Writing William

William the Conqueror and the Problem of Legitimacy
in Twelfth-Century English Historiography

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations

ASC	*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*
Eadmer: *HN*	Eadmer of Canterbury: *Historia Novorum in Anglia*
Henry: *HA*	Henry of Huntingdon: *Historia Anglorum*
Orderic Vitalis: *HE*	Orderic Vitalis: *Historia Ecclesiastica*
Roger: *Chr.*	Roger of Howden: *Chronica*
William of Jumièges: *GND*	William of Jumièges: *Gesta Normannorum ducum*
William: *GRA*	William of Malmesbury: *Gesta regum Anglorum*
William: *HRA*	William of Newburgh: *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*

1.   Introduction

"An entire book could indeed be devoted to the opinions which have been expressed about William [the Conqueror]."[1] Bates wrote this at the beginning of his biography about the first Norman English king. William brought with the Norman Conquest many changes to the English kingdom—changes which are still a topic of controversy. The victory at Hastings made William I one of the best-known English kings but also one of the most controversial ones.

As apparent from the vast amount of literature—including popular scientific works—and from their various interpretations of it, the Norman Conquest (along with William I) was and still is a controversial yet very popular topic in England. On the one hand, some see it as a civilising progress, or as stated in the famous *1066 and All That*, "The Norman Conquest was a Good Thing, as from this time onwards England stopped being conquered and thus was able to become top nation [sic!]"[2]. Others, on the other hand, condemn it as the downfall of the old Anglo-Saxon England.[3] Considering the emotions evoked even these days by William's victory in the Battle of Hastings, the view of the people from the twelfth century seems to be a worthy research subject to better understand our memory of 1066. William I's claim to the throne is first and foremost very problematic: Indeed, he ruled by the right of conquest. This was neither a good foundation of his power nor for that of his sons, who claimed the throne after him by the right of birth—especially by taking into consideration that their claims never were unchallenged.[4] Consequently, Norman propaganda tried in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest to justify William's rule by other means. Therefore, this work aims to find out how the historiographical sources of the twelfth century adopted these ideas and how they adapted them to address concerns of their present.

The twelfth century is especially suitable as a period for investigation because the authors to be analysed were mostly born after 1066. Nevertheless, they experienced the consequences and changes brought about by Norman rule, and they had the possibility to speak to eye-witnesses personally. The authors did not belong to the generation that had to eulogise King William but could judge him more independently from politics. Further, at the beginning of the 13th century, the process of assimilation of the two cultures had largely concluded and, with the loss of Normandy in 1204, a new relationship of the Norman aristocracy to their former home country began. That makes the twelfth

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[1] Bates 1989, p. 2.
[2] Sellar, Yeatman 1931, p. 17.
[3] Chibnall 1999; Baxter 2009, pp. 78–80; Kumar 2013. The changes brought by the Norman Conquest is a huge field of study. For a general overview see Harper-Bill, Houts 2007.
[4] Weiler 2013, p. 142.

century a perfect starting point in order to analyse whether and how the process of in-creasing historicisation of William's rule occurred in historiography.

However, before it is possible to begin deep analysis of the sources, it is important to understand where high medieval kings took their power from and how they were usually legitimised in medieval historiography. In order to become aware of where twelfth-century authors took their ideas from, there will be a short analysis of the authorisation of William I in eleventh-century English and Norman historiography. Legitimisation could namely not be created *ex nihilo*, but depended on already existing sources, such as a higher authority, who supported the claim of power.[5] First, though, I shall start with a short introduction to the Norman Conquest and the sources analysed to avoid repetitions in later parts of the work and in order to understand the background of the Conquest more soundly.

1.1 1066: The Kings Harold Godwinson and William the Conqueror

William's Conquest of England in 1066 undoubtedly belongs to the most fascinating events in British history and has developed into a so-called meta-narrative that is constantly re-discussed and re-evaluated by historians.[6] Despite the great significance attributed to the Battle of Hastings, the events, which led to the Norman Conquest in 1066, are still not fully reconstructed and probably never will be. Although there is a huge number of narrative sources, their authors all have their particular intentions and contradict each other.[7] Therefore, also the following summary of the events can only recapitulate the status of research and not give a final report of how and why William conquered England. However, before starting, I want to clarify what is to be under-stood—in most cases—under the named rulers or other important persons: Of course, neither William I nor Cnut the Great conquered England on their own—to mention only one example. Rather, they depended on their warriors, their advisors, the magnates, only to bring up a few groups involved.[8] Therefore following Petersohn, I want the names of the rulers to be understood as symbols used for the origin of all political ex-

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[5] Drews 2009, p. 438.
[6] Schwarz 2018, pp. 250 and 257.
[7] An analysis of the sources is e.g. given by Baxter 2009; Chibnall 1969a-1983; or Mortimer 2009.
[8] See for example Görich 2011 who tried to analyse what was to be understood under the court of Frederick I (esp. pp. 159-169).

pressions, actions, and aims that the ruler stood behind; although the process of making the decision and the execution was done by several people.[9]

In any case, the relations between England and Normandy did not just start with the Norman Conquest but went back a long time into history. They formally began in 991 as Duke Richard I (942–996)[10] and King Æthelred II (978–1013/1014–1016)[11] agreed to a pact in that they promised each other friendship and anti-aggression.[12] This relation was further strengthened by the marriage of Emma[13], daughter of Duke Richard II (996–1026)[14], with the English king.[15] Nevertheless, Norman loyalty swayed for a long time between England and their Scandinavian ancestors. So, the dukes let Viking fleets from or to England into Norman ports to winter or to trade, which caused conflicts between the two realms.[16] Concerning its relationship to Scandinavia, Normandy reached a "point of no return"[17] around 1010, as it protected the enemies of the Danish Kings Sweyn Forkbeard and Cnut the Great.

Cnut conquered England in 1016. His conquest was only the peak of the Viking invasion in England. Already around 886, Alfred the Great (871–899) and the Viking leader

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[9] Petersohn 1992, p. 129: "Friedrich Barbarossa wird als Chiffre für die Ursache aller politischer Äußerungen, Maßnahmen und Zielsetzungen gebraucht, die die Quellen mit seinem Namen verbinden und hinter denen, auch wenn die Entscheidungsfindung und Ausführung kollektiv und anonym erfolgen, doch in der Regel der initiative und verantwortende Wille des Kaisers gestanden haben dürfte.".

[10] Richard the Fearless' main achievement was that he was accepted as leader by the Northmen in Normandy. After his father's death, he was too young to seize power and came into French captivity. Therefore, he needed the Viking forces to compel the French king to accept his rule. Richard I did not only unify the Northmen under him but also centralised the duchy by establishing a network of kinship predominantly based on his wife's and mother's family ties (Searle 1988, pp. 79–117).

[11] Æthelred II, also the Unready, went down in history as an unsuccessful and incompetent king. Although modern historians revised this picture and brought out his successes (like the maintaining of political institutions), he is mainly remembered as the king who "was never ready when the Danes were" (Sellar, Yeatman 1931, p. 12). Danish plundering and some unwise appointments marked his reign. Nevertheless, Æthelred managed to come back from exile in 1014 and regained his power. The negative picture of him is, for the most part, attributed to posterity for those who needed to explain Cnut's conquest and contrasted Æthelred with his worshiped half-brother, Edward the Martyr (English king from 975–978). For the modern reception see for example Howard 2010; Williams 2003.

[12] Crouch 2002, p. 33; Houts 2000, p. 102.

[13] Emma was at the latest born in 990 and was still very young when she crossed the Channel in order to marry Æthelred, who was much older than her. The marriage was purely political. While the Normans wanted to secure their power by means of alliances with their neighbours, Æthelred aimed to stop the Viking activities. For more information on Emma refer to Stafford 2001.

[14] The reign of Richard II was marked by trading with Vikings on the one hand and by being a loyal vassal to the French king on the other. He also found new ways to express his dignity, and his court more resembled the royal one. It was under Richard II that Dudo wrote his *Historia Normannorum* as the history of the Norman dukes (Crouch 2002, p. 38f).

[15] Douglas 1994, p. 164.

[16] Brown 1985, pp. 94f; Potts 2007, pp. 19–28. So, Richard II even signed a contract with Sweyn in 1013. Another reason for the collaboration with the Viking fleets was the fear of becoming a victim oneself. (Crouch 2002, pp. 34f).

[17] Abrams 2007, p. 50.

Guthrum (c.874–890) had signed a treaty that established the Danelaw and aimed to settle the coexistence of Anglo-Saxons and Danes. However, it could not achieve peace. There had been a short period of tranquillity after the death of Eric Bloodaxe[18] in 954,[19] but already beginning in the 980s the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reports many Viking raids again. Also, this had not been Cnut's first attempt to conqueror England: In 1013, Cnut and his father, Sweyn Forkbeard, had successfully conquered parts of southern England. However, Sweyn's death prevented further aggression, and Cnut had to wait until 1015 when he made a treaty with the English King Edmund Ironside. The death of Edmund only one year later made Cnut the sole king of England. Howeverer, Cnut was not only an English king, but he also reigned over Denmark (since 1018) and Norway (1028)—the so-called North Sea Empire—which makes him "one of the most fascinating of the pre-Conquest kings"[20]. Cnut ruled successfully over his great kingdom and even managed to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. He consolidated his power in England by collaborating with the Anglo-Saxon elite, putting his followers into important positions, and by collaborating with and impinging influence upon ecclesiastical authorities.[21]

Also, his marriage to Emma, now widowed, a year after the conquest was a strategy to consolidate Cnut's power. Their common son was Harthacnut[22]. Emma's sons from Æthelred, Edward and Alfred, in turn, had to flee to Normandy.[23] Since they grew up together with Duke Robert I (1027–1035)[24], the relationship to Anglo-Danish England became even more hostile under this duke's rule.[25] When Cnut the Great died in 1035, it was unclear who should become his successor. His sons, Harold Harefoot[26] and Har-

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[18] It is assumed that Eric Bloodaxe first was Norwegian King (and the son of Harald Fairhair), but the Scandinavian sources about his life are very problematic so that many facts about his life are obscure. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* he was King of Northumbria twice: c.947–948 and 952–954. His death in the Battle of Stainmore in 954 marks the temporary end of Viking aggression in England (Authén-Blom 1989-2001, pp. 501f).

[19] Bolton 2009, 9–11; Hadley 2012, pp. 375–377; Richards 2012, pp. 368–372.

[20] Bolton 2017, p. 1.

[21] Bolton 2009, pp. 9–150. The positive picture of Cnut in English historiography confirms the broad acceptance of his reign. The Scandinavian sources, however, depict him totally differently. For more information on Cnut refer to Bolton 2017.

[22] Harthacnut was king of the Danish and English, inheriting the kingdoms from his father. He was not very popular because he imposed high taxes to maintain his fleet (Sawyer 1989-2001, pp. 65f).

[23] Brown 1985, pp. 94f; Douglas 1994, pp. 165f.

[24] Robert was the father of William the Conqueror and inherited the duchy from his elder brother. The Anglo-Saxon princes were supposed to have belonged to his inner circle. Probably tired of the internal struggles in Normandy, Robert left for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, on which he died in 1035 (Searle 1988, pp. 159–156).

[25] Abrams 2007, p. 50.

[26] Harold Harefoot was son of Cnut and Ælfgifu of Northampton. He had probably already been born when Cnut married Emma. Though Ælfgifu had a recognised status, Harold was excluded from succession (in England) as per Emma's wish. It is unknown whether Cnut made any fur-

thacnut, both claimed the English crown. As Harold Harefoot was in England and Harthacnut in Denmark, it was the former one who succeeded. In the meantime, the Anglo-Saxon princes attempted to return to England separately in order to help their mother and perhaps to even try to become kings. Edward met local resistance, forcing him back to Normandy, whereas Alfred was captured by Godwin, Earl of Wessex, and blinded on behalf of Harold Harefoot. A blind man was unsuitable for kingship, and, thus, Alfred could no longer threaten Harold's claim.[27] Further, something went wrong, and Alfred died after the blinding.[28] Harthacnut had to wait until his half-brother died in 1039/40 in order to become king. He was quite unpopular and died just a few years later in 1042. Now, it was finally time for the English to have an Anglo-Saxon king again. Edward returned from Normandy and seized the crown with the help of Earl Godwin.[29]

It is unknown where the dynasty of Godwin, Earl of Wessex, came from. Godwin probably was of noble birth and began his career under Cnut the Great. He was an extremely successful military leader, loyal, and particularly gifted in adapting to every political situation. Cnut, who highly appreciated loyalty, made Godwin powerful by letting him marry his sister-in-law and giving him the Earldom of Wessex in 1020. Wessex, back then, was the most powerful earldom of England. Cnut even entrusted his kingdom to Godwin when he was abroad. Difficulties began for Godwin when Cnut died, and he needed to decide where his loyalties lied in the struggle for the English throne. Although he favoured Harthacnut, Godwin had to accept Harold Harefoot as his king at the end, which became a problem later with the succession of the other brother. Godwin managed to nevertheless convince him of his loyalty by swearing an oath and giving him an expensive gift. He stayed on Harthacnut's side until the king's death in 1042.[30]

The relationship between Godwin and the new king, Edward the Confessor, was not easy because the Earl was involved in the death of the King's brother, Alfred. He claimed to have acted as a truthful servant under Harold's command, but the event overshadowed their relationship nevertheless. To secure his role despite this, Godwin

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ther arrangements for his succession. That being said, as Harold was faster to seize the English crown, this no longer played role (Lawson 2004).

[27] Firth 2016 describes that blinding in the eleventh century was a common practice to remove the agency of rivals. A blind man was seen as useless in Anglo-Saxon society, as he was unable to do his work for the community. Blinding, therefore, automatically meant the loss of power (pp. 2f). Furthermore, blindness stood as a symbol for ignorance, which disqualified a person to rule as well (Kempshall 2001, pp. 124f).

[28] Walker 1997, pp. 12–15.

[29] DeVries 1999, pp. 78–86. Edward, as he grew up in Normandy, had neither a network nor land in England and was, as a result, totally dependent on the benevolence of the nobility (Waßenhoven 2016, p. 33). See also Rex 2008.

[30] DeVries 1999, pp. 71–85.

married his daughter, Edith[31], to Edward. In the first half of Edward's reign, Godwin's career continued, and two of his sons, Swegen and Harold, became earls.[32] Edward, who himself was neither a good warrior nor a skilled military leader, depended on Godwin's military abilities.[33] Still, Edward tried to establish an opposite pole to the mighty family of Godwin by fetching clerks from Normandy and giving lands to Normans.[34] Godwin disliked these Norman friends and advisors of the king, but he kept quiet until the situation became unbearable in 1051. Then, Godwin opposed the king together with his sons. As punishment, the family was banned from England and Edward's wife, Edith, was brought to a monastery. In their absence, William of Normandy, later the Conqueror, is said to have visited Edward the Confessor in England. It is proposed that this was the point in time when the king promised the duke his crown. Still, it appeared that Edward was too dependent on Godwin as warlord to do without him. In fact, conflicts arose in the border regions of Wales and Scotland. Godwin and his sons returned only a year later with military aid, and Edward could do nothing else than to re-establish their power. Godwin was stronger and more powerful than ever before when he surprisingly died in 1053.[35]

Godwin's son Harold became his successor as most powerful earl of England. As his father before him, he was a great warlord but also knew the worth of diplomacy, which he showed in the enduring conflicts with the Welsh. His influence on King Edward increased constantly until 1066; he became wealthier and richer. He used this money to buy friends and power and managed to secure earldoms for his brothers. In 1063, he invaded Wales together with his brother Tostig and got a Welsh king killed. This victory helped him to prove himself capable of defending his country and protecting its population—an important capacity for kings. Tostig was given the Earldom of Northumbria in 1055. Although he was successful at ruling it at the beginning, he spent too much time in the south at the king's court, causing a rebellion of the northerners in 1065. They went south, and because Edward did not want to risk a civil war, he chose Morcar as new earl. Tostig went into exile.[36]

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[31] Edith (c.1020–1075) gained some influence at court during Edward's reign and used it for e.g. allowing the murder of her brother Tostig's opponent. After the Norman Conquest, however, she surrendered to William and lost her power even though she still was treated with respect (Henson 2001, p. 26; or also Stafford 2001).
[32] DeVries 1999, pp. 87f.
[33] DeVries 1999, pp. 71 and 88.
[34] Douglas 1994, p. 168.
[35] DeVries 1999, pp. 88–106. On the Godwin family see also Mason 2004; resp. Williams 2007a on their relation to Edward.
[36] DeVries 1999, pp. 124–181. Walker 1997 sees the reasons for the rebellion in Tostig's plan to increase the tax level (p. 107).

Meanwhile, Edward the Confessor was still without an heir. As written above, he probably nominated William of Normandy during the exile of the Godwin family, but he also considered Edward the Exile, son of Edmund Ironside, a former English king (died 1016). Edward was taken to Hungary as a child and returned to England in 1057 but died almost immediately.[37] He had a son, Edgar, who was five years old and taken to the king's court. Edgar got the title Ætheling, which shows that Edward considered him as his heir as well.[38] Another possible claimant to the throne was none other than Harold Godwinson, whom Edward is said to have appointed at his deathbed. He was the brother-in-law of the king, the mightiest earl in England, and had shown his qualities in the campaign against Wales.[39] Be that as it may, when Edward the Confessor died in January 1066, England needed a king, and nothing indicates that William of Normandy was taken into consideration. The witenagemot selected Harold as the new English king. The only other choice seemed to have been Edgar, but he was too young, and the great men were afraid of the wars to come against Normandy and Scandinavia.[40]

The reign of Harold Godwinson was rather short, and he probably spent most of its time preparing for the battle against William. DeVries still managed to work out three main themes, one of them being military preparations for the feared attacks. Another theme was to centralise economic power mainly by increased minting. The final one was political unity. Therefore, Harold married Ealgyth, daughter of Ælfgar, Earl of Mercia, and sister of the northern Earls Edwin (Mercia) and Morcar (Northumbria). This was the only rival family to the Godwin family, and so, Harold managed to secure the peace between the northern and southern parts of England.[41] But before the Battle of Hastings should have been fought, there were two other battles in England in 1066, which have been nearly forgotten. William of Normandy was not the only one who invaded England. The other was the Norwegian King Harald Hardrada (1046/7–1066)[42].

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[37] Edmund Ironside had two sons, Edmund and Edward, who were taken to Denmark by Cnut. From there, a rebellious lord brought them via the Ruthenia to the Hungarian court into safety as they were—as potential heirs of the English throne—a threat to Cnut's reign. Whereas the elder son Edmund died without heirs in Hungarian exile, Edward married a niece of the German Emperor with whom he had three children. Edward the Exile's death after his return to England was sudden and unexpected so that his modern biographer even suggests that Harold Godwinson might have murdered him in order to secure his position. However, there is no proof for this theory (Ronay 1989, pp. 19–142).

[38] Ronay 1989, pp. 143–145; Walker 1997, p. 83.

[39] Butler 1966 suggests that Harold was already declared as heir-apparent in 1064 (p. 27), but DeVries 1999 and Walker 1997 do not mention this.

[40] DeVries 1999, p. 162. Baxter 2009 provides a study on the succession question taking fully into consideration earlier research. She concludes that it was fatal of Edward not to resolve his succession clearly (pp. 117f).

[41] DeVries 1999, pp. 157–163.

[42] The reason why Harald Hardrada attacked England in 1066 is unknown. His claim to the throne was more than weak: Harald was successor of his brother, Magnus the Good, who, in turn, inherited Norway and Denmark from Harthacnut. Harald was now supposed to have

While William was waiting for better winds in Normandy, Harald Hardrada sailed right to the English coast. In Scotland, he met Tostig Godwinson, who sought revenge for his lost titles, and together they invaded Northumbria and defeated the brothers Morcar and Edwin at Fulford. Harold Godwinson took a forced march from the south, where he had waited for William, and surprised Harald near York. Thus, he managed to defeat the Norwegian army at Stamford Bridge. He had no time to enjoy his victory, as William had landed at Hastings.[43]

William the Bastard, as he was called, was the illegitimate son of Robert I, Duke of Normandy, and Herleva, daughter of a tanner[44]. He became Duke of Normandy after his father died on crusade in 1035 and had left his only son, aged six or seven, as his successor. William's actual rule began in 1042. Before, others reigned for him, like Robert, Archbishop of Rouen. It took William some efforts to convince the Norman nobles to accept his governance and to stop their rebellions. The Battle of Val-ès-Dunes in 1047 is often seen as the turning point where William finally had Normandy under his control. However, a real change first occurred after 1060. From that time on, the Duke could take care of his neighbours and cross the borders to Maine and Brittany. The deaths of his opponents Count Geoffrey of Anjou, Henry I of France (both 1060), and the Count of Maine (1062) made it possible for William to expand his power without caring about internal problems. The Norman Duke won an important ally by marrying Matilda, daughter of Baldwin V of Flanders (1035–1087)[45]. This marriage is considered as happy for both. The couple had eight children, although it took them some time to

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claimed the North Sea Empire of Cnut the Great. However, Harald spent most of his life at war—after fighting for foreign rulers such as Yaroslav I (the Wise) and the Byzantine Emperors, he became King of Norway and fought against Denmark (see also Marsden 2007; Tjønn 2010). I assume that the attack has to be seen in context of this war against Denmark and the Danish attacks on England around this time. The Norwegian invasion might be seen as well in context of the Scandinavian expansion and Viking plunder, which had affected England since 793.

[43] For Harald Hardrada and the events of 1066 see Butler 1966, pp. 93–194; and DeVries 1999, pp. 230–293. For the Battle of Fulford see Jones 2007. Harald Hardrada won at Fulford because the Earls Edwin and Morcar were inexperienced in fighting. Harold Godwinson could defeat Harald because the Norwegian King did not expect the English army to arrive so soon and was consequently totally surprised (DeVries 1999, pp. 255–270).

[44] Searle 1988 considers it as highly improbable that William's mother indeed was daughter of a tanner for several reasons. Firstly, the first one to mention this is Orderic Vitalis in the Alençon episode without hinting whether the insult by the citizens is true. Secondly, Herleva married a noble after Robert's death, and her brothers were schoolmasters to William—unthinkable for tanners (pp. 154f). Nevertheless, the story is repeated in nearly every biography of William I.

[45] The marriage of Baldwin's daughter to William of Normandy was supposed to help secure the Flemish borders. Baldwin also took great interest in the events in England. So, he gave refuge to the Godwin family in 1051–2. He was interested in having the kingdom divided so that it could not threaten Flanders. The Norman Conquest was probably not in Baldwin's interests, as it united two of his neighbours. Nevertheless, Baldwin could not actively prevent William from conquering England, so he stayed neutral. It was first with Baldwin's successors that conflicts with William I and the Flemish counts came into being (Oksanen 2012, pp. 7–20).

have their marriage formally recognised by the Church. It first needed a new pope, as the old one saw the couple as too closely related to each other.[46]

After William had solved his inner struggles and problems, he had the opportunity to reach for the English throne in 1066, which he saw as his proper right. It was not only promised to him by Edward in person,[47] but Harold Godwinson had also sworn to help him to become the English king. Harold was in Normandy in 1064 for unknown reasons[48] and seemed to have given an oath to the Norman Duke.[49] As Harold became king nonetheless, William went to convince the Norman nobility to support him, sent a legate to the pope for assistance, and managed to obtain promises of neutrality from other countries.

As Harold was in the north fighting Harald Hardrada, William had enough time—once he had landed in England—to choose a good place for battle and prepare it along with his army. He devastated the area around Hastings in order to force Harold into battle as soon as possible. His strategy worked. Harold marched south as fast he could—and was killed in the following battle. The reasons for the Anglo-Saxon defeat are—of course—wildly discussed: While some see it in the Norman superiority, others see it in bad luck, Harold's rush to oppose his opponent, or the Norman sense of loyalty.[50] Before Christmas, there was a new English king once more: This time, it was the Norman Duke William. On his way to London, he had managed to subjugate Dover, and many had seen it as better to accept the Norman duke as king than risk lying victim to his violence.[51] Douglas sees four reasons for the fast success of the Norman rule: the aus-

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[46] Bates 2018, pp. 16–210; Douglas 1994, pp. 40–83; Hagger 2012, pp. 1–27; Rex 2011, pp. 40–127.

[47] William's visit to Edward in late 1051 is mentioned in the D-version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but it may also be a later interpolation legitimising William's rule over England (Walker 1997, p. 37). Other Norman sources tell about a visit by Archbishop Robert of Canterbury promising the crown to William. Walker assumes that this event may have taken place in 1052 when Robert had to flee England, and that Edward did not know about it (Walker 1997, pp. 37f and 50f).

[48] Walker 1997, p. 91. Norman sources tell us that Edward had sent Harold in order to promise William succession to the English throne and to swear fidelity—which is seen as unlikely. There are hints that Harold wanted to achieve a marriage alliance or to release the hostages from his family taken to Normandy during his exile. The third possibility is that Harold did not want to go to Normandy at all, which would explain his landing at Ponthieu (Walker 1997, pp. 91–95). Kempen 2016 suggests that the visit was part of a diplomatic journey that was supposed to help Harold to get the English throne. Obviously, it went awry.

[49] For possible reasons why Harold swore an oath to William, see Gautier 2012.

[50] Douglas 1994, pp. 202–208; Butler 1966; 204–250; Hagger 2012; pp. 52–54; Houts 2000, p. 106; Lawson 2016, pp. 161–194; Rex 2011, pp. 151–156; Walker 1997, pp. 171f.

[51] Shortly, Edgar Atheling was declared king, but he lacked both the broader backing of nobility and ecclesiastical support. After a short time as hostage of William I, Edgar managed to flee to Scotland with his mother and sisters. There, he married one of his sisters, Margaret, to the Scottish King Malcolm. William I saw this, together with Edgar's unsuccessful invasions, as a threat, and Edgar had to flee the Scottish court to France. After some frenzy, Edgar ended up becoming friends with William I's eldest son Robert, whom he joined to crusade. After Robert's defeat

tere losses of the Anglo-Saxon elite in the three battles of 1066, the missing common aims of the rebels as well as the fact that they acted alone instead of collaborating, and a strong public opinion in favour of William, e.g. because of the Norman clerks introduced by Edward the Confessor.[52]

The remaining resistance in the northern regions was put down by William's famous "Harrying of the North" in 1069, where he devastated the land so much that the consequences were still visible during the reign of King Stephen (1135–1154). He furthermore prevented resistance by building new castles throughout England. William secured his rule by keeping Anglo-Saxon traditions in order to stress continuity, like the coronation *ordo* or the legal system, and by introducing Norman customs, like reforming the Church or replacing the old elite with a Norman one.[53]

The reformation of the Church was a central part of William's government because it was a promise he gave the Pope in return for papal support of the Norman Conquest. The Normans founded many new monasteries, and the influence of the new reform movements, like Cluny, grew. William organised several councils where the marriage of clerks and simony were forbidden. Moreover, he reformed the judicial structure of the Church by introducing independent church courts.[54] Another central and much discussed theme of William's government was the administration. Chibnall sees two central methods the king used that led to rapid changes in feudalism. One was antecessorial: Land from one or more previous English holders was given to a Norman baron. The other one was territorial, meaning that fees were made up of lands in a particular region.[55] Land was given not as a reward, but William expected knight service or money in return.[56] Generally, the Norman Conquest replaced the old Anglo-Saxon ruling class with a Norman one and led to a new distribution of property.[57]

To summarise, this chapter aimed to make clear that the Norman Conquest was a process of settlement that has to be seen within context of the enduring Danish invasions. Thus, for contemporaries, William I was, first of all, another foreign claimant to the throne, and the Norman Conquest was not such a singular event, as it is often seen

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at Tinchebrai in 1106, Edgar retired from public life. As he bore no legitimate children, the offspring of Margaret were the only remaining survivors of the Anglo-Saxon royal line (Ronay 1989, pp. 143–172).

[52] Douglas 1994, p. 219.

[53] For William's rule over England see his biographies: Bates 2018; Douglas 1994; Hagger 2012; Rex 2011. The changes due to the Norman Conquest are widely discussed. For a general overview see Harper-Bill, Houts 2007; for a detailed study Chibnall 1986.

[54] For an overview of William's politics towards the Church, refer to Harper-Bill 2007; or Douglas 1994, pp. 112–136.

[55] Chibnall 2007, p. 130.

[56] Douglas 1994, p. 277. More information on how William secured his rule will be given in 2.7.

[57] Jäschke 1994, p. 316. A general overview of English history before and during the Norman Conquest can be found in Fleming 2011.

nowadays. Also, many continental influences, which were often ascribed to William, had already come to England via Edward the Confessor or even earlier.

1.2 Research Status: On Medieval Historiography and William I's Legitimacy

Historiography[58] and its view on the past has become a substantial subject in the field of historical research during the last decades. Consequently, numerous concepts have been developed. Under the influence of fields of research like the history of ideas or the history of mentalities, their common point is to see the value of historiography less in the facts about historical events (*funktionale Daten*) but in the way people seek to describe and think about the past (*intentionale Daten*)[59]. Besides innumerable studies on single authors and comparative studies about them, research has been conducted about the functionality of high medieval historiography in general. Thereby, concepts such as historical awareness (*Geschichtsbewusstsein*)[60], purpose of presentation (*Darstellungsabsicht*)[61], view of history (*Geschichtsbild*)[62] but also narratology[63] came into being. All those ideas see historiography more as a narration (of remembered events) than as a reconstruction of the past. The main idea of these approaches is that the past is not something that can be reconstructed one to one,[64] but that its perception is important. This changes over the course of time and always adapts to the needs of the present.

Goetz's works deal with historical awareness, finding out the importance of the present for the view into the past. Historiographers usually wanted to take sides in a conflict using *exempla* as arguments for current problems. Thereby, they often ignored the historical background of their examples. Althoff sees a distinct connection between current problems and the argumentation of medieval authors. History was, thus, used

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[58] When speaking of historiography or historical writing, the focus lies on pre-modern writing.
[59] These two terms go back to Beumann 1972. A contextualisation in research can be found in Petersohn 1997 (esp. pp. 18f).
[60] Goetz 1992, 2002, 2006, 2007; Rüsen 1994, esp. pp. 5–40.
[61] Althoff 2003a, 2003b.
[62] Eckhart 2016, pp. 26f. In contrast to historical awareness, the view of history reduces the past clearly to its direct bonds to the present. The view of history is thus fixed with the help of historiography and can easily be reconstructed (ibid.).
[63] White 1987 shows that it is impossible to write about history without narration, as giving a meaning to history automatically means narrating. Only annals and chronicles cannot be seen as a full narration (pp. 4–21, 27, and 44–57). This statement is supported by Hardtwig 2007 who writes that historians need techniques of fiction (alone to find a beginning/end) and that it is, therefore, not possible to portray the past in form of language (pp. 218–226). See also Kelley 1991, pp. 497–503.
[64] See Munslow 2003 who describes the different modes about thinking on history—from the idea of a past that can be reconstructed (Ranke) until the statement that there is no such thing as a past and that it can, therefore, not be reconstructed.

as an argument to present questions, even though many arguments would not be accepted as such in modern discussions, like dreams.[65] Thus, also different views of the past could compete for their particular view on the past.[66] Goetz further emphasises the role of the institution the author came from. This did not only influence the subject of the writing but also the structure and intention of the works. As medieval prologues show, medieval authors were well aware of the influence of their background on their writing.[67] This hints at the importance of having a close look at the author's background in order to assess his aims and intentions more accurately.

In the restricted way one can speak of propaganda in the Middle Ages, some authors wanted to create propaganda for their purpose. Thereby, the effect of propaganda did not only rely on the spread of the written text, because it was read aloud and could so reach a greater audience without being copied. The quality, rank, and influence of the recipients were, therefore, much more important.[68] Thus, it is always worthwhile to have a look at the people who read the texts and to whom they were assigned to determine their significance.

When considering an event that occurred decades or even a century ago, it seems obvious to ask to what extent something like a clarification, a reassurance of the point of view has taken place. To ask more concretely: Did something like a "historization" of the Norman historical writing in English historiography take place during the twelfth century? Historicisation is a demanding theoretical concept: On the one hand, historicisation can be understood as an objectification of events. These events become history, and, thereby, they change their quality. On the other hand, historicisation means that events are provided with a meaning namely with regard to the present: In retrospect, a meaning is attributed to them that adapts to the needs of each present society.[69] Historicisation goes back to the idea of historism (*Historismus*), developed in 19th-century Germany. Historism can firstly be understood as a scientific method to work with the past that focuses on the differentness of the past. Second, historism means that history is a process of enduring change that leads to two main trends. On the one hand, this makes the origins of present institutions, movements, etc. important (traditional trend). On the other hand, this signifies that reality is not given but is part of a moving history. This second trend puts an emphasis on future and change (progres-

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[65] Althoff 2003a, pp. 66f; Althoff 2003c, pp. 127–131. Fried 1993 and Schneidmüller 2002 emphasise the importance of the present for the view on the past as well (p. 495 or rather pp. 168–192).
[66] Eckhart 2016, p. 27.
[67] Esp. Goetz 1999, pp. 194–238 and 281–400. A summary of research about this topic is given by Lake 2014.
[68] Goetz 1999, pp. 378–380.
[69] Herzog 2002, pp. 258–260; Most 2001, p. viii.

sive-futuristic trend). This new worldview leads, third, to new values. History is used in order to justify values and norms, which means, in turn, that it is also used to create individual and collective identity.[70] I want to find out whether or in which way the reign of William the Conqueror was historicised and whether it changed during the twelfth century. The way events are historicised deeply influences the ways historiographers write about them and vice versa.

All these approaches show us that historiography cannot be seen as a reconstruction of the past but rather as a construction. By writing history out of a present point of view, history became an argument for contemporary conflicts. Thus, I want to argue that also the way to legitimise William depended on current politics, and that a change during the twelfth century can be seen. Considering that there was always more than one pretender to the throne between 1066 and 1203, I assume that William's rule was not historicised by objectifying the Norman Conquest during the twelfth century. By legitimising his rule, his sons or successors legitimised their own rule as well.

A nearly countless number of texts were written about William I, given how famous the Conquest made him. Of course, each text somehow has to handle the question of his legitimacy. By using charters or other non-narrative documents, some researchers tried to estimate the source value of the so-called Norman panegyrics. However—because of the limited sources—the results are diverse and often not very fruitful, depending too much on the interpretation of the single writer. Bates, for example, follows a new idea by arguing in his biography on the first Norman English king that William authorised his rule in the first place through violence. That was given a veneer of authority by contemporary churchmen.[71] Jäschke argues totally differently; he assumes that William's rule was connected to Edward's rule and has to be seen in the context of the Viking invasions earlier in the century. From this point of view, William's rule cannot be seen as a disruption but as continuity.[72] Otter thinks similarly, referring to the many changes of royal dynasties in English history.[73] Other biographers, however, took the arguments from the Norman panegyrics.[74] Still, this kind of research is limited by the question as to how William I was legitimised in his own time and not how his legitimacy was seen in later times.

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[70] Nipperdey 2013, pp. 498–500.
[71] Bates 2018, p. 14. He sees it as typical for this time (ibid.).
[72] Jäschke 1977a, pp. 261f.
[73] Otter 1999, p. 565. She furthermore suggests that this might be the reason why the Norman Conquest is not present in eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon sources (pp. 565f).
[74] Like Berg 1988, p. 169; Douglas 1994, pp. 255–261.

For the legitimacy of William I, it is also important to understand how the Norman Conquest in general was seen by historical writers. For a long time, scholars tended to look only at the view of the eleventh century on this tailoring event. Their primary aim was to research the value of the sources. Understanding the aims and purposes of the eleventh-century authors helped them to reconstruct the process, prehistory, and consequences of the Conquest. The sources of the twelfth century were either ignored or used without thinking much about their valour as sources.

Houts can be seen as the first one who really had an actual view of the Norman Conquest out of an interest in history of reception. Describing the first English reaction to the Conquest as "silence", she went on with her analysis to the twelfth century. The Anglo-Normans tried to link the Anglo-Saxon past with their Norman present and saw the English defeat as God's punishment for English sins. Houts describes two exceptions from that trend, namely the *Gesta Heveradi* that romanticised the rebel Hereward as hero, and Orderic Vitalis who criticised William's Harrying of the North. According to Houts, the third generation after the Conquest saw the events as God's plan before it came to an explosion of historical writing with the fourth generation (around 1150–1175). The canonisation of Edward the Confessor helped to re-interpret the defeat as a triumph, and the eye-witnesses of the Conquest began to die out. Houts describes here the same phenomena we know from the Second World War: Before the last eye-witnesses die, it seems important to write down their account before the chance is lost forever.[75] Gillingham observes that the Norman Conquest and the following changes were firstly perceived as negative by Anglo-Saxon sources. Later authors, for instance William of Malmesbury, saw the changes as positive and progressive.[76] Additionally, Houts had a look at foreign and Norman historiography. While the foreign historical writers swayed between shock (being faced with the brutality of the Conquest) and admiration for the Norman victory, the Normans wanted to justify the violence.[77]

Chibnall based her chapter about the medieval view of the Norman Conquest on the research of Houts. She, too, saw the first English reaction as silence, but during the twelfth century, the view became ambivalent. Harold Godwinson was partly seen more positively; though neither Norman rule nor the authority of William I had ever been questioned.[78] So, in this context, William's legitimacy in medieval chronicles was examined in general. Brownlie suggests, like Chibnall, that despite a great range of attitudes towards the Conquest, William's rule never was challenged. Although he was not nec-

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[75] Houts 1996, pp. 10–15; Houts 1997, pp. 169–172; Houts 1999a, pp. 123–137; Houts 1999b, p. 843.
[76] Gillingham 2012, pp. 45f.
[77] Houts 1999b, pp. 834 and 852f.
[78] Chibnall 1999, pp. 12–24.

essarily seen as a good king, he was seen as more positive than the Normans in general.[79] Winkler, who sees the same discontinuity in the English royal line during the eleventh century as Jäschke and Otter, argues that these constant changes of rulers influenced the twelfth-century view on kingship in general. Unlike in other realms such as in Normandy, the ruler was not legitimised by his origin but by his success as king. Winkler suggests that authors such as William of Malmesbury did not see the conquests as punishment from God but as a chance to get rid of a bad king in favour of a good one. Kings were ascribed far more responsibility for the events during their reign. As a consequence, a new picture of English kingship as such came into being. The English kingship was not idealised by his ancestral origins but by showing failure as extremely unworthy. Thus, William was a rightful English king as he behaved in the right way. William of Malmesbury further ascribes the English people a major role by choosing William as their king. Hence, William I is legitimised by his successful rule and the choice of the English in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*.[80]

One contemporary question associated with the Norman Conquest that might have deeply influenced the author's view on William I is the question of national identity which arose due to the contrast of Normans and Anglo-Saxons. It is hardly possible to speak of "nations" in medieval times; identity in the Middle Ages was rather knitted to the local area or to the king.[81] The question arises whether the authors felt themselves rather Norman or Anglo-Saxon or whether they asked this question at all. They might have even seen the Normans living in Normandy more as French.[82] In any event, their personal identities can only be thought in contrast to the other.[83] The more the authors differentiated between Normans and Anglo-Saxons, the higher the possibility that they saw William as a foreign intruder.

This overview makes clear that historical writing tells more about the time it was written in than the times that were written about. Therefore, the background of the writers is important. Furthermore, the research status revealed that research has not yet been done on how the view of the writers changed during the twelfth century towards William's legitimacy. Neither can anything be found about how events of the twelfth-century influenced this view.

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[79] Brownlie 2013, p. 90; Chibnall 1999, p. 12.
[80] Winkler 2017a, esp. pp. 238–287.
[81] Graus 2002b; Reynolds 1983, pp. 380–390.
[82] Short 1996 assumes that the last was the case (pp. 156–167); see also Gillingham 2000b who stresses the feeling of superiority of the Anglo-Normans towards the Celts.
[83] See the introductions in Foerster 2009; Scior 2002; or Erfen 1997.

1.3 Sources

The English twelfth century was an extremely rich time for historiography. The second half of it is not gratuitously called the Golden Age of historiography.[84] There are some suggestions on why it came to an explosion in historical writing during that time. This rise can be seen as even more remarkable, as there had been only few historical writings since Bede. Some argue that it was due to the Norman Conquest: On the one hand, there was a strong need to legitimise the new ruling elite using history, as the Norman Conquest meant discontinuity to the Anglo-Saxon past at first glance.[85] On the other hand, the traumatic effect of the Conquest itself caused the explosion of historical writing. It evoked the need to explain the events and—from around 1150 on—the wish to write down the memory of the last surviving eyewitnesses.[86] Other researchers see it as part of a greater European movement in context of the Renaissance of the twelfth century. They argue that there was a general augmentation of historical writing in all parts of Europe that the rise of historical writing in England, as a consequence, might have nothing to do with the Conquest at all.[87] However, Kersken observed that in many realms of the former Roman Empire, there was a lack of historical writing between the tenth and the twelfth century. He comes to the conclusion that the reason behind this phenomenon was a new relation between land and rule, e.g. because of a new dynasty. The old historical concepts were outdated, and new ones had to be developed. This led to a crisis of historical writing.[88] Thus, Houts' and Campell's approaches are both right. The Norman Conquest was responsible for the silence in historical writing but was part of a broader European phenomenon of a change in rule.

In an article in *A Companion to Anglo-Norman World,* Houts shows how Anglo-Norman historical writing changed during the twelfth century: whereas Norman historiography put the particular ruler in the centre, the Anglo-Normans concentrated on annals, hagiography, and local history. During the reign of Henry II, the emphasis changed to administration.[89] Moreover, the main point shifted from the *longue durée* to contemporary history in the second part of the twelfth century.[90]

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[84] For an introduction to medieval English historiography see Gransden 1974; Dunphy 2016.
[85] Dunphy 2016, pp. 620–631.
[86] Houts 1996, p. 15.
[87] Campell 1984, p. 133.
[88] Kersken 2000, pp. 26–29.
[89] Houts 2007, pp. 103–120.
[90] Staunton 2017, pp. 21–28. Staunton explains this shift was due to the arrival of new monastic orders and a changing political landscape. Also, earlier historical writers filled the gap of historiography about old English history, and the dramatic events at this time (the murder of Becket, the crusades, etc.) had an influence on historical writing as they made contemporary history worth remembering (pp. 21–50).

The vast amount of works written in that time makes it impossible to analyse all of them within this study. Therefore, it is restricted to six main authors and works: Orderic Vitalis *(Historia Ecclesiastica)*, Eadmer of Canterbury (*Historia novorum in Anglia*), William of Malmesbury (*Gesta regum Anglorum*), Henry of Huntingdon (*Historia Anglorum*), Roger of Howden (*Chronica*), and William of Newburgh (*Historia de rebus anglicis*).

First, this choice aims to include the whole span of the twelfth century. The works of Eadmer of Canterbury (date of writing the *Historia*: 1093–1125) and Orderic Vitalis (1114–1129) mark the beginning of the twelfth century, followed by Henry of Huntingdon (1133–1154) and William of Malmesbury (1124–1142). At the end of the century, there are William of Newburgh (1135/6–c.1198) and Roger of Howden (1148–1201). Thus, the whole twelfth century, from the constitution of the Norman reign over the Anarchy to the reign of Richard the Lionheart, is covered. Also, the authors are representative of certain directions of twelfth century historical writing. The chosen works cover the broad spectrum of annalist, local, and administrative tendencies of that time.[91] Other criteria were the background and chief occupation of the authors, as well as their certain unique characteristics, making them interesting for this survey.

Thusly, the choice fell on Eadmer of Canterbury as he was the first Anglo-Saxon who wrote about the Norman Conquest. Focusing on the Episcopal Seat of Canterbury, Eadmer is a typical representative of local historical writing. Also, he is important for the ecclesiastical history of his time because he recorded the controversy between the Archbishoprics of York and Canterbury. Those two argued about the hegemony in England, and Eadmer emphasises the importance of his own archbishopric. He writes about the relationship between Church and State as well. This gives his works a special political orientation, making him particularly interesting for an analysis.[92]

Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury as well as Henry of Huntingdon descend from an inter-marriage; the father came from Normandy, whereas the mother was English. The children of such marriages often grew up bilingual and knew both cultures.[93] The *Ecclesiastical History* by Orderic Vitalis belongs to the most important works of this time and is reused by Wace and Robert of Torigni. Contrary to the other analysed authors, he lived not in England but in Normandy, where his father had sent the then tenyear-old boy to the monastery of St Evroul.[94]

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[91] The tendencies of Anglo-Norman twelfth-century historical writing can be found in Houts 2007.
[92] Gransden 1974, 136–142; Houts 2007, 112.
[93] Houts 2007, p. 113.
[94] Gransden 1974, pp. 151–165; Houts 2007, p. 118.

William of Malmesbury differs from the local, hagiographic, or annalistic tendencies of his time because he concentrates with the *Historia Regum* on the history of English kings. Furthermore, the *Historia* is, as a fully worked out narrative, rather unusual for this time, making him to the "most outstanding and reflective Anglo-Norman annalist"[95]. He is, nevertheless, essential for this project as William writes, just as John of Worcester, for a multi-ethnical public, consisting of Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Anglo-Norman families.[96]

The use of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* makes Henry of Huntingdon part of the annalistic tendency of historical writing in the twelfth century. This trend of historiography took the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as main source and adopted its principle to order the material by years. In doing so, a nearly non-narrative text marked by a strong paratactic style occurred. Missing links often make it impossible to draw direct conclusions between the events.[97] Henry was not a monk but an archdeacon with a wife and children, which singles him out from the other authors. He structured his work after five plagues, which infested England during its history—according to him, the Normans were one of them.[98]

Roger of Howden can be seen as a typical representative of the administrative chronicles. This kind of historical writing is typical for the reign of Henry II and links administrative documents with passages of narration. It is mainly interested in the work of governance and administration. Roger is, furthermore, influenced by romance, which was very popular in twelfth-century vernacular literature. His concentration on the northern parts of England makes him to an ideal choice for this study, as this makes it possible to include the great number of north-English historiographical texts.[99]

William of Newburgh's work was strongly influenced by Cistercian's patronage. Therefore, he can serve as an example of Cistercian thinking. Being an Augustinian himself, he stands for the historical writing of the new orders in England. As he puts emphasis on the history of Yorkshire, he is, as is Roger of Howden, a typical representative of North-English historiography. In comparison to Roger of Howden, he used only few documents in his text and did not copy from his sources word for word. This makes it difficult to find out from where he copied, but it also makes him a promising object of

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[95] Houts 2007, p. 114.
[96] Gransden 1974, pp. 166–181; Houts 2007, p. 114.
[97] Partner 1977, pp. 197–199.
[98] Gransden 1974, pp. 193–200; Houts 2007, p. 113.
[99] Gransden 1974, pp. 225–229; Houts 2007, p. 120.

study, as it might be easier to find contemporary views also in the description of the older English history.[100]

In the last decades, there was quite a bit of research done on the English historiography of the twelfth century. The groundwork for that formed the new edition of many texts in the *Oxford medieval text series*. Not only do good and often extensive introductions offer a well-founded base for further research, but the new translation into English opens the texts for a broader audience. This explains the many books and essays published in the recent years about Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon and gives reason for the neglecting of the *Historia Novorum in Anglia* of Eadmer of Canterbury, Roger of Howden, and William of Newburgh, whose texts are only available in 19th-century editions. Whereas much research was conducted about William I and the Norman Conquest in early twelfth-century writing, the amount of research steadily decreases the later it is in the twelfth century.[101]

After explaining the choice of sources, a more detailed description of each author will follow. As seen before, only by understanding the background of each author and his work can a close analysis of his text promise to be fruitful.

1.3.1 Orderic Vitalis: *Historia Ecclesiastica*

Orderic Vitalis was born February 16, 1075 near Shrewsbury at the Welsh border. His father was a Norman clerk, who came with Roger of Montgomery (d.1094), the Earl of Shrewsbury, to England after the Conquest. Odelerius, as Orderic's father was called, married an English woman before clerical marriage was forbidden, and they had three sons. Orderic was taught amongst others by Siward, a learned priest, about English legends. When Orderic was sent to the Benedictine monastery St Evroul in Normandy as a child oblate, he could hardly speak any French, and the Normans had problems with his English name. This is how he got his sobriquet, Vitalis. St Evroul was not an unusual choice, as Odelerius had visited the monastery on a pilgrimage before, and it was flourishing at the time Orderic came there.[102]

Orderic's first two years in his new home were peaceful, although this changed radically with the death of William I. Depending upon the duke's protection, the monks were menaced by the instability during the reign of Robert Curthose (1087–1106). Stability first returned with Henry I (1106–1135) and vanished again with the Anarchy (1135–c.1154), which showed Orderic the importance of a strong ruler. Orderic did not have a great career: He became sub-deacon at 17, deacon at 19, and priest at 32. Concerning

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[100] Partner 1977, pp. 51–136.
[101] A detailed description of the research status will follow in the chapters on each author.
[102] Chibnall 1984, pp. 3–17. For the relation between Orderic and his father see Houts 2016.

his activities, it is known that he worked in the library copying texts, making small commentaries, and correcting texts. It is unknown whether he could choose the texts himself, but it is stated that he copied Bede and English saints' lives. Despite being a monk, Orderic made some journeys during his life. He visited the priory of Maule (France) in 1106, was present at the council in Reims in 1119, and travelled to Cluny. He also visited his home country, where he stayed at Crowland, Thorney, and Worcester, where he met the historiographer John. Orderic died July 13 in 1142 or later.[103]

Henry I's reign was influenced by a look back to the Anglo-Saxon past. He tried to create the impression of continuity of Anglo-Saxon past and Anglo-Norman present, and, in doing so, he attempted to conceal the fracture produced by the Conquest from his people. These politics, in turn, must have left an impression on Orderic's view on the Norman Conquest.

The *Ecclesiastical History* is without doubt the most famous work of Orderic, although his redaction of the G*esta Normannorum Ducum* and some epitaphs/poems are still preserved as well. Orderic began his monumental work on what is now book III in 1114 on command of his abbot, Roger le Sap (1091–1122). This order is to be seen in the context of a visit by Henry I to the monastery in 1113 when the king confirmed earlier benefactions. The king's visit evoked the urgency to look into the monastery's archive and to record its possessions. Orderic did complete this first book, which also describes the Norman Conquest, until 1123/4, and he finished the *Ecclesiastical History* at the earliest in 1137.[104] The *Ecclesiastical History* consists of 13 books. Whereas the first two tell about the history of Christianity, the others deal with the history of St Evroul, of Normandy, and of the Norman Empire. The inner structure of the *Ecclesiastical History* consists of three lines: a monastic aspect where Orderic reports about St Evroul, a worldly one about Normandy, and a religious line telling the history of Church.[105]

Apart from the purpose to document the monastery's properties,[106] the *Ecclesiastical History* had two more main functions: It was supposed to provide material for the *lectio devina* and to help the monastery economically by portraying the supporting families positively. Blacker finds two more minor functions: The history sought to glorify the Normans on crusade in order to inspire patriotism and religious sentiment, and the first

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[103] Chibnall 1984, pp. 27–41. Orderic gives a description of his life at the end of book XIII (Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, xiii.45, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, VI pp. 550–556).
[104] Chibnall 1969b-1983, pp. 28–34.
[105] Hermann 2002, pp. 13f.
[106] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vi.8, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, III 260. Orderic states that he wanted the founders and the benefactors of St Evroul to be remembered. However, it can be assumed that the listing of the monastery's property had foremost the use to prove its possessions.

two books should help the monks with the temporal classification of their monastery in universal history.[107]

Orderic placed himself in a long tradition of historiographers. He stated as his purpose that he wanted to write down the current events truthfully "to the glory of God".[108] As Orderic wrote about the present history of Christians, he called his work *Ecclesiastical History*. In addition to writing about the purpose of his work, we find a dedication and the topos of modesty in the prologue.[109] However, even after many years living in Normandy, he still saw himself as a stranger writing down history in order to instruct young monks about their home country.[110]

According to Chibnall, the *Ecclesiastical History* was directed at a rather mixed public. On the one hand, there was the monastic audience: Young monks were expected to remember the founding history of their monastery, and it should fulfil monastic needs such as reading for the refectory. On the other hand, the *History* was also written for a broader lay audience consisting of lords, knights, or secular clerks, who were able to understand spoken Latin. Chibnall sees the punctuation as ideal to read the text aloud.[111] We find two dedications in the *Ecclesiastical History*: One is for Roger le Sap, the other for his successor, Warin les Essarts (1123–1137). Orderic was—in contrast to other historiographers—not very interested in the opinion of the people he wrote about, but he cared more about the opinion of the people he wrote for. He had an eschatological view on history and saw history as something that taught people how to live. This is a typical Christian view of history that Orderic took from Orosius, who, in turn, saw history as the manifestation of God's will on earth.[112] Orderic wrote history rhetorically, meaning that he used rhetorical devices such as invented speeches. Nevertheless, he used them only if they seemed plausible to him. They served to explain the motives of his figures, celebrate heroism, justify punishments, or to invite the reader's pity.[113]

Orderic used over one hundred sources for his *Ecclesiastical History*, whereby Bede was the most important historian for him. Others were the *Ecclesiastical History* by Eusebius and his chronicle, the *Gesta Guillemi* by William of Poitiers, the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* by William of Jumièges, and the *Liber Pontificalis*. For the Battle of Hastings, Orderic used a wide range of sources as well. In the case of contradictions, he

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[107] Blacker 1994, pp. 154–158. Considering how negatively Orderic thinks of the Normans in general, it is questionable whether he really wanted to glorify them.
[108] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, prologue, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, I 130f (*ad laudem Dei*).
[109] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, prologue, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, I 130–132. See also Blacker 1994, p. 11.
[110] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.1, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, III p. 6.
[111] Chibnall 1969b-1983, III pp. 36f.
[112] Blacker 1994, pp. 13f and 153.
[113] Chibnall 1984, pp. 179f.

simply added the specific information of the other source, but he did not have any technique for source criticism.[114] His main source was William of Poitiers, but as Ray discovered, he deleted the panegyric parts concerning William I, drew a more positive picture of Harold Godwinson, and substituted the term *barbari* for *Angli*.[115] Apart from William of Poitiers, Orderic used William of Jumièges as a source for the death of King Harold. For the one of Earl Leofwine Godwinson, Orderic took John of Worcester and for the death of Engenulf of Laigle, he seemed to have used oral sources. Finally, he refers to a poem by Guy of Amiens, probably the *Carmen de Hastingæ proelio*.[116]

The four surviving medieval manuscripts of the *Ecclesiastical History* indicate that Orderic Vitalis was not widely read despite his modern popularity: All four of them are of Norman origin. Even if he visited England, no medieval manuscripts can be found there. His editor, Marjorie Chibnall, assumes that the *Ecclesiastical History* was too cumbersome to circulate widely.[117] Cleaver, in comparison, suggests that it was a consequence of Orderic's local Norman emphasis.[118] Despite this evidence, Roach and Rozier suggest that the *Historia Ecclesiastica* was known in southern Italy.[119] However, this does not mean that Orderic's work became unimportant after his death. Parts of his *History* were copied in Normandy and England and spread there—for example the account of the founding of Crowland Abbey or the information on the new orders. Also, Wace and Robert of Torigni used parts of the *Ecclesiastical History* for their works. Wace especially made use of the books VII and VIII for the *Roman de Rou*, and Robert used information given on the new orders, William's deathbed speech, and perhaps the parts about Scottish history. Also, the monks in St Evroul kept using Orderic's work— the inserted glosses in the manuscript reveal that the monks worked with it.[120]

For most of the books, we still have the manuscript written by Orderic's own hand, which is now preserved in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. In the twelfth-century catalogue of St Evroul, four volumes of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* are mentioned. One is not preserved very well (containing books IX to XIII), and one volume was lost before the end of the 15th century. They stayed in St Evroul until the 16th century. 150 years later, the library was in great disorder, and only in the 19th century were three manuscripts united in the *Bibliothèque du Roi* (predecessor of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*), whereas the fourth manuscript has remained lost. However, we have a mid-twelfth-century copy of the lost manuscript deriving from St Stephen in Caen—the monastery

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[114] Chibnall 1969b-1983, pp. 56f.
[115] Ray 1972, pp. 1120–1122.
[116] Chibnall 1969b-1983, pp. 57–62.
[117] Chibnall 1969b-1983, pp. 112f.
[118] Cleaver 2018, pp. 32f.
[119] Roach, Rozier 2016, p. 12.
[120] Chibnall 1969b-1983, pp. 113–115.

William I founded in order to compensate for his illegal marriage with Matilda. The manuscript was bought by Queen Christina of Sweden (1632–1654) and passed with her collection to the Vatican Library. Two other medieval manuscripts are from Normandy as well: one whose exact origin is unknown, but also is a copy of the now lost manuscript. It is from the 14th century and is preserved in London today (probably, it was brought there by Henry V (1413–1422) as spoils of war). The other manuscript, from the 13th century, comes from St Taurin in Evreux and contains the treatise about the new monastic orders.[121] Only when Orderic was rediscovered in the 16th century and was edited did he become popular as an important source for feudal law, military duties, and social customs as well as because of his interest in the individual.[122] From this time we have three more copies.[123]

There are quite many autographs of historiographical texts preserved in Normandy from that time. This shows, according to Shopkow, that the monasteries did not estimate history highly enough to support the authors with scribes.[124] Considering the facts that Orderic was a scribe himself, that writing history seemed to be his main task, and that the abbot himself asked him to write it down, I prefer to argue that writing history was seen as an unhurried task which still held great importance.

Although Orderic's redaction of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* is not directly subject of this study, there shall be a short look at the changes he made concerning the Conquest. Orderic began with the revision in circa 1095 and ended in 1113, just before he started the *Ecclesiastical History*.[125] There are some works about this text, and it might be helpful to compare it to the results of the analysis of the *Ecclesiastical History* later. Albu observed that Orderic mainly made changes in the last chapter about William I, which almost doubled it in size. He added certain details, like names or dates, but also critical information about the Conqueror that cast a less favourable light on him. To this end, Orderic added the information about the king's illegitimate birth and his brutality at Alençon, where he let the hands and feet of people who had mocked him be chopped off. Furthermore, he added information in order to portray England in a brighter light.[126]

As stated above, Orderic Vitalis is, next to William of Malmesbury, the best investigated author of the Anglo-Norman twelfth century. On the one hand, many books and essays

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[121] Chibnall 1979, pp. 37 and 46. For more details about the manuscripts see the introduction by Chibnall 1969b-1983, pp. 118–123.
[122] Chibnall 1969b-1983, p. 220.
[123] Chibnall 1969b-1983, p. 122.
[124] Shopkow 1997, p. 248.
[125] Houts 2003, p. lxviii.
[126] Albu 2001, pp. 182–184; Houts 2003, pp. lxxi–lxxv. Despite Orderic's efforts to create a good image of his home country, his English became weaker with age, and he did not use it in order to reinforce his English identity (Faulkner 2016, pp. 107–125).

on his life and works exist,[127] which means, on the other hand, that many studies analyse his view on the Norman Conquest (and so also on William I), often in the context of the eleventh-century view of the Conquest.[128] He is frequently pulled up in research about the biography of King William I. His lively narration and his vivid anecdotes about the Conqueror seem to make him an ideal source for biographers.[129] The most detailed analysis of Orderic's view on the Norman Conquest is written by Bates. He takes a look at the contemporary view on William I and compares Orderic in that context with his predecessors. Bates finds out that Orderic is mainly referring to William of Poitiers—a Norman writer who glorifies William to a great degree—but ignores most of the praising. For 1066 onwards, Orderic also uses the D-version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as source. According to Bates, the writer tends to judge according to monastic principles of moral, and his view on William changes from the *rex-iustus*-figure and supporter of his monastery to a more critical characterisation of the king.[130] Before him, Ray came to similar results by comparing Orderic's text to the one of William of Poitiers.[131] In general, Orderic sees rulers from a moral, didactic point of view. So, as he would state, even good and strong kings have their flaws.[132]

1.3.2 Eadmer of Canterbury: *Historia novorum in Anglia*

As for Eadmer of Canterbury, there is not much known except the details discerned from his works. He was born around 1060 to an English family that was probably associated with the Church of Canterbury. Eadmer became part of this community very early in his life and was a scribe from circa 1079 onwards. He stayed in the monastery until 1093 when he became part of the household of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm (1093–1109). He had met Anselm before as the then Abbot of Bec visited Canterbury in 1079. Eadmer remembered their spiritual conversation enthusiastically.[133] He was his constant assistant, meaning that Eadmer also was present at political meetings. So, he went with Anselm to gatherings with William II and was present when

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[127] The monographs to be seen as most important on Orderic Vitalis are by Chibnall 1984; Hermann 2002; Hingst 2009; Wolter 1955, and the volume edited by Rozier et al. 2016. Furthermore, Orderic was part of comparative studies on the view on the Normans (Albu 2001) and on high medieval historical writing (Blacker 1994; Shopkow 1997; Spörl 1968). Additionally, essays on his view on society (Chibnall 1979), the presentation of emotions (Barton 2011; McGrath 2014; Vollrath 2008a), his depiction of feuds (Roche 2010) and his historical consciousness (Mégier 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) have been published. Of course, there are many general works about medieval historiography that deal with Orderic—as well as with the other writers—e.g. Gransden 1974; Kersken 1995; Langosch 1990.
[128] Esp. Bates 2006.
[129] Orderic Vitalis is used in every biography of William I, but especially those written for a non-academic public tend to rely much on him, e.g. Hagger 2012; Rex 2011.
[130] Bates 2006, pp. 136–140.
[131] Ray 1972.
[132] Aird 2016, p. 216.
[133] Southern 1964, p. ix. Eadmer: *HN*, 28, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 23; Eadmer of Canterbury: *Vita Anselmi*, 1.xxix, ed. by Southern 1962, p. 50.

the marriage between Henry I and Matilda was negotiated. Consequently, Eadmer also accompanied Anselm into exile and undertook several big voyages with him: the nearer ones to southeast England, but he also went to Rome twice. On the way, Eadmer made long stops at Lyon, Cluny, and Capua, and he attended the Council of Bari in 1098, where he met several important authorities such as Pope Urban II (1088–1099). After the death of Anselm, Eadmer returned to Canterbury with no further task. The seat was vacant until 1114, and in 1116 Eadmer changed into the household of the new Archbishop Ralph d'Escures (1114–1122), whom he had to leave already three years later because of ill health. In 1120, the Scottish King Alexander I asked Eadmer to become abbot of St Andrews, but the agreement failed as Alexander favoured York over Canterbury. After the death of Ralph in 1122, the monk played no further role in public history but became precentor in the monastery of Canterbury. There, his task was to supervise the writing of new books and to provide texts for the divine office. Besides this, Eadmer wrote some texts himself, such as works in commemoration of the relics of the church, and he added miracles to the life of his former abbot Anselm. Thereby, he also met William of Malmesbury, who visited Canterbury. Eadmer died after 1128.[134]

Apart from the Norman Conquest, a large fire in 1067 can be seen as a source of huge upheaval for the monastery of Canterbury: Everything—except the dormitory, the refectory, and parts of the cloister—was destroyed. Apart from that, Canterbury survived the Conquest well. Eadmer describes some conflicts after the arrival of Lanfranc (1070–1089)[135] in Canterbury because the English monks were used to a life of luxury,[136] but all in all, the English element stayed a distinctive feature until the middle of the twelfth century. Under Lanfranc, the number of monks increased as well as the monastery's wealth. Already having been wealthy before the Conquest, Canterbury made further profit by being exempted from military service. By the time of Eadmer's death, the monastery's library had become one of the greatest and finest since the Danish invasion in the ninth century.[137]

The *Historia Novorum* originally contained four books that ended with the death of Anselm in 1109, and the writing was finished about 1115. Eadmer had already collected his material during Anselm's lifetime and began writing in 1109. Ten years later, Eadmer continued with the *Historia* until it ends abruptly with the death of Archbishop

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[134] Goebel 2017, pp. 36f; Southern 1963, pp. 229–240; Turner, Muir 2006, pp. xv–xix.
[135] Before he became Archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc was teacher and prior of Bec, then abbot of St Stephen at Caen. He gained William's gratitude by fighting for the approval of the duke's marriage. After his appointment, Lanfranc began to reform the English Church in close collaboration with the king (see Cowdrey 2003).
[136] See Eadmer: *HN*, 12-19, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 10–14 for the arrival of Lanfranc.
[137] Southern 1963, pp. 243–268.

Ralph, and he began to revise it. Unfortunately, the former state of the work is not preserved. With the beginning of the year 1100, the style of the *Historia* changes drastically. Instead of dialogues, Eadmer mainly copied documents into his work. Many of these documents turned out to be forgeries, but Southern assumes that Eadmer was not aware of this.[138] The reason behind that was probably Anselm's forbiddance to write about him.[139] Eadmer of Canterbury showed no interest in secular politics or events but focused on affaires concerning himself or his monastery—mainly the rivalry between Canterbury and York. Another subject Eadmer cared much about was the conflict between secular and ecclesiastical authorities within the Investiture Contest, which he saw as something new and as a sign of decline.[140]

In contrast to the *Vita Anselmi*, the *Historia* concentrates on the public life of Anselm according to a typical Anglo-Saxon model. McNelly argues that Eadmer wrote the *Historia* in order to show God's providence and to record the history of the Church. Besides, Eadmer wanted to preserve the letters of Anselm's office.[141] In the prologue to the *Historia*, Eadmer lists several reasons for writing history himself: He hopes that writing down the events may help to remember them, and that mankind will learn from the past. Decisive for Eadmer's decision to write historiography was the struggle between the kings and the archbishops. He situated the conflict within the Norman Conquest by arguing that it was William I who introduced lay investiture to England.[142]

The sources for the *Historia Novorum* are Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Eadmer's own experiences. Especially in the description of William I and Lanfranc, Eadmer followed the description of Bede's relationship of Edgar the Peaceful (959–975) and Dunstan (959–988)[143], and Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085) was modelled after Bede's picture of St Augustine.[144] Moreover, Eadmer copied many documents he found in the monastery's archive but that turned out to be forgeries.[145] There is a preserved manuscript—CCC 452—from the first half of the twelfth century,

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[138] Southern 1958, p. 226. In his essay, Southern also develops a theory about how these forgeries came into Eadmer's works. He assumes that they were based on nearly destroyed and illegible papyruses found at the beginning of the twelfth century. Goebel 2017, however, argues that Eadmer knew about their true nature but inserted them nevertheless (p. 36). As they fit well into the general agenda, this might be even the case.

[139] Turner, Muir 2006, p. xx.

[140] Southern 1963, pp. 275–310.

[141] McNelly 1978, pp. 6–8 and 194.

[142] Eadmer: *HN*, 1f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 1f.

[143] Dunstan, later canonised, was installed as Archbishop of Canterbury in 959 by King Edgar. He remained in his office until his death in 988. Due to the lack of reliable sources, his achievements as archbishop are difficult to reconstruct. In any case, he collaborated closely with Edgar (Lapidge 2004).

[144] Vaughn 1988, p. 264. Augustine was the leader of the first missionary mission to the Anglo-Saxons and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. He died in 604 (Mayr-Harting 2004).

[145] Richter 1938, pp. 29–31.

which contains traces of Eadmer's corrections or was even partly written by him.[146] The punctuation of the text hints that it was intended to be read aloud, e.g. in the refectory. [147] The other preserved medieval copy is about one hundred years younger and is an abbreviation, omitting the copied documents.[148] Additionally, there is one fragment containing one leaf of the *Historia novorum*.[149] Although Rule is able to show where the manuscripts were preserved in the early modern time, it is not known where they were in the Middle Ages.[150] Despite the meagre manuscript situation, Eadmer's *Historia novorum* still was an influential work. It was used by John of Worcester who, in turn, was copied by Symeon of Durham,[151] and so the *Historia* had its influence on the broad range of historical writing in Northern England.

As this chapter has shown, there is not much literature about Eadmer of Canterbury in general, and, so, there is not much research about Eadmer's view on the William I either.[152] Towards the Norman Conquest, Eadmer showed ambiguity. On the one hand, he saw it and its consequences as evil, as God's punishment for Harold's perjury, and as the destruction of Englishness along with their oppression and that of the Church. On the other hand, the Norman Conquest brought the Archbishops Lanfranc and Anselm, of whom Eadmer is very fond, and with them, the revival of monastic life.[153] However, Rubenstein draws a more analytic picture of Eadmer's view on the Norman Conquest. By a close analysis of Lanfranc's politics towards Anglo-Saxon saints, their veneration before the Conquest, and its depiction in Eadmer's works, Rubenstein is able to show how Eadmer created and constructed his very own image of pre-Conquest England—a situation that, in this way, never had existed. By thus, Eadmer gave Anglo-Saxon saints more importance that they actual had and—even more important—constructs 1066 as the most significant turning point in English history. Rubenstein explains this as a growing historical consciousness towards the Conquest.[154]

Eadmer accepts William I in this context as king without analysing his authority.[155] Davy shows in his essay about divine and royal justice that, according to Eadmer, an ideal king has to be just, merciful, and to ensure peace. However, Eadmer saw royal justice per se as insufficient in comparison to divine justice. Therefore, the king needed eccle-

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[146] Southern 1964, p. xii.
[147] Rule 1965, p. lxv.
[148] Southern 1964, p. xiii.
[149] Rule 1965, p. xi.
[150] Rule 1965, pp. ix–xv.
[151] Rollason 2015, pp. 106–111.
[152] Apart from the works mentioned in the next sections, McNelly 1978; Richter 1938; Vaughn 1988 have a short look at Eadmer and the *Historia novorum*. A detailed overview of research about Eadmer and his other writings can be found in Goebel 2017, pp. 54–67.
[153] Southern 1963, pp. 310f.
[154] Rubenstein 1999, esp. p. 308.
[155] Richter 1938, p. 44.

siastical authorities to rule. William I is used in this context to demonstrate that complex.[156]

1.3.3 William of Malmesbury: *Gesta Regum Anglorum*

William of Malmesbury was born in 1095 or 1096 in Wiltshire and died 1143 or later.[157] As Orderic Vitalis, he descended from an inter-marriage—his father was probably Norman arriving with the Norman Conquest, and his parents apparently were wealthy.[158] Until William came to the monastery at a quite young age, his father administrated his education. In Malmesbury, he started by helping out in the library where he later became librarian. Thereby, he did not have any great career ambitions and became precentor in 1137. William of Malmesbury visited many famous monasteries: He made at least one large tour in 1125 and stayed moreover at Glastonbury and Worcester.[159]

It is unknown whether William started to write of his own accord, or whether there was an established tradition of writing history at Malmesbury. Along with the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, William wrote several other much read works: the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, which tells about the English ecclesiastical history from the first monks to 1125, the *Historia Novella* about the contemporary history from 1128 to 1142, and last the *Life of St Dunstan*.[160] These texts were generally for an unlearned audience, namely for the monks of Malmesbury and the ones of other monasteries nearby.[161] William's works are seen as so important today because of his methods and his collection of information. William aimed to close the gap between Bede and his time. His methodology was advanced, as William mixed Anglo-Saxon traditions with Norman ones, and he used topography along with old buildings as sources. The monk's writing life can be divided into two phases. In the first one, around 1125, he was writing the two *Gesta,* and it is seen as his creative phase. Later, between 1135 and 1143, he revised his works. We have the stages of the revisions left as William's works were copied early enough so that the first versions also remained.[162] Therefore, it still can be seen how William revised his works. In the second phase, he worked more rationally and carefully and was kinder in his judgments.[163]

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[156] Davy 2017.
[157] Thomson 1998, p. xxxviii.
[158] Fenton 2008, pp. 10f.
[159] Thomson 1987, pp. 1–15; Thomson 1998, pp. xxxv–xlvi.
[160] Gransden 1974, pp. 166f.
[161] Thomson 1987, p. 9.
[162] For the manuscripts of the *Gesta Regum* see Mynors et al. 1998 or Thomson 1998, pp. xvii–xxxiv.
[163] Gransden 1974, pp. 166–181

Even in his own time, William's works were widely read and copied—therefore, we have 25 medieval copies of the *Gesta Regum* preserved. These can be divided into four different versions, which all can be seen as authorial, and each version divides in different branches. The main versions are T, A, C, and B. The version T corresponds to William's first draft whereas A comes from the second one that was completed by 1135. A version of A was sent to Winchester. C is a revised form of A, and B came into being after a new process of revision. Thus, B can be seen as the final stage of the *Gesta Regum*. However, it was corrupted in the process of transmission. Therefore, the current edition uses the other witnesses as well. The preserved manuscripts derive from Flanders, France, and England. One copy was used by Matthew of Paris, an important author from the 13th century.[164] It is further known that a manuscript (similar to T) was sent to both Queen Matilda and, after her death, to Empress Matilda.[165]

William founded his writings on a broad range of sources; he was well-read (Thomson assumes he knew at least 400 works by 200 authors)[166]. Next to the above-mentioned topographic observations, he used many lives of kings and continental historiography such as that by William of Jumièges.[167] Neither did he neglect Anglo-Saxon sources such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Eadmer of Canterbury, Alcuin, or Marianus Scotus. Still, he knew Asser only in parts.[168] In addition, William read most of the Roman authors like Suetonius or Caesar. However, only few references to Greek authors can be found. Of course, one must not forget his readings in biblical and theological studies like the Church Fathers or Augustine.[169]

The *Gesta Regum Anglorum* are—as the title suggests—orientated around the life of the English kings. As usual in medieval historiography, William modelled his kings after the example of Suetonius. In general, he draws a positive image of the kings, especially on William the Conqueror, whom he compared to Suetonius' Caesar especially by reusing the technique to show the king's character with help of anecdotes. Furthermore, he copied the technique to describe the ruler at the end of his rule and to portray the look of a ruler.[170] So, he did not order his material chronologically but according to topics like childhood, education, ascension to throne, major internal affairs, or death. Thereby, William had a strong tendency to eulogise rulers.[171] As written above, Winkler

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[164] Mynors et al. 1998, pp. xiii–xxiii; Thomson 1998, p. xxiv.
[165] Thomson 1998, p. xvii.
[166] Thomson 1987, p. 7.
[167] Gransden 1974, p. 169.
[168] Galbraith 1982b, pp. XI 16–23.
[169] Thomson 1998, p. xxxix. For a detailed list of the authors William read refer to Thomson 1987, pp. 40–71.
[170] Gransden 1974, pp. 170f.
[171] Blacker 1994, pp. 58f. For William of Malmesbury and Suetonius see also Gluckauf Haahr 1990.

suggests that William of Malmesbury legitimated kings, especially William I, by charac-terising them as good and successful. Additionally, the choice of the English people played a role.[172]

Still, William of Malmesbury tried to appear objective by writing down contrasting posi-tions without taking a side. These passages often appear in places where he needed to balance his view—like to compensate blame with praise or vice versa—or where they gave him the opportunity to introduce gossip.[173] Kersken even argues that the main purpose of the *Gesta Regum* was to create continuity after the Norman Conquest by emphasising the institution of the monarchy as guarantor of stability. Hence, he legiti-mised the Anglo-Norman dynasty by showing the Norman dukes as political heirs of the West-Saxon royal dynasty.[174] William of Malmesbury wrote in the prologue that he wanted to continue the work of Bede as there had been a lack of Latin writing about English history since the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was name-ly not in Latin, and Eadmer of Canterbury ignored the time between the end of Bede's work and the reign of Edgar.[175]

William of Malmesbury dedicated his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* to Robert of Gloucester (1121/2–1147), natural son of Henry I and fighter on Empress Matilda's side during the Anarchy.[176] The choice of Robert of Gloucester probably was a well-considered deci-sion: He was one of the wealthiest nobles in England and had the reputation of a man of letters. As he often was at court, he had the opportunity to introduce William's work there. Lastly, he was a mighty man who was able to support the monastery of William of Malmesbury against external enemies.[177] At this time, Malmesbury was threatened by Roger of Salisbury, who wanted to seize the monastery's lands.[178] Moreover, Wil-liam hoped to get his own abbot for his monastery.[179] This might also explain William's tendency to eulogise English kings. He hoped for advantages for his monastery, and the better he depicted the royal family the more likely he would be to win the favour of Robert of Gloucester. Furthermore, and even more importantly, the work was patron-ised and initiated by Henry I's wife Matilda in 1118[180]—which increases the imbalance of William's interests further.

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[172] Winkler 2017a, esp. pp. 238–287. See also Plassmann 2017b.
[173] Hayward 2011, pp. 75–77.
[174] Kersken 1995, pp. 182–199.
[175] William: *GRA*, i.prologue, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 14.
[176] For Robert of Gloucester refer to Crouch 2000.
[177] Blacker 1994, p. 152.
[178] Hayward 2011, p. 101.
[179] Thomson 2015, p. 119.
[180] Fenton 2008, p. 22; Thomson 1987, p. 15. See also the dedicatory letters at the beginning of the work: William: *GRA*, ep. i-iii, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 2–12.

There was much research done about William of Malmesbury, who is often seen as the "most outstanding and reflective Anglo-Norman annalist"[181]. His depictions of kings found, as indicated above, a broad interest in research. The Norman Conquest, however, was usually not in the centre of interest and, instead, viewed through a certain narrow perspective like gender or the description of kings.[182] Exceptions are the works of Winkler and Thomson. Both show that William used a providential approach in order to explain the Conquest. Thomson is able to show that William felt uncomfortable with the results of the Norman arrival as he sees it as a threat to Anglo-Saxon traditions.[183]

1.3.4 Henry of Huntingdon: *Historia Anglorum*

Henry of Huntingdon was born no later than 1088. After his father's death, he inherited his office as archdeacon at Huntingdon in 1100. Whereas Henry's mother was English, his father was from Normandy. Henry of Huntingdon had at least one son and was married. Although clerical marriage was condemned at that time, it was still quite common. Still, Henry railed against the councils in twelfth-century England that aimed at abolishing clerical marriage.[184] Already as a child, Henry came to the household of the Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Bloet (1093–1123), where he likely was educated in grammar and rhetoric, and where he spent a lot of time. In the mid-1140s the library at Lincoln was rather small, indicating that Henry possessed his own books to study. The emphasis of the library lied on biblical and patristic works what might explain why most of Henry's quotations and allusions were old testimonial. Eventually, Henry went to Chartres and Bec once and/or to Norwich. His duties as archdeacon were to represent the bishop and to fulfil tasks, such as to supervise the local clergy and the income along with the rights of parish churches. At the side of the Bishop of Lincoln, Henry often was in the centre of political life e.g. when he was at the royal court or at ecclesiastical meetings. He died between 1156 and 1164.[185]

Besides biblical and patristic sources, Henry of Huntingdon used the Fathers and classical poets such as Vergil or Horace. His battle speeches were deeply influenced by

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[181] Houts 2007, p. 114.

[182] Of course, the Conquest is mentioned in the works on William of Malmesbury, but it plays a far less important role as object of research than for Orderic Vitalis' works. William of Malmesbury is the main theme in the following monographs: Fenton 2008 (out of the view of gender studies), Sønnesyn 2012; Thomson 1987. In this row, also the recently published volume by Thomson et al. 2017 has to be mentioned. As is Orderic Vitalis, William is part of comparative studies to historiography: Blacker 1994; Foerster 2009; McNelly 1978; Otter 1996. There are essays on his view on England/Normandy (Gillingham 2011; Slitt 2012; Thomson 2015), his sources (Gluckauf Haahr 1990), writing style (Hayward 2011; Winterbottom 2003), and the portrayal of rulers (Gates 2013; Plassmann 2013; Weiler 2005).

[183] Thomson 2015; Winkler 2017a.

[184] Fenton 2013, esp. pp. 67–72.

[185] Greenway 1996b, pp. xxvi–lvii; Partner 1977, pp. 11–14. For Henry and the royal court see Gillingham 2010.

Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris* and were supposed to make the text more exciting. The description of battles often was copied from Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, and the structure and themes were modelled after Sallust.[186] Henry had knowledge in both laws. In the bishop's household, also young nobles, amongst others Henry I's bastard son Richard, were educated in courtly manners and political skills. From these men, Henry probably received information about Scandinavia, the Holy Land, and Spain. Typical for the twelfth century, Henry was a compiler who mixed together quotations, summaries, and translations. In the case of the *Historia Anglorum*, they mainly came from Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. From the *Chronicle*, Henry seemed to have known nearly all versions, but he mostly used a copy that was related to E. Henry pretends to start with his own narration during the reign of William II, but he continues to depend on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* until 1133. Other authors Henry used were Paul the Deacon, Marianus Scotus, and Geoffrey of Monmouth. Moreover, Henry used William of Malmesbury, William of Jumièges, and John of Worcester.[187]

The *Historia Anglorum* was written on the request of Bishop Alexander of Lincoln (1123–1148),[188] Robert's successor, who wanted Henry to write a simple handbook to shorten existing histories. Moreover, Alexander also patronised Geoffrey of Monmouth.[189] The *Historia* aimed to reach a wide public wherefore it was written in simple language and with a strong story with many dramatic events. It consists of ten books that could be read aloud in a single setting. Henry wanted to inform, or rather educate, his readers,[190] but he also wanted to entertain them. The *Historia Anglorum* tells the story of the unification of the English. He counted the years after the reign of rulers—maybe in order to strengthen the emphasis on the development of monarchy. Thereby, Henry's attitude was that mankind was nothing without God. So, God sends evil kings in order to punish the people, whereas good kings often become saints.[191] English history is marked by a continuous divine intervention (which was supposed to prod Henry's readers into a more pious life) and, thus, becomes an example for salvation history.[192] Apart from that, the *Historia Anglorum* uses three different historical theories: first, the heptarch of seven English kingdoms; second, the concept of hereditary or successive kingship meaning that there are no joint kings, and third, the process of invasion that was started by small groups who were sent by their fellow men. This process was

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[186] For more information on Henry of Huntingdon and the Romans refer to Mortensen 2011.
[187] Greenway 1996a, pp. 108–110; Greenway 1996b, pp. xxx–lii and lxii–ci.
[188] Henry: *HA*, prologue, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 4–6.
[189] Short 2007a, p. 200.
[190] Henry: *HA*, prologue, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 6.
[191] Greenway 1996b, pp. lviii–lxvii.
[192] Foerster 2009, pp. 68–62.

taken from Bede.[193] Furthermore, Henry's thinking was deeply influenced by *contempus mundi*—a popular movement of the twelfth century that stressed the transience of earthly glory and called to orientate oneself towards afterlife.[194]

The overall concept is five plagues sent by God that haunt the English. Thereby, it is important to notice that also the English are themselves a plague:

From the very beginning down to the present time, the divine vengeance has sent five plagues into Britain, punishing the faithful as well as the unbelievers. [...] The third was through the English, who overcame and occupy it. [...] The fifth was through the Normans, who conquered it and have dominion over the English people at the present time.[195]

Thus, Normans and English are both invaders and a divine punishment along with Romans, Picts and Scots, and Danes. Furthermore, it is remarkable that Henry does not say that the Normans are the last plague. Rather, his narration is not final, and more invaders might come. The first inhabitants of the island are the Britons.[196] Britain itself is described like a paradise.[197] One might therefore argue that the land is—like Hiob—chosen by God, revealing itself also in the punishment that affects both the sinners and the innocent.

The situation of manuscripts concerning the *Historia Anglorum* is quite good. There are 36 known medieval manuscripts, but no autograph is handed down. In addition, there are many fragments.[198] The surviving manuscripts tell us that the *Historia* was written in two stages. One was before 1129, the other between 1135 and 1138, when Henry wrote new books and made additions to the first one (e.g. William's speech at Hastings). The final version continues to 1154 (coronation of Henry II). Furthermore, the manuscripts reveal that Henry often revised his text; meanwhile, the text had already been copied, which led to six different versions. One of the manuscripts came to Bec where it was probably revised by Robert of Torigni. Therefore, we have three different main forms of manuscripts: one from Bec respectively Normandy, one textual tradition

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[193] Greenway 1996a, p. 108.
[194] Partner 1977, pp. 22–35. On *contempus mundi* and Henry of Huntingdon see also the essay by Roling 1999.
[195] Henry: *HA*, i.4, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 14f (*Quinque autem plagas ab exordio usque ad presens immisit diuina ultio Britannie, que non solum uisitat fideles, sed etiam diiudicat infideles. [...] Terciam per Anglicos, qui eam debellauerunt et optinent. [...] Quintam per Normannos, qui eam deuicerunt et Anglis inpresentiaum dominantur.*).
[196] Henry: *HA*, i.9, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 24. Like the Norman Conquest, also the arrival of the other groups was a process and not a unique event, as Henry of Huntingdon claims. E.g. for the arrival of the Angels and Saxons see Fleming 2011, p. 40.
[197] Henry: *HA*, i.1, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 10.
[198] A complete list of the fragments of the *Historia Anglorum* is still missing. An incomplete list containing some siglas of manuscripts can be found in Greenway 1996b, pp. 839–842.

very similar to the Norman one, and one tradition that differs greatly—even in structure.[199]

For version 1, only one manuscript is preserved, which belonged to the Bishop of Exeter John Grandisson (1327–1369) and comes from the twelfth century (E). To version 2, two manuscripts can be ascribed. The first one can be dated around 1196 and was written for Edmund the Chaplain (H); the second one is a 15th-century copy of a lost version of the H and comes from the All Souls College, Oxford (O). The first two versions of the *Historia* show many similarities and both end in 1129. After that, a new authorial manuscript came into being.[200]

Version 3 ends 1138, and three manuscripts present the full text: Ac (14th century), C, and Eg (both twelfth century). All of them are independent copies and of English origin. Greenway sees Eg as the most interesting one, as it shows twelfth-century corrections (probably from the original text). A copy of it was brought to Bec, where it spurred a new manuscript tradition. Version 3 is furthermore preserved in the following partial witnesses: the second part of E (see above), G (English origin; 14th century), and U (strong interest in North-England; twelfth century).[201]

Version 4 derives from Le Bec, ends 1146, and consists of further corrections by Henry of Huntingdon but also of Robert of Torigni or his scribes. This includes besides a table of contents also historical emendations and corrections. So, an additional part was added to William the Conqueror's speech before the Battle of Hastings. There are seven witnesses for this version: B (might be from Le Bec; twelfth century), Bc (French origin; 16th century), Gg (a gift by Philip d'Harcourt to Bec before 1163), Lc (English origin; twelfth century), R (probably a late twelfth/early 13th-century copy from Jumièges), Rc (Arundel collection; 16th century), and Vb (which was a copy of Bc and belonged to Alexandre Petau in 1649).[202]

Version 5 ends 1149 and contains the largest groups of manuscripts, namely five direct witnesses and three copies of those five. The five manuscripts are A (Augustinian priory of St Mary; 13th century)[203], Ld (English; twelfth/13th century), S (English; twelfth/13th century), V (St Augustine's, Canterbury; 13th century), and Lc (English; twelfth century). W (English; 13th century) is a copy of A, Ex (probably Cistercian abbey

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[199] Greenway 1987, pp. 103–119; Greenway 1996b, p. lxi.
[200] Greenway 1996b, pp. cxix–cxlvii.
[201] Greenway 1996b, pp. cxix–cl.
[202] Greenway 1996b, pp. cxix–clii.
[203] The monastery, in turn, had close connections to the family of Baldwin Fitzgilbert (Norman landholder and Sheriff of Devon; d.1086x90). This is why the copy might have been done for this family, who gave it Southwick in commemoration (Cleaver 2018, p. 67f; for Baldwin see Green 2004).

of Whitland; earliest parts 13th century) of Lc, and Ad (maybe from Benedictine abbey of Ramsey; 14th century) of Ld. Additionally, there are the redactions A and B to version 5. The eleven surviving manuscripts show a similar version to 5, but the text was interpolated and rearranged at the end of the twelfth century. The surviving complete manuscripts are with one exception of English origin and come from the twelfth to the 14th century. One example for an addition is the Ten Articles of William the Conqueror. Redaction B is even more extended. On these two redactions the *Historia post obitum Bede* relies, which, in turn, was copied by Roger of Howden.[204]

Three manuscripts witness the final version 6 that ended in 1154: a continuation of C (see above), Ea (English; twelfth century), and Ii (English; 13th century). Also, for this version, two redactions are found. Redaction A is a continuation of the chronicle by John of Worcester from 1132 to 1154 and therefore is brought to conformity to this text, e.g. by inserting dates and making some unique additions. Redaction B consists of four manuscripts that are hybrids, including the abbreviated version of the *Historia* along with the *Historia post obitum Bede.*[205]

Seeing the rich manuscript tradition, the *Historia Anglorum* was widely spread in England, probably Wales, and Normandy. Also, Cleaver assumes that Henry used the resources at Lincoln Cathedral in order to let his work be copied and that there must have been a copy until the early 13th century.[206] As it found use in the *Historia post obitum Bede,* it deeply influenced the Northern historical writing. As there is a lack of research concerning the fragments of the *Historia Anglorum*, it might be that it was even more widely read. Also, the surviving manuscripts often do not reveal where the manuscript was originally copied and where it was located in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, research should be done about the composite manuscripts in that the *Historia* is handed down. This information might help to us to understand who read the *Historia* and in which context it was used.

The Norman Conquest is addressed in book VI of the *Historia Anglorum*, which covers the years 1000 to 1087. Thereby, the Conquest is a direct consequence of the marriage between Æthelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy. Henry's main sources for this period were the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Norman annals. However, there are still passages for which no source has yet been found.[207] The Normans are, as the Danes before them, a plague, but they are not that bad as they also are a people cho-

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[204] Greenway 1996b, pp. cxix–clvi. More information on the *Historia post obitum Bede* follows in the chapter on Roger of Howden.
[205] Greenway 1996b, pp. cxix–clvii.
[206] Cleaver 2018, p. 76.
[207] Greenway 1996b, pp. lxxxf.

sen by God.[208] Partner argues that Henry depicts them as cunning and rapacious.[209] However, Gillingham suggests that, in earlier phases of his writing, Henry regretted Norman rule and saw a division between Norman rulers and English subjects. However, from the 1140s onwards, Henry no longer made this distinction. Instead, with the Battle of Standard in 1138, the Normans became more English, and the Scots were the new outsiders. English history, thus, became a process of increasing civilisation caused by conquests.[210] Winkler agrees to the view of a civilising progress by conquests in Henry's work. Conquests develop and distinguish the English monarchy.[211]

Henry of Huntingdon had a black-and-white view on kings. Either they were good or bad. Kings were supposed to care about their own spiritual welfare for which it was best to retire from public life. Therefore, Henry admired the Anglo-Saxon kings who became monks, but he was also interested in kings who were just. However, Cnut the Great was the only one who found his true acceptance. Bad actions, in turn, led to divine punishment.[212] As a consequence of Henry's *contempus mundi* philosophy, the kings' intents behind their actions were more important than the outcome of their actions.[213]

1.3.5 Roger of Howden: *Chronica*

Under Henry II, English historiography flourished once again after the Anarchy. The king brought courtly life back to the island, and together with his wife Eleanor, he patronised culture and learning.[214] Roger of Howden belongs to this generation of writers, whereby he is part of the administrative historians of this period. These historical writers used a new kind of Latin prose that enabled them to write quickly and to easily insert documents into their text.[215] Additionally, he was influenced by romance historiography marked by imaginary conversations and apostrophising the reader. Roger was especially interested in the North of England.[216]

The main research concerning Roger of Howden was done to reconstruct his biography.[217] Gillingham associates Roger of Howden with Roger the Chaplain as the gaps in the *Chronica* can be explained well by Roger's travels.[218] Roger was born in

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[208] Foerster 2009, pp. 61f; Partner 1977, p. 24.
[209] Partner 1977, p. 26.
[210] Gillingham 1995, pp. 76–89.
[211] Winkler 2017a, p. 135.
[212] Partner 1977, p. 26; Plassmann 2013, pp. 167f; Plassmann 2017b, pp. 191f.
[213] Winkler 2017a, p. 180.
[214] Bezzola 1963, pp. 4–19.
[215] Bainton 2012, p. 37.
[216] Gransden 1974, pp. 226–229.
[217] Bezzola 1963; Gillingham 1998, 2006.
[218] Gillingham 1998.

Howden, in East-Yorkshire,[219] and was educated at a school in York. Afterwards, he succeeded his father Robert as a parson in Howden. He began his career as court clerk in 1169 under Henry II. For his work, he travelled often. Thereby, he most frequently voyaged to the curia in Rome or to the northern parts of England, Scotland, or Ireland, making him an expert in Anglo-Scottish relations. He even accompanied Richard I to the crusade in 1190 and returned with French King Philip II in 1191.[220] Additionally, he was part of two embassies to Rome in 1197 and to the Empire in 1198. From time to time, Roger had the possibility to attend the royal court. He stayed in the king's service until shortly before he died in 1201/2.[221] According to Gillingham, this makes him the "probably [...] most widely travelled of all medieval historians."[222]

Roger originally wrote his annals from Christmas to Christmas, while his information depended more or less on coincidence. It was only in 1192 or 1193 that he brought the chronicle to its present form amongst others by adding short histories and writing a long prologue. His main sources were a North Country compilation called *Historia post obitum Bedae* that he used up to 1184 and the *Melrose Chronicle* until 1170.[223] Furthermore, he had access to the royal archives.[224] Another work that is ascribed to Roger is the *Gesta Henrici Benedicti Abbatis*. The *Gesta* cover the years 1169 to 1192 and show many similarities to the *Chronica*.[225]

The parts concerning the Norman Conquest are on the whole a copy of the *Historia post obitum Bedae* to which Roger just made a few insertions. This *Historia,* in turn, is a compilation from around 1148–1161, which was compiled in Durham. It mainly relies on Symeon of Durham and on Henry of Huntingdon, but also used Asser, Eadmer of Canterbury, and John of Worcester as source material.[226] Copying and compiling was typical for medieval historiography and an integral part of a historian's work. Therefore, it does by no means exclude Roger of Howden from this analysis. Rather, it gives us an insight into what Roger saw as requiring supplement concerning the reign of William I, and it shows how once written stories are adapted.

Also, the prologue is at large copied from the *Historia post obitum Bedae*, which makes it difficult to learn more about Roger's aims and ambitions as to why he started to write history. Of course, there is the inevitable reference to Bede, whose *History* is carried on

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[219] Bezzola 1963, pp. 105f.
[220] Warren 1999, p. 262.
[221] Gillingham 1998, 2006.
[222] Gillingham 2002, p. 16.
[223] Gillingham 1998, p. 152. Barlow 1983a also suggested this identification but did not find sufficient evidence (pp. 303–311).
[224] Bezzola 1963, p. 104.
[225] Staunton 2017, p. 53.
[226] Stubbs 1946, pp. xxvi–xxxii; Rollason 2015, pp. 105–107.

by various authors. However, before Roger does this, he gives a list of the kings of Northumbria.[227] This emphasises already Roger's main focus on the North of England. Roger's patron was Roger de Pont L'Évêque, the Archbishop of York,[228] with whom he was befriended.[229] His work is divided into two parts. The first one carries on Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* from 732 to 1154, while the second part goes from 1155 until it cuts off in 1201. Riley suggests that this division was either made because of the reign of Henry II or because the second part is contemporary.[230]

Stubbs found numerous manuscripts of Roger's *Chronica*; one of them might even be annotated by Roger in person. In any case, Stubbs assumes that it is the original manuscript, but not the original draft as it was probably written by a scribe. It comes from the late twelfth or early 13th century, but about the history of the manuscript, nothing is known until the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603), during which it came into the possession of John Lumley and, after his death, into the royal library. Then, there is a nearly perfect contemporary copy of the original manuscript that probably was part of the library of the monastery of St Edmund's, and another copy of the first half of the 13th century. Furthermore, Stubbs found many fragments that he does not list in detail. There are other medieval manuscripts preserving the second part of the *Chronica*. However, as it not interesting for the reign of William I, I only want to hint at the introduction of the current edition.[231] Gillingham was additionally able to find another manuscript from the early 13th century. Further, he assumes that William of Newburgh knew a similar copy of this newfound manuscript.[232] Roger was further used by the chroniclers of Burton and Peterborough and even utilised by Edward I (1272–1307) as an authority, as he wanted the Scottish King to pay homage.[233] So, Roger of Howden influenced the northern historical writing substantially.

1.3.6 William of Newburgh: *Historia de rebus anglicis*

William of Newburgh was described as the "father of historical criticism"[234]. Nevertheless, he got nearly every date wrong. He only began late in life to compose his *History*, namely in 1196,[235] and it ends abruptly in May 1198.[236] As his byname indicates, Wil-

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[227] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 3f.
[228] Roger was Archbishop of York from 1154 until his death in 1181. He was deeply involved in the Becket affair (given that the two archbishoprics were rivals) but also protected the North for the king. In contemporary medieval historiography, his character and his deeds were disputed (Barlow 2004).
[229] Gillingham 2006, p. 208.
[230] Riley 1994a, p. vii.
[231] Stubbs 1946, pp. lxxiv–lxxxiv.
[232] Gillingham 2002, pp. 23f.
[233] Stubbs 1946, pp. lxxiif.
[234] Freeman 1878, p. 216.
[235] Coleman 1992, pp. 320f.
[236] Partner 1977, p. 55.

liam lived in Newburgh—about 15 miles north of York—in a house of regular Augustinian canons and probably never left the north of England.[237] There, he was educated in the Bible, the Fathers, and classical poets,[238] which makes his reading old-fashioned in comparison to other historians of his time.[239]

In reference to William of Newburgh, mostly works that examine him alongside other authors from the reign of Henry II were written. Thereby, the emphasis lies on his description of the Kings Henry II and Richard I.[240] One exception is Jahncke's exhaustive study.[241] However, it is from 1912 and brings along the kind of problems such old research does. Consequently, we do not know much about his life; William was born in 1135/6 in Bridlington, Yorkshire; it is thought that he came to the monastery at a young age and stayed there until his death—probably in 1198 or shortly afterwards.[242] Before the *Historia*, he is only known to have written a commentary on the *Song of Songs* and three sermons.[243]

In his prologue, William spends much space on criticising Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose *History* he does not consider as real history. Instead, he favours sources such as Bede or Gildas. It is interesting that William spent so much space in the prologue on England's early history, but that his *Historia* only begins with the Norman Conquest in 1066 without mentioning this time at all.[244] The *Historia* begins with a short pre-history to the Norman Conquest and ends in William's own time. He starts to write in more detail with the beginning of King Stephen's reign.[245] According to the prologue, William wrote history in the hope it would be useful for posterity:

In our times, indeed, events so great and memorable have occurred, that, if they be not transmitted to lasting memory by written documents, the negligence of the moderns must be deservedly blamed.[246]

By referring to Bede just a few sentences before, he follows explicitly in his footsteps—despite the newly used topos of modesty. At the same time, he used history in order to

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[237] Gillingham 2001, pp. 53 and 70.
[238] Coleman 1992, p. 320.
[239] Partner 1977, p. 51.
[240] Coleman 1992; Freudenberg 2014; Gillingham 2000a, 2001, 2004; Partner 1977; Stevenson 1996. Staunton 2017, however, has a broader view on the second part of the twelfth century.
[241] Jahncke 1912.
[242] Jahncke 1912, p. 13. Jahncke argues convincibly against the thesis that William might be married and lived a worldly life for a short time (pp. 135–139).
[243] Staunton 2017, pp. 82f.
[244] William: *HRA*, i.prologue-1, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 11–20. Many of the arguments William used in order to refute Geoffrey are probably not his own, but taken from others (Staunton 2017, p. 84). For the prologue and its classification in northern English historical writing, see also Lawrence-Mathers 2007.
[245] Jahncke 1912, p. 14.
[246] Stevenson 1996, p. 401 (*Nostris autem temporibus tanta et tam memorabilia contigerunt, ut modernorum negligentia culpanda merito censeatur, si literarum monumentis ad memoriam sempiternam mandata non fuerint.*—William: *HRA*, i.prologue, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 18).

educate by showing how good deeds were rewarded and bad deeds punished by God. Strokes of fate were used to demonstrate the transience of the world.[247] This designates William of Newburgh as a typical historical writer of his time at first glance. Staunton namely argues that William differs from other historical writers: Instead of using history in order to teach, he applied the thoughts of other writers about the order of world to contemporary history.[248]

He dedicated his *Historia* with a letter to the Abbot of Rievaulx, Ernald, who asked William to write the text.[249] Rievaulx was a Cistercian monastery near Newburgh. Ernald could not ask his own monks as it was forbidden for Cistercians to undertake literary projects.[250] Given the close ties between the two monasteries, it would have been obvious to support each other. In the dedicatory letter, William further states that Ernald wanted to have a contemporary history to read to his monks. Besides this, the letter contains the typical declarations of modesty.[251]

However, it is rather untypical that William did not write much about the history of his own monastery (or the one of Rievaulx). Instead, the *Historia* is restricted to the history of English kings, several events in Yorkshire, and some anecdotes along with narration of wonders. William was neither afraid to criticise kings and churchmen for their non-fitting behaviour, to this end using a Christian-morale point of view.[252] What distinguished William's style is that he wrote without copying directly from others. Rather, he composed the text on his own. Furthermore, he did not interpret the events he wrote about but only sees it as his aim to give his future generations a reliable testimony of current events. According to William, only God knows the true meaning of events.[253] Compared to other historians of his time, William used few documents.[254] Still, by depending strongly on Roger of Howden, William of Newburgh—as other historical writers of his time—brings history closely together with court and government. Especially by copying newsletters and some forgeries, he contributed to the propaganda for Richard I.[255] However, William used Roger of Howden in such a way that he was able to

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[247] Jahncke 1912, pp. 19–22.
[248] Staunton 2017, p. 83.
[249] William: *HRA*, i.prologue, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 3f.
[250] Gransden 1974, p. 263.
[251] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 3f.
[252] Partner 1977, pp. 87–136; Jahncke 1912, pp. 60–62, 75–83, and 98–100. As such, he criticised churchmen in Rome for their greed, Thomas Becket for his politically unwise behaviour, and Henry II for his marriage with Eleanor.
[253] Coleman 1992, pp. 321–323.
[254] Gillingham 2001, p. 54.
[255] Gillingham 2000a, 182–185. There was a manuscript of Roger's chronicle in Rievaulx and a similar copy at Newburgh. William could have had access to both of them (Gillingham 2002, p. 23).

write down his own view on events—"Howden re-written and re-interpreted"[256] summarises Gillingham's opinion about the great influence Roger possessed over William of Newburgh. Apart from Roger of Howden, William probably got his information from other Augustinian houses and from the Cistercian's houses of Rievaulx, Fountains, and Byland that were in the region and to which his own monastery had close ties. Additionally, he used material of chronicles from Durham. As Newburgh lies on the road from York to Scotland, it was a stopping place for travellers who might have given reports about current news to William. Lawrence-Mathers was able to show that a huge Northumbrian network existed between religious houses in that region, giving it its own regional identity.[257]

Because of the proximity to the Cistercian monasteries and through their patronage, William is also influenced by Cistercian thinking. So, he sees chastity central to the love to God and evaluates the new orders less negatively than others. Neither is he influenced by the chivalric view on warfare but sticks to a Christian viewpoint. Being a monk himself, William sees monasticism as central for the Church and the spiritual state of the kingdom, and he puts monks at the centre of religious life.[258] We have nine surviving manuscripts of the *Historia,* one copy originating from Newburgh from the late twelfth century, which was suited for presentation. It was probably a copy of William's own manuscript. Unfortunately, some leaves are lost. Due to William's connections to the Cistercians, it is not surprising that other copies are preserved at these monasteries. They are from the 13th century. These were Rufford, Buildwas, and Stanley along with the Augustinian priory of Osney. Furthermore, William of Newburgh was used for 13th-century accounts.[259]

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[256] Gillingham 2002, p. 25.
[257] Gillingham 2001, pp. 55–60; Lawrence-Mathers 2003, pp. 187 and 252-259.
[258] Partner 1977, pp. 57–85 and 108.
[259] Lawrence-Mathers 2003, pp. 187f; Lawrence-Mathers 2007, pp. 342f; Staunton 2017, p. 86; Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 19.

# 2.	The Legitimisation of Kings in the Middle Ages

Kings are so called from governing [...]. But he does not govern who does not correct (*corrigere*); therefore the name of the king is held by one behaving rightly (*recte*), and lost by one doing wrong.[260]

"Dominion [is] defined as the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons."[261]

The idea of monarchy is a very old one, and the same applies to the research done about it. The citations above can thus only stand as an example. In the following chapter, there will be an introduction on how rulers were legitimised in the Middle Ages. In doing so, an overview of modern research shall be given.

Modern scholarship has found many ways kings legitimised their power. These ideas can be divided into two main groups. The first one concerns structures that helped the ruler to keep his power; these are feudality, consensual rule, and bureaucracy. The second important explanation is ideology. This means ideas such as ruling per divine right (*Gottesgnadentum*), the symbolisation of power via rituals, the virtues of a king, and the establishment of dynasties.

In the following, all those ideas shall be presented more closely in order to understand what legitimated a king's power in medieval times. In a concluding chapter, how these concepts were applied to Anglo-Norman England will be analysed. Only by first understanding how a ruler gained the necessary authority to rule is it possible to analyse how William's rule was legitimated in twelfth-century historiography. However, before beginning, it is important to state that medieval ideas about monarchy did not come into being overnight, but that they were deeply influenced by old testimonials along with Roman and Germanic ideologies. Elements of the worship or ideals of a king's character came, for example, from the Roman-Christian sphere—the idea of election was Germanic.[262]

## 2.1	Legitimizing the King via Structures to Rule

### 2.1.1	The Debate on Feudality

The concept of feudality is an old one and a very controversial one. Therefore, this chapter aims to give an introduction to research in the first line rather than an introduction to the subject itself. The concept of feudality already was developed in the 18th

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[260] Barney et al. 2010, p. 200. "*Reges a regendo vocati. Non autem regit, qui non corrigit. Recte igitur faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur.*" (Isidore of Seville: *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ix.3, ed. by Lindsay 2008, p. 362).
[261] Weber 1978, p. 212. „*»Herrschaft« soll [...] die Chance heißen, für spezifische (oder: für alle) Befehle bei einer angebbaren Gruppe von Menschen Gehorsam zu finden.*" (Weber 1980, p. 122).
[262] Schulze 2011, pp. 14–25.

century after two centuries of discussion about law. During the French Revolution and later (because of Marxists), it got its association with oppression.[263] One of the most influential works was written by Marc Bloch. In his two books, *La Société féodale,* Bloch examines the development of feudality and of the different classes. Feudalism is defined by the connection of power and wealth (via ownership of land). Bloch comes to the conclusion that the roots of feudality lied in the Migration Period, as older forms of organising society vanished. Family bonds were not sufficient in a time where the state could not uphold the protection of its inhabitants. Therefore, the task of feudality was to produce artificial family bonds. Feudality was in course based on an unequal society assuming that many lower ranking persons subordinated to a few mighty ones. Prelates, monks, and especially warriors lived at the expense of lower classes. Notably, warriors were important for the development of feudality. Bloch argues that without professional warriors, feudality would not have become so important. Out of the warrior class, aristocracy developed later on. Nevertheless, also the ruler had duties—if he was unable to fulfil those, he lost his rights and his vassals had the right to rebel. So, a king was bound to his kingdom and people.[264]

Concerning England, Bloch wrote that the Normans brought feudality to the island. The Anglo-Norman state profited from a double Conquest (first Rollo in Normandy, then William in England) that gave written culture and bureaucracy a significant role and prevented a historically-driven state system. Feudality was therefore applied methodically and very thoroughly. The king's power profited from the system as there were no threatening political units, and the power of aristocracy was further limited by sheriffs, who were directly assigned to a king. The kings moreover profited from Anglo-Saxon institutions, such as the oath of fidelity and taxes (Danegeld).[265]

One of the fathers of the concept of feudalism in modern times is Ganshof. With his book *Qu'est-ce que la féodalité ?*[266], he deeply influenced the research until the beginning of the 1990s and the publication of *Fiefs and Vassals*. Ganshof first defined feudalism as a kind of society where individuals strongly depended on each other; where there was a specialised group of warriors; where property rights were strongly divided; where, because of this, there was a hierarchy of property rights, which reflected the hierarchy of personal relationship of dependence; and where public power was divided. Second, he understood under feudalism all institutions that sorted the obligations of vassals and overlords: The overlord had to protect his vassal and care for his living (therefore the property) whereas the vassal had to obey and support his overlord (mili-

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[263] Reynolds 1994, pp. 3–8.
[264] Bloch 1982, pp. 517–538.
[265] Bloch 1982, pp. 514–516.
[266] Ganshof 1983.

tarily). According to Ganshof, feudality existed mainly from the tenth to the twelfth century in the kingdoms succeeding the Carolingian Empire and their spheres of influence.[267] According to this model, the king got his power by making vassals dependent on him. The vassals wanted to have land (to make a living) and needed protection. So, they promised fidelity to an overlord in order to get both of it. Thus, the king's power strongly depended on his wealth and military ability. If he was not able to give his vassals what they needed, they had no interest in obeying.

Even if Ganshof concentrated his study on the area between the Rhine and Loire (the core of the Frankish kingdom), he also wrote on feudality in England. He joined Bloch's arguments and saw feudality in England as perfect because, after the Norman Conquest, all land truly belonged to the king. Before the Norman Conquest, there was no feudality in England. It was first William the Conqueror who brought it with him from Normandy. After William I's rule, his successors gained more and more power with the help of feudality: vassals lost their rights of judgement to the bureaucracy and had to pay money instead of providing armed service. This made the king more independent from his nobles.[268]

Another influential model that is partly based on the concept of feudalism is Duby's trifunctional hypothesis of the medieval society.[269] Apart from Bloch and Ganshof, Duby used many ideas from the French philologist George Dumézil. Dumézil, who became famous for his studies on Indo-European societies, formulated the hypothesis of a trifunctional society by looking at old Indian and European myths. He discovered that the main gods of all Indo-European pre-Christian religions had the same three functions that were equal in rank: there was one god who ruled over earth, one who was the warrior, and one who was responsible for fertility. These functions, according to Dumézil, could also be applied to social and religious organisations. In Dumézil's hypothesis, the king had a special place by covering all three functions: He had to be without jealousy, meaning that he is politically and legally skilled (first function), without fear (second function) and without avarice (third function). In addition, he was responsible for all three functions. The medieval model of *oratores, bellatores,* and *laboratores* can be traced back to its Indo-European roots via Ireland whence it came to England.[270]

Duby applied this model to the Middle Ages by searching for the trifunctional model in medieval works such as by Dudo of St Quentin and John of Salisbury. He argued that

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[267] Ganshof 1983, pp. xiii–xv and 13
[268] Ganshof 1983, pp. 65–68 and 180f.
[269] Duby 1986. Oexle 1988 also made an attempt to use the trifunctional model on medieval society and came to the conclusion that it played some role in medieval thinking.
[270] Lundager Jensen, Schjødt 1994 give a good overview over Dumézil's studies and about further research on this topic. Here pp. 46f, 62f, and 178–187.

the model found its way via England to France in the tenth century where it was used by the Church to exploit others as it saw the *oratores* as superior. Again, the trifunctional model can be found in the Frankish area around 1025. There, it was meant to support the weak monarchy, but, being unsuccessful, it vanished only to reappear around 150 years later. This time, it was meant to strengthen the power of aristocracy by emphasising the superiority of the *bellatores*.[271] Duby also tried to integrate the monarchy into this model but admitted at the same time that the function of *laboratores* is often missing in medieval thought. Like Dumézil, Duby connected the king to *oratores* and *bellatores*: The anointing helped the king to become wiser and to get nearer the *oratores*. However, he could not become a full churchman, as he wore the sword at the same time. That made him dependent on the bishops as his advisors. They, in turn, depended on the king as he was responsible for controlling the *bellatores* and ensuring peace. Vassalage was responsible for connecting the king with his inferiors.[272] This concept first emphasises the same legitimisation as feudality. However, it also transports a second legitimating force by using the trifunctional model of society. This model gives everyone a certain function in society: It needs someone who nurtures society, someone to spread God's word and pray for the well-being of the society, and someone to protect the first two groups from harm. The king fulfils his role, as does everyone else, and gets his power by satisfying the requirements of two groups at once. Thus, without the king, society cannot exist.

The whole idea of feudalism is questioned in Reynolds' book *Fiefs and Vassals*. There, she states that the studies on feudalism are each restricted to one geographical area, and that researchers never asked whether these various phenomena were part of the same thing. Thus, the word feudal became meaningless and even could be used as a synonym to medieval. She criticises further that words, concepts, and phenomena were confused: "Much of the discussion of fiefs, as of vassalage, seems to me to assume the identity of words with concepts, our concepts with medieval concepts, and all three with the phenomena."[273] According to Reynolds, one has to pay more attention to the fact that the use of vocabulary in medieval times was neither uniform nor consistent. Reynolds argues, additionally, that feudalism did not derive from the warrior society from the early Middle Ages, but that it took its shape in the bureaucratic governments and administrations from the twelfth century onwards. Laymen did not support the king because they were his vassals and he gave them land, but because they

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[271] Duby 1986, pp. 151, 232, and 413–422.
[272] Duby 1986, pp. 34 and 109–150.
[273] Reynolds 1994, p. 13.

were his subjects. The land was rather seen as heritage. Vassalage could not be the main bond of society, as it left out the great mass of people, Reynolds argues.[274]

Instead, medieval society was unified by its belief in hierarchy, obedience, and loyalty. People owed loyalty to their superiors without reason. As people believed at the same time in custom, there was a major source of conflict, which the ruler was supposed to resolve. He was expected to rule according to both premises and, in order to solve the conflict of the two, to consult with high-ranking members of the community, which was right, just, and in accordance to customs. The high-ranking members of the community deserved respect because of their high social status in the community, their age, and/or the age and length their family had been prominent in the community. The king prevailed at the top of the community because kingdoms were seen as the highest natural unit of government.[275] Thus, medieval rule worked foremost via traditional domination, if one wants to apply the Weberian model.

Reynolds further contradicts the previous thesis that William the Conqueror brought feudality to England. She criticises research for its focus on military service and the rights of the king as well as for its limited focus on only one area. She moreover argues that especially these two aspects cannot be found in France—thus, William I could not have brought feudality to England, as it did not exist in Normandy at that time in that form. According to Reynolds, there is no hint that the Norman Conquest changed ideas about property in England much. Instead, she states that royal English government was already by the eleventh century heavily centralised and powerful in comparison to the rest Europe, especially due to the considerable obligations placed on landowners. The first big change occurred with the Domesday Book (since 1086) that evoked an impression of hierarchy of property. This hierarchy was in fact new because sub-tenants did not owe their service to the king but to their direct overlord. It came into being as it was the easiest way for the king's tenants to fulfil royal wishes by passing them on to their sub-tenants. Reynolds also criticises the statement that, in post-Conquest England, all land was supposed to have belonged to the king. Rather, she argues that there is no hint that people thought like this and that the king could only give away land that he could legally confiscate.[276]

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[274] Reynolds 1994, pp. 9–14. See also Reynolds 2011, pp. 16f; Reynolds 2012a, p. 2.
[275] Reynolds 1994, pp. 34–37.
[276] Reynolds 1994, pp. 323–360. In Reynolds 2012b, she comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that the differences between England and France/Germany are overestimated. Wickham 2009 also states that already the Anglo-Saxon kings were comparably big landowners (pp. 470f). For an overview on research about English feudalism see also Chibnall 2007.

Even if some researchers highly criticise Reynolds's arguments,[277] research began to find new explanations about how the relationship between the king and his population worked and how he ensured his authority. To make matters worse, until the 1980s, researchers mainly worked with the concept of "state" or pre-state institutions, leaving aside all other means of inter-human relations.[278]

Concerning her suggestion that William I did not bring feudality to England, Reynolds meets general approval, showing the tendency in research to lessen the importance of the Norman Conquest as a bringer of profound changes.[279] Bates even argues that the Conquest, from a short-term view, prevented changes in social structure. William and Cnut the Great before him wanted to stress their legitimacy and the continuity of their rule by basing their power on the rights that already existed. Further, Bates claims that pre-Conquest Normandy and pre-Conquest England were very much alike and that a changed documentation does not indicate a changed society. As others, Bates stresses the importance of personal relationship—especially household, kinship, region, and friendship were important.[280] Hudson generally assumes the same and reduces the level of importance the Norman Conquest has on feudality. Nevertheless, he argues that the Conquest might have led to some changes in land holding, amongst others to a strengthening of lordship, as it is not clear to what degree the Normans knew about Anglo-Saxon practices.[281] According to Patzold, who summarises the status of research, the English example shows how power that relied on personal bonds and exchange of land coexisted with a strong central power and bureaucracy.[282]

However, not all researchers agree with Reynolds. Holt, for example, emphasises the importance of the Norman Conquest on feudalism. For him, it is more than a change of dynasties, as it changed some significant aspects of feudalism. First, all land belonged to the king and his tenants; second, it went as a whole to only one heir; and, third, power did not work via personal bonds but via tenurial dependency. In the early twelfth century, another change occurred as labour service was increasingly substituted by wage labour.[283] Additionally, Carpenter contradicts Reynolds as he sees feudal incidents in England, like wardship or marriage (also fiscal feudalism), not as a product of a strong king and government but as a product of tenure. He also argues strongly against the statement that feudalism declined after 1166 (installation of the *Homagium*

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[277] For a short overview see Spieß 2011, p. 20. More information will follow in chapter 2.1.2.
[278] Althoff 2014, p. 361.
[279] For an overview see Harper-Bill, Houts 2007.
[280] Bates 2000, pp. 616–643.
[281] Hudson 2011, pp. 133f.
[282] Patzold 2012, pp. 90f.
[283] Holt 1997, pp. 3–11. An overview of research on English feudalism before Reynolds is given on pp. 71–80.

ligium by Henry II). Instead, fiscal feudalism survived, which, in turn, guaranteed those tenants loyalty who were afraid that the overlord might interfere in e.g. whom they married. Carpenter furthermore disagrees with Reynolds by stating that homage was a bond, which was based on tenure.[284]

A totally different approach to this subject is given by Bisson[285], who argues that it came to a "crisis of power" in twelfth-century Europe. According to him, the model of prayer, warriors, and workers (*oratores*, *bellatores*, *laboratores*) already lost its ideological force towards the end of the ninth century. This common structure of power was further threatened in the following two centuries by social and economic changes that led to a bigger population and more wealth. As a consequence, there were more nobles who competed against each other for power. At the same time, they did not think in new economic terms. Instead of considering how to exploit the lands they owned better, they were still thinking in the old terms of largesse, generosity, and the customs of fixed patrimonies. This led to conflicts about resources since the nobles needed more land, money, etc. to afford their lifestyle. However, what matters most for the subject of this work are the new notions of militant lordship that were e.g. caused by the Investiture Conflict. On the one hand, this Conflict undermined the power of the Emperor in Germany. On the other hand, it led to a rethinking about the concepts of office, authority, election, and competence. Another change was the increasing violence until the twelfth century, where it was seen as normal. Political turbulence did not only occur by imposing lordship but also by ill-controlled armies. Power, nevertheless, stayed univocal because it was personal even when it was delegated.[286]

Thus, research about the basis of royal power might be summarised as follows: At the beginning, pre-state institutions and especially feudality along with the trifunctional model of society were in the centre of research. This changed around 1990. Reynolds's criticism of feudality played an important role, but other researchers had started to look for other ways to explain the king's power as well. Now, research focuses on how personal bonds worked in the Middle Ages and which possibilities the king had, apart from giving away land, to punish or reward his nobles in order to ensure their loyalty. Another emphasis is put on the development of administration. These two emphases are subjects of the next two chapters.

2.1.2 The Election by the Great: Consensual Rule

As evident from the last chapter and with the citation from Weber, legitimacy is twofold. On the one hand, there is a person who demands in order to dominate, but, on the

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[284] Carpenter 2000, pp. 32–70.
[285] Bisson 2009.
[286] Bisson 2009, pp. 5–15 and 49–79.

other hand, there are people who (want to) obey. The concept of consensual rule mainly works via inter-personal relationships, which—as it is shown in chapter 2.2.2—were stabilised via ritualising human behaviour. Furthermore, rank played an important role as well. However, this chapter focuses first on the election before having a closer look at the organisation of inter-personal relationships.

The election was, especially in times with no fixed succession, an important element to legitimise the king. One was only eligible when one came from a noble or even royal family, and it was the purpose of the election to decide which member of the family should become the next king. As primogeniture became more and more common, the election lost its power, and it was reduced to a ritual to legitimise a king who was decided upon beforehand.[287] So, election granted the king the support of the nobility. For aristocracy, the election meant they could make sure that the character of the candidate was befitting of the dignity of his office by voting for the best man.[288]

Nonetheless, especially in early medieval times, the election by the people was not seen as authorising per se. Rather, it was regarded as expression of divine will. Notably, a unanimous choice was interpreted as a divine sign.[289] This reduction to God's decision made the assembly, who elected the king, less important, as it did not matter much through whom God decided about the next ruler.[290] However, it made the result of the election more binding and authorised the king's power once more by divine right.

From the eleventh century onwards, there was a change in the view on the king's power. Especially because of the Investiture Conflict, nobles (particularly in Germany) recognised their power and wanted to be part of the process of decision-making. Therefore, from the twelfth century onwards, the king could not take any decisions without the consent of the nobility. In England, this general consent is reflected in the Magna Carta, leading to the idea that a king, who did not rule with the advice and consent of the great, acted as a tyrant.[291]

This is why Althoff assumes that nobles did not support the king unrecompensed, but that there was a give and take. In the case that an overlord needed help, he first had to convince his nobles that his cause was justified. The power of nobles in the game of

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[287] Schramm 1970, pp. 141–165.
[288] Andenna, Melville 2015, p. 13.
[289] Kosuch 2005, pp. 407–413.
[290] Schramm 1970, p. 153. This can be observed in English history as well. William II was not elected and thus justified it by claiming that the he was elected by God and that the election shows only His will anyway. Although Henry I was elected the nobles, the subject became problematic again during the Anarchy. Stephen was elected by the citizens of London whereas Matilda was elected by the bishops, and of course, they argued which vote counted more. Thus, the significance of the election vanished (Schramm 1970, pp. 153–159).
[291] Coleman 1996, p. 11; Schneidmüller 2000, pp. 62–70.

power is not to be underestimated, and especially subordination was not always given willingly. The person with the higher rank namely had the right to decide whether he wanted to listen or not. It was also customary that persons of lower ranks had to agree with persons of higher ranks. Thus, one had to think carefully whether one wanted to risk direct communication with a ruler. It helped to have a good relation towards the ruler and to be able to appraise his opinion of a request beforehand. These rules to human behaviour were supposed to prevent conflicts. In case struggles nevertheless came into being, there were signs (like *tristis* or *tristitia*) to warn the other. Also, distance could help to resolve conflicts. Therefore, nobles preferred other bonds to the king such as *cognatio*, *amicitia* or *summa familiaritas,* where rank (and so subordination) became less important. In turn for their subordination, they received e.g. land or the king's *gratia*[292]. Nevertheless, Althoff still gives the feudal bond some importance, as all members of the ruling elite needed it in order to participate in political power. It was namely the only way to influence the king even if aristocrats preferred the above-mentioned bonds.[293] Vollrath emphasises the importance of the family in inter-human relations as well. This is why important alliances were strengthened by marriage, which made this alliance public and durable.[294] Thus, power depended much on binding oneself to the right persons.

Another way to influence these relations and to avoid conflicts was through grace (*gratia*). A king could bestow his favour on his subject or could take it away depending on whether he wanted to reward or to penalise. Grace was shown in public (as rituals). So, the ruler showed preference openly, gave carefully selected presents, or chose a person for a private talk in order to bestow said person with his favour. Of course, not everyone was chosen to be in the king's grace. Rather, this usually concerned persons who were related to, befriended with, or by other means connected to the king. Punishment, in turn, only worked if that person had had the king's grace beforehand. Taking away grace did not mean to confiscate one's land, but rather meant social exclusion. Thus, conflicts were solved via publicly showing that one was dissatisfied with the current situation, making violence unnecessary.[295]

Another term, which has become more important in the last years, is *negative Treue*, meaning the promise not to harm each other. It is argued that, instead of promising support, nobles rather swore not do anything that harmed the king or their overlord.[296]

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[292] More information about this term will follow in 2.3.
[293] Althoff 2011, pp. 102–114; Althoff 2014, pp. 285–302. Eickels 2010 stresses the importance of relations where rank played no role as well.
[294] Vollrath 2008b, pp. 10f.
[295] Althoff 2014, pp. 199–223.
[296] Deutinger 2010, p. 465; Eickels 2010, p. 407.

However, swearing an oath of fidelity did not necessarily express a hierarchy, as Eickels shows with the example of the relationship between French and English kings. Rather, this could be read as an attempt to legitimate one's rule. When the French king accepted the oath of an English pretender to the throne, he also accepted his claim, and, by swearing an oath to the French king, the English king accepted his rule over France. Thus, the two kings authorised each other's rule.[297]

In the case that taking away grace was not enough or did not work, the king could take away other privileges or even use military violence. Going to war or on crusade could be one instrument to nurture nobles or the Church and could be a way to ensure peace. Therefore, it was important to have technical and military knowledge as well as to win haul in order to reward followers. War was always risky: one could acquire wealth and glory, but there was always the possibility of losing, bringing negative consequences, and it is unknown where the king was during a battle or whether he was there at all. However, his personal presence was necessary when his kingdom or his rule was threatened.[298]

Thus, consensual rule was highly institutionalised. First, the nobles had the chance to vote for or against a pretender to the throne. Later on, they secured their right to be consulted via laws. Apart from that, rituals and other standardised forms of behaviour helped to organise the king's relation to his subjects. So, everyone knew what to do in order to influence the king and could predict his reaction. This is quite a significant part of ordering medieval relations.

2.1.3 The Rise of Bureaucracy

A profound change in the dynamics of power occurred in the second half of the twelfth century. Economic growth could no longer be ignored and resulted in a more profitable exploitation of lands, and new techniques of accounting produced a new kind of written account: in England the pipe roles and the exchequer. These were incorporated by administrative historians like Roger of Howden into their narratives and augmented as they became symbols of justice in contrary to despotic rule under earlier kings.[299] The following chapter puts a special emphasis on the role of bureaucracy in the Angevin Empire, as the vast area to control led to special strategies to concentrate power in the hands of the king.

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[297] Eickels 2008, p. 25. However, Aurell 2007b sees it as big handicap for the Angevin dynasty that they had to pay homage to the French king (p. 265). Whatever the case may be, paying homage to a foreign king is a doubled-edged sword, and it depended probably greatly on the circumstances how it was interpreted.
[298] Rogge 2015, pp. 372–380.
[299] Bisson 2009, pp. 336–394. Bisson's statements were on the whole accepted (see the reviews e.g. by Garnier 2011; Moore 2010; Whittow 2009).

From the middle of the twelfth century onward, power went to bureaucracy in the English kingdom. As early as Anglo-Saxon times, the royal administration was quite strong in England. The Normans only needed to bolster that system.[300] Already the reign of William I was marked by big periods during which the king was absent from England, staying in Normandy instead in order to secure the borders there. This led, as compensation, to a tighter administration.[301] Although it came to a "national crisis of power"[302] under King Stephen because of the civil war and because he lost control over the castles and knightly retinues, the administration further flourished under Henry II.[303] Under the influence of the Renaissance of the twelfth century, which served the king's interests, many learned clerks came to the court.[304] They worked in the administration, responsible for specialised areas, which, in turn, reduced the power of the lower aristocracy in comparison to e.g. Germany. Instead of giving them offices, the king nurtured them by deciding about heritages, guardianships, and marriages. Also, the power of the upper nobility was restricted: Their lands were widely dispersed, and it was the sheriff who was responsible for justice. As towns did not play a big role either (apart from London), royal power was great: militarily, fiscally, legally, and bureaucratically. This made the king an important figure. The administration supported the king's authority when he was abroad as it carried out its work as usual.[305] Especially during the Angevin Empire, the king had to travel a lot in order to show presence in his whole kingdom. Absence weakened his authority, so that it was essential for an effective government to be on site.[306] Apart from the sheriff and taxes, sealed writs were an instrument to exercise royal authority along with a superior coinage.[307] However, it became the biggest task of the king to control the administration.[308] Thus, administration and the absence of another strong power guaranteed a strong royal power. Hence, Henry II made reforms in order to take the power away from magnates and place it in his favour.

During the twelfth century, England (and also the rest of Europe) observed thus a rise of bureaucracy. The importance of law was augmented, and the king, who controlled the administration, profited from this development that had its roots in Anglo-Saxon times.

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[300] Weiler 2013, pp. 124f.
[301] Carpenter 2003, p. 91.
[302] Bisson 2009, p. 277.
[303] Weiler 2013, p. 129.
[304] Aurell 2007b, p. 16.
[305] Weiler 2013, pp. 126–143.
[306] Aurell 2007b, pp. 26f.
[307] Chibnall 1986, pp. 105f. Many of these developments have Anglo-Saxon roots or had been already established during the reign of William I (Carpenter 2003, pp. 91–94).
[308] Weiler 2013, p. 140.

2.2 Legitimizing the King via Ideologies

Apart from these structures that helped the king keep his power, ideology played an important role. It provided the necessary explanation for the existence of monarchy, showed the suitability of a given king, or supported the power of a dynasty. In this context, divine right can be seen as most important argument.

2.2.1 Chosen by God: Ruling by Divine Right

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.[309]

In the Bible, it is made profoundly clear that a king gets his power from God and is chosen by him. Resisting the king, consequently, means resisting God which, in turn, means sin. The idea of tracing one's power back to some kind of god is not a Christian invention. Already in the Ancient Near East, rulers claimed their legitimacy on the grounds of their religion.[310] Either they saw themselves (partly) as gods or as a deputy of a god, meaning they got their power from this god directly, or, last, they proclaimed a divine origin of their dynasty. The idea behind this ideology is that the order of the world is explained by the order of the cosmos, legitimating earthly power by its cosmic origin. In archaic societies, the ruler hence had the tasks of securing his land's welfare, being just, and ensuring the right cult towards the gods. As he owed his power to the gods, he also had to fulfil their tasks.[311] In the Roman Empire, these Far-Eastern ideas were further developed by using Hellenistic traditions. Examples from the Old Testament were introduced into this ideology during the fourth century as kings increasingly became Christian.[312] There, kings were depicted as defenders of their kingdom and had to provide justice. A bad king could, according to Carolingian writers, cause disaster because he was punished by God. This also meant, in turn, that—if he corrected his behaviour—the people would profit from his rule.[313]

In early and high medieval imagination, the nobles together with the king were part of God's order of the world, consisting of three elements. First, their duty in the above-mentioned trifunctional system of *oratores*, *bellatores* and *laboratores* was to be a counterforce to the sinfulness of mankind. The king and the nobles had to discipline their people[314] and, thus, were responsible for their spiritual welfare, similar to a priest. Second, as the king was chosen by God, he acted as His deputy in consequence. Last-

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[309] Romans 13, 1–2.
[310] Erkens 2006, p. 36.
[311] Dux 2005, pp. 9–16.
[312] Erkens 2002, p. 16.
[313] Winkler 2017a, pp. 34–42.
[314] Andenna, Melville 2015, p. 11.

ly and most importantly, this all means that the office of the king was created by God, and that the king was chosen by God in person, which makes him a ruler *dei gratias*.[315] Thus, the Christian way to legitimise a ruler did not so much differ from the archaic one.

Authorising one's power in a sacral way had the main effect that the ruler was sacrosanct in case of a conflict.[316] It was only up to God to remove the king from his office. Poor rule was no reason for the people to depose their king, even if he caused harm. Their only chance was to judge the king so that he altered his behaviour.[317] However, sacral kingship also meant that God had chosen the king for some reason—usually because of his virtues. According to Augustine, the king had to rule in benefit of the ruled and not to his own advantage. Furthermore, he stood in between God and the ruled, meaning that he also had control over the clergy. This changed drastically during the Investiture Conflict, from which the Church became conceptually separated from the secular world.[318]

The "Investiture Conflict" is a highly complex phenomenon. According to common theories, it led to an undermining of the sacral basis of kingship or rather to a disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) of kingship. Nevertheless, one must not forget that just in this Conflict und because of it, an ideologic upgrade of kingship begun.[319] However, this process widely differed from region to region. In spite of this, one big consequence was that the nobility gained more power.[320] As a result, consensual rule—as shown in chapter 2.1.2became more important.

2.2.2 Rituals and Other Symbols of Royal Power

"Power resides where men believe it resides. It's a trick, a shadow on the wall, and a very small man can cast a very large shadow."[321] George R. R. Martin—author of the famous book series *A Song of Ice and Fire*, in which everything is about power and how to maintain it—wrote this on Twitter. As Martin rightly recognised, it is namely not sufficient that the king has power in theory, but he also has to show and display it publicly to ensure everyone else know it as well. Power is not something objective but rather depends much on belief.[322] This aspect of royal rule has become more important in research over the last decades as it helped to explain how medieval relations worked and how they were established. However, already Schramm emphasised the importance of images of rule, whereby he saw notably the coronation order as significant.

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[315] Erkens 2005, p. 6; Erkens 2006, p. 29.
[316] Erkens 2006, p. 33.
[317] Winkler 2017a, p. 45.
[318] Kleinschmidt 1998, pp. 25–35.
[319] See Bloch 1998.
[320] Erkens 2002, p. 27; Weinfurter 2005b, pp. 144f.
[321] Martin 2014.
[322] Büttner 2018, p. 3.

He recognised that the various parts of this symbolic language had to be regarded as a complex unity. Apart from rituals, there were other symbols of power such as insignia that—according to Schramm—can help foster understanding of how a medieval ruler saw his office.[323]

In England, there were many public rituals—the coronation only was one of them. However, it can be seen as the most important one: It showed the theocratic legitimacy of the king, and by paying homage, the people accepted his power and status.[324] As the king was legitimated by God, the coronation mass was similar to the investiture of bishops, who were also inaugurated by God.[325] Others important rituals were royal marriages or homage. They were meant, as with the coronation, to demonstrate the king's power[326] and confirm his status in society. In hierarchical societies, status is extremely important, and in medieval times, it was shown via certain marks such as titles, language, etc. Ascribing a particular status to his nobles was, therefore, a powerful instrument of the king to reward his followers. However, it vanished more and more with the development of dynasties and inheritance laws, as all lands and titles were already in the hands of someone.[327] Another kind of ritual was that of welcoming. Of course, its main function was to ensure peace and grace, but this ritual also was supposed to show the king's power and to reflect his status.[328] Hence, rituals could fulfil different functions, the portrayal of power being the most important one.

Thus, rituals can be seen as a style of communication (*Kommunikationsstil*[329]). They showed that the public accepted the present order and were supposed to avoid conflicts as it has been already seen in the previous chapter. Rituals offered security since they showed that certain laws and duties were still going to be accepted in future. They depended on a special form, which means that violating the form of a ritual was synonymous with violating the social order. Under the form of a ritual, one understands time, place, and other rules such as the dress code.[330] So, rituals visualised a legal act.[331] In context of rule, knowledge about rituals was often gained by visiting or carrying out rituals. As in other medieval contexts, a differentiation between religious and secular is meaningless because both areas were closely tied together (a good example is the

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[323] For England see Schramm 1970. For a modern reception of Schramm see Bak 2010b.
[324] Weinfurter 2005a, pp. 137–143.
[325] Weinfurter 2005b, pp. 137f.
[326] Koziol 1995, p. 137.
[327] Spieß 1997, pp. 39 and 51.
[328] Dörrich 2002, pp. 55–57.
[329] Althoff 2001, p. 160.
[330] E.g. in England, Westminster became with the coronation of Harold Godwinson and William I the right place to crown kings (Green 2006, p. 257), or Edward the Confessor chose Eastern for his coronation to unite it with a special feast and give it a more importance (Barlow 1983a, p. 7).
[331] Keller 1993, p. 57.

coronation). Thus, the degree of holiness of a ritual depended more on its regularity. The less often a ritual was carried out, the holier it was.[332] The public served as witness and made, hence, the rituals legally binding. This had two consequences for carrying out rituals. First, one had to use symbols that were widely understood in public, and, second, unanimity was a precondition so that a ritual could take place at all. In order to achieve it, negotiations needed to take place beforehand where the details of the ritual were arranged. In case someone did not agree with the message of a ritual, he refrained from attending.[333]

The unambiguity of rituals was far more difficult to achieve. In general, rituals were created very consciously as they could easily transmit—especially in new or dangerous situations—messages that were neither intended nor desired. Usually, the Bible is a good starting point in order to find the meaning of symbols. Nevertheless, many symbols used in rituals are difficult to understand. Therefore, it might be assumed that rituals consisted of many actions or symbols following each other and having each a different meaning; certain symbols were only understood by a certain group. However, in order to achieve unanimity, some rituals were supposed to be ambiguous. Contrary to popular belief, rituals do not necessarily deny changes, but could be adapted flexibly to new situations.[334] Rituals, e.g. coronations, often were expanded with new elements in order to emphasise certain messages.[335]

In historiography, another kind of ritual can be found: the ritual that flounders. One example is the narration of William I's coronation in Orderic Vitalis' *Historia Ecclesiastica* where a fire breaks out. Historiographers used these gone-wrong rituals to criticise but also to support the king.[336] Rituals that went wrong were not necessarily invented by historiographers, but—as Reuter shows with the conflict between Henry II and Thomas Becket—the ignoring of social rules (such as in rituals) could be used consciously in order to transmit a special meaning. Thomas Becket, for example, ignored the difference between public and private spheres whereas Henry II showed himself as unreliable.[337] Others altered the form of rituals because they did not agree with their message and therefore could make the whole ritual fail. Generally, such disturbances were interpreted as disaster.[338]

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[332] Dörrich 2002, pp. 15–19 and 35–37.
[333] Althoff 2001, pp. 160–176.
[334] Althoff 2013, pp. 24–28 and 189–191.
[335] Althoff 2005, p. 100.
[336] Koziol 1995, pp. 137–140.
[337] Reuter 2001, pp. 211–213.
[338] Dörrich 2002, pp. 25f.

After this overview on the function of rituals, there shall be a closer view of the corona-tion as some of the analysed historians describe it in great detail. The coronation cer-emony became, along with the anointing, a ritual during the ninth century. Other insig-nia of power were added to this ritual, such as a sword. This led from a religious point of view to more and more similarities between priests and kings during the eleventh century.[339] As written above, the investiture of a king showed many similarities to the investiture of bishops.[340] Even though kings never considered themselves priest-kings—they did not receive any orders and stayed, therefore, a layperson—they were not seen as purely lay either. The anointing was important for kings since it showed their power over the Church. The Church, however, tried to reduce the importance of anointing by emphasising hereditary right and the election. The anointing became less important even for the kings during the twelfth century because they began to count their reign beginning with their coming to power and not with their coronation. For the population, though, it stayed the most important symbol of royal power. Therefore, the oil used for the ceremony became more and more significant: the English kings used a better oil (than normal oil), chrism, which had been consecrated. Later on, the English kings even developed a special myth around the oil used at the coronation in order to distinguish themselves from the French king.[341] The anointing came originally from the Old Testament (David, Saul) and was introduced in the Visigoth Empire in the late sev-enth century, first becoming successful long term only in the middle of the ninth centu-ry. Papal legates probably brought it to England, where it was enforced until the tenth century.[342] At that time, a vow was added to the ceremony, with which the king prom-ised to ensure peace and justice.[343]

As already stated above, there were changes in the power of a king because of the Investiture Conflict during the twelfth century that especially concerned rituals such as the coronation. Also, as a result of the administrative monarchies, the role of rituals for political life transformed. However, they did not alter as severely as one might assume. Koziol is able to show that in England the reform movement under Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085) had only minimal impact on political liturgy. According to him, the bishops were far more interested in their own power than in the pope's wishes, and they need-ed the king as an ally. Rome was far away but the greedy neighbour was just next door. Therefore, political rites such as the coronation were in use all throughout the twelfth century, and even new ceremonies were invented like the royal touch. As it be-

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[339] Bloch 1998, pp. 105–127.
[340] Weinfurter 2005a, p. 137.
[341] Bloch 1998, pp. 127–263.
[342] Schieffer 2017, pp. 43–54.
[343] Büttner 2018, p. 67.

comes more evident in chapter 2.2.4, changing ideologies about kingship also influenced the invention of new rituals.[344]

Another consequence of the Investiture Conflict concerned the oath. Before the Conflict, it was not possible for one party to dissolve the oath without the consent of the other party. If one did so nevertheless, the consequences were disastrous, as this act was seen as perjury, which, in turn, was sin. In this role, the oath was the core of many rituals intended to ensure trust between men. During the Investiture Conflict, the Church began to take the power to dissolve oaths in the name of only one party. However, the fact that one party could just ask a third party to dissolve an oath led to the insignificance of the same. Instead, other measures were taken in order to guarantee the given promise, making law much more important.[345]

Apart from rituals, power was made visible by other means, e.g. by material representation. This comprised amongst others wearing luxurious clothes, going hunting, having a zoo, or consuming high quality wine. Material representation meant as well that one gave money to ecclesiastical institutions. However, it was a fine line between wastefulness and avarice, and, easily enough, one could be attacked for luxury or being too stingy.[346]

This chapter showed the importance of displaying power in the public but also how public communication worked in the Middle Ages. However, in order for the king to be able to reach a wide public, it was necessary to travel around in the kingdom.[347] Demonstrating one's power via rituals such as the coronation was significant to ensure one's acceptance in the future. Revealing wealth was also part of showing one's power, but in this respect, the ruler had to be careful. However, it was not only difficult to choose the right degree of luxury to display in public; also, certain virtues could be a double-edged sword.

2.2.3 The Virtues of a King

In medieval political thought, the concept of the two bodies of a king existed: first the individual man and, second, the personification of divine law. Historical writers so mixed, when describing a king, their knowledge about kingship as a political institution and their thinking about how one was supposed to behave. For the latter, they used catalogues of vices and virtues.[348] Already Isidore of Seville contemplated the virtues of a king: "The royal virtues are these two especially: justice and mercy—but mercy is

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[344] Koziol 1995, pp. 125–128.
[345] Weinfurter 2010, pp. 444–457.
[346] Schröder 2004, pp. 55, 75, and 279–283.
[347] See also Büttner 2018, pp. 110–113.
[348] Peters 1970, pp. 82–86.

more praised in kings, because justice in itself is harsh."[349] Thus, he had a clear idea of how an ideal king should behave. The character and behaviour of a king were so important since there was the belief that the king's virtue was predetermined for the well-being of his people.[350] In fact, mercy and peacekeeping were central characteristics for a medieval ruler. Peace was seen as both a result and a sign of the ruler's communion with God and was therefore fundamental to legitimise one's rule.[351] However, peace was not the only symbol for the ruler's union with God. As seen above, he had his power from God, which meant, in turn, that this had to be visible in the way he exercised his power. Thus, a king was not only responsible for peace, but he also had to be successful, meaning that he won wars and that his kingdom flourished.[352]

Peace was generally conserved by creating consensus between the nobles. *Gratia* was an important element for doing this. The king had to do justice in consensus with the nobles, but with *gratia* (mercy), he was able to reduce or reverse the judgement. Thereby, Christ was his role model, making virtues such as *misericordia* or *clementia* important. These virtues changed in the High Middle Ages because, as written above, royal rule was more and more separated from the Church during the Investiture Contest. So, the nobles were seen as more important, enforcing a bigger significance of law in order to regulate their status. This led to the development that the ruler was no longer supposed to show mercy, but that his task was to ensure that law was imposed.[353]

Of course, there were not only rules about how a king was supposed to behave but also what he was not supposed to do. Thus, hate was one emotion a king never was allowed to show as it delegitimised his rule.[354] As it will be shown more closely in chapter 3.1, *furor* was another unfitting emotion that disqualified a ruler for his office.

One interesting feature of medieval kings was the belief in their ability to heal. This idea came, as with many others, from the Romans—in this case from Emperor Vespasian, who needed a strong divine legitimisation to compensate his absent familial origin. Being a thaumaturge showed that Vespasian was accepted by the gods. In the Middle Ages, thaumaturgy was interpreted as a sign of sacrality, and, as it was shown in the last chapter, the coronation ceremony moved the kings nearer to God, which made the

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[349] Barney et al. 2010, p. 200. "*Regiae virtutes praecipuae duae. iustitia et pietas. Plus autem in regibus laudatur pietas; iustitia per se severa est.*" (Isidore of Seville: *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ix.3, ed. by Lindsay 2008, p. 362).
[350] This idea can be found e.g. in *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* by Pseudo-Cyprian. See Erkens 2002, p. 30.
[351] Kershaw 2011, pp. 2–6 and 269f.
[352] Kosuch 2005, p. 407.
[353] Weinfurter 2005a, pp. 113–120; Weinfurter 2005b, pp. 139–149.
[354] Goetz 2013, p. 72.

step to a miracle cure possible. The power to heal people, especially from scrofula, thus became a typical characteristic for kings during the Middle Ages.[355]

All in all, the personal suitability of a ruler was difficult to grasp. Therefore, other factors were needed to authorise his power such as the election or a dynasty. It only then became truly important when these other factors were missing, such as in civil war or in case of doubtful ancestry.[356] What constituted good ancestry and what mattered for the hereditary right is described in the following chapter.

2.2.4 The Establishment of Dynasties: Hereditary Right

A dynasty usually means that powerful families begin to give themselves a name and that a certain family is associated with its realm. The concept—already found in the Old Testament—[357] was (re-)developed in the Middle Ages by the Merovingian, who used it to secure their power.[358] The hereditary right was, on the one hand, based on the idea that a dynasty had a special quality that was passed on via blood. At the same time, a long row of ancestors made sure that a dynasty could be seen as a timeless community of outstanding individuals, giving the present king more power through the one of his predecessors.[359] Ancestry showed, on the other hand, the social status of a candidate. People believed that a lower social status led to pride, and, therefore, a potential king had to be of high status that strongly depended on his father's legacy.[360] Additionally, dynasties stood for continuity even if some individuals were unimportant rulers.[361] Often being a construct, it was easy to adapt one's family tree to the current political circumstances. Keeping with this, Aelred of Rievaulx constructed a genealogical line where Henry II did not descend from his Norman ancestors but the Anglo-Saxon ones. Aelred traces Henry twice back via the female line until he comes to Edward the Confessor.[362] Generally, these genealogical lines were not invented but came from a long tradition of didactic literature. So, by comparing texts from Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia,

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[355] Bloch 1998, p. 89; Erkens 2002, pp. 12f. Information on the English kings will be given in 2.7.
[356] Foerster 2015, pp. 141–148.
[357] Winkler 2017a, p. 287.
[358] Crouch 2002, pp. 283f. In England, the concept of dynasties was introduced by the Church and later used by the Mercian rulers. The Norman rulers, in turn, could use an already well-developed continental tradition to construct their ducal dynasty (pp. 284f).
[359] Andenna, Melville 2015, pp. 13–18.
[360] Peltzer 2015, pp. 24–26.
[361] Reinhard 1996, p. 6.
[362] Aelred of Rievaulx: *De genealogia Henrici regis*, prologue, ed. by Pezzini 2017, p. 22. According to Aelred, Henry has many famous ancestors, amongst them biblical ones like Noah also the Germanic god Wotan (pp. 23f; pr.). Despite the greater importance of the female line, William I's invasion is also justified: via Harold's usurpation, divine decision, and William's grater right (pp. 52f; XIII). See also Crouch 2002, p. 290.

Taviani-Carozzi is able to show that the genealogies of the Germanic kings reveal some similarities.[363]

Commonly, it was good to have as powerful ancestors as possible to show the quality of one's family tree. First, it was popular to lead one's dynasty back to Noah's oldest son Sem, meaning that one somehow was related to Christ.[364] This was achieved via constructing genealogies that created the impression of a continuation of Christ's genealogy.[365] Later on, Noah's youngest son Japheth came more into fashion together with the idea of descending from Troy. Thereby, it was the goal to construct as old a dynasty as possible; either by integrating old dynasties into one's own family tree or by inventing ancestors.[366] Already in Ancient Greece, gods or heroes were popular ancestors.[367] By the Middle Ages, it had developed as a popular method to change an old, often heathen myth in such a way that the king could descend from a hero or even a heathen god. Genealogies as a continual line between the hero and the king were proof enough for such a statement and helped to authorise the king's power.[368] This already shows that mythical ancestors were seen just as or even more significant than historical ones[369]—probably because mythical figures were better known.

In Anglo-Saxon England, the kings traced their dynasties back to the old Germanic god Wotan. During the Christianisation, they needed to substitute their old gods with biblical or antique examples. Still, until the eighth century, descending from Wotan was more important than a high age. Reynolds worked out two main *origio gentis* stories, which gained importance for England up until the twelfth century—the climax of these stories.[370] On the one hand, there was the biblical connection via Scota, the daughter of a pharaoh at the time of Moses. On the other hand, the Trojan origin was claimed via Brutus, a descendant of Aeneas. However, the Normans had—at first glance—a problem, as they were a relatively young dynasty that began with the Viking plunderer Rollo (d. c.930), about whose decent nothing was known. Nevertheless, Dudo wrote in his *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniæ ducum* about Rollo as a Danish nobleman.[371] The Norman dukes claimed to be descended from both Trojan and biblical

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[363] Taviani-Carozzi 1993, pp. 362–369.

[364] Melville 2015, p. 297.

[365] Weinfurter 2015, p. 130.

[366] Melville 2015, pp. 294–302.

[367] Assmann 2013, pp. 48–50.

[368] Müller 2005, pp. 74–84.

[369] Wunderli 1994, p. 25.

[370] Reynolds 1983 argues that the growing effectiveness of the government was the reason behind that. It led to a growth of sources that propagated both the work of government and the idea behind it (p. 381).

[371] Dudo of St Quentin: *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniæ ducum*, ii, ed. by Lair 1865, pp. 138–175; Crouch 2002, pp. 286f.

forefathers.[372] In this way, they wanted to underline their political importance. These origin stories were supposed to explain the present and to promote values. Kingdoms, according to these stories, were defined by their people but also by their king, who was the supreme ruler.[373] Another strategy to create an old age for one's dynasty was to construct an old line that could compete with other longstanding people such as the Romans. The Danish writer Saxo Grammaticus e.g. argued that the Danish people, with its founders Dan and Angel, were even older than the Romans. For this purpose, he also compared rune stones and heroic poetry to classical writing.[374] Thus, genealogical lines helped to authorise the rule of kings via their lineage.

Not only pre-Christian heroes could become famous ancestors but also Christian kings. Whereas in the Merovingian dynasty, saintly kings were foremost saints who incidentally were kings as well, this changed in Anglo-Saxon England. There, Church and petty kings had a strong interest in saintly kings in order to strengthen their own power and influence. Christianity was new in England, and in order to Christianise more easily, clerks tried to establish local saints. On the basis of Germanic traditions[375], kings were a good choice. They had the further advantage that local authorities, on whom the clerks strongly depended, welcomed saintly kings as well. They helped the present king to authorise his power, strengthened kingship per se, and unified the kingdom. Consequently, kings actively supported the veneration of saintly rulers—especially when they could create a kinship to them. One famous example is Edmund of East Anglia (855–869), who was used by both the kings of Wessex, who wanted to authorise their rule over East Anglia, and by Cnut the Great, who wanted to authorise his rule over England. Both presented themselves as legal successors of Edmund.[376] Thereby, Edmund's death (one reason for his holiness) was adjusted to each political situation.[377]

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[372] According to Tscherpel 2004, they claimed descent from Magog, who was also used by the Goths. So, the Norman dukes claimed a relation to that people as well (p. 28). Dudo of St Quentin suggests that the Normans, via the Danes, descend from Antenor, a Trojan nobleman (Dudo of St Quentin: *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniæ ducum*, i.3, ed. by Lair 1865 p. 130).

[373] Reynolds 1983, pp. 375–390; Tscherpel 2004, pp. 19–28.

[374] Saxo Grammaticus: *Gesta Danorum*, prologue and i.1.1, ed. by Friis-Jensen 2015, p. 6 and p. 18.

[375] Hoffmann 1975 argues that Germanic heroes and nobles often were associated with gods, especially with Wotan—either they descended from a god, or they were dedicated to a god. Additionally, the idea of *Königsheil* (the king possessed a certain power and could influence e.g. fertility) played a role. In the first phase of Christianisation, Jesus often was compared with Wotan, and, thus, saintly kings were a continuation of the Germanic hero (pp. 47–55). For the concept of *Königsheil* see also Hechberger 2005.

[376] Hoffmann 1975, pp. 19–58; Hoffmann 1994, p. 278.

[377] Büttner 2018, pp. 190f. The case of Edward the Confessor will follow in 2.7.

Apart from biological succession, there could also be a continual line via office—especially important for the popes, who could not inherit their office. In order to rule, it was best for kings to reunite both lines: the one of office and the one of family.[378] By doing so, they could show that it was their historical right to rule because their family had always ruled there. Apart from these thoughts, hereditary right was also part of legitimising a ruler via history. It authorised a ruler via historical origins, historical continuity, or historical role models and parallels. A historical origin did not necessarily mean a direct succession or continuity but could be generated by a *translatio* as well. In this way William I claimed that Edward the Confessor transferred the English crown to him. Nevertheless, in the way history could stabilise one's power, it could also be used to take it away.[379]

Ruling as part of a dynasty did not only mean taking one's power through one's ancestors but also that the father was interested in passing on his office to his son. He had three possibilities to do so: He could designate his successor, which often was not binding, he could make e.g. his son co-king during his lifetime, or there was an established hereditary monarchy meaning that king and nobles agreed on a dynasty.[380] Of course, a pretender to the throne could use all these arguments in his favour to legitimise his power.

In a time where history was a convincing reason, hereditary right was an important argument in order to authorise one's power. It showed the right to rule based on the grounds that the family had always ruled over this people, and it argued with outstanding ancestors whose excellent virtues were believed to be passed on to the present king. Thereby, it played no role whether these ancestors were fictional or related by blood—important was only to create some kind of continuity. Genealogies could be flexibly adapted to current political circumstances.

2.3   Legitimising the King in Anglo-Norman England

After this more theoretical study, it is crucial to understand how these ideas were adopted in Anglo-Norman England—the time during which the authors of the later analysed works lived. As historical writing is always dependent upon a particular time, it is important to understand how the English kings of the twelfth century authorised their rule and how this changed during the twelfth century, when old structures of power

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[378] Melville 2015, pp. 294–302.
[379] Goetz 2013, p. 83. E.g. as he was the oldest son of William I, Robert Curthose could threaten the rule of his brothers William II and Henry I by using genealogy as an argument. Genealogies were also used to prevent unwelcomed marriages by proving that the couple was too closely related to each other (Crouch 2002, pp. 288f).
[380] Reitemeyer 2006, p.16.

were challenged. What makes twelfth-century England special and particularly interesting is the case of William the Conqueror, who still influenced the discussions of this time. He was not king by birth but by conquest, and, therefore, his successors had to prove themselves worthy and able to reign. This led, on the one hand, to richer and more militaristic kings in order to afford and win war, but, on the other hand, this led to the de-sacralisation of political authority, provoking resistance and parody.[381]

However, there shall also be a short description of how kings were legitimated in Anglo-Saxon England as earlier authors such as Orderic Vitalis or Eadmer of Canterbury still might have been influenced by pre-Conquest thinking. In Anglo-Saxon England, a new king normally needed several elements to secure his authority. First, he was supposed to be of royal blood. Second—and most important—there was an elective element: The vote of the most important men in the witan was necessary. Thereby, the wishes of the last king also had influence on the election. Third and last, the king needed the ceremony and sacrament of coronation—meaning the support of the Church.[382] Thereby, he also had to swear an oath that he would protect the Church, punish offenders, and promote justice.[383] However, it is worth mentioning that already the Danish conquest evoked some changes in legitimising royal rule. Whereas, for example, Anglo-Saxon kings expressed their authority by being buried in a royal mausoleum, this changed with Harthacnut. From then on, legitimisation was bound to the beginning of the reign whereas the burial place became an opportunity to define oneself through past kings.[384]

William I reigned by ritually public kingship; as seen above, he legitimated his rule by claiming to be appointed by Edward the Confessor. At his coronation, he kept to the traditional coronation *ordo* in order to stress continuity with his predecessors.[385] However, there was something new he introduced, that being the role of the queen. His wife Matilda was crowned and made regent. The coronation, therefore, gave her more authority.[386] As William commuted between England and Normandy and left his wife in charge, it was important that she had the necessary legitimacy. To manifest his own public authority, William wore his crown publicly at several occasions.[387] This was part

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[381] Koziol 1995, pp. 144f.

[382] Brown 1985, p. 115.

[383] Henson 2001, p. 17. At the same time, the king often was the greatest landowner, which helped him to establish his authority (p. 19).

[384] Marafioti 2014, p. 247.

[385] Also the choice of Westminster as place for the coronation was to stress continuity to Edward because William was crowned near to Edward's tomb (Marafioti 2014, p. 230).

[386] Carpenter 2003, pp. 94–97; Schramm 1970, pp. 27–29. In fact, the coronation of queens had already taken place in Anglo-Saxon England (Emma and Edith both were crowned), but William I gave his wife much more power (Carpenter 2003, pp. 94–97).

[387] Bisson 2009, pp. 170f.

of a ceremony where a clerk needed to put the crown on the king's head, mirroring the coronation and augmenting thus the king's authority.[388] There will be a closer look at how William I authorised his rule via propaganda in chapter 3.3. Another means to authorise his rule was the founding of Battle Abbey in memorial of his victory over Harold Godwinson.[389] Battle had the further advantage of having control over the battlefield of Hastings as a memorial site and using it to suit William's own needs.[390]

William's successor, William Rufus (1087–1100), is characterised as a bad king in medieval historiography. His reign started hastily as he wanted to get the crown before his elder brother Robert—his missing election was already mentioned above.[391] However, the main problems for the medieval authors were his conflict with Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury about power and investiture and William's exploitations of monasteries to finance his wars. His sudden death was interpreted as divine punishment. Another difficulty might have been that William continued the rule of his father and made no attempts to disassociate himself from William I's deeds. In modern historiography, William II is described as a good fighter who was legitimated by his victories and who was able to keep the nobles on his side by giving them titles. So, he handed down a well-governed kingdom to Henry I. Moreover, he was authorised by the coronation by Lanfranc in Westminster and in being the chosen successor of his father.[392]

Henry I's (1100–1135) claim to the throne was rather weak—also because of his elder brother Robert. Nevertheless, he exploited the situation as it came and justified his right to rule by *porphyrogennetos* and the election by the magnates.[393] His reign was influenced by a reflection back to the Anglo-Saxon past. Henry distanced himself from his father with his coronation charter. By referring to the law of King Edward, he implied undoing William's law.[394] These laws, referring back into Anglo-Saxon times, were typical for the period before 1300 about which no detailed sources of the administration are handed down. These sources consciously endeavoured to be archaic in order to stress the continuity between their Anglo-Norman present and the Anglo-Saxon past.[395] Fur-

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[388] Schramm 1970, p. 32. The ritual of crown-wearing was already established in England in the 1050s and was based on the one of the German Emperor. William, however, made these ceremonies much grander (Carpenter 2003, p. 90).
[389] Dennis 2007, p. 35.
[390] Marafioti 2014, pp. 237f.
[391] Garnett 2007, p. 140; Schramm 1970, pp. 152f.
[392] Barlow 1983b, pp. 46–64 and 434–437; Chibnall 1986, pp. 57–64. For a close analysis of the conflict between William II and Anselm refer to Harper-Bill 2007.
[393] Chibnall 1986, pp. 66f.
[394] Bisson 2009, pp. 172–175. For a more detailed study about how Henry I tried to assimilate Normans and English see Williams 2007b. For the research about the changing of the English identity after the Conquest see Thomas 2003.
[395] Weiler 2013, p. 121. Williams 1995 argues as well that laws helped to create or support a common identity and linked the English to their past (p. 164). For English law and historical writing see also Wormald 1999, esp. pp. 111–143.

thermore, Henry I tried to authorise his rule by marrying into the Anglo-Saxon line. Through her mother, his wife Matilda was related to Edmund Ironside. This reference to the past was, on the one hand, dangerous as it reminded the people that there were others with a claim to the throne, too. On the other hand, the children of Henry and Matilda were of Anglo-Saxon and of Norman royal blood and, hence, had a perfect claim to kingship.[396] Furthermore, Henry tried to settle the dispute with Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury (at least on short notice).[397] Also, the marriage of his daughter with the German Emperor meant more prestige for his dynasty. However, it was expensive, and the relation to Germany stopped after the unsuccessful invasion of France and the death of the Emperor.[398] The war against the Celtics was another instrument to gain prestige, which was also used by Henry's successors. These campaigns were so prestigious because of the old English claims to the land and the prospect of fast success.[399]

In 1120, Henry's only legitimate son died in the catastrophe of the White Ship, and Henry failed to produce another heir. Although he let his barons swear oaths to his daughter Matilda, he did not give her the necessary means to seize her right. Thus, Henry's nephew Stephen (1135–1154) became king. The following fight for the English crown aptly shows how royal power was legitimated in middle of the twelfth century. One reason why Stephen's rule was successful at first was his fast action and the support of his younger brother, Henry of Winchester. Stephen hurried to London, where the citizens acclaimed him as king, and was crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Westminster a few days later. In the 1130s, kingship depended strongly on anointment and thus, Stephen managed to create a *fait accompli*. The nobles who had been staying with Henry I's body in Normandy accepted Stephen's claim after a moment of hesitation. Nonetheless, this hasty coronation could not represent Stephen's power, who desired to show himself with recognisable symbols of authority. So, he used Henry's funeral at Reading and the Easter Court in 1136 to symbolise his power. Especially the Easter Court was a complete success with a great gathering of the higher clergy. Stephen further tried to secure his crown by getting the support of the pope, whom he needed to release his followers from their oath to Matilda. Also, delegitimising Matilda was a strategy: Stephen's side asserted that Matilda could not succeed Henry as she

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[396] Green 2006, pp. 54–58; Hollister 2001, p. 112; Williams 2007b, pp. 31f.
[397] Weiler 2000, p. 2. Immediately after Anselm's return from exile, there arose a new conflict because Pope Urban II (1088–1099) forbade churchmen to pay homage to laymen. First in 1106, Henry and Anselm came to an agreement in which Henry had to make many concessions (Vaughn 2007, pp. 140f).
[398] Boshof 2007, pp. 17f.
[399] Plassmann 2015, p. 114. In case there was no quick success, the kings usually negotiated, and, of course, where one expects much prestige, there is high risk that it goes the other way round (ibid.).

was illegitimate because it was implied that her mother was a nun before marrying. Furthermore, he claimed that Henry had released his followers from the oath to Matilda on his deathbed. Matilda did not leave Stephen's claim unchallenged: She accused him of being a perjurer and referred to the fact that Henry as most recent king wanted her as heiress. She even tried to intervene in Rome. However, in the twelfth century, women could only rule in the name of their husband or son and not in their own right. Therefore, Matilda lost her cause and only by supporting the claim of her son Henry did the crown came back to her family.[400]

Under Henry II (1154–1189), the legitimisation of kingship was intensified. His power was foremost based on the successful re-establishment of his incomes in England. Then, Henry laid the foundations for the common law. The exchequer and his office were not only responsible for attending to the royal revenues but also for legal matters. In addition, royal judges travelled throughout England to hear the pleadings for the crown. This was so intensified under Henry's reign so that, from 1174/5 onward, they managed to travel throughout the whole kingdom every other year. Pleas were divided in two categories: One was the securing of the king's peace. This originally was the task of the local authorities, but Henry's sheriffs were now allowed to control them. The new procedure did not make much difference to justice but, instead, improved the royal income (and control). The second category was civil pleas that the king's judges newly tried. As a consequence, sub-tenants became less dependent on the overlord (which, in turn, gave more power to the king).[401]

Besides the big role of bureaucracy that was already shown in chapter 2.1.3, there were also many small things that helped Henry authorise his rule, e.g. new methods of raising money supported the king's authority. In this way, military obligations to the crown were exploited and "gifts" from various groups were extorted.[402] Henry II needed large sums of money in order to pay mercenary troops. When it came to rebellions in his dominions, he could not lean on the support of his barons and therefore strongly depended on those.[403] With the discovery of Roman law, the sacred character of kingship was further emphasised. It stressed the idea of majesty and made resistance against a king a crime (*lèse-majesté*).[404]

Neither was Henry II the son of his predecessor, nor was his great-grandfather. In order to cover up this missing hereditary right, Henry introduced a new principle: He re-

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[400] Chibnall 1991, pp. 65–87 and 197–206; Crouch 2000, pp. 32–47, 123–132; King 2010, pp. 58–78; Stringer 1993, p. 2.
[401] Carpenter 2003, pp. 233–242.
[402] Mason 2007, pp. 140–143.
[403] Barber 2001, p. 10.
[404] Aurell 2007b, p. 178.

ferred to legal paternity. Stephen accepted him legally as his son and hence, his rule was not considered a break with the heredity right and explained why Stephen's real son did not become king. This was also applied retrospectively to William I and Edward the Confessor.[405] A similar concept was designation. There, the successor claimed to be chosen by the last king. Plassmann argues that this was particularly important in Anglo-Norman England as it was unusual that the son followed the father to the throne.[406] Kinship also became important when it came to marriage. By marrying Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry secured land and allies.[407]

As written above, it could be a sign of royalty to have healing powers. The first English king about whom it was said that he possessed these powers was Edward the Confessor. Nevertheless, Bloch assumes that these abilities were ascribed to Edward because he was venerated as a saint and not because he was a king. Bloch, therefore, thinks that these ideas only came up later. The first English king to definitely appropriate healing the scrofula was Henry II—probably with reference to Edward.[408] Others, however, argue that the idea of the healing King Edward came via Normandy to England and has to be seen in the tradition of the French wonder-working kings. A further propagation of these ideas was stopped for some time because of the Investiture Contest.[409] Nevertheless, Henry II seemed to have used his thaumaturgical abilities in order to authorise his rule.

Edward the Confessor also became important for the Angevins because of other reasons. He and other consecrated kings such as Edmund came to be significant for legitimising the rule of post-Conquest kings. They showed the glory and sacrality of the English monarchy and the legitimacy of Norman rule at the same time by indicating that the Anglo-Norman kings reigned in succession of the Anglo-Saxon kings. At the same time, particularly Edward the Confessor stood for the good former times.[410] His canonisation, enforced by Henry II, linked the king to the Anglo-Saxon line and strengthened Henry's position towards the Church.[411] Generally, Henry II tried to strengthen his rule by claiming that Normans and Britons were one single people, and, therefore, they needed only one king. This view can particularly be observed in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*.[412] History—both Norman and Anglo-Saxon—was

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[405] Schramm 1970, p. 159.
[406] Plassmann 2017a, pp. 207f. How old this concept was is difficult to guess. Since the reign of Æthelred the Unready, English royal succession did not follow clear rules (ibid.).
[407] Barber 2001, pp. 10f.
[408] Bloch 1998, pp. 58–86.
[409] Ehlers 2000, p. 13.
[410] Hillingmeier 1996, pp. 87f; Wormald 2009, pp. 38–40.
[411] Bozoky 2009, p. 182.
[412] Geoffrey of Monmouth: *Historia regum Britanniae*, ed. by Reeve 2007; Tscherpel 2004, p. 30.

important to Henry. He not only venerated Edward the Confessor but also the Norman Dukes Richard I and Richard II, who got new sarcophagi. Also, this was supposed to cover up his missing ancestry in the male line.[413]

Henry II and his successors were generally interested in propaganda. They built churches in order to promote the legitimacy of their rule and used the writing of letters and literature for their purposes by presenting themselves as ideal and wise kings who were good warriors at the same time. The past became an important part of propaganda as well. The deeds of the royal forefathers were glorified, wherein especially the maternal ancestors of Henry II, like Edward the Confessor, were significant. Also, legends became part of the Angevin propaganda. The legend of Roland was exploited as well as the one of Arthur.[414] Using Arthur's popularity, the mythical ruler was even fashioned as a forefather along with the Trojans. So, the Angevins were on equal terms with other European monarchies that claimed a Trojan origin as well. Not only was the legitimacy of Angevin rule propagated but also the unity of English and Normans in order to reuse the Norman myth.[415] Another aim of this propaganda was to connect the Angevins to Normandy and to construct a Viking past.[416] Part of the propaganda was also to patronise historical works in the vernacular that aimed to reach a wider public at court.[417]

Richard I (1189–1199) was also very good at using propaganda in order to be seen as a good king. Furthermore, he started his rule by distancing himself from his predecessor and made some political gestures (like releasing his father's enemies from prison). Also, administration helped him to secure his rule while being abroad. Richard was good at electing ministers and delegating power. He was also an able ruler in terms of managing the aristocracy, and his successes at war contributed to the acceptance of his kingship as well.[418]

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[413] Vincent 2015, pp. 196f.

[414] For the *Song of Roland* at the court of Henry II see Short 2007b. Concerning the Arthurian material, the latest research doubts the extent to which it helped legitimise the reign of Henry II. Aurell 2007a argues that it foremost helped present Henry II and Eleanor as good patrons because Arthur as Celtic king was more anti-English. However, this changed under the reign of Henry's sons und successors who used the Arthurian legend for their political purposes (Aurell 2007a).

[415] Aurell 2007b, pp. 85–104 and 134–211. The Norman myth found its climax in England around 1200. It aimed to establish a common Norman identity for the Normans in Normandy, England, and Sicily. To do so, it emphasised the attachment to Normandy (given that the Normans originally came from various places) and the connection of successful conquests with the Norman race (Davis 1976). However, due to assimilation, a lack of further conquests, and non-Norman leaders, the concept of *gens Normannorum* vanished until 1154 (Webber 2005, pp. 178f).

[416] Aurell 2009, p. 96.

[417] Urbanski 2013, esp. pp. 207–215.

[418] Gillingham 1994, pp. 95–101.

Violence among knights was very common. In order to teach them ecclesiastical virtues, clerks developed the concept of chivalry, which caused the emergence of handbooks about good chivalric virtues.[419] During the second part of the twelfth century, chivalric literature became popular in England, and its ethos began to undermine Carolingian lordship so that kings were portrayed as closer to knights. As mentioned above, this influenced political rituals. For the coronation, this meant that spurs were given in addition to the traditional insignia like the crown. Also, new chivalric rituals such as tournaments were introduced.[420] Richard I was particularly good at utilising chivalric ideals, as his positive characterisation in contemporary historical writing shows.

The strong position of the king in twelfth-century England is also reflected in historiography and in works contemplating on good rulers.[421] One source which provides insight into English ideas of ideal rule is the *Policaticus* of John of Salisbury, written between 1156 and 1159/60 for courtly clerks. There, John defines a king in relation to his kingdom, whereas princes were not individualised at all.[422] According to the *Dialogus* and the *Tractacus,* a good king was supposed to choose wise advisors. As he had his powers from God, he could rule as he wanted, and it was not for his subjects to question his rule. Nonetheless, a good king always wanted to do good.[423]

Yet, the king's power did not remain untouched as, during the twelfth century, there was always more than one candidate vying for the throne. Therefore, the successful candidate made promises to remedy shortcomings and carried out reforms.[424] During the twelfth century, the aristocracy became increasingly important until the king could not rule without them anymore—despite the transfer of power to bureaucracy.[425] Al-

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[419] Aurell 2007b, pp. 69–76.

[420] Koziol 1995, pp. 132–136. Southern 1970 argues that there were no tournaments in England, which was why the youth was bored and why England lacked chivalry and liberality (pp. 143–145). Indeed, tournaments were forbidden in England by Henry II. However, Crouch argues that tournaments and chivalric behaviour did not necessarily depend on each other (Crouch 2005, pp. 79 and 149–156; for the prohibition of tournaments see also Meyer 2017, esp. pp. 147f). Also Jaeger 1985 contradicts Southern's statement. However, he sees in the concept of courtliness a process of civilisation. According to him, the archaic warrior was raised to a new stage of civilisation by introducing ideals such as modesty or restraint. Although this statement looks in its value judgement highly problematic, Jaeger certainly is right when he claims that Romance did not mirror chivalric virtues but creates them and so influenced the "real" world. The king profited from this concept as it placed him above the warrior, and he therefore propagated it; this concerns amongst others Henry II (pp. 3–13 and 206–209).

[421] Equally, the shift of power to administration under Henry II is reflected in historiography (Southern 1970, p. 150).

[422] Genet 2000, pp. 188–199.

[423] Weiler 2013, pp. 132–140.

[424] Weiler 2013, p. 142.

[425] Aurell 2007b, pp. 217f; Plassmann 2017a, pp. 218–223. However, already William the Conqueror claimed to rule by the choice of magnates.

ready Henry I was dependent on his nobles as he needed to take their advice into consideration.[426]

Concerning how the Anglo-Norman kings legitimised their power during the twelfth century, two main strategies can be observed. Particularly at the beginning, it was important to stress continuity with the Anglo-Saxon kings and to pretend that the Norman Conquest did not mean a break in English kingship (in view of the Danish conquests, it hardly was). Under Henry II, this strategy broadened. It was still important to refer to the past, but other elements became important as well: Much power was transferred to administration at the expense of the nobility, and propaganda was used on a large scale to demonstrate one's suitability to rule. The accumulation of power was stopped with the Magna Carta in 1215, but as these events first took place in the 13th century, they are not of interest for this work. As overall continuity remain the elements described in the previous chapters: the coronation and (constructed) hereditary right.

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[426] Green 2009, p. 60.

3. The Legitimisation of Kings in Medieval Historiography

3.1 Legitimising and Reflecting Legitimisation in Medieval Historical Writing

When one speaks about legitimising kings in historiography, one speaks of two different things. On the one hand, historiography reflects legitimacy—by reflecting the past, it also portrays the means kings used to authorise their rule. On the other hand, historiography can legitimise kings. As it was shown in the introduction, history was used as an argument in current discussions. Furthermore, it was argued in the chapter about the establishment of dynasties that having great forefathers could augment the legitimacy of a current ruler as well.

At last, historiography helped to form the cultural memory. According to Max Weber, three ideal types of legitimisation can be distinguished: charismatic, traditional, and legal (also bureaucratic) domination.[427] If one applies this definition to the Middle Ages, legal domination did not yet play a role, and charismatic domination was important in insecure times. However, if a ruler wanted to keep his power permanently, he needed to bring his dynasty into the collective memory of his subjects (i.e. traditional authority).[428] The term cultural memory (*kulturelles Gedächtnis*) is formed by Jan Assmann.[429] Citing Halbwachs, he describes that cultural memory is not a natural course of action, but that it needs to be enshrined in the present. A memory requires a framework in society in order to not be forgotten. That means that memory needs to change with time and adapts to present needs. So, memory and identity are tightly interwoven and influence each other. A new social group does not create a completely new memory or identity but re-uses the one of other groups.[430] For the purpose of this work, this means that historiography could enshrine a positive memory of rulers. By circulating the manuscripts and reading them aloud, the memory of a huge group could be formed. This helped both the ruler whom was written about and his successors. The current ruler could, in the best case, propagate a picture of him as a good ruler; his successors, in turn, could profit by claiming to be descended from a great ruler. However, one should

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[427] Weber 1980, pp. 122–124.
[428] Vercamer 2013, pp. 13f.
[429] The most important and influencing work is Assmann 2013; other important texts can be enumerated: Assmann 2006; Assmann 2005, 2007; Kansteiner 2002. An introduction to cultural memory studies is given by Erll, Nünning 2008, esp. Erll 2008 (Introduction).
[430] Assmann 2013, pp. 20f and 34–42.

keep in mind that this strategy is twofold, as also bad stories could be used in order delegitimise one's rule.

This leads us to the author's aims when writing history about rulers: Apart from the function of learning from history, there was the wish to remember the deeds of a ruler and to eulogise them.[431] Another function was propaganda. Either the rule of a king should be legitimised via history in a critical situation, or a political success should be propagated. Lastly, there could be the wish that the contemporary ruler should follow the positive example of the described kings. Authors thereby used different points of access to their subject: They integrated contemporary history into the history of salvation on the basis of former rulers who are characterised positively or negatively. Then, they authorised a king or his dynasty via God. Or, they judged a ruler according to different aspects of his rule like justice, peace, or law. What matters when interpreting the depiction of kings is to know who the client was that commissioned the work. In most cases, royal biographies were dedicated to the corresponding king or were commissioned by him. In these cases, the ruler was most often eulogised.[432]

As mentioned above, historiography was a significant instrument to secure one's rule as it played an important role in forming the cultural memory. Thus, historiographers, who wrote in order to legitimise a ruler, had to think about the following elements: What material was best to use, and what was the best way to structure it? The work had to please the court, meaning it was intended to entertain, and the ruler, who wanted to be characterised positively. For modern historians, it is important to keep in mind that historiography always depends on a certain time and that information was given according to the level of education of the focused reader. In addition, medieval writers used a broad range of topoi or other stylistic devises. These cannot be seen as "real", but rather must be regarded with caution.[433]

3.2   The Depiction of Kings in Medieval Historiography

Whereas earlier research emphasised the twelfth century as the point in time where individualism was rediscovered, modern research is more cautious. This applies to the role of individualism in high-medieval historiography as well. Derschka makes a distinction between two different aspects of the individual that are important for modern historians: first, the individual as subject, meaning the individual and its relation to other

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[431] Krieg 2003, p. 51.
[432] Kersken 2013, pp. 57–63.
[433] Vercamer 2013, pp. 14–19.

individuals and groups; second, the individual as personality that distinguishes the individual from others.[434]

For the depiction of kings in high medieval historiography, this means—in comparison to the early Middle Ages—that authors tended to individualise their characters more and more, e.g. by criticising the use of too many stereotypes or caring about the motives behind their actions.[435] Still, Bagge argues to be cautious when using the idea of individualism on the High Middles Ages. He argues that, on the one hand, each king was a supremely individual public person established by God to govern, thus differing from his subjects, for whom the individual had no standing whatsoever. On the other hand, this kind of individuality came to the king just because of his office and not for being a particular man.[436] This is reflected in medieval historiography. Although writers of history showed a greater interest in the inner side of one's personality in the so-called Renaissance of the twelfth century, this did not mean that they were interested in the uniqueness of a person. By concentrating on the "inner" personality, clerical historiographers tended to isolate the individual from his world and to minimise the importance of his actions whereas they emphasised God's providence. Contrary to that, more aristocratically-influenced writers concentrated more on the actions of an individual who was able to make his own decisions and fight for his own interests. Thus, Bagge comes to the conclusion that it is not possible to speak of individualism out of a modern point of view, either, because no coherent picture of a personality is given; neither does the individual act differently from others of his class.[437]

Thus, rulers are not described as individuals and human beings with their strengths and faults, but rather as types of rulers that depended more on the aims of the author than on the individual behind the king himself. Consequently, we usually do not find ambiguous views on a king but either a categorisation as a good ruler or a bad ruler.[438] As there comes also a closer look at the authors' views on William I's virtues and their depiction of Harold Godwinson in this work, it is important to understand how rulers were described in medieval historiography.

Galbraith looked in his essay *Good Kings and Bad Kings in Medieval English History*[439] at how a king was put in the topoi, and, thus, how he became a good or bad king. He states that medieval descriptions of rulers were, first of all, an expression of public opinion and not so much of the author. Chroniclers liked kings if they were generous

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[434] Derschka 2014, pp. 19–20.
[435] Derschka 2014, pp. 97–105.
[436] Coleman 1996, pp. 2–5.
[437] Bagge 1996, pp. 40–55.
[438] Kleinschmidt 1974, pp. 11–24.
[439] Galbraith 1982a.

and just toward the Church and successful at war. Underneath that, personal morals came—something that is difficult to understand and often depended on each author. Galbraith argues that medieval authors were incapable of evaluating long-term politics and usually did not revise the opinion of their predecessors but merely copied it.[440]

Most importantly, the above-mentioned ways to legitimate a king were chiefly significant. They believed that virtues, rights, and privileges were inherited and, therefore, the origin of a dynasty was important. However, a missing origin could be replaced by good character, and de-facto lordship was seen in itself as a legitimisation and proved the ruler's suitability.[441] The behaviour of a king had thereby to fulfil certain characteristics as seen above. These were not invented by the medieval writers but taken from older texts.

So, the kings of the Old Testament became a model for contemporary representations of kings. David, as the first king under God, became the ideal ruler, and the chroniclers measured all kings against him.[442] There was a strong recourse on antique traditions as well. *De viris illustribus,* a work of Cornelius Nepos, became the ideal standard for how to describe rulers, and authors used saints' lives as role models.[443] In the High Middle Ages, there were two kinds of ideal rulers depending on whether the historiography was rather aristocratically or clerically influenced. However, too much emphasis should not be placed on this difference, as most of the writers had an ecclesiastical background anyway. It was first during the twelfth century that the secular elite formed an interest in historical writing and began to write down history as well.[444]

Apart from the Old Testament, the New Testament was a popular source to find good rulers. Other well-liked examples were prophets or patriarchs like Abraham.[445] These biblical traditions were mixed with late antique Hellenistic ideas about an ideal ruler. Thereby, the most important part in the stylisation of the ecclesiastical ideal ruler became the subjection to God. Humility (*humilitas*) and modesty (*modestia*) were, thus, important virtues. Others were justice (*iustitia*), fairness (*aequitas*), and steadfastness (*constantia*). The just and good ruler was called *rex iustus*. Another important point was the continuity to the preceding kings, who became good examples to follow. Based on these virtues, there arose a whole system of norms for how to act and behave that, in turn, defined the language and input of historiographical texts.[446]

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[440] Galbraith 1982a, pp. II 119–126.
[441] Bak 2010a, pp. 48–50.
[442] Werner 1987, pp. 5 and 15.
[443] Goetz 1999, p. 133; Kersken 2013, p. 49; Schmale 1985, p. 16.
[444] Goetz 1999, pp. 33 and 125.
[445] Le Goff 2000, pp. 341–343.
[446] Kleinschmidt 1974, pp. 33–43 and 51.

The opposite of the *rex iustus* was the tyrant. The renaissance of that type of ruler began in the eleventh century with the ideology of the right order of the world. This ideology contained an exact idea of how a king should rule over his country. If he did not so rule, he was marked as a tyrant.[447] Another factor for this renaissance was a new type of ruler: the saint king. Often, kings were marked as a tyrant when they fell victim to opposing ecclesiastical or political parties.[448] As the opposite of the *rex iustus,* a tyrant had bad charisma, revealing itself in various topoi: He was ugly and had a long list of character weaknesses, like thirst for revenge, avarice, or arbitrariness. He acted with an immense lust for violence and his death was disgraceful.[449] Thus, especially in classical and early medieval literature, a tyrant was not defined by the legitimacy of his rule as in modern thinking but by his unjust or arbitrary behaviour.[450]

Besides these leading ideas, clerical authors put much emphasis on the ruler's good behaviour towards the Church, and that he acted according to God's will. An element this study aims to look at that plays an important role for the two kings is war. For a long time, war was only seen as a legitimate means when it helped to restore the right order or aimed to retain peace. Victory was given by God's mercy. This view changed in the tenth and eleventh century with the growing power of the Church. War was seen more positively—whereby it still was not to be praised—and success as well as bravery in war became important for being a good ruler. It was the main task of a ruler to secure peace and to protect his people.[451] Clauss et al. found three functions a medieval king could fulfil during battle. First, he could be a warlord, second, a military leader or, third, an active soldier. Historiographers used the king's participation in battle to mark him as a hero or coward.[452]

Lastly, it was important for a ruler to be good-looking. A connection was drawn between the countenance of a man and his inner virtues, and beauty was a virtue itself, which helped to identify a man as a ruler.[453] A king had to have special charisma, which seemed to be hereditary and singled him out as ruler. This charisma made him suc-

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[447] Bagge 2002, pp. 390–400.
[448] Klaniczay 1992, pp. 70–75.
[449] Klaniczay 1992, 75–78. For the weaknesses in royal characters see also Krieg 2003, pp. 196–200. Le Goff 1993 lists more types of medieval rulers like *rex inutilis* that lay between the *rex iustus* and the tyrant (pp. 24–26). However, as these two are the most often mentioned and the two extremes on the scale of description of rulers, it seems reasonable to limit the explanation to these two main types.
[450] Fanning 1998, esp. pp. 15–17.
[451] Kleinschmidt 1974, pp. 55–64; Krieg 2003, pp. 53–56; Le Goff 1993, p. 13. Hehl 1980 describes how the Church's view on war changed during the twelfth century. The Church had more power and, influenced by the crusades, killing at war was no longer perceived as a sin per se. Instead, the reason for fighting became important. In this, the main idea was for a king to protect his country and laws (pp. 2–20).
[452] Clauss et al. 2015, p. 11.
[453] Bagge 1991, p. 148.

cessful and was granted to him by God. Beumann suggests that we find in this idea a mixture of Christian and Germanic traditions (divine right).[454]

The aristocratic ideal ruler resulted from a Christian hyperelevation of the courtly virtues of a knight. For this ideal ruler, honour was the virtue that stood above anything else, followed by glory. The worth a person was defined by society. Honour along with glory helped to achieve both a person's recognition and that of God. Honour needed to be defended at every price. For the ruler, it was important to preserve his honour even after death. Therefore, he needed to be successful in war, give valuable gifts, or encourage poets to write down his deeds.[455]

One special type of ruler was the conqueror, which often appeared in context of the Norman expansion. There, mythic motives and rhetoric of violence were mixed to create an image of a conqueror as a man who showed "special sets of drives and certain patterns of emotion"[456]. The conqueror ruled by the right of conquest, which was seen as something positive, and not because of tradition. The upcoming generation even mythologised the conquest as a founding moment and made up a heroic or fateful narrative.[457] This means that conquest was not necessarily a problem for legitimising a ruler, but that conquest in itself could be an acceptable legitimisation.

A type of king that was used in royal propaganda quite often is the so-called *rex renitens*—the king who does not want to rule. The reluctant king often proves to be a good king in his later rule and was often used for kings whose claim to the throne was weak, e.g. because of a missing dynasty. The opposite of the *rex renitens* is the king who hastens to seize the crown—something that was seen as typical for bad kings. Originally, this motif might be taken from the stories of reluctant bishops and contrasts the good virtues of humility and hesitation with the bad ones of ambition, avarice, and pride. It reflects the thought that the office was a burden, and the king showed with his unwillingness to rule that he was able to resist the temptations of power.[458]

The death of a king can tell us a lot about how the author wants him to be seen. Especially a violent death of a king was described with strong political and moral overtones. As the king was king due to God's grace, it was only God who could end his reign. Therefore, a king's death could easily be seen as divine providence. A good king had to die a good death by having enough time to arrange his worldly affairs and to prepare his soul. A sudden death was seen as God's punishment for sins and, thus, was

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[454] Beumann 1955, pp. 473–475.
[455] Krieg 2003, pp. 139–152.
[456] Bartlett 1993, p. 85.
[457] Bartlett 1993, pp. 85–96.
[458] Weiler 2000, pp. 7–39.

feared. The burial place had both religious and ideological significance, and even the wholeness of the body stood as a sign for sanctity.[459]

A relatively new branch of research is emotions in the Middle Ages. They were neglected for a long time while interpreting the history of Western Europe as a history of increased emotional restraint. Medieval people were seen as unable to control their emotions properly—being that they lived in an affective family without love or in an honour-based society, or that insecurity traumatised them. Today, it is known that emotions are socially constructed by the society we live in. They have a social function and follow social rules.[460] This makes emotions interesting for interpreting the descriptions of kings. The historiographers ascribed emotions to kings in order to show something. That makes it worthwhile to have a look at the emotions that kings should show or avoid. The limited vocabulary concerning emotion observed by White is a further hint that emotions had a special function and cannot be seen as something that actually happened.[461] Usually, an ideal king had to be mild, kind, and patient, but anger seemed to play an important role, too, even if it does not fit into this concept at all. Althoff observed that anger often appeared when the king was seen as unjust. Anger served here as proof that the ruler was unfit because he could not fulfil the demands of his office. This view changed during the twelfth century. Justice as a virtue became more important as clemency (*clementia*) and anger turned into a weapon for justice.[462] Barton shows that medieval authors even drew a connection between anger and masculinity, and that they differentiated between *ira* and *furor*.[463] While *ira* was the just anger, *furor* was uncontrolled and, therefore, was still a sin.[464] White assumes that there was common, well-understood knowledge when it was appropriate to attribute anger to people, which explains why emotions were usually performed in public. Anger can be seen as a political statement or, as White expresses it, "as conventionalised responses to certain kinds of past political acts, as political acts in themselves, and as motives for future political acts of a certain kind"[465].

To summarise, medieval historiographers did not describe individual characteristics of a king but worked with different types of kings whom were ascribed certain virtues.

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[459] Evans 2003, pp. xi–xvii, 24f, and 77.

[460] Rosenwein 2002, pp. 826–841. According to that theory, it is necessary to know about social values in the society in question, as emotions were often shown as a response to a humiliation of these values. Emotions had, thus, also a political and communicative function and cannot be analysed without context (Schnell 2004, pp. 223–226).

[461] White 1998, p. 134. The vocabulary in English and northern French sources is limited to anger, shame, love, hatred/enmity, fear, and joy (ibid.).

[462] Althoff 1998, pp. 61–74. Classen 2006 confirms this (p. 49).

[463] Barton 2005, pp. 380–390.

[464] Barton 2011, p. 50; Krieg 2003, p. 73.

[465] White 1998, p. 139. Barton 2011, too, describes emotions, especially anger, as an instrument used to define and create power (pp. 56f).

These types were taken from biblical or classical texts and adapted to the needs of each writer. Their demands, in turn, strongly depended on their client(s) and their purpose for writing history. This also means that it is very difficult to actually learn much about the real king behind the type. In fact, one learns much more about the needs of the time the historiographer lived in and the people he wrote for.

3.3   Legitimising the King in Anglo-Saxon Historiography

Besides biblical and classical texts, English historiographers also used English sources and might have taken ideas from there. Hence, it is important to understand how kings were authorised in Anglo-Saxon historiography as later writers might have copied its ideals on monarchy. Generally speaking, English historiography was Germanic and teleological, and it first began with the arrival of the Angles and Saxons.[466] In the following, there is a closer look at Gildas, the earliest "English" writer, Bede, the most influential historiographer in the English Middle Ages, and Asser, "the most successful of dark age historians"[467]. Also, an introduction to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is given.

Gildas was the first after the Romans to record history about the British Isles. The historical section of his *De Excidio Britonum* (which actually was meant to be a sermon) consists of 26 chapters. As he wrote in the sixth century,[468] Gildas offers unique insights into the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons. Surprisingly for that point in time, Gildas had a good Roman education in grammar and rhetoric, which is revealed by his writing style. As he also was well-read, he must have had access to a good library.[469] Britain at that time was fragmented into several small kingdoms ruled by Britons, Picts, or Anglo-Saxons; the people mainly spoke Brittonic and, after the settlement of the Anglo-Saxons in the seventh century, Anglo-Saxon.[470] Whereas research agrees that Gildas had a moral agenda, some researchers suggest as well historical or political interests.[471] As a monk, he ascribed the poor situation of the Britons to their sins and called them to a stronger belief in God. In this context, he neither had something positive to say about kings: "Britain has kings, but they are tyrants; she has judges, but they are

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[466] Fleming 2011, p. 91; Wickham 2005, p. 49.
[467] Campbell 2000, p. 151.
[468] As Gildas wrote so early on, and as there is hardly any information about him in his texts, reconstructing any part of his biography is nearly impossible. The attempts of various researchers are summarised in Schustereder 2015, pp. 65–79.
[469] Fleming 2011, pp. 84f.
[470] For Britain in the time of Gildas see Wickham 2009, pp. 150–169.
[471] Schustereder 2015, pp. 67f.

wicked"[472]. As seen above, tyrant meant that the kings acted wrongly and thus were no role model for their people.[473] Therefore, Gildas even wanted the people to revolt against their weak leaders.[474] Nevertheless, it was ultimately God who decided who should be king by determining whether an invasion was successful.[475] A long list of faults follows the sentence cited above. Nevertheless, this list moreso confirms that the theory about tyrants can be applied to Gildas than it tells us something about the legitimacy of kings.

Bede is the most influential writer on all later English historiography. He was copied extremely often, and many twelfth-century writers used him as a role model. Bede was a monk in the monastery of Jarow and lived from 673 to 735. He finished the *Ecclesiastical History* in 731, besides which he mainly composed biblical commentaries and saints' lives. The *Ecclesiastical History* is dedicated to the Northumbrian King Ceolwulf (729–737), who supported Bede's monastery.[476] This might explain the focus of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* that—although it begins with a broad perspective on the British Isles, concentrates on the Kingdom of Northumbria. Goffart argues that Bede wrote it in order to claim the metropolitan status for York. King Ceolwulf, whose family did not only produce kings but also the bishops of York, had a great interest in making York more important.[477]

In the *Historia*, Bede saw it as his main task to integrate Anglo-Saxon history into salvation history and wrote the history of conversion as a heroic narrative. As a consequence, a king was legitimised by his right (Christian) belief and ruled over people and not over land—an idea that was typical for the early Middle Ages.[478] It was the king who was primarily responsible for divine worship in his realm—also in heathen times. Bede expected the kings first of all to endorse Christianisation and Christian universality.[479] Legitimated rulers, thus, only began to come into being after England had become Christian. Of course, the rulers had to be Christian as well and took their power from God. This means, conversely, that heathen kings were not legitimated at all, which

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[472] Winterbottom 1978, p. 29. "*Reges habet Britannia, sed tyrannos, iudices habet, sed impios*" (Gildas: *De Excidio Britonum*, 27, ed. by Winterbottom 1978, p. 99).
[473] Hanning 1966, pp. 50–56; Plassmann 2009, pp. 37–49. Wickham 2009 even suggests that *tyrannos* might come from the Britonnic word for ruler *tigernos* and that Gildas is not speaking of tyrants (p. 151). However, considering the context, this interpretation seems to be unlikely.
[474] Schustereder 2015, pp. 90f.
[475] Winkler 2017a, pp. 57f. Gildas saw invasion as a punishment from God for collective sin.
[476] Schustereder 2015, pp. 169f.
[477] Goffart 1988, pp. 245–328. York became an archbishopric in 735.
[478] Plassmann 2009, pp. 51f and 72; Wickham 2009, pp. 161f; Williams 1999, p. 5.
[479] Padberg 2005, pp. 190–207.

Bede saw as punishment from God.[480] In this context, invasions could produce legitimated kings if the new ruler promoted Christianity.[481]

The first legitimated king in the later realm of England—like Edwin of Northumbria (616–633)—was associated with an enduring peace. So, Bede wrote that during Edwin's reign, even a woman with a small baby could walk safely from one end of the kingdom to the other. His subjects loved him so much that they would not disregard their king's wishes, which in turn ensured order and justice.[482] For his enhancement of Christianity, Edwin was rewarded with a successful reign and by going to heaven.[483] So, he served as a good example of how to rule in accordance with God's will.[484] Especially the later canonised King Oswald (634–642) is portrayed in a good light and as a successful military leader.[485] In this case, Oswald won the decisive battle against the Britons because of his and his army's prayers to God. The place where they prayed performed healings later on.[486] Even if Bede was—as a monk—not too enthusiastic about war, Oswald's wars were just, as he defended, unified, and Christianised his kingdom. Apart from being depicted as an idealised Christian warrior, Oswald is also characterised as a monkish king, meaning, for example, that he prayed very often.[487] As with Edwin, he was rewarded for his good rule by God through victory and sanctity.[488]

Generally, Bede gave monastic life more importance than the secular one, and he idealised kings for becoming monks. Nevertheless, he saw the importance of powerful rulers who sought authority—otherwise, they would have been unsuccessful rulers. However, this did not mean that success made them good rulers. Offending God's laws, e.g. by moral failures, always had severe consequences. This gave churchmen an important role in good rule: They were supposed to advise kings who, in turn, had to

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[480] Plassmann 2009, pp. 72–84. Conversely, this also reveals the kings' importance for the spread of Christianity (Fleming 2011, p. 167).

[481] Winkler 2017a, p. 59.

[482] Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ii.16, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, p. 192.

[483] Bede describes that Edwin, while still a prince, was visited by a spirit who promised him he would be the greatest king England ever had and would defeat his enemies. In return, Edwin was baptised and promoted Christianity (Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ii.12-14, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, pp. 178–186).

[484] Higham 2006, pp. 149–151.

[485] Hanning 1966, p. 84.

[486] Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, iii.2, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, pp. 214–216.

[487] Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, iii.3, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, pp. 218–230.

[488] Higham 2006, pp. 151–153.

listen to them, support them, and respect their authority.[489] Thus, all depended, again, on the kings being good Christians.

Although Bede concentrated so much on the Christian legitimacy of kings, he tried to legitimate them by their old history as well. By doing this, he even went back to the heathen past, tracing Æthelbert of Kent back to Hengist and the heathen god Wotan.[490] Thus, Bede managed to use the history of salvation and the legitimacy of the heathen kings for the authority of contemporary kings.[491] This motif is called euhemerism and was utilised to integrate pagan history into Christian history. Worshipping outstanding human beings was—unlike worshipping non-existent gods—only superstition.[492] With euhemerism, the heathen past was moderated and could be used for present needs, and the king's authority was strengthened.[493]

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is a misleading name coined by modern research. More correctly, one should speak of chronicles, as there are six different versions, A–F, that have been handed down until today in seven manuscripts and two fragments. The writing of the *Chronicle* began during the rule of Alfred the Great, and the latest version extends until the reign of Henry II. How actively Alfred was involved in the creation of the *Chronicle* is disputed. Nevertheless, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* told originally about the time from Christ's birth until 892. Then, it was copied and distributed all over England where it was continued. Accordingly, different versions came into being. Since the 19th century, many researchers have attempted to find out how the different manuscripts are related to each other and what the archetypes were. However, the manuscript situation makes this impossible, as there are too few manuscripts preserved. The earliest parts of the *Chronicle* merely enumerate some facts, but, during the ninth century, it becomes more detailed. The different versions put each emphasis on different regions depending on in which monastery they were composed. The *Chronicle* is written in the vernacular, as the Latin of many English clerks was not proficient enough at that time. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is the most important source for the political his-

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[489] Higham 2006, pp. 155–158. Edwin and Paulinus as well as Oswald and Aidan closely collaborated (E.g. Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ii.14/iii.3-5, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, pp. 186/218–228).
[490] First, Hengist is traced back to Wotan, and second, Æthelbert to Hengist (Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, i.15/ii.5, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, pp. 50/150). Reasons for the functionality of Hengist can be found in Fleming 2011, p. 92.
[491] Plassmann 2009, pp. 73 and 111.
[492] See 1999.
[493] See also chapter 2.6

tory of Anglo-Saxon England and was reused by many medieval historians for their own works.[494]

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* took up Bede's idea of a heathen forefather in order to augment the legitimacy of the kings of Wessex. Instead of Hengist, there is the probably fictitious Cerdic, who was among the first to land in England and who founded the kingdom of Wessex.[495] Each new king is traced back to Cerdic, underlining the importance of the forefather. However, it was only the male descent that mattered. By inventing a contemporary to Hengist, the House of Wessex wanted to draw from the House of Kent regarding the age of their dynasty and kingdom (whose foundation was relocated around 300 years earlier). Under King Alfred the Great, the dynastic line was expanded to the biblical figures of Geata, Noah, and Adam.[496] Kent and other rivals were given no genealogy in order to increase the importance of Wessex.[497] Therefore, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* uses, as does Bede, the legitimacy of heathen kings in order to augment the legitimacy of contemporary kings.[498] Besides, the genealogy also helped to establish a catalogue of kings, and the constant repetition helped in memorising it along with the founding myth.[499]

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* favours strong kings who were able to control their realm, protect their kingdom, and fulfil their duties as king. A good king had to be wise and chose capable advisors.[500] Different kings were described differently over time, but the *Chronicle* is always interested in showing the king in a good light, which sometimes also means concealing negative facts. In this sense, Alfred the Great is depicted as a successful, intelligent strategist and saviour against the Vikings.[501] His success is already foreshadowed accordingly in how his forefathers are characterised.[502] As another

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[494] Borgmann 1993, pp. 30–42; Dunphy 2016, p. 619; Gransden 1974, pp. 32–38; Lutz 1999.

[495] *ASC A*, prologue, ed. by Bately 1986, p. 1f.

[496] *ASC A*, year 855, ed. by Bately 1986, p. 45f.

[497] This does not mean that Hengist is not mentioned, but that his successors are not traced down to him. The fights of Hengist are mentioned in *ASC A*, years 449–473, ed. by Bately 1986, p. 17f; *ASC B*, years 449-473, ed. by Taylor 1983, pp. 13f; *ASC C*, years 455-473, ed. by O'Brien O'Keeffe 2001, pp. 28f; *ASC E*, years 455-473, ed. by Irvine 2004, pp. 16f.

[498] Plassmann 2009, pp. 107–111; Scharer 1994, pp. 447–449; Scharer 2000, pp. 50–56.

[499] Taviani-Carozzi 1993, p. 362.

[500] Dennis 2007, pp. 46–48.

[501] *ASC A*, years 871-900, ed. by Bately 1986, pp. 48–61; *ASC B*, years 872-901, ed. by Taylor 1983, pp. 34–46; *ASC C*, years 872-901, ed. by O'Brien O'Keeffe 2001, pp. 59–71; *ASC D*, years 871-898, ed. by Cubbin 1996, pp. 24–35; *ASC E*, years 871-892, ed. by Irvine 2004, pp. 48–53; *ASC F*, years 871-891, ed. by Baker 2000, pp. 69–76. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mainly reports Alfred's successful wars against the Danes. Other subjects are usually not mentioned.

[502] Alfred's grandfather Egbert (802–839) conquered Mercia and defeated the Danes and Welsh (*ASC A*, year 835, ed. by Bately 1986, pp. 42f; *ASC B*, years 823-835, ed. by Taylor 1983, pp. 29f; *ASC C*, years 827-835, ed. by O'Brien O'Keeffe 2001, pp. 53f; *ASC D*, year 835, ed. by Cubbin 1996, p. 21; *ASC E*, years 827-835, ed. by Irvine 2004, p. 45; *ASC F*, years 826-835, ed. by Baker 2000, pp. 61–63). Alfred's father Æthelwulf (839–858) also fought successfully

example, Edward the Elder (899–924) is portrayed as the sole general, and negative facts are moderated or not mentioned at all.[503]

Asser's work *De rebus gestis Aelfredi* is a description of the life of King Alfred the Great (871–899) that was finished before the king's death in 893. Asser was a Welsh clerk, who probably came to Alfred's court in 886 and dedicated his work to the king. Unfortunately, the only medieval manuscript was lost in the Cottonian Fire (1731), which is why the work must be reconstructed from early editions and medieval compilations. The *De rebus gestis Aelfredi* alternates between biographical parts about Alfred and annalistic ones translated from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. This, along with the manuscript situation, led some researches to assume that the whole text is a fake. Today however, research rather assumes that the manuscript was a draft. Besides the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Asser likely took Einhard's *Vita Karoli* and Thegan's *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris* as models. He was very taken with the king, which is why the work likely was written according to Alfred's wishes, meaning that it was propaganda for West-Saxon hegemony. In turn, he received payment.[504] Asser, in contrast, probably wanted to, with his text, remind Alfred to be a good king.[505]

Asser described Alfred as a pitiful king who often suffered from pain and illnesses.[506] Although this looks, at first glance, like a sign of weakness, it was meant as the opposite. Scharer namely suggests that it was a symbol that Alfred was chosen by God. According to Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), suffering was a test and purification from sins (like it was the case with Hiob), and other medieval writers understood suffering as *imitatio Christi*.[507] However, it was probably more than a stylisation, rather an explanation for Alfred's real illnesses that were unwelcome in a warrior society. To underline his divine election even further, Alfred was compared to the Good Thief at the crucifixion of Christ. Furthermore, Asser modelled Alfred after the example of King Salomon, especially concerning his striving for wisdom, wherefore he receives wealth and

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against the Vikings and the Welsh (*ASC A*, year 853, ed. by Bately 1986, pp. 44f; *ASC B*, year 853, ed. by Taylor 1983, pp. 31f; *ASC C*, year 853, ed. by O'Brien O'Keeffe 2001, pp. 55f; *ASC D*, years 851-853, ed. by Cubbin 1996, p. 22; *ASC E*, year 852[b], ed. by Irvine 2004, p. 47).
[503] *ASC A*, year 900-924, ed. by Bately 1986, pp. 61–69; *ASC B*, years 901-915, ed. by Taylor 1983, pp. 46–49; *ASC C*, years 901-924, ed. by O'Brien O'Keeffe 2001, pp. 71–76; *ASC D*, years 901-924, ed. by Cubbin 1996, pp. 36–41. Again, the main emphasis lies on Edward's wars. Borgmann 1993, pp. 116f and 151f; Scharer 1994, p. 448; Scharer 2000, pp. 56f (about Alfred).
[504] Campbell 2000, pp. 129–140; Scharer 2000, pp. 61–66.
[505] Kempshall 2001, p. 123.
[506] E.g. at his wedding feast (Asser: *Vita Alfredi*, ch. 73f, ed. by Stevenson 1959, p. 54-57). A good description of Alfred can be found in Asser: *Vita Alfredi*, ch. 76, ed. by Stevenson 1959, pp. 59–62; or also ch. 91, pp. 76–79.
[507] Indeed, it was a characteristic of saints to accept their suffering (Nahmer 1994, p. 149).

glory instead.[508] The glorification of Alfred was further necessary in order to explain why he, as youngest son, became king, and it is revealed by the fact that Asser kept silent on internal conflicts.[509] Alfred's legitimacy was further strengthened by claiming that he was a joint ruler already during his brother's lifetime, and that he is portrayed as his parents' favourite son.[510] As in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, he is traced back until Adam.[511] Concerning the virtues Asser ascribed to Alfred, the writer strongly orientates on Gregory the Great's summary of the *Regula Pastoralis*—a handbook for clerks. In doing so, Alfred is chaste, his wisdom is connected to righteousness, and he speaks the truth. Most importantly, Alfred is not guilty of pride but always respects that his power comes from God.[512] Therefore, Smyth states that Alfred is more depicted as a saint than as a warrior king (like in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*).[513] All this served the aim to show Alfred as a good and divinely chosen monarch. Asser stylised Alfred as an exemplar who showed how to behave in a good way and how to avoid improper behaviour.[514]

Whereas Gildas has a very negative view on the kings of his time and writes nothing about their legitimacy, Bede, Asser, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* made use of the strategies to authorise a ruler that are described above. For Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, an important forefather taken from the pagan gods is important. Furthermore, Bede put much emphasis on Christian values and behaving rightly towards God. Asser additionally depicted Alfred as God's chosen king.

3.4 The Legitimisation of William I in Eleventh-Century Historiography

The first writing about William I is contemporary and was composed after the Battle of Hastings. As this chapter shows, its main task was to back up William's claim to the English throne on the Norman side, whereas English historical writers first began to write about the Conquest in the twelfth century.[515] The only exception is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. On the Norman side, there are the *Gesta Guillelmi* by William of Poi-

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[508] E.g. Asser: *Vita Alfredi*, ch. 76, ed. by Stevenson 1959, pp. 59–62; Kempshall 2001, pp. 109–122; Scharer 1994, pp. 455–458; Scharer 2000, pp. 66–86.
[509] Campbell 2000, pp. 145f.
[510] Asser: *Vita Alfredi*, ch. 21f, ed. by Stevenson 1959, pp. 19f; and ch. 42, pp. 32–34; Smyth 2002, pp. 102f.
[511] Asser: *Vita Alfredi*, ch. 1f, ed. by Stevenson 1959, pp. 1–4.
[512] Kempshall 2001, pp. 111–119.
[513] Smyth 2002, p. 95.
[514] Scharer 2000, p. 108. Therefore, Scharer wants to read the text as a mirror for princes.
[515] Some overview research about the depiction of the Norman Conquest in English and Norman historiography can be found in Chibnall 1999; Houts 1996, 1997.

tiers, the *Carmen de Hastingae proelio* ascribed to Guy of Amiens, and the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* by William of Jumièges. These Norman works are panegyric, and their main aim was to show what a suitable King William was. Nevertheless, given that they were the only exhaustive sources on the Battle of Hastings, they were widely used by twelfth-century authors. Therefore, this chapter wants to foster understanding as to how these sources influenced later authors. One important source often used by historians to reconstruct the events of 1066, the Bayeux Tapestry, is ignored in this chapter as it is not a historiographical source in the stricter sense.

Little is known about William of Jumièges. Most likely, he lived from c.1000 to c.1070 and was a monk in the monastery of Jumièges. His *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* is the earliest historiographical source on William the Conqueror. First, the work was thought of as an update of Dudo of St Quentin's chronicle, *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniæ ducum* (written between c.996–1015 to legitimise the Viking settlement in Normandy); William revised Dudo's work and added information about the Dukes Richard II (996–1026), Richard III (1026–1027), and Robert I (1027–1035). The first version of the *Gesta* was finished before 1060, but was continued to 1070, probably on the request of William the Conqueror from 1067 on. In other words, it was written during a time when it was not even certain whether William would be able to keep his newly conquered kingdom.[516]

Concerning the events leading to the Battle of Hastings, William of Jumièges used many arguments that can also be found in William of Poitier's and Guy of Amiens' works. Elisabeth van Houts suggests that they all relied on the story William's advisors created for their request to the pope. William uses the following arguments: (1) Edward named William of Normandy as his heir. (2) In order to confirm his decision, he sent Robert, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to William.[517] (3) Harold Godwinson is delegitimised; though he swore an oath to William, he became king, and William of Jumièges never calls him by this title.[518] (4) A comet predicted a change of rule.[519] Although William of Jumièges wanted to show William the Conqueror as a good example to follow, William described the king in a less perfect light than William of Poitiers did. So, he also

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[516] Houts 2003, pp. xxf, xxxf, and xlvf.
[517] William of Jumièges: *GND*, vii.13(31), ed. by Houts 1995, p. 158.
[518] William of Jumièges: *GND*, vii.13(31), ed. by Houts 1995, p. 160.
[519] William of Jumièges: *GND*, vii.13(31), ed. by Houts 1995, p. 162. The arguments are listed by Houts 2003, pp. xlv–xlviii; and Körner 1964, pp. 105f; Jäschke 1977a follows these arguments concerning Norman propaganda for William's rule (in contrast to the *Carmen* as is shown later).

wrote negatively about William, for example about his brutality at Alençon.[520] Nevertheless, William still is depicted as a perfect Christian ruler.[521]

The *Carmen de Hastingae proelio* was probably composed by Guy, Bishop of Amiens, between 1067 and 1072.[522] Guy of Amiens was canon at the cathedral of the same name and was archdeacon there. In 1058, he became bishop. Because of a quarrel with the Abbot of Corbie, he incurred papal displeasure. Guy of Amiens died in 1075.[523] The poem is written in verses (hexameter and distich) and tells about the events from the departure of the Norman army to England until Christmas 1066. The first and the last parts are missing.[524] The *Carmen* was lost—likely already in the twelfth century— and was first rediscovered in 1826. It is preserved in only one manuscript from about 1100 and in one fragment that was copied from the preserved manuscript.[525]

Many researchers came to the conclusion that the *Carmen* was part of the Norman propaganda after the Conquest and used the same arguments found in the *Gesta*.[526] By doing so, it tried to legitimise the rule of William by (1) describing him as a great warrior[527] and (2) characterising Harold as a tyrant.[528] Further arguments are (3) William's kinship to Edward the Confessor, (4) Edward's promise confirmed by the English nobility, and (5) Harold's perjury.[529]

However, the situation is not so simple upon further investigation. Jäschke sees the *Carmen* as a more or less reliable source. As a consequence, he does not interpret the characterisation of Harold as negative but sees, for example, in the non-Christian burial at the coast the presence of old north-Germanic traditions. Where William I or the author of the *Carmen* knew these traditions from is left open; Jäschke only remarks about the situation of tradition in England.[530] In addition, William's refusal to give Harold a

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[520] William of Jumièges: *GND*, vii.8(18), ed. by Houts 1995, p. 124; Bates 2006, pp. 133f.
[521] Dennis 2007, pp. 39f.
[522] O'Donnell 2017 dates the poem back to 1079 by closely analysing what Orderic Vitalis wrote about it (pp. 151–157). However, earlier research comes to a wide range of dates (see Dennis 2007, p. 44). For the discussion of authorship see Morton, Muntz 1972, pp. xvi–xxix.
[523] Morton, Muntz 1972, pp. xxxiii–xxxv.
[524] Schnith 1999.
[525] Morton, Muntz 1972, pp. xxxv and lix.
[526] See Barlow 1983a; Houts 2003; Körner 1964; Houts 2003.
[527] Guy of Amiens: *Carmen Hastingae Proelio*, 414-530, ed. by Morton, Muntz 1972, pp. 26–32.
[528] Guy of Amiens: *Carmen Hastingae Proelio*, 127-136, ed. by Morton, Muntz 1972, pp. 10; Körner 1964, pp. 97–100. Nevertheless, Harold is not shown as negatively as in the *Gesta Guillelmi* because Guy describes him as a king with equal terms as Harald Hardrada in the Battle of Stamford Bridge.
[529] Guy of Amiens: *Carmen Hastingae Proelio*, 737-740, ed. by Morton, Muntz 1972, pp. 20; 291–300 and 46; O'Donnell 2017, p. 161.
[530] Jäschke 1977b, pp. 24–48. He also names the Viking past of Normandy, but modern research has shown that the Northmen assimilated quickly to the French population and forgot

decent burial is read as a legitimising strategy by modern scholarship.[531] Whereas Jä-schke's statement misses some reasons, O'Donnell's arguments about the ambivalent attitude of the *Carmen* are much more valid. O'Donnell compares the *Carmen* with classic and Carolingian traditions of writing poetry and is so able to show how Guy of Amiens uses stylistic devises in order to hide inconsistencies. By analysing the main themes of the *Carmen* (William's *pietas* (pity), the deceit of the English, and William's development into a king), he shows that William is not depicted as positively as it might look at first sight. Though William shows *pietas* in the Battle of Hastings, he becomes pitiless and so fails to fulfil the Carolingian ideal of *pietas*. Also, in the Battle of Has-tings, there is a scene in which the Normans defeat the English by feigning their re-treat. O'Donnell observes that Guy of Amiens used the same negatively connoted vo-cabulary for the Norman feint as he usually used to describe the English behaviour. Lastly, there is William's inauguration as king. Interestingly enough, he becomes king twice—once directly in the aftermath of the Battle and at his coronation at Christmas. So, William moves, contrary to the Carolingian model, from name to thing. He first be-comes king (after Hastings), but it is only afterwards that he receives the recognition of the people, the approval of the Church, and the coronation. His relation to the English is thereby dubious because he manipulates the Londoners so that they swear fidelity to him. Thus, his reign is based on false promises from the very beginning.[532] Also, Den-nis observes that the depiction of William slightly differs from the other Norman sources by describing him as a violent warrior.[533] To conclude, the *Carmen* can, because of its obvious propagation of William's kingship, still be counted among the Norman panegyr-ics. However, one has to keep in mind that William also is attributed with some nega-tive traits.

William of Poitiers lived from around 1020 until 1087–1101 in Normandy and later in his life became archdeacon of Lisieux. He came from an aristocratic family and took part in fights during the minority of the later King William. Even after becoming a clerk, he joined William's battles. One assumes that William of Poitiers was on Odo's side in the

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their old traditions (e.g. Kaufhold 2000). Morton, Muntz 1972 see in the burial Viking traditions as well. Nevertheless, they also do not explain where Guy was supposed to know them from (pp. xliii–xliv).

[531] Schmitz-Esser 2014, p. 321. The construction of Battle Abbey at the place of Harold's death is another argument that his body was used as a sign of victory by William I. Furthermore, the refusal to burry someone in a graveyard was unusual but not unheard of in medieval times and was usually justified with the bad character of the death (p. 478f). This matches the negative characterisation of Harold in the works of the Norman panegyrics.

[532] O'Donnell 2017, pp. 152–165. Morton, Muntz 1972 came already to a similar conclusion (pp. xlif).

[533] Dennis 2007, p. 44. However, this is not meant negatively by the author of the *Carmen* as it emphasises at the same time William's military skills and compares him to Caesar (p. 45).

conflict between the king and his half-brother; this is why William of Poitiers made no great career.[534] His main work was the *Gesta Guillelmi*, which was written in 1073/4. Unfortunately, only the chapters about the years 1035 to 1067 are preserved—the beginning and the end of the work are missing.[535] William of Poitiers imitated the style of classical authors and made many references to Ancient Athens and Rome e.g. by writing that William the Conqueror's fleet becalmed like Agamemnon's one.[536] Also, he seemed to have been familiar with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, as he praised William by avoiding the vices reported there.[537]

This rhetorical style influenced the description of King William a lot: William is compared with Julius Caesar,[538] numbers are exaggerated, and heroic speeches and gestures are composed. William of Poitiers gave the Norman Conquest much weight—it occupies most of the second book. The legitimisation of William's claim to the English throne can be divided into three parts, wherein the third section repeats the main points from the first two and gives a detailed description of the events around the Battle of Hastings. Thereby, the Conquest is shown as justified and inevitable. William is legitimated as king of England with the following arguments: (1) Edward the Confessor named William as his heir because he was grateful for the Normans' help during his exile. (2) This decision was confirmed by the Archbishop of Canterbury who was sent to Normandy with the consent of the English nobility and even brought hostages to William. (3) The English aristocracy swore this oath later on as well. (4) Harold, William's rival, is strongly delegitimised: He is a perjurer because he broke his oath to William, he was crowned by an excommunicated archbishop (what made the coronation invalid), his character makes him unsuitable to rule as he is ungrateful, too ambitious, a murderer, and an unrighteous tyrant. (5) William's character is just the opposite of Harold's: He is wise, just, pious, and brave—and he does not want to fight, making him an ideal king. (6) William is related to Edward the Confessor by blood. (7) God is on William's side.[539] Here, some extra arguments are added to reinforce William's claim in comparison to the other Norman authors. So, William of Poitiers tells that England's magnates swore an oath to Duke William as well and that Harold's coronation was in-

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[534] Clauss 2013, p. 65.
[535] Renoux 1999.
[536] Davis 1981, pp. 72f.
[537] Dennis 2007, p. 41.
[538] Clauss 2013 argues that Caesar was used in three ways as frame of reference: as comparison with that William I was equal to, as rhetorical motif, and as comparison that William even surpassed (p. 62). Thereby, the readership of the *Gesta* needed no knowledge about classical texts to understand the greatness of the Conqueror but could understand the purpose of the text anyway (p. 68).
[539] William of Poitiers: *Gesta Guillelmi*, i.14 and i.41-47, ed. by Davis et al. 1998, pp. 20 and 68–78. The arguments are listed by Barlow 1983a, p. 198; Davis 1981, pp. 72–74; Körner 1964, pp. 76–82 and 106f.

valid.[540] Thus, William of Poitier writes in a much more panegyric style than William of Jumièges or Guy of Amiens.

An introduction to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was already given in the last chapter. Therefore, only a presentation of versions E and D will be provided because they are the only ones containing writing about the Norman Conquest.[541] Version D was composed contemporarily to the events in the middle of the eleventh century. There were at least five scribes involved. As place of origin, Worcester, York, or Evesham are discussed. Bates assumes that Archbishop Ealdred of York was involved in the creation of the manuscript. E is a copy of other versions of the *Chronicle* from the twelfth century. The text used for the events of 1066 was probably written in Canterbury, and Bates assumes that the composer might have known William personally.[542]

Even if the Norman Conquest and its prehistory are not described in detail in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, it is possible to make some statements, especially in comparison to the Norman texts. C writes about Harold becoming king: "And Earl Harold was now consecrated king and he met little quiet in it as long as he ruled the realm."[543] In other words, nothing indicates that Harold Godwinson's succession might not have been rightful. E is even clearer: "And Earl Harold succeeded to the realm of England, just as the king had granted it to him, and as he had been chosen to the position. And he was consecrated king on the Feast of the Epiphany."[544] Generally, Harold is shown in a good light in both versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.*[545] Harold lost at Hastings, as God punishes the English people for their sins and not because of personal mistakes or the absence of legitimacy.[546] Thus, the legitimisation via delegitimising Harold plays no role in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.*

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[540] William of Poitiers: *Gesta Guillelmi*, i.14 and i.41-47, ed. by Davis et al. 1998, p. 20 and 68–78; Körner 1964, pp. 106f.

[541] Dunphy 2016, p. 619.

[542] Bates 2006, pp. 130–135; Borgmann 1993, p. 36; Stafford 1989, p. 17.

[543] Douglas, Greenaway 1981, p. 141; 1066 (*her wearð Harold eorl eac cynge gehalgod, he lytle stilnesse þæron gebad þa hwile þe rices weold.—ASC D*, year 1065, ed. by Cubbin 1996, p. 79).

[544] Douglas, Greenaway 1981, p. 142; 1066 (*Harold eorl feng to Englalandes cynerice swa se cyng hit him geuðe, eac men hine þærto gecuron, wæs gebletsod to cynge on twelftan mæssedæg.—ASC E*, year 1066, ed. by Irvine 2004, p. 86).

[545] Sheppard 2004, pp. 125f. Brownlie 2013 confirms the good characterisation of Harold in the C and D versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (p. 201). Walker 1997 shows how each version conceptualised the Godwin family. According to him, version C is anti-Godwin, E pro-Godwin and D neutral (p. xxiv). These attitudes seemed not to have influenced the view on Harold's kingship considering that D and E describe Harold positively (C ends with the Battle of Stamford Bridge and thus offers no hints about the legitimisation of William. This is why it is not taken into consideration for this analysis).

[546] *ASC D*, year 1066, ed. by Cubbin 1996, pp. 79–81.

Upon first glance, William's rule, in comparison, is questioned. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* made no attempts to legitimise his reign the way the Norman panegyrics did. Especially version D makes clear that William became king because the English were unable to fight him. Again, the author attributed the English inability to defend their kingdom to God's punishment of their sins. Consequently, the late subordination to William is wrong in his eyes, as it only worsened things.[547] As a result, resigned to their fate, D and E accept William's kingship after he was consecrated king.[548] Especially for D, he was sent by God as punishment for English sins. Both versions of the *Chronicle* report that the English accepted—more or less voluntarily—William's rule and that he was consecrated king by Ealdred in Westminster.[549]

Research agrees on the fact that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* draws a dark image of the Conqueror: Sheppard suggests that the reasons behind that were that William did not enforce his authority with the help of typical Anglo-Saxon ceremonies, which caused misunderstandings. The Harrying of the North further led to a more negative view of William.[550] Winkler confirms this rather bad image of William as well. She writes that especially the E version rather saw Edgar as Harold's rightful successor and that the Conquest was interpreted as God's punishment for English sins. Nevertheless, kings were usually not criticised directly nor was their character judged. Consequently, William is condemned as a person for being too oppressive; his harshness is associated with the fact that he was a foreigner.[551] Generally, version D criticised William more than E. The author of E also characterised William positively by praising e.g. his wisdom or the protection of the Church. However, he also warned against William's faults like avarice or his love for hunting.[552] This becomes particularly evident in the *elogium*. There, on the one hand, he criticises William's greed, his injustice, and attributes his death to the divine punishment for William's doings in Normandy. On the other hand, the chronicler praised William's power and his good behaviour towards the Church.[553] This shows that neither D nor E legitimised William for his virtues or his good character. However, the E-chronicler once more makes clear that William was endowed his kingdom by God and that the English sufferings (also caused by William) have to be understood as divine punishment for sins.[554]

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[547] *ASC D*, year 1066, ed. by Cubbin 1996, pp. 79–81.
[548] Both versions call him king in 1067 (*ASC D*, year 1067, ed. by Cubbin 1996; *ASC E*, year 1067, ed. by Irvine 2004, p. 87).
[549] *ASC D*, year 1066, ed. by Cubbin 1996, p. 81; *ASC E*, year 1066, ed. by Irvine 2004, p. 87.
[550] Sheppard 2004, pp. 132–134.
[551] Winkler 2017a, pp. 79–93. Dennis 2007 even comes to the conclusion that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* sees William as the personification of Norman oppression (pp. 37 and 42–44).
[552] Bates 2006, pp. 131–135.
[553] *ASC E*, year 1087, ed. by Irvine 2004, pp. 99–101.
[554] *ASC E*, year 1087, ed. by Irvine 2004, pp. 99–101.

So, William is hardly legitimised as English king in the E and D versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* when one compares them to the Norman panegyrics. Rather, he is a divine instrument to punish the English for their sins, which still seems to be enough to accept his rule.

To summarise, there is an enormous difference in legitimising William in the Norman and English historiographical texts. For the Norman writers, it was very important to authorise William's rule. Therefore, he was shown as a good example and the rightful successor of Edward the Confessor. He was said to have the support of the English nobility and of God. Harold Godwinson, his opponent, was delegitimised. He is missing every virtue a king was supposed to have, his coronation is invalid, and he is a perjurer.[555] The English side, however, showed William's character in mixed light. On the one hand, he had some virtues marking him as a good king. On the other hand, Harold was seen as the rightful king, William was ascribed many faults, and he was seen as God's instrument to punish the English. Version D of the *Chronicle* is friendlier than E. Nevertheless, both versions never delegitimise William and always see him as English king on the grounds that he was installed by God.

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[555] Peltzer 2016 assumes that these arguments were gathered under Lanfranc in order to defend William's claim to the throne (p. 166).

# 4.	The Legitimisation of William I in Twelfth-Century English Historiography

In order to analyse how William I is legitimised in twelfth-century sources, several questions are going to be asked. They develop, on the one hand, from the theory chapter about how medieval kings were authorised in general. On the other hand, they seek to find out in what ways arguments of the Norman panegyrics were reused in the twelfth century. As Orderic Vitalis is closest to the tradition of the Norman panegyrics, each analysis starts with him and goes forth chronologically until William of Newburgh.[556]

## 4.1	Authorising Edward the Confessor

William (or his historiographers) claimed that Edward the Confessor bequeathed his kingdom to the Norman duke. Designation was a popular strategy to authorise an ordinarily illegal succession in kingship.[557] Norman historical writing also established some kind of kinship between the Anglo-Saxon dynasty and the Norman dukes in order to create a hereditary right for William's rule. Furthermore, some researchers argue that the twelfth-century writers legitimised kings via their capability to rule. In this context, the Conquest was necessary to bring England a better king. Therefore, this chapter seeks to find answers to the following questions: How is Edward the Confessor depicted by the twelfth-century writers, and how is the transition of rule between William and Edward described?

Concerning pre-Conquest history, Orderic Vitalis mainly concentrates on the history of the Normans. In consequence, there is not much to be found therein about Edward the Confessor. Orderic primarily mentions him in context of the Norman Conquest, and, as a result, we do not learn much about his rule over England. Nevertheless, Orderic hints that Edward was a good ruler. At his funeral, the people looked at the procession of "their beloved king with streaming eyes"[558], and, in the prologue to book IV, Orderic calls Edward and the French king, Henry I, "virtuous kings", and their successors were

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[556] In the following, events around the Norman Conquest are retold—out of the point of view of the analysed medieval writer (and this might greatly differ from modern research). References to the reconstruction of events by modern researchers are made explicit.
[557] Weiler 2001, p. 303.
[558] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 136f (*dilecti regis adhuc maderet fletibus*). This can also be seen as typical medieval topos concerning the death of an important or beloved person (Barton 2011, p. 55). Taking into account the generally positive view on Edward, I would like to assume the people were sad because they loved their king.

unable to follow them in their "virtue and graciousness"[559]. Furthermore, Orderic describes in a flashback how Edward succeeded Harthacnut and "reigned well and capably" for 23 years.[560] We do not learn much about Edward's death either. As Edward cared about his succession, he seemed to have had enough time to think about his worldly belongings. The king was buried in the church at Westminster built by him.[561] This can be seen as a typical burial place because medieval rulers were often buried in the churches they built, and, the Church of Westminster was, therefore, an appropriate burial place for a king.[562] Thus, nothing indicates that Orderic saw Edward as an incapable ruler. The little information he provides about Edward shows him to have been a good king who was loved by his people and who honoured God by building churches.

It was already mentioned in the last paragraph that Edward cared about his succession. Here, Orderic takes the arguments of the Norman writers by claiming that Edward declared William as his heir and made all the necessary arrangements to ensure his will should be fulfilled. Following the Norman writers further, here Orderic mentions the oaths of Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, and of Harold to William. Then, on his deathbed, Edward was deceived by Harold, who told him a false story in order to be declared heir instead of William. Edward believed the story that Harold was William's son-in-law and that, therefore, William had given Harold the English kingdom. So, Edward declared Harold as his successor.[563] Orderic does not try to hide that he sees Edward's last declaration as illegitimate, as the king was deceived. So, William's right to the throne due to the will of Edward was still valid.

As did the Norman panegyrics, Orderic also mentions the kinship between William and the Anglo-Saxon royal dynasty. He does it by telling about Edward's ancestry.[564] Edward was the son of the English King Æthelred (978–1013/1014–1016) and Emma of Normandy, who was the daughter of the Norman Duke Richard I (943–996), who, in turn, was an ancestor of William the Conqueror as well. So, Orderic shows the reader the relation between the last Anglo-Saxon king and the new Norman king by describing their common ancestors. Later in book IV, Orderic tells how King Æthelred fled with his family from the Danish invaders to Normandy.[565] He does not mention anything about Edward's time there, but still, the connection between the English kings and the Norman dukes is made clear.

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[559] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 190f (*optimis regibus/consimiles uirtutibus et nectare morum*).
[560] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.9, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. III 88f (*utiliter et laudabiliter*).
[561] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 136.
[562] Evans 2003, p. 25.
[563] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 134–136.
[564] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 134.
[565] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 244.

This all helps to give William the Conqueror a better right to the English throne and reveals how much Orderic depended on his Norman sources. As stated above, the relationship to Emma made William related to Edward by blood, giving him the hereditary right to rule. Furthermore, the connection to Normandy showed that Edward did not choose William as his heir haphazardly but rather that he chose the duke for a reason. Thus, Orderic tries very hard to show the connections between England and Normandy—this might be explained with his own situation: As an Anglo-Saxon in Normandy, he might have tried to reconcile his English identity with his new Norman home by finding common elements between the two realms. The Norman panegyrics were a good starting point and an ideal source, as they aimed to create continuity by constructing a common Norman-English history.

Eadmer of Canterbury introduces Edward the Confessor very unfavourably. Edward was the son of Æthelred the Unready, and his authority to rule therefore doubtful.[566] Moreover, Eadmer accuses him of having dealt the deathblow to the English Church, as during his reign, the last monasteries were destroyed. In the conflict surrounding Godwin and Harold's journey to Normandy, Edward is represented as a prudent king who was able to rightly asses the outcome of events. He mistrusted Godwin, whom Eadmer depicted as an enemy of the Church, and he warned Harold about Duke William. Especially in the second case, his cautiousness turned out to be well-placed. Eadmer states nothing about Edward's death except the smooth transition of reign to Harold Godwinson.[567] Considering the few pieces of information Eadmer gives us on Edward, it is also interesting to consider what he does not tell. For example, Eadmer does not explain how Edward became king or how he died. Most surprisingly, the accusation that Edward destroyed the Church can be seen as especially surprising in light of his later canonisation. Not only did Edward erect the Church of Westminster, but there was also a renewal of monastic life after the Danish rule under him. Eadmer seems to only allude to the fact that the Church did not keep up with papal reforms.[568] All in all, the characterisation of Edward the Confessor is not nearly as positive as Orderic Vitalis' one. Edward was neither a *rex iustus* nor did he have a good connection to the Church.

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[566] As described in chapter 4.7, Eadmer of Canterbury does not see Æthelred as a rightful king and portrays him as an incapable ruler (Eadmer: *HN*, 3-6, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 3–5).
[567] Eadmer: *HN*, 6-9, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 5–8.
[568] Harper-Bill 2007, pp. 165–168.

Also, Eadmer mentions the promise Edward was supposed to have made to William. However, he does not clarify whether Edward really made it or whether it was trick by William. Nevertheless, the scene is quite interesting:

He [William] said that King Edward, when years before he was detained with him in Normandy, when they were both young, had promised him and had pledged his faith that time, Edward, should ever be King of England, he would make over to William the right to succeed him on the throne as his heir.[569]

Eadmer put the same words into William's mouth that we find in the *Gesta Guillelmi*. Out of gratitude, Edward promised the English throne to William upon his death. In contrast to William of Poitiers, Eadmer mentions nothing about the truth of this story. Although Edward confirmed to Harold that he knew William ("Did not I tell you that I knew William [...]"[570]), nothing indicates that Edward truly wanted William to be his successor. Instead, William is described as clever and as a person who would do nothing without having the advantage.[571] This leads to the conclusion that Eadmer knew the story William of Poitiers wrote and that it was propagated by William, but he did not believe it was true. Therefore, he lets William tell the story and questions its truthfulness at the same time. Thus, William I is not legitimated by the choice of Edward the Confessor.

Like Orderic, Eadmer also mentions the kinship between the Anglo-Saxon kings and the Norman dukes. As he introduces Edward the Confessor, he writes that he was the son of Æthelred and Emma, sister of Duke Richard of Normandy.[572] However, he does not mention it further and nothing indicates that William I's rule is authorised via that relationship. Obviously, Eadmer does not approve of Edward's church politics, and this is why the king is shown rather unfavourably. The depiction as mediocre king, in turn, made Edward unsuitable to pave the way for William's reign.

Of all the portrayed authors, William of Malmesbury[573] gives the most detailed narration of the reign of Edward the Confessor. Generally, he neither depicts him as positively as Orderic Vitalis nor as negatively as Eadmer of Canterbury. The first description of Edward also fits the rest of William's characterisation of the king:

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[569] Bosanquet 1964, p. 7 (*[Willelmus] [d]icebat itaque regem Edwardum, quando secum juvene olim juvenis in Normannia demoraretur, sibi interposita fide sua pollicitum fuisse, quia si ex Angliæ foret jus regni in illum jure hæreditario post se transferret.*— Eadmer: *HN*, 8, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 7).
[570] Bosanquet 1964, p. 8 (*Nonne dixi tibi [...] me Willelmum nosse*—Eadmer: *HN*, 9, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 8).
[571] See chapter 4.5.
[572] Eadmer: *HN*, 6, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 5.
[573] William of Malmesbury along with William of Newburgh shares the same name with William I and William II. As this might sometimes lead to confusion, I occasionally use "Malmesbury", resp. "Newburgh", as names for the two authors. Even if these are not their proper names, this is friendlier to the reader and hopefully prevents confusion as to which William is referred to.

The simplicity of his character made him hardly fit to govern, but he was devoted to God and therefore guided by Him. Thus, during his reign there was no civil strife that was not soon suppressed, no foreign war; at home and abroad all was peace and quiet, a result all the more surprising in that he was so gentle, and could not bring himself to utter a harsh word against even the lowest of mankind.[574]

As shown, William of Malmesbury does not think too highly of Edward as a king; to call a king's character simple speaks hardly of a favourable opinion. Nevertheless, Edward was obviously supported by God and could therefore not fail completely. God's support is shown—as usual in medieval historiography—by peace. Here, we already find a typical twelfth-century idea about the pre-Conquest past. The authors emphasised the peace during Edward's reign, ignoring the conflicts at the Celtic borders, the threats from Scandinavia, and the internal struggles with the Godwin family.

In the pages following, William describes Edward as a good Christian who was in God's favour. In this vein, Edward stayed a virgin despite his marriage with Godwin's daughter.[575] In medieval Christian moral thought, virginity was the highest status-marker and was even preferred to marriage.[576] Thus, Edward's chastity was to be admired despite the grave consequences. Additionally, Edward was responsible for many wonders. These show him clearly as thaumaturge. For example, Edward healed a woman from disease and infertility as well as five men from blindness. However, these healing abilities were, according to William of Malmesbury, not a sign of royal blood (and so of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty) but were proof of Edward's personal sanctity. Thus, they show Edward in a positive light and not the Anglo-Saxon kings per se. William justifies this with the fact that Edward already had healed during his exile in Normandy before he had become king.[577]

Furthermore, Edward revealed his sanctity by predicting the future. First, he made a prophecy about the Seven Sleepers,[578] who turned to the left side, causing much harm for the following 74 years. At his deathbed, Edward made a second, similar prophecy referring to the popular twelfth-century motif of the green tree. Here again, harm is pre-

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[574] William: *GRA*, ii.196, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 348f (*uir propter morum simplicitatern parum imperio idoneus, sed Deo deuotus ideoque ab eo directus. Denique eo regnante nullus tumultus domesticus qui non cito comprimeretur, nullum bellum forinsecus, omnia domi forisque quieta, omnia tranquilla; quod eo magis stupendum, quia ita se mansuete ageret ut nee uiles homunculos uerbo ledere nosset.*)

[575] William: *GRA*, ii.197, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998. William writes that Edward did not sleep with his wife for two possible reasons: the hatred towards the Godwins or out of chastity. As he states as well that Edward stayed chaste all his life, probably, for him, the second was the case.

[576] Fenton 2008, p. 57.

[577] William: *GRA*, ii.221-224, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 406–410.

[578] The Seven Sleepers are a Christian (and Islamic) legend that became popular in the Middle Ages. According to the tale, seven young men refuse to venerate the pagan gods of the Roman Empire. As a consequence, Emperor Decius (249–251) orders to seal the entrance of the cave where they took refuge. However, God sends them into a deep sleep, from which they first awake 187 years later to testify their belief. Afterwards, they fall asleep again (Sauser 2003, col. 1438f).

dicted to England after Edward's death.[579] These two prophecies refer, of course, to the Norman Conquest and the rule of Harold Godwinson. As Otter puts it, they are not a promise of a better future but a plea for repentance upon facing disaster.[580] They serve the purpose of changing an invasion into an inevitability based on God's providence.[581] Here, the Norman Conquest, along with William I's reign, is portrayed as God's vengeance for the English's sinful behaviour. This also means that William was chosen by God as a king. Additionally, these kinds of prophecies became common during the twelfth century and—as we shall see later on—are also used by Orderic Vitalis and Henry of Huntingdon. Plassmann calls them political because they aimed to legitimise current political powers instead of revealing the holiness of a single person.[582] In this case, they help to authorise the reign of William I.

Given Edward's attachment to God, it is difficult to explain the desolate state of the Anglo-Saxon Church, causing, amongst others, the Norman Conquest. This is reflected in William's report. He describes the poor condition of the monasteries, the unsuitability of ecclesiastical authority, and the mistreatment of Edward's mother, Emma. Although William lists the arguments of others, who aimed to acquit Edward from these crimes, he shows some belief in the idea that the first accusation was the fault of the Godwin family and the last one Emma's own guilt.[583] Edward's path to kingship is portrayed ambiguously as well. On the one hand, Edward descended from the Anglo-Saxon royal line and his father had been king before him. On the other hand, William of Malmesbury shows Edward as undecided and totally dependent on Godwin: "In the need of the moment there was nothing Edward would not promise; loyalty was pledged on each side, and he confirmed on oath whatever was asked of him."[584] Besides being a weak king, Edward depended on Godwin's power to prove his rightful reign and needed the archbishop to teach him royal behaviour. Thus, though Edward was successful in the end, he did not have the whole support of the English from the beginning on.[585]

According to medieval standards, Edward died a good death (in that he had enough time to confess his sins) and was buried in Westminster—the church he had built and consecrated before his death. William of Malmesbury states that it was with Edward

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[579] William: *GRA*, ii.225f, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 410–414.
[580] Otter 1999, pp. 582–584. According to Otter, the motif of the green tree comes from popular belief and is—in the same function—also found in other Anglo-Norman sources such as the *Vita Edwardi* (ibid.).
[581] Weiler 2001, p. 304.
[582] Plassmann 2008, pp. 26 and 47.
[583] William: *GRA*, ii.196, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 350.
[584] William: *GRA*, ii.197, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 352f (*Nichil erat quod Eduardus pro necessitate temporis non polliceretur; ita utrimque fide data, quicquid petebatur sacramento firmauit.*).
[585] William: *GRA*, ii.196f, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 350–352.

that the Anglo-Saxon royal dynasty died.[586] Thus, Edward's death stood for a new chapter in the history of the English kings. This first means that William joined the ranks of Edward the Confessor a rather ambiguous king to the throne, and that, second, he—despite his kinship with the Anglo-Saxon kings—began a new royal dynasty with little continuity to the old one.

According to William of Malmesbury, the succession question is not solved clearly, but he does not make Edward responsible for it.[587] Edward's chastity is a good reason for his lack of sons, and the king still made efforts to a find a relative who should become his successor. Edward's first choice was Edward, son of Edmund Ironside, whom he fetched away from his continental exile. William does not see Edward the Exile as a worthy choice, describing him as "a man of no energy in action and no personal integrity".[588] Thus, Edward the Exile's death can be seen as lucky. His son was too young to become king, and so Edward the Confessor asked William, Duke of Normandy. Malmesbury sees William as a worthier successor, emphasising, just as Orderic Vitalis did, his kinship with the Anglo-Saxon dynasty via Emma of Normandy and his personal suitability for kingship.[589] Thus, William is legitimised as in Orderic's text by the choice of and relation to Edward the Confessor—despite his stress on the extinction of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty.

All in all, William does not show Edward as an able and good ruler. Still, he does not seem to dare criticise him openly because of his holiness and his legitimisation via his father.[590] Also, Malmesbury's patrons claimed to rule by the decision of and the descent from Edward—making it unwise to criticise him too openly (especially in the light of Henry I's politics to idealise Edward). Thus, William of Malmesbury uses Edward the Confessor in order to legitimise the rule of William I. Though Edward's reign is depicted in an ambiguous way, it helps to authorise William. Thereby, negative elements turn out to be positive at the end, e.g. as the Church was in a bad state, William could reform it and so improved its situation. Furthermore, much of his description of Edward reflects twelfth-century thought. For example, Edward is described as a holy king with healing abilities, and the Norman Conquest is foreshadowed by prophecies. Edward namely prophesied the Norman reign (without giving names) as divine revenge, and he declared William as his successor. Malmesbury welcomes this decision by emphasising William's good character and his kinship to Edward.

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[586] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 418.
[587] Winkler 2017a, p. 235.
[588] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 416f (*uir neque promptus manu neque probus ingenio*).
[589] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 416.
[590] Winkler 2017a, pp. 234f.

For Henry of Huntingdon, the Norman Conquest does not begin with the end of the reign of Edward the Confessor but with the marriage between Æthelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy. Already at this point in time, he compares the weakness of the Anglo-Saxon kings with the strength of the Norman dukes, seeing the Conquest as a long-term divine plan. Henry argues at the beginning of the sixth book that this marriage was predestined by God because it makes William a legitimated king by the relationship that this marriage established. Divine providence is further strengthened by a prophecy by a "man of God"[591] who predicts a new ruler from France. Thus again, a political prophecy is used in order to legitimise William.

Henry also justifies God's decision to send the Normans to England—as per the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—as punishment for English sins. In contrast to the *Chronicle*, however, he lists the English sins, namely "they were not only at all times bent on slaughter and treachery, but also continually given over to drunkenness and the neglect of the Lord's house".[592] Thus, Henry shows the English as continual sinners with a weak king who deserved to be "exterminated"[593], as Henry puts it. The Norman Conquest could only improve the moral situation on the British Isles. Thus, the narration about the year 1000 justifies the Conquest via divine providence, William's familial ties to the Anglo-Saxon kings, and Norman superiority.

The first impression Henry of Huntingdon gives about Edward the Confessor is not friendly and corresponds to his picture of Æthelred. In comparison to his brother Alfred, Edward was "younger and more simple"[594] and thus easier to influence. Furthermore, Alfred possessed "high nobility"[595], so that he did not see Godwin's daughter worthy of consideration for a marriage. Edward married Edith later on despite that she was not a suitable match for a king. This tells us that his nobility is far less than his brother's, even if Henry does not mention it directly. Henry explains Edward's choice to marry Edith by mentioning his wish to protect the English kingdom.[596] Obviously, Edward was so dependent on Godwin that he risked putting his kingdom in jeopardy when he did not fulfil the earl's wishes. Therefore, Henry's description of Edward much resembles that of William of Malmesbury. Both criticise Edward for being too simple-minded and too dependent on Godwin, but both also hesitate to blame him more openly for being a

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[591]Henry: *HA*, vi.1, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 338f (*uir Dei*).
[592] Henry: *HA*, vi.1, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 338f (*non solum quia semper cedi et prodicioni studebant, ueram etiam quia semper ebrietati et negligentie domus Domini dediti erant*).
[593] Henry: *HA*, vi.1, ed. by Greenway 1996 (*disterminare*).
[594] Henry: *HA*, vi.20, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 372f (*iuniori et simpliciori*).
[595] Henry: *HA*, vi.20, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 372f (*magne probitatis*).
[596] Henry: *HA*, vi.20f, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 372.

bad king. However, Henry makes clear that Alfred—had he not been killed—would have been the much better king and that Edward was merely the second choice.

Nevertheless, thanks to the intrigue of Godwin (which shall be discussed in the next chapter), Edward became King of England. Henry tells that he had the consent of the people and was crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Winchester on Eastern. So, Edward is legitimised by the decision of the English and the legal coronation. However, his rule started rather poorly with a famine.[597] The information is taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but it can also be read as a sign of divine disfavour[598]—either because of Edward's kingship or his marriage. The second interpretation also fits well into Henry's general programme to show how bad deeds lead to divine punishment. By including this, he probably wants to show that Edward somehow attracted God's wrath.

Generally, Edward's reign is characterised by new ecclesiastical appointments and the Godwin family. The first and only situation in which Edward did something was as he exiled Godwin and his sons after having been warned of their betrayal. There, Edward reacted angrily, as it befits a king whose power was threatened. However, this episode did not last long. As it will be shown in more detail later on, Henry inserted passages remarking on what Duke William of Normandy did at the same time. In contrast to Edward, he was not idle but fought his enemies.[599] Thus, Henry of Huntingdon again uses a comparison in order to show the king's unsuitability to rule. This device helps him to avoid direct criticism, given that contemporary kings still saw Edward as a forefather. At the same time, he already inserts Norman history into the English one. At this point in his book, Henry does not often report about foreign matters so that the frequent narration of Norman affaires already integrates the two realms into one kingdom.

According to Henry, Edward did not care about his succession. Edward the Exiled came to England apparently by coincidence and not because Edward asked him to return. As he died immediately upon his arrival, he played no further role as candidate to the throne. Edgar Ætheling is neither described as an alternative, nor does Henry seize the opportunity, as William of Malmesbury did, to introduce Matilda as the wife of William I's son. Matilda is mentioned, but only as future queen, without making the connection to the Norman dynasty.[600] Thus, Edward died heirless and was buried in

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[597] Henry: *HA*, vi.20f, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 372–324.
[598] Famines are a popular motif for indicating divine punishment and were e.g. also used by Geoffrey of Monmouth (see Busse 1994, p. 212).
[599] Henry: *HA*, vi.21-26, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 374–384.
[600] Henry: *HA*, vi.24, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 380.

Westminster, which had been consecrated shortly before his death.[601] Therefore, Edward seemed at least to die a good death befitting of a monarch.

Lastly, Henry of Huntingdon uses the motif of prophecies like William of Malmesbury did, although the prophecy itself differs much from the ones found in the *Gesta Regum*. However, it also foretells threatening destruction: As Harold and Tostig were arguing violently, Edward predicted that "their [the brothers'] destruction was already approaching, and that the wrath of God would be delayed no longer."[602] Hence, Edward already prophesied the death of the brothers in the Battles of Stamford Bridge and Hastings. He also indicated that their deaths were going to be divine punishment. Henry emphasises this point of view once more when Edward died:

> In the year of grace 1066, the Lord, the ruler, brought to completion what he had long planned for the English nation. For he delivered them up for destruction to the violent and cunning Norman people.[603]

Thus, Henry shows that Edward's heirless death was planned by God. Therefore, he does not emphasise the fact that Edward did not try to find a successor or that Edgar Ætheling might have been an alternative. As Edward's prophecy, this passage shows that the decline of the English was predestined, although Henry gives no explanation for that this time.

Thus, Henry portrays Edward the Confessor as a weak king, being dependent on the Godwin family, although he revises this impression a bit in the epilogue of book VI, in which he characterises Edward as a "good and peacable [sic!] king"[604], which might be ascribed to later nostalgia. The kinship to William is not underlined at that point in time, but as Edward is presented in such a negative way, the kinship might hardly help to augment William's legitimacy. Rather, Henry stresses the kinship of the Norman duke at the beginning of the book by describing the marriage of Emma of Normandy and Æthelred. Thus, William is not associated so much with the weak English king, yet is related to him nevertheless. Moreover, Henry uses other methods to show early on in the narration that William is the rightful king. To do this, the successful campaigns of the duke are inserted into the narration about Edward's reign. In this way, William is represented familiarly to the reader and is contrasted positively with the English king. Lastly, the change of dynasty is presented as a divine decision. Once, Henry describes

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[601] Henry: *HA*, vi.27, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 384.
[602] Henry: *HA*, vi.25, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 382f (*pernitiem eorum iam appropinquare [...], et iram Dei iam non differendam*).
[603] Henry: *HA*, vi.27, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 384f (*Millesimo sexagesimo sexto anno gratie, perfecit dominator Dominus de gente Anglorum quod diu cogitauerat. Genti namque Normannorum aspere ct callide tradidit eos ad exterminandum.*).
[604] Henry: *HA*, vi.42, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 410f (*rex bonus et pacificus*).

the death of Harold and Tostig as punishment for their sins, and at several occasions, he presents the Norman Conquest as a divine plan for the English people.

Roger of Howden, using annals as main source materials, is not so detailed about Edward's reign. He tells shortly about events in England, France, Germany, and Rome. Edward looks as if he was rather reacting to problems instead of actively practicing politics. One example is the conflict with Earl Godwin, where Edward, "being afflicted with great anguish, was utterly at a loss to know what to do"[605], and Earl Leofric of Mercia (d. 1057) was the first one to take action. Even if Edward became more active in the conflict later on, he had to listen to his advisors and fully pardoned Godwin.[606] This might be ascribed to the annalistic style, but, as the description of Harold Godwinson will show in the next chapter, Roger of Howden (or the *Historia post obitum Bedae*) can also do otherwise.

However, generally, Edward the Confessor was fully accepted as a king. He became ruler due to his descent that was traced to Kind Alfred the Great and because of the support of Earl Godwin, the Bishop of Worcester, the Archbishops of York and Canterbury and "nearly all the other bishops of England."[607] Also, the story of his death indicates a good reputation. Edward was still able to arrange the sanctification of the Church of Westminster before he died. Thus, he cared for the well-being of the Church. His death was generally lamented, and Roger calls him "honor of the English"[608] and "the Peaceful"[609]. This byname already shows the tendency of the post-Conquest era to idealise the reign of Edward because before, many conflicts e.g. with the Godwin family or the Welsh were told of. In order to round this post-Conquest picture of Edward off, Roger of Howden adds some miracle stories about Edward that cannot be found in his source. In these stories, Edward received divine visions about events that happened far away, was kind to a stranger who turned out to be an apostle, undid injustices, and healed a leper.[610] These stories show the holiness of Edward that, in turn, underlined his authority.

In the first narration of Edward's succession, William of Normandy had no part. Though a visit from him in England in 1051 is referred to,[611] he is first mentioned again as a

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[605] Riley 1994b, p. 117 (*et in angore magno constitutus, quid ageret penitus ignorabat;*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 97).

[606] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 97–99.

[607] Riley 1994b, p. 112; Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 93 (*aliisque ferme totius Angliæ præsulibus*—ibid.).

[608] Riley 1994b, p. 130 (*Anglorum decus*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 108).

[609] Riley 1994b, p. 130 (*pacificus*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 108).

[610] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 108–111.

[611] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 98.

threat to England after the death of Edward.[612] Instead, it is first told that Edward's cousin, the son of the former King Edmund Ironside, was supposed to be Edward's successor. However, this plan failed because the cousin died soon after his arrival.[613] As a consequence, Edward declared Harold Godwinson his heir, and his decision seemed to be obeyed without questioning it.[614] As seen, in this story, nothing indicates that William was taken into consideration as a possible king by anyone.

However, there is a second story, which is narrated after the Battle of Hastings. Obviously, Roger and the author of the *Historia* felt the need to explain the reasons for William to invade England. It follows a story that resembles—sometimes word for word—the one Eadmer told before: Harold wanted to fetch the hostages from William's court, ignored Edward's warning, and was forced to swear an oath to William to support his claim to the English crown.[615] As Eadmer before, Roger does not write whether William's claim was true. Though he describes the events in Anglo-Saxon England in more detail, Edward's exile in Normandy is not given much attention. So, his relation to William is never mentioned (only that he was at the ducal court).[616] As a consequence, the same conclusion as with Eadmer's *Historia* is true: William is not legitimised via Edward's choice. Nevertheless, this story reveals that a need to show the rightness of the Conquest was still seen.

The kinship between the Norman dukes and the Anglo-Saxon kings is of even less importance than in the *Historia novorum*. It is mentioned once that Duke Richard was the uncle of Edward the Confessor,[617] but the context has nothing to do with William, as it is during Edward's unsuccessful attempt to go back to England after the death of Cnut the Great. A second time, William is called the cousin (*consobrinus*) of Edward as he planned his invasion.[618] This is mentioned rather in passing, and, so, the kinship to Edward the Confessor is not important for authorising William's rule.

William of Newburgh begins his history with the Norman Conquest. Though he refers to the English pre-history in the prologue, the emphasis there lies on the Britons (and why

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[612] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 112.
[613] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 101 and 103. The parallel is no coincidence because the *Historia post obitum Bedae* used Eadmer as a source (see the introduction to Eadmer).
[614] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 108. In the English translation, Harold is called "viceroy" (Riley 1994b, p. 130), which indicates that Harold was a natural choice because he had already much responsibility. However, the Latin text says *subregulus*, which only means a subordinate ruler (subregulus 2015) and, therefore, leaves no place for such an interpretation.
[615] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 114f.
[616] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 78, 89f, and 92.
[617] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 89.
[618] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 112.

Geoffrey of Monmouth is wrong).[619] Edward the Confessor is not mentioned at all and, as a consequence, he has no importance for the legitimisation of William I's rule.

Not taking into account William of Newburgh, there is one point that all authors have in common: They at least mention the kinship between William the Conqueror and Edward the Confessor. This reveals that they all see the need to create continuity by at least mentioning this relationship. However, only Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon use it in order to authorise William's rule. Another point stressed by Orderic and William of Malmesbury is that Edward was supposed to have declared William as his successor. This promise can be understood as a strategy to increase continuity even more by stressing the idea that William reigned by hereditary right. Whereas Orderic Vitalis and Roger of Howden show Edward as a good king, the pictures painted by Eadmer of Canterbury, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon differ. William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon stick out by foreshadowing the Norman Conquest with help of Edward's prophecies.

Concerning a change in the use of Edward the Confessor in twelfth-century historiography, his role became less important. Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury use Edward to a great extent, bringing them closest to the Norman panegyrics. However, William of Newburgh does not mention him at all, and he has a subordinated role in Henry of Huntingdon's and Roger of Howden's works concerning the legitimacy of William I. This might be explained with the fact that Henry II could claim a relationship to Edward the Confessor via the female line as well. Also, it was probably more important to him to propagate his own right to the throne than the one of his forefather—the same is valid for Stephen and Matilda. The concept of e.g. Henry of Huntingdon that change is a leading element in English history fits well within the political situation of the mid-twelfth century.

4.2   Delegitimising Harold Godwinson

The Norman panegyrics showed that delegitimising Harold Godwinson was a way to legitimate William the Conqueror's rule. Regardless of that, depicting Harold as *rex iniustus* gave the authors the possibility to contrast him with William, who, thus, looked better. Furthermore, legitimising Harold too much would have meant destabilising the new dynasty. During the twelfth century, ideas arose claiming that Harold either sur-

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[619] William: *HRA*, i.prologue-1, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 11–20.

vived or that he even was a saint-like hermit.[620] The second idea could become espe-
cially dangerous to the Norman kings, as this meant that the killer of a saint (William)
had acted against God.[621] Therefore, the following chapter wants to analyse how Har-
old's rule was legitimated or whether it was legitimated at all and what this means in
turn for William's legitimacy.

[…] and Harold son of Earl Godwin had usurped the kingdom of England and had already ruled
it for three months and caused much harm, stained as he was by perjury and cruelty and other
vices.[622]

Seeing this introduction to Harold Godwinson's rule, it seems quite clear what kind of
legitimisation Orderic gives him: none. In the following, it is shown whether this first
impression is right or not. As written above, Orderic Vitalis does not write much about
pre-Conquest England. However, as Harold ruled over England when William con-
quered it and was his opponent, we find at least some glimpses of his rule. Interestingly
enough, Orderic calls Harold a tyrant five times and speaks of a tyranny one time.[623]
Even if one does not count the time William called him that in direct speech, there are
still four times left—which is quite a lot. Whether Orderic also gives Harold the charac-
teristics of a tyrant will now be looked at. Therefore, there will be an analysis of Har-
old's legitimacy, his character, his emotions, his deeds in war, and his death. A study of
Harold's role in the Battle of Stamford Bridge follows as well.

Harold's usurpation is described as extremely unjust and as having caused disorder
after Edward's death.[624] First, he betrayed William, to whom he had sworn fidelity—on
"the most sacred relics".[625] William had treated Harold with respect and had given him
and his men precious presents.[626] Later, Harold ignored all this by taking the crown.
Second, he betrayed his true king, Edward the Confessor, by lying to him. Then, he did
not even wait for Edward to be buried but used an excommunicated archbishop to be
crowned as fast as possible, stealing "the glory of the crown and royal purple".[627] Har-
old did not care if the men of the witan even wanted him as king. The question remains

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[620] E.g. in the *Vita Haroldi*, ed. by Gray Birch 1885. There, the defeat at Hastings is read as a
divine test, and Harold is fully legitimated. Via the marriage between Edward and his sister,
even a relationship is constructed to the Anglo-Saxon royal line.
[621] Marafioti 2014, pp. 234f.
[622] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 134f (*et Heraldus Goduini comitis
filius regnum Anglorum usurpauerat. iamque tribus mensibus ad multorum detrirnentum periurio
et crudelitate aliisque nequitiis pollutus tenuerat.*).
[623] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii resp. iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 136, 144, 170, and 190, 224
resp. 138.
[624] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.9, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 92.
[625] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 136f (*sanctissimas reliquias*).
[626] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 136.
[627] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 137–139 (*furtim præripuit diadematis
et purpuræ decus*).

how it is possible to reign a kingdom against the will of the people. Orderic describes that many English were afraid of Harold and, so, accepted his rule. Harold had also found mighty allies in the Earls Morcar and Edwin by marrying their sister. The only one daring to oppose Harold was his brother, Tostig, but here, Orderic confuses the chronology. He writes that Tostig saw his brother's mischief and could not stand his oppression over the country. He had to pay for his rebellion by losing his lands and went abroad.[628] Thus, the legitimisation of Harold's rule is missing and is, as it is shown later, contrasted to William's reign, which is authorised via all those arguments.

It became quite evident that Harold swore falsely, deceived his righteous king, and wanted to become a king himself at any price. This reveals many character faults: He was too ambitious, egotistical, fraudulent, and did not hesitate to act against law—human and divine[629]. To complete his poor character, Orderic characterises him as a bad ruler who caused much harm with his actions, was cruel and had "other vices".[630] The "other vices" and the "harm" are explained as well. Orderic seems to give the fault for all three battles of 1066 to Harold—at least he accuses him to have brought war with many deaths to England—and the king is described as incapable to stop the rising criminality.[631] As it was one of the main tasks of a king to protect his kingdom, Harold failed in his duties here.

But Orderic has not only bad things to say about Harold. He also finds some good characteristics:

This Englishman was very tall and handsome, remarkable for his physical strength, his courage and eloquence, his ready jests and acts of valour. But what were all these gifts to him without honour, which is the root of all good?[632]

As soon as he learned that the Normans had invaded England he made haste to prepare himself for a fight to the death. For he was a brave and valiant man, strong and handsome, pleasant in speech, and a good friend to his own followers.[633]

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[628] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 138.McGrath 2014 sees the anger of the nobles under these circumstances as justified. It namely had the purpose of warning against bad governance (pp. 103–105).

[629] William let Harold swear on „the most sacred relics" (*sanctissimas reliquias*) to support him (Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 136f). That makes Harold not only breaking the oath towards William but also towards the saints these relics belonged to and, as a consequence, towards God.

[630] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 134f (*aliisque nequitiis*). Similar information can be found in Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 190.

[631] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 134–138. Orderic describes "crimes too horrible to relate" (*horrendis sceleribus*) occurring in England during Harold's rule. It is possible that the crimes are caused by Harold's usurpation. In any case, it seems logical that a criminal ruler attracts other criminals or, at least, does not take enough action against them.

[632] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 136f (*Erat enim idem Anglus magnitudine et elegantia uiribusque corporis. animique audacia et linguæ facundia multisque facetiis et probitatibus admirabilis. Sed quid ei tanta dona sine fide quæ bonorum omnium fundamentum est contulerunt?*).

The first description can be seen as a *notatio*—a characterisation introducing a person based on antique traditions, and it follows the ideologies of descriptions of medieval rulers. Harold was good-looking and tall, something very important for a medieval ruler. As stated above, the outward appearance of a ruler was an ideal standing in itself. It did not only stand for the inner character, but it also had to do with charismatic authority. A king was not above everyone else in hierarchy because of his office, but because he was a better human being. This was indicated by his appearance, his deeds, and inner qualities. Next, Harold is characterised as strong and brave, something that is important when it comes to winning wars. His eloquence is priced as well, being significant to convince others. At last, Orderic praises Harold for his behaviour and funny jokes, which let him appear to be a nice man. Moreover, he was good to his followers.[634] Following this characterisation, Harold had everything that was needed to be a good ruler.[635] Ray already observed that Orderic's figure of Harold is a weakening of William of Poitiers' portrayal. He leaves out scenes where Harold is depicted extremely badly and even grants him some positive characteristics.[636] However, Harold had no honour, and, therefore, his virtues were worth nothing. This leaves Harold as a bad king whom William righteously fights.

This positive picture is further destroyed when one looks at Harold's emotions. Harold shows them quite often considering how little he appears in the narration. After the Battle of Stamford Bridge, he is described as being happy about the victory—something that is understandable, but because Orderic sees this battle as fratricide and slaughter, it can be seen as negative.[637] Even if one takes the biblical examples of fratricide like Cain and Abel into consideration, the predominant medieval ideal of the relationship between brothers still was fraternity. A brother needed to help his sibling when he was treated unjustly or had to avenge his death.[638] Instead of showing joy, Harold should rather have shown grief facing his brother's or also King Edward's death;[639] and he should never have battled against his brother in the first place.

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[633] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 170f (*Ipse uero ut Normannos in Angliam ingressos esse audiuit. iterum se ad agonem uiriliter præparauit. Erat enim multum audax et probus, corpore fortis et pulcherrimus. eloquentia lepidus, et affabilis fautoribus.*).
[634] This can also be read as negative in the sense that Harold treated only his followers well, but, as the rest of this description is so positive, it may be assumed that the interpretation above is what Orderic wanted to say.
[635] For different modes to characterise a person in medieval historiography and the qualities of a king see Bagge 1991, pp. 146–149; or chapter 3.2.
[636] Ray 1972, p. 1122.
[637] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 170. Orderic is the first to call the Battle of Stamford Bridge fratricide, but the motif is reused, e.g. by William of Malmesbury (see below; Chibnall 1979–1983, p. 171).
[638] Eickels 2009, pp. 203–206.
[639] According to Barton 2011, grief or sorrow were the appropriate emotions when a beloved or important person had died (p. 55).

Then, there are two situations in which Harold got angry. One time was with his brother Tostig who opposed him. "[I]n anger" Harold took away his lands.[640] The other situation is before the Battle of Hastings as Gyrth Godwinson wanted to go to the battle instead of Harold because he had not sworn any oaths to William:

On hearing these words Harold flew into a violent rage. He rejected the counsel that seemed wise to his friends, answered his brother who was advising him for the best with reproofs, and, when his mother clung to him to hold him back, insolently spurned her with his foot.[641]

Barton observes that Orderic, when considering emotions, mainly describes anger. Thus, it is not surprising that Harold, a rather bad figure, is associated with this difficult emotion. It was possible for nobles to show their anger in public, and it needed to be satisfied by physical action,[642] something we find fulfilled in both cases. First, Harold punished his brother gravely; then, he insulted his other brother, and he was violent towards his own mother.[643] Barton discovers further that Orderic sometimes constructs emotions after the Stoic or Psychomachean model, which saw emotions in general as a sin.[644] In this case, we cannot speak of anger in the sense of *iustitia*, but rather in the sense of unjust anger that shows the ruler as unsuitable for his office.[645] In both situations, Harold did not have any reason to get angry in the eyes of Orderic: it is everyone's right to oppose a usurper, and Gyrth acted correctly when he remembered his brother at the oath he had sworn. Furthermore, Gyrth showed Harold the opportunity to change his ways and regret his perjury,[646] which makes the anger even worse. McGrath argues in the first case that it was Tostig who was rightly angry.[647] Harold's anger, however, can be seen as a sign that he did not meet the qualities needed for being a good king. Interestingly enough, Orderic never uses the term *ira* in context with Harold, giving the hint that he does not see him as a powerful person.

One event that reveals much about the legitimacy Orderic ascribes to Harold is the Battle of Stamford Bridge. There, Harold's conflict with Tostig is presented in greater detail, and a foreign invasion threatened Harold's kingship. This helps us gain insight whether Orderic accepts William as king because Harold was unsuitable or whether it had to be William who takes over the throne (and not Harald Hardrada).

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[640] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 138f (*uiolenter*).
[641] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 172f (*His itaqueauditis sermonibus. Heraldus uehementer est spreuit, et germanium suum qui fideliter ei consiliabatur conuiciis irritauit. matremque suam quæ nimis ipsum retinere secum satagebat pede pracaciter percussit.*).
[642] Barton 2011, pp. 50–53.
[643] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 172.
[644] Barton 2011, p. 50.
[645] Althoff 1998, pp. 67f
[646] Plassmann 2008, p. 44.
[647] McGrath 2014 argues that Orderic praises the people opposing Harold as they responded to tyranny and oppression. They had the right to get angry as their property, dependants, or honour was attacked. As with kings, their anger should resolve in peace again and end the violence (pp. 104f).

Orderic describes first how Harold Godwinson—after becoming king—favoured the brothers Morcar and Edwin to the detriment of his brother Tostig. Not agreeing with his brother's politics, Tostig resisted and was consequently forced to leave the country. After a short stay in Flanders, Tostig travelled further to William of Normandy, for whom he promised to secure the English crown. He tried to return to England but failed because of Harold's fleet. Thus, he had no other choice than to continue to Norway and to ask Harald Hardrada[648] for help. He promised Harald half of England for his support.[649] Harald agreed as he was greedy. Orderic does not approve of Tostig's new plan:

> The wandering exile incited the tyrant to this great task and mislead him thus by using his wits to avoid being imprisoned as a spy, and further secure the king's aid to avenge his unjust expulsion by his faithless brother.[650]

Even if Orderic agrees with Tostig's rebellion, he does not like the new plan involving the Norwegian king. In August, the two armies landed near Yorkshire, and Harold went to battle against them. Orderic understands Tostig's motives. Tostig opposed the tyranny of his brother and tried to help William take the throne, which was unsuccessful. This would have made Tostig's invasion excusable and would have justified the violence. Unfortunately, God was not on Tostig's side, and so he needed to go to Harald Hardrada, and the two of them lost the battle.

Orderic's description of the Battle of Stamford Bridge is rather short. Still, he writes that the battle was fought with great brutality. Orderic mentions the bloodshed and describes how one cannot overlook the battlefield because of the great amount of bones still lying there.[651] Looking at the description of the battle itself, it is not possible to draw any conclusion from it. Orderic describes the brutality on both sides and does not assess the English victory. To conclude, Harald Hardrada is not an alternative to William;

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[648] Here, Orderic—as many other Norman or Anglo-Norman authors—confuses the first Norwegian king Harold Fairhair (c. 852–933) with Harald Hardrada (1046/7–1066).

[649] We find similar statements in Nordic sources such as *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum*, ch. XLII, ed. by Driscoll 2008, p. 56; Adam von Bremen: *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, III.52, ed. by Trillmich et al. 2000, p. 394; *Morkinskinna*, ch. LIII, ed. by Ármann Jakobsson, Þórður Guðjónsson 2011, p. 301; Saxo Grammaticus: *Gesta Danorum*, xi.6.1, ed. by Friis-Jensen 2015, p. 798; Snorri Sturluson: *Heimskringla*, LXXIX, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnason 1951, p. 174.

[650] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 142–144, quotation p. 144f (*Erroneus exul ad tantum laborem tirannum exciuit, eumque callida tergiuersatione taliter illexit. ne ab eo quasi exploratory regni sui caperetur, sed ut per eum quoquomodo iniuriam expulsionis suæ de malefido fratre ulcisceretur.*).

[651] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 138–168. The motif of Tostig luring Harald into battle can also be found in Scandinavian texts, e.g. Heimskringla (Snorri Sturluson: *Heimskringla*, LXXVIIIf, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnason 1951, pp. 172–175). Adam of Bremen (Adam von Bremen: *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, III.52, ed. by Trillmich et al. 2000, p. 394) and Saxo Grammaticus (Saxo Grammaticus: *Gesta Danorum*, xi.6.1, ed. by Friis-Jensen 2015, p. 798) tell as well that Tostig (respectively he and his brothers) met Harald in Norway. Chibnall sees the reason for that in the fact that the two fought together and that, therefore, the authors assumed that they must have met before (Chibnall 1969b-1983, p. III 142f).

he is described as greedy—a negative virtue for a king. In the conflict with his brother, Harold was wrong because it was his fault that Tostig rebelled. It was already mentioned above that Orderic sees the battle as fratricide.

Considering that Harold fought in two battles and was protecting England throughout the summer from hostile attacks, Orderic tells us very little about his reputation as commander and fighter. He just states some facts, for example that he did protect the coast, went north to stop the Norwegian invasion, and fought at Hastings, but nowhere does he go into detail. Only at Hastings does he tell about Harold's strategy that failed completely.[652]

As written above, Harold died very early in battle. This can be seen as a sudden death, and also the destruction of Harold's body that made his face unrecognisable indicates a bad death;[653] adding the fact that Orderic tells that Harold was buried near the seashore and not in a Christian graveyard or church as it would have been appropriate.[654] Evans sees in the act of burying an attempt at reconciliation and a symbol for transferring the power from Harold to William, while on a practical level, the missing tomb made a posthumous veneration difficult and took Harold's dignity.[655] So, Harold's end had everything needed for a tyrant. His death is furthermore justified by the fact that he was a usurper.[656] Prietzel finds four elements in narratives about a ruler's death in battle, namely the question of the victors where the enemy ruler is after battle, the search for the body, the finding and identification of the body, and lastly, the burial.[657] Considering these elements, Orderic's description looks highly standardised—except for the burial.

As seen before, Harold was a bad king and usurper despite his good virtues because he had no honour—as Orderic writes. This infamy nullified all the good characteristics. To come back to the question whether Orderic presents Harold Godwinson as a tyrant: He certainly shows characteristics of a tyrant, like oppressing his people, character faults, and a disgraceful death, but otherwise many of them are missing, like inhumanity, a demonic nature, or negative charisma. Instead, Orderic even finds something pos-

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[652] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 134 and 168–178.
[653] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 178.
[654] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 178–180. Orderic tells that William refuses Gytha's offer to give her Harold's weight in gold as he does not want Harold to be buried at a place his mother had chosen. Instead, William chose the "sea-shore, which in life he [Harold] had defended so long" (*littus maris quod diu [...] seruauerat*).
[655] Evans 2003, pp. 79–81. It is unclear how much truth lies in Orderic's account. His narration contradicts the Norman panegyrics (whose source value is questionable as well). Marafioti 2014 therefore assumes that it was either unclear what happened to Harold's body after Hastings, or that William aimed to make him invisible in order to neutralise him (p. 233).
[656] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vi.2, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 214.
[657] Prietzel 2015, p. 128.

itive to say. All in all, one can conclude that Orderic takes much from the bad characterisation William of Poitiers provides us. Orderic himself has a more ambivalent view on the Norman Conquest and does not want Harold to be thoroughly a tyrant. On the contrary—he cannot accept Harold's claim to the throne but rather has to admit some positive characteristics towards him. Still, Harold is shown as *rex iniustus* to back up William's legitimacy.

As a consequence, this also means that Harold is not legitimated. This is shown by the following arguments taken from the Norman panegyrics. First, he was not related by blood to the former king Edward the Confessor. Second, he lacked the support and election of the English aristocracy. Though Edward declared Harold as his heir, this was only because of Harold's cunning. Under normal circumstances, Edward would—according to Orderic—never have declared Harold as his successor. As a consequence, his consent can be seen as missing too. At last, Harold Godwinson was consecrated by the wrong archbishop, namely Stigand, making the sacrament of the coronation invalid because of Stigand's papal excommunication.[658] A later résumé of the events by Orderic sums up his opinion about Harold's legitimacy well. He characterises Harold as the following: "perjured Harold, son of Godwin, who was not of royal stock seized the kingdom by force and fraud"[659]. Orderic's poor opinion of Harold can be explained by his strong dependence on the Norman sources because of his location in Normandy.

Eadmer's narration of Harold's rule looks brief and abrupt. After a short description of English history since the reign of King Edgar, Eadmer leads directly into the pre-history of the events in 1066. Harold is introduced as the son of Godwin when the family had to go abroad. Unlike Orderic, Eadmer does not give any long description. Godwin is characterised as a great earl who had, for reasons unnamed, a quarrel with Edward but was able to return after Emma of Normandy's death. Still, Edward seemed to distrust Godwin, and, thus, two hostages were sent to Duke William in order to guarantee peace. For the first time, Eadmer shows here dislike towards Godwin by describing him as enemy of the Church of Canterbury.[660] After the "evil death"[661] of Godwin, Harold

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[658] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 134. Stigand was appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury by Edward the Confessor in 1051, but he received no pallium from Rome as the pope saw the appointment as uncanonical. He later received a pallium from Benedict X, who was declared schismatic (Butler 1966, p. 18).
[659] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.9, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. III 92f (*dum periurus Heraldus Goduini filis qui de regia propagine non prodierat ui et fraude regnum nactus est*).
[660] According to Eadmer, he supposedly stole an estate from the cathedral.
[661] Bosanquet 1964, p. 6 (*mala morte*— Eadmer: *HN*, 7, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 6).

became his heir, but Eadmer does not seem to transfer the negative depiction of Godwin to his son.

The transition between Edward's rule and Harold's is described less as a rupture than as a normal succession of two rulers. Edward wanted Harold as his successor, and Harold became king as planned. Eadmer does not give a reason why Harold became Edward's successor, but the earl was obviously accepted universally. At last, Eadmer writes nothing about a lack of support—neither by the Church nor by the aristocracy.[662] This may be interpreted that Eadmer knows nothing about any resistance and sees Harold as fully legitimated by Edward's decision.

The problems with Harold's legitimacy began as William started to claim the crown as well. The two of them exchanged messengers—William reminding Harold of his oath, and Harold explaining why it was invalid. These messages can be found in the *Gesta Guillelmi* as well. There, they serve to emphasise the illegitimacy of Harold's deed and demonstrate how William wanted to avoid war. In Eadmer's text, the exchange of messengers has the same effect: Harold argued that the marriage between his sister and a Norman noble could not take place as the sister was already dead, the stronghold in Dover was expanded as promised, but Harold had had no right to promise the kingdom to William as it was not his at that point in time. Neither William nor Eadmer accept these accusations. William unsuccessfully sent a second messenger before he attacked England, and Eadmer calls Harold a perjurer.[663] Thus, Harold himself delegitimised his rule as he swore the oath to William—otherwise his kingship is described as fully authorised.

In contrast to the *Ecclesiastical History*, there is neither a description of Harold's character nor of his emotions. Therefore, his character has to be analysed via the report of his doings. Harold first appears in an important role after his father's death. There, his first wish was to bring the hostages from William's court back to England. Edward did not forbid the journey to Normandy but warned Harold that this might bring great misfortune to England. Harold is now described as ignorant because he disregarded the king's prophecy and trusted his own judgement more than the king's. By this, he brought harm to England, showing how wrong he was by not listening to his overlord. First, Harold managed to be imprisoned by the Count of Ponthieu, and William had to free him. Second, William forced him to swear an oath to support him to become England's next king by referring to Edward's old promise. Back to England, Harold told Edward about this incident. The king replied: "Did I not tell you that I knew William and

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[662] Eadmer: *HN*, 9f, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 8.
[663] Eadmer: *HN*, 9-11, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 8f.

that your going might bring untold calamity upon this kingdom?"[664] This sentence, firstly, shows that Eadmer sees the Conquest as something bad, but it signifies, secondly, that it was not primarily William's fault but Harold's. He did not listen to his king and, therefore, was the cause for the events that ensued. Thirdly and lastly, this shows Harold as arrogant and as someone who placed his own wishes before the wellbeing of the kingdom. Bringing his family back was more important to Harold than ensuring the security of his homeland. Despite not yet being king at this point in time, Harold was one of the mightiest nobles and therefore needed to care about the kingdom's concerns.

There is not a description of the Battle of Stamford Bridge; it is not even mentioned. So, this analysis goes on to the description of Harold's death, which is very short: "Harold fell in the thick of the fray"[665]. There is no narration of his burial either, and, thus, Eadmer's narration does not correspond in any way Prietzel's elements in an account of a king's death in battle.[666] The only thing that might be concluded from these few words is that Harold died a sudden and violent death. These kinds of endings were often interpreted as God's providence and punishment for sins and did not speak in the king's favour.[667] However, this makes Harold's death befitting of his perjury and by thus, Eadmer shows quite a consistent picture of him.

Taking everything into consideration, Eadmer writes very little about Harold. Still, one may conclude that he is not shown as the *rex iniustus* that Orderic makes him out to be. Harold could have been the righteous king of England—had there not been the oath to William he broke so willingly. Thus, William's rule over England is legitimated by God's providence. William was made God's instrument to punish Harold for his perjury—his death can be seen as part of the punishment. So, at the end, the depiction of Harold helps to authorise William's rule, even if Harold is characterised in a favourable way. For his narration about Harold, Eadmer obviously mainly used the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which depicts the king in a good way. The Norman Conquest, thus, became a problem in this concept that the *Chronicle* did not solve convincingly in Eadmer's eyes. Why should God punish a rightful king with defeat? This is where the Norman panegyrics' explanation of the broken oath comes into play. It helped Eadmer reconcile the positive picture of Harold with the Norman Conquest. The strong dependence on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* can be explained with Eadmer's time of writing. Being the

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[664] Bosanquet 1964, p. 8 (*"Nonne dixi tibi,"* ait, *"me Willelmum nosse, et in illo itinere tuo plurima mala huic regno contingere posse?"*—Eadmer: *HN*, 9, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 8).
[665] Bosanquet 1964, p. 9 (*Haroldus in acie cecidit.*—Eadmer: *HN*, 10, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 8).
[666] Prietzel 2015, p. 128.
[667] Evans 2003, pp. xiv–xvii.

first Englishmen to report the events, he relied heavily on an English point of view that probably was told in the *Chronicle*.

Also, in William of Malmesbury's text, Harold's legitimisation is very questionable. William of Malmesbury first retells the story of Harold's journey to Normandy. In this case, however, it was not planned, but Harold accidently landed in Ponthieu on a fishing trip (whereby William mentions that he also knows the story and that Harold was sent by Edward). There, Harold was taken prisoner by the local count. Nevertheless, Harold managed to send a man to William, whom he wrongly told that he was on a mission to the Norman duke in the name of King Edward. So, William freed the English and from there on, Malmesbury's story resembles the ones of the other writers: Harold joined William on a campaign to Brittany and swore an oath to the duke, promising him the Castle of Dover and the Kingdom of England. Of course, also in Malmesbury's text, Harold broke his oath after Edward the Confessor's death, making him a perjurer.[668] The feature that Harold only came to the duke's court because of a lie looks marginal when compared to that crime. Nevertheless, it shows that Harold generally handled the truth carelessly and not just in one instance.

Harold's accession to the throne, already delegitimised by his broken oath, is then even further delegitimised. William of Malmesbury writes that Edward never wanted Harold as king and that he considers contrary reports to be based "more on good will than judgement"[669]. So, Harold was neither related to the Anglo-Saxon dynasty by blood nor chosen by the former king. Also, the nobility's consent was doubtful. Though they swore an oath to Harold, William writes that Harold forced them to do so.[670] Later on, Malmesbury writes that the English were divided concerning the question of who should be Edward's successor.[671] Therefore, it becomes clear that he did not see Harold as legitimated by his election by the aristocracy.

Now, there only remains to determine whether Harold's character made him a suitable king. As Eadmer of Canterbury, William of Malmesbury has a strongly negative view on Godwin, Harold's father. This influences the reader's first impression of Harold insofar as Godwin and his sons often are mentioned in the same breath. This is, for example, the case in the above-mentioned scene when William tells the rumour that the father and his sons were responsible for the desolate state of the English Church.[672] Another

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[668] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 416–418.
[669] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 420f (*magis beniuolentia quam iuditio*).
[670] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 418–420.
[671] William: *GRA*, iii.238, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 446.
[672] William: *GRA*, ii.196, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 350.

case is the conflict between the Godwin family and the Normans at Edward's court. There, William writes: "Godwine and his sons, they say, were men of noble spirit and great energy, founders and pillars of Edward's reign as king;"[673] Although this looks like a good description at first glance, it becomes evident in further reading that William of Malmesbury sees—at least Godwin—as too power-hungry. The earl died a sudden death as he vowed to be innocent concerning Alfred's death (the king's brother), which shows, according to William, his true character. Furthermore, Harold was on his father's side during their short exile and the two of them ravaged the English coast along with its inhabitants of "their kin"[674], as William puts it.[675] In any case, by aligning Harold so close with his father, William of Malmesbury evokes the impression that Harold shared these negative features with his father and was overly ambitious as well.

Even after Godwin's death, Harold is not depicted much better. For example, the relation to his brother Tostig was difficult. In the conflict between Tostig and the Northumbrians, he favoured the Northerners and appointed Morcar as earl instead of his brother, "consider[ing] his country's tranquillity in preference to his brother's personal advantage"[676]. As written above, brothers were supposed to support each other, and it was illegal to rebel against Tostig, who had been rightfully installed by the king. Therefore, Harold's behaviour in this situation was not just. He promoted the Northumbrians' interests over Tostig's rights as lawful Earl of Northumbria. By doing so, he also acted against the wishes of his king, as William of Malmesbury argues later on. He claims that Edward preferred Tostig as earl because he was among his favourites, but since he was already ill, he was unable to stop Harold.[677]

Similar to Orderic Vitalis, William writes about the Battle of Stamford Bridge, but he says nothing about Harold's role in it. Instead, a brave Norwegian and a cunning Englishman play the leading roles. However, this means as well that William does not take Orderic's point of view that the Battle was fratricide—at least at first glance; he mentions Tostig's death as well as the one of Harald Hardrada[678], but no one is made responsible for it. Only in the next book does William of Malmesbury call the Battle of Stamford Bridge and Harold's victory a murder.[679] There, however, he moreso aims to show that the victory was not a sign of divine support for Harold's cause. Nevertheless,

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[673] William: *GRA*, ii.197, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 354f (*Goduinum et natos magnanimos uiros et industrios, auctores et tutores regni Eduardi;*).

[674] William: *GRA*, ii.199, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 360f (*de cognati*).

[675] William: *GRA*, ii.198f, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 354–360.

[676] William: *GRA*, ii.200, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 364f (*magis quietem patriae quam fratris commodum attenderet*).

[677] William: *GRA*, iii.252, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 466.

[678] Also, William of Malmesbury calls him, wrongly, Harald Fairhair.

[679] William: *GRA*, iii.239, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 450.

this does not signify that Harold did well at the end. After the battle, he was too greedy to share the loot with his co-fighters, which—as we see later on—was one reason for the English's defeat at Hastings.[680] By describing that Harold kept all the wealth for himself, William indicates again that Harold was so ambitious that he lost track of the main goal. Additionally, Harold was greedy: both were problematic characteristics for a king.

This does not stop William's list of Harold's bad qualities. William includes, as Orderic Vitalis does, Gryth's warning and Harold's unjust reaction to it. In this situation, Harold is described as rash and unrestrained, indicating that he was unable to control his feelings.[681] As written above, William also sees the English king as a perjurer, who did not take oaths seriously. However, he also has something positive to say about Harold:

> [...] he might well have ruled the kingdom, to judge by the figure he cut in public, with prudence and fortitude, had it come to him lawfully. For example, during Edward's life, whatever wars were kindled against him, it was Harold's valour that extinguished them, for he was always trying to impress public opinion, being of course consumed with ambition to be king.[682]

Thus, Harold might have been a good king. He was clever, brave, and even a good fighter and strategist. However, Harold was too keen on becoming king to be a good ruler. Furthermore, he came to rule unrightfully, which alone seems to make him a *rex iniustus*.

Surprisingly, after the enumeration of all of Harold's flaws, William lets him die a good death—insofar as this is possible when a king dies in battle. As it is shown in the next chapter, Harold fought so well that only an arrow from a distance could stop him. Though Evans argues that arrows were used as a symbol of coincidence and divine providence because they did not aim at a particular person,[683] I want to argue that this is not the case in William's narration. Here, the arrow is the only way to beat a brave fighter. Apart from the wound in his head and a posthumous injury at the thigh, Harold's body stayed uncorrupted—something that can be interpreted as a positive sign as well.[684] He was buried, befitting his royal status, in the Church of Waltham, of Harold's own founding.[685] So, William does not describe Harold as negatively as Orderic Vitalis but rather gives him more positive traits.

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[680] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 420–422.
[681] William: *GRA*, iii.239f, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 452.
[682] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 420f (*pro persona quam gerebat regnum prudentia et fortitudine gubernaret, si legitime suscepisset; denique uiuente Eduardo quaecumque contra cum bella incensa sunt, uirtute sua compressit, cupiens se prouintialibus ostentare, in regnum scilicet spe prurienti anhelans.*).
[683] Evans 2003, p. 59.
[684] William: *GRA*, iii.242-245, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 454–456.
[685] William: *GRA*, iii.247, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 460.

To summarise, William's account generally resembles Orderic Vitalis'. Both of them delegitimise Harold in the strongest way, although William stresses some points less than Orderic does. According to William of Malmesbury, Harold was neither chosen by Edward the Confessor as his successor, nor was he elected by the majority of the English nobility, but he was a perjurer. Notably, Malmesbury never allows him the title *rex*. Furthermore, Harold was too ambitious and possessed other insufficiencies, making him unfit to rule. Additionally, he showed certain character flaws, such as a lack of restraint, disobedience towards his king, and disloyalty towards his brother. However, William, who wants to give a balanced account of the events around 1066, also adds some positive things about Harold. Still, they do not change the overall picture. It will be shown later whether Malmesbury contrasts William I to his depiction of Harold. Again, William's negative picture of Harold can be explained with his patrons, who both had an interest in a strong legitimisation of Henry I, respectively his daughter. For Henry, in turn, a father who defeated a tyrant was a much better foundation of power than a father who defeated a righteous king.

As already indicated in the chapter about Edward the Confessor, Henry of Huntingdon depicts the Godwin family negatively. It begins with the adverse characterisation of Harold's father: He helped Edward to ascend the throne because he wanted his daughter to be queen. As he saw no chance that Alfred, the better pretender to the crown, would agree to this marriage, he planned a conspiracy. He convinced the English nobility that Alfred, along with his Norman followers, was a threat to English landowners. Thus, Alfred's companions were killed, and Alfred died after his blinding.[686] Thus as William of Malmesbury, Henry makes Godwin responsible for Alfred's death. His accusation is even graver as he describes Godwin's egoistical and overambitious motives. Henry of Huntingdon also, therefore, uses William of Malmesbury's story of Godwin's death. He manages to dramatise the narration by claiming it was a piece of bread on which Godwin choked.[687] According to Greenway, this might refer to the Last Supper and the bread Jesus gave to Judas.[688] So, Godwin is compared to Judas, the ultimate symbol of a traitor, which shows how little Henry likes him and what he thinks about his actions. However, at this point of the narration, Harold is not associated with his father's doings. It only reveals the kind of family whence Harold comes. As blood played an important role for a person's reputation, Harold's prestige is rather low after this episode.

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[686] Henry: *HA*, vi.20, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 372.
[687] Henry: *HA*, vi.23, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 378.
[688] Greenway 1996, p. 378.

In the conflict between Edward and the Godwins, this impression is further strength-ened, although Henry's picture of Harold is not as dark as William's. Thus, Henry leaves open whether Godwin and his sons really planned a rebellion against Edward. It is only an assertion by the new Archbishop of Canterbury. However, as the family re-fused to come to the royal court alone and began to plunder the coasts of the kingdom, it is likely that Henry saw the claim as correct. Because the Godwins owned of a fleet and Stigand intervened, Edward forgave the Godwins nevertheless and restored their property.[689] So in comparison to Malmesbury, the story is moderated, as Henry does not openly criticise Harold for the plundering. Still, the future king looks rather like a pirate.

The only situation where Harold is portrayed positively is the campaign in Wales, where he successfully installed a new king. However, this impression is eliminated only a few lines later in the conflict between Tostig and Harold, during which Edward foretold the destruction of the two. There, the brothers are characterised as so extremely ambitious and jealous that they could not even stop themselves from murdering.[690] By this narra-tion, Henry builds a bridge from Godwin to Harold. The first one murdered Alfred for his own ambitions, and so, father and son show quite similar characteristics, which strong-ly speaks against Harold's suitability for kingship despite his military abilities.

These also play a role in the Battles Stamford Bridge and Hastings. Whereas Henry of Huntingdon does not tell much about Harold's deeds in the first battle (except that it was an extremely difficult fight), Harold was a good strategist in the latter one. He posi-tioned his fighters into an impenetrable shield wall that could only be broken by a Nor-man trick. Nevertheless, Harold died at the end by the hands of Norman knights after he had been shot by an arrow into his eye.[691] In this case, I agree with Evan's argu-mentation that the arrow stands as a symbol for blinding, meaning that Harold was rendered unfit to rule and unable to lead his army into war.[692] So, before his death, Harold lost the only good quality he had—being a successful strategist. Thus, in the end, he had no qualities required of a good king.

Henry of Huntingdon tells, as the other writers before him, the story of Harold's perjury. Again, he stays close to William of Malmesbury's text. By accident, Harold was driven away to Ponthieu, where he was imprisoned and sent to Duke William:

Harold swore to William, on many precious relics of the saints, that he would marry his daughter and after Edward's death would preserve England for William's benefit. On his return to Eng-

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[689] Henry: *HA*, vi.22, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 376.
[690] Henry: *HA*, vi.25, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 382.
[691] Henry: *HA*, vi.27-30, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 386–394.
[692] Evans 2003, pp. 36f.

land, he who had been received with great honour and many gifts, chose to commit the crime of perjury.[693]

As the other writers, Henry saw Harold's perjury as severe, especially as he had sworn on relics and because William treated him so well. He further makes clear that Harold actively chose to break his oath already on his journey back to England. In contrast to Eadmer's text, in which Harold was the chosen successor of Edward, Harold had no contradictory alliances. Edward was still alive, and the decision about his succession had not yet been made. However, Harold did not care and seized the crown. Henry thereby makes clear that Harold usurped the throne, ignoring every convention he needed in order to be authorised as king. So, he was not even considered as Edward's successor by the people because the magnates were thinking about Edgar Ætheling instead. Also, nothing indicates that Edward wanted Harold to be king. Instead, Henry's argument about why Harold's claim was successful resembles Orderic's description: "But Harold, relying on his forces and his birth, usurped the crown of the kingdom"[694] As a consequence, Harold lacks all legitimacy.

In the passages following, Henry gives more reasons as to why Harold has no authority to be king. He tells, from William the Conqueror's view, that, firstly, Harold was jointly responsible for the death of Alfred, which Henry had gravely condemned; secondly, that Harold took part in the exiling of Frenchmen from England; thirdly, that Harold broke his oath and that fourthly, had usurped the kingdom that ancestrally belonged to William.[695] In this way, Henry makes Harold responsible for the misdeeds of his father in order to show his unsuitability for the office. Furthermore, he once more emphasises the perjury. The kinship of William to Edward, however, is a new argument that shows the rightful claim William has to the throne.

After the Norman panegyrics, Henry is the writer that delegitimises Harold most. He summarises his rule as follows: "Harold, the perjured king, for one incomplete year, was destroyed through his own injustice."[696] While the other authors give him at least some good attributes, Henry takes away even Harold's aptitude as a strategist before his death. He is further delegitimised by his closeness to his overambitious father and by his perjury. Harold had neither the consent of the aristocracy nor of Edward as he seized the crown. Henry, by Edward's prophecy and his summary, makes clear that

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[693] Henry: *HA*, vi.25f, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 380–383 (*Haraldus autem iurauit Willelmo, super reliquias sanctorum multas et electissimas, se filiam eius ducturum, et Angliam post mortem Edwardi ad opus eius seruaturum. Summo igitur honore susceptus, et muneribus amplis ditatus, cum reuersus esset in Angliam, periurii crimen elegit.*).

[694] Henry: *HA*, vi.27, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 384f (*Haraldus uero uiribus et genere fretus regni diadema inuasit.*).

[695] Henry: *HA*, vi.27, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 384–386.

[696] Henry: *HA*, vi.42, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 410f (*Haraldus rex periurus i anno, et tamen non pleno quem propria perdidit iniusticia.*).

Harold alone was responsible for his fate, as he incurred God's wrath with his actions. By summarising the reasons why Harold was unsuitable to rule from William's point of view and claiming that Harold took away the throne from his legal owner, Henry cleverly leads into William's right to the English crown. Thus, delegitimising Harold helps authorise William.

Roger of Howden characterises Harold in a good way despite Godwin's actions and Harold's participation in the rebellion against Edward. On the contrary, Harold's behaviour during his exile is described as considerate towards the English population, seeing as he plundered as little as possible. Obviously, the reasons for the rebellion were seen as justified and the outcome welcomed:

Peace and concord being thus established, to all the people they promised good laws, and banished all the Normans who had instituted unjust ones, and had pronounced unjust judgements, and had given the bed council against the English.[697]

Thus, the rebellion came to a good end, and the kingdom profited from it. Harold's role is not questionable or problematic.

In the campaigns the followed against the Welsh, Harold had the possibility to show his qualities as a warrior and strategist. Roger calls him a "valiant duke"[698] and a "brave man and warlike commander"[699]. With this reputation, Harold frightened his enemies so much that they did not even dare to fight against him.[700] The second campaign is depicted similarly. There, Harold frightened away the Welsh king and, together with Tostig, he forced the Welsh to abandon their leader.[701] This shows that Harold was able to defend his people and enjoyed a good reputation in England.

Also, the conflict with Tostig that finally led to the Battle of Stamford Bridge is described totally differently than in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* by Orderic Vitalis. Harold did not work against his brother during the rebellion in Northumberland but tried to support him. Nevertheless, the northern lords were successful, and Tostig fled to Flanders. After Harold had become king, Tostig began to plunder the coast of southern England without Roger of Howden explaining why. He even made an alliance with the Norwe-

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[697] Riley 1994b, p. 120 (*Facta igitur concordia paceque firmata, omni populo rectam legem promiserunt, et omnes Normannos, qui leges iniquas adinverant, et injusta judicia judicaverant, multaque regi insilia adversus Anglos dederant, exlegaverunt;*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 100).
[698] Riley 1994b, pp. 122 and 128 (*strenuum ducem*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 102 /*strenuus dux*—ibid., p. 106).
[699] Riley 1994b, p. 122 (*virum fortem et bellicosum*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 102).
[700] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 122.
[701] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 106f.

gian King Harald Hardrada[702] and invaded northern England. However, Harold is described once more as a successful ruler. Tostig fled from his fleet, and Harold managed to gain a "complete victory"[703] over Harald's and Tostig's army. Thereby, he still embodied Christian virtues such as restraint and forgiving one's enemies (i.e. Harald's son Olav[704] and the surviving Norwegians were allowed return to their home).[705]

Roger of Howden clearly legitimises Harold as king. He was the chosen successor of Edward the Confessor and of the English nobles. Furthermore, he was crowned by the Archbishop of York.[706] Thus, the argument of the Norman panegyrics, that Harold's rule was illegitimate because he was crowned by an excommunicated archbishop, is obsolete. Concerning Harold's short rule, Roger is positive as well. Harold did the things a good ruler was supposed to do: He made new laws, patronised the Church, behaved rightly (by being humble, pious, and friendly), and ensured peace. Interestingly, he also undid unjust laws, which means that Harold distanced himself from his predecessor (a typical means to authorise one's rule).[707] However, I do not think that Roger of Howden wants to indicate that Edward was a bad king, but rather that this was part of the enumeration of what a good king did after being installed on the throne. In the Battle of Hastings, Harold died as a hero. He went into the fight even though he knew that he did not have much chance of winning. Still, Harold

defended himself so bravely, and with such consummate valour that the enemy could hardly get the better of him. But, alas! after very great numbers had fallen on both sides, at twilight he himself fell.[708]

So, Harold defended the kingdom until the very end. He fought well, without fear, and made it difficult for the attackers. Nevertheless, he lost without having fault. Thus, the citation above shows clearly how Harold's participation in battle is used to make him a hero. Hence, the whole description of Harold Godwinson portrays him as a good and able king.

Nevertheless, things change with the following chapter, which tells the background of William's claim to the throne.[709] As in Eadmer's version, Harold did not listen to Edward and became a perjurer. Thus, the Battle of Hastings is seen as God's revenge for the

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[702] Roger of Howden, too, confuses him with Harald Fairhair.
[703] Riley 1994b, p. 135 (*plenam victoriam*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 112).
[704] Olav (1067–1093) followed his father to the Norwegian throne and is also known as Olav Kyrre (the Peaceful) (Norseng 2017).
[705] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 107–112.
[706] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 108.
[707] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 111.
[708] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 136 (*seipsum pugnando tam fortiter defendit et tam strenue, ut vix ab hostili agmine posset interimi. [...] At postquam ex his ex illis plurimi corruere, heu, ipsemet cecidit, crepusculi tempore.*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 113).
[709] See chapter 4.1.

perjury.[710] Consequently, we have the picture of two different Harolds. Whereas the first one, where Harold is a good king, does not help legitimise William's kingship, the second does—there the Norman duke becomes a tool for divine revenge.

What concerns Edward the Confessor is also valid for Harold Godwinson's role in the *Historia Rerum de rebus anglicorum*: He is only mentioned twice by William of Newburgh. Once as the opponent of William I, and, the second time, as his death left England to the victor. There is no hint that William is suspicious about Harold's legitimacy. On the contrary, he is called "king of the English"[711], which indicates that his authority was beyond doubt. So, William of Newburgh does not use the strategy of legitimising William via delegitimising Harold either.

All writers, with the exception of William of Newburgh, delegitimise the reign of Harold Godwinson. Orderic Vitalis and Henry of Huntingdon take most of the arguments from the Norman panegyrics. Even if Orderic tries to give a more balanced picture of Harold, negative character traits and delegitimising factors predominate. Eadmer of Canterbury and Roger of Howden show a much better picture of Harold. They see him as a good and able ruler, if only he had not his broken oath to William. This, however, becomes the central de-authorising factor. Therefore, the historiographers can be divided into two groups: on the one side, there are Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon, who use many arguments to explain why Harold is unfit to rule. They delegitimise Harold Godwinson in order to show that William's claim to the throne is the better one. This strategy is taken from the Norman panegyrics. On the other side, there are Eadmer and Roger, who have only perjury to delegitimise Harold. Roger probably copied the argument from Eadmer, who needed to reconcile the obvious positive English memory of Harold with the defeat at Hastings. This argument, however, becomes the most central one to justify the Norman invasion: William the Conqueror became God's weapon to avenge the perjury. William of Newburgh, again, stands apart. For him, Harold's legitimacy has nothing to do with William's. This reveals that, at the end of the twelfth century, Harold could be depicted as a legitimised king again who was not at fault for the English defeat.

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[710] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 114f.
[711] Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 37 (*regi Anglorum*— William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 20).

4.3 God's Decision: The Battle of Hastings

Today, the Battle of Hastings is often used synonymously with the Norman Conquest and is associated with the big changes the Norman invasion was supposed to have brought to England. For many, the battle stands for William's decisive victory that made him king. In this chapter, the role the Battle of Hastings played in the medieval narratives to authorise Norman rule is analysed. Modern scholarship gives the following reasons for William's victory: his balanced army that used different kind of weapons and William's ability to sensibly use knights, bowmen, and spearmen.[712] However, as the Norman panegyrics interpreted William's victory as God's decision, the question is raised insofar as how this idea was reused or whether the authors found other ways to explain the victory.

For medieval Christianity, war was not easy to manage. It was already shown above that the main task of a good Christian ruler was to ensure peace. So, William's battle is just the opposite of peace and needs to be justified. The ideology of the just war, which gained more importance during the twelfth century,[713] helped legitimise William's attack. Generally, it could be considered a just war if its function was to solve conflicts and restore peace.[714] Therefore, this chapter also looks at how the medieval writers sought to justify William's attack.

The importance ascribed to the Battle of Hastings nowadays is reflected in Orderic's text. In contrast to the Battle of Stamford Bridge, Orderic's description of this battle is detailed. The significance he awards to the event is shown alone in the fact that he mentions the Norman Conquest in three of his books. To answer the questions posed above, how Orderic describes the two opposing parties and their leaders and how he sees the battle itself is analysed. Then, how he justifies the Norman victory is considered.

As it was shown in the previous chapter, Harold Godwinson usurped the English throne in Orderic's eyes and could not ensure peace. This makes it possible for Orderic to see the Norman Conquest as a just war: William fought the usurper in order to install peace in England. The legitimacy of the Battle is further emphasised as it is declared as God's will that William attacked and won. Orderic writes that William had the consent of the

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[712] Bennett et al. 2009, p. 21.
[713] Graus 2002a, p. 186; Nicholson 2004, pp. 25f. War was something difficult in the eyes of the Church, as both Bible and Church Fathers have contradictory views on whether it was right to go to war or not (Nicholson 2004, pp. 21–26).
[714] Nicholson 2004, pp. 21–26.

pope, and therefore of God, before he conquered England.[715] Orderic stresses even more God's agreement with the Norman Conquest, as he sees it as divine will that the English coast was undefended upon William's arrival: Harold needed to go north in order to fight Harald Hardrada.[716] This made it easier for William to land in England with his fleet and to win the subsequent battle. Thus, God actively helped William to win.

Orderic stresses how the Normans engaged themselves for the crown of their duke. They helped him to prepare the battle and fought actively for William's throne. The Conqueror earned their support and is described as the hero of the battle. Not only did he fight extremely well and with immense courage, but he also led the army excellently and was a good example for his soldiers. This meets exactly the ideal Clauss et al. draw from a medieval king on the battlefield, whose attendance alone scared and terrified the enemy. Kings could have several roles in medieval battle. They could be a warlord, a commander and/or an active soldier.[717] William fulfilled all of them well by preparing the campaign, deciding what to do, and fighting actively.

Harold, on the other hand, died at the beginning of the battle and had no time to prove himself a hero.[718] Orderic's main source for the Battle of Hastings, William of Poitiers, does not tell when exactly Harold died, so Orderic uses William of Jumièges instead, who gives an early time in battle for Harold's death.[719] This choice may also have fit Orderic's interests, as he uses typical topoi of medieval historiography here. There was the ideal king, William I, who fought in battle to prove himself a hero, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, there was the *rex iniustus,* who turned out to be a villain.[720] Orderic shows sympathy for the English cause, and this may be the reason he does not want to tell of too many negative aspects of their leader. Letting Harold die so early in battle saves Orderic from commenting on Harold's behaviour in the fights but also shows that the king was a superfluous leader, because the English needed a long time to remark on his death, as we shall see below. Additionally, Harold's early death shows that he was no hero, and, according to Evans, Harold's nearly unrecognisable body stands as a symbol for the total defeat of the English.[721]

Orderic describes the English, along with the Normans, as good and brave fighters, and this is the reason why the battle is fought so long. The Normans needed to use a

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[715] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 142.
[716] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 168.
[717] Clauss et al. 2015, pp. 9–11.
[718] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, pp. II 174–6.
[719] Chibnall 1969b-1983, p. III 137. William of Jumièges: *GND*, vii.15(36), ed. by Houts 1995, p. 168.
[720] Clauss et al. 2015, p. 11.
[721] Evans 2003, p. 79.

dangerous strategy to defeat their opponents.[722] Orderic reports later that the English only gave up because they had realised their leaders' death at sunset, and the Normans were still ready to fight on.[723] It was quite common that medieval battles ended with the death of the commanders, wherefore the behaviour of the English is not astonishing.[724] Still, it makes one wonder why they needed such a long time to recognise Harold's death. This might be explained by Orderic's source and intentions: He wants to describe the English as good fighters who managed to hold back the Normans for some time. This is shown in the next paragraph, where Orderic describes the Norman behaviour right after the battle: Recognising their defeat, the English fled, and the Normans pursued them "to their own harm"[725]. They fell down a broken rampart, and the English used their chance to slay them. Orderic gives us the immense number of 15,000 Normans that supposedly died. As generally is the case with medieval figures, this should be considered with caution and probably simply stands for a high number. This short episode shows that Orderic wanted the English to succeed at something that day.

Orderic clearly pities the English's fate.[726] He describes the battle as "a scene of destruction so terrible that it must have moved any beholder to pity"[727]. He writes that it was England's nobility and youth lying there, and that Harold's face was so destroyed that it was unrecognisable. This can be read as symbol for the brutality of the battle, but it also has a *memento-mori* effect. The once-great King Harold was no longer recognisable in death, and he fared no better than all the English who had died that day. Even William seemed to be shocked by the violence, even though Orderic does not write it outright. Orderic does not take a side during the battle. He describes the Normans and the English as brave fighters; the only difference is the description of the leaders. While William turned out to be an ideal king, Harold died early, and his death was not even recognised.

As stated above, both sides in the battle were good fighters. How does Orderic then justify the Norman victory? Orderic argues here first with a worldly view. The Normans won the battle because of their superior, albeit dangerous strategy, which they seemed

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[722] Today, researchers assume that it was this strategy of feint attack that secured the Norman victory. It is still seen as dangerous as the leader could easily lose control over his army (Bennett et al. 2009, pp. 92f and 152).

[723] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 174–6.

[724] A medieval army worked via personal networks with the king at its head. Each warrior had a leader who, in turn, answered to a higher leader and so forth. In this way, everyone knew what he had to do. The death of the king, therefore, often led to panic (Clauss 2009, pp. 34–38).

[725] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 176f (*ad sui detrimentum*).

[726] Houts 1996, p. 12.

[727] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 178f (*miserabilem stragem non absque miseratione uidendam intuitus est*).

to have used rather by chance. The Norman army believed William to be dead and wanted to flee, but the duke was able to give them their courage back, and the soldiers returned to battle, surprising the English. As this was a successful move, they feigned their retreat twice more. The other worldly reason for the Norman victory is the fall of Harold Godwinson, along with other Anglo-Saxon nobles, and the steadfastness of the Norman army. Because of this, the English began to flee. The death of the English nobles is just presented as fact. There is no description of how they died or by whom they were killed.[728] Except William, the Battle of Hastings had no heroes and was more or less a bloodbath.

The other argument for the Norman victory is ecclesiastical. Both sides—the English and the Normans—deserved punishment for their sins. Many Normans died while persecuting the English after battle. Orderic thinks that they went too far in their uncontrollable fury and desired other men's goods as well. Therefore, they were punished by being killed by the English after battle.[729] However, the English sins were more severe. They had killed Edward the Confessor's brother, Alfred, together with his servants many years ago, and they had slaughtered Harald Hardrada, Tostig, and their armies in the Battle of Stamford Bridge.[730] Furthermore, the Normans had God on their side. William, as a pious warrior, prayed to him before battle, and God favoured his cause: The coast was abandoned as William landed.

In Orderic's description, the ecclesiastical reasons for the English defeat dominate. His interpretation of the Norman victory fits well into Houts' observation for the second generation of writers after the Conquest: They see their defeat as God's punishment for their sins.[731] It fits into Orderic's monastic worldview that ultimately, only God decides who wins or loses a battle. God's will was also revealed in the comet that was seen in April over England.[732]

As mentioned above, Orderic sees the Norman invasion as just because the English crown belonged to William. God was on William's side since Harold was in the north when William landed at Hastings. This distance gave William enough time to prepare the battle against a weakened opponent. Harold wanted to make a surprise attack, but William got word of it and began immediately with battle preparations. Orderic characterises him as a pious man who went to mass before battle and had several clerks with

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[728] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 174–6.
[729] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 176–8.
[730] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 176–8.
[731] Houts 1996, p. 12.
[732] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 134. Halley's Comet shone over Europe in April 1066 and was interpreted by most of the chroniclers as an omen for the Norman Conquest (Chibnall 1979–1983, p. II 134).

him. In contrast to other writers, Orderic does not describe the English preparations.[733] Obviously, he knows the negative stories about drunken English soldiers but does not want to tell them in order to prevent harming the English further. Orderic shows respect for the English's reason to fight, and he sees it as legitimate. Even if he does not support Harold, he sees their wish to defend their country as a rightful cause to fight.[734]

In contrast to Orderic, Eadmer of Canterbury does not mention the papal support for William's project. As Harold is not described as *rex iniustus*, William's campaign had neither the aim to release England from an incapable king. Nevertheless, Eadmer hints that William's attack still can be seen as a just war approved by God: He interprets the outcome of the Battle as rightful punishment of a perjurer,[735] and thus, William was a divine instrument to restore the proper order.

There is also no detailed account of the Battle of Hastings. It came to the Norman attack as Harold refused to keep his oath, and William saw a conquest as the best solution to claim his right. The battle was fought hard; Harold died in it. In contrast to Orderic, there is no description of a heroic William or a passive Harold. A description of the two parties is missing as well. The only commonality is the balance in the battle and the violence. Both parties fought well, and so, it was God who decided:

Of that battle the French who took part in it do to this day declare that, although fortune swayed now on this side and now on that, yet of the Normans so many were slain or put to flight that the victory which they had gained is truly and without any doubt to be attributed to nothing else than the miraculous intervention of God, who by punishing Harold's wicked perjury shewed that He is not a God that hath any pleasure in wickedness.[736]

The divine decision is another similarity to Orderic Vitalis, only that Eadmer does not give any earthly reasons whatsoever. Furthermore, Eadmer does not see the Conquest as a punishment for English sins but for Harold's perjury alone. William's attack was not necessarily a just war, but, as he was a divine instrument, the Conquest was still authorised by God.

This may contradict the smooth transition between Edward and Harold, but Eadmer simply may have the same problem as Orderic Vitalis: he needs to explain the English

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[733] E.g. William of Malmesbury describes the English as drunken and not pious at all in order to draw a greater contrast between the two parties in battle (William: *GRA*, iii.241, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 452–454; see later in this chapter).

[734] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 172–4.

[735] Eadmer: *HN*, 11, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 9.

[736] Bosanquet 1964, p. 9 (*De quo prœlio testantur adhuc Franci qui interfuerunt, quoniam, licet varius casus hinc inde extiterit, tamen tanta strages ac fuga Normannorum fuit, ut Victoria qua potiti sunt vere et absque dubio soli miraculo Dei ascribenda sit, qui puniendo per hanc iniquum perjurii scelus Haroldi, ostendit se non Deum esse volentem iniquitatem.*—Eadmer: *HN*, 10f, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 9).

defeat at Hastings, which he does not fully understand and wants to legitimise the An-glo-Norman dynasty. Accordingly, it is not possible to present William as a usurper or Harold as *rex iustus.* Explaining the Norman victory with God's decision means that God, as the righteous ruler, must have had His reasons. In contrast to Orderic, Eadmer does not blame the English as a whole but only Harold for the defeat.

It was already mentioned above that William of Malmesbury believes that Edward the Confessor considered William as his heir and that Harold swore an oath promising Wil-liam the English throne after Edward's death. As Harold became king anyway, William of Malmesbury joins the arguments of the Norman panegyrics: Duke William sent mes-sengers to Harold reminding him of his oath. As Harold refused to give up the throne by claiming that his promise was invalid because William's daughter, whom he was sup-posed to marry, had died, William got the support of the pope for his cause. Malm-esbury writes that the pope thought well over the request, which made his persistence even greater. In this context, William of Malmesbury also calls William's planned attack "providence of God" and a "just cause".[737] Thus, William of Malmesbury shows that Duke William's attack of England was justified because it undid injustice (Harold's ille-gal reign) and helped to introduce the right order again (by putting Edward's rightful successor on the throne). Furthermore, Malmesbury shows that William tried to avoid war by sending messengers to Harold. At last, the duke had God on his side.

Generally, William is presented as a pious duke with God on his side. He asked the pope for support and even managed successfully with the help of St Walaric[738] to pray for good winds in order to be able to cross the Channel. There, God's providence is shown once more. During the landing, William fell down. This mishap was interpreted as a lucky omen by his soldiers: "You have England in your hand, duke, and you shall be king!"[739] The falling of a leader before an important battle is a typical motif in histori-ography: Originally, the motif comes from Suetonius' *De vita Caesarum* where the au-thor describes Caesar's landing in Africa, but it became popular throughout the whole of Europe in the twelfth century.[740] So, even the Scandinavian sagas use it as they tell

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[737] William: *GRA*, iii.238, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 446–449, here 448f (*prouidentia Dei*/*iustam causam*).
[738] St Walaric (d. 620) was a monk (later abbot) in northern France. Already during his lifetime, wonders were attributed to him, e.g. protecting the monastery's crop from insects. After his death, a cult developed around his tomb, as people were cured there from illnesses (Farmer 1997, p. 497).
[739] William: *GRA*, iii.238, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 450f (*Tenes [...] Angliam, comes, res futurus*).
[740] Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus: *De vita Caesarum libri VIII*, i.59, ed. by Rolfe, Bradley, pp. 80–82; Gluckauf Haahr 1990, pp. 169f.

us that Harald Hardrada felt off his horse before the Battle of Stamford Bridge.[741] As Harald lost this battle, the fall was interpreted as a bad omen. William was going to win in Hastings, and, as a consequence, it was a good omen. Therefore, this is probably a typical motif in order to pique the reader's interest and, in a Christian context, to prove that everything is predetermined by God—in this case William's victory.

William of Malmesbury does not only show Duke William as a man close to God, but also the Normans in general. As Harold sent a spy to the Norman camp, the Englishman believed the Norman knights to be priests because they had no beards.[742] Their behaviour was also much more Christian than that of the English. The night before battle, they prayed and confessed their sins and, while going into battle, they still asked God for help.[743] William of Malmesbury leaves no doubt that the Normans and their duke did everything to prove themselves worthy of God's support.

Duke William planned his invasion to England with consideration. To show this, Malmesbury recounts how well William organised his army.[744] In contrast to the other writers, Malmesbury claims that William was not plundering the area around Hastings but even tried to avoid battle by sending one more messenger to Harold. However, he was unsuccessful.[745] As did his fellow warriors, William showed a strong belief in the rightness of his plans and in God. In the *Gesta Regum*, it is him who had the idea to feign retreat, making it possible to break the English lines. As in the *Ecclesiastical History*, William fulfilled all three functions of a king at war: He decided on the strategy, motivated his army, and fought actively in battle. William of Malmesbury presents him as a superior warrior and fearless leader. According to him, three horses died under the future king, but the duke himself stayed unharmed. This is, of course, explained with God's protecting hand.[746]

While William did everything to secure God's favour to win against Harold, Harold Godwinson did the opposite. Neither did he send a messenger to the pope for his cause nor did he try to avoid battle. Instead, he sent William's messenger away and "expressed the wish that God might judge between himself and William."[747] There, William of Malmesbury draws a parallel to Harold's father, Godwin. As written above, Godwin, too, had carelessly appointed God as his judge, as he wanted to prove his

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[741] E.g. *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum*, ch. XLI, ed. by Driscoll 2008, p. 56-59; Theodoricus Monachus: *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, ch. XXVIII, ed. by Storm 1880, p. 56; *Fagrskinna*, ch. LXVIII, ed. by Bjarni Einarsson 1984, pp. 282f.
[742] William: *GRA*, iii.239, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 450.
[743] William: *GRA*, iii.242, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 454.
[744] William: *GRA*, iii.238, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 446.
[745] William: *GRA*, iii.240, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 452.
[746] William: *GRA*, iii.244, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 456.
[747] William: *GRA*, iii.228-240, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 448–452, here iii.240, 452f (*imprecans, ut Deus inter eum et Willelmum iudicaret*).

innocence concerning Alfred's death. He died right afterwards. Here, it is the same story again: Harold wanted God to decide who the righteous king of England was. As he died soon afterwards in battle, William of Malmesbury makes clear once more that God regarded William as the lawful English king.

As does Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury uses the Battle of Hastings as an occasion to contrast Harold and William and by extension the English and the Normans. We saw already that the Normans are depicted as pious and William as a devout and brave fighter who prepared well for the battle. Harold did just the opposite. Of course, the Battle of Stamford Bridge made good planning impossible, but Harold made, with his inconsiderate behaviour, everything worse. After having won over Tostig and Harald, he refused to share the loot with his soldiers. Therefore, many decided to leave Harold, so that only few Englishmen were left. The other soldiers, who went to Hastings with Harold, were mercenaries. For William, it is important to emphasise that there were not many English present in Hastings, but that the few who were fought well and fearlessly.[748] Here, he states that one reason for the Norman victory was the small number of English fighters. Harold was at least partly responsible for it because of his greed.

Then, William of Malmesbury begins a new book where he gives a more detailed view of the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings. There, he tells the reader again that Harold had no time to prepare for battle and had not enough followers. William tells that Harold did not even try to summon new troops, which underlines Harold's carelessness once more. Furthermore, even if he had done, William of Malmesbury claims, probably not many would have joined him because of his greed shown in the north, which caused "general hostility"[749]. Also, he refused to take his brother's advice.[750] Nevertheless, in the battle, Harold fought well. He was a good leader who kept the warriors together, and so, it was first his death that led to a general flight. However, also in battle, Harold was not content with being only leader, but he also wanted to be a soldier. Until his death, he fought bravely, and the Normans did not dare to come near him.[751]

Despite being brave fighters, William describes the English as rather barbarous: He compares their appearance to that of the Normans, describing them with long hair and

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[748] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 422.
[749] William: *GRA*, iii.239, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 450f (*erant infensi*).
[750] William: *GRA*, iii.239f, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 450–452. Winkler 2013 argues that Gryth's speech is a stylistic devise in order to dramatise Harold's failings before Hastings even more. Harold fails not only to listen to his brother, but he is also unable to see his wrong behaviour (pp. 158f).
[751] William: *GRA*, iii.242f, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 454–456.

beards.[752] According to Fenton, William wants the English soldiers even to be associated with women because of their long hair. This indicates a backwards world order that has to be overcome by conquest.[753] Weiler sees the connection between women as well. For him, the long hair already foreshadows the defeat in the fight, as it shows that the men are incapable of defending their kingdom.[754] Malmesbury goes further by stating that the English still looked like the Britons described by Caesar.[755] The parallel is insofar interesting because the Romans saw foreigners generally as barbarian and because Caesar ultimately won against the Gaul. Also, William of Malmesbury does not have a high opinion of the Britons.[756] The association with the Britons could also be a hint that many of the soldiers were not English but foreign (or Celtic) mercenary troops. Still, by comparing the English soldiers to the Britons and to women, William once more shows who was going to win the upcoming battle and probably also the negative state of England in general. Malmesbury compares the behaviour of the English before the battle to the one of the Normans as well. As written above, the Normans did what pious soldiers were expected to do. The English, however, spent the night before the Conquest drinking and singing and went into the fight without praying.[757] In doing so, they went into battle unprepared and having not confessed their sins.

To summarise, it was God who decided over William's victory. He came to the decision that William should become England's next king, and, therefore, He supported him. William of Malmesbury shows in his text that God was right in His decision by depicting William as a good and pious ruler who did everything to prove himself worthy of God's decision and to earn His favour.[758] Harold, in turn, even if he was a good fighter, lacked necessary virtues. He was greedy, overestimated himself, and was in comparison to William not pious. He was solely responsible for the defeat of the English. Nevertheless, William of Malmesbury makes clear that the English were too few to defend their kingdom even though they were brave fighters.

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[752] William: *GRA*, iii.239, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 450.
[753] Fenton 2008, pp. 110–122. See also Foerster 2009 who argues that William of Malmesbury saw the Norman Conquest as a bringer of a new and better culture (p. 64).
[754] Weiler 2005, pp. 16f.
[755] William: *GRA*, iii.239, ed. by Mynors et al. 19981998, p. 450.
[756] Fenton 2008, p. 104. He sees them as weak, lazy, and promiscuous. Winkler 2017b strongly disagrees with this opinion. She comes to the conclusion that the historical Britons are described in a much better light than in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Bede and that William downplays the significance of their defeat against the Anglo-Saxons. The negative view, according to her, only concerns the Celtics of the twelfth century. Still, in the context above, the association of the English with the Britons is clearly negative.
[757] William: *GRA*, iii.241, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 452.
[758] Sønnesyn 2012 states that William of Malmesbury generally saw it as more important that a ruler gained God's favour than that he was of royal stock (p. 158).

As seen above, Henry of Huntingdon writes that William sought out the battle, as Harold was unworthy to rule and William had the better right to the crown. So, William also had every right to fight against Harold as he needed to reinstall the right order. Dependent upon the support of his nobles, he summoned them for a meeting. However, most of them saw a conquest of England as too dangerous and did not want to help William. Therefore, William FitzOsbern[759] lured them into a trap. He pretended to be against the invasion as well, and, as the nobles assured him to do what he was going to do, he went to William and promised his support.[760] Greenway states that Henry is the first one who tells this story.[761] It indicates that William had not the Norman nobility behind him as he conquered England, which might be interpreted as both a weakness (less support) or a strength (the Norman nobility might be seen negatively) for his legitimacy.

In any case, this explains why the Norman army was frightened before the battle. Therefore, William held a long speech in order to motivate his men. In it, he reminded them of the Norman history, marked by conquest and victory. He referred to the successful wars of Hengist, Rollo, and other Norman dukes that made Normandy into what is was in the eleventh century and extended the Norman Empire to its then size. After the long list of the deeds of his own and his soldiers' ancestors, William began to present the English as a weak opponent, who had been defeated by their ancestors many times, and he asked his army:

Is it not shameful to you that a people accustomed to defeat, a people devoid of military knowledge, a people that does not even possess arrows, should advance as if in battle order against you, O bravest? Are you not ashamed that King Harold, who has broken the oath he made to me in your presence, should have presumed to show you his face? It is amazing to me that you have seen with your own eyes those who by execrable treachery beheaded your kin, together with my kinsman Alfred, and that their impious heads should still stand on their shoulders.[762]

Then William called his army to war. Greenway argues that the speech was inserted later by Henry, as he also wrote the speech for the Battle of Standard, and that Henry reused the material of the Norman myth.[763] This is why he lets William list all the famous deeds of his forefathers. The Normans are depicted as a people of Viking de-

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[759] William FitzOsbern (c.1020–1071) was a great landowner in Normandy and steward at William's court. As a reward for his support before and after the Conquest, William appointed him as the Earl of Hereford. See Crouch 2002.
[760] Henry: *HA*, vi.27, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 386.
[761] Greenway 1996, p. 387.
[762] Henry: *HA*, vi.29, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 392f (*Nonne igitur pudori uobis est gentem uinci solitam, gentem arte belli cassam, gentem nec etiam sagittas habentem, contra uos, O fortissimi, quasi bello ordinatam procedere? Nonne uobis pudet regem Haraldum, contra me in presentia uestri periurum, faciem suam uobis ostendere ausum fuisse? Michi tamen stupori est, quod eos, qui parentes uestris cum Aluredo cognato meo prodicione nefanda excapitauerunt, oculis uestris uidistis, et eorum capita nefanda adhuc humeris eorum supersunt.*).
[763] Greenway 1996a, p. 113.

scent that successfully conquers half of Europe. Many elements there are a popular part of the Norman myth and can be found already in Dudo's work, like the story of Hengist and Rollo as forefather.[764] By referring to the Norman myth at this point, Henry gives the reader the impression that the conquest of England was just one in a long row of successful conquests. As the Norman people were predestined to win these, also the following battle was going to be won. Furthermore, by portraying the English as weak and unable to fight, William implied that his soldiers were cowards if they did not go into battle. Lastly, he reminded his army to avenge the perjury against their duke and the death of Alfred. Thus, Henry's speech for William contains several elements that were typical of medieval speeches before battle: William told them that they had the advantage (because the English were unable to fight), he reminded his soldiers of their last victories and the one of their ancestors and appealed to them to take revenge. By referring to the Norman myth, William also indicated that God was on their side.[765] Hence, Henry does not only insert the speech for more excitement but also to show the reader the reasons for William's attack (Harold's perjury and murder) and William's legitimacy. William stands here in a row with other successful conquerors such as Hastings and Rollo.

Although William had depicted the English as bad fighters in his speech, the battle was fought hard, and two strategies were needed in order to defeat them. The first one was the feigned flight already mentioned by Orderic Vitalis, whereas the second one is new. William had mentioned in his speech that the English did not know of arrows, and he used these in order to defeat them. By shooting them straight into the air, they killed many English—amongst others they put Harold Godwinson out of action.[766] Therefore, the Normans won because William had the better strategy. Additionally, Henry makes clear that the victory was granted by God. He mentions the comet seen in 1066 as a divine sign of a change of ruler.[767]

To summarise, Henry uses the Battle of Hastings in order to legitimise William's rule. He shows that William fought for a just cause by avenging Harold's perjury and the death of Alfred (which is wrongly blamed on Harold). In the battle speech and by referring to the comet, Henry shows that the victory at Hastings was granted to William by God. Lastly, Henry places the Norman Conquest into a long row of conquests by Nor-

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[764] Dudo of St Quentin: *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniæ ducum*, i-ii, ed. by Lair 1865, pp. 129–175. Dudo aimed to make the Normans proud of their mixed descent and stylised Rollo as a kind of Viking Aeneas (see Potts 1996, pp. 139–142).
[765] For the rhetorical elements of battle speeches see Bliese 1989, here esp. pp. 204–214.
[766] Henry: *HA*, vi.30, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 392–394.
[767] Henry: *HA*, vi.30, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 395.

mans and of foreign invasions to England. Thereby, it was not a unique event but part of a greater, divine plan.

As seen before, Roger of Howden gives us two slightly different versions of the Norman Conquest. In the first one, in which Harold is also depicted as an ideal *rex iustus*, William attacked England without any particular reason. The Battle of Hastings was the last of three battles that took place in England in 1066. The English army was so weakened, as the best men had already fallen in the other two battles, and Harold went into battle when the army was not yet complete. Thus, the Normans had better odds and were superior in number.[768] William the Conqueror did not win the battle because God was on his side, nor because he was the better warrior, but rather because the English had to fight two other battles against the Norwegians. This explanation is surprisingly rational.

However, the second version offers a totally different interpretation similar to the one in Eadmer's text. There, the Norman Conquest was God's revenge for Harold's perjury. William even tried to prevent a battle by offering Harold to keep his promise if he kept his in turn. Nevertheless, Harold refused and had to bear the consequences. Roger writes that both English and Normans fought well in the Battle of Hastings, but that the Normans won since they fought better because God was on their side.[769] Thus, William became, as in Eadmer's text, the instrument of divine vengeance. The fault for the English loss is completely ascribed to Harold. The divine providence is further emphasised by mentioning the comet as an omen for a new king.[770]

What to do with those contradictory reports? Roger of Howden copied both versions from his original source and added only small details. The first version was probably also written first and did not deliver enough arguments for William's conquest (for both explaining why it happened to the English and to legitimise William's claim). Therefore, after the first description of the Battle of Hastings, a second explanation was inserted. There, Harold is depicted much more negatively, and William becomes an instrument for divine revenge. So, he superseded an incompetent king and was legitimised by divine will. As Roger of Howden inserted both explanations in his text, both are of importance. While the first version cannot be ignored, the second one is probably more important for interpretation, as it comes last.

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[768] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 113.
[769] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 115.
[770] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 111.

William of Newburgh dedicates only a few pages (in Howlett's edition app. three) to the rule of William the Conqueror. As a consequence, he only describes a few events. Unfortunately, the Battle of Hastings is not one of them; it is only mentioned to explain William's reign over England, and William of Newburgh does not go into detail. The Battle of Hastings is mentioned a second time in the *elogium*. There, William of Newburgh mostly laments the violence that occurred in the battle.[771] The *elogium* is more closely analysed in chapter 4.5.

After his prologue, William writes about the Battle of Hastings: "In the year 1066 [...] William [...] made war on Harold [...] either through lust for dominion or to avenge injustices."[772] Consequently, there were two possible reasons for the Norman Conquest. Neither of them falls under 'just war'. The first reason implies that William was greedy; the second that he wanted to take revenge. It might be that William alludes to Harold's broken oath, but as he does not elaborate further, it appears as though William the Conqueror did not have a good reason to attack England.

Only later in the text, when it comes to the coronation of William I, William of Newburgh mentions that William's reign was wanted by God,[773] which in turn means that the victory at Hastings was granted by God as well. Thereby, William strongly emphasises the legitimacy of William I's rule even if he does not approve of the battle itself. All in all, William of Newburgh does not seem to take much interest in the reasons for the change of rule in 1066. The date itself was important to him as he chose it to start his *Historia*. However, it was God who decided, and mankind did not seem to have much influence on it at first glance. This is very interesting, as Winkler concludes that kings were ascribed more responsibility for their deeds and that the providential model lost its importance.[774] Therefore, the following chapters seek to analyse whether this impression is confirmed in other aspects of William the Conqueror's rule.

Here again, William of Newburgh steps out of line. He is the only one who shows no urgent need to explain the English defeat at Hastings. For him, the Norman victory is a fact—still, an important one, as he chose it as a starting point for his *Historia*. However, the narrations of all the other authors agree on one point: It was God who decided that William was going to be England's new king, and this was why he ultimately won the

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[771] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 22f.
[772] Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 37 (*[...] M°LX°VI°, Guillelmus [...] Haraldo [...] vel dominandi libidine, vel causa ulciscendi injurias, bellum intulit*— William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 20).
[773] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 21.
[774] Winkler 2017a, p. 269. William of Newburgh does not explain God's decision, so he does not make the English sins responsible for the defeat either. This differentiates him from the authors Winkler observed.

battle. Factors that made it easier for William to win are also often attributed to God's will, too. The reports differ only in the reasons why God chose William as king. Orderic Vitalis takes the explanation from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. He explains the Norman Conquest as divine punishment of English sins. These are, amongst others, the death of Alfred and the Battle of Stamford Bridge. The case is different in the works of Eadmer of Canterbury and Roger of Howden. For them, it was Harold's perjury that led to God's punishment of Harold. So, the English as a people were not at fault in the Conquest. William of Malmesbury, in turn, explains God's support for William with his better claim to the throne and missing legitimisation of Harold. So, it was only Harold who was punished and not the English in general. The steps from blaming the English people as a whole for unspecific sins to blaming them for concrete sins until blaming Harold alone can be seen as an increasing historicisation of the Battle of Hastings that finally led to William of Newburgh's text that needs no explanation at all.

Henry of Huntingdon, at last, puts the Norman Conquest in a broader frame of conquests. Harold's perjury was the cause of this conquest; the concept of divine punishment, however, is even less concrete than in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. This means that divine punishment and the resulting conquests are a higher-level concept that requires a higher-level explanation that does not necessarily need to be connected to the Battle of Hastings.

4.4   Crowning the New King

We saw already that the anointing played an important role when it came to legitimising kingship. The coronation, as a public ceremony, also stood for the agreement of nobility and the Church to a king's rule. This chapter wants to analyse which role the historiographers gave the coronation for William's authorisation. Furthermore, it wants to find out whether there are other rituals described, such as welcoming or homage, in order to strengthen William's power. It shall also be analysed how rituals gone wrong can be interpreted.

For Orderic Vitalis, the coronation is an important event that made a king out of the duke. He uses the events that led to the anointing to show that both the Norman and the English aristocracy supported William's claim to the English throne. Orderic describes in detail how different groups of nobles gave up their resistance and asked William to be their king. First, the English lords came, who had tried to resist William after the Battle of Hastings by declaring Edgar Ætheling to Harold's successor. Then, the citizens of London and, at last, Edgar followed:

So by the grace of God England was subdued within the space of three months, and all the bishops and nobles of the realm made their peace with William, begging him to accept the crown according to the English custom. No less insistent were the Normans, who had endured the great perils of sea and war to win the crown for their duke. And this too by God's will was the wish of the general populace, for they had never obeyed anyone except a duly crowned king.[775]

It seems important to Orderic to emphasise that everyone in England, the Normans, and even God wanted to have William as king. Upon Edgar's surrender, the only other legitimate heir to the English throne accepted William's right. Therefore, William was unchallenged, and the kingdom was unified by the wish to have him as king. This contrasts William's behaviour with Harold's. While the latter just seized the crown without regard to the consent of the population, William is asked to take the crown.

In view of this opposition, one should assume that William's coronation is the complete opposite of Harold's, and everything is perfect. However, considering Orderic's monastic world view, this assumption seems naive: no earthly luck is eternal. It begins with William's lack of trust in the English: He had strong guards outside the church in order to be prepared for possible revolts—something that seems highly unnecessary, considering that Orderic wrote just before that the English wanted William to be king. Nevertheless, the ceremony started well. It was obviously not Stigand but the Archbishop of York who crowned William as king, which made the anointing valid.[776] Also, all the important nobles and churchmen were there to witness the event, and the coronation took place in Westminster—the burial place of Edward the Confessor, as Orderic states. So, the continuity to the Anglo-Saxon dynasty is once more emphasised.

Here, Hingst pays particular attention to the term "Albion" Orderic uses in context of the people who were present at the coronation.[777] It is a poetic word for England and is usually used for the time before the Britons arrived at the island. Orderic, in contrast, uses it very often—Hingst counts 26 times—but never in this context, which is something that makes it stand out. In a similar context as above, "Albion" can be found in charters of the tenth and eleventh century that were supposed to unify Anglo-Saxon and Danish kings. Orderic might have known them from the monastery of Crowland, whose history he wrote. Looking at other contexts of the word in the *Ecclesiastical History*, Hingst concludes that Orderic wants to create some kind of continuation, as Albi-

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[775] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 182f (*Omnia disponente Deo in spacio trium mensium per Angliam pacata sunt. cunctique præsules regnique proceres cum Guillelmo concordiam fecerunt, ac ut diadema regium sumeret sicut mos Anglici principatus exigit orauerunt. Hoc summopere flagitabant Normanni, qui pro fasce regali nanciscendo suo principi, subierunt ingens discrimen maris et prælii. hoc etiam diuino nutu subacti optabant indigenæ regni, qui nisi coronato regi seruire hactenus errant soliti.*).
[776] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 182–184.
[777] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 183f: "And, in the presence of the bishops, abbots and nobles of the whole realm of Albion" ("*in præsentia praesulum et abbatum procerumque totius regni Albionis*").

on is not associated with any specific peoples but means the geographic area of the British Isles. William's coronation can, thus, not be understood as a break in English history but as a continuation.[778] As Orderic uses "Albion" in a context where he refers to the origin of the nobles and clerks viewing the coronation, this interpretation goes too far. It might also be that Orderic wants to differ in his style and took the term, therefore, from Bede[779]. Or, he meant Normans and English alike and wants therefore to emphasise once more the unity of the people in their wish to have William as king—regardless of their Norman or English origin.

However, then the catastrophe arrived. The watch outside the church set fire to the neighbouring buildings because it misinterpreted the proclamation of the new king in Anglo-Saxon custom as danger. The people inside the church panicked, and William was left alone with a few clerks. The ceremony was brought to an unworthy end. William himself was shaking, and

the English, after hearing of the perpetration of such misdeeds, never again trusted the Normans who seemed to have betrayed them, but nursed their anger and bided their time to take revenge.[780]

Here, it can be seen that William's reign in England had a bad beginning and was marked by mistrust on the Norman side causing, in turn, mistrust on the English side. Significantly, it was a typical Anglo-Saxon custom that caused the catastrophe. It can, therefore, be read as a bad omen for future coexistence. Shopkow interprets the scene surrounding the misunderstanding as a symbol for Norman arrogance and unwillingness to learn from others. The king's fear is very significant because it foreshadows his behaviour towards the English later and even leads to persecutions.[781] We will have a look at Orderic's view on the Normans later on in chapter 4.6, but Shopkow's interpretation seems quite fitting.

Orderic, thus, shows a twofold picture of William's coronation. On the one hand, he uses it to show that William was legitimated: he had the consent of Normans and English as well as of his former enemies. Additionally, he was crowned by the right archbishop in a historical place. Nevertheless, the ritual went awry. As mentioned above, this could bring into question the validity of the entire ritual. Orderic does not do that, but he portrays the coronation as a bad omen for the coexistence of English and Normans.

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[778] Hingst 2009, pp. 52–68.
[779] E.g. Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, i.1, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, p. 14.
[780] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 182–185 (*Angli factionem tam insperatæ rei dimetientes nimis irati sunt. et postea Normannos semper suspectos habuerunt, et infidos sibi diiudicantes ultionis tempos de eis peroptauerunt.*).
[781] Shopkow 1997, pp. 97f.

Eadmer of Canterbury, on the other hand, tells a completely different story. Again, his report is not nearly as detailed as Orderic's, but it shows that the transition of rule from Harold to William was far less smooth. Neither Edward the Confessor nor the English nobility wanted William as king. Instead, William lured Harold into a trap, making him swear to support his claim to the English throne—without the consent or knowledge of the English. On the contrary, Eadmer emphasises how little William cared about the consent of the English and mistreated the nobility (unlike Orderic's report where William accepted the subordination of his former enemies and treated them befittingly of their status). For Eadmer, William became king because of the victory at Hastings.[782]

Still, the coronation ceremony is obviously very important—given that the rival of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, anointed William as king. This was, as written above, the traditional right of the archbishops of Canterbury, and, considering that Eadmer wanted to strengthen the power of his archbishopric, this needed an explanation. Otherwise, the coronation of William could set a precedent and give more power to the Archbishop of York:

From that time that he gained this victory, which was on the 14th October [1066]-sic!, William remained unconsecrated until Christmas Day when he was consecrated King by Ealdred of blessed memory, Archbishop of York, and a number of English bishops. Although the King himself and everyone else knew well enough that the consecration as being his special and peculiar privilege, yet seeing that many wicked and horrible crimes were ascribed to Stigand, who was at that time Archbishop of Canterbury, William was unwilling to receive consecration at his hands, lest he should seem to be taking upon himself a curse instead of a blessing.[783]

Eadmer avoids commenting on Stigand's crimes directly by using the word *prædicare* (to ascribe). This tells the reader nothing about the truth behind these accusations. In so doing, Eadmer avoids writing negatively about an archbishop of his archbishopric and is able to show at the same time that the coronation by the Archbishop of York was an exception. Therefore, he stresses that the coronation was an old right held by Canterbury. Moreover, this passage shows that William had the support of the Church and was crowned correctly.

Interestingly, the coronation ceremony took place about two months after the Battle of Hastings, which seems late in Eadmer's eyes. In contrast to Orderic, who sees William first as king after the coronation, Eadmer calls William a king after his victory at Has-

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[782] Eadmer: *HN*, 11, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 9.

[783] Bosanquet 1964, p. 9 (*Qui ex quo victoria usus est, quod fuit ii. Id Octobris, inunctus permanens, in Nativitate Domini unctus est in regem apud Westmonasterium a beatæ memoriæ Ealdredo archiebiscopo Eboracensi, et nonnullis episcopis Angliæ. Quam consecrationem, licet ipse rex et omnes alii optime nossent debere specialiter fieri et proprie a pontifice Cantuariensi, tamen quia multa mala et horrenda crimina prædicabantur de Stigando, quia eo tempore ibi pontifex erat, noluit eam ab ipso suscipere, ne maledictionem videretur induere pro benedictione.—Eadmer: *HN*, 11, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 9).

tings: "So William became King." [784] Eadmer writes this directly after the description of the Battle. This shows, on the one hand, that the coronation was important to Eadmer to legitimise a king (otherwise there would be no need to mention that it was late), but, on the other hand, William is moreso legitimised because of his success on the battlefield. Eadmer uses the description of the ceremony foremost to defend Canterbury's rights, which makes William's legitimisation secondary: Because the king was crowned by the rival archbishop, Eadmer needed to deemphasise the importance of the event. By doing so, he played down the significance of the Archbishop of York as well.

According to William of Malmesbury, William met no serious resistance after his victory at Hastings. He stayed at the battle field in order to bury the dead and allowed the English to do the same. This can be read as a symbol of reconciliation.[785] Then, he first travelled to London. In contrast to Eadmer, the time span between the victory and coronation is not any problem for William of Malmesbury. Rather, he sees it as a sign of royal dignity that William did not hurry to London but took his time—"a royal progress rather than an enemy advance"[786], Malmesbury calls it. After his arrival at London, the English began to accept the Norman duke as their king. They were encouraged by the two archbishops, who both considered William as the new English ruler. Only the two Earls Edwin and Morcar stood against William. However, as they were unsuccessful at driving the local population into resistance, they vanished into their own earldoms. The English aristocracy, at first, did not want to have William as their king either. Many preferred Edgar Ætheling. But, because they could not agree on a common course of action and disagreed with the bishops (who wanted William), they chose William in the end.[787] So, finally, William was accepted as king by nearly everyone. He had the support of the nobles (except of Edwin and Morcar), of the Church, and of the English population, especially the one of London.

At Christmas, he was crowned. William of Malmesbury does not write where, but he tells us that it was Ealdred who crowned William, because Stigand was not a rightful archbishop.[788] As Malmesbury has never stated that it was supposed to be Stigand who crowned Harold, the importance of the argument is lessened because of the miss-

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[784] Bosanquet 1964, p. 9 (*Rex itaque factus Willelmus[...]*—Eadmer: *HN*, 11, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 9).
[785] Evans 2003, p. 79.
[786] William: *GRA*, iii.247, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 460f (*cum exercitu non hostili sed regali*).
[787] William: *GRA*, iii.247, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 460–462.
[788] William: *GRA*, iii.247, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 462.

ing contrast. Nevertheless, Malmesbury underscores that William I was crowned correctly by a rightfully appointed archbishop.

At last, there will be a short look at how William of Malmesbury describes Edgar Ætheling. According to William, some nobles saw him as a better alternative to William of Normandy; he was taken into consideration as heir by Edward the Confessor; and had, theoretically, a right to the throne. Therefore, a short analysis might show why William of Malmesbury prefers William I as king or whether Edgar was a serious opponent.[789] The latter claim is clearly not true. William of Malmesbury seems to pity Edgar for his fate. Despite his noble origins, he lived a life in unimportance and oblivion; or as William puts it, "he suffered a turn of Fortune's wheel, and now, in solitude and silence, wears out his gray hairs in the depths of the country."[790] However, William of Malmesbury does not make William I responsible for Edgar's fate but Edgar alone, who was not staying abroad where the Greek and the German Emperor would have given him a life correspondent to his status. All in all, William attributes Edgar with similar characteristics as Edward the Confessor; he describes him with words such as "indolence" or "simplicity".[791] Whereas these characteristics, in the case of Edward the Confessor, could at least be excused by the fact that he was a holy man, in the case of Edgar, they just show his unsuitability for the crown. Thus, William of Malmesbury emphasises that William the Conqueror still was—despite his distant relation to the Anglo-Saxon dynasty—the better choice as king. The Anglo-Saxon dynasty would have become even weaker with Edgar so that a change of dynasty became even more necessary.

To summarise, William of Malmesbury neither makes as many efforts as Orderic Vitalis to legitimise William, nor does he write about any bad omen that accompany the ceremony and foreshadow William I's reign. William the Conqueror is legitimated by the choice of the nobility, the Church, and the people. The coronation by the Archbishop of York is only insofar of importance because he is judged later on, which would have reflected badly on the king. Briefly, Edgar seemed to have been an alternative to William, but Malmesbury makes clear that the old Anglo-Saxon dynasty was not able to rule any more, as it was too simple-minded. It is after the coronation that William of Malmesbury first calls William by the title *rex*.[792] Thus, it is the foremost the coronation that makes out of the duke a king.

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[789] Winkler 2014 shows that Edgar was until the twelfth century seen as an alternative ruler to William. Then, moral qualities became more important than hereditary rights.

[790] William: *GRA*, iii.251, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 466f (*diuerso fortunae ludicro rotatus, nunc remotus et tacitus canos suos in agro consumit*).

[791] William: *GRA*, iii.251, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 466f (*ignauia/simplicitate*).

[792] William: *GRA*, iii.251, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 464.

Henry of Huntingdon does not pay much attention to the coronation. The description is short and consists of one sentence: "Then William, taking possession of his great victory, was received peacefully by the Londoners, and was crowned at Westminster by Ealdred, archbishop of York."[793] So, he neither explains why the coronation was done by the Archbishop of York, nor does he mention the subjection of the English nobles. Henry only makes clear that William had the support of the Londoners, who received him well. To summarise, the sentence tells us that—as it was the case in the *Historia novorum*—William became king because of his victory at Hastings. After that, the English accepted him as king without resistance. The coronation only made visible what was already fact, and Henry treats it as such. As it makes William's kingship a fact, Henry still gives it some importance and mentions it in his report. Considering Henry's concept of divine punishment through conquests, it makes sense that the victory at Hasting as a symbolisation of divine will has more importance than the coronation.

Roger of Howden describes the coronation of William rather concisely—in one paragraph—as well, but his description does not look so favourably on William. Before William came to London, the Archbishop of York, other bishops, Edgar Ætheling, the Earls Morcar and Edwin along with five nobles from London, and other important people swore fidelity to William. In so doing, the Norman duke could claim to have the consent of the English magnates. However, as they all submitted while his army destroyed land and killed its people, it appears more as if the submission was done due to force rather than due to the belief that William was the best ruler.[794]

The future king came with his army to London to be crowned. As it was the same army that had devastated the country before, this also appears as if William wanted to be anointed by force. He was crowned rightly by Ealdred, the Archbishop of York, in Westminster and swore an oath before the altar of St Peter to protect his kingdom and the Church. The choice of Ealdred is justified by the dubious reputation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. However, Roger indicates that William only swore because the archbishop had asked him to do so.[795] Such an oath is neither mentioned for Harold's coronation nor is it justified why the Archbishop of York crowned him.

All in all, Roger shows that William was legally crowned king: he had the support of the nobles, he was crowned by the correct archbishop in the correct place, and he swore to

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[793] Henry: *HA*, vi.30, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 394f (*Willelmus uero tanta potitus uictoria, susceptus a Lundoniensibus pacifice, et coronatus est apud Westmunster ab Aldredo Eboracensi archiepiscopo.*).
[794] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 116.
[795] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 116.

protect his kingdom. The importance of the coronation for William's kingship is under-lined by the fact that Roger first calls him king (*rex*) afterwards. Before, he is only duke (*comes*). However, the coronation is also used to question William's authority. He ap-pears violent and gave his oath only upon the archbishop's request. As nothing indi-cates that Harold swore this oath as well, one might interpret it as Ealdred being suspi-cious of William's character. Whether this distrust is justified is explored in the next chapter.

The coronation is an event William of Newburgh assigns great importance. As for Rog-er of Howden, it is this ceremony that makes William the Conqueror a rightful king. Be-fore, for Newburgh, William is nothing more than a tyrant; he writes: "in his abhorrence of the title of a tyrant and in his desire to assume the role of a lawful prince, he [William] asked to be solemnly consecrated"[796]. So, the coronation is the main thing that gives William authority. William knew this as well, and therefore, he sought an archbishop to perform the ceremony. Hence, unlike in the narration of Orderic, it was not the English who asked William to be consecrated, but it was William's own decision that he made after he had subdued the country. The English people played no role in this process. However, William of Newburgh does not put emphasis on it or on the missing consent of the nobility and the clergy.

William of Newburgh's explanation for why the Archbishop of York (and not the one of Canterbury) crowned William differs from the others. The reason was not Stigand's problematic reputation, but his refusal to crown the Norman duke. For Stigand, William was a foreign intruder with no right to the throne. Therefore, William had to ask the oth-er English archbishop, who was willing to crown him. For Newburgh, Ealdred's decision was wise. He describes the archbishop as a good and sensible man who was able to recognise the atmosphere of the times and understood that it does no help to oppose God's will.[797] This further shows, as written above, that William ruled by divine right.

This resolution proved to be a good one for the English people. Here, Newburgh's text has many similarities to Roger of Howden's: Ealdred used the coronation to force Wil-liam to make certain promises. Thereby, the king promised to protect his kingdom and the rights of the Church—something highly necessary, as William still mistreated his people. For William of Newburgh, this was the "soften[ing of] this most aggressive

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[796] Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 39 (*tyranni nomen exhorrscens, et legitimi principis personam in-duere gestiens [...] in regem sollemniter consecrari deposceret.*— William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 20).
[797] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 20.

man."[798] The whole passage shows Ealdred's positive influence on William that began with the coronation. Thus, the coronation, firstly, legitimised William's rule but, secondly, also led to a change in his character: King William was less aggressive. At the same time, this kind of relation between king and archbishop is reminiscent of Eadmer's description of the collaboration between William and Lanfranc. This passage also leads to another interpretation of divine will regarding William's rule. Maybe Newburgh also wants to state that the coronation was divine will and that William therefore did not rule due to the Conquest only. Most importantly, the coronation led to a better ruler, revealing God's will.

All six writers agree on the importance of the coronation for the legitimacy of William I, and all of them mention that it was the Archbishop of York who did the anointing. However, they differ in the degree of the significance they place on this ritual. Eadmer of Canterbury and Henry of Huntingdon are the ones who give the coronation the least importance. For them, it is the Battle of Hastings that makes William king, whereas the other writers first call William king after his coronation. Given the great prestige of the event, it is no wonder that both Orderic Vitalis and Roger of Howden use it to foreshadow the future reign of William. Orderic shows the mistrust between Normans and English, while Roger hints at the king's violence towards his people. William of Newburgh gives the coronation the most importance. It is this ritual that makes of William of Normandy a better ruler and helps to control his aggressions. Again, especially Orderic Vitalis takes the arguments from the Norman panegyrics. William of Malmesbury's version, in turn, is much more diluted, and he gives Edgar Ætheling greater significance. Still, he underscores that the Anglo-Saxon pretender to the throne would not have been a good choice. Other rituals are not mentioned by the writers.

4.5   Creating the King: William I as *rex iustus*

The chapter on legitimising kings in medieval historiography showed that one of the most important parts of a ruler's legitimisation was his virtues. Also, the Norman panegyrics tried to fashion William into a perfect king. This chapter aims to analyse whether William is characterised as a good ruler in order to authorise his rule. Furthermore, it wants to understand what role success played in his legitimisation and to what extent his success was dependent on his virtues. In the last part, the depiction of William is

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[798] Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 39 (*hominem ferocissimum*— William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 20).

contrasted to the one of Harold in order to see whether this opposition was made to legitimise William further.[799]

Much has been written about Orderic Vitalis' view on William already, and Orderic himself wrote much about William as well. In order to keep this part of the chapter of reasonable length, there will be, firstly, an emphasis on William's time as king. Secondly, it seems reasonable to have a special look at his warfare, his emotions, and death in order to allow a good comparison to the description of Harold Godwinson.

There is no introduction to Duke William's reign. He merely appears from time to time in the history of St Evroul. The first time Orderic mentions him in more detail is in a conflict between Normandy and France—probably in 1059. There, William is described as a successful warrior, but Orderic directs his readers to William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers for further information.[800] At the beginning, he just mentions Duke William in context to St Evroul or in the conflicts with his neighbours. This changes when Orderic comes to the death of Edward the Confessor, which introduces the Norman Conquest.[801] From that point on, William becomes important. A probable introduction to his rule, then, follows in the introduction to book IV.[802] While Harold is called a tyrant, Orderic uses two bynames for William. On some occasions he speaks of a "bastard"[803], while, on others, William is named "the Great"[804]. Whereas the Great undoubtedly is connoted positively, the case is—at first glance—different with bastard. However, the term *nothus*, which Orderic uses, did not indicate any value judgement but just indicated a child born outside marriage whose mother had a lower status than the father.[805] Thus, Orderic's bynames are either positive or neutral.

In general, Orderic has many positive things to say about William's reign over England. After the coronation, he describes his decisions as wise and just, praises him for making new laws and for ensuring order in the kingdom. William even sent for exiled nobles.[806] We have seen that William is described as a good leader and soldier in the Battle of Hastings; the same portrait is found in the wars to come. He was lenient to

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[799] According to Klaniczay 1992, the contrast between a good ruler and a tyrant is typical for medieval historiography (pp. 70–72). It was also used in Norman historical writing to authorise William's rule (see also chapter 3.3).
[800] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 78.
[801] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 104.
[802] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 190–194.
[803] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.14 or vii.11, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 148f or p. IV 54f (*Guillelmi nothi*).
[804] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.16, vi.5, and vi.7, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 154f, 238f, and 250f (*magni regis* or rather *magnus rex*).
[805] McDougall 2017, pp. 30–34.
[806] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 104–106.

Dover and a role model to his soldiers, leading them successfully through bad weather to Chester in his campaign against the Welsh. Furthermore, Orderic describes King William as religious and as a strong supporter of the Church.[807] He showed this especially in his reform ideas that are analysed in chapter 4.7. Orderic does not see the English revolts as William's fault, as becomes evident in the following:

> [William] made himself very gracious to the English bishops and lay lords. He was at great pains to appease everyone, invited them to receive the kiss of peace, and smiled on them all; he willingly granted any favours they sought, and gave ear readily to their statements and proposals.[808]

As we shall see later on, one of the reasons for the uprisings was the behaviour of the Norman nobility; the other one was the English themselves, but here Orderic makes distinction among groups of the English:

> But in the marches of his kingdom, to the west and north, the inhabitants were still barbarous, and had only obeyed the English king in the time of King Edward and his predecessors when it suited their ends.[809]

The people living in the far North and West are described as extremely wild and seem to be living on the edge of the civilised world. They had not yet belonged to the English kingdom for long and cared only about their own interests. It was neither William's nor the English's fault that they rebelled.[810] In any case, Orderic disapproves of these rebellions, because it was against God's right order to stand up against one's rightful ruler, and they caused much harm.[811]

The first moment Orderic criticises King William is the Harrying of the North. Research often uses this as an argument to show that Orderic had a more ambivalent view on the Conquest than his Norman predecessors.[812] The Harrying of the North itself is seen differently in research. While some see it as a normal act of warfare, others follow Or-

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[807] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii and iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 172, 180, 192, 196, 234–326, and 238.

[808] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 210f (*ibique pontificibus Anglis proceribusque multa calliditate fauit. Ipse omnes officioso affectu demulcebat, dulciter ad oscula inuitabat, cunctis affabili tatem ostendebat, benigne si quid orabant concedebat, prompte si nunciabant aut suggerebant auscultabat.*).

[809] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 210f (*Circa terminos regni occidentem aut plagam septentrionalem uersus effrenis adhuc ferocia superbiebat. et Angliæ regi nisi ad libitum suum famulari sub rege Eduardo aiisque prioribus olim despexerat.*).

[810] The people living in the northern parts of Europe were quite often described as barbaric. This frequently had to do with ignorance and antique traditions—especially the theory that characteristics of a people depend on the climate of the geographical area in that they lived. Thus, the northerners inhabiting a wild, cold, and dark area were seen as cruel and primitive (Fraesdorff 2005, pp. 155 and 206–269; Scior 2002, pp. 125f; Theuerkauf 1988, pp. 131f). It is very interesting that Orderic differentiates within the English population like that.

[811] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 230.

[812] Chibnall 1999, p. 14; Houts 1996, p. 12.

deric's argument that it is an act of brutality.[813] For Orderic, William acted out of rage, but not the one Althoff describes as just anger and which reveals the power of a ruler, but an unjust, unrestrained anger. That one often appeared in the historiography of the Carolingian Age, when a ruler acted unjustly and was proof that he could not rule as was expected of a good king.[814] Barton argues that William's deeds were, therefore, evaluated as so sinful because he acted out of anger.[815] Orderic comments:

My narrative has frequently had occasion to praise William, but for this act which condemned the innocent and guilty alike to die by slow starvation I cannot commend him. For when I think of helpless children, young men in the prime of life, and hoary greybeards perishing alike of hunger I am so moved to pity that I would rather lament the griefs and sufferings of the wretched people than make a vain attempt to flatter the perpetrator of such infamy. Moreover, I declare that assuredly such brutal slaughter cannot remain unpunished. For the almighty judge watches over high and low alike; he will weigh the deeds of all men in a fair balance, and as a just avenger will punish wrongdoing, as the eternal law makes clear to all men.[816]

Typical for Orderic's writing is his association with God and the afterlife, where everyone is treated alike, regardless of peasant or noble birth, and where everyone needs to pay for his sins. Orderic's condemnation of William's acts could not be clearer, and he finds nothing positive to say about it. Still, Orderic's critique does not last long and does not overshadow his overall description of the king. It is up to God to judge William, not him. Taking into consideration that it was a common strategy in medieval warfare to devastate the enemy's territory in order to destroy his food supply and to demoralise the people there,[817] William's actions in the North cannot be seen as such a misdeed. On the contrary, in the High Middle Ages, the death and suffering of the non-combatants was seen as regrettable but unavoidable.[818] Therefore, the shocking element for Orderic cannot have been the destruction itself, but that William devastated his own lands and, in so doing, killed the people he swore to protect, and that he acted out of unrestrained anger.

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[813] Bates 2018 argues that this moment was a turning point in William's career as English king. He decided to let England be ruled by his Norman followers and showed no affection for this country (pp. 81–84). Douglas 1994 writes that the so called Harrying of the North was seen as cruel and unforgiveable by contemporaries (p. 224) whereas Hagger 2012 argues that the destructions in the North were an invention of later authors or seen as justified given the lack of contemporary sources (pp. 97–99).

[814] Althoff 1998, pp. 64–74.

[815] Barton 2011, p. 49.

[816] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 232f (*In multis Guillelmum nostra libenter extulit relatio, sed in hoc quod una iustum et impium tabidæ famis lancea æque transfixit laudare non audeo. Nam dum innocuos infantes iuuenesque uernantes et floridos canicie senes fame periclitari uideo. misericordia motus miserabilis populi meroribus et anxietatibus magis condoleo, quam tantæ cedis reo friuolis adulationibus fauere inutiliter studeo. Præterea indubitanter assero. quod impune non remittetur tam feralis occisio. Summos enim et imos intuetur oninipotens iudex. et æque omnium facta discutiet ac puniet iustissimus uindex, ut palam omnibus enodat Dei perpetua lex.*).

[817] Nicholson 2004, p. 128.

[818] Nicholson 2004, p. 6.

Another deed that led to God's wrath was the creation of the New Forest. Because of his love for hunting, William drove many people out of their homes in order to destroy these and to replace them with trees and wild animals. Thereby, also churches were devastated. As divine punishment, two of his sons and his grandson would later die in this forest. These tragedies and God's wrath were predicted in advance by visions.[819] However, modern research doubts that William I had to depopulate the area of the New Forest in the first place, but rather sees these negative accounts as a reflection of the dislike of William's forest laws.[820] William brought the tradition to create forests as a judicial area from Normandy to England, and the creation of these ensured him the power to make use of the wood and the animals living there.[821] Still, Orderic uses the New Forest in order to present William in a bad light.

Orderic generally describes William as a ruler who was quick to anger. In some cases, just anger described by Althoff can be found in order to make one's point of view clear[822]—like when William started conquering the Vexin or drove the rebels out of York.[823] Nevertheless, there were situations in which William was carried away by his anger. In such moments, he acted rashly and inappropriately. For example, he wanted to blind his wife's messenger in anger after he had learned that Matilda had sent money to their rebellious son Robert, threatened the abbot of St Evroul, and acted unjustly towards his nobles by exiling them without any proof of guilt.[824] At last, Orderic gives one example where William was able to restrain his anger. William attacked Geoffrey of Mayenne[825] only after many provocations because he did not want to harm others.[826]

Besides his coronation, there is one other moment where Orderic describes William as fearful: The king kept Morcar in prison because he was afraid of rebellion. Although this can be seen as unjust and unworthy of a king, William proved to be right, but it was first his behaviour that led Edwin into rebellion.[827] This scene can be read as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Only because William was afraid, Edwin needed to avenge his brother which, in turn, caused a rebellion. With this, Orderic shows how wrong it is for a king to act out of fear.

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[819] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, x.14, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. V 284.
[820] Young 1979, pp. 7f. Young argues that the area of the New Forest was unsuited for living because the soil was barren.
[821] Schröder 2004, pp. 149-157.
[822] Althoff 1996, p. 67.
[823] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv and viii.13, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 220 and IV 74.
[824] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii and v.10, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 90–94 and III 104.
[825] Geoffrey of Mayenne, located in the realm of Maine, fought regularly against William (see for example Bates 2018, pp. 141, 181, or 304).
[826] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 118. The use of mainly "negative" emotions such as anger is confirmed by Barton 2011, p. 48.
[827] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 258.

Not only is William's handling of anger contradictory, but Orderic's whole description of the king's character. On the one hand, he is described as powerful,[828] foresighted and protective of the English,[829] successful at war and peace-loving,[830] just[831] and pious[832]. On the other hand, William is presented as harsh, proud, and stern[833]. He was even so proud that God punished him by breaking a populace standing of the cathedral at Liseux.[834] Some of William's misdeeds are explained away stereotypically by bad advisors,[835] but most of them are ascribed to William's bad character.

The perhaps most frequently analysed scene concerning William in Orderic's *Ecclesiastical History* is his deathbed speech and burial. Upon first glance, William died a good death. He fell ill during a righteous conquest of the Vexin and, hence, had enough time to care about his succession and to confess his sins.[836] Then, however, everything went wrong at the burial. First, William's corpse was plundered and left alone, then, a fire broke out on the way to the church, William did not own the burial place, and finally, his body did not fit into the coffin and was corrupted, producing a really bad odour.[837]

First, there is a look at William's deathbed speech. The king began it by naming the almighty God his judge and, then, retold the story of his life, referring at the end to God's judgement after having faced all the violence in his life. He listed his deeds towards the Church, gave advice to his sons, promised Normandy to Robert, but England went to God in the hope that William Rufus was going to receive it by divine will:

> For I did not come to possess such a dignity by hereditary right, but wrested the kingdom from the perjured king Harold with bitter strife and terrible bloodshed, and subjected it to my rule after killing or driving into exile all his partisans. I treated the native inhabitants of the kingdom with unreasonable severity, cruelly oppressed high and low, unjustly disinherited many, and caused the death of thousands by starvation and war, especially in Yorkshire. This was because the men of Deira and Northumbria welcomed the army of Swein king of Denmark when he attacked me and slew Robert of Commine and many men-at-arms in Durham, together with my other magnates and experienced knights. In mad fury I descended on the English of the north like a raging lion, and ordered that their homes and crops with all their equipment and furnishings should be burnt at once and their great flocks and herds of sheep and cattle slaughtered everywhere. So I chastised a great multitude of men and women with the lash of starvation and, alas! was the cruel murderer of many thousands, both young and old, of this fair people. I dare not transmit the government of this kingdom, won with so many sins, to any man, but entrust it to

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[828] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii and v.10, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 104 and III 106.

[829] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv and vii.8, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 220 and IV 42.

[830] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 256 and 306.

[831] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 256.

[832] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 238.

[833] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.10, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 112.

[834] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.3, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 14.

[835] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 256. To a certain degree, advisors could be made responsible for failures (Chibnall 2000, p. 19; Freudenberg 2014, p. 75). However, usually, a good king had good advisors and vice versa (Weiler 2005, p. 18).

[836] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.14, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 78.

[837] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.16, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 100–108.

God alone, for fear that after my death my evil deeds should become the cause of even worse things.[838]

Here, William even doubted his claim to the English throne that he had taken with violence. He regretted his behaviour towards the English, especially the Harrying of the North, which forced the English into rebellion. For all his wrongdoings, William did not want to pass on the English kingdom to his son, fearing his sins would be passed on as well. Therefore, he gave it back to God so that He might decide what shall happen to it.

Speeches as well as dialogues are often used by Orderic Vitalis to give his own interpretations of events or to glorify a person's achievements.[839] Chibnall assumes that Orderic let William show guilt regarding his violence as he was a king chosen by God and, so, wanted to make reparations for his actions. The writer even might have known what really happened, as the Bishop of Lisieux, who was Orderic's diocesan, was present at William's death.[840] Vollrath in turn sees in William's speech a justification for his brutality because of his hard youth.[841] Blacker interprets the speech as a eulogy to the king.[842] This is, as well as the *notation,* a typical characterisation of a person at the end of his life and is also called *epilogus.*[843] The confession above is quite astonishing. Before, Orderic never showed any doubts concerning William's legitimacy and describes his behaviour towards the English as good—except of the Harrying of the North. This scene can either be read as a hidden criticism of William by letting himself criticise him, or as an example to show that all are the same in the hour of death and must, therefore, take responsibility for their deeds during their lifetime, and that it is natural to doubt in the hour of death.

Let us now proceed to the description of the funeral. It is argued that the funeral is described similarly to the coronation, as a fire broke out at both events, and William was left alone with the clerks. The fire can be interpreted as a symbol for the destruction

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[838] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.15, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 80–94, quotation pp. 94f (*Non enim tantum decus hcreditario iure possedi. Sed diro conflictu et multa effusione humani cruoris periuro regi Heraldo abstuli, et interfectis uel effugatis fauctoribus eius dominatui meo subegi. Naturales regni filios plus æquo exosos habui, nobiles et uulgares crudeliter uexaui, iniuste multos exhereditaui, innumeros maxime in pago Eborachensi fame seu ferro mortificaui. Deiri enim et transhumbranæ gentes exercitum Sueni Danorum regis contra me susceperunt. et Robertum de Cuminis cum rnille militibus intra Dunelmum aliosque proceres meos et tirones probatissimos in diuersis locis peremerunt. Vnde immoderato furore commotus in boreales Anglos ut uesanus leo properaui. domos eorum iussi segetesque et omnem apparatum atque supellectilem confestim incendi, et copiosos armentorum pecudumque greges passirn mactari. Multitudinem itaque utriusque sexus tam dirm famis mucrone multaui. et sic multa milia pulcherrimæ gentis senum iuuenumque proh dolor funestus trucidaui. Fasces igitur huius regni quod cum tot peccatis optinui. nulli audeo tradere nisi Deo soli, ne post funus meum adhuc deteriora fiant occasione mei.*).

[839] Blacker 1994, p. 70; Chibnall 1969b-1983, pp. 78–81.

[840] Chibnall 1984, pp. 185f. Bates 2018 argues similarly (p. 119).

[841] Vollrath 2008a, p. 96.

[842] Blacker 1994, p. 70.

[843] Bagge 1991, p. 146.

William had caused.[844] Considering how shameful this was for such a great ruler, most historians agree that it was Orderic's idea of showing the transience of earthly glory.[845] However, Evans argues that is not a bad sign if the king was left alone after death, but it is rather a symbol for the passing on of the king's power to his heir. Nevertheless, William—although being so rich in life—did not even own the ground where he wished to be buried, taking it illegally from someone else. Orderic, thus, wants to show how William's greed returned to him.[846] In addition, the corruption and stench of William's body can be read as a negative description as well. The wholeness of a body was a sign for holiness. So, a corrupted body, in turn, usually stood for foulness and might be seen as a punishment for moral corruption or gluttony. Gluttony was one of the worst deadly sins and led to another sin: lust.[847] Considering that Orderic has never written about the fact that William had eaten too much before, it is rather unlikely that the corruption of the body can be interpreted as gluttony. Instead, it seems most probable that Orderic sees it as punishment for William's acts in Northern England and as a moral lesson. The same applies to the stench.

According to Bates, Orderic sees William's rule over Normandy as authoritarian and ruthless.[848] This only partly can be applied to his reign as English king. All in all, Orderic describes William neither as a *rex iustus* nor clearly as a *rex iniustus.* William had the necessary personal qualities and was the righteous king of England. It is William's death and Orderic's condemnation of the Harrying of the North that depicted the king in a dubious light as well as his unrestrained anger and some bad characteristics. Orderic's characterisation looks rather contradictory. While William is described as *rex iustus* during the Norman Conquest, there are even elements of the *tyrannus* considering the corruption of the body at the funeral. I do not think that Orderic wanted to show

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[844] Shopkow 1997, pp. 98f.

[845] E.g. Bates 2006, p. 139; Ohler 1990, p. 122; Shopkow 1997, p. 99

[846] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.16, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 106. Chibnall 2007 assumes the story to be true as it was the Earl of Shrewsbury who compensated the landowner, and Orderic knew him in person (p. 38). Considering that the Abbot of Evroul, Mainer, was attending the funeral as well (Chibnall 1984, pp. 27f), Orderic might be a trustworthy source. Rex 2011, however, argues that everything was normal as William's grave was opened in the 16th century, where it did not look too small (p. 246). Anyway, by choosing to write down these unfavourable events for William, Orderic lets him bask in a bad light.

[847] Evans 2003, pp. 48 and 62–78. Additionally, Bates 2006 argues here similarly that an enlargement of a coffin was a saintly miracle and that, therefore, the too small coffin can be interpreted as William's sinfulness (p. 139). In the case St Anselm, for example, the too small coffin enlarges itself, which Eadmer interprets as a sign of holiness (Eadmer of Canterbury: *Vita Anselmi*, 2.lxviii, ed. by Southern 1962, p. 145). Concerning the stench, Schmitz-Esser 2014 argues that is was often seen as a sign for moral corruptness. However, he also argues that it is difficult to differentiate whether historical writers used the description of stench as a metaphor or whether the body really smelled (e.g. because of the heat), which would mean that they did not write negatively about a person but reported the truth (pp. 160–163).

[848] Bates 2018, p. 45 whereas Spörl 1968 sees William as an ideal duke with an Augustinian background (p. 64).

William in a bad light in order to portray him as a bad king. Rather, he wanted to make a moral point and William—a great king as he was—was an extraordinarily good example for this: as he stood so high during his lifetime, the fall was that much deeper after his death.

Thus, Orderic neither legitimises William via his good virtues nor via his success. However, both his legitimacy (right coronation, reign with consent of the people and the Church, kinship to Edward the Confessor, appointment by Edward) and William's virtues are the opposite of Harold's. Although, his character is described very ambivalently, William is described through and through positively until his coronation. Until that point in time, Harold plays a role for the events. After that, William's character becomes more contradictory, but Harold is dead and thus unimportant for further events.

From the beginning on, Eadmer of Canterbury does not paint a positive image of William. Already in the prologue, he makes William responsible for the main problem of his time: the Investiture Contest. According to Eadmer, it was William who began to appoint bishops and abbots by claiming royal authority and so caused the conflict Anselm later was involved in. Anselm's biographer saw lay investiture as against God's will and canon law.[849] Although this is historically inaccurate,[850] Eadmer obviously believed it to be true and saw in William the source of Anselm's conflict with the kings. For him, William's decision is wrong and maybe even evil, as it harmed the Church.

In the narration, the Norman duke is introduced by a warning from Edward the Confessor to Harold Godwinson. During Harold's stay in Normandy, the warning proved to be right. William is characterised as cunning because he managed to let Harold swear an oath he did not want to. After the victory at Hastings, the description of William's rule stays negative. Eadmer uses a topos of the inexpressible by only mentioning the harm William was supposed to have done to the surviving English magnates.[851] He goes on by describing the king as an authoritative ruler whose main interest was to introduce the foreign Norman law to England. William punished resistance severely, and the aristocracy was afraid of their king. Thus, Eadmer's description of William's resembles Orderic's one of Harold.

The monk does not want to talk about William's secular reforms, as they are not important for his subject, but he lists some of his ecclesiastical reforms. These are probably not seen positively, as they reduced the power of the Church and of the Archbishop

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[849] Eadmer: *HN*, 1f, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 1f.
[850] Garnett 2007, p. 96.
[851] Eadmer: *HN*, 7-11, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 6–9.

of Canterbury: first, people were not allowed to communicate with the pope anymore except with royal permission. Second, the primate of the English Church no longer had the right to make decisions in a council without the king's approval. Third, churchmen were not allowed to take steps against the king's men's crimes without William's consent.[852] Therefore, the English Church depended on William's benevolence and was not able to make decisions on its own. William's only good action was the appointment of Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury. Lanfranc is—as it shall be seen later on in chapter 4.7—described very positively. Unlike Orderic Vitalis, Eadmer does not give the merits for Lanfranc's nomination to William alone, but more so to Pope Alexander II (1061–1073). William's only merit was to convince Lanfranc, together with the pope, to come to England, but it was Alexander who made Lanfranc an archbishop.[853]

However, Lanfranc's appointment was a turning point in William's reign: Now, things began to change for the better. Lanfranc became William's principle advisor and had a positive influence on the king. He managed to "make the King a faithful servant of God and to renew religion and right living among all classes throughout the whole Kingdom."[854] Thus, it was not William who was responsible for the flourishing monastic life but Lanfranc. William only developed as a good instrument. Of course, a good king always had good advisors, and he was distinguished by recognising those. Choosing Lanfranc as counsellor and listening to his advice made William a good king. Lanfranc's reforms are described as successful, leading to a renewal of ecclesiastical life. For Canterbury, too, these new reforms had a positive outcome, and Lanfranc got William to restore the Church of Canterbury and most of the lands of the Archbishopric of Canterbury that it had lost in the aftermath of the Conquest.[855] Thereby, Lanfranc helped compensate the English for the damages caused in the years after 1066. The close relation between king and archbishop also echoes the connection of Edgar and Dunstan at the beginning of the *Historia Novorum*. This shows that Eadmer sees a close collaboration of secular and ecclesiastical power as the best way to rule a kingdom. Furthermore, this reference links the Anglo-Saxon past with the Anglo-Norman present, as it creates the impression of continuity.

However, Lanfranc was not the only one who tried to influence the king. Some bishops—especially Walkelin of Winchester[856]—tried to get rid of the monks in their cathe-

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[852] Eadmer: *HN*, 11f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 9f.
[853] Eadmer: *HN*, 12f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 10f.
[854] Bosanquet 1964, p. 12 (*et regem Deo devotum efficere, et religionem morum bonorum in cunctis ordinibus hominum per totum regnum renovare.*—Eadmer: *HN*, 15, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 12).
[855] Eadmer: *HN*, 15f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 12f.
[856] Walkelin (1070–1098) was one of William's chaplains and became the first Norman Bishop of Winchester, replacing Stigand (Franklin 2004).

dral and to replace them with clergy. It is only Lanfranc who finally stopped the project that Eadmer deeply disapproves.[857] William, listening in this case to bad advisors, may therefore also be seen as inconsistent and as in possession of poor power of judgement. However, these advisors could also function as scapegoats. So, Eadmer makes clear that Lanfranc (as Archbishop of Canterbury) had nothing to do with William's bad decisions.

As Anselm of Bec came to England, he became an advisor as well. Together with Lanfranc, he had a positive influence on the king, who developed well under these two men. Eadmer describes how

he [William] often and to a very great extent abandoned the natural harshness which he shewed towards some people and exerted himself zealously to see that in his dominion monasteries should be established for the observance of the religious life.[858]

This quote is interesting for the characterisation of William for several reasons. First, we learn again about his will to listen to competent advisors and his ecclesiastical politics. Eadmer describes in this paragraph how William took care of the peace of the Church and how he supported churches and monasteries with his own money. This shows William as generous towards the Church in general, making him a good ruler. Finally, it is the first time Eadmer tells his readers something about William's typical characteristics. Like Orderic Vitalis, Eadmer also characterises the king as severe. This is not the best quality for a king, but it shows the positive influence of the two churchmen all the more. Unlike Orderic, who often explains the king's behaviour as him lacking control over his emotions, Eadmer does not use these or typical features to account for William's actions. Instead, he uses good or bad advisors, and therefore, emotions are less important and play no role.

Eadmer finishes his description of William with his death. The king died a good death because he had enough time to confess his sins. Despite his illness, William was able to think of the likewise ill Anselm of Bec and sent him over half of the good food he was served. Anselm's illness is closely connected to William's: He fell ill when William wanted to confess his sins to him and refreshed quickly after the king's death.[859] On the one hand, this may serve as an explanation as to why Anselm was not there when William died. On the other hand, the close connection between the king and his advisors is stated in this way. In either case, William is described as considerate in the hour of his death.

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[857] Eadmer: *HN*, 12f/27, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 18f/22.

[858] Bosanquet 1964, p. 25 (*sui severitate in quosdam plurimum et sæpe descendebat, et quatinus in sua dominatione ad observantiam religionis monasteria sugerent studiose operam dabat.*—Eadmer: *HN*, 28, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 23). A similar effect is described in Eadmer of Canterbury: *Vita Anselmi*, 1.xxxi, ed. by Southern 1962, p. 56.

[859] Eadmer: *HN*, 29, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 23f.

This positive image changes after his death at the burial. As Orderic Vitalis writes as well, William's body was left alone, and the ground where he was supposed to be buried did not even belong to him. William, the great king, was buried without any ceremony and alone. Eadmer's intention here is quite clear. For him—as for Orderic—the death of a great man is a good opportunity to talk about the transience of human life and the vast power of God. Unlike Orderic, Eadmer leaves it open-ended whether William really had stolen the ground or not. He does not tell whether anyone was compensated either.[860] That William was left alone directly after his death can be read as the motif of passing power to his successor[861]—if there was not the problem of transition. Eadmer does not describe that William made any arrangement regarding his succession. Orderic tells how England was given back to God, but that William preferred his son Rufus as his heir. In the *Historia Novorum,* it is Rufus who seized the throne out of desire with the help of false promises to Lanfranc.[862] William therefore can be seen as careless by not being concerned about his succession and leaving it up to his sons to arrange it.

Eadmer—like Orderic Vitalis—draws an ambiguous picture of William. On the one hand, he collaborated successfully with Lanfranc and Anselm and reformed the Church, but, on the other hand, he was also listening to the wrong people, was severe, and did not treat the English well. The role of advisors concerning William's actions is noticeable. This lets William appear indecisive and dependent. However, in my opinion, Eadmer does this in order to emphasise the importance of the archbishops of Canterbury. All positively described deeds of William happen in connection to them, whereas many negative actions are associated with bad advisors. William is thus reduced to an instrument of the archbishops of Canterbury (which is something good in Eadmer's eyes).

Concerning the question of legitimacy, this shows that William is the chosen king by God and so has the clear authority to rule. Still, Eadmer authorises him, as Orderic Vitalis, not via his good rule or virtues. For this, his characterisation is too ambiguous as well. Neither is William contrasted to Harold Godwinson, about whom Eadmer does not write very negatively. Thus, Eadmer legitimised William's rule via his close collaboration with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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[860] Eadmer: *HN*, 29f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 24f.
[861] Evans 2003, p. 48.
[862] Eadmer: *HN*, 30, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 25. A detailed analysis follows in chapter 4.8.

As already hinted at in the introduction, there was much research done about William's idea of a good king. Therefore, I start this analysis by giving a short introduction to these studies. Foremost, the most important conclusion of research is that William of Malmesbury does not have a black-and-white view on kings. He does not differ between the *rex iustus* with many virtues on the one side and the *rex iniustus*/tyrant with many flaws on the other. Rather, the virtuousness of a king depended on the success of his rule. Success, in turn, was visible in peace throughout the kingdom. A king was meant to create stability and promote justice. This also means that a ruler with many virtues was not necessarily a good king because he could use his power wrongly.[863] This became already visible in the depiction of the rule of Edward the Confessor.

As seen above, also for William of Malmesbury, the ability of a ruler to fulfil his duties was one of the most important legitimising factors.[864] According to Weiler, these duties were, as already mentioned, to secure peace, to defend one's kingdom, to be pious, to support monasteries, to crack down on simony, and to uphold justice.[865] Most of all, however, divine support mattered, which the kings had to earn in the first place.[866] Thereby, success and virtue did not depend on each other.[867] All this became visible already in William of Malmesbury's description of William I at Hastings. This concept lessens the importance of dynasties and gives priority to the individual king along with the motivation behind his actions. For William of Malmesbury, it is additionally of importance that the king cared for England's well-being.[868]

Even before William of Malmesbury starts to report in detail about William, he explains to the reader in his prologue of book III what he might expect. As this concerns the following analysis deeply, I want to cite this part as a whole:

KING WILLIAM has been taken as their subject, under the spur of differing motives, by authors both Norman and English. The Normans in their enthusiasm have overpraised him, and his good and bad deeds alike have been lauded to the sky; the English, inspired by national enmities, have savaged their lord with foul calumnies. For my part, having the blood of both nations in my veins, I propose in my narrative to keep a middle path: his good deeds, so far as they have come within my knowledge, I will publish unadorned; his misdeeds I will touch on lightly and as it were in passing, so far as is needed to make them known. Thus my history will not be accused of falsehood, nor shall I be passing sentence on a man whose actions, even when they do not merit praise, at least almost always admit of excuse. Willingly therefore and with due care I will recount such incidents in his life as may provide a stimulus for the indolent or an example for the active, profitable for our own day and of interest to later generations. I shall not,

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[863] Gates 2013, p. 128; Plassmann 2013, pp. 161–164.

[864] Sønnesyn 2012, p. 159. The most significant virtues for kings in order to fulfil their duty were the cardinal virtues according to Cicero: fortitude (*fortittudo*), prudence (*prudentia*), justice (*iustitia*), and restraint (*temperantia*). William did not copy these virtues directly from Cicero but from Augustine (pp. 159–161).

[865] Weiler 2005, p. 7. This reflects the typical canon of royal virtues in the Middle Ages. However, Weiler states that William used them in a broader context and in a more complex way.

[866] Weiler 2005, p. 19.

[867] Plassmann 2017b, p. 183.

[868] Winkler 2017a, pp. 210–223.

however, waste much time in telling of things of no practical value, which are indeed tedious to the reader and make the writer unpopular. There are quite enough people already to tear a good man's record to pieces with the tooth of envy.[869]

At the beginning, William, of course, refers to the Norman panegyrics (he knew the works of William of Poitiers and of William of Jumièges)[870]. The English critique probably comes from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. William of Malmesbury therefore had the difficult task of uniting these reports to create a history that still made sense. Research often has read the citation above as proof that William was aware of his mixed descent.[871] However, he uses his descent in order to refer to the popular concept of *sine ira et studio* (without anger and fondness) introduced by the Roman author Tacitus. As is widely known, Tacitus' work is everything else but written without anger and fondness. Still, the idea became popular and was meant to win the reader's benevolence. William argues that he will achieve his aim because he is both English and Norman, which qualifies him as an unbiased writer. William's purpose after he chooses what to write down or not is much more interesting. William wants his readers to learn from history, so he only writes down the information about the king he thinks to be useful. This means, on the one hand, that he leaves out things that might bore the reader. On the other hand, William also states that people write negative things out of jealousy, and he wants to ignore these writings as well. This indicates already that his report about William might be biased and includes more positive than negative facts about the Conqueror.

The first impression verifies this idea. Even before William became king, William of Malmesbury presents him as a worthy successor of Edward the Confessor. To do so, he describes him in the moment Edward considers him as heir as follows: "The duke was well worthy of this gift [the English kingdom], being a young man of high spirit, who had reached his high dignity by energy and strength of character"[872]. Moreover, William's suitability for kingship had revealed itself even before the duke's birth, as his

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[869] William: *GRA*, iii.prologue, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 424f (*DE WILLELMO rege scripserunt, diuersis incitati causis, et Nonnanni et Angli. Illi ad nimias efferati sunt laudes, bona malaque iuxta in caelum predicantes; isti pro gentilibus inimicitiis fedis dominum suum proscidere conuitiis. Ego autem, quia utriusque gentis sanguinem traho, dicendi tale temperamentum seruabo: bene gesta, quantum cognoscere potui, sine fuco palam efferam; perperam acta, quantum suffitiat scientiae, leuiter et quasi transeunter attingam, ut nec mendax culpetur historia, nec illum nota inuram censoria cuius cuncta pene, etsi non laudari, excusari certe possunt opera. Itaque de illo talia narrabo libenter et rnorose quae sint inertibus incitamento, promptis exemplo, usui presentibus, iocunditati sequentibus. Verum in his protrahendis non multum temporis expendam impendium quae nulli emolumentum, immo legenti fastidium, scribenti pariant odium. Satis superque suffitiunt qui genuino molari facta honorum lacerent.*)
[870] Thomson 1987, p. 69.
[871] E.g. Webber 2005, p. 148.
[872] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 416f (*Erat ille hoc munere dignus, prestans animi iuuenis et qui in supremum fastigium alacri robore excreuerat*).

mother had had a prophetic dream. This omen was confirmed right after William's birth, when the baby tightly grasped the objects lying on the ground.[873]

Also, Malmesbury's description of William's behaviour before and after Hastings differs from the other two sources. Before the battle, the Normans did not plunder, because William forbade it, explaining that they would be ravaging their own territory.[874] Also after Hastings, on his way to London, William was peaceful and needed no violence in order to be accepted as king.[875] However, Malmesbury does not hide the fact that there was resistance against William's rule. He writes about the rebellion in Exeter, which William subdued easily. The king had, as in Hastings, God on his side, who let the town walls fall down.[876] This shows once again that William was the king chosen by God and that resistance against his rule was against law.

Malmesbury gives a similar picture of the so-called Harrying of the North. He clearly passes judgement on Edwin and Morcar for their rebellion. Furthermore, for him, the Scottish and Danish kings were involved. However, even William of Malmesbury cannot silently pass over the destruction that King William caused in Northumberland. Nevertheless, he does not condemn William in the way Orderic Vitalis does. For Malmesbury, William only acted partly out of anger, and this anger might even be justified because he had to prevent the Scottish King Malcolm (1058–1093) from plundering his realms. In any case, William I was not so angry that he acted without reason, as he destroyed especially the territory near the coast out of fear of the Danes.[877] Even if the destruction was terrible, Malmesbury mainly condemns the northern Earls Edwin and Morcar and not King William. Generally, William of Malmesbury thinks ill of the two. He cannot understand their constant rebellions, especially because William I treated them well: "He himself would long ago have married them to his own kinswomen and honoured them with his friendship, had they been content to remain at peace."[878] The circumstance is similar with Waltheof. William describes him as disloyal, and his death as a traitor was unavoidable from a long-term perspective. Nevertheless, he stands before the problem that Waltheof was venerated as a saint after his death. Traitors usually did not become saints. Hence, William has to acquit Waltheof of the accused rebellion. Still, he does not blame King William for the misjudgement.[879] Thus, William of Malm-

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[873] William: *GRA*, iii.229, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 426.
[874] William: *GRA*, iii.238, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 450.
[875] William: *GRA*, iii.247, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 460.
[876] William: *GRA*, iii.248, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 462.
[877] William: *GRA*, iii.248-250, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 462–464.
[878] William: *GRA*, iii.252, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 468f (*quibus ipse et coniugia cognatarum et amicitiae dignationem iam pridem indulsis set, si quieti adquiescere uellent*).
[879] William: *GRA*, iii.253f, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 468–470.

esbury is, in contrast to Orderic Vitalis, in all rebellions on the side of the king. He does not even rebuke William for the Harrying of the North.

Already in the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror distinguished himself as a great warrior and leader. William of Malmesbury reinforces this image of the king as he describes his wars in Maine. There, he first lists William's military successes (the sub-jugation of England and the pacification of the Welsh), before he writes: "he enjoyed such good fortune lifelong that nations foreign and far-distant feared nothing so much as his name".[880] William of Malmesbury often mentions *fortuna* (fortune) in his texts.[881] This is quite typical for medieval historiography, wherein *fortuna* stood for luck or chance but also for an act of divine providence,[882] which seems to be the case here. Hence, this passage shows, on the one hand, that William had God to thank for his victories and everything else. On the other hand, William was such a great warrior that foreigners were afraid of even his name.

Malmesbury also shows again that William earned God's benevolence by going to mass regularly, founding churches, and appointing Lanfranc as archbishop.[883] Fur-thermore, he lived in chastity before marriage and remained faithful to his wife after the wedding.[884] After her death, William was inconsolable and "abandoned pleasure of eve-ry kind"[885]. Besides the burial of his own wife, he also took care of the burial of Edward the Confessor's wife, who was entombed in Westminster Abbey near her husband.[886] King William also fulfilled his Christian duties towards his own father, whose bones he brought home, and towards his mother whom he highly esteemed.[887] Thus, William did, according to William of Malmesbury, everything that was expected of a good Christian. By managing the funeral of his deceased predecessor's wife, he might have even done more than was expected. So, this shows the closeness of William to Edward the Con-fessor.

There are only few points of critique that William brings towards the king. One is his mistrust towards the English that also led to overly aggressive behaviour towards them. Although, Malmesbury explains it as understandable because of the English rebellions, he still sees it as unjust.[888] Then, there is the death of William's son Richard, who caught a deadly sickness on a hunting trip. Interestingly, he contracted the sickness in

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[880] William: *GRA*, iii.258, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 476f (*uita ita fortunatus fuit ut exterae et remotae gentes nichil magis quam nomen eius timerent*).
[881] Thomson 2003, p. 125.
[882] Koselleck 1979, p. 159.
[883] William: *GRA*, iii.267, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 492.
[884] William: *GRA*, iii.273, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 500.
[885] William: *GRA*, iii.273, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 502f (*ab omni uoluptate desciuit*).
[886] William: *GRA*, iii.273, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 502.
[887] William: *GRA*, iii.277, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 504–506.
[888] William: *GRA*, iii.254, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 470.

the same forest where William I had driven out the local population in order to have better woods for hunting. In the later version of his *Gesta*, William moderates the consequence of the king's doings. In the earlier ones, however, he laments the rotting houses and the fact that the deer were not available to the local population. Therefore, it might be interpreted as divine punishment that two of William's sons and his grandson died in this forest.[889] Hunting was a difficult topic for medieval writers. On the one hand, it was typical for kings to go hunting.[890] On the other hand, it was a motif of royal arrogance and regarded critically.[891] So, even if he revises his judgement later, Malmesbury clearly criticises William for his desire to hunt and for supposedly driving out the local population. The consequences are grave.

Before William's death, Malmesbury adds a short description of the king. He depicts him as a strong man with great dignity who never fell ill. He also shows that William was adept at representing his power with the help of lavish meals. However, some critique also follows. According to William of Malmesbury, William was too fat, which made him look "unkingly"[892]. Furthermore, he was greedy. Also, this criticism is moderated by Malmesbury later on, as he claimed the wealth was needed in order to rule a new kingdom. Malmesbury also suggests that it was not only William's strength but also his largesse that protected his kingdom.[893] So, William I had the problem of managing the balancing act between generosity and greed. Both could have severe consequences.[894] Malmesbury, in turn, is unsure how to handle this and decides—especially in later versions—to consider it as positive on the king's behalf. Therefore, I want to agree with Weiler's interpretation of the passage. He argues that Malmesbury embeds his criticism in a catalogue of virtues, showing that he sees William as a good king with some flaws. According to Weiler, this means that Malmesbury does not expect good kings to behave in a saint-like way.[895]

William's death was announced with a string of bad omens, such as violent storms and the death of many people.[896] These stories are copied from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,[897] and William probably takes them, like Edward's prophecies before, to make his story more exciting. By using them, he shows that harm awaited England. William died

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[889] William: *GRA*, iii.275, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 504.
[890] Schröder 2004, p. 280.
[891] Evans 2003, p. 43.
[892] William: *GRA*, iii.279, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 508f (*corpus regium deformaret*). Skinner 2017 suggests that William really might have looked like this given that the panegyric author William of Poitiers calls him big as well. Due to the longer chronological distance, Malmesbury could stay closer to the truth (p. 223).
[893] William: *GRA*, iii.280, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 508–510.
[894] See Plassmann 2013, pp. 152–154.
[895] Weiler 2005, p. 13.
[896] William: *GRA*, iii.272, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 500.
[897] *ASC E*, year 1087, ed. by Irvine 2004, p. 95.

during a campaign in France. The French king had insulted him by indicating he was too fat. Furious, William began to plunder French territory. William of Malmesbury uses here the word "furenter"[898], which does not indicate just anger, but the uncontrolled one. Thus, the Conqueror burned the city of Mantes, including a church. Malmesbury offers two possible reasons for the king's death. The first one says that he contracted his illness by coming too near to the flames. The second one is that William was hurt by his saddle because he was too stout.[899] Both explanations indicate a divine punishment. The first one suggests that William was punished for his uncontrolled anger by the flames he himself had set. Fenton sees his death here additionally as a punishment for an unjustifiable act committed out of anger.[900] The second explanation indicates that William was punished for gluttony as he was too fat. However, as Malmesbury never criticises William for eating too much, I would rather join Winkler's argument that the second suggestion indicates only a physical death without further involvement.[901] In my eyes, these two explanations have again the aim to show William in a good light without looking biased. By offering two explanations without really taking sides, Malmesbury can write for a public that has a mixed attitude towards the Conqueror. By suggesting the death without divine involvement in the end and by describing William's following actions as those of a good Christian, Malmesbury moderates his own critique.

After it became clear to William that he was going to die, he decided on his succession, set his prisoners free, and distributed his money to the churches. He also confessed his sins and tried to repair the damage of his last campaign by donating money to the church that had been burnt down in Mantes.[902] Because of this, William died a good, royal death. Nevertheless, his burial caused problems. Malmesbury tells the same story as Orderic Vitalis: As William was supposed to be lain in the tomb, a man complained that the place had been stolen from him and did not rightfully belong to the dead king. This time, it is William's son Henry who paid the knight. William of Malmesbury intends, as does Orderic, to show the transience of earthly glory, which he makes clear by writing

At that point the pitiful ups and downs of human life were well displayed: that great man, who at one time reflected honour on the whole of Europe and was the most powerful of all his line, could obtain no place for his eternal rest without due process of law.[903]

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[898] William: *GRA*, iii.282, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 510.
[899] William: *GRA*, iii.282, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 510.
[900] Fenton 2008, p. 36.
[901] Winkler 2017a, p. 127.
[902] William: *GRA*, iii.282, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 510–512.
[903] William: *GRA*, iii.283, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 512f (*Varietatis humanae tunc fuit uidere miseriam, quod homo ille, totius olim Europae honor antecessorumque suorum omnium potentior, sedem aetemae requietionis sine calumnia impetrare non potuit*).

In contrast to Orderic, William moderates the story so that the downfall of the Conqueror is not that grand: it was his son Henry who paid for the place and not some unknown bishop or magnate.[904] This means that there still was a responsible person, who cared for the late king. It also means that William was not abandoned after his death, but that at least one son stayed by his side.

Hence, William of Malmesbury's claim to report without anger and fondness is a topos. He depicts William I as *rex iustus* with only a few character faults. These are reported in such a way that they are either strongly moderated (in comparison to his sources) or explained in such a way that they fade into the background. William depicts King William as a pious king and successful warrior. His success, in turn, is explained by God's providence. William's violence towards the English is softened by giving the fault for the rebellions to Edwin, Morcar, the Scottish or the Danish king. So, William was not harsh without reason, but rather protected his kingdom against internal and external threats. It is not without cause that William of Malmesbury gives him the byname "Great".[905] As it was God's providence behind William's success and because William gained God's benevolence by being pious, he is legitimised by the fact that he was a just king.

We saw already that Henry of Huntingdon begins to insert the deeds of William in the description of Edward the Confessor. There, William is depicted as a successful warrior and strategist (as in the Battle of Hastings). William retained this characteristic also as king. Therefore, Henry mentions of the king's campaign in Wales that he conquered in battle and the subjugated the Scottish king.[906] In his summary, Henry writes about the Conqueror "William, higher than all the preceding, shone gloriously until his twenty-first year"[907]. In the next sentence, he refers again to the comet. Thus, Henry remembers William because of his successes in battle, especially because of his victory in Hastings. This triumph makes William superior to other kings. Obviously, Henry favours strong and warlike kings, as he portrays Cnut the Great as "greater than all his predecessors"[908].

Nevertheless, William is not portrayed only positively. In this case, Henry criticises William for his greed. He writes that William collected treasures in England in order to

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[904] William: *GRA*, iii.283, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 512.
[905] William: *GRA*, iii.274, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 502f (*Magni*); also William: *GRA*, iv.304, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 542.
[906] Henry: *HA*, vi.33, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 400; vi.35, resp. p. 398.
[907] Henry: *HA*, vi.42, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 410f (*Willelmus omnium predictorum summus xxi anno glorifice splenduit.*).
[908] Henry: *HA*, vi.42, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 410f (*omnium predecessorum suorum maximus*).

bring them to Normandy. Henry also indicates that some of the treasures were acquired unlawfully, but the king did not care about their origin.[909] Furthermore, Henry laments the way William gave away land. The king only cared about the profit he could make, so he gave away the land to the person who was willing to pay most. If another was willing to give even more money, William broke the already closed agreement in favour of this person. Also, he made no attempts to protect his people from the arbitrariness of his sheriffs.[910] Hence, William contravened against the law he was supposed to protect out of greed—this behaviour should strongly delegitimise him.

However, the victory in the Battle of Hastings was enough to make William a righteous king despite his faults. This becomes visible in the rebellions, although Henry of Huntingdon seems to have ambiguous feelings towards them. The first rebellion in the North Henry condemns; he calls the people there "treacherous"[911]. The so-called Revolt of the Earls is also described as "treason"[912]. The revolt against a rightful king obviously is detestable. However, Henry does not say anything about Edgar Ætheling who was leader of the first rebellion, or about Hereward, nor does he condemn the other rebellions in the north (including the Harrying of the North). These reports look—judging by the style—more like they were copied from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or similar annals.[913] I assume that Henry does not want to show the English in such a bad light by condemning each rebellion. In this context, it needs also to be said that Henry emphasises that the English (and not the Normans) subjugated Maine for William.[914] Additionally, he complains about the treatment of the English after the Conquest. As Orderic Vitalis and Eadmer of Canterbury before him, Henry of Huntingdon states that the English no longer hold higher offices and that "it [is] even disgraceful to be called English"[915]. So, William—although he was a great king—maltreated the English.

Henry interprets this as part of the divine plan that meant to destroy the English by way of the Normans as punishment for their sins. Nevertheless, also William was punished by God for his greed. First, Henry takes—as William of Malmesbury—the narration of the natural disasters from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. He arranges the narration in such a way that it looks like the violent storms and famines were sent by God in order to show His disfavour towards William's actions. Second, as the king plundered in France and violently conquered the town of Mantes, which rightfully belonged to the

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[909] Henry: *HA*, vi.37, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 402.
[910] Henry: *HA*, vi.38, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 402–405.
[911] Henry: *HA*, vi.31, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 397f (*perfide*).
[912] Henry: *HA*, vi.34, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 398f (*prodicionem*).
[913] For the rebellions see Henry: *HA*, vi.31-34, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 396–398.
[914] Henry: *HA*, vi.33, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 398.
[915] Henry: *HA*, vi.38, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 402f (*ita etiam ut Anglicum uocari esset oprobrior*).

French king, God sent him a sickness as punishment that led to William's death.[916] Thereby, Henry shows that William was not a *rex iustus* but had many flaws. By showing that God punished him for his doings, Henry makes clear how bad William's behaviour really was.

All in all, Henry's description of William is very ambiguous. This impression is further strengthened when it comes to the epilogue about the king's reign. There, Henry of Huntingdon writes:

He was more powerful than any of the kings of the English. He was more worthy of praise than any of his predecessors. He was wise but cunning, wealthy but avaricious, glorious but hungry for fame. He was humble towards God's servants, unyielding towards those who opposed him.[917]

This description goes further in this way. Henry mentions a good characteristic and often joins it to a bad one or vice versa. Thereby, he praises William for his ability to keep peace (e.g. by copying the example from Bede of a woman that could cross the kingdom without being harmed) on the one hand. On the other hand, he criticises the king for being too stern (e.g. by describing the creation of the New Forest).[918] The purpose of this very ambiguous description is also made clear:

So you who read and regard the virtues and vices of so great a man, follow the good and turn away from the evil, so as to go by the direct way which leads to the perfect life.[919]

This was so important to Henry that he wrote this twice: after the epilogue of William's life as cited above and the other time before the epilogue.[920] Plassmann observes here that Henry says less on William's state of salvation than on the Anglo-Saxon kings; something she interprets along with other points as a sign that William was not in God's favour.[921]

Thus, the whole description of William's character does not tell us anything about his legitimacy. William's legitimacy came from God, but the description of his character serves as example to follow or to avoid. Henry of Huntingdon uses the portrayal of William I in order to educate his reader; with it he shows how to behave and how not to behave. In order to stress how important it is to avoid William's mistakes, he shows how God, the Almighty, punishes the king for his misdeeds. One time by harming his

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[916] Henry: *HA*, vi.38, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 402–404.
[917] Henry: *HA*, vi.39, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 404f (*Omnibus Anglorum regibus potentior fuit. Omnibus predecessoribus suis laude dignior fuit. Erat autem sapiens sed astutus, locuples sed cupidus, gloriosus sed fame deditus. Erat humilis Deo seruientibus, durus sibi resistentibus.*).
[918] Henry: *HA*, vi.39, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 404–6.
[919] Henry: *HA*, vi.39, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 406f (*Vos igitur qui legitis et uiri tanti uirtutes et uicia uidetis, bona sequentes et a malis declinantes, pergite per uiam directam que ducit ad uitam perfectam.*).
[920] Henry: *HA*, vi.38, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 404.
[921] Plassmann 2017b, pp. 189–192.

kingdom, and, as this led to nothing, He punished the king with death. So, Henry even warns his reader not to become too greedy or too stern.

Roger of Howden paints a very negative picture of William that is mainly taken from the *Historia post obitum Bedae*. Generally, William I is described as a severe king who recoiled neither from acting against the English nor from violating the Church. The negative image from the coronation is so further augmented. First, Roger laments William's greed: His taxes were too high and unaffordable for the English;[922] furthermore, he accuses William of plundering monasteries and the English people. English nobles tried to hide their money from William's devastation in monasteries, but the king asked his men to take it away anyway.[923] The relation of William to his subjects was marked by distrust, which deeply influenced William's decisions, e.g. at the council of Winchester where he imprisoned English churchmen: "being merely influenced, as already mentioned, by suspicion on account of the kingdom he had newly acquired."[924] Thus, William did not judge rightly or justly but out of distrust.

There is a second situation where William I acted for the wrong reasons. As Orderic Vitalis, Roger describes the Harrying of the North. In Northumbria, a rebellion broke out as the people did not want to live under foreign reign, and William sent an earl to overpower the Northumbrians. The Northumbrians united with the Danish and defeated the Normans:

When William was informed of this, *being greatly enraged, he swore that he would pierce the whole of the Northumbrians with a single spear,* and shortly afterwards, having assembled an army hastened with feelings of extreme irritation to Northumbria [...][925]

In the aftermath, he devastated the region and killed its inhabitants. As Orderic Vitalis, Roger seems to condemn William's deeds and describes the results drastically: People starved, became cannibals, or sold themselves into slavery in order to survive. So, William acted rashly and out of anger. His reaction to the rebellion, the reasons for which Roger seems to understand, was inappropriate and too severe. Interestingly, Roger emphasises that William reacted in anger (the insertions by Roger are in italics in the citation above). This is probably an attempt to explain the king's harsh reaction to the rebellion and to make the drastic consequences more fathomable. However, this does not mean that Roger approves of these actions, but rather that he shows how terrible

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[922] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 117.
[923] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 120.
[924] Riley 1994b, p. 148 (*suspicione, ut diximus, tantum inductus novi regni.*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 123). The council of Winchester will be handled in more detail in chapter 4.7.
[925] Riley 1994b, p. 142, my emphasis (*Quod ubi regi Willelmo innocui, nimia commutus ira, juravit omnes Northimbrenses una se lanca perempturum. At mox exercitu congregato in Northimbriam efferato properavit animo;*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 119).

the Harrying of North was still considered and that there still was a strong need to explain why it went that far. For William's legitimacy, the Harrying of the North remains disadvantageous.

Generally, William's relation to the north of England was not very good, and this might explain Roger's negative image of the king. When it was not William who caused destruction in Northumbria, it was the Scottish king. He plundered both people and monasteries, burnt churches, and enslaved young people. William did nothing to protect the Northerners from Scottish tyranny. This is not emphasised by Roger (William's immediate reaction to the events is not mentioned), but as it was the task of a king to protect its people, William failed. Instead, Edgar Ætheling's sister managed to civilise the Scottish king when she married him.[926] William's reaction came a year later. He saw the Scottish invasion as an offense and organised a campaign against his neighbour. William was successful; the Scottish king swore homage.[927] However, the peace did not keep long because only a few years later, William's son Robert led an unsuccessful campaign against the Scots.[928] These two events are not commentated further. So, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about William's legitimacy from it. Nonetheless, they document the difficult situation in Northumbria during William's reign.

Three other events that led to ambiguous reactions in historiography are the killing of Earl Waltheof, the writing of the Domesday Book, and the creation of the New Forest. Concerning Waltheof, Earl of Northumbria, Roger clearly takes side in favour of the earl. For him, Waltheof was neither part of the conspiracy against William, nor were his imprisonment or his killing justified. This is emphasised with a long paragraph explaining why Waltheof went to heaven.[929] However, this episode aims more to fashion Waltheof into a kind of martyr than to show William in bad light. Though the writing of the Domesday Book and the following rebellions are mentioned by Roger, he does not take a side. For him, the survey is without doubt very detailed, but he writes nothing about whether the rebellions were justified or not.[930] The story about the creation of the New Forest resembles the narration in the *Historia Regum Anglorum*. Roger only dramatizes the story by mentioning how many churches had been in that area. As a punishment, two of William's sons and his grandson died in this forest.[931]

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[926] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 121f.
[927] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 126.
[928] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 136. Scottish plundering is also mentioned for the year 1078 (p. 133).
[929] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 132.
[930] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 139.
[931] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 156.

William's death is described in an ambiguous way. On the one hand, it can be read as a divine punishment. Before falling ill, William had burnt all churches and two hermits on a campaign in Mantes. The subsequent death can be seen as a direct consequence of this crime. On the other hand, William died a good death: He had enough time to hand down his kingdom and duchy, to release his prisoners, and to confess his sins. In contrast to Orderic and Eadmer, nothing spectacular is written about his funeral. William was buried in the Church of St Stephen, which he had donated.[932] So, by the standards of medieval historiography, William's death is described in a good way.

What does all this tell about the legitimacy Roger of Howden ascribes to William's reign? The characteristics of William are—with a few exceptions—taken from Roger's main source but offer, nevertheless, a glimpse of Roger's image of William. As the few additions show, Roger did work with his source. Roger of Howden, thus, shows the king as a severe and difficult ruler and reflects the difficult situation in Northumbria after the Norman Conquest. Nevertheless, although William was not a *rex iustus*, his legitimacy is not questioned either, e.g. by portraying him as a tyrant.

As written above, William of Newburgh writes about a softening of King William's character because of the influence of Archbishop Ealdred of York (this relation is further studied in chapter 4.7); the same applies to the cooperation with Stigand and Lanfranc. Apart from the coronation and relation to the archbishops, William of Newburgh does not write anything about William's reign. So, there are William's death and the *elogium* that are of interest when it comes to the description of William's character.

As in the other narrations of William's death, also in the *Historia*, William had enough time to hand down his possessions. Then, there follows the *elogium*: first, William of Newburgh presents the king's character positively. He depicts him as "keen on fighting, great in spirit, blessed with success, and uniquely prominent among bastards."[933] Thereby, he bridges the *elogium* to the introduction of William, where he also calls the king a bastard. From the middle of the twelfth century onwards, changes in canon law led to a disinheritance of illegitimate children. However, it is unclear how these changes in law were applied and how society's attitudes towards illegitimate children changed.[934] Therefore, one has to assume that the term *nothus* still was not used pejoratively, but rather that Newburgh expresses his respect: William was successful despite his ancestry (which might have been an obstacle at the end of the twelfth centu-

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[932] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 140.

[933] Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 41 (*armis acer, animo ingens, successu felix, singulare nothorum decus*—William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 21f).

[934] Brownlie 2013, p. 206; McDougall 2017, pp. 274–277.

ry). All in all, success plays an important role in legitimising William. This is shown by the *elogium*, but also by the fact that William only became king because he was successful at Hastings.

William of Newburgh further praises William for having built and supported the Church of St Stephen at Caen where he was buried. However, concerning the burial, Newburgh follows the narration of Orderic Vitalis and Eadmer of Canterbury. Though he does not report that William was left alone after death, he reports that the ground of his grave did not rightfully belong to him, causing an interruption during the burial. The intentions are the same as Orderic's or Eadmer's:

[...] this had occurred by God's judgement to make manifest the emptiness of transient power; for that most powerful prince, who in life had held such wide sway, did not have in death an undisputed place to enclose his body.[935]

Thus, William's burial is used as an opportunity to show the transience of earthly glory. The opposition of the great king and the problematic burial place is even more emphasised by the description of William as a successful king at the beginning of the *elogium*. So, the superiority of the king appears, in retrospect, less than glorious, and rather becomes a symbol for the height of his fall.

The *elogium* grows even more negative. As written above, William of Newburgh mentions the Battle of Hastings there a second time. On this occasion, he strongly condemns the battle as a shedding of Christian blood. The fact that William the Conqueror was Christian himself makes it even worse, as he so spilled the blood of his brothers in faith. Thus, the impression from chapter 4.3 is confirmed: According to William of Newburgh, the Norman Conquest is no just war. Instead, Christians fought against Christians, which Newburgh condemns.[936] Though William I had built the monastery of Battle as atonement for the war against the English, God did not seem to have forgiven him. William of Newburgh describes that—when it rains—blood still flows at the place where the battle waged the most. This symbolises, on the one hand, the great violence with which the battle was fought, and, on the other hand, that God still remembers the shedding of Christian blood. Newburgh makes clear that William I profoundly bought his kingdom with much violence.[937]

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[935] Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 41 (*[…] judicio Die, ad declarandam transitoriæ dominationis vanitatem, actum considerantes; ut princeps potentissimus, qui tam late dominates fuerat vivus, locum corporis sui caacem sine querela non haberet mortuus.*—William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 22).

[936] Also Bede condemns Christian wars. See for example the attack of Ireland (Bede: *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, iv.26, ed. by Colgrave, Mynors 1972, pp. 426–428). This shows some similarities to the Norman Conquest. I want to thank Michael Staunton for this reference.

[937] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 22f.

Taking everything into consideration, William of Newburgh does not depict William I as *rex iustus.* The picture is not all in all negative, since William was successful and supported the Church. However, William was violent towards the English and is used as an example of the transience of earthly glory. Especially the structure of the *elogium* makes William appear to be a bad king. William of Newburgh begins with a positive statement that makes the height of William I's fall after his death even greater. Then, William of Newburgh comes back to the violence at Hastings and describes how direly costly the king's rule over England was. Thus, the depiction of William I questions rather the rightness of his rule. In this context, interestingly, Newburgh does not mention the Harrying of the North, which would have made his argument stronger.

William of Malmesbury is the one who depicts William in the best light, and he is the only one whose portrayal of William most resembles the one of a *rex iustus.* This might be attributed to the fact that he wanted to please his patrons. The reports of Orderic Vitalis and Eadmer of Canterbury are ambiguous. Orderic contrasts William to Harold Godwinson, which legitimises his rule, but after William's coronation, the scene changes. From then on, William's flaws become apparent. For Eadmer, William is merely a tool used to show the importance of the archbishops of Canterbury. Under their influence, King William is depicted as *rex iustus,* but he was negatively influenced by other advisors, destroying his characterisation as a just king. Henry of Huntingdon uses William as *exempla* only; his characterisation has nothing to do with William's legitimacy. Roger of Howden portrays William negatively but does not delegitimise him either. William of Newburgh's depiction questions William I's reign. As this shows, William's portrayal becomes increasingly negative towards the end of the twelfth century. Apart from William of Malmesbury, the stylisation as just king hardly plays a role in all the texts in order to authorise William's rule. The contrast to Harold is important for the authors, who portrayed Harold negatively—especially Orderic Vitalis. Success, in turn, is mainly significant for William's victory at Hastings.

4.6   Blaming the Normans: The New Aristocracy as Exploiter

As the last chapters already showed, the authors are well aware that the English had to suffer under the Norman rule. It was also already hinted that the fault for this suffering is not always given to William but to others. Therefore, in this chapter, I want to find out whether the new Norman aristocracy serve as scapegoats for what went wrong after the Conquest with the aim to brighten up the image of William. For this, an analysis of the description of the Norman aristocracy is necessary.

All researchers on Orderic's view on the Norman people agree that he sees them in a rather negative way: They were treacherous, liked violence, were unable to live under God's law, and needed, therefore, a strong ruler.[938] Blacker sees the reason for this worldview in Orderic's English nationalism, while Albu observes it as a general trend in Norman historiography.[939] However, an initial glance at his accounts does not verify the statements above:

> But the laymen were no less outstanding [than the clergy] [...] who had inherited the warlike courage of their ancestors and excelled in judgement and wise counsel.[940]

Here, the Normans have many good qualities; as they were going to conquer England, being warlike can be read in positive terms. Going further, Orderic describes Norman lords who had taken part in the Battle of Hastings as great warriors, which he considers as praise.[941]

This positive image changes quickly in the aftermath of the Conquest when the Normans began to rule over England. Chibnall states that Orderic sees the Norman Conquest—even if the Norman aristocracy just obeyed its ruler—as an act of violence that could not be forgiven, not even by doing personal penance.[942] Orderic's bad opinion of the Normans is shown especially from the point in time onwards when William returned to Normandy and left his men behind in charge. While some did their tasks well, "others irresponsibly heaped heavy burdens on them [the English]".[943] The Normans' behaviour towards the English is a point of general complaint. Orderic does not only describe the poor conduct of single nobles, but he laments the general behaviour as well. He writes about how Norman magnates misused their power by replacing good abbots with tyrants[944] or robbed monasteries in order to get their treasures.[945] He reproaches the Normans' abuse of their authority to become richer at the expense of the English, who were killed or needed to go into exile.[946] While Orderic does not have a problem with the career of foreign churchmen, he disagrees with the career of Norman lords be-

[938] Albu 2001, pp. 195–204; Blacker 1994, p. 72; Chibnall 1984, p. 28; Shopkow 1997, pp. 101–104.
[939] Albu 2001, pp. 238f; Blacker 1994, p. 72.
[940] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 140f (*Personæ nichilominus laici ordinis præminebant [...] militari stemmate feroces, sensuque sagaci consilioque potentes.*).
[941] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 174.
[942] Chibnall 1984, p. 127.
[943] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 196f (*nonnulli uero modestia carentes immoderate suos oppresserunt*).
[944] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 268.
[945] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 266. In fact, there were problems with sheriffs abusing their power—especially towards the Church. Therefore, institutions came into being to control them (Douglas 1994, p. 303).
[946] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 266–268.

cause they became rich by force.[947] Although Orderic does not hold the North-English in high regard, he describes their customs as an example of how the Normans misunderstood the English. The Northerners slept in tents instead of houses because they wanted to be hardened. The Normans did not know this and declared them to be wild and barbarous (*siluatici*).[948] This indicates, first, that Orderic himself sees the North-English as strangers, but it can also be an example for Norman ignorance. Second, this shows that Orderic gives a very negative description of the Norman aristocracy, whose behaviour was marked by violence and greed. Third, Orderic indicates that it was not William who exploited the English, but his nobles. As they did it in his absence, it was not William's fault that his tenants did not rule properly, as he had no influence on their behaviour from abroad.

The Norman nobles even deliberately ignored the king's will. The vice-regents, Bishop Odo and William FitzOsbern, oppressed their English subjects. While their soldiers plundered and raped, the English had no opportunity to protect themselves. This led to a rebellion.[949] Going further on in the text, Orderic calls the Norman reign one of "injustice and tyranny"[950] and presents the English rebellions as self-defence. On the one hand, this can be interpreted as not being William's fault that the English rebelled against him. Clearly, the vice-regents acted against William's wishes in such a way that he was powerless. On the other hand, he also frees the English from the accusation of having rebelled against their rightful king.

Another example where Normans clearly acted to the disadvantage of their king is Orderic's description of Norman women. He describes how the wives of Norman nobles forced their husbands back home by threatening to remarry. He characterises them as cowardly, selfish, and short-sighted. They were too afraid to come to live in England and did not think of the well-being of their family, but rather their own. If their husbands had stayed longer with the king, they would have been rewarded with the seized land. Moreover, a re-marriage would have dishonoured them, their husbands, and children.[951] As it was seen as the first task of a wife and mother to do the best for her family, they failed completely. Additionally, they weakened William's power with their behaviour.

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[947] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 232.
[948] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 216–218. This is a good example of Orderic's way of contradicting his own writing. As seen before, he portrays the northerners as barbarous as well.
[949] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 202.
[950] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 216f (*iniuriis et oppressionibus*).
[951] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 118–220.

Of course, one could assume that it was a king's task to control his nobles and that it was, as a consequence, a sign of weakness and incompetence if he failed to do so. However, Orderic does not think like this. This is, for example, shown by the history of Normandy that was deeply influenced by violence and inner-Norman conflicts—which makes Orderic state that the land was more harmed by the Normans themselves than by outsiders. The reason behind these conflicts was mainly jealously, because the nobles begrudged one another.[952] This is also shown in the description of single Norman nobles. One that Orderic draws in a particularly unfavourable way is Hugh of Avranches, Earl of Chester. He was an ambitious fighter but was also prodigal, loved luxury, and destroyed the country.[953] Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, however, is described in a far better way. According to Orderic, he was wise, prudent, and just.[954] Nonetheless, not even he was without fault, but rather is characterised as jealous as well.[955] So, it is a general characterisation of the Norman people to be like that and was not in any way the king's fault.

This point is further stressed in William's deathbed speech in that Orderic also shows the role of the king for the Norman people:

'If the Normans are disciplined under a just and firm rule they are men of great valour, who press invincibly to the fore in arduous undertakings and, proving their strength, fight resolutely to overcome all enemies. But without such rule they tear each other to pieces and destroy themselves, for they hanker after rebellion, cherish sedition, and are ready for any treachery. So they need to be restrained by the severe penalties of law, and forced by the curb of discipline to keep to the path of justice. If they are allowed to go wherever they choose, as an untamed ass does, both they and their ruler must expect grave disorder and poverty.[956]

This confirms the results above and Orderic's rather poor opinion of the Normans. They were great warriors but did not seem to know when enough was enough. As long as William, as a strong leader, was with his nobles, things seemed to go right, but the moment he left, the aristocracy abused its power. In this case, the Normans fought not against each other but harmed the English. Therefore, Orderic shows a great understanding for the English rebellions and sees the reason in the misbehaviour of the new Norman nobility. So, he makes clear that the English did not rebel against their righteous king, but against their pitiful situation caused by Norman rule. He does not fault

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[952] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii and v.10, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 90, 122, 130, and III 108.
[953] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 260–262 and 260–262.
[954] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 262.
[955] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 130.
[956] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.15, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 82f (*'Normanni si bono rigidoque dominatu reguntur strenuissimi sunt, et in arduis rebus inuicti omnes excellunt, et cunctis hostibus fortiores superare contendunt. Alioquin sese uicissim dilaniant atque consumunt. rebelliones enim cupiunt, seditiones appetunt, et ad omne nefas prompti sunt. Rectitudinis igitur forti censura coherceantur. et freno disciplinæ per tramitem iusticiæ gradi compellantur. Si uero ad libitum suum sine iugo ut indomitus onager ire permittuntur. ipsi et princeps eorum penuria et confusione probrosa operientur.*).

William for the riots or the behaviour of his nobles. Rather, he described William doing his best to discipline his nobles.

Therefore, Orderic legitimises William by blaming the Norman nobility. Many problems in the coexistence of Normans and English and negative consequences of William's rule are ascribed to the Norman magnates. Because of this, William is shown in a better light. Orderic even frees him from the responsibility to control his tenants by characterising the Normans as overly combatant.

As a monk deeply obliged to the Cathedral of Canterbury, Eadmer does not care much about worldly affairs as long as they did not affect his monastery or church politics. That is why he puts so much emphasis on Lanfranc, while he nearly neglects even the king. This main emphasis leads to Eadmer only hinting at the Norman magnates.

One mention found in the *Historia Novorum* concerning secular affaires is the suffering of the English nobility under the Conquest.[957] However, Eadmer attributes the blame to William and not the Norman aristocracy as Orderic does. The case is different concerning Odo of Bayeux, whom Eadmer strongly dislikes. On the one hand, he characterises him as great and powerful, but, on the other hand, Odo abused his power by taking away lands and rights from Canterbury. Fortunately, Lanfranc was able to undo these injustices by intervening as advisor to the king. So, this story probably has the main purpose to show Lanfranc's positive influence on the king. However, Odo is used in a second example when he harmed the Church of Canterbury and Lanfranc by opening a proceeding against them. It was at this time that St Dunstan appeared to Lanfranc[958]— showing the greatness of Lanfranc once again. Still, it is probably no coincidence that Eadmer uses Odo twice as a bad example. The bishop is characterised as greedy and unjust, not suitable for his office as Bishop of Bayeux.

As Odo's characterisation fits well into Orderic's picture of the Normans, one might assume that he is used as an example of one of many Norman landowners who abused their power at the expense of the Church. However, this is only a conjecture. All in all, Eadmer does not write enough about the Norman magnates in order to state that the negative consequences of the Conquest are ascribed to them in order to authorise William's rule. On the contrary, the fact that Eadmer clearly makes William responsible for the mistreatment of the English nobility speaks against it.

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[957] Eadmer: *HN*, 11, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 9.
[958] Eadmer: *HN*, 21f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 17f.

As written above, William of Malmesbury already finds ideal scapegoats in the northern earls and the Danish along with the Scottish king in order to excuse William's harshness towards the English. Nevertheless, the question remains whether he finds additional culprits to explain the suppression of the English after the Conquest. That the Norman Conquest meant and still means a disaster for the English in William's eyes is stated clearly:

England has become a dwelling-place of foreigners and a playground for lords of alien blood. No Englishman today is an earl, a bishop, or an abbot; new faces everywhere enjoy England's riches and gnaw her vitals.[959]

Like Orderic, William complains that the English cannot hold successful careers in their own country anymore and that the realm was exploited. Furthermore, he indicates that this is a problem that has continued into his own generation, and that a change in the situation is not in sight.[960] However, unlike Orderic, William thinks positively of the Normans. For him, they were well-dressed, ate well but not too much, knew how to fight, and looked after their money when constructing large buildings. However, their loyalty to their superiors changed, and they were very ambitious.[961] So, William characterises the Normans far better than Orderic, although he mentions their disloyalty and high ambitions as well. Malmesbury furthermore states that William had no problems appointing other foreigners into high offices and comments on the king's choice of new clerks as follows:

He was driven to this, unless I am mistaken, by their ingrained prejudice against the king for the Normans, as I said before, have a natural kindliness which predisposes them to foreigners living in their midst.[962]

Thus, it once more becomes visible that William ascribes the responsibility for the post-Conquest suffering to the English alone. It is neither King William's character nor the Norman nature that led to the dispossession of the English. William only ignored the English but showed no dislike towards foreigners in general, indicating the English could have profited from Norman rule if they would not have rebelled.[963]

The image William of Malmesbury draws of the new aristocracy reflects the ambiguous view concerning the Normans in general found in Anglo-Norman writing. For example, there is Ralph of Gael, Earl of Suffolk and Norfolk, who led the Revolt of Earls against

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[959] William: *GRA*, ii.227, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 414–417 (*Anglia exterorum [...] habitatio etc alienigenarum dominatio. Nullus hodie Anglos uel dux uel pontifes uel abbas; aduenae quique diuitias et uiscera eorrodunt Angliae*).
[960] William: *GRA*, ii.227, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 416.
[961] William: *GRA*, iii.246, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 460.
[962] William: *GRA*, iii.254, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 470f (*Exigbat hoc, nisi fallor, indurata in regem peruicatia, cum sint Normanni, ut ante dixi, in conuiuentes aduenas naturali benignitate procliues*).
[963] William: *GRA*, iii.254, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 470.

William the Conqueror.[964] William of Malmesbury deeply detests the idea of revolting against a rightful king and calls Ralph a "man of abominable disloyalty".[965] Hence, it is no wonder that God let the rebellion fail.[966] This passage shows that William was the righteous king of England and that it was, as a consequence, up to God alone to remove him. The new aristocracy is thus used to show this but is not used to excuse William I's behaviour.

The case is different with William FitzOsbern, a close friend of William's. William of Malmesbury describes him as a clever, just, and generous noble who supported his king well. However, the Conqueror accused him of being too generous—which had, according to Malmesbury, no further consequences for the relationship between the two. William of Malmesbury uses William FitzOsbern to once again show the high ambitions of the Normans. Because of his wife, FitzOsbern tried to conqueror Flanders. He died during the attempt.[967] William of Malmesbury shows with the example of William FitzOsbern which virtues he prefers for nobles and warns against being overly ambitious. As many of FitzOsbern's characteristics complemented William I's, he was the ideal advisor, and it spoke for the king that he had chosen FitzOsbern as consultant.

The only Norman noble that William of Malmesbury criticises harshly is Odo. He tells the story of the bishop's imprisonment because Odo wanted to buy the office of the pope. In this context, Odo is portrayed as overly ambitious and greedy as well; as a churchman, Malmesbury cannot approve the selling of ecclesiastical offices. So, he totally agrees with the Conqueror's judgement—despite the fact that a lay ruler judged over a churchman.[968] Being a monk himself, William of Malmesbury might expect stricter standards from a bishop than of a layman, and maybe therefore, he shows no understanding for Odo's deed. In any case, William the Conqueror is depicted as a just king who was able to control his lords and ensured justice.

William of Malmesbury uses the Norman aristocracy in order to legitimise King William. However, he does it differently than Orderic Vitalis, for whom the Norman nobles are scapegoats. For Malmesbury, the magnates are *exempla* in order to show the rightness of William's kingship. Ralph shows, once again, that William was a king chosen by God. Therefore, rebellions against him were unjust. FitzOsbern is depicted as a wise advisor to William. Lastly, the case of Odo shows that William was able to fulfil one of the most important royal tasks—to ensure justice.

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[964] For Ralph of Gael (bef. 1042–c.1096) see Keats-Rohan 1992, esp. ch. II.
[965] William: *GRA*, iii.255, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 472f (*detestandae perfidiae iuuenis*).
[966] William: *GRA*, iii.255, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 472.
[967] William: *GRA*, iii.256, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 472–474.
[968] William: *GRA*, iii.277, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 506.

Henry of Huntingdon, who mainly follows the brief narration of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, reveals little about the Norman nobility. When it is mentioned, Henry narrates about single noblemen in connection to the revolts against King William. Whereas some rebellions were led by the English, the Revolt of the Earls is also led by Normans, such as the son of the above-mentioned William FitzOsbern. Another inter-Norman conflict Henry relates to is the fight between William I and his son Robert.[969] In other situations, Henry refers to Norman officeholders in general, like the reeves, who exploited the English.[970] Thus, Henry refers to the Normans only negatively.

This might be explained by the fact that the Normans were sent by God to strike against the English, as it has already become evident in the chapter about William's character. Henry gives reasons for the divine decision why God, of all things, chose the Normans to punish the English for their sins; he writes "[f]or God had chosen the Normans to wipe out the English nation, because He had seen that the Normans surpassed all other people in their unparalleled savagery."[971] So, not only was William chosen by God to replace Harold as king, but the Normans as a whole were chosen to trouble the English. They were selected for the precise reason why Henry praises William as king: because they were good at conquering and overpowering others. However, once they had achieved this goal, this characteristic became their disadvantage. Here, Henry is on a similar line with Orderic Vitalis. As soon as the Normans lacked an external enemy, they began to tear each other apart. As examples, he points to Antioch and southern Italy. Nevertheless, unlike Orderic Vitalis, who portrays William as a tamer of his people, the William of Henry of Huntingdon shared the weaknesses of his people.[972] In other words, the Normans first brought down the English and then started to harm each other. This already becomes evident in the short descriptions of individual noblemen.

Already in the sixth book about the coming of the Normans, Henry gives away the main narrative of the seventh book, which is about the decline of the Normans—of course, again because of God's decision. This time, however, God did not need external invaders, but rather had the Normans destroy themselves.[973] In this way, the Normans

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[969] Henry: *HA*, vi.34, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 398.
[970] Henry: *HA*, vi.38, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 404.
[971] Henry: *HA*, vi.38, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 402f (*Elegerat enim Deus Normannos ad Anglorum gentem exterminandum, quia prerogatiua seuicie singularis omnibus populis uiderat eos preminere*).
[972] Henry: *HA*, vi.38, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 402–404.
[973] Henry: *HA*, vii.1, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 412.

were just a tool used to destroy the English. As they had already fulfilled their purpose, they destroyed themselves, making them ideal for God's plan.

Hence, the Norman nobility is, in a restricted way, used to legitimise William's rule. However, Henry uses a completely different strategy than Orderic Vitalis, although their descriptions of the Norman characteristics are similar. For Henry, William was chosen by God as a means of revenge because of the characteristics of the Normans. So, without the typical threats that marked the Norman aristocracy, William would not have been chosen as king. However, Henry does not use the Norman nobles in a direct way to authorise William's rule, nor are they used as a scapegoat because, for him, William shared their bad characteristics.

The problems in northern England after the Conquest are also reflected in Roger of Howden's description of the Norman aristocracy. To this end, in the events leading to the Harrying of the North, the Normans are not characterised in a good way. The soldiers of the earl, whom William I had sent to Northumbria in order to suppress the people there, mistreated the local population and even killed some peasants. Later, in fear of the Danes, they started to burn York. Thereby, they also burnt the monastery where the last Archbishop of York was buried. Roger sees the fire as exaggerated and too violent. He writes "[b]ut the Divine vengeance most speedily enacted a heavy retribution at their hands;"[974] meaning that the Normans were defeated by the Northumbrians and the Danes. Thus, God saw the actions of the Normans as unjust as well and deemed it necessary to punish them. In this way, Roger of Howden underlines the ill-treatment of the Northumbrians once more.

To characterise the new Earl of Northumbria, Cospatric, Roger offers a mixed picture. First, his legitimacy is unclear: Roger writes that he became earl not because William thought him to be the most suitable candidate, but because Cospatric paid the most for it. Second, Cospatric plundered in Cumberland, which can be seen as ambiguous. On the one hand, this weakens the Scottish king, who was an enemy. On the other hand, Roger sees Cumberland as a part of England that had been unrightfully taken away by Scotland, meaning that Cospatric actually plundered in English dominions. However, I assume that Roger sees the ravaging positively, as he writes: "[a]t this period Cumberland was subject to king Malcolm; not by rightful possession, but in consequence of having been subjugated by force."[975] It looks rather as though he wants to defend the

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[974] Riley 1994b, p. 142 (*Sed ultione divina citissime in eis vindicatum est gravissime.*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 118).

[975] Riley 1994b, p. 146 (*Erat enim eo tempore Cumberland sub regis Malcolmi dominio, non jure possessa, sed violenter subjugata.*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 121f).

earl's behaviour by explaining that it was not English territory that Cospatric plundered. At the same time, Roger wants to defend the people of Cumbria by clarifying that they did not become Scottish of their own free will. In fact, Cospatric is not depicted as negatively as it looks at the first glance.

All in all, Roger does not write much about the Norman aristocracy. If he mentions it, however, it is about single persons usually in the context of Northumbria, and, most often, he does not evaluate their doings.[976] However, the two examples above show that the Norman magnates are not used as a scapegoat for William's politics. They acted for themselves and not in any relation to the king. In the case of Cospatric, William is even shown negatively since he appointed the earl for money.

In William of Newburgh's *Historia*, the Norman magnates are not even mentioned. The emphasis lies on the king and the archbishops only. Thus, it is not used to excuse Norman violence, and the bloodshed is ascribed to William the Conqueror only.[977]

All in all, each writer uses a different strategy concerning the Norman elite. For Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury, the Normans are a tool used to authorise William the Conqueror. However, whereas Orderic blames most of the wrongdoings on the new aristocracy in order to free William from the accusation of being an exploiter, William of Malmesbury uses the Normans in order to show William's suitability as king. Henry of Huntingdon, however, integrates William's character into the general character of the Norman people. In so doing, William was chosen by God because he shared the same characteristics. Eadmer of Canterbury and William Newburgh write too little about the new nobles to draw any conclusions from it. For Roger of Howden, the new aristocracy is a tool to delegitimise William by showing that the king is greedy enough to sell offices. So, the Norman elite are neither solely used to legitimise or to delegitimise the Conqueror.

4.7   Compensating Atrocity: The Reform of the English Church

The decline of the English Church often was an argument to justify the Norman Conquest.[978] Therefore, this chapter seeks an answer to the question whether the cooperation with Lanfranc along with the reform of the Church is seen as a legitimising factor of

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[976] E.g. Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 134.
[977] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 20–23.
[978] Harper-Bill 2007, p. 168. Harper-Bill states that the accusation of decline meant that the English Church did not keep up with the papal reformations (ibid).

William's rule. In order to find out how necessary and important the authors saw the reform of the Church, the analysis for each writer starts with their view on the Anglo-Saxon Church.

As Orderic does not write about England before the Conquest, the only way he tells about the Anglo-Saxon Church is retrospectively while describing William's attempts to reform the same. He starts with a short outline of English ecclesiastical history since the first missionaries and Christianisation, arguing for the necessity of William I's Church reform. The English Church was prospering under the English kings; monasteries were founded, and the missionaries brought monastic customs with them. It was only the heathen Danes who stopped the advancement of Christianity until they were fought back. Alfred the Great and Edward the Elder restored the English kingdom heralding, thus allowing the renewed flourishing of monastic culture. Orderic emphasises further the crucial role of the three bishops Oswald of Worcester/York, Dunstan of Canterbury and Æthelwold of Winchester in reforming the Church and founding new monasteries. Even in a later digression on universal ecclesiastical history, he praises them for their good deeds towards the English Church.[979] Then, the Danes came again and destroyed the monastic buildings, plundered, and killed the clerks. Summarising, Orderic states:

I [...] have summarized notes taken from earlier annals so that the patient reader may clearly understand why the Normans found the English a rustic and nearly illiterate people [...][980]

He sees it clearly as the fault of the Danes that the English Church was in such a desolate state at the time of the Conquest. Orderic always describes a flourishing Church with saints under English kings along with the founding of new monasteries and reforms; but when the heathen Danes came, everything changed into evil, and they destroyed all these promising efforts. In truth, Orderic is correct in the general outlines. In the tenth century, the English Church needed to be rebuilt after the Viking invasions, but there was a moral renewal between 1046 and 1057 in order to take action against simony and nicolaitism.[981] Using the Danes as scapegoats and exaggerating the deeds of English kings seems to be Orderic's argument to show the English in a better light.

Going further in his argument, Orderic thinks about the weaknesses of mankind in general and how the Danes negatively influenced English behaviour:

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[979] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.9, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 82.
[980] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 238–247, quotation p. 246f (*de priscis annalibus collecta recensui, ut causa manifeste pateat studioso lectori. cur Anglos agrestes et pene illitteratos inuenerint Normanni*).
[981] Harper-Bill 2007, pp. 165–167.

This lack of discipline affected clergy and laity alike, and inclined both sexes to every kind of lust. Abundance of food and drink gave rise to luxury, the shallowness and flabbiness of the people made them all prone to crime. After the destruction of the monasteries regular life was undermined, and canonical discipline was not restored until the time of the Normans.[982]

The abstract above shows that Orderic considers the English Church before the Conquest to be in poor condition. He goes further with describing the worldly behaviour of monks and praising William for his reforms.[983] Here, Orderic seems to be torn. On the one hand, he is positive towards his English motherland, but, on the other hand, he appreciates the reforms of the Norman king that looked so much better in comparison to the pitiful situation before, helping legitimate the Conquest. In order to avoid calling the English bad Christians, he accuses the pagan Danes for having destroyed monastic life, additionally writing about the sinfulness of all human beings in general. He considers it quite natural that mankind cannot resist the temptations of a lack of discipline. He especially mentions the deeds of the Anglo-Saxon kings and saints to show that the kingdom had been positively progressing.

Then, there are descriptions of two people who offer a glimpse of the pre-Conquest Church: the two archbishops, Stigand of Canterbury and Ealdred of York. Orderic contrasts the excommunicated Stigand with Ealdred, who was a good man. Stigand, however, is described as too ambitious. Therefore, he was declared unfit for an archbishopric on the synod in 1070 and was disposed because of his ignorance and sinfulness.[984] Considering the fact that Ealdred had problems receiving his pallium, too, because of the uncanonical appointment,[985] Orderic's black-and-white picture seems suspicious. This contrast is also found in the coronation of Harold and William. While the bad king was crowned by the bad archbishop, William as the good king was crowned by the good archbishop.[986] This tells us less about the English Church—it had righteous clerks—than about the strategy to legitimate the Norman duke.

Now, there shall be a look at how Orderic evaluates the Church reform, and how he sees the Norman clerks and their career in England. In general, he esteems the history of the northern Church as highly as the one of the Greeks and Egyptians, which is the reason why he explains it.[987] Orderic describes William's Church reform unreservedly positively. The Norman king brought back monastic discipline, built new churches, ap-

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[982] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 246–249 (*Huiuscemodi dissolutio clericos et laicos relaxauerat. et utrunque sexum ad omnem lasciuiam inclinauerat. Abundantia cibi et potus luxuriem nutriebat, leuitas et mollicies gentis in flagitium quenquam facile impellebat. Destructis monasteriis monastica religio debilitata est. et canonicus rigor usque ad Normannorum tempora reparatus non est.*).
[983] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 248.
[984] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 236–238.
[985] Butler 1966, p. 19.
[986] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 182.
[987] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 324.

pointed new abbots, and sent monks to French monasteries for education. Later becoming abbots, they helped to restore monastic life. Besides, William founded monasteries himself, and additionally, he supported and protected the ecclesiastical foundations of other nobles. At the same synod at Windsor where William decided on the reforms for the English Church, he also dealt with Stigand. The archbishop was excommunicated, and, moreover, he also was deemed unworthy, as he was a murderer and was guilty of perjury. Stigand was deposed—in Orderic's eyes the only solution to deal with such an unworthy person.[988]

While the situation in the English Church was sorrowful, Orderic esteems the Norman Church very much, and he has only good things to say about it. In this vein, he writes about Norman churchmen:

At this time Normandy had a brilliant galaxy of bishops and magnates. [...] All these were men of extremely high birth, religious zeal, and every kind of virtue.[989]

The same applies to Lanfranc, Stigand's successor as Archbishop of Canterbury. Orderic is very content with this choice.[990] He describes Lanfranc as

remarkably well-versed in the liberal arts, a man full of kindness, generosity, and piety, who devoted much time to alms and other good works.[991]

Besides in this way, he is characterised as a learned man in law, as eloquent, and as wise. Even the pope was supposedly impressed by his generosity and education.[992] Lanfranc chose the monastery of Bec because of its remoteness and poverty, suitable for a pious man. Later, Lanfranc was a good prior to the monks and led the school there that became, through his teaching, one of the most outstanding ones. He had educated disputations with heretics and managed to so bring them back to the right Church. Orderic describes as well how popular Lanfranc was, how many offered him good positions, and how he hesitated to become Archbishop in Canterbury.[993] This can be seen as a typical topos of modesty, showing how even the greatest man has to struggle with the responsibilities he is bestowed. Lanfranc can, therefore, be seen as the ideal choice for the Archbishopric of Canterbury and had everything required for such a duty.

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[988] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 190, 236, and 256–248.
[989] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iii, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 140f (*Eo tempore Normannia præclare uigebat sapientibus æcclesiarum prælatis et optimatibus. […] Omnes hi pollebant et excellentia præclaræ generositatis. et claritudine religionis multimodæque probitatis.*).
[990] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 248.
[991] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 146f (*liberalium atrium eruditione affluenter imbutus. benignitate, largitate, et omni religione præditus, elemosinis aliisque bonis studiis multipliciter intentus*).
[992] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, v.2, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. III 10.
[993] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 248–252.

Other bishops chosen by William that Orderic praises are Walchelin of Winchester, Thomas of York, and John of Avranches (Rouen). Like Lanfranc, they had everything necessary to be a good churchman and devoted their life to the divine cult, caring for the well-being of the Church. Due to their efforts, the English Church blossomed again.[994] Orderic does not complain about the discrimination against the English, but he emphasises the positive outcomes.

However, Orderic does not write only positive things about the post-Conquest Church and its clerks. As stated above, Orderic criticises the Norman nobility for its behaviour towards the English. He often does not mention names, but as churchmen hold land, too, it might be that Orderic refers to them as well. In any case, Orderic criticises clerks at court for being greedy. They supposedly accepted payment from laymen and were successful with this tactic, as some of these clerks even became abbots.[995] One clerk that Orderic could not tolerate whatsoever is William's brother Odo, who was also already mentioned above. He is described as mighty and rich[996]—good characteristics for a lay ruler but not fitting for a bishop. Furthermore, Odo was much too proud, and he was harming the English with his soldiers.[997] In the conflict with William—after Odo's attempt to become pope—Orderic takes William's side. He does not understand Odo's ambition, as he already had responsibilities in England and Normandy. He writes a speech for William in which the king accused Odo of harming the English, especially the churches. The imprisonment is unanimously approved.[998] Because of this, William is not made responsible for Odo's failure.

Thus, the reform of the English Church helps Orderic to legitimise William I. His behaviour towards the Church and his monastic patronage were a model for his subjects.[999] Generally, Orderic writes very positively about the reform and sees it as highly necessary. The failure of Norman churchmen is treated the same way as the failure of the Norman nobility. William is not blamed for this, but rather they happened because of the Norman characteristics. Moreover, Orderic is concerned about explaining that the desolate state of the pre-Conquest Church was not the fault of the English, but of the heathen Danes. Therefore, again, he shows a great interest in depicting the English in a good light.

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[994] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 200 and 238.
[995] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, II p. 268. Albu 2001 also observes that Orderic criticises churchmen at court, e.g. for being too ambitious (p. 197).
[996] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 264.
[997] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 202.
[998] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.8, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 38–42.
[999] Aird 2016, p. 201.

In contrast to Orderic Vitalis, Eadmer of Canterbury shortly describes the Anglo-Saxon past and ignores Norman history as long as it does not intervene with the one of his homeland. He begins with the reign of Edgar the Peaceable (959–975) and his close collaboration with Dunstan, later Archbishop of Canterbury. Together, they brought peace to the English kingdom. Edgar's son, Edward the Martyr (975–978), was an equally successful ruler who worked closely with Dunstan. Things changed with the murder of Edward and the succession of his half-brother, Æthelred the Unready. Dunstan did not accept him as the true king, as he was supposedly involved in Edward's death, and after the Archbishop's death, the catastrophe began. Æthelred was not able to fight the Danes; anarchy and disdain of the Church reigned in England. Because of this, the righteous Archbishop of Canterbury, Ælfheah (1006–1012), was cruelly killed.[1000]

I assume Eadmer tells this Anglo-Saxon past for two reasons. First, he wants to explain the state of English Church at the time of the Conquest. Again—as seen in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*—it is not solely the fault of the English but is to a greater extent the fault of the Danes who conquered the realm. This leads to the second reason. Eadmer shows with the example of Edgar and Dunstan how important effective collaboration between the Archbishop of Canterbury—as representative of the Church—and the English king is. As long as the kings and the archbishop ruled hand in hand, they managed to fight off the Danes, and the Church prospered. But because Æthelred stopped this collaboration, England was conquered, and the Church suffered. This might be read as a warning to Eadmer's contemporaries (he even speaks of Dunstan's prophecy). Considering the problems, the Archbishopric of Canterbury had at this time, a close connection to king might have been able to help solve them.

Against this background, the reformation of the English Church was highly necessary, considering the last time it had flourished was in the tenth century under Edgar. For Eadmer, the prerequisite for the renewal of ecclesiastical life was the appointment of Lanfranc to the Archbishop of Canterbury and his close relationship to the king, who followed the churchman's advice—notably as William's reforms before Lanfranc's arrival rather harmed the Church.

In contrast to other figures, Eadmer gives a detailed description of Lanfranc: "a man of energetic character and possessed of outstanding knowledge in studies both sacred and secular"[1001]. This characterisation is similar to the one Orderic Vitalis provides, who describes Lanfranc as a man of great education and virtues as well. Thereby, Lanfranc

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[1000] Eadmer: *HN*, 3-6, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 3–5.
[1001] Bosanquet 1964, p. 10 (*vir strenus, et in divnis atque humanis rebus excellenti scientia præditus*— Eadmer: *HN*, 12, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 10).

had all the personal prerequisites for his office. He was not only approved as archbishop by King William and Pope Alexander, but also by most of the English bishops. Thus, Lanfranc's strong authority showed that he was the right candidate. Even the pope had heard of Lanfranc's knowledge, and he gave the new archbishop special treatment as Lanfranc received his pallium.

Eadmer uses Lanfranc's visit to Rome to mark the importance of the Archbishopric of Canterbury at the same time. Not only did the pope prefer Lanfranc to the other bishops, but he called him "Father of that country",[1002] giving him the power to decide the fate of Bishop Remigius of Lincoln and—far more importantly—of Thomas of York. Lanfranc supported the two, so making them dependent on his benevolence.[1003]

Back in England, Lanfranc became William's principal advisor, and the king fully granted his wishes. Thus, Christianity grew strong in England and new monasteries were built. Lanfranc personally set a good example by building Christ Church at Canterbury with its surrounding houses.[1004] However, Lanfranc was not only a good politician but also a good abbot. He cared about his monastery: New monks came, and his efforts ensured that they lived a proper, monkish life. Furthermore, he convinced the king to return the monastery's pre-Conquest belongings. Eadmer is so fond of Lanfranc's deeds that he communicates them in a—for him—very detailed way. Lanfranc is characterised as extremely generous, tender-hearted, loyal and benevolent but also intelligent. He cared not only about his monks, but also about the poor at Canterbury whom he gave food and a place to sleep.[1005] By doing so, Eadmer manages to show that Lanfranc did not forget his small tasks in light of big politics. Furthermore, he did his duties concerning the poor and ill, not neglecting crucial opportunities to show Christian compassion.[1006]

At last, Eadmer brings up the conflict with the Archbishopric of York. Of course, Lanfranc successfully managed to turn the conflict down even if Eadmer does not want to go into details. He only laments the great fire in 1067 and the carelessness of others that caused the loss of many privileges granted with the independence of Canterbury. Lanfranc not only fought against York for the privileges of his archbishopric but also against others such as Odo of Bayeux, William I's brother. Lanfranc, fearing what might happen after his death, even made provisions for this time by getting privileges from the pope that Eadmer copies into the *Historia Novorum*. Thereby, Lanfranc had the

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[1002] Bosanquet 1964, p. 12 (*pater es patriæ illus*—Eadmer: *HN*, 14, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 11).
[1003] Eadmer: *HN*, 13f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 10–12.
[1004] Eadmer: *HN*, 15, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 12.
[1005] Eadmer: *HN*, 15-19, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 12–15.
[1006] Eadmer: *HN*, 19f, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 15f.

support of divine powers because St Dunstan promised his help.[1007] By writing this, Eadmer makes clear that God and the former archbishop Dunstan supported Canterbury's claim to supremacy in England and cared about the wellbeing of the archbishopric. At the same time, he draws a connection to the Anglo-Saxon past, considering that Dunstan is one of Lanfranc's predecessors. This underlines that Lanfranc was the right man for his job even if he was not English.

To conclude, Eadmer, too, uses the reform of the English Church to legitimise William's rule. The Conquest made a successful cooperation between king and archbishop possible, which led to a new flourishing of the kingdom. Central to this success was Lanfranc, whom Eadmer describes as the ideal archbishop who excellently fulfilled the duties of his office. He was the motor of the renewal of ecclesiastical life after the Conquest, along with the reformation of the Church, and his positive influence on the king was remarkable. By associating Lanfranc with the Anglo-Saxon Archbishop Dunstan, Eadmer moderates the rupture of the Conquest and sets Lanfranc as well as William on the same level as Edgar and Dunstan.

As was already mentioned in the chapter on Edward the Confessor, the decline of the English Church in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* happened during his rule. William of Malmesbury particularly laments empty monasteries. However, he seemingly does not want to give the fault to Edward the Confessor but indicates instead that Godwin and his sons might have been guilty.[1008] Later in his text, he repeats the decline of the English Church during the reign of Edward the Confessor. William bemoans the non-existent education of the English clergy and the low standard of knowledge that, in turn, led to the disdain of the holy sacraments. As Orderic Vitalis does, he grumbles about the worldly and sinful behaviour of monks. However, not only churchmen misbehaved, but the nobility also disregarded God's commandments. They did not attend mass, had too much sexual intercourse, and ate too much. Having such poor role models, the common population did not behave much better. They drank too much, were greedy, and traded slaves. Especially the trading of slave girls for sexual pleasure is repulsed by William of Malmesbury. He summarises the situation as follows:

[1007] Eadmer: *HN*, 22-27, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 18–23.
[1008] William: *GRA*, ii.196, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 350.

In brief, the English of those days wore garments half way to the knee, which left them unimpeded; hair short, chin shaven, arms loaded with gold bracelets, skin tattooed with coloured patterns, eating till they were sick and drinking till they spewed.[1009]

This passage condenses William of Malmesbury's view on pre-Conquest England: He accuses the English of lechery and gluttony. Tattoos were forbidden according to the Old Testament.[1010] So, they can be seen as a sign of moral decline as well.

It is with that sinful behaviour that William contrasts the Normans. It was already shown in the last chapter that he describes the Norman nobility as militaristic and more modest but also as partly disloyal. In this context, William of Malmesbury also writes about the Church. As Gillingham suggests, William of Malmesbury has a clear hierarchy of peoples: in first place, the Normans, then the English, and lastly the Scots. He also suggests that Malmesbury believes that a superior way of living could be learned (in this case from the Normans).[1011] This becomes visible when William of Malmesbury describes the positive consequences of the Norman Conquest on the Church in England:

The standard of religion, dead everywhere in England, has been raised by their arrival: you may see everywhere churches in villages, in towns and cities monasteries rising in a new style of architecture; and with new devotion our country flourishes, so that every rich man thinks a day wasted if he does not make it remarkable with some great stroke of generosity.[1012]

For example, new monasteries in other architecture were built, and the general standard of religion rose. As a consequence, the English began to give alms to the Church again. Thus, the Normans influenced the English in a good way and contributed to a revival of religious life in England. William the Conqueror also contributed personally to this renaissance: He was a good role model for his subjects by giving alms. Furthermore, he redistributed the excessive wealth of the English monasteries to Norman ones, leading to growth of monastic culture on the continent as well. Additionally, many new churches were founded. Again, William of Malmesbury hides his critique of the king by writing "[b]ut at this point I should mention the grumbles of those who said [...]"[1013]. Rather indirectly, he accuses the king of letting old Anglo-Saxon monasteries decay in favour of newly founded ones.[1014] So according to William of Malmesbury, the

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[1009] William: *GRA*, iii.458, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 458f (*Ad summam, tunc erant Angli uestibus ad medium genu expediti, crines tonsi, barbas rasi, armillis aureis brachia onerati, picturatis stigmatibus cutem insigniti; in cibis urgenfi crapulam, in potibus irritantes uomicam*).
[1010] Engelhardt 1999.
[1011] Gillingham 2011, p. 40.
[1012] William: *GRA*, iii.246, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 460f (*Religionis normam, usquequaque in Anglia emortuam, aduentu suo suscitarunt; uideas ubique in uillis aecclesias, in uicis et urbibus monasteria nouo edificandi genere consurgere, recenti ritu patriam florere, ita ut sibi perisse diem quisque opulentus existimet quem non aliqua preclara magnificentia illustret*).
[1013] William: *GRA*, iii.278, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 506f (*Sed hic animaduerto mussitationem dicentium*).
[1014] William: *GRA*, iii.278, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 506.

English Church was, thanks to the Normans and King William, in a very good state. His criticism is indirect and moderated so that it hardly makes a difference.

As shown above, William of Malmesbury describes that William I substituted many Englishmen in higher offices with Normans. Of course, this also rang true for ecclesiastical offices. According to Malmesbury, William often did not wait until the previous owner died but simply deposed some of the English of their office. However, Malmesbury emphasises that these were replaced by industrious men. He writes this after his description of the exposure of English lays, the reason why the fault of the king's behaviour belongs again to the English. With their rebellious behaviour, they alone are to blame for their misfortune.[1015]

The best-known case of a dismissed clerk is also found in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*: the Archbishop of Canterbury. William of Malmesbury hinted already in the narration of William's coronation that Stigand was not legally archbishop and that he, therefore, did not crown the new king.[1016] It was only a question of time before William I would find a worthier candidate for Stigand's offices. With the support the Roman cardinals and the bishop of Sion (at that time in Burgundy), William deposed Stigand. The help of the churchmen indicates that this was done legally. According to Malmesbury, Stigand's successors were worthy and good men. For Winchester, it was Walkelin "whose good works surpass their reputation"[1017], and for the Archbishopric of Canterbury, Lanfranc. As do Orderic Vitalis and Eadmer of Canterbury, William of Malmesbury praises Lanfranc highly. He enumerates enthusiastically Lanfranc's virtues such as the archbishop's education and his religious way of life. This made him a role model for others, leading to a general rise in the level of education and religious life. Under his influence, ecclesiastical offices were only filled with men who led a good Christian life.[1018] As in the *Historia Novorum*, Lanfranc also had a positive influence on the king. So, he was able to stop the selling of serfs in Ireland in collaboration with the bishop of Worcester.[1019] William of Malmesbury, hence, is able to show that William the Conqueror appointed, according to well-chosen criteria, new churchmen and picked good advisors such as Lanfranc.

Also, concerning ecclesiastical affairs, William of Malmesbury must recount some criticism. As seen before, he also finds here means to conceal it. There is, for example, the case of Archbishop Walcher of Rouen. He criticised William for his marriage to Matilda,

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[1015] William: *GRA*, iii.254, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 470.
[1016] William: *GRA*, iii.247, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 462.
[1017] William: *GRA*, iii.269, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 496f (*cuius bona opera famam uincentia*).
[1018] William: *GRA*, iii.267, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 492.
[1019] William: *GRA*, iii.269, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 496.

as the two of them were too closely related. However, William of Malmesbury introduces the archbishop as too secular—as a man who loved hunting and wealth—and narrates that Walcher disrespected the pope, which finally led to William I removing him from his office. Only then does Malmesbury hint that William might as well have dismissed him because of the disapproval of his marriage. So, the criticism towards William is hidden by the fact that it does not come from Malmesbury directly and that it is given by an unvenerated man. However, William and Matilda each founded a church later on, which shows that Walcher's critique of their marriage was not unwarranted. Nevertheless, the couple's penance, the removal of Walcher when William was still young, and the appointment of a worthier successor portray William in a good light despite of this episode.[1020]

Considering the many conflicts that arose in the aftermath of 1066, it is no wonder that they were also felt in ecclesiastical affairs. William of Malmesbury refers to a conflict in Northumbria where many foreigners, amongst them the Bishop of Durham, died. Nonetheless, William I is not even mentioned in this conflict.[1021] By doing this, William of Malmesbury is able to show the brutal consequences of the Norman Conquest without blaming the king.

Hence, William of Malmesbury uses the reform of the English Church as well in order to authorise the reign of William I. The Norman Conquest led to the flourish of monasticism, and the Normans along with William were a good model for the English. The Church profited as well by the appointment of new and more suitable men into ecclesiastical offices. A good example is Lanfranc, who became the king's advisor, which in turn had many positive consequences. In contrast to Orderic Vitalis' description, the decline of the English Church began in the reign of Edward the Confessor. Criticism on William's reign is well-hidden.

Concerning William's behaviour towards the Church, the same is valid for Henry of Huntingdon's description of William's behaviour in general. On the one hand, William compensated for the Battle of Hastings by founding an abbey for the fallen soldiers at the place of the battle. Henry mentions it as the first action William takes after his coronation, which gives this foundation some importance—even if he makes clear that it was not William's action chronologically, but that the foundation rather was later in his reign.[1022] In the epilogue, Henry writes that William treated churchmen respectfully and

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[1020] William: *GRA*, iii.267, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 494.
[1021] William: *GRA*, iii.271, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 498–500.
[1022] Henry: *HA*, vi.30, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 394.

refers again to the founding of Battle Abbey and the establishment of St Stephen at Caen.[1023] It shows that William was, despite his warrior nature, a Christian king. On the other hand, William's greed did not stop before the Church. For example, he robbed clerks as well. Furthermore, he even harmed the Church during his conquest of Mantes. There, he burnt churches and killed two ascetics. This behaviour was not tolerated by God, and so William died.[1024]

Thus, Henry uses William's religious life to the same aim as his behaviour in general. William serves as *exempla* to learn what is good and what is bad. This is also valid for how to treat the Church. However, the reader learns what kind of behaviour is not tolerable to God. One can argue that bringing William to his death shows that God had taken away William's legitimacy. His deeds were so grave that he was unbearable as king. Thus, William's politics towards the Church do not legitimise, but delegitimise him.

Roger of Howden describes, as Orderic Vitalis, the council of Winchester where Stigand was removed from the Archbishopric of Canterbury. Though the council was held with consent of the pope, Roger does not evaluate the council as positive as e.g. Orderic Vitalis does. He lists the reasons why Stigand was expelled and records the names of two other churchmen who were also relieved of their duties. Roger writes about the interests behind the royal decisions:

all which was done by the agency of the king, in order that as many of the English as possible might be deprived of their honors; in whose place he might appoint persons of his own nation, for the purpose of strengthening his possession of the kingdom which he had recently acquired.[1025]

Thus, William's decisions were not made with the well-being of the Church in mind but in order to strengthen his own power. Although Roger does not directly take a stand in favour of or against the king's decisions, he does not approve of the reasons behind William's resolutions, as they aimed to authorise his rule. For the dismissal of the two other churchmen, no reason is given, which indicates that they were dismissed because of their nationality. This caused an atmosphere of fear among the English clerks.[1026] Thus, Roger shows once more the bad relationship between the new king and his subjects as well as William's mistrust towards the English.

[1023] Henry: *HA*, vi.38f, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 404–406.

[1024] Henry: *HA*, vi.38f, ed. by Greenway 1996, 404–406.

[1025] Riley 1994b, p. 148 (*operam dante rege, ut quamplures ex Anglis suis honoribus privarentur, in quorum locum suæ gentis personas subrogaret, ob confirmationem scilicet sui quod norite adquisierat regni.*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 123).

[1026] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 122f. This fear proved to be right as more churchmen were dismissed at the council of Windsor only a month later (pp. 123f).

How does Roger then see the suitability of the new churchmen appointed by William? At least about the two new archbishops, he only has to say positive things. Thomas, Archbishop of York, is described as "venerable",[1027] while Lanfranc is praised for being learned and skilful. Lanfranc, together with William, then made a just decision in the case of the Bishopric of Worcester, whose bishop claimed its property back from York.[1028] Also in another ecclesiastical conflict, William is depicted as a just judge. There, a quarrel between the Abbot of Glastonbury and his monks had ended in violence. William dismissed the abbot and punished some of the soldiers involved in this conflict. As Roger sees the abbot as responsible for the escalation, he considers William's judgement as good.[1029]

The history of William I and St Cuthbert[1030] is newly added to the *Chronica*.[1031] Roger relates there how Cuthbert convinced William via a miracle to respect and promote his cult. The Normans did not believe in the holiness of Cuthbert or that his body truly lied in Durham. Therefore, William wanted to check whether Cuthbert's remains really were in the venerated tomb. But as his men wanted to start doing this, William felt—despite the cold weather—a great heat and started to tremble. So, he forbade his men to touch the tomb, rode away, and respected from then on the cult of St Cuthbert.[1032] William, thus, was able to learn from his mistakes and respected saints although they were English. William is depicted as a king who, on the one hand, mistrusted the English, but, on the other hand, could be convinced of the opposite. However, this story also reveals the holiness of Cuthbert[1033]—probably even more than it reveals anything about William's character. Aird interprets a similar story recorded by Symeon of Durham and concludes that this story is a warning to William's successors to respect the interests of the church of Cuthbert.[1034] This also indicates that Roger's story does not reveal too much about William.

[1027] Riley 1994b, p. 149 (*venerando*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 123f).

[1028] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 124f.

[1029] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 136f.

[1030] Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (c.634–687) was Bishop of Lindisfarne. He died a hermit on the Island Farne (Doig 2017, p. 305).

[1031] However, it appears as a similar story in the *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis, ecclesie* by Symeon of Durham (Symeon of Durham: *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis, ecclesie*, iii.19, ed, by Rollason 2000, p. 196).

[1032] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 126f.

[1033] There are some situations where Cuthbert (or rather his corpse) shows the saint's will concerning his burial place. So, as the Northumbrians carried away his corpse from Lindisfarne in fear of Viking attacks, they could not move the coffin anymore when they were in Durham. Consequently, they decided Cuthbert wanted to stay there and brought him to the local church. (Doig 2017, pp. 306–312). That the corpse of a saint showed its will by being very light or too heavy to carry is a typical motif in hagiography (Schmitz-Esser 2014, pp. 122 and 469).

[1034] Aird 1998, pp. 87–89. Aird sees another narration, in which William confirmed the church's possessions on a visit in 1072, as more plausible (ibid.).

Roger mentions, as the authors before him, a re-flourishing of monastic life after the Norman Conquest. However, he does not put it into the context of William's politics. So, the three monks who each restored a monastery in Northumbria were sent by the Holy Spirit. The same applies to the reformation of the Church. Here, it was the newly appointed Pope Gregory VII who e.g. forbade clerical marriages.[1035]

Taking everything into consideration, the reform of the Church is the topic where Roger depicts William in the best way: There, William made just decisions and started to respect the English (or at least Cuthbert). An exception is his characterisation at the council of Winchester, where William's action fits more into the general depiction of his character. Still, Roger does not use the reformation of the Church to legitimise William's rule in the way Orderic Vitalis does, as reforms and new monasteries are ascribed to other, higher-ranked powers.

As written above, William of Newburgh ascribes a positive influence on William I to the Archbishop of York, Ealdred. As an example, Newburgh reports an incident where William I and Ealdred disagreed on an archiepiscopal request. Ealdred grew angry, and William, who could not bear that, begged pardon. Here, Ealdred showed just anger, which was usually ascribed to kings. With this anger, Ealdred was able to impose justice. It is interesting that an archbishop uses just anger on a king.[1036] William of Newburgh explicitly chooses to narrate this scene because it shows, according to him, the mutual respect between the two.[1037] However, it is obviously the case that Ealdred was—at least out of a moral point of view—superior to William and was so able to impose justice on him. This motif is similar to Eadmer's description of the relation between William I and Lanfranc. Therefore, I assume that the two authors have similar interests. The dispute between Canterbury and York was still not solved at the end of the twelfth century, and so, Newburgh probably feels the need to describe an important and influential archbishop in a good light. By emphasising Ealdred's authority over King William and by underlining his importance for the coronation, William of Newburgh, as a Northerner, shows the significance of the Archbishop of York. This might also explain why Stigand is not described as unfitting for the anointing ceremony. By doing this, Newburgh limits the exceptional character of the royal choice. As interesting as these results are, they reveal so little about how William I's power is authorised. At the very least, this emphasis on York shows that William's behaviour is not to be interpreted negatively in this case.

[1035] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 128f.
[1036] For the concept of just anger see Althoff 1998, p. 70.
[1037] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 21.

As the authors before him, Newburgh tells about the council of Winchester where Stigand was deposed. For him, this was the natural consequence after the king learned about Stigand's doubtful nomination and his generally unfitting behaviour. William acted rightly despite his anger and summoned the papal legate to manage the archbishop. After Stigand's removal, Lanfranc became his successor. William has only positive things to say about him. Like the other historical writers, he mentions his good virtues and learning. About Thomas, Ealdred's successor, William of Newburgh mentions nothing except his appointment.[1038] So, the Canterbury-York Controversy seems to have faded into the background. Therefore, these scenes allow to state that William of Newburgh thinks positively on William I's relation to the Church. By dismissing Stigand and appointing a worthier successor, William I fulfilled his promise to protect the Church.

Thus, the reform of the Church is not mentioned by William of Newburgh, and, therefore, it is not used to authorise William's rule. Nevertheless, the Church's politics and the collaboration with Ealdred are the only deeds of William (aside from the Conquest and his death) that are mentioned. In the context of the Church, Newburgh creates a positive image of William I, as he listened to the archbishop and solved the problem with Stigand well. So, the description of William's politics towards the Church helps legitimise his rule.

Being all churchmen themselves, five authors (except of Henry of Huntingdon) provide a positive image of the reform of the English Church and authorise in this way the reign of William I, using the reform to show him as a good king. In the five texts, the appointment of Lanfranc as the Archbishop of Canterbury is central. The five authors describe him as a learned and pious man who influenced the Church reform in a good way. The removal of Stigand is another main theme. Except Roger of Howden, four of the authors welcome Stigand's dismissal. The only drop of bitterness is neglecting the English for the appointment into higher offices. William of Newburgh does not mention it whatsoever, but especially Roger of Howden complains about it and depicts William negatively in this context. However, other writers, such as William of Malmesbury, find excuses for William's behaviour or mitigate it by emphasising the good results (Eadmer of Canterbury and Orderic Vitalis). The importance of the Church reform for William's rule is reflected by the fact that it is even mentioned in the short passage by William of Newburgh in the *Historia de rebus anglicis*. Henry of Huntingdon is the only one who uses William's treatment of the Church to delegitimise him. He states that William

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[1038] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 21.

passed away per God's decision after he had burnt churches and killed clerks. Thus, Henry strongly stands apart from the other writers.

4.8 Handing Down the Kingdom

Now that the analysis of how William's claim to the throne is authorised has been established, a study of the transition of the rule to his sons will follow. The aim is to understand whether the new Norman dynasty is accepted as such or whether William's right was gained by Conquest and had to be regained by each of his successors. As Weiler shows, no rule of the Anglo-Norman dynasty went unchallenged,[1039] and, therefore, it is interesting to see where the loyalties of the historiographers lie. The following chapter wants to find out how the transition of the rule to William Rufus is described and whether it is undisputed.

In order to counterbalance William Rufus, who is seen particularly negative, an analysis of Henry I follows. In order to keep this chapter at a reasonable length and to avoid straying too far from William's legitimacy, this chapter only focuses on the transition of power between William I and William II, respectively between William II and Henry I, and on Henry's politics of distancing himself from the Norman Conquest e.g. by referring back to Anglo-Saxon England.

I name no man as my heir to the kingdom of England; instead I entrust it to the eternal Creator to whom I belong and in whose hand are all things. For I did not come to possess such a dignity by hereditary right, but wrested the kingdom from the perjured king Harold [...].I dare not transmit the government of this kingdom, won with so many sins, to any man, but entrust it to God alone, for fear that after my death my evil deeds should become the cause of even worse things. I hope that my son William, who has always been loyal to me from his earliest years and has gladly obeyed me in every way he could, may long prosper in the Lord, enjoy good fortune, and bring lustre to the kingdom if such is the divine will.[1040]

This part of William's deathbed speech reveals much about Orderic's thoughts on the king's legitimacy. William ruled England because he had conquered Harold—as he therefore was neither Harold's nor Edward's heir, he had no right to pass it on to his sons. This contradicts much of Orderic's earlier text, where he used several other means to authorise William's rule. However, in my eyes, this speech does not intend to

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[1039] Weiler 2013, p. 142.
[1040] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.15, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 92–95 (*Neminem Anglici regni heredem constituo. sed æterno conditori cuius sum et in cuius manu sunt omnia illud commendo. Non enim tantum decus hereditario iure possedi. sed diro conflictu et multa effusione humani cruoris periuro regi Heraldo abstuli [...]. Fasces igitur huius regni quod cum tot peccatis optinui. nulli audeo tradere nisi Deo soli, ne post funus meum adhuc deteriora fiant occasione mei. Guillelmum filium meum qui michi a primis annis semper inhesit, et michi pro posse suo per omnia libenter obediuit. opto in spiritu Dei diu ualere, et in regni solio si diuina uoluntas est feliciter fulgere.*)

reduce the king's authority but is rather supposed to augment it. William strongly regretted his sinful behaviour towards the English—the reason why he did not want to leave the kingdom to his son. God forgives those who regret their sins, so William could die cleansed of his sins, which makes him look better. Furthermore, the speech has a strong religious meaning by showing that everyone—even the mightiest king—is in God's hands and is dependent on His benevolence. At the same time, it was a clever decision to give the kingdom to God and leave who shall be next king to His discretion while William Rufus was declared simultaneously as favourite successor. This gave William II quite a bit of authority: He was not king for being the son of a conqueror (meaning that he had to be a successful warrior as well) but because God gave the kingdom to him. In this way, William Rufus ruled by divine right, giving him the strongest legitimacy a monk could possibly fathom.

Moreover, he was chosen by his father because of his good behaviour. William I then also made sure that his son had a chance to become king by immediately sending him to England with a letter to Lanfranc, in which he told the archbishop about his wishes.[1041] Nevertheless, Orderic corrects this portrait of William II in the second book. Despite his good virtues, he was "indifferent to God"[1042] and had other flaws. Still, he was crowned king in Westminster by Lanfranc because of his father's letter.[1043] His legitimacy is emphasised during a rebellion led by Odo. There, Orderic shows no understanding for the rebels. Instead, the English, who supported William Rufus, said:

Act resolutely, as befits a king's son lawfully raised to the throne, so that you may govern all your subjects in this kingdom in safety. [...] It is both foolish and wicked to prefer a foreign enemy to a known king. A people who betrays its prince is utterly despicable.[1044]

In this passage, Orderic reveals much about why William II is a legitimised king in his eyes. Firstly, he was the son of a king. Secondly, he was properly crowned and fulfilled all the other requirements to make his accession to the throne legal. Therefore, a rebellion against William Rufus was treason and was to be punished. This shows that William's flaws have nothing to do with his legitimacy.

William II's rival, his elder brother Robert, is declared unsuitable to rule because "[h]e is a proud and foolish fellow, doomed to suffer prolonged and grim misfortune."[1045] The critique is repeated in the next book when Orderic characterises Robert as weak and

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[1041] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.15, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 96.
[1042] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, viii.1, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 110f (*erga Deum […] frigidus*).
[1043] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, viii.1, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 110.
[1044] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, viii.2, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 126f (*Viriliter age ut regis filius, et legitime ar regnum assumptus. securus in hoc regno dominare omnibus. Stultum nimis est et prophanum. noto regi preferre hostem extraneum. Detestabilis gens est. quæ domini sui gaudet ruina.*).
[1045] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.15, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 92f (*Superbus enim est et insipiens nebulo. trucique diu plectendus infortunio.*).

someone who attracts false friends.[1046] By delegitimising Robert, who as eldest son might have had more right to the throne, William II's authority is strengthened as well as Henry's, whose reign in Normandy is contrasted to Rufus'.[1047]

Henry's rise to kingship had already been prophesised in William I's deathbed speech. Henry had asked him what should become of him and William had answered: "But you in your own time will have all the dominions that I have acquired and be greater than your brothers in wealth and power."[1048] Furthermore, Orderic mentions that he was born in purple.[1049] After Rufus' death, Henry did not hesitate and hurried to Winchester in order to take control over the royal treasure. However, some magnates seemed to have suspected this measure and wanted to stop Henry, as they preferred Robert to be king. With the help of some counsellors, Henry managed to get hold of the treasure and become king anyway. Orderic Vitalis authorises this step by the facts that Henry's rule was predestined, that Henry was born in England and that the English wanted him to be king.[1050]

Henry's coronation was as it was supposed to be. He was crowned in Westminster by the Bishop of London. Orderic explains this with Anselm of Canterbury being abroad in exile and the vacancy of York.[1051] Thus, no archbishop was there to perform the anointing, and therefore, the coronation by a mere bishop did not de-authorise Henry. In contrast to William Rufus, Orderic describes Henry's reign well, and he did everything that Orderic Vitalis expects from a king.[1052]

The marriage to Matilda is welcomed by Orderic. He praises the bride for her ancestry—on her father's side the Scottish kings and on her mother's side the Anglo-Saxon kings. Orderic Vitalis takes some time to list all of Matilda's famous ancestors. There was, for example, Alfred the Great and Hengist. Matilda was hence a perfect queen. She came from an old family and had the right character.[1053] Apart from that, the reference to the Anglo-Saxon past does not play a big role for Orderic.

Thus, Orderic legitimises both of William's sons. The character of a king, however, is not decisive for his legitimacy. Rather, William II and Henry I are authorised by divine providence, a proper coronation, and their father being king before them. Surprisingly,

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[1046] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, viii.1, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 114.
[1047] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, viii.1, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 120.
[1048] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.16, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 96f (*Tu autem tempore tuo totum honorem quem ego nactus sum habebis, et fratribus tuis diuitiis et potestate prestabis.*).
[1049] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, viii.1, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, IV p. 120.
[1050] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, x.15, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. V 290–292.
[1051] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, x.16, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. V 294.
[1052] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, x.16, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. V 294–298. An example of praise towards Henry can be found at Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, xi.23, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. VI 98–90. His only weakness is women.
[1053] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, x.16, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. V 298–300.

Henry's programme to regress back to Anglo-Saxon times is not mentioned by Orderic. Again, Orderic Vitalis uses the occasion to show his own people in a good light. The English fought for Rufus and supported Henry's claim to the throne. Robert was no serious challenger to either of the brothers. He was unable to rule and did not have God's approval to become king.

As written above, Eadmer of Canterbury writes that William did not care about his successor. It was therefore that William Rufus became king—not because he was the best, but because he was the fastest. Eadmer gives—unlike Orderic—Robert the same right to throne. However, William Rufus could not become king without the consent of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Here, Eadmer has the problem to explain why a great man like Lanfranc crowned such a bad king as William II without reflecting badly on the archbishop. Eadmer solves this dilemma by blaming Rufus. He made many promises to the archbishop that he later broke. Lanfranc crowned him because William swore to protect the kingdom and to support the Church. When he was reminded of his promises, William became angry. Nevertheless, Lanfranc managed to have a positive influence on him, and things first turned worse after his death.[1054]

Eadmer, who accompanied Lanfranc's successor Anselm into exile during William II's reign, was not in England when Henry I became king. Nevertheless, he calls him king from the moment he learns of his accession to the throne. Eadmer is optimistic about Henry's succession, as the king swore to undo his brother's injustices. The haste, also of Henry's coronation, is only mentioned when Henry apologised to Anselm that it had not been the Archbishop of Canterbury who crowned him king. Anselm accepted the apology. However, Eadmer indicates that Henry had not yet been fully legitimised as king because the coronation was only partly valid, having not been performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Robert is mentioned once more as an alternative to Henry and described as hanging over Henry's head like a sword of Damocles. As difficulties arose because Anselm did not want to pay homage, Henry faced a dilemma: He feared that Robert would give Anselm whatever he wanted, and that Anselm would make him king instead.[1055]

Eadmer spends much time on the marriage between Henry and Matilda: firstly, because she descended from King Edgar, whom Eadmer venerates very much; secondly because he wants to cleanse Anselm of the accusation that the wedding was unright-

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[1054] Eadmer: *HN*, 30-32, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 25f.
[1055] Eadmer: *HN*, 134-137, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 118–121.

eous.[1056] Eadmer seems to take this claim very seriously; he writes: "quite a large number of people have maligned Anselm saying [...] that in this matter he did not keep to the path of strict right".[1057] He therefore describes at length how Anselm made sure that this was not the case—e.g. by questioning her and asking the crowd to agree to the marriage. It was also Anselm who crowned Matilda as queen.[1058] Thus, the marriage to Matilda and her coronation by the right archbishop helps authorise Henry in a better way in Eadmer's eyes. Nevertheless, the main emphasis here lies on acquitting Anselm of a false accusation.

The examples of William the Conqueror's two sons show that neither of their reigns was left undisputed. According to Eadmer, in both cases, the eldest brother is an alternative. However, he does not mention any other alternative that would show that William's successor had to be one of his sons. The examples moreover show the importance of the Archbishop of Canterbury for the legitimacy of royal rule. Without the consent of the archbishop, a king cannot be fully authorised. Therefore, the claimant of the throne was heavily dependent on the archbishop, an aspect which became visible in both cases. The archbishop could have at any time chosen Robert instead. This fits well into Eadmer's general programme to overemphasise the importance of his own archbishopric.

According to William of Malmesbury, William I settled his succession on his deathbed and declared his son William (II) as his heir to the English kingdom. The subsequent information William of Malmesbury gives on William Rufus is that he did not attend his father's funeral but travelled around England instead. Although Malmesbury has a problem with this preference, he praises William II for immediately fulfilling his father's final wishes by distributing the accumulated gold to the Church.[1059] However, William II only reigned well at the beginning of his rule. Later, he exploited his kingdom in order to buy the support of his knights.[1060] In the next book, William of Malmesbury retells this story—although slightly differently. Though William Rufus showed many virtues, his father suspected him to be involved in Richard's (William's first son) death. Also, Malmesbury condemns Rufus' haste even more. He writes that William Rufus went to

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[1056] There were rumours that Matilda was a nun before she married Henry, which means that she was not allowed to marry at all because she was already given to God (Green 2006, p. 55).
[1057] Bosanquet 1964, p. 127 (*Anselmum in hoc a rectitudine deviasse nonnulla pars hominum [...] blasphemavit.*—Eadmer: *HN*, 138, ed. by Rule 1965, p. 121).
[1058] Eadmer: *HN*, 138-143, ed. by Rule 1965, pp. 121–126.
[1059] William: *GRA*, iii.282, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 510–512.
[1060] William: *GRA*, iii.prologue, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 424.

England "before the king breathed his last"[1061] in order to become king. He was accepted as such because he got hold of the royal treasure and had the support of Lanfranc, by whom he was consecrated king.[1062]

William's eldest son, Robert, was, in this context, not taken into consideration as heir. At another point, William writes that he "failed to secure England after his father's death"[1063] because of his rebellions against the Conqueror. Malmesbury positively illustrates only Robert's deeds on crusade.[1064] As seen before, William of Malmesbury deeply hates rebellions against a rightful king, so Robert's disinheritance is appropriate in his eyes. Also, during Odo's rebellion of in favour of Robert and against William Rufus, he is on the side of the king whom he always titles as "king of England"[1065]. This shows that William of Malmesbury accepts William II as the rightful king despite his many flaws.

Henry I, in contrary, is depicted in a good way, and William states that he was like his father—a description William of Malmesbury sees as a compliment, which, in turn, shows that he holds William I in high esteem.[1066] Furthermore, William states that he was born while his father was already king, which led to his princely education "and the throne seemed destined to be his"[1067]. William reinforces this impression by a prophecy made by the Conqueror, who told Henry that he would be king one day.[1068] Accordingly, Henry's reign was predetermined. Hence, his ascension to the throne differs fundamentally from Rufus'. After his brother had been buried, Henry was chosen as king by the magnates. The population also celebrated its new king. Immediately after his coronation, Henry prohibited the unjust laws of his brother and in so doing distanced himself from the bad doings of Rufus. However, the reinstitution of the laws of Edward the Confessor is not referenced.[1069]

Matilda's ancestry, along with her marriage to Henry I, is already mentioned before the Norman Conquest as Edward the Confessor decided over his succession.[1070] With this, Malmesbury shows the reader that William was also a good choice because—owing to

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[1061] William: *GRA*, iv.305, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 542f (*antequem ille extremum efflasset*).
[1062] William: *GRA*, iv.305, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 542–544. Gillingham 2017 argues against previous research findings that William of Malmesbury sees William II all in all positively. As I only look at the beginning of his reign, this statement cannot be (un-)verified here.
[1063] William: *GRA*, iii.274, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 502f (*Anglia post mortem eius caruit*).
[1064] William: *GRA*, iii.274, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 502.
[1065] William: *GRA*, iv.306, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 546–548, here 548f (*regem Angliae*).
[1066] William: *GRA*, iv.prologue, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 424.
[1067] William: *GRA*, v.prologue, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 708f (*et ei regnum uideretur competere*).
[1068] William: *GRA*, v.390, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 710.
[1069] William: *GRA*, v.393, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 714.
[1070] William: *GRA*, ii.228, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, p. 416.

the marriage—the Anglo-Saxon line shall reunite with the Norman one. He stresses Matilda's lineage once more when he recounts her wedding. First, however, Malmesbury mentions that she was the daughter of the Scottish king. Only then does he relate that she was also the great-great-niece of Edward the Confessor.[1071] For William of Malmesbury, the more important person was her only common son with Henry. Malmesbury suggests that he might have been the one Edward had referred to in the prophecy about the green tree. Unfortunately, as William puts it, "God had other plans".[1072] The heir to the throne died in the catastrophe of the White Ship and never became king.[1073] So, Edward's prophecy could not be fulfilled, and reunification with the Anglo-Saxon past did not take place.

William of Malmesbury accepts both of William I's sons as kings. They are authorised by being their father's heirs, their coronations, and the will of the people. Henry I is additionally legitimised by his birth in purple and divine providence. His politics to take up the Anglo-Saxon past do not hold much importance for William of Malmesbury. The laws of Edward the Confessor are not mentioned at all, and Matilda is, at that point in time, equally described as the daughter of the Scottish king. Only Henry's son plays an important part in reflecting the Anglo-Saxon past. However, as he died an early death, this had no further importance, and the break established by the Conquest remained unresolved.

Henry of Huntingdon narrates the classic story that William I gave Normandy to Robert, England to William Rufus, and to Henry ample amounts of money. William II's reign is not further introduced. Henry refers to the fulfilment of William I's wishes and names William II the "new king"[1074] without referring to a coronation or Robert's possible claim to the English throne. In fact, Rufus' coronation is only mentioned incidentally whilst Henry lists the presence of Lanfranc at the Christmas court. There, he describes the Archbishop more closely as the man who had crowned William II king.[1075] Thus, Henry makes clear that William was consecrated. However, as he does not describe any details, the coronation obviously is of little importance to him concerning William's legitimacy. Rather, William Rufus is authorised by his father's decision. William II so ruled by hereditary right.

[1071] William: *GRA*, v.393, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 714–716.
[1072] William: *GRA*, v.419, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 758f (*Deo alter uisum*).
[1073] William: *GRA*, v.419, ed. by Mynors et al. 1998, pp. 758–760.
[1074] Henry: *HA*, vi.40, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 408f (*rex [...] nouus*).
[1075] Henry: *HA*, vi.40, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 406–408.

The case is completely different with Henry I. William Rufus died suddenly and unexpectedly in a hunting accident, granting him no opportunity to decide about his succession. Neither does Henry of Huntingdon choose Orderic Vitalis' way of letting William I predict Henry's accession. Accordingly, Henry uses different arguments in order to legitimise Henry's reign. Henry I was chosen as king by the magnates. Henry of Huntingdon does not tell which ones, but as William II held court when he died, Henry implicates that all the important men of the kingdom were present at Henry's election. Furthermore, this time, Henry of Huntingdon refers to the coronation that was done by the Bishop of London. In contrast to the coronations of the two Williams, this time, Henry provides more details and recounts Henry I's promise to change the law.[1076] As a consequence, Henry is legitimised by the choice of the nobility and the coronation. Henry of Huntingdon also mentions the marriage to Matilda. However, he does not write about her Anglo-Saxon roots but only about her kinship to the Scottish royal family.[1077] There is also nothing said about the laws of Edward the Confessor.

The case of William Rufus' rule shows the rightfulness of William I's reign. Because he ruled rightly, he was able to hand down the kingdom to his son. Henry, in turn, did not profit as much from his father's reign. He additionally needed the election and the coronation. This shows that it is not the kinship that is most important to Henry of Huntingdon, but rather William's decision to declare Rufus his heir. Thus, William II is foremost legitimated by his father's choice. Of course, also the power to choose an authorised heir speaks for William's legitimacy.

Roger of Howden describes a smooth transition between William and his son. On his deathbed, the king declared William Rufus as his heir of the English kingdom. Roger then further narrates how William II went to England quickly and was crowned by Lanfranc in Westminster. The new king's rule began well, as he fulfilled his father's wishes by giving away his gold to churches.[1078] However, his reign was not unchallenged. Odo and some other magnates preferred Robert as king and planned a rebellion. Interestingly, Roger calls the rebellious nobles "Normans" and writes that William II needed the help of the "English" to defeat them.[1079] This shows that there is still opposition between Normans and English. Roger does not, as usual, take sides, but it is obvious that the rebellion is directed towards a legally installed king.

[1076] Henry: *HA*, vii.22, ed. by Greenway 1996, pp. 446–448.
[1077] Henry: *HA*, vii.22, ed. by Greenway 1996, p. 448.
[1078] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 140.
[1079] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 140f; here Riley 1994b, p. 171 (*normannorum/Anglos*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 141).

Rufus, too, cared about his succession. In a peace treaty with his brother Robert, they installed each other as heir in case one of them should die without a legal son.[1080] Nevertheless, this treaty was nullified only a few years later by Robert, and the brothers found no further agreement despite William's journey to Normandy.[1081] This first changed when Robert decided to go on crusade. There, the treaty was renewed, but Roger does not mention whether this refers to the succession question as well.[1082] Thus, he leaves open whether Henry I is delegitimised by this treaty or not.

When it comes to Henry's accession to the throne, Roger no longer mentions the treaty. He copies the rather short record of the *Historia post obitum Bedae*:

King William reigned fourteen years all but twenty-eight days, and was succeeded by his younger brother, Henry. Shortly after, on the nones of August, he was consecrated king at Westminster, by Maurice, the bishop of London[.][1083]

This description does not even mention Robert as a possibility. Henry became king because his elder brother was king before him. It is also not a problem that it was not Anselm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who crowned Henry. Roger does not even tell the reasons behind it, nor does he mention the haste leading up to the ascension to the throne. He leaves the impression that Henry's kingship was a planned act even if he failed to mention the plan before.

The reference to the Anglo-Saxon past, however, is an important subject. Roger of Howden explicitly states that Henry "restored the laws of king Edward"[1084]. Then, he goes on to the marriage between Henry and Matilda. This time, the coronation of the queen was performed by the correct bishop. However, here, Roger does not mention her relation to the Anglo-Saxon royal line. In contrast, he lists her relatives who were/are/are going to be kings of Scotland.[1085] It is curious that Roger does not further state the connection to England but inserts instead the names of her brothers for the first time into the *Historia post obitum Bedae*. That he is conscious of Matilda's descent is obvious because the first time he refers to her is when he mentions the marriage of her parents. There, the kinship to Edgar (and so the Anglo-Saxon royal line) and the good character of her mother are reported.[1086] This shows that continuity of the Anglo-

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[1080] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 143.
[1081] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 148.
[1082] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 153.
[1083] Riley 1994b, p. 191 (*Regnavit autem idem rex Willelmus xiiii. annis, minus xxviii diebus. Cui successit frater suus junior Henricus. Et mox, nonis Augusti, in Westmonasterio, a Mauritio Lundoniensi episcopo in regem est consecratus;*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 157).
[1084] Riley 1994b, p. 191 (*legem regis Eadwardi omnibus in commune reddidit*—Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 157).
[1085] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, pp. 157f.
[1086] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 122.

Saxon past was most important in the aftermath of the Conquest. For the legitimacy of Henry I, it plays a subordinated role.

For Roger of Howden, the legitimacy of William I's sons is not much in need of explanation. Whereas William II reigned as his father's chosen heir, Henry was chosen by no one. His sole right was his kinship to William II. Thus, Robert's claim would be as valid as his. However, in the narration of the forthcoming conflicts between the two brothers, nothing indicates that Roger shows the remotest understanding towards Robert's claim.[1087] Therefore, the coronation and kinship are enough to authorise royal rule.

William of Newburgh follows Eadmer's path by describing the succession of William I as problematic. Though William I decided over his successors on his deathbed, the rule over England remained disputed. King William chose Robert as Duke of Normandy and William Rufus as king over England. Newburgh explains this decision with Robert's rebellion on the one hand and with William Rufus' obedience on the other hand.[1088] How problematic this decision was is emphasised by the fact that Newburgh tells this story a second time when he begins to write about the reign of William II. For him, the order of succession is "reversed"[1089], meaning that Robert's right to the English throne is greater than William II's. Some nobles were also of this opinion, causing problems throughout the English kingdom. All in all, Newburgh does not see William II as a suitable king, but neither sees Robert as such, with whom Rufus competes.[1090] However, for William of Newburgh, it is not the question whether one of William I's sons is going to be English king, but which one. For him, the Norman dynasty clearly is already established with William I's death.

For William of Newburgh, Henry I was William the Conqueror's ideal successor. Newburgh legitimises Henry by being William's son and being born in purple. Henry's good character further underlined his suitability. His rule was—concerning the legitimisation—totally unchallenged. This also shows the fact that it is totally clear to William that Henry's daughter and grandchildren are meant to follow him to the throne and not Stephen, whom he calls a usurper. William of Newburgh does not mention Henry's efforts to resume the Anglo-Saxon past. Rather, instead of distancing him from William I, he compares Henry favourably to him, e.g. when Henry reunited the Duchy of Normandy with England.[1091]

[1087] Roger: *Chr.*, I, ed. by Stubbs 1946, p. 158.
[1088] William: *HRA*, i.1, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 21.
[1089] Walsh, Kennedy 1988, p. 43 (*præpostero*—William: *HRA*, i.2, ed. by Howlett 1964, p. 23).
[1090] William: *HRA*, i.2, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 23–26.
[1091] William: *HRA*, i.3, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 26–30.

All in all, for all the authors it clear that William I's sons were supposed to follow him onto the throne. Another candidate is not even considered. This shows well that William's original right by Conquest led to an establishment of a new dynasty. This chapter also showed what the important means to legitimise a king were. This is, for all authors, the close kinship to a former king. Further elements are a rightful coronation and—in the case of Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury—divine providence, respectively for Henry of Huntingdon the election. All five writers legitimise Henry I more so than they do his brother. Henry namely additionally possessed a good character and was born in purple. None of the authors mentions his politics to return to former Anglo-Saxon times. One has the impression that this no longer matters. The exceptions are William of Malmesbury with the legend of the green tree and Roger of Howden, who mentions the laws of Edward the Confessor.

5. Conclusion: The Change in Legitimising William I during the Twelfth Century

The analysis showed that there are indeed uncountable opinions about William the Conqueror. However, it is surprising how unimportant they are for the question whether William was a legal, legitimated king. Generally, kings in the Middle Ages used a range of means in order to authorise their power. These ideas were a mixture of old testimonial, Roman, and Germanic ideologies and changed over time. On the one hand, rulers relied on certain structures to rule, which enabled them to take over control. On the other hand, ideologies helped the ruler to justify their power and to reflect it.

Concerning the structures, older research emphasised the role of feudality as a basis of power. They understood with this term the dependency of power and wealth. Richer overlords gave away land and promised protection as a counter to loyalty. The development of feudality was deeply dependent upon the formation of a social group of specialised warriors. As an ideological background for feudality, Dumézil's trifunctional model often is used. In the division of society into three groups (*oratores, bellatores, laboratores*), each member of society—also the king—had its place and function. The feudal model is questioned by newer research, especially by Reynolds. She argues that the model of feudality is too broad, and that words, concepts, and phenomena have been confused. Furthermore, feudality did not develop from the establishment of specialised warriors in the early Middle Ages, but from the bureaucratic governments of the twelfth century. Instead of feudality, research has developed new concepts. Thereby, turning away from concepts as "state" and pre-state-institutions has greatly helped. Instead, research focuses on direct personal bonds and concepts of loyalty. Consensual rule also played an important role in order to maintain one's power. For this, the establishment of personal bonds was important. Thereby, the family played a main role. This further included that one had to convince his subjects to follow one's decisions by punishing or rewarding them. Consensual rule was highly institutionalised—both by laws and rituals. It revealed itself especially in the election of a king, which, additionally, expressed divine will. Further, especially since the middle of the twelfth century, rulers could depend on administration as a means to keep their power. The importance of law was augmented, and the king could rely on court clerks at the expense of lower aristocracy. Bureaucracy became especially significant in the Angevin Empire, helping the king to rule his far-reaching lands.

Concerning ideology, the most important method to legitimise royal rule was the claim to have been chosen by God. According to this concept, God had chosen a man to be

king for reasons humans did not necessarily need to understand. The king had the task of caring for his subjects, but, as he was installed by God, only God could take his office away. It was not up to the king's subjects to judge his behaviour. Rituals were important when it came to the expression and the public representation of power and social bonds. Moreover, rituals helped communicate and reassure that the bond would hold in future—especially valuable in a time with no monopoly on force, low literacy, and few other means of public visualisation. Rituals also displayed the power and might of a king in public, making it visual for his subjects. The most important ritual to authorise kingship was the coronation. There, the king showed that he was indeed chosen by God and that he was the right one to rule the kingdom; he displayed his wealth and power.

It was already shown that a king's character was secondary to divine rule. Nevertheless, the two of them are closely interdependent. In order to be a good king—meaning that one was able to keep peace—a ruler depended on God's mercy, which in turn depended on leading a devout life. Another popular means to authorise one's rule was the establishment of dynasties. Dynasties demonstrated a high social status (which was extremely important) and were based on the idea that special qualities were passed on via blood. Therefore, it became popular to construct a lineage traced back to biblical figures, heathen heroes, and/or holy kings. In medieval times, it was common to argue via history, which meant that a good argument to prove someone was a rightful king was that someone's family had always produced kings. The concept of a dynasty also made sure that it was possible to hand the royal power down to one's sons.

Of course, all these methods were used in Anglo-Saxon England as well. However, I want to emphasise that the eleventh century was marked by discontinuity and conquests. Apart from William, England was exposed to other foreign kings, namely Cnut and his sons. This is often forgotten when it comes to describing the changes that the Norman Conquest was supposed to have brought. Research concluded that, concerning his legitimisation, William the Conqueror rather endeavoured to stress continuity to his predecessors than to change much. Therefore, his connection to Edward the Confessor was emphasised, and he kept the Anglo-Saxon coronation *ordo*. His rival Harold is delegitimised in order to leave William as the only legitimate choice for king. The main change was augmenting the importance of the queen, which was necessary because William ruled over two realms and could not be at two places at once. Therefore, he needed reliable deputies. William's sons kept to the politics of their father, although it meant—in Henry's case—a disassociation from William. According to current research, especially Henry's rule was strongly marked by a reference back to Anglo-Saxon times.

This first changed during the Anarchy. From there on, about 60 years after the Conquest, the role of the Anglo-Saxon past vanished as a source of the legitimacy for current kings. Instead, the kinship to William I and Henry I became important. The coronation, however, remained the legitimating ritual for kingship. Still, real changes first began with the reign of Henry II. He reformed law and administration in order to reign over such a great realm. Additionally, his legitimisation also contains the methods used for his predecessors. He let Edward the Confessor be canonised as part of his programme to glorify his forefathers. Under his son Richard, the stylisation of the king as an ideal chivalric warrior became important.

Thus, all the Anglo-Norman kings were legitimised via history. It was important to construct continuity with Anglo-Saxon times that increasingly took on a nostalgic air. The coronation in Westminster by an archbishop was another important element. Under the reign of Henry II, the methods of authorisation increased. For example, law and administration became important. However, the most important accomplishment of the kings prior to Richard I was that they managed to prevent the uprising of serious rivals. So, power rather went to royal administration or judges instead of nobility or towns.

The role of historiography concerning the legitimacy of kings is twofold. It could reflect and create legitimacy. It had already become evident that history and the construction of seemingly unbroken royal dynasties were important in the process of legitimising power. Historiography helped locate current kings in history and fit them into a line with their predecessors. Additionally, it legitimised kings as well by depicting them in a favourable way. Of course, historiography could always promote the opposite as well. All depended on the interests of each writer. So, also the reflection of the legitimacy of former kings could create or question the authority of current kings.

As the modern concept of individuality had not come into being in the Middle Ages, medieval historiographers worked with different types of rulers, such as the good king (*rex iustus*), the bad king (*rex iniustus*), or the king who does not want to rule (*rex renitens*). Medieval writers generally used the means listed above in order to legitimise kings. However, they emphasised the various methods differently and de-facto lordship was often good enough to authorise a king. Given that most writers had a clerical background, the characteristics of a good king were taken from the Bible or classical authors like Cornelius Nepos. The writers also judged a king by his relation to the Church. An ideal king supported the Church and acted according to divine will. The aristocratic historiography, on the other hand, put honour and its preservation at the forefront. Also, episodes in the life of a king or his emotions often were interpreted ac-

cording to fixed topoi. Thus, a good king had enough time to confess his sins before death and was to show anger only in appropriate moments.

In Anglo-Saxon historiography, these ideas were partially utilised. Whereas it is impossible to state how Gildas legitimated kings, the case is different with Bede. In the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, he shows the importance of being a Christian king and spreading Christian beliefs. Additionally, he constructs a royal line that began with the heathen god Wotan to give the royal house of Kent an extensive past. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reuses this idea. As it was composed in favour of the West-Saxon kings, it invents Cerdic in order to be on equal terms with Kent. The line of Cerdic leads back to Adam. Furthermore, kings are legitimised by their ability to fulfil their duties and to protect their realm. Asser uses the method of constructing a dynasty as well. Furthermore, Alfred is legitimised by being chosen by God and by his good character modelled after the Old Testament's King Salomon.

From the beginning on, William's claim to the English throne was rather weak—it was based on conquest alone. Therefore, he needed to find further means to authorise his rule so that no one would think to challenge him by conquest as well. This propaganda started immediately after the Conquest with the so-called Norman panegyrics. Given that William's kinship to the Anglo-Saxon royal line was rather weak, they had to find new means to authorise his power. Therefore, they emphasise (more or less) his good virtues and his legal coronation. Furthermore, he was king by consensual rule, as the English nobility promised the throne to him. Most importantly, William's victory at Hastings showed that God was on his side and wanted him to be king. As Harold was unsuitable for his office, William was the best candidate. In order to not neglect William's descent, the Norman panegyrics claim that William was Edward's chosen heir, connecting him, at least partly, to his predecessor. Also, in the eleventh century, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* does not criticise kings. There, William is legitimised by God's decision, as he was a divine instrument used to punish the English. The fact that his character is described rather ambiguously has nothing to do with his legitimacy. Thus, the twelfth century sources had a wide range of models to legitimise (or delegitimise) William's kingship.

Orderic Vitalis reuses many of the arguments that can also be found in the Norman panegyrics. His dependence on them can be explained with his location in Normandy and lack of historical writing on the English side. He writes that William was chosen by Edward the Confessor as heir, he delegitimises Harold Godwinson (although the picture is moderated), he ascribes the victory at Hastings to God's providence as punish-

ment for English sins (an argument taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*), and he lets William be crowned by the right archbishop. However, he does not follow William of Poitiers in the argument that the Anglo-Saxon nobility promised the throne to William before 1066. Instead, they accepted him as king after Hastings. By describing William's kinship to Edward, Orderic integrates the Norman Duke into the Anglo-Saxon royal line, giving him noble ancestry.

Until William's coronation, Orderic depicts him as an ideal king. Though he is first described in more detail after Edward's death, the short time span is enough to present him as an ideal candidate for the English throne. Thus, until the anointing, William had every legitimisation mentioned in the first part of this work. However, this impression changes, as the ritual went wrong. Still, the problematic coronation does not influence William's legitimacy. Rather, it foreshadows the difficult relationship between the English and the Normans. Orderic is deeply concerned about the consequences of the rule of the new Norman aristocracy. This fits Chibnall's statement about the loss many English felt about 25 years after the Conquest. It first was then that the consequences of Norman rule fully became cognisant to them, and they were afraid of losing their traditions together with their land.[1092] However, with the coronation, a less positive image of William begins. The new Norman nobility misused its power, which led, in turn, to English rebellions, that, in turn, were violently ended by William. There, he overshot the mark by acting out of anger and too violently. The English did not have any fault as they did not rebel against their king, but rather against the injustice of the new aristocracy. The change in the portrayal of William can also be explained with the end of one of Orderic's main sources, the *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, in 1070. From there on, Orderic might have used more critical sources.

Also, the politics involving the Church reveal a positive image of the English and of William: The king's deeds led to a renewed flourishing of the English Church. Again, Orderic clears the English from being guilty for the situation of the pitiful state of the Church, because he instead makes the Danes responsible. Generally, the English are depicted well in the *Ecclesiastical History*. So, the brothers Edwin and Morcar are characterised positively because Edwin is described as handsome, generous, and good, making him an ideal nobleman.[1093] The quality of the English is further demonstrated by Alexius of Byzantium, who took English refugees into his court and entrusted them his palace, his treasure, and even his life.[1094] The English did not only differ from the Normans in their better qualities, but also in their appearance, e.g. the English had

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[1092] Chibnall 1984, p. 175.
[1093] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 214–216 and 258.
[1094] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, vii.5, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. IV 16.

long hair.[1095] This differentiation between the two cultures shows that Orderic—when writing the *Ecclesiastical History* about fifty years after the Conquest—still sees huge differences between the cultures—which is likely strengthened by living abroad.

Chibnall sees these inconsistencies concerning the description of William's reign as founded in the situation of the writer and his position in society. Due to assimilations and the Normans claiming Anglo-Saxon history as their own, there were no sharp distinctions between the two peoples any more.[1096] Thus, this picture may be explained by Orderic's ambivalent attitude towards the Conquest: On the one hand, he has a negative view of the Normans as people in general, probably out of personal experiences; on the other hand, he believes that William was England's rightful king by divine predestination. In order to understand why Orderic legitimises William despite his violence, it might be illustrative to cite Orderic's own citation from the Bible: "Fear God, honour the king".[1097] William was the king chosen by God, and it was not appropriate for humans to question God's decisions. Questioning the ruler led to chaos as Orderic had to experience under the unstable rule of Robert Curthose. Further, only God could punish William for his anger and violence, and therefore, William's behaviour has no influence on his legitimacy. In this description, Orderic follows the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Hence, William's sons could follow their father to the throne by hereditary right. Considering the manuscript situation, the influence of Orderic's description on the legitimacy of current kings has to be evaluated as rather low. Probably, his text was more used to commemorate William, taking into consideration that one manuscript is preserved in the church William was buried.

Like Orderic Vitalis, Eadmer of Canterbury approves the righteousness of William's reign. William's legitimisation is not as clear as in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, but he still was the king chosen by God, as God punished Harold for his perjury which, in turn, delegitimised Harold. Although William was related to the Anglo-Saxon royal house, Eadmer does not emphasise this connection as strongly as Orderic does. Rather, he even speaks negatively of Edward the Confessor, criticising him for his behaviour towards the Church. So, a close kinship to Edward was not worth striving for. Instead, Eadmer shows many parallels between William and Edgar, placing him near the Anglo-Saxon kings in another way and constructs some kind of continuity via office.

[1095] Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 198. In the case of William of Malmesbury, the long hair turns men into women and is therefore seen as negative. Nevertheless, I assume that Orderic wanted to state the differences between the two cultures. The English are enumerated together with the riches of William, making them look like a miraculous people.
[1096] Chibnall 1999, p. 15.
[1097] Peter 2:17; Orderic Vitalis: *HE*, iv, ed. by Chibnall 1969-1983, p. II 207.

This continuity via office is also visible in the descriptions of Lanfranc and Anselm. Namely concerning William's reign, Eadmer is mostly interested in showing the Archbishopric of Canterbury in a good light and emphasising its role in securing a good and successful government. William becomes rather secondary. In close collaboration with Lanfranc, he reformed the Church. Outside this cooperation, William is depicted rather negatively—he was too severe and listened to the wrong people. This shows that he is not legitimised by his general good character but only by the moments of collaboration with the archbishop.

Thus, William is legitimated by divine right only. He became king after the Battle of Hastings, independent of his coronation. The victory, in turn, was granted by God. The ceremony becomes secondary. The same is valid for the consent of the people—the coronation showed that the Church consented to William's reign, but Eadmer says nothing about laymen. Neither did Edward offer the crown to the Norman Duke nor did anyone else from the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. As Eadmer does not care much about secular affairs and is not so keen on describing William in a good light outside of the relation between king and archbishop, he does not need the Norman aristocracy— neither to blame them for the bad treatment nor as an excuse for English rebellions.

The true importance of the archbishops of Canterbury first becomes visible with William's sons. Whereas William is legitimated by the victory of Hastings that was granted by God, his sons were missing this authorisation. Therefore, the decisive argument why William II and Henry I ruled and not their elder brother, Robert, is the coronation— performed and/or approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury. So, the archbishops were able to replace a clear sign by God. That Eadmer accepts both of William's sons as kings and sees no other candidate to the throne from outside the family further shows that William's legitimisation is good enough to continue his line.

With this argumentation, Eadmer partially follows the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and he partially develops his own means to legitimate the kings. From the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* comes the idea to see the Conquest as punishment for sins. However, Eadmer does not make the English people responsible, but Harold alone, whose perjury was punished. The new idea is that the legitimisation stems from the close collaboration with the archbishop. Thereby, Eadmer shows, on the one hand, the idea behind God's judgement (the well-being of the English Church), and on the other hand, it helped him to increase the importance of the archbishops of Canterbury. Eadmer probably takes the main thought from Bede, who also praises the close cooperation between king and bishop. Also, in the case of Eadmer, the manuscript situation does not speak for a legitimisation of current kings. Rather, the primacy of the Archbishopric of Canterbury stood

in the centre. However, being copied by John of Worcester, Eadmer's ideas on William had influence on the northern English historical writers.

Aside from Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury is the one who makes most of the Norman Conquest with stylistic devises. Already during the reign of Edward the Confessor, William's kingship was foreshadowed by prophecies. Then, Edward declared William as his heir. In this context, Malmesbury emphasises the kinship between the Norman dukes and the Anglo-Saxon kings. William of Malmesbury even goes one step further by mentioning Matilda as the future wife of William's son and her noble ancestry. As this is not so important by the time Malmesbury comes to narrate the marriage between the two, William foreshadows that the kinship of Duke William and Edward will be even closer in future. Thus, William closely connects the two houses and gives King William a noble descent. Furthermore, this is supposed to please his patrons. The first one, Matilda, is given more importance in the narration. Robert of Gloucester, who fought for the right of the Empress Matilda, could use this to increase the importance of the female line, which gave Empress Matilda and her son, the later Henry II, a better right to rule.

As the writers before him, William of Malmesbury ascribes the victory at Hastings to divine favour. He follows Eadmer's argument that God thereby punished Harold alone and not the English people as a whole. In this version, Harold is delegitimised completely: He was not chosen by Edward or his people as king, and he was a perjurer. William, in contrast, proved himself worthy and behaved like an ideal Christian ruler; he had the consent of the magnates, the people, and the Church. The coronation was what made William a king. As Malmesbury writes for William's successor, his critique of William is—despite his conflicting announcement—strongly moderated. Of all the writers analysed, he is the only one who truly portrays the king as *rex iustus*. Again, God's providence is stressed by reporting William's military successes—against both external and internal enemies.

Like Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury is (at least partly) keen on depicting the English in a good light. He therefore emphasises that it was not their fault that the Battle of Hastings was lost. Instead, a bad king had a negative influence on his people as he was a poor role model. With Edward and Harold, the English had at least two mediocre kings in a row, which left its mark on the morale of the islanders. William of Malmesbury generally writes badly of the Anglo-Saxon royal line as Edgar Ætheling is depicted as unsuitable to rule as well. This legitimises William because he took over from a weak royal line to reform the kingdom. Under William I's reign, monasticism flour-

ished, and new ecclesiastical appointments helped the Church to prosper. King William, along with his Norman followers, embodied a good example for the English, which led to better behaviour of this people as well. Also, King William's sons profited from their father's legitimacy. Malmesbury authorises them amongst others by describing their descent from William the Conqueror. This authorisation might even have an impact at court. As the manuscript situation reveals, Malmesbury was widely read, and his patrons could take care of the circulation of his favourable descriptions. Therefore, I want to argue that William of Malmesbury did not only reflect current ideas about William I's legitimacy but also actively created it.

Henry of Huntingdon's view on the legitimacy of William the Conqueror is deeply influenced by his providential framework. William was chosen by God to conquer England and to become king long before his birth. The English were to be punished for their sins that were reflected in weak kings. William, however, shared the warrior-like characteristics of the Norman race, making him the ideal instrument for the divine plan. Thus, his relation to the Anglo-Saxon kings was no coincidence, but rather also part of God's plan. The same was valid for his victory of Hastings. In contrast to other writers, Henry does not ascribe the victory to divine intervention, but to William's abilities as a strategist (because of which he was chosen). Other means to legitimise William are not necessary. The coronation is merely symbolic of something already apparent, and the account of William's character and behaviour has the main purpose of showing Henry's readers how to behave and how not. Therefore, Henry shows that bad behaviour causes divine punishment. In the case of William, one might even argue that his mistreatment of the Church led to his de-legitimisation, which was why God brought him death. Thus, there was a connection between behaviour and legitimacy, but as it was God's task to punish, it was God again who decided about royal legitimacy. The description of the rebellions shows that Henry does not see humans as responsible for the judgement of their king.

One cannot speak of an establishment of a Norman dynasty in the case of *Historia Anglorum*. Although William II is legitimated by his father's choice, this is not the case for Henry I. He needed an election and the coronation. Considering Henry of Huntingdon's framework of conquests and the self-destruction of the Normans, this is hardly surprising. This concept does not require dynasties. Every rule is transitory because of the next conquest. Only God's reign is eternal, and He is the one who decides England's fate and its kings. Henry's idea of transitory rule might come from his own experiences. He experienced the changes due to Norman rule (such as the interdiction of

clerical marriage against which he fought) and then the Anarchy that he saw as the end of Norman rule. So, he observed the consequences of two changes in dynasty. Looking back in history, he found even more of them, which led to the framework of conquests. In this context, despite the exhaustive manuscript situation, one can hardly speak of a creation of legitimacy but more of a reflection. Henry reflects William's authority and finds a divine explanation for it.

For Roger of Howden, the kinship between Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror is only secondary. Interestingly, Roger reports two stories of what led to the Norman Conquest. Thereby, he follows William of Malmesbury, who foreshadows the Conquest in book II but narrates it in full detail in the following book. However, whereas William's two narrations fit together, Roger's do not. His first account resembles the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* where it is stated that William attacked England without apparent reason. The second narration has many similarities with Eadmer of Canterbury's, and Roger inserts it in order to explain the surprising attack by the Normans. As in the texts of Eadmer of Canterbury and William of Malmesbury, the Norman Conquest so became divine punishment for Harold's perjury. Thus, William is legitimated by divine right.

However, like Orderic Vitalis, Roger of Howden uses the coronation in order to cast doubts about William's character. Whereas Orderic uses the ceremony to foreshadow the difficult relation between Normans and English, Roger foreshadows William's difficult character as the king angered too quickly. Although William is also depicted in the following as a severe and violent ruler, this does not exert any influence on William's legitimacy. William was solely responsible for his behaviour, although the English suffered at the hand of his Norman followers, too. However, as William misbehaved as well, and the Norman nobles are not used as scapegoats. Neither does Roger use the reform of the Church to authorise William's reign. Even if William is depicted best in this context, Roger still criticises him for dismissing English clerks in favour of Norman ones.

William's sons are authorised by their kinship to William and the coronation. This shows firstly that William's legitimisation is transferred to his sons. Secondly, it reveals that William's missing lineage is compensated by God's decision to have him win at Hastings. Because William started a new dynasty and had a mediocre character, Roger needs a strong explanation for the legality of his reign. The strongest possible cause is divine right. God's decision is explained with Harold's perjury. Thus, Roger mainly reflects the legitimacy created by the Norman panegyrics.

Although Roger mainly copies his main source, there still can be observed two main changes. The first one concerns the depiction of Edward the Confessor. Probably in the light of his canonisation, Roger inserts some stories that reveal the king's holiness. The other one deals with William's Harrying of the North and lets the king look in an even more negative light. This shows that the memory of Edward the Confessor became more positive again because of Henry II's politics, but also that William was seen more negatively. This can be explained with his minor role in legitimating contemporary kings.

William of Newburgh is the one who devotes little space to the Norman Conquest. Therefore, we learn nothing about Edward the Confessor or the Norman magnates or whether they supported King William's legitimacy. Harold Godwinson questions his legitimacy, about whom William of Newburgh reports almost nothing, but who seemed to be rightfully king. Additionally, William I was unsuitable to rule. Although he successfully conquered England and was—slightly—tamed by the archbishop, Newburgh condemns him for the bloodshed at Hastings. As the other writers, William of Newburgh uses William's funeral to show the transience of earthly glory. New is that he makes William responsible for the violence at Hastings, which means that the Conquest is not interpreted as divine punishment for English or Harold's sins, and Newburgh indicates that, in contrast, William was victim of divine punishment. However, there is one thing that authorises William's reign: the coronation. Only there does Newburgh recognise William's rule as divine will, and he explicitly writes how the ceremony made a king out of a tyrant. The coronation led William to become a better person, as the archbishop was able to make William make certain promises.

All in all, Newburgh does not give the change of power in 1066 much weight, and neither does he make much effort to legitimise the king. In contrast to the other authors, even God's plan for William's kingship remains unclear. Although God obviously condemned William for his violence, he still wanted him to be king. Newburgh's perception only becomes clear upon returning to the prologue. There, William of Newburgh describes the English history as a string of conquests. First, there were the Britons, then the Romans, and lastly the Angles and Saxons.[1098] In this sequence, the arrival of the Normans was just another change of peoples in England's history. William the Conqueror thus became a forefather of the current royal line. This becomes visible when Newburgh condemns Stephen for his missing ancestry but legitimises William's sons independent of their character. So, William I is first of all authorised by standing in a

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[1098] William: *HRA*, i.prologue, ed. by Howlett 1964, pp. 13f.

long line of conquerors the island has undergone. As Newburgh was mostly read in northern England in Cistercian houses, it is hardly possible to speak of a creation of legitimacy even if he develops new ideas. The same applies to Roger of Howden.

Considering the question how the legitimisation of William I changed during the twelfth-century, there is only one method that all six writers have in common: William ruled by divine right. God's decision became visible in William's victory in the Battle of Hastings (or his coronation). Consensual rule only plays a role in the texts of Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury. Although modern research concludes that this was fundamental for keeping one's power, the historiographers see it as secondary. However, concerning rituals and authority, medieval authors and modern researchers show greater agreement. All six authors tell about William's coronation. In some cases (Orderic Vitalis and Roger of Howden), it is even used as a decisive moment that foreshadows the future. Apart from Eadmer of Canterbury and Henry of Huntingdon, all the other authors use it in order to legitimise William's rule. It is first after the anointing that they call William king. The character, however, is even more secondary than consensual rule. William of Malmesbury is the only one who depicts the Conqueror as *rex iustus*. Orderic Vitalis seems to want to give a good impression of the king but finds no excuses for his anger or his deeds while he was angry. All the other authors draw an even more negative picture of William.

The establishment of a dynasty is an important point when it comes to the legitimisation of William. Whereas all authors agree on the legitimacy of William II's and Henry I's reign, the case is more difficult for William I, as he did not join his father upon becoming king. Instead, they need to find other means to create continuity. Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury go the easy way and copy the argument from the Norman panegyric by underlining the kinship between William and Edward the Confessor. Eadmer of Canterbury, in contrast, emphasises continuity by showing the parallels between the cooperation of Edgar and Dunstan and the one of William and Lanfranc. So, Eadmer stresses continuity via office and collaboration. Henry of Huntingdon and William of Newburgh create continuity via conquests. They show English history as a series of conquests; the Norman Conquest was at the time simply the most recent one. For Henry of Huntingdon, William needs no forefathers because Norman rule is transitory as well. According to William of Newburgh, William I needs no forefathers because he is the progenitor and founder of a royal line himself. He is given the role Hengist holds for Bede. The contemporary English history starts with him and so does Newburgh's book. Roger of Howden is the only one for whom continuity is secondary. He copies his

source that stylistically is quite reminiscent of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. These different approaches explain why William I is not attributed with famous forefathers, even if Dudo names some: Either he shared the famous forefathers of Edward, or he is one himself, or famous ancestors are not necessary. This stress on continuity is insofar very interesting as Vincent could observe that it was the other way round in charters. There, "the Norman Conquest [was] widely accepted as a legally significant *ceasura* in English history".[1099]

One thing that particularly becomes evident in the example of Henry of Huntingdon and also William of Newburgh is the temporary nature of the Norman Conquest for many twelfth-century people. We, who believe that the Norman Conquest was the last successful invasion of England and see it as a unique and outstanding event, often ignore the sequence of conquests that marked English history before 1066. As already evident in the introduction, the eleventh century alone was characterised by two successful conquests and many more or less transitional invasions. In that light, it is no surprise that also Norman rule was seen as transitional, as one conquest of many. So, although continental rulers liked to construct a long line of forefathers, this was not possible in the English case. Therefore, William's legitimacy did not so much depend on his relation to the Anglo-Saxon kings, but rather depended ultimately on God.

It is interesting how little the methods of legitimating William had changed during the twelfth century and how few contemporary ideas of authorising kingship influenced the writers. A radical change first occurred at the end of the twelfth century. There, continuity with Anglo-Saxon times becomes unimportant, and the legitimacy also loses significance. Whereas especially Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury apply nearly every method to authorise William's rule, this changes with time. Most of the historical works from the end of the twelfth century deal with contemporary events only. Also, William of Newburgh and Roger of Howden are not great exceptions, as their main emphasis lies on contemporary history as well. Roger of Howden does not bother to compose his own history of the events of 1066 but copies his source nearly word for word. Thus, he takes the point of view from others without much questioning. William the Conqueror had become history; his legitimacy was no longer of much importance. This might explain the negative image of him. The same is valid for William of Newburgh. For him, William is the founder of a new dynasty comparable to Hengist or Cerdic in Anglo-Saxon historical writing. A founding father is legitimated by a great conquest, and everything else is secondary. Therefore, the new ideas of administration and chivalry that surfaced during the reign of Henry II play no role for the legitimacy of

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[1099] Vincent 2015, p. 225.

William the Conqueror. Obviously, he was much too historicised that the application of new ideas was of importance. Furthermore, Henry II tried to establish the importance of the female line when it came to hereditary right. Henry reigned because of his mother's descent from Henry I, and, as his grand-mother came from the Anglo-Saxon line, it was probably more attractive to claim to rule by her right. This, in turn, reduced the importance of William I's legitimacy.

However, during the reign of Henry I, the situation was different. William I was Henry's father and his legitimacy was closely tied to that of his predecessors. Therefore—although he distanced himself from his father—his authorisation was still important and not yet history. Continuity to Anglo-Saxon England was of importance, which also revealed Henry's politics. This is reflected in historical writing as well. Although Henry's reference back to Edward the Confessor is not mentioned in the description of his reign, it plays an important role in the description of the reign of William I. Criticism about Edward is hidden, continuity to Anglo-Saxon England emphasised (either via kinship or via office), and William is presented as a better alternative to Edgar Ætheling. Eadmer of Canterbury does not fit wholly into this concept. This can be explained by his *causa scribendi*, which makes the archbishops of Canterbury more important than the kings of England.

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