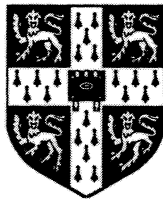


H.M. CHADWICK MEMORIAL LECTURES . 5

PETER SAWYER

Scandinavians and the English in the
Viking Age



DEPARTMENT OF ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE, AND CELTIC
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Hector Munro Chadwick (1870-1947) was Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Cambridge from 1912 to 1941. Through the immense range of his scholarly publications, and through the vigorous enthusiasm which he brought to all aspects of Anglo-Saxon studies — philological and literary, historical and archaeological — he helped to define the field and to give it the interdisciplinary orientation which characterises it still. The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, which owes its existence and its own interdisciplinary outlook to H.M. Chadwick, has wished to commemorate his enduring contribution to Anglo-Saxon studies by establishing an annual series of lectures in his name.

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First published 1995 by the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic,
9 West Road, Cambridge, CB3 9DP, England.

ISBN 0 9517339 4 X

ISSN 0962-0702

Printed by Target Litho, Cottenham, Cambridge.

Scandinavians and the English in the Viking Age

PETER SAWYER

There has recently been a growing awareness that relations between Vikings and the Christian inhabitants of western Europe were not so uniformly hostile as has commonly been supposed.¹ The invitation to deliver this lecture commemorating H.M. Chadwick is a welcome opportunity to review the English evidence for these relations, some of which has not figured in previous discussions of this topic.

First some comment is needed on the Vikings and their 'Age'. This has conventionally been supposed to begin in the last decade of the eighth century, but archaeological investigations in Scandinavia and the Baltic region have shown that several developments associated with the Viking Age began before that. Various new dates for its beginning have been proposed, depending on what development is considered most significant. Bjørn Myhre has recently listed some of the suggestions that have been made.² They include the appearance of oval brooches in the last quarter of the eighth century, the adoption of the gripping-beast style, possibly in the middle of the century, or the establishment of emporia and craft centres in Scandinavia and around the Baltic,

¹ I.N. Wood, 'Christians and Pagans in Ninth-Century Scandinavia', *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, ed. B. and P. Sawyer, and I. Wood (Alingsås, 1987), pp. 36-67, at 42-4 and 49; R.I. Page, 'The Audience of *Beowulf* and the Vikings', *The Dating of Beowulf*, ed. C. Chase (Toronto, 1981), pp. 113-22; N. Lund, 'Allies of God or Man? The Viking Expansion in a European Perspective', *Viator* 20 (1989), 45-59; and the works cited below in nn. 20 and 24.

² B. Myhre, 'The Beginning of the Viking Age — some Current Archaeological Problems', *Viking Revaluations*, ed. A. Faulkes and R. Perkins (London, 1993), pp. 182-204, followed by 12 pp. of figures, at pp. 198-9.

from Ribe to Staraja Ladoga, a process that began soon after the year 700.

It is clear that the early years of the eighth century marked the beginning of a period of great change in Scandinavia that led, eventually, to its integration into western Europe, but that does not justify including the whole of that century in the Viking Age. What distinguished the Viking period in European history was not brooches, gripping-beasts, or emporia, but Vikings. The word 'Viking' has in modern times been applied to an amazing range of products and activities, and even in the world of scholarship it has been used for many aspects of Scandinavia in the early Middle Ages, an extension of meaning that has been encouraged by Peter Foote and David Wilson.³ In defining the period it would be better to begin with what the word meant to contemporaries. Outside Scandinavia, before the nineteenth century, it is only recorded in English and, in the form *witsing*, in Frisian. In a very thorough study of the Old English word Christine Fell has pointed out that it was not used very often; it only occurs three times in the ninth-century annals in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.⁴ She has claimed that it was there used to describe pirates operating in small bands, in contrast to larger armies; the *hlofl wicenga* that wintered at Fulham in 879 was, in her words, 'singled out for a separate mention as a small band of people engaged in private enterprise'.⁵ The distinction does not seem to have been so clear to the chronicler. In the following annal the same group is described as a *here*, and Asser described it as *magnus paganorum exercitus*.⁶ The same army besieged Paris in 885. It does, therefore, seem

³ P. Foote and D.M. Wilson, *The Viking Achievement: the Society and Culture of Early Medieval Scandinavia* (London, 1993). Modern usage of the word is discussed by C.E. Fell, 'Modern English Viking', *Leeds Studies in English* 18 (1987), 111-23.

⁴ C.E. Fell, 'Old English Wicing: A Question of Semantics', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 72 (1986), 295-316.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 304.

⁶ *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. W.H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), p. 47.

reasonable to accept that in the ninth century the word was used in England to describe Scandinavian raiders, in both small bands and large armies. It was certainly used to describe members of a large army in the poem on the battle of Maldon. The Viking period is, therefore, best defined as the period when Scandinavians played a large role in the British Isles and western Europe as raiders and conquerors. It was also the period in which Scandinavians settled in many of the areas they conquered, and in the Atlantic Islands.

Even with this limited definition, it is uncertain when the Viking Age began. The attack on Lindisfarne in 793 has generally been treated as the first raid, mainly on the basis of one of the letters that Alcuin wrote when he heard about it. Dorothy Whitelock's translation of the crucial passage is usually cited: 'nor was it thought that such an inroad from the sea could be made'.⁷ The original reads, *nec eiusmodi naufragium fieri posse putabatur*.⁸ *Naufragium* in classical Latin normally meant 'shipwreck', but Niermeyer cites several texts from Alcuin's time in which the meaning is clearly 'loss' or 'ruin' with no maritime association — one of the quotations is, indeed, from Bavaria.⁹ In other words, Alcuin was not referring to some nautical exploit, but to an unprecedented depredation of one of the holy places of western Christendom. Nicholas Brooks has drawn attention to a charter of Offa, dated 792, exempting the churches of Kent from many burdens but requiring them to contribute to the defence of Kent against pagan seamen.¹⁰ The other side of the Channel was also

⁷ D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents c. 500-1042*, 2nd ed. (London, 1979) [hereafter *EHD*], p. 842.

⁸ *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. A.W. Haddan and W. Stubbs, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1869-71) III, 493.

⁹ J.F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus* (Leiden, 1954-76), p. 715.

¹⁰ N. Brooks, 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 69-84, at 79. The charter is listed in P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (London, 1968) [hereafter S with references by number], 134.

threatened at that time. In 800 Charlemagne organized defences along the coast north of the Seine estuary, probably as far as the Rhine, against pirates who infested the Gallic Sea.¹¹ As no attack on that part of Frankia is reported before 810 we cannot say when the Viking raids began. They may have been an irritation for centuries, as pirates still were in the fifteenth century. Du Chaillu, who invented the Viking Age, concluded that it began in the second century A.D. and ended in the middle of the twelfth century.¹² Whenever the raids began, it is clear that they became sufficiently serious by the last decade of the eighth century for English and Frankish rulers to make special efforts to counter them.

There is less uncertainty about the end of the Viking Age. By the middle of the eleventh century the raids were only against the British Isles and were fairly frequent until 1075 when, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 200 ships came from Denmark to support a rebellion against King William. They arrived after the revolt had been crushed and compensated themselves by plundering York before leaving. That was the last major Scandinavian assault on England. The invasion planned by the Danish king Knut in 1085 was never launched.¹³ In 1103 the Norwegian king Magnus was killed when he invaded Ulster and in Stephen's reign Yorkshire was attacked by a Norwegian fleet under Eystein Haraldsson, but these sporadic attacks do not justify extending the Viking Age into the twelfth century.¹⁴

¹¹ *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* (Hanover, 1895), s.a. 800 (p. 110) and cf. s.a. 811 (p. 135); *Carolingian Chronicles*, trans. B.W. Scholz (Ann Arbor, MI, 1970), pp. 78-80 and 94.

¹² P.B. Du Chaillu, *The Viking Age: The Early History, Manners, and Customs of the Ancestors of the English-Speaking Nations*, 2 vols. (London, 1889) I, 26, cited in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. 'Viking'.

¹³ N. Lund, 'Knuts des Heiligen beabsichtigter Zug nach England im Jahre 1085', *Mare Balticum: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ostseeraums in Mittelalter und Neuzeit*, ed. W. Paravicini et al. (Sigmaringen, 1992) [= *Kieler Historische Studien* 36], pp. 101-10.

¹⁴ A. Bugge, *Smaa bidrag til Norges historie paa 1000-tallet* (Videnskapsselskapets [i Kristiania] Skrifter, II Hist.-Filos. Klasse, 1914, no. 2), pp. 40-7; Einarr

Other raiders were plundering in Europe at the same time as the Vikings. Timothy Reuter has pointed out that ‘the Vikings were not the only church-robbers in Francia any more than they were in Ireland’, and has suggested that ‘for most of Europe in the eighth and ninth century it was the Franks who were the Vikings’. In this connection he draws attention to the Byzantine proverb quoted by Einhard: ‘If a Frank is your friend, then he is not your neighbour’.¹⁵ It is reassuring to know that at least one of the assertions I made in 1962 still holds good: the ‘Viking outburst’ was an extension of normal Dark Age activity made possible and profitable by special circumstances.¹⁶

The Scandinavians we hear most about were, of course, the Vikings, and it would be appropriate to begin with the attitudes of the English to them. One of the aims of the raiders was to capture people of high status to ransom. That required some contact between the Vikings and the ransom payers. There are tantalizing hints of such contacts in some of the earliest references to Viking activity. In 809 the Frankish Royal Annals report that Eardwulf, king of Northumbria, was restored with the help of Charlemagne and Pope Leo III whose emissaries accompanied Eardwulf to Northumbria. Charlemagne’s agents returned safely but the deacon Aldulf, a Saxon from Britain, who represented the pope, was captured by pirates and taken to Britain where he was ransomed by a man of the Mercian king Cenwulf. He then made his way back to Rome.¹⁷ It would be interesting to know whether the ransom was

Skúlason, Runhenda vv. 6-7, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, 4 vols. (Copenhagen 1912-15), A i. 474; B i. 446. The claim by the continuator of Sigebert of Gembloux (MGH, *Scriptores* 6 (Hanover, 1844), 386) that an unnamed Danish king invaded England in 1138 is not trustworthy; there is no hint of it in any other source.

¹⁵ T. Reuter, ‘Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 35 (1985), 75-94, at 78 and 91.

¹⁶ P.H. Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings*, 1st ed. (London, 1962), p. 194.

¹⁷ *Annales Regni Francorum*, s.a. 808-9 (pp. 126 and 128; trans. Scholz, pp. 89-90).

paid in one of the English emporia, such as London, or in one of the forts that the Vikings had, by 822, established in Kent.¹⁸ There is also a hint that the Vikings were accessible in the letter which Alcuin wrote to Bishop Higbald after the attack on Lindisfarne in 793. Alcuin explained that he planned to meet ‘our lord King Charles ... and if we can then be of any profit to your Holiness, regarding either the youths who have been taken into captivity or any other of your needs, we will take diligent care to bring it about’.¹⁹

In many parts of Europe some people were prepared to welcome Vikings as allies or at least to welcome their help in local conflicts. Donnchadh Ó Corráin has described Norse-Irish alliances in the ninth century as commonplace.²⁰ There are many examples of similar alliances in Frankia, one of the most significant being the cooperation between Lothar and the exiled Danish king Harald, which was partly responsible for the escalation and extension of Viking attacks in the 830s.²¹ Bretons used Vikings against the Franks, just as the West Welsh did against the West Saxons.²² Vikings were apparently involved in a struggle for power in Northumbria in 844. In that year King Æthelred II, who had been expelled by Radwulf, was restored after the death of his rival in battle against pagans at *Alutthelia*.²³ The Danish invasion in 1075, mentioned earlier, was in support of a rebellion. In the ninth century Vikings were recruited in Frankia to combat other

¹⁸ S 186.

¹⁹ *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, ed. Haddan and Stubbs III, 473; *EHD*, no. 194 (p. 846).

²⁰ *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin, 1972), pp. 92-3.

²¹ *Les Annales de Saint Bertin*, ed. F. Grat, J. Vielliard and S. Clémencet (Paris, 1964), p. 39, *s.a.* 841; *The Annals of St Bertin*, trans. J.L. Nelson (Manchester, 1991), p. 51.

²² *Annales de Saint Bertin*, ed. Grat *et al.*, pp. 89-90, *s.a.* 862 (trans. Nelson, p. 99); *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* [hereafter *ASC*], *s.a.* 838.

²³ *Rogeri de Wendover Chronica sive Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.O. Coxe, 2 vols. (London, 1841) [hereafter *RW*] I, 282-3; *EHD*, no. 4 (p. 844).

Vikings.²⁴ There is no record that the English did the same at that time, but they did later. Pallig, who pledged to support King Æthelred ‘the Unready’ and was rewarded with estates, gold and silver, proved untrustworthy, but Thorkell loyally supported the king from 1012 to his death in 1016.²⁵ Conversely, members of English royal families were prepared to join the invaders. According to most versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Alfred’s nephew Æthelwold, deprived of the West Saxon kingship by Alfred’s son, Edward, was accepted by the Danish army in Northumbria as king, and two years later was killed together with Brihtsig son of the ætheling Beornoth who, as Dorothy Whitelock suggested, was probably a descendant of Mercian kings.²⁶

Northumbria provides many examples of collaboration. There were acute internal conflicts in which Vikings could be involved, as apparently happened in 844, and many Northumbrians welcomed the support of Scandinavians in their resistance to the West Saxons. At least two archbishops of York, Wulfhere, who most probably died in 900, and Wulfstan (931-56) cooperated actively with the Scandinavian conquerors of York. There is nothing to suggest that Æthelbald and Hrothweard (d. 931), who held the see between them, were hostile to the invaders; Æthelbald was consecrated in London in 900 because there were no bishops in Northumbria to perform the ritual.²⁷ Wulfhere retired to Addingham, not far from Skipton, when the Vikings seized York in 866, but he accepted the outcome of the battle in 867.²⁸ It was the Scandinavians who enabled him not only to recover Lindsey, but also to extend his authority into other Mercian dioceses. The

²⁴ J.L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 151, 178, 187, 193 and 204-6.

²⁵ *ASC A s.a. 1001*; A. Campbell, *Encomium Emmae Reginae* (London, 1949), pp. 74-5.

²⁶ *ASC, s.a. 900 and 903*; *EHD*, p. 209, n. 1

²⁷ *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), pp. 52-3.

²⁸ ‘Epistola Simeonis ... ad Hugonem decanum Eboracensem’, in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. T. Arnold, 2 vols. (London, 1882) I, 225.

survival of several very large and ancient parishes in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire until well after the Norman Conquest, for example Horncastle in Lindsey, Grantham in Kesteven, Pocklington and Pickering in Yorkshire, suggests that some degree of ecclesiastical order was preserved in that region, presumably thanks to the archbishops of York.²⁹ The other sees in areas conquered by the Danes were abandoned in the last quarter of the ninth century, but some form of episcopal supervision was maintained at least in Lindsey and in parts of the see of Leicester.

Monasteries were also disrupted, and many were abandoned as a result of Viking raids and settlements. The survival of religious communities was threatened not so much by plundering and destruction, for physical damage could be made good, as by the loss of the estates that produced the rents, food and other resources on which they depended. It is, therefore, not surprising that by the end of the ninth century in the areas that were conquered and settled by Scandinavians most monasteries had ceased to exist. There are hints that there may have been some form of community at *Medeshamstede* and at Ely before they were revived (or refounded) in the reign of Edgar, but neither was in an area of dense Scandinavian settlement.³⁰ The only communities that apparently survived in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire were episcopal minsters, the best example being Ripon, which owed its preservation (and, ironically, its destruction) to archbishops of York.³¹

Archbishops were not the only Northumbrians who co-operated with the Scandinavian invaders; many laymen did so too. For at least eleven years after Osbert and Ælle were killed in attempting to expel the Danes from York, Northumbrians were

²⁹ D.M. Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1971), pp. 1-2; R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London, 1989), pp. 134-6.

³⁰ The evidence for the survival of these, and many other, monasteries has been reviewed by David N. Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 33-6.

³¹ See below, p. 12.

ruled by three English kings in succession: Egbert I (867-73), Ricsige (873-76), and Egbert II (876-?878). These have often been treated as kings of Bernicia.³² This interpretation is based on the northern annals included in the *Historia regum* attributed to Simeon of Durham which describe the two Egberts as ruling over Northumbrians beyond the Tyne.³³ The location of their kingdom obviously depends on which side of that river these annals were written. That is uncertain. If, as is possible, they originated in the community of St Cuthbert, and were contemporary, the kingdom lay south of the Tyne, for St Cuthbert's relics were then at Norham on Tweed, where they had been taken for safety in the time of Bishop Ecgred (839-45).³⁴ Whatever the provenance of these annals, others that are incorporated in Roger of Wendover's *Flores historiarum* strongly suggest that the kings in question ruled in Deira. His annal for 872 reports that when the Northumbrians expelled both King Egbert and Archbishop Wulfhere they were given refuge by the Mercian king.³⁵ The Danish army that was then in London reacted quickly to this revolt against the regime they had established. According to the C-manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the Danish army went to Northumbria in the autumn of 872 and then took up winter quarters at Torksey, which was a good base from which to oversee both York and

³² Simeon of Durham did so in his *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiae: Symeonis Opera*, ed. Arnold I, 55. Many scholars have come to the same conclusion, e.g. D.P. Kirby, 'Northumbria in the Reign of Alfred the Great', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland* 11 (1958-63), 335-46, and D.N. Dumville in the *Handbook of British Chronology*, ed. E.B. Fryde *et al.*, 3rd ed., (London, 1986), p. 5.

³³ *Symeonis Opera* ed. Arnold II, 106 and 111; *EHD*, no. 3 (p. 277).

³⁴ P. Hunter Blair, 'Some Observations on the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham', *Celt and Saxon: Studies in the Early British Border*, by K. Jackson *et al.* (Cambridge, 1964), pp. 63-118, at 109-10; P. Sawyer, 'Some Sources for the History of Viking Northumbria', *Viking Age York and the North*, ed. R.A. Hall, Council for British Archaeology Research Report 27 (London, 1978), 3-7.

³⁵ RW I, 323-4; *EHD*, no. 4 (p. 282).

Mercia.³⁶ In 873 the *Historia regum* and Roger of Wendover report the death of King Egbert, the succession of Ricsige and the return of Archbishop Wulfhere to York.³⁷ The joint exile of Egbert and Wulfhere does not prove that Egbert was king in York, although that does seem likely. Clearer evidence that Ricsige was king in Deira is provided three years later by Roger of Wendover's annal describing that king's death as a consequence of Healfdene's occupation of Northumbria, and the Danish settlement: 'Ricsige, struck to the very heart with grief, ended his last day, and Egbert succeeded him.'³⁸ The evidence of place-names shows that the Scandinavian settlement was south of the Tyne. The main concentration of Scandinavian and Scandinavianized place-names is, in fact, south of the Tees; the few that are north of that river probably resulted from the settlement of Ragnald's followers early in the tenth century.³⁹ It is also worth noting that there is no reference to these three kings in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, although *Edred filius Rixinci*, described there as a tenant of St Cuthbert in the time of Edward the Elder, may have been King Ricsige's son.⁴⁰

The complexity of relations between the English and the Scandinavian invaders is very well illustrated by the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, the core of which was written in the middle of the tenth century.⁴¹ The kings Osbert and Ælle are described as

³⁶ ASC, s.a. 973. Some scholars, e.g. A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1975-79) I, 45, and Dorothy Whitelock in *EHD*, p. 29, date the move of the Danish army from London to Northumbria in 873, but from the middle of the century at least to 889 the chronicler's year began in the autumn (*EHD*, p. 125). Cf. F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1971), p. 251.

³⁷ *Symeonis Opera*, ed. Arnold II, 110; RW I, 325; *EHD*, nos. 3 and 4 (pp. 277 and 283).

³⁸ RW I, 327; *EHD*, no. 4 (p. 283).

³⁹ V.E. Watts, 'Comment on "The Evidence of Place-Names" by Margaret Gelling', *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change*, ed. P.H. Sawyer (London, 1976), pp. 212-22, at 216.

⁴⁰ *Symeonis Opera*, ed. Arnold I, 210; *EHD*, no. 6 (p. 288).

⁴¹ *Symeonis Opera*, ed. Arnold I, 196-214 [hereafter *HSC*]; Sir Edmund Craster, 'The Patrimony of St Cuthbert', *English Historical Review* 69 (1954), 177-99, at 177-8.

enemies of St Cuthbert because they seized valuable estates belonging to his community, and their death in battle against the Danes is treated as a just fate effected ‘through God acting on behalf of St Cuthbert’.⁴² In contrast, the first Scandinavian king of York, Guthfrith, was remembered as a benefactor from whom the community acquired not only its new home at Chester-le-Street, but also the territory between the Tyne and the Wear. Even more remarkable is the claim that St Cuthbert played a decisive role in the election of Guthfrith as king.⁴³

Another enemy of St Cuthbert was Ragnald, grandson of Ivar, who seized land owned by the community between the Wear and the Tees and gave it to two of his leading Scandinavian followers, Olaf Ball and Scula. He also had English supporters, and granted land belonging to St Cuthbert to Esbrid, son of Eadred, and his brother *comes* Ælstan ‘who had both stood firm in the battle’ against Eadred, son of Ricsige.⁴⁴

Ragnald’s submission to Edward the Elder marked the beginning of a thirty-year period of competition between Edward’s successors as kings of the English and descendants of Ivar, who were kings of Dublin and were from time to time recognized as kings in York.⁴⁵ The most successful was Olaf Guthfrithsson who, recovering from his defeat at *Brunanburh*, seized the opportunity after Athelstan’s death to regain the kingdom of York and extend his authority as far south as Watling Street, the boundary agreed in 941 by the intervention of Archbishops Oda and Wulfstan.⁴⁶ Olaf was killed later that year and by 944 Edmund had ‘reduced all Northumbria under his rule’.⁴⁷ After Edmund

⁴² *HSC* cc. 10 and 12 (pp. 201-2).

⁴³ *HSC* c. 13 (p. 203); *EHD*, no. 6 (pp. 286-7).

⁴⁴ *HSC* cc. 23-4 (pp. 209-10); *EHD*, no. 6 (p. 288).

⁴⁵ For this period, see vol. II of Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin*.

⁴⁶ *Symeonis Opera*, ed. Arnold II, 93-4, *s.a.* 939; *EHD*, p. 279, where it is pointed out (n. 2) that this annal covers several years and that Oda did not become archbishop until 941 (his predecessor died 12 Feb. 941).

⁴⁷ *Symeonis Opera*, ed. Arnold II, 94, *s.a.* 941; *EHD*, p. 279; *ASC s.a.* 944.

was assassinated in 946 his successor, Eadred, was acknowledged as king in Northumbria. It was, however, not long before Archbishop Wulfstan and other Northumbrian leaders rebelled, probably in 947, and recognized in succession Olaf Sihtricsson, king of Dublin, and Erik, an exiled king of Norway.⁴⁸ The chronology of Northumbrian affairs in Eadred's reign is confused, but there are reasons to think that in 950 the Northumbrians expelled Olaf in favour of Erik. Eadred appears to have been willing to tolerate the presence of Olaf in Northumbria, possibly treating him as a subordinate or under-king, a status defined by his baptism in 943 with Edmund as sponsor. Erik was less acceptable as king in York. He had been driven into exile by his brother Håkon, who was Athelstan's foster-son.⁴⁹ Some Northumbrians may well have hoped that he would be hostile to Håkon's English connections, in particular Eadred, as Athelstan's half-brother, and consequently a more effective leader in resisting the English king than Olaf had been. Eadred clearly regarded the reception of Erik as a threat and he led a punitive expedition into Northumbria. It was in the course of that raid that the archiepiscopal minster of Ripon was burned, which suggests that it was directed as much against Wulfstan as against Erik. In fact, Eadred did not initially attempt to expel Erik. It was only when the rearguard of the English army was attacked by 'the York army' during its withdrawal south that Eadred was provoked into threatening more extreme action. In response the Northumbrians paid compensation and agreed to 'desert' or 'cast off' Erik. It is significant that no chronicle reports that he was expelled at that stage. According to

⁴⁸ The following discussion of the situation in York during Eadred's reign is based on my forthcoming 'The Last Scandinavian Kings of York', *Northern History* 31 (1995).

⁴⁹ The evidence for relations between Athelstan and the Norwegians Harald and his son Håkon is discussed by Page, 'The Audience of *Beowulf* and the Vikings' (cited above, n. 1).

the D- and E-*Chronicles*, that happened in 954, but it may have been two years earlier.

Experience had taught the English that they could not overcome Northumbrian independence simply by expelling Scandinavian kings from York. Eadred's method was to deprive the Northumbrians of their most experienced and respected leader, Archbishop Wulfstan. The *D-Chronicle* reports that in 952 Wulfstan was imprisoned on the orders of King Eadred 'because accusations had often been made to the king against him', and that he was restored to favour two years later. Doubt is cast on those dates by Wulfstan's appearances as a witness in Eadred's charters. He attests fairly regularly until 950, but is absent from the charters of 951. There are no charters of 952 or 954, but his reappearance as archbishop in charters of 953 implies that he had been released by then.⁵⁰ It does, therefore, seem more likely that he was imprisoned in 950. Eadred may also have encouraged Oswulf, high-reeve of Bamburgh, to play an active part in Deiran politics; after Erik's expulsion and death, in which Oswulf was believed to have been implicated, he was rewarded by being made ealdorman of the whole of Northumbria.⁵¹

If the explanation advanced here for the Northumbrians' acceptance of Erik as king is correct, their choice was a consequence of the diplomacy of Athelstan, who is the first English

⁵⁰ There are thirty-eight charters of Eadred issued before the end of 949, including a few that are spurious or are of doubtful authenticity. Archbishop Wulfstan witnessed twenty-six of them, including eight issued in 949; S 544-6, 548-50, 552 and 578. As a recent discovery, the charter of 950 is not in S. It will be numbered 552a in the forthcoming revised edition of S by S.E. Kelly, and will be published in C.R. Hart, *The Charters of Barking Abbey* (forthcoming) as no. 9. The charters of 951 are S 554-8; S 560, dated 953, is witnessed by Wulfstan. I should like to thank Simon Keynes for having provided me with a copy of his privately published *Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters c. 670-1066* (Cambridge, 1993), which has facilitated discussion of the charter evidence.

⁵¹ RW I, 402-3, s.a. 950; *EHD*, p. 284; D. Whitelock, 'The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies ... presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. P. Clemoes (London, 1959), pp. 70-88, at 77.

king known to have had direct relations with a Scandinavian king. Håkon's fosterage in the English royal court must have been an arrangement made between Athelstan and Harald Fairhair, who was remembered in Scandinavian tradition as the first king of a united Norway. William of Malmesbury preserves a report that Harald sent envoys, named Helgrim and Osfrid, to Athelstan with a well-equipped warship as a gift. They were royally received in York and were given gifts in return.⁵² There is no evidence that Athelstan gave Harald any support, but it is tempting to see their relations as an early attempt by an English king to encourage the Norwegians to resist Danish claims to hegemony in Scandinavia, a policy adopted by Æthelred the Unready when he supported Olaf Tryggvason's bid for the Norwegian kingship in the hope of diverting Swein Forkbeard from attacking England.⁵³ Athelstan cannot have had the same motive; England was not then threatened by a Danish king. A possible explanation is hinted by Ekkehard IV in his *Casus Sancti Galli*, composed in the mid-eleventh century.⁵⁴ This reflects, with much confusion, a tradition that there was an alliance between Athelstan and Otto I to depose a Danish king. The success of Henry I in exacting tribute from the Danes in 934 cannot have erased the memory of the crushing defeat the Danes inflicted on a Saxon army in 880.⁵⁵ It is, therefore, possible that Athelstan's friendship with Harald

⁵² William of Malmesbury, *De gestis regum Anglorum*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (London, 1887-9) I, 149.

⁵³ T.M. Andersson, 'The Viking Policy of Ethelred the Unready', *Scandinavian Studies* 59 (1987), 284-95; P. Sawyer, 'Cnut's Scandinavian Empire', *The Reign of Cnut, King of England, Denmark and Norway*, ed. A.R. Rumble (London, 1994), pp. 10-22, at 16.

⁵⁴ *Casus Sancti Galli*, ed. H.F. Haefele (Darmstadt, 1980), c. 81 (p. 170). I should like to thank Timothy Reuter who, citing an unpublished paper by the late Karl Leyser, drew my attention to this passage.

⁵⁵ *Annales Corbeienses*, s.a. 934 (MGH, *Scriptores* 3 (Hanover, 1839), 4); *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. F. Kurze, MGH, *Scriptores rerum germanicarum in usum scholarum*, s.a. 889 (p. 94); *The Annals of Fulda*, trans. T. Reuter (Manchester, 1992), p. 88.

Fairhair was intended to serve the interests of his brother-in-law, Otto I.⁵⁶

The permanent settlement of Scandinavians in England provided opportunities for closer and more continuous peaceful contact between Scandinavians and the English than was possible in royal courts or in the course of diplomatic missions. The description of the initial settlement in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 876, in which the Danes are said to have ‘proceeded to plough and support themselves’, is confirmed by the Scandinavian influence on field-names and on farming vocabulary.⁵⁷ These Scandinavian farmers had a profound effect on the dialect of the areas in which they settled but the language was still English. What is more, the boundary between the Northumbrian and Midland dialects of Middle English followed the lower course of the river Witham which, to judge by the evidence of place-names, ran through one of the largest and densest concentrations of Danish settlement in England.⁵⁸

The Scandinavian element in some dialects continued to influence place- and field-names long after the Norman Conquest. The fact that many of the field-names that are first recorded in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries are Scandinavian is a measure of the invaders’ influence on local dialects; they do not indicate the areas of densest settlement.⁵⁹

The settlement-names recorded in Domesday Book are a better guide to Scandinavian colonization, although we cannot assume that all Scandinavian names mark Scandinavian settlements. Nor

⁵⁶ Other explanations are discussed by Page, ‘The Audience of *Beowulf* and the Vikings’, p. 116.

⁵⁷ G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘English Field-Names and the Danish Settlement’, *Festskrift til Kristian Hald*, ed. P. Andersen (Copenhagen, 1974), pp. 45-55.

⁵⁸ G. Kristensson, *A Survey of Middle English Dialects 1290-1350: the Six Northern Counties and Lincolnshire* (Lund, 1967), p. 241 and map 17 (p. 283).

⁵⁹ G. Fellows-Jensen, ‘Conquests and the Place-Names of England, with Special Reference to the Viking Settlements’, *Ortnamn och Språkkontakt*, ed. T. Andersson *et al.*, NORNA-rapporter 17 (Uppsala, 1980), 192-209, at 201.

can we assume that these names were given or changed soon after the Conquest. The most common Scandinavian name-elements are *by* and *thorp*. In the East Midlands almost half of such names have a personal name as the first element.⁶⁰ The people named in this way were not the first Scandinavian settlers. Place-names of this type are very rare in Scandinavia and therefore cannot have been a Scandinavian innovation in England.⁶¹ Similar names in which a personal name is combined with Old English *tūn* are found in parts of England that were never under Scandinavian control.⁶² It can be shown that some of the people named in this way were the first to have full rights of ownership.⁶³ These places were not new settlements, but the people who formerly held them, although free, were not free to dispose of them by gift or sale. The land belonged to larger estates and owed tribute and services to the lords of those estates. When an individual acquired, by royal grant or by usurpation, the right to sell, lease, give or bequeath land that he or she held, or was given land with the same freedom, the place in question was sometimes re-named after the beneficiary, the first 'owner'. In this way some of the great estates that had once been the dominant form of land exploitation throughout England were broken up.

Although this process had begun when the Danes arrived, in the areas they conquered there were still many large, old-fashioned estates held by rulers, bishops, religious communities and magnates. The invaders called these estates 'sokes'. The few churchmen and lay magnates who accepted Danish rule were doubtless able to retain at least some of their property and, as the

⁶⁰ G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands* (Copenhagen, 1978), p. 285.

⁶¹ B.H. Pedersen, 'Bebyggelsenavne på -by sammensat med personnavn', *Ti afhandlinger*, Navnestudier 2 (Copenhagen, 1960), 10-46.

⁶² Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands*, p. 284.

⁶³ P.H. Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (London, 1978), pp. 151-6; M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past: Place-names and the History of England* (London, 1978), pp. 180-5.

Historia de Sancto Cuthberto shows, some leading Englishmen were given estates by their new masters. In the conquered areas all sees but one were abandoned, few if any religious communities survived, and many of the lay magnates who still lived were in exile. The men and women who worked these estates could not flee so easily even if they wanted to, and many continued to render tribute and services, but to Danish lords. It was thanks to them that the English language survived.

The Danes not only took over, and continued to exploit, estates in the way described in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, they also distributed land to their warriors, a process described in Roger of Wendover's version of the annal concerning the land distribution of 876: 'Healfdene, king of the Danes, occupied Northumbria, and divided it among himself and his thegns (*ministri*), and had it cultivated by his army'. The warriors were not given land to own; they were expected to render produce and services to their lords. The survival of many sokes to be described in Domesday Book shows that seigniorial rights were retained by the new landowners. However, by 1065 some sokes had been greatly reduced in size by partition and alienation, and others had probably completely disappeared. As a result there were many small lordships, called manors by the Normans, that owed obligations only to the king. Some of this manorialization may have happened before the Danish conquest, but the main fragmentation of estates occurred during and after the period of Danish rule and is reflected by the place-names that include Scandinavian personal names. Gillian Fellows-Jensen has shown that some of the Scandinavian personal names in the place-names of Yorkshire 'are unlikely to have taken the form they display in Domesday Book earlier than about the year 1000'.⁶⁴ This suggests that, as might be expected, the process of

⁶⁴ G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Of Danes — and Thanes — and Domesday Book', *People and Places in Northern Europe 500-1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, ed. I. Wood and N. Lund (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 107-21, at 120-1.

fragmentation that led to this type of place-name continued long after the original settlement.

Although some of the sokes described in Domesday Book appear to be relatively new creations, and the composition of the old sokes was certainly not the same as it had been two centuries earlier, place-names suggest that some sokes suffered very little fragmentation. Sokes in the Lincolnshire Wolds naturally tend to have a large proportion of Scandinavian names.⁶⁵ Caistor, for example, had land in sixteen places, seven of which had names ending in *by*. In Waltham the proportion of *by*-names was even higher, nine out of fourteen, and one of the others was Waithe, from the Danish word *vað*, 'ford'. Horncastle also had land in fourteen places, and eight of them had *by*-names. With this degree of Scandinavian influence it is remarkable that in Caistor there was not one place-name incorporating a personal name, and in Horncastle there were only two, while a third of the *by*-names in the Lincolnshire Domesday were of this type.

Both Caistor and Horncastle were royal sokes and may have been better preserved than many others. It must, however, be admitted that some royal sokes had a very different pattern of place-names. Grantham, for example, had land in sixteen places, seven of which had names in *by* or *thorp*, five of them compounded with a personal name. If the interpretation of such names suggested here is correct, the implication is that Grantham soke retained land in several places that had been partly alienated and were consequently re-named.

Whatever the fate of English estates, the Scandinavian conquest introduced a new elite, whose descendants continued for centuries to have a leading role in the government of their districts. Many of

⁶⁵ The components of the sokes discussed here are listed in Domesday Book, i. 337b-339a, 347a-b; translated in *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey*, ed. C.W. Foster and T. Longley, Lincoln Record Society 19 (Lincoln, 1924) [hereafter LD], 16-25 and 63-5. The Scandinavian names are discussed in Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the East Midlands*.

the major landowners in the Danelaw on the eve of the Norman Conquest had Scandinavian names. This can be seen very clearly in the Lincolnshire Domesday, which includes a note listing thirty-five pre-Conquest landowners who were especially privileged.⁶⁶ It begins with the queen, the bishop, three abbots and four earls. Of the other twenty-six men only five had English names, and one of those, Godric, was the son of *Toruert*, who had a Scandinavian name (Þorfrøðr, -friðr).⁶⁷ Only one of those with a Scandinavian name had a father with an English name, *Toli filius Alsi*. People with Scandinavian names were not necessarily of Scandinavian descent, but the large proportion of Scandinavian names current among people of both high and low rank shows that the name-giving habits in areas of Scandinavian settlement had been profoundly affected by the example of the new rulers, a change that must have been reinforced in the eleventh century after Knut's conquest. There is, however, little doubt that very many people with Scandinavian names in Domesday Book were of Scandinavian descent. In Lincolnshire and Yorkshire between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries there were about as many fathers with Scandinavian names giving their sons English names as there are examples of the reverse process.⁶⁸ The pattern was less evenly balanced in the reign of Edward the Confessor. In the twenty-nine cases where the Lincolnshire Domesday names both a parent and one or more children, there are eleven in which both generations had Scandinavian names, and only six in which both had English names. Five fathers with Scandinavian names had sons with English names, but there is only one example of the reverse. The names of three generations are recorded for one family, and all

⁶⁶ Domesday Book, i. 337a; LD, p. 13. The personal names are discussed by G. Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (Copenhagen, 1968).

⁶⁷ The others were *Adestan*, *Ailric*, *Lewine* and *Wlward*.

⁶⁸ Fellows-Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire*, pp. lxii-lxiii.

were Scandinavian.⁶⁹ This evidence suggests that in Lincolnshire on the eve of the Norman Conquest most people with Scandinavian names had fathers or mothers who also had Scandinavian names and were probably of Scandinavian descent.

The Scandinavians not only introduced a new squirearchy, they also stimulated the growth of towns. It is, indeed, arguable that the main Viking achievement was to redistribute the wealth that was stored in the treasuries of churches, kings and magnates. They stole it, shared it out, and spent it; a good example of Keynesian economics in action. It is no accident that some of the major towns of medieval England, including Lincoln, Norwich, Stamford and York, began to expand shortly before or after the year 900, a few decades after Scandinavians had settled in their vicinity.⁷⁰ Lucien Musset has noted a similar development in western France.⁷¹ This urban development had wider consequences, for towns depended on their surrounding regions to supply the food, fuel and raw materials they needed.

There was also long-distance trade, some of it with Scandinavia, although there is very little evidence for that before the twelfth century.⁷² By then Scandinavia was a source not only of such luxuries as furs and falcons, but also more mundane produce, in particular preserved fish to feed townsfolk in the winter and spring. The first indication of shipping on any scale is provided by Orderic Vitalis who reports that in 1095 Robert de Mowbray, earl of Northumberland, attacked and robbed four great

⁶⁹ *Sortebrand* (=Svartbrandr), son of *Ulf*, son of *Sortebrand*: DB i. 336a, LD, pp. 2-5.

⁷⁰ Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England*, p. 230; R.A. Hall, 'The Five Boroughs of the Danelaw: a Review of Present Knowledge', *Anglo-Saxon England* 18 (1989), 149-206, esp. 201-5.

⁷¹ L. Musset, 'La renaissance urbaine des x^e et xi^e siècles dans l'ouest de la France: problèmes et hypothèses de travail', *Etudes de civilisation médiévale (ix^e-xii^e siècles)*. *Mélanges E.-R. Labande* (Poitiers, 1974), pp. 563-75.

⁷² P. Sawyer, 'Anglo-Scandinavian Trade in the Viking Age and After', *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History: Essays in Memory of Michael Dolley*, ed. M.A.S. Blackburn (Leicester, 1986), pp. 185-99.

ships called *canardes* (presumably a Latinisation of the Old Norse word for a sea-going ship, *knörr*) that were bringing merchants from Norway to England. The merchants appealed to the king and, when Robert disregarded an order to restore the stolen property, full compensation was paid from the royal treasury.⁷³ The goodwill of Norwegian merchants was clearly worth keeping.

The conquest of England by Knut naturally brought about great changes in relations between the English and Scandinavians. Until then the influence of Scandinavians on dialect, types of brooches and other forms of jewelry, and art styles was confined to the areas they had conquered and settled in; they were not encouraged to settle anywhere else.⁷⁴ *Duces* with Scandinavian names from the Danelaw occasionally attended the English king's court, but few thegns or *ministri* with Scandinavian names witnessed tenth-century charters. The situation was very different after 1017. Scandinavians of high rank were then permanent members of the king's retinue and acted as his agents in all parts of England, a large number of Scandinavian warriors served in the fleet under Knut and his sons, and Knut's court in England naturally attracted Scandinavian artists and poets. Indeed, Roberta Frank has suggested that in the reign of Knut 'London was probably *the* center in the North for the production and distribution of skaldic poetry'.⁷⁵ The influence of the art style that was then popular in Scandinavia, known as the Ringerike style, reached many parts of England, one of the finest examples being a grave monument from the churchyard of St Paul's in London.⁷⁶ The fragment of what

⁷³ *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1969-80) IV, 280-1.

⁷⁴ Kevin Leahy tells me that almost all brooches and other objects decorated in Scandinavian styles that have been discovered in Lincolnshire with the help of metal detectors have been found in areas with the main concentrations of Scandinavian place-names.

⁷⁵ R. Frank, 'Skaldic Poetry', *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: a Critical Guide*, ed. C. Clover and J. Lindow (Ithaca, NY, 1985), pp. 157-96, at 179.

⁷⁶ D.M. Wilson and O. Klindt-Jensen, *Viking Art* (London, 1966), pp. 134-46; S.H. Fuglesang, *Some Aspects of the Ringerike Style* (Odense, 1980).

must have been a most impressive frieze from the Old Minster in Winchester that was demolished in 1093, depicting a scene from the saga of the Volsungs, was presumably made during Knut's reign, as Martin Biddle has suggested.⁷⁷

It was at that time that Scandinavians began to acquire land in many parts of England outside the Danelaw.⁷⁸ They, or their descendants, consequently appear in Domesday Book as tenants on the eve of the Norman Conquest. One of the greatest landowners in England at that time was Ulf *Fenisc*, whose by-name implies that he had himself come from the Danish island of Fyn. The name has sometimes been interpreted as meaning 'Fenman', apparently because Ulf held much land in Lincolnshire, but the Old English word for 'fen' is *fenn*, with a short vowel and a double final consonant. The Old English adjective *fennig*, 'fenny', accordingly has two *ns*. The only satisfactory interpretation of the name is that it described Ulf as coming from Fyn, which in Old Danish was *Fiun* and in Old Icelandic *Fjón*.⁷⁹ In this connection it is worth noting that in the *Liber Vitae* of Hyde Abbey one man with a Scandinavian name, *Atzor*, is described as *feonisca*.⁸⁰

Links between England and Scandinavia were weakened during the reign of Edward the Confessor who, in 1051, dismissed the last of the Scandinavian seamen.⁸¹ Contact was maintained, however, not only by traders and, after the Norman Conquest, by

⁷⁷ M. Biddle, 'Excavations at Winchester 1965: Fourth Interim Report', *The Antiquaries Journal* 46 (1966), 308-32, at 329-32.

⁷⁸ A. Williams, "'Cockles amongst the Wheat": Danes and English in the Western Midlands in the First Half of the Eleventh Century', *Midland History* 11 (1986), 1-22.

⁷⁹ J. Kousgård Sørensen, *Odense Amts Bebyggelsesnavne*, Danmarks Stednavne 14 (København, 1969), 1-2. The *-isc* suffix is generally used to indicate relationship to a collective; see H. Krahe and W. Meid, *Germanische Sprachwissenschaft III* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 196-7. I am indebted to Gillian Fellows-Jensen for advice on the interpretation of this by-name.

⁸⁰ *Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester*, ed. W. de Gray Birch, Hampshire Record Society (London and Winchester, 1892), p. 59.

⁸¹ ASC, *s.a.* 1051.

exiles seeking refuge, but also by missionaries. One indication of the activity of English missionaries is provided by the leaves of manuscripts from medieval Scandinavian libraries that were saved from destruction during the Reformation by being used as covers for records of local government.⁸² Norwegian examples include a leaf from a late eleventh-century English missal and another that appears to be a Norwegian copy of an eleventh-century English manuscript.⁸³ The importance of English missionaries in the conversion of Norway has long been recognized, but they also made a major contribution to the process in Denmark, in part thanks to Knut, and in Sweden. Leaves from numerous twelfth-century English liturgical manuscripts have been found in Swedish archives, including two remarkable fragments from eastern Sweden with collects for St Rumwold, whose cult was celebrated in a small area of Bedfordshire.⁸⁴

This is to go well beyond the Viking Age. It is, though, worth emphasizing the important role of the English in extending the Christianization in Scandinavia, even in Denmark and Sweden where German influence is more obvious. The groundwork for this activity was laid in the Viking period. The conversion of the Danes who settled in England and the promotion to archbishop of three Anglo-Danes in the tenth century must have been factors in encouraging English interest in the conversion of their kinsmen in Scandinavia. Vikings undoubtedly destroyed much that was valuable; they disrupted the church and changed the political map of England. But all Scandinavians were not Vikings; Norwegian traders and royal envoys were welcomed by English kings. Even

⁸² J. Toy, 'The Commemorations of British Saints in the Medieval Liturgical Manuscripts of Scandinavia', *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift 1983*, pp. 91-103; J. Brunius, 'Medeltida böcker i fragment: En översikt över pergamentsomslagen i Riksarkivet', *Nordisk tidskrift för bok- och biblioteksväsen* 80 (1993), 3-33.

⁸³ L. Gjerløw, 'Missaler brukt i Oslo bispedømme fra misjonstiden til Nidarosordinariat', *Oslo bispedømme 900 år*, ed. F. Birkeli *et al.* (Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø, 1974), pp. 73-142, at 75-81 and pls. 1-2.

⁸⁴ Toy, 'The Commemorations', p. 100.

Viking raiders were welcomed, or at least accepted as allies, by some English leaders, ecclesiastics as well as laymen. That is hardly surprising. Scandinavians and the English had much in common; even their languages were closely related, if not mutually comprehensible. One of the main differences between them was that the Vikings came by sea and therefore had the advantage of surprise when attacking and a relatively safe means of retreat. Once they settled and were land-based, they were not such a serious threat, and by the middle of the tenth century the Danelaw was part of the English kingdom. Another difference was that the first generation of Vikings was pagan. We should, however, not put too much weight on the religious differences, although some contemporaries did. Then as now Christians, in their conflicts with one another, could be as ruthless, cruel and destructive as any Viking. Inhumanity was not an exclusively Scandinavian characteristic.

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