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Anglian leadership in Northumbria, 547 A.D. through 1075 A.D.

Jean Anne Hayes

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, jhayes2@lsu.edu

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ANGLIAN LEADERSHIP IN NORTHUMBRIA, 547 A.D. THROUGH 1075 A.D.

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by

Jean Anne Hayes

B.A., Louisiana State University, 1994

M.A., Louisiana State University, 1997

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for Brent

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ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

- Adomnan* *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1961)
- AC* *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. Denis Murphy (Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1896); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*
- AS Chart* *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. and trans. A. J. Robertson (Cambridge: University Press, 1956)
- ASC* *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; Two of the Saxon Chronicles parallel, with supplementary extracts from the others*, ed. John Earle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865)
- Rositzke *The C-Text of the Old English Chronicles*, ed. Harry August Rositzke (Druck, Germany: H. Pöppinghouse O. H.-G., 1940)
- Bede, *HE* Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969)
- CGS* *Johannis de Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, ed. W. F. Skene, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, *Historians of Scotland* vols. 1 and 4, 1871-1872); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*
- CH* *Chronicle of Holyrood*, ed. C. W. Bouterwek, in *Monachi anonymi Scoti Chronicon Anglo-Scoticum* (Elberfeld, 1863); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*
- CM* *Chronica de Mailros*, ed. Joseph Stevenson, Bannatyne Club, no. 49 (Edinburgh, 1835); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*
- DB* *Domesday Book – Yorkshire*, ed. Margaret L. Faull and Marie Stinson (London: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., 1986)
- DEC* *Durham Episcopal Charters 1071-1152*, ed. H. S. Offler (Surtees Series, vol. 179, 1964/68)
- De Ob SymD* *De obsessione Dunelmi et de probitate Ucthredi comitis*, ed. Thomas Arnold in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London, *Rolls Series*, 1882), i, 215-220; translated by Christopher Morris in *Marriage and Murder in eleventh-century Northumbria: a study of 'De Obsessione Dunelmi'*, Borthwick Paper, no. 82, (University of York, 1992), 1-5.
- EHD*, vol. I *English Historical Documents, c.500-1042*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955)

- ESSH* *Early Sources of Scottish History AD 500 to 1286*, trans. Alan Orr Anderson, vol. 1-2 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1922)
- FlorW* *Chronicon ex Chronicis: ab initio mundi vsque ad annum Domini. 1118. deductum, auctore Florentio Wigorniensi monacho. Accessit etiam continuation vsque ad annum Christi. 1141. per quondam eiusdem cænoby eruditum. Nunquam antehac in lucem editum* (London: Thomas Dausonus, Ricardo Watkins, 1592)
- GP Malms* *Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London: Longman & Co., 1870)
- GRA Malms* William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regvm Anglorvm*, vol.1, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- HA* Henry of Huntingdon, *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon: Historia Anglorum, the History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- HB* *Nennius, British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. and trans. John Morris, History from the Sources Series (London: Phillimore, 1980); *Historia Brittonum, Genealogies*, ed. T. Mommsen, in M.G. H., *Auctores*, vol. 13 (1894); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*
- HE Oder* Oderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History of Odericus Vitalis*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)
- Stephenson, *HKE* *Symeon of Durham, A History of the Kings of England*, trans. J. Stephenson (Published in Church Historians of England, 1858; reprint, Felinfach, Wales: Llanerch Enterprises, 1987); *Historia Regum*, ed. Thomas Arnold in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London, Rolls Series, 1885), ii.
- LDE SymD* Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius, Hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, ed. and trans. David Rollason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); *Historiae Ecclesiae Dunhelmensis*, ed. Thomas Arnold in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London, Rolls Series, 1882), i.
- TA* *Tigernach Annals*, ed. W. Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, vol. 17 (1896); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*. For further reading on the Annals of Tigernach and the Clonmacnois redaction, see Kathryn Grabowski and David Dumville, *Chronicles and Annals of Medieval Ireland and Wales: the Clonmacnoise-group Texts* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1984) 109-226.
- Vita Æwardi* *Vita Æwardi Regis*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow (Edinburgh: Nelson's Medieval Texts, 1962)

ABSTRACT

The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Britain were founded in warfare beginning in the fifth century. These kingdoms developed alongside the native Romanized Britons, who attempted to reassert their authority in Britain in the wake of the Roman withdrawal. Northumbria, located north of the Humber River, the largest and most northerly of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms played a vital role in the politics of early medieval Britain. During the seventh century, the Northumbrian kings were recognized as the overkings of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, as well as the neighboring British and Pictish kingdoms. Over the course of several centuries, the leaders of Northumbria alternately engaged in military conflict and peace alliances with their most powerful northern neighbor, the Scots. After York fell to an invading Danish army in the ninth century, the lands of Northumberland were permanently divided along the Tees River valley into Yorkshire and Northumbria. The tenth and eleventh centuries witnessed power struggles between the earls of Northumbria and the 'English' kings from Wessex. While the other Anglo-Saxon ealdormen received their political appointments from the kings and worked alongside their monarchs, the earls of Northumbria alone maintained political autonomy. Northumbria was uniquely located between the two emerging powers of Scotland and Anglo-Saxon England, yet never succumbed to either. Dedication to local Northumbrian ealdormen as earls, who exhibited strong military leadership and surprising political savvy, guaranteed Northumbria self-rule and unchanged laws until the Norman Conquest. Not until William Rufus II gained the throne of England in 1087 did Northumbria begin participating as a political and military entity within greater England.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Bede (c. 672-735), a monk who spent a lifetime at the Jarrow and Wearmouth monastic complexes in County Durham, had access to early manuscripts, histories, and records of political activities in the north of Britain. The scholarly monk provided us with one of the earliest descriptions of his homeland, based both on cultural identity and geography: the Angles lived north of the Humber River.¹ He explained the political divisions within this region as the *duas prouincias* (two provinces) of Deira and Bernicia, which served as the centers of Anglian power within early Northumberland.² This is the earliest primary source to offer us a glimpse of the fledgling Anglian stronghold that grew into a great power broker in seventh-century England.

¹Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), i.15, 50 and ii.9, 162; [A]ll the Northumbrian race that is those people who dwell north of the river Humber. (*[T]ota Nordanhymbrorum progenies, id est illarum gentium quae ad boream Humbri fluminis inhabitant.*) At this time the Northumbrian race that is the English race which dwelt north of the river Humber. (*Quo tempore etiam gens Nordanhymbrorum, hoc est ea natio Anglorum quae ad aquilonalem Humbrae fluminis plagam habitabat.*) Colgrave and Mynors base their edition on the Moore manuscript. For a reference on this particular manuscript, please see footnote 8 below. See map of Anglo-Saxon Britain in *The Anglo-Saxons*, eds. James Campbell, Eric John, and Patrick Wormald (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 126, fig. 118.

²Bede, *HE*, iii.1, 212. The term Northumberland relates to the geographic region of Britain north of the Humber River in which Angles settled. From 547, the term Northumbria refers to the kingdom ruled by Anglian kings prior to the Danish conquest of York in 866. The kingdom of Northumbria encompassed varying amounts of territory over its history: always inclusive of land between the Tyne and Tweed Rivers, sometimes north to the Firth of Forth, often south to the Tees River, and at its height in the seventh century all lands between the Humber River and the Forth. Post 866 Northumbria included lands north of the Tees River to the fluctuating northern border with Scotland, between the Firth of Forth and the Tweed River. This region was governed by Angles primarily from the old royal family at Bamburgh, occasionally by other prominent local noble families. The lands south of the Tees River became the Yorkshire kingdom, also occasionally referenced as Viking or Danish Yorkshire. Dorothy Whitelock adopts the tenth century terminology created by Symeon of Durham which designated 'north Northumbria' as the Tees River north to the Firth of Forth and 'south Northumbria' as the Tees River south to the Humber River. Whitelock sees that entire area, whether ruled by Angles

This is a study of the power dynamics in England between the rulers of Northumbria and the kings south of the Humber River. The land divisions and government of Northumberland were permanently altered due to the Danish conquest of York in 866. From that moment Yorkshire and Northumbria solidified into two separate political entities, made even more pronounced by the influx in Yorkshire of Danish colonists, customs, and rulers. Sometime between 927 and 953, the title of king was replaced by that of *ealdorman* (alderman, nobleman of the highest rank) or earl (*eorl*, *ealdorman*, leader) in Northumbria as the English kings were recognized as the overlords of all England inclusive of Northumberland. The tenth and eleventh-century nobles who governed Northumbria were not always recognized as strong leaders. The evidence presented in this dissertation is intended to rectify that opinion. The Northumbrian earls maintained their local positions of authority, predominantly with the approval of the

or Danes, regardless of culture or political agenda, as one cohesive geographic entity; Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,' *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture, Presented to Bruce Dickens*, ed. P. Clemoes (London: Bowes & Bowes Publ., 1959), 77. William Kapelle and David Rollason describe the eleventh century population of Northumberland as three distinct groups: 'Yorkshire men' in Viking populated Yorkshire; 'men of St. Cuthbert' or 'men of Durham' between the Tees and Tyne Rivers; 'Northumbrians' between the Tees and Tweed Rivers. Kapelle argues that the English outside Northumberland generally applied the label 'northerners' to anyone from that northern area; William E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation, 1000-1135* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 11; David Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100: Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 211-213. Christopher J. Morris refers to the region ruled by earls from Bamburgh as 'Northumberland', that of the earls from York as 'Yorkshire', and the entire area combined as 'Northumbria'; Christopher Morris, *Marriage and Murder in eleventh-century Northumbria: a study of 'De Obsessione Dunelmi'*, Borthwick Paper, no. 82, (University of York, 1992), 15. Fletcher retains the original kingdom titles of 'Bernicia' and 'Deira' for the separate earldoms, and that of 'Northumbria' for the combination of the two; Richard Fletcher, *Bloodfeud: Murder and revenge in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 137. The contemporary sources utilize Old English and Latin terms which translate into 'Northumbria' as the sole way to identify any and all lands or earldoms north of the Humber River.

English kings from 927. In contrast, the Yorkshiremen accepted the direct leadership of the kings and their appointed earls. This example continued until 1075, with the earldom of Waltheof II (1072-1075). By highlighting the careers of the Northumbrian earls, the evidence will illuminate their predominantly successful endeavors at self-rule.

Northumberland populations throughout the Anglo-Saxon era witnessed Anglo-British border wars, local political strife and murder, violent Scottish raids, as well as numerous military alliances with neighbors. The period of ninth-century Viking settlement in Britain made Northumberland, as elsewhere, more violent and unstable. Under the Viking kings, York grew into a Viking stronghold, thereby setting it apart from Anglian Northumbria. Vikings and Northumbrians vied for ascendancy in the North. From the ninth to the eleventh-century alliances were formed between the Northumbrians, Yorkshire Vikings, Scots, and West Saxons. The Angles of Northumbria were continuously governed by descendants of their founding kings Ida (547-559/560) and Ælle (560-588), with few exceptions. These powerful Anglian kings and earls maintained their political identity and existence in the face of much opposition throughout these centuries.

The Anglian Northumbrian kings and earls traditionally were warriors whose ancestors ruled from the citadel at Bamburgh or the old Roman town of York. Modern scholars portray these northern rulers as exceedingly powerful kings through the reign of Oswiu (642-671), then as rulers who were controlled by the Danes inhabiting York from 867, as well as by the Saxon kings from 924. In actuality, the Northumbrian rulers were strong, independent leaders, who rebelled against outside governance. The local rulers of Anglian Northumbria maintained true authority over their region throughout the Viking period in Yorkshire, the eleventh-century Viking kings of England, and the Saxon kings who ruled as overkings for all Anglo-Saxon

England. Despite the impression given by the tenth and eleventh-century primary sources, southern kings left a Northumbrian in charge of the local population instead of assuming direct authority for the region. The only times a southern king set foot in Northumbria prior to 1066 were while passing through in order to engage in battle against the Scottish monarch.³ Post 1066, William I made incursions focused on breaking the rebellious spirit of the Northumbrians and to force them to acquiesce to his terms. I intend to show that the tenth and eleventh century Northumbrian earls were never merely ‘puppet rulers’ for the kings of England. Contrary to the impressions left by contemporary sources, no English king exerted immediate authority in Northumbria prior to the end of William I’s reign.

The North historically enjoyed a great geographic separation from the primary royal Saxon towns of Winchester in Wessex, Nottingham in Mercia, as well as Edward II’s beloved Westminster in East Anglia. Edward II the Confessor (1042-January 1066) and William I the Conqueror (December 1066-1087) appointed earls from the south in an attempt to spread royal authority into Northumbria. The Viking nobles of York tended to accept assigned earls with political grace in the tenth and eleventh centuries. For much of that same period, the English kings allowed strong, loyal Northumbrians to rule as earl, as the Northumbrian population despised leaders from outside their region. The unsuccessful terms of royal appointees to the Northumbrian earldom in the eleventh century tell much about the resilience and defiance of the Northumbrians to direct southern oversight.

Modern historians of Northumberland owe much debt to the scholars of the past century. Two of the most influential scholars were Hector Munro Chadwick and Frank Merry Stenton,

³ASC-E, 934 and 937, Æthelstan into Scotland; ASC-E, 944, Edmund into Yorkshire only; ASC-D, 945, Edmund into Strathclyde; ASC-E, 1000, Æthelred II into Cumberland only; ASC-E, 1031, Knútr (Cnut) into Scotland.

who both produced critical works on the political institutions and the social structure of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.⁴ Following a similar path, Dorothy Whitelock published a much used and influential article on Anglo-Saxon political authority in Northumbria. She also provided succinct translations of Old English documents including the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the first volume of the collection *English Historical Documents*, which are widely trusted and referenced by Anglo-Saxon scholars.⁵

As the century unfolded, some scholars began to concentrate more on specific geographic locations, thereby producing regional histories. Peter Hunter Blair, a Northumbrian born scholar, studied late Roman and Anglo-Saxon Northumbria under Professors Chadwick and Whitelock. His work provided a strong foundation on which future Northumbrian scholars have built. Blair's publications offer valuable insights into critical primary sources for Northumbrian history. Through mostly comparative work, Blair drew three major conclusions which still influence research in this area today. First, the *Historia Brittonum*, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *De Excidio et Conquesta Britanniae* by Gildas should be utilized in combination, in order to best grapple with the events from the sixth to the eighth centuries. Read together alongside Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, these sources aided Blair in sorting out some of the geography and political origins for early Northumbria.⁶ Second, for the ninth-century relations between

⁴Their pivotal works are: Hector Munro Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1905); Frank Merry Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1943).

⁵Whitelock, 'Dealings,' 71-88.

⁶Peter Hunter Blair, 'The Origins of Northumbria,' *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, XXV (Newcastle: The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1947), 1-51; Blair, 'The Northumbrians and their Southern Frontier,' *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, XXVI (Newcastle: The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1948), 98-126; Blair, 'The Boundary between Bernicia and Deira,' *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, XXVII (Newcastle: The Society

Northumbria and early Scotland, Blair entered new territory by disregarding the *Three Fragments* of Irish Annals in favor of the record by Symeon of Durham in the *Historia Regum*.⁷ Third, Blair's work on Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* paved the way for succeeding scholars to understand that source within the context of Northumbria, the homeland and venue for Bede. Most important, Blair focused on a particular manuscript created in Northumbria, MS. Kk.5.16 Cambridge University Library, commonly known as the Moore Manuscript, which contains a series of chronological entries for the dates immediately following Bede's death.⁸

James Campbell added to the general understanding of Northumbria through his specialties: Anglo-Saxon civilization and the idea of the Anglo-Saxon state.⁹ David Dumville delved into the realm of Anglo-Saxon kingship and constitutional history, offering insight into the responsibilities and roles of Anglo-Saxon rulers. More recently Nicholas Higham and David Rollason made great use of archaeological evidence in their studies of Northumbrian civilization

of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1949), 46-59; Blair, 'The Bernicians and their Northern Frontier,' *Studies in Early British History*, ed. N. K. Chadwick (Cambridge: The University Press, 1959), 137-172; reprinted in Peter Hunter Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria*, eds. Michael Lapidge and Pauline Hunter Blair (London: Variorum Reprints, 1984), chapters III, IV, V, VIII respectively.

⁷Blair, *Viking III* (Oslo: Museum of National Antiquities, Viking Ship Museum, 1939); reprinted in Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria*, chapter I.

⁸Blair, 'The Moore Memoranda on Northumbrian History,' *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe*, H. M. Chadwick Memorial Studies, eds. Sir Cyril Fox and Bruce Dickins (Cambridge: The University Press, 1950); reprinted in Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria*, chapter VI.

⁹James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000); *The Anglo-Saxons*, eds. Patrick Wormald and Eric John (London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1982; reprinted Penguin Books, 1991).

and politics.¹⁰ This combination of archaeology and textual sources marks a great shift in research ability and quality, which more historians are embracing today.

Primary sources give glimpses into northern Britain throughout the early medieval period, but sometimes differ in their accounts. Textual evidence from Anglo-Saxon, Irish, British and Norman chroniclers are utilized in this dissertation. The primary Northumbrian texts featured in this study include Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Symeon of Durham's *On the Origins and Progress of this the Church of Durham* and *A History of the Kings of England*. *The History of the Britons* formerly attributed to Nennius and the *Annales Cambriae* are British sources with Northumbrian information that sometimes differ from Bede, and therefore assist in providing a fuller picture of the North. The use of these annals must be supplemented from other sources, as none of the texts cover the entire Anglo-Saxon period, nor do all agree with each other. Some are not even considered completely credible by all scholars. Therefore, other source types must not be ignored: archaeological, manuscript, architectural, stone sculpture, and place-name.

Northumbria should be understood as a separate political entity located between early medieval Scotland and southern England. Modern Scotland and England share a recognized border line that runs through territory once controlled by the kings and earls of Northumberland. Medieval Northumberland was born through the battle acquisitions of an invading and occupying continental Anglian force. It survived as a cushion-zone, or border area, between the rising powers of Wessex and Scotland. Northumberland frequently defended itself against invasions

¹⁰Nicholas Higham, *The Northern Counties to AD 1000* (Essex: Longman Group Limited, 1986); *The Kingdom of Northumbria: AD 350-1100* (Dover, NH, 1993); *An English Empire: Bede and the Early Anglo-Saxon kings* (Manchester: The University Press, 1995); *The Death of Anglo-Saxon England* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1997; reprint, 2000); Rollason, *Northumbria*.

from both these powerful neighbors, as well as made military alliances with both in search of peace. Despite the eventual melting of its northern portion into Scotland and several attempts by English kings to claim the rest as part of their homogenous southern kingdom, Northumbria maintained a separate identity and authority in Britain throughout the eleventh century. Ultimately the region represented an independent power between the regions over which the English and Scottish kings held definite authority, leaving the earls of Northumbria extremely powerful men.

Northumbria was a large portion of Britain, ruled by its own earls, and therefore outside the direct influence of the English kings. The great distances between Northumbria and the Saxon power centers of Winchester and London proved a difficulty for the kings who desired direct control over that northern region. Therefore one purpose of this dissertation is to investigate who controlled the region and propose an argument for the continued authority of the Northumbrian leaders past 927 when the kings of Wessex claimed dominance over the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

During the political development of Anglian Northumberland, the Christian faith spread into the lives of the pagan Angles. Several factors were influential in this occurrence: the Irish monastery at Iona, which founded a daughter monastery at Lindisfarne in Bernicia in 635; Bishop Paulinus' baptism of King Edwin of Northumbria; the founding of the archbishopric of York; the exile of some Northumbrian *athelings* (noblemen of royal blood, usually the son or grandson of a former king) to Iona; the founding of the twin monasteries of Wearmouth in 674 and Jarrow in 681¹¹; the re-emergence of the Lindisfarne community at Durham in 995. After

¹¹Roy Midmer, *English Mediaeval Monasteries, 1066-1540: A Summary* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1979), 177 (Jarrow), 222 (Wearmouth).

995, Durham Cathedral grew into an Anglian religious and political stronghold in the northern marches, due to the presence of the relics of St. Cuthbert. The authority of Durham's bishops fell across a large region that ranged primarily from the Tees River north to the Tyne River, but also to various manor holdings as far-reaching as lower Scotland and Lancashire. As landlords over such vast amounts of territory, the bishops played vital roles in the judicial affairs of numerous Northumbrians.¹² On occasion the bishops even assisted their earls and the Saxon kings with affairs of state, such as serving as escorts for Scottish monarchs traveling south to convene with English kings.¹³

Scottish leaders made forays into Northumbria from time to time. The argument has been made that these trips were merely raids aimed at showing the military prowess of a new Scottish warrior king. Following the establishment of the Lindisfarne community on the Wear River and the subsequent growth of Durham as a power center in the tenth century, the site was raided on more than one occasion by Scottish kings and their heirs to the throne. I intend to show these attacks not strictly as plunder raids, but occasionally as attempts at Scottish colonization deep within Northumbria, specifically aimed at acquiring Durham.

The chapter arrangement and content information is presented in chronological form beginning with the late Roman occupation of Northumberland. Chapter two explains the geography of the region, the peoples and kingdoms that emerged following the Roman

¹²See Margaret Bonney, *Lordship and the urban community: Durham and its overlords, 1250-1540* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1990). This work explores the secular lordships of the Durham bishops and the religious community.

¹³Bishop Æthelwine assisted Earl Tostig in this capacity in 1061; *Vita Ædwardi Regis*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow (Edinburgh: Nelson's Medieval Texts, 1962), 43; Stephenson, *HKE*, 1059, 127.

withdrawal, and regional borders that shaped the beginning stages of the Anglian kingdoms alongside those of their British and Pictish neighbors. The development of the Lindisfarne community, its subsequent migrations, and the political ties of that religious community to the leaders of Northumbria are also discussed. Chapter three focuses on the military and political challenges in Northumberland during the ninth and early tenth centuries. The Dál Riada *Scoti* moved from the western Argyll region eastward conquering and absorbing the Pict kingdoms. This placed the Scots on the northern border of Northumbria and positioned them for military incursions across that border. In the mid-ninth century Northumberland experienced the invasion and settlement of Danish *wicinga* (pirates, Vikings) in York. They subsequently spread to all of Yorkshire and divided Northumberland into two distinct regions. About mid-tenth century, the leaders of Northumbria and Yorkshire ceased being titled kings and instead ruled as earls under the English monarchs. Chapter four follows the activities of the earls of Northumbria on the regional and supra-regional level until the assassination of Waltheof II in 1075. Chapter five provides an overview of the evidence presented, which expresses the state of regional authority held by the Northumbrian earls, instead of the kings. Further research will be introduced.

Throughout this paper, proper names and place names appear in several languages. Angle and Saxon proper names are in Old English as found in the succession and genealogic lists compiled by C. R. Cheney, augmented occasionally by William G. Searle.¹⁴ Gaelic proper names are in Middle Irish form as used by Benjamin T. Hudson, who follows M. A. O'Brien,

¹⁴ *A Handbook of Dates for students of British History*, ed. C. R. Cheney, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks no. 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); William G. Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles: The Succession of the Bishops and the Pedigrees of the Kings and Nobles* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1899).

with modern English spelling glossed where necessary for clarity.¹⁵ Danish and Norse¹⁶ names are in the vernacular and glossed in English. British and Pictish names are in modern English. Where possible Angle, Saxon, Scottish and British place names are in modern English, or glossed as such. The dates for rulers of Northumberland and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms are pulled from the collection of dates compiled by Cheney, unless otherwise noted. Dates for Scottish kings come from Benjamin Hudson and Archibald Duncan.¹⁷ All other dates for rulers and events are noted individually.

¹⁵Benjamin T. Hudson, *Kings of Celtic Scotland* (London: Greenwood Press, 1994); M. A. O'Brien, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1962; reprint 1976).

¹⁶*English and Norse Documents: Relating to the reign of Ethelred the unready*, ed. and trans. Margaret Ashdown (Cambridge: The University Press, 1930).

¹⁷A. A. A. Duncan, *The Kingship of the Scots, 842-1292* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 2002).

CHAPTER 2

POST-ROMAN NORTHUMBERLAND: EMERGING KINGDOMS

In order to study the extent of the authority wielded by the rulers of Northumbria, one must understand the geography and politics of northern Britain. It is, therefore, imperative to have some grasp of the geographical regions of medieval Northumberland. The opening of this chapter outlines the early geography of the region during the post-Roman era.¹⁸ Old British tribal kingdoms rose anew alongside the Anglian new-comers to Northumberland in the fourth and fifth centuries. The chapter then follows the development of the Anglian kingdoms and their relationships with the neighboring kingdoms. British rivalry with the Picts to their north and then with the Angles who settled amidst the British shaped the territories of the fifth and sixth century northern kingdoms. By the eighth century Northumberland was dominated by a line of Anglian kings who oversaw alliances with the Angle and Saxon kings south of the Humber River. Bede used the Latin term *imperium*, which is *bretwalda* in Old English, to describe the vast authority of these powerful kings.¹⁹ The political structure of the Anglian kingdoms will be briefly introduced. Changes that occurred over time to the boundaries of Northumbria due to border wars will unfold throughout the following chapters.

¹⁸All scholars of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria must address political and territorial changes to Northumberland. Depending on the time period in question and the political situation at hand, as well as the preference of certain terms by the scholars, the descriptive terminology for the region varies. This tends to cause confusion among novices. Some leaders in this field of study whose works are featured in this dissertation include: Whitelock, 'Dealings,' 70-87; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*; A. P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men – Scotland AD 80-1000* (London, 1984); Higham, *Northern Counties*; Rollason, *Northumbria*. I intend to present my own definitions of the terminology for the regions of Northumberland covered in this dissertation, which have developed as a result of wide reading from many other scholars. See also Chapter 1, fn. 2 above.

¹⁹Bede, *HE*, ii.5, 148. See also page 37, fn. 103 below.

Northumberland can be variously defined over its long history in terms of political authority, as well as natural and military boundaries. According to Bede, beginning sometime between the winter of 406 and 410, and continuing throughout the fifth century, numerous fleets of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes landed in Britain.²⁰ These warrior bands forayed inland and ultimately warred with the native British for control of land on which to settle. Eventually Angles settled along the eastern coastline in what became East Anglia and Mercia, as well as north of the Humber River, Saxons created the southern kingdoms of Wessex, Sussex, and Essex, while Jutes were the probable founders of the southeastern kingdom of Kent.²¹

Anglian kingdoms were forged in Northumberland during the sixth century.²² These kingdoms emerged in a border region which had recently survived the evacuation of Roman legions and government. The British (Welsh) kingdoms reclaimed control of Britain from the Romans, and along with the northern Pict kingdoms, were the local authorities with whom the Angles first clashed.²³ The Picts were untouched by Roman imperialism, having never been

²⁰Bede, *HE*, i.12, 42. See also Barbara Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Seaby, 1990), 1-4; David Dumville, "Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend," *History*, N.S. 62 (1977): 173-192; Walter Pohl, "Ethnic Names and Identities in the British Isles: A Comparative Perspective," in *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. J. Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), 14; Ian Wood, "Before and After the Migration," in *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. J. Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), 41-46. Based on these more recent studies, it is apparent that Bede's history of such early events does not include all the Germanic and Scandinavian peoples who availed themselves of the opportunity to foray into Britain, i.e. Frisians, possibly Swedes.

²¹See map of the kingdoms and the principal sites and towns of southern Britain, c. 600 in Campbell, *Anglo-Saxons*, 52, fig. 50.

²²See discussion below beginning on page 19 for Angles entering Northumberland.

²³For a recent debate on the cultural ethnicity of the Picts, see Katherine Forsyth, *Language in Pictland: The Case Against Non-Indo-European Pictish* (Utrecht: Keltische Draak, 1997).

conquered by their legions.²⁴ The Britons were Romanized Christian Celts, native to Britain and survivors of the Roman imperial period. The Scots of Dál Riada also later posed a threat to the Anglian kingdoms, following their ninth-century absorption of the southern Pictish kingdoms north of the Firth of Forth. The *Scoti* were Christian Celts whose kings and followers migrated from the Dál Riada region of southeastern Ireland. The Scots and Britons followed the Celtic Church rites and maintained close ties to Iona and the holy men there.

From the sixth century onwards the Britons, Picts, and Scots formed alternating alliances against the Angles of Northumberland and with them against outside threats, such as Wessex, Norway, and Denmark. The Saxon kings from Wessex repeatedly attempted to control the northern English lands, but mostly failed miserably. During the ninth and tenth centuries Danish and Norwegian Vikings alternately invaded and even successfully implanted their leadership and culture onto York. In the late eleventh-century Norman era, the new southern kings attempted to subjugate the northern area as a last English frontier and to finally annex Northumberland with the south. The history of the domination of Northumberland coincides with the history of a deeply traditional Anglian people who managed to survive with a distinct culture and showed a strength and spirit to all who meant to conquer them.

Northumbrian scholars all wrestle with the geography, which evolved and changed throughout the pre-Roman, Roman, and post-Roman periods. Scholars usually define the

²⁴Seven Pict kingdoms: Fib (Fife), Fortriu (Strathern and Mentieth), [Ath]Fotla (Atholl), Circenn (Angus and the Mearns), Ce (Marr and Buchan), Fidach (Banff with Moray and Easter Ross), Catt (Sutherland and Caithness); Hudson, *Kings*, 9. Two other British kingdoms, Rheged and Elmet, existed farther south of the Solway-Firth line, in Cumbria and York respectively. See map of the kingdoms of the Britons, Picts, and Dál Riada Scots in Archibald A. M. Duncan, *The Kingship of the Scots, 842-1292: Succession and Independence* (Edinburgh University Press, 2002), vii. For a thorough look at the early Pictish kings and kingdoms, see Marjorie Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1980). Refer to Forsyth, *Language in Pictland*, for a study on the non-Celtic ethnicity of the Picts.

various areas within early Northumberland using two different methods: frontier zones (the transition from one kingdom to the next was a graded continuum rather than the sudden change which is implied by a line) or linear frontiers (actual border lines, often punctuated by military structures or the landscape). In *The Anglo-Saxons*, James Campbell deals with the early Roman military constructions in Britain.²⁵ Campbell sees Offa's Dyke and Hadrian's Wall as impenetrable structures at the borders of Roman occupied Britain.²⁶ Campbell's work illustrates the argument for linear frontiers. For Northumberland, Campbell traces the Roman military at Hadrian's Wall²⁷ and finds that large permanent reductions in force strength along the wall began under Consul Magnus Maximus, commander of the Roman legions based out of York, in 383. The departure of the legions continued into the early fifth century. By 407 only a remnant of the original Roman military remained stationed on the wall.²⁸ Campbell remarks on the impressiveness of Hadrian's Wall as a fortified structure, the frequent repairs and maintenance made to it, as well as the large numbers garrisoned at it for nearly three hundred years. Most importantly, Campbell believes the wall existed to protect Roman Britain from the Picts who lived north of the Solway Firth-Firth of Forth line by preventing access from north of the wall into the southern Roman-held lands. Britons lived in the region between the Picts and the Wall,

²⁵Campbell, *Anglo-Saxons*, 13-17.

²⁶See map of the Roman Britain Frontier in Smyth, *Warlords*, fig. 1 and the map in Campbell, *Anglo-Saxons*, 126, fig. 118.

²⁷Hadrian's Wall was built in the years 122-136 by then General Hadrian. The wall cut across Britain from Wallsend, by the Tyne, to Bowness-on-Solway and covered 73 ½ English miles (80 Roman miles). The wall was built of stone, with a ditch along its northern side, and punctuated along its length by mile castles and watch towers. From 205-208 an extensive maintenance program on the wall was overseen by Emperor Severus; Bede, *HE*, i.5, fn.1, 25-26.

²⁸Campbell, *Anglo-Saxons*, 18.

but apparently their kings recognized the authority of Rome, and were also not friendly with the Picts.²⁹ The Picts never accepted Roman rule and, as the enemy of Rome, engaged the frontier legions in pitched border battles.

Alfred Smyth proposes that the Roman fortifications of northern Britain served several purposes for the army. He suggests that Celtic society in the British kingdoms did not die with the occupation by Rome, as the garrisoned forts across the landscape prove.³⁰ From fortifications and watch towers spread around the old tribal kingdom borders and along the newly built roads, the Romans were able to oversee their occupied zone. Smyth believes the Romans used their forts, towers and Hadrian's Wall to prevent outsiders from entering Roman-held land, to block passageways and therefore communications across the Pennine Foothills (a mountain range that runs centrally north to south), to watch the travel patterns of the natives, and to provide protection to the Roman mining centers.³¹ Roman engineers laid a network of roads across northern Britain which connected the scattered forts, making quick communication between garrisoned posts possible.³² The Pennines and Cheviots (another central mountain range north of the Pennine Foothills) also served as natural obstacles to east-west travel, with

²⁹Hadrian's Wall divided the pre-Roman Brigantine (British) kingdom into north and south sections as it ran across the Vale of Eden (Cumbria). The British living on the northern side of the Wall were caught between the Romans and Picts. See Higham, *Northern Counties*, 253.

³⁰Smyth, *Warlords*, 3. Smyth names Wales, Cornwall, Cumbria, Lancashire, and Elmet (Leeds) as places the Celtic culture survived Roman occupation.

³¹Smyth, *Warlords*, 5-8. See map of northern geographical names in Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 6.

³²For roads and sites in northern Roman Britain, see map of Northumbria in Rollason, *Northumbria*, xxvii and also the map in Smyth, *Warlords*, fig. 1.

only two easily fordable openings at the Tyne Gap and the Liddesdale-Teviotdale valley.³³

Hadrian's Wall runs through the Tyne Gap, Smyth believes purposefully, in order to staunch the unregulated flow of natives north to south.³⁴ While addressing a broader range of functions for the Roman garrisons, Smyth agrees with Campbell that they were intended to protect the Romans from outside invasions, at the same time proposing that there was a need for protection from the native tribes south of Hadrian's Wall as well.

David Rollason argues that the kingdoms of northern Britain were defined and maintained through military aggression and as such were in a continuous state of flux indefinable by a line. Rollason calls instead for the use of frontier zones, i.e. march areas, to describe the boundaries between the kingdoms in the North.³⁵ He uses archaeological evidence for Offa's Dyke and Hadrian's Wall to explain early frontier zones.³⁶ Offa's Dyke is an earthen wall built as a north-south partition between an early British kingdom and Mercia.³⁷ The evidence reveals Anglo-Saxon style settlements west of the wall, on the British side, and permeable gaps intermittently along its length. Hadrian's Wall arguably functioned as a fortified doorway between the Pict and British kingdoms to its north and Romanized Britain to its south. The

³³See map in Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 6.

³⁴Smyth, *Warlords*, 16-17.

³⁵Rollason, *Northumbria*, 20-23.

³⁶For Offa's Dyke, Rollason cites Cyril Fox, *Offa's Dyke: A Field Survey of the Western Frontier-works of Mercia in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries AD* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955) and *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes, et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 342-343. For Hadrian's Wall, Rollason relies on Hugh Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (London: Batsford, 1996), 111-113 and David J. Breeze and Brian Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall*, 4th ed. (London: Penguin, 2000), 39-43.

oversized gates located within each mile castle along the wall have been interpreted as portals through which passage was allowed, even regulated, and therefore represent another example of intermingling across man-made linear barriers. Based on these archaeological findings, Rollason's argument for frontier zones frequented by the peoples living on either side of a constructed partition seems valid. As such this dissertation accepts the existence of frontier zones, rather than the simple demarcation of linear frontiers for territorial boundaries.

There were many kingdoms and therefore frontier zones within post-Roman northern Britain, most without grand structures, such as Hadrian's Wall, to mark their fluctuating boundaries.³⁸ The British kingdom of Catraeth included the lands south of the Wear River to Cleveland just at the edge of the North York Moors and westward to the eastern edge of the Pennine foothills.³⁹ The region along the Ayre River, around modern day Leeds, might have been a small British kingdom called Elmet (*Elfed*). Sources make rare mention of such a place or of kings over the area.⁴⁰ Some place-names in the region retain the name Elmet (*Elfed*), such

³⁷Offa's Dyke was built at the instigation of the Mercian king Offa (757-796). See map of Offa's Dyke in Campbell, *Anglo-Saxons*, 120.

³⁸Higham, *Northern Counties*, 252-257.

³⁹Blair cites two Welsh scholars, Kenneth Jackson and I. Williams, who conclude that Catraeth can be identified with Catterick; Blair, 'Bernicians and their Northern Frontier,' 154, fn. 1. Catterick, located by the northern end of the Swale River, definitely fell within the boundaries of the British kingdom in question, whether all scholars agree to the British name of the kingdom as *Catraeth* or another lost name. For northern British and Anglian kingdoms in post-Roman Britain, see map in Higham, *Northern Counties*, 252, fig. 6.2.

⁴⁰During the reign of King Edwin, a member of his royal family in Deira, Hereric, was killed in Elmet while at the British royal court, presumably on an ambassadorial mission; *Nennius, British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. and trans. John Morris, History from the Sources Series (London: Phillimore, 1980), passage 63, page 78. Hereric was the father of Hilda, who became famous during the reign of King Oswiu by working with Bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne to found the abbey of Whitby. For more information regarding Hilda, see page 57

as Tanshelf, which gives the impression that the kingdom in fact existed, even if only for a short time.⁴¹ Rheged, a British kingdom west of the Pennines, covered the area from the plain north of the Solway Firth south to the Vale of Eden. It is possible that Rheged extended as far south as Lonsdale (including the Lake District) at some point, therefore including southern Cumbria within its territory. The Strathclyde Britons controlled the lands north of the Plain of Solway along the western coast of Britain. Their lands spread eastward from their center at Dumbarton Rock (*Ail Cluathe*), on the west coast across from modern Edinburgh, toward a shared border with Gododdin. The British tribe called the Votadini by the Romans, reclaimed independence and governed their kingdom of Gododdin, located along the east coast of Britain. The northern Gododdin border is generally accepted as the Firth of Forth, to the north of which resided the southern Picts. Higham intimates that the region between the Gododdin and Catraeth kingdoms most likely belonged to another British tribe, with a royal center at *Din Guoaroi* and encompassing the region of *Brynaich*.⁴² Smyth and Rollason claim that Gododdin stretched south to the Rivers Wear or Tees, with Edinburgh (*Din Eidyn*) as either their main stronghold or one of their royal fortresses.⁴³ Dumville relies on Kenneth Jackson, who believes the Gododdin occupied all lands east of the foothills from the Tees River to the Firth of Forth, including the region of Manau on the head of the Forth.⁴⁴ If this is true, then the Gododdin kingdom would

below. Edwin reportedly took the kingdom of Elmet from its British king Ceretic and absorbed it into Anglian Northumbria; Bede, *HE*, iv. 23, 404-414.

⁴¹For an in depth discussion of historical Elmet, see Rollason, '*Northumbria*,' 85-87.

⁴²Higham, *Northern Counties*, 253.

⁴³Smyth, *Warlords*, 19-21; Rollason, *Northumbria*, 88-89.

⁴⁴David Dumville, 'The origins of Northumbria: some aspects of the British background,' in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. Steven Bassett (Leicester University Press, 1989),

have also encompassed the royal estate of *Din Guoaroi*, as well as the area of *Brynaich*. These kingdoms were conquered by the Angles in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries and transformed into two Anglian Northumbrian kingdoms.

By the late fourth century the Romans began withdrawing from Britain. Sometime prior to or during the consulship of Magnus Maximus, the legions had abandoned the wooden Antonine wall⁴⁵ in favor of the larger stone wall of Hadrian. Also around this time, Germanic Anglian warriors invaded the plain of York. The Roman fort at York had served as an important intermediary military post connecting the northern Wall with southern forts and towns, such as Bath. Britons began staging rebellions against the Romans, as the Angles cut off the Roman's supply line from south of York, making it virtually impossible for the Roman forces to maintain their northernmost posts in Britain.⁴⁶ In the early fifth century the Roman occupation of northern Britain was ending and they abandoned all forts along the Cheviot Hill range. The power vacuum created by the end of Roman occupation caused the British kingdoms in Northumberland to form coalitions in order to defend against invasions from northern Picts and eastern Irish invaders, as well as the Angles.

At this point in the history of this region, varying accounts make it difficult to establish the actual end of Roman domination and the beginning of the Anglian kingdoms in Northumberland. Bede recorded that in 449 a British king named Vortigern paid Germanic warriors from the continent to assist the British in repelling attacks from the Picts and Irish.⁴⁷

217; Kenneth H. Jackson, *The Gododdin: The Oldest Scottish Poem* (Edinburgh: the University Press, 1969; reprint, 1978), 69-75.

⁴⁵Antoninus Pius had this wall built c. 143 from Firth of Clyde to Firth of Forth.

⁴⁶Smyth, *Warlords*, 19.

At that time the race of the Angles or Saxons, invited in advance by a king, came to Britain in three warships and by command of the king were granted a place of settlement in the eastern part of the island, ostensibly to fight on behalf of the country, but their real intention was to conquer it. First they fought against the enemy who attacked from the north and the Saxons won the victory. A report of this as well as of the fertility of the island and the slackness of the Britons reached their homes and at once a much larger fleet was sent over with a stronger band of warriors; this, added to the contingent already there, made an invincible army. The newcomers received from the Britons a grant of land in their midst on condition that they fought against their foes for the peace and safety of the country, and for this the soldiers were also to receive pay.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Gildas, whom Bede quotes from here, merely gave the description *superbus tyrannus* when referring to the British leader who invited the Germanic warriors to Britain. Bede added the name Vortigern in his own passage. Nicholas Higham claims that *vortigern* is British for *superbus tyrannus*; *King Arthur: myth-making and history* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 121.

⁴⁸*Tunc Anglorum siue Saxonum gens, inuitata a rege praefato, Britanniam tribus longis nauibus aduehitur et in orientali parte insulae iubente eodem rege locum manendi, quasi pro patria pugnatura, re autem uera hanc expugnatura suscepit. Inito ergo certamine cum hostibus, qui ab aquiline ad aciem uenerant, uictoriam sumserunt Saxones. Quod ubi domi nuntiatum est, simul et insulae fertilitas ac segnitia Brettonum, mittitur confestim illo classis prolixior, armorum ferens manum fortiolem, quae praemissae adiuncta cohorti inuincibilem fecit exercitum. Susceperunt ergo qui aduenerant, donantibus Brittanis, locum habitationis inter eos, ea condicione ut hi pro patriae pace et salute contra aduersarios militarent, illi militantibus debita stipendia conferrent;* Bede, *HE*, i.15, 50. The *Historia Brittonum* records a very different account of the Germans moving to northern Britain. Driven from exile on the continent, three *ciulae* (keels) which carried the war band leaders Hengist and Horsa were welcomed by Vortigern, the ruler in Britain, and given land to live on called Ruoihm or Thanet; *HB*, passage 31. Then a second wave of Germans joined Hengist in Britain and Vortigern gave them the rule of Kent in exchange for Hengist's daughter in marriage. At Hengist's instigation, Vortigern allowed forty *ciulae* to embark from Kent toward the north to engage the Picts in battle alongside the British. After devastating the Orkney Islands, lands past the *Frenessicum* Sea around the northern Wall *Guaul* were handed over to the Germanic warriors, led by Oetha and Ebissa, Hengist's son and nephew; *HB*, passages 37-38. Blair discounts the *HB* version of Anglian settlement in Northumberland, in favor of those by Gildas and Bede. He does however allow that the account might be a corrupted form of another traditional event in which some Angles may have settled in northern Britain along the Pictish borders as Hengist moved into Kent c. 449. David Dumville also disregards this same evidence in *HB*, claiming that it is a ninth-century gloss added in, unless its source can be verified; Dumville, 'Origins of Northumbria,' 214-215. The *HB* also provides a genealogy of the Angles who occupied *Din Guaroai*, beginning with Ida, and which Higham accepts as correct; Higham, *Northern Counties*, 257.

Germanic warriors fought in warbands for a designated leader, who in turn shared captured and stolen goods with his warband, usually awarding the bravest with arm rings and larger portions of the spoils. Typically warriors entered the warbands of successful leaders, causing some leaders to gain notoriety and even political strength. As a result, in Britain the warband leaders with the greatest military backing could easily make bids for control over any lands obtained by the warband. We do not know for certain which two pieces of land Vortigern supposedly awarded to the Angles, but the trend has been to assume that they were the lands which became the kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira.⁴⁹ Therefore, the Anglian kings who rose to power in Northumberland most likely were the leaders of the greatest warriors and the lands received from the British king provided them all new land on which to settle.

Blair claims that this period of transition from Roman dominance to British successor kingdoms was in fact the British heroic age.⁵⁰ Roman York was the center of military operations in Britain, the strongest fortress, and a Roman-style colony. It also served as the home of the Roman leader in Britain, referred to as a Caesar until Magnus Maximus, commander at York, in the fourth century who instead preferred the title of Consul. After living and working side by side with the Romans, especially in the region of York, British warriors were well trained and equipped to hold their own against Pictish and Irish invasions. The fact that they remained in control of their kingdoms, even as they sought to employ the Angles, attests to British military ability. Blair therefore accepts the textual evidence of Bede, Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum*

⁴⁹Bede's interchangeable use of the terms Angles and Saxons in this passage should be read as Angles throughout; Bede, *HE*, i.15, 48-50. He clears this up himself in the next passage of his work, by stating that the Germans who invaded Northumberland derived from the country of the Angles, located between that of the Jutes (part of modern Denmark) and the Saxons (on the continent).

⁵⁰Blair, 'Origins of Northumbria,' 41-45.

about a British king hiring Germanic ‘auxiliary’ warriors to assist the British defenses against Pictish invasions. The British provided these German military troops with provisions as well as land for settlement. This strategy was clearly learned from the Romans at York. The Roman legions regularly engaged mercenaries on the continent from the ‘federated nations’, those Germanic tribal kingdoms whose warriors fought alongside the legions as contracted *fœderati* soldiers.

Smyth finds that throughout the fifth century the skeletal Roman forces still at York worked with the Angles by hiring them as *soldati* (warriors who worked for *sold*, mercenary pay). He also believes this initial Anglian force was later joined in the early sixth century by fellow Angles from across the North Sea. Smyth suggests this combined group struck out on its own to found the Anglian kingdom of Deira, presumably with the military elite assuming the roles of an aristocracy. Under a separate Anglian aristocracy, the British fortress at *Din Guoaroi* was overtaken, renamed *Bebban burh* (Bamburgh), and became the royal center of a second Anglian kingdom.⁵¹ This account places two leading Anglian warbands fearlessly carving out new homes amongst the British.

Dumville seconds this analysis concerning the Angles in the region of York, but not Smyth’s dates. Accepting the textual evidence of Gildas and the archaeological finds by Leslie Alcock, Dumville believes that old Roman military centers from York to Catterick were controlled by Anglian warbands sometime in the second half of the fifth century.⁵² No one

⁵¹The Anglian royal family ruled from this coastal castle, whose name derives from *Bebban burh* (fortress of Bebba). Bebba might be an ancestor of Ida or the wife of one of Ida’s successors, possibly Æthelfrith. For more on this debate, see Blair, ‘Bernicians and their Northern Frontier,’ 147-149. Smyth discusses the Anglian confiscation of the Briton fortress *Din Guoaroy* in *Warlords*, 20-21.

knows for sure how or why the Angles came to take over the military sites of southern Northumberland in the fifth century; it might have occurred during employment by the Romans or the Britons, or as colonization and expansion within the British realm. Whatever the reason, the acceptance of archaeological finds combined with the extant texts provides us with a better target range for the date of Anglian settlement in Northumberland.

Higham relies on the archaeological evidence found by Brian Hope-Taylor's inspection of the royal estate at Yeavinger to propose an alternative beginning for the Anglian Northumbrian kingdoms.⁵³ According to Hope-Taylor, Yeavinger showed signs of being independent of British rule by 500. This contradicts Smyth's date for the foundation of an Anglian kingdom in the southern region of Gododdin in the course of the sixth century. To further this claim, Anglian artifacts dating to 500 have been found at Corbridge, which was inclusive of the early northernmost Anglian kingdom along with the Tyne River region. Also at this time the Tweed-Tyne region lacked Christian art, which further supports the theory of pagan Anglian inhabitants in the early sixth century. In contrast, the bordering British kingdoms of Gododdin in Lothian and Rheged contained Christian commemoration stones, such as the 'Brigomaglos' stone which was engraved with a Christian dedication to a British leader.⁵⁴ Higham's reliance on archaeological evidence thus points him to a strong non-Christian Anglian settlement inland between Corbridge and Yeavinger that was flourishing by 500, amidst Christian British kingdoms. Higham finds corroboration for the archaeology in the *Historia*

⁵²Dumville, 'Origins of Northumbria,' 215; Leslie Alcock, 'Gwŷr y Gogledd: and archaeological appraisal,' *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, cxxxii (1983), 1-18.

⁵³Brian Hope-Taylor, *Yeavinger: an Anglo-British Center of Early Northumbria* (London: Her Majesty's Survey Office, 1977).

⁵⁴Higham, *Northern Counties*, 257-258.

Brittonum, which claims that Ida (547-560) merged *Din Guoaroi* with *Brynaich* to form the kingdom of Bernicia and that he faced a British opponent named Dutigern (*Euderyn*) in the region.⁵⁵

Ida, son of Eobba, held the regions in the north of Britain that is the sea of Humber, and ruled for twelve years, and joined *Din Guoaroi* with *Brynaich*, these two regions became one region, that is Deura Bernech, in English Deira and Bernicia.⁵⁶ At that time Dutigern then fought bravely against the English nation.⁵⁷

Likewise the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* recognizes Ida as the founder of the Northumbrian kingdom that included Bamburgh as the main royal citadel. Although the *Chronicle* credits him with the construction of the fortress, it is more likely that he reinforced and added to the pre-existing British structure and compound.

In this year Ida from who first awoke the royal race of the Northumbrians seized and ascended the throne and reigned twelve years. He built Bamburgh which was first enclosed by a beam fence and thereafter with an earthen rampart.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Higham, *Northern Counties*, 257-258. Higham explains that this reference in the source has previously been interpreted as a mistake by the author (Nennius?), who really meant to document the cohesion of Bernicia and Deira. Higham reads the passage as confirmation that Ida joined the British fortress at *Din Guoaroi*, after first conquering it, with the British kingdom of *Brynaich*, thereby extending the northern Anglian settlement. This move can then be understood as the beginning of a true Anglian kingdom with a fortified royal estate at Bamburgh. I agree with Higham's acceptance of the source information combined with the archaeological evidence for an early expansion of Ida's Angles from inland, toward the coast, and then south past the Tees River. Also of note are the numerous battles waged between the native British and the incoming Angles, Saxons and Jutes who desired land south of the Humber River. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* begins describing these land skirmishes in 455. See Table 2.1 'Anglian Kings of Bernicia and Northumbria'.

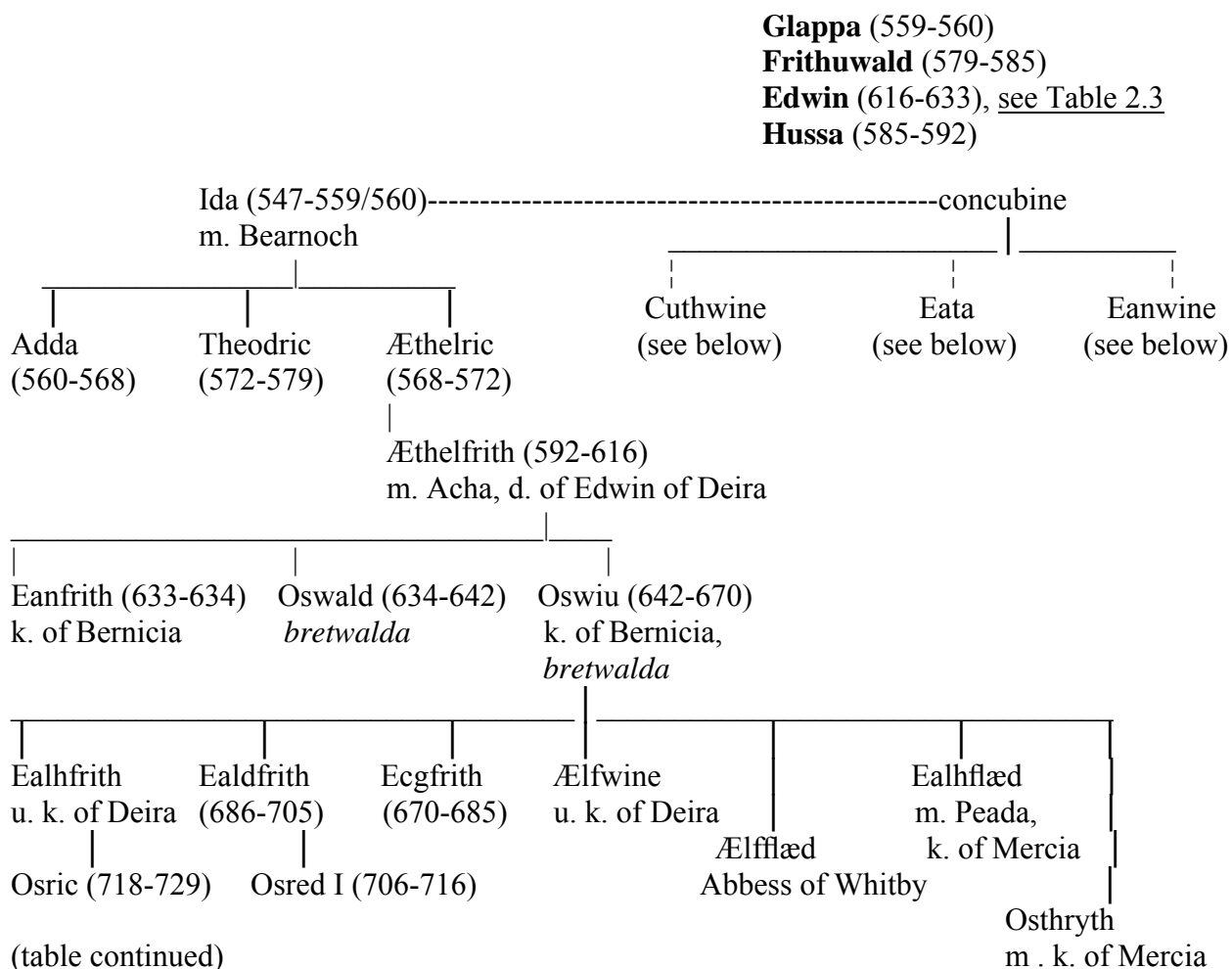
⁵⁶*Ida, filius Eobba, tenuit regiones in sinistrali parte Britanniae, id est Umbri maris, et regnavit annos duodecim, et junxit Dinguayrði guurth Berneich, quae duae regiones fuerunt in una regione, id est Deura Bernech, anglice Deira et Bernicia; HB, passage 61, 78.*

⁵⁷*Tunc Outigirn in illo tempore fortiter dimicabat contra gentem Anglorum; HB, passage 62, 78.*

⁵⁸*Her Ida feng to rice þanon Norðhymbra cyne kyn ærost awoc and rixade xii gear and he getimbrade Bebban burh sy wæs ærost mid hegge be tined and þær æfter mid wealle; ASC-E,*

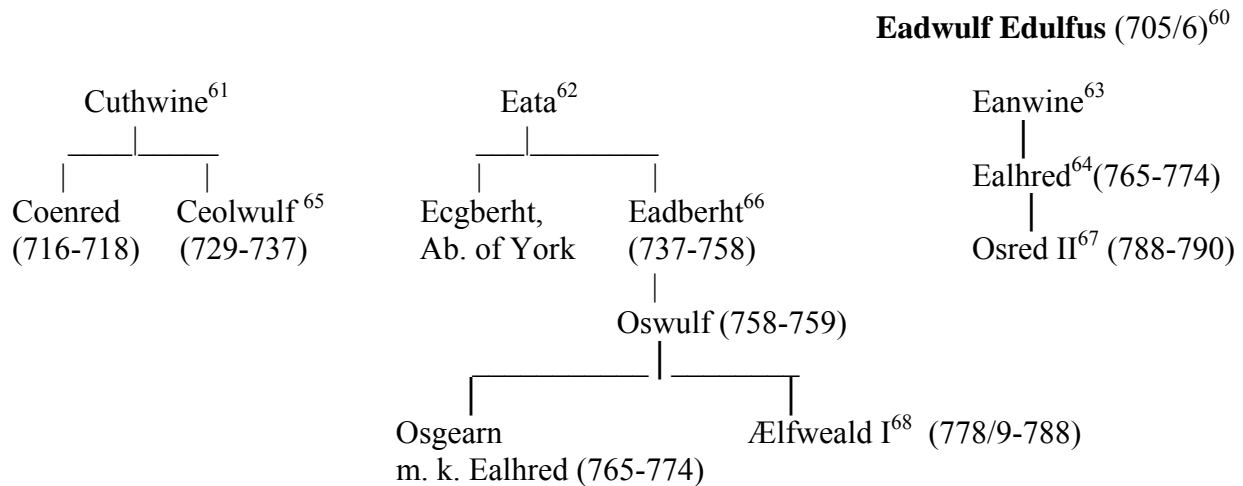
TABLE 2.1⁵⁹

ANGLIAN KINGS OF BERNICIA AND NORTHUMBRIA



547. Bede describes a rampart as: *quibus circumcises e terra uelut murus exstruitur altus supra terram, ita ut in ante sit fossa de qua leuati sunt cespites, supra quam sudes de lignis / fortissimis praefiguntur* (made of sods cut from the earth and raised high above the ground like a wall. In front is a ditch from which the sods have been lifted and above it are fixed stakes made of the strongest wood); Bede, *HE*, i.5, 26. Ida therefore fortified the castle at Bamburgh, which remained the seat of the kings and later earls of Bernicia and Northumbria. By his wife Bearnoch, Ida had three sons who followed him as king and by his concubine another branch of kings sprang beginning with Coenred in 716.

⁵⁹This table was compiled and arranged by Ms. Hayes especially for this dissertation, predominantly using primary sources. The kingdom of Bernicia began being referred to as Northumbria in sources around 650. The use of **bold** for some kings in this table denotes an unknown familial relationship. A vertical dashed line represents direct lineage over several generations.



Æthelwald Moll (759-765)

Æthelred I⁶⁹ (774-778/9; 790-796)

(table continued)

⁶⁰According to Cheney, he ruled for only two months, presumably at the turn of the calendar year.

⁶¹A direct descendant of King Ida and son of *ealdorman* Leadwald.

⁶²A direct descendant of King Ida, son of *ealdorman* Leadwald, and brother of *ealdorman* Cuthwine.

⁶³A direct descendant of King Ida, son of *ealdorman* Byrnhom.

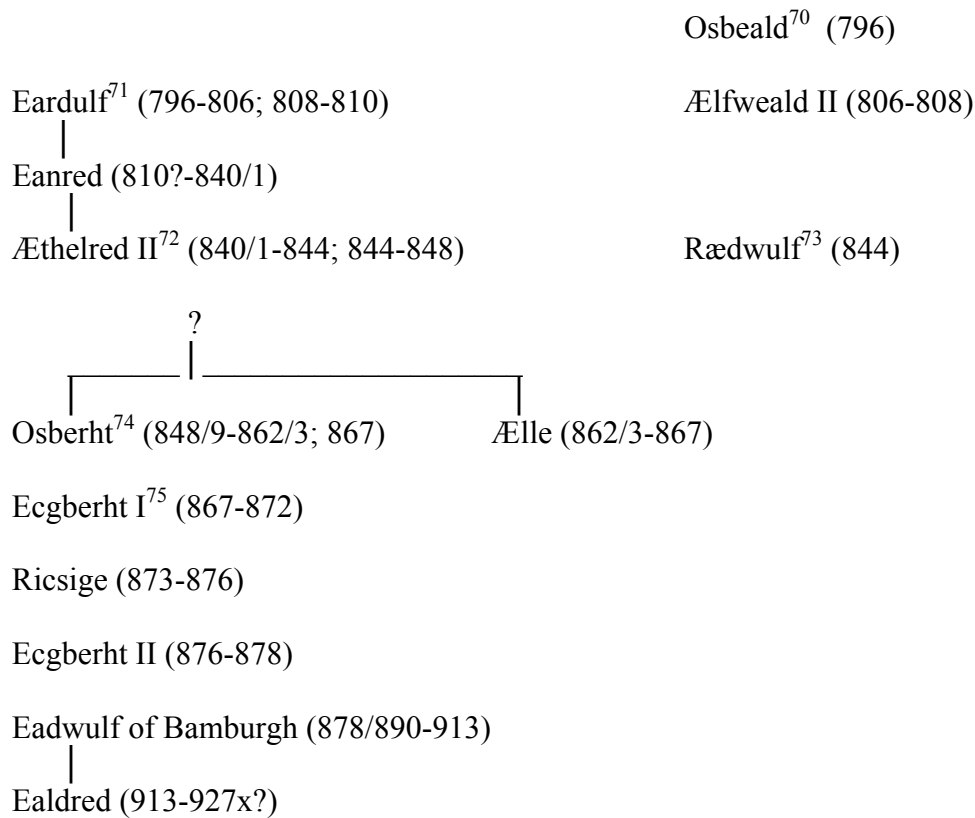
⁶⁴Ealhred possibly murdered his grandfather Moll in 765 for the kingdom, but Cheney suggests that Æthelwald Moll was deposed before his death. He married Osgearn, daughter of King Oswulf, which undoubtedly provided him with a duo-familial claim to the throne of Northumbria. In 774 Ealhred was forced to retire into exile by leading Northumbria *ðegnas*.

⁶⁵Ceolwulf abdicated in 737 to enter the monastery at Lindisfarne as a monk. He died in 764.

⁶⁶Eadbert abdicated in 758 to become a monk. William of Malmesbury does not specify which house he entered, but one may suspect that it was Lindisfarne. He died in 768.

⁶⁷Osred was expelled in 790 then murdered in 792, most likely by Æthelred I who reclaimed the throne in 790.

⁶⁸Ælfweald appointed Eanbald as Archbishop of York in 780 and sent to Rome for the *pallium*. In 791 he was assassinated by Northumbria *ðegnas*. William of Malmesbury holds him blameless of any wrongdoing or negative rule, though, on the grounds that he was interred at Hexham with subsequent miracles attested to his shrine there.



⁶⁹In 780 Æthelred was exiled by leading Northumbria *ðegnas*. After his return as king, in 796 he was assassinated by his countrymen.

⁷⁰Osbeald was elected to rule and shortly deposed. He died in 799.

⁷¹Eardulf was exiled after a few years, went on pilgrimage to Rome, and returned to be reinstated as king with the help of Charlemagne, king of the Franks and Holy Roman Emperor, in 808.

⁷²Æthelred II was expelled for a short period in 844 but regained the kingdom.

⁷³While his rule was short, he managed to have coins minted with ‘REDVVLF REX’.

⁷⁴Osberht was expelled in 862 or 863. After ruling briefly a second time, he died in 867 along with Ælle at York by the Viking king Hálfðan I.

⁷⁵Ecgberht I was the first Anglian king over Northumbria not appointed by Northumbrians, and maybe not a relative of the house of Bamburgh; most likely a noble with Danish sympathies that gained him local power until expelled.

Considering all the evidence, Ida apparently expanded the inland Anglian settlement toward the eastern coast by driving the local British from the coastal region, acquiring the British stronghold of *Din Guaroï*, then extending his kingdom to include the area between the Tyne and Tees Rivers.⁷⁶ This account differs greatly from Smyth, who states that an Anglian kingdom began at *Din Guaroï* and spread inland toward the Cheviot Hills into the Gododdin region.⁷⁷ This dissertation follows Higham's assessment of the sources and argument for the foundation of the Anglian kingdom.

The Roman road system across Northumberland also proved initially useful to the Angles in conquering Gododdin between the Tweed and Tyne Rivers.⁷⁸ Dere Street, which ran from Corbridge on the Tyne River north to Inveresk on the Firth of Forth, was as vital to the Anglian expansion of Northumbria, as it had been in uniting the Roman military posts there.⁷⁹ Control of this roadway separated the two ancient British kingdoms, Rheged to the west of the Pennine foothills and Gododdin on the east coast. The early Angles of Bernicia utilized control of this road to drive a wedge between the two British kingdoms, making it easier to conquer and push the Gododdin British along the east coast north above the Tweed River.

The geography of Northumberland included a series of central foothills that served to further subdivide kingdoms and to direct travel mostly along a north-south track. The Pennine,

⁷⁶See Blair, 'The Boundary between Bernicia and Deira,' for geographic, ecclesiastic and monastic evidence that supports the boundary between the two Anglian kingdoms as the Tees.

⁷⁷In this instance Smyth is clearly following the works of Blair, 'The Origins of Northumbria,' 48-49 and Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 74.

⁷⁸As the Angles and Britons were uneducated in building or maintaining stone roads, these fell into decay and became difficult to impossible to use as the century advanced.

⁷⁹See map in Smyth, *Warlords*, fig. 1.

Cheviot, and Lammermuir foothills are the highlands that run north to south and provided limited habitable and arable zones in central Northumberland.⁸⁰ During the sixth century, the Anglian invasions pushed many Britons into this inhospitable, non-arable highland zone, from which many British warrior bands fled to Ireland as mercenary fighters for the Ulster Uí Néills.⁸¹ The Angles settled into the arable lowlands of Northumberland, which consisted of the eastern coast and the many dales that snaked along the highland zone. Later in the tenth and eleventh centuries these highland areas turned into a lawless region, a place dangerous for travelers.

After Ida successfully utilized the natural geography and Roman roads to assist in getting a foothold into Northumberland, his heirs continued the campaigns against local British tribes, who were led by several impressive warband leaders. The British warrior kings identified in the *Historia Brittonum* as active Anglian opponents include Urien of Catraeth and Rheged; Rhydderch Hen of Strathclyde (d. 614); Gwallawg (of Elmet?); and Morcant (Morgan of Gododdin?).⁸²

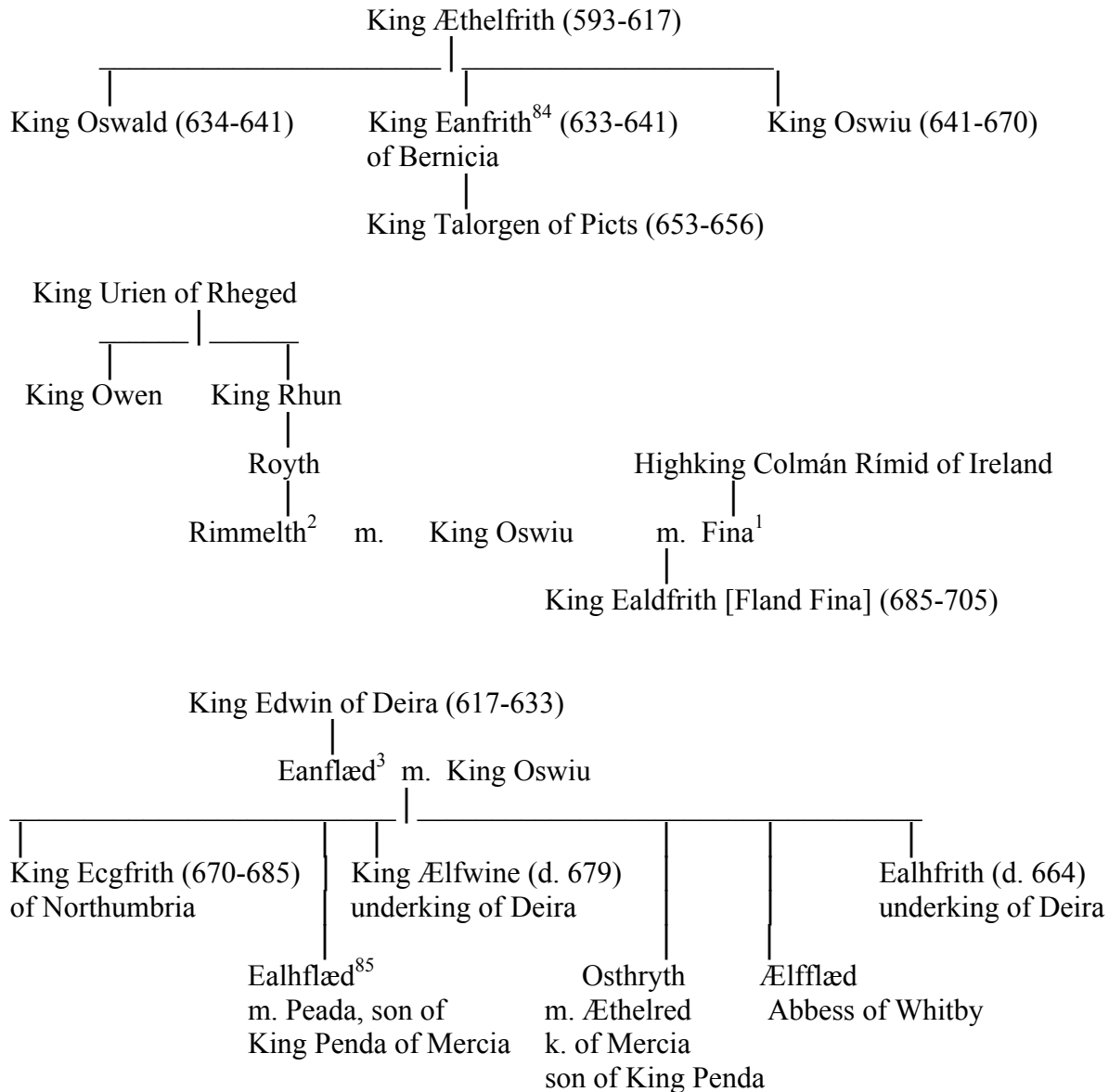
⁸⁰See map in Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 6.

⁸¹Smyth, *Warlords*, 21-22, 25-26; Hudson, *Kings*, 2.

⁸²Ida's immediate successors are recorded in the regnal list of the Moore *Memoranda* edition of Bede, and reprinted in Blair, 'The Bernicians and their Northern Frontier,' 149 as follows. Ida (547-559), Glappa (559-560), Adda (560-568), Æthelric (568-572), Theodric (572-579), Frithuwald (579-585), Hussa (585-592). This same order of kings and their dates of rule are accepted by Cheney. As mentioned earlier, for the purposes of this dissertation I accept the authority of Cheney. Adda and Æthelric are generally accepted as sons of Ida, while the rest not only are not identified by the sources, but their names do not lend an indication that they descend from Ida. Blair suggests therefore that they likely represent other leading Anglian families; Blair, 'The Bernicians and their Northern Frontier,' 150-151. If so then their periods of rule illustrate attempts to wrest control of Bernicia from the family of Ida that ultimately failed. See map of the rise and expansion of the kingdom of Bernicia in Higham, *Northern Counties*, 254, fig. 6.3. See also Table 2.2 'Marriage Connections between Northumbria, British Rheged, and Ireland'.

TABLE 2.2⁸³

MARRIAGE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NORTHUMBRIA, BRITISH RHEGED, IRELAND



⁸³The information in this table was partly borrowed from Smyth, *Warlords* 22, Table 1 and augmented by Ms. Hayes to fit the needs of this dissertation.

⁸⁴Eanfrith of Bernicia married a daughter of the king of the Picts, making their son eligible to inherit the Pictish throne.

⁸⁵Information on Ealhflæd, Osthryth, and Ælfflæd were added from Searle, 302-303, and are not found in Smyth, *Warlords*, 22, Table 1. The three sisters were added to show all the offspring of King Oswiu and their maternal connections.

Against them the four kings, Urien, and Rhydderch Hen, and Gwallawg and Morcant, did fight. Theodric [king of Bernicia, 572-579] fought bravely against the well known Urien and his sons. However, now and then the enemy [Angles] had conquered, at another time the citizens [Britons]. And himself [Urien] confined them [Angles] for three days and three nights in the island of Metcaud [Lindisfarne]. While he [Urien] was on this expedition, he was butchered. Morcant was blind before jealousy, because about himself, his [Urien's] great army had renewed war with every king.⁸⁶

Higham believes Husa (585-592) to be the Bernician king forced out of the Tyne River region and onto Lindisfarne Island by Urien's ground forces, while Dumville interprets the source to mean Theodric (572-579).⁸⁷ The need for a confederacy of British warriors from every region surrounding the early Anglian kingdom of Bernicia bespeaks the perceived threat of Bernicia. The most likely incursions began as British raids from the south, led by Urien's forces, up into the Tyne valley. These raids forced the Bernicians north and eventually into a defensive position on the island of Lindisfarne. As the above passage relates, inter-tribal tensions among the British leadership caused the death of Urien, clearly the most talented military strategist of the coalition, which swung the pendulum of power back to the Angles. Afterwards, Husa reclaimed dominance of Bernicia and especially its fortified estate of Bamburgh.⁸⁸

The first recorded Anglian leader in the British kingdom of Catraeth is Ælle (560-588/590).⁸⁹ His immediate successors were Æthelric (588-593), about whom we know nothing, and Æthelfrith (592-616), the grandson of Ida of Bernicia, who ruled Deira and Bernicia from

⁸⁶*Contra illum quattuor reges, Urbgen, et Riderchhen, et Guallauc, et Morcant, dimicaverunt. Deodric contra illum Urbgen cum filiis dimicabat fortiter. In illo autem tempore aliquando hostes, nunc cives vincebantur, et ipse conclusit eos tribus diebus et tribus noctibus in insula Metcaud et, dum erat in expeditione, jugulatus est, Morcanto destinante pro invidia, quia in ipso prae omnibus regibus virtus maxima erat instauratione belli; HB, passage 63, 78.*

⁸⁷Higham, *Northern Counties*, 259; Dumville, 'Origins of Northumbria,' 218.

⁸⁸Higham, *Northern Counties*, 259.

593. The early history of this region shows strong Anglian presence throughout the sixth century, and quite possibly as far back as the early fifth century around York, giving credence to the Roman-Anglian *soldati* argument. The original region associated with Anglian Deira includes York to the southeast across the River Derwent encompassing the lands to the Humber River and the North Sea. The first phase of expansion in Deira took the Angles north along the Humber River into the Vale of York, to just south of the Tees River.⁹⁰ There the Battle of Catterick was waged between a second allied coalition, led by king Mynyddog of Gododdin, and the successful Anglian forces of king Æthelfrith (592-616).⁹¹ This strategy allowed the Angles to control more coastline as well as the arable lowland zones, while the defeated British were pushed up into the non-arable Pennine highlands.⁹²

Beginning with the reigns of Ida (547-559) of Bernicia and Ælle (560-588) of Deira, an Anglian military and political leadership was firmly in place at Bamburgh Castle and York, which was continued by their successors. Northumbrian kings ruled with the aid of loyal officials and military leaders of varying ranks or stations, who also served in an advisory capacity as needed. Beginning with the rule of Oswiu in Deira (655-670) members of the royal families occasionally ruled Deira as *subreguli* or *principes* (sub-kings).⁹³ Likewise those holding

⁸⁹ASC-E, 560. See Table 2.3 ‘Anglian Kings of Deira’.

⁹⁰See map of the Deiran heartland in Rollason, *Northumbria*, 46.

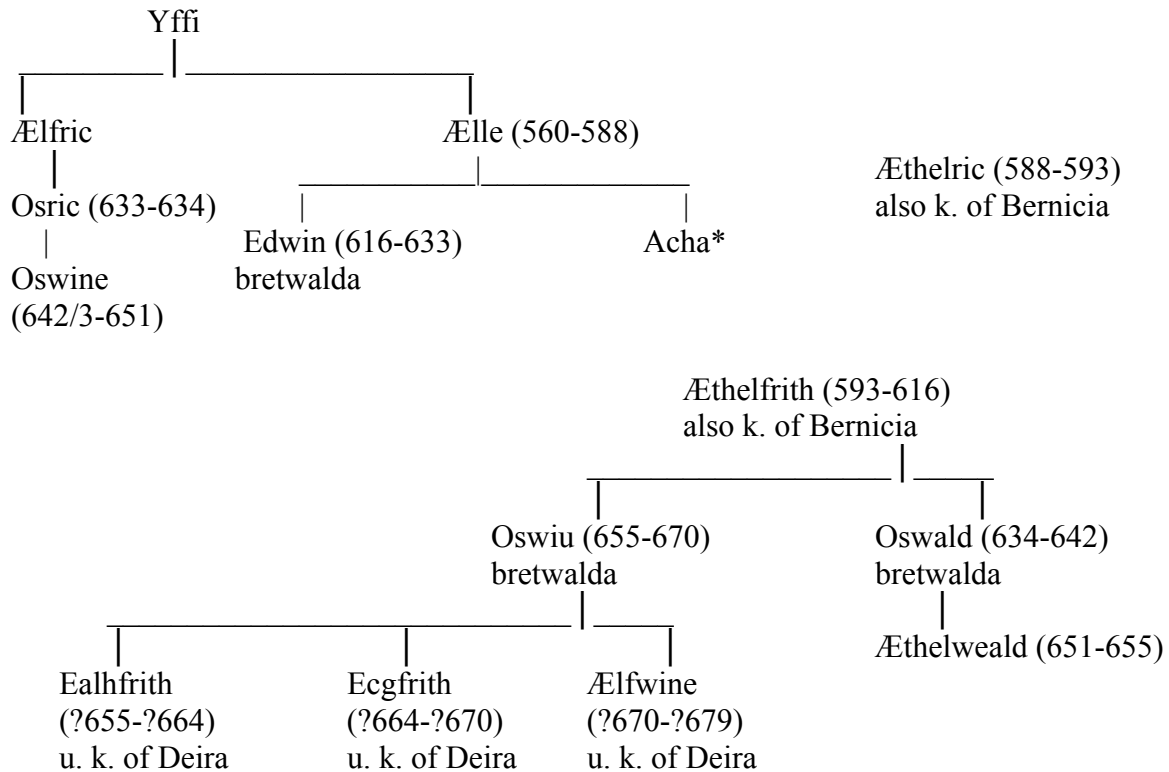
⁹¹Higham, *Northern Counties*, 260; see also Jackson, *The Gododdin*. The Battle of Catterick occurred sometime between 593 and 600. The coalition reportedly included warrior bands from northern Pict kingdoms, the Scots of Ayr, Elmet, Gwynedd in northern Wales, Anglesey.

⁹²Smyth, *Warlords*, 21.

⁹³The breakdown of administrative and advisory positions listed here is borrowed from Rollason, *Northumbria*, 172-174, 181-182, 185-186, and supplemented by Ms. Hayes.

TABLE 2.3⁹⁴

ANGLIAN KINGS OF DEIRA



⁹⁴Dates of rule are listed throughout the Appendix for kings and religious leaders. Dates are as found in *A Handbook of Dates for Students of British History*, ed. C. R. Cheney (Cambridge: the University Press, 2000); occasionally augmented by William George Searle, ed. *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles: The Succession of the Bishops and the Pedigrees of the Kings and Nobles* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1899) 254-5, 302-18, 322-51, unless otherwise stated. This table was arranged by Ms. Hayes for this dissertation.

the rank of *patricii* (patrician; the rank of *ealdorman* in Old English, leader, nobleman) were perceived as important as a sub-king and served as the right-hand man, or premier official, of the king. A comparison to the Merovingian *maior domus* may be acceptable. Next were the *duces* (dukes; also *ealdorman* in Old English), whose political roles are unclear but they must have been landholding magnates and warriors. Those with the title *prefecti* (prefects) had charge of fortified and garrisoned complexes in *urbes* (towns) which held political prisoners.⁹⁵ Even in status with the *prefecti* were the *comites* (counts; *gesiðas* in Old English, military retainer), but their position may have been social only, while the *prefecti* clearly held a royal office. *Gesiðas* generally were wealthy married landholders with an established family lineage. Last in political hierarchical importance were the royal *ministri, milites* (ministers, soldiers; *ðegnas* in Old English, thanes), who served as attendants and warriors for the king. Their roles as attendants extended to accompanying their king or the heir of a deceased king into exile. Without ownership of land they lived in the royal estates giving them the reputation of household retainers. The distinguished career of a royal *ðegn* could be rewarded with a land gift or *læn*, promoting the *ðegn* to the rank of *gesið*. Thus the kings of Northumbria worked with a powerful and sophisticated governmental bureaucracy (*witan*, royal council), which enhanced the strength of the rulers. Unless militarily detained, the *witan* gathered on annual religious holidays with the kings to handle political matters.⁹⁶

A powerful and aggressive king, Æthelfrith (592-616), a grandson of Ida, succeeded Husa as king of Bernicia. In the following year Æthelfrith used his marriage to Ælle's daughter

⁹⁵For Northumberland *urbes*, see map in Higham, *Northern Counties*, 254, fig. 6.3.

⁹⁶Patrick Wormald, 'Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship: Some Further Thoughts,' *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Virginia Darrow Oggins, Studies in Medieval Culture, 20, (Western Michigan University: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986) 163.

Acha and seized the Deiran kingdom upon the death of Æthelric in 593. In the process, Æthelfrith drove his wife's brother, Edwin, from Northumberland, preventing him from mounting an armed claim to the kingship of Deira.⁹⁷ Thenceforward, Æthelfrith served as the first king of both Bernicia and Deira, and as such posed an increased threat to the surrounding kingdoms.

Æthelfrith's ability to defeat a great combined army of Picts and Britons brought him to the attention of the Dál Riada Scots. Around 500, while the Angles were establishing themselves on the eastern coast of Britain, the Irish kings of Dál Riada migrated from their citadel of Dunseverick on the coast of County Antrim. They settled a group of islands in the North Sea, where Iona was founded, and the western region of Britain known as Argyll, to the west of Strathclyde.⁹⁸ This region of early Irish settlement in Britain came to be called Dál Riada as well, and eventually spread north of Strathclyde, as the Scots began slowly taking in Pictish territory. British Strathclyde and Gododdin lay between the two newcomers, Angles and Scots. After defeating Mynyddog, Æthelfrith pressed northward from Bernicia and annexed Gododdin. This move must have alarmed the Scots, as they engaged the Angles in battle at *Degsastan* (possibly Dawstone in Liddesdale) in 603.

For this reason Áedán, king of the Irish living in Britain, aroused by his successes, marched against him [Æthelfrith] with an immensely strong army; but he was defeated and fled with few survivors. Indeed, almost all his army was cut to pieces in a very famous place called Degsastan, that is the stone of Degsa. In this fight Theobald, Æthelfrith's brother, was killed together with all his army.⁹⁹

⁹⁷Higham, *Northern Counties*, 260. The marriage of Æthelfrith and Acha joined the two royal families of Deira and Bernicia in their sons Oswald and Oswiu.

⁹⁸Hudson, *Kings*, 2. See map of kingdoms and geography of north central Britain in Rollason, *Northumbria*, 8.

Following his loss at *Degsastan*, Áedán mac Gabráin made inroads eastward into British lands, but north of those held by Æthelfrith, mainly around the Firth of Forth.¹⁰⁰ Two years later Æthelfrith led the Bernicians to victory against the British at Chester (*Legacæster*), but most likely did not consider land that far south a permanent part of Anglian territory.¹⁰¹ Higham suggests, however, that Æthelfrith claimed dominance over Rheged, Strathclyde and Gododdin, and most likely the Dál Riada Scots as well. His continuous military success, even at great distances from the strong fortresses of Bernicia and Deira, added to Æthelfrith's formidable reputation in his day. Symeon of Durham recalled Æthelfrith as *potentissimi regis* (most powerful king), which is extremely high praise from a Christian monk about a non-Christian king.¹⁰² His legacy of military excellence and territorial expansion set the tone for succeeding kings. Æthelfrith's reign laid the foundation for Anglian dominance of Northumberland, which lasted until the Viking invasion of York in 866.

While exiled from Deira by Æthelfrith, Edwin, his brother-in-law, went from Gwynedd to Mercia and finally to East Anglia, where he fell under the protection of the *bretwalda* (Britain-ruler) Rædwald of Mercia.¹⁰³ In 616 Æthelfrith attempted to bribe Rædwald into handing over

⁹⁹*Vnde motus eius profectibus Aedan rex Scottorum, qui Britanniam inhabitant, uenit contra eum cum inmenso et forti exercitu; sed cum paucis uictus aufugit. Siquidem in loco celeberrimo, qui dicitur Degsastan, id est Degsa lapis, omnis pene eius est caesus exercitus. In qua etiam pugna Theodbald frater Aedilfridi cum omni illo, quem ipse ducebat, exercitu peremptus est; Bede, HE, i.34, 116.*

¹⁰⁰Hudson, *Kings*, 14.

¹⁰¹Bede, *HE*, ii.2, 134-142; *ASC-E*, 605. Chester is located on the Dee River in the Wirral, and officially on the extreme southern edge of Northumberland.

¹⁰²*LDE SymD*, i.1, 18.

¹⁰³Patrick Wormald discusses the few interpretations for the term *bretwalda* and settles on the translation 'Britain-ruler'. He cites the term in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's entry for 827

Edwin. When Rædwald refused to cooperate and instead backed Edwin's claim to the throne of Deira, Æthelfrith brought his army south toward Mercia. The two neighboring forces of Northumbria and Mercia met on the battlefield, at a point on the Idle River in the Humber valley.¹⁰⁴ Following Æthelfrith's death in battle, the East Anglian forces of Rædwald ensured that Edwin claimed his inheritance as king of Deira. Edwin expanded his authority over Bernicia, as well as the territories which Æthelfrith had conquered or subdued through alliances, in a power grab which scattered Æthelfrith's heirs.¹⁰⁵ Bede describes King Edwin's connection to his homeland of Deira:

(except for the Laud Manuscript) as *Brytenwalda*, which could be literally translated as 'rule of the Britons'. Wormald mentions that some scholars, although not he, do interpret *bretwalda* to mean that the Anglo-Saxon kings inherited an intact and continuous kingdom of Britons. Wormald suggests that pre-Viking *bretwaldas* held an 'ideal supremacy' as Southumbrian kings, with a few exceptions from north of the Humber River: kings Edwin, Oswald, and Oswiu. He finds the post-Viking *bretwaldas* ruled over all Britain (north and south of the Humber) only occasionally and with resistance from other Anglo-Saxon kings. This dissertation defers to Professor Wormald's assessment of the term *bretwalda*, to mean an over-king of all Anglo-Saxon kingdoms south of the Humber into the early tenth century. The term itself ceased to be used in sources in the later tenth century, and the West Saxon kings who acted as over-kings were referred to as 'kings of the English' while the titles of 'king' changed to 'earl' for the other Anglo-Saxon regions. Ealdormen remained high-ranking noble officials that frequently played important roles in the kingdom and individual earldoms. Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*,' *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald and Donald Bullough and Roger Collins (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited, 1983) 99-129.

¹⁰⁴Bede, *HE*, ii.12, 178-180. Rollason concludes that this and other seventh-century battles fought in the same vicinity confirm that the Humber River, from its inlet on the coast inland through its flanking valley, formed the border region between early Northumbria and Mercia. From that time, the Humber remained the landmark for differentiating between lands held to the south by non-Northumbrian kings, and those lands to its north ruled directly by the Anglian families of Deira and Bernicia through the mid-ninth century; Rollason, *Northumbria*, 34-36.

¹⁰⁵During Edwin's reign, Æthelfrith's sons and their attendant ðegnas fled north to sanctuary among the Scots; Bede, *HE*, iii.1, 211. Gareth Dunleavy discusses the exile of the *æthelings* Oswald and Oswiu, who were in custody of the Irish monastery of Iona in Scotland. After this period among the monks, during which he received a Christian baptism and an

from which province that man of noble birth had possessed the lineage and the beginnings of majesty.¹⁰⁶

At the death of Rædwald, the East Angles placed themselves under his rule and Edwin peacefully assumed control over all territories tributary to Mercia. Bede recognized Edwin as *bretwalda* after Rædwald.¹⁰⁷ William of Malmesbury tells us that Edwin also brought the Orkney Islands, some Scottish and Pict lands, as well as the British Mevanian Isles (Angelsey and Man) under his control.¹⁰⁸ The addition of the Isles of Angelsey and Man brought direct control of the traffic in the Irish Sea to Northumbria, which Edwin manned with a newly enlarged naval fleet.¹⁰⁹ William of Malmesbury further claims that no public or domestic thefts, rapes, or stealing of another's inheritance occurred during Edwin's rule, stating that peace and justice prevailed in all his lands.¹¹⁰ His management skills of his vast territories therefore matched his excellent military accomplishments.

excellent education in the scriptorium, Oswald remained overtly pious. Later in his kingship, he maintained a strong relationship with Iona and the monks he befriended there in childhood. See below in text.

¹⁰⁶*de qua prouincia ille generis prosapiam et primordia regni habuerat*; Bede, *HE*, iii.1, 212; translation kindly provided by Marie Therese Champagne.

¹⁰⁷Bede, *HE*, ii.9, 163 and ii.12, 175-181. According to Bede, following the death of the fourth *bretwalda*, the East Anglian king Rædwald, Edwin acquired the kingdom of the East Angles by slaying Rædwald's son Regenhere and driving out his remaining heirs. William of Malmesbury recounts that King Æthelfrith of Bernicia killed Regenhere in battle before dying at Rædwald's hand. At that time, Edwin was reportedly living in exile in Rædwald's house and that he peacefully assumed power over East Anglia after Rædwald's death; *GR Malms* i.3, 44-45.

¹⁰⁸See map in Rollason, *Northumbria*, 8.

¹⁰⁹Higham, *Northern Counties*, 261.

¹¹⁰William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regvm Anglorvm*, vol.1, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), i.3, 44-45.

The Christian princess Æthelberga of Kent married Edwin in 625 and traveled north with her Christian bishop and private chaplain Paulinus.¹¹¹ In 627 Edwin was converted to Christianity by Bishop Paulinus. This famous conversion, as recorded by Bede, included that of the Anglo-Saxon high priest Coifi, who subsequently assisted in the obliteration of the traditional Anglian religious sites.

[H]e ordered his companions to destroy and set fire to the shrine and all its enclosures. The place where the idols once stood is still shown, not far from York, to the east, over the river Derwent.¹¹²

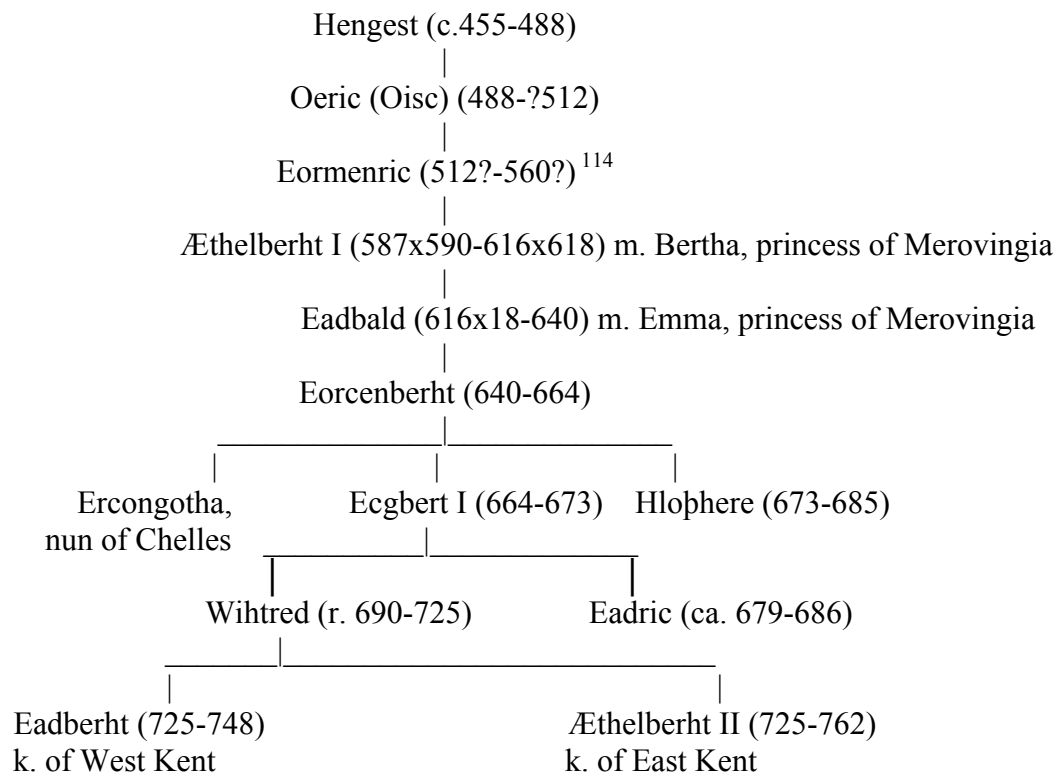
In place of the pre-Christian Anglian religious ruins King Edwin, like the Roman Emperor Constantine, commissioned a church and baptistery to be built at York for the express purpose of

¹¹¹See Table 2.4 ‘Kings of Kent’. While in exile in Mercia, Edwin married his first wife, Cwenburh, daughter of the king of Mercia, with whom he had Osfrith. Through this marriage he joined the family of the *bretwalda* King Rædwald, who later in 617 assisted Edwin to claim the thrones of Deira and Bernicia. The end of Cwenburh’s life is not known, but her death must have occurred at some point prior to Edwin’s marriage to Æthelberga in 625. See Higham, *Northern Counties*, 261.

¹¹²[I]ussit sociis destruere ac succendere fanum cum omnibus septis suis. *Ostenditur autem locus ille quondam idolorum non longe ab Eburaco ad orientem ultra amnem Deruentionem*; Bede, *HE* ii.13, 186. Another account of the baptism of Edwin and his daughter Eanflæd comes to us from the *Historia Brittonum* and *Annales Cambriae*. Both British sources relate that Rhun, son of king Urien, baptized Eanflæd (625) and in the following year Edwin along with twelve thousand of his warriors; *HB*, passage 63, 78; *AC*, 626. If this account holds true, then this was a Celtic baptism and Celtic church rites and dates would have been first introduced to the Anglian population of Northumbria, not those of the Roman church. Since Bede’s account draws on a combination of three Anglian accounts and the monk makes no effort to hide his derision of the British throughout his writings, it is possible that the tradition of Edwin’s conversion he recorded leaves out the probability of its British source. The derogatory term used in the *Historia Brittonum* for the Angles being baptized, *ambronum* (thugs), shows the contempt of the British author for the Angles, which further enhances the possibility that it was a Celtic ceremony. It was obviously distasteful for the *Historia Brittonum*’s author to report the Angles as anything other than murdering land thieves, but nonetheless he reported the incident as told to him by his esteemed bishop. Scholars of medieval Northumbria, while recognizing both sources for this baptism, usually accept Bede’s version. I am leaving the possibility open for either account to be true.

TABLE 2.4¹¹³

KINGS OF KENT (JUTES)



Several kings ruled West and East Kent until the last Kent king Baldred (821-c.825, deposed).¹¹⁵

¹¹³Dates used in this table were kindly provided by Professor Lisi Oliver, while the table was compiled and arranged by Ms. Hayes especially for this dissertation, predominantly using primary sources.

¹¹⁴The reign of Ermenric is shown alongside that of Otha, which may have been together or separate, according to the *ASC*.

¹¹⁵Baldred was defeated by Ecgbert, king of West Saxons, who claimed rule in Kent.

his own baptism. His witan and chief priest Coifi along with all the warriors of the two Anglian kingdoms also joined the king in this initiation ceremony into the Christian Church. Bede informs us that these buildings were hurriedly constructed during the king's catechism period and that immediately after the ceremony he began construction on a more permanent structure:

[H]e set about building a greater and more magnificent church of stone, under the instructions of Paulinus, in the midst of which the chapel which he had first built was to be enclosed.¹¹⁶

Edwin died before the new building project was complete, but his successor Oswald saw the project to completion. The Christian conversion of King Edwin transformed Northumbria from a pagan to a Christian territory and set the stage for the introduction of Celtic monks and Celtic religious rites into the kingdom.

Bede records the death of Edwin on the twelfth day of October in 633 at the battle of Hatfield Chase (*Hæthfelth*). On this tragic day, the Northumbrian Angles faced the combined forces of Cædwalla of Gwynedd and Penda of Mercia, who were most likely responding to the expansion campaign of Edwin into British Angelsey and Man. Edwin lost one son, Osfrith, on the battlefield prior to his own death, and another son as a prisoner of war to Penda, who was later murdered by the king.¹¹⁷ In the immediate period following this battle, the victors visited their wrath onto Northumbria.

At this time there was a great slaughter both of the church and of the people of Northumbria . . . Now Penda and the whole Mercian race were idolaters and ignorant of the name of Christ; but Cædwalla, although a Christian by name and profession, was nevertheless a barbarian at heart and disposition and spared neither women nor innocent children. With bestial cruelty he put all to death by torture and for a long time raged

¹¹⁶[C]uravit docente eodem Paulino maiorem ipso in loco et augustiorem de lapide fabricare basilicam, in cuius medio ipsum quod prius fecerat oratorium includeretur; Bede, *HE*, ii.14, 187. The early Christian catechism training period lasted an average of three years.

¹¹⁷Bede, *HE*, ii.20, 202; Higham, *Northern Counties*, 261.

through all their land, meaning to wipe out the whole English nation from the land of Britain.¹¹⁸

Cædwalla settled at York and enforced a horrific operation of destruction on the Northumbrians. At this time, Edwin's widow Æthelberga escaped Northumbria with her surviving children and grandchild.

Paulinus took with him Queen Æthelberga, whom he had previously brought thither, and returned by boat to Kent . . . He came thither in the charge of Bass, a very brave *ðegn* of King Edwin. He had with him also Edwin's daughter, Eanflæd, and his son Usfrea, and Yffi, the son of Osfrith, Edwin's son. Æthelberga fearing Kings Eadbald [? of Kent, 616-640] and Oswald [of Northumbria] afterwards, sent these children to Gaul to be brought up by King Dagobert, who was her friend. Both children died there in infancy.¹¹⁹

During this period, Edwin's cousin, Ælfric's son Osric (633-634), inherited Deira while his nephew, Æthelfrith's son Eanfrith (633/4-634), ascended to Bernicia. Both kings were engaged in battles to remove Cædwalla and Penda from Northumbria and both lost their lives in this endeavor.

First, in the following summer he [Cædwalla] killed Osric, who had rashly besieged him in a fortified town; he broke out suddenly with all his forces, took Osric by surprise, and destroyed him and all his army. After this he occupied the Northumbrian kingdoms for a whole year, not ruling them like a victorious king but ravaging them like a savage tyrant, tearing them to pieces with fearful bloodshed. Finally when Eanfrith came to him

¹¹⁸*Quo tempore maxima est facta strages in ecclesia uel gente Nordanhymbrorum . . . Siquidem Penda cum omni Merciorum gente idolis deditus et Christiani erat nominis ignarus; at uero Caedualla, quamuis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo tamen erat animo ac moribus barbarus, ut ne sexui quidem muliebri uel innocuae paruulorum parceret aetati, quin uniuersos atrocitate ferina morti per tormenta contraderet, multo tempore totas eorum prouincias debachando peruagatus, ac totum genus Anglorum Brittanie finibus erasurum se esse deliberans; Bede, HE, ii.20, 202-204.*

¹¹⁹*Paulinus adsumta secum regina Aedilberge, quam pridem adduxerat, rediit Cantiam nauigio . . . Venit autem illuc duce Basso milite Regis Eduini fortissimo, habens secum Eanfledam filiam et Uuscfrean filium Eduini, necnon et Yffi filium Osfridi filii eius, quos postea mater metu Eadbaldi et Osualdi regum misit in Galliam nutriendos regi Daegbercto, qui erat amicus illius. Ibique ambo in infantia defuncti; Bede, HE, ii.20, 204.* By 'both children' Bede most assuredly is referring to the two male children, while Eanflæd survived into adulthood.

unadvisedly to make peace, accompanied only by twelve chosen *ðegnas*, he destroyed him as well.¹²⁰

Following the deaths of Osric and Eanfrith, Oswald (634-642) defeated Cædwalla's forces at Rowley Water (*Denisesburn*), assumed the rule of Northumbria, and even became recognized as the sixth *bretwalda*.¹²¹ Oswald's military engagement against Cædwalla revenged the deaths of his brother and cousin, while also stopping British raids in Northumbria. William of Malmesbury describes his reign thus:

From this time, the worship of idols fell prostrate in the dust, and he governed his kingdom, extended beyond Edwin's boundaries, for eight years, peaceably and without the loss of any of his people.¹²²

King Oswald faithfully accepted responsibility for completing the stone church at York, which was dedicated to Saint Peter. He oversaw the burial of King Edwin's head within the chapel dedicated to Pope Gregory the Great.

Also during this period, Bishop Paulinus was recognized as the first Archbishop of York, after the wishes of Pope Gregory who desired that York and London serve as archbishoprics for

¹²⁰*Et primo quidem proxima aestate Osricum, dum se in oppido municipio temerarie obsedisset, erumpens subito cum suis omnibus inparatum cum toto exercitu deleuit. Dein cum anno integro prouincias Nordanhymbrorum non ut rex uictor possideret, sed quasi tyrannus saeuens disperderet ac tragica caede dilaceraret, tandem Eanfridum in consulte ad se cum XII lectis militibus postulandae pacis gratia uenientem simili sorte damnauit; Bede, HE, iii.1, 212-214. The 'fortified town' in this passage most likely refers to York. Dumville accepts Bede's account of this period as recorded, stating that British sentiment embodied in Cædwalla did indeed seek to eradicate the dominance of the Northumbrian Angles; Dumville, 'The Origins of Northumbria,' 219.*

¹²¹*GRA Malms, i.49.4, 70-72.*

¹²²*Denique ex eo tempore cultus idolorum ad cineres torpuit, et ipse regnum latioribus quam Eduinus terminis citra ullam necem hominum octo annis quiete cohercuit; GRA Malms, i.49.1, 68-70.*

the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.¹²³ This arrangement for London was never realized. From the time of Augustine's conversion of Æthelberht I of Kent in 597, Canterbury claimed the status of a Metropolitan See. The two Anglo-Saxon archbishopric positions were designed to be equal in power as evidenced by Pope Gregory's instructions that upon the death or resignation of one, the other would ordain the replacement archbishop.¹²⁴ While Paulinus never actually received the *pallium*, and indeed the first Archbishop of York to be ordained with it was Ecgberht in 735, York became a political and religious site of importance from this time.

When Oswald decided to sponsor the construction of a religious center near the royal citadel at Bamburgh, he sent to Iona for recruits. Abbot Seghene (623-652) sent Aidan to Northumbria to found a daughter house of Iona.¹²⁵ Oswald befriended Aidan and together they built the first Northumberland monastery following the standards and traditions of Iona.¹²⁶

The lands chosen and donated by Oswald were just off the North Sea coastline, midway between the mouth of the River Tweed and the royal fortress at Bamburgh.¹²⁷

¹²³Bede, *HE*, ii.17-18, 195-199.

¹²⁴Bede, *HE*, ii.18, 196-198. The explanation for two archbishops on one island stemmed from the extreme distance between Britain and Rome, to which archbishops routinely traveled to receive the *pallium*, the priestly vestment bestowed upon archbishops at ordination.

¹²⁵Bede, *HE*, iii.3, 220. See Table 2.5 'Irish and Anglian Abbots and Bishops of Iona and Lindisfarne'.

¹²⁶Bede, *HE*, iii.3, 220. The population of the north practiced Christianity primarily along the lines of the Irish (Celtic) traditions.

¹²⁷See Magnus Magnusson, *Lindisfarne: the Cradle Island* (Northumberland: Oriel Press Ltd., 1984) for an in-depth study of the monastic center site. Also, see the plan of Lindisfarne Isle in Magnusson, *Lindisfarne*, inside cover.

TABLE 2.5

IRISH AND ANGLIAN ABBOTS AND BISHOPS OF IONA AND LINDISFARNE

IONA¹²⁸

Colum Cille (Columba) 563-597

Baithene, 597-600

Laisran, 600-605

Fergna Brit, 605-623

Seghene, 623-652 ----->

Suibhne, 652-657

Cuimine Ailbhe, 657-669

Failbe, 669-679

Adomnan, 679-704

Conamhail, 704-710

Dunchadh, 710-717

Faelcu, 717-724

Cillene Fada, 724-726

Cilline Droicteach, 726-752

Slebhine, 752-767

Suibhne, 767-772

Breasal, 772-?

LINDISFARNE¹²⁹

Aidan, 635-651

Finan, 651-661

Colman, 661-664

Tuda, 664

Eata, 681-685

St. Cuthbert, 685-687

Wilfrid, 687-688

Eadbeorht, 688-698

Eadfrith, 698-721

Æthelweald, 721-739/40

Cynewulf, 740-779/83

Hygebeald, 779/81-802/3

Ecgbeorht, 802/3-819/21

Heathured, 819/21-828/30

Ecgred, 828/30-845

Eanberht, 845/6-854

Eardwulf,¹³⁰ 854-899

Cutheard, 900-95

Tilred, 915-925/8

Wigred, 925/8-944

Uhtred, 944x?

Seaxhelm, ?

Ealdred, ?x968

(table continued)

¹²⁸This table was arranged by Ms. Hayes for this dissertation. Gareth Dunleavy, *Colum's Other Island: the Irish at Lindisfarne* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960) 99.

¹²⁹Dates taken from Searle. Lindisfarne occasionally remained the reference name in contemporary sources for the bishopric even after the physical relocation of the community to Chester-le-Street, Ripon, and finally Durham.

¹³⁰Bishop of Lindisfarne who translated St. Cuthbert's relics from Lindisfarne in 875 in the face of Viking invasions, to eventually be entombed at Chester-le-Street.

Ælfsige,¹³¹ 968-990
Ealdun,¹³² 990-1018
Eadmund, 1020-1041
Eadred, 1041
Æthelric, 1041-1056
Æthelwine, 1056-1071
Walcher¹³³, 1071-1080

¹³¹Ordained bishop by Osketil, Archbishop of York (956-971).

¹³²Bishop of Lindisfarne that translated St. Cuthbert's relics from Chester-le-Street to Ripon to their final resting place at Durham in 995.

¹³³First Norman appointed bishop to the See of Durham.

The island of Lindisfarne is eight miles round, and on it is a noble monastery where there rest the bodies of the distinguished bishop Cuthbert and other bishops who were his most worthy successors, and of whom can justly be said the words which are sung: ‘Their bodies are buried in peace, and their names will live for ever.’¹³⁴

As the tide ebbs and flows, this place is surrounded twice daily by the waves of the sea like an island and twice, when the shore is left dry, it becomes again attached to the mainland.¹³⁵

The location near Bamburgh provided royal protection to the monks, seclusion from society for their ascetic lifestyle, and also symbolized the strong connection of these Celtic monks with the ruling family.¹³⁶ Aidan and Oswald worked together to provide Christian education and ceremonies to the Northumbrian peoples. Many Irish monks of Iona migrated

[t]o those Anglian provinces over which Oswald reigned, to preach the word of faith with great devotion, and those of them who held the rank of priest to administer the grace of baptism to those who believed. Churches were built in various places and the people flocked together with joy to hear the Word; lands and property of other kinds were given by royal bounty to establish monasteries, and Anglian children, as well as their elders, were instructed by Irish teachers in advanced studies and in the observance of the discipline of a Rule.¹³⁷

¹³⁴*Lindisfarnensis insula octo miliaris se extendit per ambitum, in qua est nobile monasterium quo eximius antistes Cuthbertus, cum aliis presulibus qui eius successores dignissimi extiterant, corpore requieuit, de quibus apte dici potest quod canitur: ‘Corpora eorum in pace sepulta sunt, et uiuent nomina eorum in eternum’*; Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istiu, Hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, ed. and trans. David Rollason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), ii.5, 88. The ending quote is Eccles. 44:14.

¹³⁵*[Q]ui uidelicet locus accedente ac recedente reumate bis cotidie instar insulae maris circumluitur undis, bis renudato litore contiguus terrae redditur*; Bede, *HE*, iii.3, 218-220.

¹³⁶This early relationship between Irish monks of Iona and Lindisfarne with their ascetic monasticism and the Northumbrian kings remained strong. Therefore, it is not surprising that a monk-bishop called Cuthbert from the Irish monastery of Lindisfarne became the protector of the Northumbrian kings and people, as well as the most celebrated saint in the north. Bishop Aidan also founded the first Northumbrian female monastic house at Hereteu (Hartlepool), during the reign of king Oswiu. The Deiran royal family of Edwin provided the second abbess of this monastic house, St. Hilda. See also page 18, fn. 40 above and page 57 below.

¹³⁷*[i]llis Anglorum prouinciis, quibus regnauit Osuald, magna deuotione uerbum fidei praedicare et credentibus gratiam baptismi, quicumque sacerdotali errant gradu praediti, ministrare Construebantur ergo ecclesiae per loca, confluebant ad audiendum uerbum populi*

The closeness of relationship between king and bishop is obvious in the following passage.¹³⁸

This early example of respect and cooperation between the rulers of Northumbria and the local religious leaders would continue throughout the Anglo-Saxon era.

It was indeed a beautiful sight when he [Aidan] was preaching the gospel, to see the king acting as interpreter of the heavenly word for his ealdormen and *ðegnas*, for he [Aidan] was not completely at home in the Anglian tongue, while he [the king] had gained a perfect knowledge of Irish during the long period of exile.¹³⁹

The Priory of Lindisfarne flourished from its dedication in 635 to its final raid and destruction by Viking raiders in 875. Fondly referred to as the Holy Island, Lindisfarne received not only royal backing but also remarkably holy leadership, from its Irish founding fathers – Aidan, Finan and Colman. These first bishops of Lindisfarne hailed from Ireland, as well as the Irish monastery of Iona, founded by Columb Cille (Columba), and were great examples of leadership for later bishops such as Saint Cuthbert.¹⁴⁰

The monastery at Iona was founded by the Irish monk Saint Columb Cille, who was the great-grandson of Niall, the founder of the Ulster Uí Néill clan in Ireland. The Irish custom for royal succession recognized all male descendants of previous kings; as such Columb Cille was an eligible claimant to the Uí Néill throne. Instead Columb Cille used his religious training as a

gaudentes, donabantur munere regio possessiones et territoria ad instituenda monasteria, inbuebantur praeceptoribus Scottis paruuli Anglorum una cum maioribus studiis et obseruatione disciplinae regularis; Bede, HE, iii.3, 220.

¹³⁸The custom at Lindisfarne included the consecration of abbot as priest, at the rank of bishop, and continued as such within the community at Durham; *LDE SymD*, ii.6, 102.

¹³⁹*Vbi pulcherrimo saepe spectaculo contigit, ut euangelizante antistite, qui Anglorum linguam perfecte non nouerat, ipse rex suis ducibus ac ministries interpretis uerbi existeret caelestis, quia nimirum tam longo exilii sui tempore linguam Scottorum iam plene didicerat; Bede, HE, iii.3, 220. See also GRA Malms, i.49.4, 70-72.*

¹⁴⁰See *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. A. O. Anderson and M. O. Anderson (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1961), 67-81; Smyth, *Warlords*, 90-95.

priest and his royal lineage to found an ascetic religious center in northern Britain. Iona was staffed with other monastic Irish refugees, who followed Colum Cille into self-imposed religious missionary exile from Ireland. Almost every Iona monk raised to the status of bishop after Colum Cille also belonged to his royal family. His noble upbringing included warrior training, which endeared him to the Dál Riada kings, as he became the chosen official for their coronation ceremonies. In the same vein, Aidan and his succeeding bishops must have found kindred spirits in the Northumbrian kings. The time Oswald spent at Iona would have introduced him to the royal lineage and warrior training of the bishops, to whom he could relate and respect.

The influence of these Irish monks can be seen throughout Northumberland in their great religious artistic achievements, which continued well past the Council of Whitby in 664, usually treated as the last date for Irish influence in northern England. Alongside a daily routine of prayer, many monks were employed in stonecutting and building the Lindisfarne monastic complex in the decorative Irish style.¹⁴¹ This was no small feat considering the terrain of sand flats and water separating the island of Lindisfarne from the mainland, from which all supplies derived. In the tradition of Iona, these Celtic religious men were strong advocates of education, for the monks entering their order as well as the noble sons living in their midst.

Aidan's life was in great contrast to our modern slothfulness; all who accompanied him, whether tonsured or laymen, had to engage in some form of study, that is to say, to occupy themselves either with reading the scriptures or learning the psalms. This was the daily task of [Aidan] himself and of all who were with him, wherever they went.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹Gareth Dunleavy, *Colum's Other Island: The Irish at Lindisfarne* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 93-94.

¹⁴²*In tantum autem uita illius a nostri temporis segnitia distabat, ut omnes qui cum eo incedebant, siue adtonsi seu laici, meditari deberent, id est aut legendis scripturis aut psalmis discendis operam dare. Hoc erat cotidianum opus illius et omnium qui cum eo erant, ubicumque locorum deuenissent;* Bede, *HE*, iii.5, 226.

Other employments of the monks included acting as learned tutors or secretaries in the homes of noblemen and creating manuscripts for religious houses. Manuscripts from Irish, and later Northumbrian, scriptoria primarily were copies of the four gospels, other religious volumes such as Psalters and hymnals, works by the early Christian fathers, Roman and Irish authors, even parts of the Hebraic Torah.¹⁴³ The manuscripts created in the Irish style were filled with large decorative initials, stylized animal interlace, and scenes representing the biblical text. Irish monks intentionally crafted manuscripts as works of art, from the vellum pages to the jeweled metalwork covers, so that the presentation of the word of God would be at its best. The talented scriptorium at Lindisfarne has been forever immortalized in the extant illuminated manuscript from the eighth-century, the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, now housed in the British Library, as well as the *Echternach* and *Durham Gospels*, and possibly the *Book of Kells*.¹⁴⁴ Cotton MS. Nero D. IV, more commonly known as *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, was “written [and illuminated] in Latin by Eadfrith, bishop of Lindisfarne (698-721), bound by Æthelwald his successor (724-740), ornamented on the outside with gems and precious metals by Billfrith the anchorite, and in the tenth century provided with an interlinear translation in Anglo-Saxon by [priest] Aldred.”¹⁴⁵ Lindisfarne monastery functioned as an enterprising community from its foundation and made an indelible mark on Northumbria.

¹⁴³See *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts to the end of the twelfth century*, Printed for the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral, intro. R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: The University Press, 1939).

¹⁴⁴Higham, *Northern Counties*, 299. For further reading about the texts and scriptoria of medieval Northumbria see Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Woodbridge, England: Boydell and Brewer, 2003).

¹⁴⁵*Durham Cathedral Manuscripts*, 17.

The Lindisfarne monks imbued their religious successors, both clerics and monks, at Durham with the desire for education and scriptorium creations. As further evidence that Celtic traditions continued in Northumbria past 664, Northumbrian monks simultaneously wrote in the Celtic ‘insular’ style as well as the continental ‘uncial’ style.¹⁴⁶ The medieval library of Durham also grew over time with gifts donated by Durham’s bishops, visitors and wealthy patrons alike.¹⁴⁷ The Cathedral’s Treasury building housed the extensive medieval library.¹⁴⁸ To these monks, their traditions and dedication toward education, all Anglo-Saxon scholars are greatly indebted for the history of medieval Northumbria.

The legacy of King Oswald’s reign over England can be marked by the completion of the commissioned church of York, the building of Lindisfarne monastery and stability in his kingdom at the death of King Cædwalla of Gwynedd. In 642 Oswald was defeated and slain by the mighty Mercian king Penda.¹⁴⁹ The career of Oswald, the warrior *bretwalda*, ended with his remains being disbursed about the northern kingdom. William of Malmesbury recounts his death at the hands of King Penda of Mercia as follows.

So it came about that after he was slain, his arms with the hands and his head were cut off by his conqueror with insatiable rage, and fastened on a stake. The dead trunk as I have

¹⁴⁶*Durham Cathedral Manuscripts*, 13. Benedict Biscop introduced the ‘uncial’ style of writing into the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow which he founded in 674 and 681 respectively.

¹⁴⁷King Æthelstan of Wessex presented the volume, Cotton MS. Otho B. IX., *The Four Gospels*, to St. Cuthbert’s Church at Chester-le-Street in 934; *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts*, 25. While passing through Northumbria, the king made obeisance at the shrine of St. Cuthbert, for whom he had a personal devotion.

¹⁴⁸The Treasury inventory resides today in the University of Durham archives.

¹⁴⁹*Tigernach Annals*, ed. W. Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, vol. 17 (1896), 185; *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, ed. Denis Murphy (Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1896), 103; *Historia Brittonum, Genealogies*, ed. T. Mommsen, in M.G. H., *Auctores*, vol. 13 (1894), 208.

said being laid to rest in the calm bosom of the earth, turned to its native dust; but the arms and hands by God's power remain without corruption. These were placed by his brother Oswiu in a shrine at a place called Bamburgh by the Angles, and shown there as a miracle . . . The head was then buried by this same brother at Lindisfarne, but it is said now to be preserved at Durham in the arms of the blessed Cuthbert. As for the remaining bones of his body, Queen Osthryth, wife of Æthelred king of the Mercians and daughter of King Oswiu, was moved by affection for her uncle to wish to transfer them to her monastery of Bardney, which is in the province of the Mercians not far from Lincoln.¹⁵⁰

King Oswald's second career as saint began with his relics performing miracles at the monastery of Bardney, and from that time many newly constructed churches and monasteries throughout Northumberland were dedicated to him.

Oswiu (642-671) assumed rule of Bernicia in the wake of his brother Oswald, while their cousin Oswine (642/3-651), son of King Osric, ruled Deira. Following Germanic tradition, marriage alliances between adversaries also helped solidify peace and recognize the power of the kings of Bernicia and Deira. Oswiu first married princess Fina, daughter of Irish highking Colmám Rímid.¹⁵¹ Oswiu's second marriage joined him to the British royal house of Rheged, through princess Riemmelth, great-grand daughter of King Urien.¹⁵² This occurred either while exiled or during the reign of his brother Oswald, most likely the second. This afforded the

¹⁵⁰*Itaque defuncti brachia cum manibus et capite insatiabili uictoris ira desecta et stipiti appensa. Et corpus quidem, ut dixi, totum placido naturae sinu confotum in terreum elementum abiit; brachia uero cum manibus auctore Deo, teste ueraci historico, inuiolata durant. Ea a fratre Oswio apud Bebbanburg (urbem ita uocant Angli) compositi scrinio, monstrata miraculo idem asserit . . . Caput, tunc ab eodem germano Lindisfarni humatum, nunc Dunelmi inter brachia beatissimi Cuthberti teneri aiunt. Ossa reliqui corporis cum regina Ostrida, uxor Ethelredi Regis Mertiorum, filia Regis Oswii, caritate patruī ducta Bardenio monasterio suo, quod est in regione Mertiorum non longe a Lindocolina ciuitate; GRA Malms, i.49.10, 75. William of Malmesbury further states that the relics of Oswald performed miracles at Bardney, but later were transferred on to Gloucester for protection from Viking raids.*

¹⁵¹See Table 2.2 'Marriage connections between Northumbrian, British Rheged, Ireland'.

¹⁵²For a political discussion on the marriage to Riemmelth, see Dumville, 'The Origins of Northumbria,' 220.

opportunity for the stronger Bernicia to absorb Rheged, as an inheritance.¹⁵³ Oswiu's next marriage, which must have occurred after he gained the throne of Bernicia, also had dynastic political implications. By marrying Eanflæd of Deira, daughter of the *bretwalda* Edwin and Æthelberga of Kent, Oswiu linked himself with the Kentish royal family of *bretwalda* Æthelbert I, his wife's grandfather.¹⁵⁴ These types of prestigious marriages proved the might and recognition of the new kings in the region.

Also in that same alliance tradition, King Eanfrith (633-634) of Bernicia, brother of kings Oswald and Oswiu, married a Pictish princess, Enfret. Their son Tolargain was therefore heir to the kingdom of Bernicia and a claimant to the Pictish throne.¹⁵⁵ During Oswiu's rule in Northumbria, the Pict king died and Oswiu saw his nephew ascend the throne as his birthright.¹⁵⁶ Quite possibly, Tolargain recognized his uncle as 'overking' and that upon Tolargain's death Oswiu assumed control of his Pict kingdom. The sources are silent about a Pictish king after Tolargain for a space of years which coincide with the dates of Oswiu's rule in Northumbria, making it probable that he also ruled the Pict kingdom. Bede recorded the tradition of matrilineal succession amongst the Picts:

As the Picts had no wives, they asked the Irish for some; the latter consented to give them women, only on condition that, in all cases of doubt, they should elect their kings from the female royal line rather than the male; and it is well known that the custom has been observed among the Picts to this day.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Dumville, 'The Origins of Northumbria,' 220.

¹⁵⁴ For the marriage to Eanfled, see Bede, *HE*, iii. 15, 260.

¹⁵⁵ See Hudson, *Kings*, 8-13 for further discussion on Pict succession traditions and, 11-12 for the succession of Tolargain specifically. See Table 2.2 'Marriage connections between Northumbrian, British Rheged, Ireland'.

¹⁵⁶ Smyth, *Warlords*, 119-121.

Following the retreat of the Romans, the Strathclyde Britons had emerged as the strongest nation amidst the Scots and Picts. They exerted a political and military hold over the Picts and frequently attacked the Scots. During Oswiu's term as *bretwalda* the Dál Riada Scots accepted his protection from the stronger kingdom of Strathclyde. It was in 653, after a shift in power allowed the Picts to throw off the overlordship of Strathclyde, that Oswiu's nephew Tolargain became king of the Picts.

The news of Oswiu's military alliances must have been alarmed Oswine. Peace between Deira and Bernicia did not last and battles for supremacy in Northumbria ensued. It is probable that Mercia interfered in Northumbrian politics directly at this point, siding with Oswine of Deira in an attempt to thwart the growth of Oswiu's power. If that was the case, then Penda exerted himself as ally to Deira, but also as overking to Oswine who assumed the position of client king to someone with a stronger military coalition. In this view, Mercia appears as a powerful kingdom over client kingdoms and the only serious threat to Oswiu's goal of making Northumbria the powerhouse kingdom in greater Britain.¹⁵⁸ Finally in 651, men once loyal to Oswine betrayed his presence in a country manor to Oswiu's forces.¹⁵⁹ After Oswine's untimely death at the hands of Oswiu, Oswald's son Æthelwald (651-655) ruled Deira, as Oswiu's son and heir Ecgrith was imprisoned in Mercia. After Penda's repeated raids into Northumbria, Oswiu bribed him with,

¹⁵⁷*Cumque uxores Picti non habentes peterent a Scottis ea solum condicione dare, consenserunt ut ubi res ueniret in dubium magis de feminea regum prosapia quam de masculine regem sibi eligerent; quod usque hodie apud Pictos constat esse seruatum;* Bede, *HE*, i.1, 18.

¹⁵⁸Higham, *English Empire*, 66-68.

¹⁵⁹*GRA Malms*, i.50.2, 76.

an incalculable and incredible store of royal treasures and gifts as the price of peace, on condition that he [Penda] would return home and cease to devastate, or rather utterly destroy, the kingdoms under his [Oswiu] rule.¹⁶⁰

In fact the two opponents met on the battlefield near *Winwæd* in 655, where Oswiu and his son Ealhfrith fought against Penda who received preparatory aid from Oswiu's nephew Æthelwald of Deira.¹⁶¹ Following the death of Penda at this battle, along with Mercia's allied kings and *æthelingas*, and subjecting his son-in-law Peada of Mercia to Northumbria, Oswiu purportedly acted as the seventh *bretwalda*.¹⁶²

At this time Oswiu slew Penda at *Winwæd* field and thirty royal children [*æthelingas*] with him and some of them were kings and one there was Æthelhere, brother of Anna, king of the East Angles.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰*innumera et maiora quam credi potest ornamenta regia uel donaria in pretium pacis largiturum, dummodo ille domum rediret et prouincias regni eius usque ad internicionem uastare desineret*; Bede, *HE*, iii.24, 288-290.

¹⁶¹*Winwæd* was most likely a tributary of the Humber.

¹⁶²Oswiu inherited from Edwin and Oswald control over East Anglia. Due to the defeat of Penda and the marriage alliances of his son Ealhfrith to Cyneburh, daughter of Penda, and his daughter Ealhflæd to Peada, son and heir of Penda, Oswiu controlled Mercia; Bede, *HE*, iii.21, 278-280. William of Malmesbury claims that Oswiu either directly controlled and collected tribute from the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms or was supreme over those who did; *GRA Malms*, i.50.3-51, 76-80. Bede claims that Oswiu also claimed some control over the southern Pict kingdoms; Bede, *HE*, iii. 25, 294-308. This may be true if one assumes that Oswiu claimed the throne of his nephew Tolargain, king of the Picts, upon his death.

¹⁶³*Her Oswiu ofslah Pendan on Winwidfelda and xxx cynebearna mid him and þa wæron sume ciningas ðere sum wæs Æðelhere Annan broðer East Engla ciningas*; ASC-E, 654. 'The battle of Penda, king of the Saxons; and he fell in it, with thirty kings. Oswiu was the conqueror'; *TA*, in *ESSH*, 194; 'The seventh *bretwalda* was Oswiu, [Oswald's] brother, who controlled the kingdom for some time within almost the same boundaries; and for the most part subdued the nations also of the Picts and Scots, which hold the northern territories of Britain, and made them tributary'; *Chronicle of Holyrood*, ed. C. W. Bouterwek, in *Monachi anonymi Scoti Chronicon Anglo-Scoticum* (Elberfeld, 1863); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*, 11.

In thanksgiving for success at *Winwæd* Oswiu donated twelve royal estates, six in Bernicia and six in Deira, as foundations of monasteries that were to be perpetually free from military service to the kingdom. At one of these sites, Bishop Aidan and Abbess Hilda of Hartlepool founded Whitby Abbey for female monks, on the eastern coast between the Tees River and the Yorkshire Wolds. The second abbess of Whitby, Ælflæd, was a daughter of Oswiu whom he dedicated to the religious life also in thanks for his victory in 655. She used her royal status to further endow the abbey during her tenure.¹⁶⁴

In 664 Oswiu oversaw the Synod at Whitby, which established the date of Easter and other Church issues according to the practice of Rome within the Celtic churches of Northumberland.¹⁶⁵ A great gathering of important figures presided at this northern ecclesiastical assembly. Those who supported the religious rites of the Celtic Church included King Oswiu, Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne and his priests, Bishop Agilbert of Dorchester and his priests, Abbess Hilda of Whitby and Bishop Cedd of East Saxony. The opposition, who desired to institute the rites of the Roman church, was led by Oswiu's wife and queen Eanflæd,

¹⁶⁴Bede, *HE*, iii.24, 288-294. The archeological findings from the monasteries of Hartlepool and Whitby provide evidence of the importance of religious sites within Northumbria and their continued connections with the royal families. These two sites closely resemble those of contemporary royal estates across Northumbria, containing items of first rate quality and material used for personal adornment and daily activities; Rollason, *Northumbria*, 183. Rollason cites the archaeological reports of R. Daniels, 'The Anglo-Saxon monastery at Church Close, Hartlepool,' *Archaeological Journal*, no. 145 (1988), 158-210; Charles Peers and C. A. Raleigh Radford, 'The Saxon monastery at Whitby,' *Archaeologia*, no. 89 (1943), 27-88. Some donations made on behalf of the church structure included: gold and jewels donated for manuscript production, as well as tapestries, candelabra, and rich decorations for the church sanctuaries. Therefore, daughters of royal and noble families obviously did endow their religious houses of entrance, not only providing for their subsistence but in fact living a mostly unchanged lifestyle within the monastic walls. One can imagine that a visiting secular relative would have been extremely comfortable.

¹⁶⁵Other issues debated included: form of tonsure, baptismal rites and ordination procedures for the consecration of bishops, renewed condemnation of the Pelagian heresy.

their son Ealhfrith (?655-?664) as the sub-king of Deira, and Abbot Wilfrid.¹⁶⁶ The Synod concluded as King Oswiu decided to oversee the implementation of Roman church practices within the religious centers of his realm. Even though he personally embraced the Celtic rites and monks of Dál Riada and Northumbria, he was swayed by internal politics to enforce the introduction of Roman rites into his kingdom. The position of Queen Eanflæd and sub-king Ealhfrith against King Oswiu on this issue was a carefully planned political strategy that threatened civil war in Northumbria. As sub-king of Deira and grandson of Edwin of Deira, Ealhfrith directly commanded the military forces and most likely the allegiance of all Deira. In the event that Oswiu had sided for the Celtic rites, Ealhfrith was prepared to oppose his father, with the blessing of Abbot Wilfrid of Ripon.¹⁶⁷ For Queen Eanflæd this may have been an issue of religious style preference, as she was baptized under and practiced the Roman rites. To Ealhfrith this was a political issue, which could have provided his chance for early kingship of Bernicia at the removal of his father. This situation should be viewed as a dynastic division that threatened to split the Northumbrian kingdom in two. Therefore Oswiu chose to avoid civil war with his son and to maintain a united kingdom, rather than retain the supremacy of the Celtic Church in his realm.¹⁶⁸

After Ealhfrith (?655-?664) had become sub-king of Deira under his father King Oswiu, he founded the abbey of Ripon within a region formerly controlled by Celtic monks from Iona.

¹⁶⁶Bede, *HE*, ii, 19, 198-202.

¹⁶⁷Wilfrid began his career as Abbot of Ripon, later was elected Archbishop of York, lost that position and was assigned as bishop to Dorchester. *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, Bertram Colgrave, ed. and trans. (Cambridge: The University Press, 1927; reprint, 1985), 671-678 and also *Willelmi Malmesbiriensis Monachi Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London: Longman & Co., 1870), iii.100, 214 and iii.100, 217.

He then assisted abbot Wilfrid of Ripon in forcing all Celtic religious men around Ripon to return to Iona, leaving Roman church officials in charge.¹⁶⁹ This action clearly demonstrated the Roman leanings of King Ealhfrith, which he inherited from his mother queen Eanflæd, a princess of Kent.¹⁷⁰ His successor Ecgfrith (sub-king of Deira, ?664-670) is mostly remembered for a

¹⁶⁸Smyth, *Warlords*, 118-120.

¹⁶⁹Alfred Smyth rightly attributes Ealhfrith with aiding the Romanizing efforts of Bishop Wilfrid in Rheged, but I believe he assigns wrong dates to his rule. Smyth gives the dates 685-704 to Ealhfrith, which in fact belong to his half-brother, King Ealdfrith of Northumbria; Smyth, *Warlords*, 25-27. The closeness of the name spellings for these two brothers makes for confusion and the need for careful use of the sources. William of Malmesbury records Ealdfrith as the eldest child of King Oswiu from his relationship with the Irish princess Fina and therefore illegitimate. Accordingly, the ‘nobility’ or *ðegnas* of Northumbria found Ealdfrith ‘unworthy of the government’ and this provided an explanation for the younger son, Ecgfrith, immediately succeeding Oswiu as king. William of Malmesbury further records that Ealdfrith went into exile in Ireland and Iona during Ecgfrith’s reign. While in Ireland he learned poetry, possibly at Clonard or Clonmacnois, and three compositions in Irish attributed to him are still extant. While at Iona, he further studied under Bishop Adamnan. Due to his instructions with the monks, the Northumbrians chose him for king after Ecgfrith in spite of his illegitimacy; *GRA Malms* i.3, 52-53; Bede *HE*, iv.26, 426-430. Alternately, Alfred Smyth shows the legitimacy of Ealdfrith’s birth. Smyth discusses the three marriages of King Oswiu, of which the first to Fina, a daughter of Highking Colmán Rímid of Ireland, produced Ealdfrith. Smyth, *Warlords* 22, Table 1. In my opinion it was more likely that Ecgfrith was first backed by the Northumbrian *ðegnas* over Ealdfrith due to Ecgfrith’s mother being Eanflæd, the daughter of King Edwin. To the Northumbrian *ðegnas*, the son of an Anglian princess might have been more acceptable than that of an Irish princess. It also follows that another way to favor Ecgfrith would have been to discredit or not acknowledge King Oswiu’s marriage to Fina as legitimate, as done by the monk William of Malmesbury. Based on the Irish parentage of his mother and time spent amongst Irish populations during exile, it is improbable to link Ealdfrith with an anti-Irish program, such as that of his half-brother Ealhfrith and sister-in-law Cyneburh. Therefore, the dates Smyth should have assigned to King Ealhfrith of Deira are (?655-?664); Cheney, *A Handbook of Dates*, 24. Ealdfrith’s own dynastic marriage was to Cuthburh, sister of King Ine of Wessex. See Table 3.1 ‘Kings of Wessex.’

¹⁷⁰Smyth, *Warlords*, 22-27. A dedication inscription on the Bewcastle High Cross includes the name of Cyneburh, possibly the wife of King Ealhfrith. The last century has witnessed serious debate over King Ealhfrith’s name, which was found on the stone in the nineteenth century thought by some to be a modern addition. Scholars who accept the presence of the king’s name as genuine also connect the cross with his reign in Deira and his efforts on behalf of Abbot Wilfrid in ousting the Iona monks in favor of monks who followed Roman Church traditions. For more information, see Douglas Mac Lean, ‘The Date of the Ruthwell

lack of battlefield skill, which lost him Mercia to Penda's son Æthelred, and for promoting Cuthbert to Bishop of Lindisfarne.¹⁷¹ He made two dynastic marriages, first to Æthelthryth, daughter of King Anna of East Anglia, and then to Eormenburh, sister-in-law to King Centwine of Wessex. After becoming king, Ecgfrith assisted the same abbot Wilfrid to strip the highland Rheged (Briton) churches of all treasures and ensconce them at Ripon.¹⁷² Events such as these could only lead to insulting the Britons and ensuring more anger and animosity toward the Northumbrian Angles.¹⁷³ As long as these differences remained strong, rebellion and violence between Britons and Angles continued to be a constant threat and problem.

Upon Oswiu's death, Abbess Ælflæd buried her father and king at Whitby where she could preside over the prayers for his soul. After Oswiu no Northumbrian king claimed authority or tribute over the southern Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. I believe that early Northumberland functioned as part of larger Britain only when her own kings were *bretwalda*, and even then on the limited basis of tribute collection and the protection of Northumbria from invasion and raids. This fact will be elaborated on in the following two chapters. The cultures and laws of Northumbria developed separately from the southern kingdoms, due mostly to the lack over time of cohesive oversight or government from one central place.¹⁷⁴ Succeeding kings of England,

Cross,' *The Ruthwell Cross: Papers from the colloquium sponsored by the Index of Christian Art*, (Princeton University, Department of Art and Archaeology, 1992), 57-61.

¹⁷¹ Ecgfrith also later became king of Bernicia (670-685).

¹⁷² British churches in the kingdom of Rheged were plundered and confiscated to endow the monastic church of Ripon in Yorkshire. See *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, 671-678 and also *GPA Malms*, iii.100, 214 and iii.100, 217.

¹⁷³ Smyth, *Warlords*, 34-35.

¹⁷⁴ Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 11-12.

whether Anglo-Saxon or Viking, never truly exerted control over Northumbria.¹⁷⁵ Dorothy Whitelock further claims that it was ‘essential’ for the eleventh-century Northumbrian earls to be strong leaders, as they often had to face their enemies from Scotland and Cumbria without royal assistance.¹⁷⁶ In this dissertation my argument goes a bit further. The tenth and eleventh-century earls of Northumbria maintained their identity and authority as regional rulers as the Saxons and Vikings claimed the kingship of England. These earls were autonomous, unlike the contemporary Yorkshire earls who succumbed to Saxon appointment and laws.¹⁷⁷

During the reign of King Ecgfrith (670-685), King Oswiu’s son and successor in Bernicia, the monk Benedict Biscop founded the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow. Before the age of twenty-five, Benedict served King Oswiu in the capacity of *ðegn*, a warrior and attendant. In his twenty-fifth year, Benedict accepted a land grant from the king in return for loyal service, which also raised him to the status of *gesið*. At this time the Northumbrian noble chose to change professions and lifestyles and took monastic vows.¹⁷⁸

During his early monastic career Benedict made several visits to monasteries in the land of the Franks and to Rome. He encountered various types of church architecture and art, especially stained-glass, which differed greatly from the simpler architectural style of Northumbria, such as rectangular halls of timber with plain glass.¹⁷⁹ In the course of his

¹⁷⁵Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 5; Whitelock, ‘Dealings,’ 70.

¹⁷⁶Whitelock, ‘Dealings,’ 85.

¹⁷⁷See chapter 4 below.

¹⁷⁸Rollason, *Northumbria*, 164, 186-7.

¹⁷⁹Lloyd and Jennifer Laing, *Early English Art and Architecture, Archaeology and Society* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1996), 93-95. See also H. M. and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, vols. I-II, 1965, vol. III, 1978 (Cambridge: the University Press).

religious career Benedict found himself appointed abbot of St. Augustine's monastery at Canterbury. He resigned this position to Abbot Adrian with the approval of Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, to return to his northern homeland and personal property.

When Benedict returned to Northumbria to found Wearmouth on the River Wear and Jarrow on the River Tyne, he imported Frankish masons and glaziers to create the monastic complexes.¹⁸⁰ The resulting religious sites sported new architectural style and artistic elements which fostered further building campaigns in Northumbria of similar design: stone construction with a single course of rounded windows, window glass at Jarrow, single bell towers with upper belfry openings, a single western entrance and simple eastern sanctuary. The libraries of these monastic houses were enriched with a quantity of manuscripts, all collected on Benedict's travels, and later produced their own masterpieces, as well, such as the *Codex Amiatinus*.¹⁸¹

Early Northumbrian monastic sites also included defensive features, mostly unique to border region churches. Specialized architectural elements included defensive walls surrounding the site, fortified gatehouses, tower entrances eight feet above ground level, even arrow-slit wall openings flanking entrance arcades.¹⁸² Together these precautionary additions to Northumbrian

¹⁸⁰*GRA Malms*, i.54.3, 82; Stephenson, *HKE*, 19; Bede, *HE*, iii.24-25, 288-310. St. Wilfred also utilized similar craftsmen when building the monastery at Hexham. For monastic site locations, see map in Rollason, *Northumbria*, xxvii.

¹⁸¹Higham, *Northern Counties*, 299. For discussion on the successful agricultural program at the joint monastic complex and the repercussions for prolific manuscript production, see James Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1986), 82 and his reference in fn. 58.

¹⁸²Christopher J. Brooke, *Safe Sanctuaries: Security and Defense in Anglo-Scottish Border Churches 1290-1690* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2000), 5-9. The stones utilized in Anglo-Saxon church construction predominantly were scavenged from local Roman forts and domestic buildings.

religious complexes provided safety to the enclosed community in the face of Scottish military campaigns and raids, from the ninth century into the fourteenth century.

When founded, the two monastic houses of Wearmouth and Jarrow were institutions of solitude, prayer, and education for Northumbrian males drawn to the ascetic life. Many notable Northumbrian youths spent their lives within those walls, most notable of course being the historian monk Bede.¹⁸³ These two monastic communities gained in reputation so much that by 716 they boasted a total of 600 monks in residence. Along with the many other smaller monastic houses in Northumberland, as well as the Irish monastery at Lindisfarne, Wearmouth and Jarrow attest to the strong presence of Christianity in the north from about the middle of the seventh century. These monastic centers influenced Northumbria by spreading education, introducing new styles of architecture from the continent and art from Ireland, increasing the frequency of religious practice, as well as building political and familial connections with the local kings and nobles.

Northumbrian kings exerted their authority to appoint and assign bishops, even to dictate the number of bishops within the kingdom. In 678 Bishop Wilfrid of York fell out of favor with King Ecgfrith resulting in the bishop's exile, which he turned into a trip to Rome. The king chose to replace him with not one, but two monks promoted to the rank of bishop at the king's request.

In the same year there arose a dissension between King Ecgfrith and the most reverend bishop Wilfrid with the result that the bishop was driven from his See while two bishops were put in his place to rule over the Northumbrian race; one was called Bosa, who administered the kingdom of Deira, and Eata, who presided over Bernicia. The former had his Episcopal See in York and the latter at Hexham or else in Lindisfarne.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³Bede died in 735 at his beloved Jarrow where he was first interred. His bones were later stolen (c.1020), translated and reburied at Durham Cathedral near St. Cuthbert.

Occasionally the kingdom of Northumbria could be sub-divided along the old Deiran and Bernician lines for political reasons. In this case, King Ecgfrith and Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury replaced a corrupt, politically oriented bishop with two bishops, thereby reducing the amount of authority held by the leaders of the Church in Northumbria. Depending on the needs of the kings, and later earls, of Northumbria the region could be welded together for great power or separated in order to restrict power, as in this case with the bishops.

Ecgfrith, along with Archbishop Theodore, endowed lands within the city of York and surrounding villas to Bishop Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (685-687). The most famous of these land gifts is the vill of Crayke.¹⁸⁵ Ecgfrith's death and the resulting loss of land were recorded in the *Tigernach Annals*.

The battle of Dunnichen took place on the twentieth day of the month of May, on Saturday; and there Ecgfrith, Oswiu's son, king of the Saxons, was killed, after completing the fifteenth year of his reign, with a great company of his soldiers, by Brude, son of Bile, the king of Fortriu.¹⁸⁶

The northern borders of Northumbria changed as a result of the battle. The Picts of Fortriu reclaimed their lands north of the Firth of Forth, as the Britons of Strathclyde and the Scots of Dál Riada took the opportunity to rebel against Northumbrian overlordship.

From this time the hopes and strength of the kingdom of Angles began to 'ebb and fall away'. For the Picts recovered their own land which the Angles had formerly held, while

¹⁸⁴*Quo etiam anno orta inter ipsum regem Ecgfridum et reuerentissimum antistitem Wilfridum dissensione, pulsus est idem antistes a sedesui episcopatus et duo in locum eius substituti spiscopi, qui Nordanhumbrorum genti praeessent: Bosa uidelicet, qui Derorum, et Eata, qui Berniciorum prouinciam gubernaret, hic in ciuitate Eboraci, ille in Hagustaldensi siue in Lindisfarnensi ecclesia cathedram habens episcopalem; Bede, HE, iv.12, 370. See also GP Malmes, iii.100, 220. William of Malmesbury relates that Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury divided Wilfrid's Bishopric into three separate dioceses: Eata at Hexham (Lindisfarne), Bosa at York (including Ripon), and another at Lindsey, south of the Humber.*

¹⁸⁵*LDE SymD*, i.9, 42-46.

¹⁸⁶*TA*, vol. 12, 209; trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*, 129.

the *Scoti* [of Dál Riada] who lived in Britain and some part of the Briton nation [Strathclyde] recovered their independence.¹⁸⁷

This chapter has explored the drastic transformation of Northumberland in the wake of the fifth-century Roman withdrawal. Old British kingdoms reformed with self-rule and fought valiantly to prevent an Anglian settlement from becoming permanent. Despite their efforts the British found themselves neighbors to an increasingly powerful Anglian kingdom that continually ate away at British territory. Ancient Pictish kingdoms north of Lothian also found their southern borders threatened by the Angles of Bernicia. On a regional level the early period of Anglo-Saxon Northumberland was one of power struggles for survival and supremacy along with shifting territorial boundaries. Amidst the Anglian kingdoms themselves dynastic wars ensued, *æthelings* vied for their thrones and were driven into exile, royal daughters sealed marriage alliances in the tradition of ‘peace-weavers.’ The outcome was a tremendously strong kingdom of Northumbria, which claimed dominance over much of Britain for the space of three kingships. Two newcomers threatened Northumbria’s power in the ninth century, but its foundation served to support the core of the kingdom through the changes in the immediate future.

¹⁸⁷*Ex quo tempore spes coepit et uirtus regni Anglorum ‘fluere ac retro sublapsa referri’. Nam et Picti terram possessionis suae quam tenuerunt Angli, et Scotti qui erant in Britannia, Brettonum quoque pars nonnulla libertatem receperunt, Bede, HE, iv.26, 428.*

CHAPTER 3

NINTH AND TENTH-CENTURY NORTHUMBRIA AND NEIGHBORS

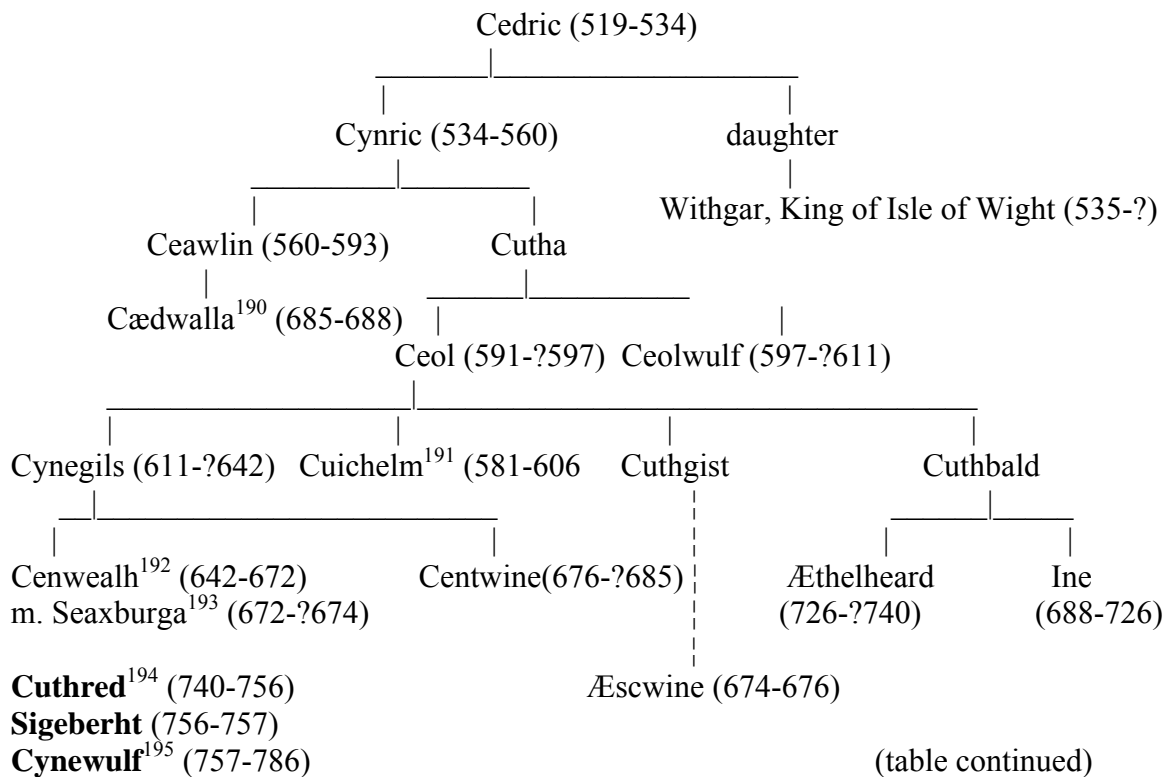
This chapter outlines the changes to the kingdom of Northumbria as a result of the ninth-century emergence of the Scottish kingdom and the Danish Viking invasions. The advent of the Scottish kingdom to the north introduced border tensions and therefore a new set of military and political challenges to the Northumbrians. The Viking kingdom centered at York led to the creation of Yorkshire as a separate kingdom within Northumberland, as well as severing the region from Anglian Northumbrian rule. The contemporary sources point to the absorption of Northumbria into the southern English kingdom, beginning with the reign of Ælfred.¹⁸⁸ It is all too easy for scholars to accept the ambiguous terminology in the sources for the regions of Northumberland, leading to a misunderstanding of which areas were actually ruled by West Saxons and which were not. This chapter will address the terminology and assist the readers' comprehension of it within the context of the source passages and the history of regional events as they unfolded. Most importantly this chapter will demonstrate that throughout the ninth and early tenth centuries, the kingdom of Northumbria continued to be strongly ruled by Northumbrian earls rather than the English kings from south of the Humber River. It remained so until William II's rule in 1087.

Many elements combined to give the local Northumbrian rulers authority over their realm. From early centuries, a crucial element was the connection with powerful leaders north of the Tweed. Early ninth-century Scotland was home to the Irish *Scoti* in

¹⁸⁸See Table 3.1 'Kings of Wessex'.

TABLE 3.1¹⁸⁹

KINGS OF WESSEX (WEST SAXONS)



¹⁸⁹This table was compiled and arranged by Ms. Hayes especially for this dissertation, predominantly using primary sources.

¹⁹⁰Cædwalla ruled for approximately two years before undertaking a pilgrimage to Rome for baptism by Pope Sergius. In his absence the rule passed on permanently to Ine.

¹⁹¹Cuichelm and Cynegils were both baptised by Augustine of Canterbury.

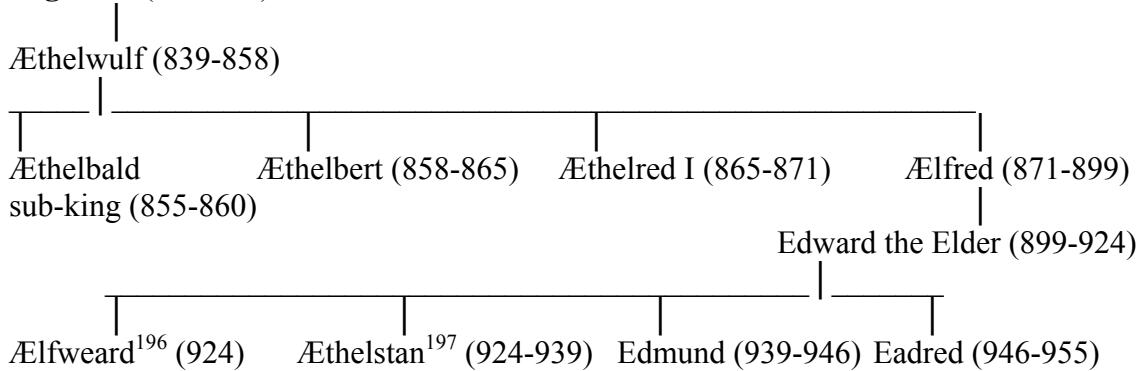
¹⁹²Cenwealh built Winchester Church, the royal burial place of Wessex kings.

¹⁹³Seaxburga, queen of Cenwealh, ruled effectively after him. William of Malmesbury reports, "She levied new forces, preserved the old in their duty; ruled her subjects with moderation, and overawed her enemies: in short, she conducted all things in such a manner, that no difference was discernible except that of her sex;" *GRA Malms*, i.2, 30.

¹⁹⁴The use of **bold** for some kings in this table denotes an unknown familial relationship, as found in the *ASC*. A vertical dashed line represents direct lineage over more than one generation.

Beorhtric (786-802) m. a Mercian princess, daughter of King Offa

Ecgberht (802-839)



¹⁹⁵Cyneheard, a disloyal *ðegn*, killed King Cynewulf and was killed in return by Cynewulf's loyal thegns. This famous story, recounted in the *ASC 786*, survives in gripping prosaic language in *MS 173*, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

¹⁹⁶Ælfweard ruled for sixteen days, from 17 July to his death on 2 August 924. He was elected king in Mercia.

¹⁹⁷In 927 Æthelstan the Great consolidated his rule over all the Anglo-Saxon kings, effectively becoming the first true overking of the Anglo-Saxons, also referred to as 'king of the English.' See pages 95-97 below for discussion of this event and Table 3.3 'Kings of Wessex and England.'

Dál Riada¹⁹⁸ on the western edge of the mainland, including Iona and Argyll, and the seven Pict kingdoms, as well as the British kingdoms of Gododdin and Strathclyde. In County Antrim the Dál Riada kings had recognized the Uí Néill king as their Irish overking and continued to do so through the ninth century, even after their relocation to northern Britain. At the famous battle in 603 at *Degsastan*, the Scottish king Áedán mac Gabháin fought with King Æthelfrith of Bernicia over the lands of Lothian and lost. In this period, Northumbria extended past the river Tweed to the Firth of Forth, encompassing the region of Lothian, formerly the British kingdom of Gododdin. By 842 Cináed I mac Alpín (Kenneth MacAlpin) succeeded in defeating the native Picts of the central and northern regions of north Britain.¹⁹⁹ At this time, the Scots under Cináed I moved their royal residence from the western Argyll region eastward to Forteviot in Lothian, the royal stronghold of the southern Pict kings.²⁰⁰ As with the Britons, the Scots

¹⁹⁸See map of the early Scottish kingdom in A. A. M. Duncan, *The Kingship of the Scots, 842-1292* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 2002), viii-xi. Dal means *meadow or valley*. Bede attributes the Irish leader Reuda with founding an Irish kingdom in Argyll and the surrounding islands, which they gained either by *uel amicitia uel ferro* (friendly treaty or by the sword); Bede, *HE*, i.1, 18. Thereby the place name Dál Riada is to be interpreted as the valley of Reuda.

¹⁹⁹Duncan, *Kingship*, 8-9; *Cronica Canonicorum Beate Marie Huntingdonie* (*Chronicle of the Canons of Huntingdon*), in *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and other early memorials of Scottish history*, ed. W. F. Skene, (Edinburgh: H. M. General register house, 1867), 209; trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*, 230. See genealogy tables in Duncan, *Kingship*, 345; Smyth, *Warlords*, 220-221, table 4; G. W. S. Barrow, *Kingship and Unity*, 180; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 40, table 3; Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, 223, table 18. For more information regarding the succession rules and government style of the Scots, see *CGS*, i.144.

²⁰⁰Duncan, *Kingship*, 10-11, 14-15. Scone, another Pict royal center, was taken over by the Scots in the reigns of Cináed I mac Alpín's great-grandson. At Scone, the 'Hill of Credulity' served as the ritual site for Scottish coronations as it had for the Picts.

also continued to follow the Celtic church rites even after moving eastward and relocating their religious center from Iona to St. Andrews and Dunkeld.²⁰¹

Following several *wicinga* (pirate, Viking) attacks, in 807 a majority of the Iona monks moved to Kells Monastery in Ireland while some stayed in Scotland. The separation of the religious center at Iona from the new royal sites of the Scots after 842 is the most politically significant change to be noted. In 849 all reliquaries including that of Iona's founder, Columb Cille, were brought to Kells. Columb Cille's relics were then divided and part were brought by King Cináed I mac Alpín to the new royal church at Dunkeld in Fife. The geographic separation from Iona also ended the close relationship between the Scottish kings and religious leaders remaining at Iona. The abbot of Iona and most of the monks returned to Ireland and resettled at Kells Monastery, leaving a small contingent and a new abbot at Iona.²⁰² Due to the close connection between the Dál Riada kings and Iona, the abbot of Iona had always presided over the crowning ceremony of the kings at the monastery.²⁰³ By 906, for the accession of Causantín II as

By 960, Cináed I's descendants had added the royal fortress of Edinburgh to its growing kingdom.

²⁰¹*The Chronicle of the Kings of Scotland*, version A, trans. A. O. Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, i, 2-4; also see Dauvit Broun, 'Dunkeld and the origin of Scottish identity,' *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots*, eds. Dauvit Broun and Thomas Owen Clancy (Edinburgh: University Press, 1999), 95-114. See map in Duncan, *Kingship*, viii-ix.

²⁰²Smyth, *Warlords*, 175. For further reading, see Hudson, *Kings*, 64-66.

²⁰³In this way the abbots of Iona exhibited authority in the secular realm. They accepted the coronation responsibility from the pre-Christian Irish *brehons*. The pre-Christian ceremony consisted of the candidate being robed in white and barefoot, who then stood on a carved rock or was seated on a stone throne. His family lineage was pronounced by a *fili*, a bard who also was responsible for maintaining genealogical records, or a *brehon*, a member of the professional class of men educated in legal matters

king of Scots, Scone became the designation for the royal king-making ceremony. The religious complex at St. Andrew's was built by the Scottish royal family. The Church at St. Andrew's became the new religious center in the east for the Scots and was staffed with Celtic monks from Iona. It also became the new burial place of the Scottish kings, as Iona had been before the move. The Bishop of St. Andrew's presided over the royal coronation ceremony. Through defeat and marriage alliances, the Picts became Christianized Scots and Cináed I mac Alpín ruled an impressive area of northern Britain.²⁰⁴

The house of Bamburgh, the royal family descended from Ida, built and maintained ties to the family of Cináed I mac Alpín. This powerful Bamburgh family shared marriage alliances with and offered political support to their Scottish neighbors. However, the Scots also forced the Northumbrians into occasional border struggles between the Tweed River and the Forth. According to the *Scottish Chronicle* Cináed I attacked Bernician strongholds in *Saxonia*, referring to Northumbrian lands, at least six times during his rule. The places of attack were listed as Dunbar, a royal Bernician fortress which he burned, and *Marlos* [*Malros*, Melrose], the early Northumbrian abbey of Melrose from which St. Cuthbert hailed. Hudson correctly identifies both locations

and secular traditions, who also presented the king with the symbolic staff of royal office. The kings of Dál Riada brought the seated version of this ceremony with them from Ireland and it became the famous coronation ceremony officiated at Scone after Cináed mac Alpín relocated the royal center near there in the mid-ninth century. Wormald, 'Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship,' 158-159. See Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988) for further reading on *filið* and *brehons*.

²⁰⁴Smyth, *Warlords*, 116. Marriage alliances with the Picts aided the merging together of these two cultures as the heirs to the throne were from both houses, e.g. daughter of Cináed I mac Alpín married Rhun, Pict prince, son of King Artgal. See genealogy table of the kings of the Strathclyde Britons in Smyth, *Warlords*, 18.

within Lothian, rather than Bernicia proper, and highlights these early and purposeful attempts by the Scots to acquire Lothian from the Northumbrians. He also suggests that these early border wars between the Scots and Angles were elaborate shows of great Scottish planning and strength. As king over a newly consolidated area, Cináed I portrayed himself as a forceful and aggressive leader by attacking a royal stronghold and a wealthy monastery.²⁰⁵ The complex web of relationships in the Anglo-Scottish border region reflected the status of the Scots as the newcomers who were making their presence known and that of the Northumbrians as the established kingdom.

The Northumbrians faced yet another neighborhood challenge with the arrival of *wicinga* fleets into the Humber River. In 866 a large multitude of Danish troops led by Hálfdon I invaded Northumbria and on 1 November they succeeded in capturing York.²⁰⁶ Afterwards, the raiders roamed north of the Humber River to the Tyne River and back in a matter of months. The devastation they wrought across Northumbria left a lasting impression.

[T]he aforementioned heathen army captured York on 1 November and ranged hither and thither, filling everywhere with blood and lamentation. They destroyed monasteries and churches far and wide with sword and fire, and when they departed they left nothing except roofless walls.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵Hudson, *Kings*, 43. For an agreement on the type of Scottish attacks as ‘raids’, see Duncan, *Kingship*, 13.

²⁰⁶In reference to the 866 date, the *ASC* uses 867 while Symeon uses 866. I am deferring to David Rollason who accepts the date of Symeon; the difference derives from two separately accepted dates for beginning the yearly calendar at that time.

²⁰⁷[*P*]redictus paganorum exercitus Kalendas Nouembris capta Eboraca, hac illacque discurrit, cruore atque luctu omnia repleuit; ecclesias longe lateque et monasteria ferro atque igne deleuit, nil preter solos sine tecto parietes abiens reliquit; *LDE SymD*, ii.6, 96.

Due to battles between Kings Osberht and Ælle for complete rule of Northumbria, the Northumbrians delayed consolidating their forces, which were led by eight counts and their *ðegnas*, against the Danish army. At stake were the kingdom of Northumbria and the safety of the population, as well as the continued Anglian leadership over the entire region. After much fierce fighting, the Northumbrian ground forces broke past the Danish defenses and into York. The Northumbrians accepted defeat following the death of most of their warriors.²⁰⁸ King Hálfðan I (866-877) killed the two Northumbrian kings at their defeat for not recognizing his over-lordship.²⁰⁹ Afterwards Hálfðan I ruled the area surrounding York directly but appointed an Anglian leader named Ecgerht I (867-872) as his sub-king over Northumbria. Ecgerht I willingly recognized Danish overlordship in exchange for the opportunity to be king.²¹⁰ He ruled for six years directly over the Northumbrians north of the Tees River, under the authority of the Danes.

Once the Danes settled into York, their direct authority affected Yorkshire up to

²⁰⁸*LDE SymD*, ii.6, 96-8; *ASC-E* 867[866]; Higham, *Northern Counties*, 308. Symeon references the feud between these two kings and the fact that they reconciled and pooled their resources to fight together against the Vikings at York. He also insinuates that their defeat was revenge from St. Cuthbert as Osberht had seized from monastic hands Warkworth and Tillmouth, while Ælle had seized Billingham, Cliffe, Wycliffe and Crayke, for personal use. Such is an example of the hagiographical references to the curse of St. Cuthbert, which was reported to be meted out on all who offended his property or monks. The Icelandic Saga of Ragnar Lodbrökr relates the death sentence of King Ælle as the ‘blood-eagle’, a slow, painful death used for defeated leaders and traitors. *Ragnar Lodbrök’s Saga*, ed. Magnus Olsen (Copenhagen, 1907), i.355; trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*.

²⁰⁹See Table 3.1 ‘Kings of Scandinavian Yorkshire’.

²¹⁰*LDE SymD*, ii.6, 98; Smyth, *Warlords*, 194-5.

TABLE 3.2²¹¹

KINGS OF SCANDINAVIAN YORKSHIRE

Hálfðan I (865/6-877)

Guthfrith I (Guthred, 883-895)

King Ælfred of Wessex; oversight without a native king appointed (894-901)

Sigfrith (895-?)

Knútr (Cnut, 895)

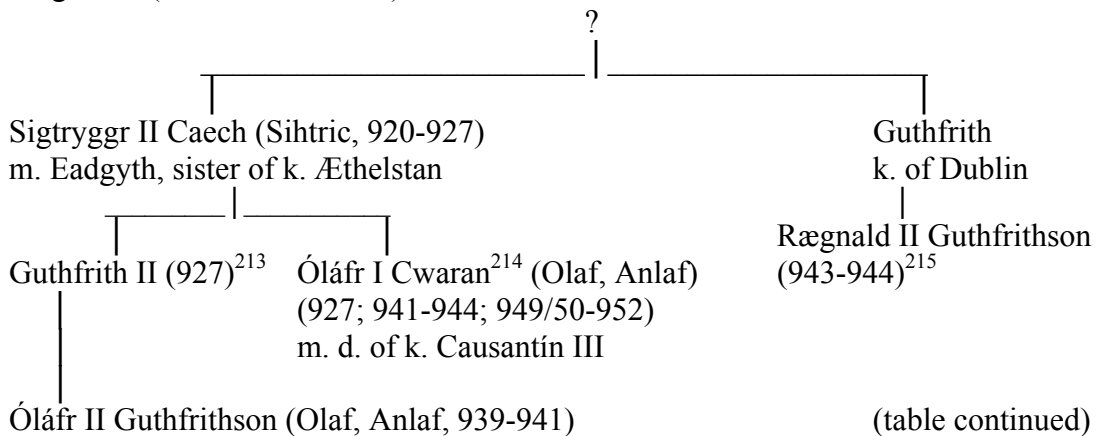
ætheling Æthelweald of Wessex (899-?903)

Knútr (Cnut, ?901-?)

Hálfðan II (910 died)

Eowils²¹² (910 died)

Rægnald I (914 or earlier-920)



²¹¹This table was arranged by Ms. Hayes for this dissertation, with some information partly borrowed from Cheney and the rest deriving from primary sources.

²¹²Co-ruled with Hálfðan II.

²¹³Guthfrith II was expelled in 927 and later died in 934.

²¹⁴In 952 finally expelled by Northumbrian *ðegnas*.

²¹⁵Rægnald II was anointed king in 943 with the blessing of King Edmund and then was expelled by Edmund in 944; *ASC-D*, 943-4.

King Æthelstan of Wessex (927-939)

King Edmund of Wessex (944-946)

King Eadred of Wessex (946-947)

Eiríkr (Eric) Bloodaxe (947-948; 952-954)

King Eadred of Wessex (954-955)

the Tees River, possibly up towards the Wear River in County Durham, where they subjected the Anglian population to their overlordship.²¹⁶ Danish control of northern Northumberland was incomplete and inconsistent, and Anglian kings at Bamburgh remained in control of the region north of the Tees River.²¹⁷ This began a new era in Northumberland: the kingdom of Yorkshire ruled by Vikings and their descendants, and the kingdom of Northumbria ruled directly by Angles, mostly from descendants of the royal family at Bamburgh, but occasionally by other local nobles. The separation along the Tees River used to be read as a demarcation of the cultural, legal, traditional, religious and linguistic differences between Angles and Vikings.²¹⁸ Recent studies claim that no such social distinction existed past the initial generation of Vikings, except occasionally in legal documents and place-names. In fact the opposite can be argued, as the Vikings intermarried with Angles, even eventually accepting Christianity. The boundaries for the Viking kingdom included those of the old Deiran kingdom, while Northumbria's territory resembles traditional Bernicia.²¹⁹

The Danish conquest of York in 866 added another dimension to the power struggles already in existence in northern Britain. From York, the Danes crossed the

²¹⁶See page 81 below for specifics concerning boundary lines and occupation by the Danes.

²¹⁷Stephenson, *HKE*, 876, 79.

²¹⁸Stephenson, *HKE*, 876, 79; *ASC*, 876; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 14-15.

²¹⁹D. M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c. 800-1100* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 298-306; Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: a political and social history of England in the tenth and eleventh centuries* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 65; Stafford, 'The reign of Æthelred II: a study in the limitations on royal policy,' in *Ethelred the Unready*, ed. D. Hill, BAR British Series, vol. 59 (1978), 17-21.

Pennine foothills, traveled north through Cumbria to the Firth of Clyde, across the Irish Sea and into Dublin. This frequently used ‘highway’ kept the Yorkshire Danes in contact with their Norse relatives who controlled Dublin and at the same time caused trouble in northern Britain. This path cut off communication between the Scots and their homeland in Ireland, as well as with Dublin Norse.²²⁰ From the time the Norse settled at Dublin and the Scots lived in the region of Argyll and Dál Riada, both parties established a mutually beneficial treaty. In exchange for Scottish military aid against Norse enemies, the Norse rulers kept *wicinga* fleets among the Hebrides from raiding Scottish lands and people.²²¹ This combination allowed each free use of the Irish Sea in safety and protected each others’ coastlines. By 867 the Danes controlled Yorkshire directly; while Northumbrians from Bamburgh continued to rule Northumbria above the Tees River; the house of Wessex ruled southern England; and the house of mac Alpin ruled the Scots and dominated the Britons of Strathclyde.

In 872 the Northumbrians expelled their appointed sub-king Ecgberht I, along with Archbishop Wulfhere, and installed a leading magnate named Ricsige (873-876) as their king instead.²²² Symeon offers no explanation for the expulsions, but it stands to

²²⁰Smyth, *Warlords*, 195.

²²¹Smyth, *Warlords*, 195.

²²² These events, beginning with the fall of York, are only found in sources provided by Symeon of Durham. Symeon does not identify Ecgberht or Ricsige, nor does he explain their fashion of rule in Northumbria; specifically whether they were partial to local Northumbrian or Danish ideals. It is not known whether they were direct descendants of the Bamburgh house or powerful *ðegnas* who had served as *scir refa* ‘reeve’, as Alfred Smyth implies for Ecgberht; Smyth, *Warlords*, 196. As for Archbishop Wulfhere, he was consecrated to his See on 854 and died in that role in 900 according to Symeon, although the *ASC-E* places his death in 892. One wonders at the actual power of the Northumbrian *ðegnas*, who were supposedly subordinate to the Danes in

reason that the *ðegnas* of Northumbria did not accept outside appointed leadership lightly, and therefore the expulsions serve as an example of their rebellious nature.²²³

The strong-willed, traditional Northumbrians never showed fear when defending their homeland and culture, even in the face of defeat or destruction at the hands of outsiders. These traits can be seen in the numerous rebellious and defensive measures enacted by their *ðegnas* from the ninth to eleventh centuries, and will be discussed further in this dissertation.

Yorkshire, if they could successfully expel the archbishop from York. This was an entirely different matter from removing a local king, as even with the majority of the Danes moving about, a contingent of warriors would have been stationed at York. Even so, the Northumbrian *ðegnas* were obviously aware of the movements of the Danish army in the years following the fall of York. The Danes spent time warring in Mercia from 867-868, wintered at York from 868-869, wintered in East Anglia in 869, warred in Wessex in 870-871, wintered at London in 871, wintered at Torksey in 872, wintered at Repton in 873, finally conquered all Mercia, returned to Northumberland and wintered at Tynemouth. As to the reason for the rejection of the archbishop Wulfhere, one can suppose that he submitted to the Danes and their appointment of Ecgberht, although no information is recorded in the sources. *LDE SymD*, ii.6, 98-100.

²²³Very little is known about the personal life of Symeon of Durham. We know that he spent his monastic career at Durham Cathedral Priory, where he witnessed the disinterment of St. Cuthbert by Bishop Ealdun (990-1018) in 1104, which he recorded for us. He served the monastic community as precentor: assisted the sub-prior with the rotation assignments for monks saying masses at chantries and altars in the cathedral church; produced the obituary roll and the organization of prayers for the souls of the dead monks. In this office, he worked in the scriptorium and as such would have been privy to manuscript materials, as well as the cathedral chapter library, for the compilation of his three known works: *Historiae Ecclesiae Dunhelmensis* (*LDE SymD*), *Historia Regum* (Stephenson, *HKE*), *De Primo Saxonum Adventu*, ed. Thomas Arnold in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London, Rolls Series, 1885), ii, 365-384. He remains the primary historian for events in late Anglo-Saxon and early Anglo-Norman Northumbria. Information regarding his precentor duties derives from *Extracts from the account rolls of the abbey of Durham*, ed. J. T. Fowler, vols. 99-100, 103 (Surtees Society, 1898-1901), reprinted in Margaret Bonney, *Lordship and the Urban Community: Durham and its Overlords, 1250-1540* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 281.

Upon discovering his sub-king Ecgberht I replaced, Hálfðan I led the bulk of his Danish fleet northward, from his base at Repton in Mercia to Tynemouth.²²⁴ The Danes wintered there, and in the following spring of 875 raided northward through Northumbria into Scotland and Strathclyde.²²⁵ As the fleet settled in for the winter, Bishop Eardwulf of Lindisfarne ordered the packing of Cuthbert's relics, all manuscripts and treasures, and the evacuation of their beloved monastery.²²⁶ In so doing the bishop preserved the lives of all who dispersed to Ireland or fled southward into Northumberland with St. Cuthbert.

[T]hey put monasteries and churches to the flames wherever they passed, they killed servants and handmaids of God whom they had first subjected to mockery, and, to put it briefly, spread fire and slaughter from the eastern sea to the western. So the bishop and those who with him were accompanying the body of the Holy Father could have nowhere to rest but wandered from place to place, moving hither and thither, backwards and forwards, fleeing in the face of the cruel barbarians.²²⁷

In this year [875] the [Danish Viking] army went from Repton and Hálfðan I went with some of that army into Northumbria and took winter residence along the river Tyne and the army traversed that land [and] overran that land and afterwards harried among the Picts and among the Strathclyde Welsh [Britons].²²⁸

²²⁴ASC-E 867; Just prior to invading Northumberland and taking York, the Danish army had first landed on the English coast and invaded Mercia, accepting tribute in the form of war horses. Afterwards Hálfðan I made the church at Repton his base in Mercia.

²²⁵ASC-E, 876; the Laud Chronicle scribe refers to the *Scoti* as *Peohtas* [Picts].

²²⁶LDE *SymD*, ii.6, 100-104.

²²⁷[M]onasteria passim et ecclesias ignibus contradidit, seruos ancillasque Dei ludibriis affectos interfecit et, ut breuiter dicam, ab orientali mari usque ad occidentale cedem et incendium continuauit. Vnde antistes et qui cum illo sancti patris corpus comitabantur nusquam locum requiescendi habere poterant, sed de loco ad locum, huc atque illuc euntes et redeuntes, ante crudelium barbarorum faciem discurrebant; LDE *SymD*, ii.6, 100-104; Bede, *HE*, ii.13-14, 182-88.

²²⁸*Her for se here fram Hreopedune and Healfdene for mid sumum þam here on Norðanhumbre and nam wintersetle be Tinan þære ea and se here þæt lond geeode and eft hergade on Peohtas and on Stræcled Walas; ASC-A, E, 875.*

Early on after leaving Lindisfarne an attempt was made to send the relics and the famous *Lindisfarne Gospels* manuscript to Ireland, presumably to Kells monastery. When this venture failed, the community continued traveling across Northumberland for seven to nine years²²⁹ until they found refuge in the monastery at Crayke in York, which Cuthbert himself had established.²³⁰ After a four-month hiatus there, the Lindisfarne community came to reside at Chester-le-Street in Durham County for a period of 113 to 115 years.

David Rollason utilizes information from the *History of St. Cuthbert* to suggest another reason for the move into County Durham. Bishop Ecgred (830-845) had acquired the large ‘multiple estates’ of Gainford-on-Tees and Billingham, both in County Durham between the Tees and Wear, and had even commissioned a church at Billingham, which he presumably staffed from Lindisfarne.²³¹ In light of this property gain by the community of Lindisfarne so far inland, it is possible the community was extending its direct influence southward, although Rollason puts forth that the community was most likely willing to move prior to the renewed Viking attacks. The Viking king of York, Guthfrith I (883-?895), reportedly donated more lands to the community between

²²⁹There is a discrepancy about the number of years in the sources of Symeon: *LDE SymD*, Book ii says seven years and *HKE*, Book ii says nine years.

²³⁰*LDE SymD*, i.9, 46 and ii.6, 98, fn.42. These passages relate how the Northumbrian king Ecgfrith and Archbishop Theodore of York bestowed upon the Lindisfarne bishop, Cuthbert, lands in Carlisle (Cumbria) and York. Cuthbert was to use the York lands as a residence, and support network for that residence, while in York on church business. Symeon informs us that Cuthbert built a monastery at the vill of Crayke for this purpose.

²³¹Rollason, *Northumbria*, 245. Higham defines the typical Northumbrian ‘multiple estate’ as ‘consisting of a central place or estate centre through which were channeled the profits of land-ownership from the various, administratively subordinate communities occupying parts of that estate’ which survived later as a ‘shire’. Higham, *Northern Counties*, 292.

the Wear and Tyne following their evacuation from Lindisfarne, resulting in the settlement at Chester-le-Street.²³² These extensive tracts of lands from Tyne to Tees in the late ninth century formed the heart of what would become the ‘liberty’ of the community of St. Cuthbert and the region of authority of the Bishops of Durham. This brought a succession of Christian Danish kings to York until their annihilation in 910.

Later in 995 another wave of Viking invasions into Northumbria forced the Lindisfarne community to move from Chester-le-Street to Ripon for three to four months. On the return trip from Ripon towards Chester-le-Street the community stopped at a place alongside the Wear River where it makes a curving dip around a peninsula of land.²³³

According to Symeon,

the cart on which they were carrying the coffin containing the holy body could be moved no further.²³⁴

St. Cuthbert’s assistance aside, the peninsula of Durham provided a strategic site easily defensible against attacks and therefore was ideal as a new location for the religious community and its holy relics.

After conquering York and the nearby region, Hálfðan I rewarded his loyal *jarls* (ranking Norse and Danish warriors, equivalent to *ðegnas*) with manor estates situated around York. Most manors from along the Tees River south to the Humber River, including the capital city York itself, became the property of the new Danish landed elite.

²³²Rollason, *Northumbria*, 246.

²³³*LDE SymD*, ii.6, 100-4, ii.10-12, 110-8, 122-4 and iii.1, 144-6.

²³⁴*uehiculum quo sacri corporis theca ferebatur, ulterius promoueri non poterat; LDE SymD*, iii.1, 144.

And in this year Hálfðan I shared out the land of Northumbria and they were engaged in tilling their land and in making a living for themselves.²³⁵

Rollason discusses the extent of these manors and the co-existence of the Vikings with the Anglians already in possession of the manors. He suggests that Hálfðan I was ‘enfeoffing’ his *jarls* by assigning them to Anglian manors. Due to the scant source material for this period of Viking residence in Northumbria, namely the 876 entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and paragraphs 14 and 23 in the *History of St. Cuthbert*²³⁶, scholars must rely heavily on place-names to identify the extent of Viking authority in Northumbria.²³⁷ Yorkshire place-names include forty-two names of Old Norse personal names with the Old English suffix *-tun*, such as Norton (homestead, village), three hundred names of Old English personal names with the Old Norse suffix *-by*, such as Appleby (homestead, village), and a few names with the Old Norse word *thveit* (meadow, piece of land). The first example has been interpreted as Anglian sites taken over by Viking landlords; the second example as Anglian sites broken up into smaller units with the old centre dominated by Viking landlords; the third example as land newly colonized

²³⁵ *And þy geare Healfdene Norðan hymbra land gedælde and hergende weron and heora tiligende wæron; ASC-E, 876. Hergende here is translated as ergende (ASC-A) based on the recommendation of Rollason who follows Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Michael Swanton, trans. (London: Dent, 1996), 75, n. 14 as ‘an ironic slip’.*

²³⁶ The *History of St. Cuthbert* reads ‘the Viking army rebuilt the city of York, cultivated the land around it, and remained there’; Rollason, *Northumbria*, 231.

²³⁷ Rollason, *Northumbria*, 231-233. Use of the *Domesday Book* for Yorkshire and the *Boldon Book* are essential in the research of place-names. See also *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*, ed. Victor Watts (Cambridge: The University Press, 2004).

by the Vikings.²³⁸ Higham adds that these place-names are uncommon north of the Catterick Gap with the exception of Sheraton (*Scurufatun*) in the Tees basin and around Sedgefield to Stockton-on-Tees.²³⁹ Neither Rollason nor Higham accept the Viking landlords as working farmers, as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *History of St. Cuthbert* state, but as warriors who lived off the proceeds of the manors or villages as the former Anglian landlords must have done.

Following the 875 campaigns into Northumbria and Scotland, King Hálfðan I appointed Ecgberht II (876-?878) to rule as sub-king of Northumbria following King Ricsige, who did not survive long as the Anglian choice for king.²⁴⁰ From this time the Danes settled permanently into Yorkshire and began to make a mark on the local native society there. As for the Anglian Northumbrians north of the Tees River, they were left weakened by the ravaging and warfare with the Vikings.

Scottish chroniclers tell of an advance on Northumbria in the wake of the Vikings made by their King Giric mac Dúngail (Giric MacDougal, 878-c.889).²⁴¹ The Scottish King Giric reportedly ‘subdued Bernicia’ presumably with an extensive army from across

²³⁸Rollason, *Northumbria*, 231-233; see also Gillian Fellows-Jensen, ‘Scandinavian settlement in Yorkshire: through a rear-view mirror,’ in *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain: Thirteen Studies of Place-names in their Historical Context*, ed. Barbara Crawford, Studies in the Early History of Britain (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 170-186.

²³⁹Higham, *Northern Counties*, 308.

²⁴⁰Stephenson, *HKE*, 876, 79.

²⁴¹*CKS-I*, 283, relates the story about Bernicia, although *CKS-X* discusses an invasion of Hibernia, not Bernicia. See also Anderson, *Kings and Kingship*, 267-288.

Scotland against an Anglian army led by a leading *ðegn* from Bamburgh.²⁴² While this seems to imply an imperialistic move designed to colonize Northumbria, Duncan warns against this interpretation of the chronicle passage. First, he suggests that when the Scottish chronicle mentions Giric ‘subduing Bernicia’, the region in question was really Lothian, which the Northumbrians also claimed at that time. In light of the English sources and border-war history between Scotland and Northumbria over Lothian, this seems to be an acceptable interpretation of the terminology. Second, he argues that the history of recorded Scottish raids to date into Northumbria followed a different pattern and intent than conquering. His understanding of the Scottish sources leads to the conclusion that early Scottish kings were expected to show strength by successfully leading raids for theft of portable wealth, not by testing their strength by occupying another land.²⁴³ Under this interpretation these raids were designed as quick hit-and-run engagements with opposing forces in order to show off the military skill and leadership of the new king.

English sources do not mention a Scottish invasion or raid during this period, nor admit to Scottish overlordship of Northumbria. To the contrary, Symeon of Durham documents the reign of Guthfrith I (883-?895) as king of York, following the death of King Hálfðan I in 877, and of King Ecgberht II (876-?878) over the Northumbrians.²⁴⁴

²⁴²For references to the weakened condition of Northumbria, see Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 251-255. See also Alfred Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings and the British Isles, 850-880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). Symeon uses the descriptive phrase “the devastated provinces of Northumbria” for the year 883; Stephenson, *HKE*, 81.

²⁴³Duncan, *Kingship*, 13, 22. See also Hudson, *Kings*, 55-58.

Symeon further records an alliance between King Guthfrith I of York and King Ælfred of Wessex²⁴⁵ (871-899) surrounding the appointment of lands to St. Cuthbert's in Durham, thereby showing Ælfred as recognizing Guthfrith I and not King Giric of Scotland as a ruler in Northumberland.²⁴⁶ The land agreement ratified by Kings Guthfrith I of York and Ælfred involved 'the right of sanctuary' for any refugee at the shrine of St. Cuthbert for the period of thirty-seven days, with a fine of ninety-six pounds for any violators, and the addition of all lands between the Tees and Tyne rivers to the 'perpetual' possession of St. Cuthbert. At this time, the bishops of Lindisfarne and community of clerics along with the relics of St. Cuthbert resided at Chester-le-Street in County Durham. This addition of lands greatly increased the official region of influence for that religious community as well as provided them with a permanent new homeland. This event marks an extremely important event for the bishops of Lindisfarne, later to be referred to as the bishops of Durham. From this time on, the authority of these bishops over such an extensive region seems to signify the great respect for the miracle-working saint as well as the regional political importance of these local church leaders. Guthfrith I reportedly died in 895 at which time the Danish Yorkshiremen entered into a peace alliance with King Ælfred, marked by the exchange of oaths.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Stephenson, *HKE*, 81. Another more modern spelling of Guthfrith is Guthred. Symeon did not provide a background for Ecgberht II. See Cheney, *A Handbook of Dates*, 25.

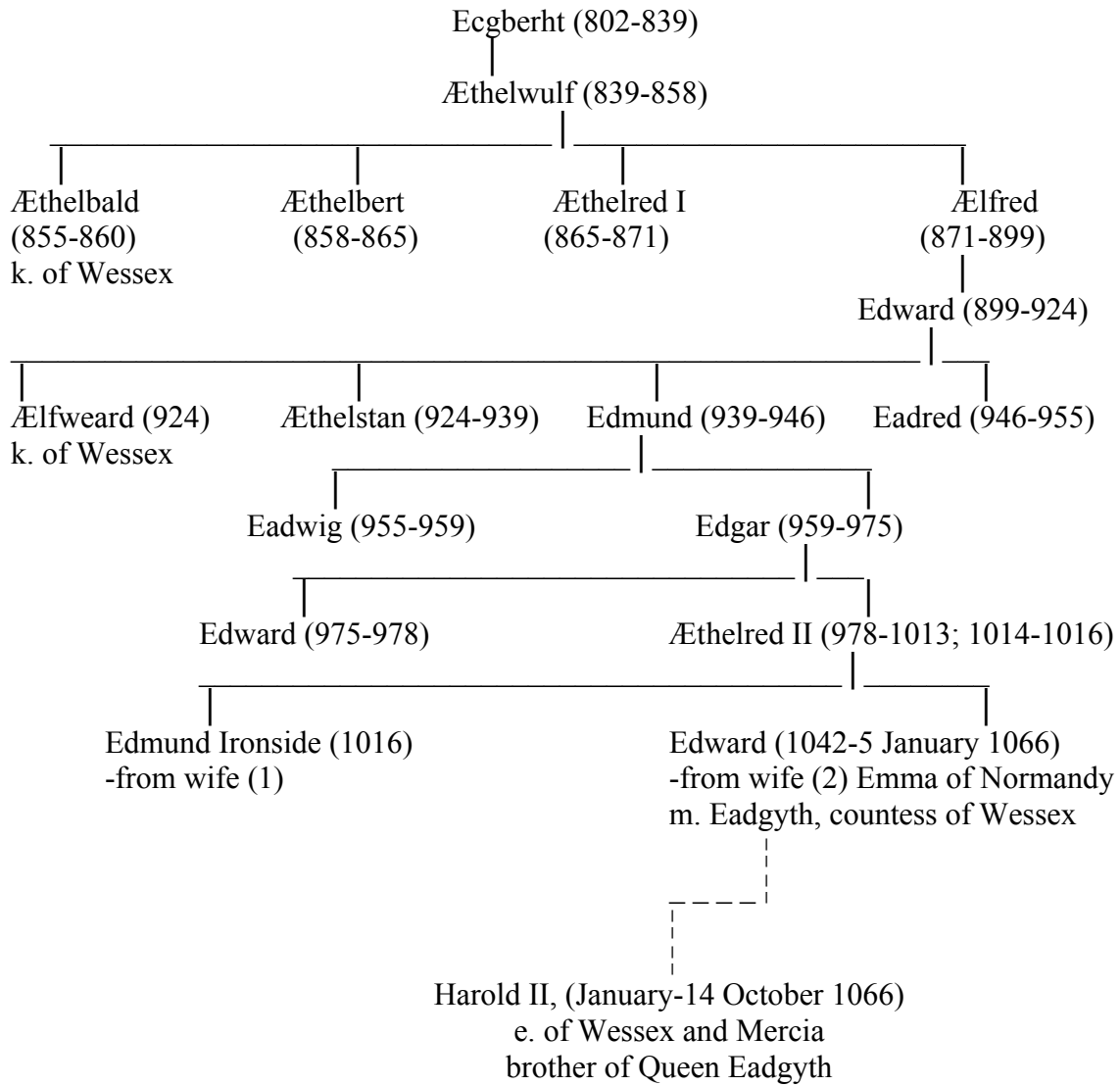
²⁴⁵ See Table 3.3 'Kings of Wessex and England'.

²⁴⁶ Stephenson, *HKE*, 81.

²⁴⁷ Stephenson, *HKE*, 85.

TABLE 3.3

KINGS OF WESSEX AND ENGLAND



In 877 the Danish king Guthrum joined the Vikings of the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw (East Anglia and Mercia) and invaded Wessex. After a period of success, the Vikings ultimately experienced defeat at the hands of King Ælfred in 878 at Edington.²⁴⁸ The terms of surrender demanded that King Guthrum and his thirty leading warriors receive Christian baptism, while King Ælfred accepted the role of godfather to the Danish king.²⁴⁹ These events also included Ælfred bestowing a baptismal name, Æthelstan, on Guthrum, a twelve-day celebratory feast in honor of the new Christians, gifts from godfather to godson, and a military truce between the two leaders.

The requirement of Christian baptism for pagan kings after defeat harkens back to policies enacted by early sixth-century Byzantine emperors on the continent and by King Oswiu of Northumbria in Britain. There could not have been any guarantee the newly baptized would remain in communion with Christianity rather than turn apostate, such as King Rædwald of Mercia. However, the new spiritual relationship ideally cemented a political bond of peace and alliance between the participants. In this light the act of baptism became a sponsorship of diplomacy and therefore served an important secular function for Christian kings. Joseph Lynch also suggests that the baptismal gifts were actually tribute payments to entice the Vikings to return to the Danelaw and remain

²⁴⁸ASC-A, 878. For further reading on this battle and its repercussions, see Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Importance of the Battle of Edington,' *From Bede to Alfred: Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Literature and History* (London, 1980), 32-59; Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, 240-254.

²⁴⁹GRA Malms, ii.121.6, 184; ASC-A, 878-880, 78, 80. William of Malmesbury reports that Ælfred awarded Guthrum Northumbria along with East Anglia, but Northumbria is not mentioned elsewhere and it must be a mistake in William of Malmesbury's manuscript. Most likely the reference of Northumbria meant the Viking kingdom of Yorkshire, but Guthrum was never king there.

there.²⁵⁰ Obviously some aspect or combination of the proceedings worked as Guthrum settled peacefully in East Anglia. Another probable reason for enforcing the Christian baptism could be that it enhanced the idea of defeat, not only of the warriors but their war gods as well, thereby enhancing the might of the conqueror and of course his god.

King Guthrum ruled as king of East Anglia to 890, King Guthfrith I reigned in Yorkshire until 895, King Ecgberht II was succeeded in Northumbria by Eadwulf of Bamburgh (?878-913) and King Ælfred of Wessex held sway in southern England to 899.²⁵¹ *Egil's Saga* claims that, “Ælfred the Mighty had reduced all the tributary kings from their [royal] title and rank. They were then called earls, who had before been kings or kings' sons. That continued during his life and that of Edward his son; but Æthelstan came young to the kingdom, and he was held in less awe. Then many became untrustworthy who had before been loyal.”²⁵² William of Malmesbury similarly mentions the subjugation of the rulers of *Northanimbro*s and East Anglia to King Ælfred.²⁵³ During Ælfred's reign a new Danish invasion into Britain drew support from the Yorkshire Vikings and the East Anglian forces, as they collectively opposed Kings Ælfred's forces.²⁵⁴ At this time, Eadwulf of Bamburgh ruled the kingdom of

²⁵⁰Joseph H. Lynch, *Christianizing Kinship: Ritual Sponsorship in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), 208-210, 215-217.

²⁵¹Guthrum's dates as king of East Anglia are (879/880-890).

²⁵²*Egils Saga Skallagrímssonar*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, in *Alt-nordische Saga-Bibliothek*, part 3 (Halle, 1894), 144-160; trans. Anderson, *ESSH*, 112.

²⁵³*GRA Malms*, ii.121.11, 186. It is not clear if the term *Northanimbro*s refers to the kingdom of Northumbria or that of Yorkshire, although the latter is the most likely.

²⁵⁴*GRA Malms*, ii.121.12, 186-188. *Northanimbrorum* in Malmesbury's passage must refer to the Vikings of Yorkshire as supporters of the invading Viking force from

Northumbria and owed no allegiance to the Danes in York or to King Ælfred. It is therefore unlikely that his Anglian forces joined invading Vikings or those at York in any battle. It is important to note that the West Saxon kings did not have complete control over Northumberland at this time, despite the varying claims in sources that they received homage and oaths from all kings in Britian. It is also of interest that despite the reference to King Ælfred reducing all other Anglo-Saxon kings to earls, Oswulf I (953-965) was the first Northumbrian leader to officially cease using the title of king and embrace that of earl.²⁵⁵ This occurred some fifty-five years after the reign of Ælfred.

Upon the death of King Ælfred and the succession of his son Edward as king of Wessex (899-924), a royal cousin, Æthelweald, commandeered the royal manor of Wimborne and militarily challenged the new king.²⁵⁶ Anglo-Saxon custom recognized all sons and grandsons of previous kings as *ætheling* and therefore eligible to claim the throne.²⁵⁷ As the son of former king Æthelred I, Æthelweald was clearly eligible for kingship. In fact he had been passed over once already in favor of his uncle Ælfred, probably because of Ælfred's senior experience in warfare against the Danes and close assistance to Æthelred I. Æthelweald went north to York and enlisted the shelter and

overseas. See also, *ASC-A*, 894, 90-92. The *Chronicle* passage also relates the same invasion, but remarks that the foreign Danes are joined by the Danes of East Anglia and Northumbria (i.e. Yorkshire).

²⁵⁵See chapter 4 below for more on Earl Oswulf I.

²⁵⁶*ASC-D* 901; Stephenson, *HKE*, 85.

²⁵⁷Campbell, *Anglo-Saxons*, 155.

allegiance of the Danes, who made him their king in York (899-903).²⁵⁸ In 902 Æthelweald and the Yorkshire Danish army invaded Essex from the sea and conquered that region. The following year saw horrible warfare in Mercia and Essex as the East Anglian Danish forces led by Kings Æthelweald and Eiríkr (Eric) ‘harried’ the entire region. After much fighting, King Edward’s forces slew King Eiríkr, Æthelweald the *ætheling* pretender to the Wessex throne, and many Scandinavian noblemen.

On each side there was great slaughter made, and the Danes suffered greater losses, although they had possession of the place of slaughter.²⁵⁹

At this date King Edward eagerly concluded peace both with the host of the East Angles and with Northumbria.²⁶⁰

This passage shows that King Edward’s forces were not superior, but well matched, and a truce was agreed upon by all combatants. As such, this passage reads as evidence of a failed attempt by a southern Saxon king to exert direct authority over the Viking kingdom of Yorkshire as an overking. It also silently attests to the continued independence of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria.

In 910 the Yorkshire Danes violated the truce of 905 and raided south across the Humber River throughout Mercia. King Edward moved north with a large armed fleet of West Saxon and Mercian *ðegnas* to engage the Danes in battle. The Danish fatalities included two kings, several ranking *jarls* and nobles, leaving Yorkshire without strong

²⁵⁸ASC-D, 901 and 905. The Danes accepted Æthelweald as king alongside their own King Eiríkr. At this time, the Danes from York controlled East Anglia as well as Danish Northumbria.

²⁵⁹*And þær wæs on gehwæðere hand mycel wæl geslægen. And þæra Deniscna wearð ma ofslægen, þeah hi wæl stowe geweald ahton; ASC-D, 905.*

²⁶⁰*Her gefestnode Eadward cyng for neode frið ægðer ge wið East Engla here ge wið Norðhymbre; ASC-E, 906.* Read Yorkshire for Northumbria in this passage.

Viking leadership. In the meantime, King Edward continued his campaign against Danes across the island.

Following the military strategy instituted by King Ælfred, his son Edward built fortresses in each conquered area and left troops behind to hold the territory. Throughout this entire campaign, Lady Æthelflæd of Mercia had successfully aided her brother King Edward and likewise built fortresses and towers across the Mercian landscape to fend off Viking attacks. Following the death of the Danish kings of York in battle with King Edward, the Norwegian royal family of Dublin planned to expand its rule to Yorkshire in an aggressive campaign justified through Scandinavian succession customs of kinship.

At this time Ealdred Eadwulfing, leading *ealdorman* in Bamburgh and member of the old royal family, took refuge with King Causantín II.²⁶¹ Symeon gives hints at his lineage by calling him the son of *princeps* Eadwulf who was murdered sometime around 913 by a man named Eadred *filius Rixinci*.²⁶² This Eadred was presumably a rival Northumbrian noble, maybe even the descendant of the former King Ricsige (873-876), who served as sub-king of Northumbria under the Viking kings of York. In light of these events, the relationship between the ruling families of Northumbria and Scotland appeared friendly and presumably allied against a West Saxon advance into their home territories. It is extremely important that Causantín II gave protection to Ealdred of

²⁶¹See Scottish royal genealogy table in Duncan, *Kingship*, 345.

²⁶²Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops*, 371. William Searle further states that Eadred abducted Eadwulf's wife, the mother of Ealdred. During the kingship of Rægnald in Yorkshire, the king struck a land deal with the family of Eadred Ricsigeson: the family gained all upland estates in western Durham; Rægnald took possession of the coastal lands in Durham, which he bestowed on two of his *jarls*. In order for both parties to profit here, Rægnald first seized these properties and their incomes from the Church at Durham; Higham, *Northern Counties*, 312.

Bamburgh within the royal Scottish court, as Ealdred's son Oswulf later became the first recognized earl of Northumbria in 953 and maintained the alliance with Scotland.²⁶³

Also vital to note about this period, is the fact that in 914 Scotland's alliance with the Danish Yorkshiremen ended as the Dublin Norse prepared to control York.²⁶⁴ The Norsemen began utilizing the Cumbrian 'highway' the Danes had forged, which cut across Scottish Cumbria (Argyll). Besides the land infringement and harassment, the Norse allowed *wicinga* to raid the Scots living in the Hebrides thereby breaking the Scots' former peace treaty with the Dublin Vikings, which of course drew the enmity of the Scots.

The attempted takeover of York from Dublin probably began in late 918 or early 919, but was threatened beforehand. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Danish Yorkshire population accepted the protection of Lady Æthelflæd of Mercia, Earl Æthelred's widow, even swearing oaths of loyalty to her, as protection against a Norse invasion from Dublin. Soon afterwards, though, the lady died leaving Yorkshire without strong protection, and therefore available to the Dublin Norse.²⁶⁵ The political landscape was further changed following the death of Lady Æthelflæd, with the usurpation of Mercia by her brother King Edward. He achieved this through the abduction of his niece Ælfwyn, the daughter and heir of Earl Æthelred and Lady Æthelflæd, whom Edward removed to Wessex.²⁶⁶ This can be interpreted as a self-protection measure on Edward's

²⁶³See Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops*, 371 and Smyth, *Warlords*, 196.

²⁶⁴Smyth, *Warlords*, 197.

²⁶⁵ASC-C, 918. The death of Lady Æthelflæd of Mercia fell between 918 and 921.

part, as his niece was also a grand-daughter of King Ælfred and her heirs could possibly exert a claim to the Wessex throne.

In the years 920-921, the Danes of Northampton, East Anglia, Stamford, and Nottingham of the Five Boroughs fell into the hands of Wessex.²⁶⁷ In 922, Edward ordered his levies to shore up Thelwall in Mercia and Manchester in Northumberland with fortresses and garrisons.²⁶⁸ Vikings led by a warlord named Rægnald invaded Northumberland and conquered York.²⁶⁹ Rægnald I (923-924) successfully retained control of York against Edward's forces.²⁷⁰ The reign of Rægnald I over York although short, ensured his recognition as a leading political figure in northern territorial politics, as expressed by his attendance on King Edward in 923.

By 924, King Edward had expanded his direct control over East Anglia, Essex, Kent and Mercia. He reportedly also extended strong control over the northern Britons of Strathclyde. At this time the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reports a large meeting of the neighboring kings with Edward.

Then the king of the Scots and all the people of the Scots accepted him as father and lord, so also did Rægnald [I of York] and the son of Eadwulf [Ealdred of

²⁶⁶ASC-C, D, 919. This date also must be accepted loosely as it follows the death of Lady Æthelflæd of Mercia, noted immediately above.

²⁶⁷For the Danelaw region at its largest extent, c. 906-918, see map in Campbell, *Anglo-Saxons*, 126, fig. 118.

²⁶⁸ASC-A, 923.

²⁶⁹ASC-E, 924; *Her Regnold cyng gewan Eoferwic*. (At this date King Rægnald conquered York.)

²⁷⁰Cheney shows Rægnald I's dates as 914, maybe earlier, to 920 for his reign as king of York. Having no other information concerning this Viking king, I have used the dates and chronology of his activities from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

Bamburgh] and all the inhabitants of Northumbria both English and Danish, Norwegians and others, together with the king of the Strathclyde Welsh and all the Strathclyde Welsh people.²⁷¹

A. O. Anderson accepts the *Chronicle* accounts of the submission of the Scots, Northumbrians, Viking Yorkmen, and Strathclyde Britons to the overlordship of King Edward. Anderson's argument suggests that these kings were no match for West Saxon strength and therefore 'submitted voluntarily for mutual defense.' M. R. Davidson contends that the northern kings participated in 'peace treaties' with the West Saxon kings, rather than truly 'submitting' to the Saxons.²⁷²

In the same manner as Davidson, Smyth believes that treaties such as these were forged between the West Saxons and Scots to the advantage of both. He suggests that Scots and Britons gained an ally in the West Saxons against the Vikings of York and that the West Saxons established northern peace so that the Mercian border with Yorkshire could be shored up militarily. I believe that Smyth correctly identifies the Saxon desire to control Northumberland, not Scotland.²⁷³ The logistics of conquering and annexing a region so distant as Scotland, and with hostile Northumbrian territory in the middle

²⁷¹ *And hine geces þa to fæder and to hlaforde Scotta cyning and eall Scotta þeod and Regnald and Eadulfes suna and ealle þa þe on Norþhymbrum bugeaþ ægþer ge Englisce ge Denisce ge Norþmen ge oþre and eac Stræcled Weala cyning and ealle Stræcled Wealas*; *ASC-A*, 924. Symeon confirms the *Chronicle* account: 'Rægnald, king of the Danes, with the Angles and Danes dwelling in Northumbria . . . chose king Edward the elder as their father and lord, and concluded a firm league with him'; Stephenson, *HKE*, 85-87.

²⁷² A. O. Anderson, "Anglo-Saxon Relations from Constantine II to William," *The Scottish Historical Review* 42 (1963), 2. See also M. R. Davidson, 'The (Non)submission of the northern kings in 920,' *Edward the Elder, 899-924*, ed. Nicholas J. Higham and David H. Hill (London: Routledge, 2001), 200-211. In Davidson's article, he stresses that scholars should be careful of reading the sources and blindly accepting terms like 'submission' and 'subdued'.

²⁷³ Smyth, *Warlords*, 200-203.

ground, would have deterred the West Saxons from ever assessing Scotland as a target for acquisition. By the same token, the Saxon kings did not appear strong enough to directly control Northumberland from Wessex or even Mercia, as evidenced by the continuance of local Anglian or Viking rule as kings or earls.

As mentioned earlier, though, the Scots also had their eyes set on Northumbria. While the ninth-century Scots definitely invaded Northumbrian Lothian, subsequent Scottish kings began ‘raiding’ further south into the city of Durham.²⁷⁴ After the 995 translation of St. Cuthbert to Durham the site had gained the reputation of a great religious center in the north. The political activities of the bishops of Durham, such as acting as royal escorts by the eleventh century, drew further attention to the increasing importance of the Cathedral town and its region. Northumbria and her leaders in the ninth through the twelfth centuries were situated between the two military powerhouses of Wessex and Scotland, with Viking squatters in Yorkshire. The Vikings showed no true desire to colonize or directly control Northumbria, but Wessex and Scotland appeared to seriously consider it.²⁷⁵ Even so, neither kingdom was able to completely or permanently conquer the region despite numerous attempts.

In the year 924, King Edward died in Mercia and was followed closely by the death of his son and heir Ælfweard in Oxford. Therefore, the kingship fell to Æthelstan who was promptly elected by the Mercians and West Saxons.²⁷⁶ In the early years of his

²⁷⁴For the example in 1040 see, *LDE SymD*, iii.9, 168. See also chapter four below.

²⁷⁵Scholars who accept this argument include Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 55 and Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 28.

²⁷⁶*ASC-A*, 925; *ASC-D*, 924; *FlorW*, 924, 347.7.

reign Æthelstan had to solidify the vast regions his father had so briefly overseen. The advance of the Dublin Norse into Yorkshire prevented the house of Wessex from outright expansion into that region. With King Edward's lands extending so far northward, following the annexation of Mercia with Wessex, the tension between the kings of York and Wessex threatened to evolve into official border wars. Æthelstan immediately made political alliances by marrying one sister to Otto the Great, who was heir to the continental Saxon throne at the time, and another sister Eadgyth to Sigtryggr II (Sihtric), king of Norse Yorkshire (920/1-927).²⁷⁷

Also of note, in 926 or 927 King Æthelstan had to ratify a new treaty with King Hywel of the Strathclyde Britons, King Owain (c.925-937) of the Gwent Britons and King Causantín II (900-943) of the Scots, in order to maintain their allegiance to Wessex.²⁷⁸ Of particular interest here is the death of the Yorkshire King Sigtryggr II with the subsequent annexation of his kingdom by his brother-in-law King Æthelstan.²⁷⁹ At this time West Saxon interests in Yorkshire were finally beginning to come to fruition. Æthelstan directly ruled Yorkshire for the remainder of his life. Following his control of York, the northern kingdom vacillated between four Vikings and two West Saxons as

²⁷⁷ASC-D, 924-925.

²⁷⁸ASC-D, 926. See also Duncan, *Kingship*, 23. One should read 'Cumbria' here for Gwent. See fn. 301 below for place-name explanation.

²⁷⁹Sigtryggr II Caech's actual immediate successors were Óláfr I Cuaran (?927) and Guthfrith II (927; driven out of York); Cheney, *Handbook of Dates*, 26. King Æthelstan purportedly held the kingship of York himself from 927-939.

king until in 954 the kingdom lost its independent identity and was permanently annexed under the kings of Wessex.²⁸⁰

In 927 King Æthelstan added Ealdred Eadwulfing of Bamburgh to the treaty alongside the three Scottish and British kings.²⁸¹ This clearly states the powerful position of the old Anglian royal family at Bamburgh and their political importance to Wessex. It is important to note that King Æthelstan does not move to absorb Anglian Northumbria, as he did the Norse Yorkshire kingdom. So far from Wessex with the newly acquired kingdom of Yorkshire to incorporate under West Saxon rule, Northumbria would have been a serious strain on King Æthelstan's resources. Also, I propose that Anglian Northumbria was useful to Wessex as an independent region, with one of their own in control, as a buffer against the Scots. Causantín II and his direct descendants, who later became kings of the Scots, were avid enemies of the southern Saxon kings. Their actions seem geared toward the control of Lothian and Cumbria, areas over which the Northumbrians also claimed control.²⁸² It also seems probable that their long-term goal included the annexing of Northumbria from the Tees River northward as part of Scotland. This plan makes great sense in light of the numerous raids made on Durham by the Scots throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries.²⁸³ In this light, the Scots can be seen as a

²⁸⁰It is arguable as to whether 927 or 954 marked the true birth of the kingdom of England that reached from its southern shore northward to envelope Northumberland. This dissertation recognizes the 927 date.

²⁸¹*ASC-D*, 926; *GRA Malms*, ii.131, 134. See also page 2, chapter 4 below for more on Ealdred.

²⁸²By 960 the Scots controlled Edinburgh, which lay in northern Lothian and raided numerous times in Cumbria from 980-990s; Duncan, *Kingship*, 15.

considerable threat to Wessex as they attempted to gain land bordering with Yorkshire, as well as to Northumbria into whose territory the Scots repeatedly intruded. Northumbria should be seen as playing an ever increasing role in the tenth century as a buffer zone between the two powerhouses from Wessex and Scotland.

At this point, the Northumbrians and their neighbors in Scotland, the British kingdoms, York, and West Saxons forged alliances and counter-alliances amongst themselves in the interest of self-preservation. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 934 King Æthelstan entered the lands of King Causantín II with a large fleet along the eastern coast as well as with ground forces. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* does not provide a reason, but Florence of Worcester makes a vague reference to King Causantín II breaking the peace treaty.

Athelstan, the valiant king of England led an expedition into Scotland, consisting of a powerful fleet and a large body of cavalry, Causantín II, king of the Scots, having broken the peace that he had made. King Athelstan ravaged a great part of the country, and Causantín II was compelled to give him his son as an hostage, with fitting presents; and peace having been restored, the English king returned to Wessex.²⁸⁴

We do not know whether or not Florence's account tells the true reason for the English advance into Scotland. We only know for sure that an English army went north, ravaged

²⁸³Starting in 950 with King Máel Coluim I who went as far south as the Tees River to steal people (to be kept or sold as slaves) and cattle; Duncan, *Kingship*, 24. See page 106 below for further information about this event.

²⁸⁴*Strenuus rex Anglorum Æthelstanus, quia rex Scotorum Constantinus fædus (quod cum eo pepigerat) dirupit, classica manu perualida et equestri exercitu nõ modico ad Scotiam proficiscitur, eãq; maxima ex parte depopulator. Vnde vi compulsus rex Constantinus, filium suum obsidem cum dignis muneribus illi dedit, paceq; redintegrata rex in Westsaxoniã redijt; FlorW, 934, 349.16.*

a portion of Scottish lands,²⁸⁵ and after obtaining another peace treaty with King Causantín II and King Owain, left with gifts and a royal Scottish prince as ‘hostage.’²⁸⁶

The fact that King Owain of Cumbria signed this treaty leads one to believe that the English ground forces rode through Cumbria into Scotland, rather than through Northumbria. Although if Symeon of Durham is to be believed, King Æthelstan stopped at Durham Cathedral to venerate at the tomb of St. Cuthbert, which places at least part of his army in Northumbria proper.²⁸⁷ This stately visit to Durham could have prefaced a westward swing into Cumbria and then northward into Scotland to face the British and Scottish forces. According to Symeon, King Æthelstan

requested [Cuthbert’s] intercession, and he gave him for the adornment of his church many different kinds of gifts worthy of a king, which are still preserved today in this church of Durham and serve as a monument to the king’s pious devotion to the church of the holy father Cuthbert and to his undying memory. The cartulary contains an inventory of them and how great they were. To these gifts of ornaments he added for the sustenance of those serving there property amounting to not less than twelve vills, the names of which it is not necessary to insert here because they are to be found in writing elsewhere. He approved and ordered to be observed inviolably and in perpetuity the laws and customs of the saint which his grandfather King Ælfred and King Guthfrith I [of Yorkshire, 883-894] had instituted. After making this offering he imposed on those who presumed to take anything from them or in any way to diminish them the anathema of the gravest curses, that is, that on the Day of Judgment they should be smitten with the sentence of the Lord’s damnation along with Judas the traitor. By order of the king the army also honored the tomb of the holy confessor with

²⁸⁵ *AC*, 928, 149 and *CM*, 934, 28; trans. Anderson, *ESSH*, 426. The *Annals of Clonmacnois* mentions the West Saxon army wasting Scottish lands as far north as Edinburgh, which incidentally was in the southern reaches of Scotland, and the *Chronicle of Melrose* places Æthelstan at Dunnottar and the Werter Moors. This is often referred to as the battle of *Brunanburgh*.

²⁸⁶ *ASC*, 934; *FlorW*, 934, 349.16; *LDE SymD*, ii.18, 136-138.

²⁸⁷ *LDE SymD*, ii.18, 134-139.

more than ninety-six pounds of silver. Having thus commended himself and his men to the protection of the holy confessor, he arranged his march and set out.²⁸⁸

The gifts mentioned, but not elaborated on, in this passage included the vill of South Bishop's, Wearmouth, County Durham and its dependencies of Westoe, Offerton, Silksworth, two Ryhopes, Burdon, Seaham, Seaton, Dalton-le-Dale, Dawdon and Cold Heseldon. King Æthelstan's other gifts included a twelve hundred pound monetary gift, a copy of Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert*, the gospel book BL, Cotton Otho B. IX (extant in a burned state), a stole and maniple produced in Winchester earlier in the century (preserved in the Cathedral Treasury), and seven silk *pallia* (also in the Cathedral Treasury).²⁸⁹ By the standards of the day, these gifts would have ensured the prayers of the bishop and many Cathedral clerics on behalf of the king and army.

A. O. Anderson interprets the type of peace agreement reached between kings Æthelstan, Causantín II and Owain, which involved not only gifts but a royal hostage for

²⁸⁸*suffragia postulauit; eique diuersis speciebus in ecclesie ornamentum multa que regem deceret donaria contulit, que in hac Dunelmensi ecclesia usque hodie seruata, piam ipsius Regis erga ecclesiam sancti patris Cuthberti deuotionum, et eternam representant memoriam. Que autem et quanta sint, descripta per ordinem cartula comprehendit. His ornametorum donariis, uillarum quoque non minus quam duodecim possessions ad sufficientiam inibi seruientium superadiecit, quorum nomina quoniam alibi scripta tenentur, hic ea ponere necessarium non habetur. Leges quoque et consuetudines ipsius sancti quas auus eius rex Elfredus et Guthredus rex instituerant, ipse approbauit, et inuiolabili firmitate in perpetuum seruandas censuit. Oblatione autem facta, eos si qui aliquid ex his auferre uel quoquo modo minuere presumpsissent, grauissime maledictionis anathemate percussit, ut scilicet in die iudicii cum Iuda traditore dominice damnationis sentential feriantur. Exercitus quoque iussu Regis sepulchrum sancti confessoris nonaginta sex et eo amplius libris argenti honorauit. Ita se suisque sancti confessoris patrocini commendatis, disposito itinere profectus est, LDE SymD, ii.18, 136.*

²⁸⁹See *LDE SymD*, ii.18, 136 fn.103, for sources of listed items and the vill of South Bishop's, Wearmouth, county Durham and its dependencies.

Æthelstan, as ‘vassalage’.²⁹⁰ Feudal terms can be easily misunderstood or misinterpreted; so a look at them in the context of the tenth century, amongst the kingdoms and cultures of the Anglo-Saxons and Scots, is warranted. The exchange of gifts can be understood in two ways: either as a token of good will to keep the new peace agreement or as a chronicler’s way of making the theft of valuables from the defeated party seem friendly. Since keeping an army in that day meant providing items needed by the warriors for war and rewarding them with more items and sometimes land after success, it was vital for a king to maintain wealth or goods. By taking them, a victor could hope to ensure a peaceful period, at least until the opposing party could replenish its coffers.

Giving a royal son into the keeping of the victor likewise could have been done for several reasons. The most obvious would be the separation of the reigning king and an heir apparent, which would inhibit the father from training the son to run his kingdom in future. The Scottish tradition of ‘fostering’, where the son would be placed into the household of the mother’s brother for a few years prior to reaching the age of manhood, could have been used by the Saxon kings. The custom centered round entrusting your son to the care of another family and exposure to another man’s warrior training, management skills and household etiquette. In the case of a Scottish hostage, the Saxon king, instead of an uncle, would gain a page or young knight to train and care for. This provided ample opportunity to convince the hostage of the ‘goodness’ of the Saxon king and to instill Saxon customs into a future king of the Scots.²⁹¹

²⁹⁰Anderson, ‘Anglo-Scottish Relations,’ 3.

²⁹¹See Barrow, *Kingship and Unity*, 25.

While A. O. Anderson does not explain his meaning of ‘vassalage’, this last suggested explanation fits in well with another of his theories. He suggests that the Scots were occasionally willing to accept a subordinate position to a Saxon king for Scottish political reasons. The tradition of succession to the Scottish throne alternated between two branches of the royal family.²⁹² Scots preferred ‘adult, able-bodied males within one generation’; therefore a system of alternating between two branches of the royal family provided cousins or uncles as the *tanaise* (second man). This situation often, but not always, provided a hostile and aggressive atmosphere between the two family branches. Barrow also states that exceptions were made infrequently but that beginning with Máel Coluim II (Malcolm) most rulers attempted to secure the throne for their direct descendants.²⁹³

Royal Scottish civil wars and familial political murder resulted from the duobranched ruling tradition. While one branch held the throne, the other looked for any signs

²⁹²Hudson explains the breakdown of the two branches of Scots royal family as the line of Cenél nGabráin and Cenél Loairn; *Kings*, 17-23. Refer to Barrow, *Kingship*, 163 ‘Early Scottish Succession’ table for a breakdown of the Scottish kings into their respective family groupings as discussed by Hudson.

²⁹³Barrow, *Kingship and Unity*, 24-25. Contrary to the Scots, Pictish customs seemed to prevent the sons of kings from rule by a matrilineal succession. A recent article by Alex Woolf revisits the question of validity about the Pictish matrilineal succession tradition. While not completely convincing, his argument supports a past attempt by Alfred Smyth to show the rarity of this matrilineal tradition. Alex Woolf, ‘Pictish Matriliny Reconsidered,’ *Innes Review*, 49 (1998), 147-167. I am trusting the scholarship of Barrow and the source Bede, *HE*, i.1, 18 on this issue, as well as the example of Talorgain, nephew of Northumbrian king Oswiu, who married a Pict princess and followed his father-in-law as king (see chapter 2 above). Also of interest, the Scottish enthronement ceremony occurred at Scone, the former Pict inaugural site, and featured the king being seated upon the ‘Stone of Destiny’ to symbolize his marriage to the kingdom.

of weakness that could be used to overthrow the sitting king. Accordingly, Anderson suggests that an alliance with another king protected the sitting Scottish monarch by preventing a battlefield defeat which could then be interpreted as weakness, thereby drawing the murderous attentions of the rival royal family. In one case the Saxons actually supported aid to the rightful Scottish monarch in order for him to regain the throne from a rival.²⁹⁴ The idea of a Scottish king as ‘vassal’ to another king must therefore be understood as a willing alliance that actually benefited the Scots more than the Saxons. The Scots never intended to abide by treaty terms if the opportunity arose for them to expand their territory or revenge the Saxons for devastating their country. As for the hostages, usually they were released upon the death of the Saxon king by his successor and would return home.

By 945 the term ‘vassalage’ began to take on the meaning of military service in exchange for peace. This can be seen in the form of government the Scottish kings imposed on Cumbria and Lothian, namely through the appointment of an earl or sub-king over those regions. The Scottish king was recognized as over-lord for those two regions, while he acted as vassal to the English king in order to maintain Scottish hold over those two regions. In exchange for being allowed to claim Cumbria and Lothian as part of Scotland, the Scottish king had to provide military defense of those regions, ideally to prevent roaming *wicinga* armies from raiding into England.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴Stephenson, *HKE*, 1054, 124.

²⁹⁵See map of the tenth-century Anglo-Scottish border in Rollason, *Northumbria*, 278. The date and sources for the cession of Lothian from Northumbrian to Scottish control are hotly debated amongst Scottish historians. Their main sources are the English manuscripts *De obsessione* in Thomas Arnold, *Symionis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London: Rolls Series, 1882), i, 215-220 and *De Primo Saxonum Adventu*, edited from

In 940 King Æthelstan died and his brother Edmund I (940-946) succeeded him as King of England. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Norse Yorkshiresmen took the opportunity to invite Óláfr (Olaf, Anlaf) of Ireland to York as their king in 941.²⁹⁶ Florence of Worcester names Óláfr as a ‘pagan’ king of Ireland and son-in-law to King Causantín II of Scots. He mentions that the invasion of Óláfr into York and the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw c. 941 occurred at the instigation and aid of King Causantín II.²⁹⁷ With King Óláfr leading their army, the Yorkshiresmen reclaimed

MS Domitian A viii, in Thomas Arnold, *Symonis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London: Rolls Series, 1882), ii, 365-384. *De obsessione* states that earl Eadwulf ‘Cudel’ of Northumbria ceded Lothian to King Máel Coluim II of Scots in 1016 following the battle of Carham earlier in the same year. *De Primo Saxonum Adventu* contrarily states King Eadgar of Wessex received submission from King Cináed II of Scotland c. 973 and Edgar sealed the new relationship by giving Cináed II military control over Lothian; ii, 382. Marjorie Anderson reconciles the use of both dates by accepting the 973 date as first but suggests that over time the Northumbrians reclaimed some control over Lothian thereby necessitating a second re-cession in 1016. See Marjorie O. Anderson, ‘Lothian and the Early Scottish Kings,’ *Scottish Historical Review*, 39 (1960), 110-111. The Scottish scholars who accept the *De Primo Saxonum Adventu* date of 973 include Hudson, *Kings*, 93-101; G. W. S. Barrow, ‘The Anglo-Scottish Border,’ *The Kingdom of the Scots*, ed. G. W. S. Barrow (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 151-154 and Bernard Meehan, ‘The Siege of Durham, the Battle of Carham, and the Cession of Lothian,’ *The Scottish Historical Review* 55, no. 159 (April 1976), 16-17. This dissertation follows the lead of this latter group in accepting 973 as the official date that Scotland absorbed Lothian from Northumbria, bringing the Northumbrian-Scottish border south from the Firth of Forth to the Tweed River. This does not negate the reality of the overwhelming Northumbrian population within Lothian, or the continued connection of this region with Northumbria and her leaders.

²⁹⁶*ASC-D*, A, 941. In Scandinavian tradition, all legitimate and illegitimate sons were considered heirs apparent and claimants to any and all thrones of their fathers, as well as their uncles and grandfathers. In *ASC-D*, 941 and *HA*, 944, Óláfr is referred to as the son of former King Sigtryggr of York and Rægnald as the son of former King Guthfrith II of York. Hudson, *Kings*, 84 also identifies Óláfr as son of Sigtryggr. Smyth, *Warlords*, Table 4, 221 names Óláfr as Guthfrith II’s son. Symeon of Durham proclaims Óláfr to be “Guthredi quondam Regis filium” or “son of the former king Guthfrith [Guthred]” mentioned above on pages 84-87.

²⁹⁷*FlorW*, 938, 349-350.1.

Mercia, especially the Five Boroughs of the Danelaw – Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and Stamford. King Edmund faced a general Viking uprising until 944, which he finally overcame with the expulsion of King Óláfr and his cohort King Rægnald.²⁹⁸

In this year King Edmund brought all Northumbria under his sway and drove out two kings, Óláfr Sigtryggr's son and Rægnald Guthfrith's son.²⁹⁹

While the sources speak of the Viking battles, they do not mention any broken peace treaties with Cumbria at this time. One can only assume though that the Cumbrians too had joined forces with the Yorkshiremen, as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* relates that,

In this year, King Edmund ravaged all Cumberland and ceded it to Máel Coluim I, King of Scots, on the condition that he would be his together-worker both on sea and on land.³⁰⁰

Even though this passage mentions King Edmund raiding Cumbria only, it makes sense that he either went into Scotland as well in order to get the submission of King Máel Coluim I (944-954) or that as overlord of Cumbria, Máel Coluim I was forced to reach an alliance with Edmund in order to retain the overlordship of Cumbria.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸See Stephenson, *HKE*, 937-944, 89. Symeon gives the impression that Óláfr accepted the kingship of York while Rægnald acted as king of Northumbria, which would have been north of the Tees or Wear Rivers.

²⁹⁹*Her Eadmund cyning ge eode eal Norþhumbra land him to gewaldan and aflymde ut twegen cyningas Anlaf Syhtrices sunu and Rægenald Guðgerþes sunu; ASC-A, 941.*

³⁰⁰*Her Eadmund cyning ofer hergode eal Cumbra land and hit let to eal Malculme [Malculfe] Scotta cyninge on þa gerad þa he wære his midwyrhta ægþer ge on sæ ge on lande; ASC-A, 945.* See page 103 above for explanation of feudal relationship change between Scots and Saxons referenced in this source passage. See also *FlorW*, 945, 351.9 and Stephenson, *HKE*, 945, 89-90.

³⁰¹Historians referenced in this dissertation alternately or separately use the terms “Scottish Cumbria”, “Cumbria”, “Cumberland”, “Strathclyde”, and “Westmoreland”. For a focused discussion on this terminology and geographic references, see P. A.

In 945 following King Edmund's death, his brother Eadred succeeded him as king of England. Eadred's rule began with warfare as he faced a rebellion from York and successfully quelled the Yorkshire Viking army. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* relates the event.

And then his [Edmund's] brother *ætheling* Eadred succeeded to the kingship and reduced all Northumberland to his rule and Scots gave him oaths that they wished all that he wished.³⁰²

In the year 948 or 949 King Máel Coluim I of Scotland brought ground forces into Northumbria.

In the seventh year of his reign, he [Máel Coluim I] plundered the Angles as far as the river Tees; and he seized a multitude of the people, and many herds of cattle. And the Scots called this [a] raid.³⁰³

This was a successful military action against Northumbria, including Durham. As with most raids, this incursion aimed at acquiring wealth, in the forms of cattle and people. The Scots most likely captured Northumbrians for servitude or possibly for ransom, although no one of importance appears in the *Chronicle*. These raids removed valuable

Wilson, 'On the use of the terms "Strathclyde" and "Cumbria"' in *Translations of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 46 (1966): 82. See also *CGS*, 182. This source refers to "Cumbria" as the area left of and including the highland foothill range, yet below the Firth of Solway and Tweed River line. Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, refers to "Cumberland" as the area including and west of the highland foothills up to the Solway Firth across to the Tyne River and "Scottish Cumbria" as the area north of the Solway Firth alongside Lothian past the Firth of Forth. Stenton, in *Anglo Saxon England*, refers to "Westmoreland" as the region John of Fordun calls "Cumbria", while referring to "Strathclyde" as the region Kapelle calls "Scottish Cumbria".

³⁰²*And þa feng Eadred æþeling his broþer to rice and gerad eal Norþhymbraland him to gewælde and Scottas him aþas sealdan þa hie woldan eal þa he wolde; ASC-A, 946.*

³⁰³*CGS*, 10. See chapter 4 for more information on Scottish raids into Northumberland. Anderson argues that Causantín II made that raid; *ESSH*, 452.

Northumbrian property, turned crop fields into battlefields, and engaged the local armies in armed combat.

At the same time, the Anglo-Saxon populations still faced enormous threats from Norway. *Wicinga* hordes continued to enter Britain in order to conquer, settle, rule and reap the benefits of the land and authority. They posed a tireless threat to York and English lands south of the Humber River, especially the Five Boroughs. As early as 948 the Norsemen of York welcomed Eiríkr ‘Bloodaxe’, the exiled monarch of Norway, as their new king.³⁰⁴ In the aftermath of Eiríkr entering and taking over York, King Eadred reportedly

ravaged all Northumbria, because they had taken Eiríkr for their king, and on the raid the famous Minster [church] at Ripon, which St. Wilfrid built, was destroyed by fire. Then when the king was on his way home, the [Viking] army from out of York overtook the rearguard of the king [Eadred] at Castleford and there was great slaughter. Then was the king so enraged that he would have invaded that land a second time and completely devastated it but when the council of the Northumbrians heard of it, they abandoned Eiríkr and made reparation to King Eadred for their deeds.³⁰⁵

Eiríkr reigned in York for one year until expelled by the locals in favor of Óláfr I again, most likely for allowing Archbishop Wulfstan to control York through him. Óláfr

³⁰⁴Smyth notes that Eiríkr first invaded and became king of the Orkneys prior to entering York; *Warlords*, 216-218. See also *Heimskringla, Hakon the Good's Saga*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1893-1901), 3-5; trans. in Anderson, *ESSH*, 454-462.

³⁰⁵*oferhergode eall Norðhymbraland. for þæm þe hi hæfdon genumen him Yryc to cyninge. and þa on þære hergunge wæs þa mære mynster forbærnd æt Rypon. þe S[an]c[t]e Wilferð getimbrede. and þa se cyning hamweard wæs þa offerde se here innan Heoforwic. Wæs þæs cynges fyrde hindan æt Ceaster forða. and þær mycel wæl geslogon. Ða wearð se cyning swa gram þe he wolde eft infyrðian. and þone eard mid ealle fordon. Ða Norðhymbra witan þa ongeaton. Ða forlæton hi Hyryc and wið Eadred cyning gebeton þa dæde; ASC-D, 948. Read Yorkshire here for Northumbria. Most likely only Yorkshire Anglo-Danes joined with Eiríkr and not the Angles of Northumbria.*

I ruled the second time for three years until in 952 he was also expelled by the Yorkshiremen for Eiríkr once again. Eiríkr then ruled York from 952 to 954, at which time he was finally expelled from Northumberland by King Eadred.³⁰⁶ After escaping north into Scotland, Eiríkr was assassinated later in 954.³⁰⁷ For his role in the Viking politics of York, King Eadred locked up Archbishop Wulfstan of York within a fortress at Jedburgh for two years, and then released him for reassignment and demotion as bishop of Dorchester.³⁰⁸ Henry of Huntingdon also reports about the events occurring in Northumberland during Eadred's rule, which he deems ultimately to have resulted in Wessex dominating the whole of Northumberland.

The kingdom of Northumbria must be touched on briefly. Osberht reigned there in the time of King Æthelwulf. They threw him out as was their custom and set up King Ælle. When both these had been killed by the Danes, the Danes reigned for a long time in Northumbria, namely King Hálfðan, Guthfrith, Niall, Sigtryggr, Rægnald, and Óláfr. But the Danes reigned in a confused manner, so that now there would be one king, now two, now many lesser kings. But later Northumbria fell into the dominion of Eadred, king of Wessex, and his successors. So the kingdom of Northumbria came to a complete end.³⁰⁹

Both annals, the *Chronicle* and that by Huntingdon, explicitly remark on the total take-over of Northumberland by King Eadred of Wessex. Henry of Huntingdon does not

³⁰⁶ASC-D, E, 954; Stephenson, *HKE*, 954.

³⁰⁷Smyth, *Warlords*, 219.

³⁰⁸ASC-D, 952 and 954; Stephenson, *HKE*, 952 and 954, 90; *FlorW*, 952, 353.16 and 954, 353.18.

³⁰⁹*De regno uero Nordhymbre paulisper tangendum est. Osbrictus namque tempore Regis Athelwlfī regnauit ibidem. Quem more suo abicientes, constituerunt Ællam regem. Qui utrique cum a Dacis occisi fuissent, regnauerunt Daci multo tempore in Nordhymbre. Scilicet rex Haldene, et Gudfert, et Nigellus, et Sidric, et Reginaldus, et Anlaf. Confuse autem regnauerunt Daci, ita quod modo ibi rex unus erat, modo duo, modo reguli multi. Postea uero Edredo regi Westsexe in dominium contigit, et successoribus eius. Hic igitur omnino regnum Nordhymbre explicit; HA, v.33, 334.*

even recognize Northumbria as a regional entity after this date, but rather as part of the greater kingdom of England. A more believable explanation comes when reading ‘Yorkshire’ for *Norphymlbraland* and *Nordhymbre* in these contemporary sources. The events and kings referred to are those situated at York, which remained a center of contention between Norse rulers and English kings until 954.³¹⁰

By 954, the English kings ceased to recognize Norsemen as ‘kings’ of York and permanently claimed that title for themselves. As for the northern areas of Northumberland, Durham County – from Tees to Tyne – continued under the direction of the Durham Bishops and the earls, while Northumbria – north of the Tyne – remained in the hands of the earls from Bamburgh. Clearly Northumbria continued to exist as a regional entity with local rulers. With the exceptions of a few outside appointed earls later in the eleventh century, Anglian Northumbrian earls maintained political and military activities in their homeland without dominance from Wessex.³¹¹

This moment marked a major turning point in Northumberland history. King Eadred of England reportedly *feng to Nordhymbra rice* (seized Northumbrian rule).³¹² Oswulf I (953-965), ‘lord of Bamburgh’, grandson and son of the last Northumbrian

³¹⁰A. O. Anderson also interprets the sources to reference the kingdom based at York, rather than all Northumberland or the region of Anglian Northumbria; ‘Anglo-Scottish Relations’, 4. Dorothy Whitelock uses the term ‘Northumbria’ when referring to the region ‘permanently under the English crown’ post 954; *Dealings*, 72. A. O. Anderson uses the term ‘Danish Northumbria’ for the Northumberland region originally controlled by the Danes and later inherited by the Norse. The region includes all of Yorkshire, and possibly some manorial estates up to the river Wear.

³¹¹See Table 3.4 ‘Earls of Northumbrian and Yorkshire’ and also the genealogy tables in Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, table 13; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 18 and 30; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 76.

TABLE 3.4³¹³

EARLS OF NORTHUMBRIA AND YORKSHIRE

Eadwulf³¹⁴ of Bamburgh (878/890-913)

Ealdred³¹⁵ (913-927x?), son of Eadwulf of Bamburgh

*Oswulf I³¹⁶ (?x953-965), e. of Northumbria; lord of Bamburgh, member of old royal family

Eadwulf ‘Yvelcild’ (966-975), e. of Northumbria

*Oslac (966-975), e. of Yorkshire

*Waltheof I (?975-?1006), e. of Northumbria; son of Earl Oswulf I

Thored (979-993), e. of Yorkshire

Ælfhelm (993-1006), e. of Yorkshire

*Uhtred (?995/1006-1016), e. of Northumbria; (1006/7-1016) e. of Yorkshire; son of Earl Waltheof I

*Eadwulf ‘Cudel’ (1016-?1020s), e. of Northumbria; son of Earl Waltheof I

Eiríkr (1016-1023x?1033), e. of Yorkshire; a Norwegian *jarl*, brother-in-law of King Knútr

*Ealdred (?1020s-1038), e. of Northumbria; son of Earl Uhtred

(table continued)

³¹²ASC-D, E, 954.

³¹³This reference list was compiled by Ms. Hayes especially for this dissertation.

³¹⁴See Table 2.1.

³¹⁵See Table 2.1.

³¹⁶An asterick (*) denotes that the name can be found in the earls’ list in *HReg SymD* in year 1072 passage. P. H. Blair accepts the credibility of this list for Northumbrian earls. Symeon of Durham moved the list from the year 952, as found in the *Chronicle of Melrose* (Cottonian MS., Faustina B IX), to that of 1072; Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Northumbria*, 92-98. **Bold** lettering represents earls of Northumbria from outside Northumbria.

- *Eadwulf (1038-?1041/1042), e. of Northumbria; son of Earl Uhtred
- ***Siward** (1031x1033-1055), e. of Yorkshire; (?1041/1042-1055), e. of Northumbria; son-in-law of Earl Ealdred
- ***Tostig** (1055-1065), e. of Yorkshire and Northumbria; son of Earl Godwin of Wessex; brother-in-law of King Edward II the Confessor
- *Oswulf II (1065-1067), e. of Northumbria; son of Earl Eadwulf; grandson of Earl Uhtred
- ***Morcar** (1066), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire; son of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia
- ***Copsige** (Feb-Mar1067), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire
- *Gospatric (1067-1072), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire [and later Dunbar]; grandson of Earl Uhtred and great-grandson of King Æthelred II
- Robert de Commine** (1069), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire
- *Waltheof II (1072-1075), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire; son of Earl Siward, nephew-in-law of King William I; father-in-law of King David I of Scotland
- ***Bishop Walcher** of Durham (1075-1080), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire
- ***Aubrey** (1080), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire
- ***Robert de Mowbray** (1080-1095), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire
- ***King William Rufus II**, (1095-1100), e. of Northumbria and Yorkshire

kings, Eadwulf (?878-913) and Ealdred Eadwulfing (913-?927), became in 953 the first member of the royal family of Bamburgh recognized as earl of Northumbria. Oswulf I's rule, along with those of his descendants, bear out my argument that Northumbria retained a political and military position into the eleventh century. These local leaders maintained their borders with Scotland through alliances and pitched battles without aid from Wessex. The Northumbrian leadership showed great tenacity in their survival during this mid-tenth century period of political transition and redefinition as an earldom. Northumbria existed as a border region and its leaders remained on the political stage of Britain throughout the tumultuous eleventh century.

CHAPTER 4

NORTHUMBRIAN EARLS, 927 A.D. TO 1075 A.D.

Kings from Wessex, and later London, claimed the title 'king of England' by 927 and were recorded in the annals as *feng to Nordhymbre rice* (seized Northumbrian rule) and even having *Northanimbros...subegerit* (subjected the Northumbrians).³¹⁷ The continuing history of Northumberland, especially Northumbria, shows these kings alternately in alliance with or opposition to the Northumbrian earls. These northern earls retained enough authority in their region to lead rebellions and host royal peace treaties between English and Scottish kings. G. P. Baker aptly attributes the policies of the early King Edwin with making Northumbria 'the most progressive province of England, and perhaps of Europe.'³¹⁸ Baker further suggests that if the Northumbrian kingdom could have been permanently united, it would have continued to dominate all southern Anglian and Saxon kingdoms past the reigns of Edwin's sons Oswald and Oswiu, leaving Wessex out of the picture. As the annals relate, Northumbria did not retain that early powerhouse position, but neither did it disappear, completely succumb to the designs of other rulers, or in the case of Anglian Northumbria, accept outside rulers until the reign of King William II Rufus (1087-1100). While it makes for clean story-telling to represent Northumbria as a defeated, destroyed and amalgamated member of the larger southern English kingdom from 927, that image does not match the reality.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ASC-E, 954; *GRA Malms*, ii.125.1, 196.

³¹⁸G. P. Baker, *The Fighting Kings of Wessex, A Gallery of Portraits* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1931), 70-71.

³¹⁹See Anderson, "Anglo-Saxon Relations," 2 and chapter 3, page 97 above for a discussion on Northumbria's political relationship with the kings of England in 927.

The leading members of the house of Bamburgh were intricately involved in the activities of the Saxon kings as they related to Northumbria even after their title of ‘king’ ceased to be recognized by the English kings from Wessex in 954. William of Malmesbury wrote about the events surrounding the rule and death of King Sigtryggr (Sihtric) of York.

When the ceremony of his consecration was completed, Æthelstan . . . brought the whole of England entirely under his rule by the mere terror of his name, with the sole exception of the Northumbrians. Their ruler was a certain Sigtryggr, a barbarian alike in blood and behavior . . . who, though he had turned up his nose at the authority of previous monarchs, sent an embassy on his own initiative humbly requesting some closer relationship, and rapidly followed this up in person and confirmed the proposals of his envoys. Rewarded with the hand of Æthelstan’s sister and gifts of many kinds, he laid the foundations of a lasting agreement. But . . . a year later his life came to a violent end and this gave Æthelstan the opportunity to add Northumbria to his own share.³²⁰

With Sigtryggr, king of the Northumbrians, he [Æthelstan] made a lasting peace, giving him one of his sisters in marriage; but on Sigtryggr’s death a year later he subdued the whole province, after driving out a certain Ealdwulf who was in revolt.³²¹

³²⁰*Transacta consecrationis celebritate, Ethelstanus . . . omnem omnino Angliam solo nominis terrore subiugauit, preter solos Northanimbros. Nam preerat illis Sihtritius quidam, gente et animo barbarus . . . qui, cum antecessorum regum pontentiam rugatis naribus derisisset, huius affinitatem ultro suplicibus nuntiis expetiit. Ipse quoque, festino pede subsecutus, uerba legatorum asseruit; quare et sororis copula et multiplicibus xeniis muneratus perpetui federis fundamenta iecit. Sed . . . post annum uita deturbatus occasionem Ethelstano exhibuit ut Northanimbriam suae parti iungeret; GRA Malms, ii.134.1, 212. Read Yorkshire for Northumbria in this passage.*

³²¹*Cum Sigtrico rege Northanimbrorum, data ei in matrimonium uria ex soroibus, uicturum fedus perculit; quo post annum mortuo, prouintiam illam sibi subegit, expulso quodam Aldulfo qui rebellabat; GRA Malms, ii.131.3, 206. Read Yorkshire for Northumbria in this passage.*

King Sigtryggr of Yorkshire reportedly died in 925 or 927.³²² Eadwulf (878/890-913), leading *ealdorman* of Bamburgh and earl of Northumbria, was killed in 913 by a man named Eadred and so cannot be the Eadwulf in this passage.³²³ However, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* calls his son, *Ealdred Ealdulfing from Bebbanbyrig* (Ealdred, son of Eadwulf, from Bamburgh). Therefore the son can be understood as the Eadwulf mentioned here by William of Malmesbury.³²⁴ This passage presents King Æthelstan as the new king of all Northumberland. In reality the royal family of Bamburgh continued to rule in Northumbria as outlined in this chapter.

Danish and Norwegian invasions of Yorkshire, with their subsequent Viking rule over that region, broke the kingdom of Northumbria in two. With the Tees River as the predominant dividing line, the Vikings directly controlled Yorkshire while the Northumbrians continued to rule in Northumbria from Bamburgh. This geographic division is reminiscent of the early Anglian kingdoms, Deira and Bernicia. Beginning in 927 with King Æthelstan, West Saxon kings officially absorbed Northumberland thereby creating the kingdom of England. This action permanently altered relationships and titles of the Northumberland leaders. From 927 Yorkshire kings were alternately West Saxon and Viking until the reign of Eiríkr ‘Bloodaxe’ in 954, after which no Viking held the

³²²The date 927 is offered by Cheney, but William of Malmesbury places it at 925 and the *ASC* at 926.

³²³The Old English term *ealdorman* refers to high ranking nobles, who often held leading political offices within a great region. In the tenth century, the term *eorl* (derives from the Danish word *jarl*, earl) also began to be used as a title for the noble who assumed the lead role in a region, i.e. Northumbria. See Chapter 2, pages 33-35 above for Anglo-Saxon political and social positions. Likewise ealdormanry is a term in office as *ealdorman* or earl. See Table 3.4.

³²⁴*ASC-D*, 926. Ealdred Eadwulfing’s dates of rule are (913-927x?).

title of ‘king’ in York. At this point the kings of Wessex claimed immediate authority in Yorkshire and oversaw the appointments of loyal men as earls there. In contrast, the new position of Northumberland inside the English kingdom did not curb the authority of the Bamburgh family within Northumbria in favor of the English kings. No evidence exists showing royal appointments to Northumbria’s earldom from amongst the nobles of Bamburgh, as in York.

In 921, the Angles of Northumbria reportedly joined the Scottish king Causantín II, the Danish Yorkshire king Rægnald I and the Strathclyde [Cumbrian] king in a peace treaty with King Edward.³²⁵ According to Symeon, the leader of the Northumbrian Angles, i.e. Ealdred Eadwulfing, recognized the authority of King Edward, but remained in control of Northumbria. In 927, King Æthelstan defeated the Yorkshire Viking forces under Guthfrith II, expelled Guthfrith II from Yorkshire, and ruled Yorkshire himself until his death in 939. At this same time Ealdred Eadwulfing was clearly leading Northumbrian *ðegnas* against an imminent takeover by King Æthelstan in that same year.³²⁶

At this time there appeared a radiance of fire in the northern quarter of the sky, and Sigtryggr perished, and King Æthelstan ascended the throne of Northumbria, and all the kings who were on this island he [Æthelstan] dominated: first Hywel king of the West Welsh, and Causantín king of the Scots, and Owain king of the Gwents, and Ealdred son of Ealdwulf from Bamburgh, and established with a pledge and with oaths, there at the site which is near named Eamotum on the fourth of the ides of July and every devil [those who gave oaths to the king] declared a money payment [to the king] and hereafter separated with peace.³²⁷

³²⁵Stephenson, *HKE*, 921, 87.

³²⁶*GRA Malms*, ii.131.3, 206; see chapter 3, page 99 and page 114, fn. 320 above.

³²⁷*Her oðeowdon fyrena leoman on norðdæle þære lyfte. and Sihtric acwæl and Æpelstan cyning feng to Norðhymbra rice. and ealle þa cyngas þe on þyssum iglande wæron he gewylde. ærest Huwal West Wala cyning. and Cosstantin Scotta cyning. and*

Unlike Guthfrith II, Ealdred Eadwulfing was not expelled from Northumbria, nor was he deposed and replaced at the instigation of King Æthelstan. Instead as a preeminent player in Northumbrian politics of that time, Ealdred Eadwulfing attended the peace agreement alongside the British and Scottish kings called by King Æthelstan. At this point we can not be certain if the Northumbrian leadership still retained the title of ‘king’ or had officially changed to that of ‘ealdorman’ or ‘earl’. Either way Ealdred’s presence at the 927 assembly should not be underrated.

This is the last known document signed by Ealdred. Cheney does not believe that this was the last of Ealdred’s life or rule, but we do not know his exact death date. It is critical to recognize the continuance of authority held by Northumbrian leaders, beginning with Ealdred and continued through his heirs, over their region. The Saxon kings did not extend their direct rule over Northumbria as in York, or attempt to change the Anglian leadership until the disastrous rule of Tostig Godwinson (1055-1065). I propose rather, that these kings recognized the Northumbrians from Bamburgh as competent rulers of their region, and possibly even as political and military allies against Scottish incursions into England.

Oswulf I (?x953-965), son of Ealdred Eadwulfing, followed his father’s footsteps as the leading nobleman, ‘Lord of Bamburgh.’³²⁸ Roger of Wendover recorded the

Uwen Wenta cyning. and Ealdred Ealdulfing from Bebbanbyrig. and mid wedde and mid apum fryþ gefæstnodon. on þære stowe þe genemned is æt Eamotum. on iiii ides Iulii and ælc deofol geld to cwædon and syþþam mid sibbe tocyrdon; ASC-D, 926; Stephenson, HKE, 926, 68. See also Duncan, Kingship, 23 and chapter 3, page 89 above.

³²⁸Stephenson, *HKE*, 953, 69; Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops*, 371. According to Symeon of Durham the Northumbrian rulers transitioned from kings to earls in 952; Stephenson, *HKE*, 952, 69. Rollason argues that Eadwulf retained the title ‘king of the

participation of Oswulf I in the death of King Eiríkr ‘Bloodaxe’ of York in 954. In his work, Roger of Wendover recognized Oswulf I as earl at the time.³²⁹ His military leadership, and possibly murderous actions, suggests that Oswulf I was not new to his position and was potentially earl of Northumbria prior to 953. In fact he witnessed a royal document at the king’s court in 934.³³⁰

Oswulf I probably acquiesced to the authority of Eadred as overking personally, although this is not recorded in the annals.³³¹ This relationship proved to be politically astute, as the Bamburgh family retained direct control over the region and the Northumbrian earls were accepted as leading northern magnates. Certainly following Oswulf I’s tenure, all leaders of Northumbria accepted the political title of earl. Whether as compensation for assisting the removal of Eiríkr ‘Bloodaxe’ or a power grab in the wake of those tumultuous events, Oswulf I ruled as earl of Yorkshire, as well. Richard Fletcher advances the theory that King Eadred had to recognize Oswulf I as earl of Yorkshire after the latter seized control in York. The issue involved the true nature of the balance of power in that moment: who could exert true authority in the northern region

North Saxons [Northumbrians]’ per his translation of a passage in the contemporary *Annals of Ulster*; Rollason, *Northumbria*, 249.

³²⁹*EHD*, vol. I, 257.

³³⁰Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 42. At this juncture, it is appropriate to review the terminology for the geographic region of Northumberland. This dissertation refers to the political regions of Northumberland as Northumbria (Tweed to Tees Rivers, post-973) and Yorkshire (Tees River to Humber River Valley) with Bamburgh and York as the principle regional capitals. For an overview of terminology usage by other scholars, see Chapter 1, fn. 2 above.

³³¹*ASC-E*, 954.

and who was most afraid of whom?³³² The scenario presented by Fletcher seems highly probable.

Beginning with the reign of Archbishop Osketel (?954-970/971), the archbishops of York all hailed from across the Humber River, maintained their Anglo-Danish connections from the old Danelaw region, and even presided simultaneously over the bishopric of Dorchester or Worcester.³³³ Whitelock suggests that the king chose these men for their knowledge of the vernacular Anglo-Danish language and cultural customs prevalent in Yorkshire as the Danelaw. The maintenance of political and familial connections south of the Humber and assignments to southern dioceses also ensured that these archbishops would not support any efforts for ‘Northumbrian independence’.³³⁴ This sheds light on the potentially hostile threat the Northumbrian earls posed to the English kings and reinforces the reality that the authority of the kings fell short of Northumbria.

During Oswulf I’s rule he reportedly joined forces with the Wessex *ætheling* Edgar, then sub-king of Mercia (955-959). Together they rebelled against the overlordship of King Eadwig (955-959)³³⁵ of England after accounts of unwise conduct of West Saxon government.³³⁶ In 959 when Edgar (959-975) succeeded his brother as king

³³²Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 41.

³³³*GP Malms*, iii.115, 250. See Table 4.1 ‘Anglo-Saxon Bishops and Archbishops of York’.

³³⁴Whitelock, ‘Dealings’, 75-76.

³³⁵Eadwig succeeded his father Eadred in Wessex while his brother, and future heir, Edgar inherited Mercia; *ASC-D* 955; Stephenson, *HKE*, 955, 91.

TABLE 4.1³³⁷

ANGLO-SAXON BISHOPS AND ARCHBISHOPS OF YORK

Paulinus, 625-633³³⁸
 Ceadda, 664-669³³⁹
 Wilfrid I, 669-678, 686-691
 Bosa, 678-686, 691-705
 John of Beverly, 705-718
 Wilfrith II, 718-732
 Ecgbeorht, 732/5-766
 Æthelbeorht, 767-780/1
 Eanbeald I, 779/780-796
 Eanbeald II, 796-808x?
 Wulfsige, 808x?-830x837
 Wigmund, 837-854
 Wulfhere, 854-892/900
 Æthelbeald, 900-904x928
 Hrothweard, 904x928-931
 Wulfstan I, 931-955/6
 Oscytel, 956/8-970/1
 Edwaldus, 971
 St. Oswald, 972-992
 Ealdwulf, 995-1002
 Wulfstan II, 1003-1023
 Ælfric Puttoc, 1023-1041, 1041-1050/2
 Æthelric, 1041-1042
 Cynesige, 1051-1060
 Ealdred, 1061-1069
 Thomas I³⁴⁰, 1070-1100

³³⁶*FlorW*, 957, 354.21. The accusation of unwise conduct of the government is not explained but we are informed about the questionable marriage of Eadwig. Archbishop Odo of Canterbury reportedly *totwæmde Eadwi cyning and Ælgyfe forþæm þe hi wæron to gesybbe* ‘separated king Eadwig and Ælgyfe because they were too closely related’; *ASC-D*, 958. Florence of Worcester incorrectly calls Edgar the ‘cousin’ of Eadwig.

³³⁷Dates taken from Searle.

³³⁸Paulinus was Roman, not Anglian or Saxon. He was installed at York by King Oswald of Northumbria.

³³⁹Bishop Ceadda had championed the Celtic church festival dates, over the Roman religious practices and date for Easter, at the 664 Synod of Whitby. Therefore following the Synod, he was exiled from his See at York and returned to Iona.

of England, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* refers to him as also the king of Mercia and Northumbria.³⁴¹ The reference here to *Norðhymbrum* remains unclear whether all of Northumberland or only Yorkshire is intended. If it is inclusive of the earldom of Northumbria, then it might be interpreted as an ongoing alliance between King Edgar and Earl Oswulf I following their earlier partnership. In no way should the *Chronicle* passage be understood as Edgar gaining true authority in Northumbria at the expense of Oswulf I. Edgar spent most of his reign as king of England in a predominantly pacifist role, dedicated to establishing monasteries alongside his Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Dunstan, whom he appointed in 963.³⁴² The opening lines of his death tribute confirm the impression that Edgar exercised no authority over Northumbria, thereby leaving provincial authority to the earls.

At this time [975] Edgar ruler of the Angles, protector of the West Saxons, and guardian of the Mercians departed.³⁴³

At Oswulf I's death in 965, Oslac (966-975) officially received the earldom of Yorkshire from King Edgar.³⁴⁴ The etymology of the names for the two earls leaves open

³⁴⁰First Norman appointed Archbishop to the See of York.

³⁴¹Rositzke, 959, 49.

³⁴²*ASC-E*, 963; *FlorW*, 959-975, 355.23-361.2; Stephenson, *HKE*, 959-975, 91-92.

³⁴³*Her Eadgar gefor Angla reccent West Seaxena wine and Myrcene mundbora*; *ASC-E*, 975.

³⁴⁴*ASC-E*, 966. Symeon does not provide an identity for Earl Oslac. However, Symeon gives the impression that Oslac assisted Oswulf I by ruling in York, presumably as sub-Earl, but this is the only source that implies a parallel rule for both men; Stephenson, *HKE*, 143.

the possibility of kinship. Families tended to use ancestral names or prefixes in each generation, which served to identify the name bearer with his family. In the case of Oswulf and Oslac, any relationship between the two men can only be conjecture, though.³⁴⁵ Apparently Edgar quickly appointed a man of his choosing as earl of Yorkshire and Oslac proved to be loyal to the king in administration of his earldom as well as in attendance at royal courts to witness documents.³⁴⁶ Eadwulf (966-975), nicknamed *Yvelcild* (evil child), ascended to the earldom of Northumbria.³⁴⁷ As his name was a family name in Bamburgh, he possibly belonged to Oswulf I's family, but the sources do not confirm this.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 41. We can safely accept that his two immediate successors in York, Thored and Ælfhelm, did not hail from the leading Bamburgh family. Whitelock suggests that Oslac is an Anglicized form of the Old Norse name Áslákr, which would argue for no connection with the house of Bamburgh; 'Dealings', 79.

³⁴⁶In 963 a Yorkshireman named Oslac was granted Sherburn in Elmet, Yorkshire. The archbishops of York had held the estate and church of Sherburn from the tenth century, with the exception of the year 963. Sherburn was a site visited by royalty from the ninth century and believed to be an important property in Yorkshire. After holding Sherburn for one year, the nobleman Oslac returned the property to the archbishops of York; Hadley, *Northern Danelaw*, 238 and 276. If this Oslac is the same man as our Oslac, then even before King Edgar promoted him to earl, he benefited from a royal land grant, possibly owed for a service to the king. Clearly this Oslac had enough income and social standing that he could generously re-grant Sherburn back to the Episcopal See at York. A wealthy noble from Yorkshire with landed interests in the region who had an established relationship with the king seems just the sort of man to be chosen as the region's leader. This possible identity for Earl Oslac further exemplifies the ties between Yorkshire and the kings of England.

³⁴⁷*EHD*, vol. I, 257-258. In this source by Roger of Wendover, Earls Oslac and Eadwulf with Bishop Ælfsige of Lindisfarne (at Chester-le-Street) escorted King Cínead II of Scotland to King Edgar's court where Lothian was ceded to Scotland in 973.

³⁴⁸King Edgar issued a law code in 962-963 which recognized the legal idiosyncrasies of Yorkshire as a blend of Anglo-Saxon and Danish. With this document, the king gave permission for Danish customs to remain in an Anglo-Saxon earldom under an Anglo-Saxon king; *EHD*, vol. I, 397-400. Hadley suggests that Eadgar did this in

In 975 King Edgar died. The ealdormen of England aligned themselves either with the *ætheling* Edward or the *ætheling* Æthelred, both sons of Edgar from different mothers. As the careers of both Earls Oslac and Eadwulf ended also in 975, it can be suggested that they campaigned for the losing *ætheling*.³⁴⁹ Oslac was exiled from England unlike Eadwulf who was not punished in any way similar, if at all. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* relates Oslac's fate.

Oslac out of his native region	over the rolling sea
over the bath of the gannet	the grey-haired man
wise and eloquent	over the waters hasten
over the country of the whale	bereaved of [his] estates. ³⁵⁰

Here is an example of a Yorkshire earl, loyal and close to the former king, appointed by that king, yet he is not retained by the new king nor merely relieved of his position. In exile Oslac also suffered the loss of his private properties and their incomes. The West Saxon author for the *Chronicle* passage above immortalized the fall of Oslac, but no other source mentions the event in detail, only that he was exiled. The extensive knowledge and poetic interest shown in Oslac by the chronicler from the king's court, proves further the earl's allegiance with King Edgar and the administration from Wessex.

order to 'maintain a semblance of political unity by recognizing the regional legal traditions of his kingdom;' *Northern Danelaw*, 301-303. Æthelred II, Knútr (Cnut), and Edward II the Confessor all reconfirmed the law code. This is just one more way to showcase the close relationship of the English kings and the leaders of Yorkshire. At no time did the king dictate a law code for Northumbria nor change an existing one.

³⁴⁹Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 44.

³⁵⁰Oslac of earde ofer yða gewealc
ofer ganotes bæð gamolfeax hæleð
wis and wordsnotor ofer wætera geðring
ofer hwæles eðel hama bereafod; *ASC-A*, 975.

By contrast the sources simply cease reporting about the Northumbrian Earl Eadwulf and the end of his career. Lack of such source information, even by the northern author of the *Chronicle*, gives the impression that English kings of the time did not exert enough authority in Northumbria to exile, or possibly even depose the earl. The kings certainly were not appointing earls there yet, as the nobles within Northumbria continued to do so. Even so, Eadwulf did not remain earl. Waltheof I (?975-?1006), a son of Earl Oswulf I, succeeded to the ealdormanry of Northumbria, thereby placing an obvious member of the leading Bamburgh family in charge.³⁵¹ If Eadwulf had backed the wrong *ætheling* the Northumbrians could have removed him to prevent any excuse for royal intervention such as evident in Yorkshire. It is also possible that if Eadwulf was merely a distant relative of Oswulf I, or only a strong Northumbrian noble, prior to becoming earl, and that Oswulf I's son seized the opportunity to have him ousted. A fight for the royal crown would have provided a favorable chaotic environment for an in-house exchange of earls. Neither can it be ignored that Eadwulf might have been assassinated. One hesitates to credit this course of action, though, as political murder was recorded enough in other instances but was not here. Ultimately the story of Earls Oslac and Eadwulf provides an excellent example of the extent of royal involvement within Northumberland, showing its reach to Yorkshire, but not as yet to Northumbria.

Following the death of King Edgar, *ætheling* Edward successfully maneuvered through the political and familial quagmire to become king in 975. Edward II (975-978) reigned for three years until murdered by his half-brother, the *ætheling* Æthelred, and

³⁵¹See genealogy tables in Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, table 13; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 30, table 2; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 76, table 3.

step-mother Ælfthryth in March 978.³⁵² Æthelred II (978-1016) immediately assumed the title of king of England.

During Æthelred II's reign, the northern earldoms were ruled by Waltheof I (?975-?1006) in Northumbria and Thored (979-993) in Yorkshire. Earl Thored's familial association is uncertain, although a man of that name appears in the *Chronicle* under the year 966 as the son of Gunnar, a landed Yorkshire magnate. According to the passage this Thored reportedly 'ravaged Westmorland'.³⁵³ It is possible that the Thored in the *Chronicle* is the same Thored that later received the ealdormanry of York, as the same passage recorded Oslac's appointment as earl in York. Therefore, at the time Oslac became earl, a leading magnate possibly also from York commanded a successful expedition into Westmorland. This event was deemed important enough to precede the statement about the appointment of Oslac in the *Chronicle* and there are no other entries for that year. The name Thored is Old Norse and as such speaks of a Viking ancestry. The Vikings of Yorkshire were generally landed warriors and often held important local positions, as will be discussed below with Thurbrand and Carl.

³⁵²ASC-A, E, 978; *GRA Malms*, ii.162-163, 264-268; Stephenson, *HKE*, 957, 69 and 978, 95. The sources all name Ælfthryth as responsible for Edward II's death while staying at her home in Corfe. The quickness of Æthelred II's coronation at Kingston leaves a distasteful impression that she was indeed behind the murderous plot. As Æthelred II was only 10 years old when made a king, Ælfthryth most likely assumed the role of dowager-queen until Æthelred II was ready to assume all the royal duties himself.

³⁵³ASC-E, 966. See also Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 40-41; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 70-71; Whitelock, 'Dealings', 79-80. Higham, Fletcher, and Whitelock lean toward this identification for Thored and do not believe him to be the son of the exiled Earl Oslac who bore the same name.

Whatever ancestry and political or administrative post previously held by our Thored, he was eventually awarded the stewardship of Yorkshire.³⁵⁴ The scholarly debate on the reason for his appointment as earl focuses on the raid into Westmoreland. As a renegade leader in command of enough *jarls* (the Old Norse and Danish equivalent to the rank of *ðegn*) to ravage a large region, the king was forced to rein him in somehow. Therefore, Æthelred II offered him the newly vacant ealdormanry of Yorkshire. Thored comes across as a shrewd and tough negotiator, though, as Æthelred II in turn married Thored's daughter Ælflæd.³⁵⁵ The old Germanic tradition of daughters as peace-weavers was obviously still an effective political strategy. Thored thereafter acquiesced as a respectable and loyal *ealdorman*, much relied upon by his son-in-law the king.

During Æthelred II's reign *wicinga* armies began new waves of invasion into England. The *wicinga* attacks continued throughout his kingship without a strong and consistent homeland defense policy. The king showed bad judgment and weakness on the occasions he taxed the English population and paid tribute to the Danish armies in hopes of peace.³⁵⁶ Also, unlike his predecessors, Æthelred II recruited high ranking regional leaders to lead the English ground and naval forces against the *wicinga* in his

³⁵⁴Thored gave a donation of private property in the form of land holdings to the community of St. Cuthbert at Crayke: Smeaton, two hides; Crayke, two hides; Sutton, one hide. See 'Grant of Lands by Eorl Thored to St. Cuthbert's' in *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, ed. and trans. A. J. Robertson (Cambridge: The University Press, 1956), 124.

³⁵⁵Whitelock, 'Dealings', 80; *EHD*, vol. I, 50. The *æthelingas* Æthelstan, Edmund 'Ironside' (April-November 1016) and Eadwig were the sons from this marriage. Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 26; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 72; Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, 57-58. Stafford even speculates that Thored grabbed the earldom, forcing Æthelred II's hand in the matter.

³⁵⁶*ASC-E*, 1002; Stephenson, *HKE*, 1002, 99; Hudson, *Kings*, 115.

place.³⁵⁷ The combination of these events ultimately resulted in the Danish kings Sveinn ‘Forkbeard’ Haraldsson and his son Knútr defeating Æthelred II.

In 992, the king entrusted Ealdorman Ælfric of Mercia, Earl Thored of Yorkshire, as well as bishops Ælfstan and Æscwig with using the naval fleet collected at London to destroy the Danes. Earl Thored proved his loyalty to King Æthelred II in this venture, while the Ealdorman Ælfric deserted the king to join the enemy fleets.³⁵⁸

Then the armies met the ships from East Anglia and from London and there they [the English] killed [by] great slaughter and then took the ships, all the weapons and cloth/sails, on which was the *ealdorman*.³⁵⁹

In 993, Earl Waltheof I and the *ðegnas* of Northumbria faced a renewed *wicinga* onslaught, and the Yorkshire populations were similarly besieged afterwards along the Humber River.

In this year [993] Bamburgh was broken into pieces and a great [Viking] army carried off plunder there and afterwards the [Viking] army came to the mouth of the Humber [River] and there wrought great evil both in Lindsey and in Northumbria.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷Remarked upon with some feeling by Higham in *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 25.

³⁵⁸ASC-E, 992. Symeon identifies Ælfric as the *dux* (Duke) of Mercia, which he inherited from his father in 983; Stephenson, *HKE*, 983, 986, and 991, 95-96. The Latin title *dux* correlated with the use of the Old English title *ealdorman* at that time.

³⁵⁹[*p*]a gemætte se here ða scipu of East Englum and of Lunden and hi ðær ofslogon mycel wæl and þa scip genamon eall gewæpnod and gewædod þe se ealdorman on wæs; ASC-E, 992. In the next passage the *Chronicle* relates the blinding of Ealdorman Ælfric’s son, and presumptive heir, at the request of King Æthelred II. This action would have inhibited any claim the son had to rulership of his father’s earldom and also served to deter other such leaders from violating the trust, generosity and favor of their king.

³⁶⁰Her on ðissum geare wæs Bæbbanburh tobrocon and micel here huðe þær genumen and æfter þam com to Humbran muðe se here and þær mycel yfel gewrohtan ægðer ge on Lindesige ge on Norðhymbran; ASC-E, 993. Read Yorkshire for Northumbria in this passage.

In response, Earl Thored was given command of a large army with which to combat the *wicinga*, but the Anglo-Danish war leaders failed to remain on the battlefield.³⁶¹ The disastrous failure of this mission meant dire consequences for Thored. The actual events are unknown, but the results could only have been death or deposition and exile at the request of his father-in-law the king.³⁶² By the summer of 993, Yorkshire had gained a new royally appointed *ealdorman*.

In the year 995 Bishop Ealdhun (990-1018) of Lindisfarne removed the religious community and St. Cuthbert's relics from Chester-le-Street in Northumbria to Ripon in Yorkshire, as a precaution in the face of invading *wicinga*.

After three or four months later, peace having returned, they were taking the venerable body back to its former resting place, and they had reached a place called *Wrdelau* which is near Durham on the east side, the cart on which they were carrying the coffin containing the holy body could be moved no further.³⁶³

This miraculous tale was intended to give credence to the power of Cuthbert's saintly remains, as the relics chose his final resting place. Of course a peninsula surrounded

³⁶¹Whitelock states that the Yorkshire leadership actually 'instigated' the flight of the English forces; 'Dealings', 87.

³⁶²*ASC-E*, 993; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 26, 40-41; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 72-73.

³⁶³*Post tres autem uel quattuor menses pace reddita, cum uenerandum corpus ad priorem locum reportarent, iamque prope Dunhelmum ad orientalem plagam in locum qui Wrdelau dicitur aduenissent, uehiculum quo sacri corporis theca ferebatur, ulterius promoueri non poterat; SymD LDE*, iii.1, 144. See also fn. 1 for discussion on the date of the invasion and subsequent move of St. Cuthbert's community as related to the 993 sack of Bamburgh, Yorkshire, and Lindsey. Fletcher believes that the Lindisfarne community moved prior to a supposed 994 invasion from Scotland, as referenced in Anderson, *ESSH*, vol. I, 512, but this source by Fletcher's own admission is not reliable; *Bloodfeud*, 73.

almost entirely by a river provided fabulous defense possibilities and, therefore, a more practical explanation for settlement at that site.

St. Cuthbert's religious community found a final and permanent home at Durham on the River Wear and still within the protective sphere of the Northumbrian earls in Bamburgh. During the tenure of Bishop Ealdun the land was cleared of forest and made ready for ploughs to farm, as well as the eventual building of a church. At some point after Waltheof I's death, Symeon of Durham records the assistance of *comitis Northanhymbrorum Vhtredi* (Uhtred, earl of Northumbria) in the deforestation project.³⁶⁴ Thus the strong traditional ties between the rulers at Bamburgh and the religious community of Lindisfarne continued as the bishop and clerics settled into their final home.

The *ealdorman* career of Waltheof I was not recorded at length. We do not read of vast political connections with the kings of England, and of only one important military campaign in 993 obviously led by Waltheof I. He should not be understood as an unimportant figure in Northumbria, however, or as leading a dull political life. The lack of extensive source material may be interpreted as just the opposite. Whatever situations he encountered as earl of Northumbria were handled without the interference or assistance of the kings. The West Saxon *Chronicle* author would certainly have reported any such activity on the part of the kings, but he did not, probably for lack of such news to relate. In this light, the Northumbrian earls still maintained direct and strong local leadership, outside the realm of the kings through the tenth century.

³⁶⁴*SymD LDE*, iii.2, 148. Uhtred was Waltheof I's son and a direct descendant of the old royal family of Bamburgh.

Thored's successor in Yorkshire was Ealdorman Ælfhelm (993-1006), who owned a large number of estates in Northampton, and even possibly held the ealdormanry there.³⁶⁵ Ealdorman Ælfhelm's daughter, Ælfgifu, inherited the family estates in Northampton and later married King Knútr.³⁶⁶ Prior to his ealdormanry of Yorkshire, Ælfhelm's family held extensive estates on both sides of the Humber River: in Northamptonshire, Mercia, the Danelaw Five Boroughs, south Lancashire, Staffordshire, Tamworth, Wolverhampton, West Riding of Yorkshire.³⁶⁷ In Ælfhelm the king saw a loyal appointee to Yorkshire with extensive landholdings south of the Humber River. His familiarity with Anglo-Danish customs and his lack of previous political activity or partisanship also made him the logical choice for Æthelred II.³⁶⁸ For Ælfhelm, this appointment meant great royal favor for himself and his family as well as promotion from a wealthy *gesið* to the rank of a leading English *ealdorman*. After years of service to

³⁶⁵Rollason, *Northumbria*, 267. Ælfhelm's children included his sons Wulfheah, Wulfric, and Ufegeat and his daughter Ælfgifu. For the genealogy of Ælfhelm's family, refer to Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 46.

³⁶⁶*GRA Malms*, ii.188.1-2, 334-336; Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops*, 354; *HA*, vi.18-19, 368-370. Whitelock recognizes Ælfgifu as the king's concubine rather than his wife; 'Dealings', 80. King Knútr and Ælfgifu's second son Haraldr I ruled as king over Mercia and Northumbria (1036-1037) and as king over all England (1037-1040), while their eldest son Sveinn inherited the throne of Norway. These royal appointments made Ealdorman Ælfhelm the grandfather of English and Scandinavian kings.

³⁶⁷*Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (Cambridge: The University Press, 1930), no. 17; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 41.

³⁶⁸Whitelock, 'Dealings', 80. Ælfhelm and his family did go on to cultivate strong connections with the *æthelingas* Æthelstan and Edmund 'Ironside', which proved to be disastrous after Æthelred II married his second wife Emma of Normandy; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 41.

Æthelred II, Ælfhelm fell out of favor with the king. He was *ofslagen* (slain) in 1006 by royal order, after which his two sons Wulfheah and Ufegeat were *ablende* (blinded).³⁶⁹

Uhtred (?995/1006-1016), the son of Waltheof I, accepted royal appointment to the ealdormanry of Yorkshire in 1006 subsequent to the assassination of Ælfhelm. We do not know for certain at what date he succeeded his father as *ealdorman* in Northumbria. We do know that he was the earl of Northumbria prior to Æthelred II awarding him Yorkshire and as such placing all of Northumberland once again under the authority of the house of Bamburgh.

The launch of Uhtred's career as earl in Northumbria has long been based on a battle recorded as occurring at Durham in 1006. The *De obsessione* text details the events of a 'siege' of Durham by Máel Coluim II (1005-1034) early in his reign.³⁷⁰ The

³⁶⁹ASC-A, 1006; *FlorW*, 1006, 372-373.4. Æthelred II had shown his desire for the sons of his second marriage, Edward the Confessor and Ælfred the Martyr, to inherit England as his heirs, instead of those from his first marriage. Therefore in 1006 the king set about eradicating all important officials that supported the claims of the eldest *æthelings*. Higham speculates that the close ties between the family of Ealdorman Ælfhelm and the *æthelings* Æthelstan and Edmund 'Ironside' drove the king to eliminate them; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 46-47. For further reading on this 'palace revolution', see Simon Keynes, *The diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready'* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1980).

³⁷⁰*De obsessione Dunelmi et de probitate Ucthredi comitis*, ed. Thomas Arnold in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia* (London, Rolls Series, 1882), i, 215-220. For a translation of the text see, Christopher J. Morris, *Marriage and Murder in eleventh-century Northumbria: a study of 'De Obsessione Dunelmi'*, Borthwick Paper No. 82 (Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, 1992), 1-5. Symeon of Durham's *A History of the Kings of England* makes no mention of this Scottish incursion for any dates that are generally attributed to it; yet he does mention other contemporary occasions when Northumbria was attacked: 993 a Danish army plundered Bamburgh, 1016. Knútr's forces ravaged Northumbria until Uhtred yielded; Stephenson, *HKE*, 993 and 1000, 96-97, 107-108. In his *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius, Hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, Symeon records a Scottish 'siege' at Durham in 1018 and relates that Northumbria was devastated and nearly the entire population perished; *LDE SymD*, iii.5, 154-156. *De obsessione* dates the battle to 969, but the reign of Máel Coluim II is

attack on Durham ended with Ealdorman Uhtred and the *ðegnas* of Northumbria defeating the Scots with great slaughter. King Æthelred II then named Uhtred earl of Northumbria and York – except for the lands belonging to the bishop of Durham – even while his elderly father Waltheof I was still earl in Northumbria. Alan O. and Marjorie O. Anderson, William Kapelle, Nicholas Higham, and Richard Fletcher accept the text’s credibility for a 1006 Scottish invasion of Durham and the subsequent promotion of Uhtred to earl; Dorothy Whitelock, Bernard Meehan, and Alfred Smyth disagree about the incursion.³⁷¹

Whitelock questions the occurrence of the 1006 Scottish attack on Durham. ‘According to the *De obsessione Dunelmi* this was at an unsuccessful siege of Durham, but this account suspiciously resembles that of the siege of 1040.’³⁷² Donnchada I (Duncan) led a 1040 Scottish invasion into Durham and the Northumbrians were the victors. Meehan likewise discounts the *De obsessione* account of a Scottish attack on Durham in 1006. ‘[A] siege of Durham taking place in 1006—or even between 1005 and 1016, when Ethelred, Malcolm and Aldun were all in power—but apparently not known to the author of the *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiae*, should be regarded with the deepest suspicion.’³⁷³ Instead he proposes the existence of two different Scottish and

known to begin in 1005; therefore the date of 1006 is generally accepted by scholars for the ‘siege’ of Durham. For sites of events relevant to Uhtred’s career, see the map of early eleventh-century Northumbria, Yorkshire, and Cumbria in Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 34.

³⁷¹A. O. Anderson, ‘Anglo-Scottish Relations’, 6-7; M. O. Anderson, ‘Lothian and the Early Scottish Kings’, 111-112; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 16; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 48; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 74; Whitelock, ‘Dealings’, 86, fn.1; Meehan, ‘The Siege of Durham,’ 16-17; Smyth, *Warlords*, 233-235.

³⁷²Whitelock, ‘Dealings’, 86, fn.1.

Northumbrian confrontations, one during Máel Coluim II's reign and another in 1040, which may have merged in the *De obsessione* account.

First, the text of *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius, Hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie* alone among northern sources recounts a siege of Durham in 1040.

King Donnchada I (Duncan, 1035-1040) of the Scots came with immense forces, besieged Durham, and expended much labor to conquer it, but in vain. For when the greater part of his cavalry had been killed by those who were being besieged, he fled in confusion, and in this flight he lost all his foot soldiers who were killed and their heads taken to the market place and stuck up on stakes. Not long afterwards the king himself, when he had returned to Scotland, was killed by his own men.³⁷⁴

Second, a battle between Máel Coluim II and a 'comitem Anglicum', most likely Earl Uhtred, is related in the *Chronica Gentis Scottorum*.³⁷⁵ The date for the battle cannot be determined from the source, but obviously it falls within the period of Máel Coluim II's kingship.³⁷⁶ According to the *Chronica* the confrontation between Scottish and Northumbrian forces took place in Cumbria and the Scots were victorious. The

³⁷³Meehan, 'Siege of Durham,' 15, 17.

³⁷⁴*Dunecanus rex Scottorum cum immensis copiis adueniens, Dunhelmum obsedit, et ad eam expugnandam multum quidem sed frustra laborauit. Nam magna parte equitum suorum ab his qui obsidebantur interfecta confusus aufugit, fugiens pedites omnes interfectos amisit, quorum capita in forum collata, in stipitibus sunt suspensa. Nec multo post ipse rex cum iam in Scotiam redisset a suis occisus interiit; LDE SymD, iii.8, 168. The ending phrase a suis occisus interiit refers to fellow countrymen, particularly to the men loyal to Mac Bethad (MacBeth), laird of Moray, who assassinated Donnchada I. For the relationship of MacBeth to the family of Donnchada I, see Hudson, *Kings*, 136-145. See also page 147 and fn. 413 below.*

³⁷⁵Meehan, 'Siege of Durham,' 16-17.

³⁷⁶*Johannis de Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum*, ed. W. F. Skene, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, *Historians of Scotland* vols. 1 and 4, 1871-1872); trans. A. O. Anderson, *ESSH*, 182.

Scottish source describes an all-out battle rather than a town siege and makes no mention of Durham.

A. O. Anderson believes that the 973 agreement between Scots and Saxon kings was not upheld at the time Máel Coluim II became king in 1005.³⁷⁷ Per the 973 agreement, Máel Coluim II should have inherited overlordship of Cumbria on the condition he defend Cumbria and the English border from *wicinga* armies.³⁷⁸ As shown in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, beginning in 1005 Æthelred II was consumed with leading Wessex and Mercian forces against Danish invasions into Kent, Mercia and Wessex. Thus occupied, Æthelred II could not have attended an homage ceremony with the Scottish king and renewed the 973 agreement. This could be the reason for the battle that Meehan suggests occurred in Cumbria. Rather than waiting for Æthelred II to gift Cumbria in *laen* (benefice) and becoming subject to the English king, Máel Coluim II may have grasped the opportunity to annex Cumbria into his Scottish kingdom.

This suggested scenario fits well with Meehan's argument for two reasons. First, Scottish kings historically conducted raids soon after assuming the throne as a show of

³⁷⁷Anderson, 'Anglo-Scottish Relations', 6.

³⁷⁸Hudson believes that the *Chronica* incorrectly established Máel Coluim II as sub-king in Cumbria under his predecessor Cináed III mac Duib; Hudson, *Kings*, 111; *CGS*, iv.35. He believes Máel Coluim II was forced into exile under Cináed III and that he took refuge in the old Scots kingdom of Dál Riada from 989-1005. There Máel Coluim II reportedly led defensive maneuvers against the Norse king Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson (Rægnald Guthrithson, d. 1005) who attempted to extend his rule south of the Hebrides. This would be completed in 1014 by King Sigurðr Hlōðvésson (Sigurth Hlothesson). For more information see Skene, *Celtic Scotland: an history of ancient Alban* (Edinburgh, 1886; reprint, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), I, 377-387 and also *Eyrbyggja Saga*, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson and Matthías Þorðarson (Reykjavík, Íslenzk fornrit, no. 4, 1935), 76 as referenced by Hudson.

military might and bravado, mostly for effect amongst other claimants to the throne.³⁷⁹ This type of activity is reminiscent of the Irish form of ritualized ‘warfare’ conducted by all new kings to demonstrate their overlordship, as all sub-king tribute was paid in cattle.³⁸⁰ These Scottish border raids, *crechrige* (royal prey), were traditionally quick, hit-and-run ventures aimed at highlighting the skill and success of the new king.

Second, Scottish and Northumbrian rulers had an off-and-on history of border wars. The Pennine Foothills, with its various east-west passageways, divided Northumbria and Cumbria, but facilitated access between both. Therefore an incursion led by the new Scots king into Cumbria must have alarmed the Northumbrians.

I propose that Máel Coluim II led warriors into Cumbria soon after his coronation in 1005, knowing he would only face Northumbrian resistance. His venture aimed at solidifying his rule over Cumbria, possibly removing any sub-king appointed by Cináed III, and openly taunting the Northumbrians with a second avenue into their lands. This maneuver would have likewise signaled to the Scots Máel Coluim II’s strong authority and success on the battlefield, as well as his lack of fear about English reprisal. While this may have been a bit out of character with the peaceful homage agreements of his ancestors, it would have been a bold career move.³⁸¹

³⁷⁹Hudson, *Kings*, 112. Hudson as well accepts the *De obsessione* story of a 1006 ‘siege’ of Durham conducted by Máel Coluim II. He proposes that Máel Coluim II probably intended to claim all church lands north of the Haddington Tyne.

³⁸⁰Wormald, ‘Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship,’ 153.

³⁸¹Anderson, ‘Anglo-Scottish Relations’, 5.

As such the argument in the *De obsessione* about how and exactly when Uhtred became earl in Northumbria can not blindly be accepted. We know that Uhtred followed his father Waltheof I as earl of Northumbria, but should not assume that he was appointed by Æthelred II. According to the *Chronica* the ‘*comitem Anglicum*’ was defeated by Máel Coluim II, which would not have inspired Æthelred II to endow him with an earldom. In fact Æthelred II dismissed, replaced and even ordered the death or mutilation of leaders who failed him, such as Earl Thored and Ealdorman Ælfhelm along with his sons.³⁸² Most likely, Uhtred was accepted as earl by the ranking Northumbrians and as in the past, the English king was not involved.³⁸³

The actual date(s) of Waltheof I’s death and Uhtred’s succession are not recorded, except in the *De obsessione*. In his history of the English kings, Symeon of Durham calls Waltheof I elderly, which is mimicked in the *De obsessione*. Uhtred may have been active in Northumbrian affairs sometime prior to his father’s death, even commanding the Northumbrian *ðegnas* against their enemies. According to the 1005 passage in the *Chronica* Uhtred was acting as earl in that year, which pushes his date earlier than accepted by most scholars, who rely on the *De obsessione*.³⁸⁴ A final point can be gleaned from the *Chronica* account: the Northumbrian earl acted without royal assistance in defending the western Northumbrian border from the Scots. As such, the

³⁸²See pages 124-127 above.

³⁸³Rollason, *Northumbria*, 267-268.

³⁸⁴Whitelock and Rollason believe Uhtred to be earl by at least 995, as referenced by Symeon of Durham in the story of Uhtred’s assistance to Bishop Ealdun in clearing the site of Durham; Whitelock, ‘Dealings’, 82; Rollason, *Northumbria*, 268-269. For *SymD LDE*, iii.2, 148; see page 130 above.

Northumbrian earls appear to still be the foremost power in the northernmost region of England.

Whatever the beginning date of his leadership in Northumbria, Uhtred managed to survive the reign of Æthelred II, while the king had other nobles and ealdormen eliminated; he also got through the opening years of Viking kingship over England under Sveinn and Knútr. After a period of separate ealdormen over Northumbria and Yorkshire, Uhtred again merged these two earldoms under his sole authority in the wake of his father's death and the murderous elimination of Ealdorman Ælfhelm in 1006.

Uhtred's career was marked by three political marriages. His first wife was Ecgfrida, daughter to Bishop Ealdun of Durham, whom Uhtred reportedly aided in 995.³⁸⁵ The date of their marriage is unrecorded. As part of the marriage contract, Bishop Ealdun bestowed six vills in Teesdale belonging to the Church upon Uhtred: Barmpton, Skirningham, Elton, Carlton, School Aycliffe, and Monk Heselden. These Uhtred was to retain 'for as long as he always lived honourably in marriage' with Ecgfrida.³⁸⁶ The *De obsessione* text alludes to the end of this marriage in 1006, following the 'siege' of Durham and the death of Ealdorman Ælfhelm of Yorkshire, as Æthelred II conferred Yorkshire on Uhtred. We should not accept the date of 1006 for

³⁸⁵Higham, 'Northern Counties', 313

³⁸⁶*De obsessione*, 216-218; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 2. Their son Ealdred (?1019-1038) inherited the earldom of Northumbria. For the location of the Teesdale estates, see map in Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 34.

the dissolution of Uhtred's first marriage; indeed it must have occurred earlier as the earl's third marriage occurred in that year.³⁸⁷

Uhtred's second marriage was also recorded in the *De obsessione*. "Having sent away the bishop's daughter, Uhtred married Sige, the daughter of Styr, son of Ulf, a wealthy and prominent man; her father gave her to him on the condition that he would kill Styr's enemy Thurbrand."³⁸⁸ Speculation on the reasons behind this second marriage leads one to look at the gains for Uhtred. This marriage brought Uhtred political support in Yorkshire, by allying him with a prominent landed family of Anglo-Danish descent.³⁸⁹ After a history of mutual support between the earl and Bishop Ealdun, one would expect tension to have developed amongst them as Uhtred divorced himself from Ecgfrida. Instead, the immediate remarriage of Ecgfrida to another strong Yorkshireman suggests that both Northumbrian parties could have worked together to cultivate strong Yorkshire ties.³⁹⁰ Kapelle proposes that Bishop Ealdun married Ecgfrida to a Yorkshireman in a plot with Uhtred to guarantee the earl's ability to exercise his authority in Yorkshire.³⁹¹ It is also possible that the bishop benefited directly from this arrangement as well. As the

³⁸⁷By calculating dates for the children of Uhtred's third marriage, Fletcher proposes that his second marriage could not have taken place after 1004, but exactly when it occurred we do not know; *Bloodfeud*, 77.

³⁸⁸*De obsessione*, 216-218; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 2. The children of this marriage were: Eadwulf (1038-1041), earl of Northumbria and Gospatric, prominent landholder in Cumbria.

³⁸⁹Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 16.

³⁹⁰Bishop Ealdun contracted a second marriage for Ecgfrida to Kilvert, son of Ligulf, a Yorkshire *ðegn* and their daughter was named Sigrid.

³⁹¹Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 16.

leading religious figure in Northumbria and a large landholder, the bishop required important political allies as well as competent military support, which his daughter's second marriage would have enhanced. As to Uhtred's agreement to kill his father-in-law's enemy Thurbrand, the earl did not uphold his end of the deal and was instead later himself murdered by Thurbrand.³⁹²

Sometime around 1006 or 1007 Uhtred took a third wife, Ælfgifu, the daughter of King Æthelred II.³⁹³ Either simultaneously or immediately afterwards, Uhtred was awarded the earldom of Yorkshire.³⁹⁴ It is possible to interpret this political move as a weakness on the part of Æthelred II. In order to consolidate royal authority over Yorkshire, the king was forced to ally with the leading figure in that region, thereby legitimizing the power of Uhtred. As such Æthelred II was forced to accept and acquiesce to the political strength of the earl of Northumbria. From that moment, Uhtred held the earldoms of Northumbria and Yorkshire, was a trusted friend of the Bishop of Durham, and the son-in-law of King Æthelred II. This speaks volumes about Uhtred's ability to maneuver as a political player in the kingdom.

Earl Thored had been a local Yorkshire landholder but not strong or loyal enough to Æthelred II to successfully command forces against a *wicinga* army in Yorkshire in

³⁹²See pages 142-143, fn. 402 below for an explanation of Uhtred and Thurbrand.

³⁹³*De obsessione*, 216-218; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 2. The daughter of this marriage, Eadgyth, was contracted into marriage with Maldred Crinanson, a grandson of Máel Coluim II, prior to Uhtred's death in 1016. Eadgyth could have been no older than nine years old at the time; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 77.

³⁹⁴Fletcher believes Uhtred was awarded the earldom of Yorkshire precisely because he had so successfully maneuvered his way into alliance with politically important families through his second marriage; *Bloodfeud*, 77-78.

993. Ealdorman Ælfhelm had begun his career as a politically neutral *ealdorman*, but was assassinated for supporting the claims of Æthelred II's sons from his first marriage. Æthelred II seems to have gambled heavily on Uhtred's loyalty to himself as he handed the Northumbrian earl control over Yorkshire and consequently made Uhtred the second important *ealdorman* in the kingdom.³⁹⁵ Perhaps Æthelred II did not trust Uhtred to look after the king's interests. Æthelred II was shoring up a new circle of political leaders in 1006 and needed to be sure this new northern *ealdorman* would be dedicated to his royal goals, and not act independently in opposition to the king. Therein lies the reason for the third political marriage in ten years for Uhtred. Presumably as son-in-law to the king, Uhtred's loyalty could be relied upon implicitly and his proven authority, military expertise and political astuteness would be an asset to the king.

The contemporary annals make no mention of Uhtred following his marriage to princess Ælfgifu until the Danish invasion of 1013.³⁹⁶ Knowing Æthelred II's preference for *danegeld* payoffs to *wicinga* hordes over military engagement, King Sveinn of Denmark led his armies against England. From conception, this mission was designed to overthrow the Anglo-Saxon monarchy, not simply control the Danelaw; a bold new strategy for Scandinavian forces inside England.

³⁹⁵Earl Eadric of Mercia ranked as the top political figure and authority holder after King Æthelred II; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 47.

³⁹⁶Higham interprets this silence in the sources as Uhtred holding down the north for Æthelred II. I suggest that this lack of information about the northern earl's movements means something quite different. As with Waltheof I, in all probability there was no activity between the king and the northern *ealdorman* on which to report. In this light, the powerful Northumbrian earl perhaps pursued his own agenda outside the scope of royal activities and authority, with only the occasional attendance at court to witness documents; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 25 and 49.

So at that time Sveinn passed through East Anglia into Northumbria, which he subjected to his power without a battle; it was not that in men's minds that inborn fire, so impatient of servitude, had grown cold, it was their own prince Uhtred who gave the first example of surrender. After they had passed under the yoke, all the other peoples likewise who dwell in northern England handed over tribute and hostages. Next he [Sveinn] proceeded to the southern provinces, and forced the people of Oxford and Winchester to bow before his sway; but the Londoners, who had their lawful king safe inside their walls, shut their gates. The Danes, attacking furiously [lost]... Sveinn with the ragged remnant of his army made for Bath, where Æthelmær, ealdorman of the western region, with all his men submitted to him [Sveinn]. The men of London still would not have yielded, although by now the whole of England had gone over to his [Sveinn's] allegiance, had not Æthelred deprived them of his presence . . . [S]o he [Æthelred] evaded the necessities of battle and siege, took to his heels, and left them [the Londoners, the English] in a lurch...and having made his way in secret to Southampton took ship for the Isle of Wight.³⁹⁷

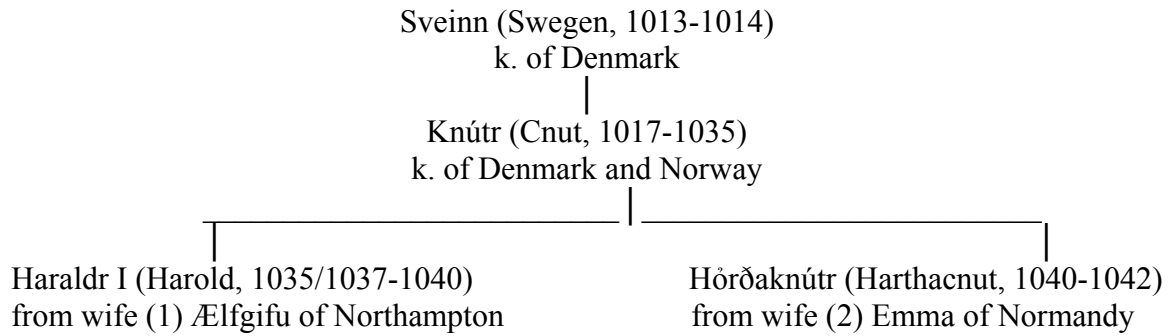
Æthelred II retreated to Normandy with his wife Emma and their two sons, while Sveinn claimed the throne of England for a few months until his death on Candlemas, 3 February 1014.³⁹⁸ Danes in England, both *wicinga* and Anglo-Danish inhabitants of the Danelaw, immediately elected Knútr (Cnut) to succeed his father Sveinn as king in England.

³⁹⁷*Tunc ergo Suanus, per Orientales Anglos profectus in Northanimbros, ditioni eos suae sine pugna subdidit, non quod in illorum mentibus genuinus ille calor et dominorum impatiens refriguerit, sed quod princeps eorum Vhtredus primus exemplum defectionis dedit. Illis sub iugum missis, ceteri quoque omnes populi qui Angliam ab aquilone inhabitant uectigal et obsides dederunt. Mox ad australes regions ueniens, Osenefordenses et Wintonienses leges suas adorare coegit; soli Lundonienses, regem legitimun intra menia tutantes, portas occluserunt. Dani contra ferotius assistentes... Lacero agmine petit Suanus Bathoniam; ibi Ethelmerus, occidentalis regionis comes, cum suis omnibus manus ei dedit. Nec adhuc flecterentur Lundonienses, tota iam Anglia in clientelam illius inclinata, nisi Egelredus presentia eos destitueret sua; . . . [B]ellique et obsidionis necessitatem subterfugiens, illos fuga sua reliquit in medio . . . cumque clandestinis itineribus Hamtunam uenisset, inde Wehtam enauigauit; GRA Malms, ii.177.1-4, 300-302; see also ASC-E, 1013, 147-149. See Higham's intellectual argument for the movements of Uhtred during this politically stressful period; *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 64-65. Read Yorkshire for Northumbria in this passage.*

³⁹⁸ASC-E, 1014, 150; *GRA Malms*, ii.179.2, 308-310; Stephenson, *HKE*, 104-105. See Table 4.2 'Scandinavian kings of England.'

TABLE 4.2

SCANDINAVIAN KINGS OF ENGLAND



Æthelred II took his time returning to England and consolidating a substantial force to oppose Knútr, but eventually succeeded. By 1015 the ealdormen had all renewed their allegiance to Æthelred II, who by summer was bedridden with illness while his eldest surviving son, Edmund ‘Ironside’ led the English forces against the returning Knútr. Earl Eadric of Wessex defected to Knútr, leaving the English army led by the *ætheling* Edmund ‘Ironside’ and Earl Uhtred.³⁹⁹ In 1016 Æthelred II died and his son Edmund ‘Ironside’ (1016) succeeded him as the king of England. After much battle, Uhtred was forced to submit to Knútr to save total destruction of his earldoms and King Edmund signed a treaty giving Knútr rule of the Danelaw and Mercia. After ruling for seven months, King Edmund died in November 1016 leaving Knútr (1016-1035) sole king of all England.⁴⁰⁰

In the same fashion as Æthelred II, Knútr used political murder to eliminate all Anglo-Saxon nobles of questionable loyalty to the new regime and then appointed his favorites to positions of leadership across the country.⁴⁰¹ As a strong Anglo-Danish political leader in Yorkshire, Thurbrand held the preeminent position of *hold*, a post equivalent to the king’s *scir refa* (shire reeve) in Anglo-Danish regions of England, and

³⁹⁹ASC-D, E, 1016.

⁴⁰⁰ASC-E, 1016, 152-159; *GRA Malms*, ii.180.1-11, 312-318.

⁴⁰¹See ASC-D, E, 1017, 161 and Stephenson, *HKE*, 111-113. Symeon of Durham states that the ealdormen newly recognized by Knútr swore oaths of fealty to him as their new king in order to obtain their new earldoms. Also in this year Knútr married Emma, the widowed queen of Æthelred II, and their son Hórdaknútr (Harthacnut) later ruled England. In order for Knútr to marry the dowager queen, he had to separate from his first wife, Ælfgifu of Northampton, with whom he had the son Haraldr I (Harold), who followed Knútr as king in 1035. See also *Óláfs Saga Tryggvasonar, the longer saga*, in Ashdown, *English and Norse Documents*, c.285.7-12, 152.

found favor with Knútr in 1016. Subsequently Thurbrand oversaw the execution of Uhtred for the king in that same year, which began a cycle of murders between the two families that lasted through four generations.⁴⁰²

Eadwulf (1016-?1020s), nicknamed ‘Cudel’, followed his brother Uhtred as earl of Northumbria, while Eiríkr (1016-1023x?1033), Knútr’s kinsman, gained the earldom

⁴⁰²*ASC-E*, 1016, 154; *GRA Malms*, ii.180.3, 314; *FlorW*, 1016, 383-384.14; Stephenson, *HKE*, 107-108. Fletcher and Kapelle disagree on the classification of the killings begun by Thurbrand’s murder of Uhtred in 1016: bloodfeud or political opposition. Kapelle suggests that Uhtred and Styr Ulfson were supporters of king Æthelred II, while Thurbrand and his political associations in Yorkshire were hopeful for a successful takeover of England by a Scandinavian king. Their governmental positions within Yorkshire should have been complimentary, but their political preferences prohibited them from working together. Kapelle suggests that Thurbrand had Uhtred assassinated after Knútr seized the kingdom in 1016. As *hold*, Thurbrand was the highest ranking political figure in the city of York beneath the rank of earl, was an extensive landholder in the shire, and direct overseer of the coastal region called Holderness located southeast of the Yorkshire Wolds. See map in Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 34. Thurbrand obviously owned a large section of Holderness personally as his descendants were shown to be landowners of the region in later years. Kapelle further argues against Uhtred’s murder being part of a bloodfeud because forty leading Northumbrians were also killed that day by Knútr’s *jarls*. As such, Kapelle presents the murders as Knútr’s way of eliminating the Northumbrian nobles loyal to the Anglo-Saxon royal family; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 19-20. Building on the impressions of Kapelle, Fletcher sees a rivalry between an Anglian *ealdorman* from old Bernicia with ties to the English king and an Anglo-Danish *hold* from old Deira with Scandinavian political aspirations for England. Fletcher describes a bloodfeud within the context of the culture. ‘There was no separation between social behavior on the one hand and political action on the other. Disputes about honour could also be disputes about territory and power.’ He further defines the word *honour* as used by contemporary writers to mean ‘lands’, ‘office’, and ‘dignity’. As land grants and royal diplomas attest, Styr Ulfson held extensive lands near the city of York, in the Teesdale region in northern Yorkshire, as well as in Derbyshire. We do not know why Styr Ulfson and Thurbrand the Hold were such adamant enemies, but it was not impossible for large landowners to dispute over political advancement or land ownership. In Uhtred, Styr Ulfson acquired an immensely powerful son-in-law and by default Thurbrand gained a serious enemy, who had accepted a contract of murder against Thurbrand; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 51-53, 77. From Fletcher’s point of view, the description of bloodfeud seems entirely appropriate. The contract on Thurbrand’s life certainly provides the impression that a personal vendetta, along with political competition, was present at the outset. Whitelock also accepts the death of Uhtred as the beginning of a ‘feud’; ‘Dealings’, 82.

of Yorkshire.⁴⁰³ While Eiríkr was awarded Yorkshire by Knútr, there are no records stating as much for Eadwulf. The implication is that the Northumbrian nobles accepted Eadwulf as their new *ealdorman* and that this northern region continued to lie outside the reach of true royal authority.⁴⁰⁴ The generous land gifts from King Knútr to St. Cuthbert's at Durham is one of the few activities enacted by the king within Northumbria.⁴⁰⁵ Even during the Battle of Carham in 1018, the Northumbrians faced the Scots without military aid from the king or Eiríkr of Yorkshire.⁴⁰⁶

Uhtred was survived by three sons and one daughter: Ealdred, son of Ecgfrida; Eadwulf and Gospatric, sons of Sige; Eadgyth, daughter of princess Ælfgifu.⁴⁰⁷ The eldest son Ealdred (?1020s-1038) assumed the ealdormanry of Northumbria on the death

⁴⁰³*De obsessione*, 216-218; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 2; Stephenson, *HKE*, 143. Eiríkr descended from a Norwegian princely dynasty, governed Norway during periods of absence by King Sveinn, and assisted Sveinn and Knútr in their campaigns to conquer England. He married Gytha, daughter to Sveinn and sister to Knútr. Eiríkr ruled the earldom of Yorkshire under Knútr. Beginning in 1028, Haakon, Eiríkr and Gytha's son, ruled Norway as regent for Knútr who was busy in England. The date of Eiríkr's death is uncertain, while that of Eadwulf can be estimated to the 1020s by Fletcher; *Bloodfeud*, 111-112; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 98-99.

⁴⁰⁴Kapelle recognizes the improbability of influence over Northumbria from Yorkshire at this time; *Norman Conquest*, 20-21.

⁴⁰⁵Lands gifted by King Knútr to St. Cuthbert: the vill of Staindrop (*Cnapatun*, Shotton, Raby, Wackerfield, Evenwood, West Auckland, Lutterington Hall, Eldon, Ingelton, Thickley, and *Middeltun*) and the vill of Brompton; *LDE SymD*, iii.8, 166-168. See map in Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 34 for Carham.

⁴⁰⁶I accept the occurrence of the Battle at Carham in 1018, placing the Northumbrian forces under the generalship of Eadwulf. For in-depth debates about the date, identity of the Northumbrian *ealdorman*, and reasons for the Battle at Carham, see Anderson, 'Anglo-Scottish Relations,' 6-7; Meehan, 'Siege of Durham,' 14-15.

⁴⁰⁷See Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, table 13.

of his uncle Eadwulf. Earl Ealdred is remembered for one major act during his tenure: his murder of Thurbrand, *hold* of Yorkshire.

Fletcher presses the case for Thurbrand's assassination as a true bloodfeud revenge for the death of Uhtred. Kapelle surveys the political positions of those involved and interprets the events as a struggle for power over Yorkshire between the Northumbrian earls and the Yorkshire *holds*. Kapelle's argument runs parallel to that of Higham, who suggests that Earl Eiríkr ruled Yorkshire with the assistance of the shire *hold*, Thurbrand, which spurred a 'long-sustained rebellion against Knútr's regime'.⁴⁰⁸ Subsequent to Thurbrand's death, his son Carl took on the job of Yorkshire *hold* and witnessed numerous royal documents beginning in 1024. Enmity existed between Carl and Ealdred, which an 'intervention of friends' attempted to end.⁴⁰⁹ Quite possibly this occurred at the instigation of King Knútr while he passed through Northumberland in 1031 to accept the obedience of Kings Máel Coluim II of Scotland, Mealbæaðe (MacBeth), and Iehmarc.⁴¹⁰ Despite the peace brokered between *hold* and earl, Carl murdered Ealdred in 1038 while the latter was a guest of the former.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 98-99.

⁴⁰⁹Fletcher acknowledges the probability that the interfering parties could have been the king and his attendants, the Archbishop of York, or a combination of Northumbrian and Yorkshire nobles; Bloodfeud, 114-119; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 22-25; *De obsessione*, 216-218; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 3.

⁴¹⁰ASC-C, D, E, 1031. This must be the same occasion on which King Knútr bequeathed royal lands to St. Cuthbert; see previous page, fn. 405 above.

⁴¹¹*De obsessione*, 216-218; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 3; Stephenson, *HKE*, 143; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 121-122. As so often happened in Anglo-Saxon history, the laws of succession caused much familial contention for kingship and resulted in *wælf* (slaughter), which often led to further killing, i.e. bloodfeud. King Æthelberht I of Kent

Eadwulf (1038-1041), Uhtred's middle son and Ealdred's half-brother, ascended to the family earldom in Northumbria.⁴¹² His short tenure over Northumbria witnessed two military campaigns, carried out successfully against the British and Scottish, with no aid or hindrance from Yorkshire or the king. Sometime during his first year of rule, Eadwulf led a Northumbrian force against the Britons of Cumbria, at which he 'very cruelly pillaged the Britons'.⁴¹³ The subsequent invasion of Durham in 1039 or 1040 by

(587x590-616x618) codified the laws of Kent, which he then had written down for the first time in Anglo-Saxon history sometime between the years 595 and 604. Sections 33-71 fall under the category 'Personal Injury Laws,' which defines an ordered system of *wergild* as the penalty for murder and a substitute for retaliatory murder, i.e. bloodfeud. Clearly, these laws were not always enforced or applied to those vying for royal control of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (i.e. Æthelred II) or earldoms (i.e. families of Uhtred and Thurbrand; Tostig and queen Eadgyth). See Lisi Oliver, *The Beginnings of English Law* (Toronto, Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2002) for background on Æthelberht's laws, 8-24, 46, for text and translations of the personal injury laws, 70-77, and for commentary, 99-105. See also Felix Liebermann whose work remains valuable for notes and commentary; *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1897-1916).

⁴¹²Stephenson, *HKE*, 143.

⁴¹³Stephenson, *HKE*, 143. Hudson documents the Scottish occupation of Cumbria at the death of the British King Owain c. 1018, who was heirless. This began the tradition of the heir to the Scottish throne ruling as sub-king over Cumbria prior to becoming the Scottish monarch, such as with Donnchada I (Duncan; 1034-1040). Máel Coluim II (1005-1034) pressed for the succession to be limited to his direct descendants through male and female lines, which went against the traditions of alternating families. As such, when Donnchada I was consecrated king in 1034 after his grandfather's death, he faced strong opposition and a dangerous threat from a cousin-in-law MacBeth (1040-1057) who murdered the king in 1040. While Donnchada I consolidated his strength in Scotland against MacBeth, Earl Eadwulf successfully ambushed Cumbria; *Kings*, 117, fn. 20, 122-124. It is possible that Earl Siward dethroned MacBeth as a form of family revenge for MacBeth's murder of Donnchada I. Earl Siward was after all related by marriage to Donnchada I, as proposed by Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 27-49. Hudson disregards this theory; *Kings*, 139-140. Siward definitely commanded Yorkshire and royal troops against MacBeth, temporarily exiling him in 1046 and again finally in 1054. Siward saw Donnchada I's son Máel Coluim III on the throne of Scotland that same year; A. O. Anderson, 'Anglo-Scottish Relations,' 10. See genealogy table in Duncan, *Kingship*, 345 for a slightly different set of dates for Máel Coluim III proffered by Duncan. See Duncan, *Kingship*, 345.

King Donnchada I smacked of retaliation against Earl Eadwulf and the Northumbrian *ðegnas*.⁴¹⁴ A. O. Anderson interprets the 1039/1040 attack at Durham as an attempt by the Scots to annex more land from Northumbria, to push the shared border further south than the Tweed River.⁴¹⁵

While Ealdred served as earl in Northumbria, Earl Eiríkr of Yorkshire died conceivably of old age most likely sometime shortly prior to 1024.⁴¹⁶ King Knútr replaced his brother-in-law with an Anglo-Danish Yorkshire *ministiri* (*ðegnas*), Siward (?1033-1055), as *ealdorman*.⁴¹⁷ Siward's appointment to Yorkshire very likely occurred between the years 1031, when peace was arbitrated between Earl Ealdred and *hold* Carl, and 1033, as Siward began witnessing royal documents. At some point during the career of Earls Ealdred or Eadwulf, the Bamburgh countess Ælfflæd, daughter of Ealdred and

⁴¹⁴Hudson, *Kings*, 124. See also page 132 above, especially for Symeon of Durham's text regarding the battle.

⁴¹⁵A. O. Anderson, 'Anglo-Scottish Relations,' 9. Kapelle reverses the order of the campaigns, placing the Scottish attack on Durham first and the Northumbrian counter-attack on Galway (a region north of Cumbria across the Solway Firth) as revenge for that group of Lowland Scots' role at Durham alongside Donnchada I. This interpretation seems less grounded than the version presented on the previous page. See also Hudson, *Kings*, 122-124, for an account of Donnchada I's reign and his campaigns.

⁴¹⁶Earl Eiríkr last witnessed a document in 1023, but Siward first witnessed a document in 1033. However in the year 1024 *hold* Carl began witnessing documents and continued to do so post-1033, albeit alongside Siward as of that year. As referenced by Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 23, see *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*, ed. John M. Kemble (London, 1839-1848), vol. 4, item nos. 730, 741-781; vol. 6, item nos. 1318, 1332.

⁴¹⁷The earl's name in Old Norse is Sigvarðr 'Digerá' (Siward the Strong); Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 131.

niece of Eadwulf, married the new Yorkshire Earl Siward.⁴¹⁸ The second son from this union, Waltheof II, inherited the earldom of Northumbria in 1072, returning the governance of that earldom to a direct descendant of the Bamburgh family.⁴¹⁹

We know that Siward served first King Knútr loyally and then his two sons, Haraldr I Harefoot (Harold, 1035-1040) and Hóřðaknútr (Harthacnut, 1040-1042), in their royal careers. The truest evidence of this lies in the willingness to commit political murder at the behest of a monarch. As Donnchada I was killed by his rival northern kinsman for the throne of Scotland in 1040, Earl Eadwulf also met an untimely end at the hands of his nephew-in-law Earl Siward of Yorkshire.

Siward after he had killed Earl Eadwulf governed the earldom of the whole of Northumbria from the Humber to the Tweed.⁴²⁰

From this date Siward received royal appointment to the whole of Northumberland.

Certainly he commanded strong troops, and was respected amongst his fellow ealdormen, the three Danish Viking kings of England, as well as Edward II.⁴²¹ In

⁴¹⁸Siward's first wife was countess Godgifu (Godiva) who later married Earl Leofric of Mercia, presumably her third husband. Godgifu and Leofric founded the monastery of Coventry and were active patrons to the monasteries of Leominster, Wenlock, St. John the Baptist and St. Werburgh at Chester, St. Mary's Stowe in Oxfordshire, and Worcester. Their children were Edwin, who followed his father as earl of Mercia; Morcar, who served as earl in Northumbria and Yorkshire in 1066; and Eadgyth, who first married King Gruffydd of Wales and later King Harold II Godwinson of England. Henry of Huntingdon titles Leofric as earl of Chester. Odericus Vitalis claims that Earl Ælfgar was Godgifu's second husband; *HA*, vi.24, 380; *HE Oder*, iv.ii.183, 216; *FlorW*, 1057, 419.1.

⁴¹⁹*HE Oder*, iv, ii.221, 262.

⁴²⁰*Siwardo cum iam Eadulfum comitem interfecisset, totius prouincie Northanhymbrorum comitatum ab Humbera usque Twedam administrante; LDE SymD*, iii.8, 170.

contrast, the sources do not convey the nature of Siward's relationship with the Northumbrian population. His political marriage to a prominent member of the old royal Bamburgh family guaranteed Siward some latitude amongst the northern nobles. Siward honored his wife's great-grandfather's legacy by naming their son and eventual heir to the earldom, Waltheof. Due to his wife's connections to the queen of Scotland and the 1054 defeat of MacBeth, Northumbria experienced a lull without Scottish invasion.

This man committed familial murder in order to steal the earldom, though. Siward worked closely with the kings. He was an Anglo-Dane from Yorkshire and not from a family as high-born as his wife. His *hold* in Yorkshire was Thurbrand's son Carl, a sworn enemy of the house of Bamburgh. Siward may have been tolerated in Northumbria, presumably primarily due to his marriage, but just barely. He ruled from York rather than Bamburgh. In 1054 he commanded an expedition into northern Scotland against the murderous King MacBeth.

In this year Earl Siward marched with a great army into Scotland with both ship army [naval fleet] and land army, and fought against the Scots, and he put to flight their King MacBeth, and slew all men who were the best there in that land, and took from that place great plunder such as no one people previously acquired,

⁴²¹After the death of King Hörðaknútr, his half-brother Edward II (1042-1066), the son of Æthelred II and Emma, resumed the Anglo-Saxon line on the throne in England. King Edward II inherited a small, yet powerful set of earls: Siward, Yorkshire and Northumbria; Godwin, Wessex; Leofric, Mercia; with whom he was forced to work. King Knútr had promoted Godwin (1018-1053), probably from the rank of *gesið*, to that of earl by 1018 for his diehard loyalty to the new king. For a concise discussion of Godwin's political career and family background, see *GRA Malms*, ii.200.1-3, 362-364 and Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 101-103. Earl Godwin is purportedly responsible for Edward II's election as king following Hörðaknútr's death, which exemplifies the extent of his acquired power in the kingdom, often stated as second only to the reigning monarch; Stephenson, *HKE*, 117. King Edward II married Eadgyth, the daughter of Earl Godwin, but their union proved childless. Henry of Huntingdon states that Edward II had to accept Eadgyth to maintain peace with Godwin and endure the security of his seat on the throne; *HA*, vi.21, 372.

but his son, Osbearn, and his sister's son, Siward, and [those] among his housecarles and also those of the king, were slain there on the day Seven Sleepers [27 July].⁴²²

Therefore Siward's retinue consisted of his own Anglo-Danish housecarls and members of King Edward II's household. This seemingly marks the first time in Northumbrian history that an English king went to war alongside a Northumbrian earl against the enemy Scots. Yet the reality is that King Edward II lent his aid to a strong Yorkshire earl, who wanted to return the rulership of Scotland to distant family connections, Máel Coluim III, thereby killing the usurper to the throne, MacBeth.⁴²³ Nowhere in the sources can one find mention of Northumbrian *ðegnas* assisting Siward in military campaigns. Presumably they were either strong enough to resist or considered untrustworthy by Siward.

He did not enjoy his victory long, for in the following year Siward died at his stronghold of York. Siward had commissioned the construction of a monastery in Yorkshire dedicated to St. Olaf, the Norwegian king turned saint, while he was earl and the holy site became his final resting place.⁴²⁴ Even in death the Anglo-Danish earl kept

⁴²²*Her ferde Siward eorl mid miclum here on Scotlande. ægðer ge mid scyphere and mid landfyrde. and feaht wið Scottas. and aflymde þone kyng Macbeoðen. and ofsloh eall þe þær betst wæs on þe lande. and lædde þonan micele herehupe. swilce nan man ær ne begeat. ac his sunu Osbarn. and his sweostor sunu Sihward. and of his huscarl. and eac þæs cynges. wurdon þær ofslægene. on þone dæg Septem Dormientiu; ASC-D, 1054; Stephenson, HKE, 124. See Cheney, Handbook, 84 for the festival date of *Septem dormientes*.*

⁴²³See the genealogy table of the royal line in Scotland in Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 223.

⁴²⁴ASC-D, E, 1055.

company with a Viking saint and prayers were said for his soul by monks in his cherished Yorkshire.

Edward II appointed his brother-in-law, Tostig, to the ealdormanry of Yorkshire and Northumbria in 1055.⁴²⁵ Edward II passed over two descendants of the Bamburgh royal family in order to promote Tostig to the rank of earl: Gospatrick, youngest son of Earl Uhtred, who held considerable responsibility even through the reign of Siward; Waltheof, son of Siward and countess Ælflæd the daughter of Earl Ealdred.⁴²⁶ Had Edward II recognized the ability of either of these men to rule the Northumbrians, he could have prevented the horrific rebellions originating north of the Tees River that continued until the reign of King William II Rufus in 1087. In contrast, Tostig hailed from Wessex, which was ruled by his father, Earl Godwin. At this time, Tostig's brother Harold was *ealdorman* of Mercia and his sister Eadgyth was married to King Edward II. Clearly, Tostig's loyalties lay with the royal family and Wessex. It is no surprise then, that Tostig's authority was challenged by the Northumbrians.

Throughout the course of his rule, Tostig maintained his base at York as did his predecessor Siward, without access to the traditional Northumbrian stronghold at Bamburgh further north. The Yorkshiremen most likely were less hostile to his rule than the Northumbrians, as Tostig had appointed a local Yorkshire *ðegn* named Copsig to

⁴²⁵Tostig married Judith, daughter of Count Baldwin of Flanders.

⁴²⁶See Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, 147, 157, for the most frequently accepted outline of Gospatrick's political career.

attend to the actual administration of the earldoms.⁴²⁷ It is obvious that Tostig made mistakes in his relationships with leading Northumbrians.

In 1056 the Durham bishop Æthelric (1041-1056) resigned his post and returned to his former monastery of Peterborough in Mercia.⁴²⁸ Traditionally the clerics of Durham elected their own bishops, but in this instance Tostig appointed Æthelwine, the brother of bishop Æthelric. In so doing, he took electoral privileges away from the Durham clerics and appointed an outsider and a thoroughly undesirable monk as their new spiritual leader. As with his brother, Bishop Æthelwine had no comrades amongst his cathedral clerics, was eventually branded a thief, and turned over to the king for imprisonment.⁴²⁹ As if to soothe the enmity of St. Cuthbert's community, Tostig and his wife Judith presented gifts of decoration to the church. They also promised land donations to the Cathedral, on the condition that they be allowed to venerate St. Cuthbert at his tomb. The gifts were accepted, but their physical presence was not. Symeon of Durham recounts the moment of the couple's arrival at the church grounds.

While he [Æthelwine] was governing the bishopric, Earl Tostig who was governing the earldom of Northumbria, held the church of St. Cuthbert always in veneration, and he embellished it with several gifts, which it still has today. His

⁴²⁷ *LDE SymD*, iii.14, 180; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 89.

⁴²⁸ Æthelric was a monk at Peterborough whom Bishop Edmund of Durham (1020-1041) recruited to join the community at Durham. Later he was elected bishop by the clerks during Siward's ealdormanry; *LDE SymD*, iii.6, 160; Stephenson, *HKE*, 118, 126. Symeon of Durham recorded Æthelric's troubled term as bishop, particularly his third year when the clerks attempted to replace him *eo quod extraneus esset* (because he was an outsider), but Siward backed his continuance. Bishop Æthelric most likely retired because he lacked local political support, especially in the wake of Siward's death, although Symeon accuses him of stealing a *thesaurus* (treasure) of money from the church; *LDE SymD*, iii.9, 170.

⁴²⁹ *LDE SymD*, iii.9, 170-171.

wife Judith . . . also gave various ornaments to the saint's church; and she promised to give more still together with many landed possessions, if she were allowed to enter his [St. Cuthbert's] church and to adore him at his tomb. Since she did not dare to attempt such a thing herself, she devised the plan of sending one of her servants ahead of her, so that if she were able to do this with impunity, the mistress would follow her and would dare to enter the church with more confidence of her safety . . . As [the maid] was about to place her foot inside the cemetery, she was suddenly repelled by a violent force as of the wind, her strength failed, and stricken with grave infirmity, she was scarcely able to return to the hospice, where falling on to her bed, she was racked with terrible torment until at length she was deprived of both the pain and her life. The countess was absolutely terrified at what had happened and began to tremble all over.⁴³⁰

The new earl's popularity and authority were fairly non-existent in Northumbria, and especially with St. Cuthbert. Even so, Bishop Æthelwine maintained close association with Earl Tostig as illustrated by their partnership in political matters.

In 1058 and 1059 King Máel Coluim III of Scotland led military expeditions south across Scotland's border into Northumbria.⁴³¹ The expected response of military defense and even retaliation from Tostig never materialized. Instead in 1061, Tostig along with Archbishop Cynesige of York and Bishop Æthelwine of Durham acted as

⁴³⁰*Illo pontificatum regente, supradictus comes Tosti cum Northanhymbrorum disponderet comitatum, in ueneratione semper ecclesiam sancti Cuthberti habuit, et donariis non paucis que inibi adhuc habentur ornauit. Ipsa quoque coniunx illius Iudith . . . diuersa illius ecclesie ornamenta contulerat; et adhuc plura cum multis terrarum possessionibus se donaturam promiserat, si eius ecclesiam intrare, et ad ipsius sepulchrum sibi liceret adorare. Sed tantam rem per se non ausa temptare, unam de pedissequis suis cogitauerat premittere, ut si hoc ipsa impune facere posset, domina post sequens securior ingredi auderet . . . Iam pedem intra cimiterium erat positura, cum subito ueluti uentorum uiolentia repelli cepit et uiribus deficere, et grauius infirmata uix ad hospitium ualuit redire, decidensque in lectum, graui torquebatur cruciatu, tandem dolore cum uita caruit. Hoc facto comitissa uehementer exterrita contremuit, LDE SymD, iii.9, 174-176.*

⁴³¹*Vita Æwardi, 43.*

royal emissaries to Scotland.⁴³² They first travelled to Máel Coluim III's court and then escorted him into Northumberland, most likely to York, to meet with King Edward II. Máel Coluim III and Tostig agreed to a military truce. Kapelle suggests that the large retinues and exalted ranks of the English envoys was meant to dazzle the Scottish king, even 'flatter' him.⁴³³ Quite possibly Máel Coluim III lobbied for complete control of Cumbria in exchange for peace. After all the lack of military retaliation from Tostig could have been read as a sign of weakness, at least in regard to his authority in Northumbria.

Later in 1061 Tostig and his wife Judith, accompanied the newly appointed Archbishop Ealdred of York to Rome in order to accept the *pallium* from the pope.⁴³⁴ Máel Coluim III seized the opportunity of an absent earl to reinstate *crechrige* (raids; royal prey) into Northumbria.⁴³⁵ According to the sources, lands as far south as the Tees River valley were devastated, including Durham and St. Cuthbert's community, as well as the villas donated to Earl Uhtred as his wife Ecgfrida's dowry.⁴³⁶ Of particular interest

⁴³²Stephenson, *HKE*, 127. Symeon marks this event in year 1059 while the author of *Vita Edwardi* records it in year 1061.

⁴³³Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 91.

⁴³⁴Ealdred, Bishop of Worcester, succeeded Archbishop Cynesige of York, who died on 22 December 1060. Ealdred's election occurred on 25 December 1060; Stephenson, *HKE*, 127.

⁴³⁵Stephenson, *HKE*, 1061, 127; *De Ob SymD*, 220; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 5 (after the deaths of Earl Siward and countess Ælflæd).

⁴³⁶Kapelle believes these incursions to be combined attacks from Cumbria across the Pennine foothills into western Northumbria near Durham and from Scotland across the Tweed River. His argument for such lies in the destruction at Durham, which he attributes to the Cumbrian forces under Máel Coluim III as per their customs and not the Scots who tended to avoid ravaging holy sites; Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 92.

is the devastation wrought on lands personally held by Tostig in northern Lancashire, southern Cumberland and Westmoreland.⁴³⁷ As a result, Máel Coluim III directly controlled Cumberland from 1061 to 1091, not as a vassal to the king of England, as had been the political arrangement since 973. Through it Máel Coluim III navigated his forces into Yorkshire and Northumbria causing horrific devastation again in 1070 and 1079.⁴³⁸

Upon Tostig's return, the Northumbrians watched their appointed earl allow the Scots' seizure of Cumbria, destruction of Yorkshire and Northumbrian lands, and theft of property and people go without retribution. Tostig appeared weak in his northern government. Yet with his family connections, he should have been able to mount a sufficient force of royal and personal housecarls (household retainers) along with Wessex *ðegnas* if necessary to invade Scotland.⁴³⁹ So the reason must not derive from lack of resources and motives, but rather with his inability to succeed in such an endeavor.

⁴³⁷See William Farrer, 'Introduction to the Lancashire Domesday,' *The Victoria History of the County of Lancaster*, ed. William Farrer and J. Brownbill (London, 1906), 271, as referenced by Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 92, fn. 20. See map of political divisions of the North in 1056 in Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 45.

⁴³⁸Stephenson, *HKE*, 138-141, 150.

⁴³⁹For a compelling study on the responsibilities and social standing of housecarls in eleventh-century England, see Nicholas Hooper, 'The Housecarls in England in the Eleventh Century,' in *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference*, ed. R. Allen Brown, VII (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1984), 161-176. Hooper's definition for housecarls as 'members of a household; the soldiers of a household' is used in this dissertation. This differs from an older interpretation of housecarls as similar to the Scandinavian *jomsvikings*, a private brotherhood that lived together as a standing mercenary army paid from *heregeld* (*danegeld*) collections and who lived as a 'law-bound guild'. For previous scholarship on this established view of housecarls, see L. M. Larson, *The King's Household in England before the Norman Conquest* (Madison, 1904); C. W. Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions on the eve of the Norman Conquest*

In order to move into Scotland and approach Máel Coluim III's stronghold in the Firth of Forth region, Tostig had to traverse Northumbria.⁴⁴⁰ There exists little information regarding the local Northumbrian leaders during Tostig's rule, which implies a working relationship did not exist between the two parties so that the locals were not featured by the contemporary chroniclers. Without a peaceful relationship with ranking Northumbrians, a respect for local traditions, or a sense of responsibility to and for their population and property, Tostig could not hope to gain free passage through Northumbria. A military force led by their West Saxon earl would have been as unwelcome to the Northumbrians as a Scottish army, which Tostig surely knew.

In 1065 the Northumbrians took political control of their earldom into their own hands and away from Tostig.

Soon after the feast of St. Michael, the archangel, on Monday, the fifth of the nones of October [1065], the Northumbrian thegns Gamelbearn, Dunstan (son of Athelnoth), and Glonicorn (son of Heardulf) entered York with two hundred soldiers to revenge the execrable murder of the noble Northumbrian *ðegn* Gospatric, who was treacherously killed by order of Queen Eadgyth at the king's court on the fourth night of Christmas [29 December 1064], for the sake of her brother Tostig; as also the murder of the *ðegnas* Gamel, son of Orm, and Ulf, son of Dolfin, whom Earl Tostig had perfidiously caused to be assassinated in his own chamber at York the year before, although there was peace between them.⁴⁴¹

(Oxford, 1962); T. Oleson, *The Witenagemot in the reign of Edward the Confessor* (London, 1955).

⁴⁴⁰Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 94.

⁴⁴¹*Dein post festiuitatem sancti Michaelis archangeli, quinto Nonas Octobris, feria secunda, Northimbrenses Ministri Gamelbearn Dunstanus filius Atheluethes, Glonieorn filius Heardulfi, cum 200 militibus Eboracũ venerunt, et pro execranda nece nobilium Northimbrensiũ Ministrorũ Gospatrici quem regina Eadgitha germani sui Tostii causa in curia regis, quarta nocte dominicę Natiuitatis, per insidias occidi iussit, et Gamelis filii Orni, ac Vlfi filii Dolfini quos, anno præcedenti Eboraci, in camera sua, sub pacis fædere, per insidias Comes Tostius occidere præcepit; FlorW, 1065, 426-427.9.* Gospatrick was the youngest and last surviving son of Earl Uhtred and as such a claimant to the earldom. Gamel, son of Orm, was a nephew of Gospatrick and a high-ranking

Florence of Worcester's account continues the list of heinous crimes committed by Tostig. He imposed an enormous tax increase, and in doing so caused vast hardship for the population twofold: their income was customarily lower than that of southern England due to less arable land and even that had been recently severely damaged by Scottish armies. Tostig compounded political murders with a debilitating economic policy and as such sealed his fate in Northumbria.

In 1065 the leading Northumbrians and Yorkshiremen led a united effort to depose Tostig as earl, to expel him from the north, and to force Edward II to accept their choice for earl.⁴⁴² The reasons seem clear. He was a southerner, from the leading Wessex family, with a sister as queen of England and a brother as the most powerful ealdorman in the land. He did not work within the system of traditions either by assimilating himself into Northumbrian society or allowing the religious and secular leaders to retain their authority. On several occasions he failed to defend Northumbria from Scottish assaults and to avenge the same with retaliation.

Upon the expulsion of Tostig in 1065, the Northumbrians recognized Oswulf II (1065-1067) of Bamburgh, the son of Earl Eadwulf, as their true *ealdorman*. We are told

member of the leading Northumbrian family. Ulf, son of Dolfin, had close ties to Gospatrick and Gamel's family through three generations. Hadley provides translation of an inscription on a sundial at the Anglo-Saxon church in Kirkdale, Yorkshire. "Orm, the son of Gamel, bought St. Gregory's church when it was broken and fallen, and had it made anew from the ground in honour of Christ and St. Gregory, in the days of Eadweard the king and Tostig the earl;" Hadley, *Northern Danelaw*, 262-265. This appears to be the same family, if not the same men in reverse order, mentioned above. A member of the Bamburgh family would have the ability to fund a total church restoration project, as well as carry on the familial tradition of maintaining strong ties with the Church. For Orm's family connections, see Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, table 13.

⁴⁴²*FlorW*, 1065, 426-427.9.

that afterwards the northern nobles forced Earl Harold of Wessex and King Edward II to accept Morcar (1066), brother of Earl Edwin of Mercia, as the *ealdorman* of Yorkshire and Northumbria.⁴⁴³ Earl Morcar acquiesced to the election of Oswulf II as earl by the Northumbrian *witan* and allowed him to remain in control of Northumbria.⁴⁴⁴ Alongside the violent changing of earls in Northumbria, England had three kings and was ravaged by war in the northeast and south in 1066. Following the death of Edward II on 5 January, Earl Harold of Wessex was elected king by the *witan* and consecrated on 16 April. After defeating king Haraldr Hardrada of Norway and his outlawed brother Tostig at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in late September, King Harold II died in battle against Duke William of Normandy at Hastings on 14 October.⁴⁴⁵

Duke William was anointed king of England on 25 December 1066 by Archbishop Ealdred of York. William I's first endeavor in Northumberland was to attempt removing the existing Anglo-Saxon earls and install someone new. Consequently William I appointed Copsig (February-March 1067), who had acted as sub-Earl for

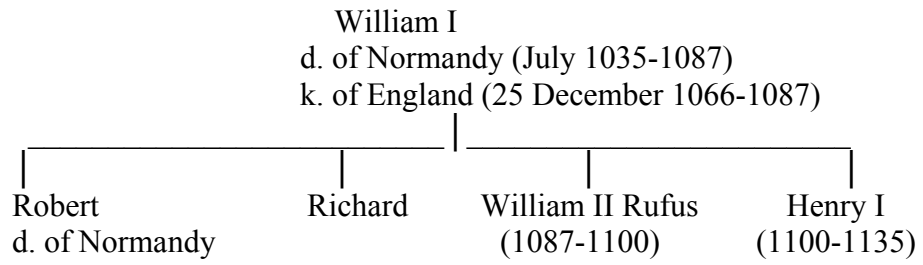
⁴⁴³It is curious that the rebellion leaders did not apply to the king for his acceptance of Oswulf II as earl of all Northumberland. The answer might lie in the fact that he was not acceptable to the Yorkshiresmen, or that Morcar was a more politically neutral choice and therefore easier for the king to accept. See page 149, fn. 418 above for the family of Earls Morcar and Edwin. *ASC-C, D, E*, 1065.

⁴⁴⁴Stephenson, *HKE*, 143. Symeon of Durham says that Morcar appointed Oswulf II over the lands north of the Tyne, which is negated by his dates of rule.

⁴⁴⁵*ASC-C, D, E*, 1066; Cheney, *Handbook*, 31. For the Norman Kings of England, see Christopher Brooke, *From Alfred to Henry III, 871-1272* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 259 and Table 4.3 'Norman kings of England.' For dates of William I's career as duke and king, see David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror, the Norman impact upon England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964; reprint 1992), 449-453.

TABLE 4.3

NORMAN KINGS OF ENGLAND



Tostig in Northumberland, to rule that region as *ealdorman*.⁴⁴⁶ William I's efforts were unsuccessful, as Copsig was murdered by Earl Oswulf II on 12 March, thus ensuring that the Northumbrian noble retained his ealdormanry.⁴⁴⁷ One of Copsig's assignments had been to collect the extraordinarily heavy tax imposed by William I to pay his Flemish mercenaries who fought at Hastings. After Copsig's death, Oswulf II led the Northumbrian rebellion against the new king and his tax. The rebellion ended as the earl was killed unexpectedly while apprehending an outlawed thief.⁴⁴⁸ This clearly illustrated the lack of William I's authority in Northumbria at this time.⁴⁴⁹ The new king had considerable trouble with the obstinate Northumbrians. They insisted on rejecting representatives of the king and all forms of taxation beyond the regular amount.⁴⁵⁰

A further example of Northumbrian strength was demonstrated by Gospatric (1067-1072), 'the Younger' who purchased the earldoms of Northumbria and Yorkshire

⁴⁴⁶*LDE SymD*, iii.14, 180. In Copsig the king saw someone with previous administrative experience in Northumberland and with no family ties to Earl Siward's family or the noble family in Bamburgh. William I traveled to Normandy in the spring of 1067, taking with him the earls he did not trust to leave behind. One of these was Earl Morcar and another was the Northumbrian nobleman Waltheof who would later rule as earl from 1072-1075; *ASC-D*, 1066.

⁴⁴⁷*HE Oder*, iv.ii.176, 206-208; Stephenson, *HKE*, 143. See Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 89, 106-107, for a concise rendition of Copsig's political career under Tostig and on his own. Kapelle argues that Copsig first attempted to assassinate Oswulf II in order to clear the way of rivals for the earldom, but failed.

⁴⁴⁸Stephenson, *HKE*, 144-145.

⁴⁴⁹Forrest Scott also proposes this lack of William I's authority in Northumbria; Forrest S. Scott, 'Earl Waltheof of Northumbria,' *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4th series, vol. 30 (1952), 172.

⁴⁵⁰For a clear description of the fiscal privileges held by Northumbria, see Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 96-97.

from the king and therein continued the Bamburgh family line of earls.⁴⁵¹ This Gospatrick was a great-grandson of King Æthelred II, first cousin to King Máel Coluim III, and the sole surviving grandson of Earl Uhtred of Northumbria. The years 1068 and 1069 were consumed with Northumbrian and Yorkshire rebellions against the Anglo-Norman government and king.⁴⁵² As a result William I attempted appointing the Norman, Robert de Commine (1069) as earl in the north, while Gospatrick was briefly in Scotland. On 31 January 1069, upon arriving in Durham, Robert de Commine and several hundred of his soldiers were murdered by the Northumbrians. The Northumbrians undoubtedly still considered Gospatrick their earl. In September 1069 the Yorkshiremen, led by their foremost noble Marlesweyn, Earl Waltheof of Northampton, and others welcomed a Danish fleet commanded by royal descendants of Knútr who laid claim to England's throne. William I entered Yorkshire and Northumbria in revenge for de Commine's death, as well as to repel the Danes. He destroyed so much property that a famine followed in that region during the year 1070.⁴⁵³ The Bamburgh kinsmen, Earl

⁴⁵¹Stephenson, *HKE*, 143-144. Symeon also relates the familial connection between Gospatrick and Máel Coluim III, which facilitated Gospatrick's political survival post-1072. After William I deposed him as earl of Northumbria, Gospatrick eventually relied on his royal Scottish cousin, who appointed him earl of Dunbar in Scotland.

⁴⁵²For records of the rebellions see, *ASC-D*, 1067, 1068; *FlorW*, 1069, 433-434.13; *HE Oder*, iv, ii.184-185, 216-218.

⁴⁵³*ASC-D*, 1068-1069; *FlorW*, 1069, 433-434.13; *LDE SymD*, iii.15, 182-186. See Scott, for a concise recounting of the events, which he gleaned from the above sources. See also *Domesday Book – Yorkshire*, ed. Margaret L. Faull and Marie Stinson (London: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., 1986) for a list of estates still desolate and non-income producing in 1086. For example, the estates of Whitby (from £112 to 60s), Acklam (£48 to 40s), and Loftus (£48 to naught) in the North Riding of Yorkshire that once belonged to Earl Siward were greatly reduced in value. Some of the northern estates at one time owned by Tostig may represent the ravages from the 1061 invasion by Máel Coluim III.

Gospatrick and Earl Waltheof, accepted peace terms with William I at York and were allowed to return to their homes openly retaining their earldoms.⁴⁵⁴

The circumstances that caused Gospatrick to lose his earldom remain unknown. Symeon of Durham merely remarks on it while introducing Waltheof, son of Earl Siward and countess Ælflæd of Bamburgh, as the earl of Northumbria and Yorkshire in 1072.⁴⁵⁵ Thereafter, Ealdorman Waltheof II (1072-1075) served as earl of Northumbria, Northampton, Huntingdon, and Cambridge, which made him one of the most powerful noblemen in the kingdom. An Anglo-Dane, descended from the royal family in Bamburgh, who controlled the rebellious northern territories and only recently reconciled with the king, could have been a considerable problem-child for William I. In true Germanic and Norse fashion, William I employed the use of a peace-weaver to secure Waltheof II's loyalty, thereby marrying a royal niece, Judith, to the earl.⁴⁵⁶ Also in 1072, Bishop Æthelwine of Durham died and William I appointed Walcher, a Norman from Lorraine, in his place.⁴⁵⁷ According to Symeon of Durham, Earl Waltheof II and Bishop Walcher respected each other to the point that the earl attended all religious synods hosted by the bishop and even sat at the bishops' side during the proceedings.⁴⁵⁸ Sometime in his first year as Northumbrian earl, Waltheof II engineered the deaths of the

⁴⁵⁴*HE Oder*, iv, ii.190-198, 224-234.

⁴⁵⁵Stephenson, *HKE*, 144; *HE Oder*, iv, ii.221, 262. Odericus Vitalis mistakenly says that King William I gave *Northamtoniæ* (Northampton) to Waltheof II, an earldom he in fact already held at this time.

⁴⁵⁶*HE Oder*, iv, ii.221, 262.

⁴⁵⁷*ASC-D*, E, 1072; *FlorW*, 1072, 438.16.

⁴⁵⁸Stephenson, *HKE*, 1073, 144.

sons of Carl, son of Thurbrand. According to Symeon of Durham, Waltheof II acted to revenge the murder of his grandfather, Earl Ealdred.⁴⁵⁹ This act ended the feud between the two families of Uhtred of Bamburgh, earl of Northumbria, and Thurbrand, *hold* of Yorkshire. We hear no more about the matter and so are unaware if Carl's descendents simply did not or could not respond. We do know that Waltheof II was not reprimanded for his actions; he continued as earl. The political successes of Waltheof II mark the highlight and extent of authority for the earls of Northumbria and especially the leading Bamburgh family in the tenth and eleventh centuries. His life ended in 1075, by order of the king, for implication in a rebellion led by a group of Anglo-Saxon earls.⁴⁶⁰ His successors were Bishop Walcher of Durham (1075-1080), a Norman named *Albericum* or *Albrius* (Aubrey, 1080), Robert de Mowbray (1080-1095), and finally King William II Rufus himself (1095-1100).⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹Stephenson, *HKE*, 1073, 144-145; *De Ob SymD*, 220; Morris, *Marriage and Murder*, 5.

⁴⁶⁰Stephenson, *HKE*, 1075, 148-149; *LDE SymD*, iii.23, 212; *ASC-D*, 1075, E, 1076; *FlorW*, 1074, 439-441.18 and 1075, 441.19; *HE Oder*, iv, ii.259-267, 312-322 and iv, ii.285, 344.

⁴⁶¹ In 1071, Bishop Walcher (1071-1080) became the first Norman prelate appointed to the bishopric of Durham. Four years later in 1075, the king awarded him with yet another appointment, as earl of Northumbria (1075-1080). While serving as the secular leader of Northumbria, he assigned the noble Ligulf of Bamburgh to serve as his senior advisor. Ligulf was a member of the old ruling family through marriage, as son-in-law of Earl Ealdred and uncle to Earl Waltheof II. He had inherited from his own family large estates throughout the kingdom and as such controlled great wealth and commanded immense respect. Bishop Walcher was murdered by family members of Ligulf, who was murdered by the bishop's private chaplain, a member of the bishop's household. Aubrey resigned after a few months. Robert de Mowbray joined two separate rebellions aimed first at replacing King William I with the king's eldest son Duke Robert of Normandy and second at deposing King William II Rufus (1087-1100) in favor of the king's cousin Stephen de Albamarle. William II had Earl Robert imprisoned in 1095, where he died 34 years later, and the king accepted governance of Northumbria and Yorkshire himself directly. Stephenson, *HKE*, 1080, 150-152; *LDE SymD*, iii.15,

To serve as the political head of Northumbria was a daunting privilege. The earls who hailed from Northumbria faced prospects of Scottish incursions and infrequent but unpleasant intrusions by English kings. The earls who were appointed from other regions of England faced the dangerous task of enforcing their authority over antagonistic local leaders. Underlying the administrations of the local earls was the fierce protection of traditions and customs inherent to the region. The natives embodied a fierce desire to oversee their own Northumbrian population without outside, foreign influence. In times of governance by an outsider, the Northumbrian nobles seemed to fade into the background of chronicles, yet worked diligently nonetheless to regain control of Northumbria. The earldom remained geographically and culturally distant from the hub of southern English activities and traditions throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. With the advent of William the Conqueror's rule, English kings ventured more frequently into that hostile, outermost area of the kingdom. Not until the reign of William II Rufus did Northumbria begin to settle down and tentatively join in activities as part of a larger English kingdom.

188, iii.24, 218-220, iv.4, 234-236 and fn. 28; *HE Oder*, v, ii.390, 112, and vii, iii.199, 50; *ASC-E*, 1080, 1091, 1095; *Durham Episcopal Charters 1071-1152*, ed. H. S. Offler (Surtees Series, vol. 179, 1964/68), 4-5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Northumbrian history began with the advent of two sixth-century Anglian kingdoms in Britain north of the Humber River. The strength and tenacity of these early kings continued to pulse through their descendants based at Bamburgh for six centuries. The Anglian Northumbrian kings forged relationships with their neighbors, the Britons, Picts and Scots. Three of these early kings were powerful enough to rule as *bretwalda*, over other Anglo-Saxon kings, as well as British and Pictish kings.

These early Northumbrian leaders commanded a governmental system in which their advisory body, the *witan*, assisted. Numerous ranking positions existed, that included both political posts and social designations. As a result of King Oswald's efforts, the royal house of Bamburgh sponsored the building of the first Christian religious site in Anglian Northumbria at Lindisfarne. The ruling family continued to patronized the Northumbrian holy men, fostering a long-term mutually beneficial relationship with the Lindisfarne community. This association continued through the centuries, as evidenced by the cooperative nature exhibited between Earl Uhtred and Bishop Ealdun in 995.

The division of Northumberland into two distinct political entities occurred as a result of the Viking invasion of 867. After their military success, the Vikings claimed direct control of Yorkshire and rule of Northumbria as overkings. The kings and nobles from Bamburgh persisted in exerting true authority in Northumbria. In contrast, the region known as the Danelaw experienced immediate military threats and oversight by the Vikings, such as with Gunthrum, who ruled East Anglia from 879-890 with the permission of King Ælfred.

In 927 King Sigtryggr II of Yorkshire died and King Æthelstan assumed direct kingship over York. At the same time Æthelstan allowed the Northumbrian ‘king’ Ealdred Eadwulfing to maintain his position of leadership in the capacity of ‘earl’. From that time the Northumbrian earldom remained an autonomous entity within England, unlike the other Anglo-Saxon earldoms.

Despite the impression the reader can get from contemporary chroniclers, the English kings relegated governmental responsibility for the region of Northumbria to the local leadership. It is imperative that one read the sources carefully, taking into account the actual people, places, and contexts attributed to the Latin terms ‘Nordhymbre’, ‘Nordanhymbra’, ‘Nordanhymbrorum’, and the Old English terms ‘Norðanhymbra’ and ‘Norðhymbraland’. All too often the correct understanding of these Latin and Old English terms is Yorkshire and the people and events there. After taking this into account, the actual source references to Northumbria provide evidence for little interference from English monarchs and their officials. At the same time these sources recognize the leading Northumbrian ealdormen as witnesses on royal documents, commanding their troops of *ðegnas*, and generally overseeing their region with extreme competence.

The Norman invasion of 1066 brought a shift in the balance of power to England. William I (1066-1087) made use of loyal Anglo-Saxons where he could in his government. Where that proved unsuccessful, he appointed Normans to key leadership positions. William I tried various methods to enforce his authority in Northumberland. His political strategies included first trusting the Yorkshire *ðegn* Copsig, then alternately working with the Bamburgh nobles and appointed Norman dukes and a Norman bishop as earl. When these intermittently failed, William I resorted to his most accomplished method of domination –

warfare, thereby destroying property in hopes of annihilating the spirit of the northerners. Throughout it all the Northumbrians exercised every chance to obliterate success for the Norman appointees. They continued to insist on self-rule, which they accomplished through the ealdormanry of Waltheof II (1072-1075).

The *Domesday Book* shows that the authority of the southern English kings over medieval northerners could not have been complete. Its records for Yorkshire include the desmense lands of King Edward the Confessor, which totaled less than the earls of Northumbria. Consequently the earls retained lordship over more Yorkshire *ðegnas* than the kings themselves.⁴⁶² Likewise the Bishop of Durham, the monks of St. Cuthbert and the Archbishop of York all held a large number of working or recently wasted manors which also proves that their authority in Yorkshire still mattered.⁴⁶³

The Domesday survey of 1086 does not include Northumbria. Kapelle argues that the non-existence of such a survey for Northumbria underlies the lack of Norman authority over that region from 1086 to 1088.⁴⁶⁴ He disregards the possibility that a survey was made of that region, which has subsequently been lost, as no other regional survey suffered a similar fate. Kapelle argues compellingly for York as the farthest outpost of Anglo-Norman authority in England, based on the extant Domesday evidence.

⁴⁶²*Domesday Book, Yorkshire*, eds. Margaret Faull and Marie Stinson (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1986). King Edward held 4 sokes totaling 28 berewicks and 76 sokelands, while the Northumbrian earls held 10 sokes totaling 29 berewicks and 169 sokelands. Along with these manors came the allegiance of the *ðegnas* overseeing them.

⁴⁶³*Domesday Book, Yorkshire*, 298a2, 304c1-15.

⁴⁶⁴Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*, 15-16.

Nonetheless we must rely on other sources to produce a picture of the authority figures in Anglo-Norman Northumbria. The accounts provided by Symeon of Durham, Odericus Vitalis, Florence of Worcester, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* relate similar occurrences. The Northumbrians tried valiantly to elect their own earls and maintain their own forms of taxations and local government. When this proved impossible, their frustrations and fears of unjust oversight were vented through political murder and military opposition.

This dissertation examined the dynamics of power between the Northumbrian leaders, their neighboring kingdoms and the English kings. Modern scholars lean toward literal translations of the sources for the regions north of the Humber. As such, the resulting scholarship presents Northumbria as ‘subdued’ by the English kings from the early to mid tenth century. This dissertation suggests a more contextual translation for regional terminology that references the areas of Northumberland. Consequently, the sources show that the tenth and eleventh-century Northumbrian earls were not rendered powerless by the kings of England. For the few scholars who actually do not represent the earls as mere royal officials, they only conjecture that these Northumbrians must be strong because of their mounted rebellions.⁴⁶⁵ The evidence and arguments in this dissertation are intended to show the tenth and eleventh-century earls of Northumbria as the true authority figures in their region. Their ealdormanry tenures were not overshadowed by heavy-handed royal involvement. In no instance were the Northumbrian earls that hailed from Bamburgh appointed by an English king to their earldom, unlike the Yorkshire earls. These earls

⁴⁶⁵Whitelock, ‘Dealings’ and Kapelle, *Norman Conquest*.

protected their population from unjust outside interference by mounting military expeditions against the offenders.

Northumbria came to be a powerful earldom positioned between two kingdoms that desired to ultimately absorb the earldom. The Scots invaded several times intending to push their southern border past Durham, after first succeeding in moving it from the Forth to the Tweed valley. The late eleventh-century English kings used their own appointees to attempt exerting royal authority over their earldom, only to have their officials exiled and murdered. In 1087 William II finally succeeded where all others had failed, and through his personal government of Northumbria he merged the earldom's leadership and administrative system with the rest of the kingdom.

Further research needs to be done on the governmental positions of Northumbria and the men who held the positions. As some posts changed responsibilities over time, a closer examination of these is merited. Since the *witan* played such a vital role in electing or approving new earls, it would be advantageous to explore the roles of those men in more depth.

Also, the intricate relationships between the earls and the Scottish monarchy bear closer examination. The complexity of alliances and Scottish incursions into Northumbrian held lands is a fascinating dichotomy. The recurrent military situation inspired, indeed demanded, the defensive architectural elements of Northumbrian border churches and monastic complexes.

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APPENDIX: GLOSSARY¹

<i>æðeling</i>	nobleman of royal blood, prince [ǣtheling]
<i>bretwalda</i>	ruler over all Britain (Angles and Saxons)
<i>burh</i>	a dwelling or dwellings within a fortified enclosure, a fort or castle
<i>comites</i>	(Latin) counts; equivalent to the rank of <i>gesiðas</i>
<i>crechrige</i>	(Irish) royal prey; raids for plunder, including cattle and people
<i>duces</i>	(Latin) dukes; another word for <i>ealdorman</i>
<i>ealdorman</i>	‘alderman’, nobleman of the highest rank, chief officer of a region or <i>scir</i> , landholding magnates and warriors
<i>eorl</i>	(from the Old Norse and Danish term <i>jarl</i>) ‘earl’; a noble warrior and ruler over vast estates or provinces, an almost hereditary position, usually synonymous with <i>ealdorman</i>
<i>gesið</i>	military retainer, generally wealthy married landholders with an established family lineage [yā sith]
<i>hide</i>	(<i>carucate</i> or <i>bovate</i> in Latin) measurement of land, about 120 acres, but amount varied greatly; except north of the Humber River where the measure of ploughland of eight oxgangs was a typical family holding in Deira
<i>hold</i>	a position equivalent to royal <i>scir refa</i> (shire reeve) in Anglo-Danish regions of England
<i>hundred</i>	villages grouped into administrative units, which formed regions in shires
<i>jarls</i>	(Old Norse and Danish) equivalent to the rank of <i>ðegn</i>
<i>læn</i>	‘fief’, ‘lehen’, benefice (<i>beneficium</i> in Latin); a loan of land to others in return for military services and rent
<i>land-yard</i>	(<i>virgate</i> in Latin) 30 acres was a typical family holding in the open fields of Midland villages. The width of the field strips, measuring from 15-21 feet, equaled a <i>land-yard</i> or <i>virga</i> (Latin for rod)

¹This glossary was compiled by Ms. Hayes for this dissertation. Phonetic pronunciations have been provided for a few Old English terms. Some definitions have been composed by Ms. Hayes, while others have been compiled from sources and modern scholarship. Ms. Hayes claims full responsibility for all definitions presented.

<i>ministri</i>	(Latin) ministers; equivalent to the rank of <i>ðegn</i> , attendants and warriors for the king and their <i>ealdorman</i> ; also <i>milites</i> , (Latin) soldiers
<i>ofslagen</i>	slain, killed in battle
<i>pallium</i>	(Latin) a silk cloak or mantle worn as a vestment by the Pope and conferred by him on archbishops and sometimes on bishops
<i>patricii</i>	(Latin) patrician; the rank of <i>ealdorman</i> , perceived to be as important as a sub-king
<i>prefecti</i>	(Latin) prefects; nobles who had charge of fortified and garrisoned complexes in <i>urbs</i> that held political prisoners, equivalent in rank to <i>comites</i>
<i>refa</i>	‘reeve’, high official, count, prefect
<i>scir</i>	‘shire’, district, diocese, See, parish; administrative regions or counties; royal center, with a considerable number of dependent or satellite villages and hamlets; the true economic unit in Bernicia, to which belonged the hills, moors, and waste on which family groups of inhabitants, scattered in hamlets and small villages, intercommoned
<i>soca</i>	‘soke’, the rights of jurisdiction, and others, exercised by land lords; also <i>socn</i> , the exercise of judicial power, jurisdiction, right of inquisition, right of taking fines, revenue; a district in which a <i>socn</i> was exercised; <i>sake and soke</i> , the men and women of a <i>scir</i> who would share in the rendering of goods and services to their land lord
<i>sold</i>	(Latin) mercenary pay
<i>soldati</i>	(Latin) Germanic warriors who worked for <i>sold</i>
<i>subreguli</i>	(Latin) sub-kings; also <i>principes</i> in Latin
<i>tanaise</i>	(Irish) second man; The Scottish system for choosing a royal successor, by alternating between two branches of the royal family. This provided cousins or uncles who were ‘adult, able-bodied males within one generation’ of the previous king as the new monarch.
<i>ðegn</i>	warrior, retainer; a servant who owed personal and military service to an <i>ealdorman</i> or a king. Their roles as attendants extended to accompanying their king or the heir of a deceased king into exile. Without ownership of land they lived in the royal estates, which gave them the reputation of household retainers. [thān]

<i>urbes</i>	(Latin) towns
<i>vill</i>	<i>villaticum</i> and <i>villa</i> in Latin, farmstead, country house
<i>wergeld</i>	man price, compensation for a man's life
<i>wicinga</i>	'Viking', raider, pirate
<i>witan</i>	royal councilors, usually royal <i>ðegnas</i> , landholding <i>gesiðas</i> and ranking noblemen

VITA

Jean Anne Hayes graduated from Louisiana State University with a Bachelor Degree in art history after first studying for four years in the School of Architecture. She also received her master's degree from Louisiana State University in art history with an emphasis in religious medieval architecture and art. In her doctoral program she specialized in medieval history, earning minors in medieval architecture and art and medieval Britain. Following graduation Ms. Hayes will hold the position of professor of Medieval History at Saint Joseph Seminary College in Saint Benedict, Louisiana.