fabric of the creation of the metropolitan see. Little is known about the exact circumstances of the establishment of the Polish archbishopric.

⁴⁰ Thietmar 1953: 225 (IV,58).

⁴¹ Historians most often assume that Bolesław the Brave expelled his stepmother and his stepbrothers soon after he had sat on the throne, whereas no sources could confirm such assumptions. The only information concerning the time of that event comes from a 16th century Czech chronicle, according to which it happened in 995, see J. Strzelczyk 1999: 34.

⁴² *S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi...* 1962: 38 (25). *S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi...* 1969: 27–28, 59–60 (21). *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, 53 (I, 29). See also R. Turek 1993: 101–118, and P. Urbańczyk 2000: 202–225.

⁴³ *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, 49–50 (27).

Probably, it was the initiative of Bolesław the Brave — Radzim—Gaudentius, the stepbrother of the martyr and witness of his death was sent to Rome. Otto III called a Synod in Rome in 999. It was decided there, with the approval of Pope Sylvester II, the Emperor's close friend, that Radzim—Gaudentius, would become St Adalbert's archbishop (*archiepiscopus Sancti Adalberti*)⁴⁴. The record does not specify where the metropolitan cathedral was to be situated. This fact does not necessarily mean that there was any doubt as to where Gaudentius would reside⁴⁵ and the title essentially emphasized Otto III's cult of the Slav saint.

The Emperor's expedition to Gniezno was carefully planned⁴⁶, and the Polish party had time for sumptuous preparations for the imperial visit. The composition of the Emperor's retinue itself indicated the importance of the expected events. The Emperor led a splendid delegation to the capital of Christianity: the lay representative was patrician Ziazo while the priests were represented by the papal cardinals headed by *oblationarius* Robert⁴⁷. The large number of church dignitaries imply the essentially spiritual and ecclesiastical character of the visit to Poland. However, Otto III, apart from the religious goals, wanted to solve certain political issues as he had planned them. The ancestral Saxon elite were at that time strongly discouraged by the Emperor's involvement in the South, while the Polabian Slavs, still not subjugated, threatened their country. Otto realized, nevertheless, that the state was too weak to face a war on two fronts. It was an urgent matter to win a strong ally in the East, who would take over from the Saxons the burden of fighting against the Polabians. The Polane were strong and nurtured an ancient hatred of the Luticians (the former Weleti), therefore the Emperor took pains to draw them into cooperation. The reward for Bolesław the Brave's assistance was to be a number of concessions. Among them, of major importance was the replacement of the tributary bonds of dependence between Poland and Germany with a status close to that of a sovereign monarch. It appears that in Otto III's plans, Poland was to lead the Slavs subordinated to the Empire and as Sclavina, along with Germania, Italia and Gallia, it was to be the backbone of Christian Europe united under his sceptre⁴⁸. Therefore the Emperor's visit proceeded in an excellent atmosphere and greatly impressed both sides, which was documented by Thietmar and a century later by a chronicler active in Poland, Gallus Anonymous.

⁴⁴ J. Strzelczyk 2000: 21.

⁴⁵ J. Fried express the opinion that — as some German sources have it — Prague was to be the seat of the Archbishop. See J. Fried 1989. This is an evident mistake, as the sources only inform about the fact of the foundation of Archbishopric in Prague (which happened as late as in the mid 15th century), having said nothing about the Emperor's intentions. This erroneous note may have been written down after 1039, when the sacred relics of St Adalbert, stolen from Gniezno by prince Břetislav were indeed transferred to Prague. See an excellent comment by G. Labuda 2000: 17–33.

⁴⁶ The ruler of a relative poor country strove to prepare the visit well enough to rouse the fastidious guests' admiration — see Thietmar: „one can hardly believe and describe the luxuriousness of the Emperor's reception by Bolesław” — Thietmar 1953: 203 (IV, 45).

⁴⁷ Thietmar 1953: 203–205 (IV, 44).

⁴⁸ G. Althoff 1996: 119; with reference to an older bibliography. Also J. Strzelczyk 2000: 68–99.

The Saxon chronicler, ill disposed towards the Polish prince, gave a rather bald and dry account of the visit, writing in the introduction that Bolesław the Brave: „It is difficult to believe and tell what a grand reception Bolesław gave the Emperor and how he led him through his country to Gniezno”⁴⁹. More can be found in Gallus: „For the Emperor’s visit [Bolesław the Brave] prepared astounding wonders; first, troops of knights of every description, then he placed his dignitaries like choirs, in a vast plain, while the individual troops, standing separately, were distinguished by the different colour of their attire”⁵⁰. In a further passage the chronicler describes magnificent feasts⁵¹ and splendid gifts offered to the Emperor by Bolesław. In Gniezno the Emperor, by means of several complementary and symbolic gestures raised Bolesław and his state onto a higher geopolitical position. The most accurate information is given by Gallus Anonymous: „Otto III, having taken off his imperial diadem, put it on Bolesław’s head as [a token] of alliance and friendship, and [...] he gave him as a gift a nail of the Holy Cross together with St Maurice’s spear”⁵². Although the chronicler (writing a century later) interpreted the Emperor’s conduct as the royal coronation, this act was confirmed in 1025⁵³. In Gniezno Otto III had only prepared the conditions for the future elevation of the Piast prince. The putting of the imperial diadem on Bolesław the Brave’s head and donating him the replica of the sacred spear, the insignia of imperial power, should be understood as the sign of incorporation of the Polanian country in Otto III’s state and at the same time as granting Bolesław some royal powers. The most important was the hereditary right to control (the investiture of bishops and other dignitaries of the Church) an independent domestic church, which was a highly exceptional privilege, to which exclusively sovereign monarchs were essentially entitled. Moreover, the Emperor entrusted the prince of the Polane with the work of converting pagans by the force of arms (the Polabians being most certainly the prime target). It is most probable in this sense that Bolesław the Brave was to become, as Gallus Anonymous recorded, a cooperator/associate (*cooperator*)⁵⁴ of the Empire. The other titles conferred upon the Polish prince, according to the chronicler: „brother, friend and an ally of the Roman nation”⁵⁵, completed, using the Byzantine symbolism⁵⁶, the ceremonial inclusion of the Piast dynast in the „family of European Christian rulers”⁵⁷.

In order to give legal power to Otto III’s gestures a synod was organized, attended by Roman cardinals and several Italian ones, and probably by German senior church dignitaries⁵⁸. This assembly established the archbishopric see in Gniezno, where

⁴⁹ Thietmar 1953: 203 (IV, 45).

⁵⁰ *Galli Anonymi Cronica* 1,6: 18–21.

⁵¹ It happened during Lent.

⁵² *Galli Anonymi Cronica*: 19.

⁵³ A different opinion by J. Fried 1989; see. J. Strzelczyk 2000: 47–61.

⁵⁴ *Galli Anonymi Cronica*: 20.

⁵⁵ *Galli Anonymi Cronica*: 20.

⁵⁶ T. Wasilewski 1968: 461–472.

⁵⁷ G. Labuda 1988: 426–526. G. Labuda 2000: 28–31.

⁵⁸ It is still not yet known which of the members of the Empire’s episcopate was present in Gniezno Thietmar writes (207 — IV, 45) about the legitimacy of the Emperor’s decisions (*legitime ut spero*), which testifies that the archbishop of Mainz, under whose obedience Bohemia was as were once Silesia and Cracow, did

Radzim–Gaudentius took office. Bishoprics in Cracow, Kołobrzeg and Wrocław, subordinated to the metropolitan archbishop, were also established. The head of the church in the whole of Poland, the bishop Unger, managed to secure independence for himself. The Poznań bishopric was established for him, which preserved direct links to Rome⁵⁹.

Pope Sylvester II gave his enthusiastic approval of the decisions of the Gniezno synod. His correspondence reflects his joy and pride after the success of the peaceful expansion of the Christian Empire into the areas never reached by the ancient Romans⁶⁰. The wide publicity gained by the Gniezno event caused the existence of the Piast state to become clearly noticed in Germany and Europe, which is evidenced by the appearance in records, right after the year 1000, of the term *Poleni* and later *Poloni* denoting the people and the country of *Polenia*, soon to be *Polonia*⁶¹.

Strong emphasis upon the religious aspect accompanied the political decisions in Gniezno. The Emperor continually stressed his respect and admiration for St Adalbert. Even before he arrived at the Piast capital, he dismounted from the horse, took off his shoes, and, barefoot and praying, he headed for the main church in town. As a gift for the buried martyr, he brought three gold altar plates⁶². In return, Bolesław the Brave presented Otto III with St Adalbert's arm and possibly with some other parts of the martyr's body, which can be inferred from the subsequent placement of the relics in several major ecclesiastical centers in the Empire: in Aachen, Reichenau, Oberzell, Liège, Rome, Pereum (near Ravenna), Affile (near Subiaco). St Adalbert's relics were also sent (by the Emperor ?) to Esztergom, seat of metropolitan Hungary⁶³.

Thietmar reports that Bolesław the Brave presented the Emperor with a troop of 300 heavily-armed soldiers and, leading a select retinue, he escorted the Emperor as far as Magdeburg. The report of several decades later, a continuation of the French chronicles by Adémar of Chabannes, mentions that Bolesław received from Otto III a throne, possibly taken out of Charlemagne's tomb in Aachen. This information, frequently

not object to them. It is unlikely that he visited Poland then.

⁵⁹ Thietmar wrote in his chronicle that he had objected to the foundation of the archbishopric for Unger. This statement does not seem to be convincing. It is widely held that the formal objection of a local bishop was strong enough to suppress any alterations to the legal status of the diocese. It is more likely that the chronicler — writing his work during Polish–German wars, and in a situation when Unger, at that time in prison in Magdeburg (1005–1012), agreed to be subordinate to the Magdeburg archbishopric, which claimed to have supremacy over the Polish Church—added this particular sentence showing the prejudice of his and the Magdeburg's circles against Gniezno. So called „Exemption” that is the exempting a diocese from the jurisdiction of a local archbishop was nothing extraordinary — on the contrary — for the bishoprics where were residencies of monarchs. — see: J. Deér 1971: 1–56. On the status of Poznań — Z. Dalewski 1991: 19–43.

⁶⁰ A. Gieysztor 1985: 733–746. R. Folz 1991: 275–280.

⁶¹ J. Fried 1998: 41–70 — maintains too rashly that in Gniezno the country was given a name, see: J. Nalepa 1994: 174–182, 241–245.

⁶² Their description can be found in the chronicle of Kosmas, when they were taken to Prague after the plundering expedition of the Bohemian Prince Břetislav — *Cosmae Pragensis Chronicon* II, 5: 90.

⁶³ T. Dunin-Wąsowicz 1997: 372–379.

questioned, now tends to be accepted by historians⁶⁴, such a gift emphasized the inclusion of the state of the Polane, this time through Carolingian tradition, into Otto III's ideal Christian Empire, the dream shared by many of his circle. Its main centres were to be Rome and Aachen, Charlemagne's capital, with some other minor centres. The lesser yet significant ones were to include also Gniezno, the capital town of the Piasts⁶⁵.

These plans were only partially implemented, and only in Central Europe. Less than two years after his meeting with Bolesław the Brave, Otto III died, not even twenty-two years old. A witness of those times, Bruno of Querfurt, close to both the rulers, noted: „No one lamented his death more than Bolesław, to whom, above all others, the young King in vain tried to do so much good”⁶⁶. The prince had certainly good reasons to worry because the circumstances in the Empire became extremely unfavorable for Poland. The power was taken over by Henry the Quarrelsome's son, who as King Henry II made the Piasts' worst nightmares come true. The former Bavarian prince, bound by the traditional ties of friendship with the Czechs and treating with reserve Otto III's former men that contested his rule, allied himself with the fierce enemies of the Poles — the pagan Luticians⁶⁷.

The bloody wars that resulted thereupon weakened the two sides of the conflict, with neither winning it. For the Piasts' authority, it meant the undermining of the ideological fundamentals of their state, which had been built upon the cooperation with the Christian Empire. The previous prosperity ensuing from this collaboration (booty for the Piast warriors acquired from wars against pagans) was replaced by a period of stagnation and exhaustion bringing few profits fighting against a powerful Empire's army. The dynasty was losing their prestige among the Polish elite. Wars against Henry II initiated also a permanent distancing from each other of the Poles towards the Germans, while the pagan Polabians grew in strength to preserve their independence and old faith as late as the twelfth century. As a consequence, the exhausted Piast state was soon plunged into a crisis, when the church declined and the old pagan religion revived. Finally the Piast state ceased to exist for some time (1037?–1039)⁶⁸. It was only the intervention of the Salian rulers of Germany, alarmed by destabilization of the region that restored the status quo ante. The restoration of the state, efficiently carried out, was largely possible owing to the existence of the Gniezno metropolitan archbishopric, and as a consequence of the fact that the Piasts had already become permanent members of the Western European ruling hierarchy. These two factors turned out to be the lasting legacy of Otto III's action in Gniezno in 1000, which — even if it failed to carry out the idea to unify the state of the Piasts with the Empire, and it did not prevent further wars between Poland and the Germans — included Poland in the mainstream of Western Christian culture.

⁶⁴ K. Görich 1998: 384–386, 417.

⁶⁵ D. Claude 1972: 194.

⁶⁶ *Vita Quinque Fratrum Eremitarum* 48 (8).

⁶⁷ K. Görich 1997: 111–112.

⁶⁸ G. Labuda 1992: 83–134. See also (more popular) P. Schreiner 1996.

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BOHEMIA'S IRON YEAR

Dušan Třestík*

There was no reaction in Moravia and the Bohemian Basin to the fact that after a certain date the year would be written with an „M” at the beginning because the first millennium had drawn to a close — or at least, none that the clerics considered worth mentioning in the margins of the tables that they used to calculate the dates of Easter, and none that stuck in folk memory such that some later chronicler could learn from questioning „barbarian” witnesses and incorporate into an elegant work composed in Latin. Just as in years before, people took their pigs to the oak and hornbeam woods in the hills, between which, here and there, smoke rose from semi-sunken houses. They ploughed, sowed and reaped their fields, and the grain was carefully stored in straw-lined pits set into the ground.

On Sundays, counted by notches in staffs, they would gather in the market beneath the nearest stronghold, and some among them crowding in front of the small, round stone structure within the ramparts — around the church, to hear Mass. Pottery jugs of honey were deposited with the brewery in the stronghold, and once a year 12 small denarii were counted into the hands of an official. The honey and coins were a tax on freedom, or rather for the „peace”, that eternal world order of nature and Man which was clenched in the hands of princes of the family of Přemysl the Ploughman, and which was in some way linked to the latter's marriage to Libuše — an eternal Government, meaning that seated on the stone throne that „made” the centre of the land, at Prague Castle, the sovereign remained a constant link between the distant past and the present, the new Christian era.

Thus and likewise was the situation in Bohemia in the year 1000 — with nothing deviating from the familiar. In the villages in the Spring of this year, however, when the ploughs broke the soil in the fields, no messengers set out with the *vit*, summons meaning war, calling the menfolk to campaigns in Silesia, against the Lusatians, or against the Emperor's lords — as the princes in their castle on the Vltava were wont to do. This was a bad sign — the Czechs were used to fighting, lived from wars, and profited from them. They hunted on the plains of Galicia and elsewhere, even further to the east and the north, and long lines of people, hundreds chained by the neck, were

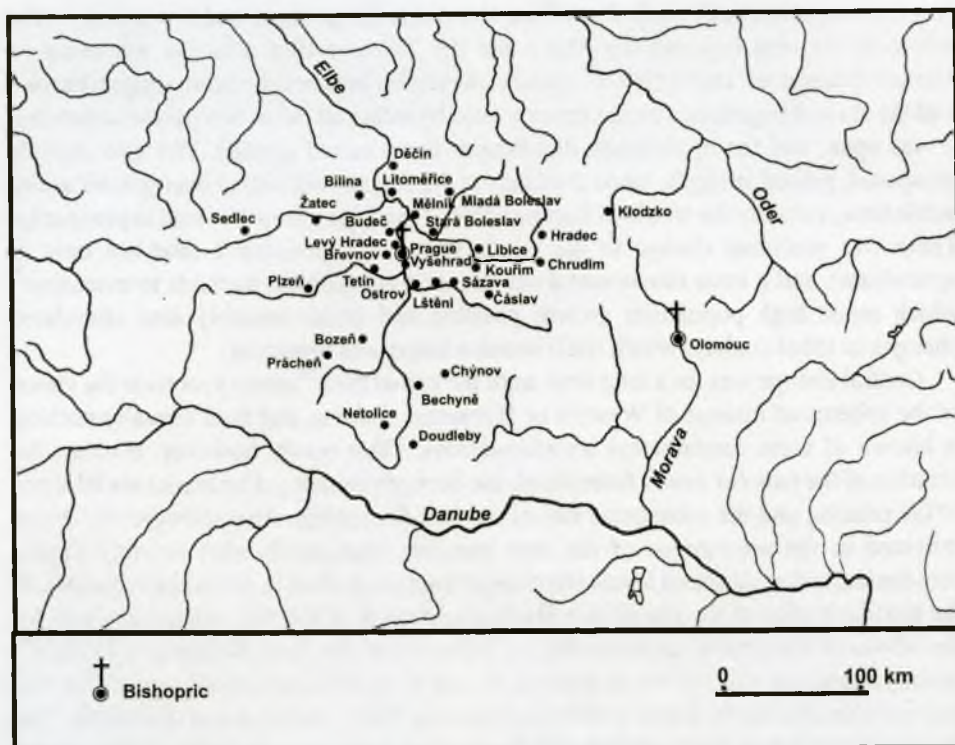
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driven to the „great city of the Slavs”, Prague, where beneath that same castle on the Vltava, traders from across the known world gathered to purchase these rare — because not under embargo — goods: pagan slaves. Prominent among them were wealthy Jews in peaked hats, mainly from distant Hispania, but there were also wild Swedes from Kiev and braided Magyars. In this year 1000, however, trade did not go well, and the human goods were few — and thus local slaves were now sold, too. The former Bishop, Adalbert (Vojtěch) had tried to prevent this in Bohemia, as these slaves, being Christians, were under the embargo, but himself paid the price for doing so: he fled his homeland again, and was ultimately killed among the Prussians. The current bishop did not concern himself in these matters — he was a Saxon and a drunkard, unable even to say Mass without the assistance of his clerics because of the trembling of his hands; nevertheless, none of this changed the fact that the goods, whether covered by the embargo or not, were few. Czechs, particularly of course those who held power, became poorer, and were frustrated and unquiet, looking everywhere for enemies and scapegoats, and finally turning on each other. Five years previously, Bishop Adalbert’s family had been massacred simply because it was wealthy, and its strongholds offered rich plunder — and it could have been worse, much worse, as he himself was to have been murdered in the banqueting hall at Prague Castle, at the hands of the Prince in person. He was to have been exiled and then permitted to return, all the psychopathic warriors at the castle were to have drunk to his death, and his brothers blinded and castrated, in one great, Shakespearian drama¹.

It occurred to no-one in Bohemia, however, that the cause of these problems might lie in the date — the end of the millennium and perhaps the end of the world as forecast in the holy book of the Christians. As yet, they were not living in the linear time of their priests, in a time heading towards an End marked by the return of the Saviour, but rather in the old time of eternally repeating circles. Their main concern was that the world always be born anew; thus, every Spring they sedulously painted eggs to aid the cycles of nature, and broke the first Spring furrow with confidence — just as the first „Přemyslid” prince, Přemysl the Ploughman, had done. While they observed the holy days, kept faith with the Host, and had for two generations generally lived in the manner of Christians, they nevertheless were a part of their *world*. It was this world which in the 10th century began — with the break-up of the old Carolingian Empire and under attack from the Magyars and the Northmen — to find a new form, which would perhaps definitively determine the shape of that which is now termed Europe.

The decisive processes thus took place in the areas of what are now France and Germany, in the old empire of Charlemagne and its successor states. Of equal importance, however, was that at the turn of the 11th century these cores expanded their influence across huge territories to the north and east, in Scandinavia and Central

¹ For the events of the years 999–1021 and their background, see: B. Krzemińska 1970: 246–272; J. Žemlička 1995a: 205–222 and 1995b: 267–278; G. Labuda 1992: 19–61. From the point of view of the Empire, most recently see K. Görich 1997: 95–168.



Bohemia at the turn of the first millennium

Europe. In this, Central Europe was — generally — more successful, and the Czechs were the most successful in Central Europe. Why, then, the adversities brought by the year 1000? Why, soon after the year 1000, did Poland and Hungary become kingdoms with their own archbishoprics, and why did Bohemia have to wait for centuries for such a status? Was this at all important, or were other things more weighty than these — ultimately formal or prestige — events? It is worth recalling the route taken by the Czechs from sometime around the beginning of the 7th century to the end of the millennium.

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The main problem for the Central European Slavs and later the Magyars stemmed from the fact that they were „newly arrived” foreigners from the East. Czechs today commonly begin their history with this very arrival to their present homeland, but for Central Europe this actually meant little, being only one of the events of the end of the Migration Period. The ethnogenesis of the newly arrived Slavs was played out more or

less contemporaneously with that of the Germans, Langobards and Bavarians — the whole of the area between the Rhine and the Tisza or Bug was first assuming its Medieval character. During the 6th century, the region between the Merovingian Empire and the Avar Khaganate was not entirely held by either of these two power structures; it was open, and the opportunity that history had awaited opened. The new arrivals prospered, gained strength, made clearings in the forests and settled ever greater areas; at this time, virtually the whole of Europe north of the Alps was on the road to prosperity. There was profound change in the whole system of subsistence (and not only in agriculture), and a mass movement from intensive subsistence methods to extensive², which made high population growth possible and understandably also stimulated changes in tribal society, which itself became larger and wealthier.

Central Europe was for a long time, until the end of the 8th century, outside the vision of the spheres of interest of Western or Byzantine sources, and thus virtually nothing is known of these fundamental transformations. Their result, however, is clear: the creation of the new (or newly formalised, the decision cannot yet be made) social strata of the princes, and the subsequent rise of the first Slav states. Archaeologically, this is reflected in the appearance of the new princely strongholds with wealthy family cemeteries, and at all social levels the change from cremation to inhumation burial³. In the broader region of the Carpathian Basin the lifestyle of the Slav aristocracy was for the whole of this period under the heavy influence of the Avar Khaganate; in the 8th century, however, this latter was passive, closed in on itself, and could provide no real cultural stimulus for the princes of the surrounding Slavs. At the end of the century, the khaganate fell into a deep internal crisis⁴ and at the same time, for reasons that are not especially clear, momentous changes took place among the Slav aristocracy. The decisive moment was the destruction of the Avar empire by Charlemagne and the encountering of the advanced culture of the Frankish Empire, particularly the „high” lifestyle of the Frankish aristocracy. It was undoubtedly this fundamental culture shock which began the process that took Central Europe to its definitive form, given by the existence of the then heads of states and nations (in that order!). It was not the missionary or other activities of the Empire that were decisive, but rather the active nature of the Slav princes.

While at first sight it might seem that this was associated with the coming of Christianity, in point of fact for the princes (because they, unlike the masses, were the ones interested in Christianity) religion was not the issue — rather, it was a question of lifestyle as a whole, the way of life of which Christianity was a part. The princes regularly met the Frankish lords from across the border, negotiating with them and closing agreements, treaties and marriages with them — they lived with people who included even the famous paladins of Charlemagne. To such as these, however, they

² On this subject see especially S. Kurnatowski 1981: 63–93.

³ Z. Klanica 1987: 74–82, and also F. Daim 1996: 479–497. See also D. Třeštík 1997: 76ff.

⁴ A. Avenarius 1988: 145–158; W. Pohl 1988.

had an unequal status, that of „barbarians” or „heathens”, and thus it was that while they themselves had every reason to seek baptism, for their tribes to do so was not considered as even a theoretical possibility⁵. The tribe stood and fell with the eternal and sacred order of the world and human society encompassed by the Slavonic term *mir*, which was at the same time both secular and divine, and which included all areas of human affairs from the tending of the fields and acquisition of food to the cults of the gods. To give this up was hardly possible, as it would mean the ruin of the world — women and fields would turn barren, and society itself collapse⁶. Thus, the tribe not only did not want to accept Christianity, but virtually could not. Christianisation meant social and spiritual (these areas being differentiated by Christianity rather than „paganism”) upheaval — a revolution in the true sense of the word, the destruction of the old world of men and gods and the introduction of a new world. Missionaries might gain individuals for the new faith, and this would be tolerated by the tribe, for it did not relate to their essence; they could not take this step *en masse* however. A prince might become a Christian as a „private individual”, but if — as is highly likely — he had „public” duties in the cult (like the Scandinavian kings who made regular sacrifices for „peace and a good year”) then he would necessarily come into conflict with the tribe, who would attempt to overthrow him.

The situation was further complicated by the posture of the Empire. As all empires, the Holy Roman Empire was an „empire of the centre”; virtually everything and everyone beyond its borders was barbarian — some kind of semi-humans in an animal state who in even the best cases were „noble savages”, in the way the Alamanni were for Tacitus. Much of this remained unchanged even after the Empire became Christian. The universal embassy of Christianity, which was established by St Paul around A.D. 60 to counter attempts to restrict it only to Jews, was again lost in the theology of the Imperia Christiana⁷. If this theology assigned to the Emperor himself direct responsibility for the salvation of his subjects, in practice it meant that the Redeemed could only be those dwelling within the Empire, and that the barbarians beyond the borders would be abandoned for their paganism. Their only hope for a part in Salvation was to

⁵ D. Třeštík 1995a: 20ff.

⁶ On this subject see D. Třeštík 1995a: 7–59. This point was well made (according to the Legend of St Adalbert, which while it of course did not reflect authentic sayings of the Prussians certainly reproduces their intent) when Adalbert was spurned with the words: „Magnum sit tibi, inquit, quod usque inpune venisti; et sicut celer reditus spes vite ita tibi parue more necis dampna cerabunt. Nobis et toto huic regno, cuius nos fauces sumus, communis lex imperat et unus ordo vivendi. Vos vero, qui estis alterius et ignote legis, nisi hac nocte discedatis, in crastinum decapitabimini” (Canaparius c. 28, in J. Karwasińska (ed.) 1962: 42–43). Bruno of Querfurt is even more explicit as to what is meant: „Propter tales, inquit, homines terra nostra non dabit fructum, arbores non parturiunt, nova non nascetur animalia, vetera moriuntur. Exeuntes exite de finibus nostris; si cicius non retro pedem ponitis, crudelibus penis afflictis mala morte peribitis”. (Bruno c. 25, in J. Karwasińska (ed.) 1969: 32). „Lex” here means that which the Slavs understood by the word *pravda* — the „correct”, „true”, „straight — not crooked” world order, not merely a „law” or „legal code” (cf. the „Russkaya Pravda” of Yaroslav the Wise). On this subject, see J. Leeuwen–Turnovcová 1990.

⁷ On „imperial theologies” see E. Peterson 1935; F. Dvorník 1966: 617ff.

become a tributary part of the Empire. For this reason the Empire did not undertake any large missions, and thus even later Europe was baptised by the Irish and Anglo-Saxons. The „Regnae” of the barbarians rather took cognisance of the Empire, and attempted to find a *modus vivendi* with it, but could never convince it of their legitimacy. Perhaps the furthest advances were made by the ideological construct of the „family of kings”⁸, of which the Emperor was head. This, of course, was purely practical, making it possible for the Emperor to deign to speak with the barbarians at all; it did not mean an acceptance of the latter’s equal or even comparable status, and in no way legitimised their kingdoms.

Today it is recognised that — in contrast to the classical teaching — the Western Empire was not destroyed by Germanic tribes. Barbarians did not smash it, but rather entered and were absorbed by it. The last direct continuation of the Western *Imperium* was thus to be found, in structural (not only in ideological) terms, in the Empire of Charlemagne and its successors. The Empire of the Saxon Ottonians, however, was a mere ideological construction, which had nothing in common with the old *Imperium Christianum*. The barbarians took the Empire over for many reasons, one of the foremost of which was an effort to acquire legitimacy of their relations to the fallen and plundered Empire. The central European barbarians came late to this division of the heritage of Antiquity, and had no chance to enter smoothly into the empire in the same way as the Germans of the 5th century had entered the Western Empire. The one option presented to them was that vividly presented by the Carinthians, who since as early as the 8th century had flirted with Bavaria and its Christianity. Once Bavaria had again become part of the Empire and the Avars had fallen, it did not require even two decades before the Carinthians were fully incorporated into the Empire. The barbarians, even within the Carolingian Empire, had only one choice if they wished to rid themselves of their barbarism — to submit. This also applied to Christianity, however — to accept baptism from the Empire meant automatically to submit to it. Even in the year 900 Theotmar, Archbishop of Salzburg, was claiming that Great Moravia must be subject „to our king, our people, at the same time both in the practice of the Christian religion and in the deliverance of its worldly goods, because it was from us that they were first taught the Christian faith, and were made Christians from pagans”⁹.

This position was one of revamped tidings: its foundation, that Christianisation was only possible within the framework of the *imperium*, had clearly been current since the

⁸ F.J. Dölger 1940: 397–420 (the same 1964: 34–69); A. Grabar 1954: 117–123; G. Ostrogorsky 1956/57: 1–14; D. Obolenski 1971; D. Claude 1964: 25–36; S. Krautschnick 1964: 106–142; E. Chrysos 1994: 293–307.

⁹ Letter from the Archbishop of Salzburg, Theotmar, to Pope John IX in the year 900 (*Die Conversio...* 1997: 140): „...in terram Sclauorum, qui Maraui dicuntur, que regibus nostris et populo nostro, nobis cum habitatoribus suis subacta fuerat tam in cultu christiane religionis quam in tributo substantie secularis, quia exinde primum imbuti et ex paganis christiani sunt facti”. Cf. also p.146: „sive velint, sive nolint, regno nostri subacti erunt (fuerunt)”. The MSS have „subacti erunt” or „subacti fuerunt”. F. Lošek here introduces the not particularly convincing conjecture „fuerunt”, which would mean that it refers to subjugation already completed. On the unsuccessful attempts see E. Boshof 1995: 37–67, claiming the letter is a falsification made for Pilgrim, Bishop of Passau, cf. D. Treštk 1998: 137–160.

6th century, although the Papacy, particularly under Gregory the Great, had let it be known that this was not so, and undertook its own missions, particularly among the Anglo-Saxons, which would later have well-known consequences later for the Irish/Anglo-Saxon missionary movement. This frequently led to conflict with the sovereign, even though he was for short periods and to a limited extent used. It was Gregory the Great who first organised a specific missionary policy, particularly after the conquest of the Avar empire; his method was simple — the subjugation of the ruler of a foreign land, and his baptism. This of course brought Charlemagne back to the thesis of the old Imperial theology, by which the only route to salvation was offered by the Empire, and that Christianisation thus meant incorporation into the Empire. This was the situation which confronted the emerging Slav states in the 9th century, and because little changed even under the Ottonian dynasty, until at least the reign of Otto III — who was also „the emperor, who baptizes” — the situation remained thus for those engaged in state building in the 10th century.

So it was that if the Slav princes did not wish to „deliver their worldly goods” to the Frankish Counts and thus also surrender their freedom, and yet nevertheless wished to accept baptism, then they had to help themselves. For them, baptism meant the end of the old „gentile” („tribal”) organisation, the one conditional on the other. Tribal organisation was very closely bound up with the order of men and gods termed, somewhat inadequately, „paganism”. Naturally, the converse was also true — to establish a state meant disrupting this order of gods and men, and the passing of the people to a new God with His world and human order. Both could be done by „self help” — the complication was in obtaining legitimacy, *i.e.* recognition, particularly (of course) from the Empire. The only solution was to create a „little empire” alongside the Empire, and thus gain a legitimacy comparable to that of the latter. The princes thus had no alternative but to accept Christianity and found a state, *i.e.* destroy the tribal institutions and create a new state, defend it and, most especially, gain legitimacy for it in the form of what would now be termed „international recognition”. In this process, Christianity had a dual role — it was on the one hand part of the conditions that needed to be fulfilled for „international recognition”, and on the other — perhaps more importantly — made possible the internal revolution in tribal society. While this radically affected the tradition, that world order supported by the freedom and individuality of tribal members, the fact was noted that this fundamental upheaval did not result in the expected catastrophe, that the fields and women remained fertile, that no radically new world began in which the old order no longer applied. It was not achieved without opposition, and the „pagan” reaction in central Europe was visible until as late as the 11th century almost whenever the state weakened, usually as a result of structural crisis, but it is peculiar that it never had any real chance of success.

This „revolution” by devotees of the Cross¹⁰ and holy Book¹¹ began sometime around the end of the 820's among the princes of the Moravians, who joined together and with Mojmir at their head overturned the old tribal system. In 831 their new state officially received Christianity from Passau in Bavaria. The Bohemians attempted something similar shortly afterwards, when in 845 they sent the greater part of their princes to Louis the German at Regensburg to receive baptism. This was evidently intended as a compromise rather than a „revolution”, the tribe and its organisation not being affected as the princes accepted baptism for themselves, and not in the name of Bohemia. This remarkable and entirely unique effort (comparable perhaps only to the similarly pragmatic history of the coming of Christianity to Iceland) fell through almost immediately afterwards, however, as Louis next attacked Moravia and deposed Mojmir. This presumably taught not only the Moravians but also Bohemia that baptism brought no equality with the Empire. Moravia rather defended itself and its new state organisation, but in Bohemia the result was that the princes did not even try to form a state, but continued to govern from their strongholds in the name of their tribe. Opposition to the Empire came primarily from Rostislav (846–869) and later Svatopluk (870–894) in Moravia. While they supported Svatopluk heavily militarily and otherwise, he returned this favour by attacking Bohemia itself c.883 and adding it to his own empire.

Government was subsequently left in the hands of the Bohemian princes, at the head of whom however was set the Central Bohemian Prince Bořivoj of the Přemyslid line, who Svatopluk had baptised by his archbishop, Methodius; by acting as godfather Svatopluk clearly brought himself into an artificial „familial” relationship with Bořivoj. This of course led to a revolt in the latter's principality, he himself was exiled, and his people chose themselves a new prince¹². Svatopluk, however, returned in force, and reinstated Bořivoj, who then built the Church of Our Lady on the old parliament field of the Bohemians, where stood the stone throne of the princes, thus handing this sacred place into the hands of the Christian God. Thus, he did not consider his conversion in the slightest degree a personal affair, and moved against the old tribal organisation entirely deliberately, in the name not only of Christianity, but also of the whole „life order” of Christians, above all the state. His son Spytihněv took this to a new length by building a stronghold on the site, thus enclosing — physically and symbolically — the site of the enthronement of the Bohemian princes within his ramparts¹³.

¹⁰ The Western Slavonic word „křesťan” (lit. „Christian”) is derived not from „křest” („baptism”) but from „kříž” („cross”).

¹¹ At this time the Moravian princes frequently used likenesses of codices, the holy books of the Christians, on the metal fittings of their belts — the insignia of warriors. To the best of the author's knowledge this is the only such conspicuous indication that Christianity was understood as the religion of the Word in the whole history of Early Medieval Christianisation.

¹² Christiani, *Vita et passio...* 1978: 22. On analogies with the Widukinde record of Saxon origin myths, cf. F. Graus 1974: 354–365. On Bořivoj's baptism, see D. Třeštík, 1997: 312 ff.

¹³ My interpretation, based on results of the earlier archaeological studies, is discussed in: D. Třeštík 1983: 7–37; and 1995b: 228–240. In result of new research I modified that opinion in: D. Třeštík 1997: 338ff.

Nevertheless, the Bohemians broke away from the Moravians and in 895 allied with King Arnulf against them. Nevertheless, Spytihněv „reconstructed” his principality according to the Moravian model, and planned out a series of administrative strongholds for it. Each of these was also to contain a church, and Spytihněv thus purposefully building up a small provincial Church closely bound up with the secular administration¹⁴. In 895 Bohemia — or at least the Central Bohemian domains of the Přemyslids, as the other principalities were still pagan — came under the authority of the Regensburg diocese; Bishop Tuto established an archpresbytery in Prague, occupied mainly by monks from the diocesan Monastery of St Emmeram and headed by the priest Paul. When in 906 Great Moravia collapsed, a number of Moravian priests — educated in Latin and the Slavonic script — found refuge in Prague, and the Přemyslid „provincial church” was noticeably enriched. Přemyslid power grew, gradually subordinating that of the other princes of the Bohemian Basin and binding them into a union of „friendship”. Sometime during the reign of Spytihněv (post-911) they achieved if not direct rule, then hegemony over Bohemia.

They relied above all on Bavaria, and its ruler Arnulf, of the Luitpold dynasty, and had every reason to be apprehensive of the growing power of the Saxon Liudolphines. The situation became untenable when in 897 the Saxon Liudolphines crushed Sorbia on the Saale and attacked the tribe of the Havollani. Ludmilla, mother of Spytihněv and Vratislav, was a Sorb, and Vratislav's wife Drahomíra came from a princely family on the Havel, and the Přemyslids watched events unfold with growing distrust — it was thus a major shock when in 921 the Saxo-Frankish King Henry I agreed that he would acknowledge Arnulf of Bavaria. Vratislav died at the time (on February 13th, 921), and because his sons were not yet adults, the counsel of magnates elected to his place the elder, Wenceslas, under his mother Drahomíra's regency until he reached adulthood; at the same time, their grandmother Ludmilla was made responsible for the upbringing of both boys (Wenceslas and Boleslav). This must certainly have led to conflict between these two ambitious women, particularly in view of their stances as regarded Arnulf's surprising *volte face*. Ludmilla was in favour of recognising Henry I, while Drahomíra was set against doing so, and ultimately had Ludmilla murdered on September 15th 921. She then repudiated allegiance to Arnulf and expelled the Bavarian priests from the realm. Little changed afterwards, even with Wenceslas' assumption of power in 925. Only in 929 did Henry, in a large-scale, well-planned action, secure the „friendship” of the rulers in all of the duchies, coming in turn to Bohemia. The joint military actions of Henry and Arnulf compelled Wenceslas to submit, and thus link with the other princes of the „German” duchies. The opportunity thus arose for Bohemia to become

Recently, the question of the origins of the Prague stronghold has again become the subject of a lively discussion — cf. J. Frolík, Z. Smetánka 1997: 40–81 and 1998: 291–307; L. Hrdlička 1997: 649–662; I. Boháčová 1997: 33–40; 1998a: 291–293; 1998b: 672–688; K. Tomková 1997: 630–638. Results are still unclear. It is difficult to prove, that the beginnings of the stronghold reach much before the time of Bořivoj I. (before 872–889).

¹⁴ After J. Sláma 1987: 175–190; and 1988: 71ff.

part of Henry I's kingdom, and thus enter the later Ottonian Empire as a distinct component on the same level as the other duchies.

This possibility roused opposition, at the head of which stood Wenceslas' younger brother, Boleslav. War with Henry, however, could not well be begun without first removing the unreliable Bohemian princes, some of whom were in direct alliance with the Saxons; Bohemia would be so weakened by such a civil war that it would give itself up to Henry for reprieve. The internal debate was finally decided by the possibly prepared, but probably premature, chance events culminating in Wenceslas' murder on September 28th, 935 at Stará Boleslav. Boleslav seized power, and immediately set about realising his plans — to his great good fortune, at this very time Henry sickened and died, and the struggle for the succession made it impossible for Otto I to move against Bohemia.

Boleslav seized his chance brilliantly. He quickly — and obviously with no great difficulty — liquidated all of the Bohemian principalities, established a strong, professional army, and threw the latter onto the offensive. This was directed primarily along the lines of the great trade routes, in order to secure income for the prince from as long a length of them as possible. To the north, on the route along the Oder to Volhynia and its mouths onto the Baltic, this meant Silesia; to the east, above all northern Moravia and Olomouc, along with Little Poland (*Małopolska*), the old Wislanian territory including Cracow, and the territory of the Łędziane, including Przemyśl and Czerwień, all on the route leading to Kiev and Khazaria.

Clearly, all of this had for the most part been achieved when in 950 Boleslav finally gave up the chronic, not particularly intensive, war with Otto I, and submitted to the latter. In less than 15 years he had transformed a tiny Central Bohemian principality into the rich and powerful ruler of extensive lands. In less than 15 years he had risen from being a minor Central Bohemian princeling to being the wealthy and powerful ruler of an extensive domain. There could not, of course, be any thought of some kind of amalgamation between this new power structure and the emergent Ottonian empire; the subjugation of Boleslav's domains were an acknowledgement from Otto's side, and for Boleslav were confirmation, of the former's relevance to the Christian world.

This new creation was rather provisional in nature, with no ethnic and virtually no administrative cohesion — indeed, it did not even have a name. Boleslav's problem was fundamentally very basic, even though it was difficult to resolve — how to equip and maintain 3000–6000 mounted warriors, a powerful army for the period. The „standard” solutions — regular tax collection or a vassal system — were impossible to apply to an ill-differentiated, agrarian society of freemen. The Bohemian magnates were not hereditary and privileged nobility as generally understood — they had no estates, and thus no territorial supremacy. While loosely given taxes existed (particularly the „tax for peace”), their collection required a cumbersome apparatus of people needing to be supported in the same way as the military. The contemporary Ottonian Empire could not serve as a model, and Boleslav undoubtedly opted for the model that the Přemyslids had applied within their own domains since the turn of the 10th century.

This was based on the territorial government supported by strongholds and some combination of taxes, gifts and services owed by freemen in this so-called „service” system of organization¹⁵, the principles of which were rather expensive and complex, but nevertheless effective. In order to ensure the adequate supply of sufficient quantities of foodstuffs, manufactured goods and various services (from help in the stronghold’s kitchens to doing the garrison’s washing), a number of individuals — often whole villages — were made responsible for these „for all time”.

The roots of this system lay in the administrative organization of Great Moravia, itself an original adaptation of the model provided by the empires of Charlemagne and his successors. It is attested, however, in an almost identical form (even down to the employment of the same terminology) in all of the Central European states that came into being in the 10th century — not only in Přemyslid Bohemia, but also in Poland and Hungary. It is thus indisputable that this administrative model stemmed from a single source; it could not be the contemporary empire of the Saxon Ottonians, as nothing of this kind existed there, and must have been Great Moravia, elements being mediated through Bohemia, the Moravian lands to Slovakia, and thence down into the Hungarian state.

Boleslav built his new administrative strongholds close to the ruined centres of the earlier princes¹⁶. For the people in the surrounding area, the stronghold became the centre of their lives — the courts were here, and it was here that the Sunday market and Mass were held. This creation of a state administration was at the same time a Christianisation of the greater part of the country, which had remained pagan up until this time. Boleslav apparently established and supported 22 new churches, obviously all within his new strongholds.

Another important source of income, particularly in the form of the ready cash required for the purchase of arms and armour for the military, was international trade, especially that in slaves for export to the Arab world, and to the Caliphate of Córdoba in particular. These slaves were taken in the wars to the north and east, and thus did not fall under the Church’s ban on the sale of Christian captives to unbelievers, particularly the Jews who dominated this international trade. Prague became one of this trade’s most important centres, and Boleslav thus maintained regular diplomatic relations with the Cordovan caliph. It was only natural, therefore, that he would attempt to mint his own coins, which would serve not only in both long distance and local, internal trade, but which also made possible the payment of taxes in cash. This step was first taken in around 965, and the model used was the denarius of Henry II of Bavaria. It was clearly at this time, too, that Boleslav introduces a tax of 12 (or 15?) denarii annually to be paid by all freemen. Its name, the „tax for peace” (*tributum pacis*) was derived from the fact that it was justified by the most important duty of the prince’s government — the administration of the „peace”, understood in „pagan” or ancient Slav terms of the period not merely as the absence of strife between people, but the overarching just, „righteous,

¹⁵ The whole subject and literature are summarised by A. Gąsiorowski 1975: 308–312.

¹⁶ J. Sláma 1987: 182ff.

true" world order. In Hungary an identical tax was introduced, the „*liberi denarii*", which was a „tax for freedom". Both taxes confirmed the free status of their payers, and were thus „privileges".

While Boleslav co-operated faithfully with Otto I after 950, this did not mean that he did not also follow his own policies. His domains to the north were contiguous with those of the principality of Gniezno, which from at least the 940's onwards built in Poland a structure similar to that established by the Přemyslids in Prague at the turn of the 10th century¹⁷. They, like Boleslav, also had an interest in the profits from trade with the Baltic region. Mieszko, the Prince of Gniezno, attempted to extend his rule over the great trading city of Wolin at the mouth of the Oder, which was part of the union of the Weleti; the latter were old friends of the Czechs, as it was from the Weletian Havolanni that Boleslav's mother, Drahomíra, had come. This led Mieszko to a meeting with Boleslav, a second, more important reason for which being that the former had come to realise that the state he was building must attain the social life style and culture then to be met with in both Bohemia and the Empire. This in turn led to the decision to accept baptism — not, however, from the Empire itself, but from Bohemia¹⁸. Boleslav supported him in his war against the Weleti with the „gift" of a detachment of his warriors, and some time in 963–964 gave him his own daughter Dobrava in marriage; Mieszko promised, meanwhile, to be baptised. In 966 Mieszko was baptised by one Bishop Jordan after Bohemian mediation, and Boleslav was perhaps his godfather. This made it possible for Mieszko to open relations with Otto I and become, like Boleslav, a „friend" of the Empire. The alliance of the two principalities was not directed against the Empire, but was forged out of identical aims — both needed to legitimize their new statehood, and obtain recognition of it in the eyes of the Christian world.

In pursuing these aims they chose — not by chance — the same route as that followed by Great Moravia in the 9th century. This route led to the second great authority of the Western Christian world, the Papacy, and consisted in the establishment of provincial Churches with their own bishops, and the attainment of independence for them by the granting of archdioceses on the part of the Pope. This solution had first occurred to Rostislav, and its realisation had brought the brothers St Constantine/Cyril and St Methodius as teachers from Constantinople, their task to train priests from the native population, in order that a separate provincial Church, independent of the Frankish Church, could be founded in Moravia. The means to this end was to be a separate archbishopric directly under the authority of Rome. This plan was then taken up by Svatopluk, who offered Moravia as a seat for the Pannonian Archdiocese to Methodius¹⁹, and ultimately in 880 approached Rome for the establishment of a sepa-

¹⁷ Z. Kurnatowska 1984: 81–91; and 1991: 77–98; 1995: 133–148; 1997: 125–135.

¹⁸ On the „baptism of Poland" see especially G. Labuda, 1987, I: 55ff., which comes out in favour of a Czech origin for Polish Christianity. H. Łowmiański (1973: 575ff.), prefers to credit it to the Empire, and includes a bibliography on the subject. See also: S. Trawkowski 1993: 51–72, and G. Labuda 1994: 73–98.

¹⁹ On the complicated question of Methodius' Pannonian archbishopric cf. the overview by M. Eggers 1996: 17–30 of course with an impossible resolution. Subsequently, D. Třeštík 1997: 277ff.

rate Moravian archdiocese with Methodius at its head. Svatopluk thus gave his lands to St Peter and submitted to the Papacy as the other universal authority of Christendom, thus become a legitimate member thereof with all the appurtenant privileges²⁰. This recipe for circumventing the hegemonial advances of the Empire was not forgotten, and was clearly in the background of both Boleslav's and Mieszko's attempts to obtain bishoprics for their lands.

Thus it was that in 967–968 two embassies arrived in Rome at the same time, one from Mieszko which included Bishop Jordan, and one from Boleslav, led by his daughter Mlada, a nun of the Niedermünster house, an offshoot of the Monastery of St Emmeram in Regensburg. The Pope gave his blessing to the bishoprics proposed by both, but while at Gniezno there were no problems, and Jordan was duly invested there in 968, the Czech request stumbled over the rights in Canon Law of the Bishops of Regensburg over Bohemia²¹.

Another complication was that Boleslav had requested two bishoprics, one for Moravia²² and one for Prague. Moravia was the most important, as Boleslav had the argument that since a Moravian diocese had existed in the 9th century, he was actually only requesting its restoration. In the background, of course, was the hope that the diocese would be restored as the Moravian archbishopric. Naturally, over everything hung the threat of a papal prohibition of Methodius' Slavonic liturgy; Boleslav therefore had to ensure that nothing of this kind was counted on in Moravia or Prague. This he was able to do without difficulty, since the Slavonic liturgy did not exist in his lands, even though the Slavonic script was used²³. However, in the event no such ban was promoted by the Curia — indeed, use of the Slavonic liturgy was recommended²⁴.

²⁰ L. E. Havlik 1969: 10–32; and 1965: 100ff.; generally, J. Fried 1980.

²¹ Overview of the older literature: A. Naegle 1918: 385–517. From this in particular: H. Spangenberg 1900: 758–775; W. Schulte 1901: 285–297; R. Holtzmann 1918: 177–193. Also V. Nowotný 1913: 583–592, 609–611; F. Dvorník 1949: 75–83, Z. Fiala 1962: 53ff.; H. Büttner 1965: 1–22; J. Kadlec 1967: 29–45; O. Králík 1968: 25–69; F. Graus 1969: 5–42; H. Łowmiański 1970: 433ff.; O. Králík 1970/71: 51–57; P. Hilsch 1972: 6–16; G. Zimmermann 1973: 38–60; J. Kadlec (writing as V.A. Kaiser) 1973: 9–23; O. Králík 1976: 157–168; R. Nový 1993: 13–19; G. Labuda 1994: 94–96.

²² The only source is a document of the Archbishop of Mainz Willigis from 975, publ. M. Stimming 1932, Nr. 219: 135: „Quapropter auctoritate ipsius (d h. „domini pape”) astipulantibus quoque assessoribus nostris venerabilibus episcopis Spirensi, Warmaciensi, Pragensi, Moraviensi pro manifesto parricidio Gozmarum ab officio et beneficio deposuimus...”. H. Koller 1996: 491, has attempted to challenge its authenticity with reference to the work of K.H. Rexroth 1957: 203–230, from which according to Koller it follows that the document bears traces of the *diktat* of the High Middle Ages, and reflects High Medieval attitudes. Rexroth however claims the opposite, and shows convincingly that the document is genuine.

²³ There are only two arguments for the existence of the Slavonic liturgy in 10th century Bohemia: the variously and thus far not convincingly dated Kiev MSS, and the supposed, also controversial, traces of Eastern prayers for example in the sham tonsuring of St Wenceslas in the 1st Old Slavonic Legend, cf. F.V. Mareš 1974: 95–110. As evidence for a living liturgy these are far from satisfactory.

²⁴ The letter of Pope Stephen V to Svatopluk in 885, MMFH III: 224ff.: „Divina autem officia et sacra mysteria ac missarum sollempnia, quae idem Methodios Sclavorum lingua celebrare praesuppsit ... interdicimus, excepto quod ad simplicis populi et non intelligentis aedificationem attinet, si evangelii vel apostoli expositio ab eruditiss eadem lingua annuntietur, et largimur et exhortamur et si ut frequentissime fiat monemus, ut omnia lingua laudet Deum et confiteatur ei”.

In support of his plans, Boleslav embarked upon a most unusual route — the translation and ultimate canonisation of the brother that he had murdered. The legends have it that this came to him in the third year after the slaying, *i.e.* in 938, but all the indications are that in fact these events took place in the 960s, at the time when Boleslav began to negotiate for the bishoprics. A local saint from the ruling dynasty was certainly a compelling argument, but Boleslav had other motives: in legend, Wenceslas is depicted above all as he who freed the imprisoned, rejected the death sentence, tore down the gallows and granted pardons. This is, with the exception of taxes, a fairly precise account of what the state as an institution had brought to free Czechs — none of it had been known under the old tribal system. There is nothing strange in those opposed to Boleslav's state, which had brought none of these things, speaking of „good Prince Wenceslas”. For all of these reasons, Boleslav was resolved to turn his victim and uncomfortably ideal ruler into a Christian saint; this may have been somewhat surprising, but was certainly an admirable and for the future highly successful politico-ideological move.

When he died in 972, Boleslav left his son and heir of the same name a large, strong realm, and of course a range of unresolved issues, above all the question of both bishoprics. This latter was helped along by the death, also in 972, of Michael, Bishop of Regensburg, and the enthronement of his successor the reformist Bishop Wolfgang, who was more ready to negotiate on the issue. If he had not already participated in the discussions, the Emperor would have had to do so now, as no reduction in the size of the Regensburg diocese was possible without his agreement. When, however, Otto I died in 973 and the Bavarian Duke Henry II the Quarrelsome led a revolt against his successor, supported by Boleslav II, the negotiations were interrupted to such an extent that the consecration of the two bishops for Prague and Moravia did not take place until 976.

None of this altered the fact that Boleslav II, like Mieszko, did not feel bound to the same friendship with the Empire as he had under Otto I, and remained supportive of Henry the Quarrelsome both politically and militarily; Bohemia was thus the main objective in Ottonian attacks on Henry that met with little success. Henry, however, lost in the end, and Boleslav was reconciled with Otto II in 978. When in 982 the Czechs elected a new bishop, Vojtěch (Adalbert) Slavník to replace the deceased Dietmar, Otto II welcomed him to the congress at Verona in 983 with unusual warmth, not only allowing his investiture without delay, but also emphasising Prague's importance by personally commissioning a new legend of St Wenceslas for the Empire from Bishop Gumpold of Mantua. This *rapprochement* did not last long, however, not only because of Otto II's death soon after, but in particular because the new Empire of the Saxon Ottonians faced a deep crisis; this was marked by the defeat of Otto II by the Saracens at Capo Colonne in southern Italy in 982, and peaked the following year with the great uprising of the Polabian Slavs, led by the Weleti, who at this time took for their confederation the name of the Luticians — the „people of the savage god”. In three weeks, the revolt swept away all that the Saxons had created in the Polabian Slav lands. At the same time, Henry II the Quarrelsome became active again, attempting to seize

the wardship of the young Otto III, and aiming for the throne. His allies were once more to be Boleslav II, Mieszko and the Abodorite Prince Mstivoj. Mieszko, however, feared that that Boleslav II would ally with his „old friends” the Luticians, who were of course Mieszko’s mortal foes. When in 985 Henry again foundered and renewed his own allegiances, Mieszko took a crucial step in 986 — renouncing his traditional friendship with Bohemia he attacked both the Cracow region and Silesia, clearly taking both without a major war. The borderlands of the tribe of Lędziane, with the Przemyśl and Czerwień strongholds near Volhynia had even earlier (981) been captured by the Kievan Grand Prince (and later Saint) Vladimir I. Around 990, Boleslav with the aid of the Lutice attempted to regain the lands seized by Mieszko with the support of the Empress Theophano, but was unsuccessful.

In a few short years the Přemyslid domains had been utterly cast down; the state of the two Boleslavs faced a structural crisis that was deepening at an ever-faster rate. The flow of tribute and booty, particularly slaves from annexed lands, which was used in the main to maintain Boleslav’s armies (and which was the main source of income for the Bohemian magnates) had ceased; additional difficulties were caused by the need to maintain garrisons returning from Silesia and the Cracow region.

The gloomy situation that dominated Bohemia was also reflected in the fate of Adalbert, the Bishop of Prague. His career had started famously — he came from a family which was obviously an offshoot of the Přemyslid line, and his father Slavnik had been entrusted by Boleslav I with governing most of north-eastern Bohemia, where as Boleslav’s relative he ruled as a powerful prince. It was therefore natural that when Dietmar, Bishop of Prague, died in 982, Adalbert — who had recently returned from studying at Magdeburg — was chosen as his successor. Boleslav II’s brother Christian, who had studied at Regensburg, was also available, but had not yet reached the thirty years of age required for ordination. Adalbert tried to exercise his office after the pattern of the powerful Ottonian bishops, although in doing so he clashed with the many of the customs of the provincial Church in Bohemia, often inherited from the Great Moravian period, which did not match the strict requirements of the reforms prevalent in the contemporary Church in the Empire. He also clashed with local laws when, for example, he opposed the Sunday markets introduced by Boleslav I as a means of compelling people in the castle wards to attend Mass. He also insisted that his priests — contrary to custom — be celibate, even though he knew that they were poor and could not support themselves without wives. He came into serious conflict with the magnates when he tried to strictly enforce the ban on the sale of Christian slaves to the Jews — this had become a problem particularly since the halt of eastward expansion, and the number of pagan prisoners of war had ceased to be sufficient.

Initially, however, Adalbert had his successes, especially when in circumstances that are unclear, perhaps after the death of the first bishop, the Moravian diocese also came under his administration²⁵. This brought him missionary and other duties in

²⁵ *Granum cathalogi praesulum Moraviae*, a later compilation from the 15th century, claims that the

Silesia and Little Poland, but also in the adjacent Hungarian lands. At this time he undoubtedly began to consider the archbishopric — that supposedly „with seven suffragans” which had existed in Moravia in the 9th century, and which had been referred to by Boleslav I when he negotiated for the Prague and Moravian dioceses. This was not the only issue, there was also the question of ensuring the „sovereignty” of the lands of the Czech Boleslav by gifting them to St Peter, as Svatopluk had achieved in 880 with Great Moravia.

Methodius’ archbishopric had also included territories occupied by the Magyars in the 10th century, and this at least gave Adalbert the justification for conducting missions into the Hungarian lands, hitherto the preserve of Passau in particular. In his time, Adalbert forged links not only with the court of the Hungarian Prince Géza²⁶, but also with the lands of Mieszko I, where the Bohemian Church had considerable influence. It was probably he who introduced Mieszko I to the plan for the restoration of Methodius’ archbishopric. Mieszko named one of his sons Svatopluk²⁷, evidently after the ruler of Great Moravia, and clearly with a view to giving his lands of St Peter, along with that all that went with them — which Mieszko managed some time before the year 990.

When he had conquered and, with the support of the Empress Theophano held, the Bohemian territories in Silesia and Little Poland, Mieszko intended to assure his gains by way of the papacy, and at the same time to obtain legitimacy („sovereignty”) for his state, by having them declared a gift to St Peter, and clearly at the same time meant to obtain an archbishopric. This directly affected Adalbert, without whose agreement it was not possible to take Silesian and Little Poland territories out of the Prague and Moravian dioceses. Adalbert himself was from 989 to be found in Rome, whence he had removed from Prague both because of his disagreements with the Bohemian magnates and obviously also because his political stance in favour of rapprochement with Mieszko. Here in Rome, Adalbert finally gave Mieszko his canonical agreement to the planned archdiocese²⁸. While from the Czech perspective this was treachery, his reasons were different; he was concerned with the ordering of the Central European area as a whole — and particularly of the power structures of the Bohemian Boleslav, the Polish territories of Mieszko, and most probably Arpád Hungary — according to the principles worked out by Svatopluk and Methodius. He wanted to obtain for the new states legitimacy alongside the Saxon Ottonian Empire. His plans to obtain an archbishopric for Boleslav’s realm was never abandoned, but put aside in recognition of the *status quo*.

unification came in the third year of Adalbert’s episcopate, *i.e.* in 985 (MMFH I, p.316). R. Holtzmann 1918: 189ff, and H. Büttner 1965: 17ff, have taken this seriously, and built other assumptions onto it. However, it is impossible, as the author of the *Granum* had no other source than the 14th century Chronicle of Pulkava („*The Old Slavonic Moravian Annals*”, fabricated from the *Granum* by L. E. Havlík 1987: 1–38, are merely products of Havlík’s fantasies).

²⁶ T. von Bogay 1976: 9–36; G. Adriányi 1993: 9–19; Gy. Györffy 1988–89: 75–86; R. Marsina 1992: 409–421; Basic study on the time of Stephan: Gy. Györffy 1969: 79–113.

²⁷ *Thietmari Chronicon*, IV. 58: 225, cf. J. Hertel 1980: 101ff.

²⁸ C. Warnke 1980: 150ff.

When it was that Boleslav II was apprised of this point of view is not certain, but it is known that he was reconciled with Adalbert in 992, and by way of considerable concessions (including amongst others the establishment of the monastery at Břevnov near Prague in 993) induced him to return to Bohemia. In Rome, Boleslav's brother Christian met with Adalbert, and then wrote the triple legend of the Bohemian Saints Wenceslas and Ludmilla, and also of Saints Cyril and Methodius, bringing Czech Christianity from Moravia, thus supporting Adalbert's programme for the restoration of the „seven bishoprics” of Archbishop Methodius²⁹. The reconciliation, however, did not last long: Boleslav became gravely ill and could not restrain the magnates, who would never forgive the bishop for interfering in their interests. Serious incidents convinced Adalbert to flee his land again in 994, at which point he clearly offered his office to Christian. The latter refused it, claiming that Adalbert had no quarrel with the prince, and that on the contrary, they would be able to implement the plan that he and Adalbert had drawn up. Adalbert passed into the quiet of the Aventine monastery in Rome, but in the meantime the magnates vented their anger on the settlement of his brother at wealthy Libice; taking advantage of the fact that its garrison was participating in an expedition against the Luticians, they raided Libice on September 27th 995, murdering Adalbert's brothers and sacking and razing both this and the family's other strongholds. For Adalbert, this was the final straw that led him to decide never to return to his homeland. He undertook a pilgrimage around the holy places of France, spent some time with Otto III, and departed on a mission to the Prussians where on April 24th 997 he met his death.

Otto clearly felt responsible, and did sincere penance, linking it to his programme for the „*renovatio imperii Romanorum*”, which he vigorously pursued, executing the Pope and Anti-Pope. At the end of 999 he installed Adalbert's brother Radzim/Gaudentius as „Archbishop of St Adalbert” in some as yet unidentified see, and set out on a journey to the grave of his friend at Gniezno. It had been decided to use this opportunity to put into force what was deemed to be Adalbert's legacy, fulfilling his programme to restore the imperial dignity by co-operation with new states, particularly to the East in „Sclavonia” and the Hungarian lands, by gaining for them not only titles of kingship, but also independent archbishoprics underpinned by the granting of lands to St Peter by the papacy. This was in fact the old solution of Svatopluk and Methodius, and it is thus hard to maintain that it was Adalbert's plan alone. Ultimately, it is likely that Otto reasoned that the „archbishopric of St Adalbert” would be instigated in Prague, and that he finally decided on settling it in Gniezno when, on his journey to Poland, he was brought news of the dismal situation in Bohemia — Boleslav II had died at the beginning of February and under the rule of his successor Boleslav III the land had quickly fallen into turmoil. The arrangements made by Otto III in Gniezno with Boleslav I the Brave,

²⁹ Christiani, *Vita et passio...* 1978, c. 1: 14: „(Method) ... ab ipso principe, qui partibus in illis tunc dominabatur et imperabat universe terre ceu magnificus imperator, statuitur summus pontifex, habens sub se septem eiusdem sanctitatis pontifices”. An attempt by J. Kadlec 1976: 61–70, to explain the seven tokens of the canonised as relating to the seven insignia of Methodius (the *semipočetniki*) is rather unlikely — this is a tradition dating to considerably later than the 10th century, cf. E. Trapp 1982: 469–483.

—i.e. an archdiocese and the title of King for Bolesław the Brave himself — were from the start not undisputed, and paved the way for later complications. Stephen I of Hungary, who had obtained both an archbishopric and a royal title for his successors, had no such difficulties. Only Bohemia remained, in the end, with nothing — paradoxically, this was because it was the most advanced in terms of state structure, and because such maturity meant that it had come to the first of the obviously unavoidable crises in its power structure, a point which Poland and Hungary were to reach only around the mid-11th century.

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The results of all of these processes, peaking around the year 1000, were to be permanent for all of the parties concerned. The new Central European power structures of the Přemyslids, Piasts and Árpáds became legitimate, and also equal parts of Christian-Antique Europe. Nothing was changed by the fact that the new Emperor, Henry II, rejected the policies of his predecessors and after 1002 returned to the Empire's traditional hegemonistic policies. Conditions and assumptions changed in the East to such a degree, however, that the Empire was left with nothing more than a vested interest in balancing the power of its eastern neighbours, preventing any one of them from growing at the expense of the others. Only seemingly paradoxically, it was this that was to ensure their stability.

All of the Central European states survived the crises in their power structures, despite the very serious threats to their existences. All of them learned their lessons, and moved on from parasitic plundering to the management of their own internal resources. Unusually, this strengthened the *dirigiste* state model, with its roots in late Antiquity, and inherited by Bohemia, Poland and Hungary in a form passed on by Great Moravia. It braked the modernisation process, the emancipation of the emergent nobility was heavily restrained within the framework of their „offices”, and of course the Church was enclosed in the provincial framework, entirely subordinate to what the state administration decreed for it. On the other hand, however, this „egalitarian” model, not recognising anyone as privileged, nor as other than a „free subject” of the prince, formed the basis for the collective self-consciousness of a „political nation”, for which domestic intellectuals — mainly from the ranks of the Western-educated secular priesthood — created their own ideological concepts centring particularly on local dynastic saints, from which sprang the „eternal sovereigns”. In this way the concept of the nation state arose, subject not only to a temporary sovereign ruling in fact, but primarily to an „eternal” sovereign, and thus a „state”. This collectivist concept was the basis for the modernisation tendencies which arrived in the 12th century as an „import” from the West. This, though, stimulated only to varying *degrees* that which broke down the rigid framework of the dirigiste state, particularly the economic power of the nobility whose land holdings made a self-sufficient existence possible and freed them from dependence on service to the sovereign. The result was the extensive colonisation of forest land, the awakening of local exchange, and the fast growth in the role of money in general.

All of this had peaked by the time the Central European lands were touched by the great wave of modernisation that gradually rolled from the end of the 11th century across the German lands towards the East. The Czech lands were affected at the beginning of the 13th century, firstly in Moravia, with then in Bohemia itself from the middle of that century. One of its more spectacular manifestations was in the mass foundation of towns, universally with the assistance of German colonists — the participation of the latter in the colonisation of forest lands was far less significant. What was important, however, was the emancipation of the nobility. While they held the great majority of the (originally „state”) land in the realm, they did not have full and incontestable rights over it, particularly in terms of feudal rights. It did not empower them individually as was the case in the west, where the buttresses of ownership were (at least according to the model) the complex feudal relationships of the individual, again acting „collectively”. The old „political nation” transformed itself into a „provincial community” (*Landesgemeinde*) of „landsmen”, stakeholders in „the land”; at the end of the 13th century they created their own provincial court at which the „provincial ledger” (*Landtafel*) operated. Entries in this ledger guaranteed allodial ownership. At the same time, however, the provincial community restricted the king to the area of his more narrow rule (the *dominium speciale*), and granted itself a more general rule (the *dominium generale*). In fact, this „privatised” the state in that ownership of the land also assured rule over the people upon it, that is, full territorial supremacy. The model of state and society (or „state society”) which had stood at the inception of the Central European states and nations was definitively liquidated in this way. Bohemia and — to a lesser extent — others in Central Europe now stood on a new, „modern” footing.

For both, the ascent of the Central European states „to Europe”, which was at the same time their fulfilment as well as their „brake”, arrested in the *dirigiste* state model, the year 1000 was decisive both symbolically and materially. For Poland it was a „golden year”, for Bohemia an „iron year”, but this was true only in the shorter term perspective. From the point of view of centuries, this was throughout Europe a year of foundation, completion and culmination.

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THE MAKING OF THE CHRISTIAN KINGDOM IN HUNGARY

Marianne Sághy*

In the preface to his *Chronicle*, Raoul Glaber justified his historical enterprise with the following words of mandatory modesty:

according to all evidence, quite a number of things happened in the Roman world as well as beyond the seas and in the lands of the barbarians which, if preserved in memory, would be very useful to men and would particularly warn them to be prudent¹.

Glaber had his point. The foundations of „a Christian and feudal” Europe² were laid down in the eight decades between 987 — when a new dynasty came to power in *Francia* — to 1066 — when the lands „beyond the sea” were conquered by a Christian descendant of heathen Viking warlords. By the year 1000, many things had happened in the formerly „barbarian lands” of Central Europe as well, where three new Christian kingdoms came to be established: Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary.

Among the new royal dynasties of Europe perhaps no one cared more about the proper Christian *étiquette*, that by that time closely surrounded the mystery of power, than the Hungarian ruler. The very foundation of Stephen’s *regnum* at the beginning of the new millennium diffused a heavy Christian symbolism. Created at the dawn of a new era governed by Christ, the Hungarian kingdom wanted to be *seen* to be Christian.

Historians of religion know all too well that changes in the style of government are best introduced by a religious conversion. Conversion to Catholic Christianity served not only the survival of Hungarians as an ethnic group in the middle of Europe — as opposed to the destiny of other nomadic peoples such as the Huns and the Avars, who had previously established themselves in the Carpathian basin — but also the strengthening of princely power in the case of Géza (977–997) and spectacular royal centralization in the case of his son Stephen (997–1038).

Modern historiography often explained Saint Stephen’s achievement in terms of *Realpolitik*. Yet if we eliminate the saint and focus exclusively on the statesman, we

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¹ R. Glaber 1996: 21.

² Cf. D. Barthélemy 1999.

amputate probably one of the most important aspect of his complex character and sketch but an anachronistic portrait of the man. Catholic faith was Stephen's deep inner belief, his profound conviction, and the ideal according to which he lived. As a follower of Christ, Stephen meant to realize the Christian ideal of *rex iustus et pius* in his life. It is important to emphasize the intricate Christian symbolism which governed Stephen's decisions in founding his kingdom and in living his life. For, in his case, we are dealing with a person who had ambitions to be part of the written history of mankind: the history of Salvation. Stephen sought to arrange the great events of his life according to the Christian calendar: he was crowned at the moment when, according to the Apocalypse, „Christ began his rule on earth”; he commemorated his *tricennalia* by offering to the basilica of Székesfehérvár (Alba Regia) a sumptuous casula whose pictures embroidered in gold celebrated the beginning of Christ's public ministry³; and he aspired to die on the day when the Holy Virgin was taken to Heaven.

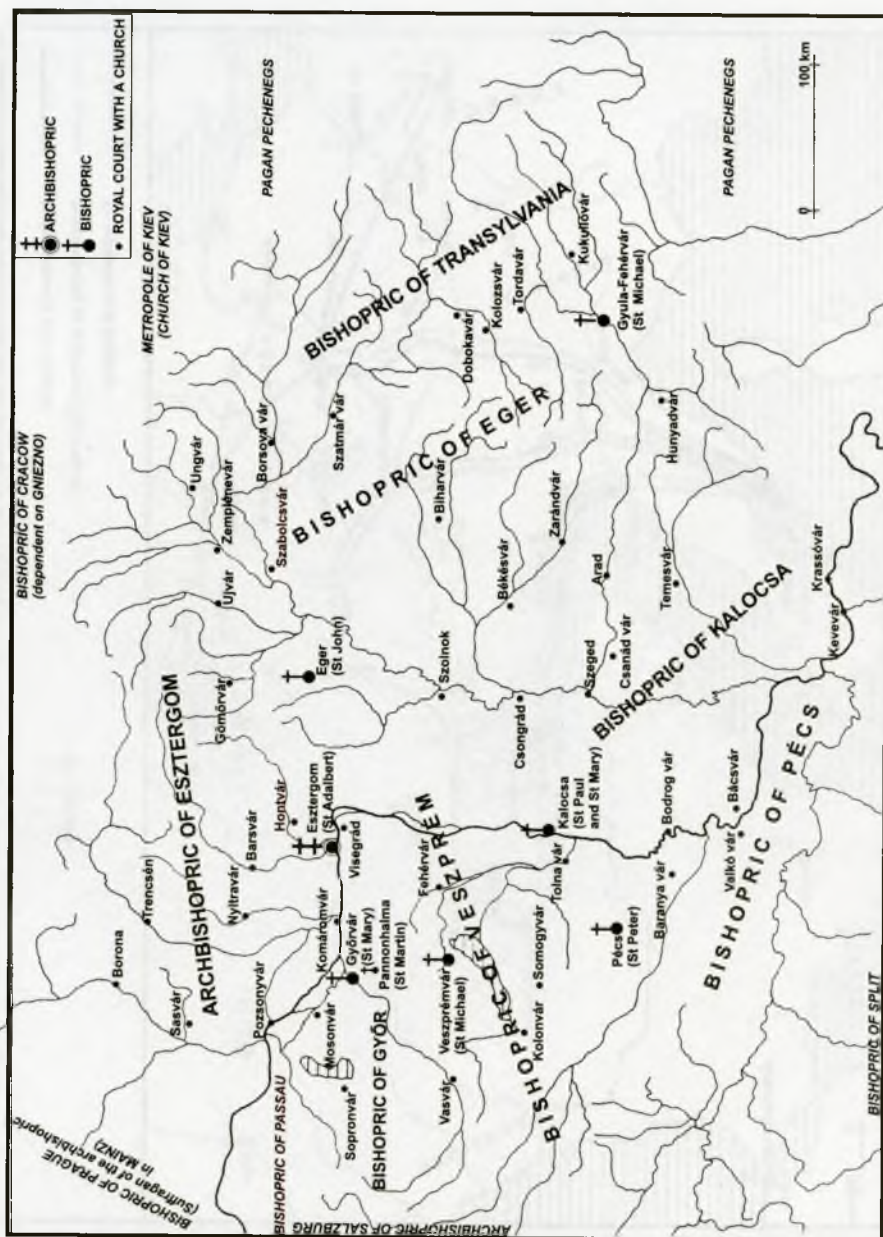
Following a brief survey of early Hungarian history, I will attempt to present the extant (scarce) historical evidence to illustrate the political and diplomatic steps taken by Stephen of Hungary in 1000 that led to his royal coronation on January 1, 1001. What difference did Stephen's coronation and the foundation of the Christian kingdom make in Hungary? Are we dealing with a „recycling of power” — a power that the Árpáadian princes *de facto* possessed since the period of the conquest of the country in 896 — or with a fundamentally new institution which led to the re-structuring of traditional Hungarian society and the introduction of certain elements of a hierarchy more or less similar to Western feudal structures?

THE WAY TOWARDS THE WEST

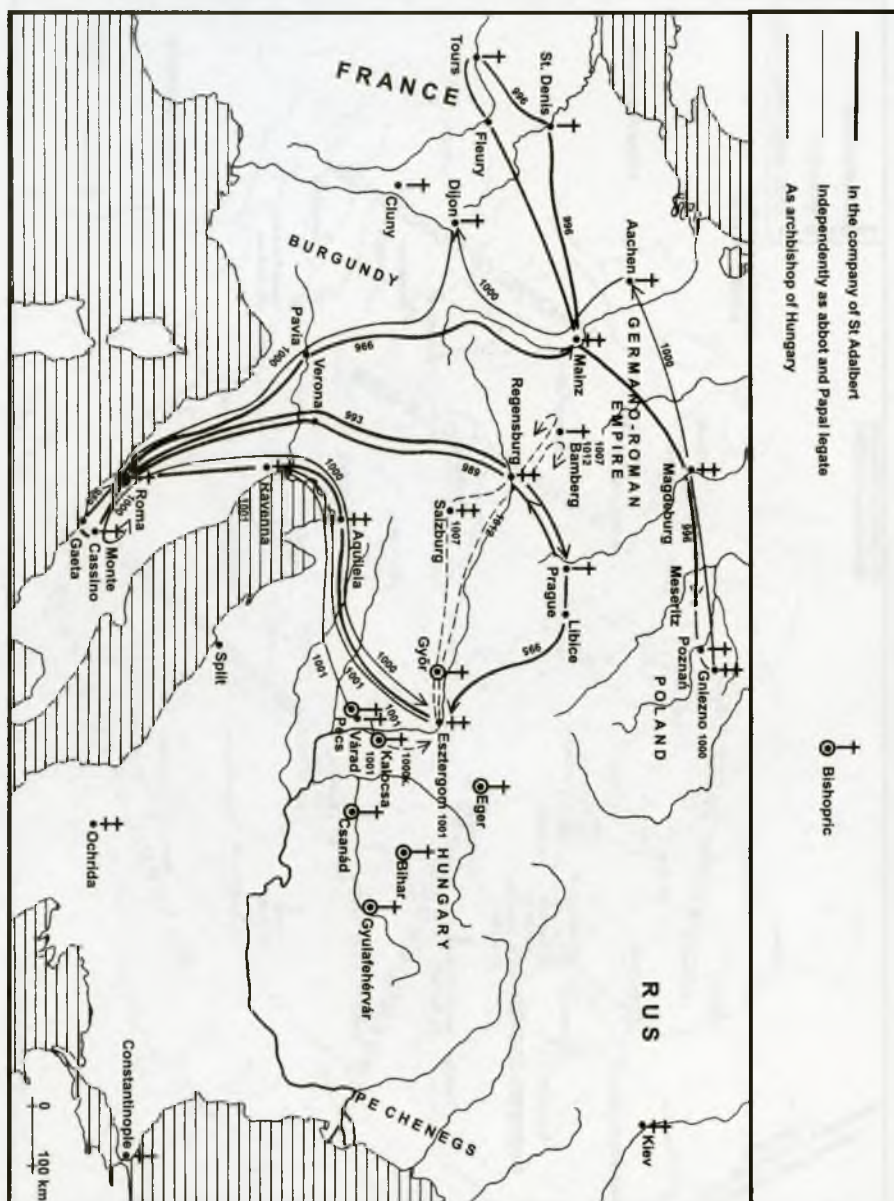
The Hungarians, a semi-nomadic people from the Asian steppe-land, were forced to find a new home in the Carpathian basin in around 896. Pushed by Pecheneg warriors, another nomadic confederation, who attacked their settlements at the confluence of the Volga and the Kama, the Hungarians' search for a new country westward, across the Carpathian mountain-range, was the last episode of the great migration of nomadic peoples that had started in the third century A.D.

The origins of the Hungarian people, just as their language, is lost in the mists of time. Part of the Finno-Ugrian (or Uralo-Altaic) linguistic family, the Hungarians — who call themselves Magyar, probably after the leader of one of the seven tribes, Megyer — joined the great Turk (Onogur and Khazar) confederations of the vast steppe-lands. In the eighth and ninth centuries, Hungarian tribes lived north of the Black Sea within the framework of the Khazar Empire, where they had the opportunity to get acquainted with all three major forms of monotheism: the Khazar *kagan* and his court adopted Judaism; town-dwellers professed Christianity; and the military elite was

³ É. Kovács 1988: 133–144, reprinted in eadem 1998: 401–414.



The kingdom of Hungary in about 1000 A.D.



The itineraries of trips undertaken by Asric

conquered by Islam. Thus, although the Hungarians continued to practice a form of shamanism, they knew about Christianity well before they crossed the Carpathians. Referring to ninth-century events, the legends of Saints Cyril and Methodius twice mention Hungarians who, apparently, know perfectly well the Christian *comme-il-faut*: in the hagiographic narrative, first they let Cyril go unharmed when he recites the Our Father; then a Hungarian „king” (*rex*) offers sumptuous hospitality and precious gifts to Methodius, asking the holy man not to forget to mention him in his prayers⁴.

Grave goods dating from the Conquest period also show that a number of Hungarians professed Christianity by the time they reached the fertile land watered by the Tisza and the Danube. The Christianization of the Hungarians followed the „Bulgarian way” in the beginning: first enemies, then allies of the Byzantine Empire, Hungarians were baptized in the Byzantine court and by Greek missionary bishops active in the territory of Hungary.

Between 896–955, the Hungarian military elite led troops westwards as far as to France and Spain to sack cities and monasteries alike in frightening raids. The period of „military adventures” ended with the disaster at the field of Lech (near Augsburg) where the Hungarian army was defeated by Emperor Otto I. At the news of the Hungarians’ defeat, Emperor Constantine froze the flow of Byzantine gold to Hungary that had previously sustained the Hungaro–Byzantine alliance. The new leader of the Hungarian confederation, Taksony (955–970) and his son Géza in this difficult situation decided to turn away from Byzantium.

The new, Western orientation was introduced by Taksony’s embassy to the Pope around 961–962. The Hungarian prince asked for Latin missionaries so that he could follow the work of evangelization in his country. His request was fulfilled, but the Roman clerics sent to Hungary were captured by the German emperor. Victorious over the Hungarians, Otto I wanted to incorporate Hungary through a bishop *of his own* into the *orbis Christianus*.

Otto did not fail in his expectations. The marriage of his son with the Byzantine princess Theophano — celebrated in Rome in 972 — meant for Hungary a serious menace. The alliance of the two empires threatened the very survival of the Hungarian people in his new homeland. Géza acted immediately: he sent an embassy to Otto and asked the emperor to send missionary bishops to the Hungarian court. The envoys met the emperor in Sankt Gallen in August 972: Otto on the spot chose a monk, Prunwart (Bruno) as a missionary to Hungary. Consecrated by the bishop of Mainz, Bruno of Sankt Gallen baptized Géza and his son Vaik probably before Easter 973⁵. Both received the name „Stephen” in baptism — in honour of the patron saint of the bishopric of Passau — Stephen the protomartyr. On this occasion, some 5000 men and women were also baptized⁶. Géza and his wife Sarolt took baptism as yet another precious

⁴ *Les légendes...* 1934; M. Gyóni 1938.

⁵ *Pruwarti ep. Iste s. Galli...*, MHG Necrol. I. 466; A. Gombos 1937, II: 1456.

⁶ *Interim autem divinis conspectibus se probabiliem reddidit, ut omnes militiae suae comites ad veri dei culturam converteret. Quos vero alienae viae sectatores reperit, minis terroribusque subiugavit. Legenda minor...* 1938, II: 344.

„decoration” but did not discontinue offering sacrifices to the old gods. When rebuked by a priest, Géza bluntly retorted that „he was wealthy and powerful enough to offer gifts to as many gods as he liked”⁷. Géza, the proud *magnus senior* did not even dream about becoming a *servus Dei*. He was satisfied with the power conferred upon him by the Hungarian confederation and behaved like a „small god” of the endless *puszta*. His wife, the beautiful, but belligerent Sarolt, daughter of the chief Gyula of Transylvania, was baptized by a Greek missionary bishop, yet her way of life was far from being that of a model Christian⁸. On his visit to the Hungarian princely court, Adalbert of Prague deplored the state and quality of Christianity found there: „a Christianity infected with paganism, worse, indeed, than paganism”. Adalbert met the same problems in Esztergom which made him flee Prague.

Géza’s son, Stephen, however, was raised by clerics. He made friends with those Czech monks who left the monastery of Brewnow together with Adalbert and found refuge in Hungary, such as Radla, whom Stephen liked very much and who later became the first archbishop of Hungary. Deeply imbibed with Christian teaching and Christian morals, Stephen was mesmerized by Adalbert, who exercised the same fascination on him as he did on young Otto III.

THE YEAR 1000: THE YEAR OF SAINT ADALBERT IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Et cum consummati fuerint mille anni, solvetur Satanas de carcere suo, et exibit, et seducet gentes quae sunt super quatuor angulos terrae, Gog et Magog; et congregabit eos in praelium, quorum numerus est sicut arena maris. Et ascenderunt super latitudinem terrae, et circuierunt castra sanctorum et civitatem dilectam. Et descendit ignis a Deo de caelo, et devoravit eos; et diabolus, qui seducebat eos, missus est in stagnum ignis et sulphuris, ubi est bestia et pseudo-propheta cruciabantur die ac nocte in saecula saeculorum.

Et vidi thronum magnum candidum, et sedentem super eum, a cuius conspectu fugit terra et caelum, et locus non est inventus eis. Et vidi mortuos, magnos et pusillos, stantes in conspectu throni; et libri aperti sunt, et alius liber apertus est qui est vitae, et iudicati sunt mortui ex his quae scripta erant in libris, secundum opera ipsorum. Et dedit mare mortuos qui in eo erant, et mors et infernus dederunt mortuos suos qui in ipsis erant, et iudicatum est de singulis secundum opera ipsorum. Et infernus et mors missi sunt in stagnum ignis. Haec est mors secunda. Et qui non inventus est in libro vitae scriptus, missus est in stagnum ignis. Et vidi caelum novum et terram novam.

(Apoc. XX–XXI)

⁷ *Hic Deo omnipotenti variisque deorum inlusionibus immolans, cum ab antistite suo ob hoc accusaretur, divitem se et ad haec facienda satis potentem affirmavit.* — Thietmar, Lib. VIII. 4 (1980: 496)

⁸ *Uxor autem eius Beleknegini, id est pulchra domina Sclavonice dicta, supra modum bibebat et in equo more militis iter agens quendam virum iracundiae nimio fervore occidit. Manus haec polluta fustum melius tangeret et mentem vesanam patientia refrenaret.* — Thietmar, *Die Chronik...* 1935.

Expectations concerning the year 1000⁹ were fashioned by the vision of Saint John recorded in the Apocalypse. What was evident in John's text was that after the disastrous year 1000 — the destruction brought about by Satan set free — a new era would dawn upon humanity: Heaven and earth made anew by God, the kingdom of Christ will come in glory. This moment, the beginning of the new millennium — the millennium of Christ's kingdom — was chosen by Stephen of Hungary for his royal coronation.

Only one contemporary source records the event of the coronation. Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg, writing around 1018, notes that „out of the clemency and to the urging of the emperor, Vaik [Stephen], who set up bishoprics in his country, received a crown and blessings”¹⁰. What is the connection between the establishment of the ecclesiastical structure and the foundation of the kingdom? What prompted Stephen to „set up bishoprics” in 1000? From whom did he receive his crown?

In the first months of 1000, Emperor Otto III made a pilgrimage to Poland to visit the tomb of his friend and spiritual guide, Adalbert, killed on a missionary tour among heathen Prussians in 997¹¹. As soon as he heard of Adalbert's martyrdom, Otto took good care of his friend's memory. He became a most dedicated *impresario* of Adalbert's cult: he commissioned Adalbert's *vita*, he had Adalbert canonized, he dedicated churches to him in Rome, and set out on pilgrimages in the footsteps of the new saint from Monte Cassino to Gaeta and as far as Gniezno. On this occasion, the emperor raised the bishopric of Gniezno, the center of the cult of Adalbert, to the rank of archbishopric; he put the new archbishopric under the *patrocinium* of Saint Adalbert; and, together with the ruling prince of Poland, Bolesław the Brave (Chrobry) founded four bishoprics dependent on Gniezno¹². The new ecclesiastical map of Poland was, to be sure, drawn in agreement with Pope Sylvester II (999–1004), to whom Bolesław had sent Gaudentius, the younger brother of Saint Adalbert in 999 to ask for his permission to establish new bishoprics and to promote Gniezno to the rank of archbishopric. Gaudentius was created „archbishop of Saint Adalbert” by the Pope.

As for Prince Bolesław, apart from receiving from Otto the honorific title of *patricius*, he also got a copy of the lance of Saint Maurice¹³. But he was not offered

⁹ „Un peuple terrorisé par l'imminence de la fin du monde: ce mirage historique prit place fort aisément dans un univers mental tout disposé à l'accueillir. L'histoire romantique l'héritait des quelques historiens et archéologues qui avaient entrepris, au XVII^e et au XVIII^e siècle, l'exploration scientifique du Moyen-Âge, de cette époque obscure, asservie, mère de toutes les superstitions gothiques que commençaient alors à dissiper les superstitions gothiques que commençaient alors à dissiper les Lumières. Et c'est bien, en fait, à la fin du XV^e siècle, dans les triomphes du nouvel humanisme, qu'apparaît la première description connue des terreurs de l'An Mil”. — G. Duby 1980: 11. For a summary of the set of problems surrounding the Year 1000 (with extensive bibliography!), see Médiévales (Automne 1999), „L'an mil en 2000” and <http://www.mille.org/mission.html>

¹⁰ Cf. Thietmar, Lib. VIII. 9 (1980: 496).

¹¹ Bruno von Querfurt, *Vita sancti Adalberti*... 1969.

¹² A. Gieysztor 1969: 611–647.

¹³ K. Görich 1993.

a crown and remained the vassal of the emperor: he was supposed to send every year 300 good warriors to the imperial army¹⁴.

In possession of a precious relic, the arm of Saint Adalbert, Otto stopped on his way back to Aachen (where he was to found a monastery dedicated to Saint Adalbert) in March 1000 at the monastery of Międzyrzecz (Meseritz) in Poland. During this stopover, the abbot of the monastery, Asrik — Anastasius, suddenly decided to join the imperial *cortège* carrying the relic of his spiritual master and to go with them to Germany.

It was, very probably, Bolesław's successful ecclesiastical policy and the news of Emperor Otto III's pilgrimage in Poland that prompted Stephen to ask for Papal blessing to establish an episcopal structure in Hungary. For that purpose, the Hungarian prince sent out, probably between March and June, envoys seeking „the support of the believers in Christ”¹⁵. Asrik was among those who answered his call. He returned from his grand tour in Western Europe — which included Magdeburg, Aachen, Dijon, Ravenna and Monte Cassino — to Stephen's court in Esztergom.

Asrik was a disillusioned man. A highly cultivated cleric, an able and ambitious administrator, this gregarious abbot was one of those ecclesiastical „socialites” of the tenth century who — like Gerbert of Aurillac or Archbishop Willigis — enjoyed the company of kings and emperors. These „jet-set monks” preferred conducting church politics in royal courts. Asrik was the big loser of the Polish church in the glorious year of Saint Adalbert. Bolesław did not employ him at any point during the organization of the new dioceses and, while Gaudentius became archbishop, Asrik, a former disciple of Saint Adalbert, was not even offered a bishopric. This is why he left suddenly the silence of his abbey in Międzyrzecz and opted for Otto III's imperial patronage instead. But his ambitions were not satisfied by Otto either. When the news that Stephen of Hungary needed collaborators for the establishment of ecclesiastical dioceses reached Asrik in Italy, it seemed as if another opportunity had opened up for him to play the role of the wise cleric in a royal court and the diplomatic mediator in the negotiations between the Pope and the prince. This time he did not fail in his expectations. The legend compiled by Bishop Hartvik towards the end of the eleventh century presents Asrik as the single most important ambassador between Pope Sylvester and Stephen, whose ability made it possible for Stephen to create an independent Christian kingdom on the edge of the Holy Roman Empire with Papal blessing!¹⁶ Hagiography shows that Asrik, the Papal legate, proved to be more useful for Stephen than Gaudentius was for Bolesław. If anything, the fact that Hungarians created their own word for archbishop (*érsek*) from Asrik's name¹⁷ is a linguistic monument of the lasting impression that Asrik made in Hungary.

¹⁴ K. Górski 1968.

¹⁵ *Legenda maior...* 1938, II: 386.

¹⁶ *Legenda S. Stephani...* 1938, II: 412–414.

¹⁷ K. Mollay 1975.

Asrik was not alone in the arena of the organization of the Hungarian church. He had to compete with the first Hungarian missionary archbishop, Dominic, created by the Pope some time in the second half of 1000. The disciples of Saint Adalbert, however, who, after 1001, occupied the strategic positions of the Hungarian church, managed to wipe out the mission of Archbishop Dominic from historical memory¹⁸. Asrik had several embassies in the Hungarian court before the end of 1000, when he returned from Rome with a crown, a lance (*vexillum*) and with a Papal charter¹⁹.

The regalia and the blessing sent by Pope Sylvester II acknowledged the foundation of the kingdom in Hungary. The legal foundations of the Hungarian archbishopric and of the Hungarian ecclesiastical system were laid down at the Easter synod of Ravenna in April 1001, which permitted the establishment of the archbishopric of Esztergom, under the patronage of Saint Adalbert²⁰. The basilica of Esztergom was also dedicated to Saint Adalbert²¹, following closely in the series of dedications made to the saint by Otto III in Rome, Ravenna, Subiaco, Aachen, Liège and Gniezno.

THE YEAR 1001: THE YEAR OF SAINT APOLLINARIS IN HUNGARY

The legend compiled by Bishop Hartvik at the beginning of the twelfth century tells the story of how Stephen received his crown from Sylvester II:

Quarto post patris obitum anno divino commonente clementia eundem Asricum presulem, qui alio nomine Anastasius dictus est, ad limina sanctorum apostolorum misit, ut a successore Sancti Petri, principis apostolorum postularet, quo novelle christianitati exorte in partibus Pannonie largam benedictionem porrigeret, Strigoniensem ecclesiam in metropolim sue subscriptionis auctoritate sanciret et reliquos episcopatus sua benedictione muniret. Regio etiam dignaretur ipsum diademate roborare, ut eo multus honore cepta per dei gratiam posset solidius stabilire.

Eodem forte tempore Mischa, Poloniorum dux, christianam cum suis amplexus fidem, missis ad Romane sedis antistitem nunciis, apostolica fulciri benedictione ac regio postulaverat diademate redimiri. Cuius petitioni annuens papa coronam egregii operis parari iam fecerat, quam illi cum benedictione et regni gloria mittere decreverat. Sed quia novit dominus, qui sunt eius, qui duobus per apostolos in apostolici ordinis sortem electis Mathiam pretulit et apostolicum fecit supplere numerum, ille nimis.. potius electum suum Stephanum hac (temporali) statuerat feliciter insignire corona, ipsepostmodum eundem felicius decoratus eterna. Prefixa itaque die, qua parata corona predicto Poloniorum duci mittenda fuerat, nocte, que precedebat, pape per visum domini nuncius astitit, cui ob dixit: Crastina die prima diei hora ignote gentis nuncios ad te venturos

¹⁸ Gy. Györfy 1977: 150–151.

¹⁹ *Foundation charter...* 1992.

²⁰ Dipl. 396, MGH Ottonis III.

²¹ E. Marosi 1994: 13–28; T. von Bogyay 1976: 9–36; Kelet–Közép... 1994.

esse cognoveris, qui suo duci coronam a te regiam cui benedictionis apostolice munere flagitabunt. Coronam ergo quam preparari fecisti, eorum ducem prout potent cures sine cunctatione largiri. Sibi enim eam cum regni gloria pro vite sue meritis scito deberi.

Iuxta igitur huius visionis modum prescripta sequentis diei hora presul Ascricus ad papam pervenit, qui officium iniunctum sibi prudenter exequens et sancti ducis gesta referens ordine, ab apostolica sede, que premisimus, insignia postulavit, indicans cum dignum fore tali honore et dignitate, qui plueres gentes per dei adiutorium sibi subiugasset et multos infideles per suam potentiam ad dominum convertisset. Quibus auditis valde gavisus Romanus pontifex, cuncta, prout fuerant postulata, benigne concessit. Crucem insuper ferendam regi, velut in signum apostolatus misit, ego, inquires, sum apostolicus, ille vero merito Christi apostolus, per quem tantum sibi populum Christus convertit. Quapropter dispositioni eiusdem, prout divina ipsum gratia instruit, ecclesias simul cum populis utroque iure ordinandas relinquimus. Inpetratis ergo omnibus, prout petiit, presul Ascricus letus ad propria remeavit, secum ferens, propter que inceptum iter peregerat.

Benedictionis ergo apostolice litteris cum corona et cruce simul allatis presulibus cum clero, comitibus cum populo laudes congruas adclamantibus, dilectus deo Stephanus rex unctione crismali perunctus, diademato regalia dignitatis feliciter coronatur²².

Compiling his work almost a hundred years after the events on the basis of two earlier legends written for Stephen's canonization in 1083, Hartvik felt the need to spice up his material with some miraculous motifs. Yet the story he narrates corresponds to the data provided by an authentic and reliable source, the foundation charter of Pannonhalma of 1002. Despite historical mistakes (Hartvik talks about Mieszko instead of Bolesław, and mixes up the actual course of events), the great merit of Hartvik's presentation is that manages to draw a dramatic parallel between the foundation of the Polish and of the Hungarian kingdoms, a parallel which was very real around the year 1000. The creation of the Hungarian church was triggered by the memorable events which took place in Poland, while the news of Stephen's coronation urged Bolesław to ask for a crown for himself from the Pope in 1008 — but his efforts were thwarted by the German emperor²³. At the meting out of the new dioceses from 1001 onwards, Stephen filled the Hungarian church with the friends and disciples of Saint Adalbert — Polish and Czech clerics — who, for various reasons, had fled their countries to find a new home in the monastery of Saint Martin of Pannonhalma, and were rewarded with high ecclesiastical positions as bishops (such as Asrik in Kalocsa), and archbishops (Radla-Sebastian in Esztergom). The importance of these clerics, the „pillars of princely power” was duly acknowledged by Stephen in the generous gifts he offered to

²² *Legenda S. Stephani...* 1938, II.

²³ A. Gieysztor 1961.

the churches²⁴, as well as in his *Institutiones* written to his son Emeric around 1013–1015:

The second place after faith in the royal palace belongs to the church, the seeds of which were first sown by our head, namely by Christ, then transplanted, firmly rooted, and propagated all over the world by its members, such as the Apostles and holy fathers. The order of prelates adorns the royal throne; hence, prelates hold the third place within the regal dignity. They shall be, dearest son, your elders, and you shall cherish them as the apple of your eye²⁵.

Bishop Hartvik meant to emphasize the fact that Stephen managed to create an independent kingdom with the blessing of the Pope. The independence of the Hungarian kingdom has often proved to be a „hot” issue: it was first challenged at the end of the eleventh century by Gregory VII, who used Hartvik’s story in order to prove that Hungary had been created a Papal fief in Stephen’s time; in the twentieth century, German and Austrian historians tried to demonstrate that Hungary had been created a fief of the Holy Roman Empire. In his monumental work on Stephen, György Györffy refuted both opinions by showing that the first Papal fiefs in Southern Italy were created half a century later, in 1059; and that Stephen could not have become the vassal of the German emperor without ever meeting him and swearing him in person his oath, as did Bolesław the Brave²⁶.

The crown is in the center of Hartvik’s narrative. „The crown of Saint Stephen”, the „Holy Crown of Hungary” has been venerated by thirty–six generations of Hungarians as the symbol of the Hungarian state founded by Stephen. The existing Holy Crown is not identical with Sylvester’s gift to Stephen. The Pope did send a crown to the new king, but this was lost in the turmoil following Stephen’s death in 1038. It is probably the crown sent by the Pope — an open crown — that is shown on the casula of 1031²⁷, which was later transformed into a coronation mantle and now forms part of the Hungarian coronation *regalia*²⁸. Equally represented on the mantle is Sylvester’s other gift, a lance, which German historians took for the Lance of Saint Maurice. One of Stephen’s earliest series of coinage, the coins of Nagyharsány, with the inscription *lancea regis*, also shows the lance: it is clear that as opposed to the Lance of Saint Maurice, Stephen’s lance is decorated with flags²⁹. This „winged lance” is the *vexillum Sancti Petri*, the banner of Rome.

²⁴ *Legenda maior...* 1938, II: 389: *innumerabilia palliorum paramentorum et aliorum ornamentorum ibi esse genera, area altaria tabulas plures auro purissimo fabricatas, lapidum series preciosissimorum in se continentes, cyborium arte mirabili supra Christi mensam erectum. Cameram omni genere vasorum cristallinorum, onichinorum, aureorum, argenteorum pleniter refertam.*

²⁵ *Libellus de institutione morum...* 1938, II: 611–627, translation see: *De institutione...* 1988: 100–101.

²⁶ Gy. Györffy 1977: 144–147.

²⁷ É. Kovács 1988.

²⁸ *Insignia regni...* 1983.

²⁹ I. Gedai 1971–72: 23–32.

On the first day of the new millennium, Stephen's coronation took place in the church of Saint Stephen the Protomartyr on the Castle Hill in Esztergom in the presence of Archbishop Dominic, Abbot Asrik, the Papal legate, and several Bavarian prelates, envoys of Stephen's brother-in-law, Henry of Bavaria, the future Emperor Henry II. The ceremony followed the *ordo* of Mainz. As a twelfth-century verse confirms, subsequent kings of Hungary crowned in the coronation church of Székesfehérvár, in the basilica which housed Saint Stephen's tomb, did not fail to remember the first king, the founder of the kingdom:

Reges usque hodie
Quando coronantur
In prefati Stephani
Solio locantur
Suis armis inclitis
Illi dectrantur
Qui per regni presules
In reges consecrantur³⁰.

Soon after the coronation, Abbot Asrik set out for Italy again, where he participated at the synod of Ravenna in April 1001. The council — in the presence of Otto III, Sylvester II, Odilon of Cluny, Bruno of Querfurt and Romuald of Pereum — arranged for the establishment of the archbishopric of Esztergom and, just as in Poland, four suffragan bishoprics: Veszprém, Kalocsa, Pécs and Eger. This time, Asrik's endeavours were also „crowned” by King Stephen: although the archbishopric went to Stephen's best friend, the Czech Radla, Asrik became bishop of Kalocsa. When, for a short while, Asrik was called upon to replace the elderly Radla, he returned to his see with the title of archbishop which he did not want to put aside — this served as a precedent for later bishops of Kalocsa to promote their see to the rank of archbishopric! After Radla's death, Asrik became the archbishop of Esztergom.

The decisions of the council of Ravenna were also commemorated: in Somogyvár, the former headquarter of Koppány, Stephen's first victim — who revolted against „the new order” of Géza and Stephen and was killed in the battle of Sóly (between Veszprém and Várpalota on the northern shore of Lake Balaton) in 997 — a church was built in honour of Saint Apollinaris, the saint who had caused „the idols of the pagans to fall down”. This was to signal the intentions of the *rex Christianus* of Hungary.

The number of the new dioceses grew to seven by the end of Stephen's reign. Apart from some slight corrections in the eighteenth century, this ecclesiastical structure remained intact until 1920. Having created the Hungarian church, Stephen turned towards the construction of a new type of secular power in the country. Royal centralization went hand in hand with the creation of a system which allowed the king to set the representatives of his authority in central positions throughout the country, in the fortresses of the counties (*comitatus*). The county-system proved to be another

³⁰ *Chronicum...* 1938, II: 607; cf. J. Deér 1966: 209.

lasting monument of Stephen's achievement. The foundation of the Hungarian kingdom, thus, meant the establishment of a strong royal power — as opposed to the rule of the chieftains of the Hungarian tribes; the victory of the Christian king over his heathen opponents; and, as earlier social distinctions gradually disappeared, the introduction of a new, hierarchical social structure in the country.

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THE EMPEROR AND HIS FRIENDS: THE OTTONIAN REALM IN THE YEAR 1000

Ludger Körntgen*

Was the year 1000 a special one for the Ottonian realm and for the emperor Otto III? Since the personal rule of the young ruler only lasted for about eight years (994–1002), it may be remarked that every year of this reign tends to be seen as somehow special¹. Otto, who was born in 980 and crowned king at Christmas 983, took over independent rule in autumn 994 following a period of about 12 years, when charters were signed with his monogram, but a regency had been installed which was exercised by his mother Theophano (d. 991) and his grandmother Adelheid (d. 999)². The year 995 saw a „traditional” expedition to the Slavs east of the river Elbe who in 983 had successfully revolted against Ottonian rule and had destroyed the bishoprics founded by Otto I (936–973); during the same year delegates were on their way to Constantinople, dealing with a marriage between Otto and a Byzantine princess, and to Rome, obviously preparing for the imperial coronation of the king. This took place in 996, when the Romans had asked Otto (who was just on the way to Rome), to join the decision-making efforts for the creation of a new Pope. It may have been a surprise for the leading circles of the Roman church and territory that Otto presented his kinsman Brun, a young cleric of his chapel³. Obviously, there was no way to refuse the presentation, and it was Brun, who just about three weeks after his creation as Pope Gregory V crowned Otto III emperor. It was during this first and short stay at Rome, that Otto got to know two persons who were to become most important for the young emperor and his aims and interests: Gerbert, the most distinguished scholar of his time⁴, who had failed in his struggle to keep the archbishopric of Reims, and Adalbert⁵, who no longer wished to be bishop of Prague but to stay in Rome as a monk.

Conversation with these learned and spiritual men perhaps filled much of the time between Otto's imperial activities of the years 996 and 998; but this lack of information about what the traditional approach to medieval history was most concerned with, the

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¹ For the chronological account of Otto's rule see: M. Uhlirz 1954; J.F. Böhmer, M. Uhlirz 1956.

² See: G. Althoff 1996: 54–75.

³ The institution of the clerics dealing with the liturgy of the court and the administration of the realm.

⁴ See: P. Riché 1987; *Gerbert l'Européen* 1997.

⁵ See: *Adalbert von Prag* 1997; P. Urbańczyk 1997: 155–162.

Haupt- und Staatsaktionen (affairs of the state), does not mean that the activities of autumn/winter 996 and spring 997 were of less importance for the emperor himself. It may have been most convenient for Otto to have a „break” in the realm north of the Alps, not only because of some illness he had to face in Italy, as he told the Pope in order to excuse his return to the north instead of supporting Gregory V who had been driven out of Rome immediately after the emperor’s retreat⁶. Staying in the north did not only mean to home comforts and his wealth and to spend time with kinsmen, friends and noblemen, but to present himself as emperor to the parts of his realm and especially to Saxony, where the rule of the Ottonians had started in the first half of the 10th century. Not much is to be said about the activities of the second half of 997, focussing on some expeditions to the Slavs with no more success than all the previous years since 983⁷. In winter the second expedition to Rome started, for the first months being more an imperial ceremony with highlights in Pavia (Christmas) and Ravenna⁸, then turning into a real military expedition but without serious resistance by the Roman local leader Crescentius and his party, who were only strong when the emperor was absent. The most spectacular event was the extraordinary punishment of the former Ottonian bishop Johannes Philagathos, who had been created Pope by Crescentius. The fate of the latter was equally spectacular, he was first decapitated, his body was thrown down from the Castel Sant’Angelo and then hanged upside-down on the Monte Mario together with the bodies of twelve of his supporters. This was the beginning of a greater effort to keep control over Rome, where the emperor stayed for more than one year. So it was from here that Otto started the journey to the east that took about half of the year 1000, and it was Italy and Rome where Otto spent the second half of this year.

Especially the journey to Gniezno and afterwards the stay at Aachen produced spectacular events that ensure that the year 1000 was a very special one in Ottonian history, but what followed was no less importance. While there is no record of important imperial activities during autumn and winter 1000 in Rome⁹, the beginning of 1001 brought the revolt of Tivoli, a town near Rome, and then of some noble families and their supporters in Rome, forcing the emperor to retire to Ravenna. This seems most important for the future, because the emperor was never to return to Rome, and his successor (Henry II) was to be crowned there after some delay only in 1014. This departure from Rome might have been regarded by Otto as a temporary one, since he spent some time preparing a great military expedition but these preparations were halted by Otto’s death because of a sudden illness before he had gathered fresh troops from the north in 1002¹⁰. These military actions and the emperor’s retreat from Rome are not the only events of 1001 which have impressed historians deeply; on the contrary, the most discussed result of imperial politics in 1001 seems to be a charter given to the Pope, which claimed to refuse one of the most influential forgeries of western history,

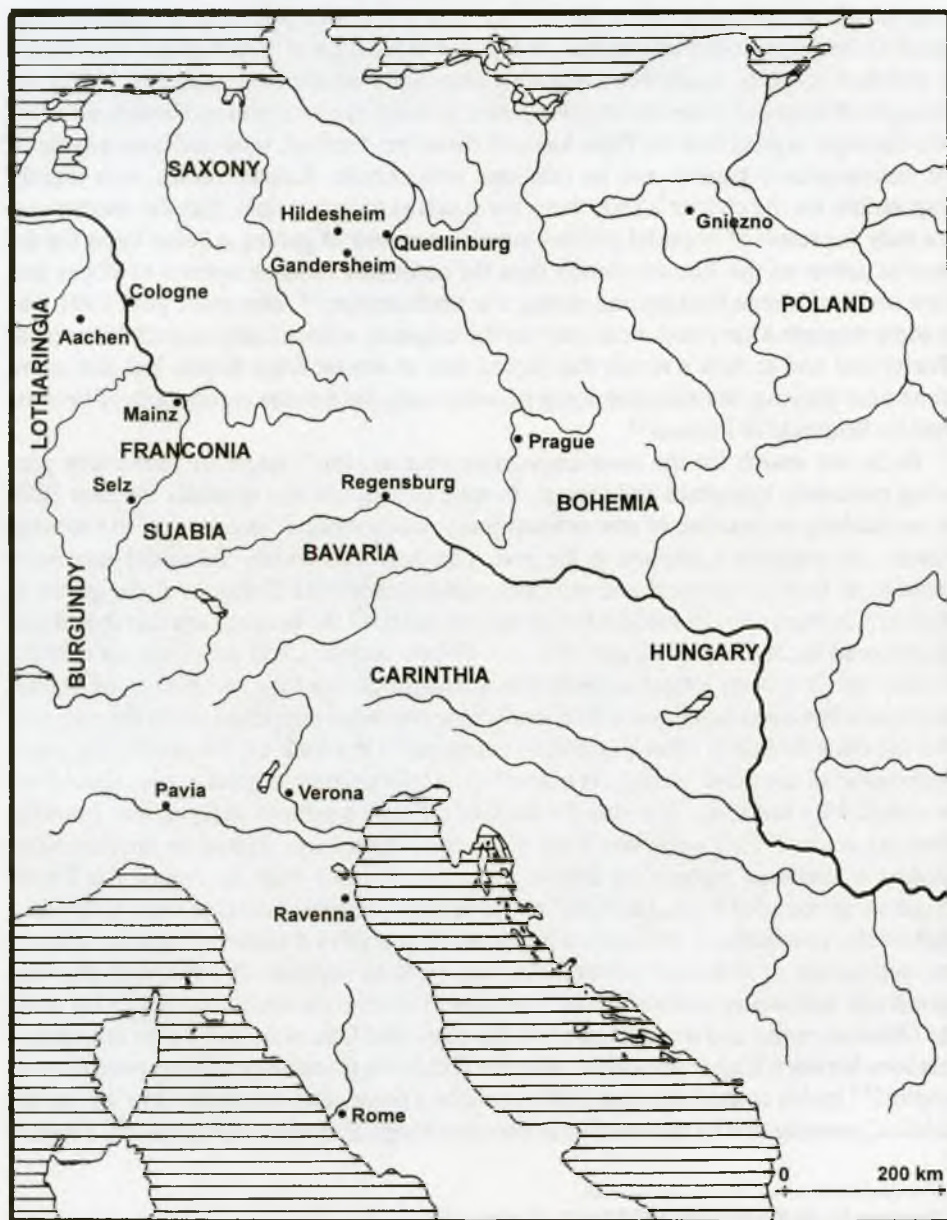
⁶ See: G. Althoff 1996: 85.

⁷ See: C. Lübke 1986, nr. 320–326, 157–164.

⁸ See: G. Althoff 1996: 100.

⁹ See: G. Althoff 1996: 169.

¹⁰ See: G. Althoff 1996: 182–187.



The Ottoman realm and surrounding areas at the turn of the first millennium

the so called donation of Constantine, which made Rome, Italy and the whole west of the former Roman empire a gift of Constantine the Great to the Pope Silvester I¹¹. Since only the efforts of humanists of the 15th century have been able to give a philological proof of the forgery, this charter has set Otto III in the light of some „proto-humanist“; in political respects, it has been regarded as a claim of imperial authority facing the struggle of the papal court for secular power in Italy. Hans-Henning Kortüm now has convincingly argued that the Pope himself, Silvester-Gerbert, who had been a critic of the contemporary papacy and its relations with secular Roman circles, was mainly responsible for the charter's text; therefore it seems to be possible, that the charter was not only the result of imperial politics but also a means of getting a better basis for the secular power of the Roman church than the somehow obscure actions of Popes and their secular Roman background during the tenth century¹². However, year 1001 was in some respects a very important year for the emperor, who not only issued this notable charter and had to face a revolt that forced him to retreat from Rome, but also spent some time praying, feasting and doing penance with the famous community of hermits lead by Romuald at Pereum¹³.

So in our search for the most impressive year of Otto's reign we find every year being extremely important and special. In spite of this, one can consider the year 1000 as particularly so because of one extraordinary action without any parallel in Ottonian history: the emperor's journey to the east. This has been widely discussed especially because of its ecclesiastical and political consequences: At Gniezno, at the grave of Bishop Adalbert, Otto III met the Polish duke Bolesław I the Brave. Together they made Gniezno an archbishopric as see of a new Polish ecclesiastical province, so that the Polish church was no longer subjected to the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Mainz. Historians have discussed more frequently however what happened when the emperor and the duke met each other in a public ceremony: Otto took off his crown and put it on the head of the duke, stating, as a later report tells us, that so great a ruler should not be called duke but king. Was this the birth of a Polish kingdom independent from the Ottonian realm? This topic has been a focus of discussion within an anachronistic context of national history (as Polish historians did not want to regard the Polish kingdom as founded by a „German“ emperor and German historians were tending to blame Otto as a betrayer of German interests). In our days it seems to be a question of our perception of Ottonian politics: Are we right to suppose that the emperor was concerned with wider political plans¹⁴ in order to change the traditional bonds between the Ottonian realm and its neighbours in the east? Did Otto work out a new concept of relations between kingdoms and the emperor within the framework of a renewed Roman empire?¹⁵ In this context the year 1000 would be a point of no return for Otto's imperial politics, promulgated by the creation of two new kings, Bolesław of Poland and Stephen

¹¹ See: now H.-H. Kortüm 1999: 52/53 with all references.

¹² See: H.-H. Kortüm 1999: 52–62.

¹³ See: G. Althoff 1996: 181–182; J.-M. Sansterre 1989.

¹⁴ See: G. Althoff 1996: 28–32.

¹⁵ See: J. Fried 1989.

of Hungary, who was not crowned directly by the emperor but, as the Saxon bishop Thietmar of Merseburg tells us, with the latter's advice and support¹⁶. This interpretation fits into the context of the *Renovatio imperii Romanorum* that modern historians (following Percy Ernst Schramm) have perceived as a project worked out by Otto and a circle of learned clerics regarding the literary traditions of Rome and the *Imperium Romanum*¹⁷. Knut Görich, arguing that Otto was not intending a renovation of the old Empire but a renovation of the Roman church and the Papacy, has challenged this view¹⁸. In this context Otto's efforts in Rome as, for example, the building of a residence are not to be regarded as a claim of Roman imperial traditions but as a means of securing Ottonian power in Rome and supporting the Pope against the Roman aristocracy¹⁹.

According to this, dealing with political plans and imperial glory is still one, but not the only way we have come to understand the reign of Otto III and the context and meaning of politics and imperial behaviour around the year 1000. During recent decades new approaches to the history of Ottonian kingship have been worked out to understand the basis and structure of power and rule within the context of early medieval society and mentality. It has been recognised, for instance, that literacy was not the dominant factor of culture and social life of the tenth century; on the contrary, important moments of social interaction and politics took place within a context of oral culture and tradition. That means that relations between the members of the aristocratic society were not organised according to written law and abstract schemes. Instead of this, social relations were expressed and demonstrated by rituals and gestures and social or political interaction was guided by unwritten rules which are called „Spielregeln“ by Gerd Althoff and others²⁰. In this framework, kings also did not execute government by means of written orders or with the support of ministers and, for instance, counts acting as local vice kings or officers; kingship had to be actualised by the presence of the king who presided over the law-court, granted land to bishops, abbots and the lay nobility or received tribute and gifts from other rulers or their delegates²¹. Such a king did not use a fixed residence but travelled around his realm to present himself to the magnates of different regions. Such a king was not the centre of a strict hierarchic order; we have to regard the Ottonian realm as a multi-central network of vertical and horizontal bonds of persons and the king as only one focus of the system. Since much research has been done on the outline and function of conflicts within Ottonian society and on the structure and importance of early medieval nobility, the rise of Ottonian kingship is no longer regarded as a struggle of central against peripheral power. Instead of this we recognize Ottonian kingship as a kind of rule and power of the nobility. Ottonian power was created and rose together with the power of the magnates; there was no natural

¹⁶ See footnotes 69 and 70 below.

¹⁷ P. E. Schramm 1984.

¹⁸ K. Görich 1995².

¹⁹ K. Görich 1995²: 263–267.

²⁰ See: G. Althoff 1997; J. Fried 1994: 131–143.

²¹ See: H. Keller 1982: 74–128; H. Keller 1985a: 17–35; 1985b: 290–311; 1991: 159–195; J. Fried 1994: 632–736; T. Reuter 1997³: 183–220.

antagonism between „central” kingship and „peripheral” nobility but an exchange of conflict and cooperation.

Ottonian kingship had started within a setting of cooperation: When Conrad I, the first king in the east-Frankish realm who was not a descendent of the Carolingian royal family, died in 918, the leading families of the Franks east of the Rhine and the Saxons, the Konradiner and the Liudolfinger, obviously made a deal: Henry I, the head of the Liudolfinger, became king, and Eberhard, the brother of Conrad I, held the position next to the king (*secundus a rege*)²². Within some years Henry was also accepted by the dukes of Bavaria and Suebia, who were allowed to keep their ruling positions and control over the church in their duchies. Henry’s son Otto I (936–973) gained a stronger authority especially over the church in these duchies, but Saxony and the Frankish regions near the Rhine continued to be the centre of Ottonian rule during his reign²³. Otto’s victory over the Hungarians (955) gave him the prestige of a successful and strong ruler and supported his claim for the imperial crown that perhaps was prepared by his wedding with Adelheid, the widow of the Italian king Lothar (d. 950). In this respect the imperial coronation in 962 can be regarded as a consequence of Otto’s claim for Carolingian tradition, but the actual context in which the coronation took place was a conflict within the aristocracy of Rome that forced the Pope to ask the East Frankish ruler for help²⁴. Otto’s son Otto II (d. 983) was crowned co-emperor (as the last emperor in the west who was crowned in the lifetime of his father), in order to prepare his marriage to the Byzantine princess Theophano. After the sudden death of Otto II however there was only slight presence of Ottonian rule at Rome; the empress Theophano seems to have spent some time there primarily to support the liturgical commemoration of her husband who had been buried at St Peter’s²⁵. For the realm north of the Alps, however, the death of Otto II was a test of stability: Ottonian rule passed this test, because with the support of some lay magnates and especially the leading bishops, Theophano and her mother-in-law Adelheid were successful in refusing the claims of Henry the Quarrelsome, who had twice revolted against his cousin Otto II and tried to take over the regency after the latter’s death²⁶.

The support of the lay magnates and the „Reichskirche”, that means the bishops and abbots of some great abbeys who were subjected directly to the king, was one the bases of Ottonian rule; within this framework, conflicts normally did not mean a refusal of kingship or the authority of a particular king but were actual reactions of some nobleman who felt disregarded by the ruler who supported a local competitor²⁷. This is precisely the form taken by conflicts that took place during the reign of Otto III, as Knut Görich has recently argued; there was no fundamental resistance in Saxony against a „foreign” Roman policy of the young emperor, as Percy Ernst Schramm had stated²⁸. Conflicts

²² See: G. Althoff, H. Keller 1994²; M. Becher 1996.

²³ See: H. Keller 1982; 1985a; 1985b; G. Althoff, H. Keller 1994².

²⁴ See: T. Reuter 1997: 168–174.

²⁵ See: G. Althoff 1996: 68.

²⁶ See: J. Fried 1994: 561–580; G. Althoff 1996: 37–54.

²⁷ See: K. Leyser 1979; G. Althoff 1989: 265–290.

²⁸ See: K. Görich 1995: 123–186.

within the nobility were a standard feature of society and politics of the Ottonian realm; whether or not the king was involved, such conflicts took the form of feuds with special rules and as such cannot be regarded as „civil war”. Military conflict, however, was not the only means of struggle for power and social ranking within the aristocratic society of the Ottonian realm; the king was the first place for a nobleman to ask for land and rights, and the relationship with the king was a special feature of the rank and power of an aristocratic family. The ruler himself, on the other side, was interested in connexions to the noble families and the most important magnates. A special means of connecting to each other was *amicitia*, a formalized kind of friendship²⁹ that played an important role at the very beginning of Ottonian kingship, because Henry I was connected to the dukes by *amicitia*. This was a special means within a special context, because normally *amicitia* was only initiated between persons of the same rank. According to this, later Ottonian rulers did not continue to have *amicitiae* with their magnates³⁰.

The political meaning of *amicitia*, however, was not the only model for social relations. Social connections are to be regarded as a complex feature not only of the politics but also of the culture, religion and mentality of early medieval times. Best known is the complex praxis of liturgical *memoria*, the liturgical prayer for and remembering of the dead³¹, which was an important feature of social and political relations, since *amicitia*, for example, included the obligations of liturgical *memoria*. Looking at Otto III and his time, we perceive social relations of different kind with and around the emperor. Otto is regarded as one of the most individual characters of early medieval kingship and stories are told about him and his friends giving impressive pictures of what perhaps can be regarded as personal friendships. There was, for example, a young nobleman, named Tammo, who is said to have been a friend of Otto's: when sitting at the table they used the same bowl of water to clean their hands, and sometimes they exchanged their clothes. What seems to be a feature of personal emotion can also be regarded as a public gesture, a demonstration of social and political connexion³², despite this, the phenomenon may allow some insight into a more personal or „private” sphere. We do not know, however, how „private” was the friendship that connected Otto III with the learned men of his entourage³³, for example Gerbert of Reims or Leo of Vercelli, or the monks such as Adalbert or Bruno of Querfurt. Every man of the emperor's close circle might have been of different political weight and function: Gerbert, for example, who was created archbishop of Ravenna (and then Pope in 999) was a different case from Adalbert, who was sent over the eastern border of the Ottonian realm to get back his see at Prague or to go as a missionary to the Prussians of the northeast³⁴. Another was Heribert, who was first chancellor and then was created archbishop of Cologne: Heribert is said to have been one of Otto's most important

²⁹ See: G. Althoff 1990: 88–119; Epp 1999.

³⁰ See: G. Althoff, H. Keller 1994²; G. Althoff 1992.

³¹ See: *Memoria* 1984; O. – G. Oexle 1993: 510–513.

³² See: G. Althoff 1996: 199–207.

³³ Concerning Gerbert see: G. Althoff 1996: 91–95 with the conclusion: „Freunde” sind Otto und Gerbert ganz offensichtlich nicht gewesen.

³⁴ See: above nr. 5.

counsellors and especially, since he was chancellor for Italy, one of the architects of imperial or Roman politics³⁵. However, Heribert seems to have been a friend of Otto's in a much stronger meaning: both of them are said to have promised each other a special commemoration after the other's death, and since Otto was the one to die first, Heribert indeed founded a monastery near Cologne (Deutz), which was obliged to celebrate the emperor's liturgical commemoration³⁶.

The importance of liturgical commemoration as a feature of friendship gives a proof of the importance of religious life and liturgy as a basic feature of social and political life around the year 1000. The Ottonian ruler was recognized as a king chosen and supported by God; this sacral shape of Ottonian kingship was demonstrated by the ritual of king's anointment³⁷. That does not mean, however, that religion was only used as a means of legitimising and securing political power: for the king, as for all the people around the year 1000, religion was a most important dimension of life. The struggle for power and political success was only one side of the medal; the other side was man's struggle for eternal salvation, and this struggle was shared by the ruler. Therefore it is not easy to differentiate between the political and the religious meaning of the ruler's religious actions: There is no need to look for the political reasons of devotional acts exercised by the ruler, but, on the other hand, there is no need to exclude political meanings and consequences of such acts. If the ruler, for example, gave land and rights to a religious community, this gift was a means of getting support of the saints and of God for the earthly and the heavenly aims of the ruler. But such a gift also induced closer connections between the ruler and the community and by this the devotional gift promoted acceptance of his rule. The same can be said of Otto's friendship with monks and clerics: praying with a monk or doing ascetic exercises with young clerics³⁸ was good for the salvation of the soul, but since those men were famous heroes of contemporary religious movements or were to become important bishops, those actions also promoted the sacral prestige of the emperor and his connection to the churches of his realm.

It is extremely important to face this complex context in order to understand the spectacular event of the early part of the year 1000 which was connected with a friend of Otto III who had died three years before: the bishop, monk and missionary Adalbert. The latter was a member of the Bohemian Slavník family who had left his see at Prague because of conflicts with Boleslav II, the duke of Bohemia. At Rome he had become a famous protagonist of the new communities of hermits, but two synods had decided that his leaving of his see was not allowed by canon law. Therefore Adalbert had been forced to go back to Prague, but instead of this, Gregory V had allowed him to work as a missionary. Obviously the duke of Poland, Bolesław I the Brave (Chrobry), had sent

³⁵ See: H. Müller 1977; 1996: 16–64.

³⁶ Lantbert, *Vita Heriberti* 7, 745: *Placet ambobus, ut quilibet eorum sospes reverteretur, quocumque casu alter detineretur, de rebus hereditariis aedificaret decens coenobium, titulum Dei genitrici, matri et virgini virginum*. See: H. Müller 1977: 283–284.

³⁷ See: H. Keller 1985b; J. Fried 1994: 643–648; R. Schieffer 1998b: 345–361.

³⁸ In 999 Otto spent two weeks in a cave, near the church St Clement at Rome, feasting and doing penance. He was only accompanied by the young cleric Franco, who later was to become bishop of Worms. See: G. Althoff 1996: 131/32.

Adalbert to the pagan Prussians who were living to the north of his realm, but after a short period of missionary efforts, Adalbert had been killed in 997. There was no doubt that this death had made Adalbert a martyr, and therefore he was recognized as a saint with no hesitation. Because Adalbert had been a very prominent leader of the new ascetic and eremitic movement in Italy and, on the other hand, had been known to rulers, bishops and monks, his death as a martyr made a great impression on his contemporaries. The emperor himself is said to have been very deeply moved by the message coming from the northeast, but this had not consisted only of sorrow and pain. Sadness and regret for the death of a friend may have been what Bolesław (who had sent Adalbert to Prussia), and Otto and the monks in Rome (who had been living with Adalbert) felt, but obviously there was also another kind of feeling. Adalbert the martyr was not only a new member of the heavenly community of saints who could be worshipped but was a saint who could intervene in heaven for the people he knew. That seems to be the reason why Thietmar of Merseburg about 20 years later wrote down that the emperor after having received the message of the killing of Adalbert praised God that he had given the crown of martyrdom to such a willing servant³⁹. Adalbert's friends could benefit from the glory the martyr had won by his death in heaven; but they also could benefit from the glory the new saint had won on earth.

To benefit from Adalbert's glory both in heaven and on earth, it was necessary to propagate the veneration of the new saint. Both the emperor and duke Bolesław the Brave immediately acted to achieve this: Bolesław bought the corpse of the dead missionary from the Prussians and put him in a tomb in Gniezno; Otto is likely to have initiated the writing of the first life of Adalbert that was completed before the year 1000⁴⁰. In this context there is no need to find a special political motive of Otto's decision to go to Gniezno in order to worship the saint at his grave: This would be the best to demonstrate Otto's devotion to the new saint, to propagate the veneration and to change the former friendship for the living to a close relation with the saint. The journey to the north and the east started at Christmas 999 at Ravenna and was styled as a pilgrimage; from now up to the return to Rome Otto's chancery used a new title for him that evoked the devotional character of the pilgrimage to Gniezno: *servus Jesu Christi*⁴¹. That does not mean that the emperor took on the outfit of a pilgrim; in contrary, according to Thietmar no emperor had ever left Rome or had returned with more glory⁴². Some lay magnates and some clerics accompanied Otto, but we do not know the names of most of them⁴³. But not only the entourage of the travelling emperor was of importance: the journey also was a chance to present the emperor to the realm north of the Alps, his stays being remarkable events for the places he visited. One of the first stops north of the Alps was at the Bavarian metropolis at Regensburg, where

³⁹ See: K. Görich 1998: 412.

⁴⁰ In a forthcoming paper Johannes Fried is arguing that the first life of Adalbert was written in Liège or Aachen.

⁴¹ First instance is *Die Urkunden Ottos III.* nr. 344, 774/75; see: G. Althoff 1996: 136. For an interpretation of the title as a claim for specific sacral authority see: J. Fried 1998: 56–62.

⁴² Thietmar IV, 44, 182: *Nullus imperator maiori umquam gloria a Roma egreditur neque revertitur.*

⁴³ See: G. Althoff 1996: 151/52.

Otto was received with marvellous honour by the bishop. But the emperor was not only received by the local authorities: According to the Annals of Quedlinburg, all the parts of his realm, Gallia, that means the Lotharingians, Francia and Suevia, were hurrying to meet Otto when he had crossed the Alps⁴⁴. From Saxony and Thuringia came a delegation guided by Otto's sisters Sophia and Adelheid, who were not only the abbesses of the important Ottonian religious communities of Quedlinburg and Gandersheim in Saxony but the leading representatives of the Ottonian family north of the Alps. Similar receptions by the bishops and the lay magnates were held when the emperor passed Saxony, but the most glorious event took place when he was received by Bolesław, the duke of Poland, who guided his imperial guest to Gniezno⁴⁵.

Triumph and glory had to be suspended when the imperial entourage reached the grave of Adalbert. Near to Gniezno the imperial outfit was changed into that of a real pilgrimage: with bare feet Otto entered the church where Adalbert was buried, then he spent some time at the saint's grave praying for his intermediation to Christ⁴⁶. We cannot overestimate the meaning of this event: Otto was praying to a saint with whom when he was alive he had spent some time praying only three years ago! Therefore it seems possible to set the decision that was made afterwards into a primarily religious context: Gniezno was created see of an archbishopric, a decision which has often been discussed within a specific political context because from now on there was a special ecclesiastical province for the realm of Bolesław. This background given, it seems possible that there had been a request from the latter and that the emperor and the Pope had decided at Rome to create the new archbishopric before the emperor's journey had started⁴⁷. But it is also possible that the decision was made at Gniezno as a reaction to the people's insisting on keeping the relics of Adalbert there which Otto perhaps, if the lives of Adalbert are to be believed, had tried to get for a church at Rome⁴⁸. However, the religious implications of Otto's creating the new archbishopric seem to be as important as the political ones: as the founder of a new ecclesiastical province, Otto shared not only the missionary efforts that would go out from there, but the missionary merits of the patron Adalbert. Of course, Otto shared these merits also with Bolesław, who had obtained the corpse of the saint for Gniezno, and who had to be the supporter of the new ecclesiastical structures within his realm.

It is from this viewpoint that it is possible to understand the second much discussed event that followed Otto's praying at Gniezno. The emperor, as a later Polish source probably depending on a nearly contemporary lost passion of St Adalbert tells us,

⁴⁴ *Annales Quedlinburgenses* SS 3, Hannover 1834, repr. New York 1963: 22–90; a. 1000, 77: *Transscensa vero Alpium difficultate, ut primo hisce partibus pedem inferre potuit, tota ei Gallia, Francia, Suevia, equestri et pedestri agmine turmatim obviam ruit.*

⁴⁵ Thietmar IV, 85, 182.

⁴⁶ Thietmar IV, 85, 184: *...ad Christi gratiam sibi inpetrandam martyris Christi intercessio profusis lacrimis invitatur.*

⁴⁷ See: J. Fried 1989: 83–93 arguing that Prague had been chosen for the see of the first slavic ecclesiastical province but the plan had been changed at Gniezno. This view has been challenged by K. Görich 1991: 10–27 and confirmed by J. Fried 1998: 55, n. 52.

⁴⁸ O. Engels 1997: 43.

crowned Bolesław with his own crown and called him „brother and co-operator of the empire”⁴⁹. We are not going to decide here if this was the starting point of an independent Polish kingdom or a piece within a puzzle of new imperial politics, but whatever the political claims and interests of Otto and Bolesław might have been, the implications of friendship are obvious. As Gerd Althoff has pointed out, the act at Gniezno was a demonstrative gesture of *amicitia* as political friendship between Otto and Bolesław⁵⁰, and given the importance of Adalbert’s grave and his veneration for both of them it seems to be clear that the cult of the new saint was a basic feature of this friendship. That is not to deny that Bolesław claimed a stronger authority over his realm by means of new ecclesiastical structure, or that the grave of the new saint at Gniezno was one of the facts that made him a ruler of extraordinary prestige and power. But more important may have been that the presence of the saint mediated a closer relation with Otto, so that Bolesław became one of the magnates who were close to the emperor. Obviously, the latter was also mainly interested in a closer connection to Bolesław; within a framework of politics, this can be regarded as a result of political conception: an attempt to change the quality of the political relations between the „Reich” and the Polish realm, which before had been tributary to the Ottonian kingdom and now was to be promoted to a higher status as part of a wider range of kingdoms which formed the empire and were less subjected to, but rather cooperating with, the emperor⁵¹. But given the personal style of politics around the year 1000 there is no need to regard things as such. The Gniezno Summit was a ritual celebration and demonstration not of relations between kingdoms or „states” but of personal bonds between Otto III and Bolesław the Brave — and the saint who had been a „friend” to both of them and now was regarded as a protector and as a mediator of eternal wealth in Heaven.

The feature of friendship as an intricate and composite phenomenon binding together political, religious and perhaps emotional aspects also helps to understand another spectacular event in the year 1000: having left Gniezno the emperor spent the days of Easter at Quedlinburg, as his predecessors had done, but then turned to Aachen to visit another „friend” who was not living but was the focus of the emperor’s interests and activities: Charlemagne, the first Frankish emperor, who had died in 814 and had been buried in the palace chapel he had founded there. Aachen had been a standard station within the itinerary of Ottonian kings since Henry I had gathered authority over Lotharingia but the place had been especially improved and enriched by Otto III as a means of expressing his devotion to Charlemagne⁵². Of course, Otto could not worship Charlemagne in the same way as Adalbert because the Frankish emperor was not regarded as a saint. What the emperor did instead has often been mentioned as a matter of curiosity: Otto ordered to dig for the grave of Charlemagne, whose place was not known, and when it had been found, he opened it and visited the dead emperor, whose corpse was sitting on a throne. As a later source referring to Otto of Lomello,

⁴⁹ Gallus Anonymus 1952: 19/20.

⁵⁰ See: G. Althoff 1996: 139–147.

⁵¹ See: J. Fried 1989: 138–143; 1994: 595–598.

⁵² See: L. Falkenstein 1998; K. Görich 1998: 406–407; R. Folz 1950: 87–93.

who was count of the palace in Italy and is said to have accompanied the emperor into the grave, tells us Charlemagne's corpse was found almost intact; Otto III and his few companions prayed to the dead man, then the emperor ordered to dress his „colleague" with a white garment, cut the dead man's nails and broke a tooth out of his mouth before leaving the grave that was closed again⁵³.

Was this an early medieval case of adoration of stars? Contemporary authors criticised Otto for disturbing the rest of the dead; in fact, doing as Otto had done was a sacrilege and was only allowed for one aim: to search for the corpse of a holy man who was to be venerated as a saint. Knut Görich recently has argued that the emperor's behaviour could be understood that way: as an approach to prepare the veneration of Charlemagne as a saint⁵⁴. Obviously the two main sources⁵⁵, the Italian *Chronicon Novalicense* and the C version of the French chronicle of Adamar of Chabannes, style Otto's visit to the grave of Charlemagne as a hagiographical report: the white garment, the finding of an intact corpse and the cutting of the nails and gathering of relics can be regarded as moments of a hagiographic narrative. The secrecy of the action, then, may have been important because the opening of the grave could only be legitimised after having found the intact corpse of the dead as a witness of his holiness. This theory cannot be proved because Otto's death soon afterwards may have cut off further preparations for the veneration of Charlemagne. It seems very plausible, however, that Otto wanted to practice the same worship of Charlemagne as was permissible in the case of Adalbert; that the emperor's devotion to Charlemagne paralleled the veneration of the new saint Adalbert seems to be testified by the embrace of Bolesław I the Brave who perhaps had accompanied Otto to Aachen⁵⁶. As Adamar tells us, Otto gave the throne of Charlemagne to Bolesław, who had given an arm of Adalbert to the emperor⁵⁷. This seems to be not only a kind of gift sharing but also an exchange of relics; at least Bolesław was engaged into the emperor's specific devotion to Charlemagne. Görich made the point that there was a special function for a saint as a patron of political friendship; so Adalbert and Charlemagne could be regarded as the patrons who should guarantee the friendship between Otto III and Bolesław⁵⁸.

This is not to say that securing political friendship would have been the most important function of the two venerated dead, the martyr Adalbert and the perhaps future saint Charlemagne. Otto had been impressed by Adalbert and the ascetic monasticism in Italy some years before the meeting at Gniezno and he had demonstrated his veneration of Charlemagne since almost the beginning of his personal rule, especially with some important gifts to the palace chapel and its community⁵⁹. Therefore

⁵³ *Chronicon Novalicense* III,32:182.

⁵⁴ See: K. Görich 1998.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of the sources see: K. Görich 1998: 382–386; L. Falkenstein 1998: 161–163.

⁵⁶ See: K. Görich 1998: 418; G. Althoff 1996: 148–149; J. Fried 1989: 136.

⁵⁷ Adémar de Chabannes III 30: 153–154; See: L. Falkenstein 1998: 162.

⁵⁸ See: K. Görich 1998: 423–425.

⁵⁹ See: K. Görich 1998: 426–427; L. Falkenstein 1998: 84–160. In his yet unpublished paper *Otto III und das Karlsgrab in Aachen*, K. Görich suggests that the emperor's veneration of Charlemagne may have been influenced by the local clergy of Aachen.

Adalbert and Charlemagne cannot be regarded as Otto's mediators with Bolesław; in contrary, Bolesław seems to have been mediator for Otto not to Adalbert but to his grave, while for Bolesław the saint had worked as a means of getting closer relations with the emperor. Otto, on the other hand, was the one to mediate between the latter and Charlemagne. In fact, there was a political meaning of both the holy monk Adalbert and the emperor Charlemagne: as Adalbert, who had been killed as a missionary to the Prussians, Charlemagne was remembered as a missionary who had converted the Saxons⁶⁰. Therefore Adalbert and Charlemagne can be regarded as the patrons of a common missionary action of Otto and Bolesław to the peoples of the northeast. But this was more than a political concept of cooperation: as the propagation of faith was regarded as a task for or an obligation of the Christian ruler (not only the emperor, but every ruler who was baptized⁶¹), the proposition of Christianisation of the Slavs was a political motive for both Otto III and Bolesław. Since propagation of faith also was a task of Christian virtue and a means of getting eternal merits, the cooperation of the two rulers was not only a case of politics; on the contrary, Otto and Bolesław shared their efforts to acquire spiritual merits and to promote their Heavenly wealth. In this context the meaning of the worship of Adalbert and Charlemagne becomes clearer: it was an attempt to engage the saint's support not only for political efforts but also for the earthly success and the eternal wealth of the rulers⁶². Otto, Bolesław, Adalbert and Charlemagne are to be regarded as a special community sharing the missionary approach and its eternal reward. The relations and bonds between the four members of this community were complex and intricate: the propagation of the veneration of Adalbert and perhaps of Charlemagne seems to be more than a gift of devotion given in order to obtain in return the supernatural help of the saints. Building churches, sharing relics and improving the veneration of the monk and the emperor Otto and Bolesław reached for closeness to Adalbert and Charlemagne, a closeness showing the same complexity as the *amicitia* between Otto and Bolesław. In this respect it seems possible to regard a complex friendship binding together religious, political⁶³ and personal attitudes as the central motive of Otto's journey to Gniezno and Aachen in the first half of the year 1000.

The personal style of social and political relations that is reflected by the „friendship” between Otto, Bolesław, Adalbert and Charlemagne seems to be the dominant factor of Otto's rule north of the Alps. Since the beginning of Ottonian rule it had been a main feature of kingship to grant positions of power, land and rights to relatives and supporters⁶⁴. That is not to say that the king had been the head of a hierarchic order appointing laymen and clerics to office of the state's or the church's administration only according to his will. Dukes, for example, held the position of the first official of the king within their respective duchies; in another view they were powerful magnates with

⁶⁰ See: K. Görich 1998: 406–407; J. Fried 1998: 66–67.

⁶¹ See: O. Engels 1997: 33.

⁶² See: J. Fried 1998: 69.

⁶³ J. Fried 1989: 138–143, stresses the political implications of this bond referring to the byzantine idea of the „family of kings”.

⁶⁴ For general aspects of Ottonian government and politics see above nr. 20–21.

proprieties and rights of their own, and both aspects of their status tended to be connected or mixed up⁶⁵. According to this a duke's son achieved the positions that his father had held not by hereditary right alone, but generally did not fail to succeed to the duchy. The king created dukes or counts, but normally he accepted the claim of a nobleman's son for the succession of his father. In each region there was a competition of magnates struggling for power and property, and the king was the one to answer their requests granting land and rights and appointing them to the positions of a duke, margrave or count. Doing this was a major feature of kingship and the presence of Otto III north of the Alps in the year 1000 when returning from his journey or pilgrimage to Gniezno was an opportunity to act in this way according to the expectations of his magnates. This shape of kingship is outlined by the Quedlinburg annals which relate that Otto after celebrating Easter at Quedlinburg fulfilled the expectations of the magnates and the people by doing his imperial „job”, that is ruling, giving pardon, granting and remunerating⁶⁶.

Within this framework, the king's own political attempts can be recognized in his approaches to the changing of the balance between the leading families of the different regions and in the creation of new magnates. With respect to this Otto III seems to have taken some steps especially in the east and in the southwest of the realm north of the Alps: In the east he supported the position of the margrave Ekkehard who rose to be one of the most important magnates of the realm in Otto's reign and after the emperor's death became a candidate for his succession in kingship. In the southwest Otto obviously shifted the balance not between the duchies of „Suebia” and „Bavaria” but between the leading families of the south, driving the Suebian duke Hermann to the Alsace in favour of the Bavarian duke Henry and his interests in Suebia⁶⁷. Since 948 the duchy of Bavaria had been held by members of the Ottonian family; while the second duke of this line, Henry the Quarrelsome, had revolted against his cousin Otto II and had failed in taking over the regency after the latter's death⁶⁸, his son Henry, who was to become successor of Otto III in year 1002, had promised to be a loyal follower of the king. Although his presence at Gniezno is not mentioned by the sources, Henry is likely to have accompanied the emperor there because at some stays during the journey he intervened for grants to some clerics or lay magnates and he is called „our beloved kinsmen” (*noster consanguineus amabilis*) by Otto⁶⁹. According to this, it seems plausible that another important political event around the year 1000, the creation of the Hungarian kingdom and the approval of this by Otto, was not only a result of imperial politics⁷⁰ but was mediated by the Bavarian duke. We are not informed exactly of the emperor's participation in the coronation of the first Hungarian king; Thietmar

⁶⁵ See: T. Reuter 1997: 91–195.

⁶⁶ *Annales Quedlinburgenses* a. 1000, 77: ...*ad curtem suam totius senatus ac plebis expectationi satisfactus redit, illamque septimanam regalibus impendens officiis, regendo, indulgendo, largiendo ac remunerando transegit*. See: G. Althoff 1996: 152.

⁶⁷ See: T. Zotz 1999: 102–111.

⁶⁸ See: above nr. 26.

⁶⁹ *Die Urkunden Ottos III.*, DD II, 2, nr. 366, 795; see: T. Zotz 1999: 110.

⁷⁰ For this view see: J. Fried 1989: 138–143.

of Merseburg tells us that the Hungarian duke Vaik (Stephen) was crowned with the acceptance of and according to the will of Otto. In the same sentence, Thietmar calls Vaik the brother-in-law of Henry⁷¹. There is no doubt that Otto III had supported the marriage between Henry's sister Gisela and the Hungarian prince⁷²; by this marriage, the latter was related to the Bavarian duke and to the emperor.

Once more we can recognize the motive of connexion or relation: it may be possible to regard Stephen of Hungary as a king, who was in a distinctive political manner connected with the emperor, but it might be more important to mention that Stephen was a relative of both his neighbour, the duke of Bavaria, and the emperor Otto III. The Hungarian prince who was to become king was obviously included into a network of bonds that were defined in different ways: kinship, friendship, fidelity or feudality were different realities of social and political life, but first of all these different structures are fitting into a framework of personal relations more than in a context of internal or foreign affairs of states. The emperor may have been the centre of different networks, but he was not the only focus. Magnates as Henry of Bavaria or Ekkehard of Meissen not only shared Otto's relations with Stephen of Hungary or Boleslaw of Poland but acted within their own frameworks of relations not seldom transgressing what can be called the „frontiers” of the Ottonian realm: Ekkehard of Meissen, for example, was the dominant magnate in a region close to Saxony, Thuringia, Poland and Bohemia and could act as mediator between the Bohemian Přemyslids and the Polish Piasts⁷³. Henry of Bavaria was not only the brother-in-law of Stephen but also was the nephew of Rudolf III, the king of Burgundy, who was also related to Hermann, the duke of Suebia⁷⁴. When, before crossing the Alps and returning to Rome, Otto III met the Burgundian king at Bruchsal we could recognize the claim by a hegemonial emperor and „German” king for the support of a neighbouring king whose territory was of strategic value for the linkage of the Ottonian realm south and north of the Alps⁷⁵. But maybe Otto himself was more interested in the religious context of this meeting which took place near the nunnery of Selz founded by Otto's grandmother Adelheid who had been buried there one year previously. Rudolf of Burgundy was a nephew of the empress, and with respect to this we can regard the meeting of the king and the emperor as a meeting of relatives in order to pray for the soul of their aunt and grandmother⁷⁶. Political motives may have been included, but this is not to say that the shape of piety only was covering the hard facts of political intention that would have been the focus of mainly political talks concerned with common interests or future plans. Family relation itself was also a political fact and a meeting for prayer and remembering of the empress Adelheid was a demonstration and a promotion of kinship and friendship. But this was not an exclusive goal for the emperor, because Henry of Bavaria and Hermann of Suebia were also included with concern to their respective relations with the

⁷¹ Thietmar IV, 59, 198.

⁷² See: T. Zotz 1999: 106; J. Fried 1989: 67; 1994: 583.

⁷³ See: K. Görich 1997: 106–107.

⁷⁴ See: T. Zotz 1999: 108–109.

⁷⁵ See: T. Zotz 1999: 109–111.

⁷⁶ See: G. Althoff 1996: 154.

Burgundian king: when some 20 years later Henry as the king and emperor succeeding Otto III, claimed the succession of the Burgundian kingdom⁷⁷, that was not the execution of an approach to hegemony started by Otto III but a consequence of the relationship between the Ottonian and the Burgundian family that had been founded during the reign of the first Ottonian king Henry I (919–936).

The importance of personal relations and bonds makes it clear that Germany around the year 1000 was far from being a state with strong political structures, effective rule and administration and fixed frontiers. Since the end of 997, the pilgrimage to Gniezno brought the emperor's longest stay north of the Alps; in spite of this, ruling „Germany” or an attempt to improve the means of administration were obviously not the aims of this short presence. The kingdom that was ruled by the Ottonian kings and had been the basis for their approach to Italy and the imperial crown was still not recognised as „Germany” but as a complex of different political, geographical and ethnically defined regions. Around the year 1000 the troops that crossed the Alps on the way to Rome were recognised as „Germans” (*Teutonici*), but that was not their self-expression⁷⁸. Instead of this they regarded themselves as „Saxons”, „Suebians”, „Franks” or „Bavarians”, but ethnicity was not the only and not the dominant factor of regional identity. The duchies were marked by ethnic names but were the products of different and complex political developments; the duchy of Saxony has long been regarded as the basis for Ottonian kingship, but Mathias Becher recently has argued that on the contrary this duchy was the result of Ottonian effort while the Ottonian family had acted in a Frankish context including Saxony and Francia, which in spite of older interpretations was not to become a duchy of its own in Ottonian times⁷⁹.

The most effective rule was exercised by the dukes of Bavaria who were not of Bavarian but of Saxon origin⁸⁰; when Henry the Quarrelsome rebelled against Otto II he was supported not only by Bavarian but also by Saxon magnates while there were some magnates of his duchy who supported the emperor. There were also connections between the Bavarian dukes and the Bohemian Přemyslids while the Polish Piasts who also had been said to support Henry the Quarrelsome later on obviously opted for the Ottonian kings⁸¹. Henry's sister Hadwig, who had been married to the duke of Suebia, Burkhard II, continued to act as a duchess for the years of her widowship, although that a new duke of the Conradian family had been created⁸². Therefore Suebia seems to have been a political region dominated by two different noble families and not a unified duchy with a strong ethnic and political identity. This is not alien to the situation we find in Saxony: the position of the duke had been created as a representative of the Ottonian kings but had been kept within the family of the Billungs as a focus of their increasing power while the Ottonian kingdom in Saxony was represented mainly by the abbesses of Quedlinburg, Gandersheim and Essen. As some magnates of Saxony

⁷⁷ See: S. Weinfurter 1999: 220–222.

⁷⁸ See: J. Fried 1994: 21–22, 858–860; J. Ehlers 1989: 306–309; 1994: 44–45.

⁷⁹ See: M. Becher 1996.

⁸⁰ See: S. Weinfurter 1999: 22–35.

⁸¹ See: K. Görich 1997: 99–100.

⁸² See: T. Zotz 1999.

were connected to leaders of the Slavs and especially to the Piasts⁸³ the magnates of Lotharingia held positions in the West Frankish realm. All of them are likely to have been conscious of their obligation to the Ottonian king, but we do not know who may have been conscious of a political if not ethnical identity of „Germany”.

In the Ottonian realm around the year 1000, rule and power was not only a feature of kingship but was shared by noble families of wealth and influence based on propriety and local or wider networks and holders of positions given by the king but also more or less appointed to families who held the position for more than one generation. Given this, historical research has tended to recognize a special sphere of central power and government and a reservation of resources for the king outside the mechanisms of aristocratic society: the church. Bishoprics and some abbeys were regarded as positions that were to be granted by the king without any respect to other claims or interests and therefore could be used as means of control and rule over the realm. But nowadays we have learned that the Ottonian „Reichskirche” was not totally excluded from the lay world, so that positions of the church were objects of competition between noble families, as were the positions of a margrave or a count; according to this the so-called „Reichskirchensystem” was not a reservation of the king’s rule but also a feature of aristocratic power⁸⁴. However, Otto III and his successor Henry II are said to have opted for a better control over the churches by creating prelates from their chapel instead of meeting the demands of local groups. But with respect to Otto III, it is not clear if this was a matter of political claims; what we have to realize is that the emperor chose young clerics from the chapel who sometimes were familiar to him as for example Franco, who is said to have shared some time with Otto feasting and praying in a cave and later was made bishop of Worms by the young emperor, or Heribert who is likely to have been one of Otto’s teachers and was created chancellor and in 999 archbishop of Cologne⁸⁵. That there was a special familiarity between the young emperor and Heribert is shown not only by their mutual promise to found a monastery for the memory of the other⁸⁶ but is demonstrated by a letter of the emperor that announced to Heribert the see of Cologne by the words of the greeting: „Otto who only by God’s grace is emperor sends to his *archilogotheta* Heribert his grace and Cologne and one cubit of pallium”⁸⁷. Ernst-Dieter Hehl recently has argued that this would have been a distinctive political announcement, because Otto might have wanted to make Aachen the see of a bishopric and therefore had to curtail the diocese of Cologne, a curtailment that according to Hehl would have been announced by the uncommon shortness of the pallium⁸⁸. But there is no proof for the idea that Otto wanted to found a new bishopric

⁸³ See: K. Görich 1997.

⁸⁴ The traditional view was challenged by T. Reuter 1982; for an actual account of this controversy see: R. Schieffer 1998a.

⁸⁵ For Ottos „friends” see: G. Althoff 1996: 199–207.

⁸⁶ See: above nr. 36.

⁸⁷ Lantbert, *Vita Heriberti* 5, 1841, repr. New York 1963: 743: *Otto imperator sola Dei gratia Heriberto archilogotetae gratiam et Coloniam ac pallii cubitum unum*. See: G. Althoff 1996: 205.

⁸⁸ E.-D. Hehl 1997: 169–203. The *pallium* was a distinctive piece of the liturgical vestments of an archbishop granted by the Pope.

at Aachen and therefore it seems to be better to account it for a joke demonstrating the familiarity between the emperor and the new archbishop and perhaps, as Falkenstein suggests, the emperor's promise to pay for the taxes required by the Pope when granting a pallium to an archbishop⁸⁹.

According to this familiarity seems to be an important motive of the creation of bishops as Heribert or Franco during Otto's reign; it is not clear that Otto acted in favour of the development of king's authority and in order to diminish the power of local groups when creating bishops from his entourage. With respect to the motive of familiarity there is no difference between Otto's creation of bishops or Popes and his promotion of lay magnates who were called „friends" of the emperor as were margrave Ekkehard or duke Henry of Bavaria⁹⁰. That the king's right to create bishops and his familiarity with some of the most important prelates of his realm was another matter than his total control over churches and ecclesiastic affairs is demonstrated by a conflict that was an important matter at the end of the year 1000 and concerned Otto after his return to Rome at the beginning of year 1001. The conflict involved persons who were or had been near to the emperor: his sister Sophia, his former tutor Bernward, who had been created Bishop of Hildesheim, and archbishop Willigis of Mainz, the leading prelate of the realm north of the Alps who is said to have lost influence and importance during the first years of Otto's personal rule⁹¹. The starting point of the affair had been in 989 when Otto's sister Sophia had asked to be invested as a nun of Gandersheim by the archbishop and not by the bishop of Hildesheim who in this matter was competent⁹². The conflict rose when the new church of Gandersheim was to be blessed and Sophia acting instead of the abbess called in archbishop Willigis. When a date for the blessing was cancelled bishop Bernward tried to execute the blessing but the nuns disturbed the ceremony. A week later Willigis came for the blessing ceremony but a representative of Bernward intervened and induced Willigis to adjourn the decision to a synod that should be collocated two months later. Bernward obviously feared that this synod would decide in favour of the archbishop; therefore he started a journey to Rome in order to ask for the intervention of his former scholar Otto. When Bernward was travelling the synod was held at Gandersheim in November but ended with an *éclat*: Bernward's representative left the convention accompanied by some bishops while the rest joined Willigis for a discussion on the frontiers between the dioceses of Mainz and Hildesheim.

The Gandersheim conflict reveals the problems and the interests of what is called the „Reichsepiskopat" (episcopate of the realm) around the year 1000. At the beginning there was a question of status: The imperial princess Sophia wanted to be invested by the leading prelate of the realm and not by the bishop of the small diocese of Hildesheim. It is not clear if at this time there was a struggle by the convent of Gandersheim to get out of the bonds of the diocese of Hildesheim or if it was only the ambition of the

⁸⁹ See: L. Falkenstein 1998: 91–97.

⁹⁰ See: above nr. 65.

⁹¹ See: E.–D. Hehl 1997.

⁹² For the Gandersheim conflict see: K. Görich 1993: 56–94; G. Althoff 1996: 160–169; E.–D. Hehl 1998: 295–344.

princess that was responsible for the conflict⁹³. However, when the two prelates were concerned with the request of the princess it was not only the latter's rank but also that of the bishop and the archbishop that was questioned. Since the conflict lasted for decades and was finished only during the reign of Conrad II (1024–1039) it is clear that it was not a conflict between individual bishops. Every bishop was concerned not only with his own rank and prestige but with the status of his diocese and felt obliged to fight for its proprieties and rights in competition with other bishops. Those were the questions of concern to the archbishop of Mainz, the bishop of Hildesheim and their colleagues in the year 1000: competing with each other, struggling for the status of their churches the bishops were acting as members of the hierarchical aristocratic society. There is no indication that the bishops of the „Reichskirche“ laid greater impact on the affairs of the realm and the interests of the king or emperor than the lay magnates. Bishops and abbots were obliged to support the emperor by sending troops across the Alps and sometimes acted as the leader of their troops; some as for example the abbots of Reichenau, Witigowo and Alawich, are mentioned as having spent most of their time in the emperor's duty⁹⁴. That was an answer to the properties and rights that had been granted to the churches by the Ottonian kings; since the rulers had given resources to the bishoprics and abbeys they had to comfort the rulers by gifts and regular contributions, by giving accommodation for the itinerant king and by military support⁹⁵. But that does not mean that every prelate was foremost concerned with the ruler's needs nor that the prelates were automatic supporters of the king while the lay magnates would have been the ruler's contenders. Knut Görich recently has pointed out that there was no difference between prelates and lay magnates in supporting the emperor during the reign of Otto III; in contrary it has to be mentioned that the Gandersheim conflict which rose within the „Reichskirche“ was one of the most important conflicts in the realm north of the Alps, while the older view of a conflict caused by resistance to Otto's imperial politics has been refuted by Görich⁹⁶.

Within this framework the implications of the Gandersheim conflict are clear: Ecclesiastical affairs could challenge the peace of the realm, as could the conflicts between lay magnates. The Gandersheim conflict also reveals the limits of ecclesiastical hierarchy and law; synods as the normal means of producing ecclesiastical assent were paralysed since the synod's president, the archbishop, was one of the contenders⁹⁷. Obviously the archbishop was able to prevent a decision in favour of the bishop if not to get a decision according to his will. That was the reason why Bernward asked for another authority, that of the Pope and the emperor. Bernward was encouraged to appeal to the Pope by rules of canon law that were known in Hildesheim as is witnessed by manuscripts written obviously with respect to the actual conflict⁹⁸. But although there was no rule that gave the emperor any competence for this case, the life of Bernward

⁹³ See: K. Görich 1993: 60; G. Althoff 1996: 57; E.-D. Hehl 1998: 316–317.

⁹⁴ See: T. Zotz 1999: 106–107.

⁹⁵ See: R. Schieffer 1998a: 5–6.

⁹⁶ See: K. Görich 1995: 123–186.

⁹⁷ See: K. Görich 1993: 75–79; G. Althoff 1996: 168–169.

⁹⁸ See: E.-D. Hehl 1998: 325–329.

which hands down an almost contemporary report from Hildesheim⁹⁹ lays great impact on the role of Otto III. As this report tells us the emperor did not wait for Bernward when the bishop was approaching, but went to meet him on his way. Otto provided for Bernward's subsistence and accommodation and spent some time with him in secret conversation. All these details notify an atmosphere of friendship and familiarity¹⁰⁰; obviously the report wants to tell us that Bernward was very familiar with Otto III.

Familiarity and friendship to the emperor seem to be arguments as important for the conflict as the ecclesiastical canons, which had been copied at Hildesheim and the proceedings of the synod that was to be held at Rome with the Pope presiding. Familiarity was Bernward's means to engage the emperor; while appealing to the Pope and the Pope's synod at Rome according to canon law the bishop appealed to the familiarity of the emperor according to unwritten rules of social behaviour. It is revealing that Bernward succeeded in asking for the emperor's help, even though the other side was constituted by Otto's sister Sophia and the most important archbishop of the realm. Obviously Willigis and Sophia had lost a position close to the emperor¹⁰¹ while Bernward trusted to his familiarity to Otto III that was based on his former function as teacher of the young emperor. Otto's part in the Gandersheim conflict was not defined as a case of the king's rule over the church but was placed within the framework of social and political relations and friendship. It is true, however, that it was the emperor's duty to take part in the papal synods at Rome but that was only the visible side of a stronger but less formal influence. With the backing of the emperor Bernward had a better standing at Rome; most of all, Otto was the one to mediate the Pope's support. But as Bernward had to realize that was not enough: neither the Pope nor the emperor was able to terminate the conflict without the consent of the other involved prelate, Willigis, who succeeded in resisting the decisions of papal synods and the intervention of a papal legate. As Hehl has pointed out, the Gandersheim conflict was not the only case during Ottonian rule to reveal the power of bishops who were encouraged by canon law to resist both the emperor's and the Pope's will¹⁰². Regarding this, we are once more induced to focus not only on the emperor as the centre of social and political life but to realize that the rule of such impressive a figure as Otto III was placed within a framework of multiple relations, interests and bonds.

The Ottonian realm around the year 1000 was more than a young emperor attempting to create a new definition of his empire: there were lay magnates struggling for success and social ranking, powerful bishops, monks striving for new ascetic or missionary performance and some saints who were able to mediate an eternal reward for their worshippers. Within this framework, relationships and friendship are not to be regarded as columns of a social and political hierarchy with the emperor on the top but as ropes of a network with different knots and the emperor as the central but not the only one.

⁹⁹ For the *Vita Bernwardi* and its problems see: K. Görich, H.-H. Kortüm 1990: 1–57; M. Stumpf 1997: 461–496.

¹⁰⁰ See: G. Althoff 1996: 162–164.

¹⁰¹ See: G. Althoff 1996; E.-D. Hehl 1998.

¹⁰² See: E.-D. Hehl 1998.

There is no doubt that relations and friendship were a means to secure power and to install political bonds. But the social network tied by those ropes was more than a political structure to be compared to the institutions of the modern state. Being well connected did not only mean to have a starting-point for claiming social success or power but to have a secure standing within a world of unsteadiness and insecurity and in respect to a future world that was the object of hope but also fear¹⁰³. Even the emperor might have been dependent on his social environment for the confirmation and corroboration of his status within both the present and the future world. Fears for one's earthly wealth and heavenly salvation may have included the expectation of the troubles announced for the end of history and the Second Coming of Christ around the year 1000¹⁰⁴, but it is not clear if such ideas had indeed reached the emperor's circle or were common to lay and clerical elites north of the Alps¹⁰⁵. With or without any fear of world's end, there was enough reason for even the emperor — regarded as chosen by God — to provide for his salvation by fasting, doing penance and worshipping the saints. In the year 1000 Otto made steps in this direction by extending and securing a network that connected him to a martyr that could be regarded as his friend and to a „colleague” that had established missionary activity as a special way of salvation for emperors.

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¹⁰³ See: V. Epp 1999: 3.

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