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## Origin myths and the construction of medieval identities: Norman chronicles 1000–1100

### INTRODUCTION

The histories investigated in this piece are just two of the many to be written in the north-western part of France that came to be called Normandy concerning the years 911 to 1100. They describe what was to be the last large-scale influx of a non-Christian people to the heartlands of western Christendom, something brought about by the decision in 911 of Charles the Simple, King of the Franks (892–922, d. 929), to grant the area around Rouen to a disparate group of Vikings, and their subsequent settlement and expansion of that holding.<sup>1</sup> These two texts, Dudo of St-Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normannorum ducum*, and William of Jumièges's reworking of it in his *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, were written in the eleventh century, that is four or five generations after the initial Viking settlement of Normandy, yet both recount details of the settlement period.<sup>2</sup> One way of linking these tales to later Norman identity might be to understand the use of written record, in particular the writing of histories which recount the past, as a way of fixing past realities for a later audience. The texts then link that past to the various present realities of their audience, and so help to construct a distinct Norman identity through reference to historical events.<sup>3</sup> This piece intends to examine their accounts of that settlement, and to question the extent to which references to remote origins played a part in the construction of later Norman identities. It also examines the links between these texts and the society of eleventh-century Normandy, and argues that the identity structures recoverable from such narrative histories should not be understood as key to the creation of Norman ethnicity.

### INTRODUCTION TO DUDO OF ST-QUENTIN'S HISTORY OF THE NORMAN DUKES

The foundation of any study of Norman historiography, medieval or present, must be the serial biography of the first four Norman leaders composed over the years between 996 and 1001.<sup>4</sup> Its

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<sup>1</sup> For the general history of the Norman settlement in the context of Viking incursions see Simon Coupland, *The Vikings in Francia and Anglo-Saxon England to 911*, in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History 2*, c. 700–c. 900, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge 1995) 190–201; John Michael Wallace-Hadrill, *The Vikings in Francia* (Reading 1975). Two contrasting views which discuss the settlement as part of the background to the later history of Normandy are provided by David Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (London 1982); Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power 940–1066* (Los Angeles/Berkeley/London 1988); Lucien Musset, *Les peuples scandinaves au moyen âge* (Paris 1941), spans the gap between the two approaches beautifully.

<sup>2</sup> Dudo of St-Quentin, *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum* (ed. Jules Lair, *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie* 23, Caen 1865); for the English translation see Dudo of St-Quentin, *History of the Normans* (trans. Eric Christiansen, Woodbridge 1998); William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, *The Gesta Normannorum ducum* (ed. and trans. Elisabeth van Houts, *Oxford Medieval Texts*, 2 vols., Oxford 1992–95).

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Davis, *The Normans and Their Myth* (London 1976) 15, makes a similar point. See Ovidio Capitani, *Specific motivations and continuing themes in the Norman chronicles of southern Italy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries*, in: *The Normans in Southern Italy and Sicily* (Lincoln Lectures 1974, Oxford 1977) 1–46; Leah Shopkow, *History and Community* (Washington 1997); Kenneth B. Wolf, *Making History: the Normans and Their Histories in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Philadelphia 1995), for specific attempt to do this for the Normans.

<sup>4</sup> Dudo, *De moribus*, ed. Lair. For dating see Mathieu Arnoux, *Before the Gesta Normannorum and beyond Dudo: some evidence on early Norman historiography*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies. Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 22 (2000) 29–48, at 31.

author, Dudo of St-Quentin, was a Frankish secular clerk educated in the best traditions of late Carolingian scholarship, probably at the cathedral school of Liège.<sup>5</sup> The work is the only full-length narrative history from Normandy which recounts the settlement period, and as such formed the basis of all subsequent Norman writings on it.<sup>6</sup> As a result it, or re-workings of it, survive in an impressive number of medieval manuscripts from both England and Normandy, physical testament to both to its influence and popularity.<sup>7</sup>

Arguments over the reliability of the work as a source for tenth-century history have to a certain extent obscured its very real usefulness in examining the period in which it was written.<sup>8</sup> Even then, however, there has been little scholarly consensus over the reasons for its composition, or for its sources, and it has been claimed variously as a translated Norse saga, a solidly Carolingian text, and as a political intervention designed for specific moment.<sup>9</sup> Both sides in a debate over continuity and change over the period of Norman settlement have suggested that its purpose within Normandy was to bind the Norman elite together, whilst at the same time using the text as evidence of the Frankish or Danish nature of that elite.<sup>10</sup> One recent study suggests that the text acknowledged these differences, and charted the ethnogenesis of the Normans from both Frankish and Danish groups, and hence was partly instrumental in speeding that merger.<sup>11</sup> Much of the confusion arises from a critical failure to distinguish between concepts which are often closely linked, but are very different for this text, namely authorial intention, the wishes of patrons, and the differences between readership and audience.

There can be no doubt that Dudo was closely connected to the ducal court, and that his role at that court allowed him to write his text. Dudo claims to have been commissioned to write the work by Duke Richard I (942–996), and given subsequent encouragement by Richard II (996–1026) and that duke's uncle, Count Rodulf of Ivry.<sup>12</sup> Dudo was rewarded for his efforts by the Norman dukes, whose charters record that he was granted land and two churches on his retirement to St-Quentin in 1015.<sup>13</sup> It is less clear, however, that such payment was made for his work in producing the narrative, or that the Norman dukes saw this composition as his key duty. He was chaplain to Duke Richard II from 1011, and seems to have had some function in charter production for the court, even if there is no evidence of the organised chancellery suggested by his self-styling as chancellor in one charter.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Leah Shopkow, The Carolingian world of Dudo of St. Quentin, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 15, 1 (1989) 19–37.

<sup>6</sup> The text was reworked in Latin by several writers, for which see *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, ed. van Houts. It was also used in vernacular re-writings of Norman history, for which see Elisabeth van Houts, The adaptation of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* by Wace and Benoît, in: *Non Nova, sed Nove: Mélanges de civilisation médiévale dédiés à Wilhelm Noomen*, ed. Martin Gosman/Jaap van Os (Groningen 1984) 115–124, and works quoted there.

<sup>7</sup> Gerda Huisman, The Manuscript Tradition of the *Gesta Normannorum*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 6 (Woodbridge 1984) 122–135.

<sup>8</sup> For extreme opinions on its reliability see Jules Lair's introduction in *Dudo, De moribus*, ed. Lair, and the unjustified demolition by Henri Prentout, *Etude critique sur Dudon de S. Quentin et son histoire*, 2 vols. (Caen/Paris 1916); Annie Renoux, Châteaux normandes du X<sup>e</sup> siècle dans le *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum* de Dudon, in: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'Histoire médiévales en l'honneur du Doyen Michel de Boüard (Mémoires et documents. Société de l'École des Chartes* 27, Genève/Paris 1982) 327–346, shows how the text can respond to sensitive treatment.

<sup>9</sup> Eleanor Searle, Fact and pattern in heroic history: Dudo of St. Quentin, in: *Viator* 15 (1984) 119–137; Christiansen, Dudo xviii; Felice Lifshitz, Dudo's historical narrative and the Norman succession of 996, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 20, 2 (1994) 101–120.

<sup>10</sup> Bates, Normandy; Searle, Predatory Kinship.

<sup>11</sup> Cassandra Potts, *Atque unum et diversis gentibus populum effecit: Historical tradition and Norman identity*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 18 (Woodbridge 1996) 139–152.

<sup>12</sup> Dudo, *De moribus*, Letter, ed. Lair 119f.

<sup>13</sup> *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie (911–1066)* 13, 18, (ed. Marie Fauroux, *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie* 36, Caen 1961) 86–89, 100–102.

<sup>14</sup> *Recueil des actes* 18, ed. Fauroux 100–102; On early Norman charters see Fauroux's introduction and Cassandra Potts, The early Norman charters: a new perspective on an old debate, in: *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. Carola Hicks (Stamford 1992) 25–40; David Bates, The Conqueror's charters, in: *ibid.* 1–15; Reginald Allen Brown, Some observations on Norman and Anglo-Norman Charters, in: *Tradition and Change. Essays in honour of Marjorie Chibnall*, ed. Diana Greenway/Christopher Holdsworth/Jane Sayers (Cambridge 1985) 145–164, argues, in part using Dudo's self-styling,

Neither is the extent to which the dukes exercised close editorial control of the work clear. There are a series of themes which would suit the dukes and which emerge from the work: the indivisibility of Normandy, its leaders' styling as dukes, the inclusion of various frontier areas (notably Brittany) in the original grant of 911, and a general pro-Norman tone. This combination of very general political interests and patronage need not imply, however, too close a connection between ducal interests and the identity structures recoverable from the text.

The stylistic evidence of the text itself counsels against understanding the work as ducal propaganda designed to create a sense of Norman identity within Normandy. Its Latin vocabulary and range of reference is both scholarly and vast, its models are resolutely those of Carolingian hagiographical and historical writing, and its narratives are punctuated by complex poetical interludes.<sup>15</sup> Within fifty years of its completion one monk, William of Jumièges, found it necessary to extensively simplify the text in order to aid understanding among his less classically educated monastic audience.<sup>16</sup> The court of Rouen was far from unlatinate at the time, yet Dudo's text is remarkable in the extent to which it would have been incomprehensible not only to most of a listening audience, but also to those readers with an otherwise reasonable grasp of Latin.<sup>17</sup> This suggests that those Dudo had in mind when writing were those such as the Frankish Bishop Adalbero of Laon (977–1031), to whom the work is dedicated, who could appreciate its virtuoso mastery of source material and Latin.<sup>18</sup> The text therefore legitimises the Norman dukes to a very small readership, limited by the linked difficulties of understanding the both the language and the range of reference, and certainly not including the majority of the Norman nobility, regardless of their ethnicity. This is not indicative of a text written for any urgent political needs of the Norman dukes. Understanding the potential readership of this text in this way, whatever might be thought of its broader audience and source base, is crucial to understanding the way in which Dudo's text describes the Normans in the early eleventh century.

#### NORMAN IDENTITY IN DUDO'S TEXT

The first section of the main body of Dudo's text sets the scene for its consistent incorporation of Norman identity into the norms of Carolingian scholarship. The intellectual problem facing anyone attempting this task at the turn of the eleventh century was that the Danishness of the immigrants of 911 was too widely known simply to be effaced, but was too distant from appropriate learned models simply to be recorded. The first passage of narrative in the text uses geographic description to overcome this problem by describing the origins of those who settled in Normandy, moving via Germany to the island of 'Scanza', and from there to the Gothic area of Dacia.<sup>19</sup> The geography is skilfully concocted from a series of classical and late antique sources, notably Jordanes' History of the Goths, but the selection of Dacia from Jordanes is far from random.<sup>20</sup> The text is later to use the similarities between *Danai* (Danes) and *Daci* (Dacians) to firmly locate the Danish settlers as a classical recognised people:

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that a chancellery existed. I suspect Dudo was more than capable of describing Norman courts in terms appropriate to royal Frankish ones whatever the reality.

<sup>15</sup> Christiansen, Dudo xxix–xxxiv, gives a comprehensive discussion of Dudo's style; Shopkow, Carolingian world, discusses Dudo's intellectual environment in depth.

<sup>16</sup> The dedication to William's work says the new text is *inelimato stilo, tenui oratione per plana deductum cui libet lectori ad liquidam elaboravi*. (Gesta Normannorum ducum, Dedicatory Letter, ed. van Houts 1, 5).

<sup>17</sup> On the court's cultural life see Lucien Musset, Le satariste Garnier de Rouen et son milieu (début du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle), in: Revue du moyen âge latin 10 (1954) 237–267; Elisabeth van Houts, A note on Jezebel and Semiramis, two Latin Norman poems from the early eleventh century, in: Journal of Medieval Latin 2 (1992) 18–24.

<sup>18</sup> Dudo, De moribus, Letter, ed. Lair 115.

<sup>19</sup> Dudo, De moribus I, 1, ed. Lair 129; see Christiansen, Dudo 182f., for a full discussion of the source material.

<sup>20</sup> Jordanes, Getica 25–39 (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 5, Berlin 1882) 60–63.

“And so the *Daci* call themselves *Danai*, or Danes, and boast that they are descended from Antenor; who, when in former times the lands of Troy were laid waste, ‘slipped away through the middle of the Greeks’ and ‘penetrated’ the confines of ‘Illyria’ with his own men”<sup>21</sup>

To ram the point home the text continues to describe Scandinavians as *Daci* throughout, unless adopting the more contemporary *Normanni* for those actually based in Normandy, and to refer to their homeland as Dacia.<sup>22</sup> At the most basic level of nomenclature, therefore, Dudo shifts his actors from Denmark into a world known to Frankish scholars, the Dacia of Jordanes’ Goths.<sup>23</sup>

The text’s move to Antenor of Troy is more intellectually problematic than the etymological ascription of Dacianness, however, since it is manifestly untrue, both because no reader could imagine actual Danes boasting of descent from Antenor, and because the statement relies to some extent on the association of *Danai* with Antenor and the Greeks, despite the fact he was fleeing from them at the time related.<sup>24</sup> It can only be accounted for by a long-standing Frankish intellectual tradition of claiming ancestry from Antenor, which was clearly still current in Dudo’s own time.<sup>25</sup> Intellectual trickery therefore creates an influx of Danes who are not only related to known groups, but specifically to the Franks.

This pattern of relating eleventh-century Normans to Franks recurs in some of the events portrayed by the text. Dudo’s work is unusual in that, although it starts with a normative statement of a single place and race of origin, its account of one of the key events in the founding of Normandy openly acknowledges the mixed background of the Normans.<sup>26</sup> Rollo, the Viking leader who was to become the Norman duke, dreams of thousands of birds circling around him, a dream which is interpreted, and hence legitimised as Godly, by a handy Christian prisoner:

“By the different kinds of birds with their red left wings, whose furthest extremity you [Rollo] could not reach with your gaze, you may understand men of different provinces with shields on their arms, who have done fealty to you, and who you will see joined together in countless multitude....The birds of different sorts will obey you, men of differing kingdoms will kneel to serve you.”<sup>27</sup>

Throughout the rest of the text these individuals from various kingdoms, many of whom any reader with basic knowledge of the history of Normandy would know to be Franks, are described as *Daci* or *Normanni*. As part of the text’s stress on the legitimacy of Norman occupation, the ducal family of Normandy is portrayed as both married to the Frankish royal house, and later as promoting able Frankish relatives to positions of power in Normandy, sometimes to the anger of other groups.<sup>28</sup> The textual stress on the ducal house means that such comments on mixed ancestry are never applied to the Norman nobility as a whole, but evidence from elsewhere suggests that no rea-

<sup>21</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* I, 3, ed. Lair 130: *Igitur Daci nuncupantur a suis Danai, vel Dani, glorianturque se ex Antenore progenitos; qui, quondam Trojae finibus depopulatis, mediis elapsus Archvis, Illyricos fines penetravit cum suis.* (trans. Christiansen 16).

<sup>22</sup> See for example Dudo, *De moribus* II, 1–6, ed. Lair 141–146, on Rollo’s background.

<sup>23</sup> The classical models for description of a people are discussed at length in Graham Loud, *The ‘Gens Normannorum’: Myth or reality*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 4* (Woodbridge 1982) 104–116.

<sup>24</sup> He was, however, of Greek stock, being one of the few Greeks to fight with the Trojans.

<sup>25</sup> Fredegar, *Chronicae cum continuationibus* (ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov. 2, Hannover 1888) 1–193; *Liber historiae Francorum* (ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov. 2, Hannover 1888) 215–328; for discussions of Trojan origin see Ian N. Wood, *Defining the Franks: Frankish origins in early Medieval historiography*, in: *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde/Lesley Johnson/Alan Murray (Leeds Texts and Monographs, NS 14, Leeds 1995) 47–75. Forthcoming work by Rosamond McKitterick and Helmut Reimitz should centre the debate more firmly on the manuscripts and re-creation of Frankishness.

<sup>26</sup> This is one of the key reasons Davis questions that the idea of a ‘Norman race’ existed in the eleventh century (although few from the English side of the Severn would assume mixed origins preclude such an idea). Davis, *Normans* 53.

<sup>27</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* I, 6, ed. Lair 146f.: *Per volucres diversorum generum, laevas alas habentes puniceas, quarum infinitissimam extremitatem exhaustire visu non poterat, homines diversarum provinciarum scutulata brachia habentes, tuique effecti fideles, quorum innumeram multitudinem coadunatem videbis...tibi aves diversarum specierum obtemperabunt; tibi homines diversorum regnorum serviendi accubitati obedient.* (trans. Christiansen 30).

<sup>28</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* II, 29–30, ed. Lair 169, 171, on the marriage of Rollo and Charles the Simple’s daughter Gisla. Dudo is the only source for Gisla’s existence, which makes her inclusion significant to the legitimation and identity structures of the text. Frankish relatives in Normandy caused significant problems for William Longsword (c. 928–942), for which

sonably informed reader could have doubted the presence of those of Frankish stock among the inhabitants of Normandy described by Dudo's text as *Normanni*.<sup>29</sup>

The text's portrayal of the Normans and Franks as groups that were not distinct in terms of origin can be extended into other areas too. The original religious differences between Danes and Franks are commented on, and details given which, for all their classicisation of Norse gods, coincide to some extent with surviving Scandinavian material.<sup>30</sup> Yet the text ignores the possibility of such practice after the conversion of Rollo in c. 911 and, more importantly, stresses the role played by the Christian God in the actions of the as yet unbaptised Rollo. Not only does a divine dream grant Normandy to Rollo, but his baptism is foretold by another Christian dream-interpreter before he even leaves 'Scanza', a storm is calmed by prayers to Christ, and the poetic breaks continually urge Rollo to hurry towards his baptism.<sup>31</sup> The combined effect of both an interventionist God and a vocal Christian entourage is to make the pagan Rollo into a proto-Christian: a neat way of appropriating Christian criticism, but one which also has the effect of disguising what must have been important religious differences between Frank and Dane in early Normandy. Although other differences cannot be so easily appropriated they are all placed firmly in the past, and specifically before Rollo's conversion, avoiding suggestions of difference between Franks and Normans in the eleventh century. Rollo, for example, needs an interpreter to speak to Charles the Simple, yet according to Dudo's text it was necessary to send Rollo's grandson to Bayeux to learn Danish, since at that time Rouen, and hence the ducal court spoke French.<sup>32</sup> There are some references made to different techniques in fighting, but again they occur before Rollo's baptism, and warfare afterwards is conducted without comment on difference.<sup>33</sup> No comments are made which distinguish any aspects of the material or institutional culture of Normandy as different from that of any Frankish principality, although some such differences did exist.<sup>34</sup> Above all, the values of the Normans throughout the text would not be unfamiliar to any eleventh-century Frank: pride in prowess at war and an attachment to their homeland, in this case Normandy, foremost among them. This elimination of cultural differences may be an accurate account of the eleventh-century situation, where a settled Norman elite has essentially adopted pre-settlement institutions and customs, but it should be noted that that Dudo does not

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see Dudo, *De moribus* III, 43–46, ed. Lair 187–192; Potts, *Atque unum*, although I believe the latter over-emphasises the effects of ethnic difference.

<sup>29</sup> Lucien Musset, *L'aristocratie normande au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: *La Noblesse au Moyen Age: Essais à la mémoire de Robert Boutrouche*, ed. Philippe Contamine (Paris 1976) 71–104, provides an overview. For individual families see amongst others: David Bates, *Notes sur l'aristocratie normande: Hughes, évêque de Bayeux (1011–env.–1049) et Herluin de Conteville et sa famille*, in: *Annales de Normandie* 23 (1973) 7–38; Pierre Baudin, *Une famille châtelaine sur les confins normanno-manceaux: Les Gérés (X<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, in: *Archéologie médiévale* 22 (1992) 309–356; Jean Michel Bouvris, *Une famille de vassaux des vicomtes de Bayeux au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle: les Brocs*, in: *Revue du département de la Manche* 19 (1977) 4–45; Lucien Musset, *Aux origines d'une classe dirigeante: Les Tosny, grands barons normands du X<sup>e</sup> aux XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: *Francia* 5 (1977) 45–80; Jean-Marie Maillefer, *Une famille aristocratique aux confins de la Normandie: Les Gérés au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: Lucien Musset/Jean Michel Bouvris/Jean-Marie Maillefer, *Autour du Pouvoir Ducal Normand X<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Caen 1985) 175–206.

<sup>30</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* I, 2, ed. Lair 129–130; Christiansen's discussion (Dudo, *De moribus*, ed. Christiansen 182f.) of the borrowing from Virgil, whilst retaining details known from elsewhere is very helpful. That Dudo had access to such detail might suggest that non-Christian practice was at least tolerated in his Normandy, although there are other links to the Norse world than non-assimilated settlers, for a vivid picture of which see Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht: a Norman Latin Poem from the early eleventh century* (ed. Christopher McDonough, Toronto 1995).

<sup>31</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* II, 5, 7, poem xvi, ed. Lair 145, 148f.

<sup>32</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* IV, 68, ed. Lair 221. The eloquence of Rouen is described as "Roman", as opposed to the "Danish" of Bayeux.

<sup>33</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* II, 13, ed. Lair 155.

<sup>34</sup> The structures of Dudo's Normandy were essentially that of a Frankish principality, but some identifiable Danish customs did survive. Dudo may have been ignorant of their origin, although the effect is to disguise early differences. Bates, *Normandy* 16–23, has a useful discussion, also Charles Homer Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Harvard Historical Studies 24, New York 1918), and Jean Yver, *Les premières institutions du duché de Normandie*, in: *I Normanni e la loro espansione in Europa nell'alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 16, Spoleto 1969) 299–366; Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, sees Normandy as Danish, although without fully acknowledging Bates's distinction between using 'Frankish' structures as a tool of analysis and as a statement of identity.

portray the Normans as Franks, but rather as an eleventh-century group that behave similarly to the way eleventh-century Franks did.

The distinction is best demonstrated by the continued use of *Normanni*, and is entirely necessary given the political history related. Despite the text's assertions there was no guarantee of a continued settler presence in Normandy after 911, and no necessary reason why the descendants of the Viking Rollo should have found themselves as dukes of the area by the eleventh century. Both Frankish kings and the heads of neighbouring areas made concerted attempts to impose their will on Normandy, and Louis IV even managed to temporarily impose his own governor in Normandy during the minority of Richard I.<sup>35</sup> The armies of the opposing French king are routinely described in ethnic terms, either simply as Franks or, at one point, as "the army of the Frankish nation".<sup>36</sup> Since much of the Norman history in Dudo's text involved combat with this external, ethnically-described Frankish element, it was clearly impossible to describe the Normans as *Franci*. Another consequence is that those of Frankish descent who fight with the Norman dukes are rendered as *Normanni*, so that linguistically (as perhaps in practice) an external threat hastens the development of a Norman identity which takes elements from, but also remains distinct from, that of the Franks.

The uses of *Daci* and *Normanni* throughout the text suggest that it is precisely this external threat, rather than the formation from within Normandy of a new identity, 'Norman', incorporating but distinct from both Danes and Franks resident there, which lies behind the text's clear linguistic distinction between eleventh-century Franks and Normans. There is a natural tendency after the events of 911 to follow standard diplomatic and narrative practice and refer to those in Normandy or under the control of the duke as 'Normans', and it is highly significant that no second-generation Danish settler is described as Dacian. At the same time, however, 'Norman' never comes to mean solely those in Normandy, and the extensions in its meaning are always to include Scandinavians.<sup>37</sup> At one point it is explicitly stated that Dacians are also called Normans, and even the anti-hero of the first book, Hasting, a man who is not described as active in Normandy, is described as Norman.<sup>38</sup> The acceptance of a close link between Viking/Scandinavian and Norman, is mirrored in the selection of material for the work, and in particular in the puzzling devotion of Book One to the Viking Hasting, who was never a Norman duke and is not a figure most Frankish Christians would wish to associate with.<sup>39</sup> The end result is that the inhabitants of Normandy are paradoxically portrayed in the text as culturally Frankish, yet as more distinct from the Franks than from Scandinavian groups.

Such a portrayal seems well suited to the intended readership of the text, that is Frankish scholars outside Normandy. One reason for this is the knowledge of that audience. Dudo had completed the majority of the Work by 1001, ninety years and four generations after the supposed grant of Normandy to Rollo, at a point when first-hand knowledge of the settlement period was scarce.<sup>40</sup> What had survived following the disruptions of the Viking period was a tradition of anti-Viking complaint, and a continued memory of the Viking roots of those in Normandy, as seen in the near-contemporary text of Richer of Reims.<sup>41</sup> Such criticism could not be ignored, and the only way to neutralise it is that adopted by Dudo's text, namely to acknowledge it, yet shatter the intrinsic nature of the link between such behaviour and the admirable attitudes of the Normans of 1000.

<sup>35</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum* IV, 5, ed. van Houts 1, 106–117.

<sup>36</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* IV, 85, ed. Lair 240. The association of political groups, armies and ethnic groups is long-standing; Patrick Geary, *Ethnic identity as a situational construct in the early middle ages*, in: *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 113 (1983) 15–26, at 21–26.

<sup>37</sup> This is in direct contrast with William of Jumièges's re-writing. See below 160f.

<sup>38</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* IV, 119 and I, 8, ed. Lair 282, 136.

<sup>39</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* I, ed. Lair 129–138. On Hasting see Frederic Amory, *The Viking Hasting in Franco-Scandinavian legend*, in: *Saints, Scholars and Heroes: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honour of Charles W. Jones*, ed. Margot King/Wesley Stevens (Minnesota 1979) 265–286.

<sup>40</sup> This may in part account for the ducal desire for a written history. See Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900–1200* (London 1999) 126–128, for examples of histories of the English conquest written at such a point.

<sup>41</sup> Richer of Reims, *Historiae* (ed. Hartmut Hoffmann, MGH SS 38, Hannover 2000); esp. *ibid.* I, 53, ed. Hoffmann 87.

This stress on the different recent origin of the Normans, producing a group of non-Franks who embody Frankish attitudes, is also ideally suited to the positioning of Dudo's text within the intellectual community from which he came, a community that was showing a willingness to experiment with new ways of portraying the political and historical world that matched Dudo's own.<sup>42</sup> Beyond matters of style, the text can use the Normans as a model political group, and hence comment on the ideal behaviours for such groups. This too was a common concern of those educated in the schools of northern Francia, who saw their world threatened by rapid social and political change, and also by the intellectual challenge of a monastic reform movement with very different ideas on appropriate ecclesiastical behaviour.<sup>43</sup> The ideal bishops of Dudo's text are politically engaged and hence hostile to this movement, either by their known actions beyond the text, Adalbero of Laon and Archbishop Robert of Rouen being singled out for poetical praise, or by their actions within it, Archbishop Franco of Rouen being instrumental in the negotiations around the foundation of Normandy.<sup>44</sup> The inappropriateness of monastic ideals to the political arena is in turn illustrated by the characterisation of William Longsword, a duke who wished to be a monk, who had to be forced by his nobles (and an attractive woman) to have sex and produce an heir, and whose simple trust led to his own death and the near-destruction of Normandy. Proper roles for leaders are set out both explicitly and implicitly, and are best summarised by Abbot Martin of Jumièges's attempts to dissuade William Longsword from becoming a monk:

“Defender of this our country, why have you searched out such things as this to do? Who will take care of the clergy and the people? Who will stand up to the host of pagans when it comes upon us? Who will rigorously rule the people with your fathers' laws? To whom will you entrust and commend the common herd?”<sup>45</sup>

These values, also attributed to the reigns of Rollo and to Richard I, sit squarely within a Carolingian tradition which had been part of the coronation rites of Frankish kings for some time, and which was about to be set out explicitly by Adalbero of Laon.<sup>46</sup> Only by portraying the Norman dukes as possessed of certain Frankish values could Dudo incorporate these models of appropriate political behaviour, and situate his text within the Frankish intellectual tradition he knew best. At the same time, by refusing to deny the recent non-Frankish elements in those dukes' history, Dudo's text provides a distinct group with which to compare the Franks, and demonstrates vividly the way that Frankish society has declined. The Franks have lost sight of proper political values whereas the Normans, descended from Antenor but who have spent years outside Francia as barbarians, have refound theirs. Only by this construction of Norman ethnicity as a mirror to that of the Franks, distinctly other yet Frankish by values, could Dudo's text situate itself within the political debates

<sup>42</sup> Richer, *Historiae*, ed. Hoffmann, represents this departure from annalistic tradition well, as does Aimoin of Fleury, *Historiae Francorum libri quattuor*, PL 139, 627–798, also the early history of a settling people. On the new historians generally see Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favour: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca 1992) 145–148; Rosamond McKitterick/Matthew Innes, *The writing of history*, in: *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge 1994) 193–220; Richard Southern, *Aspects of the European tradition of historical writing I. The Classical tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth*, in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series 20 (1970) 173–196.

<sup>43</sup> Adalbero of Laon, *Carmen ad Rotbertum regum* (ed. and trans. Claude Carozzi, *Les Classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge* 32, Paris 1979), shares similar concerns, and was finished only ten years after Dudo's piece.

<sup>44</sup> Dudo, *De moribus*, Letter, ed. Lair 115–119 (on Adalbero). Dudo, *De moribus*, poems iv, vi, vii, l, liii, lxxxvi, ed. Lair 123–128, 214f., 292 (on Robert). Robert was a member of the ducal house of Normandy, and Adalbero had a distinguished political career. Dudo, *De moribus* II, 25–30, ed. Lair 166–171 (on Franco).

<sup>45</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* III, 58, ed. Lair 201: *Defensor huius patriae, cur talia rimatus es facere? Quis fovebit clerum et populum? Quis contra nos ingruentium paganorum exercitui obstabit? Quis paternis legibus reget srenue populum? Cui gregem committes et commendabis.* (trans. Christiansen 77).

<sup>46</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* II, 31, IV, 127, ed. Lair 171, 293–295; Adalbero, *Carmen*; *Ordines Coronationis Franciae* (ed. Robert Jackson, Philadelphia 1995); *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, ed. James Burns (Cambridge 1988) 83–251; Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago 1980), sets these political imaginings in broader context.

expected by its readership outside Normandy. Its later reception within Normandy, however, shows considerably less concern for those debates, and so constructs Norman ethnicity rather differently.

### THE GESTA NORMANNORUM DUCUM OF WILLIAM OF JUMIÈGES

Over the period from c.1050 to 1066 Dudo's work was abbreviated and re-written by a monk of Jumièges named William, who also added histories of the reigns of Richard II (996–1026), Richard III (1026–27), Robert I (1027–35) and of the early years of William II, returning to his work in the 1070s to add some details of the conquest of England.<sup>47</sup> Many of his alterations were stylistic, simplifying Dudo's prose to accord with a reformed monastic taste less sympathetic to displays of secular learning, and removing the poetic apostrophes that had dotted it. Yet he also made important changes to Dudo's text, and changed the portrayal of Norman ethnicity in doing so, particularly in the use of the Danish, pagan past.

One of the key changes is the much greater anxiety over the pagan nature of the Danish past, and hence a series of attempts to christianise Normanness more explicitly than Dudo's work had done. The origin myth from Antenor is altered to include Magog, son of Noah, the last syllable of whose name gives rise to Goths.<sup>48</sup> This was information derived from Jordanes, but which Dudo's text had not included, and which gave the Normans a biblical as well as a classical background.<sup>49</sup> William's text drastically shortens Dudo's account of the life of the only Norman duke to be both a pagan and a Christian, Rollo, by removing all mention of Rollo's dreams and pre-Christian religious actions, and summarising actions previously attributed to Rollo before his conversion in Normandy. At the same time several of these actions are attributed to the Danes generally, rather than to Rollo explicitly.<sup>50</sup> The dedication to Duke William II makes the reasons for these changes explicit, stating that William had removed much of the life of Rollo, "born of heathen parents and spending much of his life as a heathen ... for I consider that they are merely flattering, and do not offer a model of what is honourable or edifying".<sup>51</sup> The first time William's text refers to Rollo by name is upon his arrival in Normandy, a necessity which cannot be avoided since his presence and seizure of power had to be accounted for.<sup>52</sup> William's text is then very careful to stress the link between Rollo's conversion to Christianity and the establishment of the Norman state. The initial negotiations over Normandy between Franco and Rollo had in Dudo's text been portrayed as a spiritual injunction to convert, followed by a peace treaty and a marriage alliance, and Rollo's reply is entirely political, swearing to protect Normandy for the king in exchange for perpetual rights over it.<sup>53</sup> Rollo's conversion, although spiritually beneficial and predestined, is the closing part of the treaty, necessary for but separate from the grant of land. In William's text, by contrast, Normandy is given as a direct reward for conversion: "if Rollo would become a Christian, he [King Charles the Simple] would grant him the land".<sup>54</sup> It is only at this point, when conversion has been agreed upon, that William's text uses 'Norman' for the first time, associating the people solidly with both the land itself and Christianity, and making the act of conversion the marker of the transition from Dane to Norman.<sup>55</sup> This basic definition of a Norman as a Christian from Normandy remains throughout the text, which removes

<sup>47</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, ed. van Houts 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum* I, 2 (3), ed. van Houts 1, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Jordanes, *Getica* 29, ed. Mommsen 61. Dudo had undoubtedly seen this part of Jordanes' text, since he used it for geographical information. See notes 19–20.

<sup>50</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum* II, 1–2, ed. van Houts 1, 32–34, summarising Dudo, *De moribus* II, 1–8, ed. Lair 140–149.

<sup>51</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, Dedicatory Letter, ed. van Houts 1, 6f.: *A paganis maioribus nati et multa etate sua in paganismo acta... animaduertens ea penitus adulatoria, nec speciem honesti uel utilis pretendere.*

<sup>52</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum* II, 3 (9), ed. van Houts 1, 52f.

<sup>53</sup> Dudo, *De moribus* II, 25, ed. Lair 166f.

<sup>54</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum* II, 10 [16], ed. van Houts 1, 64f.: *Si Christianus efficeretur, terram... ei daturum fore.*

<sup>55</sup> The idea that the creation of political entities produces medieval people is discussed in Susan Reynolds, *Medieval origins gentium and the community of the realm*, in: *History* 68 (1983) 375–390; and ead., *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe* (Oxford 1997) 250–331.



reference to those, such as William Longsword's steward Bernard, who fit this description but had been described by Dudo as 'Dacian'.<sup>56</sup> All this produces a Norman identity clearly more suited to William's monastic readership, and perhaps to the intended use of the text to as a source of appropriate examples for good Christian laymen, than was the identity that had been provided by Dudo's text.

This clear break between Danes and Normans allows William's re-working of Dudo to contain more Scandinavian history without reflecting adversely on his portrayal of the Normans. This allows a closer attention to the historicity of Danish events, and William's text can shift the origins of the Normans from the mythical, classicised Dacia, and instead locate them firmly in Denmark and with the Danes.<sup>57</sup> Information available to William allowed him to include more details of Danish history, and he is able to (erroneously) identify Dudo's King Harold as Harold Bluetooth of Denmark (941–988), to include unusual details of Danish politics, and to incorporate tales of Björn Ironside, son of a King Lothbroc, by relegating Dudo's Hasting to the role of his tutor.<sup>58</sup> Elisabeth van Houts has argued that this introduction could only have come from an Anglo-Scandinavian legend, a process of the reintroduction of Scandinavian material into Normandy also noted by others.<sup>59</sup> In the same article, and others, she also demonstrated the extent to which contemporary accounts from Normandy drew on and contributed to the tales of the Scandinavian world, testament to continued contacts, albeit increasingly reliant on England, between the two areas.<sup>60</sup> The inclusion of Scandinavian material here is testament to William's work as a historian who sees the relevance of information on Denmark to the early history of Normandy, but it is never associated directly with Norman identity. In fact, the text has a sharper divide between Dane and Norman than Dudo's did. It could be that contact with Scandinavians who shared names and some legends brought home to some in Normandy their Danish origins, but it is difficult to argue this from the historical work of William. In fact, when some attempt is made to measure the impact of the text's Scandinavian material on the broader Norman audience's perceptions of themselves, it seems limited.

#### SCANDINAVIAN ORIGINS: AUDIENCE REACTION TO HISTORICAL WRITING

The two texts considered above had different readerships and audiences, and came from very different intellectual traditions. As a result they adopted different discursive strategies, and constructed different Norman ethnicities. They also, however, shared similar features as a result of the situation in the Normandy in which they were produced. Although there is no evidence they were aimed at Danes, both had to acknowledge the Danish past of the Normans, and to incorporate it within their broader arguments. Both texts can make the Normans into an idealised group only because the characteristics they use to describe ethnic groups (Christian or political) are tendencies which are easily transferable between groups, and hence applicable to the Normans. The texts benefit in this respect from a lack of broader stereotypes, such as clear differences in material culture between Franks and Normans, which might make such an attribution of values harder. Yet the interaction between texts and society is not necessarily one-way, and the role of history writing in producing a sense of ethnicity among its larger audience needs examining. Susan Reynold's discussion of medieval origin myths concludes that "classifications of people, many of them full of biblical, classical or totally imaginary names, probably never attracted attention from any but the learned; but stories

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *Gesta Normannorum ducum* III, 2, ed. van Houts 1, 78; Dudo, *De moribus* III, 44–45, ed. Lair 189f.

<sup>57</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum* I, 3 (4), ed. van Houts 1, 14.

<sup>58</sup> *Gesta Normannorum ducum* III, 9 and I, 4 (5), ed. van Houts 1, 88–90, 16.

<sup>59</sup> Elisabeth van Houts, Scandinavian influence in the Norman literature of the eleventh century, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 6* (Woodbridge 1984) 107–121; Maylis Baylé, *Reminiscences Anglo-Scandinaves dans le sculpture Romane de Normandie*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 13* (Woodbridge 1991) 35–48.

<sup>60</sup> Van Houts, *Scandinavian Influence*; ead., *Normandy and Byzantium in the eleventh century*, in: *Byzantion* 55 (Paris 1985) 544–559, at 545.

of the origins of peoples ... were another matter.”<sup>61</sup> In what follows I intend to challenge the idea that these histories played a role at either level, arguing that Norman ethnicity in the eleventh century owed far more to a broad, present-based sense of common endeavour than to origin myths, learned or otherwise.

The Normans who constituted the broader audience of these texts, and which are so critical to studies of ethnicity, are drawn from the same groups in society as those who travelled to, and settled in, southern Italy over the course of the eleventh century.<sup>62</sup> Once there they had their own histories produced, which recorded their arrival, settlement, and some details of the land they had left behind.<sup>63</sup> Two of these histories were written at the courts of immigrant Normans at the end of the eleventh century: William of Apulia’s verse chronicle of Robert Guiscard’s life for that of Guiscard’s son, Roger Borsa (1085–1111), on the mainland, and Geoffrey Malaterra’s prose account of the life of Roger I of Sicily for the court of his protagonist and patron. One was written by an author, Geoffrey Malaterra, who had clearly read Dudo’s text, since his text’s description of initial reasons for the grant of Normandy contains information only found there.<sup>64</sup> It seems highly probable from information about libraries, the extant manuscripts, and from textual evidence in Geoffrey Malaterra’s text, where he complains that he has no exact information about the name of the French king to hand, that there was no copy of either of the works examined above in southern Italy.<sup>65</sup> What emerges in terms of similarities between the two traditions might therefore be seen as the edited highlights of the Normandy tradition as understood by its broader audience: oral information from Norman immigrants to Italy, stories from histories that patrons wished included, and the memories of some, such as Geoffrey, who had read Dudo’s work.

Geoffrey of Malaterra’s text provides no detailed origin myth for the Normans before their arrival in Normandy, including references to Scandinavia only to account for Rollo’s presence there.<sup>66</sup> It does, however, include much more specific information on Normandy, and provides an extensive genealogy of Count Roger’s father, Tancred, details of his fight with a wild boar, and an account of a single combat between another of his sons, Serlo, who had remained in Normandy, and a Frankish knight.<sup>67</sup>

This pattern of altering or not including origin myths, is continued by the chronicle of the monk Amatus of Montecassino, written before 1070. He does provide an origin myth of sorts:

“On the extreme edge of France there is a plain, well-wooded and of diverse products. In this confined region lived a people, hardy and strong. This people had previously lived in the island called Nora and for that reason were called Normans, for in the German tongue Man means a human”<sup>68</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Reynolds, *Origines gentium* 378.

<sup>62</sup> Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicile*, 2 vols. (Paris 1907); in English Graham Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard* (Harlow 2000); John Julius Norwich, *The Normans in the South* (London 1967). A brief but thorough guide to events is provided in Wolf, *Making History* 1–37.

<sup>63</sup> Geoffrey Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi fratris eius auctore Gaufrido Malaterra* (ed. Ernesto Pontieri, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 5, 1, Bologna 1927); Amatus of Montecassino, *Storia de’ Normanni di Amato di Montecassino* (ed. Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis, *Fonti per la storia d’Italia*, Roma 1935); Guillaume de Pouille, *La Geste de Robert Guiscard* (ed. Marguerite Mathieu, *Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoelleni, Testi e Monumenti, Testi* 4, Palermo 1961).

<sup>64</sup> Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii I*, 1, ed. Pontieri 3. The information must have come from Dudo specifically, since it also includes details of Rollo’s activity in Frisia which had been removed by William of Jumièges, for which see Dudo, *De moribus* II, 9–11, ed. Lair 149–152.

<sup>65</sup> Huisman, *Manuscript tradition*; Herbert Bloch, *Monte Cassino’s teachers and library in the high Middle Ages*, in: *La scuola nell’Occidente latino dell’alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 19, Spoleto 1972) 563–605; Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii I*, 2, ed. Pontieri 7.

<sup>66</sup> Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii I*, 1, ed. Pontieri 7.

<sup>67</sup> Malaterra, *De rebus gestis Rogerii I*, 4, ed. Pontieri 9; *ibid.* I, 39f., ed. Pontieri 24f.

<sup>68</sup> Amatus, *Storia de’ Normanni I*, 1 ed. de Bartholomaeis 9f.: *En la fin de France est une plane plene de boiz et de divers frutz. En celui estroit lieu habitoit grant multitude de gent, molt robuste et forte, laquel gent premerement habiterent en une ysulle qui se clamoit ‘Nora’; et pour ce furent clamez ‘normant’, autresi comme ‘home de Nore’. ‘Man’ est à dire, en langue thodesche, ‘home’.*

The identification of Nora with Scandinavia is possible, although unattested in Normandy, and far from necessary when the intellectual traditions of southern Italy are considered. The most common description of an invading people in that tradition is Paul the Deacon's *History of the Lombards*, which Amatus states to be his model and which similarly locates invading peoples on appropriately named islands.<sup>69</sup> It is therefore significant that Amatus' text has the Normans speaking German, as had the Lombards. Even within this tradition Amatus' text removed a reference to Scandinavia which had featured in the Lombard saga, and which would have served to link the Normans to that saga, in effect making the Normans less Scandinavian than was possible.<sup>70</sup> Again, however, a series of tales of contemporary Norman actions around the world are included, including the reasons behind the arrival of certain Normans in Italy, the conquest of England, and details of the Crispin family.<sup>71</sup>

The text of William of Apulia also ignores the origin myths of the Norman tradition, and instead derives the name Norman etymologically:

“In the language of their native country the wind which carries them from the boreal regions from which they have departed to seek the frontiers of Italy is call North, and the word man is used to mean *homo*, thus they are called Nor-men, that is ‘men of the North wind (*homines boreales*)’<sup>72</sup>

Language again matters, perhaps because it was an obvious feature of difference in Italy. The ‘North’ from which the Normans come, however is located with reference to Italy, not Normandy, and is thus unlikely to be Scandinavia. There is in William of Apulia's text one tale which suggests strongly that it was the fund of stories in the Normandy tradition that attracted its broader audience. Robert Guiscard is portrayed as arranging a mock funeral to enter a citadel, the very same trick used by Hasting in Dudo's account.<sup>73</sup> Hasting and his origin are, however, not referred to, suggesting it is the force of the tale rather than its origin that mattered most, and which led some Normans to wish to have it applied to themselves.

It is startling that these highlights make little or no reference either to Scandinavia or to more classically-derived origin myths. What emerges instead is a more general conception of the Normans as from the North, supported by, in one case, an accurate etymological derivation of the word ‘Norman’. Neither is this understanding of the Scandinavian past confined to works from Italy. It is also predominant in Wace's twelfth-century vernacular version of the history of the Norman dukes. Indeed, so general does Wace's concept of a Northern origin point become that it includes not just Scandinavia but the North, including England, generally.<sup>74</sup> In the Italian material this cannot be explained simply as an attempt to minimise ethnic difference in southern Italy, since tales which stress the separate past of the Normans are included, but must be due to the general lack of interest in such distant concepts among the Norman nobility. What seems to be valued instead are tales of conquest and combat, which are intrinsically interesting to a military aristocracy because of the events they relate and the values they encode. This may matter much more than the Normanness of those involved. The tales that Geoffrey Malaterra includes, for instance, are those of the family of his patron, the Hautevilles, not those of the Norman nation more broadly. If the texts mentioned above functioned for their noble audience mainly as a source of entertaining stories to be dipped into, it would seem very difficult to apply the constructions of Norman ethnicity found within them to Norman society at large.

<sup>69</sup> Amatus, *Storia de'Normanni*, Invocation, ed. de Bartholomaeis 4.

<sup>70</sup> Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* I, 1–2 (ed. Ludwig Bethmann/Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Langob., Hannover 1878) 48.

<sup>71</sup> Amatus, *Storia de'Normanni* I, 20, ed. de Bartholomaeis 23f.; *ibid.* I, 3–8, ed. de Bartholomaeis 12–16.

<sup>72</sup> William of Apulia, Robert Guiscard I, 6–10, ed. Mathieu 98: *Hos quando ventus, quem lingua soli genialis, Nort vocat, advexit boreas reginoes as oras, A qua digressi fines petiere latinos, Et man est apud hos, homo quod perhibetur apud nos, Normanni; dicuntur, id est homines boreales.*

<sup>73</sup> William of Apulia, Robert Guiscard II, 332–354, ed. Mathieu 150.

<sup>74</sup> Wace, *Le Roman de Rou* (ed. Antony Holden, trans. Glyn S. Burgess, annot. Glyn S. Burgess/Elisabeth van Houts, Société Jersaise, Jersey 2002) III, 56–60, Appendix 103–110, 110–111, 342–343.

## CONCLUSION

Origin myths and broader constructions of identity can be seen to be mutually reinforcing in the texts of both William of Jumièges and Dudo of St-Quentin. The apparent lack of interest in such origin myths, however, as well as the fluidity of ethnic description charted above, makes the role of these works of history in constructing medieval Norman ethnicity, or reflecting it, open to considerable doubt. Some extra-textual differences, such as the known Danish past of the Normans, are clearly reflected by and evident in the works, although both authors were able to respond differently to the challenges they posed. Beyond this, however, constructions of Normanness seem fluid and highly audience-contingent, to the extent that it is clearly absurd to talk about one Norman ethnicity in the period. This is true of any society, but what makes the Norman histories so unusual is that the audiences for whom the texts' constructions of ethnicity matter most do not include a dominant political group for whom being Norman is given good: Dudo's crucial audience is Frankish scholars and William of Jumièges's those who ascribe to monastic ideas of political society. The intellectual battleground for disputes on the nature of the Normans thus never fully includes the minds of many of those Normans themselves, and the various constructions of Normanness are never produced solely to suit the wishes of a political elite who might try and enforce one set of ideas on society. The Normans' use of these histories in distinguishing between themselves and others cannot therefore lie in the constructions of Normanness they provide, but must rather lie elsewhere, perhaps in the very basic nature of the texts as sources of stories about the past which were unique to Norman writings, and which provided a common frame of reference.<sup>75</sup> Only the Norman conqueror of England, for example, could have used the Norman conqueror of Southern Italy as an example of courage, despite the very different ideas Duke William and the parvenu immigrant Guiscard must have had about what it meant to be Norman.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> To adopt Anthony D. Smith's category of an ethnic group with "little self-awareness", applied specifically to the medieval world in Anthony Smith, *National Identities: Modern and Medieval*, in: *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde/Lesley Johnson/Alan Murray (Leeds Texts and Monographs, NS 14, Leeds 1995) 21–46; See id., *Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford 1988).

<sup>76</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum III*, 262, 3 (ed. and trans. Roger Mynors, completed by Rodney Thomson/Michael Winterbottom, 2 vols., Oxford Medieval Texts, Oxford 1998–1999) vol. 1, 483.