

Writing History for an Age of Reform:
Orderic Vitalis and the *Historia ecclesiastica*

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Abstract

This thesis undertakes a sustained literary reading of the thirteen books of Orderic Vitalis' *Historia ecclesiastica*, in order to explore the relationship between his ideas of history writing and contemporary church reforms. Church reform is a neglected aspect of Orderic's ecclesiastical history writing, as previous studies of the *Historia* have focused on Anglo-Norman political history and, more recently, Benedictine monasticism. Thus, this thesis tests how far Orderic's *Historia* was a commentary on eleventh- and twelfth-century reforms, and their impact upon ordinary churchmen. By reading across all thirteen books of the *Historia*, this thesis develops new methodologies for navigating the text's scale, organic structure, and non-linear chronological development. These elements of the text present a serious challenge to modern research, problematising comparative analysis between Orderic's work and those of other Anglo-Norman history writers. This thesis aims to model new approaches in order to inform future comparative research. Each chapter examines a different kind of material, in order to explore Orderic's engagement with reform at multiple levels and navigate a different aspect of the text's methodological challenge: church councils; nicolaitism and noble marriage; reform ideologies; and expressions of ideas of history writing.

By thus looking at a range of material, this study argues that Orderic responded critically to the efforts of church reformers and articulated a powerful defence of his monastic community's traditions, history, and way of life. It lays emphasis on Orderic's use of history writing as a tool to reflect upon experiences of reform. This study also uncovers Orderic's changing engagement with church reforms throughout the decades spent writing the *Historia*. Consequently, it exposes Orderic's design choices, highlighting his sophisticated appreciation of the performative social effect of history writing. It further draws attention to his evolving ideas of how to write history for an age of reform.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Conventions

References to the *Historia ecclesiastica* will take the following form. The abbreviation *HE* is followed by the editor for the relevant edition. Thereafter, I refer in Roman numerals to the book in question (I-XIII) and then the volume and page range of the modern edition referred to.

Introduction

This study examines the relationship between eleventh- and twelfth-century church reforms and the writing of the *Historia ecclesiastica* by Orderic Vitalis. Orderic was an Anglo-French monk at the Norman monastery of Saint-Évroul, where he composed his monumental thirteen-volume *Historia* over the course of three decades (c. 1114-1141). The *Historia* has not been analysed in detail in light of the context of church reform. This study asks how far Orderic responded to the contemporary context of church reform through history writing over time and how, in turn, his ideas of history writing were shaped by this response. Thus, I will examine the arguments Orderic makes about church reform in his work, how he does this, and how far these arguments change over the long period of writing. This thesis also investigates how Orderic's engagement with church reform shaped his ideas of history writing and the development of his text. This involves consideration of what Orderic thought history was for, how it should be written, and what its effect(s) should be. In examining Orderic's ideas of history writing, the study seeks to uncover interactions between the community of Saint-Évroul for whom Orderic wrote, the context of church reform, and the writing of the *Historia*. Thus the primary aim is to shed light on Orderic as a writer and on the development of his text by examining what it meant to write an ecclesiastical history at a time of dramatic and contested change in the church. A secondary aim is to reflect upon the implications of these insights for the use of this text for the study of church reforms in this period, drawing attention to its untapped potential.

The present study also addresses the question of how to approach this task methodologically in light of the text's scale, apparent incoherence, and non-linear chronological development. The *Historia* is one of the most important sources for the

Anglo-Norman world and provides critical evidence for ecclesiastical affairs, monastic life, and political history. However, the text poses interpretative problems that have shaped modern research and that, until recently, have been largely overlooked.¹ Consequently, the second question this study poses is how to conduct a sustained literary reading of the text as a whole. The *Historia* developed over a period of nearly thirty years through an uneven series of accretions and reimaginings; it was not written according to a single, pre-conceived scheme.² This study investigates its complex, long-term development in order to consider connections between different parts of the text and how these shaped reading experiences. A key aim is to develop and model effective methodologies for reading across the thirteen books of the *Historia*, paying close attention to form, argument, and narrative strategy. However, I also aim to consider composition in a nuanced way, accounting for development over time, instances of rethinking, and discontinuities. Thus, I address the question of how to make sense of apparent incoherence, reading for underlying connections while simultaneously considering the role discontinuities can play in the communication of meaning. This question involves addressing the serious practical barriers to sustained literary reading presented by the sheer scale of Orderic's work, without reliance on selective or partial analyses. As a result, I will establish new methodologies that can inform future research into Orderic and his work.

¹ Daniel Roach and Charles C. Rozier, 'Introduction: Interpreting Orderic Vitalis,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 1-16.

² On the dating of the *Historia*'s thirteen books, see Appendix 1.

I. Orderic Vitalis and his Works

Orderic Vitalis

Orderic is known only from his own work.³ The *Historia* contains two substantial passages containing autobiographical material in Books V and XIII.⁴ Orderic's biography has been discussed extensively; what follows is a brief sketch of the main events of his life.⁵ Orderic was born in 1075 at Atcham, near Shrewsbury in the Welsh Marches. He was Anglo-French and the son of a priest. His parents were Odelerius, a cleric educated at Orléans, and an unnamed English woman.⁶ Odelerius came to England as a cleric in the household of Roger of Montgomery, earl of Shropshire from 1071, from whom he held the church of St Peter's, Shrewsbury. Orderic was the eldest of three brothers. When Orderic was ten years old, his father instigated the foundation of a monastery on the site of his church and pledged to join the community himself along with his second son, Benedict. His third son, Everard, would hold his father's remaining land as a tenant of the new foundation. At the same time, Orderic was sent as an oblate to the community of Saint-Évroul in Normandy where he would remain a monk for the rest of his life. He died in 1142 or 1143.⁷

Two aspects of Orderic's biography in particular have informed this study. The first is his place within the intellectual life of the community of Saint-Évroul. Saint-Évroul was a Benedictine community situated near to the main southern route from

³ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 1.

⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:142-150; XIII, 6:550-556.

⁵ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 1-5, 23-28; Elisabeth van Houts, 'Orderic and His Father, Odelerius,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 17-36.

⁶ For possible explanations for Orderic's silence regarding his mother, see: Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984), 8-9; van Houts, 'Orderic and His Father,' 27-30.

⁷ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 113, n. 1.

Normandy to Anjou.⁸ It lay between the dioceses of Lisieux, Séez, and Évreux in the pays d’Ouche, a region of largely uninhabited and underdeveloped woodland. It had been (in the ninth century) the site of a small community led by St Évroul, an ascetic and monastic leader whose life Orderic retells in the *Historia*.⁹ The community was formally (re)founded after centuries of abandonment in 1050 by two prominent local families, the Giroie and Grandmesnil.¹⁰ Saint-Évroul was an independent monastery but followed Cluniac customs, hence the interest in the *Historia* in affairs at Cluny.¹¹ Orderic joined Saint-Évroul in 1085 and over the course of his long monastic career rose to a position of prominence within the community’s intellectual life.¹² Recent research has drawn attention to Orderic’s roles within the community and their implications for his historiographic work, especially from the mid-1120s onwards. Based on the analysis of manuscripts contained Orderic’s hand, Jenny Weston has suggested that he acted as master of the scriptorium, correcting the work of other scribes and adding rubrics.¹³ Charles Rozier has argued that, from some point in the 1120s, Orderic occupied the position of cantor.¹⁴ My thesis pays close attention to this aspect of Orderic’s biography, considering how his changing place within the community’s intellectual life influenced his ideas of history writing and thus the way he approached the writing of history for his community. Furthermore, in light of new evidence for Orderic’s increasing influence

⁸ For a concise introduction to the monastery of Saint-Évroul, see Chibnall, ‘General Introduction,’ 6-23. On the community’s proximity to the warzone between Normandy and Anjou: Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories: Propaganda, Myth and Subversion* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 180.

⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:264-302.

¹⁰ For a discussion of material in the *Historia* concerning these families, see Chapter Two, Section I.

¹¹ For example, see *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:310-314; XIII, 6:424-6. On Saint-Évroul’s adherence to Cluniac custom, see Chibnall, ‘General Introduction,’ 74, n. 1.

¹² Chibnall discusses the school of Saint-Évroul and its educational predilections: ‘General Introduction,’ 15-18, 20-22. On the early history and school of Saint-Évroul, including a full list of library contents surmised from a later twelfth-century catalogue, see: Delisle, ‘Notice sur Orderic Vital,’ in *Orderici Vitalis ecclesiasticae historiae libri tredecim*, vol. 5, ed. Auguste Le Prevost (Paris, 1855), iii-xxxii.

¹³ Jenny Weston, ‘Following the Master’s Lead: The Script of Orderic Vitalis and the Discovery of a New Manuscript (Rouen, BM, 540)’ in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 56-60. For an earlier discussion of Orderic’s education and hand, see: Chibnall, ‘General Introduction,’ 23-25.

¹⁴ Charles C. Rozier, ‘Orderic Vitalis as Librarian and Cantor of Saint-Évroul,’ in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 65-66, 73-75.

and seniority within the community's intellectual life in the 1120s, this study investigates the possibility that over the course of his career Orderic had a growing latitude to compose his work with less stringent oversight.

A second aspect of Orderic's biography that this thesis draws attention to is the pertinence of contemporary church reforms. Orderic's lifetime (1075-1142/1143) coincides with a key period of church reform. During this period, papal reforms targeted simony and nicolaitism, and, under Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), gave rise to the Investiture Controversy.¹⁵ Under Gregory's successors – especially Urban II, Callixtus II, and Innocent II – structures of papal government were formalised, including the more widespread use of general church councils.¹⁶ The rise of new monastic orders, especially the Cistercians, posed new challenges to the Cluniac model.¹⁷ This period also saw the proliferation of new canon law in widely-read collections like Burchard of Worms' *Decretum* and, later, the hugely influential Gratian's *Decretum*.¹⁸ These changes form a key part of modern perceptions of a period that has been described as a revolution and a

¹⁵ The historiography on church reform in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is vast. For useful introductions to this topic, see Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); 'The papacy, 1024-1122,' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, c. 1024-c. 1198, part 2, eds. David Luscombe and Johnathon Riley-Smith (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 8-37; I. S. Robinson, 'The papacy, 1122-1198,' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, c. 1024-c. 1198, part 2, eds. David Luscombe and Johnathon Riley-Smith (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 317-83; 'Reform and the Church, 1073-1122,' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 4, c. 1024-c. 1198, part 1, eds. David Luscombe and Johnathon Riley-Smith (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 268-334; H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the Papacy, and the Normans in Eleventh and early Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); *Popes and Church Reform in the Eleventh Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

¹⁶ Of particular importance on conciliar mechanisms, see *Conciliarum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta II/1: The General Councils of Latin Christendom*, eds. A. García y García *et al* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

¹⁷ Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1996), 44-86.

¹⁸ Kathleen G. Cushing, *Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution: The Canonistic Work of Anselm of Lucca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Christof Rolker, *Canon Law and the Letters of Ivo of Chartres* (Cambridge: University Press, 2010); Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000).

reformation.¹⁹ Specific aspects of church reform will be discussed more fully in the introductions to Chapters One, Two and Three.

Orderic was a witness to these changes and was directly impacted by them. As a monk of Saint-Évroul, he was well-connected through the community's dependent priories and his own travels, such as to Crowland, Worcester, and the priory of Maule, in Île-de-France.²⁰ Orderic also had practical experience of canon law and church councils.²¹ He was deeply interested in monastic reform, attending an important council in 1132 at Cluny and writing a treatise critical of certain aspects of new monastic orders.²² Reformist efforts to curb and eliminate clerical marriage impacted Orderic personally. In an effort to disincentivise clerical marriage, punitive measures were taken against priests' sons, including barring them from ordination unless they had first taken a monastic vow.²³ It has been suggested that Orderic's father, Odelerius, separated his family, committing his two eldest sons to monasteries as children, as a form of collective penance.²⁴ As a monk in Normandy, Orderic was also close to some of the most significant centres of production for polemical literature produced in the later eleventh century that criticised demands for clerical celibacy and punitive measures taken against the sons of priests.²⁵ This context has informed this study by raising the question of the impact of church reform on Orderic's writing. What does it mean for Orderic to write

¹⁹ R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution, c. 970-1215* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); Constable, *Reformation*, esp. 1-43.

²⁰ Chibnall, 'General Introduction', 8-11, 25-26.

²¹ See Chapter One, esp. Section II.

²² See Chapter Three, Sections I and III.

²³ C. N. L. Brooke, 'Gregorian Reform in Action: Clerical Marriage in England 1050-1200,' *Cambridge Historical Journal* 12, no. 1 (1956): 3. On clerical marriage during this period, see Laura A. Wertheimer, 'Children of Disorder: Clerical Parentage, Illegitimacy, and Reform in the Middle Ages,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 3 (2006): 382-407; Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 115-164.

²⁴ van Houts, 'Orderic and His Father,' 23-24.

²⁵ Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh-Century Debates* (New York; Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 137; Leidulf Melve, 'The Public Debate on Clerical Marriage in the Late Eleventh Century,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 61, no. 4 (2010): 688-706. On Norman experiences, see Elisabeth van Houts, 'The Fate of Priests' Sons in Normandy with Special Reference to Serlo of Bayeux,' *HJSJ* 25 (2013): 57-106.

ecclesiastical history at this moment? In drawing attention to the significance of contemporary reforms for Orderic and his community, this thesis sheds light on how Orderic discussed reform issues through his writing and attempted to make sense of a changing world and his community's place within it.

His Works

Orderic is known to have been involved in the authorship of three works. He was a contributor to the annals of Saint-Évroul from 1095 onwards.²⁶ Between c. 1109 and c. 1113 he added extensive interpolations to William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*.²⁷ Orderic's third and most substantial work is the *Historia ecclesiastica*, a monumental history of the Christian church from the Incarnation to 1141.²⁸ He began work on the text in c. 1114 at the behest of his abbot, Roger Le Sap (1091-1123, d. 1126); at this stage the work was principally focused on the history of Saint-Évroul with additions concerning political affairs in Normandy. The majority of the text was written under Roger's successor, Warin des Essarts (1123-1137) and it was during this period that the text expanded rapidly to encompass a range of material, including the Normans in England and Sicily, events in Iberia and the Holy Land, and – eventually – a life of Christ and vitae of the Apostles. Orderic completed the final books of the *Historia* under Abbots Richard of Leicester (1137-1140) and Ralph of Prunelai (1140-1151). See Appendix 1 for a breakdown of the dating of the text and Appendix 3 for a visual guide to the text's evolution. Eleven of the thirteen books of the *Historia* survive in three autograph manuscripts, containing carefully written text, corrections, and rubrication, all in a hand that has long been attributed to Orderic himself.²⁹ The text of the missing

²⁶ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 29.

²⁷ *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni*, ed. and trans. Elisabeth van Houts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 1: lxxvii-lxxvi. Orderic's interpolation are discussed in detail in Chapter Four, Section I.

²⁸ For a summary of content, see Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 45-48.

²⁹ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 118-119.

fourth volume is preserved in a copy made at St Stephen's, Caen, in the twelfth century.³⁰

As Books I and II of the *Historia* have been neglected, they warrant further introduction. Marjorie Chibnall determined that the first two books were of scant historical value, as they were heavily based on the Gospels, Augustine's *De consensu evangeliorum*, and the *Liber pontificalis*.³¹ As a result, Chibnall included these books only in part and translated nothing save the preface to Book I in her edition.³² Books I and II were not the first Orderic wrote. They were added to the *Historia* only in c. 1136 as part of a final revision that included the additions of Books XI, XII, and XIII. As a result, Books III-X were renumbered at this point. Orderic connected Books I and II to the rest of the *Historia* with additions to the preface to Book III. Books I and II mirror one another in their structures. The first part of Book I is a life of Christ and the second part is an imperial list that begins with Tiberius and ends with Henry I. Book II consists of a series of *vitae* of the apostles (along with a *vita* on St Martial); its second part is a papal list based on the *Liber pontificalis*.

My approach to the analysis of the *Historia* has been informed by consideration of Orderic's audience. Evidence from the text confirms that its primary audience was the monks of Saint-Évroul, as is clear from rhetorical prefaces and the material concerned with the community's endowments.³³ In a seminal study on the *Historia's* audience, Roger Ray argued that the *Historia* was read aloud as part of the liturgical cycle and in the refectory during meals.³⁴ Ray further argued that the monks of Saint-Évroul also had input into the development the text by critiquing the work, Orderic's responses to which

³⁰ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 121. For further details of the manuscripts containing the *Historia*, see Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 1-125; Delisle, 'Notice,' xciii-civ; Amanda Jane Hingst, *Written World: Past and Place in the Work of Orderic Vitalis* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), xvi-xviii.

³¹ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 127-8.

³² *HE*, Chibnall, I, 1:130-3.

³³ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 37. See the preface to Book V: *HE*, Chibnall, 3:6.

³⁴ Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and His Readers,' *Studia Monastica* 14 (1972): 17-33.

are visible in the text. In light of Ray's persuasive arguments, this study examines the development of the text in relation to the intimate relationship between Orderic and his community.

Two aspects of the *Historia* in particular present a serious challenge to modern study. The first is the text's non-linear chronological development. Orderic began work in c. 1114 on Book III, which he spent ten years working on. Later, the pace of writing sped up rapidly and he wrote several books simultaneously in the period 1135-1137. The way that the text developed over time was not in accordance with a preconceived scheme. As a consequence of the text's organic development, it contains multiple and sometimes contradictory expressions of the work's purpose. Chronology poses a problem because the different books focus on a range of kinds of material and express a variety of perspectives. This it makes it hard to discuss Orderic as a writer, as it can be difficult to reconcile arguments and ideas expressed at different moments in the text's development. It calls for a clearer appreciation of the chronology of the text and its relationship to Orderic's monastic career and community.

The text's scale poses a second barrier. The thirteen books of the *Historia* extend over more than six-hundred folios which, in Chibnall's edition, translates into six volumes and more than 2,000 pages.³⁵ As part of extending the scope of his work from a history of the community of Saint-Évroul and monasticism in Normandy, Orderic introduced ducal politics and the conflict between the sons of William the Conqueror; church councils and papal schisms; an account of the First Crusade; the Normans in Sicily; Iberian affairs; several *vitae*; and a history of the Apostolic Church. The form and scale of the text has encouraged approaches in modern scholarship that focus on particular kinds of material and presents severe challenges for the study of the text in its entirety. Furthermore, it is difficult to reconcile the text's scale and variety with a clear sense of how it functioned as a history for the community of Saint-Évroul. Due to the

³⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, 6 vols. The number of folios given refers only to the surviving autograph manuscripts: Hingst, *Written World*, xvi.

sheer volume of material, approaches that extract selected source material from the text present the most achievable way of reading. Sustained interdisciplinary readings of the *Historia* as a whole, informed by literary techniques, are conversely much more practically difficult.

II. Current Approaches

The edition of the *Historia ecclesiastica* produced by Auguste Le Prevost provided a basis for modern study, until it was superseded by Chibnall's edition.³⁶ It is hard to overstate the influence of Marjorie Chibnall's critical edition and her extensive research into Orderic on modern scholarship of the *Historia*.³⁷ Chibnall's edition offers critical apparatus, a facing transcription, and a scholarly introduction making it an exceptional useful resource, which this study makes extensive use of.³⁸ Chibnall adopted editorial principles that preserved the idiosyncrasies of the text, such as the preservation of the manuscripts' spelling and punctuation, selective rather than exhaustive standardisation of abbreviations, and a retention of certain inconsistencies in word forms.³⁹ Chibnall's translation of the *Historia* is a useful navigational tool, however she tended to favour less literal translations in certain cases.⁴⁰ Where Chibnall's edition is less useful (and less complete) is regarding Books I and II. Her edition still contains useful apparatus, including the identification of Orderic's main sources and a full transcription of the prologue to Book I. This study thus makes use of Le Prevost's

³⁶ *HE*, Le Prevost, 5 vols.

³⁷ See Chibnall, *World of Orderic Vitalis and Piety, Power, and History in Medieval England and Normandy* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2000).

³⁸ Chibnall's edition also superseded an earlier translation by Thomas Forester: *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy by Ordericus Vitalis*, trans. Thomas Forester (London: H. G. Bohn, 1853-1856), 3 vols.

³⁹ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 123-5.

⁴⁰ Of particular note, see Book IX and the translation of crusade terminology: *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:4-191.

transcription for Books I and II. While it contains recognised problems associated with the agendas of nineteenth-century editorial work, these issues are mitigated to some extent by Chibnall's partial transcription of Books I and II, as well as Orderic's close dependence on the sources he used for this part of the *Historia*.⁴¹ Nonetheless, the limited inclusion of Books I and II in Chibnall's edition and the problems with Le Prevost's points to the pressing need for a new critical edition of Books I and II.

The *Historia* has been widely studied as a critical source for Anglo-Norman history. Few would argue with Chibnall's assessment that the *Historia* is 'one of the most valuable and readable of twelfth-century historical works'.⁴² Indeed, the *Historia* is a foundational source for hugely influential works, such as Charles Homer Haskins' *Norman Institutions*. Writing in 1918, Haskins numbered Orderic among 'the imposing series of Norman historians' and noted too the uniquely detailed evidence he offered on many areas.⁴³ Orderic also appears regularly as a topic of study in a range of prominent journals, such as *Anglo-Norman Studies* and the *Haskins Society Journal*.⁴⁴ Orderic is firmly a part of the canon of Anglo-Norman historical writers, alongside others like William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, and John of Worcester.⁴⁵

In the last decade in particular, there has been a substantial increase in research focused on Orderic and the *Historia*. This new trend is a response to the prior lack of attention paid to Orderic's sense of history writing and ways of interpreting his text.⁴⁶ Of particular significance is a recent collection of essays – *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works, and Interpretations* – the first dedicated to the study of Orderic's work.⁴⁷ This immensely valuable collection establishes the benefits of in-depth studies devoted to the *Historia*

⁴¹ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 117.

⁴² Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 1.

⁴³ Charles Homer Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (New York: F. Ungar), 241.

⁴⁴ For example, see *ANS* 1978, 1979 and 2010; and *HSJ* 1990, 1992, 2013, 2014.

⁴⁵ Antonia Gransden included Orderic within this group: *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca, New York; Cornell University Press, 1974), 136-52.

⁴⁶ This point is made explicitly: Roach and Rozier, 'Introduction,' 3-4.

⁴⁷ Roach and Rozier, 'Introduction,' 3-4.

exclusively. Recent years have also seen a range of articles that focus on reading and interpreting the *Historia*, as well as an important monograph. Daniel Roach re-examined the neglected Book IX of the *Historia*, which recounts a history of the First Crusade largely copied from Baudri of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosolimitana*.⁴⁸ Roach attempted to analyse Orderic's copying practices, arguing that these shed light on his ideas of history writing. John O. Ward compared Orderic to his near-contemporary William of Malmesbury, to draw out aspects of Orderic's history writing, such as his use of rhetorical speeches and instances of chronicling.⁴⁹ Amanda Hingst, in the monograph *Written World: Past and Place in the Work of Orderic Vitalis*, attempted to understand Orderic's priorities as a writer through analysis of often-overlooked parts of the text (such as miracle stories).⁵⁰ Hingst's approach was in direct response to the dominant way of reading the text through the extraction of material deemed most useful.⁵¹ As a result, she draws conclusions about Orderic's sense of history and its role as a means to share knowledge with posterity. This range of new research has shed important light on two areas that this study responds to: Orderic as history writer and methodologies for reading the text.

Orderic as History Writer

Until recently, Orderic has been seen as a simplistic or naive writer, whose grasp of historical theory and of his subject in general was simplistic.⁵² In her 1974 *Historians in the Middle Ages*, Beryl Smalley concluded that 'Orderic's *Ecclesiastical History*

⁴⁸ Daniel Roach, 'Orderic Vitalis and the First Crusade,' *Journal of Medieval History* 42, no.2 (2016): 177-201. See *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:2-190 and *The Historia Ierosolimitana of Baldric of Bourgueil*, ed. Steven Biddlecombe (Cambridge: University Press, 2014). For Orderic's use of Baudri, see *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5: xii-xv.

⁴⁹ John O. Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian in the Europe of the Early Twelfth-Century Renaissance,' *Parergon* 31, no. 1 (2014): 1-26.

⁵⁰ Hingst, *Written World*.

⁵¹ Hingst, *Written World*, xxi.

⁵² Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 1; Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 1; Roach and Rozier, 'Introduction,' 2-3; Delisle, 'Notice,' lvi, xliv.

conjuges up a picture of Clio, Muse of history, as a big fierce woman browbeating her votary.⁵³ Chibnall too supported this view, characterising the work as a sprawling tome that defied Orderic's attempts to impose formal structure.⁵⁴ This view of Orderic still holds currency: as recently as 2014 Ward wrote that one thing that is attractive about Orderic's work is its 'innocent simplicity'.⁵⁵

Recent research, however, has begun to challenge this assessment of Orderic's history writing, pointing to his ability and creativity as a writer. Hingst has pointed to now-outdated source priorities that have informed previous research: as she puts it, earlier studies investigated material from the text according to its utility, rather than significance.⁵⁶ Thomas Roche examined how Orderic used charters in his work and took issue with the way Orderic had been characterised as a good informant.⁵⁷ Roche revealed that Orderic variously transcribed, adapted, and fashioned narratives from charters according to extra-legal reasons. Roche's assessment of Orderic's use of charters is also part of a new trend towards closer examination of Orderic's narrative strategies and their communication of meaning. Vincent Debiais and Estelle Ingrand-Varenne have shed light on the narrative functions of epigraphic material in the *Historia*, questioning their status as exogenous documents.⁵⁸ Through their analysis, Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne argue that epitaphs can act as parts of argument and as narrative devices. More explicitly still, Thomas O'Donnell has focused on the complex, meandering narrative form of the *Historia*.⁵⁹ With a keen awareness of the difficulty the

⁵³ Beryl Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 86. See also: Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 155-6 and 161.

⁵⁴ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 39.

⁵⁵ Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 24-5. Emily Albu has characterised the work as chaotic and lacking in control: *Normans in their Histories*, 190-1. This view has been challenged: Thomas Roche, 'Reading Orderic with Charters in Mind,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier et al, 145-6.

⁵⁶ Hingst, *Written World*, xxi.

⁵⁷ Roche, 'Charters in Mind,' 145-171.

⁵⁸ Vincent Debiais and Estelle Ingrand-Varenne, 'Inscriptions in Orderic's *Historia ecclesiastica*: A Writing Technique between History and Poetry,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier et al, 127-144.

⁵⁹ Thomas O'Donnell, 'Meanders, Loops, and Dead Ends: Literary Form and the Common Life in Orderic's *Historia ecclesiastica*,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier et al, 298-323.

text presents for its readers, O'Donnell persuasively argues that the text's sprawling form is associated with efforts to write community history through the lives of individual members.⁶⁰

Close examination of Orderic's use of language has also exposed new aspects of his history writing and argumentation.⁶¹ Daniel Roach has examined Orderic's use of the phrase *usque hodie*, tracing all fifty-two uses across the *Historia* and arguing that Orderic uses this language to draw connections between the his community and their past.⁶² Leah Shopkow has also considered Orderic's language use, in order to examine his concepts of *historia*.⁶³ These studies reveal the value in understanding Orderic's priorities and in not applying modern standards of textual coherence and design to his text. Such approaches reveal Orderic's creativity and forethought as a writer. This in turn raises a serious methodological challenge for attempts to read the text as a whole, because this very creativity demands further attention is paid to each part of the whole and also magnifies differences between different parts written over time. Thus far, much of this insightful research takes the form of articles examining particular elements of Orderic's work. As a result, gaps remain in our understanding of Orderic's history writing in view of the *Historia* as a whole text.

An aspect of Orderic's writing that has attracted attention is the textual milieu of Benedictine monasticism and its effect on the development and reading of the text.⁶⁴ Much of this work builds on Roger Ray's insights into the reading of the *Historia* in

⁶⁰ O'Donnell, 'Meanders, Loops, and Dead Ends,' 308-9.

⁶¹ Such as Leonie V. Hicks, 'Monastic Authority, Landscape, and Place in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis,' in *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles*, eds. Juliana Dresvina and Nicholas Sparks (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholar Press, 2012), 102-20.

⁶² Daniel Roach, 'The Material and the Visual: Objects and Memories in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis,' *HSJ* 24 (2012): 69-72.

⁶³ Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 19-21.

⁶⁴ See in particular: Giles E. M. Gasper, 'Orderic Vitalis, Historical Writing and a Theology of Reckoning,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 247-59.

liturgical and refectory settings at Saint-Évroul.⁶⁵ Charles Rozier's recent thesis indicated the importance of reading the *Historia* (and other monastic histories) within specific contexts of theological learning and devotional practice that constitute the text's 'original compositional context'.⁶⁶ Sigbjørn Sønnesyn has analysed audience in a different way by focusing on Orderic's imagined ideal reader, arguing that this reader was a studious and educated monk who could use exegetical modes of reading to access the allegorical and moral messages encoded in the *Historia*.⁶⁷ This research has offered a much more dynamic understanding of audience than was previously available.⁶⁸ However, an aspect of audience that remains to be investigated is the potential ways in which the community members of Saint-Évroul (including but not limited to Orderic's abbots) shaped the text as it developed. To date, research has focused on Orderic's understanding of his own audience and his responses to specific criticism.⁶⁹ A question as yet unaddressed is how far Orderic, as one of his community, was in a more sustained and collaborative dialogue with the monks of Saint-Évroul and how this in turn could have shaped the way the text grew and Orderic's ideas of history writing were reimagined over time. In this way, the full implications of Ray's arguments concerning the text's use in a monastic context remain to be explored.

As part of this new interest in Orderic's history writing, the *Historia* has been examined in different contexts. Until recently it had been treated as a work of Anglo-Norman political history.⁷⁰ This perception is furthered partly because Orderic has been

⁶⁵ Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and His Readers'. Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn explicitly builds on Ray's conclusions: "'Studioli abdita investigant': Orderic Vitalis and the Mystical Morals of History," in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 284-97.

⁶⁶ Charles C. Rozier, *The Importance of Writing Institutional History in the Anglo-Norman Realm, c. 1060-c. 1142, with special reference to Eadmer's Historia novorum, Symeon of Durham's Libellus de exordio, and the Historia ecclesiastica of Orderic Vitalis* (PhD Thesis, University of Durham, 2014), 23-38.

⁶⁷ Sønnesyn 'Mystical Morals of History,' 284-97.

⁶⁸ For example, see Chibnall's discussion of audience: 'General Introduction,' 36-9.

⁶⁹ On Orderic's response to criticism: Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and His Readers,' 18-20.

⁷⁰ For example, Haskins, *Norman Institutions*; Chibnall, *Piety and Power*. Even in discussions of canon law, Chibnall foregrounds Orderic's reflection of the views of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy: 'Canon Law as Reflected in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis,' in *Law as Profession and*

most commonly examined alongside other Anglo-Norman history writers.⁷¹ More recent research has broadened the range of contexts within which the *Historia* has been studied, drawing attention to neglected aspects of the text. Richard Barton has offered an examination of emotion in the text and its relationship to expressions of secular power.⁷² Amanda Hingst and Leonie Hicks have shed light on the significance of landscape to Orderic's historical writing and its associations with memory, sacrality, and Christian history.⁷³ These studies make it increasingly clear that situating Orderic within the nationalising framework of Anglo-Norman political history obscures our understanding of his sense of history writing and the form of his text. They also raise the prospect that other contexts could be pertinent ones in which to study the text. Church reform, however, still remains to be examined as a context within which Orderic wrote despite its impact upon his life, family, and monastic community.⁷⁴

In the modern study of church reform, Orderic's *Historia* is currently used as a source for church councils and canons. His text contains many references to councils and synods, a number of which are unique to his account.⁷⁵ Orderic's detailed descriptions of the papal councils at Clermont in 1095 and Reims in 1119 are particularly significant cases. Robert Somerville included Orderic's version of the canons of Clermont as one of the Anglo-Norman group in his *The Councils of Urban II*.

Practice in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honor of James A. Brundage, eds. Kenneth Pennington and Melodie Harris Eichbauer (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 219-29. This tendency is drawn attention to by Roach and Rozier: 'Introduction,' 1-3.

⁷¹ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 35-65; Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages*, 86-8. This is also true for introductory works which no doubt shape how many readers first approach the *Historia*: Elisabeth van Houts, 'History Writing,' in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 114-8.

⁷² Richard Barton, 'Emotions and Power in Orderic Vitalis', *ANS* 33 (2010): 41-60.

⁷³ Hingst, *Written World*; Hicks, 'Monastic Authority, Landscape, and Place,' 102-120.

⁷⁴ It has, however, been noted that Orderic criticises the reform papacy at one point in the text: Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis on Henry I: theocratic ideology and didactic narrative,' in *Contemporary Reflections on the Medieval Christian Tradition: Essays in Honour of Ray C. Petry*, ed. George H. Shriver (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1974), 131.

⁷⁵ See Appendix 2.

⁷⁶ Chibnall has also examined canonical material in the *Historia*, arguing that Orderic's text reflects the steady inroads canon law made into secular practice in Normandy.⁷⁷ Although Orderic's work has thus already been examined in relation to church reform (specifically in relation to the spread of canon law), these studies do not set out to examine Orderic's engagement with reform nor how it shaped his work as a whole. Somerville traced Orderic's sources, seeking to isolate the most authentic version of the canons of Clermont and therefore the one that best reflected the canons promulgated by Urban II.⁷⁸ Chibnall likewise did not assess how Orderic wrote about canon law, but rather assumed that his text simply transmits contemporary views.⁷⁹ In this thesis, however, I will bring together the recognition of Orderic's investment in contemporary church reforms with a more sophisticated reading of his history writing, in order to appreciate his creative processes.

Methodologies for Reading the Text

An aspect of this burgeoning scholarship on Orderic's work is a shift in emphasis, away from extracting material from the *Historia* as a source and towards paying closer attention to Orderic's use of language and narrative strategies.⁸⁰ The traditional approach to reading the text has been to selectively take material, isolating it from its rhetorical and narrative setting. Chibnall argued that this approach was the best way to read the *Historia*, accounting for its tendency towards digression and irrelevance by 'carefully sifting' the text for useful material.⁸¹ This approach is underpinned by the assumption that Orderic was a naive witness, who either did not seek to or was unable to shape his material in such a way as to express his own arguments and ideas through his

⁷⁶ Robert Somerville, *The Councils of Urban II, Vol. 1: Decreta Claromontensia* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972), 83-9.

⁷⁷ Chibnall, 'Canon Law as Reflected,' 219-29.

⁷⁸ Somerville, *Councils of Urban II*, 86.

⁷⁹ Chibnall, 'Canon Law as Reflected,' 219.

⁸⁰ Roach and Rozier 'Introduction,' 4-5.

⁸¹ Chibnall, 'Canon Law as Reflected,' 229.

writing.⁸² Chibnall's introduction to her edition of the text further supports such assumptions, emphasising that Orderic inherited the assumptions of the Norman aristocracy and his fellow monks.⁸³ In the 1970s, Richard Southern and Roger Ray raised some of the problems of using extractive methodologies to read medieval historiography.⁸⁴ Ray argued for more authentic consideration of different kinds of histories, examining ideas of genre (especially *historia*) as they were perceived by contemporaries. In this way, Ray believed it would be possible to make sense of complex, untidy historical works and to explore the close relationship between history, hagiography, and biblical scholarship. Although Ray's arguments were informed by his research into Orderic's work, to which Ray frequently refers, the practical application of these insights to the reading of the *Historia* is still in its infancy. Thus I will attempt to apply Ray's insights to our reading of the *Historia* systematically, in order to overcome the text's practical and interpretative challenges.

Without first developing a conceptual framework for reading and understand the *Historia* as a whole, there is a danger that comparative work can have the unintended effect of telescoping the text's complexity into analytically useful but simplified formulas.⁸⁵ Leah Shopkow made use of an innovative methodology by examining the 'historical culture' of Normandy.⁸⁶ Situating the *Historia ecclesiastica* in the context of Norman historiography, Shopkow offers important insights on the relationship between the *Historia* and works that preceded it.⁸⁷ However, Shopkow focuses upon only one aspect of the text - Anglo-Norman political history – a decision that is not explicitly

⁸² Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages*, 90; Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 24-5.

⁸³ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 40-41.

⁸⁴ Richard Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 4. The Sense of the Past,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (1973): 243-263; Roger D. Ray, 'Medieval Historiography through the Twelfth Century: Problems and Progress of Research,' *Viator* 5 (1974): 33-60.

⁸⁵ Such as in Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 1-2, 6, 10, 25.

⁸⁶ On Shopkow's methodology, see *History and Community*, 1-19. Emily Albu similarly examined Orderic as part of the tradition of Norman history writing: *Normans in their Histories*, 180-213.

⁸⁷ For example, Shopkow, *History and Community*, 58-59.

justified. Furthermore, Shopkow presents Orderic's view as a fixed point with consistent characteristics, such as: a 'dark moral view of human history', a self-representation as a humble churchman who wrote simply, and the belief that historical writing shared in the holy character of scripture.⁸⁸ While each of these ideas can be supported with evidence from the text, it does not necessarily follow that they represent aspects of Orderic's overarching view of history.

Studies of particular aspects of the *Historia* can be equally problematic in the absence of a model for reading the text as a whole. For example, Roach's analysis of objects of memory is insightful, but the concluding arguments that the *Historia* should be conceived of as a monastic history and not a history of the Anglo-Norman realm cannot be supported by the small range of carefully selected material Roach deploys.⁸⁹ Furthermore, it is unclear at this stage why the *Historia* could not be both a monastic and an Anglo-Norman political history. Emily Albu's study of the tone of the *Historia* similarly bases a broad argument – that 'Orderic's base line is worldly woe' – on only a limited discussion of the text as a whole.⁹⁰ Albu supports this claim by downplaying the significance of more positive moments: she argues that such periods are short lived and 'soon deflated'.⁹¹ In both of these cases, the absence of a developmental model of the *Historia* poses problems, as investigations into specific aspects are not easily inserted into a broader picture of Orderic's history writing.

As part of the recent growth of research into reading the *Historia* and the problems of the text, new efforts have also been made to make sense of the text as a whole. Part of this process has been studies that foreground neglected aspects of the *Historia*, arguing for their integral position within the text.⁹² In particular, the

⁸⁸ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 136-137.

⁸⁹ Roach, 'The Material and the Visual', 78.

⁹⁰ Emily Albu, 'Worldly Woe and Heavenly Joy: The Tone of the *Historia ecclesiastica*,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier et al, 235.

⁹¹ Albu, 'Worldly Woe,'

⁹² Daniel Roach, 'Saint-Évroul and Southern Italy in Orderic's *Historia ecclesiastica*,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier et al, 78-99; Véronique Gazeau, 'Orderic Vitalis and the Cult of Saints,' in

relationship between the first two books and the remaining eleven has attracted attention. These books have previously been characterised as an additional, separate work that was appended to the rest of the text.⁹³ New analysis has pointed to the effects of these books and how they contributed to the history Orderic sought to write.⁹⁴ Elisabeth Mégier has considered ways of conceptualising the *Historia* as a whole text.⁹⁵ Mégier argues that the *Historia* has coherence as a whole text, arguing that themes in Books I and II reinforce the central, shared arguments in the text and are rooted in a ‘fully coherent theology of history’.⁹⁶ Much of Mégier’s argument hinges on the similarities between Books I-II and XI-XIII. These five books, however, were all written mainly within the same two-year period (1136-1137), which is only a small part of twenty-seven-year-plus period of writing. Mégier’s approach also poses a dichotomy between seeing Books I and II as either separate from the whole or part of a single, coherent text. Until we are able to develop ways of understanding the *Historia* as a whole text without imposing a false coherence upon it, comparative analysis of the *Historia* and even studies of particular aspects of the text will continue to be problematic. This study thus pursues a third option, examining these books as a distinct part of a single text that encompassed multiple viewpoints.

Life, Works and Interpretations, Rozier *et al*, 172-88. Daniel Roach has also completed a PhD thesis, ‘Narrative Strategy in the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Orderic Vitalis’ (PhD Diss., University of Exeter, 2014), that concerns the challenges of reading the text and points to often neglected material such as on Southern Italy and the First Crusade, although I have not been able to access it as it is currently under embargo.

⁹³ Chibnall, ‘General Introduction,’ 34.

⁹⁴ Ward, ‘Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,’ 16-18; Gasper, ‘Theology of Reckoning,’ 258.

⁹⁵ Elisabeth Mégier, ‘Jesus Christ, a Protagonist of Anglo-Norman History? History and Theology in Orderic Vitalis’s *Historia ecclesiastica*,’ in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 260-83.

⁹⁶ Mégier, ‘Jesus Christ,’ 201.

III. Parameters of the Study

This thesis examines the *Historia ecclesiastica* as a whole text. My aim is to build a clearer picture of the text's development over time and to navigate some of the challenges posed by its apparent incoherence. Reading across the entire text means that I will be able to analyse specific passages in relation to wider themes and the text's multiple, overlapping narratives. Thus, this thesis makes use of the reading of the *Historia* as a whole as an analytical tool. Such an approach also offers the ability to question how attention could be drawn to ideas, people, and events through implicit connections to earlier sections. Part of this approach involves considering how different parts of the *Historia* were composed in relation to passages already written. My aim is to expose resonances between and amongst collections of passages. This approach will also shed light on identifiable changes of plan as well as how the addition of later books recast the reading experience of earlier ones, both in advance (especially with the addition of Books I and II) and retrospectively where later books might draw together ideas expressed earlier.

As part of this approach, I will consider material from Books I and II. By adopting a reading that examines these books alongside the other eleven, I will avoid isolating them as a separate object of study, which can implicitly support the idea they are a discrete part of the text. The aim of my approach is to allow multivalent connections to emerge between all thirteen books. This approach thus offers a way to expose differences and tensions between Books I and II specifically, as well as between all thirteen books. Having examined all thirteen books together, the thesis will then be able to reflect on the place of Books I and II within the development of the *Historia* and as an integral part of Orderic's ideas of history writing.

In examining the *Historia* as a whole, I will also consider each of the books of the *Historia* as a semi-independent entity. In a sense, the *Historia* can be analysed as

multiple, interrelated books that emerged from subtly different contexts and in response to one another. This in no way diminishes the connections between these books; however, it does point to a kind of internal comparison that can be used to better understand the development of the text. In the fourth chapter, I will also examine Orderic's interpolations in the *Gesta Normannorum ducum* in relation to Orderic's ideas of history writing. As I will demonstrate, there is reason to read Orderic's interpolations in the *Gesta* alongside the early parts of the *Historia*: these two periods of history writing are connected through common modes of writing, heavily informed by Orderic's practice as an interpolator. I have chosen not to include Orderic's other historical works elsewhere, because this thesis takes as its object of study the *Historia*, rather than Orderic as historian. There has been a tendency in some recent research to read Orderic's writing in the *Historia* as a reflection of his inner state and personality.⁹⁷ However, the dangers of such an approach are significant; as Chibnall recognised, Orderic left no record of his thoughts and feelings.⁹⁸ Consequently, this thesis attempts to read the *Historia* as rhetorical and argumentative, including the passages in which Orderic appears to present thoughts and autobiography. Aside from the *Gesta*, this study does not make use of other comparative analyses. Until we have a clearer conceptual framework for the *Historia* as a whole text, comparisons risk simplifying the multiple perspectives expressed in the text.

This study focuses on Orderic's argument and on the form of the text. My aim is to understand the relationship between Orderic's history writing in the *Historia* and contemporary church reforms. Consequently, this study does not focus on Orderic's sources or source use, aspects of the text which have already been discussed in detail.⁹⁹ There are two exceptions to this. The first is Orderic's use of Baudri of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosolimitana*, which is the primary source for the account of the First Crusade in Book IX. In this case, I will consider Orderic's decision to copy Baudri's text as part

⁹⁷ Such as Albu, 'Worldly Woe and Heavenly Joy,' 217-246.

⁹⁸ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 39.

⁹⁹ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 48-77; Delisle, 'Notice,' lxiii-xciii.

of a reflection on how to write a history of the unprecedented events of the First Crusade. The second instance concerns sources for Books I and II. The way that Orderic abbreviated Biblical material and inserted selected passages from commentaries is a key dimension of the text's argument, especially when read in light of the educated monastic audience from whom Orderic wrote. In these two cases, source use and its implications for Orderic's history writing is discussed below in more detail.

This study examines material on contemporary ecclesiastical affairs as a key part of Orderic's writing. There is reason to suggest that church reform was potentially crucial to Orderic's work. In addition to the effects of reforms on Orderic's life, he also witnessed a gathering in 1132 at Cluny of Cluniac priors from across Christendom that was expressly called to amend Cluniac customs in response to the challenge posed by the new monastic orders.¹⁰⁰ It has also been suggested that Orderic was personally in attendance at the 1119 council of Reims, convened by Pope Callixtus II.¹⁰¹ The content of the *Historia* also indicates the potential significance of church reform. Orderic recorded numerous church councils, described papal schisms and conflict in the church, and depicted key reforming figures, like Pope Gregory VII and Archbishop Lanfranc.¹⁰² His decision to commence his work with the Incarnation through the addition of Book I could also be associated with reform as a return to a purer spiritual past. Indeed, there could be a fundamental relationship at work here between backwards looking reform and history writing. In placing reform firmly at the heart of Orderic's work, this study draws attention to often neglected material (such as the *Historia*'s hagiography, Books I and II, and church councils), offering a more rounded consideration of the *Historia* and Orderic's practice as a writer. By exposing the interplay between Orderic's arguments and contemporary reforms, it also adds a new dimension to the study of Orderic's

¹⁰⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:424-6.

¹⁰¹ The question of Orderic's attendance is discussed in Chapter One, Section II.

¹⁰² Each of these examples is discussed in detail below.

community by exploring their experiences of church reform, mediated through the history written for them.

As the first study to conduct a detailed examination of reform in the *Historia*, my thesis also offers insights into eleventh- and twelfth-century church reforms. It undertakes a sustained analysis of the text that is currently only selectively examined in relation to reform, as a useful source. The study thus uncovers Orderic's arguments about contemporary changes in the church and sheds light on his ideas and expectations about reform and reformers. Drawing out how arguments are made through history writing, this study analyses how Orderic saw and communicated the effects and experiences of reforms. Thus, this study contributes to recent interest in the practical effects of reform efforts.¹⁰³ In investigating Orderic's perspective, this study also sheds light on ideas of reform as expressed by a non-polemical interlocutor. Whereas most of the texts studied in relation to ideologies of reform are elite, polemical, and, often, reformist in outlook, Orderic wrote for his own community and did not overtly push for change or argue against it. Consequently, this study offers a counter-balance to the tendency to focus on elite and reformist texts.

IV. Methodology

This thesis examines the thirteen books of the *Historia ecclesiastica* through a sustained analysis of form and content, in light of the social logic of the text. The methodology has two key components. The first is a sustained literary analysis of the text, considering form and content in parallel, which is informed by interdisciplinary methodologies. An objective of the study is to undertake a sustained literary reading of the text and to navigate the severe practical challenges posed by it. Through the close analysis of language and narrative strategy, I aim to examine the rhetorical and

¹⁰³ See Chapter Three, Introduction and Section III.

persuasive functions of the text and to fully appreciate the nuance and sophistication of Orderic's arguments. This method is informed by literary approaches to medieval historiography. Matthew Kempshall, who emphasises the fundamentally rhetorical nature of all medieval historiography, has been especially influential.¹⁰⁴ I will also take as a starting point the idea that narrative is a key tool of composition that communicates meaning and argument, rather than foremost a structural tool.¹⁰⁵ One of the consequences of this approach is to focus on implied causation and associations, and their argumentative implications, alongside, for example, geographic and chronological schemes of organisation. As a part of this, I will also be attuned to the presence of multiple, co-existing modes of narrativity. Discontinuities will be examined as another kind of narrative strategy, with the potential to create a disconnection or rupture and to shape the reader's attention. This methodology also responds to the most recent research into the *Historia* by offering a more sustained literary reading than hitherto undertaken. Although extractive approaches to reading the text have been challenged, it is still necessary to make the argument that methodologies informed by interdisciplinary study offer a more effective and nuanced way to analyse the text. By adopting this methodology, the study aims to put forward the value of literary readings for our understanding of Orderic as a history writer and the text as a whole.

The second aspect of my methodology is an examination of the text according to its specific social contexts. This aspect is informed by Gabrielle Spiegel's theory of the 'social logic of the text', by which is meant the socio-political context in which a text was written and that accounts for its particular semantic inflection.¹⁰⁶ The social logic of

¹⁰⁴ Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400-1500* (Manchester: University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁵ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 28-33. My approach to Orderic's narrative strategies has also been informed by Nancy Partner's arguments concerning the importance of setting aside modern concepts of structure and narrative: *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 194-211.

¹⁰⁶ See in particular: 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text,' and 'Towards a Theory of the Middle Ground,' *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1999) 3-28; 44-56. For an example of the theory in practice: Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography*

the *Historia* has multiple dimensions. This study identifies and focuses upon three aspects of the text's determinative social context. These are the chronology of the *Historia* (that is when each book was written relative to the rest); Orderic's career and position within the community of Saint-Évroul; and his audience, the community itself. I have chosen to focus on the text's social logic as a means to address the problems posed by the text's scale and inconsistencies. As discussed, these aspects of the text pose substantial interpretative research that continue to inhibit modern research. This methodology is a response to these challenges and an attempt to navigate them through an appreciation of the changing contexts in which Orderic worked.

The chronology of the *Historia* forms a key part of the text's social logic, as each book can be read relatively to those it was written before and alongside. Accordingly, this study attempts to understand the text's structure, development, and apparent inconsistencies in light of these relationships. The full implications of the text's chronology will become apparent in the fourth chapter, where I identify different phases of Orderic's work and put forward an argument concerning their relationship to his ideas of history writing.¹⁰⁷

Orderic's monastic career and position within the community changed over time. As discussed, he appears to have been an increasingly senior presence in the scriptorium from the mid-1120s. He also lived and wrote under four different abbots; the significance of this to not just the pace of his work, but also for Orderic's history writing (such as his freedom to pursue ideas or responsibility for community *historia*) has been the subject of only limited scholarly attention. If each book of the *Historia* has a chronological moment, it also has a social moment related to Orderic's place within the

in Thirteenth Century France (Berkeley; Los Angeles; Oxford: University of California Press, 1993). The structure of the work consciously foregrounds the prose chronicles' social logic with the first chapter considering in detail the specific context in which they emerged: 'The Historical Setting,' 11-54.

¹⁰⁷ See Chapter 3, Section I. For a visual representation of the *Historia's* development, see Appendix 3.

community of Saint-Évroul. In examining the text's chronology, this study will also focus on social time by paying attention to the ways in which Orderic's changing position and seniority may relate to changes in the text.

Orderic's monastic audience is the third part of the text's social logic. I will examine his audience in two ways. Firstly, I will consider the diachronic nature of his community. Like Orderic over his monastic career, his community changed too. This study examines the implications of the fact that Orderic's immediate audience was also a close-knit community to which he belonged. It builds upon recent research into the monastic milieu in which the *Historia* was read by pursuing a more sustained consideration of Orderic's community as an audience he was in dialogue with throughout the writing of the *Historia*. Adopting a sustained dialogic reading of audience demands that we consider how the different parts of the text work together in a community context (including diverse material like a history of the Incarnation, church councils, and autobiography). It also raises questions about how Orderic's position within the community shaped his ideas of history writing and the purposes of his work over time. By thinking about Orderic in dialogue with his community, this study will thus investigate how Orderic worked as his community's history-writer, determining their understanding of the past and their place within it.

This study puts forward methodologies that help to resolve the challenges posed by the text's scale, its complex chronological development, and apparent inconsistencies. By considering the *Historia* as a whole, this thesis offers an innovative approach to the important question of the relationship between Books I and II and the remaining eleven books of the *Historia*. Furthermore, it argues for a new understanding of these books as distinct in form and substance, but nonetheless a key part of the whole text. This study also offers a new reading of the chronology of the *Historia* and models methodologies for deploying the text's chronology analytically. This reinterpretation of the text's chronology is a crucial tool to understand how the *Historia* developed and to make sense of the text's multiplicity of perspectives. Although the *Historia* was not

written according to a preconceived scheme, this study foregrounds Orderic's conscious design at each moment of writing. It sheds light on Orderic as a history writer too, drawing attention to how his ideas of history writing changed and matured over time through practical experience and in dialogue with his community. Through the use of the text's chronology as a reading tool, I show how these changing ideas of history writing are traceable in its development.

V. Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into four chapters. These were designed according to two main aims. In the first instance, they adopt a cumulative approach to the study of Orderic's engagement with reform. I begin simply with the arguments Orderic makes concerning an aspect of reform. I then use these conclusions to build towards a more sophisticated understanding of Orderic's reform ideologies. The second aim is to confront the methodological challenges of the text in a practical and effective manner. Each chapter adopts a different body of material spread through the thirteen books, thus intersecting the text in different ways, in order to examine different aspects of the text's methodological challenge. In so doing, I develop and deploy increasingly effective methods for reading the text through these multiple examinations. The fourth chapter then draws together the methodological insights from the previous three and applies them to the question of Orderic's history writing and the development of the text over time.

Each chapter also engages with a different historiography. This is a response to the modern study of church reform, which is partitioned into sub-fields. (The fields of canon law, secular marriage, nicolaitism, and ideas of reform are all pertinent here.) The *Historia* cannot be neatly associated with one particular aspect of the modern study of church reform: to do so would be to presuppose the content and focus of the text. This

presents a challenge of how to understand the potential contribution to the knowledge of reform, because different questions and languages deployed in these fields makes it harder to draw out Orderic's arguments and application to the current state of knowledge. However, addressing this challenge is necessary in order to understand Orderic's text in relation to contemporary ecclesiastical change.

The first chapter examines accounts of church councils in the *Historia* and the arguments Orderic makes in them. This chapter looks at church councils as the material in the text most closely associated with eleventh- and twelfth-century reform. Its aim is question of how far Orderic makes arguments about contemporary reforms. The conciliar material in the *Historia* poses interpretive challenges as it has been treated as a form of record and disaggregated from the remainder of the text. The chapter aims to navigate these challenges by questioning current approaches and exploring how Orderic makes arguments through this kind of writing. It attempts to integrate this material through an analysis of Orderic's narrative strategies and by stripping away assumptions concerning the material's documentary form. The chapter contributes to our knowledge of Orderic as a writer by questioning the place and effect of this hitherto isolated material. It also sheds light on conciliar theory and practice during this period through a literary re-reading of this material.

The second chapter looks at passages on marriages and married life in the text, in order to investigate how far Orderic explored contemporary issues related to marriage. It examines to what extent Orderic makes arguments about reform throughout the text, through an assessment of a kind of material that is much more diffuse and widely spread than accounts of church councils. This material has been chosen because marriage – both secular and clerical – is closely associated with ecclesiastical change during this period. It is also a personally significant issue for Orderic and his community. Thus, the chapter builds upon the first by testing how integral reform is in the main body of the text. This material poses a different interpretative challenge to conciliar accounts. Its quantity presents a practical barrier and its spread throughout the text complicates

analysis in light of the text's chronology. Furthermore, the fields of nicolaitism and lay marriage are distinct and have different conceptual underpinnings. By navigating these challenges, the chapter aims to offer insights into the problem of the text's chronology. It also explores how to move between these two modern fields of study, exposing connections that exist in the gap between them.

The third chapter asks how far Orderic has an articulated reform ideology. It builds upon the first and second chapters, which show how Orderic engaged with the effects and experiences of contemporary reforms. The primary challenge the chapter engages with is a conceptual one: how to read reform ideology in a text that does not contain recognised reform languages and lacks a polemical context and form. In engaging with this challenge, the chapter aims to draw attention to some of the limitations in the modern study of ideas of reform. The chapter addresses this conceptual challenge through the use of change as an analytical category shorn of the assumptions associated with church reform. The chapter also posits that Orderic makes arguments about change in the church through passages on members of the ecclesiastical elite. It thus addresses how to read this material to draw out Orderic's arguments and underlying reform ideology.

The final chapter investigates Orderic's ideas of history writing and their development over time. It undertakes a comparative assessment of metanarrative prefaces, epilogues, and interjections in the text. It examines this material for its argumentative and rhetorical qualities in light of the text's social context. Its aim is to question the significance of church reform (both in terms of the wider context and Orderic's response to it) to the development of ideas of history writing and to the form of the text. The chapter shifts focus directly to the relationship between Orderic's reform engagement (examined in Chapters One, Two, and Three) and Orderic's history writing. By shedding light on the relationship between church reform and Orderic's history writing, the chapter aims to explore a new aspect of Orderic's sense of history writing. The primary methodological challenge the chapter addresses is that of incoherence. It

asks how to draw out Orderic's sense of history writing from the multiple, competing ideas of history writing expressed at various points in the text. The chapter develops a way to navigate this problem through the systematic application of the methodological insights of the previous chapters.

Chapter One. Church Councils

To date, Orderic has not been examined in detail as a potential commentator on church reform. However, the *Historia* offers critical evidence for conciliar practices and procedures for the period c. 1070-c. 1140, containing thirteen full accounts of church councils along with numerous brief references.¹⁰⁸ These kinds of church councils and the canon law they issued are integral to our understanding of church reform and the development of papal government in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, in the Anglo-Norman realm a flurry of conciliar activity went hand-in-hand with efforts to promote reform.¹¹⁰ So, did Orderic use his conciliar accounts to explore ideas about contemporary reforms? In this chapter, I will examine the arguments Orderic makes through these accounts of church councils, how he does this, and what implications these arguments have for our knowledge of conciliar practice and theory in this period. Thus, the chapter tests the hypothesis that Orderic responded to the context of contemporary church reforms in the way he composed his historical work.

To date Orderic's conciliar material has only been examined as a form of record that provides direct evidence for the realities of conciliar practice and canon law. For example, Robert Somerville made extensive use of evidence from the *Historia* in his research into church councils and their canons, analysing Orderic's language in order to

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix 2. For briefer references, I recommend looking under *sinodus* and *concilium* in the *Index Verborum* provided in Chibnall's edition: *HE*, Chibnall, 1: 272, 370.

¹⁰⁹ The development of Roman jurisprudence and the New Law has been seen as a key step towards thirteenth-century papal monarchy: Kriston R. Rennie, 'The Council of Poitiers (1078) and Some Legal Considerations,' *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 27 (2008): 1-5. For an excellent introduction to medieval canon law, see James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London; New York: Longman, 1995), esp. 44-69.

¹¹⁰ Martin Brett 'A Collection of Anglo-Norman Councils,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 26, no. 3 (1975): 306.

uncover the realities of conciliar practice.¹¹¹ This way of reading the text has had two consequences. Firstly, the material has been read under the assumption that Orderic transmitted material and did not communicate ideas or points through the form and content of the passages in question. Consequently, Marjorie Chibnall argued that Orderic's conciliar accounts are representative of the Norman response to the spread of canon law.¹¹² And secondly the material has been studied in isolation from the remainder of the text, as if the documentary quality of conciliar accounts insulated them from the author's creative processes. However, the placement of this conciliar material within the main body of Orderic's narrative history could suggest that current approaches undervalue the significance of the author's creative input. Consequently, this chapter asks how far conciliar material in the *Historia* is a form of record and what is offered by alternative ways of reading. In placing this hitherto disaggregated material centre stage, the chapter confronts the methodological challenge of attempting to integrate the conciliar accounts into the narrative and argumentative frameworks of the text. By exploring how we read these accounts, the chapter sheds light on Orderic as a commentator on reform and on the relationship between his ecclesiastical context and history writing.

Recent research into canon law gives reason to question the way that conciliar material in the *Historia* has hitherto been studied.¹¹³ The emerging consensus is that the survival and transmission of canonical material in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was

¹¹¹ Robert Somerville, 'The Councils of Pope Callixtus II: Reims 1119,' in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Salamanca, 21-25 September 1976*, eds. Stephen Kuttner and Kenneth Pennington (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980), 35-50; 'The Councils of Pope Callixtus II and the Collection in Ten Parts,' *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 11 (1981): 80-86; *The Councils of Urban II, Vol. 1, Decreta Claromontensia* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972), 83-9. See also: Marjorie Chibnall, 'Canon Law as Reflected in the Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis,' in *Law as Profession and Practice in Medieval Europe: Essays in Honor of James A. Brundage*, eds. Kenneth Pennington and Melodie Harris Eichbauer (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), 219-29.

¹¹² Chibnall, 'Canon Law as Reflected,' 219-29.

¹¹³ For an incisive discussion of the state of the field: Kriston R. Rennie, *Medieval Canon Law* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2018), esp. 1-10.

fragile, varied, and beholden to the interests of individuals.¹¹⁴ It also appears that canonical material was not tightly controlled. Anders Winroth has established that even Gratian's *Decretum* had two versions, the earlier of which (r1) was much shorter and more analytical than the later (r2).¹¹⁵ Assumed centripetal forces, such as the emergent papal government, appear not to have sought to produce authentic versions of conciliar canons or to control the use of canonical collections.¹¹⁶ As a result, received grand narratives for the development of canon law in the eleventh and twelfth centuries have been challenged, such as the development of Roman law and jurisprudence.¹¹⁷ Conciliar canons in particular survive in few, often varied, manuscript copies and are much less well attested than canonical collections.¹¹⁸ How conciliar canons were recorded and why

¹¹⁴ For example, see: Linda Fowler-Magerl, 'The Collection and Transmission of Canon Law along the Northern Section of the Via Francigena in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,' in *Bishops, Texts and the Use of Canon Law around 1100*, eds. Bruce C. Brasington and Kathleen C. Cushing (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 129-40. Uta-Renate Blumenthal emphasised with reference to the 1095 council of Clermont that routes of copying are often circumstantial and closely tied to personnel in attendance: 'Conciliar Canons and Manuscripts: The Implications of their Transmission in the Eleventh Century,' in *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Munich, 13-18 July 1992*, eds. Peter Landau and Joers Mueller (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1997), 369-72.

¹¹⁵ Anders Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2000), 122-45. Works since the publication of *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* have further nuanced its construction, see Atria A. Larson, *Master of Penance: Gratian and the Development of Penitential thought and law in the Twelfth Century* (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2013). On the ongoing reworking of the *Decretum* into the thirteenth century, see: Martin Brett, 'Margin and Afterthought: the *Clavis* in Action,' in *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages*, eds. Martin Brett and Kathleen G. Cushing (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 137-64.

¹¹⁶ Anne J. Duggan. 'Making law or not? The function of Papal Decretals in the Twelfth Century,' in *Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Esztergom 2008, 3-8 August 2008*, eds. P Erdő and S. A. Szuromi (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980), 64-6.

¹¹⁷ Christof Rolker, 'Ivo of Chartres and the Panormia: The Question of Authorship Revisited,' in *Proceedings of the Thirteenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Esztergom 2008, 3-8 August*, eds. P Erdő and S. A. Szuromi (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980), 194-5; Uta-Renate Blumenthal, 'The Revival of Roman Law: The *Exceptiones Petri*,' *HSJ* 21 (2010): 113-23.

¹¹⁸ For examples of this disparity, see: Kathleen G. Cushing, 'Law, Penance, and the "Gregorian" Reform: The Case of Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile MS 529,' in *Canon Law, Religion and Politics: liber amicorum Robert Somerville*, eds. Uta-Renate Blumenthal, Peter Landau, and Anders Winroth (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 28; Brett, 'Margin and Afterthought,' 139, 153-6; Martin Brett, 'Canterbury's Perspective on Church Reform and

they are preserved in certain manuscripts is often far from clear.¹¹⁹ This uncertain survival has raised questions about the relationship between church councils and the texts that describe them. Without a tight link between councils and textual production, the function and legal significance of councils in this period is less clear.¹²⁰ The instability of the transmission of canonical material – especially conciliar law – draws into question the idea that Orderic received authoritative canonical material and provided a written record of it in his work. In light of this recent scholarship, current approaches to the canonical material in the *Historia* need re-examination.

Due to the lack of centralised control over the production and spread of canonistic material, scholars have turned their attention to its use by copyists and communities at the point of reception. Kathleen Cushing has persuasively argued that reception was the most dynamic aspect of canonical activity, entailing creative processes of adaptation, omission, and interpolation.¹²¹ However, this insight has not yet been applied to the works of history writers. Thus far the focus has been on communities and on individuals operating in legal or theological spheres.¹²² And yet, histories offer critical evidence for the study of canon law in this period, because the loss of conciliar *acta* means that narrative histories are often the most detailed

Ireland, 1070-1115,' in *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century: Reform and Renewal*, eds. Damien Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedei (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 18.

¹¹⁹ Somerville, *Councils of Urban II*, 39; Blumenthal, 'Conciliar Canons and Manuscripts,' 372-3; Brett, 'A Collection,' 301-8; Somerville, 'Reims 1119,' 36.

¹²⁰ Blumenthal, 'Conciliar Canons and Manuscripts,' 373-5. On the transmission of the canons of Lateran III, see: Danica Summerlin, 'Three Manuscripts Containing the Canons of the 1179 Lateran Council,' *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 30 (2013): 22.

¹²¹ Kathleen G. Cushing, "'Intermediate" and Minor Collections: The Case of the *Collectio Canonum Barberiniana*,' in *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages*, eds. Martin Brett and Kathleen G. Cushing (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 73-86.

¹²² Rolker, *Ivo of Chartres*; Cushing, *Papacy and Law*, 102; Martin Brett, 'The *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* of Ernulf of Canterbury,' in *Canon Law, Religion and Politics: liber amicorum Robert Somerville*, eds. Uta-Renate Blumenthal, Peter Landau and Anders Winroth (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 163-84; Kathleen G. Cushing, 'Polemic or Handbook? Recension Bb of Anselm of Lucca's *Collectio Canonum*,' in *Bishops, Texts and the Use of Canon Law around 1100*, eds. Bruce C. Brasington and Kathleen C. Cushing (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 69-78.

sources for the canons, events, and attendees of councils.¹²³ The canons of the 1095 council of Clermont are found in five early Anglo-Norman manuscripts, four of which are historical works.¹²⁴ Even for the Third Lateran Council – held in 1179 – the evidence of chronicles and histories is some of the most thorough, specifically the *Historia* of William of Tyre and *Chronica* and *Historia* of Roger of Howden.¹²⁵ The question of how to read conciliar material in histories thus has wider ramifications for the study of councils, canon law, and church reform during this crucial period.¹²⁶

Some of the problems of current approaches to the reading of canonical material in histories have been brought to the fore in the work of Richard Kay, who examined Gerald of Wales' *Speculum Ecclesie* in relation to Lateran IV.¹²⁷ Kay argued that Gerald wrote for a curial audience and made an argument on the eve of Lateran IV in favour of the fiscal reform of the Roman curia. By making sense of Gerald's audience and argument, Kay opens the text to new kinds of analyses and makes a persuasive argument for how to read it. However, where Kay's argument is less strong is in the assumption of Gerald's exceptionalism. Introducing Gerald's text, Kay draws attention to the vexed question of his reliability, noting that 'If the report [of the council] had come from a sober, matter-of-fact chronicler such as Richard de Mores, it would be accepted today without question'.¹²⁸ However, no chronicler could have been an objective reporter.¹²⁹

¹²³ On the loss of *acta* from Lateran I, II, and III, see: *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, 77, 97, 119.

¹²⁴ Somerville, *Councils of Urban II*, 83-89.

¹²⁵ Summerlin, 'Using the Canons of the 1179 Lateran Council,' in *Rechtshandschriften des deutschen Mittelalters: Produktionsorte und Importwege: Tagungsband des Arbeitsgesprächs an der Herzog August Bibliothek (Juni 2010)*, eds. G. Drossbach and P. Carmassi (Wiesbaden: Wolfenbütteler, 2015), 247-8; Summerlin, 'Three Manuscripts,' 25-6.

¹²⁶ Kriston R. Rennie and Jason Taliadoros have recently made the case for the wider significance of canon law for any study of the medieval period: 'Why study medieval canon law?,' *History Compass* 12, no. 2 (2014): 133-49.

¹²⁷ Richard Kay, 'Gerald of Wales and the Fourth Lateran Council,' *Viator* 29 (1998): 79-94.

¹²⁸ Kay, 'Gerald of Wales and the Fourth Lateran Council,' 80.

¹²⁹ Martin Brett has discussed the question of when acts of copying become creative endeavours in their own right: 'Editions, Manuscripts and Readers in Some Pre-Gratian Collections,' in *Ritual, Text and Law*, eds. Kathleen G. Cushing and Richard F. Gyug (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 205-24.

Given the absence of control over the dissemination of canon law, there is no reason to assume Gerald of Wales was uniquely placed to adapt his material to the needs of his argument and audience. Consequently, the question of how history writers were able to use canonical material in their work - including outside of polemical contexts - is yet to be fully addressed, despite its implications for the critical evidence provided by histories. By positing alternative ways of reading church councils in the *Historia*, this study offers insights into methodologies for reading canonical material in histories and sheds new light on what Orderic's work reveals about conciliar practice in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

This is the first study to examine conciliar material in the *Historia* as one part of a single text. Consequently, the chapter also offers an initial examination of where and in what form we find this material. The main challenge posed by the material is its relationship to the rest of the *Historia*. This presents difficulties because Orderic's narrative arrangements are often far from clear: where and how a conciliar account connects to surrounding passages is idiosyncratic and demands close attention. Orderic's arguments can be implicit and so, as I discuss below, the role councils play in making points can be equally opaque. And finally, Orderic wrote conciliar accounts between the earlier 1120s and c. 1139, a period that covers much of his writing career. As a result, how he wrote conciliar accounts reflects his experiences of writing history over time. By attempting to navigate these challenges and read the material as a part of the text, the chapter will address previously unexplored questions concerning how Orderic tied conciliar accounts to surrounding passages and the effect of their placement in the text.

Initially, I attempted to examine the material through the lens of history writing as an alternative to canon law. To do this, I sought to compare how Orderic handled conciliar accounts to the near-contemporary John of Worcester and to Bede, one of Orderic's formative influences. We know that Orderic knew Bede's *Historia*

ecclesiastica gentis anglorum well.¹³⁰ However, I found that comparison between Bede and Orderic's works is of limited use for the study of conciliar accounts at this stage. Bede's use of councils indicates a high level of design.¹³¹ His account of the council of Whitby is placed at the literal centre of his work and acts a narrative hinge in the paschal dispute, as it marks the English acceptance of the Roman dating of Easter.¹³² Patrick Wormald has argued that the 'nigh-cosmic' significance attributed to Whitby is, in fact, a result of Bede's presentation of the council.¹³³ In contrast, Orderic's church councils lack an overarching scheme and are characterised by diversity. Consequently, this comparison reveals only that Orderic did not follow Bede in the way he wrote about church councils; it tells us little about the priorities and aims that informed Orderic's work. Comparison with John of Worcester is similarly limited. Although John refers to several church councils, there are few points of overlap between his work and Orderic's (the main instances are the papal councils of Clermont, 1095, and Reims, 1119). John's accounts are usually very brief and McGurk identified a recurrent dependence on Eadmer of Canterbury's work.¹³⁴ As a result, opportunities for close comparative analysis are limited.

¹³⁰ The influence of Bede on Orderic's work deserves further study. For a limited discussion, see: R. H. C. Davis, 'Bede after Bede,' in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R. Allen Brown*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill, Christopher J. Holdsworth, and Janet L. Nelson (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), 115-6. For a list of manuscripts containing Orderic's hand, amongst which number several of Bede's works, see: *HE*, Chibnall, 1:201-3.

¹³¹ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 296-308, 348, 384-8. On Bede's use of councils see: Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650-c. 850* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 20-1, 247-319.

¹³² Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 294-308; John Moorhead, 'Bede on the Papacy,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60, no. 2 (2009): 219; Patrick Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English",' in *The Times of Bede: Studies in early English Christian Society and its Historian*, eds. Patrick Wormald and Stephen Baxter (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 211. For a useful summary of the content of Bede's *Historia*, see: Alan Thacker, 'Bede and History,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Cambridge: University Press, 2010), 176-8.

¹³³ Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede,' 210.

¹³⁴ *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, vol. 3, *The Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, ed. and trans. P. McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 82-3, 88-9, 90-1, 110-111, 114-119, 136-137, 144-147, and 188-189.

Consequently, the approach I adopt here is to examine form and content simultaneously through a series of close comparisons between groups of the main conciliar accounts found in the *Historia*. Short references to councils will not be discussed, as they brevity limits the potential for close analysis. By comparing different accounts composed by a single author, this chapter develops a new way to examine conciliar material. This approach has a number of advantages over the kinds of comparative study that focus on multiple authors' accounts of one council or synod. Focusing on one writer allows for a consideration of how the accounts were composed, as well as how this was done differently between accounts or over time in light of the chronology of the text. It also exposes the significance of the kind of gathering (such as archdiocesan synod or general papal council) and availability of material (first-hand accounts or archival material) on the final form of the conciliar account. This kind of approach avoids the assumption that conciliar accounts necessarily share a documentary character: it draws attention to differences between accounts, opening the possibility for multiple, even competing, kinds of reception and use within a single text. Furthermore, by focusing on councils in a single text, it is possible to pay close attention to narrative strategy. Consequently, this chapter will attempt to read Orderic's conciliar accounts as narratively integrated, paying attention to how accounts connect – or do not connect – to passages around them and the argumentative implications of this.

In the first section, I ask whether it is valid to treat Orderic's conciliar accounts as a form of record. It thus assesses current approaches to Orderic's canonistic material. Section II builds upon the first by offering a literary reading of the accounts, in order to uncover the points Orderic makes concerning conciliar procedure. In the final section, I turn my attention to history writing, asking whether Orderic makes other kinds of arguments in conciliar material.

I. The Question of Record

This section investigates how far conciliar accounts in the *Historia* can be read as a form of record. It asks whether assigning documentary status accurately reflects the form and effect of conciliar accounts in the text, as a first steps towards a reassessment of this material. By examining the question of record, the section draws into doubt current approaches to the study of conciliar material in the *Historia*. First, I will provide an overview of councils in the *Historia*, focusing on the significance of practical and material factors. Then I will compare two conciliar accounts to investigate Orderic's creative processes.

Councils in the *Historia*

In Appendix 2 of this thesis I provide the details of the thirteen full conciliar accounts found in the *Historia*. They have some shared characteristics, particularly in terms of content.¹³⁵ However, shared content does not equate to uniformity of form. Some accounts are laid out as a summarising report while others are presented as a sequential narrative of events.¹³⁶ Individual cases have idiosyncratic forms too. For instance, the 1106 synod of Lisieux is depicted as gathering of the Norman political community under the auspices of Henry I.¹³⁷ In contrast, Orderic includes the 1049 papal council of Reims, held by Pope Leo IX, as part of a history of clerical celibacy.¹³⁸ In certain cases, the line between a council and associated events becomes blurred. The account of the 1108 synod of Rouen includes only a brief mention of the council

¹³⁵ Dating, location, attendees and key subject matter are reliably included.

¹³⁶ The clearest narrative accounts are to be found in the final three books, such as the council of Peter the Venerable at Cluny, 1132 and the 1119 Rouen synod: *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6: 290-4; XIII, 6:424-6.

¹³⁷ For the account of the council of Lisieux, 1106: *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:92-4.

¹³⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120.

specifically and includes instead a lengthy digression on a conversation between two of the attending bishops:

In the year of Lord 1108, the first indiction, Archbishop William called together a council of bishops and abbots to Rouen, and for a number of days with his suffragans dealt with matters of importance to the church. Then Ralph, bishop of Coutances, went to the lodgings of Serlo, bishop of Séez, who was wiser than himself, and spoke with him about many different matters listening to the eloquent reasoning he put forward.¹³⁹

In what follows, Orderic presents a conversation between Ralph and Serlo regarding recent miracles and their meaning.¹⁴⁰ Such variety in form could indicate that Orderic did not receive and transmit material, but rather played a role in shaping conciliar accounts in the text.

However, we cannot rule out the possibility that Orderic's accounts vary principally as a result of practical constraints. The kind of councils under discussion could have influence the form of Orderic's accounts. He wrote about a range of different conciliar gatherings: archdiocesan synods are the most common, with six held at Rouen recorded in full, as well two others held at Lisieux and at Lillebonne. Outside of Normandy, Orderic includes two papal councils held at Reims (in 1049 and 1119) and a third held at Clermont (in 1095). The sources he had access to varied too. The account of Clermont was likely based on written sources the Norman bishops in attendance returned with.¹⁴¹ The evidence of other accounts – particularly Rouen-based

¹³⁹ *Anno ab incarnatione Domini MCVIII indictione prima; Guillelmus archiepiscopus concilium presulum et abbatum Rotomagi congregavit, et de necessariis æcclesiæ rebus cum suffraganeis suis per aliquot dies tractavit. Tunc Radulfus Constantiæ urbis episcopus ad hospicium Serlonis Sagiensis episcopi qui sapientior erat uenit, et cum eo de plurimis locutus copiosam rationem de propositis audiuit.* *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:264. All translations of quotations from the *Historia* are my own.

¹⁴⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:264-8.

¹⁴¹ Suggested by Somerville, *Councils of Urban II*, 37-41. Orderic notes the return of three bishops to their Norman sees: Odo of Bayeux, Gilbert of Évreux, and Serlo of Séez. The other Norman bishops were represented by their envoys. *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:18.

archdiocesan synods – suggests that Orderic relied upon material taken from the archives of Rouen in other cases.¹⁴² A third kind of source is likely to have been eye-witness accounts. The account of the conversation between two bishops at the 1108 synod at Rouen was presumably based upon testimony from one of the attendant bishops – Serlo of Sées – or an intermediary, as Serlo had formerly been abbot of Saint-Évroul (1089-1091). Given the different kinds of conciliar gathering under discussion and variety in Orderic’s sources, these kinds of practical factors could be responsible for the form of the conciliar material in the *Historia*.

A further complicating factor is the chronology of the text. Orderic did not write about church councils consistently over the course of his career. The earliest written accounts are in Books IV and V. These were written over the period *c.* 1125-*c.* 1130 and are not found close together nor closely related in the text.¹⁴³ There is a gap with no substantial conciliar accounts in Books VI, VII, and VIII, except for 1108 synod of Rouen. In contrast, Books XI-XIII (written mainly 1136-1137) contain the most significant concentration of conciliar accounts, several of which are linked chronologically and thematically. Books I and II (written alongside XI-XIII) also contain conciliar material, notably an abbreviated account of the council of Jerusalem and a list of the Ecumenical councils.¹⁴⁴ We can see that Orderic did not consistently insert conciliar accounts but included them irregularly over much of his writing career. The variety of these passages could, therefore, be a reflection of the experience of writing over time.

It is not usually possible to analyse Orderic’s creative processes through comparison with his sources. In several cases his accounts are unique to the *Historia*.¹⁴⁵ Where multiple accounts exist, it can be difficult to identify source

¹⁴² See Appendix 2 for further details of Orderic’s accounts of Rouen synods.

¹⁴³ See Appendix 2.

¹⁴⁴ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:143-144; II, 1:221-222.

¹⁴⁵ See Appendix 2.

derivation. For example, there is no surviving authoritative or original account of the 1095 council of Clermont.¹⁴⁶ Somerville identified extensive variation between the versions making it difficult to isolate any one author's creative input.¹⁴⁷ Even where it is possible to assess Orderic's accuracy, this does not necessarily help to understand his composition of conciliar accounts. Chibnall argued that the account of Lillebonne in the *Historia* is an accurate one that substantially reflected the canons issued in 1080.¹⁴⁸ This claim is based upon the sources Orderic had access to (the archives of Rouen) and through comparison with two other surviving versions of the canons issued in 1080, which reveals only slight variations. This assessment pertains exclusively to the list of canons – ignoring most of the account – and does not consider where we find the canon list and how it is prefaced. It is even more difficult to examine Orderic's source use when considering his accounts as a whole and not just canon lists, as he included further unique passages. For example, his version of Urban II's address at Clermont includes a section on the enslavement of Christians under Muslim rule that is not found in other accounts (even among the Anglo-Norman group).¹⁴⁹ Orderic and Hesso *scholasticus*' accounts of the 1119 council of Reims focus on different aspects of Callixtus II's speech, although there is nothing to suggest that the pope's speech did not in fact include both elements.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, tracing Orderic's sources does not offer a viable solution to disentangle meaningful formal and rhetorical composition from differences arising from variety in source material, kind of council, or chronology of writing.

¹⁴⁶ The lack of an authoritative form is widely recognised: *Councils and Synods, with other documents relating to the English Church*, vol. 1, 871-1204, part 2, 1066-1204, eds. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 647-9; Somerville, *Councils of Urban II*, 6-7.

¹⁴⁷ As is clear from comparisons to other councils: Somerville, *Councils of Urban II*, 7, n. 17.

¹⁴⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, 3:26, n.1. See also: *HE*, Chibnall, 2:284-5, n. 4.

¹⁴⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, 5: 16, n. 3.

¹⁵⁰ Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis on Henry I,' 129-30; *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6: 252, n. 1.

Comparing Councils: Rouen (1072) and Lillebonne (1080)

A way in which we can attempt to separate differences resulting from material or chronology from formal composition is to compare accounts that seem to have been based on similar material and that were written in close succession. A promising comparison is between two of the earlier written accounts in the *Historia*: the councils held in 1072 at Rouen and 1080 at Lillebonne. Several factors facilitate this comparison. Both gatherings were archdiocesan councils, convened with the active involvement of King William I. These passages are found in Books IV and V respectively, written over the period c. 1125-c. 1130. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that both accounts derive from material at the cathedral archives at Rouen. As the *Historia* is the only source for the account of the 1072 council of Rouen, Orderic's sources cannot be known for certain.¹⁵¹ However, the account includes a list of canons, suggesting that Orderic had access to a written source. It seems probable that Orderic acquired this source from the cathedral archives for Rouen, as the council was convened at Rouen and Orderic used the cathedral archives for other conciliar accounts in the *Historia*. For the 1080 council of Lillebonne, Orderic also likely used material from the archives of Rouen where a copy of the canons of Lillebonne was still preserved in 1431.¹⁵² The material differences between these two accounts are, therefore, limited, indicating that differences in form and narrative can be attributed to Orderic's authorship.

The passage on the 1080 council of Lillebonne is a detailed account.¹⁵³ Orderic explains that the council was convened at William I's behest and then gives a short history of the town of Lillebonne, referring to its name as a corruption of the name *Julia bona* given to a settlement founded by Julius Caesar.¹⁵⁴ He also includes a full list of canons, numbering thirty-eight in total. It is the only account in which Orderic explicitly

¹⁵¹ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284, n. 4.

¹⁵² *HE*, Chibnall, 3:26, n. 1. See Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, 30-7.

¹⁵³ For the full account: *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:24-36.

¹⁵⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:34-6.

claims to be producing a kind of record. He claims that: ‘I wish to insert here the statutes of the council as they were truthfully recorded by those in attendance, so that future generations may learn what kind of laws there were in Normandy under King William’s rule.’¹⁵⁵ The implication is that Orderic’s account inherits the status of the statutes as copied down by the attendees, and thus is a truthful record too.

The account of the 1072 council of Rouen does not include a comparable metanarrative explanation.¹⁵⁶ Rather, Orderic situates the council in its immediate political context, referring to William I’s efforts to bring peace to Normandy and Maine in the wake of growing hostilities with Robert the Frisian, ruler of Flanders.¹⁵⁷ William admonishes the nobility to just governance and adherence to law, assembling the council at Rouen under Archbishop John of Rouen in order to promote peace and stability in the church.¹⁵⁸ Orderic also includes a list of the canons issued in 1072, naming John, archbishop of Rouen, and the bishops Odo of Bayeux, Michael of Avranches, Gilbert of Évreux, as those in attendance who confirmed the decrees along with a number of unnamed abbots.¹⁵⁹ These differences between the accounts could indicate that the presentation of Lillebonne as an instance of record is a creative act, rather than a status inherited through Orderic’s source. This is supported by the inclusion of a metanarrative interjection asserting the status of the council of Lillebonne as an authentic record; such an assertion evidently cannot have been copied from the list of Lillebonne canons Orderic seems to have used.

By focusing on points of difference between these two accounts, it is possible to investigate how this presentation as record was achieved. One tool Orderic uses is narrative arrangement. In the case of the 1072 Rouen council, Orderic inserts the

¹⁵⁵ *Statuta uero concilii sicut ab iis qui interfuerunt ueraciter annotata sunt uolo hic inserer; ut posteri discant quales in Normannia leges fuerunt sub Guillelmo principe. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:24-6.*

¹⁵⁶ For the full account: *HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:284-92.*

¹⁵⁷ *HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:284.*

¹⁵⁸ *HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:284-6.*

¹⁵⁹ *HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:292.*

accounts into a narrative of William I's return to Normandy in 1070, tying it to a discussion of politics in Normandy.¹⁶⁰ This narrative explores ideals of kingship and secular rule, by depicting William as an idealised ruler imposing order on warlike Normans. Orderic writes that: 'Hearing news of the king's arrival, peace-lovers everywhere rejoiced but the sons of discord and foul sinners quailed in their wicked hearts before the coming of the avenger.'¹⁶¹ Orderic also refers to the actions William took to establish order and peace in the duchy. He writes that:

He [King William] admonished bishops and churchmen that they should live well, ceaselessly meditate on God's law, take counsel together for God's church, correct the customs of those subject to them in accordance with the decrees of the canons, and guide all with caution.¹⁶²

William's admonitions present an idealised vision of an ordered Christian society. The council of Rouen is called explicitly as a result of this admonition – 'Therefore in the year of Our Lord 1072 a council was assembled' – situating it as tool through which ideals of order were enacted.¹⁶³ Consequently, Orderic arranges the material so that the council reflects upon ideas of kingship and secular rule.

In the case of Lillebonne, in contrast, Orderic appears to disconnect the account from the preceding narrative. The passage immediately before the conciliar account concerns the death of John, archbishop of Rouen, in 1079.¹⁶⁴ As John's successor – William Bonne-Âme – plays a role in the council of Lillebonne, the two passages could seem connected. However, nothing explicitly ties them; the account of Lillebonne begins

¹⁶⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284.

¹⁶¹ *Audito undique regis aduentu pacis amatores letati sunt; sed filii discordiæ et fædi sceleribus ex conscientia nequam adueniente ultore contremuerunt.* *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284.

¹⁶² *Episcopos quoque et æcclesiasticos uiros admonuit ut bene uiuerent; ut legem Dei iugiter reuoluerent, ut æcclesiæ Dei communiter consulerent, ut subditorum mores secundum scita canonum corrigerent, et omnes caute regerent.* *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284.

¹⁶³ *Anno igitur ab incarnatione Domini millesimo septuagesimo secundo congregatum est concilium.* *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284.

¹⁶⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:22-4.

without introduction: ‘In the year of our Lord 1080...’.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, Orderic lays emphasis on King William’s role in calling together the council, presenting the new Archbishop William as a passive figure numbering among those who were summoned. This comparison indicates that the narrative isolation of the account of Lillebonne was not a necessary consequence of the sources Orderic was working with, but rather is a strategy through which Orderic depicted his account as a form of documentary record.

In the account of Lillebonne Orderic also diminishes the active role played by key individuals. The account is distinctive for the frequency of passive verb forms. Orderic writes that William I called together magnates, bishops, and abbots from Normandy and then:

The king’s command was upheld [*factum est*] and so, in the eighth year of the papacy of Gregory VII, a renowned council was celebrated [*celebratum est*] at Lillebonne. By the king’s foresight and with the counsel of his barons, matters concerning the state of God’s church and of the whole realm were profitably dealt with [*tractatum est*].¹⁶⁶

Limited attention is drawn to the role of individuals, even King William himself, whose primary role is the initial gathering together of leading men. This has the effect of emphasising the council as an historical moment: a fixed point disconnected from the individuals in attendance.

In contrast, the account of the 1072 council of Rouen is more concerned with the unfolding of events and the initiative of those involved. Stress is placed on the role of John, archbishop of Rouen, who ‘led [*præerat*]’ the council.¹⁶⁷ The account is primarily a narrative of consensus building. Orderic repeats the names of the suffragans in

¹⁶⁵ *Anno ab incarnatione Domini millesimo octogesimo. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:24.*

¹⁶⁶ *Vt rex iussit factum est. Igitur octavo anno papatus domni Gregorii papæ septimi celebre concilium apud Iuliam bonam celebratum est; et de statu æcclesiæ Dei totiusque regni prouidentia regis cum baronum suorum consilio utiliter tractatum est. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:24.*

¹⁶⁷ *HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:286.*

attendance who agreed the canons in two places, foregrounding the importance of the agreement reached more than the specifics of the canons.¹⁶⁸ Orderic's use of language also reflects a greater interest in individuals and their actions, such as when he writes that the attendant bishops discussed the doctrine of the trinity 'which they agreed, confirmed and professed to believe with one heart.'¹⁶⁹ The evidence of these two accounts suggests that the use of passive language is a further device through which Orderic positioned his passage on Lillebonne as an authentic record of an historic event.

There are further differences between the accounts in the way Orderic introduces the canon lists. Orderic offers the list of Lillebonne's statutes without discussing how they were arrived at or agreed upon.¹⁷⁰ Consequently, the canons appear as a central part of the passage and the fulfilment of Orderic's explicit aim to provide for posterity knowledge of the laws in the time of King William. It can be difficult to analyse the effect of this kind of writing, as Orderic presents a simple canon list with few qualifying comments or metanarrative discussion. In the account of the 1072 Rouen synod, however, the canons are described as subsidiary to the expression of shared faith: 'After this profession of catholic faith, the following articles on catholic doctrine and faith were added [*annexa sunt*].'¹⁷¹ They are also subordinate to a shared liturgical performance, as the attendees are described as agreeing their shared Trinitarian faith as the first order of business.¹⁷² Furthermore, the description of the canons as 'articles on catholic doctrine and faith' gives them a function as an embodiment of the shared Trinitarian faith expressed by those in attendance. In this way, the canons operate as a representation of the accord reached by those present. The canons thus work in this account as part of a narrative in which the community of the faithful is attested and recommitted. This use of a canon list cautions against assuming that the canons of Lillebonne were simply

¹⁶⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:286, 292.

¹⁶⁹ *quam...corroborauerunt, sanxerunt, se toto corde credere professi sunt. HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:286.

¹⁷⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:34.

¹⁷¹ *Post hanc catholicæ fidei professionem; annexa sunt hæc subscripta catholicæ doctrinæ fidei capitula. HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:286.

¹⁷² *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:286.

recorded into the *Historia*. Rather, in this account Orderic draws attention to the canon list as part of the deliberate positioning of his account as an authentic record. Together with the use of language and narrativity, the canon list is a tool through which Orderic seeks to position his text as an authentic and truthful account of an important historical moment. This implies that the almost documentary form of the account of Lillebonne was no less deliberate and rhetorical than the account of the 1072 Rouen synod. It points to the use of what might be identified as a particular form – a record form - in accounts of church councils in the text.

Record Form

Orderic's adoption of this record form raises questions about its effect on the reading of the account of Lillebonne in relation to Orderic's history writing and social context. Many of the distinctive features of the account of Lillebonne can be read as means by which Orderic elaborates an argument for the historical significance of the council of Lillebonne. The narrative disconnection between this passage and the one that precedes it establishes the conciliar account as a discrete narrative that is not subordinate to a larger topic or theme, implying that the council of Lillebonne is an event that warrants inclusion based exclusively on its own significance. The link drawn at the end of the account to the name *Julia bona* is not just an etymological curio. Rather, Orderic uses this link as an introduction to a history of Christianity in Normandy, culminating in a detailed and lengthy list of the archbishops of Rouen.¹⁷³ He concludes the archiepiscopal list by writing that 'Now I will return to the affairs of our time and our region, and I will undertake to explain the events which took place in Normandy under King William after the council of

¹⁷³ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:34-96. Orderic's etymological link seems to have been used by Robert of Torigni, when he refers to a later reissue of the canons of Lillebonne: Robert of Torigni, *Chronicle*, in *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, vol. 4, ed. Richard Howlett (Roll Series, 1890), 212-3.

Lillebonne’, demonstrating that the entire narrative is directly connected to the council.¹⁷⁴ The effect of this is to imply the significance of Lillebonne as a culmination of this Christian history and a moment when the laws of Christian Normandy were established.

Part of Orderic’s explanation for the account of Lillebonne includes the comment that ‘I wish to insert here the statutes of the council as they were truthfully recorded by those in attendance.’¹⁷⁵ Accuracy is implied in Orderic’s choice of language: the claim to ‘insert [*inserere*]’ could imply limited modification or adaptation. Orderic places further emphasis on the truthfulness of his record by referring explicitly to its veracity (*ueraciter*) and by stating that those who recorded the statutes had been in attendance. Focusing on the textual fidelity of Orderic’s version of the canons – as Chibnall has done – misses the rhetorical potential of this claim to accuracy.¹⁷⁶ Whether or not Orderic is making a claim for strict textual fidelity, his claim to accuracy makes the argument that the account is at least a representative approximation of the kinds of issues and laws put forward at the council in 1080. Consequently, Orderic establishes the value of his account as the fulfilment of his explicit ambition to inform a new generation about the kinds of laws that existed in the time of King William.

By depicting Lillebonne as a key moment in Anglo-Norman politics and law, Orderic was fulfilling one of the aims of the *Historia* at this stage: a history of King William and of the Normans and their church. Orderic implies this was his aim at the start of Book V, where the first historical topic under discussion is William I’s Easter celebrations in 1075.¹⁷⁷ In the epilogue to Book III Orderic explicitly states that one of

¹⁷⁴ *Amodo ad res nostri temporis nostraeque regionis reuertar; et quae in Neustria sub Guillelmo rege post concilium Illebonæ gesta sunt enarrare aggrediar.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:96.

¹⁷⁵ *Statuta uero concilii sicut ab iis qui interfuerunt ueraciter annotata sunt uolo hic inserere.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:24-6.

¹⁷⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, 2: 284-5, n. 4.

¹⁷⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8-10.

his ambitions in the following books is to write more of King William.¹⁷⁸ He again referred to this task at the end of the list of archbishops of Rouen that followed the account of Lillebonne, writing that he would now write more about events that took place during King William's reign.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, the writing of the account of Lillebonne reflects back on Orderic's community and the kind of history he proposed to write for them.

If, as I have argued, the presentation of record is a rhetorical device, it raises the question of why certain councils were represented in this way and not others. Kriston Rennie has drawn attention to the problem of examining canon law in too textual a form, isolating it from the socio-political context it was produced in and for.¹⁸⁰ This problem equally applies to conciliar accounts. By analysing a third conciliar account – that of Reims, 1049 – it is possible to draw out the relationship between the arguments Orderic makes in his conciliar accounts and his audience. Orderic's account of the council of Reims, held by Pope Leo IX, represents the gathering as a key moment of change in the history of the canon law on clerical marriage. After discussing Leo's journey to France and consecration of churches there, Orderic writes that: 'Then in that place [Reims] he [Pope Leo IX] held a general council, and amongst other advantages he determined [*constituit*] for the church, he wholly prohibited priests from bearing arms or keeping wives. And thereafter the fatal custom began to slowly disappear.'¹⁸¹ When writing about Pope Leo in Book II – some ten years later – Orderic again emphasises the significance of the council of Reims (neglecting to mention the other eleven councils Leo IX convened).¹⁸² Writing in Book V, Orderic elaborates upon the significance of this council by making it the centrepiece of a narrative on the custom of clerical

¹⁷⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:188.

¹⁷⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:96.

¹⁸⁰ Rennie, *Medieval Canon Law*, 59.

¹⁸¹ *Tunc ibidem generale concilium tenuit, et inter reliqua ecclesiae commoda quae constituit; presbiteris arma ferre et coniuges habere omnino prohibuit. Exinde letalis consuetudo paulatim exinanire cæpit.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120.

¹⁸² *HE*, Le Prevost, II, 1:458.

marriage. He explains that the custom was brought to Normandy by Rollo and his followers, such that after the coming of the Normans ‘not only priests but also bishops freely enjoyed the beds of their concubines, and publicly took pride in their great brood of sons and daughters.’¹⁸³ Pope Leo’s coming represents the turning point at which this practice was refuted and long neglected rules re-established. Orderic concludes, writing: ‘Certainly, now priests now happily abandon the bearing of arms, but they are still unwilling to stay away from their women and live chastely.’¹⁸⁴ Although the Norman synods and papal councils Orderic records throughout the *Historia* frequently refer to clerical marriage and issue canons accordingly, the 1049 council of Reims is remembered in the *Historia* as the moment when the right and wrong of clerical marriage was defined.

In arguing for the centrality of the 1049 council as a moment of order and redefinition, Orderic is presenting an understanding of history that is given pertinence because of its community context. The context for this passage is Abbot Mainer of Saint-Évroul’s decision to make Fulk of Guernanville his prior.¹⁸⁵ As Orderic explains, Fulk was the son of a dean of Évreux, also called Fulk, who also went on to join the community of Saint-Évroul at a later date.¹⁸⁶ The history of the custom of clerical marriage is inserted into this account in order to explain the marriage of the elder Fulk to Orielde and their ten children together. It further explains the pressures that later drove the elder Fulk to join Saint-Évroul, as the practice of clerical marriage became increasingly unacceptable. Thus, in seeking to explain the fate of the father and son, Orderic depicts a particular understanding of history, framing the 1049 council of Reims

¹⁸³ *non solum presbiteri sed etiam presules libere uterentur thoris concubinarum, et palam superbirent multiplici propagine filiorum ac filiarum.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120.

¹⁸⁴ *Arma quidem ferre presbiteri iam gratanter desiere; sed a pelicibus adhuc nolunt abstinere, nec pudicitiae inherere.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120-2.

¹⁸⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120.

¹⁸⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120-2.

as the locus point for a change that had deep ramifications for the community of Saint-Évroul.

Conclusions

The way Orderic composed his accounts of the 1049 council of Reims and 1080 council of Lillebonne indicates that the appearance of record is an adopted form, achieved through the use of language and narrative strategies. Even Orderic's use of canon lists can be associated with this form. This reading problematises current approaches to the canonical material, which neglect the persuasive function and argumentative effect of these passages. Chibnall argued that in his treatment of canon law in the text Orderic 'unconsciously reflected the views of men, whether knights or monks, he met.'¹⁸⁷ However, it is now clear that Orderic did not just transmit received material. Comparative approaches like those used by Somerville also appear to have limitations, as the quest for veracity and authenticity side-lines the creative potential of history writers in their handling of canonical material. We need to ask a new set of questions about this material – focusing on its form and narrative placement - in order to understand its role within the text and effect on reading experience. The level of mediation involved in the writing of Orderic's conciliar accounts raises new questions about the ideas he conveys through this material. Thus, I will now investigate how far Orderic's accounts can be read as a commentary on contemporary conciliar practice.

¹⁸⁷ Chibnall, 'Canon Law as Reflected,' 219.

II. Councils as Commentary: Ideas of Papal

Authority

Having established that conciliar accounts in the *Historia* are more than mere records, this section aims to examine Orderic's creative processes. I will explore an alternative way of reading these conciliar accounts by focusing on form, narrativity, and language use. This section aims to draw out the ideas Orderic conveys about councils and the contemporary church. In so doing, it aims to test how far this alternative way of reading allows us to use the evidence of conciliar accounts in the *Historia* in a new way to inform our knowledge of councils in this period. To give precision to my analysis of Orderic's arguments, I will focus on a key aspect of church councils in the period: papal conciliar practice. The most detailed papal councils in the *Historia* are the 1095 council of Clermont and 1119 council of Reims.¹⁸⁸ Most scholars accept the papacy's innovative use of conciliar and legal mechanisms as a key part of church reform in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; consequently, how we read these passages directly concerns the ability of this evidence – and the *Historia* – to contribute to our understanding of church councils and reform in this period.¹⁸⁹ Comparing representations of the conduct and qualities of the popes in these accounts, my aim is to consider what Orderic's accounts reveal about papal authority, use of law, and conciliar practice when read with a focus on the author's communication of argument.

¹⁸⁸ These accounts can be found: *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:10-8; XII, 6:252-76.

¹⁸⁹ Anne Duggan, 'Conciliar Law 1123-1215: The Legislation of the Four Lateran Councils,' in *The History of Medieval Canon Law in the Classical Period, 1140-1234: from Gratian to the Decretals of Pope Gregory IX*, eds. Wilfried Hartmann and Kenneth Pennington (Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 318-20. However, this narrative for the papal use of councils as legal tools has been recently challenged by Danica Summerlin: see below, Section II.

Analysing Clermont (1095)

The account of the 1095 council of Clermont forms the starting point for the history of the First Crusade, which comprises the main subject matter of Book IX. One of the challenges of reading the account of Clermont is this narrative entanglement between the conciliar account and the First Crusade. Orderic describes Urban's journey to France, the canons issued at Clermont, and Urban's sermon as part of the same narrative.¹⁹⁰ Written forty years after the event, it is plausible that this narrative structure is a response to an audience that would primarily remember Urban II for his preaching of the crusade. This discussion will examine the overlapping narratives at play in the account in order to consider connections between depictions of Urban II in the church council and as a preacher for the first crusade, as well as how the narrative structure reinforces and exploits these connections.

Orderic's account of the council of Clermont represents a separate version that differs from the other Anglo-Norman witnesses.¹⁹¹ Despite his reliance on Baudri of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosilimitana* for his crusade history in Book IX, the account of Clermont can still be read to shed light on Orderic's expression of papal authority.¹⁹² It has been argued that Orderic's account of Clermont is of limited independent value because of his reliance on Baudri.¹⁹³ However, Baudri's work was a source Orderic used, rather than an exemplar he copied. Chibnall argues that Orderic's dependence on the *Historia Ierosilimitana* for Urban's speech is limited, and Orderic may have received alternative information from another source, like a Norman bishop.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore,

¹⁹⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:8-18.

¹⁹¹ Somerville, *Councils of Urban II*, 83-9.

¹⁹² *HE*, Chibnall, 5:xiii.

¹⁹³ Dana Carleton Munro, 'The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095,' *American Historical Review* 11, no. 2 (1906): 232. See also: *HE*, Chibnall, 4:14-5, n. 10. More recently, Georg Strack has examined Urban II's sermon, discussing in detail Orderic's primary source, Baudri of Bourgueil: 'The Sermon of Urban II in Clermont and the Tradition of Papal Oratory,' *Medieval Sermon Studies* 56, no. 1 (2012): 30-45.

¹⁹⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, 5:14-5, n. 10.

Orderic's version of Urban's speech is far shorter than Baudri's, indicating at least highly selective abbreviation.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, while Orderic's account might not furnish new factual information *vis-à-vis* the First Crusade, it can still be used to assess the writing of church councils and depictions of papal authority.

In his account of the council of Clermont, Orderic focuses on Pope Urban II's person. The account of Clermont forms the centrepiece of a narrative about Urban's journey to France. Orderic introduces the journey, writing that: 'Pope Urban travelled to France in the reign of King Philip. He dedicated the altar of St Peter and the abbey of Cluny and many churches of the saints [*multas sanctorum basilicas*], and by apostolic authority he honoured them with privileges for the glory of Christ.'¹⁹⁶ Orderic's description consists of a list of specific actions undertaken by Urban, stressing his liturgical role and his use of apostolic authority. As Orderic does not give details of which churches Urban dedicated and granted privileges to, stress is placed on Urban's activities rather than their consequences. Even the specific mention of Cluny connects to Urban personally, as he was a former Cluniac monk.

Orderic's use of narrative emphasis also centres attention on Urban's conciliar practice in general, suggesting that the account of Clermont reads as a key example within a larger discussion principally about Urban himself. The account of Clermont is bookended by brief references of two other councils, held at Piacenza (1095) and Tours (1096). Before commencing his account of Clermont, Orderic notes that 'Pope Urban held a council at Piacenza and carefully dealt with matters of peace and other important concerns for holy church.'¹⁹⁷ The reference to Tour is similarly brief.¹⁹⁸ The brevity of these accounts indicates that their purpose is not to communicate information about any

¹⁹⁵ For Baudri's version of Pope Urban's speech, see *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed. Biddlecombe, 5-10.

¹⁹⁶ *Vrbanus papa regnante Philippo in Gallias uenit, et altare Sancti Petri apud Cluniacum cenobium et multas sanctorum basilicas dedicauit, et priuilegiis apostolicae auctoritatis ad laudem Christi sullimauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:10.

¹⁹⁷ *Vrbanus papa Placentiae concilium tenuit, et de pace aliisque utilitatibus sanctae ecclesiae diligenter tractauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:8.

¹⁹⁸ *ea unde apud Clarem montem tractauerat confirmauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:28.

one council but rather to present a narrative of Urban's conciliar activity, in concert with the account of Clermont. Through this kind of narrative arrangement Orderic depicts Urban as the key agent at play in the account and the driving force behind the council.

Orderic draws particular attention to Urban II's charismatic appeal. Summarising the achievements of the council of Clermont, he writes that: 'He [Urban] corrected [*correxit*] many practices that were normal north of the Alps and determined many things for the profitable improvement [*utilia emendationem*] of customs.'¹⁹⁹ Orderic conflates the effect of the council with the actions of Urban II, hence the use of first-person verb forms. The effect of the council is described principally in terms of *correctio* and *emendatio*, indicating that the council reads as a moment of revitalisation due to the personal initiative of the pope. As a summary of the council's effect, this statement shapes the reading of the account as a whole. Orderic also placed this description immediately after the first reference to the council, giving it a significant formative role in how a reader approaches the remainder of the account. Orderic also deploys specific language to convey Urban's affective power as a speaker. Following the list of canons, Orderic writes that: 'Pope Urban generally confirmed [*sanxit*] these decrees at the council of Clermont, and strongly urged [*summopere incitavit*] all orders of men to hold fast to the law of God. Then he uttered a tearful complaint concerning the desolation of Christianity in the east...'²⁰⁰ Orderic balances Urban's confirmation of the decrees with his exhortation that they be obeyed. Urban's eloquence and ability to persuade in fact becomes a topic in its own right, when Orderic writes that '[h]e was an eloquent speaker and gave a lengthy and profitable sermon to the gathering.'²⁰¹ The

¹⁹⁹ *Multa vero quæ cisalpes agebantur correxit; et multa ad emendationem morum utilia constituit.* HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:10.

²⁰⁰ *Hæc Vrbanus papa in Aruernensi sinodo decreta generaliter sanxit, omniumque ordinum homines ad tenendam Dei legem summopere incitavit. Deinde lacrimabilem querimoniam de desolatione Christianitatis in oriente ubertim deprompsit.* HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:14.

²⁰¹ *Prolixum utillumque sermonem consistentibus eloquens seminiuerbius fecit.* HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:14.

picture Orderic constructs is of Urban wielding personal authority in a conciliar arena by means of charismatic leadership.²⁰²

The audience to whom Urban speaks is, in contrast, largely silent. Orderic mentions that Urban called together ‘all the bishops of France and Spain’.²⁰³ Stress is placed on the wide reach of the council and its quality as a general council, covering many provinces of the western church. Orderic does not name attendees but does emphasise their number: thirteen archbishops, two hundred and twenty-five bishops, and a ‘multitude [*multitudine*]’ of abbots and other ecclesiastical dignitaries.²⁰⁴ Combining the numbering of archbishops and bishops with the multitude of abbots, Orderic effectively and concisely creates an image of the council as a coming together of representatives from religious communities across Christendom. It is significant, therefore, that Orderic does not write about actions taken or speeches given by any attendees. Orderic uses the presence of a silent audience as a counter-point to Urban’s charismatic appeal. This act of witnessing implies assent that supports the communication of Urban’s personal, affective authority.

This is an instance in which Orderic appears to exploit the overlap between the council of Clermont and Urban II’s call to crusade. There is no clear separation between Urban’s exhortations at the council and his following sermon, preaching the crusade. They read as sequential parts of a single account.²⁰⁵ As part of the account of Urban II’s crusade sermon, Orderic lingers upon the pope’s eloquence. Orderic writes that Urban ‘preached magnificently [*magnifice predicante*]’ about the suffering of Christians in the east.²⁰⁶ In describing the sermon Urban gave at Clermont, Orderic’s focuses on its personal, empathetic, and emotional appeal. When Urban describes the suffering and

²⁰² For a detailed discussion of eleventh- and twelfth-century charismatic leadership, see: Stephen C. Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

²⁰³ *omnes episcopos Galliae et Hispaniae*. *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:10.

²⁰⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:10.

²⁰⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:14.

²⁰⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:18.

oppression of Christians in and around Jerusalem, Orderic adds that ‘he wept [*plorauit*] as he made this tearful [*lacrimosus*] report known to the holy assembly and caused many of his listeners to join with him in weeping [*flere*] out of compassion and brotherly love.’²⁰⁷ By referring to an unspecified majority of Urban’s listeners, Orderic uses a hypothetical audience to rhetorical effect, keeping focus on Urban while evidencing the efficacy of his words. It is notable that Orderic deploys a rich vocabulary of tearfulness, using three terms to describe crying. One way to read this is to see Orderic as attempting to communicate Urban’s eloquence through the sophistication of his own writing. Although the form is different – from spoken word to written – Orderic embodies Urban’s eloquence when describing the pope’s moving words. The substantial thematic overlap between Urban’s conciliar practice and sermon reinforces the central argument of the passage: the depiction of Urban II as a preeminent charismatic leader.

Analysing Reims (1119)

Orderic’s account of the 1119 papal council of Reims, convened by Pope Callixtus II, is very different from the account of Clermont. The account of Reims is far longer than any other conciliar account in the *Historia*. It also offers far more details about attendees, conversations, and spatial arrangements. The account of Reims further differs from that of Clermont in that it includes a more linear narrative of events that took place over a series of days. Given the level of detail Orderic goes into, it has been suggested that he was in attendance at Reims in 1119.²⁰⁸ Somerville argues that, based on the amount of historical information in the account, we can infer Orderic presence or, in the least, that he must have had detailed conversations with eye-witnesses.²⁰⁹ Whether or not Orderic attended the council of Reims has important implications for a

²⁰⁷ *lacrimosus relator manifeste in sancta concione plorauit; unde multos auditorum ex affectu nimio piaque fratrum compassione secum flere coegit. HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:14.*

²⁰⁸ *HE, Chibnall, 6:xix-xxi.* Roger Ray, however, has suggested Orderic was absent: ‘Orderic Vitalis on Henry I,’ 128.

²⁰⁹ Somerville, ‘Reims 1119,’ 35-50.

comparison between this conciliar account and any other in the *Historia*, because of its implications for the source material Orderic based his accounts on.

However, we should not assume that the detail of the account necessarily implies Orderic was present. Other factors suggest he was not an eye-witness. Unlike his account of a Cluniac gathering in 1132, Orderic does not state that he was present at Reims.²¹⁰ This omission is significant, given Orderic's inclination to refer directly to his own travels, such as to Worcester.²¹¹ Some of the attendees whom Orderic names could have provided a level of information consonant with the detail of the account; a likely connection is Baudri of Bourgueil, who was present in 1119 and whom Orderic described as a personal friend.²¹² Furthermore, although Orderic's information was detailed, it is also patchy. For example, we are given the words of one of the short speeches given by Callixtus, but not from his main sermon. Although this could be a result of imperfect memory or partial note-taking on Orderic's part, it also supports the argument that Orderic received a second-hand account. We should not read this passage as a detailed, first-hand account, but rather a carefully crafted depiction of events, comparable to other conciliar accounts in the *Historia*.

A point to consider is how and where we find the pope in the account of Reims. The Reims council is preceded by a passage on warfare between Henry I and Louis VI; the account then begins without preamble with the notice that Callixtus assembled a council at Reims in 1119.²¹³ Its internal narrative structure consistently draws attention away from Callixtus. After describing the council's assembly, Orderic shifts focus back to Normandy and Henry I. In a passage of direct speech, Orderic depicts Henry I commanding a contingent of Norman bishops to attend the council but cautioning them not to bring suits against one another nor to accept new rules put forward by the pope.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:424-6.

²¹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:188.

²¹² On Orderic's friendship with Baudri: *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:188-90.

²¹³ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:234-52.

²¹⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:252.

Through direct speech and the connections to the preceding narrative on the conflict between Henry and Louis, Orderic draws attention to the implications of the council for Henry and Anglo-Norman politics. Consequently, in contrast to the account of Clermont, Orderic's narrative arrangement for the account of Reims is less closely focused on the actions of Pope Callixtus. The narrative structure Orderic designs gives space for other actors to perform important roles.

A group of other actors who are particularly prominent are the churchmen in Callixtus' entourage. The very first sentence immediately foregrounds a group of elite churchmen who surround Pope Callixtus and attend the council alongside him: 'In the middle of October, Pope Callixtus came with the papal curia [*Romano senatu*] to Reims and staying there for fifteen days he held a council'.²¹⁵ Although Orderic uses the same term to describe Callixtus convening the council as he did for Urban (*teneo*), the reference to the papal curia is a key point of difference. Orderic deliberately foregrounds this group – which can be described as a papal party – as key to the arranged and processes of the council. Callixtus' key role in the council is thus not as an individual, charismatic leader in the vein of Urban II, but as the leader of this papal party.

Orderic highlights the cooperation between different members of the papal party. Callixtus' speeches and arguments are supported in the text by the way that Orderic describes sequential action. For example, Orderic writes that '[t]hen after the pope had finished his sermon, the cardinal bishop Cuno rose and most eloquently [*eloquentissime*] admonished the holy churchmen on pastoral care.'²¹⁶ Not only does Orderic's description of the cardinal draw attention to his learning, but the arrangement of the narrative has the effect of implying a link between the two speeches, with one building

²¹⁵ *In Octobris medio Calixtus papa cum Romano senatu Remis uenit, ibique xv diebus demoratus concilium tenuit. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:252.*

²¹⁶ *Deinde ut papa sermonem finiuit; Cono cardinalis pontifex surrexit, et eloquentissime sacros archimandritas de cura pastoralis admonuit. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:256.*

upon and reinforcing the other. Consequently, Orderic also gives the papal party a unified voice.

The final event of the council is the promulgation of the canons. Unlike the account of Clermont, here Orderic describes in some detail what promulgation involved:

Lastly, he [Calixtus] ordered the decrees of the council of Reims be promulgated [*propalari*]: John of Crema composed them with the consultation of the Roman curia [*senatus*]; John of Rouen, a monk of Saint-Ouen, wrote them in a charter [*in carta*]; and Chrisogonus, deacon of the holy Roman church, publicly and clearly read them aloud. The text of the council is as follows...²¹⁷

With the exception of the monk John, the other men involved are all members of Callixtus' inner circle; and Orderic stresses the role of the papal curia in informing John of Crema's composition of the canons. This description has been examined by Somerville as evidence of how conciliar promulgation took place.²¹⁸ However, read in light of Orderic's focus on the papal party and their interactions, a more persuasive reading is that this depiction of sequential procedure conveys the how the papal party stage-managed the council.

In fact, Orderic recurrently draws attention to the papal party's careful use of speech, text and dress to control conciliar proceedings. Orderic describes the initial commencement of the council by writing about the arrangement of the attendees, part of which concerns the pope and his close adherents:

²¹⁷ *Denique decretalia sinodi Remensis capitula propalari imperavit, Iohannes Cremensis ex consultu Romani senatus dictavit, Iohannes Rotomagensis sancti Audoeni monachus in carta notavit, et Crisogonus sanctae Romanae ecclesiae diaconus distincte et aperte recitavit. Textus autem concilii huiusmodi est. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:274.*

²¹⁸ Somerville, 'Reims 1119,' 42.

In the exalted assembly, the pope's seat was placed before the doors of the church. After Mass, Pope Callixtus took his seat, and the papal curia stood in the first place directly before him...These men subtly interrogated the complaints in front of all of the others [in attendance] and they profusely brought forth answers imbued with remarkable learning. Chrisogonus the deacon, dressed in a dalmatic, stood beside the pope, and carried in his hand a collection of canons [*canones*], ready to present the authentic sense [*autenticas...sententias*] of the fathers as matters required.²¹⁹

There is an interplay in the passage between the physical arrangement of people and cooperation between the papal party. The placement of the curia near to and in front of Callixtus mirrors Orderic's presentation of the papal party as a collective. Orderic also does not initially distinguish between different members of the curia, using plural verb forms (*discutiebant, proferebant*) to express their shared learning, interrogation of complaints, and offering of answers. Furthermore, the unity of the papal party is juxtaposed with 'all of the others [in attendance]', who are referred to only very briefly as a passive audience. The role of Chrisogonus is particularly interesting. He is closely affiliated with Callixtus in the council due to his proximity. Orderic also draws specific attention to his vestments. By not describing how other attendees were dressed, Orderic singles out Chrisogonus for his visual display of the clerical office. This is an instance where a focus on the level of detail as evidence of Orderic's attendance can distract from the rhetorical effects of his composition. Indeed, the selectivity with which Orderic gives details (such as this reference to Chrisogonus' dalmatic) supports the argument that the passage is carefully crafted from the materials Orderic had available, eye-witness testimony or not.

²¹⁹ *In sullimi consistorio apostolica sedes erat ante ianuas æcclesiæ. Finita missa Calixtus papa resedit, et in prima fronte coram eo Romanus senatus constitit...[Orderic names them]...Hi nimirum præ omnibus aliis questiones subtiliter discutiebant, et mira eruditione imbuti responsa ubertim proferebant. Crisogonus uero diaconus dalmatica indutus papæ astabat, manuque canones gestabat, promptus propinare autenticas maiorum sententias ut res exigebat. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:254.*

In concert with his sacral dress, Chrisogonus is described as carrying canons. Here Orderic focuses on how he used and was supposed to use this canonical collection. Although Orderic does not discuss the legal status of the text to which Chrisogonus refers, he asserts that it contained the ‘authentic sense’ of the church fathers. This description indicates the almost theatrical use of a canonical collection, as a tool to lay claim to the authority of past and precedent. Orderic does not go on to describe when or how Chrisogonus made use of the canonical collection. Implicitly, therefore, in the passages that follow, the arguments and answers put forward by the papal party are supported by canonical authority. What we can see here is Orderic putting forward an alternative model of papal conciliar authority, which contrast with the focus on the affective, personal power of Urban II at Clermont in 1095.

This close attention to the ordering and arrangement of space can be found throughout the account. Part of Orderic’s detailed description of the seating arrangements includes the comment that: ‘On the twelfth calends of November the prelates’ chairs were placed in the church of the Virgin Mary, before an image of the crucifixion. Each of the metropolitans sat in order exactly as it was determined in antiquity by the Roman pontiff.’²²⁰ This is not just a descriptive account. Rather the ordering of space is given meaning in the text through association with precedence and apostolic authority. It is interpreted by Orderic as a symbol of the council’s inheritance of the authority of the past. This supports the argument that the specific details given in the account, such as seating arrangements, it not just the result of eye-witness testimony, but rather is the articulation of an understanding of conciliar authority, here expressed through which what we can term a kind of conciliar choreography.

Furthermore, Orderic uses the imposition of silence and instances of speech to show how the papal party controlled the progression of the council and the expressions

²²⁰ *In basilica sanctæ Virginis Mariæ ante crucifixum xii kalendas Nouembris kathedræ presulum appositæ sunt; et singuli metropolitæ prout eis antiquitus a Romano pontifice constitutum est ordinate consederunt.* HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:254.

of ideas within it. For example, in another instance of disagreement – over the fate of Audoin, bishop of Évreux, and the man who forced him into exile, Amaury – Orderic writes that: ‘And so the French supported Amaury against the Normans, and there arose a great argument of words [*uerborum*]. With silence finally established, the pope spoke.’²²¹ Chibnall suggests that *uerborum* implies multiple, overlapping speakers, and this reading seems persuasive.²²² Silence is presented as a prelude and condition of papal speech, which is therefore given an authoritative status. The phrase ‘*Tandem facto silentio*’ is used more than once in the account.²²³ One of the effects of this is to give it a repetitive reading: that once again it was necessary to establish silence. It also implies a procedural quality to the enforcement of silence, which is presented as an automatic part of the arrangement of the council. Orderic actually draws attention to how the need to impose silence was anticipated and accommodated within the arrangement of the council. Orderic writes: ‘Six other attendants stood at a distance, wearing tunics or dalmatics, and demanded [*imperabant*] silence when frequently raucous disagreements arose.’²²⁴ By describing the presence of these attendants, Orderic draws the reader’s attention to their existence, not just their effect. Furthermore, the placement of this description is significant. It comes at the start of the account, with the effect that the repeated instances of imposed silence implicate these papal attendants in controlling the flow of speech. Orderic depicts the repeated imposition of silence as part of this picture of the papal party’s control over conciliar proceedings. He thus establishes the role of the papal party in orchestrating the council and controlling the expression of issues and ideas.

The ability to impose silence is not given to Callixtus and the papal party exclusively, however. A speech given by Henry I appears at the start of the account and

²²¹ *Francis itaque contra Normannos adminiculantibus Amalrico; grandis ibi facta est uerborum altercatio. Tandem facto silentio papa locutus est.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6: 260.

²²² *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6: 255.

²²³ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6: 268.

²²⁴ *Porro alii sex ministri tunicis seu dalmaticis uestiti circumstabant, et frequenter insurgente dissidentium tumultu silentium imperabant.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6: 254.

concerns his instructions to a delegation of Norman bishops. The speech concludes: ‘Go. Greet the Lord Pope on my behalf, and just listen with humility to the apostolic decrees but do not inflict superfluous innovations upon my kingship.’²²⁵ Henry’s words are imperative, establishing his authority over the bishops explicitly and immediately. That Henry is imposing silence on his bishops is implied in the phrase ‘just listen [*tantum...audite*]’. Therefore, Orderic is implying also a relationship between speech and accepting the innovations Henry sought to avoid. By demanding his bishops just listen – and do not speak in response – Orderic depicts an attempt to avoid the acceptance of any new rules or decrees Callixtus might attempt to innovate. This supports the argument that silence-making and speech-giving are used in this account as tools to convey authority.

Through these tools Orderic builds a picture of a council carefully stage-managed by a papal party. This is an expression of conciliar practice, and, by extension, also an envisioning of papal authority; the ability to shape and control the council is a manifestation of the authority of the papal group. This is in marked contrast to Orderic’s depiction of Urban II at Clermont in 1095, whose authority was personal and affective. These differences cannot be explained with reference to the chronology of the text. Despite the period of twenty-four years between the councils of Clermont and Reims, Orderic wrote these accounts in close succession. His account of Clermont is at the start of Book IX and so was likely written in *c.* 1135. The account of Reims comes from Book XII and was written between *c.* 1136-*c.* 1137. Thus changes in Orderic’s writing cannot be explained simply as a result of the passage of time.

A different explanation could be that Orderic sought to reflect genuine changes in the way popes handled church councils. The prominence of the papal party at Reims, in contrast to the charismatic presence of Urban II, could reflect an historical change. As Gresser has argued, the early decades of the twelfth century witnessed a transformation

²²⁵ *Ite. Dominum papam de parte mea salutate, et apostolica tantum precepta humiliter audite, sed superfluas adinventiones regno meo inferre nolite. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6: 252.*

in how popes conducted church councils, relying evermore on the consensus between the pope and the increasingly powerful college of cardinals.²²⁶ Gresser in fact points to the council of Reims in 1119 as a key point after which this transition becomes increasingly clear. However, whether or not Orderic sought to reflect historical changes he perceived, his role in the communication of this change is critical. By focusing on audience, we can see how Orderic did not reflect on papal authority *per se*, but rather told a story of change that made sense to his community in terms they could understand. In the account of Reims, Orderic inserts a scriptural quotation. He describes the large number of assembled clergy, saying that they ‘prefigured the coming judgement, that Isaiah, observing in spirit and as if pointing with a finger, declared with awe and alacrity of mind, “the Lord will come to judgement, with the elders of his people and their princes.” [Isaiah 3. 14.]’²²⁷ The effect of this is to insert explicitly an analogical mode of reading, connecting biblical and historical time. It further connects the council to the past, supporting the arguments for papal authority based in the careful arrangement of seating according to tradition. This kind of interpretation of events makes sense in a community context in which biblical exegesis formed a common language through which Orderic could foreground comprehensible interpretations of contemporary events. The way Orderic composed his accounts with his audience in mind further complicates ideas of record, as he used formal elements to convey a particular understanding of papal conciliar practice for his community.

By adopting the methodology used here it has been possible to shed new light on papal conciliar practice. Danica Summerlin has questioned the prevailing view that ‘the decrees of papal councils held an ascendant place in the hierarchy of medieval legal

²²⁶ E. Gresser, ‘Concilium Lateranense I, 1123,’ in *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta II/1: The General Councils of Latin Christendom*, eds. A. García y García *et al* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 82-83.

²²⁷ *futurum examen prefigurauere, quod in spiritu intuens Ysaïas et quasi digito demonstrans exclamat cum metu ac mentis alacritate, “Dominus ad iudicium ueniet cum senibus populi sui et principibus eius.”* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6: 254.

sources.²²⁸ Through analysis of the use of the canons of the 1179 Lateran council, Summerlin argues that the canons were used regionally and selectively; their authority developed only slowly and was brought about through partial reuse by local canonists.²²⁹ Although Summerlin is primarily interested in the use of conciliar canons and their legal authority, her argument has far-reaching implications for how we think about authority and conciliar activity too. Writing before Summerlin's recent work, Anne Duggan argued that '[a]ll three Lateran councils [I, II, and III], however, belong to the same tradition and illustrate the increasingly effective exercise of legislative authority by the papacy.'²³⁰ The view represented here is part of a well-established narrative that sees church councils as key tools of the reform papacy from Pope Leo IX onwards.²³¹ In questioning the immediate legal force of papal conciliar canons, Summerlin implicitly draws into question the relationship between the conciliar practice of the papacy and its emergent legal authority. Writing for a Norman monastic community, Orderic offers an alternative perspective on these developments when compared to legal minds like Ivo of Chartres and Anselm of Lucca. His text supports Summerlin's arguments, as Orderic does not conceive of the conciliar authority of either Urban or Callixtus as foremost legal in expression; in both cases, their authority derives from the performative potential of church councils. This perspective is one that is not shaped by developments after 1142 and so avoids the problems posed by teleological readings informed by later twelfth-century evidence.²³² As a non-teleological, non-legal observer, Orderic's understanding of papal authority as essentially performative is valuable evidence that supports the most recent research into the extra- or pre-legal nature of papal conciliar authority.

²²⁸ Summerlin, 'Using the Canons,' 246.

²²⁹ Summerlin, 'Using the Canons,' 249-260.

²³⁰ Duggan, 'Conciliar Law,' 320.

²³¹ Duggan, 'Conciliar Law,' 318-320.

²³² On this problem, see: Brett, 'Some New Letters of Popes Urban II and Paschal II,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58, no. 1 (2007): 75-96; Brett, 'A Collection,' 301-8.

Conclusions

Orderic's writing career (c. 1114-1141) was part of a period of creativity and ferment in the spread and use of canonical material. Recent research has emphasised the range of local uses canon law was put to, questioning the received developmental narrative of canon law in the twelfth century. Even for collections as prominent as Burchard of Worms' *Decretum*, new light has been shed on how such works were put to varied uses at the point of reception.²³³ The way Orderic shaped the canonical material in his own text, adapting it to the needs of his community and arguments, indicates that history writers could be a part of this creative reuse of canon law. Histories might not belong to a phase of recording that follows on from reception and use; rather the writing of canonistic material in histories should be seen as another kind of reception and discussed alongside more overtly legal collections.

A further question this reading of Orderic's canonical material raises is the potential for historians to act as legal commentators. While not as exclusively focused on law as a canonical collection, this discussion has shown that Orderic ought to be regarded as a commentator on conciliar practice. This provides a counter-balance to the tendency in modern scholarship on ideologies associated with church councils to focus on the works of reformers and of elites.²³⁴ One thing we gain by reading the canonical material in the *Historia* according to the methods adopted here is to widen the range of voices discussing church councils at this crucial moment. Orderic's role as a commentator also blurs the lines between history and law, a distinction that is already uncertain in this period. Recent research has indicated that canonical material was not a discrete kind of writing, but overlapped with history and other genres, including letter writing, and theology.²³⁵ Conciliar accounts thus do not appear to have possessed a

²³³ Cushing, 'Law, Penance, and the "Gregorian" Reform,' 28-39.

²³⁴ For example: Blumenthal, 'Conciliar Canons and Manuscripts,' 373-5; Brett, 'Canterbury's Perspective,' 13-35.

²³⁵ On history, see: Uta-Renate Blumenthal, 'Poitevin Manuscripts, the Abbey of Saint-Ruf and Ecclesiastical Reform in the Eleventh Century,' in *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier*

documentary character that insulated them from the creative forces that shaped other material deployed by history writers. Thus, how historians made use of canonical material in terms of their own agendas and arguments is an important question too.

III. Councils and History Writing

Thus far this chapter has argued that reading passages on church councils in the *Historia* as a form of record overlooks the instrumental role of Orderic's creative processes in shaping these accounts. Furthermore, I have shown that Orderic made points about conciliar practice through his accounts. This section considers how far Orderic as a history writer used conciliar accounts to make extra-legal arguments. The section thus attempts to avoid the teleological assumption that canon law was necessarily understood legalistically in the period before the development of professional law schools.²³⁶ My aim is to offer an integrated reading of the conciliar accounts in the *Historia*, exposing how they connect to the passages that surround them and drawing into question the assumption that canonistic material forms a discrete part of the *Historia*. The first part examines the role of conciliar accounts in political arguments. The second part looks at the inclusion of conciliar accounts within apocalyptic narratives of decline.

Middle Ages, eds. Martin Brett and Kathleen G. Cushing (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 91; 'The Collection of St Victor (=V), Paris: Liturgy, Canon Law, and Polemic Literature,' in *Ritual, Text and Law*, eds. Kathleen G. Cushing and Richard F. Gyug (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 301-2. On letter writing see: Martin Brett, 'De Corpore et Sanguine,' 163-184; Rolker, *Ivo of Chartres*, 208-10. On theological readings of legal texts, see: Bruce C. Brasington, "'Notes from the edge": Marginalia and Glosses in pre-Gratian Canonical Collections,' in *Bishops, Texts and the Use of Canon Law around 1100*, eds. Bruce C. Brasington and Kathleen C. Cushing (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 165.

²³⁶ Rennie has persuasively argued that for at least the period before c. 1140 it is untenable to examine the development of canon law through a legal lens alone: *Medieval Canon Law*, 6.

Making Political Arguments

One of the main ways in which we find conciliar accounts in the *Historia* is in the context of Norman ducal politics. For the account of the 1106 Lisieux synod, Orderic situates the account within a narrative about the conflict between Henry I and Robert Curthose. It is preceded by a description of Henry's victory over his brother, and the steps the king then took to settle affairs in the duchy.²³⁷ The account thus forms part of a narrative of peace-making and the establishment of order in Normandy. Orderic draws the narrative together in a concluding paragraph that reflects on the changes wrought by Henry's rule, replacing that of his eldest brother: 'When they heard news of the king's victory, every pious man was gladdened. However, lovers of evil and of lawlessness were filled with gloom [*contristati luxerunt*], because they knew for certain that, by the will of God, a yoke had been put upon their untamed necks.'²³⁸ That this description of establishing peace reflects principally on Henry's rule is indicated when Orderic writes that bellicose nobles fled in all directions 'solely for fear of him [Henry]'.²³⁹ It uses the grouping of Normans into the pious and lawless as a device to express the different qualities of Henry I and Robert Curthose as rulers. The account of the 1106 synod of Lisieux is followed by a passage that continues with the theme of Henry's rule in Normandy, describing how Robert de Bellême sought out allies to continue the fight against Henry.²⁴⁰ This description of Robert of Bellême is thematically linked to the preceding passages as an example of one of the lawless men displeased with the efficacy of Henry's rule. Therefore, we can see that the conciliar account is framed by passages that make an argument for the benefits of Henry I's acquisition of power in Normandy.

²³⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:86-92.

²³⁸ *Auditis rumoribus de uictoria regis religiosi quique letati sunt; exleges autem et malignitatis amatores contristati luxerunt, quia iugum indomitæ ceruici suæ diuinitus impositum pro certo nouerunt.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:92.

²³⁹ *solo timore illius.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:92.

²⁴⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:94-8.

We can ask what role the conciliar account plays in the making of this argument. Here, Orderic explores the interplay between Henry's authority and his consensual rule.

In the middle of October, the king came to Lisieux, called together all the great men [*optimates*] of Normandy, and held a council for the benefit of the church of God. There he set forth royal laws that a secure peace was to be preserved throughout all the land of Normandy and that all theft and looting was to be entirely suppressed.²⁴¹

The term *optimates* seems to be used inclusively, denoting both secular and ecclesiastical elites. The lack of specificity regarding attendees could in fact be seen as an attempt to convey a sense of a representative gathering that drew together leading men from across Normandy. The account establishes a sense of Henry's effective rule and its direct consequences for the good of the church. It also connects to the themes of its wider narrative setting, drawing attention to the suppression of lawlessness. The council is thus set up as a space in which to express ideals of ducal rule – with emphasis on justice and peace-making – drawing an implicit comparison with Henry's predecessor. Accordingly, the conciliar account contributes to the political argument Orderic is making about Henry I's capable rulership of the duchy.

The conciliar account also draws attention to how Henry I assumed control of the duchy. Orderic describes the lead up to the synod, writing that 'The king approached Rouen with the duke, and, well received by the citizens, he renewed his father's laws and restored the former privileges of the city.'²⁴² By presenting Robert and Henry travelling together to Rouen, Orderic implies cooperation and a legitimate transfer of authority. This notion is further supported in the text where Orderic provides a passage

²⁴¹ *In medio Octobri rex Luxouium uenit, cunctos optimates Neustriæ conuocauit, et utillum æcclesiæ Dei concilium tenuit. Ibi statuit regali sanctione, ut firma pax per omnes teneatur fines Normanniæ, ut latrociniis omnino compressis cum rapacitate. HE, Chibnall, XI, 6:92.*

²⁴² *Rex siquidem cum duce Rotomagum adiit, et a ciuibus fauorabiliter exceptus paternas leges renouauit, pristinasque urbis dignitates restituit. HE, Chibnall, XI, 6:92.*

of direct speech in which Curthose complains to his brother that he had been misled by treacherous Normans and should have instead heeded Henry's counsel.²⁴³ Orderic refers to Curthose as duke on the journey to Rouen, implying that Henry did not usurp his brother's authority and only assumed control of the duchy after Curthose freed the Norman castellans of their fealty.²⁴⁴ An effect of the way Orderic describes the arrangement of people and events is thus to stress the legitimate transfer of Norman rule from Curthose to Henry.²⁴⁵

The evidence, in fact, suggests that the account of the 1106 synod of Lisieux is the centrepiece of this argument concerning the legitimacy of Henry I's rule. Orderic further argues for the legitimacy of Henry's ducal authority by drawing multiple connections between him and his father, William I. He writes that Henry 'renewed [*renouauit*] his father's laws' at Rouen expressing continuity between father and son. The use of the term *renouo* also implies that William's law lapsed under Curthose, again suggesting that Henry I represents a legitimate resumption of ducal rule. Orderic connects Henry to his father in the account of the Lisieux synod specifically by noting that Henry restored ecclesiastical properties to their status on the day of William I's death and that Henry took into his own hand his father's demesne, rescinding gifts his brother had made.²⁴⁶ Thus in focusing on conciliar practice, Orderic presents Henry I as the moral heir to the duchy.

What is intriguing about these connections is that some of them draw links between the Henry and William's conciliar practice. The discussion of the 1072 Rouen synod in the first section of this chapter described how it to was situated in a narrative of ducal peace-making.²⁴⁷ There are significant similarities between this account and the

²⁴³ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:90.

²⁴⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:92.

²⁴⁵ On the theocratic underpinnings of Orderic's view of Henry I and its relationship to social order, see: Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis on Henry I,' 131-2.

²⁴⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:92-4.

²⁴⁷ See above, Section I.

account of the 1106 Lisieux synod. Although William I travelled to Normandy after conquering England (whereas Henry I crossed the English Channel to conquer Normandy), the two passages use a similar formulation. They are connected thematically as both are depicted as moments when order and peace were established; in the case of Rouen (1072) this is achieved through close cooperation with the abbots of Normandy which has similarities with Henry I's collaboration with Norman magnates.²⁴⁸ Regarding William's return to Normandy, Orderic writes that 'Hearing news of the king's arrival, peace-lovers everywhere rejoiced but the sons of discord and foul sinners quailed in their wicked hearts before the coming of the avenger.'²⁴⁹ The parity in language between this comment and the reference to Henry I's peace-making in 1106 is substantial and suggests that Orderic reviewed earlier material in order to use precise language to draw parallels between the two kings' conciliar practice. A further instance of possible re-reading occurs between the accounts of the 1106 synod of Lisieux and the 1080 council of Lillebonne. As discussed above, Orderic claimed that his account of Lillebonne preserved the laws established under King William. The reference to the re-establishment of William's laws at Lisieux in 1106 thus possibly has the effect of tying the account not to a vague idea of previous royal law, but to the specific laws associated with the council of Lillebonne which a reader of the *Historia* would have come across earlier in the text.

These intriguing overlaps between the accounts raise questions about the relationship between secular power and canon law in Normandy. The account of the 1106 Lisieux council appears in Book XI, written in the latter half of the 1130s: as much as ten years after the accounts of Rouen (1072) and Lillebonne (1080) were written. The span of years between these accounts reveals that Orderic had a long-term sense of this interplay between ducal authority and the issuing of church law in Normandy. The way Orderic makes this argument could imply that in a Norman setting, conciliar practice

²⁴⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284-6.

²⁴⁹ *Audito undique regis aduentu pacis amatores lætati sunt; sed filii discordiæ et fœdi sceleribus ex conscientia nequam adueniente ultore contremuerunt.* *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284.

was a considered a key place in which expressions of ducal rule took place. Orderic lived during a period of real dynamism in the archdiocese of Rouen, with councils meeting frequently under William I, Robert Curthose, and Henry I. Raymonde Foreville traces twenty-five synods in the archdiocese for the period up to 1118/9 (excluding a twenty-sixth that may have met in 1042).²⁵⁰ In this context, conciliar accounts seem to have had a unique potential in the *Historia* to express ideas of secular rule and legitimacy.

The account of the 1118 synod of Rouen is likewise situated in a political narrative. Unlike the previous case, the setting for the 1118 synod is one of political uncertainty and endemic warfare. It is preceded by a passage on conflict between Henry I and French-backed William Clito.²⁵¹ Here Orderic emphasises the dire perils of civil war: ‘Then many in Normandy imitated Achitophel and Shimei and other deserters, and acted like those who, abandoning the king who was divinely ordained by Samuel, joined with the parricide Absalom.’²⁵² The warfare between Henry I and Clito is the topic of the passage that follows the council too.²⁵³ Consequently, the account of this synod reads as a central part of this narrative of warfare in Normandy. This raises questions about to what extent the conciliar account contributes to Orderic’s depiction of the dangers of civil war.

In the account Orderic lays emphasis on Henry I’s cooperation with the magnates in Normandy who were loyal to him. Henry is not depicted as the sole agent in convening and directing the council. Rather, his role in organising the council is given in passive language, as Orderic simply notes that the council ‘was assembled [*congregatum*

²⁵⁰ Raymond Foreville, ‘The Synod of the Province of Rouen in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,’ trans. Geoffrey Martin, in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, eds. C. N. L. Brooke, D. Luscombe, G. H. Martin, and D. Owen (Cambridge: University Press, 1976), 21-32. Martin Brett has also looked at the vivacity of the Rouen synod: Brett, ‘A Collection,’ 301-8.

²⁵¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:200-2.

²⁵² *Tunc plurimi Achitophel et Semei aliosque desertores in Neustria imitabantur, et operibus illorum similia operabantur; qui relicto rege per Samuhelem diuinitus ordinato Absalon parricide iungebantur.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:200.

²⁵³ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:204-8.

est].²⁵⁴ Discussion is also foregrounded. Orderic writes that: ‘There King Henry discussed the peace of the realm with Ralph, archbishop of Canterbury, and other magnates whom he had gathered.’²⁵⁵ Orderic also depicts the Norman churchmen gathered under the auspices and protection of the king to discuss the state of the church. He names the abbots in attendance, as well as the suffragan bishops.²⁵⁶ Orderic also explains the absence of Serlo of Séz: ‘His legate stated that the cause of his absence was infirmity and old-age.’²⁵⁷ The need to account for absences implies that Orderic sought to depict a sense of a wide-ranging gathering, representing a moment of political accord. Attendance is stressed in a way that communicates the point that Henry’s council was well-represented by leading men from across Normandy, implicitly communicating the legitimacy of his rule over Normandy and drawing attention to the collaborative nature of the gathering. Through this account Orderic thus puts forward a picture of Henry I as a ruler who heeds counsel and works with the leading men of Normandy.

Orderic’s work implicitly draws a contrast between the council – as a moment of ordered rule – and contemporary political upheavals. The first place we can see this is in the speech given by Cuno, the papal legate in attendance at the council in 1118. It is not given as direct speech, but rather Orderic relates specific topics, with the effect that these parts are presented as the relevant ones for the reading of this passage. The parts Orderic highlights are complaints against Emperor Henry IV and Bourdin, the antipope; in addition ‘He [Cuno] also related that as storms arose Pope Gelasius went into exile and now was north of the Alps; and that the pope begged for the help of prayers and, even more so, money from the Norman church.’²⁵⁸ The account thus focuses on exile

²⁵⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:202.

²⁵⁵ *Ibi rex Henricus de pace regni tractavit cum Radulfo Cantuarie archiepiscopo aliisque baronibus quos aggregaverit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:202.

²⁵⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:202.

²⁵⁷ *legatus eius infirmitatis senique causa eum defuisse asseruit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:202.

²⁵⁸ *Retulit etiam Gelasii papae qui iam cis alpes uenerat insurgentibus procellis exilium; et a normannica ecclesia subsidium petiit orationum magisque pecuniarum.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:202.

and usurpation, especially through the discussion of Gelasius' flight to France and of the anti-pope Bourdin. The speech mirrors the political climate in Normandy: Orderic uses Cuno to give voice to an argument from analogy about the dangers posed by disorder and unlawful authority.

After Cuno's speech, Orderic develops this argument much more explicitly concerning the dangers facing the Norman political community. He writes that 'Audoin, bishop of Évreux, sent a message via his envoy [to the synod], that he could not join them for he was protecting his territory against their common foe.'²⁵⁹ Unlike where Orderic accounts for Serlo of Séz's absence in an aside, this passage is in a new paragraph and the arrival of envoy reads as an event that took place during the council. Orderic adds that Audoin feared he would be forced to surrender if aid did not arrive soon. With the addition of a final aside, Orderic impactfully illustrates the threat posed by rebels, stating that: 'For the same day the castle at Évreux was surrendered to Amaury [de Monfort].'²⁶⁰ The narrative that follows further asserts this argument, for it includes a description of the fall of Évreux that entailed treachery and deceit. It focuses on William Pointel, who had been entrusted by Henry I to hold the castle and Évreux, and his decision to change sides and support Amaury de Monfort.²⁶¹ The castle is captured by trickery at night when Pointel secretly allowed enemies into the citadel. With a final comment Orderic conveys the cost of this treachery: the divine office was not celebrated at Évreux for over a year. Through narrative arrangement, Orderic juxtaposes the first half of the conciliar account – focused on Henry I and his efforts to promote peace in the duchy – with thereafter the increasing sense of discord and uncertainty communicated through Cuno's speech and then, especially, the more

²⁵⁹ *Audinus uero presul Ebroicensis per legatum suum mandauit; quod pro tutela patriae contra publicos hostes non interfuerit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:202.

²⁶⁰ *Eadem enim die turris Amalrico Ebroicensis tradita est.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:204.

²⁶¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:204.

immediate example of Audoin and the loss of Évreux. These different elements, when read together, form a persuasive argument about the dangers of illicit authority.

This is an argument that may have resonated with Orderic's community at the time he was writing. The account of the 1118 synod of Rouen was written in the later years of the 1130s about events that were within living memory for Orderic and surely many among his audience. However, the political argument Orderic makes could also have had ramifications in his own time. Writing during the early years of the Anarchy, Orderic could have been exploring an analogous situation in order to draw out relevant political arguments about authority and legitimacy for his community.²⁶² Indeed, in Book XIII of the *Historia*, Orderic refers to the burning of the settlement around Saint-Évroul, demonstrating the impact of Angevin raiding on the community. Orderic's account of the burning refers to the deeds of the monks, some of whom rang bells and chanted litanies while others pleaded with their attackers.²⁶³ The *Historia* as a whole draws to a close by pessimistically reflecting upon the capture of Stephen and Geoffrey of Anjou's successful conquest of Normandy.²⁶⁴ By examining Orderic's argument in relation to this socio-political context, it is possible to uncover its contemporary relevance for the community of Saint-Évroul. What this indicates is that Orderic's use of councils accords with one of the recognised didactic purposes of history writing to use past event to inform an understanding of the present.²⁶⁵

²⁶² On Normandy during the Anarchy, see: Marjorie Chibnall, 'Normandy,' in *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*, ed. Edmund King (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1994), 93-116.

²⁶³ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:461-3.

²⁶⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:397-9.

²⁶⁵ Michael Staunton, 'Did the Purpose of History Change in England in the Twelfth Century?,' in *Writing History in the Anglo-Norman World: Manuscripts, Makers and Readers, c. 1066-c. 1250*, ed. Laura Cleaver and Andrea Worm (York Medieval Press, 2018), 9-18.

Narratives of Decline

A final use of conciliar material this section considers is the use of councils in apocalyptic narratives. This kind of usage only appears in the final book of the *Historia* and raises questions about how Orderic's use of conciliar accounts adapted over time with the changing agenda of his work. Here I will examine an account of the second Lateran council held in 1139, which can be found in Book XIII of the *Historia*. Book XIII is the final book of the *Historia* and was written 1136-c. 1140. At this point, the scope of Orderic's work was at its most extensive. Before his account of the 1139 council, Orderic writes about the Angevin invasion of Normandy, focusing on the siege of Falaise, internecine warfare, and widespread plundering.²⁶⁶ Orderic writes that rather than protect their people the Norman lords 'burdened and wickedly oppressed them, stealing property.'²⁶⁷ This comment comes from a sentence that summarises recent events, drawing the reader's attention to endemic violence and its consequences. The conciliar account is followed by references to the deaths of two prominent churchmen, Audoin of Évreux and his brother Thurdstan, archbishop of York.²⁶⁸ Orderic writes at length about Audoin's career and successful episcopate, emphasising his loss. Thereafter Orderic refers to 'a great disturbance [*turbatio magna*]' in England, describing the fall from favour of Roger of Salisbury and his nephews the bishops of Lincoln and Ely.²⁶⁹ The council is thus situated within a narrative that focuses generally on decline in human affairs, with references to warfare and the deaths of prominent churchmen.

In contrast, the way Orderic depicts the council is as a serious attempt by those in attendance to arrest decline. He presents the council as a bold and ambitious endeavour, writing that Pope Innocent II 'ordered a great gathering of prelates to hold inviolable the

²⁶⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:526-8.

²⁶⁷ *ablatis rebus opprimebant, et nequiter illis incumbabant*. *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:528.

²⁶⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:530.

²⁶⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:530.

statutes of the holy fathers.²⁷⁰ Part of account concerns the challenges involved in travelling to Rome:

They came to the synod, summoned from many regions and for this reason they undertook the perilous journey in the winter time. And so, having endured many expenses, they came within sight of the walls of Rome. The pope put forward many things taken from earlier books, and collected an outstanding text of holy decrees, but evil, which spreads across the whole world, hardened the hearts of men against the church statutes.²⁷¹

Although the passage could refer to the cost Saint-Évroul incurred by sending Abbot Richard to Rome, it can equally be seen as part of the laying of emphasis on the commitment of those involved in the council.²⁷² The final part of this comment draws attention to the failure of the council to have a meaningful effect. Orderic also notes that ‘the papal decrees were disseminated throughout kingdoms everywhere’ but that they did nothing to help the oppressed.²⁷³ Consequently, he identifies evil as the sole cause for this lack of positive outcome. The rhetorical effect of the account lies in the contrast between the effort put into the council and its failure to have meaningful consequences. In stressing the resources and commitment invested in the gathering of the Lateran council, Orderic magnifies the sense of its failure thus illustrating the spread of evil as part of his depiction of a world in decline.

This reading makes sense of one point of inconsistency in the text. In Book II Orderic also writes about the second Lateran council. This passage was written at a

²⁷⁰ *et multitudini prelatorum statuta sanctorum patrum inuiolabiliter teneri precepit.* HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:528.

²⁷¹ *De multis regionibus exciti ad sinodum conuenerant, et hac de causa brumali tempore periculosum iter inierant, sicque cum multis suarum dispendiis rerum Romana mænia uiderant. Multa illis papa de priscis codicibus propalauit, insignemque sacrorum decretorum textum congessit, sed nimis abundans per uniuersum orbem nequitia terrigenarum corda contra æcclesiastica scita obdurauit.* HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:528.

²⁷² HE, Chibnall, 6:529, n. 3.

²⁷³ *apostolica passim per regna diuulgata sunt.* HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:530.

similar time to the one in Book XIII. As discussed, in Book XIII Orderic stresses how widely disseminated the decrees of Lateran II were, explaining their lack of effect in terms of the spread of evil. It is not a question of ignorance, but rather a wilful choice to ignore the decrees. In contrast in Book II Orderic writes that the records of Lateran II were poor, with few details known.²⁷⁴ There is reason to believe that the depiction in Book II is more descriptive, because the council is not well evidenced in surviving manuscripts indicative of limited contemporary copying.²⁷⁵ The differences between the accounts also lies in the narrative emphasis of Book XIII. Depicting the council as a moment at which men of faith gathered together, at great expense, and put forward a ‘an outstanding text of holy decrees’, Orderic uses the failure of this council as a tool to communicate a pervasive sense of contemporary decline.

A question that remains is why this way of writing about councils in a context of general human decline only appears in the final book. It seems likely that it reflects an extension of the earlier uses of conciliar accounts – specifically with reference to political disorder and illicit authority – in the context of the widening scope of the *Historia* in the final book. It could also be associated with a more prevalent sense of apocalypticism, raising questions over whether or not this is in evidence in the text more generally. At this point of the study, these suggestions must remain preliminary. However, this recognition informs the discussion of Orderic’s history writing in the final chapter of this thesis.

Conclusions

The section has revealed how Orderic uses conciliar accounts as a key part of arguments about political authority in Normandy and, towards the end of his work, to

²⁷⁴ *HE*, Le Prevost, II, 1:460.

²⁷⁵ T. Izbicki, ‘Concilium Lateranense II, 1139,’ in *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta II/1: The General Councils of Latin Christendom*, eds. A. García y García *et al* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 99.

communicate ideas of contemporary decline. If, as I have argued, the way history writers composed conciliar accounts can be seen as an additional kind of reception of canonical material, then the extra-legal argumentative uses analysed here should be included within this wider bracket of reception and use. Cushing has uncovered how an adapted version of Anselm of Lucca's *Collectio Canonum* was produced at San Frediano (a monastic community in Lucca), with much of the polemical language of Anselm's original version removed and its argumentative sections abbreviated, in order to deliberately produce what Cushing characterises as a practical handbook.²⁷⁶ The argument I put forward here indicates how historians could work along an opposite trajectory, taking canonistic material and inserting it into new arguments. This raises a question over what the existence of this kind of extra-legal usage means for our perception of church councils and canon law in this period. My reading of the evidence of the *Historia* supports the recent research that argues that the period is one of intense and diffuse interest in canon law. There is the possibility that further study of other histories from the period would reveal comparable kinds of extra-legal usage, enriching our appreciation of just how widely canonical material could be adapted at the level of individual writers and communities.

Recognising the way Orderic uses conciliar accounts argumentatively offers a new way to draw out the implications of this evidence for the study of conciliar practice and theory. It allows us to explore the assumptions and ideals about councils they contain. Appreciating the narrative of decline in which the account of the 1139 Lateran council is situated also allows us to appreciate that here Orderic presents an idealised vision of a papal council, contrasting it with decline in the world around it. Consequently, this conciliar account can be interrogated in order to reflect upon expectations and ideals concerning conciliar practice. Orderic's depictions of Norman synods similarly points towards underlying ideas about the association between councils and licit or illicit political authority within the duchy. Thus, this discussion reveals new

²⁷⁶ Cushing, 'Polemic or Handbook?', 69-78.

ways of analysing councils in historical works when one does not reduce them to mere instances of recording.

Conclusion

One of the primary aims of this chapter was to explore the validity of reading Orderic's conciliar accounts as a form of record. Focusing on Orderic's creative processes, it has been possible to draw out some of the ideas he conveys. This problematises current approaches to the reading of this material in the *Historia*; it also presents a challenge to current methodologies for reading histories in general for the study of canon law. It indicates potential problems with methodologies that attempt to circumvent the rhetorical elements of histories.²⁷⁷ This kind of approach makes the error of assuming that processes of recording are inert. However, the argumentative and rhetorical elements of the conciliar accounts in the *Historia* are integral to the form and content of these passages. Furthermore, treating conciliar accounts as records misses much of their evidential value for the study of church councils and canon law. Understanding how Orderic used conciliar accounts through an analysis of argument and narrative strategy has revealed a great deal about ideals of conciliar practice. This reading of the *Historia* raises the question of whether other history writers shared Orderic's ideals or expressed different ones in their works. It raises the intriguing prospect that future studies could reveal a shared field of expectations and ideals concerning conciliar practice through an interdisciplinary reading of conciliar accounts in histories from the period.

A further aim of this chapter was to test the possibility that Orderic engages with contemporary reforms through his historical work. I have argued that through a

²⁷⁷ Such as: Leidulf Melve, 'Assembly politics and the "Rules-of-the-Game" (ca. 650-1100),' *Viator* 41, no. 2 (2010): 70-1.

comparative reading of conciliar accounts in the *Historia*, we can see Orderic expressing ideas about papal conciliar authority. In light of the connection between church reform and councils in this period, this argument establishes the place of Orderic's text in the milieu of church reform. Furthermore, this analysis of Orderic's councils in their textual setting has also revealed that the passages are not an isolated part of the text. Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne have arrived at a similar conclusion concerning the epigraphic material in the *Historia*.²⁷⁸ Although the most common form of apparently exogenous document in the text, through an analysis of narrativity they argue that this material is a key part of the 'weft and weave of the narrative'.²⁷⁹ This chapter further extends our knowledge of how the different parts of the *Historia*, once assumed disparate and separate, interact and were composed together. The recognition that councils should be read as a part of the text highlights the importance of one of the main aims of this thesis: to attempt to read the *Historia* as a whole. It also highlights how difficult it is to partition the text and isolate certain kinds of material for analysis. Indeed, a further conclusion of this analysis is that Orderic's conciliar accounts must be taken seriously – including in studies of the text that do not explicitly focus on canon law. Even the way we read Anglo-Norman political material in the text should involve consideration of church councils. The inclusion of conciliar accounts within larger narratives in the text has consequences for the questions we can ask of the text and its relationship to church reform. That his conciliar accounts appear to be simply one part of the text – and not disaggregated or exceptional – raises the question of whether Orderic similarly explores ideas associated with church reform elsewhere in the text. This question is the focus of the following chapter.

²⁷⁸ Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne, 'Inscriptions in Orderic's *Historia ecclesiastica*,' 127-144.

²⁷⁹ Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne, 'Inscriptions in Orderic's *Historia ecclesiastica*,' 144.

Chapter Two. Nicolaitism and Noble Marriage

Throughout the *Historia ecclesiastica*, Orderic writes often about relationships between husbands and wives. Marriages among the Norman aristocracy are some of the most frequently occurring events in the text.²⁸⁰ He writes about married clerics too, referring to them collectively and to individual members of clerical families. Marriage is a key part of the fabric of Christian life presented in Orderic's history. Orderic wrote during a period of dramatic change in the way marriage was understood and conducted, closely associated with transformations in ecclesiastical governance, canon law, and church reform. During Orderic's lifetime (1075-1142/1143) the question of what makes a marriage was widely discussed; from the middle of the twelfth century the issue was theoretically resolved with the production of Gratian's legal synthesis, the *Decretum* (1139 and 1150) and Peter Lombard's hugely influential work, the *Sentences* (1155-57).²⁸¹ The first half of the twelfth century – especially the 1120s – was a key period when these theories were developed.²⁸² From c. 1100, ecclesiastical ideas of marriage

²⁸⁰ I have chosen not to provide an appendix, because the material lacks unified form; compiling any appendix would involve making decision about what does and does not “count” as marriage in advance of the analysis of this chapter.

²⁸¹ Anders Winroth, ‘Marital Consent in Gratian’s *Decretum*,’ in *Readers, Texts and Compilers in the Earlier Middle Ages*, eds. Martin Brett and Kathleen G. Cushing (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 111-22; Thomas M. Finn, ‘The Sacramental World in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard,’ *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 560. On the thirteenth-century significance of Lombard’s work for the development of marriage law, see: Michael M. Sheehan, ‘Choice of Marriage Partner in the Middle Ages: Development and Mode of Application of a Theory of Marriage,’ in *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies*, ed. James K. Farge (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 92-100.

²⁸² Philip L. Reynolds, ‘The Regional Origins of Theories about Marital Consent and Consummation during the Twelfth Century,’ in *Regional Variations in Matrimonial Law and Custom in Europe, 1150-1600*, ed. Mia Korpiola (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 43-75.

gained traction, affecting practices by challenging the ease of remarriage and the legitimacy of polygamy.²⁸³ The period c. 1000-1215 is also seen as a transformative one for lay kinship networks generally.²⁸⁴ Challenges to the way marriage was understood directly affected Orderic and other members of the community of Saint-Évroul, who were formerly married priests or their sons, as clerical marriage became a less tolerated custom. Situating material on marriage in the *Historia* in this moment of change draws to light the potential for Orderic to have engaged with these questions, and thus ecclesiastical change, through his history writing.

However, the marriage material in the *Historia* has not been studied as a potential commentary on change. The only study of marriage in the text is by Chibnall in her introductory work *The World of Orderic Vitalis*.²⁸⁵ Chibnall focused on the legal implications of the cases that Orderic discusses, ignoring passages on everyday marriages that never called for legal intervention. Certain passages on marriage (especially from Book III) have also been mined for genealogical information, as in the recent study on Hugh de Grandmesnil by Mark Haggard.²⁸⁶ Orderic's work has further been used as a source for gender relationships and emotion in Anglo-Norman marriages.²⁸⁷ Any examination of Orderic as a commentator on this topic, however, is problematised by the separation of the modern study of marriage in this period into two distinct fields. One looks at secular marriage, tracing competing theories of marriage and their practical application over time. The other focuses on clerical marriage, as one of

²⁸³ James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University Press, 1990), 176-225. However, it would be easy to overstate this effect: see 226-8.

²⁸⁴ David D'Avray, 'Lay kinship solidarity and Papal Law,' in *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, eds. Pauline Stafford, Janet L. Nelson, and Jane Martindale (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), 188-99.

²⁸⁵ Chibnall, *World of Orderic Vitalis*, 128-32.

²⁸⁶ Mark Haggard, 'Kinship and Identity in Eleventh-Century Normandy: the case of Hugh de Grandmesnil, c. 1040-1098,' *Journal of Medieval History* 32 (2006): 212-30.

²⁸⁷ John S. Moor, 'Inside the Anglo-Norman Family: Love, Marriage, and the Family,' *ANS* 28 (2005): 1-18; Jean A. Truax, 'Anglo-Norman Women at War: Valiant Soldiers, Prudent Strategists or Charismatic Leaders?,' in *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages. Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History*, eds. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 111-26.

the prime issues of ecclesiastical discipline during the Gregorian reform. The main question this chapter addresses is how to examine Orderic's ideas about marriage as expressed in the *Historia*, in light of the challenges posed by the text and by current interpretative frameworks. It thus seeks to navigate between the two separate fields, asking how far Orderic's ideas about secular and clerical marriage overlap or informed one another. The chapter's primary aim is to investigate how far Orderic makes arguments about marriage practices and theories in a context of church reform. The diffuse range of material on marriage in the *Historia* affords an opportunity to consider Orderic's engagement with church reform in a more systematic way. Thus, the chapter builds on the arguments made in the first chapter, by considering Orderic's engagement with contemporary reforms throughout the *Historia*.

The study of the custom of clerical marriage (nicolaitism) is distinct from the study of secular marriage because it is subsumed within discussions of eleventh- and twelfth-century church reform. Along with simony, clerical celibacy is seen as one of two issues that defined the Gregorian papacy's reform agenda (to be later joined by the issue of lay investiture).²⁸⁸ Clerical marriage is seen principally as an issue of clerical discipline, a space into which reformers and the reforming papacy exercised their ideals and enacted change.²⁸⁹ Celibacy among the clergy is also understood in terms of its symbolic significance within a vision of a reformed church.²⁹⁰ Contemporary discussions of marriage are accordingly understood within a polemical context, as arguments about efforts to promote reform.²⁹¹ For example, Anne Marie Barstow has

²⁸⁸ Blumenthal, 'The papacy, 1024-1122,' 13-4. The collection of essays edited by Michael Frassetto is also crucial for this point, in particular see articles by Paul Beaudette, Uta-Renate Blumenthal, H. E. J. Cowdrey, and Phyllis G. Jestice: *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical and Religious Reform*, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York: Garland, 1998), 23-46; 239-68; 269-304; 81-115.

²⁸⁹ I. S. Robinson, 'Reform and the Church, 1073-1122,' in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. 4, c. 1024-c. 1198, part 2, eds. David Luscombe and Johnathon Riley-Smith (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 307-8.

²⁹⁰ Henrietta Leyser, 'Clerical Purity and the Re-ordered World,' in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, volume 4*, eds. Rubin and Simons (Cambridge: University Press, 2009), 11-21, esp. 19.

²⁹¹ Such as: Robinson, 'Reform and the Church,' 276-278.

looked at the neglected evidence from apologists for clerical marriage, uncovering the arguments they articulated in response to the attacks of reformers.²⁹² Van Houts has similarly examined ‘voices of opposition’ in the Anglo-Norman material with a focus on Serlo of Bayeux.²⁹³ The principal challenge this historiography poses for my study is how to disentangle clerical marriage in the *Historia* from current assumptions about the place of nicolaitism within polemic discourse. Thus in examining this material outside of but informed by this polemical context, this chapter focuses on Orderic’s depictions of lived reform.

Unlike the study of nicolaitism, research into secular marriage in the eleventh and twelfth centuries does not directly associate it with church reform. It is a separate and expansive field of inquiry.²⁹⁴ The period has, however, been seen as a transformative one with the growing hegemony of an ecclesiastical model of marriage over a secular one. It saw key developments in the theology, law, jurisdiction, and sacramental status of marriage as well as in marriage practices amongst the aristocracy.²⁹⁵ In the monograph *Medieval Marriage*, Georges Duby posited the existence of two competing models of marriage and argued that the secular model, rooted in custom, was supplanted by the ecclesiastical, bringing marriage under the jurisdiction of the church and demanding consent, exogamy, monogamy, and indissolubility.²⁹⁶ Duby’s theory continues to influence scholarship.²⁹⁷ Consequently, processes of change affecting

²⁹² Barstow, *Married Priests*, 105-55.

²⁹³ van Houts, ‘Fate of Priests’ Sons,’ 58.

²⁹⁴ For an excellent and up-to-date introduction to the historical institution of marriage and the historiography pertaining to it: Elisabeth van Houts, *Married Life in the Middle Ages, 900-1300* (Oxford: University Press, 2019), 6-18.

²⁹⁵ For a recent discussion of marriage between 1000 and 1140, see Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 176-228.

²⁹⁶ Georges Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-century France*, trans. Elborg Forester (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), 3-21.

²⁹⁷ Christopher N. L. Brooke adapted Duby’s theory for the English context, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: University Press, 1989), 142-3. Mia Korpiola, writing in 2000, applied the two-model theory to processes of marriage formation, borrowing terminology from Walter Ullmann: ‘An Act or a Process? Competing Views on Marriage Formation and Legitimacy in Medieval Europe,’ in

secular marriages are seen as the successful establishment of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. For example, James Brundage has charted attempts by canonists and church to bring marriage law under ecclesiastical jurisdiction.²⁹⁸ Consequently, although secular marriage in this period is not principally studied through model of church reform, the field is concerned with ecclesiastical change and its social consequences.

In the most recent research, the sharp divide between these fields has begun to soften. Ruth Mazo Karras has looked at married priests and their wives in comparison with other relationships at the margins of (or entirely outside) acceptable sexual relationships.²⁹⁹ In the same study, Karras also examined the experiences of married clergy, using evidence from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. Van Houts has similarly focused on experiences of married life, but unlike Karras has focused on the full range of medieval marriages, including priests' marriages alongside the laity's.³⁰⁰ Taking the 'social and emotional life of the married couple' as the object of study, van Houts uses this to bridge the gap between different kinds of marriage.³⁰¹ However, these studies still examine priests' marriages independently and draw few connections between secular and clerical marriage.³⁰² Furthermore, the distinctive challenge the

Family, Marriage and Property Devolution in the Middle Ages, ed. Lars Ivar Hansen (Tromsø: University of Tromsø, 2000), 31-54.

²⁹⁸ Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 183. For studies on competition between ecclesiastical models and customary practice with respect to specific aspects of marriage, see: Catherine Rider, 'Between theology and popular practice: Medieval Canonists on Magic and Impotence,' in *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Musson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 53-66; Korpiola, 'An Act or a Process?,' 31- 54.

²⁹⁹ Karras, *Unmarriages*, 115-64.

³⁰⁰ van Houts, *Married Life*, 170-200. For a further examination of priests' experiences of marriage, though from the perspective of gender and masculinities, see Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest: Clerical Celibacy, Masculinity, and Reform in England and Normandy, 1066-1300* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 41-85.

³⁰¹ van Houts, *Married Life*, 2.

³⁰² Hugh Thomas has briefly suggested a possible connection between ecclesiastical jurisdiction over marriage and measures taken against priests' sons: *The Secular Clergy in England, 1066-1216* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), 164.

conception of secular and clerical marriage poses for the reading of medieval texts is yet to be addressed directly.

As the two fields lack conceptual unity and differentiate between the two kinds of marriage, they pose a problem for the reading of texts that do not draw strong distinctions between married priests and laypersons. It would be over-simplistic to assume that a medieval writer understood and wrote about clerical and secular marriage as distinct, separate things, in accordance with the way they are now perceived. Furthermore, the lack of scholarship that addresses both kinds of marriage means that this study necessarily requires the development of a new kind of approach to reading marriage in the *Historia*. Consequently, this chapter will introduce a rich body of material, examining instances of both secular and clerical marriage, in order to shed light on how the two areas relate. In so doing, I will also reflect upon implications for current approaches to the study of marriage in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The study of marriage in the *Historia* also poses a methodological challenge that is distinct from that of the previous chapter. Orderic refers to and describes numerous marriages throughout the text.³⁰³ Consequently, I have had to determine how to manage this material in a way that facilitates analysis without imposing modern definitions or artificial limitations on what constitutes marriage in the text. This material is also diffuse and varied in form. The text includes betrothals, marriages, extra-marital relationships, married lives, wives, and multi-generational family histories.³⁰⁴ Orderic refers in brief to some marriages. For others, however, he composes a richer biographical narrative. Other passages are dramatic set-pieces, such as the dialogue between a nobleman, Ansold of Maule, and his wife, Odeline, concerning the husband's desire to enter a monastery.³⁰⁵ In addition, accounts of marriage perform various narrative roles, including within

³⁰³ To get a sense of scale, see the *Index Verborum*, *HE*, Chibnall, 1:246-386, especially the following entries: *coniugium* (273), *coniunx* (274), *conubium* (277), *desponsatio* (282), *desponso* (282), *maritus* (321), and *matrimonium* (321).

³⁰⁴ Many of these different kinds of writing are present from the earliest book, Book III: see Section I.

³⁰⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:196-8.

political narratives of warfare and peace-making.³⁰⁶ The extensiveness and variety of this material brings a primary interpretative challenge of the *Historia* to the fore: the text's chronology. This chapter thus addresses how to analyse any cogent expression of ideas about marriage in this material when its variety of forms took shape over decades of writing.

The approach this chapter adopts is to analyse form and content in the text according to a chronological framework. This methodology involves identifying phases of argument, determined with reference to the chronology of the books. It offers a practical means to navigate the scale of the material in accordance with the text's non-linear chronology. By using this technique, I aim to uncover Orderic's development of thought, managing apparent contradictions and multiple perspectives. A further aim is to uncover developments between ideas expressed over time, offering a means to explore connections between material on secular and clerical marriages. This approach responds to the arguments of the first chapter, which drew attention to the importance of reading the text as a whole. This is the first study to analyse marriage in the *Historia* as a whole and in line with the text's chronology. It offers methodological insights into the reading of the text, through the development and modelling of a new chronological framework of reading. In focusing on marriages in general, the chapter sheds light on Orderic's arguments and their ramifications for the modern study of secular marriage and nicolaitism. And finally, the chapter also offers new insights into the relationship between the *Historia* and Orderic's community through the analysis of the deeply pertinent issue of clerical marriage.

In the first section, I examine how in Book III (the first written book) Orderic initially discusses marriage as a part of community history through passages on the families who founded Saint-Évroul, the Giroie and Grandmesnil. Section II examines the appearance of married priests and their sons in Books V and VI, questioning how and

³⁰⁶ For examples, see: *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:352; IV, 2:314, 352; V, 3:116.

why Orderic inserts these individuals into the community history initially presented in Book III. The third section considers the concentration of material on the married lives of noblewomen in Book VIII. It asks what the effect of this material is, how it relates to Orderic's audience, and what relationship might exist between this material and preceding passages on married priests. Finally, in Section IV, I examine how Orderic writes about marriage in the final books of the *Historia* (Books I and X-XIII), relating it to the exploration of noblewomen's marriages in Book VIII. It asks what marriage ideals Orderic expresses (and how he does this) as the scope of the work expands beyond the immediate world of the Norman nobility. Together, these sections offer us further insight into how far Orderic explores issues of church reform through his *Historia* and on behalf of his community.

I. Book III: Marriage among the Founding Families

Book III of the *Historia* was the first one that Orderic wrote. It was written alone over a period of around ten years (1114-1124): more than twice the amount of time Orderic took to complete any of the other books. Consequently, Book III was written independently of the other twelve and was not influenced by the future developments of the text. At this point, Orderic had a well-defined and cogently expressed purpose. When Orderic began Book III it was at the behest of his abbot, Roger Le Sap (1091-1123), on an abbey history with a local focus, a fact Orderic conveyed by describing the book as 'about contemporaries and neighbours'.³⁰⁷ This section considers how Orderic writes discursively about marriages in Book III in relation to the explicit objectives of the *Historia* at this point, with a focus on the founding families (the Giroie and Grandmesnil). My aim is to reveal how Orderic initially lays out ideas and assumptions

³⁰⁷ *De contemporaneis et collimitaneis*. *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:188.

about marriage, in order to then be able to explore the development of ideas in later material. By focusing on community history, I consider how far secular marriage exists within the ecclesiastical space of the community of Saint-Évroul.

In this part of the *Historia*, Orderic focuses on issues related to monastic life. References to marriage can appear in these passages. For instance, Orderic describes the lives of Judith and Emma, two of the sisters of Abbot Robert of Saint-Évroul. Orderic writes that the sisters lived at a chapel dedicated to St Évroul in Ouche and that '[t]hey were believed to have renounced the world and to cleave to God alone, under the sacred veil, through the purity of heart and body.'³⁰⁸ The sisters later abandoned the religious life and travelled to Apulia, where Robert was in exile and where he enjoyed prestige and wealth. They both then marry:

Thus both abandoned the veil, the mark of holy religion, for love of the world; because they made the first pledge void, both remained barren in this lifetime and in a brief moment of happiness they offended the heavenly bridegroom.³⁰⁹

The argument expressed through this passage concerns the keeping and breaking of monastic vows. Orderic establishes that Judith and Emma were nuns. He then argues that their abandonment of the monastic vow is imprudent by contrasting worldly impermanence and heavenly reward, redoubling the emphasis on the brief period of happiness Judith and Emma enjoyed with the phrase '*in breui puncto temporali*'. The sister's marriage performs a role within this argument too, as their infertility is presented as a consequence of their abandonment of the veil. In this way, the reference to marriage is here used didactically as part of a conventional argument about the permanence of monastic vows.

³⁰⁸ *sub sacro uelamine mundo renunciassse Deoque soli per mundiciam cordis et corporis inherere credebantur. HE, Chibnall, III, 2:102-4).*

³⁰⁹ *Sic ambæ uelamen sanctæ religionis specimen pro mundi amore reliquerunt, et quia primam fidem irritam fecerunt; ambæ in hoc sæculo steriles permanserunt, et in breui puncto temporali felicitate functæ celestem sponsum offenderunt. HE, Chibnall, III, 2:102-4).*

This kind of didactic use of marriage does not, however, reflect upon ideas of marriage directly. In a passage on the lustfulness of the secular clergy Orderic describes the case of a priest named Ansered, a priest who briefly joined the community of Saint-Évroul during a period of serious ill-health.³¹⁰ When Ansered unexpectedly recovered, Abbot Thierry permitted him to leave the community as he had no desire to continue living as a monk. The account thereafter focuses on Ansered's sexual practices. Orderic describes how Ansered 'piling sin on sin, lay with a certain woman', but that he was discontent with one lover and sought another.³¹¹ His second lover, Rosie, also had another lover, who happened to be a priest too. Ansered is later murdered by Rosie's second lover.

In the context of reforming ideals about priestly chastity, this passage could be interpreted as a commentary on whether priests should marry. However, the reference to Ansered's first lover is incidental to the story: it is Rosie and her other lover – the second priest – who shape events. Thus Orderic deliberately emphasises excessive polyamorous lust. As we will see, Orderic goes on to write much more about married priests – including community members – adopting an ambiguous stance. It seems likely, therefore, that the focus on excessive lust here is a deliberate positioning of the account outside of a conversation about nicolaitism. Furthermore, this criticism of clerical lustfulness is principally an argument about Abbot Thierry's attempts to promote monastic discipline: his decision to allow Ansered to leave is vindicated due to the priest's evident moral corruption.³¹² This indicates that in Book III Orderic does not yet engage with ideas about marriage *per se*, rather he only refers to marriages insofar as sexual relationships are argumentatively useful as a contrast to continent, monastic life.

Where experiences of marriage come into greater focus in Book III is with reference to the families responsible for re-founding Saint-Évroul in *c.* 1050, the Giroie

³¹⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:44-46.

³¹¹ *peccatis suis peccata accumulans, cuidam mulierculæ seipsum copulavit. HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:44.

³¹² *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:42-46.

and Grandmesnil. The first marriage Orderic refers to in Book III is Giroie's battlefield betrothal, which led directly to the establishment of the family's power in the region around the border of Normandy and Maine between 1015 and 1027.³¹³

Orderic recounts Giroie's victory in battle and then:

A certain powerful knight from among the Normans, called Heugon offered his only daughter in marriage to him [Giroie], and he gave Montreuil and Échauffour and all of the land belonging to these two towns. When Heugon died a little later Giroie took possession of his entire fief. And the maiden he was to marry died prematurely before their wedding [*nuptias*]. Then William of Bellême led Giroie to Rouen to Richard duke of Normandy, and the gracious duke honoured him acknowledging his virtue, and granted to him all the land of Heugon as hereditary right.³¹⁴

Betrothal is key to this story, as it serves the purpose of legitimising the origins of Giroie's landed power through Heugon's unnamed daughter. There seems to be a tension between Giroie's obvious inheritance rights and the lack of a formal marriage. This is perhaps why Chibnall translated the final sentence of this extract differently: 'To legalize this William of Bellême took Giroie to Richard duke of Normandy at Rouen, and the generous duke, recognizing his valour, received him favourably and granted him all the land of Heugon by hereditary tenure'. The phrase '[t]o legalize this' has no basis in the Latin, and seems to have come from *deinde*. Despite the absence of a formal marriage, however, Orderic stresses Giroie's legitimate acquisition of Heugon's lands

³¹³ Dominique Barthélemy, 'Kinship,' in *A History of Private Life*, ed. Georges Duby and trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1988), vol. 2, 97.

³¹⁴ *Huic quidam Normannorum potens miles nomine Helgo unicam filiam suam in matrimonium optulit, et Monasteriolum ac Escalfoium totamque terram suam his duobus oppidis subiacentem donauit. Ille uero Helgone paulo post defuncto totum honorem eius possedit; et uirgo quæ firmata ei fuerat immatura morte præuenta ante nuptias obiit. Deinde Willelmus Belesmensis Geroium Rotomagum ad Ricardum ducem Normannie adduxit; quem liberalis dux agnita uirtute eius honorauit, eique totam terram Helgonis hæreditario iure concessit.* HE, Chibnall, III, 2:22.

with reference to ducal approval and through the phrase ‘hereditary right [*hæreditario iure*]’.

As the founders of Saint-Évroul, the focus on the Giroie and Grandmesnil in Book III makes sense as part of the agenda of an abbey history. However, Orderic does not write exclusively about the specific individuals responsible for the refoundation. Although Giroie’s rise to power through betrothal is described, it was his sons – William and Robert – who were key figures in the refoundation after their father’s death. Orderic also went on to write about the marriages of many of their relatives and descendants.³¹⁵ For example, we learn about the line of Giroie’s son, William, who had two sons (each by a different wife), called Arnold of Échauffour and William, known as ‘the Good Norman’, who travelled to Southern Italy.³¹⁶ While it possible that many of these individuals remained important patrons of Saint-Évroul, others – like William the Good Norman – are unlikely to have been reliable benefactors. This suggests that in Book III Orderic does not merely refer to a series of benefactors, but rather attempts to provide a wide-ranging history of the founding families, with a focus on their marriages and genealogy.

The genealogical material in Book III is one of the few aspects of marriage in the *Historia* that has been studied before. Mark Hagggar has attempted to reconstruct the Grandmesnil kinship network through the *Historia*, examining the text as a source for marital connections.³¹⁷ For example, Hagggar argues that Orderic’s description of Robert of Rhuddlan and his brother Arnold as nephews of Hugh de Grandmesnil indicates that their connection to Hugh is key to their situation within Norman society.³¹⁸ However, Hagggar assumes that Orderic’s account reflects social realities of the Norman aristocracy, and does not consider alternative readings; for example, the reference to

³¹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:22.

³¹⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:26.

³¹⁷ Hagggar, ‘Kinship and Identity,’ 212-230.

³¹⁸ Hagggar, ‘Kinship and Identity,’ 224.

Robert and Arnold as nephews to Hugh could be an attempt to explain to the reader how these two individuals connect to the story of the founding families. Indeed, Orderic's depiction of the Giroie and Grandmesnil does not appear to be foremost a genealogical exercise. Book III is, in fact, difficult to read as a device for reconstructing their genealogies. The lineage of these families is not immediately apparent in the text and relies upon painstaking reconstruction through the piecing together of disparate references, as is clear from Dominique Barthelemy's attempt to determine the Giroie family tree.³¹⁹ Consequently, taking the material as a record of genealogy and as factual evidence overlooks *how* Orderic tells the story of the founding families – and how he integrates their story into community history.

Passages on marriages and married life in Book III play a consistently important role in the story of the founding families. In one case, Orderic writes about the death of Robert Giroie, who was in open rebellion against Duke William:

But because mortal strength is fragile and quickly withers as a meadow flower, the aforementioned lord [Robert Giroie], after innumerable good deeds, while sitting cheerfully at a fire in winter time, saw his wife Adelaide, who was the duke's first cousin, holding four apples in her hand. He snatched up two of these in friendly jest [*familiariter iocando*], and, unaware that they were poisoned, he ate both despite his wife's objections.³²⁰

The passage presents a sense of a contented family home, with Robert sitting as ease by a winter fireside. The relationship between husband and wife is the driving force behind these events. By writing that Adelaide was Duke William's first cousin, Orderic implicitly points towards her internal struggle between loyalty to kin and to husband. A

³¹⁹ Barthelemy, 'Kinship,' 96-105.

³²⁰ *Sed quia mortalium robur labile est subitoque ceu flos fœni marcet; præfatus heros post innumeras probitates dum ad ignem in hieme lætus sederet, coniugemque suam Adelaidem quæ ducis consobrina erat quatuor mala manu gestare uideret; duo ex illis familiariter iocando ei rapuit, et nescius quod uenenata erant uxore contradicente comedit.* HE, Chibnall, III, 2:78-80.

reader assumes that Adelaide was in possession of poisoned apples in order to kill her husband, on behalf of or at the behest of the duke. However, Orderic also hints at Adelaide's loyalty to her husband, as she does not give him the apples and explicitly tries to stop him from eating them. The way that Robert's death is told through a domestic scene with a close focus on a matrimonial relationship indicates that Orderic conceived of and gave shape to his story of the founding families through marriage narratives. Thus, Orderic also conveyed the fundamental role played by marriages in the construction of Giroie power through inheritances, alliances, and the development of a power base.

By focusing on the Giroie and Grandmesnil in Book III, Orderic claims a place for these families within his community's history. Later, Orderic became more assertive that the history of the founding families is an integral part of the history of Saint-Évroul. In Book VIII (written during the first half of the 1130s), Orderic describes the death of Hugh de Grandmesnil, prefacing the section with the comment that 'now wearied, I return to my bed which is Saint-Évroul, and I will retrace something simple about affairs pertinent [*pertinentibus*] to us at the end of this book.'³²¹ At this point in the *Historia*, the range of topics Orderic covers necessitates more direction (the passage on Hugh is preceded by a long passage on Vitalis, founder of Savigny).³²² For the earlier material, such direction would be less necessary as the text's scope was narrower. This indicates that the material on the Giroie and Grandmesnil in Book III is implicitly presented as part of the history of Saint-Évroul. In this Orderic likely reflected his community's own sense of its past as the founding families were key benefactors of the community.³²³

³²¹ *Nunc autem stratum meum quod est Vtici fessus repetam, et quiddam de rebus ad nos pertinentibus in libri calce liquido retexam.* *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:336.

³²² *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:326-36.

³²³ Leonie Hicks has examined the sense of ownership lay benefactors could hold over religious centres, dubbed a 'proprietary air': *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300: Space, Gender and Social Pressure* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 158-9.

Conclusions

The way Orderic chose to tell the story of these families reveals that from the earliest part of the *Historia*, secular marriage not only occupies an important place in the text but is also integral to Orderic's objectives as a history writer composing abbey history. Furthermore, the text also establishes a two-fold relationship between the community of Saint-Évroul and marriage amongst the neighbouring secular nobility. It evidences the place of the married lives of the Giroie and Grandmesnil within the community's history, physically manifest in the chapter house where, as Orderic describes it, Hugh de Grandmesnil and his wife Adeliza were buried side-by-side near to Abbot Mainer.³²⁴ And secondly, Orderic further asserts the significance of marriage to the community's history through the decision to frame the history of the Giroie and Grandmesnil through descriptions of marriages and their consequences. That is not to say that Orderic uses the accounts of the Giroie in order to reflect upon marriage practices amongst the nobility. However, by actively drawing these dynasties into his community history, Orderic gives meaning to questions about marriage. At this point in the text, these latent questions are not drawn to the fore. Nonetheless, it remains possible that the decision to frame the history of the founding families through marriages acts as a starting point for a deeper consideration of marriage that the text goes on to explore in later books.

II. Books V and VI: Married Priests and Community History

In Books V and VI of the *Historia* (written c. 1127-c. 1133) we find a collection of passages on priests and their sons. Orderic also describes his own life story –

³²⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:336-8.

including his parentage and oblation – for the first time in Book V. As discussed, nicolaitism was a critical issue for church reformers and was the subject of sustained criticism during Orderic’s lifetime. Furthermore, Normandy in particular appears to have been an epicentre for the production of texts defending clerical marriage and priests’ sons.³²⁵ In this context, passages on married priests in the *Historia* have the potential to be both argumentative and pertinent to contemporary audiences. The aim of the section is to investigate the effect or effects of the addition of married priests in Books V and VI and its relationship to the earlier books, especially the history of the founding families presented in Book III. Thus, the section explores the interplay between secular and ecclesiastical marriage as a part of community history.

The Insertion of Married Priests

In Books V and VI married priests and their sons make a significant appearance in the text for the first time.³²⁶ These individuals are often linked to Saint-Évroul. For instance, Orderic describes the replacement of the secular clergy of Auffay by Saint-Évroul monks, noting that three canons who previously occupied the site – Winimar, Benedict, and Benedict’s son John – continued living as secular clergy alongside the monks for ‘many years [*pluribus annis*]’.³²⁷ In fact, the most detailed passages concern community members. In Book VI, Orderic writes about three brothers, Robert (called Nicholas), Roger, and Odo, who joined Saint-Évroul ‘in their youth [*in iuuentute*]’, indicating they were oblates or joined as adolescents.³²⁸ They were sons of a priest, Gervase of Montreuil, who was a long-term tenant of the monastery. Orderic writes in detail about the trio. Robert was tasked with supervising the building of the new church, Odo was appointed prior, and Roger was tasked with caretaking the monastery’s

³²⁵ Barstow, *Married Priests*, 133-74; Thomas, *Secular Clergy*, 170. Thomas also notes that the response to reform legislation on clerical marriage was more muted in England than Normandy, 173.

³²⁶ Early in Book V, see: *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:20.

³²⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:252.

³²⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:240-2.

properties in England and later became abbot (1091-1123, *d.* 1126). It was under Roger that Orderic began work on the *Historia*. He died shortly before Orderic began writing Book V.³²⁹ It is interesting that Orderic chose to tell the story of these three brothers as a narrative about a single, clerical family. As abbot, Roger could have warranted exclusive focus. Furthermore, as Orderic was writing for his own community, it is likely that the monks would have been familiar with the three brothers, either directly or via shared memories. What is indicated is that here Orderic retells this story in order to draw attention to the fact these three community members were the sons of a priest. In light of the community history presented in Books III, the way Orderic draws focus onto clerical families attached to Saint-Évroul could be part of an attempt to lay claim to this aspect of the community's past.

The inclusion of autobiographical material in Book V can be read as a part of this attempt. Orderic recounts his life story through a passage of direct speech in which Odelerius – Orderic's father – exhorts his patron and lord, Roger of Montgomery, to found a monastery on the site of Odelerius' church, St Peter's, Shrewsbury.³³⁰ Odelerius also announces his intention to join the new foundation, along with his second son, Benedict. His third son, Everard, is to become a tenant of the new monastery. Odelerius confirms that he has already secured a place for his eldest son, Orderic, at the community of Saint-Évroul. There is a striking similarity between this story and that of Gervase of Montreuil. In both cases, Orderic refers to the mass oblation of the sons of a married priest. While Orderic does not explain his father's reasoning, the similarities between his actions and those of Gervase of Montreuil could indicate that the mass oblation of priests' sons was a viable strategy for navigating the increasingly punishing laws targeting married priests and their children. Therefore, these stories of mass oblations reflect upon the contested status of clerical families. Moreover, Orderic's audience of formerly married priests and priests' sons offers a social context within

³²⁹ See Appendix 3.

³³⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:142-50. The details of Orderic's life story have been given above, in the Introduction.

which to read this expression of autobiography.³³¹ I suggest that Orderic's life-story here has a performative social function, expressing a shared identity with other priests' sons as part of laying claim to the right to represent this aspect of his community's past.

A further part of this process of inserting married priests and their sons into community history is a retelling of the story of the site at Ouche, where Saint-Évroul was re-founded c. 1050. In Book III, Orderic refers to two 'aged clerics [*senes clerici*]' who lived alone on the site at Ouche, called Restold and Ingran.³³² In Book VI, however, Orderic rewrites this history. Restold is mentioned and again is referred to as *presbitero*, a priest.³³³ Restold, though, did not dwell there alone: he lived with his wife (who is not named) and son, Ilbert. Restold is a celebrated figure: he and, by implication, his family are guided to the site by the direct intercession of St Évroul. A period of a least six years (1124-1130) separates the two passages. Given that Orderic is referring to his community's history and was able to re-read his own work, the disappearance of Ingran and the insertion of Restold's family cannot be a mistake. Rather, in retelling this part of the foundation story, Orderic draws deliberate attention to the role clerical families have long played as part of the history and fabric of the community. The insertion of a priestly family is an intriguing choice, as during the Gregorian reform some texts were modified with the erasure of priests' wives and families.³³⁴ Books V and VI are, I suggest, a response to the community history presented in Book III: while the earlier book emphasises the place of married laypeople through passages on the founding families, in Books V and VI Orderic draws out a different strand of the community's relationship to married lives. Consequently, here we can begin to see how Orderic's engagement with

³³¹ On the reading of autobiography in terms of social context, I have found Jay Rubenstein's work on Guibert of Nogent helpful: *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind* (New York; London: Routledge, 2002), esp. 84 on Guibert's parents' marriage.

³³² *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:15.

³³³ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:328-30.

³³⁴ Dyan Elliott, 'The Priest's wife: Female Erasure and the Gregorian reform,' in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance Hoffman Berman (New York; London: Routledge, 2004), 123-55.

marriage in the *Historia* developed over time, through a responsive and cumulative process of writing.

That Orderic explores the community's historic relationship with marriage in these books raises the question how far at this point he also begins to explore issues related to marriage. In Book V he describes the case of the remarriage of Roger of Montgomery. Roger had been married to Mabel de Bellême, who – as Orderic describes her – was a constant threat to Saint-Évroul's safety and property.³³⁵ Roger is similarly described as an enemy of the monks, that is up until his wife is murdered relaxing after a bath.³³⁶ Roger remarries, taking as his wife Adelais, daughter of Evrard of le Puiset. Orderic reflects that:

The next wife proved to be unlike the former in character. She was well-endowed with piety and gentleness, and she constantly urged her husband to love monks and protect the poor. And so this lord recalled the great many evils which he had done to Saint-Évroul; and he wisely sought to dispel his former guilt through the correction of his life. Afterward he manfully aided the monks and gave many things to them in England and Normandy.³³⁷

The passage has direct relevance to the monastic community because it memorialises Roger's role as a benefactor. It also, however, reflects upon the role of Roger's remarriage – and his second wife – in a story of redemption. The consequences of Roger's marriage are foremost ethical ones that are not exclusively concerned with monastic donations (he saw to 'the correction of his life'). Remarriage brought about these changes, as Adelais 'constantly urged her husband to love monks'. There are

³³⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:134.

³³⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:136.

³³⁷ *Sequens a priori matrona dispar moribus extitit. Nam maturitate et religione uiguit; uirumque suum ad amorem monachorum et defensionem pauperum frequenter incitauit. Præfatus igitur heros mala quæ plerunque fecerat Vticensibus recoluit; pristinosque reatus sequentis uitæ emendatione sagaciter abolere studuit. Viriliter enim postmodum monachos adiuuit, et in Normannia et Anglia plurimas res illis erogauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:138.

implications concerning the role of experience and time in marriage as a factor in moral improvement. A sense of the passage of time is further conveyed in the final sentence through the word *postmodum*, implying that Roger's aid for the monks took some time to materialise. Thus although the passage ostensibly focuses on monastic properties, it also explores ethical reform and how that is brought about through a wife's positive influence. In Book V, therefore, the evidence indicates that Orderic begins to consider the ethical ramifications of married life, specifically in the context of its effect on the community of Saint-Évroul.

It is also in this part of the text that Orderic includes a life of St Évroul. As part of this life, he touches on Evroul's betrothal and married life. As Orderic writes, St Évroul did not desire marriage, but under pressure from his family and by the 'honest persuasion of friends [*honestam micorum...persuasionem*]' he relented.³³⁸ Thus:

While persevering with alms, prayers, and vigils, he led his wife, and called her to the same good works, so he might increase the devotion of his wife, although faithful, through her devoted husband. So, still abiding under the habit of a layman, he had established a life which seemed in no way different from those who were held in check by a rule.³³⁹

Orderic provides the reasoning behind St Évroul's acceptance of marriage (the role of 'honest persuasion' negates the possibility of deception or a weakening of Évroul's resolve). Through this description of Évroul's married life, Orderic explores the ethical potential of marriage. Thus Évroul's wife, although already 'faithful', is rendered yet more devoted through her husband. Orderic depicts a monasticised vision of married life, asserting that Évroul's way of life was indistinguishable from those living under a

³³⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:266.

³³⁹ *Insistens autem elemosinis, orationibus atque uigiliis; coniugem quam duxerat, ad idem sanctitatis opus euocabat, quatinus per uirum fidelem etsi fidelis, accresceret deuotio mulieris. Sicque degens adhuc sub laicali habitu uitam instituerat, ut nichil ab his discrepare uideretur, quos imperium regulare cohercebat.* *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:266.

rule. In this way, Évroul's wife could even be seen as prefiguring the monastic brethren of Saint-Évroul, who likewise follow the saint towards a regular life. Leonie Hicks has argued Orderic's descriptions of history of his community - its site and saint – were of paramount importance in the context of the first half of the twelfth century, because the spiritual pedigree conferred by this history was key to Orderic's elaboration of a defence of traditional Benedictine monasticism in the face of emergent new monastic orders.³⁴⁰ One way in which Orderic sought to reinforce the spiritual credentials of his community's founder saint is to draw attention to the ethical potential of married life. The evidence thus suggests that this aspect of the *vita* forms part of the consideration of marriage and community we find at this point in the text.

There is further evidence to suggest that when writing Books V and VI Orderic was increasingly interested to explore experiences and multiple perspectives on marriage. A technique Orderic uses is imagined speeches. Matthew Kempshall has argued that the technique of using made-up speeches – or *sermocinatio* – ‘was designed to add variety and excitement to a narrative but it always had to be made up credibly.’³⁴¹ The technique is also related to personification, and thus to some degree imagined direct speech was supposed to invoke the presence of an absent individual.³⁴² As such speeches were supposed to offer an authentic approximation of the speaker, it is possible to read them as an attempt to understand experiences of marriage from different perspectives.

A case in which Orderic uses imaged speeches in Book V is the account of the death of Ansold of Maule. As with the passages discussed so far in this section, this account is closely connected to the community of Saint-Évroul. Ansold was an important patron of the community and also the founder of the dependent cell at Maule,

³⁴⁰ Leonie Hicks, ‘Monastic Authority, Landscape, and Place,’ 102-20.

³⁴¹ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 339-41.

³⁴² Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 339-41.

a cell to which Ansold eventually retired at the end of his life.³⁴³ Before joining the cell, Ansold speaks to his wife Odeline:

Dear sister [*soror*] and beloved wife Odeline, I ask you now, kindly hear my prayers. Thus far we have together lawfully held to the faith of marriage [*coniugii fidem*]. And, with God's help, we have lived together for more than twenty years, without quarrel or scandalous complaint. We have borne honourable children through a legitimate union [*legitimam copulam*], whom you will encourage with ceaseless exhortations to be subject to their creator for their own good... As your life can be a guide for many, add this one thing to your good habits, that henceforth you will live chastely in holy widowhood.³⁴⁴

Emphasis is placed on the functional partnership the couple shared. The reference to 'quarrel and scandalous complaint' could indicate that an aspect of this partnership is the way it is perceived in the public sphere as free from any taint or scandal. Odeline's pious motherhood is also emphasised when Ansold refers to her ceaseless exhortations to their children. Through this speech, Orderic presents a vision of what marriage can, and possibly should, look like.

Orderic also tells the reader a great deal more about Ansold, with a focus on temperance and chastity. He lived a regular, quasi-monastic life; Orderic notes that even monks could learn from his example.³⁴⁵ Part of this description includes reference to Ansold's married life:

³⁴³ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:198.

³⁴⁴ *Grata soror et amabilis coniunx Odelina; queso mea benigniter nunc exaudi precamina. Hactenus coniugii fidem mutuo nobis legitime custodiimus; et sine litigio turpique querela plusquam xx annis opitulante Deo simul uiximus. Honestam sobolem per legitimam copulam genuimus; quam ut salubriter suo creatori subdatur sedulis incites hortatibus...Cum uita tua multis doctrina possit esse; hoc solum consuetis bonis tuis adde, ut amodo casta uiuas in sancta uiduitate.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:196.

³⁴⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:180-2.

Content with legal marriage, he [Ansold] loved chastity, and he censured the foulness of lust, not as a layman with vulgar words, but he condemned it openly as a doctor of the church with eloquent allegations. He praised fasting and all bodily restraint in all people, and manfully held to these things himself, according to the small measure of a layman [*pro modulo laici*].³⁴⁶

The description unpacks the juxtaposition between marriage and chastity, on one hand, and the incontinent, on the other, establishing chaste marriage as a form of praiseworthy living. By referring to Ansold's criticisms of other laymen, Orderic implies he is unusual for his devotion to chastity. This description could suggest that the vision of marriage presented in Ansold's speech to Odeline is an attempt to approximate his specific understanding of marriage. Orderic is not merely presenting a generic, monasticised depiction of married life, but rather represents the understanding of a layman unusually devoted to a regular life. This is clear in the way that Ansold refers to Odeline as *soror*, prefiguring his entry into monastic life.

In this passage as a whole, Odeline largely disappears from view. She is a passive recipient of Ansold's speech and acquiesces to his decision to join the community at Maule simply because she was customarily obeyed her husband.³⁴⁷ Furthermore, Orderic does not refer to Odeline's role in her husband's patronage of Maule, as he did when writing about Roger of Montgomery and his second wife. The passivity of Odeline could be part of Ansold's understanding of marriage herein conveyed. Orderic, then, is not putting forward a didactic argument about what marriage should involve. Nor, however, is he simply recording Ansold's marriage; rather through

³⁴⁶ *Legali conubio contentus castitatem amabat; et obscenitatem libidinis non ut laicus uulgari uerbositate uituperabat, sed ut doctor æcclesiasticus argutis allegationibus palam condemnabat. Ieiunia et omnem continentiam carnis in omnibus laudabat; et ipse uiriliter in se pro modulo laici retinebat.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:180-2.

³⁴⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:196.

imagined speeches, Orderic seems to be presenting to his audience a particular conception of married life.

Abandonment and Exile: Exploring the Challenges of Married Life

All of the cases thus far discussed relate to the community of Saint-Évroul. The final part of this section considers how far this exploration of marriage and its relationship to the community gives rise to further consideration of marriage in a broader context. When writing about the rebellion of Robert Curthose, Orderic again uses the technique of *sermocinatio* to present William I's view. Receiving word of his wife Matilda's support for their son, William laments:

It is certainly true and to be believed the claim of a wise man that 'a faithless wife is the ruin of the state.' Who, after this, will find in this world a companion faithful and useful to himself? Behold my wife [*collateralis*], who I love as if my own soul, who I have placed in charge of my whole realm and all treasures and powers, supports my enemies who plot against my life, greatly enriches them with my wealth, and zealously arms, consoles, and strengthens them against my well-being.³⁴⁸

The passage lays emphasis on the close partnership between husband and wife, such as through the use of the term *collateralis*. The emphasis on love is a point of difference between this speech and the one given by Ansold of Maule. Although Ansold refers to his wife as 'beloved wife [*amabilis coniunx*]', there is no comparable emphasis on the place of love in this marriage. This difference strengthens the argument that Orderic

³⁴⁸ *Vera est cuiusdam sapientis nimiumque michi probabilis assertio; "Naufragium rerum est mulier malefida marito." Quis ulterius in hoc mundo fidam sibi et utilem sociam repperiet? En collateralis mea quam uelut animam meam diligo, quam omnibus gazis et potestatibus in toto prefeci regno meo; inimicos meos insidiantes uitae meae sustentat, opibus meis summopere ditat; et contra salutem meam studiose armat, consolatur ac roborat. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:102-4.*

sought to present Ansold's specific view of marriage, as in the speech given by William I, Orderic seems to convey an alternative view. Furthermore, it also indicates that Orderic is not just using Ansold and William as mouthpieces, but rather is attempting to interpret different lay experiences of marriage. Moreover, this reading of William's speech shows that in Book V Orderic also begins to think about how marriage was perceived and experienced outside of the immediate world of Saint-Évroul and beyond the bounds of strictly community history.

In extending his consideration of marriage beyond community history in Books V and VI, Orderic also begins to confront the challenges posed by contemporary changes to the practices and procedures of marriage. One way in which Orderic does this is through the use of languages of abandonment and exile. What is intriguing about this development is that it appears near-simultaneously in two passages, one referring to a royal betrothal and the other a married priest. In Book V Orderic writes about a father and son both named Fulk.³⁴⁹ The passage begins with a discussion of Fulk de Guernanville, who was chosen as prior by Abbot Mainer. Orderic writes about the younger Fulk in some detail, also touching on his parentage:

Certainly, this man was a son of Fulk, dean of Évreux. Ardent among the order he diligently aided his abbot in all things, he attracted his father to his own monastery along with a large part of his patrimony. This dean [Fulk] was one of the students of Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, and held the fief of a knight through his paternal inheritance. Also, according to the custom of that time, he had a noble wife [*sociam*] named Orielde, by whom he had many children.³⁵⁰

That we are given Orielde's name is unusual. Orderic also names the couples' eleven

³⁴⁹ This passage is referred to above in Chapter One, Section I.

³⁵⁰ *Hic nempe Fulconis decani Ebroicensis filius fuit, et in ordine flagrans abbatem suum diligenter in omnibus adiuuit; patrem quoque suum magnamque patrimonii sui partem ecclesie suae attraxit. Præfatus decanus ex discipulis Fulberti Carnotensis episcopi fuit; et ex paterna hereditate feudum militis possedit. Illius etiam temporis ritu nobilem sociam nomine Orieldem habuit; ex qua copiosam progeniem generavit.* HE, Chibnall, V, 3:120-2.

children.³⁵¹ Consequently, Orderic draws into the account an entire clerical family and, in doing so, implicitly establishes the full range of people affected by legal efforts to penalised nicolaitism.

Next Orderic discusses the history of clerical celibacy, explaining that it began with the Normans under Rollo.³⁵² Pope Leo IX's 1049 council at Reims banned priests from marrying and bearing arms, ushering in a period of profound change.³⁵³ Orderic then states that priests have surrendered their arms but are still loathed to give up their wives. The narrative returns to the elder Fulk and Orderic concludes:

Fulk, whom I mentioned above, after long defilement with the pus of corruption, raised his mind to better things, and now, in old age, through the counsel and warning of Fulk his son, he fled [*confugit*] to the monastery of Saint-Évroul, and not so much abandoning the world as abandoned by it, he was granted the monastic habit.³⁵⁴

The story of the elder Fulk thus surrounds this brief synopsis of the history of nicolaitism in Normandy. As a result, Orderic contextualises Fulk's life story in relation to the abrupt changes facing married priests. Emphasis is placed on the challenges Fulk faced as a married priest. Orderic writes that he 'fled [*confugit*]' to Saint-Évroul and that 'not so much abandoning the world as abandoned by it, he was granted the monastic habit'. This is an inversion of a monastic vow, which should entail the voluntary abandonment of the transient material world. It is notable that Orderic is not critical of Fulk personally. Rather, Fulk was corrupted by his partaking in a custom that he was not responsible for. Far from a negative portrayal, it is easy to read Fulk as a victim in this passage, both of the custom of clerical marriage and of attempts to change it. It is even

³⁵¹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:122.

³⁵² *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120-2.

³⁵³ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120-2. See Chapter 1 for a further discussion of this conciliar account.

³⁵⁴ *Supradictus Fulco diutine corruptionis sanie fedatus ad meliora mentem extulit, iamque silicernius consilio monituque Fulconis filii sui Vticum confugit; et monachatum non tam seculum deserens quam a seculo derelictus impetrauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:120-2.

possible that the passage can be read as a criticism of efforts to punish married clergy for following what had been established custom.

It is plausible that Orderic heard the story from Fulk de Guernanville himself. He is an important figure within the text, appearing in two other places.³⁵⁵ He was also one of the first monks of Saint-Évroul and became prior under Abbot Mainer (1066-1089). It seems likely that he had died before Orderic wrote Book V in the 1120s; but it is equally likely that Orderic knew Fulk personally for a number of years as a novice at Saint-Évroul. The level of detail the passage includes – not least the list of all of Fulk’s siblings – further indicates that Orderic had intimate knowledge of the story. Consequently, it seems likely that here Orderic is attempting to represent the experiences of the changing expectations on married clerics, bringing into explicit focus the underlying context that informs similar passages on the families of Gervase of Montreuil and Odelerius of Orléans.

In almost the same part of Book V as the passage on Fulk and Fulk, Orderic describes the fortunes of William the Conqueror’s children, including his daughter Agatha. Part of the description includes a discussion of two of Agatha’s betrothals, the first to Harold Godwinson (who died before the marriage) and the second to the king of Galicia, Amfurcius:

Next Agatha, the king’s daughter, who earlier had been betrothed to Harold [Godwinson], later was sent to marry Amfurcius, king of Galicia, who asked for the match through noble envoys. But she, who did not rejoice in union [*ad uotum*] with her first betrothed, greatly abhorred to marry a second time. She had seen and loved the Englishman, but she deeply feared to be united with the Spanish husband, whom she had never laid eyes on. And so she reached out to the Omnipotent with tearful prayers, that she might not be led into Spain, but preferably might be received by Him. She prayed and was heeded, and she died

³⁵⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:124, 146.

a virgin on route.³⁵⁶

The passage juxtaposes the first betrothal with the second: adopting Agatha's point of view, Orderic presents the betrothal to Harold Godwinson as a desirable one, based on Agatha's love for him, but the second betrothal as a source of fear. The use of a language of seeing is used to interpret Agatha's responses, allowing the reader to empathise with her plight. Orderic wrote that Agatha had 'seen and loved [*uiderat et dilexerat*]' Harold; in contrast, the discussion of Amfurcius emphasises the fact that Agatha had not met him. First, we are explicitly told that Amfurcius arranged the marriage through 'noble envoys', precluding the possibility of a meeting during the agreement of the match. Second, Orderic explains that Agatha was afraid of marrying Amfurcius 'whom she had never laid eyes on'. Here Orderic seems to empathetically explain Agatha's emotions in response to a particular marital situation. Read alongside the passages on Ansold of Maule, William I, and the two Fulks, it becomes clear that at this point in the text a theme of exploring different experiences of marriages – both secular and clerical – emerges in the text.

Orderic also makes the argument that Agatha was suffering from abandonment. Her unfulfilled first betrothal leaves her with a sense of loss. Geographic exile could also be read as an expression of marital alienation. Orderic focuses on differences between Harold's Englishness (he is referred to as *Anglum*) and Amfurcius, a Spanish king. Agatha prays 'that she might not be led into Spain [*ne duceretur ipsa in Hispaniam*]', not that she might not wed Amfurcius. Even Amfurcius's name could be seen as part of this argument: it is garbled and so could be an attempt to depict foreignness.³⁵⁷ Where we can see a connection between this passage and the previous one on the two Fulks is

³⁵⁶ *Porro Agatha regis filia, quæ prius fuerat Haraldo desponsata; postmodum Amfursio regi Gallicie per procos petenti missa est desponsanda. Sed quæ priori sponso ad uotum gauisa non est; secundo sociari ualde abominata est. Anglum uiderat et dilexerat; sed Hiberno coniungi nimis metuit quem nunquam perspexerat. Omnipotenti ergo effudit precem lacrimosam, ne duceretur ipsa in Hispaniam, sed ipse potius susciperet eam. Orauit et exaudita est; obiterque uirgo defuncta est. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:115.*

³⁵⁷ *HE, Chibnall, 3:114, n. 1.*

in the empathetic consideration of marital abandonment. Consequently, the text appears to posit a connection between the challenges faced by both married priests and women in the context of contemporary marriage practices. Furthermore, it is possible that the similarity with which Orderic approaches marriages in these cases, focusing on experiences of harsh realities of marital practices, could explain the simultaneous emergence of a consideration of the challenges faced by noblewomen and priests at this point in the text.

Conclusions

This discussion has revealed that Orderic used a language of abandonment to explore two cases of marriage, one secular and one clerical, in rapid succession. This could suggest that Orderic's ideas developed through an interplay between thought on clerical and secular marriage. He appears to draw women and married priests into a shared frame of reference, examining commonalities between them in the challenges they faced in the context of contemporary marriage practices. This raises a question of how far these two kinds of marriage were seen as distinct at this moment in time. Indeed, this reading could suggest that the identification of clerical marriage as a distinct issue risks making the teleological assumption that the two kinds of marriage were already disentangled at a theoretical level before the reformers succeeded in eroding the legitimacy of the custom of nicolaitism.

This discussion of marriage in Books V and VI has also revealed how significant the issue of clerical marriage is in the text. This evidence has implications for the study of nicolaitism in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. To date, modern scholarship on these debates has accepted a binary paradigm with reformers on one side and apologists on the other.³⁵⁸ For example, Barstow corrected an over-focus on reformers' arguments

³⁵⁸ See Cowdrey, 'Gregory VII and the Chastity of the Clergy,' 288-90.

by looking at apologists for clerical marriage.³⁵⁹ Examining the clergy in England, Thomas focused on the drive to enforce celibacy and ‘ideological and practical resistance to this drive’.³⁶⁰ Thus far, evidence from the *Historia* appears in this historiography only as source for resistance to reforming legislation among the Norman clergy.³⁶¹ Orderic’s work is perhaps better characterised as an attempt to come to terms with the consequences of actions taken against married priests and their sons. In this Orderic may have been responding to his community’s interests. The insertion of married priests’ and their sons into the *Historia* in Books V-VI could reflect the feelings of a group of monks who thought that their parentage and personal histories were being effaced as their status was increasingly challenged in reformist circles. Jennifer Thibodeaux has noted that literate defence of clerical marriage dies out from the 1130s onwards (or at least does not survive).³⁶² Future research could explore how far textual production in Normandy associated with clerical marriage did not so much die out as morph into a new kind of writing, one more concerned with an empathetic consideration of experience.

III. Book VIII: Marriage and Noblewomen

Jean Blacker noted that Orderic pays an unusual amount of attention towards women.³⁶³ What has not been recognised, however, is the concentration of material on married noblewomen in Book VIII. In this section, I will consider how and why Orderic

³⁵⁹ Barstow, *Married Priests*, 105-55.

³⁶⁰ Thomas, *Secular Clergy*, 154-5.

³⁶¹ Thomas, *Secular Clergy*, 169-70, 173; Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest*, 42, 44-45; Alison Alexander, ‘Riots, Reform and Rivalry: Religious Life in Rouen, c. 1073-c. 1092,’ *ANS* 33 (2010): 23-40; van Houts, ‘Fate of Priests’ Sons,’ 64, 69, 73.

³⁶² Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest*, 152-3.

³⁶³ Jean Blacker, ‘Women, Power, and Violence in Orderic Vitalis’s *Historia ecclesiastica*,’ in *Violence against Women in Medieval Texts*, ed. Anna Roberts (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998), 44-5.

explores noblewomen's marital experiences in this material. This section develops the arguments of the previous one by asking how far these passages on noblewomen grow out of or respond to the material on married priests. The section also considers the effect of this material and, consequently, what its placement reveals about Orderic's audience. In order to consider cases on noblewomen in relation to marriage in Book VIII generally, I will first consider an aspect of the text that has come to light in recent research: the use of accounts of marriage as a device for political criticism.

Marriage as a Tool of Political Criticism

In a recent article, William Aird examined how Orderic wrote about secular rulers, with a specific focus on ideas of kingship.³⁶⁴ Passages referring to royal marriages are important evidence that Aird draws upon for his analysis.³⁶⁵ He argues that the way Orderic wrote about royal marriage is a form of moral critique. Kings who refused to marry are criticised for a lack of stability and maturity. In these cases, the inability of kings to control their sexual urges is used as a metaphor for their failure to govern effectively.³⁶⁶ While Henry I is a clear exception to this idea – as his excessive lust and effective governance are both in evidence in the *Historia* – Aird's analysis draws new attention to the way Orderic uses passages on marriage didactically as part of an argument about kingship.

The main cases of marriages Aird refers to come from Books VII and VIII.³⁶⁷ Although Aird does not associate this material with a particular phase of the writing of the *Historia*, its appearance in these books raises questions about what the use of

³⁶⁴ William M. Aird, 'Orderic's Secular Rulers and Representations of Personality and Power in the *Historia ecclesiastica*,' *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, 189-216.

³⁶⁵ References to noble marriage are supplementary to this analysis: Aird, 'Orderic's Secular Rulers,' 196-7.

³⁶⁶ Aird, 'Orderic's Secular Rulers,' 212.

³⁶⁷ The detailed passages on Emperor Henry IV and King Philip I of France are found in Books VII and VIII respectively: *HE*, Chibnall, VII, 4:6-9; VIII, 4:262-3.

marriage in this political space indicates about Orderic's exploration of marriage itself at this point in the text. We can ask what ideas are associated with marriage at this point in the text such that make it a useful for tool for a criticism of kingship. Orderic wrote about Henry IV's abandonment of his wife within a longer passage on his conflict with Pope Gregory VII. Orderic writes about Henry's unlawful seizure of lands, immorality, and his decision to drive Gregory from the papal throne by force.³⁶⁸ Regarding Henry's marital strategies, Orderic wrote:

Therefore he [Pope Gregory VII] admonished, reproached, and finally excommunicated, Henry, king of the Germans, because he was an incorrigible transgressor over the boundaries of divine law [*diuinæ legis*]. For this prince abandoned his wife, a daughter of the illustrious count, Eustace of Bologne, and clung to sordid adulteries and pleasures as a pig rejoices in the mud; and the dangerous man resisted the law of God and all the exhortations of good men.³⁶⁹

Emphasis is placed on Henry's moral failing by referring to his plural 'sordid adulteries [*sordidis adulterii*]' and by establishing his wife's high birth (she is a daughter of Count Eustace of Bologne), implying he had no reason to repudiate her. By citing both the law which Henry ignored and the exhortations of unnamed 'good men [*bonorum...omnino*]', Orderic shows his actions are entirely unjustified and cannot be excused with reference to poor counsellors. In drawing a comparison between Henry IV and a pig, Orderic implies that his adulterous behavior also represents the relinquishment of human reason. Here, then, is a clear expression of the implications of marriage, associated with ideas of

³⁶⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, VII, 4:6-8.

³⁶⁹ *Henricum ergo Teutonicorum regem quia diuinæ legis preuaricator erat incorrigibilis sepe admonuit; corripuit, ad postremum excommunicauit. Nam princeps prefatus uxorem suam Eustachii Boloniensium egregii comitis filiam reliquit, et sordidis adulterii uoluptatibus ut porcus luto gaudens inhesit; Deique legibus et bonorum exhortationibus omnino infestus obstetit.* *HE*, Chibnall, VII, 4:6-8).

reason and social conformity. It is these underpinning ideas that facilitate this moral critique of Henry IV.

An element of Orderic's argumentation Aird overlooks is the use of instances of marriage as expressions of political acumen. Book X was written within two years of the material on Emperor Henry IV. In it Orderic praises Henry I's stable and effective kingship.³⁷⁰ Orderic then refers to Henry and Edith-Matilda's marriage:

This prince in the fourth month of his reign, unwilling to wallow in a disgusting way, as any horse or mule without reason, betrothed to himself with regal custom a nobly-born virgin called Matilda, with whom he had two children, William and Matilda...Thus, in his wisdom, Henry, recognising the high birth of this maiden, and long since desiring her integrity and many fine qualities, he chose her as his bride in Christ and, with Bishop Gerard of Hereford consecrating the match, raised her to the throne alongside himself.³⁷¹

This passage uses his marriage to foreground his effective kingship. In stressing Edith-Matilda's high-birth, Orderic establishes Henry's prudence in choosing her as a wife. Henry is also shown to be sensible because of his choice of marriage partner, as Edith-Matilda is described as of high birth and possessing 'many fine qualities'. Orderic also uses another comparison with animals to juxtapose human reason and base urges. In these passages on Henry I and Henry IV, Orderic also presents being unmarried as an immoral state, through the use of a language of pollution. This kind of language is visible again in a passage on William Rufus, about whom Orderic writes: '[h]e never had a lawful wife, but insatiably clung to obscene fornications and frequent adulteries;

³⁷⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:298.

³⁷¹ *Prefatus princeps quarto mense ex quo cepit regnare nolens ut equus et mulus quibus non est intellectus turpiter lasciuire, generosam uirginem nomine Mathildem regali more sibi desponsauit, ex qua geminam prolem Mathildem et Guillelmum generauit...Sapiens ergo Henricus generositatem uirginis agnoscens, multimodamque morum eius honestatem iamdudum concupiscens; huiusmodi sociam in Christo sibib elegit, et in regno secum Gerardo Herfordensi episcopo consecrante sullimauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:198-200.

polluted by shameful acts, he presented a disgraceful example of wantonness to his subjects.³⁷² The similarities between these three passages indicates that they draw upon a shared understanding of the ethical implications of the married state. It is this understanding, implicitly conveyed in the text, which gives power to Orderic's critique of kingship. Indeed, were it not for the association between marriage, morality, and reason, these passages would lack rhetorical effect. This further indicates that, writing in the mid-1130s, Orderic increasingly articulates and *uses* a sophisticated understanding of marriage in his text for argumentative effect. Orderic shows a new ability to use the moral dimensions of married life didactically, differing from earlier material on community history and the experiences of married priests.

Abandoned Women

Alongside this new argumentative use of marriage, Orderic includes a range of passages on cases of divorce and separation with a focus on the experiences of noblewomen. There is a concentration of this material in Book VIII specifically. It differs from earlier passages on noblewomen's marriages. Prior to Book VIII, Orderic wrote infrequently about instances of divorce and separation. In Book V, Orderic writes about William de Moulins-la-Marche and his wife Aubrée, who were divorced on grounds of consanguinity:

After Aubrée had born her husband two sons, William and Robert, a divorce was arranged between the man and wife on account of consanguinity

³⁷² *Legitimam coniugem nunquam habuit; sed obscenis fornicationibus et frequentibus mæchiis inexplēbiliter inhesit, flagitiisque pollutus exemplum turpis lasciuiae subiectis damnabiliter exhibuit.* *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:202.

[*consanguinitatis*]. After the separation had been carried through in the presence of a bishop, William took another wife named Duda...³⁷³

The passage has a narrative function. Orderic goes on to write more about Duda, her children with William, and Aubrée's future as a nun. The divorce itself appears to be of secondary importance: it a necessary step to establish the legitimacy of the marriage between William and Duda and thus a prelude to Orderic's discussion of their children.³⁷⁴ Orderic's reference to the fact that Aubrée and William were formally separated in the presence of a bishop can be read as an attempt to establish the legitimacy of the second marriage, rather than the legality of the divorce. Although Orderic refers to consanguinity as the reason for the divorce, he does not consider underlying motives, noting simply that a divorce 'was arranged [*factum est*]'. Thus, writing in Book V, Orderic considers this instance of divorce principally in terms of its practical effects and consequences for a story of remarriage.

In Book VIII, however, Orderic's lays different emphases. For example, he describes the divorce of Nigel de Aubigny and Matilda de L'Aigle:

Nigel de Aubigny took this woman as his wife, and honourably kept her for some time on account of the favour of her noble kin. After her brother, Gilbert de L'Aigle, died, the cunning [*uafer*] man sought the opportunity to get a divorce, and he repudiated her because she had been the wife of a blood relative, and he took to wife Gundreda, a sister of Hugh de Gournay.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ *Postquam Albereda duos marito suos filios Guillelmum et Rodbertum enixa est; causa consanguinitatis diuortium inter uirum et predictam mulierem factum est. Guillelmus autem peracto coram pontifice discidio, aliam duxit uxorem nomine Dudam. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:132.*

³⁷⁴ *HE, Chibnall, V, 3:132-4.*

³⁷⁵ *Nigellus de Albineio ipsam uxorem accepit, et pro fauore nobilium parentum eius aliquandiu honorifice tenuit. Verum defuncto Gisleberto de Aquila fratre eius uafer occasionem diuortii exquisiuit, eamque quia consanguinei sui coniunx fuerat repudiauit, et Gundream sororem Hugonis de Gornaco uxorem duxit. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:282-4.*

As in the previous case, Orderic does not discuss the specifics of the claim to consanguinity, noting with inconsistent language that they had a familial relationship of some kind. However, where this account differs is in a consideration of the motives of Nigel de Aubigny. Orderic implies that Nigel sought the divorce because the usefulness of the marriage came to an end with the death of Matilda's brother, Gilbert de L'Aigle. The text also implies the political expediency of Nigel's decision making through the description of him as a 'cunning man'. Even the way he 'honourably kept her' is lent a sceptical edge through comments that it was temporary ('for some time [*aliquandiu*]') and motivated by a desire for Matilda's family's favour. The passage likewise begins to consider the position Matilda was placed in, referring to the fact that Nigel repudiated her. That Orderic presents an image of a sceptical, cynical figure through consideration of practices of matrimonial politics points towards a shift in the way he engages with questions of marriage, drawing to the fore the treatment of noblewomen.

Orderic's interpretation of Nigel de Aubigny's cynical motives for seeking divorce appears to corroborate the received understanding of the use of consanguinity legislation by the secular nobility.³⁷⁶ It has been accepted that, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the extension of consanguinity legislation was manipulated by the secular elite as a weapon to bypass the indissolubility of marriage.³⁷⁷ Recent research, however, has shed light on cases where noble families seem to have deliberately avoided endogamy, even when it would be politically and territorially expedient.³⁷⁸ For instance,

³⁷⁶ For the extension of consanguinity laws in this period, see Michael M. Sheehan, 'Marriage Theory and Practice in the Conciliar Legislation and Diocesan Statutes of Medieval England,' in *Marriage, Family, and Law in Medieval Europe: Collected Studies*, ed. James K. Farge (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), 119-20.

³⁷⁷ James Brundage, 'Sex and Canon Law,' in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, eds. Vern L. Bullough and James Brundage (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 1996), 38-9. On this interpretation, see: D'Avray, 'Lay kinship solidarity,' 195-7.

³⁷⁸ Constance Brrtain Bouchard, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,' *Speculum* 56, no. 2 (1981): 268-287. This article has received only limited attention: it is mentioned briefly in Christof Rolker, 'Kings, Bishops and Incest: Extension and Subversion of the Ecclesiastical Marriage Jurisdiction around 1100,' *Studies in Church History* 43 (2007): 160-1. The arguments of this article are repeated, largely unchanged, in Bouchard's monograph: *Those of My*

Ryan Patrick Crisp has looked at the Saint-Aubin genealogies, arguing that the eleventh-century counts of Anjou internalised arguments against consanguinity and took steps to avoid it.³⁷⁹ An implication of this research is that Orderic's account of Nigel de Aubigny's divorce ought not to be read as received understanding of this event. Rather, Orderic appears to have offered an interpretation Nigel d' Aubigny's actions that foregrounds Matilda's abandonment. This marks a substantial change from an earlier lack of interest in the motives behind cases of divorce and indicates a new concern with women's experiences of marriage.

In Book VIII, Orderic pays close attention to the marriages of individual noblewomen. One particularly detailed passage is on the treatment of Agnes, wife of Robert de Bellême, known as Robert Talvas.³⁸⁰ Orderic vividly describes how Talvas delighted in torture and extortion. His wife Agnes bore him a son and heir – William – but:

The savage husband did not honour his noble wife as is right because of his beloved child, on the contrary he saddened her with many pains as if she was a hateful slave girl, and moreover for a long time he held her a prisoner like a brigand in the stronghold of Bellême. Finally, she secretly escaped from prison, rescued by a diligent and loyal servant; and she fled to Countess Adela of Chartres, and thence withdrew to Ponthieu, never to return to the tyrant.³⁸¹

Although Robert Talvas was a hostile neighbour of the community of Saint-Évroul, the passage foregrounds Agnes' mistreatment in a way that goes beyond a means to criticise

Blood: Creating Noble Families in Medieval Francia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 39-58.

³⁷⁹ Ryan Patrick Crisp, 'Consanguinity and the Saint-Aubin Genealogies,' *HSJ* 14 (2005): 105-107.

³⁸⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:298-300.

³⁸¹ *Seuus maritus generosam coniugem non ut decuit propter dilectam sobolem honorauit, immo multis eam afflictionibus ut odibilem ancillam contristauit, quin etiam multo tempore in arce Belesmensi uelut latronem custodiae mancipauit. Tandem auxilio industriaque fidelis cubicularii erepta de carcere clanculo exiuit; et ad Hadalam Carnotensem comitissam confugit, et inde nunquam ad tirannum reditura in Pontium secessit.* *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:300.

her husband.³⁸² Her suffering can be understood in relation to Talvas' violation of his responsibilities as a husband, hence the comments that Talvas treated her as a 'hateful slave girl' and 'like a brigand' rather than as he should have treated her as his wife and the mother of his son. The fact Agnes had produced a son is used to show that Talvas' cruelty is entirely unjustified, as we can see from the comment that he 'did not honour his noble wife as if right because of his beloved child'. There is a sense in the passage that Agnes endured her husband's cruelty over a sustained period of time. Orderic wrote that Agnes was imprisoned at Bellême 'for a long time [*multo tempore*]' and he used the word *Tandem* (meaning 'finally' or 'at last') to begin the sentence describing her escape. The mistreatment Agnes suffers at her husband's hands seems to justify her flight: the marriage is *de facto* dissolved by Talvas' mistreatment. Agnes and the unnamed, yet 'diligent and loyal' servant are the heroes of the piece for escaping Talvas' clutches. And although Agnes explicitly never returned to her husband, there is no suggestion that she should or would be expected to. This analysis reveals that Orderic uses an emotional field of reference to explore the experiences of a married noblewoman. Orderic does not just relate the details of the account and nor does he simply attack Robert Talvas' behaviour. Rather, there seems to be a genuine effort here to represent the emotions and suffering endured by Agnes, as well as her powerlessness when trapped in a cruel marriage.

Unlike the earlier material, Orderic here writes about a group of individuals who are neither royal nor in all cases directly connected to Saint-Évroul. In a passage describing the marriage of Matilda de L'Aigle and Robert of Mowbray, Orderic explores the challenges she faced when her husband was captured in rebellion against William Rufus:

Matilda his [Robert's] wife, who was joyful with him for scarcely any time because she had been married at a moment of upheaval, and – between military

³⁸² *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:300.

disasters – she lay in bed with her quivering husband for barely three months, and before long she was without marital comfort, and she grieved for a long time afflicted with many sorrows. Her husband, as I have said, alive in prison, she could not prevail to legitimately marry a second man with him [Robert] living according to the law of God.³⁸³

Matilda's predicament was made known to Pope Paschal who granted her an annulment, which allowed her to remarry. The passage seems to convey the idea not that Matilda missed Robert specifically, but that she was 'without marital comfort [*maritali consolatione*]'. In fact, Robert himself is barely mentioned. The evidence thus suggests that in Book VIII Orderic was interested in the experiences of Norman noblewomen in their own right. His writing examines the interplay between social realities and ethical ideals, through a focus on suffering of these married noblewomen.

In contrast to depictions of passive wives earlier in the *Historia* – such as Ansold's wife, Odeline – in Book VIII the intentions and decision-making of women in a marital sphere is drawn to the fore. A woman whose decision-making is focused upon in particular detail is Betrada de Monfort. She was a controversial figure in the twelfth century, due to her marriage to Philip I of France. Before looking at Orderic's version, it is worth briefly sketching the outline of events.³⁸⁴ The affair began in 1092 when Philip repudiated his wife Bertha of Holland and Betrada left her husband Fulk of Anjou, before marrying one another. The marriage was resisted by some, including Pope Urban II, on the grounds that Philip and Betrada were both already married and, because Philip was distantly related to Fulk, the pair shared an affinal bond. The couple were excommunicated multiple times after 1095, although usually for only short periods. In

³⁸³ *Mathildis uero uxor eius quæ cum eo uix unquam leta fuerat, quia in articulo perturbationis desponsata fuerat, et inter bellicas clades tribus tantum mensibus cum tremore uiri thoro incubuerat, maritali consolatione cito caruit, multisque meroribus afflicta diu gemuit. Vir eius ut dictum est in carcere uiuebat, nec ipsa eo uiuente secundum legem Dei alteri nubere legitime ualebat. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:282-4.*

³⁸⁴ This summary of events is based on a more detailed discussion provided by Rolker, 'Kings, Bishops and Incest,' 159-68.

1104 a resolution was reached: Philip and Betrada were absolved after they swore an oath not to see each other anymore. However, evidence suggests that Betrada continued to live with Philip as his wife and was accepted as queen.³⁸⁵

Orderic's description of Betrada's married life appears in three places. The first two of these are found in Book VIII, and, therefore, were perhaps conceived together. The third part is from Book IX (c. 1135). Thus, it was likely written soon after those in Book VIII, but not simultaneously with them. Jean Blacker has looked at Orderic's writing on Betrada as part of a consideration of women in the text.³⁸⁶ However, Blacker analyses only one of the passages in isolation. As we will see, examining these passages in relation to one another reveals a clearer sense of Orderic's argument.

In Book VIII, Orderic writes about Betrada's first marriage to the infamous adulterer Fulk, count of Anjou.³⁸⁷ The narrative follows that Fulk asked Betrada's guardian, Robert Curthose, to give her in marriage to him; in exchange Fulk would act as Robert's ally and would pacify the Manceaux. Robert replies:

My lord duke, you ask something of me that I am deeply opposed to, for you want me to give my niece who is still a young virgin, who was entrusted to me by my brother-in-law, to a man twice-married already. In truth you seek only your advantage and slight mine. You wish to acquire the county of Maine through my niece and steal my inheritance from me. Is this undertaking just?³⁸⁸

After voicing this complaint, Robert Curthose then explains that he will agree to the match, on the condition that the lands which belonged to his uncle – Ralph de Gacé –

³⁸⁵ Rolker, 'Kings, Bishops and Incest,' 165-6.

³⁸⁶ Blacker, 'Women, Power, and Violence,' 46.

³⁸⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:184-6.

³⁸⁸ *Rem domine dux postulas a me michi ualde contrariam, ut neptem meam quae adhuc tenera uirgo est digamo tradam; quam sororius meus michi commendauit nutriendam. Verum prouide commodum tuum queris; meumque paruipendis. Cenomannensem comitatum uis tibi optinere per neptem meam; et tu michi aufers hereditatem meam. Iustumne est quod moliris?* *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:184-6).

were returned to his duchy. Fulk then jubilantly marries Bertrada (and with her a son, also called Fulk), despite the fact that he had ‘two wives still living [*uiuentibus adhuc duabus uxoribus*]’.³⁸⁹ After Betrada and Philip had married, there was some disagreement in ecclesiastical circles over whether or not Betrada had been married to Fulk of Anjou. Ivo of Charters argued that Betrada was free to marry Philip I because of the invalidity of her marriage to Fulk, on account of Fulk’s previous wives.³⁹⁰ Here, Orderic uses the same facts – that Fulk had two wives still living – and applies it to a moral analysis of the marriage. Although Robert Curthose eventually agrees to the match, he is also used to voice the idea that there is something morally objectionable about a marriage between ‘a young virgin’ and a twice-married man. Orderic thus sets up a contrast between Betrada’s purity and Fulk’s corruption.

Taken alone, the first passage can be read a number of ways. For example, it can be read as foremost about political and territorial questions in the Norman-Anjou border region. Putting the next section on Betrada alongside this first, however, reveals a considered approach to understanding Betrada’s motives. In this second passage, Orderic writes that Betrada sought to abandon Fulk and attempts to convince King Philip to marry her. Philip agrees and the couple are married by Odo of Bayeux, who is rewarded with a church in the town of Mantes. According to Orderic, no French bishops would agree to perform the ceremony, rejecting the legitimacy of the union. Orderic also touches on Philip’s excommunication and the long period France spent under interdict.³⁹¹ Orderic’s writing at this point is clearly critical of the union. Betrada is referred to as a ‘fraudulent mistress [*peculans pelex*]’ and the match nearly precipitates a war between Philip and Fulk.³⁹² However, there is some ambiguity over Betrada’s status. Both Fulk and Philip are referred to as explicitly ‘adulterous’, with the term *adulterus*. However, Betrada is not. Furthermore, summarising the section, Orderic wrote that

³⁸⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:186.

³⁹⁰ Rolker, ‘Kings, Bishops, and Incest,’ 164.

³⁹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:260-2.

³⁹² *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:260-2.

‘Alas, the detestable crime of adultery was perpetrated in the seat of the king of France’.³⁹³ In light of this description, it is interesting to consider that Betrada is not called an adulterer: the term used is *peculans*, which strictly means embezzling. In this way, it seems that Betrada is presented as culpable for the scandal but in a way that is distinct from Philip.

The key to this distinction lies in the way Orderic focuses on Betrada’s motives specifically, writing:

About this time a new disturbance arose in the kingdom of France. Betrada, countess of Anjou, fearing lest her husband do to her what he had already done to two other wives, and afraid that if she were abandoned she would be despised by all as if a base prostitute, conscious of her nobility and beauty she chose the most faithful envoy to go to Philip, king of the French, and clearly informed him of what she had in mind. For she preferred to freely abandon her husband and strive for another, than be deserted by him and open to the contempt of all.³⁹⁴

This passage offers a detailed consideration of Betrada’s internal thought processes. We are told that she was principally afraid of being abandoned by Fulk; Orderic lends legitimacy to this fear by referring to the fact that Fulk had already repudiated two other wives. Moreover, Betrada is presented as afraid of the social realities that face repudiated women, here expressed through the fear she would be despised ‘as if a base prostitute’. We also see into Betrada’s motives in choosing to contact Philip, as it is coloured by an awareness of her own nobility of birth and beauty. In addition, we are

³⁹³ *Abominabile crimen mechiae in solio regni Galliae pro dolor perpetratum est. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:260.*

³⁹⁴ *Circa haec tempora in regno Galliae feda turbatio exorta est. Betrada enim Andegauorum comitissa metuens ne uir suus quod iam duabus aliis fecerat sibi faceret, et relicta cunctis contemptui ceu uile scortum fieret; conscia nobilitatis et pulchritudinis suae fidissimum legatum Philippo regi Francorum destinavit, eique quod in corde tractabat euidenter notificavit. Malebat enim ultro uirum relinquere, aliumque appetere; quam a uiro relinqui omniumque patere despectui. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:260.*

told that she chose her ‘most faithful [*fidissimum*] envoy’ again allowing us insight into her fear of discovery and the caution with which she approached escaping from Fulk. The final sentence highlights the problem Betrada sought to circumvent: she hoped to pre-empt her own repudiation by abandoning her husband and, therefore, to be well placed to remarry successfully. The first passage on Fulk and Betrada’s union established the idea that this match was improper and undesirable. Consequently, it could help the reader to contextualise Betrada’s later decision to abandon Fulk and to seek a more desirable match for herself. Thus, she comes as an ambiguous, even forgivable, figure who is forced to make difficult choices. In laying out the full story of Betrada’s married life Orderic makes important observations about the way noblewomen were used politically through the formation of marriages. Indeed, in drawing Betrada’s decision-making to the fore, Orderic could even be making an argument against some of the contemporary social realities of married life for women.

In Book IX, Orderic retells the story of Betrada with Philip I as the focus.³⁹⁵ Whereas in Book VIII Betrada is set up as the instigator of the affair, in Book IX, Philip is held directly responsible: Orderic writes that Philip abducted or carried off – *rapuit* – Betrada. Another difference is that in Book IX, Betrada is described as a *moecham*, meaning adulteress. The retelling of this affair in Book IX raises questions about kingship, tying into Orderic’s analysis of political authority through marital practices. Furthermore, this passage comes from the very start of Book IX where it is part of a list of momentous and troubling changes taking place in the years 1094 and 1095, including Emperor Henry V’s attack on Rome.³⁹⁶ If we read Philip’s abduction alongside Henry’s misdeeds, then the two can be seen as a pair, exemplifying the failure of kings. The passage emphasises Philip’s wrongs as part of a juxtaposition between worldly power and the sacral authority of Urban II.³⁹⁷ The way Orderic redeploys the story of Betrada

³⁹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:10.

³⁹⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:8-12.

³⁹⁷ See the previous chapter on Urban’s spiritual authority.

and Philip in Book IX further shows just how distinctive the emphasis on the marital experiences of women is in Book VIII.

The remarkable interest Orderic displays in the married lives of Norman noblewomen should give us pause. It raises questions about the community of Saint-Évroul's sense of identity and where the lines between the monks and secular society were drawn. It raises further questions concerning the relationship between Orderic's work and his community. Why was Orderic's community interested in women's experiences of marriage? This question could be addressed through further examination of other contemporary works, in order to reflect upon the potential impact of contemporary changes to marriage practices and laws on the way writers engaged with female experiences. Based upon my analysis thus far, I suggest in part the focus on married noblewomen in Book VIII develops out Orderic's earlier writing. He writes about noblewomen from a perspective that is consonant with the focus on experiences of suffering and uncertainty we find in passages on married priests and their sons. Thus, this study posits a connection between married priests and priests' sons in Books V-VI and married noblewomen in Book VIII, based in a common outlook on change, law, and experience. Although Orderic implicitly recognises the distinct status of clerical marriage, his interpretation of the experiences of married clerics and their sons seems to have informed how he approaches those of married noblewomen. This reveals one way in which clerical and secular marriage could be understood relative to one another and in shared terms

Conclusions

This analysis of marriage in Book VIII problematises aspects of current research into marriage practices. Recent research has sought to examine the theory of competing models of marriage by testing the validity of the posited secular model of marriage and the supposed changes to family structure that took place after the end of the first

millennium.³⁹⁸ These studies involve the close investigation of marriage practices among regional elites, as Amy Livingstone has done for the lands around the Loire and Theodore Evergates for the county of Champagne.³⁹⁹ What these studies have in common is a hierarchy of evidence based on assumed closeness to realities of marriage practices. Charters and other documentary sources thus provide the main evidential basis.⁴⁰⁰ Chronicles and histories are supplementary evidence used to corroborate the picture of marriage based on documentary sources.⁴⁰¹ A conclusion Evergates, Livingstone, and Fenton reach in their respective regional studies is that noblewomen were less disposable and their married lives less fraught than a reading of the legal and theological works on marriage might lead one to assume.⁴⁰² The evidence of the *Historia* could corroborate this argument, as Orderic's depictions of the trials faced by noblewomen are plausibly exceptional instances, hence their inclusion within the *Historia*. However, Orderic's writing about these noblewomen is more than an inert reflection of experiences of married life. Orderic explores this experience, unpacking layers of meaning through a consideration of the moral consequences and emotional fallout of marital decision-making.

Focusing on how Orderic explores marriage in the *Historia* allows us to undertake different kinds of analyses. The *Historia* has been used as a profoundly

³⁹⁸ Amy Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of the Loire, 1000-1200* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 141-3, 165-6.

³⁹⁹ Amy Livingstone, 'Kith and Kin: An Examination of Kinship and Family Structure of the Nobility of Eleventh- and Twelfth- Century Blois-Chartres,' *French Historical Studies* 20, no. 3 (1997): 419-58; *Out of Love for My Kin*; 'Climbing the Tree of Jesse: Aristocratic Marriage in the Lands of the Loire, 1050-1150,' in *Les stratégies matrimoniales (IXe-XIIIe siècle)*, ed. Martin Aurell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 101-18; Theodore Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100-1300* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). Normand marriage practices have been examined in a similar way: Kirsten A. Fenton, 'Women, Property, and Power: Some Examples from Eleventh-Century Rouen Cartularies,' in *Society and Culture in Medieval Rouen, 911-1300*, eds. Leonie V. Hicks and Elma Brenner (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 227-46.

⁴⁰⁰ Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin*, 4-5; Evergates, *Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 3. Other

⁴⁰¹ Livingstone, *Out of Love for My Kin*, 6.

⁴⁰² Evergates, *Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 89-91; Livingstone, 'Climbing the Tree of Jesse,' 101-18; *Out of Love for My Kin*, 165-6; Fenton, 'Women, Property, and Power,' 227-46.

important source for familial relationships in Normandy. As John Moor has recently expressed it, Orderic ‘blazes the trail’ amongst Anglo-Norman writers when it comes to discussions of affection and love in family relationships.⁴⁰³ However, reading the *Historia* as a source ignores other ways of using the text to think about medieval experiences of love in marriage. This is a pressing problem as accessing evidence for affective relationships is notoriously challenging.⁴⁰⁴ What I have argued is that in Book VIII Orderic uses an emotional field of reference as part of a consideration of marriage experiences of noblewomen. By understanding the aims of the text it is possible to draw conclusions about expectations of affection in marriage as understood by a monastic community with close ties to secular elites. Orderic also seems to have sought to interpret the views of the secular nobility. His depiction of Betrada’s intentions seems to be an attempt to comprehend a social experience of marriage. This reading thus points towards ways in which this kind of evidence could be used explore how a certain group of elite laypeople made decisions about marriage.

IV. Marital Ideals in the Later Books

Thus far this chapter has argued that over the course of Orderic’s writing career, his engagement with contemporary marriage practices became more sophisticated and extended beyond the community of Saint-Évroul. Books I and X-XIII were for the most part written between 1135 and *c.* 1137, with additions down to 1141. During this period, the scope of the work continued to expand. Accordingly, Orderic depicted an increasingly wide range of marriages. This section considers what points Orderic makes about marriage through this kind of material. It asks how far writing about chronologically and geographically distant marriages afforded Orderic new

⁴⁰³ Moor, ‘Inside the Anglo-Norman Family,’ 15. Moor’s work depends heavily on evidence from the *Historia*, 1-18.

⁴⁰⁴ Moor, ‘Inside the Anglo-Norman Family,’ 1-5; van Houts, *Married Life*, 108-10; Evergates, *Aristocracy in the County of Champagne*, 88.

opportunities to explore or assert more abstract ideals. The section further seeks to situate any such expression of ideals in relation to the depiction of the trials faced by noblewomen in Book VIII. The first part of this section focuses on Books X-XIII, where we see an expansion of the geographic remit of Orderic's work drawing in cases of marriages at the margins of the Anglo-Norman world. In the second part, I examine Book I, which extends the chronology of the *Historia* back to the Incarnation, and ask how Orderic uses the life of Christ to reflect upon the place of marriage within an order of Christian salvation.

Marriage at the Margins in Books X-XIII

Regarding the later books of the *Historia*, Chibnall remarked that Orderic's writing on Saracens lacked the same appreciation of their human qualities as he expressed in discussion of Christians. Chibnall argued that this was because, for Orderic, Saracens moved in a 'purely literary world'.⁴⁰⁵ The explanation Chibnall puts forward suggests that this kind of writing came about because Orderic had never met a Saracen; it is a consequence of a lack of personal experience. This section considers how Orderic used passages on people at the margins – those that moved in more literary and less socially ground worlds – to discuss idealised forms of marriage.

This use of outsiders as a literary space to explore ideals begins in Book X with a story set in the Holy Land about Melaz, a Muslim princess, and Bohemond of Antioch.⁴⁰⁶ As Orderic tells the story, Bohemond and his company were captured and imprisoned by a Turkish emir, Danishmend Gazi. The emir's daughter, Melaz was anxious to meet the Frankish crusaders and spoke with them often, later converting to the Christian faith. When Danishmend warred against his brother, Melaz armed and released the crusaders to aid her father. After winning the battle the crusaders return to

⁴⁰⁵ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 41.

⁴⁰⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:354-78.

their imprisonment but, supported by Melaz, they overpower their guards and seize the citadel. Melaz's father is eventually converted and persuaded to form an alliance with the crusaders, including a marriage pact between Melaz and Bohemond. The couple then returned to Antioch.

This story has attracted considerable attention.⁴⁰⁷ It has tended to be seen in isolation from other discussions of Anglo-Norman marriages and relationships. Indeed, Blacker interpreted it as a form of romance, implicitly isolating it from socially grounded depictions of married life.⁴⁰⁸ John O. Ward likewise argued that the passage was tantamount to romance and was 'plain but attractive verisimilar Christian propaganda'.⁴⁰⁹ However, in this section I will argue that the story is part of a final development in the way Orderic writes about marriage in the *Historia*.

Part of the story of Melaz and Bohemond refers to a proposed marriage alliance. A recent convert to Christianity, Melaz is described as beautiful and virtuous; a desirable match. However, once safely returned to Antioch, Bohemond dissuades the young woman from marrying him, encouraging her to instead prefer his younger - and apparently more handsome - kinsman, Roger of Salerno. Bohemond explains that he is restless by nature and at war on all fronts; he had also pledged to go on pilgrimage to the shrine of St Leonard in Aquitaine. He continues:

What joy or delight could there for you in our union, while at once after our wedding it is necessary for me to undertake a journey across a vast area of sea and land, and to set out as a pilgrim into a distant land near the ends of the earth? Thus, my lady, think on these things, and pick out for yourself from

⁴⁰⁷ F. M. Warren, 'The Enamoured Moslem Princess in Orderic Vital and the French Epic,' *PMLA* 29, no. 3 (1914): 341-58; Simon Yarrow, 'Prince Bohemond, Princess Melaz, and the Gendering of Religious Difference in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis,' in *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity*, eds. Kirsten A. Fenton and Cordelia Beattie (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 140-57.

⁴⁰⁸ Blacker, 'Women, Power, and Violence,' 45.

⁴⁰⁹ Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 24.

among many a better choice.⁴¹⁰

Bohemond's argument against the marriage communicates idealised notions of marital fidelity, as Bohemond's inability to live up to these ideals underlies his argument.

Bohemond claims that his absence and pre-occupation are a barrier to a true marriage, because it would deny Melaz 'joy [*letitia*]' and 'delight [*delectatio*]'. This is the first detailed passage on a conversation about marriage that takes place at the margins of Orderic's world, both geographically and through the crossing of religious lines.

Through the story of Melaz, Orderic is able to adopt an outside eye, reflecting upon ideals rather than realities of Christian marriage. Accordingly, this passage acts as a starting point for a consideration of marital fidelity as an idealised form of love.

In Books XI-XIII of the *Historia* Orderic appears to build on the ideals expressed in the passage on Melaz and Bohemond, exploring and celebrating marital fidelity through discussions of other people at the margins of the Anglo-Norman world. Orderic retains a close focus on narratives concerning wives, indicating that this new kind of writing is in dialogue with earlier material on the struggles faced by married women. In Book XIII, Orderic writes about Sibyl, wife of Robert Bordet of Cullei, lord of Tarragona. Facing difficulties in defending his land, Robert travelled abroad to seek papal support and to gather soldiers in Normandy:

At the same time, while he [Robert] went to Rome and again returned to Normandy to raise companions-in-arms, his wife Sibyl, a daughter of William la Chèvre watched over Tarragona. She was no less strong in virtue than she was in beauty. For in her husband's absence, she kept watch ceaselessly; every night she put on a coat of mail like a knight, holding a rod in her hand she mounted the walls, patrolled the city, stirred up the guards, and prudently reminded everyone to cautiously look for the traps of the enemy. The young

⁴¹⁰ *Quæ letitia seu delectatio tibi esset in nostra copulatione, dum statim post nuptias oporteat me per pelagus et arua immensum iter inire, et in longinquam peregre proficisci regionem prope fines terræ? His ita perspectis domina, elige tibi de pluribus meliora.* HE, Chibnall, X, 5:378.

lady is praiseworthy, who served her husband with faith and attentive love [*dilectione*], and guided God's people with sleepless and faithful diligence.⁴¹¹

Sibyl is the central figure of the narrative and the only named character aside from her absent husband. The passage reads as a celebration of her devotion to her husband. Her virtue and good deeds are conveyed in several ways. Most clearly, Orderic adopted an explicit language, stating simply that Sibyl was as virtuous as she was beautiful. By listing her commendable deeds, Orderic reinforces the depiction of her devotion and stresses her ceaseless bravery and vigilance. The final sentence is a direct statement of Sibyl's praiseworthiness, which includes explicit mention of not only her faithfulness to her husband - *fide* - but also the love she had for him. The term here is *dilectione*, which can also mean delight or pleasure, although the context of a more abstract connection between husband and wife (because of the physical distance between them when these events takes place) would seem to favour the translation of this term as 'love' here. In the passage Sibyl acts in a military capacity, wearing armour 'like a knight' (although she carries a rod, rather than a weapon).⁴¹² This transgression into a typically male sphere is represented as a testament to the depth of Sibyl's devotion to her husband.

One way to interrogate the relationship between Sibyl's status as a wife and her love for her husband is to consider the effect of castle imagery used in the passage, specifically the wall which Sibyl climbs and patrols. Abigail Wheatley has argued that the 'medieval castle was understood as a characteristically Biblical architecture, fraught with spiritual significance, and that castle words in all languages could be used to denote

⁴¹¹ *Interim dum pergeret Romam, itemque pro colligendis contubernalibus redisset in Normanniam; Sibilla uxor eius filia Guillelmi Capræ seruauit Terraconam. Hæc non minus probitate quam pulchritudine uigebat. Nam absente marito peruigil excubabat; singulis noctibus lorica ut miles induebat, uirgam manu gestans murum ascendebat, urbem circumibat, uigiles excitabat, cunctos ut hostium insidias caute precauerent prudenter admonebat. Laudabilis est iuuenis era, quæ marito sic famulabatur fide et dilectione sedula, populumque Dei pie regebat peruigili sollertia.* HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:402.

⁴¹² See Truax, 'Anglo-Norman Women at War,' 115.

defended ecclesiastical enclosures as well as temporal fortresses.⁴¹³ Based on a reading of a number of texts Wheatley explains that (derived from Luke 10. 38.) a castle could work metaphorically, standing in for the body of the Virgin and emphasising her humility, chastity, and charity.⁴¹⁴ In Aelred of Rievaulx's configuration the castle ditch denotes humility, the walls chastity, and the tower charity.⁴¹⁵ Wheatley also makes the case that, following Kantorowicz, the symbolic power of the castle could lead to the perception amongst medieval writers that '[e]very knight seeking hospitality at a castle can be seen in the symbolic guise of Jesus entering the castle of Bethany, while every woman caught up in a castle siege became the Virgin'.⁴¹⁶ By applying Wheatley's theory to this passage, we can infer that the city walls operate as an analogy for Sibyl's virtues. While it seems unlikely that Orderic uses castle architecture in accordance with a detailed scheme as Aelred does, the imagery deployed here still forms part of the idealisation of marital devotion expressed through this passage. The castle architecture seems to reinforce the reading of this passage as a celebration of Sibyl's virtues as a wife. Not only do the city walls hold firm against the Saracens but Sibyl herself plays an integral role in ensuring the defences are protected. When we take the different components of this passage together, Sibyl comes across as the embodiment of an ideal wife. Consequently, we can read the passage as a statement of the importance of fidelity and love within marriage, as well as a celebration of those virtues manifest in an individual. Through the telling of her deeds, explicit celebrations of her virtue and beauty, and the imagery of the castle, the passage reads as one of the most insistent and unequivocal celebrations of an individual we find anywhere in the *Historia*.

In the later books, Orderic's idealisation of marital love is not communicated solely through passages concerned with individuals at a geographic remove. In one case,

⁴¹³ Abigail Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* (Rochester, New York: Boydell Press, 2004), esp. 78-111; for this quotation see 93-4.

⁴¹⁴ Wheatley, 'Idea of the Castle,' 80-110.

⁴¹⁵ Wheatley, 'Idea of the Castle,' 80-3.

⁴¹⁶ Wheatley, 'Idea of the Castle,' 110-1.

Orderic positively depicts an intimate, loving relationship between an unmarried man and women in Normandy. Orderic writes about a plot against William Clito's life:

The duke [William Clito], who knew nothing of the fatal machinations prepared for him, went to a certain young woman whom he loved. She washed his head, as she was accustomed to, and aware of the enemy plot she wept as she washed. The young man asked his lady-friend [*amica*] the cause of her tears, and cleverly pressed her with prayers and threats, until she was forced to tell to him everything she had discovered from his enemies about his murder. At once, his hair still uncombed, along with his soldiers he seized his weapons, and he took the woman away with him for now she was in danger. And sent her with a certain abbot to William, duke of Poitou, a fellow knight of the same age. He entreated William to grant his saviour [*liberatricem*] an honourable marriage [*honorabili conubio*] as if she was his sister. And thus it was done.⁴¹⁷

The fact that Orderic is not describing a marriage means that this relationship can also be read as one that concerns relationships existing outside the socially grounded world of Anglo-Norman aristocratic marriage. The passage appears to pull in two different directions. The term *amica* is difficult to translate, as it can mean 'girlfriend', although it can also denote a friend who happens to be female.⁴¹⁸ That Clito secured a marriage from his lady-friend 'as if she was his sister' implies a sibling bond. The physical intimacy of hair-washing, however, could read as a metaphor for a more romantic relationship. It is notable that Orderic comments that the woman 'was accustomed to'

⁴¹⁷ *Porro dux qui tam feralem machinationem sibi paratam nesciebat; ad quandam uenit iuenculam quam amabat. Illa uero caput eius ut solebat lauit, et cognita hostili coniuratione lauando fleuit. Adolescens lacrimarum causam ab amica inquisiuit, precibus et minis sollerter extorsit, quibus coacta seriatim detexit, quicquid ad inimicis eius de morte compererit. Protinus ille cum suis arma capillis adhuc impexis arripuit, ipsamque secum ne aliquo modo pericliteretur sustulit; et Gillelmo duci Pictauensis coæuo commilitoni suo per quendam abbatem destinauit, ipsumque ut liberatricem suam honorabili conubio sicut sororem suam donaret obsecrauit. Quod ita factum est. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:374-5.*

⁴¹⁸ Hugh Thomas translates the term 'girlfriend' in his work on the relationships of secular clergy: *Secular Clergy*, 31, 161.

wash Clito's hair, establishing a long-term relationship between this young, unmarried man and woman. A reading that I think makes sense of this passage is to see as part of the communication of fidelity as an ideal form of love in the later books. That the woman in the passage is not identified indicates that her role is principally to communicate certain ideas and not because of any more specific personal or political ramifications. Critically, the passage plays a narrative function because it explains how Clito avoided a plot against his life. The young woman is the means by which the plot is discovered, thus the role she plays exemplifies ideals of loyalty and devotion. By putting this scene into a wider context of a long-term, intimate relationship between Clito and this young woman, Orderic makes this event into a celebration of love between men and women. Consequently, we can see this passage as another relationship at the fringes, through which Orderic presents ideals of fidelity and love. The way that this collection of passages reinforces this same theme indicates that, in the later books of the *Historia*, the text seeks to assert the value of these kinds of ideals.

Faithful Marriage and Christian Order

The final part of this chapter examines material in Book I of the *Historia*, tracing Orderic's use of Christ's parables. Book I was written alongside Books XI-XIII. Here I consider how far Orderic conveys similar ideals of fidelity through this material. As part of the life of Christ Orderic includes in Book I, he writes about Christ's parables. Two in particular concern the status of married laypersons. In one case Orderic explains the meaning of the three archetypes of those who are saved, namely Noah, Daniel, and Job. Noah represents those who govern and Daniel those who are continent. 'Truly Job ordained in marriage, and exercising responsibility for his own household, pleased God; through whom the order of the good married people is worthily prefigured.'⁴¹⁹ Orderic

⁴¹⁹ *Job vero in conjugio positus, et curam propriæ domus exercens, Deo placuit; per quem digne bonorum conjugum ordo figuratur. HE, Le Prevost, I, 1:54-5.*

states explicitly that this section is taken from Ezekiel.⁴²⁰ However, the explanation of the trio's respective symbolic meanings has not been taken from the Bible. One potential source for Orderic's interpretation is Augustine. Augustine also discussed this passage, as well as the way in which Noah, Daniel, and Job prefigured three social groups. Augustine's scheme is very similar: Noah prefigures those who rule the church well, Daniel 'just continent people [*justos conjugatos*]', and Job 'just married people [*justos conjugatos*]'.⁴²¹ Augustine's description is very brief and refers to the just or fair married people (*justos*), whereas Orderic's is longer and describes the 'order of good married people', using the term *bonorum*. It is possible, therefore, that Augustine is only indirectly Orderic's source.

The second case is Orderic's explanation of the parable of the husbandman. The parable follows that a husbandman sowed seeds, some of which were lost. Others fell upon good ground and yielded fruit: either one-hundred-fold, sixty-fold, or thirty-fold. Orderic explains the metaphorical meaning: one-hundred-fold fruit is brought forth by virgins and martyrs, sixty-fold by widows (who no longer have to struggle against desires of the flesh), and finally 'thirty-fold fruit is that of married people, because this is the age to do battle [with the world]'.⁴²² Thus the sixty-fold and thirty-fold fruit are associated with different ages and states within the life of a layman. Orderic is explicit that with this parable he intends to draw out its meaning: 'What meaning these things might have, I shall note briefly and with clarity.'⁴²³ The use of the first-person verb form – *annatabo* – and the term *mihi* foregrounds the writer's interpretative role. The source for the interpretation of those who bring forth the thirty-fold fruit as 'married people

⁴²⁰ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:54-5. Ezekiel, 14. 14-23.

⁴²¹ *in tribus utique illis viris tria quaedam hominum liberanda genera praefigurans; in Noe, quantum arbitror, justos plebium praepositos propter arcae tanquam Ecclesiae gubernationem; in Daniele, justos continentes; in Job, justos conjugatos: et si quis est forte alius intellectus, de quo nunc non est necesse disquirere.* Augustine, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione, et de baptismo parvulorum*, in *Patrologia cursus completus series latina*, vol. 44, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1865), Liber Secundus, Cap. X, 12.

⁴²² *Tricesimus vero conjugatorum est, quia haec aetas praeliantium est.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:29.

⁴²³ *Quid significant ista, breviter et liquido mihi annotabo.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:28.

[*conjugatorum*]' is likely Augustine and Jerome.⁴²⁴ It is an amalgamation of their interpretations. Jerome wrote that one-hundred-fold fruit comes from 'virgins [*virginibus*]', the sixty-fold from 'widows and the continent [*viduis et continentibus*]' and the thirty-fold from those in 'pious marriage [*casto matrimonio*]'.⁴²⁵ Augustine writes that those who bring forth one-hundred-fold fruit are martyrs, sixty-fold fruit comes from virgins, and thirty-fold from those who are married.⁴²⁶ Consequently, we can see that the interpretation Orderic offers is a thoroughly conventional that would likely be familiar to Orderic's audience. This interpretation of the parable also reflects an orthodox view concerning the value of marriage and its role within a scheme of Christian salvation.⁴²⁷

Nonetheless, what is distinctive about these two passages is their role in reasserting this conventional understanding. Orderic's life of Christ is a selective abbreviation that includes the insertion of extra-Biblical material written by Orderic and from select commentaries. Consequently, he does not recount all of Christ's parables in detail, providing interpretations and exposition in only a few cases. For instance, in the passage on the parable of the husbandman, Orderic refers to eight other parables by name only.⁴²⁸ It appears that Orderic assumed his readers would be familiar with all of

⁴²⁴ On Augustine and Jerome's writings on marriage see: Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 89-93. This interpretation is not found in the Gospels where the parable appears. See Matthew 13. 24; Mark 4. 26-33; and Luke 13. 18-21: *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, vol. 6, edited by Angela M. Kinney (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2013), 68-70; 198; 392.

⁴²⁵ *Centesimum fructum virginibus, sexagesimum viduis et continentibus, tricesimum casto matrimonio*. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Evangelium Matthaei ad Eusebium Libri Quatuor*, in *Patrologia cursus completus series latina*, vol. 26, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1845), Cap. XIII, Vers. 23.

⁴²⁶ *Quod dicit, Aliud centesimum, aliud sexagesimum, aliud trigesimum: centesimum martyrum, propter satietatem vitae vel contemptum mortis: sexagesimum virginum, propter otium interius, quia non pugnant contra consuetudinem carnis; solet enim otium concedi sexagenariis post militiam, vel post actiones publicas: trigesimum conjugatorum, quia haec est aetas praeliantium; ipsi enim habent acriorem conflictum, ne libidinibus superentur*. Augustine, *Quaestiones in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, in *Patrologia cursus completus series latina*, vol. 35, edited by J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1902), Quaest 1, Cap. IX.

⁴²⁷ Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 185-6, 197-8. For a discussion of affection and love in marriage as we find it in literary sources, see: Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100-1300* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), esp. 1-20, 73-4.

⁴²⁸ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:25-30.

the parables and that giving these parables' names was sufficient for the purposes of his retelling of the life of Christ. If this is the case, then it begs the question of how the extended parables were read. It seems fair to conclude that the parables which were discussed in detail in Book I were not read primarily for information. Rather, read in this context, they seem to lay emphasis on certain meanings and lessons. Furthermore, the addition of non-Biblical material (the interpretations of parables based on commentaries) compounds this emphatic effect in a way that would have immediately clear to a monastic audience. The effect of this laying of emphasis in the case of the two parables discussed above is to reassert the importance of marriage within a scheme of Christian salvation. It provides an abstract understanding of theological place of Christian marriage that could inform how a reader approaches passages on marriage throughout the rest of the text. By creating this emphasis in Book I, Orderic could be retrospectively drawing attention to the text's developing interest in marriage, using the fruits of that development to recast the reading experience of the whole.

Conclusions

The assertion of marital fidelity as an ideal one finds in the later written sections of the *Historia* co-exists with an ongoing interest in the challenges noblewomen faced in married life. As part of the account of the 1119 council of Reims in Book XII Orderic includes a case brought to the council by Hildegarde of Poitou.⁴²⁹ Orderic describes Hildegarde's position noting that: 'she said that her husband had forsaken her and that Malberge, wife to the vicomte of Châtellerault, had replaced her in his bed.'⁴³⁰ He also notes that she spoke in a 'high clear voice'; as discussed in the previous chapter, Orderic uses speech argumentatively in this account and thus this comment about Hildegarde's voice encourages empathy with her perspective and implies her accusations are well

⁴²⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:258-60.

⁴³⁰ *Se siquidem dixit a marito suo esse derelictam, sibique Malbergionem uiccomitis de Castello Airalidi coniugem in thoro surrogatam. HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:258.

founded.⁴³¹ The acute awareness in the text of the very real challenges faced by noblewomen helps to make sense of Orderic's strategy of using passages concerning outsiders to explore ideals of marriage. By combining these two kinds of writing, Orderic is thus able to explore marriage ideals and its practical challenges simultaneously. Indeed, in combining a discussion of ideals and contemporary challenges, Orderic draws further attention to the difficulties faced by noblewomen implying that instances of repudiation violate the ideals marriages ought to be based upon. Orderic's argument about marriage only becomes clear in the text when we read these two kinds of material together. Orderic can thus be seen to adopt and develop a critical stance on contemporary marriage practices, asserting underlying, immutable ideals as a counter-point to the practical challenges of married life. This marks a change in the way Orderic uses history writing. In the final books he moved from exploring a contemporary issue to putting forward an argument about ideals in response. This raises new questions about Orderic's sense of history writing – particularly concerning its purpose and effect – and how it changes over the course of his writing career.

Conclusion

This discussion of marriage in the *Historia* has revealed Orderic's recurrent interest in marriage practices. This involves the reassertion of the Biblical foundation of marriage in the face of contemporary experiences of married life. The way Orderic interpreted contemporary marriage practice also raises questions about the percolation of theories of marriage into non-legal, non-theological works. Elizabeth Zimmerman has considered how far consent theology found expression in different kinds of texts, looking specifically at two letters written by Heloise, Peter Abelard's lover.⁴³²

⁴³¹ *alta claraque uoce*. *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:258.

⁴³² Elizabeth Zimmerman, "It is not the Deed but the Intention of the Doer": the Ethic of Intention and Consent in the first two Letters of Heloise,' *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 42, no. 3 (2006): 249-67.

Zimmerman contextualises Heloise's writing within a twelfth-century context, relating it specifically to Abelard's philosophical treatises, but also to broader philosophical and theological concerns, including those that are relevant to marriage.⁴³³ It is interesting to consider how far Orderic's interest in the emotions and intentions of married noblewomen was similarly informed by current thought on marriage. A further element of this conclusion is the implications for our understanding of Orderic's community. The extensive presence of married noblewomen and married priests in the text raises intriguing questions about, firstly, the investment the community had in directing or influencing Orderic's historical project and, secondly, how the expanding scope of the *Historia* grew out of the community's more immediate experiences. The potential role of the community further indicates that Orderic's engagement with contemporary reforms with respect to marriage developed through dialogue with his audience.

The contrast Orderic draws between contemporary marriage practices and marital ideals is, as I have suggested, the articulation of an argument that criticises how marriage is being experienced. The simple existence of this argument draws into question the way twelfth-century theories of marriage are currently studied. In the last fifteen years there has been a growth in scholarship concerned with canon law on marriage that focuses on individual thinkers. These studies have tended to focus on theological and legal works, such as those of Gratian, Peter Lombard, Ivo of Chartres, and Anselm of Lucca, among others.⁴³⁴ This approach also involves discussing these members of the ecclesiastical elite without putting them within a developmental narrative as representatives of, or steps on the road to, the church model of marriage.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Zimmerman, 'Ethic of Intention,' 250-2.

⁴³⁴ Winroth, 'Marital Consent,' 111-22; Thomas M. Finn, 'Sex and Marriage in the Sentences of Peter Lombard,' *Theological Studies* 72 (2011): 41-69; Rolker, *Ivo of Chartres*, 211-29; 'Kings, Bishops and Incest,' 159-68; Cushing, *Papacy and Law*; 'Anselm of Lucca and Burchard of Worms: Re-thinking the Sources of Anselm 11, *De Penitentia*,' in *Ritual, Text, and Law*, eds. Kathleen G. Cushing and Richard F. Gyug (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 225-40. See also: Marie Anne Mayeski, "'Like a boat is marriage': Aelred on Marriage as a Christian Way of Life,' *Theological Studies* 70 (2009): 92-108.

⁴³⁵ See Rolker, *Ivo of Chartres*, 211-29; Winroth, 'Marital Consent,' 111-22; Mayeski, 'Aelred on Marriage,' 92-108.

As a result, it has shed light on competing ideas of marriage and has complicated the narrative on the emergence of Duby's ecclesiastical model of marriage. However, where this approach is problematic is where the lines are drawn between source material. Historical works are consistently ignored as a source for theoretical considerations of marriage. What would appear to be an exception is Marie Anne Mayeski's examination of Aelred of Rievaulx's thoughts on marriage. However, Mayeski focuses exclusively on a selection of Aelred's theological writings, with material coming from *On Spiritual Friendship* and passages of biblical commentary in his *Sermons*, without touching on his historical writing.⁴³⁶ The evidence of the *Historia* indicates that history writers were part of contemporary conversations about what marriage is and should be, even if the tools they used were different.

This analysis of Orderic's arguments has also revealed connections between secular and ecclesiastical marriage in the text. From the earliest book – Book III – secular marriage intruded into Orderic's ecclesiastical history writing and from Book V married priests and married nobility co-exist in the text. The consideration of the challenges faced by married priests and by noblewomen seems particularly close and there is the distinct possibility that the way Orderic wrote about these two groups was developed in tandem. By beginning discussions of married noblewomen and priests at the same point in the text, Orderic also encouraged his readers to perceive connections between their experiences of marriage. This entangled relationship between secular and clerical marriage should encourage us to look again at how we study these two kinds of marriage. Navigating between clerical and lay marriage in the *Historia* has enabled a valuable contribution to our understanding of the text. The evidence of the *Historia* alone is certainly insufficient to argue that secular and clerical marriage were necessarily blurred. It does, however, raise the possibility that some connections between these two kinds of marriage were drawn in the minds of Orderic's contemporaries. It also shows that the separation of these two kinds of marriage should not be assumed for the first

⁴³⁶ Mayeski, 'Like a boat is marriage,' 92.

half of the twelfth century. Writing at the crux of change, Orderic witnessed attempts to separate clerical marriage from (lay) marriage: this process was not a foregone conclusion.

A further contribution this chapter offers concerns methodologies for reading the text as a whole. An aim of this chapter was to navigate the practical challenge posed by the text's non-linear chronology, in light of the diffuse spread of marriage material in the text. The adoption of a chronological framework has allowed me to analyse this material, uncovering how Orderic engaged with questions surrounding marriage over time. It has allowed me to do this by facilitating the identification of multiple, inter-related phases. Treating each of these separately, it is possible to accommodate the different position Orderic adopted at various moments in his writing career. Furthermore, a chronological framework also exposes how Orderic's engagement with marriage built upon itself from book to book. Understanding the relationship between the books has been a crucial step for working out what arguments Orderic makes and how he does so. Indeed, I have argued that Orderic did not set out to write about marriage specifically, but rather his multi-faceted engagement with the topic emerged through the text and in dialogue with questions of community history. Furthermore, the focus on married priests and noblewomen seems to emerge from a context in which nicolaitism and marital theories of consent were a serious topic of concern. This discussion suggests that there are potentially identifiable moments where the scope and arguments of the text changed.

Chapter Three. Church Leadership and Church Reform

The previous two chapters focused on Orderic's engagement with two aspects of eleventh- and twelfth-century church reforms. Writing for his community, Orderic explored ideas associated with church councils and experiences of marriage, commenting upon the effects of ecclesiastical change in these areas. The second chapter further revealed how Orderic's writing on marriage practices was underwritten by a personal and communal investment in the changes effecting married priests and their sons. The systematic engagement with reform issues identified and brought to light in the previous chapters could suggest that Orderic had an underlying reform ideology which informed his historical work. The *Historia*, however, is not widely studied in modern scholarship on eleventh- and twelfth-century church reform. As narrative history, the text differs markedly from the didactic sources that continue to form the primary evidence for the study of reform, even in recent studies on the lives of ordinary priests.⁴³⁷ The absence of *Historia* in this kind of scholarship indicates that current models for the study of reform could be unduly limited. It also raises the challenge of how to read a text in relation to reform that lacks recognised reform language and is not part of polemic discourse. This chapter addresses this problem, attempting to determine how to analyse Orderic's articulated reform ideology in light of the assumptions of the field. It does this by examining Orderic's depictions of change and continuity in the contemporary church, in order to reflect upon the perceived impact of reform efforts. It also seeks to consider depictions of change in relation to Orderic's audience, the monks

⁴³⁷ Julia Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe, c. 800-c. 1200* (Cambridge: University Press, 2015), 40-1.

of Saint-Évroul, shedding light on how far Orderic's history writing acted as a communal space in which to think through the implications of change for a community of Benedictine monks.

Recent research has drawn into question many of the assumptions about ideas of reform in the eleventh- and twelfth-centuries. In place of dramatic rupture, new emphasis has been placed on continuities. Sarah Hamilton has persuasively argued that we must view the eleventh century in a broader chronological frame, in order to moderate our focus on dramatic change and fully appreciate the enduring impact of the Carolingian past.⁴³⁸ Julia Barrow has argued that 'the tenth century and much of the eleventh century can, indeed, be viewed as a continuation of the Carolingian era'.⁴³⁹ This continuity is clearest in terms shared objectives and ongoing interactivity between the clergy and their lay neighbours. Such arguments have helped to develop our understanding of the enduring impact of the Carolingian church well into the eleventh century and have led to a greater focus on long-term processes of change.⁴⁴⁰ As a result, the characterisation of the eleventh century as a moment of profound change has been drawn into question. The development of the papacy now appears to be more incremental, as the Tusculan popes of the earlier eleventh century appear to be more proactive figures who prosecuted modest reforms.⁴⁴¹ The grand narrative of papal-led church reform in the eleventh century commands less confidence (although the role of the papacy is still a subject of a great deal of scholarly attention).⁴⁴² Eleventh-century

⁴³⁸ Sarah Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West, 900-1200* (Harlow: Pearson, 2013) 5-11.

⁴³⁹ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 5-7; see also 105-6.

⁴⁴⁰ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 71-89. For more on the impact of Carolingian reforms in the eleventh century, see: John Howe, 'The Nobility's Reform of the Medieval Church,' *American Historical Review* 93, no. 2 (1988): 317-39.

⁴⁴¹ John Howe, *Church Reform and Social Change in Eleventh-Century Italy: Dominic of Sora and his Patrons* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 21; 'Gaudium et Spes: Ecclesiastical Reformers at the Start of a New Age,' in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, eds. Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 32.

⁴⁴² Maureen C. Miller, 'The Crisis in the Investiture Crisis Narrative,' *History Compass* 7, no. 6 (2009): 1570-80; Howe, 'Gaudium et Spes,' 26-30; Conrad Leyser, 'Review article: Church Reform –

innovations appear to be less overarching and are frequently associated with changes in methods rather than aims.⁴⁴³ Even some of the ways in which eleventh-century reformers used languages of reform seems to have been less unprecedented than previously thought.⁴⁴⁴

Reviewing these recent developments, Conrad Leyser remarked that ‘Like nostalgia, medieval church reform isn’t what it used to be.’⁴⁴⁵ And indeed, there is far less confidence in the use of reform as an analytical tool or a characterisation of the period. As Sarah Hamilton has commented, the term has now been indiscriminately applied to a vast range of different movements, obscuring our understanding of the varied aims and outcomes of these movements.⁴⁴⁶ As a result, Hamilton has attempted to think about different historical languages of reform from the ninth to twelfth centuries.⁴⁴⁷ John Howe has argued, however, that we do not necessarily need to abandon the idea of this period as one of radical change.⁴⁴⁸ He argues that men like Peter

Full of Sound and Fury, signifying Nothing?’, *Early Medieval Europe* 24, no. 4 (2016): 482-3; Robinson, ‘Reform and the Church,’ 334; Hamilton, *Church and People*, 62.

⁴⁴³ For example, Barrow on tonsure and oblation both of which are understood as discrete issues, not emblematic of a broader movement of reform: *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 192, 194-195; Louis Hamilton on church dedications: ‘To Consecrate the Church: Ecclesiastical Reform and the Dedication of Churches,’ in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, eds. Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 105-137; Sarah Hamilton, *Church and People*, 67-8.

⁴⁴⁴ For the received view of the use of languages of reform, see: Robinson, ‘Reform and the Church,’ 273-5; Gerhart B. Ladner, ‘Gregory the Great and Gregory VII: a comparison of their concepts of renewal,’ *Viator* 4 (1973): 27. For recent challenges to this argument: Julia Barrow, ‘Ideas and Applications of Reform,’ in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, eds. Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), vol. 3, 362; Louis I. Hamilton, ‘Introduction,’ in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, eds. Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), xxii. New attention has been drawn to pre-eleventh century ways of conceptualising institutional reform: Claire Sotinel, ‘The Church in the Roman Empire: Changes without Reform and Reforms without Change,’ in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, eds. Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 155-72; Robert A. Markus, ‘Church Reform and Society in Late Antiquity,’ in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, eds. Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 3-19.

⁴⁴⁵ Leyser, ‘Sound and Fury,’ 478.

⁴⁴⁶ Hamilton, *Church and People*, 9.

⁴⁴⁷ Hamilton, *Church and People*, 9.

⁴⁴⁸ Howe, ‘*Gaudium et Spes*,’ 32-5.

Damian, Bruno of Segni, and Gregory VII saw an ‘an unprecedented crisis requiring radical action’ and that the mental world of the Gregorians – their perceptions of change and crisis – remains a significant object of study.⁴⁴⁹ I contend that it is equally valid to take as an object of study the mental worlds of others affected by reform too. This chapter seeks to examine the *Historia* in this way, shedding light on the potential for a non-polemic text, and also one outside of Gregorian circles, to offer insights into contemporary perceptions of change and continuity. Unlike his great model – Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* – Orderic did not exhort those in power to act in certain ways.⁴⁵⁰ He wrote from and for a traditional Benedictine community. Consequently, his text offers a way to circumvent the challenges posed by an over-reliance on prescriptive sources.⁴⁵¹ As the first study of Orderic as a mind on reform, this chapter uses the untapped potential of the *Historia* for the study of reform to challenge the questions we ask about reform, our interpretive frameworks, and our choice of sources.

Consequently, part of the chapter’s work is to identify methodologies for reading the *Historia* without subsuming it under pre-existing analytical frameworks. In order to navigate the challenge of reading reform in a text like the *Historia*, this chapter makes use of a number of tools. Firstly, I focus on the way Orderic depicts change in the church. Change offers a simple category of analysis and a means to relate the arguments of the text to the prevailing direction of current research, while avoiding the assumptions of hierarchal involvement and process that languages of reform contain. Moreover, as an historical work, change over time is integral to the form the *Historia*: history writing can be seen as the presentation of a particular interpretation of the past to a specific audience.

⁴⁴⁹ Howe, ‘*Gaudium et Spes*,’ 32.

⁴⁵⁰ Alan Thacker, ‘Bede’s Ideal of Reform,’ in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, eds. Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough, and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 142-143.

⁴⁵¹ A recognised problem, for example: Hamilton, ‘Introduction,’ xxiv.

Secondly, in order to identify where and how Orderic makes arguments about change, I will examine the *Historia* in view of the dynamic relationship between Orderic's text and his community, using the textual milieu of Benedictine monasticism to unpack the arguments Orderic makes. This approach is informed by the work of scholars of the ninth-century Carolingian church, who have uncovered chronologically, geographically, and textually specific languages of reform.⁴⁵² For example, Julia Smith and Carine Van Rhijn have examined Carolingian concepts of *correctio*, using the evidence of saints' cults and educational materials for local priests respectively.⁴⁵³ Some of the more useful studies of reform in the eleventh century have also adopted similar approaches. For example, John Howe's examination of the *vitae* of Dominic of Sora (*d.* 1032), who founded a group of central Italian monasteries, emphasises the role of Dominic as a charismatic figure, the co-option of local, low-level secular elites (the *castelli*), and the fundamentally physical nature of Dominic's reform efforts.⁴⁵⁴ By focusing on community context, my aim is to consider Orderic's historical languages of

⁴⁵² Mayke de Jong, 'Charlmgagne's Church,' *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, ed. J. E. Story (Manchester: University Press, 2005), 103-35; 'Ecclesia and the early medieval polity,' in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter, FGM 11*, eds. S. Airle, W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (Vienna, 2006), 113-26; 'The State of the Church: Ecclesia and Early Medieval State Formation,' *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat: Europäische Perspektive Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 16*, eds. W. Pohl and V. Wieser (Vienna, 2009), 241; 'Imitatio Morum. The Cloister and Clerical Purity in the Carolingian World,' in *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical and Religious Reform*, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York: Garland, 1998), 49-80; Rutger Kramer, 'Order in the Church: Understanding Councils and Performing Ordines in the Carolingian world,' *Early Medieval Europe* 25, no. 1 (2017): 54-69; M. D. Ponesse, 'Smaragdus of St Mihiel and the Carolingian Monastic Reform,' *Revue Bénédictine* 116, no. 2 (2006): 367-92.

⁴⁵³ Julia M. H. Smith, "'Emending Evil Ways and Praising God's Omnipotence": Einhard and the Uses of Roman Martyrs,' in *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing*, eds. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (Woodbridge: University of Rochester Press, 2003), 189-223; Carine van Rhijn, 'Priests and the Carolingian reforms: The Bottlenecks of Local *correctio*,' in *Texts and Identities in the early Middle Ages*, eds. Richard Corradini *et al* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 219-37; *Shepherds of the Lord: Priests and Episcopal Statutes in the Carolingian Period* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007); 'Manuscripts for Local Priests and the Carolingian Reforms,' in *Men in the Middle: Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe*, eds. Steffen Patzold and Carine van Rhijn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 177-198.

⁴⁵⁴ Howe, *Church Reform and Social Change*.

reform and how far these emerged from shared languages within a Benedictine community.

The final aspect of my approach is to test the hypothesis that it is through passages on members of the ecclesiastical elite that Orderic makes arguments about contemporary changes affecting the church. Prelates appear frequently in the text, including prominent figures associated with eleventh- and twelfth-century reforms, such as Pope Gregory VII, Ivo of Chartres, and Lanfranc of Canterbury. This is a body of material that has been neglected, especially in comparison with studies of secular elites in the *Historia*.⁴⁵⁵ To avoid shaping the reading of the text according to current narratives of church reform, I will situate my analysis of passages on recognised reformers within a broad discussion of church leadership in the text.

In the first section, I examine Orderic's depiction of change in the church in Books XI-XIII, as these three books are the most concerned with contemporary affairs. Thereafter, the first section examines how these depictions of change relate to the themes of the final three books and how they developed over time. In the second section, I consider the implications of Orderic's perception of change for an analysis of reform in the *Historia*, thus reflecting upon current approaches to the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century church reform. In the third section, I consider how far Orderic has a cogent reform ideology, articulated in the *Historia*. The section aims to uncover this ideology through a reading of the material on prelates in light of Orderic's traditional Benedictine audience.

Introducing the Ecclesiastical Elite

Before discussing Orderic's depictions of change, it is first necessary to introduce the material on members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Having a sense of the

⁴⁵⁵ For example, Aird, 'Orderic's Secular Rulers,' 189-216; Haggart, 'Kinship and Identity'.

material on ecclesiastical elites in the text is important in order to appreciate Orderic's argumentation. For, as we will see, through this body of material on prelates, Orderic establishes a behavioural norm against which the actions of individuals are set.

Orderic's text offers a rich discussion of historical and contemporary prelates. In the earliest book, Book III, the abbots of Saint-Évroul, are especially key.⁴⁵⁶ However, Orderic also refers to other Norman abbots and bishops indicating that, from the start of *Historia* onwards, the church elite were an important group beyond those directly tied to Saint-Évroul. Despite the *Historia*'s numerous reimaginings, the ecclesiastical elite never disappear from view: as the work expands, the text embraces an ever greater range of individuals.⁴⁵⁷ Adding Books I and II to the *Historia*, Orderic introduce Christ, the Apostles, and the historical popes.⁴⁵⁸ He denotes elite churchmen in a variety of ways, such as with reference to their position within the ecclesiastical hierarchy (*episcopus, metropolitana, prelatu, presule; abbas, archimandrita*) or status as pastors.⁴⁵⁹ Some unique formulations draw attention to their role as leaders of the church, such as when Orderic remarked that the school of Bec produced many 'distinguished teachers, foresighted helmsmen [*prouidi nautae*], and spiritual charioteers [*spirituales aurigæ*], who have been entrusted by heaven to direct the reins of the church in the arena of this present age.'⁴⁶⁰

Certain characteristics are shared amongst Orderic's passages on elite churchmen. He consistently describes their names, positions, and the length of time they ruled for. An individual's learning is usually alluded to, although in varying levels of

⁴⁵⁶ For a detailed discussion of material on the abbots of Saint-Évroul in Book III, see Section I.

⁴⁵⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:402.

⁴⁵⁸ The papal list forms the second part of Book II: *HE*, Le Prevost, II, 382-460.

⁴⁵⁹ For *pastor* denoting a bishop: *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:200; VIII, 4:176; X, 5:19. For denoting the literal meaning pastor: III, 2:12; X, 5:264. For the metaphorical meaning of shepherd: X, 5:202; XI, 6:74; XII, 6:328.

⁴⁶⁰ *egregii doctores et prouidi nautæ ac spirituales aurigæ, quibus ad regendum in huius sæculi stadio diuinitus habena commissæ sunt æcclesiæ.* *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:296.

detail.⁴⁶¹ Writing about careers, Orderic describes key achievements, such as church building, the acquisition of relics, and the establishment of regular discipline, as well as personal liturgical observances.⁴⁶² Less common are references to musical or literary compositions.⁴⁶³ Bishops' moral failings are also discussed. Gilbert Maminot, a royal physician and bishop of Lisieux, is criticised for his negligence in his liturgical performances.⁴⁶⁴ In such cases Orderic often adds individual's commendable qualities too: Gilbert Maminot gave alms liberally, offered hospitality freely, and was a merciful judge.⁴⁶⁵ There also is a consistent use of language in passages on these churchmen: Orderic favoured a range of metaphors, especially likening churchmen to lanterns and shepherds (or, in cases where they endangered their communities, to wolves).⁴⁶⁶

Orderic writes the most about those men about whom he had first-hand knowledge: for example, we are told that Abbot Osbern of Saint-Évroul was of medium height and had black hair streaked with grey.⁴⁶⁷ Physical characteristics can be associated with moral failings – such as the simoniac abbot of Saint-Pierre-sur-Dive, Robert, who is described as a '*miserabilis homuncio*' or 'miserable little man' – but are not always.⁴⁶⁸ Orderic regularly writes about individual churchmen's characters and temperaments. We are told that Ivo, bishop of Séez was witty and ever ready to make a joke and Thierry, abbot of Saint-Évroul was gentle and unworldly to a fault.⁴⁶⁹

Passages on prelates take various forms, from passing references to much fuller narratives. For example, Orderic refers to Odo of Bayeux's presence during the invasion in 1066, before later discussing in more detail his rapaciousness, ill-disciplined

⁴⁶¹ For a particularly detailed case: *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:236. See also: IV, 2:296; X, 5:296; XI, 6:42.

⁴⁶² Archbishop William Bonne-Âme of Rouen did all of these things: *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:22-4. See also, Abbot Mainer: V, 3:118.

⁴⁶³ For example: *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:298.

⁴⁶⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:20.

⁴⁶⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:20.

⁴⁶⁶ For examples: *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:192, 270, 296-8; VIII, 4:306; X, 5:194, 202, 322; XII, 6:306.

⁴⁶⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:106.

⁴⁶⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:72; XII, 6:274.

⁴⁶⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:42, 46, 66.

underlings, and abortive attempt to become pope.⁴⁷⁰ The most common form these passages take is death notices, in which Orderic refers to a deceased churchman and their successor.⁴⁷¹ A less frequent but still common form is catalogues of current bishops and archbishops.⁴⁷² Another is lengthy passages on individual churchmen, in which their lives, education, and careers are discussed (such as the extensive life of Lanfranc in Book IV).⁴⁷³ Individual churchmen are also prominent in certain political narratives, as in the contest between Gregory VII and Emperor Henry IV and the denunciation of Archbishop Stigand after the Norman Conquest.⁴⁷⁴ Some passages on elite churchmen do not have parallels elsewhere in the text. These include an archiepiscopal list for the see of Rouen, a vision of a purgatorial procession, and an account of the foundation of several new monastic orders.⁴⁷⁵

I. Change in the Church

This section analyses how Orderic depicts change in the church, focusing on its causes and effects. The section is divided into three parts, the first of which examines change in Books XI-XIII, as the most immediate witness to contemporary affairs. In the second part of this section, I consider how Orderic wrote about change in earlier material (paying particular attention to the treatise on new monasticism in Book VIII), in order to reveal how Orderic's depictions of change developed over time. The third part examines

⁴⁷⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:168-86; IV, 2:202, 267; VII, 4:42; VIII, 4:114-8; X,5:210.

⁴⁷¹ For example: *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:200; V, 3:12; VIII, 4:162. One of the final events referred to in the *Historia* is the death of John, bishop of Lisieux: *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:550-2. Sometimes death notices take the form of lists, such as: *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:168.

⁴⁷² *His temporibus Gallia religiosus et eruditus presulibus florebat*. *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:262-4. For an example of an abbatial list: *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:306.

⁴⁷³ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:248-54.

⁴⁷⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:182; VII, 4:6-10.

⁴⁷⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:48-96; VIII, 4:236-50, 310-32.

material on everyday prelates, assessing how far a sense of change is sharpened in the text through an implicit comparison between exceptional and everyday church leaders.

Change in the Contemporary Church

In 1132 Orderic travelled to Cluny, where along with 1,212 other monks he performed the liturgy and processed from the church of St Peter through the cloister, and into the chapel of the Virgin. Delighted at the opportunity to attend this momentous occasion, Orderic compiled a rich account.⁴⁷⁶ In it, he describes an assembly where Peter gathered together the Cluniacs ‘so they might hear more austere rules for monastic life than previously they had held to.’⁴⁷⁷ In Orderic’s account, this assembly was a flash-point where different ideas of right religious life and monastic vocation were put forward by Abbot Peter and the assembled monks. The debate between the two groups acts as a space to consider competing agendas and the experience of being reformed. Through depictions of such key moments, Orderic explores ideas of change, drawing attention to causes, ideologies, and results.

The account of Peter the Venerable’s council is one of the most substantial cases of this kind in the later books. It was an important gathering, attended by two hundred Cluniac priors, the abbots of Vézelay and Melun, and the bishop of Auxerre. Due to the wide-reach of the Cluniac order, Peter’s efforts to introduce a stricter way of religious life stood to impact many religious communities including Orderic’s own.⁴⁷⁸ A second flash-point I will compare this account to is the description of a violent and divisive synod held at Rouen in 1119.⁴⁷⁹ Unlike the Cluniac assembly, this synod concerned the

⁴⁷⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:424-6.

⁴⁷⁷ *ut precepta monasticæ conuersationis austeriora quam hactenus tenuerant audirent.* *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:424.

⁴⁷⁸ On Saint-Évroul’s relationship to Cluny, see Introduction, Section I.

⁴⁷⁹ This case was discussed in Chapter One, Section II.

secular clergy and thus offer means to compare Orderic's depictions of changes affecting monks and secular clerics.

Orderic likely wrote his account of the 1132 Cluniac assembly in 1136 or 1137; it is possible that he made notes while in attendance, as we know he made use of wax tablets.⁴⁸⁰ However, this account should not be read as a descriptive one. Rather, Orderic communicates ideas of change through the juxtaposition of Peter's action with the practices of his predecessors. On one level this is a pragmatic comparison. Orderic writes that Peter 'increased the fasts the monks were subjected to and withdrew time for conversations and certain aids to bodily infirmity, which until now the moderate mercy of reverend fathers had permitted.'⁴⁸¹ A sense of departure from the practices of 'reverend fathers' comes across more clearly than the detail of the new rules, as Orderic only sketches the specifics of two them (an increase in fasting and decrease in social time). The contrast between Peter and earlier churchmen is also a comparison of spirit. Peter's new rules are described as 'harsh [*ausis*] rules', contrasted with the 'moderate mercy [*moderata...clementia*]' of his predecessors.⁴⁸² A third comparison is one of means. Orderic describes the arguments of those who spoke against Peter, who cite the examples of three of Peter's predecessors: Hugh, Maiolus, and Odilo. The monks claim that they 'held to a strict way of life, and they laboured to guide their Cluniac disciples to Christ along the same path.'⁴⁸³ Continuing, the monks argue that following in the footsteps of such holy men, who had themselves worked miracles, would surely be enough.⁴⁸⁴ In the way he recounts the arguments put forward by the monks, Orderic communicates anew a contrast between different methods used to bring about religious

⁴⁸⁰ He refers to his own use of wax tablets once in the *Historia: HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:218. On Orderic's note-taking, see Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 100.

⁴⁸¹ *Ille uero subiectis auxit ieiunia, abstulit colloquia, et infirmi corporis quaedam subsidia quae illis moderata patrum hactenus permiserat reuerendorum clementia. HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁴⁸² *rudibus ausis. HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁴⁸³ *artam uitae uiam tenuerunt, et per eandem Cluniacenses discipulos ad Christum perducere moliti sunt. HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁴⁸⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

improvement: leading by example (epitomised by former abbots) and the imposition of stricter rules (pursued by Peter in the present).

In imagining a Cluniac resistance to Peter, Orderic gives voice to arguments against Abbot Peter's efforts. Orderic shapes the effect of these arguments by establishing a clear division between Peter and the rest of the Cluniacs, lending legitimacy and support to the counter-arguments levelled against the new strictures. Orderic thus does not name specific monks, but has them speak against Peter's collectively. There is no mention of those who might have supported Peter.⁴⁸⁵ As a result, the text polarises the debate, isolating Peter and implicitly giving his opponents a status as representative of a widely-held Cluniac position.

In laying emphasis on the newness of Peter's rules and methods, Orderic conveys a particular sense of change that focuses on the intentions and actions of a church leader. In contrast, the new rules Peter established are tacitly ignored. Orderic side-lines the practical, long-term consequences, explaining that the abbot later changed his mind about many of the new impositions:

Later, though, he mellowed and came to agree with the judgement of his subordinates, and mindful of discretion, which is the mother of virtues, and feeling compassion for the weak, he aided them, omitting many of the severe decrees which he had proposed.⁴⁸⁶

That in the account we are told only that Peter withdrew many of the new rules – not specifically which ones – signifies that the rules themselves are not as important as Peter's change of mind. This also suggests that the perception of change Orderic presents is not closely associated with practical consequences. Rather, the key issue

⁴⁸⁵ The two abbots and bishop in attendance are not mentioned as part of this debate: *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁴⁸⁶ *Postmodum tamen emollitus subditorum arbitrio consensit, memorque discretionis quæ uirtutum mater est inualidisque compatiens subuenit, perplura de grauibus institutis quæ proposuerat intermisit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

Orderic focuses upon is the abbot's actions, not the successful (or unsuccessful) imposition of new rules. Indeed, Orderic likens Peter to the Cistercians, not because of shared ideas about monastic life, but because of his attraction to innovation ('emulating Cistercians and others who seek out novelties').⁴⁸⁷ The monks' reaction against Peter is likewise a challenge to the abbot's actions, not a defence of any particular customs under threat. Orderic explains that the monks were accustomed to obey their abbot, before then describing how they put forward their reservations, demonstrating how serious the situation was when the monks argue openly against their abbot's wishes.⁴⁸⁸ Indeed, that the newness of Peter's efforts was not silently passed over, but was made the central argument of the account, indicates that this was keenly felt by Orderic and the monks whose views he depicts.

Writing at the most four years before completing his account of the Cluniac gathering, Orderic describes the events of a synod held at Rouen in 1119.⁴⁸⁹ As with Peter the Venerable's assembly, the 1119 synod was indirectly significant for Orderic and his community because of its ramifications for priests in Normandy, some of whom were directly connected to Saint-Évroul.⁴⁹⁰ In terms of substance, the two accounts are very different. The 1132 council was a very large gathering of Cluniacs from across Christendom and concerned monastic life. The 1119 synod was an archdiocesan gathering, involving one archbishop and the Norman clergy. Archbishop Geoffrey's agenda was concerned with the lives of the secular clergy and specifically sought to ban all association with women. The Cluniac assembly involved reasoned argument; the 1119 synod devolved into violence and anarchy when Geoffrey ordered his retainers to attack the priests, leading to a battle in the church and throughout the archbishop's apartments. A further difference between them is Orderic's source of information. Unlike the 1132 council, Orderic was not in attendance at Rouen in 1119. Chibnall has

⁴⁸⁷ *Cistercienses aliosque nouorum sectatores emulatus*. *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁴⁸⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426

⁴⁸⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:290-2.

⁴⁹⁰ See Chapter Two, Section II.

suggested that Orderic likely received word of the tumultuous council through two priests: Hugh of Longueville and Ansequetil of Cropus.⁴⁹¹ They seem to be a plausible source, as they are two of only three named priests in the account and the villages they came from are close to Saint-Évroul's priory of Auffay.

There are, however, underlying points of structural and thematic similarity that connect these accounts through the shared depiction of a profound moment of change. In his account of the 1119 synod, Orderic communicates a sense of change directly, by stressing the unprecedented nature of the violence that erupted at the synod:

In truth the archdeacons, canons, and modest citizens were saddened by the unspeakable carnage and pitied the servants of God, who endured an unheard-of disgrace. For in such a way in the bosom of holy mother church the blood of priests was shed, and a holy synod was overturned in chaos and transformed into a mockery.⁴⁹²

The attack on the priests in the sanctuary of the church by their own archbishop is said to be 'unheard of [*inauditum*]'. Orderic further establishes how far the council departed from traditional practice in the way he relates Geoffrey's aims. Orderic writes that the archbishop sought to impose a canon that 'entirely forbade all association with women [*omne consortium feminarum penitus eis interdixit*]'⁴⁹³ It is the only canon mentioned and its imposition causes the violence that follows. Its wording is a paraphrasing of a canon given at the council of Reims, held earlier in 1119, which Geoffrey attended and was inspired by. However, the differences in language are critical: whereas here Orderic refers to *femina*, the Reims canon – as Orderic relates it – states that priests, deacons, and subdeacons were forbidden from 'cohabiting with concubines and wives

⁴⁹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, 6:292, n. 1.

⁴⁹² *Archidiacones uero et canonici ciuesque modesti de infanda cede contristati sunt; et diuinis compatiebantur cultoribus qui dedecus inauditum perpessi sunt. Sic in sinu sanctae matris aeclesiae sacerdotum cruor effusus est; et sancta sinodus in debachationem et ludibrium conuersa est. HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292-4.

⁴⁹³ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:290

[*concupinarum et uxorum contubernia*].⁴⁹⁴ This change presents Geoffrey as extending the canon to incorporate all women, including sisters, mothers, and other family members. Another key difference is the prohibition of association (*consortium*) with women generally at Rouen, as opposed to the specific ban on cohabitation (*contubernia*) at Reims. While at Reims men in clerical orders were forbidden from living with a woman in a relationship, at Rouen, Geoffrey is depicted as attempting to ban all social contact with women. It seems the difference in wording is unlikely to have been error, as Orderic had recorded his account of the council of Reims only a little earlier in Book XII.⁴⁹⁵ It seems more likely that the change in language is an attempt to convey the extremity of the archbishop's proposals and the unprecedented nature of the events at the 1119 synod. This modification of language establishes a clear break with past practice, as Orderic supplies several other lists of canons issued at contemporary councils throughout the *Historia*.⁴⁹⁶ None of these included so extensive a ban on the relations between men in holy orders and women generally.

A further point of similarity between the two accounts is the focus on the actions and intentions of a single elite churchmen, alongside a simultaneous depiction of limited long-term consequences. Orderic explains that Archbishop Geoffrey was unable to compel obedience and the priests fled the city without waiting for his blessing. They returned to their homes, to their parishioners, and – most significantly – to their ‘concubines [*pellicibus*]’.⁴⁹⁷ The specific reference to concubines establishes the inefficacy of Geoffrey's methods and his failure to reform his diocesan clergy as intended. Orderic also adds that ‘they [the priests] showed the injuries and livid wounds on their bodies to prove their honesty.’⁴⁹⁸ While this comment is an attempt to attest the honesty of the account, it also indicates that Orderic imagines that these married priests

⁴⁹⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:276.

⁴⁹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:252-76.

⁴⁹⁶ See Appendix 2.

⁴⁹⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

⁴⁹⁸ *atque ad comprobendam fidem uulnera et liuentes lesuras in corporibus suis ostenderunt. HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

were seen as and would see themselves as victims. This indicates a gap between perceptions of change and practical consequences; although Orderic conveyed the idea that the efforts of Peter the Venerable and Geoffrey of Rouen were ineffective, it does not detract from the strong sense of change he presents. This raises the prospect that continuity in practice could co-exist with a sense of rupture amongst contemporary witnesses.

Orderic lays emphasis on Geoffrey's actions specifically by minimising the role played by the attendant clergy. He writes that the clerics' rebuttal to Archbishop Geoffrey is cut short when a priest named Albert rose to speak and was immediately set upon by the archbishop's men.⁴⁹⁹ This absence of discussion can be read as a key part of the argument Orderic constructs: in seizing Albert, Archbishop Geoffrey is depicted as enforcing silence and acquiescence on pain of physical violence. Orderic writes that Albert was seized before he could utter a word (establishing his innocence and lack of provocation) and then 'he was dragged out of the church without accusation or legal examination as if a thief.'⁵⁰⁰ Geoffrey is implicitly criticised for the way he evades due procedure and debases clerical dignity in treating Albert as a common criminal.

In contrast to the priests, Geoffrey is presented as the sole perpetrator of the violence that follows. Although Orderic explains that the retainers were indiscriminate in their attacks, only refraining from murdering some of the priests when they fell to their knees and begged for mercy, Geoffrey alone retains the burden of responsibility.⁵⁰¹ Once the violence had died down and the clergy had fled, Geoffrey 'emerged [from his apartments], blessed water, donned his stole, and, with his sorrowful canons, he restored the church which he had defiled [*contaminauerat*].'⁵⁰² Orderic uses the singular form of

⁴⁹⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

⁵⁰⁰ *sine reatus accusatione et legitima examinatione uelut furem de templo trahi ad carcerem uidissent.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

⁵⁰¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

⁵⁰² *progressus aquam accepta stola benedixit, et æcclesiam quam contaminauerat cum tristibus canonicis reconciliauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:294.

contaminare identifying Geoffrey alone as the responsible party, in contrast to the retainers and servants who appear only as nameless agents of archiepiscopal will. Just like Peter the Venerable, Geoffrey's attempt to impose a stricter standard of religious life in and of itself – irrespective of long-term success in the endeavour – creates of a profound sense of change in the passage.

As part of these accounts Orderic also presents a sense of what motivated these two churchmen to attempt innovative methods to bring about reforms. These accounts thus read as a consideration of the underlying causes of these changes. In the account of the 1119 synod, Orderic focuses on Geoffrey's emotions. He explains that 'inspired by the apostolic decrees, he raged fiercely [*acriter exarsit*] against the priests of his diocese.'⁵⁰³ We are also told that '[i]ndeed, the archbishop was a Breton, lacking discretion in many things, tenacious and hot-tempered, stern in face and gesture, bitter in rebuke, undisciplined and very verbose.'⁵⁰⁴ The inclusion of this discussion of Geoffrey's character implies the significance of temperament and emotion as the driving force behind the changes the archbishop sought to bring about. While there are clear differences between Orderic's representations of Geoffrey and Peter the Venerable (especially in how they respond differently to resistance from their subordinates), the account of the 1132 council also foregrounds his emotions. When insisting upon the new rules Peter is described as an 'austere teacher [*austerus...preceptor*]' but the decision to rescind many of them comes about when he 'mellows [*emollitus*]'⁵⁰⁵ This suggests that Orderic's perception of change is located in the action of elite churchmen and their emotional motivation to enforce stricter standards of religious life.

Similarities between the accounts bridge their surface differences, suggesting that the passages speak to one another and were read comparatively. Reading them in this

⁵⁰³ *institutionibus apostolicis exacuminatus in presbiteros suæ diocesis acriter exarsit. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:290.*

⁵⁰⁴ *Prefatus enim presul erat Brito in multis indiscretus, tenax et iracundus, uultu gestuque seuerus in increpatione austerus, procax et uerbositate plenus. HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.*

⁵⁰⁵ *HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.*

way points to a certain consistency in how these efforts to impose new rules are understood in the text: as unprecedented attempts by a certain kind of prelate to impose stricter standards of behaviour on priests and monks. This common interpretation could indicate a mode of reading in which the two cases are taken as examples and are folded into a shared understanding of change in the contemporary church. Reading these passages in their wider narrative setting reveals how Orderic uses these flash-points to communicate a much more general and urgent sense of crisis in the church. This is achieved through a shared narrative formula, in which these two councils are depicted as particularly significant examples of a broader trend. The account of the 1132 assembly is directly preceded by a short discussion of recent papal affairs. We are told that Pope Innocent II established his court at Pisa, and:

There for many years he exercised papal authority, and from there he sent decretals across the world. At that time the strictness of religious life greatly increased among the men of the church, and the canonical order, which was admired in France and England, increased in strength in many different ways. Abbots in their ardour presumed to go beyond the limits of their predecessors, and added oppressive rules on top of former ones, imposing harsh burdens on weak shoulders.⁵⁰⁶

Here Orderic describes a period of sweeping change affecting the church generally: he refers to ‘men of the church [*æcclesiasticis uiris*]’, to ‘the canonical order [*canonicalis ordo*]’, and to abbots who imposed harsher rules on their monks. This change is described as an increase in the ‘strictness of religious life [*rigor sanctæ conuersationis*]’,

⁵⁰⁶ *Illic per plures annos apostolicam dignitatem exercuit, et inde per orbem decretalia scita destinavit. Tunc rigor sanctæ conuersationis in æcclesiasticis uiris admodum creuit, et canonicalis ordo in Francia et Anglia multipliciter adamatus inualuit. Feruor quoque abbatum meta antecessorum suorum transcendere presumpsit, et priscis institutionibus grauiora superadiecit; satisque dura imbecilibus humeris onera imposuit. HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:424.*

affecting monks and clerics alike. And although the passage is introduced in association with Pope Innocent's actions, he is not depicted as a sole instigator.

The reference to the canonical order (Augustinian canons) is particularly interesting because it is presented as a parallel process: the popularity of regular canons is described alongside the increase in the strictness of religious life. Why might this be? Orderic wrote the passage in the later 1130s (or 1140 at the latest). This period coincides with the high point of the spread and influence of regular canons.⁵⁰⁷ From the 1150s, they were less successful in acquiring new churches.⁵⁰⁸ This broader context grounds Orderic's perspective in the world in which he wrote. Indeed, the spread of regular canons would have been keenly felt at Saint-Évroul, because one of the cathedrals acquired by regular canons during this high-point was Séez, the diocese geographically closest to Saint-Évroul (although not its diocesan) and the destination of Serlo, abbot of Saint-Évroul (1089-1091), when he became a bishop.⁵⁰⁹ Orderic's interpretation of the spread of regular canons encourages us to think more about the experience of change without the benefit of hindsight. Orderic would never live to witness the waning popularity of regular canons. Thus his interpretation can shed some light on our own understandings of these events; for example, his interpretation supports Sarah Hamilton's argument that the popularity of regular canons indicates 'an increase in demand for the delivery of services by priests more remote from the problems of the world.'⁵¹⁰

Orderic's introduction to the 1119 synod makes use of a similar formula. He writes that Geoffrey had attended a papal council at Reims in 1118 and that his attendance motivated the decision to improve clerical discipline in his own diocese.⁵¹¹ Given the proximity of the accounts to one another in the text and their underlying similarities discussed above, the use of a similar prefatory introduction – connecting an

⁵⁰⁷ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 112; Hamilton, *Church and People*, 104-5.

⁵⁰⁸ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 112-3.

⁵⁰⁹ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 112-3.

⁵¹⁰ Hamilton, *Church and People*, 106.

⁵¹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:290.

isolated event to a change affecting the church much more widely with reference to the papacy – seems significant. The way that Orderic moves from a statement of more general change to a specific event establishes these two gatherings as examples of that wider process. Consequently, these two passages are not only directly connected to a wider movement in the text, they are also deployed as a microcosm of that movement and a way of engaging with the questions it raises.

A plausible context in which these specific passages would have been read is as part of an emphasis on crisis and instability in human affairs. In the later books of the *Historia* there is an increasing sense of crisis in the church. Orderic opens Book X with a description of celestial portents:

In the year of our Lord 1098, the sixth indiction, the omnipotent Creator of all things openly revealed certain signs in the world, by which he terrified the hearts of men, and by the uncommon sights already revealed, he prefigured still more terrible things yet to come. For, on the fifth calends of October, almost through the whole night the sky appeared to be on fire. Then, on a Saturday in the seventh indiction, the day of the birth of the Lord, the sun was turned into darkness. After this, at once there were many changes of rulers [*magistratum*] across the world, and terrible calamities and violent revolts and crises raged on earth.⁵¹²

The passage establishes a connection between these omens and upheaval in human affairs, with the deaths of rulers and the spread of revolt. This association has particular resonances for the church, because the rulers to whom Orderic refers are ecclesiastical ones. The term *magistratum* – derived from *magister* – typically refers to ecclesiastical

⁵¹² ANNO ab incarnatione Domini M^oXC^oVIII^o indictione sexta; omnipotens Creator omnium signa quædam in mundo palam demonstrauit, quibus humana corda diuinitus terruit, et exhibitis ostensionibus inusitatis terribiliora prestolari presignauit. Nam V^o kalendas Octobris pene per totam noctem cælum ardere uisum est. Deinde indictione vii sabbato die Natalis Domini sol in nigredinem uersus est. Post hæc multæ mutationes magistratum in orbe statim factæ sunt; terribilesque casus et seditiones grauiaque discrimina in mundo seuierunt. *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:192.

leadership.⁵¹³ Furthermore, the example Orderic gives of one of these recently deceased rulers is a churchman: Pope Urban II.⁵¹⁴ The deaths of churchmen and natural calamities are paired in the following Books XI-XIII too. In Book XI Orderic remarks that 1106 witnessed the change of many leaders (*'principum'*) in the world and that there was also – in February of that years – a great comet which burned in the sky for three weeks, striking terror into many.⁵¹⁵ In Book XII, we are told about an earthquake and the churchmen who died soon after.⁵¹⁶ And in Book XIII Orderic lists the bishops (and one archbishop) who died in the leap year that followed Henry I's demise.⁵¹⁷ In these cases Orderic does not list who succeeded each of these men, only their deaths, implying an absence of prominent churchmen. The recurrent emphasis on the decimation of the episcopacy and its close association with portents that prefigured upheaval and chaos strongly establishes a sense of crisis in the church.

A second theme of the later books is schism. Book XII opens with one papal schism (Gelasius and Gregory VIII) and ends with another (Innocent II and Anacleto).⁵¹⁸ Orderic explores the damaging consequences of schisms, explaining that they divide communities at every level into two sides, each backing a rival pope, and thus in many monasteries there were two competing abbots and in many bishoprics two bishops.⁵¹⁹ At Cluny, Peter the Venerable's abbacy was contested when the former abbot, Pontius, returned from pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1125.⁵²⁰ Cluny itself was looted after a mob supporting Pontius seized the monastery. Orderic thus appears to depict a fractious and unsteady church. His accounts of attempts to promote a stricter religious life must to be read in light of this theme. Consequently, these efforts form part of the

⁵¹³ 'Magister,' *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources Online*, accessed 20th February 2018, <http://clt.brepolis.net.libproxy.york.ac.uk/dmlbs>.

⁵¹⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:192.

⁵¹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:68.

⁵¹⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:316-8.

⁵¹⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:476-8.

⁵¹⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:184-6, 392.

⁵¹⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:418.

⁵²⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:312-6.

depiction of a moment of crisis in the contemporary church in the later books of the *Historia*.

Perceptions of Change across the *Historia*

The analysis of the final books of the *Historia* raises the question of how and when these kinds of depictions of change emerged in the text. In the earlier books of the *Historia* Orderic explores questions about ecclesiastical leadership, specifically related to abbacy but does not connect such discussions to ideas of innovation. A significant part of Books III and IV concerns the conflict between the first abbot of Saint-Évroul, Thierry, and his prior, Robert de Grandmesnil. As with discussions of prelates in the later books, in writing about this conflict Orderic was principally interested in differences in the abbots' actions, temperaments, and ideas of abbacy. Robert was one of the founders of the community, the brother of another founder (Hugh), and later succeeded Thierry as abbot.⁵²¹ He was reluctant to accept Thierry's authority and the conflict between the two men split the community.⁵²² Thierry eventually gave up his abbacy and died while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The root of this conflict is not personal dislike or naked ambition, but a different approach to ruling a monastic community:

And so he [Robert] frequently disparaged his father [Abbot Thierry] in secret, because this man of God concerned himself more spiritual matters than secular ones. Sometimes he openly quarrelled with him and found fault with some of his decisions concerning administrative matters, which tended to be simply made.⁵²³

⁵²¹ For the narrative of the foundation of Saint-Évroul, see: *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:14-8.

⁵²² *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:66-8.

⁵²³ *Frequenter itaque patri suo clam detrahebat; eo quod ipse uir Dei plus spiritualibus quam sæcularibus negociis intendebat. Nonnunquam aperte cum eo litigabat, et nonnullas eius constitutiones de rebus exterioribus simpliciter factas uituperabat.* *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:66.

Orderic is not supportive of Robert's efforts. Using language like '*patri suo*' – 'his father' – serves to emphasise the betrayal of Robert's secret criticisms of Thierry. Nevertheless, Orderic does give voice to Robert's concerns even noting that Thierry's decisions tended to be unworldly. Elected after Thierry left on pilgrimage in 1059, Orderic explains that Robert was chosen for several well-considered reasons: 'on account of his distinguished nobility, his energy for the management of the monastery, and his effectiveness and industry in handling practical affairs.'⁵²⁴ Consequently, a comparison is drawn between Robert's dynamic, worldly, and practical abbacy and Thierry's more passive and spiritually focused one.

The way Orderic presents the early history of the community encourages reflection on ideas of abbacy. He explains their different approaches to abbacy through consideration of their personalities. When Orderic first introduced Thierry in Book III he describes him as a very gentle, pious man, who above all concerned himself with liturgical celebrations and his own religious observances.⁵²⁵ Robert, on the other hand, was commendable for his chastity, but he was relentless in his pursuit of anything – whether good or bad – which he deemed desirable, was liable to rise to anger, and disdained obedience in favour of command.⁵²⁶ The outgrowth of their different temperaments is the varied achievements of their respective abbeys. Thierry – a talented calligrapher – encouraged the community's scribes to fill the library and set a fine example of an imitable life, while Robert's abbacy saw the acquisition of land and the commencement of a new church on a grand design.⁵²⁷ By discussing their temperaments, achievements, and criticisms, Orderic depicts these two men as archetypes of different ways of leading a monastic community. In doing so he invites the

⁵²⁴ *propter eius præclaram generositatem; quam propter ardentem monasticæ rei procurationem et in agendis rebus efficaciam et strenuitatem. HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:74.*

⁵²⁵ *HE, Chibnall, III, 2:18.*

⁵²⁶ *HE, Chibnall, III, 2:64.*

⁵²⁷ *HE, Chibnall, III, 2:42-52, 86-8.*

reader to consider broader questions about the relationship between character, virtue, and abbacy.

The focus on individual churchmen, their temperaments, and its consequences all have parallels with the way Orderic depicts change in the later books. It also shows that Orderic is consistently interested in questions of right leadership. Where these passages differ from later ones is the in the lack of connection between their actions and a sense of change or a link to the contemporary church more widely. In discussions of Thierry and Robert Orderic does not seem to convey a sense of departure from normal expectations. The conflict between these two men and their competing ideas of abbacy is presented as an expected part of monastic life. Indeed, the challenges posed by determining the right abbot is a frequent motif of the history Orderic presents: Saint-Évroul continued to face challenges in determining their abbots after Robert was ousted by Duke William and Osbern, prior of Cormeilles, was intruded in his place.⁵²⁸ In this context the conflict between Thierry and Robert seems like business as usual. Competing ideas of abbatial styles could even be integral part of the early history of the abbey, which Orderic tells partly in the manner of a *gesta abbatum* through a succession of abbots. What this could suggest is that depictions of change in the later books of the *Historia* are not reducible simply to variety in practice, but rather denote a more dramatic sense of a break with past practice.

In Book VIII, written 1133-1135, Orderic considers a different kind of ecclesiastical change: the emergence of the new monastic orders. The passage begins with the foundation of Cîteaux by Robert of Molesme and the subsequent growth of the Cistercian Order before more briefly discussing the lives of the founders of several other new orders: Andrew, monk of Vallombrose, founder of Chézal-Benoît; Bernard, former

⁵²⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:90-6, 108-14.

abbot of Saint-Cyprian, founder of Tiron; and Vitalis, canon of Saint-Évroul, Mortain, and founder of Savigny.⁵²⁹

As part of the discussion of new monasticism, Orderic presents the foundation of Cîteaux as a moment of innovation and a challenge to prevailing ideas of monastic life. The account of the foundation is framed as a conversation between Robert, abbot of Molesme, and his monks.⁵³⁰ Robert instructs the monks that they are to adhere to letter of the Rule of St Benedict in every particular. However, the monks argue strongly against him:

The community of monks did not agree with these remarks; on the contrary, they set against such immoderate novelties the examples of their predecessors whose lives clearly shone, marked with evident miracles, and the established path well-trodden by venerable men.⁵³¹

That Robert is presented as departing from past practice in pursuing ‘immoderate novelties [*immoderatis nouitatibus*]' is integral to this counter-argument. In a passage of direct speech that gives voice to the monks arguments, they refer to predecessors as a guide to correct practice, referring directly to St Maur, who was sent to Gaul by St Benedict and who adapted customs to suit the climate of the region.⁵³² They then deploy past practice directly as argument, explaining every deviation from the rule with reference to the context in which customs emerged.⁵³³ Later, Orderic again stresses the novelty of the new monastic orders: after the death of Vitalis, founder of Savigny, we are told that ‘Geoffrey of Bayeux, a monk of Cérisy, succeeded him; and he strove after

⁵²⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:310-32.

⁵³⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:312-26.

⁵³¹ *His dictis monachorum conuentus non adqueuit, immo predecessorum quorum uita euidentibus miraculis insignita manifeste refulsit exempla et instituta uenerabilium uestigiis trita uirorum immoderatis nouitatibus obiecit.* *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:314.

⁵³² *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:316-8.

⁵³³ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:318-20.

immoderate innovations and oppressed with a heavy yoke the necks of his followers.⁵³⁴

Orderic makes use of similar language to make the point, describing Geoffrey's actions as 'immoderate innovations [*immoderatis adinventionibus*]'.⁵³⁴

The discussion of the foundation of new monastic order forms the central part of what I suggest should be read as a consideration of changes affecting monasticism generally. To conclude his discussion, Orderic justifies his work writing that:

I have recorded for the notice of posterity this [account] concerning modern teachers, who prefer new traditions to the rites of ancient fathers; they call other monks laymen and rashly hold them in contempt as if transgressors of the rule.⁵³⁵

Orderic generalises the different accounts of monastic founders, combining them into a single topic: 'concerning modern teachers, who prefer new traditions'. Therefore, each of the individual narratives is made an example of this larger process. Through this concluding remark Orderic indicates a way of reading the account: not as a succession of discrete foundation narratives, but as instances of a shared endeavour. Orderic is writing principally from the position of a traditional Benedictine community. He expresses the criticism that the Cistercians 'call other monks laymen, and rashly hold them in contempt as if transgressors of the rule.' Thus a point of difference between this discussion in Books VIII and the passages in Books XI-XIII is the application of ideas of change to the church as a whole.

The connections between this passage and later passages on reform efforts of elite churchmen suggests that Orderic's initial discussion of change in monastic ways of

⁵³⁴ *Baiocensis Goisfredus ac Cerasiacensis monachus successit, qui et ipse immoderatis adinventionibus studuit, durumque iugum super ceruices discipulorum aggrauauit. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:332.*

⁵³⁵ *Notitiæ posterorum hæc annotaui de modernis preceptoribus, qui nouas traditiones priscorum preferunt patrum ritibus; aliosque monachos seculares uocitant, ac ueluti regulæ preuaricatores temere condempnant. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:332-4.*

life later informed how he wrote about change in the church in general. For example, in his discussion of new monasticism, Orderic focuses closely on individual founders. In the most detailed discussion of this process of change – the dialogue between Robert of Molesme and his monks – the abbot is represented arguing alone against the entire community of monks, despite the fact that we are told twelve men (presumably monks of Molesme) agreed with him and left alongside him to found Cîteaux.⁵³⁶ Indeed, the entire passage on new monastic orders is more rightly characterised as a piece describing the lives and foundations of a group of monastic pioneers.

The passage on new monasticism also includes arguments that Orderic later applied to churchmen's efforts to reform the non-monastic church. One of the arguments the monks of Molesme use against their abbot is an argument in favour of discretion, as opposed to harsh rules. They cite the metaphor of a physician to make this point:

A thoughtful physician cares for a sick person with mild medicine, lest a too hard medicine wrack the patient with pain, which may kill though it had appeared to offer a cure. No prudent man inflicts an unsupportable burden on a weak man, in case the porter tired and weighed down by the load might die on the journey.⁵³⁷

The argument follows that rules should be adapted to individual need, rather than imposed without regard for circumstance. That this metaphor is put into the mouths of the monks shows that it is read as part of the argument against the imposition of new rules and, certainly, it accords with their arguments in favour of a less literal reading of the Rule of St Benedict. In the passage on the 1132 Cluniac council Orderic again returns to the idea of discretion, writing that when Peter the Venerable withdrew the new

⁵³⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:322.

⁵³⁷ *Prouidus archiater egrotum fouet temperato medicamine, ne si nimis importunæ medicationis uexat infirmum cruciamine, quem curandum suscepit uideatur extinguere. Nullus prudens inualido infert onus importabile, ne lassus portitor uel oppressus sarcina pereat in itinere.* *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:316.

rules he had imposed he was ‘heeding discretion which is the mother of virtues’.⁵³⁸ In contrast, Archbishop Geoffrey of Rouen is described as ‘lacking discretion in many things’.⁵³⁹ The argumentative implications of ideas of discretion are discussed more below; for the argument I wish to make here the important point is that Orderic adapted and reapplied the same lines of argument later as he had in the treatise on new monasticism. What this indicates is that Orderic’s ideas about change in the contemporary church were originally developed in relation to new monasticism before being redeployed to express arguments about change in the church as a whole.

What this discussion also indicates is that in the 1130s Orderic became increasingly interested in prelates’ attempts to enact stricter standards of religious life. It seems likely that the treatise on new monasticism acted as a point at which Orderic began to reflect upon efforts to challenge traditional ways of life in the church. The treatise appears to have circulated separately and, therefore, could represent a point at which a more didactic mode of writing encouraged Orderic to develop and express a different kind of argumentation.⁵⁴⁰ Thus, Orderic’s interest in change appears to emerge out the consideration of new monasticism, a topic that we can closely associate with Orderic’s audience. It is possible that Orderic’s audience were, therefore, also involved in the way Orderic’s arguments developed over time and extended to include prelates in general. Although we cannot know how far his fellow monks agreed with his assessment, the very fact Orderic puts it to them through his work is indicative of an ongoing dialogue at Saint-Évroul about contemporary church reform. This suggests that a community of ordinary Benedictine monks could be invested in changes affecting the church as a whole, including challenges to the practices of the secular clergy. Julia Barrow has argued that monastic authors spent much more time considering their role within the church than clerical ones, and that these monastic writers often reflected upon the role of the secular clergy too, using them as a counter-point to thus triangulate the

⁵³⁸ *memorque discretionis quæ uirtutum mater est.* *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁵³⁹ *in multis indiscretus.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

⁵⁴⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, 4:xiv; 4:310, n. 2; Chibnall, ‘General Introduction,’ 121-122.

purview of monks.⁵⁴¹ As a result, the evolution of the clergy was shaped from without by monastic hands. Orderic's evidence draws out the significance of this valuable observation in another direction. It further shows how both monastic writers and, crucially, their monastic audiences could be invested in the changes affecting the church as a whole in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Everyday Churchmen

In the passages discussed so far, I have focused on where Orderic conveys change. To focus on these cases alone, however, diminishes the rhetorical effect of his work. Orderic's depictions of more everyday prelates provide a counter point to passages on innovating church leadership, informing how the text is read.

Orderic describes the actions everyday church leaders undertake in generic terms. Describing the abbacy of Mainer of Saint-Évroul, Orderic wrote that: 'And, pleasing God, he emended the monastery entrusted to him in many ways within and without.'⁵⁴² We find a similar formula when Orderic wrote about John, bishop of Lisieux, who 'effectively managed the governance he had taken up for about thirty-four years, and emended the church, clergy, and God's people in many ways.'⁵⁴³ As Orderic is content to describe activities in generic terms, instances where specifics are given create narrative emphasis. Writing about William of Rots, third abbot of Fécamp, Orderic states that '[h]e undertook the abbacy of the monastery [of Fécamp] while still a novice in monastic life; he led for about twenty seven years, and emended many things internally and externally.'⁵⁴⁴ Orderic then gives specifics about William's building work:

⁵⁴¹ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 71-2.

⁵⁴² *Ille autem suscepto nomine abbatis et onere laudabiliter uixit, et susceptum regimen uiginti duobus annis et vii mensibus utiliter tenuit; multisque modis monasterium sibi commissum intus et exterius iuuante Deo emendauit. HE, Chibnall, III, 2:146.*

⁵⁴³ *Ille uero susceptum regimen fere xxxiiii annis potenter rexit, multisque modis æcclesiam et clerum Deique populum emendauit. HE, Chibnall, XI, 6:144.*

⁵⁴⁴ *Præfatum uero cenobium adhuc in monachico scemate neophitus suscepit, fere xxvii annis gubernauit, et in multis intus et extra emendauit. HE, Chibnall, XI, 6:138.*

he built a beautiful new chancel and extended the nave.⁵⁴⁵ The lone emphasis on building work suggests that it is a task of particular worthiness.

Across the text emphasis is placed consistently on a narrow range of activities, one of which is building work. Other activities include promoting or establishing regular life and worship, gathering (and educating) new men, and correcting behaviour through example. There are minor differences in the way Orderic writes about the actions of abbots when compared to bishops. For example, Robert, former abbot of Saint-Évroul, in exile in Italy, is granted the monastery of Holy Trinity at Venosa. Robert made a man called Berengar abbot:

He discovered that the small flock of twenty monks whom he received was entirely occupied with worldly vanities and very lazy in divine worship. After a while, with God's help, he increased the number of monks to one hundred. Likewise, with such eagerness, he made them known for their honest virtues, such that they provided several bishops and abbots from among their number.⁵⁴⁶

Discipline is still important when describing the actions of bishops, although it is more closely associated with church ceremonial, such as when Orderic writes that Gilbert, bishop of Évreux, 'ensured divine worship took place there night and day.'⁵⁴⁷ 'His successor,' Orderic adds, 'Audoin, promoted church ceremonial and taught the law of God to his clergy and the people of his diocese.'⁵⁴⁸ Bishop Gilbert also 'increased the number of clergymen [*clerum ampliauit*]'⁵⁴⁹ Throughout the *Historia* Orderic

⁵⁴⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:138.

⁵⁴⁶ *pusillum gregem xx monachorum quem recepit, mundanisque uanitibus uehementer occupatum et in Dei cultu ualde pigrum inuenit; postmodum gratia Dei iuuante ad numerum centum monachorum augmentauit. Tanto etiam bonarum studio uirtutum nobilitauit eos, ut ex ipsis plures episcopi et abbates assumerentur.* *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:102.

⁵⁴⁷ *æcclesiastico cultui nocte dieque mancipauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:174.

⁵⁴⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:530.

⁵⁴⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:174.

consistently recorded how many new monks particular abbots admitted too. For example, describing the election of Roger Le Sap as abbot of Saint-Évroul, Orderic notes that he admitted one-hundred and fifteen new monks.⁵⁵⁰ The effect of this recurrent description of a narrow range of activities is to establish a norm for the behaviour of prelates, against which the innovations of specific individuals would come into sharper focus.

There is a particular emphasis on building work. Building efforts are referred to especially frequently, even in only brief accounts of individual churchmen.⁵⁵¹ Most detail is given about Orderic's own abbots: Abbot Mainer completed a new church, along with a cloister, dormitory, refectory, kitchen, store room, and all other necessary claustral buildings.⁵⁵² Even dubious character's like Odo of Bayeux are celebrated for their building work (if little else).⁵⁵³ Odo apparently cared greatly for the external (*exterius*) welfare of his church:

For he was an eloquent and noble man, abundant and very active in striving after worldly concerns, he carefully respected men of religion; he fiercely safeguarded his clergy with words and the sword, and sumptuously adorned his church in every way with precious ornaments. This is attested by the buildings he constructed as well as the outstanding vessels of gold and silver and the vestments with which he furnished his church and clergy.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:254.

⁵⁵¹ For example: *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:301; XI, 6:152.

⁵⁵² *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:148.

⁵⁵³ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:196, 202, 267; VII, 4:42.

⁵⁵⁴ *Erat enim eloquens et magnanimus, dapsilis et secundum seculum ualde strenuus, Religiosos homines diligenter honorabat; clerum suum acriter ense et uerbo defendebat, æcclesiamque preciosis ornamentis copiose per omnia decorabat. Hoc attestantur edificia quæ construxit; et insignia ex auro et argento uasa et indumenta quibus basilicam uel clerum ornauit. HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:114-6.

A focus on building is also reflected in how Orderic imagines leaders saw themselves. We can see this in Orderic's version of the last words of Hugh, bishop of Lisieux, who says:

I completed the church of St Peter, prince of the apostles, which was begun by my predecessor the venerable Herbert; I eagerly adorned it, honourably dedicated it, and sumptuously enriched it with clergy and the vessels and other supplies necessary for divine service.⁵⁵⁵

Hugh's imagined speech is heavy with emphasis on his physical provisions for the church, including its completion, adornment, dedication, and suitable outfitting for the performance of worship. In a few cases in the *Historia* the building work actually becomes the focus of the narrative, such as when Orderic explains how a project begun under one churchman was eventually completed sometimes decades later.⁵⁵⁶ All of this indicates that, if one of the most important activities fundamental to leadership is to amend and improve religious life, caring for and improving the physical fabric of religious communities is an essential way in which that is brought about.

The importance of building may rest on the close association in the text between a community and its material fabric. In a passage on the nunnery of Almenèches, Orderic remarked that the community was dispersed during the instability of Robert Curthose's reign as duke of Normandy. Seeking sanctuary at Saint-Évroul, the abbess, Emma, stayed for a period of six months:

Then the following year she returned to her own church and, with help from God and faithful men, she endeavoured to restore [*restaurare*] the ruined site.

Thereafter she lived for around ten years, and diligently raised the church of the

⁵⁵⁵ *Æcclesiam sancti Petri principis apostolorum quam uenerabilis Herbertus predecessor meus cepit perfeci, studiose adornaui, honorifice dedicaui et cultoribus necessariisque diuino seruitio uasis aliisque apparatibus copiose ditaui. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:16.*

⁵⁵⁶ *HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:308.*

Virgin and Mother along with the regular buildings, and keenly recalled the nuns who had been dispersed back to the monastic enclosure. After she [Abbess Emma] died, Matilda, the daughter of her brother Philip, succeeded her, and repaired the monastery along with its shrines after it had been unexpectedly set aflame a second time.⁵⁵⁷

In this passage Orderic described a cycle of rebuilding and reestablishment. The rebuilding of the community is described in clear, material terms, such as the reference to the ruined site (*diruta*), the verb choice (such as *erexit* and *reparauit*), and the reference to specific buildings or groups of buildings (including *regularibus officinis* and *ædibus*). The relationship between the rebuilding of the site and the restoration of the community is a close one. Orderic explicitly referred to the fact that the nuns were recalled to the ‘monastic enclosure [*ad septa monastica*]’, a delineated space. This link may explain why building work in general is given such prominence in the text, as the building of a church is associated with the promotion of the non-physical church too.

All of the activities Orderic associates with everyday members of the ecclesiastical elite have also been associated with church reform. Indeed, John Howe has stressed that in the eleventh century, reform was primarily seen as a physical exercise, involving building works and increasing the numbers of religious.⁵⁵⁸ However, for Orderic these activities are part of the normal exercise of ecclesiastical governance: they are not reforming acts and nor are they associated with change. What this indicates is that Orderic has a specific, historically grounded sense of what change in the church means at this time. Indeed, his conception of reform – if we can call it that – is specific and refers directly to the application of legal frameworks to disciplinary issues. A

⁵⁵⁷ *Porro sequenti anno ad ecclesiam suam reuersa est auxilioque Dei et fidelium eius diruta restaurare conata est. Hæc postmodum fere x annis uixit, quibus basilicam uirginis et matris cum regularibus officinis diligenter erexit, et dispersas ad septa monastica monachas summopere reuocauit. Qua defuncta Mathildis filia Philippi fratris eius successit, iterumque repentino igne incensum cum ædibus monasterium laboriose reparauit.* HE, Chibnall, XI, 6:36.

⁵⁵⁸ Howe, *Church Reform and Social Change*, xxii; 160-161.

question this raises is whether or not the physical aspects of reform – perceived as such in the mid eleventh century – had become normalised by the twelfth century and were no longer seen as reform at all.

Conclusions

Next to a background of stability – of the raising of churches, the promotion of new men, of education and discipline – Orderic saw something profoundly change in the western church. The consistency and normality of the actions of most prelates forms a context of continuity, against which is depicted a radical departure from past practice by a select group of churchmen. One of the reasons why Orderic's perceptions of change matters is because it shows that in his small corner of Normandy at least, reform efforts were keenly felt. However, Orderic does not simply document change; he constructs a specific narrative of change and responds to the actors responsible with precise counter-arguments. As part of this narrative, Orderic establishes that there is a group of elite churchmen responsible for enacting change, who had shared aims and motives. Orderic's perception of the actions of these churchmen led him towards the end of his life to describe a period dramatic change affecting men of the church as a whole. At a time when we are deconstructing grand narratives, we must remember that Orderic seems to have crafted one of his own. However, the narrative Orderic constructed was not one of reform. Rather, he told the story of how in the twelfth century a particular group of elite churchmen abandoned precedent and sought to forcibly raise standards of religious life by the imposition of new rules.

II. Arguing about Reform

Orderic's depiction of a period of dramatic, violent upheaval demands that we engage with the question of how to read this text in relation to reform. Does Orderic

have an identifiable ideology of reform? This section examines how to read Orderic's depictions of change in light of contemporary reform debates.

In the few places where Orderic's work appears in modern scholarship on church reform, it is typically used as evidence of Normandy as an area of resistance.⁵⁵⁹ Marjorie Chibnall's argued that Orderic's held a viewpoint characteristic of the Norman church when it comes to ecclesiastical affairs.⁵⁶⁰ Setting aside the question what a Norman viewpoint actually is, reducing Orderic to a mouthpiece for widely held norms precludes the possibility that he made arguments through writing.

In fact, Orderic's depictions of change are not just descriptive. His discussion of members of the ecclesiastical elite are highly selective. For example, his writing on Lanfranc archbishop of Canterbury (1070-1089) – who is seen as a key figure in the reform of the English church – does not relate his activities to change in the church.⁵⁶¹ In Book IV, Orderic added a life of Lanfranc, describing his youth and education (based on the *Vita Lanfranci*), his monastic conversion, and his promotion to the see of Canterbury.⁵⁶² As part of this life, Orderic provides a conventional illustration of the tension between the active and contemplative lives.⁵⁶³ There is no suggestion that Orderic associates the memory of Lanfranc with changes in the church. Consequently, the text presents a challenge of attempting to approach ideas of reform without imposing categories derived from other sources on our reading of the *Historia*.

It does not appear that Orderic engaged with contemporary debates according to recognised terminology. He does not refer to churchmen as reformers and, indeed, the

⁵⁵⁹ For example, Julia Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 191. The example of Norman clerics travelling to Liège ultimately comes from Orderic's *Historia*. Check further references.

⁵⁶⁰ Chibnall, 'General Introduction', 40-41, 95-97; *The World of Orderic Vitalis*, 128-132.

⁵⁶¹ Robinson, 'Reform and the Church,' 269; H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc: Scholar, Monk, Archbishop* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 197-205.

⁵⁶² *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:248-54. On his use of the *Vita Lanfranci*: 2:248, n. 3; 2:250, n. 4.

⁵⁶³ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:252.

term *reformare* is rarely found in texts before the fourteenth century.⁵⁶⁴ In the *Historia* there is one reference to ‘Gregorians [*Gregorianos*]’.⁵⁶⁵ It appears in an early part of Book VII, as part of a description of the conflict between Gregory VII and Henry IV. Orderic describes how Gregory clashed with the emperor and encouraged him to amend (*emendaret*) his behaviour: ‘He often called together many bishops to synods and discussed how to set right [*corrigeretur*] the Christian empire, which now was shamefully and wickedly polluted.’⁵⁶⁶ Gregory is forced to flee Rome and dies in exile; thereafter: ‘The people of Milan and Mainz, along with many others who supported Wibert [the anti-pope], anathematized all of the Gregorians and savagely attacked them with arms.’⁵⁶⁷ The use of *Gregorianos* is in a political context and has little to do with questions of clerical discipline. The fact Orderic refers to *Gregorianos* only once in the *Historia* indicates that – while the term had some currency – it denotes political adherents of Gregory VII. As a group they belonged to political history, which is why we find this passage in a section that discusses political developments across Christendom.⁵⁶⁸

Orderic’s use of language indicates limited analytical value of commonly used (although increasingly contested) labels like Gregorian and reformer when it comes to reforming identities and their expression in the *Historia*.⁵⁶⁹ The way Orderic’s arguments develop between Books VIII and XI-XIII further points to some of the challenges of over-emphasising reform languages. The study of the language of reform has long been an important part of the modern study of eleventh- and twelfth-century

⁵⁶⁴ Barrow, ‘Ideas and Applications,’ 347.

⁵⁶⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, VII, 4:10.

⁵⁶⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, VII, 4:8.

⁵⁶⁷ *Mediolanenses et Maguntini et multi alii qui Witberto fauebant; Gregorianos omnes anathematizabant armis quoque crudeliter impugnabant.* *HE*, Chibnall, VII, 4:10.

⁵⁶⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, VII, 4:10-22.

⁵⁶⁹ For an example of a criticism of the use of these terms, see in relation to episcopal identities: John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones, ‘Introduction: the Bishop Reformed,’ in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, eds. Ott and Jones (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 14-5.

reform and is a key tool in the selection and analysis of texts.⁵⁷⁰ Even in much more recent research, tracing the language of reform has remained a core objective.⁵⁷¹ This language is fairly well-defined, including terms like *emendare*, *corrigere*, *meliorare*, *renovare*, *restaurare*, and *innovare*. These terms are seen to embody a package of reform ideals and to operate – more or less – as synonyms of one another.⁵⁷² Orderic does make use of certain terms that have been associated with reform language: *emendare*,⁵⁷³ *correctio*,⁵⁷⁴ *corrigere*.⁵⁷⁵ However, studying these terms offers limited insight into the arguments Orderic makes and how his ideas develop, especially as these terms are used much less frequently in the final three books and not at all in Books I and II. His limited usage of these terms indicates some of the potential problems of focusing too heavily on this language. First, and most significantly, using this language to define interest in reform risks giving us only a partial understanding of contemporary responses, as texts that have different ways of engaging with change in the church (like the *Historia*) are side-lined. Seeking a particular language shapes how we examine sources too, as it distracts attention away from different, potentially competing, historical languages of reform. Furthermore, the terms we choose to focus on are themselves derived from the same sources, leading to a risk of circularity: the terms are defined as reform language because of their presence in reform texts, a definition which in turn rests upon the presence of that same language.

Rather than as a part of recognised debates about reform, Orderic's history appears to lead a different kind of dialogue within the community of Saint-Évroul. Through depictions of elite churchmen, he makes arguments about change in the church that speak to the concerns of his community. The way he describes his work and its

⁵⁷⁰ Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), 1-34; 'Gregory the Great and Gregory VII,' 1-31;

⁵⁷¹ Barrow, 'Ideas and Applications', 345-62; Robinson, 'Reform and the Church,' 268-270.

⁵⁷² Barrow, 'Ideas and Applications,' 362.

⁵⁷³ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:146; IV, 2:272; VII, 4:8; VIII, 4:116, 254-6; XI, 6:154.

⁵⁷⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:352; XIII, 6:448.

⁵⁷⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:284-92; VIII, 4:176-8, 262-4; X, 5:204.

effect indicates the close, dynamic relationship between the text's development and its primary audience. Chibnall has stressed that Orderic wrote primarily for his own community, with parts of the work resembling a record of the community's endowments and other parts suitable for reading in the refectory.⁵⁷⁶ Orderic's community also included monks to come in the future, for whom Orderic recorded evidence so they might make sense of divine purposes hidden in his own time.⁵⁷⁷ Chibnall also argued, however, that he wrote for a larger audience too, comprising a group who understood spoken Latin or had access to secular clerks capable of translation.⁵⁷⁸

How Orderic represents his own audience, however, privileges the place of his community. In the preface to Book V, Orderic writes that bearing in mind the sin of sloth: 'I decided to write candidly something that might be useful or pleasing to some of the faithful in the house of the Lord'.⁵⁷⁹ In the same preface he explains that his intention is to produce something that is 'useful or pleasing [*prosit seu placeat*]' to this community, indicating a close relationship between perceived audience and the form the text takes. Consequently, while it is possible that Orderic's work included a wider audience, the relationship between the community and the text is arguably more significant for our analysis of the text's form and composition.

The dynamism of this relationship is in evidence in the way Orderic writes about issues associated with reform. Sarah Hamilton has shown that the key issues put forward by eleventh-century reformers – simony, nicolaitism, and secular interference in ecclesiastical elections and property – had not always been considered the most important ones.⁵⁸⁰ Hamilton demonstrates that earlier texts, still circulating in the tenth and eleventh centuries, could show quite different concerns, including the bearing of

⁵⁷⁶ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 37.

⁵⁷⁷ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 39.

⁵⁷⁸ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 36-7.

⁵⁷⁹ *aliquid quo aliquibus in domo Domini fidelibus prosit seu placeat decreui simpliciter edere. HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

⁵⁸⁰ Hamilton, *Church and People*, 62-9.

arms; drinking, gambling, and other secular pursuits; and litigiousness.⁵⁸¹ Some eleventh- and twelfth-century figures also focused on a different range of issues, such as Roger De Warin, bishop of Cambrai, who writing in *c.* 1180 forbade priests from frequenting taverns, tournaments, and ball games.⁵⁸² What this indicates is that which aspects of behaviour and practice are deemed key issues in a context of church reform vary, both over time and between contemporaries. The way Orderic approaches various disciplinary issues and questions of right religious life can therefore offer a way to think about the relationship between his text and those he wrote for.

Orderic's treatment of different reform issues indicates that he was not just writing with audience in view, but was in a more engaged dialogue with his community. This dialogue is clearest in the way Orderic handles simony and secular pursuits undertaken by clerics, in contrast to his treatment of nicolaitism. An examination of simony in the text reveals that Orderic presents a consistent, unambiguous understanding of simony as an immoral practice. In one of the few passages concerning simony, Orderic writes that Abbot Robert of Saint-Pierre-sur-Dive 'was thought guilty by many as a follower of Simon Magnus'.⁵⁸³ There is no consideration of Robert's motives; instead he is put forward as a negative archetype, effectively communicating the evils of simony. While less forthright, Orderic's discussions of the secular pursuits undertaken by priests is similarly straightforward. For example, writing about Gilbert Maminot, a royal physician and bishop of Lisieux, Orderic criticises his overindulgence in 'secular pursuits and habits', explaining that he was over fond of dice games and hawking (to the negligence of his liturgical performances).⁵⁸⁴ Once again, the issue is represented as a moral failing and there is no consideration of Gilbert's motives. This indicates that in the

⁵⁸¹ Hamilton, *Church and People*, 69.

⁵⁸² Hamilton, *Church and People*, 69.

⁵⁸³ *multis noxius utpote sectator Simonis Magi. HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:74.

⁵⁸⁴ *Secularibus...exercitiis et actibus. HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:20.

Historia issues of simony and the clergy partaking in secular pursuits were represented in a similar way as a moral failing.

Orderic's writing on clerical celibacy, in contrast, presents a more complex understanding of the issues at stake. As part of the account of the 1119 synod of Rouen, Orderic explores the motives of the married clergy in attendance who resisted attempts to separate them from their wives, giving voice to their concerns in the text. After Archbishop Geoffrey insisted upon a ban on contact between priests and women, the clergymen 'whispered among themselves, lamenting the struggle between body and soul'.⁵⁸⁵ By giving voice to the whispered concerns of the clergy, the text invites its readers to consider the priests' perspective. A second point of difference is that the passage focuses on the suffering the priests endure due to efforts to separate them from their wives, such as when a group in the church were talking quietly 'about confession or other worthwhile matters' before being set upon and nearly killed.⁵⁸⁶ We are told also that the assembled clergy fled the scene: 'Some of them ran through the muddy streets of the city, clothed in their vestments, back to their lodgings.'⁵⁸⁷ The passage dwells on the experience of these priests with vivid details, evoking consideration of the way clerical dress was dirtied when the priests were put to flight.

The way Orderic writes about attempts to eliminate clerical marriage indicates that he sought to remember and communicate the experiences of some of the members of his own community. The text makes use of the suffering inflicted upon these individuals as an argument against attempts to enact change (thus Orderic depicts the priests at the 1119 synod as victims of the archbishop's unconscionable aggression). A further potential reading of the text is as a consolation for those affected by reforming

⁵⁸⁵ *inter se pro corporum et animarum discrimine conquerentes musitarent.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:290-2.

⁵⁸⁶ *de confessione uel aliis utilibus causis.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

⁵⁸⁷ *Porro quidam illorum poderibus suis induti per cenosos urbis uicos ad hospitia sua cucurrerunt.* *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:292.

efforts. In the *Historia*, Orderic frequently refers to the deaths of notable churchmen.⁵⁸⁸ As part of this, Orderic stresses the idea that these elite churchmen are answerable to God for their stewardship.⁵⁸⁹ Describing the dying Hugh, bishop of Lisieux, in Book V, Orderic imagines that he was deeply conscious of the fact he would soon be called upon to defend his period of rule: ‘he shrewdly looked into himself, as a servant of God heading for the court of his lord, and prepared himself in great dread to render an account of his stewardship.’⁵⁹⁰ This was not an insignificant concern: the picture Orderic presents is of a bishop nearing death who waits in dread – *in timore magno* – to defend his actions. When read in the context of a powerless audience and set alongside descriptions of the suffering of priests at the hands of overzealous churchmen, it is possible that such passages would act to console their readers.

Evidence from the *Historia* also tentatively suggests that Orderic’s community was equally concerned with questions of reform and change. For example, Orderic was sent to the Cluniac council in 1132 and Abbot Richard, who succeeded to the abbacy of Saint-Évroul in 1137, attended the Lateran council held in 1139.⁵⁹¹ This could suggest that Orderic’s audience was not a passive recipient of the ideas expressed in the text. Rather, what we can see in the text is the use of history writing as a communal space to think through the implications of change.

III. Orderic’s Reform Ideology

This section brings into focus Orderic’s reform ideology. It does so by examining passages on prelates in light of the dialogue between Orderic and his community. In the

⁵⁸⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:48-96; VIII, 4:170; X, 5:202; XI, 168.

⁵⁸⁹ On the abbots of Saint-Évroul: *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:554.

⁵⁹⁰ *seseque ut Dei seruius ad domini sui curiam iturus sollerter circumspexit, et pro uillicatione sua rationem redditurus in timore magno se preparauit.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:14.

⁵⁹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:536.

first part, I analyse the languages of zealotry and *discretio* he uses to make arguments about church reformers. In the second part, I consider Orderic's arguments concerning church leadership and their relationship to audience. The section thus reflects on the effect of these arguments for Orderic's audience as a traditional Benedictine community.

Zealotry and *discretio*: A Critique of a Reforming Elite

This section focuses on Orderic's depictions of prelates, considering his representations of reforming identities and their argumentative implications. Its aim is to investigate the languages Orderic uses to assess reformers' actions, as well as how far they were informed by monastic concerns and texts. Recent scholarship has pointed to the complexity of reformers' identities, beyond binary labels like 'reformer', 'Gregorian', and 'imperial'. For example T. M. Riches and John Ott have both examined how bishops in the diocese of Cambrai promoted local interests, charting their own course between competing groups that included the imperial court, the kings of France, and the papacy.⁵⁹² Conducting a similar study on the career of Siegfried I of Mainz (1060-1084), John Eldevik has argued for the importance of seeing the way bishops in the period of Gregorian reform stood between the poles of papal and imperial partisanship as more than 'strategic triangulation'.⁵⁹³ This approach is a valuable one, that has successfully challenged the traditional identification of bishops as situated

⁵⁹² T. M. Riches, 'Bishop Gerard I of Cambrai-Arras, the Three Orders, and the Problem of Human Weakness,' in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, eds. John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 122-36; John S. Ott, "'Both Mary and Martha': Bishop Lietbert of Cambrai and the Construction of Episcopal Sanctity in a Border Diocese around 1100,' in *The Bishop Reformed*, eds. Ott and Jones, 137-60.

⁵⁹³ John Eldevik, 'Driving the Chariot of the Lord: Siegfried I of Mainz (1060-1084) and Episcopal Identity in an Age of Transition,' in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, eds. John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 162.

somewhere on the axis between imperial and Gregorian.⁵⁹⁴ It has also revealed how reformers' self-identifications were malleable and open to discussion.

However, developing new languages for describing reforming identities has proven more problematic. One problem posed by these studies is how to draw general conclusions. The see of Cambrai is a border diocese caught between obedience to the archdiocese of Reims and participation in imperial politics, and therefore is not directly comparable to others. Furthermore, its location at a crossroads is central to both Ott and Jones' arguments.⁵⁹⁵ The very strength of these studies – delving into a local context in intricate detail – thus poses difficulties in developing a coherent picture of reforming identities. A second problem is an overemphasis on political expediency. Conrad Leyser has discussed the problem posed by rushing to a history of politics and power in the wake of the collapse of grand narratives.⁵⁹⁶ Leyser argues that the modern study of reform is at just such a juncture, viewing the ideology and rhetoric of reformers as ephemera masking the continuity of dynastic power. While Leyser does not point to this problem specifically in the context of episcopal identities, it seems to be applicable here too. For example, Riches' argument is that both Bishop Gerard I and his successor Lietbert shared a concern to prioritise diocesan interests and defend episcopal rights.⁵⁹⁷ Their concerns were pragmatic and political: '[i]n contrast perhaps to a later generation, neither Gerard nor Lietbert were engaged in epic ideological battles. They were the intelligent, pragmatic heads of an institution whose interests they were there to protect'.⁵⁹⁸ While it is valuable to emphasise the nuances of political context, what exactly diocesan interests were – as well as how they were defined and agreed upon – is not self-evident and cannot be reduced to political expediency. In essence, Riches argues that the bishops of Cambrai-Arras supported their own power, but power to what end?

⁵⁹⁴ Eldevik, 'Driving the Chariot,' 163; Ott, 'Both Mary and Martha,' 159-60.

⁵⁹⁵ Ott, 'Both Mary and Martha,' 156-60; Riches, 'Bishop Gerard I of Cambrai-Arras,' 135-6.

⁵⁹⁶ Leyser, 'Sound and Fury,' 478-99.

⁵⁹⁷ Riches, 'Bishop Gerard I of Cambrai-Arras,' 136.

⁵⁹⁸ Riches, 'Bishop Gerard I of Cambrai-Arras,' 136.

By privileging the bishops' room to manoeuvre as a core interest, Riches implies the bishops of Cambrai only reacted to outside influences.

An examination of Orderic's depictions of church reformers offers a different approach to the study of reforming identities. Although examining one text is no less specific than studying one bishop or diocese, the two approaches can be used concurrently. Furthermore, the *Historia* also offers a way to avoid overemphasising political expediency. It allows us to ask more nuanced questions about the perception of reform ideologies as embodied in local ecclesiastical elites, such as how members of this elite were perceived from an outside perspective.

An analogy Orderic uses to depict reformers is with the Biblical figure Phineas, which occurs three times in the *Historia* (in Books IV, VIII, and XI). Phineas, an Israelite priest, killed an Israelite man who was in a relationship with a Midianite woman.⁵⁹⁹ One of the references is in a speech given to Henry I and concerns questions of royal leadership and anger that will not be discussed here.⁶⁰⁰ The other two concern members of the ecclesiastical elite. The repeated use of this allusion over a period of years indicates its enduring value to Orderic in the expression of meaning. The first reference to Phineas comes from Book IV in a discussion of the promotion of John, bishop of Avranches, to the archiepiscopate of Rouen:

He [John] was possessed of a passionate love of virtue in many ways, in both words and deeds, and, like Phineas, he raged against vice with excessive zeal... And so for ten years he bore metropolitan rule with strength and diligence, and

⁵⁹⁹ Numbers 25:6-15. See: *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, vol. 1, ed. Swift Edgar (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2010-3), 806.

⁶⁰⁰ For more on this, see: Kate McGrath, 'Royal Madness and the Law: The Role of Anger in Representations of Royal Authority in Eleventh- and Twelfth-century Anglo-Norman texts,' in *Madness in Medieval Law and Custom*, ed. Wendy J. Turner (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 123-4.

worked hard against impious priests, trying to separate them from their mistresses.⁶⁰¹

The reference to Phineas is part of an argument that explores the interplay between intentions and actions. Orderic criticises how John ‘raged against vice with excessive zeal [*nimio...zelo*],’ expressing a tension between a strong desire for moral improvement – as John, we are told, ‘was possessed of a passionate love of virtue’ – and the potential error in attempting to forcefully to bring about such improvement.

When Orderic refers to Phineas again in Book VIII, he uses the parallel to extend this argument to reforming churchmen in general. In Book VIII, Orderic reflects on the decline of morals, continuing that in response: ‘[t]he elect [*electi*], who burn with the zeal of Phineas, often grow angry amongst the reprobates and lament to God with the words of the prophet: “I beheld the transgressors and was grieved, because they kept not thy word.”’⁶⁰² Despite the fact the two passages were written as much as ten years apart, in both Phineas is associated with zeal (*zelo*). Orderic also uses the imagery of heat (*feruebat* and *inflammantur*), associating passion or anger with zealousness. However, in Book VIII we see the extension of this analogy, used earlier to make an argument made about Archbishop John, to an entire group of elite churchmen. The elect in this passage is not explicitly a clerical elite, but rather a moral one. (However, that these individuals apparently cite the psalms indicate that we are still dealing with a specific group of literate churchmen.) Orderic explains that their anger emerges in the context of a binary hierarchy, with the *electi* on one side and ‘the reprobates’ on the other. The elect explicitly dwells among the reprobates (*inter*) and their anger is a response to this proximity. Orderic does not identify himself with the *electi*; rather he appears to be

⁶⁰¹ *Hic ardore uirtutum in uerbis et operibus multipliciter feruebat; nimioque zelo in uitia ut Phinees seuebat...Decem itaque annis metropolitanum regimen fortiter et diligenter gessit; multumque contra impudicos presbyteros pro auferendis pelicibus laborauit.* HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:200.

⁶⁰² *Electi autem qui zelo Phineas inflammantur, inter reprobos crebro irascuntur; ac ad Dominum cum propheta conqueruntur, “Vidi preuaricantes et tabescebam; quia eloquia tua non custodierunt.”* HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:190. Chibnall identifies the Psalm as cxviii (cxix) 158: HE, Chibnall, 4:190, n. 4.

conceptualising a group of elite churchmen who, as Orderic depicts them, positioned themselves as a moral elite driven by a common ideological and emotive impetus.

As part of this representation, Orderic uses the allusion to Phineas and the language of zealotry to construct an argument against efforts to enforce changes contrary to customary practices. The argument Orderic makes is not straightforward. Rather, he depicts these elite churchmen in ambiguous terms, torn between their intentions, their anger, and their attempts to enforce morality. For example, Orderic remarks that after the Norman Conquest many new bishops and abbots were unjustly intruded, bringing harm to the communities they were forced upon. Thurstan, abbot of Glastonbury, is a particularly extreme example:

For while the reckless abbot tried to compel the monks of Glastonbury to relinquish the chant which the English had learned from the disciples of St Gregory the Pope, and to learn by heart a strange and formerly unknown chant from the Flemings and Normans, there arose a most bitter quarrel, which was soon followed by the disgrace of the holy order. For the monks were unwilling to accept the new custom, and the unyielding master persisted in obstinacy, and called to support him laymen armed with arrows. Unseen they surrounded the assembly of monks, and savagely pierced some of the monks, such that – as it is told – they were fatally wounded.⁶⁰³

Thurstan is criticised for his character and behaviour: he is described as ‘reckless [*proteruus*]

⁶⁰³ *Nam dum proteruus abbas cogeret Glestonios cantum quem Angli a discipulis beati Gregorii papæ didicerant relinquere et ignotum sibi nec auditum antea cantum a Flandrensibus seu Normannis ediscere; orta est lis acerrima quam mox secuta est sacri ordinis ignominia. Dum enim monachi noua nollent suscipere instituta, et contumacis magistri persisteret pertinacia; laici ero suo suffragati sunt ferentes spicula. A quibus ex insperato monachorum concio est circumdata; et pars eorum crudeliter est percussa, ac ut fertur letaliter sauciata. HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:270.*

to enforce a foreign chant on the community and in calling laymen to support him, precipitating violence.

Where Orderic's argument becomes more nuanced is in describing less obviously erroneous characters. One of these is Gregory VII. In Book Four, Orderic describes Gregory's life and succession to the papacy:

A monk from boyhood, he energetically studied the law of God; and because of his intense passion for justice, he endured many persecutions. He dispatched apostolic edicts everywhere across the world, and, sparing no one, he terrifyingly thundered forth divine precepts, and with prayers and threats he summoned all to the wedding feast of the King of Hosts.⁶⁰⁴

Gregory is depicted as a complex character. A well-educated oblate monk, he loved justice and endured persecutions on its behalf. His leadership as pope, however, is characterised as severe and forceful. Gregory dispatched edicts 'everywhere across the world [*Passim per orbem*]'. Both '*passim*' and '*per orbem*' would convey a sense of wide-reaching scale; the use of both lays emphasis on Gregory's far-reaching ambition. The verb choice is also significant: Gregory '*terribiliter intonuit*', or 'terrifyingly thundered forth'. Returning to Gregory VII in Book VII, Orderic comments on his background as an oblate and his support for monasticism, before adding a piece on his character: 'Inflamed with zeal for truth and justice, he convicted every sin. He spared no one, out of fear or favour, who was opposed to rightness.'⁶⁰⁵ Here emphasis is placed on Gregory's zeal or passion: he is 'inflamed with zeal [*Zelo...inflammatus*]'. The use of both *zelo* and *inflammatus* hints at a potential excess. A second aspect that Orderic emphasises is Gregory's merciless pursuit of all kinds of sin and that he 'spared no one

⁶⁰⁴ *Hic a puero monachus in lege Domini ualde studuit; multumque feruidus propter iusticiam multas persecutiones pertulit. Passim per orbem apostolica edicta destinavit, et nulli parcens cælestibus oraculis terribiliter intonuit; omnesque ad nuptias regis Sabaoth minis precibusque inuitavit. HE, Chibnall, IV, 2:298.*

⁶⁰⁵ *Zelo quippe ueritatis et iusticiæ inflammatus omne scelus arguebat; nullique contra rectitudinem pro timore seu fauore parcebat. HE, Chibnall, VII, 4:6.*

[*nulli...parcebat*]. What the text does is disentangle Gregory's intentions from his methods. His support for truth and rightness is presented as a praiseworthy quality in both passages. However, his attempts to enforce these values is where we find criticism of his methods.

A further means by which Orderic communicates this argument is through implicit comparison with material in Books I and II. An episode that Orderic discusses in detail is the conversion of St Paul. His conversion involves changing his name: 'Afterward, having changed his name from Saul, he was called Paul which means *wonderful*. He was turned in a marvellous way from a ravening wolf into a gentle lamb.'⁶⁰⁶ Paul's conversion is a religious one, but also involves adopting the virtue of gentleness: going from wolf to lamb. The events of the conversion support this reading:

In the second year after the ascension of the Lord, Saul seemed to emulate the excessively severe justice of his ancestral traditions; and so he raged dangerously against the Christians. While he walked to Damascus with letters from the high priest, which stated that he was to massacre all the Christians there, nearing the town, he was without warning enveloped in an otherworldly light, and suddenly he was chastised by the divine voice of Lord Jesus, and rightly fell to the ground, and then rose abandoning his former ferocity.⁶⁰⁷

The account presents a strong juxtaposition between Christian gentleness and non-Christian violence. Paul's former ferocity is emphasised, such as by referring to the

⁶⁰⁶ *Postea, mutato nomine, de Saulo Paulus, id est mirabilis, dictus est; miroque modo de rapaci lupi mitis agnus factus est. HE, Le Prevost, II, 1:237. On Orderic's use of wolf imagery, see: Albu, Normans in their Histories, 205-6.*

⁶⁰⁷ *Hic secundo post ascensionem Domini anno, dum plus justo paternarum traditionum æmulator existeret, ideoque in Christianos admodum sæviret, et cum principis sacerdotum epistolis in Damasum iret, ut omnes ibi Christicolos trucidaret, appropinquans urbi, subito insolita luce circumdatus, atque cælesti voce Domini Jesu ex insperato correptus, salubriter ad terram corruit, amissaque pristina feritate surrexit HE, Le Prevost, II, 1:238.*

content of the undelivered letter. Saul becomes Paul by changing his name, his faith, and his character.

The virtue of gentleness is further reinforced throughout the *Historia* in the saints' lives embedded in the text. In Book VI, Orderic embarks on a life of St Évrout, writing that he was '[s]triking in appearance and of sweet disposition, he was never unduly severe to anyone.'⁶⁰⁸ He was also compassionate and gentle in behaviour, including towards the monks subject to him.⁶⁰⁹ Read in the context of this Biblical and hagiographic material, references to Phineas and to excesses of zeal seem to foreground an argument about the mistakes of contemporary churchmen. This is a means of argument that would perhaps have been particularly effective for Orderic's audience, who would be well equipped to identify the passages Orderic drew attention to in Book I and II. Furthermore, an effect of the decision to place Books I and II at the start of the *Historia* is to retrospectively emphasise the errors of overzealousness, because a reader would confront descriptions of contemporary reformers having first read about Christ and the Apostles.

By examining how Orderic constructs arguments about this group of elite churchmen it is possible to shed light on episcopal and abbatial identities in relation to reform. His arguments about zeal and its place in the governance of the church is a subtle critique of those contemporaries who sought to forcibly enact change, in which Orderic charts a course between respect, even admiration, for zeal, righteousness, and virtue, and criticism of the forceful imposition of unreasonable religious standards. This argument suggests that Orderic imagined those responsible for enacting change had a shared set of aims and positioned themselves as a moral elite. This reading of the *Historia* cautions against focusing too heavily on political expediency, as it appears that

⁶⁰⁸ *Vultu siquidem spectabilis et affectu dulcis; nulli leuitate aliqua existebat grauis.* *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:264. For the whole life, see: 264-94.

⁶⁰⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:292-4.

Orderic imagined that those responsible for enacting change were motivated by deeply held religious imperatives.

The argument Orderic makes about overzealousness is further developed in the text through an implicit comparison with the opposing ideal of *discretio*. The emphasis on *discretio* reads as the counter point to Phinean zealotry. In the case of the foundation narrative of Cîteaux, one of the arguments Orderic puts into the mouths of the protesting monks is a reference to the parts of the Benedictine Rule that encouraged abbots to take account of bodily weakness, assigning work and duties as appropriate to an individual's abilities.⁶¹⁰ Thus, *discretio* is invoked as a critique efforts to impose a literalist reading of the Benedictine Rule on a monastic community.

It seems likely that the origin of Orderic's use of *discretio* is, in fact, the Benedictine Rule itself. In the Rule, *discretio* – adapting demands to suit individual circumstances and abilities – is a key attribute for good abbacy.⁶¹¹ At its most direct, the rule states that: 'Yet the abbot should always keep in mind this maxim from the Acts of the Apostles: "Each was provided for according to his need." Thus the abbot should consider the weaknesses of the needy, not the ill will of the envious.'⁶¹²

However, in the prologue to Book XI, Orderic extends the demand for *discretio* to bishops too:

No need to compel those who carry their burdens of their own free will,
who willingly bear and carry the corn sheaves into the storehouse.

⁶¹⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:318.

⁶¹¹ *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. and trans. Bruce L. Venarde (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 124-5, 139, 179. For an engaging discussion of the centrality of *discretio* to the Benedictine rule (and Gregory the Great's writing on *discretio* and its place in the Benedictine Rule): Martha G. Newman, 'Text and Authority in the Formation of the Cistercian Order: Re-assessing the Early Cistercian Reform,' in *Reforming the Church before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, eds. Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 192-5.

⁶¹² *Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. and trans. Venarde, 181.

It is unnecessary to urge forward a steed walking willingly,
but a restraint to rightly guide lest it falls.
A rider urges a stubborn horse with sharp spurs,
and with repeated strokes of a whip compels the horse to gallop.
The law of the church is similar among nourishing teachers,
for they urge forward the sluggish with warnings and curb the hasty.⁶¹³

The use of repeated metaphors is emphatic in its insistence on the importance of *discretio*. The reference to ‘nourishing teachers [*doctoribus almis*]’ indicates that Orderic is thinking about church elite of all kinds in this passage. That this extension of the argument for *discretio* to church leaders in general appears in Book XI means that it coexists in the text with passages conveying a general sense of crisis in the church. What this indicates is that at the same moment when Orderic extrapolated a narrative of change in monasticism to the whole church he also adopted an argument rooted in the Benedictine Rule, as a means of criticising those throughout the church who sought to impose stricter standards of religious life. This may account for the fact that Orderic not only celebrates discretion, but also argues against compulsion – ‘No need to compel those who carry their burdens of their own free will’ – and argues that *discretio* is key to the correct application of the ‘law of the church [*Æcclesiæ...lex*]’.

Just as Orderic emphasises the problems of excessive zeal in Books I and II, the evidence suggests that he uses a similar kind of analogical argument to express the essential value of *discretio* for church leaders. Christ in particular is depicted as embodying the virtue of *discretio*, especially in his use of parables:

⁶¹³ *Cogendia non sunt; qui sponte ferenda capessunt;/Qui segetum captant fasces et in horrea portant./Vltro satis gradiens sonipes non est stimulandus;/Sed ne labatur moderato iure regendus;/Durum sessor equum calcaribus urguet acutis;/Percutit et crebris ut cogat currere flagris./Æcclesiæ similis lex est doctoribus almis;/Nam lentos stimulant monitis celeresque refrenant.* HE, Chibnall, XI, 6:10.

Then the true Prophet offered to the gathered crowd other parables: on the good seed that was sown and on the tares, on the mustard seed, and on the leaven which was taken by a woman and hidden in three measures of flour, until all had risen. The Saviour, sitting in a boat, was like the wealthy master of a household satiating his guests with different foodstuffs, so that each one received different sustenance after the nature of his stomach. Thus he made use of different parables, so that he might satisfy different desires.⁶¹⁴

The list of parables given without further qualification indicates that Orderic's readers would already be familiar with them. Therefore, the passage does not emphasise the details of any particular parable, but rather recalls to mind Christ's role as a giver of parables. The passage also discusses how and why Christ gave different parables. Connotations of *discretio* are clearest in the reference to the provision of different foodstuffs according to different natures. The section is based upon an abbreviation of Matthew xiii 1-52, Mark iv 26-33, and Luke xiii 18-21. However, the piece on Christ as the master of the household comes from Rabanus Maurus's *Commentariorum in Matthæum libri octo*.⁶¹⁵ Recalling the fact that the life of Christ in Book I is an abbreviation, the inclusion of material from a commentary would be immediately obvious to Orderic's audience. Thus, the passage lays explicit emphasis on this interpretation of Christ's parable giving, drawing attention to *discretio* as a virtue of leadership.

This analysis has revealed how Orderic uses a binary language of zealotry and discretion to articulate a critique of contemporary efforts to bring about stricter

⁶¹⁴ *Deinde verus propheta confluentibus turbis alias propinat parabolas, de bono semine seminato et de zizaniis, de grano sinapis, et de fermento, quod acceptum mulier in farinæ satis tribus abscondit, donec fermentaretur totum. Salvator sedens in navi, quasi dives paterfamilias invitatos diversis reficit cibis, ut unusquisque secundum naturam stomachi alimenta susciperet varia. Diversis ergo utitur parabolis, ut satisfaciat voluntatibus variis.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:29.

⁶¹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, 1:141. See: Rabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in Matthæum libri octo*, in *Patrologia cursus completus series latina*, vol. 107, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1864), Liber Quartus, Cap. XIII.

standards of religious life. That Orderic explores the ideal of *discretio*, derived from the Benedictine Rule, changes how we see his text in relation to reform. In the first instance, it indicates the formative role of Orderic's monastic community for his arguments against reform efforts. The text could thus represent a monastic reaction to church reform. And, secondly, the application of an ideal explicitly associated with abbacy to a critique of reform efforts reveals that Orderic saw church reform as an issue of church leadership. Accordingly, from Orderic's point of view *discretio* as an ideal of abbacy could naturally be used as a lens through which to assess the actions of church leaders in general. Future research could shed more light on Orderic's language by asking whether other contemporary writers focus on leadership in similar terms, possibly indicating an alternative language of reform rooted in monastic practice.

The View from the Ground: Defending Traditional Benedictine Monastic Life

The way Orderic engages with contemporary reforms through criticisms of church leaders raises questions about the way Orderic conceived of reform as an elite endeavour. This section asks what arguments Orderic makes about church leadership and what their effect is on the functioning of the *Historia* as community history.

A question in the modern study of church reform concerns the relationship between different reform efforts. Scholars have examined how far church reform was a unified process and the relationship between monastic and clerical reforms.⁶¹⁶ The relationship between centres of reform and local efforts is likewise an area of interest.⁶¹⁷ Recently Maureen Miller has argued in favour of a more dynamic understanding of the relationship between centres – such as the papacy – and peripheries, moving away from

⁶¹⁶ See especially: H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Cluniacs and the Gregorian Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 157-71.

⁶¹⁷ For discussion of the direction of this relationship: Hamilton, *Church and People*, 60-118, esp. 62-3.

the idea of movement from one to the other.⁶¹⁸ Orderic's depictions of change in the church offers an alternative, supplementary way of addressing questions of the relationships between reform efforts.

In the way that he frames efforts to enact change, Orderic depicts reform as a shared endeavour taken up by a particular group of elite churchmen. In describing the Cluniac assembly in 1132, he notes that '[t]hen Ralph, bishop of Auxerre, and the abbots Alberic of Vézelay and Adelard of Melun, monks of the same house, joined the assembly, and strengthened the efforts of Abbot Peter by their presence and encouragement.'⁶¹⁹ The presence of these men is to be expected: Vézelay and Melun were Cluniac communities and Auxerre a neighbouring diocese. Orderic's interpretation of their interactions offers more insight, however. He notes that they 'strengthened the efforts of Abbot Peter by their presence and encouragement', indicating proactive support for the abbot's agenda. Introducing the passage in this way, before then moving to present the conflict between Peter the Venerable and his monks, could suggest a reading in which these efforts to enact change appear principally as a conflict between the attendant prelates and the Cluniac monks. This reading of the text supports a recent argument put forward by Julia Barrow, which framed church reform as an antagonistic process between elite and common churchmen. Barrow argued that renewed efforts in the eleventh century to enforce clerical celibacy were an attempt by elite churchmen to impose standards of behaviour they had long been accustomed to on ordinary priests (and sometimes those in lower orders too).⁶²⁰

Focusing on Orderic's arguments about church leadership, we can see how he articulates criticisms of contemporary reformers. A recurrent theme in the text is the absence of miracle working. The preface to Book V states that: 'However, because now

⁶¹⁸ Miller, 'Crisis in Investiture Crisis Narrative,' 1570-80.

⁶¹⁹ *Tunc Radulfus Autisiodorensis episcopus, et abbates Albericus Vizeliensis ac Adelardus Melundensis eiusdem cenobii monachi cetum auxerunt, et conatus Petri abbatis presentia et exhortatione sua confirmauerunt.* *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁶²⁰ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 115-57.

is the time when the love of many grows cold and evil spreads, miracles - the proofs of holiness [*sanctitatis indicia*] – cease and crimes and mournful quarrels multiply across the world.⁶²¹ To open Book VI, Orderic returns to the same theme:

In truth, now writers ought not sweat over recording the miracles and wonders of the saints, for on earth they are now very scarce...However, their [the early fathers] successors, who hold the highest position of rule and are called master and reside in the seat of Moses, are rich in worldly pomp and wealth, which many of them covet too much; but they do not shine in the same way with the merits of holiness and the power of virtues and miracles.⁶²²

In Book VIII Orderic notes that modern churchmen cannot work miracles and that miracles ‘proclaim holiness [*pollerent sanctitatem*]’.⁶²³ The prologue to Book XI again asserts that miracles are no longer being worked.⁶²⁴ The repetition of this point has the effect of foregrounding the absence of miracle working as a condition of the modern world and part of the backdrop against which much of the text is read. Furthermore, Orderic explains the significance of the absence of miracles by explaining that they act as proofs of holiness. Consequently, the lack of miracle working is implicitly associated with a decline in the moral integrity and piety of contemporary prelates.

The depiction of historical churchmen as prolific miracle workers further emphasises the gulf between the past and the present. Miracles form a key part of

⁶²¹ *Verum quia nunc est illa tempestas, qua multorum refrigescit karitas, et abundat iniquitas; sanctitatis indicia cessant miracula, et multiplicantur facinora; ac luctuosa in mundo querimonia.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8.

⁶²² *De miraculis uero prodigiisque sanctorum, quia nimia nunc in terris est penuria eorum; modo scriptoribus in referendo non est insudandum...Successores autem eorum qui potestatis apicem optinent, et rabi uocitantur atque super kathedram Moisi resident; secularibus pompis et diuitiis quibus plerique nimium inhiant multipliciter pollent, sed merito sanctitatis potentiaque uirtutum et prodigiorum non æque renitent.* *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:214.

⁶²³ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, 4:192.

⁶²⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, VIII, XI, 6:8.

Orderic's abbreviation of the life of Christ. Orderic explains the task he was undertaking in Book I:

Now I wish to consider the period of the miracles of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which are written in the four books of the Evangelists, and to truthfully and briefly relate an account of them, so that having read about them here one might be able to recall them to mind.⁶²⁵

Concluding the abbreviation he again refers to his task as a record of Christ's miracles: 'I have collected, briefly and in sequence, each one of the Saviour's miracles from the accounts of the Evangelists'.⁶²⁶ That the life was conceived of as a sequence of Christ's miracles is also hinted at in the text where Orderic numbers the first and second miracles performed.⁶²⁷ From Christ forward, miracle working forms a key part of the lives of holy men included in the *Historia*. St John, we are told, was Christ's favourite apostle, a fact attested by the sheer number of miracles he worked.⁶²⁸ The numerousness of John's miracles is further lent importance by the fact that, uniquely among the accounts of the apostles in Book II, Orderic ends it with a personal prayer to the saint.⁶²⁹ The contemporary miracle-working of long dead saints makes the comparison even more acute, such as when Orderic describes the miracles still being performed at the shrine of St Taurin at Fécamp.⁶³⁰

The criticism of the absence of miracles and comparison to historical miracle-workers can be read as the articulation of an argument against the contemporary ecclesiastical elite. Furthermore, it is also closely associated with efforts to promote

⁶²⁵ *Amodo continuationem miraculorum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, quæ in quatuor Evangeliorum libris scripta sunt, libet intueri, et veraciter compendioseque paginis annotare; ut facilius ibidem perspecta possim ad mentem revocare.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:11.

⁶²⁶ *et singula Salvatoris miracula ex evangelicis codicibus seriatim breviterque congesi.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:94.

⁶²⁷ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:14, 16.

⁶²⁸ *HE*, Le Prevost, II, 1:298-9.

⁶²⁹ *HE*, Le Prevost, II, 1:299.

⁶³⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:38-42, 44.

change; for example in describing the 1132 Cluniac assembly, Orderic writes that the monks refer to their former abbots whose holiness had been proven through by the miracles they performed.⁶³¹ That Orderic here uses historical church leaders to articulate a criticism of Peter the Venerable indicates that he conceived of contemporary reform efforts as principally an issue of ecclesiastical leadership. While this does not mean that Orderic was unaware of conflict between abbots and bishops or monastic and clerical reforms, Orderic's construction of argument indicates which kinds of conflict he saw as particularly significant for his historical work and for his audience to understand. Ott and Jones have argued against a model that pits monks and the papacy as advocates of reform against resistant bishops, instead arguing that bishops and abbots had shared aims.⁶³² This reading of the *Historia* suggests that it might also be worthwhile to consider how bishops and abbots were seen to work together, or even how they were perceived as a single, elite group in their pursuit of reforming agendas.

The argument over a lack of miracles implicitly establishes a comparison between past and present church leaders. This kind of comparison is one Orderic further develops, using history writing as a tool to put contemporary changes and past models in dialogue with one another. The only instance I have found in which Orderic explicitly compares elite churchmen of the past with those of the present can be found in a context of monastic reform: in the passage on new monastic orders. Orderic concludes the passage, writing:

Reflecting upon their devotion and rigor [members of the new monastic orders], I have decided not to greatly reproach them; however, I do not rank them above the early fathers, of proven worth. I think that they are ignorant of

⁶³¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:426.

⁶³² Ott and Jones, 'Introduction,' 16-7.

the holy father Columbanus, born in Ireland, who was a contemporary of St Benedict.⁶³³

This abrupt introduction of Columbanus requires some explanation. In what seems a substantial digression, Orderic goes on to describe the life of Columbanus, his journey to Gaul, and foundation of two monasteries at Luxeuil and Bobbio.⁶³⁴ ‘Of astonishing holiness, he laboured among the elect, shone with signs and glorious wonders among the men of earth, and, instructed by the Holy Spirit, he presented a monastic rule, which he first gave to the Gauls.’⁶³⁵ Apparently many trained under Columbanus, some becoming abbots and bishops ‘whose holiness was revealed by apparent miracles from heaven’.⁶³⁶ Coming into contact with St Maur, Columbanus’s disciples accepted the Benedictine Rule, but without rejecting any of the precepts of their first master.⁶³⁷

How does this substantial life of Columbanus relate to new monastic orders? That there is a relationship is explicit, as Orderic explains that he is doubtful than many new monks know Columbanus; therefore, reading the life is supposed to qualify our understanding of the new monks, as well as their motives and actions. One way to make sense of this passage is to examine Orderic’s reference to Columbanus and Benedict as ‘*contemporaneus*’. Chibnall has noted that this is a surprising mistake, as the Annals of Saint-Évroul record that Benedict died in 509 and Columbanus in 615.⁶³⁸ Orderic himself inserted entries into the Annals for the years 1087 to 1140, suggesting that he had a thorough knowledge of them.⁶³⁹ However, the idea that this is a mistake hinges on

⁶³³ *Studium et rigorem eorum considerans illos magnopere non uitupero, at tamen maioribus et probatis patribus non antepono. Arbitror ignorant quod beatus pater Columbanus de Hibernia ortus sancto Benedicto contemporaneus fuerit. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:332-4.*

⁶³⁴ *HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:334.*

⁶³⁵ *Hic admirandae sanctitatis pater inter precipuos laboravit, signis et prodigiis gloriose inter terrigenas effulsit, et Spiritu Sancto edoctus monachilem regulam edidit, primumsque Gallis tradidit. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:334.*

⁶³⁶ *quorum sanctitas evidentibus miraculis caelitus ostensa est. HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:334.*

⁶³⁷ *HE, Chibnall, VIII, 4:334.*

⁶³⁸ *HE, Chibnall, 4:334, n. 1.*

⁶³⁹ See *HE, Chibnall, 1:201, Appendix 1.*

the reading of the term *contemporaneus* as contemporaries in a strictly chronological sense. Yet, the parallels drawn between Columbanus and Benedict are also thematic: Columbanus is a miracle worker, a saint of imitable life, and the creator of a monastic rule. Thus the use of the term *contemporaneus* could primarily emphasise the similarities between two saints. The fact that no dates are mentioned in association with Columbanus or Benedict supports this reading, because their similarities in life are far clearer than the chronological gap between them. Read in this way, the example of Columbanus offers an alternative, but equally praiseworthy, form of monastic life. Orderic's description of Columbanus's disciples, who met St Maur and combined their rule with the Benedictine without compromise or contradiction, shows that there is yet another form of monastic living, following the imitable lives of both Benedict and Columbanus. The effect of this is to challenge the Cistercian argument for a rigid adherence to the Benedictine Rule.

This argument is one that is made through a comparison of past churchmen (Columbanus) with present (the founders of the new monastic orders). Through this comparison Orderic deploys custom and proven examples as a defence against the challenges levelled against traditional Benedictine communities. Quite apart from its content, the form of this argument is thus directly tied to a defence of Benedictine life. In criticising elite churchmen, Orderic appears to be appear articulating a defence of his community's way of life and sense of being. Important evidence for this is the way in which Orderic describes his own relationship with the community of Saint-Évroul. He communicates utter confidence in his community's religious credentials.⁶⁴⁰ Concluding his work towards the end of his life, Orderic recalls that arriving into Normandy a frightened child 'among strangers I found only kindness and friendship'.⁶⁴¹ He continues: 'By your [God's] favour, I have dwelt in that monastery [Saint-Évroul] for fifty-six years, and I have been loved and esteemed by all of my brothers and

⁶⁴⁰ On Orderic's confidence in his community, see: Delisle, 'Notice,' xxxiv-xxxv; Hicks, 'Monastic Authority, Landscape, and Place,' 102-20.

⁶⁴¹ *inter exteros omnem mansuetudinem et familiaritatem. HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:554.*

companions far more than I deserve.’⁶⁴² In his life of St Évroul Orderic also expresses a personal devotion to his community’s patron saint and celebrates the history of his community.⁶⁴³ In writing from this position of confidence and esteem, Orderic does not appear to be seeking to reform his community, but rather to conceptualise change in way that supported the way of life of his Benedictine audience.

Conclusions

The way Orderic helps his community to accommodate the challenges posed by contemporary reforms has potential implications for how we think about ideology in relation to reform. In order to better understand the impact of historical ideas of reform, there has been a tendency in recent scholarship to juxtapose practicalities on the ground with the rhetoric of reformers.⁶⁴⁴ On the one hand this has involved setting aside reformist rhetoric in favour of a more grounded social history of the church. Barrow’s monograph on the clergy in this period is an example of this kind of approach.⁶⁴⁵ Another, similar approach has been to actively compare reformist rhetoric to reality, as Sarah Hamilton has done, testing how far reformers were successful in their stated aspirations.⁶⁴⁶ These approaches involve making use of a wide range of material in order to build up a picture of what clerical lives actually looked like. Barrow, for example, used charters, administrative documents, narrative sources (political histories, episcopal lives, and some autobiographical works), miracle collections, and, to a lesser extent, liturgical sources.⁶⁴⁷ The breadth of material discussed has given insight into the lives of ordinary members of the clergy.⁶⁴⁸ However, reading this material as evidence of the

⁶⁴² *In prefato cenobio lvi annis te fauente conuersatus sum, et a cunctis fratribus et contubernalibus multo plus quam merui amatus et honoratus sum.* *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:554.

⁶⁴³ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:264-94.

⁶⁴⁴ Thomas, *Secular Clergy*, 24-36.

⁶⁴⁵ As was noted by Conrad Leyser: ‘Sound and Fury,’ 487-91.

⁶⁴⁶ Hamilton, *Church and People*, 9; 60-118.

⁶⁴⁷ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 12-21.

⁶⁴⁸ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 1-2.

realities of clerical lives draws attention away from how a text expresses those realities. As a result, ordinary priests tend to be treated as passive objects: those to whom reform was done. This offers limited insight into contemporary mentalities and neglects the potential for those on the ground to also operate in an ideological sphere. This consideration of *Historia* and its relationship to the community of Saint-Évroul points to the potential for thinking about responses to church reform at the level of an individual community. It indicates a potential problem in juxtaposing reformist rhetoric and realities on the ground, as this dichotomy implies ideology is the sole province of reformers. The way the *Historia* expresses a particular understanding of contemporary change in dialogue with a monastic audience suggests that even texts that focus on experiences of reform, like Orderic's, can offer insight into different reforming ideologies.

Conclusion

This chapter has uncovered a new dialogue about reform that took place within a Norman monastic community in the earlier part of the twelfth century. The existence of this conversation points to the impact of church reform at a local level; it indicates that the rhetoric of reformers had real consequences for the lives of ordinary monks. This raises questions about the ways in which ideas of locality and reform are explored. Orderic's arguments directed at the churchmen who enacted change points to the need for a more sophisticated conception of resistance. As discussed, it has been assumed that Orderic's view of ecclesiastical affairs was typical of the Norman church. When it comes to Normandy itself, the region has been characterised as a key place of resistance to reform, especially to efforts to impose celibacy on the higher clergy.⁶⁴⁹ That Orderic – a writer who wrote about a sweeping change across Christendom – comes from

⁶⁴⁹ Hamilton, *Church and People*, 100; Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 191. See Chapter 2.

Normandy, the locality most resistant to centripetal forces, indicates that the relationship between locality and text is more complex than these assumptions imply. Although Orderic looked beyond the duchy, his text is firmly rooted in his Norman context. This is clear from the closeness with which Orderic speaks to his community and the prevalence of material on the Norman church.⁶⁵⁰ Understanding Normandy in relation to other regions as an area of resistance does not necessarily shed much light on how those within the duchy saw change in their contemporary church. Indeed, I have shown that the relationship between Orderic's Norman context and his writing is more dynamic than these assumptions would lead us to believe. He is both rooted in Normandy and looks beyond it; he tells a broad narrative of change for a distinctively Norman audience.

Alison Beach has recently put forward the argument that monastic reforms were causes of collective cultural trauma.⁶⁵¹ Looking at the Peterhausen Chronicle, a mid-twelfth-century monastic chronicle produced at the Benedictine house of Peterhausen in the diocese of Constance, Beach sought to question the way that monastic historiography is perceived in relation to reform. Beach contends that acts of reform could have an enduring impact on a community's sense of identity, cultic practices, and organisation of personnel, lasting potentially for decades.⁶⁵² Beach's argument offers new insight into processes of monastic reform and provides a valuable guide for reading house chronicles as historiographic exercises that seek to make sense of change over time. My reading of Orderic's arguments shares some of the emphases of Beach's work. Orderic does seem to have perceived a moment of profound cultural shock with reform undermining traditional modes of leadership and forms of religious and familial life. Where Orderic differs, however, is in his focus on the church at large. Unlike the author of the Peterhausen Chronicle, Orderic did not belong to community that underwent a period of reform after its c. 1050 (re)foundation. What this indicates is that a sense of trauma

⁶⁵⁰ For example, the number of Norman church councils: see Chapter 1.

⁶⁵¹ Alison Beach, *The Trauma of Monastic Reform: Community and Conflict in Twelfth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: University Press, 2017). On the sociological definition of collective cultural trauma, see 20-21.

⁶⁵² Beach, *Trauma of Reform*, 19-38

could be applied to an understanding of change that went beyond the immediately local. Orderic depicts the entire western church as undergoing a period of dramatic upheaval and deep uncertainty.

The way that Orderic uses history writing as a communal space to think about change and reform indicates the potential value of non-didactic sources. By focusing on change, on leadership, and on dialogue within community, this chapter has navigated the conceptual challenge presented by the study of reform in a non-didactic narrative history. Consequently, this study allows us to use the engagement with reform in the *Historia* to rethink current approaches to the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century church reforms. One of the most significant insights is the value of examining outside perspectives. That Orderic was not speaking to power and was not seeking to persuade means that his text can be read to shed light on perceptions of change amongst more ordinary members of the church. Julia Barrow has argued that scholars have tended to see resistance against reform only in the most eloquent sources, neglecting evidence of local priests' localised efforts to thwart or ignore rulings on clerical marriage.⁶⁵³ I would add to this observation that it is also worth considering those texts that are non-polemic as evidence of the mental worlds of those affected by, rather than effecting, reforms in this period. This reading of the *Historia* indicates the potential value of historical works, not as records of change or evidence of realities, but as witnesses that partake in the creation of narratives of change and continuity through history writing. In the *Historia* we have seen how Orderic constructed arguments about contemporary reform with historiographic devices, such as the juxtaposition of past and present. The very complexity and scale of the *Historia* both makes it difficult to use and affords it an important place as evidence of a more meditative, uncertain perspective on change in the church.

⁶⁵³ Barrow, *Clergy in the Medieval World*, 115.

Orderic's powerful articulation of a reform ideology critical of the actions of church leaders also challenges how we read and envisage the *Historia* as a work of history writing. It raises questions about the centrality of reform to the *Historia* and the relationship between ideas of reform and history writing, as well as what it meant to write history in an age of reform. Building on the second chapter, this discussion has further demonstrated how Orderic's ideas developed over time throughout the course of writing, with the expression of narratives of change first in a monastic context and later extended to a vision of crisis in the church. This chapter has also pointed towards a dynamic relationship between Orderic's writing and his community, involving community interests in the arguments of the work. In the final chapter I address these questions directly, examining Orderic as a writer of history.

Chapter Four. Writing-in-Time

The arguments put forward in the first three chapters of this thesis raise new questions about Orderic's sense of history writing and its relationship to church reform. Through an assessment of church councils, marriage, and reform ideology in the *Historia*, this study has uncovered a sustained engagement with contemporary church reforms in the text. I have shown how Orderic used narrative history as vehicle to make arguments about contemporary changes, such as criticising the overzealousness of prelates or drawing expressions of conciliar law into arguments about the dangers of illicit political authority. I have also drawn out how Orderic's arguments changed over the course of his writing career. His interest in marriage developed through consideration of community history, priests' sons as community members, a shared, empathetic interpretation of the experiences of married priests and noblewomen, and, finally, the use of marginal couples and biblical history to assert the place of idealised marital relationships within a scheme of Christian order. In the third chapter, I similarly uncovered the development of Orderic's ideas about church reform which begin with a focus on monasticism and are only later applied to change in the church generally. The significance of church reform to the text – in terms of developing form over time as well as substance – poses the question of how far the context of church reform was significant to the design and development of the text's structure and argumentation. The place of Orderic's community within passages on reform in the text, especially with respect to clerical marriage and church leadership, further indicates that Orderic's ideas of history writing were shaped over time through dialogue with his audience. In this chapter, I will investigate what Orderic's use of narrative history as a means to argue about reform reveals about his understanding of the persuasive and rhetorical functions of history writing.

Until recently, however, the prevailing view among modern scholars has been that Orderic lacked a sophisticated grasp of history writing at a theoretical level.⁶⁵⁴ Orderic has been seen as a less talented contemporary of William of Malmesbury and a compiler who often lost control of his subject.⁶⁵⁵ The lack of attention paid to Orderic's own reflection on history writing is something recent research has responded to.⁶⁵⁶ There is a growing interest in examining Orderic's history writing, addressing what he thought history was for, who he wrote for, and why he wrote the narrative that he did. Recent studies of Orderic's history writing have focused on different aspects and contexts, for example Giles Gasper examined it from a historical-theological perspective and Benjamin Pohl through the lens of cultural memory, giving us a richer, multi-sided understanding of what Orderic thought history was for and how it should be written.⁶⁵⁷ One of the objectives of this chapter is to explore the significance of Orderic's reform context and writing on church reform, by examining the different ideas of history writing Orderic communicated in the text, and by considering the relationship between them. My aim is to reimagine Orderic's understandings of history writing and his historical project in light of the critical significance of contemporary church reforms to his life, community, and text.

The problem of unpacking the full range of Orderic's ideas of history writing lies principally in the methodological challenges posed by the *Historia*. Due to its scale and non-linear chronology of writing, the *Historia* contains within it many different perspectives and arguments. As a result, the text is highly resistant to attempts to impose coherence upon it. This presents a challenge with consequences for how we can meaningfully analyse the text in isolation, or in synthesis with other works. These

⁶⁵⁴ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 1; Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 1; Roach and Rozier, 'Introduction,' 2-3.

⁶⁵⁵ Smalley, *Historians of the Middle Ages*, 86; Delisle, 'Notice,' xlv; Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 24-5; Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 39.

⁶⁵⁶ Roach and Rozier, 'Introduction,' 3-4.

⁶⁵⁷ Gasper, 'Theology of Reckoning,' 247-59; Benjamin Pohl, 'One single letter remained in excess of all his sins...': Orderic Vitalis and Cultural Memory,' in *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier et al, 333-51.

challenges are becoming more apparent in recent scholarship too, where there is a growing debate over fundamental questions about the nature of the text.⁶⁵⁸ As discussed above, attention has focused on the relationship between Books I and II and the remaining eleven books. Until recently these first two books have attracted only limited attention.⁶⁵⁹ Despite a greater interest in the books, there is no consensus on their place within the *Historia* as a whole. Leah Shopkow sees the addition of Books I and II as a means of situating the principally Norman history of the other eleven books alongside the histories of other Christian peoples.⁶⁶⁰ John O. Ward, on the other hand, argues that the addition of the first two books did not make the work into a universal chronicle and was not meant to.⁶⁶¹ Ward suggests instead that to understand these books we need to better understand the *Historia*'s status as ecclesiastical history in imitation of Eusebius.⁶⁶² Giles Gasper offers another alternative, suggesting that Books I and II were an attempt to broaden the horizons of the text beyond a history of monasticism alone, connecting 'the individual and the temporal with the cosmic and eternal'.⁶⁶³ The role or roles played by these books and their place within the *Historia* as a whole are questions that remain pressing.

In seeking to address some of these fundamental challenges to our understanding of the text, the first part of the chapter puts forward a new understanding of the *Historia* as the product of a multi-stage process of writing over time. By addressing the question of how the text developed and its relationship to Orderic's career and life, I will put forward a model involving six key stages of development.⁶⁶⁴ The identification of these six stages is based upon an assessment of the text's chronology plotted against the

⁶⁵⁸ See the Introduction, Section II.

⁶⁵⁹ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 34; Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages*, 86-8; Delisle, 'Notice,' xlv; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, 152.

⁶⁶⁰ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 104.

⁶⁶¹ Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 16-7.

⁶⁶² Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 18.

⁶⁶³ Gasper, 'Theology of Reckoning,' 258.

⁶⁶⁴ This model is presented in Appendix 3.

careers of Orderic's abbots. It is further informed by the previous chapters which drew attention to the evidence of particular books as moments of development, notably Books V, VIII, and, together, I-II and XI-XIII.⁶⁶⁵ Developing this model presents a new understanding of the *Historia* as a whole text. It also allows us to consider ideas of history writing expressed in the text comparatively, as part of a developmental narrative. This kind of comparative approach has been informed by Gabrielle Spiegel's theory of the 'social logic of the text'.⁶⁶⁶ Spiegel argues that the specific socio-political context within which a text was written is internalised within a text at a 'moments of inscription'.⁶⁶⁷ The *Historia* contains within it multiple moments of inscription where the text develops or is reimagined and where Orderic revisits questions of what it means to write history. Because Orderic wrote over a period of time, the historical world he internalised within each book changed. Furthermore, the writing and re-reading of the earlier books of the *Historia* form part of the context within which the later books were written: at any given moment Orderic can be seen as both writer and reader. By examining metanarrative passages as discrete moments of inscription, I will reflect upon this complex, multi-stage process of writing and its connection to the changing social context of the community at Saint-Évroul.

By situating different moments where Orderic reconsiders history writing in the text within a developmental narrative, this chapter also attempts to come to terms with the implications of writing over time. It will examine different ideas of history writing in the text as part of a process of learning through the practice of writing history. By writing a single work that contains within it multiple reflections on purpose, audience, and effect, Orderic embodied this process of learning within the fabric of the text. This reading takes something from the work of Marvin Trachtenberg.⁶⁶⁸ The theory he put

⁶⁶⁵ See Chapters Two and Three.

⁶⁶⁶ See in particular: Spiegel, 'Social Logic of the Text,' 3-28; 'Middle Ground,' 44-56.

⁶⁶⁷ Spiegel, 'Social Logic of the Text,' 25-6.

⁶⁶⁸ Marvin Trachtenberg, *Building-in-Time: From Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2010).

forward – Building-in-Time – is based on the examination of thirteenth- to fifteenth-century Italian architecture and argues that medieval builders developed tools to make use of the long periods of time necessary for monumental construction.⁶⁶⁹ These tools were not *ad hoc* efforts but were ‘a virtual temporal paradigm and set of operational principles, uncodified but unmistakably present in silent patterns of practice.’⁶⁷⁰ As part of this praxis, premodern architects responded to a lack of funding, materials, lands, and even necessary technology by allowing solutions to arise over time.⁶⁷¹ As an interpolator of the *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, Orderic had first-hand experience of working on a multi-generational project that changed in scope over time and between authors.⁶⁷² His *Historia* was also a long-term project, making use of a durable medium, that was effected by changing circumstances (especially personnel at Saint-Évroul). However, rather than a process of building-in-time, this chapter will consider the *Historia* as a process of writing-in-time. Unlike church building, writing history entailed a two-fold relationship with time: that of the text and that of the history the text tells. Furthermore, writing entails the capacity for metanarrative, a potential Orderic used to the full in his frequent reflections on ideas of history writing. Taking account of these discursive, self-reflective elements, the concept of writing-in-time allows us to consider metanarrative passages as theoretical considerations arising from the practice of history writing. By examining ideas of history writing as part of a process of writing-in-time this chapter aims not only to interrogate ideas as expressed at different moments in the text, but also to provide a theoretical framework to understand the relationship between them.

A further aspect of the approach adopted in this chapter is to consider the metanarrative material in the *Historia* as rhetorical and conventional, as well as meaningful and socially grounded. These passages are plentiful in the text, although the

⁶⁶⁹ For the most practical discussion of how this works, see: Trachtenberg, *Building-in-Time*, 145-232.

⁶⁷⁰ Trachtenberg, *Building-in-Time*, xx-xxi.

⁶⁷¹ Trachtenberg, *Building-in-Time*, 16-7; 111.

⁶⁷² *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts. See especially the editor’s introduction and William of Jumièges’ prologue: xix-cxxxiii; 4-8.

prologue to Book VII has been lost and the epilogue to VIII either never existed or has been lost too.⁶⁷³ Much of the modern scholarship on the *Historia* cites metanarrative passages of the text uncritically, as if self-evident explanations of Orderic's aims.⁶⁷⁴ Emily Albu has even argued that the prefatory material in the *Historia* offers a window into Orderic's mind, claiming that 'Orderic injected his own feelings into the *Historia*, overtly in the prefaces and conclusions of books'.⁶⁷⁵ There is also a trend, however, towards a more subtle analysis of expressions of purpose. Giles Gasper analysed the arguments made in the epilogue to Book XIII by comparing Orderic's use of Biblical language to the Benedictine Rule and Bede's history.⁶⁷⁶ The methodology used in this chapter is designed to facilitate comparative analysis across the text. By looking at ideas of history in the text as discrete moments within a developmental narrative, this chapter shifts the object of study away from the author's underlying ideas towards arguments about history writing as expressed at different moments. A consequence of this is to foreground the rhetorical and argumentative elements of these passages.

There is a question over whether prefaces can give any insight into the writer's own ideas of history or conception of their work, as medieval history writers used conventions dating back to Antiquity.⁶⁷⁷ This chapter, however, begins from the premise that Orderic's metanarrative writing can give insight into his ideas of history writing. By tying metanarrative argument to the development of the text over time, the chapter considers how these rhetorical passages have structural implications, involving the reimagination and repositioning of the text. Furthermore, Orderic's use of conventions

⁶⁷³ *HE*, Chibnall, 4:xiii-xviii.

⁶⁷⁴ For example, Shopkow, *History and Community*, 205-6, 211; Ward, 'Ordericus Vitalis as Historian,' 14-5.

⁶⁷⁵ Albu, 'Worldly Woe,' 240. Albu elsewhere emphasises the personal nature of Orderic work: *Normans in their Histories*, 180-213.

⁶⁷⁶ Gasper, 'Theology of Reckoning,' 253-7.

⁶⁷⁷ Antonia Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-century England,' in *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), 55-58; Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1964), 10, 115. On this point, see: Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 214 and 221.

always reflects a choice and thus must be seen as a form of argument. Each decision to include a particular convention must also be seen in light of what has come before: they can work together to build a relational argument. This chapter will examine these arguments as acts of persuasion, associating them with Orderic's audience – the monks of Saint-Évroul - and the social context in which he worked. It will also consider how changes in this context could contribute to the development of ideas of history writing in the text as part of a dynamic and creative dialogue.

I. Writing the *Historia ecclesiastica*

In this section, I will discuss the *Historia's* chronology and the challenges it poses for an assessment of Orderic's sense of history writing. The section lays out the new chronological model I have developed for reading the *Historia*. It then explores the challenges this raises in terms of the text's incoherence, before then seeking to navigate this challenge through a critical reading of Orderic's practice as an interpolater of the *Gesta Normannorum ducum*. My aim is to posit a way of managing the multiple perspectives on history writing in the text, in order to facilitate an assessment in the following sections of what these perspectives are and how they relate to church reform. Sections II-IV discuss Orderic's ideas of history writing as expressed at different moments of inscription. I will lay out what each of these sections covers at the end of Section I, having first presented my chronological model.

The Chronology of the *Historia*

The writing of the *Historia ecclesiastica* can be seen as a multi-stage process of writing and reimagination. Based upon the well-established chronology of the *Historia* this section lays what I argue are the key moments in the development of the text. These moments number six in total and correlate with the writing of different books or groups

of books. Each represents a moment of re-inscription where Orderic reflected upon his purpose and aims, communicating them anew. For each moment I also pay attention to Orderic's life, including factors like his age and position within the community of Saint-Évroul. The result is a multi-stage chronology of the *Historia*, its writing, and its author.

To develop this chronology, I have made use of the dating of the books of the *Historia*, established by Marjorie Chibnall.⁶⁷⁸ Chibnall's dating is based on the content of the *Historia* and is still accepted in recent scholarship.⁶⁷⁹ However, there have been no sustained analyses of the implications of this chronology for our reading of Orderic's arguments and ideas of history writing. I have also plotted the evidence of chronology against the careers of Orderic's abbots. Although Chibnall recognised that the vast majority of the *Historia* was written under Warin Les Essarts (1123- 25th June, 1137), how the work evolved during the abbacy of Warin, as well as the specific effects of Warin's election and death, are questions that have not been addressed.⁶⁸⁰ Although Orderic's relationships with his abbots had a shared institutional context including demands of obedience, the way he represents these relationships indicates a significant shift with ramifications for the writing of the *Historia*. Combining this analysis of abbots with the chronology of the text provides a compelling picture of the development of the text over time.

The commencement of the *Historia* in *c.* 1114 marks the first moment in the text's development.⁶⁸¹ As Orderic later explains the work was begun at the command of Abbot Roger Le Sap (1091-1123, *d.* 1126), who ruled the community for most of Orderic's formative years (Orderic had joined the community in 1085 as a ten-year-old boy).⁶⁸² Book III is centred on the affairs of Saint-Évroul, describing the community's

⁶⁷⁸ Below I discuss the dating of certain books in more detail with reference to the relevant sections in Chibnall's editions. See also: Appendix 1.

⁶⁷⁹ The editors of the recent collection of essays *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations* provided a chronology of the composition of the text that substantially followed Chibnall's: xiv.

⁶⁸⁰ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 32.

⁶⁸¹ Chibnall 'General Introduction,' 32; *HE*, Chibnall, 2:xv.

⁶⁸² Orderic refers to Abbot Roger's command: *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

refoundation in 1050 and its early history.⁶⁸³ At this stage Orderic worked slowly. Book III was likely completed in late 1123 or early 1124 as Orderic began Book IV in 1124 and there appears to have been no gap in his writing.⁶⁸⁴

The second phase begins in 1123 or 1124. This period saw the conclusion of Book III and commencement of Book IV. Thereafter the pace of writing picked up markedly: according to Chibnall's dating Orderic completed Book IV in a maximum of five years (likely less) and began Book V by 1127 which was in turn complete by 1130.⁶⁸⁵ The scope of the work also changed, as Orderic announced his intention at the end of Book III to pursue a history of King William I and the fates that befell the Normans and English.⁶⁸⁶ Chibnall posited that the resignation of Abbot Roger and promotion of Warin to that office was a significant factor in this increase in pace.⁶⁸⁷ I suggest that the promotion of Warin of Les Essarts to the abbacy is an even more significant factor in the development of the *Historia* and Orderic's ideas of history writing than has been realised. Although Orderic wrote that both Roger and Warin had commanded him to write the *Historia*, representations of the two men differ substantially.⁶⁸⁸ In the prologue to Book V – written soon after Roger's death in 1126 – Orderic dedicates the work to Warin.⁶⁸⁹ In it, Orderic seeks out his abbot's support, explaining that he will press on boldly with his endeavour, 'trusting without doubt that your skill will correct that which is lacking because of my ignorance.'⁶⁹⁰ The dedication could certainly be conventional and alone offers limited evidence of Orderic's relationship with Warin.

⁶⁸³ For this history: *HE*, Chibnall, V, 2:12-54.

⁶⁸⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, 2:xv.

⁶⁸⁵ For the dating of these books, see: *HE*, Chibnall, 2:xv-xvi; 3:xiv-xv.

⁶⁸⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:188.

⁶⁸⁷ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 32-3.

⁶⁸⁸ *Primo itaque preceptis uenerandi Rogerii abbatis et postea uestris optauit parere; opusculum incipiens de statu Vticensis ecclesiae.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

⁶⁸⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

⁶⁹⁰ *benigniter fisus quod uestra corriget sollercia, quicquid mea deliquerit inscitia.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8.

Other evidence in the *Historia*, however, suggests that the two men were close. They were contemporaries. Based on evidence from the text, it is possible to place Warin's birth in the period 1070-1074.⁶⁹¹ Orderic – born 1075 – was between one and five years his junior.⁶⁹² Orderic also writes at length about Warin in two places. In Book VI he discusses Warin's career and character and in Book XIII he describes his death in its proper chronological place, using the opportunity to write about his career again.⁶⁹³ Both of these passages actually date from around the same time. Additions were made to Book VI for many years after the bulk of the book was complete: the passage on Warin is one such addition and was written after Warin's death. This is clear from the consistent use of the past tense in the passage. This shows that soon after Warin's death in 1137, Orderic chose to describe the abbot's passing and to add another section describing his personality in the space towards the end of another book.

The description of Warin's death in Book XIII points to a particularly close friendship between Orderic and his abbot. He depicts the community as whole 'in tearful morning for their father'.⁶⁹⁴ The epitaph composed for Warin was also written by Orderic:

The monks of Saint-Évroul, ever faithful to their teachers and leaders, placed a white stone upon the tomb of the honoured Abbot Warin, on which was engraved this epitaph which I composed out of deep affection [*amorem dilecti*] for my friend and later father.⁶⁹⁵

The affection Orderic expresses for his friend is not simply conventional, as we can tell from the differences between this epitaph and the one Orderic wrote for Warin's

⁶⁹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:346; XIII, 6:486.

⁶⁹² *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

⁶⁹³ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:344-346; XIII, 6:486-90.

⁶⁹⁴ *in luctu patris flebilibus*. *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:486.

⁶⁹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:488.

predecessor, Roger.⁶⁹⁶ Roger's epitaph comes from Book XII and so was added to the *Historia* long after his death but at a similar time to the addition of Warin's epitaph. The epitaph for Abbot Roger lacks any references to emotional response of the community to their abbot's death. Orderic writes simply that 'Finally, thoroughly wearied, the elderly man gave up his body to the earth'.⁶⁹⁷ The epitaph as a whole is primarily descriptive with no references to affection or closeness between the abbot and his monks. Orderic writes about Roger's parents, Gervase and Emma, and his monastic vocation.⁶⁹⁸ The descriptive character of the epitaph is hinted at in the preamble, where Orderic explains that 'I wrote a short epitaph on him in verse hexameters, in which I wished to strive for truth rather than elegant melody'.⁶⁹⁹ That the two epitaphs were included in the *Historia* around a similar time suggests that differences between them cannot be ascribed to changes in how Orderic wrote. It seems more likely that Orderic was genuinely close to Abbot Warin and sought to reflect that fact in his text.

The evidence suggests that Warin was willing, even eager, to give Orderic a great deal of freedom when it came to the development of the *Historia*. One of the traits Orderic heavily emphasises in the passage on Warin in Book VI is his humility. He writes that: 'he was inspired by the skill of men of letters and humbled himself before them. Disregarding the dignity of his office he eagerly hastened to undertake many different duties suited to the novices, as if he was one of them.'⁷⁰⁰ Orderic adds too that Warin was always ready to learn from others: 'On account of his humility he eagerly listened to words of doctrine and instruction from others, though often he knew the topic better. He attentively sought out guidance from his equals and subordinates, listening

⁶⁹⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:326.

⁶⁹⁷ *Denique confectus senio terris sua membra Deposuit. HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:328.

⁶⁹⁸ *Presbiter instructus documentis ultro Rogerus Sumpsit ouans almi monachile iugum Benedicti. HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:326.

⁶⁹⁹ *Versibus exametris epilogum breuem super illo edidi; in quo plus ueritati quam concinna sonoritati intendere malui. HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:326.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ipse nimirum quamuis peritia litterarum admodum imbutus esset sese humiliabat, et postposita magisterii dignitate ad diuersa officia quae iunioribus competunt uelut unus ex illis auide currebat. HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:344.

humbly as if a student.⁷⁰¹ It is certainly possible that the inspiration for this depiction came in part from Orderic's own experiences. The audience for this depiction was principally Orderic's own community; as a result, we can be confident that it reflects how Warin was seen by the community. Orderic also wrote that Warin became a monk in his early twenties, meaning that he was not an oblate and did not benefit from a monastic education to the extent that Orderic did.⁷⁰² As contemporaries, Orderic had been a monk for at least a decade longer than Warin. Considered in the light of which aspects of Warin's character Orderic chose to emphasise, these differences between the two men could have been significant. Indeed, it is easy to imagine a situation in which Warin was willing to defer to Orderic's learning or that the two men sought to learn about history writing together. While the conclusion that Warin granted Orderic greater license in his endeavour must remain tentative, it is nonetheless striking that the rapid expansion of the *Historia* coincides with the abbacy of a man Orderic remembers as a close friend and avid student.

It was also under Warin that the work expanded into what I have defined as its third, fourth, and fifth phases. The third moment of development took place in 1130 or 1131, when Orderic began for the first time to write two books simultaneously, Books VI and VII. It is likely that Orderic began Book VI in c. 1130.⁷⁰³ The dating of Book VII is more difficult, although I see no reason to doubt Chibnall's suggestion that it was complete in the main before the commencement of Book VIII in c. 1133, and thus was likely begun in 1130 or 1131.⁷⁰⁴ The fourth moment is 1135. In this year Orderic finished Book VIII and wrote in their entirety Books IX and X. The dating of Books IX

⁷⁰¹ *Ab aliis doctrinae et instructionis uerbum humilitatis causa cupide audiebat, et multoties ea etiam quae ipse melius nouerat, a paribus uel a subditis diligenter inquirebat, atque uelut discipulus humiliter auscultabat.* *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:346.

⁷⁰² *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:346.

⁷⁰³ *HE*, Chibnall, 3:xiv.

⁷⁰⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, 4:xix.

and X to 1135 is reliable, as most parts appear to have been written while Henry I was still alive.⁷⁰⁵ This represents one of the busiest periods of Orderic's writing career.

The fifth phase is the point at which the final form of the *Historia* was determined. At the end of Book X, Orderic left a space in which to add the number of the book later (although the space was never filled).⁷⁰⁶ In Book IX he did not do the same thing, numbering it originally VI.⁷⁰⁷ This suggests that by the time he finished writing Book X, Orderic was considering adding new books to the start of the *Historia*, which would necessitate renumbering. However, he had not yet determined the final scheme, hence a gap was left rather than the appropriate number filled in. Book X can be dated to 1135 and Book XI was begun in 1136.⁷⁰⁸ Furthermore, the first part of Book XI - the preface - also serves as the preface to Books XII and XIII. What this suggests is that between completing Book X in 1135 and commencing Book XI in 1136, Orderic determined the final form of the *Historia*, deciding on the addition of five new books (I-II and XI-XIII).

This period of intense work and creativity coincides with when Orderic was most likely in charge of the community's scribal work.⁷⁰⁹ It seems likely that Orderic was master of the scriptorium from the mid-1120s onwards, as at this point his friend Warin was abbot and his former teacher, John of Reims, had died.⁷¹⁰ Charles Rozier has argued that he also occupied the position of cantor, overseeing scribal work and mentoring new scribes.⁷¹¹ Rozier argues that Orderic became cantor in the mid-1120s, as around this time the former cantor William Gregory likely died.⁷¹² That Orderic writes about William Gregory as cantor but does not refer to his successor lends further support to

⁷⁰⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, 5:xi-xii.

⁷⁰⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, X, 5:380.

⁷⁰⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:190.

⁷⁰⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, 6:xvii-xviii.

⁷⁰⁹ Weston, 'Following the Master's Lead,' 56-60.

⁷¹⁰ Orderic writes an epitaph for John of Reims: *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:168-70.

⁷¹¹ Rozier, 'Librarian and Cantor,' 65-6.

⁷¹² Rozier, 'Librarian and Cantor,' 73-5.

Rozier's argument. All the evidence points to the period from the mid-1120s as the one where Orderic held a senior position within the community of Saint-Évroul and, especially, within the scriptorium.

The sixth phase dates from the middle of 1137 onwards. Abbot Warin died on 2nd June 1137. After this point Orderic added no new books. According to Chibnall, work on Books I, II, XI, XII, and XIII seems to have been largely complete by the end of 1137, after which point he continued to make some additions down to the end of 1141.⁷¹³ Chibnall has claimed that the manuscript for Book XIII indicates Orderic hoped to add new material, as he left blank spaces.⁷¹⁴ However, there is no suggestion in the text that he considered modifying or extending the final form of the *Historia*, determined in 1135-1136. There is the faintest of hints that Abbot Richard – Warin's successor – could have been less supportive of the *Historia*. Orderic writes much less about Richard, but what we are told is that he was often absent from the abbey.⁷¹⁵ As abbot he travelled frequently. Orderic writes that Richard returned from the 1139 Lateran council and at once travelled to England, where he fell ill from a fever and subsequently died.⁷¹⁶ As part of the papal list that forms the second half of Book II, Orderic writes that the records of the second Lateran council were poor with few details widely known.⁷¹⁷ That Orderic did not record any kind of anecdotal account could suggest that historiographic work was of lower priority under Abbot Richard. Indeed, in the fractious political climate after the death of Henry I, this lower prioritisation makes sense especially for a monastic community near the southern border of Normandy. What this could mean is that following the death of Abbot Warin, the election of Richard as abbot and the political

⁷¹³ *HE*, Chibnall, 6:xvii-xviii.

⁷¹⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, 6:xviii.

⁷¹⁵ *Vticeses cœnobitæ didascalis et rectoribus suis semper fidi, album lapidem posuerunt super tumulum uenerandi abbatis Guarini; super quem sculpendum ob amorem dilecti quondam sodalis mei postea patris hoc epitaphium edidi.* *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:488.

⁷¹⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:536.

⁷¹⁷ See Chapter One, Section III.

climate of the later 1130s combined created a context in which continuing substantial work on the *Historia* was less attractive.

This revised understanding of the text's chronology presents new opportunities for comparative analysis between the different writing stages. This approach could offer the potential to develop a deeper understanding of Orderic's ideas of historical writing and how they developed over time through his experience of crafting and redesigning the *Historia*. Moreover, it raises questions about how Orderic learned about history writing through practice, reflecting these insights in the development of the text. And finally, this chronology draws attention to the critical relationship between Orderic's position within his community and his historical project.

The Problem of Incoherence

The model of the development of the *Historia* proposed in this section raises the serious challenge of the text's incoherence. Orderic reflects upon ideas of history writing at numerous points in his work, each of which are new expressions of his intentions and ideas as a writer. For example, there are substantial metanarrative prologues for Books I, II, III, V, VI, IX, and XI. Books I, III, V, VI, VII, IX, X, and XIII include a metanarrative epilogue. Interjections and digressions provide other moments where Orderic discusses what he is doing. The passages differ in that they were written with years, even decades, between them. Based upon the chronology presented above, each of these passages of metanarrative can be associated with a different stage of the text's evolution and, consequently, with very different subject matter: from local monastic affairs in Normandy, to crusade history and the Incarnation. It is also plausible that passages written later implicitly respond to ideas expressed earlier, indicating that the relationships between metanarrative passages changed too. A further consideration is that the context within which Orderic wrote changed, from his tentative writing under Abbot Roger to a position of seniority and responsibility from the mid-1120s. His relationships with his abbots and his place within the community add another layer to

this picture of inconsistency. At the level of medieval historiography, the genre of *historia* itself invited such plurality of thought.⁷¹⁸ The term *historia* was a flexible one that accommodated many different kinds of writing. It could be applied to liturgical texts as well as diverse forms of writing, like epic poems, *chanson de geste*, tableaux, and even maps.⁷¹⁹ Orderic used the term himself with this kind of flexibility: Roger Ray noted that he described both a rhymed office and his own narrative as *historia* in close succession and without qualification.⁷²⁰ Of the different passages on history writing in the text no one passage is any more authentic than any other. This lack of coherence raises the prospect of whether we can talk about Orderic's sense of history writing at all.

The text's incoherence is perhaps the most pressing challenge facing the modern study of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. Much of the relevant historiography was discussed in the introduction to this thesis. However, I will touch on some of the more recent work again in order to stress the challenge posed by the text's incoherence. For instance, Leah Shopkow's analysis of 'historical culture' in Normandy is problematised because she presents Orderic's history writing as informed by a fixed view-point with consistent characteristics; in the absence of a consistent text, these kinds of claims are difficult to substantiate.⁷²¹ John O. Ward's analysis of Orderic's history writing alongside William of Malmesbury faces the same challenge. Furthermore, Ward excluded certain parts of the text from considerations of history writing, arguing that passages on natural disasters were instances of 'mere chronicling', conveying little more than Orderic's conviction that an historical record was valuable for its own sake.⁷²² However, it is not clear that this assessment is true for all parts of the *Historia*. Emily Albu likewise made a general argument about Orderic's history writing, focused on the consistency of his tone.⁷²³ In

⁷¹⁸ On medieval concepts of *Historia*: Ray, 'Medieval Historiography,' 35-7; Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 2; Shopkow, *History and Community*, 19-20; Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 6.

⁷¹⁹ Ray, 'Medieval Historiography,' 35-6; Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, 34-5.

⁷²⁰ Ray, 'Medieval Historiography', 36, n. 6.

⁷²¹ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 136-7.

⁷²² Ward, 'Orderic Vitalis as Historian,' 9.

⁷²³ Albu, 'Worldly Woe,' 235.

the works of Shopkow, Ward, and Albu the appendage to Orderic of coherent ideas of what history was and why it should be written falls apart when one considers the range of ideas expressed in the text. Elisabeth Mégier's identification of underlying coherency that unites the *Historia* is an attempt to resolve this issue; however, in so doing Mégier imposes a false coherence on the text, failing to account for its complex development and plurality of perspectives.⁷²⁴ As a result, directly addressing the problem of incoherency and developing methods to work with the text is a pressing concern.

I suggest that the problem lies not with the text itself, but with the application of concepts of coherence and incoherence to it. The value placed upon coherence is rooted in modern expectations. This is clear in the way that incoherence in a text is often represented as a negative, such as when Shopkow writes that Orderic's general lack of cohesion left the *Historia* as an 'amorphous configuration from which only the last books...escape.'⁷²⁵ In the 1970s Roger Ray called for new efforts to 'try to understand the making of medieval forms of literature within perspectives consistent with the nature of the medieval writer's audience.'⁷²⁶ The diversity of ideas and perspectives presented in the *Historia* is a part of the medieval reading experience of the text. When we stop reading for coherence – for underlying, unifying ideas – we can see how the way the text developed over time and changed in form and direction are embedded in the narrative. Perhaps the clearest instance of this is at the conclusion to Book III where Orderic renumbered the book in the rubric (from *primus* to *tercius*) but omitted to do so in the conclusion to the book.⁷²⁷ Most likely an oversight, this mistake means that a reader is directly confronted by the history of the text itself as they read it. Furthermore, Orderic chose to write a single work, preserving at each point the conception and shape of the

⁷²⁴ Mégier, 'Jesus Christ,' 260-83.

⁷²⁵ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 163

⁷²⁶ Ray, 'Medieval Historiography,' 40.

⁷²⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:188. See also: 2:189, n. 3.

text. Earlier forms of the *Historia* were not effaced beyond the renumbering of the books in the rubrics, with the exception of the last paragraph of the epilogue to Book III.⁷²⁸

Coherence and History Writing in the *Gesta Normannorum ducum*

What we need, then, is to develop ways of understanding the role the expression of different ideas played in the text. A way to do this is to examine how Orderic himself handled the presentation of multiple perspectives when it came to interpolating the *Gesta Normannorum ducum*. Orderic worked with William of Jumièges' autograph version of the *Gesta* (or a direct copy).⁷²⁹ Due to the survival of the autograph versions produced by William and Orderic, it is possible to examine how Orderic changed the text that he received. When Orderic completed his interpolations of the *Gesta* between c. 1109 and c. 1113 he was working with a text that was structured according to and contained within it reference to the ideas and objectives of the two previous writers. The first four books of William of Jumièges' work are based on Dudo of Saint-Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum*.⁷³⁰ In the dedicatory letter written by William of Jumièges to William the Conqueror, he explains how he has made use of Dudo's work and also notes his own intentions to write in a simple style and produce a collection of memorable deeds.⁷³¹ Although it was very substantially extended by William, Dudo had established the overarching form of the text as a series of books, each of which covered the reign of one duke and was subdivided into single topic chapters.⁷³² Elisabeth van Houts has argued that the form of the text correlates closely

⁷²⁸ Chibnall notes the erasure: *HE*, Chibnall, 2:188-9, n. 2.

⁷²⁹ van Houts, 'Orderic and His Father,' 18; *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:xxi, lxix.

⁷³⁰ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:v.

⁷³¹ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:4-6.

⁷³² *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:liv-lv.

with its purpose as a tool to emphasize the legitimacy and succession of the dukes of Normandy.⁷³³

Orderic's response to the text as he received it was not, however, to strive to produce a coherent text. Orderic does not refer to himself in the *Gesta* and van Houts has argued that his anonymity is an attempt to collectivise the authorship of the text.⁷³⁴ However, as van Houts notes, the effect is imperfect. One 'moment of inconsistency' she points to is where Orderic names those responsible for murdering Duke William's advisers during his minority while reproducing William of Jumièges' comment that he will not name these same men for fear of reprisals.⁷³⁵ Rather than see this as an inexperienced attempt to collectivise authorship, I suggest that Orderic treated William's writing of the *Gesta* as part of the history the text presented. Hence Orderic copied verbatim William's metanarrative writing, preserving the language he used to conceptualise his work, even when these passages made little sense in Orderic's own time. For example, he copied the dedicatory letter to William the Conqueror, meaning that Orderic and William of Jumièges versions both begin: 'To William, the holy, victorious, and orthodox king of the English by grace of the highest King's authority, William, monk of Jumièges, unworthiest of all monks, wishes the strength of Samson to crush his enemies and the profundity of Solomon to establish justice.'⁷³⁶ Orderic also included William's epilogue, which refers again to the fact that the work is directed at William the Conqueror, before adding that: 'we shall now direct our pen to Robert, son of the king, whom at present we rejoice as duke and advocate.'⁷³⁷ William writes that Robert Curthose is in the flower of youth and exhorts him to follow the examples of his noble ancestors. The reference to

⁷³³ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts 1:xcii.

⁷³⁴ van Houts, 'Orderic and His Father,' 18-9.

⁷³⁵ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:xxi.

⁷³⁶ *Pio, uictorioso atque orthodoxo summi Regis nutu Anglorum regi Willelmo, Gemmethicensis cenobita, omnium cenobitarum indignissimus Willelmus, ad conterendos hostes Sansonis fortitudinem et ad discernendum iudicium Salomonis abyssum.* *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1, 4-5.

⁷³⁷ *stilo decreuimus ad Rodbertum eiusdem regis filium, quo in presentiarum duce et aduocato gaudemus.* *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:184-5.

the bright future of a young Robert Curthose shows that this passage would have been both politically and chronologically outdated when Orderic copied it.

Copying the form of the text as William designed it can also be seen as an attempt to preserve the history of the text. When Robert of Torigni interpolated the *Gesta* he added a new book on Henry I. It is puzzling that Orderic did not similarly extend the work, which in his version concludes at the same point as William of Jumièges' version – 1069 – some forty years earlier than Orderic was writing.⁷³⁸ Van Houts' argument that Orderic chose not to include a new book because of the uncertainty of political events following the battle of Tinchebrai in 1106 is unconvincing.⁷³⁹ By the time Orderic was writing, the battle had occurred between three and seven years previously; with Robert Curthose imprisoned for these years, the political situation may in fact have seemed comparatively stable. Furthermore, political instability in the present would be no barrier to writing, for example, an extended history that covered William I's reign. A more convincing argument is that Orderic was interested in preserving the framework of the text as William of Jumièges designed it. This would explain why Orderic did not add a new book, but was willing to update information within the earlier structure, for example, he notes that the community established on the site of the battle of Hastings has been called Battle Abbey 'up to the present time [*usque hodie*].'⁷⁴⁰ Immediately prior to the epilogue of the *Gesta*, Orderic subtly hinted at future events, adding *parumper* into the comment: 'At last, for a while [*parumper*], the storm of wars and rebellions dying out, he [William the Conqueror] now powerfully holds the reins of the entire English monarchy'.⁷⁴¹ Thus Orderic looked

⁷³⁸ On the dating of William of Jumièges' version: *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:xx-xxi.

⁷³⁹ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:lxxv.

⁷⁴⁰ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 2:173. Van Houts notes Orderic's tendency to update certain information within the original framework of the *Gesta*: 'Orderic and His Father,' 18.

⁷⁴¹ *Tandem bellorum ac seditionum tempestate parumper conquiescente, iam totius Anglice monarchie*. *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 2:182-3.

ahead to the troubles to come in the main text, while still preserving verbatim the triumphant and celebratory tone of William's original epilogue.⁷⁴²

It has been argued that Orderic's writing of the *Gesta* was an educational exercise above all and that is why he leaned heavily on William's work.⁷⁴³ There is indeed evidence to suggest Orderic gained valuable experience in interpolating the *Gesta*; for example, his stylistic revisions became more extensive over time indicating growing confidence.⁷⁴⁴ However, I suggest that the close copying of elements of William's text was not foremost educational. Orderic, in fact, added large amounts of material to his version of the *Gesta* almost doubling the size of Book VII, on William the Conqueror.⁷⁴⁵ This included new material on the Conqueror's mother – Herleva – and the first reference to the duke's bastardy as well as the resulting challenges he faced.⁷⁴⁶ Orderic was also willing to add entirely new topics to the *Gesta*, such as a narrative of the Normans in Sicily.⁷⁴⁷ Some of the material added was idiosyncratic and far removed from the objectives of the text as William presented them and Orderic copied them. In Orderic's version, the history of Saint-Évroul and its foundation are given detailed attention as are the long-term enemies of the community, the Bellême family.⁷⁴⁸ As van Houts remarks, Orderic's stylistic revisions were also very extensive.⁷⁴⁹ The changes to both style and substance that Orderic made to William's *Gesta* suggests that he was willing and able to go far beyond dependence on the model provided by the earlier version of the *Gesta*.

⁷⁴² *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 2:182-4.

⁷⁴³ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:lxix; Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 29.

⁷⁴⁴ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:lxvii.

⁷⁴⁵ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:lxviii-lxxi. Emily Albu has emphasised the addition of new material concerning violence and betrayals as well as the role of its addition in tempering the pro-Norman stance of the text as William of Jumièges composed it: *Normans in their Histories*, 182-7.

⁷⁴⁶ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:lxv. See: 2:97.

⁷⁴⁷ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 2:152-158.

⁷⁴⁸ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 2:136-42, 162; 2:50, 56.

⁷⁴⁹ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:lxviii.

The key to understanding Orderic's treatment of the *Gesta* is to recognise that he treated narrative and metanarrative in William's version differently. Understanding that Orderic worked in two different modes makes sense of instances in the text that can appear disjointed. For example, after providing a detailed discussion of the early years of Duke William's reign, naming the men implicated in planning and carrying out the murder of Gilbert, count of Eu, the young duke's guardian, Orderic inserts verbatim a comment from William of Jumièges: 'I should have mentioned them [the murderers] by name, had I not wished to avoid their burning hatred. But yet I shall whisper to all of you surrounding me, that these are the very men who now claim to be the most faithful and have received so many honours from the duke.'⁷⁵⁰ Orderic simultaneously updates the narrative (reflecting a change in context) and preserves William's metanarrative. These two modes of writing are also reflected in the text's tone and argument. Van Houts noted that a key contribution Orderic makes to the *Gesta* is refashioning the narrative of the Conquest to reflect a less partisan position.⁷⁵¹ Elsewhere in the text there are hints that Orderic made such changes across the text more systematically, for example, Orderic added the word *crudeliter* in a passage on Rollo's occupation of Meulan, changing the emphasis: 'he cruelly [*crudeliter*] destroyed it [Meulan] and put its inhabitants to the sword.'⁷⁵² However, in copying the prefatory letter verbatim Orderic did not modify William of Jumièges' superlative praise of William the Conqueror. Orderic, like William of Jumièges, addresses William I as 'most prudent and serene king'.⁷⁵³

Furthermore, Orderic actively emphasised William's authorship, suggesting a desire not to collectivise authorship but to present the text's history to his audience. Orderic added the rubric: 'Here begins the letter of William of Jumièges addressed to

⁷⁵⁰ *Quos nominatim litteris exprimerem, si inexorabilia eorum odia declinare nollem. Attamen non alii extiterunt (uobis in aure loquor circumstantibus) quam hi qui fideliores se profitentur, et quos nunc maioribus dux cumulavit honoribus.* *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 2:98-9.

⁷⁵¹ *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:lxiii-lxxiv.

⁷⁵² *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:56-7.

⁷⁵³ *prudentissime rex et serenissime.* *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:4-5.

William the orthodox king of the English and duke of the Normans.’⁷⁵⁴ The language of this rubric lays stress on William of Jumièges’ authorship of the metanarrative dedicatory letter specifically. The decision to remain anonymous could support this reading, especially as Orderic was the first interpolator of the *Gesta* to make his additions without reference to himself.⁷⁵⁵ Orderic’s anonymity in the *Gesta* does not so much collectivise authorship as ascribe it all to William. In Orderic’s autograph of the *Gesta* it begins with an illuminated initial ‘P’, in which is depicted a seated king being presented a book by a tonsured monk.⁷⁵⁶ In the absence of labels, a reader would assume it represents William the Conqueror and William of Jumièges. Van Houts suggested that it could also represent Orderic himself, presenting the work to Henry I, and this dual reading may in fact be an integral part of the design.⁷⁵⁷ However, given Orderic’s anonymity in his version of the *Gesta* and his preservation of the dedicatory letter addressed to William the Conqueror by William of Jumièges, any reader who did not know by other means that the work had been interpolated by Orderic would have no way of identifying an additional author. To them the monk in the image could surely only represent William of Jumièges.

This reading of Orderic’s approach to interpolating the *Gesta Normannorum ducum* raises the prospect that Orderic preserved William’s metanarrative writing in order to make the history of the *Gesta* part of the narrative of the text. The text’s incoherence is thus an effect of a mode of writing that preserves even outdated metanarrative material. This in turn could suggest that Orderic likewise sought to preserve the history of his own text too in the way he wrote the *Historia*. Key instances of thought and learning captured in metanarrative could be preserved in the text as part

⁷⁵⁴ *Incipit epistola Willelmi Gemmeticensis ad Willelmum orthodoxum Anglorum regem in Northmannorum ducum gestis. Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:4.

⁷⁵⁵ van Houts, ‘Orderic and His Father,’ 18-9.

⁷⁵⁶ ‘Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, 1174 (Y. 014) f. 116r,’ *Bibliothèque virtuelle des manuscrits médiévaux*, accessed 17th October 2018, https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?REPRODUCTION_ID=14973.

⁷⁵⁷ van Houts, ‘Orderic and His Father,’ 19.

of a process of writing-in-time. The following three sections of this chapter will explore this further by examining ideas of history writing as expressed at different moments in the text. The second section discusses the writing of Books III-V, investigating how ideas of history writing initially appeared in the text and developed following the death of Abbot Roger. The third section discusses the period from 1130 to 1135 and will focus on Books VI and IX, examining the emergence of new ideas of history writing in the middle years of Orderic's writing career. The final section will examine Books I-II and XI-XIII, focusing on the moment when the final form of the *Historia* was determined.

II. Books III-V: Writing History for the Community

This section examines ideas of history writing expressed in the metanarrative passages of Books III-V. This was a lengthy period of writing (c. 1114–c. 1130) that also includes the retirement (1123) and death (1126) of Abbot Roger. My aim is to explore how Orderic's initial intentions are expressed and how far these change during this period, especially in relation to the changing personnel at Saint-Évroul. A further aim is to reflect upon how far Orderic's command of metanarrative explanation develops too, and whether or not this indicates his growing authority as the community's history writer. The first part looks at initial aims of the work as expressed under Abbot Roger. Thereafter, I focus on the Book V as the place where Orderic starts to argumentatively use metanarrative passages to ask and answer questions about the value of history writing.

House History under Abbot Roger Le Sap

The ambitions of Book III as initially conceived were pinned closely to the objectives set by Abbot Roger. Orderic writes later in the *Historia* that he was instructed by Roger to begin a history of the monastery of Saint-Évroul.⁷⁵⁸ The prologue to Book III also establishes the modest objectives of the work at this point. Although this prologue accrued later additions at some point after 1135, the original commencement of the book referred to the Biblical metaphor of the vine.⁷⁵⁹ Orderic describes how the vine is tended across the world by God's efforts and was promoted historically in Neustria during the early Christian history of Gaul.⁷⁶⁰ He refers by name to St Ouen, St Wandrille, and St Évroul as early founders of monastic communities in the region.⁷⁶¹ Orderic describes how sin led to decline, reversed only by the conversion of Rollo in 912 and – even more importantly – the period of refoundation and church building commenced under Duke William II.⁷⁶² The story of the refoundation of the community at Ouche by the Giroie and the Grandmesnil begins here and quickly comes to dominate the narrative, commencing the history of Saint-Évroul.

The metaphor of the vine is important to Orderic's history writing at a whole. He refers to the vine twice in Book I and again in Books III, V, and XIII.⁷⁶³ Chibnall has stressed the significance of the reappearance of the vine at the start of Books I and III, indicating Orderic's consistent desire to begin the work with it.⁷⁶⁴ Chibnall also argues that the parable held personal significance for Orderic.⁷⁶⁵ More recently, Mégier has built upon Chibnall's arguments, stressing that the appearance of the vine in Book I, III,

⁷⁵⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

⁷⁵⁹ For the later additions to the prologue to Book III, see: *HE*, Chibnall, 2:2, n. a. The vine is referred to in numerous places in scripture. The most substantial is John 15. 1-8.

⁷⁶⁰ For the whole prologue: *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:4-12.

⁷⁶¹ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:4.

⁷⁶² *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:4-12.

⁷⁶³ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:5, 46-6; *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:5; V, 3:116-118; XIII, 6:554.

⁷⁶⁴ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 53-4.

⁷⁶⁵ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 54.

and XIII (it also appears in Book V) affords the *Historia* a unity of meaning as well as of form, presenting a relationship between the church as vineyard and God as cultivator.⁷⁶⁶ Less attention, however, has been paid to how each instance of the Vine works within its specific narrative setting and in relation to the writing of history in each book.

The metaphor of the vine at the start of Book III communicates ideas of both history and history writing:

First, I will undertake to write of the vine of the Lord of Hosts, which his strong right hand tends and protects across the whole world [*in toto mundo*] against the plots of the Behemoth. Once labourers had toiled in this region, which was once called Neustria and is now called Normandy, it sent forth its shoots here and there and offered to God the plentiful fruit of men of enduring holiness. For in that very region many monasteries were built by good husbandmen, where the branches of that vine – who are good Christians – were brought together, that they might spend their lives in safety fighting against treacherous spiritual foes.⁷⁶⁷

Orderic's use of the metaphor of the vine has a clear chronological dimension, due to the reference to the older name of Neustria and to the narrative of the early monastic foundations that follows. As a result, the vine provides a way of conceptualising monastic history in Normandy as a single narrative, beginning with first growth under the care of the fifth- and sixth-century saints, followed by a period of neglect and decline, before finally an era of recovery under Duke William. The history of Saint-Évroul is situated within this narrative, giving its eleventh-century history a relevance

⁷⁶⁶ Mégier, 'Jesus Christ,' 261-2.

⁷⁶⁷ *Opus in primis arripiam de uinae Domini sabaoth; quam ipse forti dextera colit et protegit in toto mundo contra insidias Behemoth. Hæc nimirum in regione quæ olim Neustria, nunc uero uocatur Normannia; laborantibus colonis sparsim suas propagines emisit, et multiplicem fructum hominum in sanctitate permanentium Deo obtulit. Multa enim a bonis cultoribus cænobia ibidem constructa sunt; ubi rami ipsius uitis id est boni Christiani semetipsos contradiderunt, ut tutius contra insidias spiritualium hostium fine tenus decertarent. HE, Chibnall, III, 2:4.*

within the history of monasticism in Normandy. Beginning with Christian history in its broadest aspect (that of God and church), Orderic moves the reader along the branches of the vine to the particular blossoming of the community of Saint-Évroul. The movement from macro- to micro-history can also be read as an argument: by making Saint-Évroul one of the tendrils of a branch of the vine, the prologue presents the importance of the history of Saint-Évroul as a part of the vine with potential to shed light upon the whole. The vine offers a way to conceptualise the work as it appeared at the start of Book III, justifying a history of Saint-Évroul as a small part of God's tending of the vine across the world.

These persuasive and argumentative elements of the metaphor ground the reading experience of the *Historia* in the needs and expectations of the community. In a pragmatic sense, the metaphor also delineates the parameters of Orderic's history, communicating useful information about the text's scope and focus which moulds the expectations of the reader. For Orderic's audience – the monks of Saint-Évroul – the metaphor of the vine and those good Christians who form its branches explains the place of their community within a shared monastic endeavour and posits continuities between the struggles of monastic life for monks in Orderic's own time and those of the distant past. In this way, the metaphor of the vine offers the reader an imagery through which to make sense of the specific history of Saint-Évroul and the experiences of the community's monks within the narrative of monasticism in Normandy.

When Orderic concluded Book III, some ten years later, he presented a much less settled sense of the purpose of his work. The closing passages of Book III include a series of discussions of other near-contemporary history writers, which can be read as attempts to think about history writing and determine a path forward for the *Historia*.⁷⁶⁸ The passage seems to have been written before the future direction of Book IV had been determined. The final paragraph in Book III explains what Orderic will do in Book

⁷⁶⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:184-8.

IV.⁷⁶⁹ However, according to Chibnall this paragraph was written over an erasure and the colour of the ink is similar to the beginning of Book IV, which is written on the same folio.⁷⁷⁰ This suggests that Orderic added a new conclusion to Book III once he had determined the shape of Book IV and was ready to begin writing it. What this means for the passage on history writers, which precedes this new addition, is that it was likely written before Orderic had committed to the direction Book IV would take. And yet, that Orderic erased only the final paragraph of Book III, and not the discussion of history writers that preceded it, suggests that the passage had relevance to the text as it developed with the addition of Book IV. In this context, it makes more sense to read the passage on contemporary history writers as an open-ended exploration of ideas of history writing, rather than an attempt to contextualise an already conceived work alongside the works of Orderic's peers.

The passage invites this kind of reading, as in it Orderic discusses a range of different kinds of work, paying close attention to their topics and forms. He writes that William of Poitiers wrote about the noble deeds and praiseworthy virtues of King William I.⁷⁷¹ Guy of Amiens, in contrast, composed a 'metrical song' on the battle of Hastings (plausibly the *Carmen de Hastingae praelio*).⁷⁷² This is not a simple list of history writers, the kind one might expect to find as a conventional component of prefaces to historical works in this period.⁷⁷³ Rather it includes detailed discussion of the writers and their works. Orderic describes Marianus Scotus' work in the most detail, giving the range of material covered – from Creation to his own times – and tools for organising chronology: 'enumerating years according to the times of kings and rulers, he commendably arranged the parts of his annals up to the day of his death.'⁷⁷⁴ Orderic

⁷⁶⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:188.

⁷⁷⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, 2:188-9, n. 2

⁷⁷¹ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:184.

⁷⁷² *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:184. On the attribution of the *Praelio* to Guy, see: 2:184, n. 2.

⁷⁷³ Gransden, 'Prologues,' 55-6.

⁷⁷⁴ *enumeratis annis per regum et consulum tempora usque ad diem mortis suae annalem historiam laudabiliter distinxit.* *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:186.

describes Marianus' work as '*annalem hystoriam*', possibly attempting to find the right words to fit the form of his chronicle. Orderic likewise pays close attention to their topics of interest, noting that Sigebert of Gembloux built upon Marianus' chronicle, omitting much that was written about western lands, including instead material relevant to the Goths, Huns, and Persians.⁷⁷⁵ Orderic notes that the works under discussion 'were produced by modern men, and as yet are not widely spread across the globe': the focus on near-contemporary historians could suggest Orderic wrote about them as a means to consider how to write history for the present age.⁷⁷⁶

Orderic's discussion of the writers' biographies and characters also works as part of this exploration of history writing. For medieval historians, the character of a history writer was a critical factor in determining the truthfulness and value of their work.⁷⁷⁷ Consequently, Orderic's considerations of writers' biographies and characters would be a natural way for him to consider questions of history writing. For example, Orderic writes about William of Poitier's position in the royal household, but also the kind of historical work he sought to produce due to his personal experience: 'Since he was the aforementioned king's chaplain for a long period of time, he was eager to relate in a detailed and indisputable account all which he saw with his own eyes and witnessed himself.'⁷⁷⁸ The man about whom he writes the most is John of Worcester. Orderic describes how he was an oblate at Worcester cathedral and began his work under instruction from Bishop Wulfstan; he adds also that John was celebrated for 'his habits and erudition [*moribus et eruditione*]'.⁷⁷⁹ Orderic had good reasons to know more about John's background and character than the other men discussed here, as he met him at Worcester on the occasion when he also saw John's chronicle.⁷⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the fact

⁷⁷⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:188.

⁷⁷⁶ *A modernis enim editi sunt; et adhuc passim per orbem diffusi non sunt.* *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:188.

⁷⁷⁷ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 144-6.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ipse siquidem praedicti regis capellanus longo tempore extitit, et ea quae oculis suis uiderit, et quibus interfuerit, copioso relatu indubitanter enucleare studuit.* *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:184.

⁷⁷⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:186.

⁷⁸⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:188; IV, 2:188.

Orderic describes in the most detail the biography of the man who most closely resembled himself – as a Mercian monk – could imply that this discussion of history writers was intended to be useful to Orderic in his own historiographic pursuits.

The form of the passage also implies a certain exploratory mode of writing. The discussions of these historians are sequential, with the exception of the lengthy passage on Marianus Scotus. Orderic describes John's background and then notes that he 'continued the chronicle of Marianus Scotus'.⁷⁸¹ Orderic at once embarks on a much more sustained piece on Marianus' work, beginning the next sentence 'This Marianus...[*Marianus enim*]' before explaining that he was a monk at the church of St Alban the martyr, Mainz.⁷⁸² After writing about Marianus' work Orderic returns to John of Worcester, noting that he continued Marianus' chronicle, adding the events of around one-hundred years.⁷⁸³ That John was a continuator of Marianus' work, might explain the decision to pause the discussion of John's work in order to first mention what it built upon. However, the swift move from John to Marianus and, eventually, back to John again, suggests that the form of the passage was not carefully fixed. As a reader, the interjection on Marianus appears as an aside. This could suggest that this passage both reads and was written as an exercise in thinking about history writing through a consideration of the contemporary historical works Orderic was familiar with.

This thoughtful but uncertain perspective on history writing seems to be a key element in Orderic's writing during the period after Abbot Roger retired the abbacy of Saint-Évroul in 1123. Book IV was substantially written during the period between Abbot Roger's retirement in 1123 and his death in 1126. The book does not have many substantial passages of metanarrative.⁷⁸⁴ One of the few passages that can be read as a metanarrative reflection on history writing is a description of William of Poitiers.

⁷⁸¹ *Mariani Scotti cronicis adiecit*. *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:186.

⁷⁸² *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:186.

⁷⁸³ *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:186-8.

⁷⁸⁴ For the brief prologue and epilogue, see: *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2: 190, 360.

William was one of the historians discussed in the passage in Book III. The significant similarities between this passage and the previous one indicates a continuity of a mode of thought. As in the previous passage, Orderic focuses on character and biography, explaining that William 'is called "of Poitiers" because he drew deeply from the font of wisdom there.'⁷⁸⁵ Whereas in Book III Orderic described William's experience as a royal chaplain and its value to his history writing, in Book IV he explains that William had been a soldier before entering the church and had experience of wielding arms '[a]nd so he was able to confidently report on the conflicts he saw, for he took part in the clash of perilous arms in dire conflict.'⁷⁸⁶

There are, however, certain differences between the discussion of William of Poitiers in Books III and IV with the result that the passage in Book IV makes a more specific argument. In Book IV Orderic discusses William of Poitiers alone, without reference to other writers. Orderic also gives more detail about William's life, character, and works, for example describing his quiet retirement spent writing narratives and verse.⁷⁸⁷ This more thorough discussion of William appears to be closely related to the objectives and content of Book IV. The discussion of William of Poitier appears at the end of a passage on William I's grief at the death of Earl Edwin. Orderic then interjects explaining that he has relied on William of Poitier's history up to this point.⁷⁸⁸ Consequently, the passage on William of Poitiers falls at the conclusion of Orderic's use of his work, which further indicates that Orderic's writing about contemporary historians is tied closely to the objectives of his own work.

⁷⁸⁵ *Pictauinus autem dictus est; quia Pictauis fonte phylosophico ubertim imbutus est.* *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:258.

⁷⁸⁶ *Et tanto certius referre uisa discrimina potuit; quanto periculosius inter arma diris conflictibus interfuit.* *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:258.

⁷⁸⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:258.

⁷⁸⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:258-60.

Book V and the Emergence of Metanarrative Argument

Thus far, this section has argued that the end of Book III and Book IV show evidence of exploratory metanarrative reflections on history writing. The writing of Book V marks a significant departure, as in an elaborate and lengthy prologue Orderic articulates a powerful argument about the purposes of writing history. The argument Orderic makes is not immediately self-evident, however, and requires careful untangling. The approach I adopt here is to begin by dissecting the different components of the argument. It is then possible to consider how the parts of the prologue relate to one another implicitly, constructing an overarching argument.

The passage begins by discussing the sin of idleness, arguing that sloth poses a serious threat: ‘Following the example of our predecessors we must ceaselessly shun fatal sloth, and must busily sweat at useful study and salutary activity’.⁷⁸⁹ Orderic continues:

Without doubt noxious desire kills this [slothful man], while he is lethargic in goodness it lures him towards wickedness, and he is plunged into the pit of destruction along the wide road of his own indulgence. And so our masters thoroughly condemn sloth and indolence as hostile to the soul.⁷⁹⁰

The passage makes the repeated argument that slothfulness leads to sin and the slavery to desire; it is depicted as corrosive to the soul and the mind. Orderic supports his argument with two quotations from Solomon.⁷⁹¹ Orderic’s monastic audience would have been familiar with the Biblical passages on Solomon, and so Orderic’s explicit reference can be read as a direct appeal to scriptural authority. Orderic also notes the

⁷⁸⁹ *Maiorum exempla sectantes lætale ocium indesinenter debemus deuitare, utique studio et salubri exercitio feruenter insudare.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:4.

⁷⁹⁰ *Hunc procul dubio nociua desideria occidunt, dum in bono torpentem ad scelus pertrahunt; et per amplam proprii libitus uiam in baratrum perditionis immergunt. Maiores igitur nostri pigriciam et ociositatem animæ inimicam penitus condemnant.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:4.

⁷⁹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:4.

agreement between Christian and pagan writers on this point, quoting Virgil and Ovid. Orderic continues with the theme of sloth, relating it to his historiographic work. He explains that he gladly obeyed the commands of his abbots to write a history of Saint-Évroul ‘so I might not be condemned when the Lord comes to judge us alongside the idle servant who hid his talent in the earth.’⁷⁹²

The next part of the prologue focuses on the history Orderic has written and its place within the community. It has two parts. First, he explains that members of his community had long desired the writing of such a history and were eager to read it. He explains that he began work under Abbot Roger on a history of the community, ‘which our predecessors encouraged each other to write.’⁷⁹³ He adds that ‘Of course they [former monks of Saint-Évroul] would have read with pleasure about the deeds of the their abbots and brothers, and of their collection of small properties.’⁷⁹⁴ The counterpoint to this eagerness, however, is the unwillingness of the monks to write their own history. Orderic argues that ‘[a]ll preferred to be silent than to speak and placed untroubled peace before the daunting task of seeking out past events.’⁷⁹⁵ Orderic positions himself as filling a gap in the community, meeting a demand for history writing that other members of the community had been unwilling to take up. That it fell to Orderic – a man ‘from the reaches of Mercia [*de extremis Merciorum*]’ and ‘an ignorant foreigner [*ignotus aduena*]’ – is a point made in the text, which compounds the sense of the community’s desire to read its own history.⁷⁹⁶

The final part of the prologue involves a shift in tone, as Orderic discusses the decline of his own times, the absence of miracles, and the impending end times. This

⁷⁹² *ne cum seruo torpente pro absconso in terra talento dampner Domino ad iudicium ueniente. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:6.*

⁷⁹³ *quod priores nostri sese mutuo exhortati sunt facere. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:6.*

⁷⁹⁴ *Libenter quippe legissent actus abbatum fratrumque suorum, et paruorum collectionem rerum suarum. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:6.*

⁷⁹⁵ *Nam quisque silere quam loqui maluit; et securam quietem edaci curæ transactas res indagandi proposuit. HE, Chibnall, V, 3:6.*

⁷⁹⁶ *HE, Chibnall, V, 3:6.*

passage follows on from a short piece of autobiography in which he describes the main events of his life in broad strokes.⁷⁹⁷ Without preamble, Orderic laments that ‘our bishops and other church leaders [*pontifices nostri aliique rectores*]’ no longer lead lives of sufficient holiness and so can no longer bring forth miracles as their predecessors had.⁷⁹⁸ Orderic explains that if they were to perform miracles:

I would endeavour to shake off sloth and would relate in writing things worthy to tell for the rapt attention of men in the future. However, because now is the time when the love of many grows cold and evil spreads, miracles - the proofs of holiness [*sanctitatis indicia*] – cease and crimes and mournful quarrels multiply across the world.⁷⁹⁹

Orderic’s ability and eagerness to write history is directly correlated with the condition of man. He further explains that decline in his own times is due to the drawing near of the Antichrist and the impending End Times, introducing the culmination of Christian time into his conception of writing the history of his own age.⁸⁰⁰ Thus Orderic cogently expresses both a sense of the times in which he lived and their implications for the writing of history.

Reading the prologue to Book V in light of ideas of history writing, I suggest that its overarching point is that Orderic’s history writing holds value as a guide for the community of Saint-Évroul in a world approaching the apocalypse. The first part of the argument is an assertion that history writing must be valuable. Orderic implies that writing history is an antidote for idleness and so it falls within the category of ‘useful

⁷⁹⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6-8.

⁷⁹⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8.

⁷⁹⁹ *excusso torpore memetipsum exercerem, et digna relatu noticia posterorum avidæ scripto transmitterem. Verum quia nunc est illa tempestas, qua multorum refrigescit karitas, et abundat iniquitas; sanctitatis indicia cessant miracula, et multiplicantur facinora; ac luctuosa in mundo querimonia.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8.

⁸⁰⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8.

study and salutary activity [*utilique studio et salubri exercitio*].⁸⁰¹ Thus Orderic identifies the writing of history as a tool for personal edification. He does not, at this moment, articulate the potential for history to elicit moral improvement in its readers, however. The remainder of the prologue can be read as an attempt to articulate the value of Orderic's historical project. First, he argues that the *Historia* is for the members of his own community. Although the monks of Saint-Évroul have always been an implied audience for a history of their community, in the prologue to Book V their position as active beneficiaries is explicitly asserted. And secondly, Orderic illustrates the state of the world in which his community dwells. In an age of decline and the absence of the miraculous, Orderic positions his history as offering guidance and consolation to a community of good monks.

Through the course of Book V Orderic seeks to respond to the needs of his community, using history to comfort through the assertion of God's enduring support for pious men of religion. In Book V, Orderic again refers to the parable of the vine, although it is here used to provide solace to Orderic's monastic audience. Orderic's description of the vine focuses heavily upon the agency of God in supporting labourers in the vineyard.

The eternal lord of all things deftly sails and wisely pilots his ship amongst the storms of the world; every day he kindly brings aid to the labourers who toil in his vineyard and so strengthens them with free-flowing divine grace against toil and suffering. Behold how he directs his church with foresight amongst savage rebellion and war, and in many ways strengthens and supports it!⁸⁰²

⁸⁰¹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:4.

⁸⁰² *Æternus dispositor rerum nauem suam inter procellas seculi potenter uehit et sapienter gubernat; et in uinea sua colonos cotidie laborantes benigniter adiuuat, atque infusione celestis gratiæ contra labores et pericula corroborat. En æcclesiam suam inter bellicosos tumultus et militares strepitus prouide dirigit; pluribusque modis augmentando salubriter prouehit.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:116-8.

The central argument – that God supports those who labour in the vineyard – is reiterated and expressed in multiple forms, lending it rhetorical emphasis through repetition. Orderic also explicitly articulates the meaning of the metaphor, identifying the church with the vineyard and the ship. The direct relevance of this argument to the monks of Saint-Évroul is spelled out unequivocally. ‘This is truly proven by the monastery of Saint-Évroul’, he writes, asserting that the history of his community shows the guiding hand of God.⁸⁰³ Orderic proceeds to lay out the challenges the community has faced, beginning with its foundation in a barren, difficult country, surrounded by enemies. God is also described as a key ally to Abbot Mainer during his long and fruitful rule.⁸⁰⁴ In Book III, the vine was a metaphor for the spread of Christianity and, in particular, monasticism; in Book V, however, it is a vehicle for the communication of an argument of direct relevance to Orderic’s community: that God will not forsake them.

The placement of the parable of the vine in Book V indicates the centrality of this point to Orderic’s history writing at this moment. Concluding a piece on the descendants of William I, Orderic writes that: ‘This brief account on the family of King William must be sufficient for the present, because a fervid will urges me continually towards the fulfilment of my promise and it never ceases to push me to deliver on my pledge.’⁸⁰⁵ The passage on the vine immediately follows this comment. It reads, therefore, as a fundamental part of the purpose of this book and the fulfilment of the promise Orderic made to his community in writing their history.

The argument that God continues to support men of religion is further elaborated in the content of Book V. Included within the book is a *vita* of St Taurin.⁸⁰⁶ In a passage that concludes the *vita* Orderic emphasises Taurin’s ongoing intercession, giving

⁸⁰³ *Hoc Vticense monasterium plausabiliter expertum est. HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:118.

⁸⁰⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:118.

⁸⁰⁵ *Hoc de progenie Guillelmi regis breuiter caraxatum ad presens sufficiat; quia me feruida uoluntas ad complendam promissionem meam iugiter stimulat, et reddere uotum me cogere non cessat. HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:116.

⁸⁰⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:38-46.

examples of the miracles he works daily at Évreux.⁸⁰⁷ The demon he banished from the temple of Diana apparently still stalked the city taking various guises, but was powerless to harm the inhabitants who call it a ‘goblin’.⁸⁰⁸ In Books III and IV Orderic introduced *vitae* with a metanarrative interjection, presenting them as purposeful digressions.⁸⁰⁹ In Book IV, for example, Orderic justifies the inclusion of Guthlac’s *vita*, asserting his belief that the deeds of northern Christians must be as edifying as those of the Greeks and Egyptians about whom scholars have so eagerly written.⁸¹⁰ In Book V, the *vita* of St Taurin is not accompanied by any such justification. As a result it does not read as a digression, but rather as a continuation of the narrative and a core part of the book. I suggest that the *vita* does not require an introduction because the ongoing miracle work of a very active saint accords closely with the central purpose of Orderic’s history writing at this point. St Taurin acts as evidence of God’s agency in the world and support for devout Christians.

By asserting the approaching End Times in Book V Orderic gives urgency and significance to the argument that God provides aid to devout Christians. Orderic had discussed contemporary decline previously, in Book IV.⁸¹¹ Where Book V differs is in the stress placed on the association between contemporary decline and the imminent End Times. Indeed, Book V is the most explicitly apocalyptic of the *Historia*’s thirteen books. As discussed, the prologue includes direct reference to the apocalypse: ‘The time of the Antichrist approaches. As God revealed to the blessed Job, it will be preceded by a dearth of miracles and the rapid spread of a riot of sins amongst those who adore carnality.’⁸¹² Apocalypticism is flagged in the main body of the book too, such as when Orderic includes the wording of a charter concerning properties given by Peter of Maule

⁸⁰⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:44-6.

⁸⁰⁸ *golbinum*. *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:44.

⁸⁰⁹ See the *vita Judoci* and *vita Guthlaci*: *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:166-8; 2:322-40.

⁸¹⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:322-4.

⁸¹¹ *fleBILE tema de sua ruina piis historiographis ad dictandum tribuit*. *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:190.

⁸¹² *Antichristi tempus appropinquat, ante cuius faciem ut dominus beato Iob insinuat; praecedet egestas miraculorum, nimiumque in his qui carnaliter amant se ipsos grassabitur rabies uiciorum*. *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8.

to Saint-Évroul. It begins: ‘The brevity of mortal life, the faithlessness of men, the transformation of ages, and the desolation of kingdoms daily warn us the imminence of the end of the world.’⁸¹³ Although the passage is presented as a quotation taken from a charter, the reference to the end of the world ties the passage back to the book’s prologue. The apocalyptic theme is also articulated in a passage on recent calamities.⁸¹⁴ Orderic gives details of a fatal lightning strike at the cathedral church of Lisieux, using it as an example of the adversities affecting the world. The text thus puts forward an interpretation of contemporary decline, associating it explicitly and repeatedly with apocalypticism. This association has a key effect on the argument put forward in Book V, because apocalypticism has implications for future events too. By presenting contemporary decline and interpreting it as evidence of the approaching End Times, Orderic folds descriptions of individual events into a larger apocalyptic narrative. I found no evidence in the text to indicate that the period of writing (from c. 1127 to c. 1130) represents a moment of crisis or instability for the monks of Saint-Évroul. Indeed, the abbacy of Warin was one that Orderic depicted as successful.⁸¹⁵ This crafting of an apocalyptic narrative makes more sense as part of Orderic’s first attempt to articulate an argument for the value of history writing. By presenting this apocalyptic narrative in Book V, Orderic makes the argument for the promise of God’s aid for the monks of Saint-Évroul both more persuasive and more necessary.

Book V marks a decisive shift in the way Orderic wrote about history writing. He articulated a well-conceived and thoughtful argument for the usefulness of his history writing, located in history’s ability to foreground the support offered by God and so providing consolation to a community of monks dwelling in an age of decline. Although the prologue to Book V represents the clearest expression of this idea, I have also made use of material from elsewhere in the book, indicating a consistency of thought and a

⁸¹³ *Mortalis uitae breuitas, hominumque infidelitas; temporum mutatio, regnorumque desolatio, imminere mundi finem cotidie nos admonent.* *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:172.

⁸¹⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:12-6.

⁸¹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:624. See *HE*, Chibnall, 3:xiii.

reassertion of argument through the course of writing. The expression of a clear sense of the purpose of history writing in this book contrasts with the more open-ended, discursive passages in Books III and IV.

Warin's History Writer

A change in circumstances that I suggest explains both the end of Orderic's anonymity and the expression of a much clearer, more precise sense of history writing in Book V is the death of Abbot Roger. I have discussed above the differences between Abbot Warin and Abbot Roger as well as their potential significance to the development of the *Historia*. The evolution of the text between Books III and V adds further evidence to this argument. However, Roger retired the abbacy in 1123, before Orderic began writing Book IV. We know that the first parts of Book V were written in the second half of 1127, as Orderic says he had been a monk for forty-two years (he joined in 1085) and he wrote after the death of Cecilia, abbess of Caen, on 11th July 1127.⁸¹⁶ Why, then, did it take four years for the promotion of Warin to the abbacy to affect the development of the text? The answer might lie in the relationship between Roger and Warin. In Book XII Orderic writes that after his election Warin learnt the burden of pastoral office and that '[a]bove all he is to be praised with affection for he kindly served the venerable old Roger, and for the three remaining years that he lived, he obeyed him in all things like a son his father or a student his master.'⁸¹⁷ It is noteworthy that Orderic singles out Warin's obedience to Roger for praise, especially given that this passage was written no earlier than 1136, a full ten years after Roger died. Based upon this comment, the death of Abbot Roger might mark a more significant break than his retirement. Consequently,

⁸¹⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, 3:xiv.

⁸¹⁷ *In primis pie laudandus est quod uenerabili Rogerio seni benigniter seruiuit, eique per iii annos quibus postmodum superuixit; in cunctis ut patri filius et magistro discipulus obsecundauit. HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:326.

Book V might represent the beginning of the *Historia* as a work that seeks not only to explore history writing, but to provide answers to the question of why write history.

With Warin's assumption of full abbatial authority following the death of Roger, Orderic's position in the community changed. As discussed above, Orderic was a better educated peer of Warin's. When Orderic began writing Book V in *c.* 1127 he was also in his early fifties, suggestive of his seniority within the community. In *c.* 1125, the year before Roger's death, John of Reims died. John had been Orderic's teacher and was Saint-Évroul's subprior.⁸¹⁸ Writing about John's death, Orderic calls to mind his learning, intelligence, and role in expounding scripture to the community.⁸¹⁹ Chibnall suggested that John's death was a significant factor in the increase in the speed at which Orderic worked.⁸²⁰ The potentially cumulative effect of the deaths of Abbot Roger and John of Reims is perhaps more significant than Chibnall allowed, however. These three factors – Warin's abbacy, Orderic's age, and John's death – all point to Orderic's elevation to a new position of importance and authority in the community's intellectual life around the time of the death of Abbot Roger.

In becoming Abbot Warin's historian, Orderic appears to have assumed new responsibility for community memory and for his own conception of *historia*. The new responsibility Orderic felt is evidenced in the text. As part of the prologue to Book V, Orderic includes a dedication to Abbot Warin.⁸²¹ Dedications were a conventional component of prefaces to historical works in this period.⁸²² That Orderic had not written a dedication of Abbot Roger and only added one at the start of Book V indicates that his use of this convention was a response to the changing context within which he worked. A key function of dedications is to diminish the writer's responsibility, ascribing some

⁸¹⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:166-8.

⁸¹⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:166-8.

⁸²⁰ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 32.

⁸²¹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

⁸²² Gransden, 'Prologues,' 61-62; Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces*, 116-7.

of it to the individual to whom the work is dedicated.⁸²³ This is especially true in instances where the writer asks the dedicatee to amend and review work, as Orderic does in the dedication in Book V.⁸²⁴ In attempting to share responsibility for the work with Abbot Warin by seeking his guidance, Orderic implicitly identifies that responsibility for the *Historia* now lay with him.

Orderic's assumption of responsibility for the *Historia* coincides with the emergence of the author in the text. Before Book V, Orderic is only mentioned directly in the rubrics that bookend Book IV.⁸²⁵ He also remained anonymous as an interpolator of the *Gesta Normannorum ducum*.⁸²⁶ The insertion of a passage that details his life story in Book V is thus a dramatic change. Part of the prologue to Book V includes a lengthy passage on Orderic's life: he writes about his birth, giving the date (16th February 1075), and the key events of his life, including his education, oblation, and life at Saint-Évroul.⁸²⁷ Book V includes a speech given by Orderic's father concerning the foundation of Shrewsbury abbey and Orderic's oblation.⁸²⁸ A particularly significant piece of evidence is that Book V begins with the year 1075, the year of Orderic's birth. This is no coincidence: Orderic explains that he wishes to begin this book in the year 1075 precisely because it is the year of his birth.⁸²⁹ Recent research has offered persuasive insights into Orderic's autobiographical writing and its relationship to the chronology of Orderic's life and writing career.⁸³⁰ We have not, however, considered these passages as part of Orderic's sense of history writing and as part of the history he offered to his community. As Roger Ray has argued, the *Historia* was designed to be

⁸²³ Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces*, 124.

⁸²⁴ Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces*, 141.

⁸²⁵ These appear to be original, written by Orderic along with the rest of Book IV: *HE*, Chibnall, 2:190, n. a.

⁸²⁶ See Section I, above.

⁸²⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6-8.

⁸²⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:142-4.

⁸²⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:6.

⁸³⁰ van Houts, 'Orderic and His Father,' 19-27.

read aloud in the refectory and perhaps in other liturgical contexts.⁸³¹ If we accept Ray's argument, that means Orderic's life story was read aloud in the refectory of Saint-Évroul.

The emergence of autobiographical writing in Book V could be an attempt by Orderic to support his position as the community's history writer. He does this by presenting to the community his own life story, so that his personal history is interwoven with that of the community and is known to that community's members. Given that a historian's character was a key index of the truthfulness and value of their work, the presentation of biography could be read as a justification for a writer's suitability. This indicates that Orderic had an acute sense of the theoretical implications of writing history. He was not content with simply referring to himself and using a few humility *topoi* – as William of Jumièges does in the dedicatory letter that introduces the *Gesta Normannorum ducum* – but rather goes from one extreme to another: from silence to a full life story.⁸³²

If Books III and IV were of the community, Book V was *for* the community. Situating Saint-Évroul in an age of decline prefiguring the apocalypse, Orderic offered consolation to his monastic community through a history that showed the guiding hand of God. While the argument put forward in the prologue to Book V is cogent and persuasive, it does not mark an end point in Orderic's considerations of history writing. Multiple modes of history writing could co-exist and plans could change through the course of writing, or even retrospectively. Orderic brought Book V to a close with one such passage of retrospective reflection. It follows a long account of the properties given to the community. Orderic implicitly argues for the importance of this kind of account by describing how the community's properties are modest, widely spread through

⁸³¹ Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and His Readers,' 17-33. On evidence for reading aloud in the text punctuation, see: *HE*, Chibnall, 1:xli.

⁸³² For the William's use of *topoi* in the dedicatory letter: *Gesta*, ed. and trans. van Houts, 1:5.

several diocese, and were acquired at great pains.⁸³³ He also explains the significance of property, writing that the monks are supported by their properties and that ‘every day they serve God with hymns, prayers, and a continent way of life for the benefit of their patrons.’⁸³⁴ The epilogue emerges from a discussion of a particular kind of material (descriptions of properties); nevertheless, it also taps into some of the same concerns about the usefulness of history writing. Like the prologue to Book V, Orderic considers the same questions of how to make history writing useful, although the answer he arrives at is different. This conclusion draws attention to the dynamism of Orderic’s sense of history, which emerges out of the material he is working with and is honed by retrospective theorising on the practice of writing.

III. The Challenges of Writing History: Orderic’s Process, c. 1130-c. 1135

This section examines the emergence of new ideas of history writing in the text during middle period of writing (c. 1130-c. 1135) and considers what these ideas reveal about Orderic’s processes of learning and writing over time. The previous section showed that in the prologue to Book V Orderic expresses a cogent argument for the value of history writing. In this section, I investigate whether Orderic presents different arguments in Book VI and how far these develop out of earlier ideas and in dialogue with the community of Saint-Évroul. This section thus focuses on how Orderic developed as a history writer through a process of writing-in-time, using practical experience to develop theoretical insights.

⁸³³ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:210.

⁸³⁴ *pro fautoribus suis in himnis et precibus et continenti uita Domino cotidie famulatur. HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:210.

New Ideas of History Writing in Book VI

The prologue to Book VI was written in *c.* 1130, soon after Book V was completed. It is made up of three main parts.⁸³⁵ The first discusses the usefulness of studying the past, arguing that knowledge of the past can shed light on the present. Then it discusses the role historical writing plays in preserving knowledge of the past. Orderic explains that ignorant men criticise the works of history writers, and so many scholars abandon their attempts to preserve a record of the past. The final part of the prologue refers to the absence of miracles and the decline of the age.⁸³⁶

The first part of the prologue puts forward the argument that history writing matters because of the instrumental potential of historical knowledge:

The human mind always needs to be suitably occupied with worthy learning to remain sharp and needs to meditate upon past events and examine those in the present to prepare itself favourably with the strength necessary for the future. And a person ought daily to learn how to live better and pursue the steadfast examples of great men now dead to the best of his ability.⁸³⁷

Historical knowledge is not presented as a self-evident source of insight. It is necessary to ‘meditate upon [*recolendo*]’ and ‘examine [*rimando*]’ past and contemporary events to draw insights from them. The reader is expected to inhabit an active condition of thought and reflection. An alternative mode of reading Orderic highlights is to ‘pursue [*capessere*]’ the examples of great men in the past in order to learn from them. The importance of meditating on the past is expressed most persuasively in the way that Orderic describes its effects: he explains that such activity maintains the mind’s

⁸³⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:212-4.

⁸³⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:214.

⁸³⁷ *Humani acumen ingenii semper indiget utili sedimine competenter exerceri, et preterita recolendo presentiaque rimando ad futura feliciter uirtutibus instrui. Quis que debet quemamodum uiuat cotidie discere, et fortia translatorum exempla heroum ad commoditatem sui capessere.* *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:212.

sharpness, imbues it with strength to face the future, and help a person to learn how to live better. Historical knowledge is presented as multi-purpose tool for the betterment of individuals and, therefore, the community too.

Orderic also expresses the associated point that history writing is correspondingly valuable and that the loss of historical knowledge through the absence of history writing is a blow to the collective potential of mankind to improve. Orderic laments that knowledge of many events is now lost because scholars gave up in the face of criticism. He notes that in the works of Jerome and Origen we read their complaints against their detractors; this comment encourages the reader to reflect on what would have been lost were Jerome and Origen to have abandoned their work too.⁸³⁸ The loss of knowledge is framed as one that affects humanity in general: history writers abandon their work ‘and so now and then, on a frivolous pretext, the world faces a grievous loss’.⁸³⁹ The works of individual history writers are collectivised and given value as part of a shared endeavour to preserve valuable historical knowledge.

This understanding of the role of historical knowledge makes sense of Orderic’s claims to be a preserver of such knowledge for future generations. Benjamin Pohl has argued that one of Orderic’s aims as a writer was the safeguarding of historical knowledge through preservation in written material form.⁸⁴⁰ Pohl argues that Orderic saw himself as actively engaged in the preservation of memory and that this activity was morally valuable and its opposite – a lack of preservation – was an expression of slothfulness. An important question that Pohl does not fully address is whether or not preservation for own sake was the driving force behind Orderic’s attempts to record events. Coming from the perspective of Cultural Memory studies, Pohl argues that the reasons for preservation were as ‘a means to express a collective sense of belonging within both time and space’ thus contributing to the forging of community and

⁸³⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:212

⁸³⁹ *Sic interdum friuola occasione sæculo damnum oritur lugubre.* *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:212.

⁸⁴⁰ Pohl, ‘Orderic Vitalis and Cultural Memory,’ 333-51.

institutional solidarities.⁸⁴¹ The instrumental quality of historical knowledge expressed in Book VI indicates that Orderic put forward multiple arguments as to the value of writing history. One of those arguments certainly could be as a means of situating a community within time and space, as Pohl argues; however, in this instance Orderic is arguing for a more theoretical understanding of past events as a tool for moral improvement, with implicit relevance for a community of Benedictines.

Although the argument Orderic makes in this prologue is a conventional one, its deployment in the text at this point is closely tied to social pressures stemming from the community of Saint-Évroul. Expressing the value of history as a guide to right life was a common element of prefaces to historical works in this period.⁸⁴² It was also a line of argument expressed by Bede and Orosius, authors to whom Orderic refers to in the prologue to Book I.⁸⁴³ However, conventionality alone cannot explain why Orderic expresses this argument here in the prologue to Book VI and not elsewhere. Orderic's comments about those who criticise the history writing of others, leading sometimes to the abandonment of historical works, could suggest that he faced such criticism. Some of the prologue is, in fact, a direct appeal to his audience: 'I pray, let them [detractors] fall silent and be still, those who neither satisfy themselves [with their own work], nor generously support that of others, nor peacefully correct that which displeases them.'⁸⁴⁴ This suggests that Orderic faced criticism and, accordingly, developed new ideas of history writing.

The influence of Orderic's community on his writing at this point appears to be as a form of dialogue, rather than of conflict. Examining the evidence of the prologue to Book VI, Roger Ray argued that Orderic here elaborated a powerful defence of his

⁸⁴¹ Pohl, 'Orderic Vitalis and Cultural Memory,' 336.

⁸⁴² Gransden, 'Prologues,' 65.

⁸⁴³ Gransden, 'Prologues,' 65; *HE*, Chibnall, I, 1:130.

⁸⁴⁴ *Conticescant obsecro et quiescant qui nec sua edunt; nec aliena benigne suscipiunt, nec si quid eis displicet pacifice corrigunt.* *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:212-4.

history writing in the face of criticism.⁸⁴⁵ To an extent the passage supports this reading. For example, Orderic complained that ‘sometimes idle men slander their [history writers’] cleverness with wolfish fangs.’⁸⁴⁶ Describing potential critics through a negative language of wolfishness puts the text in a defensive posture. However, Ray’s argument that Orderic here defended his position hinges on the idea that Orderic’s reiterated the same ideas of history writing in the prologue to VI as he had earlier and that he would continue to put forward these same ideas consistently throughout his work.⁸⁴⁷ However, Orderic ideas of history writing appear less fixed, as the prologues to Books V and VI present different arguments. This suggests that Orderic defended his work while also developing his ideas, indicating a more discursive relationship between writer and community than a model of conflict alone allows. The suggested dialogue between Orderic and his audience reveals the role of the community in both the reading and writing of the *Historia*. As the *Historia* was unusually disconnected from the circles of power and ducal patronage for Norman historiography in this period, there is the possibility that the role Orderic’s community played was correspondingly more significant.⁸⁴⁸

The relationship between ideas of history writing in the prologues to Books V and VI reveals a mix of overlapping ideas, development of thought, and distinct arguments. Orderic re-expresses some ideas – such as the decline of the age – and expands upon other. For example, he concludes a lengthy discussion of Saint-Évroul’s endowments in Book VI with an excursus on the importance of donations and their role in the salvation of the laity.⁸⁴⁹ This argument was also made in Book V, although in far less detail. The collaborative role played by Orderic’s community in this development should caution against a tendency to see the *Historia* as idiosyncratic or personal, a view

⁸⁴⁵ Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and His Readers,’ 18-22.

⁸⁴⁶ *quorum sollertiam dente canino nonnunquam inertes lacerant*. *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:212.

⁸⁴⁷ Ray, ‘Orderic Vitalis and His Readers,’ 26-9.

⁸⁴⁸ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 58-9.

⁸⁴⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:260-4. The passage is adapted from Genesis xiv. 21-24 (see *HE*, Chibnall, 3:261, n. 2).

perhaps derived from its organic structure and lack of contemporary popularity.⁸⁵⁰ Laura Cleaver has challenged the assumption that twelfth-century autograph histories are necessarily the works of individuals.⁸⁵¹ She argues that it is reductive to isolate authorship based solely upon the identification of a hand, ignoring more complex and collaborative processes of production. The reading of metanarrative in Books V and VI put forward here supports Cleaver's argument as it suggests that Orderic first and foremost learned about ideas of history writing with his audience, leading a communal dialogue concerning the purpose of the *Historia*.

Learning through Practice: The Writing of Crusade History

Attempting to theorise the relationship between different moments of inscription, like the commencement of Books V and VI, matters because it has implications for how we see Orderic as a history writer and whether or not a sense of Orderic's history writing as a whole is recoverable. I suggest that a way to do this is to consider these different moments as part of a long-term process of learning through practice: what I have called writing-in-time. The evidence of the text supports this model for understanding the development of the *Historia*, as processes of learning are embedded in the text. The final part of this section considers this evidence by examining the writing of a history of the First Crusade, in Book IX. Book IX is an interesting one to examine in terms of learning because the First Crusade posed a challenge to contemporary history writers. It was an event for which they lacked pre-existing historiographic models and so stimulated creativity and innovation.⁸⁵²

⁸⁵⁰ Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis on Henry I,' 132-4.

⁸⁵¹ Laura Cleaver, 'Autograph History Books in the Twelfth Century,' in *Writing History in the Anglo-Norman World: Manuscripts, Makers and Readers, c. 1066-c. 1250*, eds. Laura Cleaver and Andrea Worm (York: Medieval Press, 2018), 93-9, 111-2.

⁸⁵² Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages*, 122; *HE*, Chibnall, 5:xiii.

In the prologue to Book IX Orderic puts forward a persuasive argument for the inclusion of a crusade narrative in his work. He declares emphatically that ‘[n]ever before, I do believe, has there appeared so glorious a topic for writers of the events of wars.’⁸⁵³ The reasoning for this position is elaborated in full in the first part of the prologue. Orderic explains that God arranges earthly affairs and, therefore, evidence for the hand of God lies in the history of the world:

This we see plainly in winter and summer, and likewise we feel it in the heat and cold. This we observe in the rise and fall of all things and can duly examine in the many, varied works of God. And so, many accounts appear concerning the various events that take place across the world every day and increase the material that skilled history-writers can treat of at length. For that reason I reflect upon these things and commit my thoughts to writing, because in our times an unforeseen change is taking place, and an outstanding and extraordinary theme to relate is unfolding for writers to study.⁸⁵⁴

Orderic argues that history is evidence of God’s agency, and thus history writers are those responsible for preserving that evidence. The passage lays out the existence of God in the affairs of the world through empathic repetition, arguing that this fact (‘*Hoc*’) is visible in the cycles of everyday life. The events of the crusade itself are then accommodated within this scheme of thought. It is presented as an event that offers unique insight into the divine. Concrete, explicit reassertion of the centrality of divine agency to the crusade further supports this argument for the value of crusade history. Orderic foregrounds God’s agency by depicting Urban II at Clermont as a mouthpiece

⁸⁵³ *Nulla ut reor unquam sophistis in bellicis rebus gloriosior materia prodiit. HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:4.*

⁸⁵⁴ *Hoc in hieme et estate palam uidemus; hoc nichilominus in frigore et caumate sentimus, hoc in omnium rerum ortu et occasu perpendimus, et in multiplici uarietate operum Dei rite rimari possumus. Inde multiplices propagantur hystoriae, de multimodis euentibus qui fiunt in mundo cotidie; et dicacibus hystoriographis augmentantur copiose fandi materiae. Haec ideo medullitus considero, meditatatusque meos litteris assigno, quia temporibus nostris insperata fit permutatio, et insigne thema referendi mira prestruitur dictatorum studio. HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:4.*

for God; the response to Urban is similarly inspired, arising from genuine faith.⁸⁵⁵ The unique significance of the crusade is expressed through the drawing of parallels with the biblical past. He likens the willing crusaders to the Hebrews brought from Egypt by Moses.⁸⁵⁶ It is as if as a topic for history, it belongs more to the Biblical past than to the contemporary world.

The prologue also addresses the serious challenges posed by attempting to write a history of these events. He writes: ‘I fear to undertake a full account of this propitious pilgrimage and will not risk promising to complete such an arduous task. But I do not know how to pass by such a noble theme untouched.’⁸⁵⁷ He goes on to list reasons that inhibit his efforts to write history, including his age – *sexagenarius* – his life as a monk, and his waning strength.⁸⁵⁸ He notes the lack of scribes available to help him copy material. He concludes the prologue with the modest ambition that: ‘And accordingly, I will begin the ninth book, in which I will busy myself to describe truthfully and in order matters concerning [the pilgrimage to] Jerusalem, God grant me much needed aid.’⁸⁵⁹ The final clause – an appeal for God’s aid – underlines the challenges posed by the task at hand.

The prologue can be read as a form of preamble in which Orderic sought to think through the problems of writing crusade history. This effect is achieved by combining an argument for the value of crusade history with an explicit awareness of the challenges posed by writing it, creating a kind of back-and-forth. The prologue to Book IX is the first in the *Historia* to be written before the rubric that marks the beginning of the book. The prologue concludes with a prayer after which can be found the rubric ‘[h]ere begins

⁸⁵⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:4-6.

⁸⁵⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:4-6.

⁸⁵⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:6.

⁸⁵⁸ *Integrum opus peregrinationis almae aggredi timeo, arduam rem polliceri non audeo; sed qualiter intactum tam nobile thema preteream nescio.* *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:6.

⁸⁵⁹ *Nonum itaque libellum nunc incipiam; in quo de Ierosolimitanis quaedam seriatim et ueraciter prosequi satagam, Deo michi conferente opem necessarium.* *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:6.

the ninth book of the *Historia ecclesiastica*.⁸⁶⁰ Up to this point, Rubrics were inserted prior to any prefatory material. Inserting the rubric later makes the preface read as a consideration of what Book IX will include and the form it will take, rather than as a part of that book. This indicates the prologue is an exercise in thinking through whether or not to pursue a history of the crusade and, if so, how to go about doing it.

The solution Orderic comes up with is to copy Baudri of Bourgueil's *Historia Ierosolimitana*.⁸⁶¹ However, it is a solution that seems to have been worked out through the act of writing, and not in advance. The prologue includes a discussion of the works of Baudri and Fulcher of Chartres, in which both writers are presented as useful models. Orderic, mentions Fulcher first, writing that 'he shared in the labours and perils of this expedition and produced a firm and truthful volume on the praiseworthy courage of the army of Christ.'⁸⁶² On Baudri, Orderic writes that 'he has splendidly written four books, in which he presents with eloquence and truthfulness a full narrative from the commencement of the pilgrimage up to the first battle after the capture of Jerusalem.'⁸⁶³ The works produced by these two men are described differently. Fulcher produced 'a firm and truthful volume [*certum et uerax*]'. Baudri in contrast, is described in terms of his practice of writing: he is said to write with truthfulness, but also 'eloquently [*eloquenter*]' and 'splendidly [*luculenter*]'. The differences between the descriptions indicates that the passage is a genuine consideration of alternative models. This is supported by the fact that Orderic does not refer to any decision to use the works of either writer in any way. Furthermore, he also refers generally to the many other writers who have approached this topic, situating Fulcher and Baudri as part of a larger cohort.⁸⁶⁴

⁸⁶⁰ *Incipit liber nonus æcclesiasticæ hystoriæ. HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:8.*

⁸⁶¹ On Orderic's use of Baudri, see: *HE, Chibnall, 5:xiii-xv.*

⁸⁶² *laboribus et periculis predicabilis expeditionis interfuit; certum et uerax uolumen de laudabili militia exercitus Christi edidit. HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:6.*

⁸⁶³ *iiii libros luculenter conscripsit, in quibus integram narrationem ab incio peregrinationis usque ad primum bellum post captam Ierusalem ueraciter et eloquenter deprompsit. HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:6.*

⁸⁶⁴ *HE, Chibnall, IX, 5:6.*

The decision to favour Baudri over Fulcher is one that has puzzled historians. Although Chibnall argued that the decision lay in the similarity of style and outlook between Orderic and Baudri, Roger Ray is less confident.⁸⁶⁵ Ray suggests that the decision was not necessarily a straightforward one as Fulcher was an eye-witness. Ray contends that it is likely that the final decision was reached because Baudri's work was more rhetorically suited to the reading context of Orderic's work. One of the reasons that this is a difficult question to answer might be because the decision to follow Baudri's account appears to have been made during the course of writing.

The evidence supports the argument that Orderic had not determined to copy Baudri's work at the outset of Book IX. In the first part of Book IX, where Orderic uses Baudri first, it is not a straightforward instance of copying. Orderic introduces a paragraph heavily based on Baudri, which discusses a great shower of stars witnessed in the night's sky on 4th April 1095.⁸⁶⁶ Orderic also introduces an alternative explanation for the fallen stars, based on a story he heard from Walter of Cormeilles.⁸⁶⁷ Walter had been a sentry (*uigil*) for Gilbert Maminot, bishop of Lisieux, who was a learned man and habitually studied the heavens. Orderic gives a passage of direct speech in which Gilbert calls to Walter, drawing his attention to the miraculous spectacle, before offering an interpretation. Gilbert explains that the falling stars prefigure a great movement of people from one kingdom to another, as many of the stars will never return to their former positions. In this instance, therefore, Orderic made use of Baudri's account but offers different interpretations of the events he describes. This is not a case of simply copying, but rather a selective and deliberate use of Baudri's work married with information and stories Orderic picked up elsewhere.

⁸⁶⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, 5:xiii; Ray, 'Medieval Historiography,' 54-5.

⁸⁶⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:8.

⁸⁶⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:8-10.

The epilogue to Book IX shows that Orderic used practice to work through the challenges of history writing before then reflecting upon what he had learnt.⁸⁶⁸ In this epilogue, Orderic retrospectively justified the decision to copy Baudri's work. Orderic explicitly lays out the choices he has made, writing that 'up to this point I have followed after the footsteps of the venerable Baudri'.⁸⁶⁹ He notes that in many places he copied Baudri's work verbatim, for 'I did not believe I was able to improve upon it'.⁸⁷⁰ Orderic then adds that: 'I have now decided to reverently honour the bishop, whom I knew well'.⁸⁷¹ By writing about Baudri's biography, Orderic also makes an argument for the worthiness of his work as one to copy from. There is nothing about this depiction that is unconventional, rather Orderic repeatedly emphasises Baudri's learning and monastic life. He writes that Baudri was both very well learned and noted for his monastic vocation while at Bourgueil; these two characteristics also informed the decision to elect him bishop of Dol.⁸⁷² Baudri spent time living in Normandy and 'there through his writings and teachings he inspired his listeners to the worship of God'.⁸⁷³ Orderic notes that he visited several Norman communities, naming Fècamp, Saint-Wandrille, and Jumièges; these houses were ones Orderic thought highly of and would have been well-known to the monks of Saint-Évroul. By placing the justification for following Baudri's narrative in the epilogue, the book's arrangement does not present the reader with an immediate answer to the problem of how to write crusade history. Rather, it invites the reader to consider the question and draws the audience into Orderic's efforts to confront the challenges of writing history. Thus, the problems of history writing explored in the *Historia* could also be seen as part of the dialogue Orderic had with members of the community of Saint-Évroul.

⁸⁶⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:188-190.

⁸⁶⁹ *Huc usque uenerabilis Baldrici prosecutus sum uestigia. HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:188.

⁸⁷⁰ *non credebam me posse emendare. HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:188.

⁸⁷¹ *Præfatum seniore[m] quem bene cognoui; ueneranter honorare decreui. HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:188.

⁸⁷² *HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:188.

⁸⁷³ *Ibi scriptis et dogmatibus suis auditores suos ad Dei cultum incitabat. HE*, Chibnall, IX, 5:190.

It can be tempting to imagine that Orderic's ideas of history writing were fully matured when he came to write the *Historia*. Marjorie Chibnall implied this in arguing that Orderic's 'historical apprenticeship' took place between 1095-1114/1118, consisting primarily in his interpolations into the *Gesta Normannorum ducum* and the very earliest parts of the *Historia*.⁸⁷⁴ However, this section has shown that learning about and reflecting upon history was a key aspect of the writing of the *Historia*. Indeed, that Orderic works through the problems of writing crusade history in Book IX indicates that even when he was in his sixties and at the pinnacle of his writing career, these processes of learning through writing did not disappear. Consequently, it appears that writing-in-time is not a process that was exclusively associated with a period of studentship.

In fact, I would argue that learning through practical experience is a key and enduring part of Orderic's sense of history writing. From as early as Book III Orderic starts discussing some of the problems he faced as a writer. Having described William I's marriage and children, Orderic notes that 'talented history writers [*ingentem hystoriam*]' could write the history of these men and women '[h]owever, I will briefly note down that which is relevant and return then to the topic I have begun, for I have not spent time in the courts of the world but dwell in the cloisters of an abbey and tend towards monastic concerns.'⁸⁷⁵ Here as in Book IX, Orderic preserved in the text explicit reflection on the challenges of writing history as well as his attempts to come to terms with them.

Seeing Orderic's work as a form of writing-in-time offers a way to theorise the relationship between different moments of inscription as part of a process of learning through practice. Metanarrative reflections on history writing can be seen as theoretical considerations, arising from the practice of writing history. We can consider, therefore, how the writing of the *Historia* over time afforded Orderic insights into history writing,

⁸⁷⁴ Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 29.

⁸⁷⁵ *Nos autem quia saecularibus curiis non insistimus, sed in claustris monasterii degentes monasticis rebus incumbimus; ea quae nobis competunt breuiter adnotantes ad inceptam materiam redeamus.* *HE*, Chibnall, III, 2:104.

foregrounding his innovativeness and talent as a history writer. Orderic used the practice of writing a single, monumental work of history to develop insights into the writing of history and explored these in the text through metanarrative. According to this reading, the various moments where Orderic reframed the work no longer appear to be retrospective attempts to course correct, but rather are tools designed to capitalise upon the benefits of writing over time. Thus, examining moments of inscription and theorising their relationship in terms of a deliberate learning experience offers a way to reconstruct a singular sense of Orderic's ideas of history writing on a much firmer theoretical footing, understanding plural perspectives through a model of experiential learning.

IV. Reforming the *Historia ecclesiastica*

The aim of this final section is to consider, as a single moment of inscription, the decision to re-shape the *Historia* with the addition of Books I-II and XI-XIII. Between the end of writing Book X in 1135 and the commencement of Book XI in 1136, Orderic determined the final form of the *Historia*.⁸⁷⁶ Books XI, XII, and XIII all appear to have been conceived together. The evidence suggests they were written simultaneously or soon after one another. Furthermore, Chibnall concluded that the divisions between the books are arbitrary and that they share a single prologue (at the start of Book XI) and epilogue (at the end of XIII).⁸⁷⁷ Based on this evidence, we can read Books XI, XII, and XIII as a single moment of inscription with a shared sense of history writing. The chronology of the *Historia* also suggests Books I and II were written predominantly in the period 1136-1137. Consequently, these two books can be examined as part of the same final stage of the development of the text.

⁸⁷⁶ Discussed above, in Section I.

⁸⁷⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, 6:xvii-xviii.

The prologue to Book XI offers a key to decoding these books. The passage is a composite discussion of the different ideas of history writing expressed earlier in the *Historia*. It includes the errors of idleness. Orderic writes that ‘A foolish man is troubled in vain and squanders his leisure,/ But a wise man never wishes to waste his time.’⁸⁷⁸ He adds: ‘For he wastes his time who composes useless verses [*carmen inutile*],/ and his labour is ruined when no benefit is returned from it.’⁸⁷⁹ Thus the relationship between sloth and history writing is articulated. Orderic also refers to the recurrent theme of the absence of miracles and the impact this has on his work. At length he exclaims his desire to write of miracles, if only they were still performed. Instead, he writes, ‘I am forced to tell of dark things, which I have seen and endured.’⁸⁸⁰ Orderic refers to the transient works of man, the failings of greed and sin, and the ‘thousand crimes [*crimina mille*],’ that might be recorded.⁸⁸¹ Taking the form of a verse prayer the prologue begins and ends with a direct appeal for salvation.⁸⁸² By thus seeking God’s mercy, the passage ties back to earlier writing on the agency of God in history. Collecting and re-expressing conceptions of history writing found elsewhere in the text, the prologue draws together the different ideas of history writing explored throughout the *Historia*.

The close parallels between this prologue and earlier arguments could suggest that it is deliberately summative and based upon a re-reading of earlier metanarrative passages. The form of the passage also supports this argument, as it is the only verse preface in the *Historia*.⁸⁸³ Vincent Debiais and Estelle Ingrand-Varenne’s discussions of Orderic’s use of verse epitaph in the *Historia* suggests that the shift to verse had multiple effects, including laying poetic and narrative emphasis on a particular passage.⁸⁸⁴ In this

⁸⁷⁸ *Insipiens frustra uexatur et oia perdit,/ At sapiens nullus sua tempora perdere gestit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:10.

⁸⁷⁹ *Tempus enim perdit qui carmen inutile pandit,/ Et labor ipse perit, qui commoda nulla rependit.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:10.

⁸⁸⁰ *Cogimur atra loqui quae cernimus aut toleramus.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:8.

⁸⁸¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:8-10.

⁸⁸² *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:12.

⁸⁸³ For the full preface, see: *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:8-12.

⁸⁸⁴ Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne, ‘Inscriptions in Orderic’s *Historia ecclesiastica*,’ 143-4.

case, one of effects of the use of verse is to distinguish this preface from earlier ones giving it an authoritative or cumulative place in the text. As the final metanarrative preface in the *Historia* it is, in a sense, Orderic's final word on history writing, especially as the epilogue to Book XIII follows Bede by providing a short autobiography of the writer.⁸⁸⁵

In writing a composite of former ideas, Orderic also lends particular emphasis to the addition of a new theme: the power of Satan. A section of the prologue describes how the influence of the devil is the cause of the age's decline:

The evil beast with ten horns now rules;
Everywhere the wild mob is stained by the leprosy of sin.
God figuratively revealed the Behemoth to his friend Job.
The treacherous demon rages across this wicked world.
The savage Erinys prowls above people dwelling below;
And thrusts them daily into the depths of Hell.⁸⁸⁶

The section that follows is a description of Satan. Orderic list some of the names he is known by, noting that readers will also be able to think of many more.⁸⁸⁷ The destruction wrought by the devil on humanity once again becomes the focus, and Orderic writes that '[h]e corrupts countless people with sin and often slaughters them./ Alas vast armies of men are eternally destroyed!'⁸⁸⁸ The heavy emphasis on the agency of Satan marks a significant departure from earlier books. It establishes a context in which the following books should be read. A key part of the depiction of Satan here is his role in misleading,

⁸⁸⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:550-556.

⁸⁸⁶ *Cornua dena gerens mala bestia iam dominatur,/ Effera plebs passim scelerum lepra maculatur./ Iob Dominus tipice Behemoth monstravit amico/ Dæmon in hoc mundo furit insidiosus iniquo./ Terrigenas furibunda super grassatur Erinis,/ Cotidieque suos Erebi contrudit in imis.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:10.

⁸⁸⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:10-2.

⁸⁸⁸ *Innumeros fædat uiciis et sepe trucidat,/ Proh dolor ingentes pereunt plerunque phalanges.* *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:12.

explicitly expressed in comments like: ‘Amphilsilena [Satan] mocks and plays with mortals’.⁸⁸⁹ Emphasising Satan’s role as a manipulator implies one of the causes of contemporary decline is a lack of sure guidance or knowledge of right life. In laying out this problem in the prologue to XI, the text implies that the history to follow should be read in relation to it and, possibly, as an attempt to address it.

The argument I make here is that Books I, II, XI, XII, XIII provide a means for contemporary churchmen to escape the grasp of sinfulness. These books are a tool for personal, individual reform and a response to the problem posed by the dominance of Satan and of sin. The composition is a thoughtful one, conceived under the auspices of Abbot Warin after Orderic had been the head of the scriptorium and, possibly, cantor at Saint-Évroul for a decade or more. Furthermore, the books also answer an historiographic question that frequently reappears in the *Historia*: how to write history of and for an age of decline. This problem was first tentatively hinted at in Book IV where Orderic describes the ‘lamentable theme of ruin’ presented by current events.⁸⁹⁰ The epilogue to Book IV enlarges upon this concern, as Orderic regrets that many books could be filled with the sufferings that befall man.⁸⁹¹ The problem is developed more explicitly in Books V, VI, and VIII. In Book V Orderic presents an answer to the challenge by falling back on the support of his abbot, Warin, trusting to his corrections.⁸⁹² In Book VI Orderic puts forward a different solution, casting the writing of a history of decline as an act of honesty: ‘Nevertheless, we must write truthfully of the course of the world and of human affairs.’⁸⁹³ Revisiting this problem repeatedly and proposing a range of solutions implies that it was a concern for Orderic as a history writer and one that was stubbornly resistant to effective resolution.

⁸⁸⁹ *Ludit et illudit mortalibus amphilsilena*. *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:10.

⁸⁹⁰ *flebile tema de sua ruina*. *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:190.

⁸⁹¹ *HE*, Chibnall, IV, 2:361.

⁸⁹² *HE*, Chibnall, V, 3:8.

⁸⁹³ *De cursu tamen seculi et rebus humanis ueraciter scribendum est*. *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:214.

By the time Orderic came to determine the final form of the *Historia* he developed a solution to this problem, pairing modern calamities with the apostolic past. My aim is to show how the description of calamities and disaster in Books XI, XII, and XIII make sense when read in relation to the *vitae* of Christ and the Apostles in Books I and II. Crucially, I am not arguing that all five of these books should be read in terms of underlying similarities. Rather Books I-II and XI-XIII should be seen as two discrete parts of a single text and that the core argument of the text lies in the relationship between them.

Books XI-XIII: Natural Calamities as a Call to Reform

A key element of the final three books is their role as a didactic record of heaven-sent calamities. Natural disasters are a recurrent feature of the books. References are sometimes simple and brief, such as where Orderic refers to the spread of a phlegmatic disease, storms, drought, earthquakes, and flooding.⁸⁹⁴ Orderic gives substantial detail about stories of miraculous happenings.⁸⁹⁵ A particularly vivid story comes from Brittany where a woman who had recently given birth came face-to-face with the devil in the guise of her husband.⁸⁹⁶ The most substantial collection of such stories comes from Book XIII, where Orderic describes the many calamities that occurred in 1134. The year witnessed heavy snowfall followed six days later by strong winds and unexpected flooding. In June, the sun blazed hotly for fifteen days such that many sought to cool off in rivers and lakes; Orderic says that ‘In our neighbourhood, from where news travels easily to us, thirty-seven men were drowned in the waters of lakes and rivers.’⁸⁹⁷ In this passage Orderic refers to his sources. He writes elsewhere about the material he gathered too, such as in a passage about a young man – William Blanchard – who was driving a wagon home with his sister when, on the borders of the bishoprics of Lisieux and Séez, a

⁸⁹⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:74, 82; XII, 6:316; XIII, 6:480.

⁸⁹⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:73.

⁸⁹⁶ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:186.

⁸⁹⁷ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:434-6.

lightning bolt struck the wagon, killing the mare that pulled it, a nearby foal, and the girl. Orderic then adds that: ‘I saw the ashes and the corpse of the deceased girl on a bier the next day, for, as I was staying at Merlerault, I hastened to the scene in order to confidently know the truth of matter and so relate for posterity [an account of] this divine blow.’⁸⁹⁸ In the same passage he also writes that a twelve-year-old boy told him of severe flooding that he escaped by climbing the roof of a house.⁸⁹⁹ These references support the truth of the account. They also, however, indicate the significance of these passages to the *Historia* at this point. The veracity of these descriptions clearly matters, as does the readers’ knowledge of it. Furthermore, Orderic’s description of rushing to the scene of a nearby lightning strike says a great deal about his interests. That he was willing and able to seek out first-hand events of this kind indicates their significance to his work.

The focus on these kinds of calamitous events is an integral part of Orderic’s writing from 1136. Additions to Book VI were being made after the final form of the *Historia* had been determined. Consequently, the final parts of Book VI were likely written alongside Books I-II and XI-XIII. One of these additions concerns a miracle that happened on 28th December 1133 and so could not have been added to the *Historia* before 1134 at the earliest.⁹⁰⁰ On the night of Holy Innocents (28th December) sudden, heavy snowfall and a swollen river prevented a man named Geoffrey from delivering bread to Saint-Évroul. However, he miraculously crossed the river with ease and the bread remained dry. The specifics of the account are less important for my argument than its inclusion in Book VI. What its presence shows is that the focus on miraculous happenings was a key part of the reimagining of the *Historia* and that this new emphasis was inserted retrospectively into spaces in earlier books.

⁸⁹⁸ *quarum fauillas et extinctæ cadauer in feretro in crastinum uidi; quia Merulæ consistens illuc perrexi, ut diuinam posteris relaturus percussione[m], indubitanter scirem rei certitudinem.* *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:438.

⁸⁹⁹ *HE*, Chibnall, XIII, 6:440.

⁹⁰⁰ *HE*, Chibnall, VI, 3:344.

The calamities Orderic describes are associated in the text with the decline of the age. A relationship is implied between natural disasters and human suffering, beyond the direct causal relationship in cases of, for example, those drowned during flooding. The relationship appears to be sequential: calamities prefigure and anticipate human suffering and death. Describing events in 1109, Orderic writes about sickness, rainfall, and famine, before then describing the deaths of a number of prominent churchmen.⁹⁰¹ An earthquake in 1119 similarly prefigures the deaths of numerous bishops and abbots.⁹⁰² The description of violent gale on Christmas Eve, 1118, appears immediately before a passage on the schism between Popes Gelasius and Gregory VIII.⁹⁰³ The relationship between calamities and human suffering is also expressed explicitly. Orderic describes a bizarre occurrence at Ely where a pregnant cow was cut open to reveal three piglets inside. A pilgrim to Jerusalem had apparently foretold this event and had also prophesied that three great persons subject to Henry I would die soon after.⁹⁰⁴ Orderic writes that the pilgrim was proven right by events when William of Évreux, Queen Edith-Matilda, and Robert of Meulan all died.

The frequency with which Orderic writes about calamitous events and his descriptions of seeking them in the field indicates that they play an important role in the text at this point.⁹⁰⁵ I suggest that their significance lies in the interpretation of these events as tools of divine instruction. Orderic lays out this interpretation at numerous points. Following an account of various phenomena, Orderic explains that ‘All-mighty God revealed wonderous and mighty works on earth, through which he impressed upon the hearts of those who witnessed them that they might discipline themselves away from

⁹⁰¹ *HE*, Chibnall, XI, 6:166-8.

⁹⁰² *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:316-8.

⁹⁰³ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:184.

⁹⁰⁴ *HE*, Chibnall, XII, 6:186-8.

⁹⁰⁵ On this point, see the introduction to this chapter.

evil-doing.⁹⁰⁶ The response of men to such occurrences is an important element of the accounts. For example, Orderic wrote that:

In the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord 1134, the twelfth indiction, many grave happenings took place on earth, by which some men were punished according to their crimes. However, others, witnessing such frightful and unknown occurrences, grew pale and trembled with terror.⁹⁰⁷

Although the events of 1134 are described elsewhere, in this instance the focus is on how these events punish and instil fear, rather than the events themselves. Further authority is lent to this interpretation when Orderic cites the explanations of others. Following violent gales, Orderic explains that ‘Certain perceptive philosophers subtly examined the hidden elements of such things and carefully conjecturing from past events they declared what was to come: that the wrath of God threatened the world as judgement for sin.’⁹⁰⁸ Orderic is not appealing to any particular scholars, but rather to the authority of the learned in general, hence the references to their perceptiveness, subtly, and caution.

By providing a record of calamities and explaining their meaning in the text, Orderic facilitated their function. The record he offers thus acts as a device to spread the significance of these events beyond those who directly witnessed them so that others might benefit from the wisdom they impart. In this way, a key element of the final three books is didactic: they partake in the process of exhorting men to improve their lives and cast-off sin. However, the present age of decline does not offer the tools to improve one’s own life. This is where the apostolic past fits in.

⁹⁰⁶ *omnipotens Deus mirifica in orbe magnalia monstravit; quibus intuentium corda ut castigarentur a nequitia commonuit.* HE, Chibnall, XII, 6:226.

⁹⁰⁷ *Anno ab incarnatione Domini MCXXXIII indictione xii; multa grauia in mundo contigerunt, quibus quidam exigentibus culpis plexi sunt; alii uero terribilia et insolita uidentes terrore pallentes contremuerunt.* HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:434.

⁹⁰⁸ *Quidam perspicaces sophystæ archana rerum subtiliter rimati sunt; et ex preteritis futura caute concientes dixerunt, quod ira Dei mundo culpis exigentibus immineret.* HE, Chibnall, XIII, 6:446.

The Pedagogical Function of Books I and II

If calamities in the present provide the impetus for reform, the models provided in Books I and II are put forward as tools to enable this kind of personal reform. They do this by providing solid, reliable examples, contrasted with the faltering morality of modern churchmen. Orderic consistently argues that modern churchmen are not sufficiently holy in their lives and, consequently, do not work miracles, which are understood as ‘proofs of holiness’.⁹⁰⁹ In Books I and II the miraculousness of Christ and the Apostles is heavily stressed, implicitly attesting their proven virtue. Orderic actually describes the *vita* of Christ as a catalogue of miracles: ‘And now I wish to examine the series of the miracles of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which have been written down in the books of the four Evangelists. I wish to note down a truthful compendium, so that it might be easy to recall them to mind.’⁹¹⁰ The relationship between miracles and the text is even closer in this description, as it foregrounds the text’s role as a tool to help the reader quickly recall to mind these miracles. When summarising the work at the end, Orderic explains that one of the things he has done is gather a full record of Christ’s miracles.⁹¹¹ As Elisabeth Mégier noticed, this is no boast: Orderic recorded every one of Christ’s miracles referred to in the Gospels.⁹¹² In Book II, the record of miracles performed by the Apostles is an equally important fixture. The saint with whom Orderic concludes the first half of Book II is St Martial, who is the only additional saint added to the list of Apostles and Evangelists.⁹¹³ St Martial’s prolific miracle working is a key element and might account for the decision to include the saint here. Orderic actually states that he will not include the details of the many miracles St Martial worked, for fear of wearying his readers, indicating that the fact St Martial worked miracles – rather

⁹⁰⁹ I discussed this point in Chapter Three.

⁹¹⁰ *A modo continuationem miraculorum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, quæ in quatuor Evangeliorum libris scripta sunt, libet intueri, et veraciter compendioseque paginis annotare; ut facilius ibidem perspecta possim ad mentem revocare.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:11.

⁹¹¹ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:93-4.

⁹¹² Mégier, ‘Jesus Christ,’ 268-9.

⁹¹³ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:360-82.

than the miracles themselves – is key to the account.⁹¹⁴ The miraculousness of Christ and the early saints contrasts starkly with Orderic’s reflections on contemporary churchmen. An argument is implied through this comparison: that these early churchmen have a moral integrity that contemporary ones do not.

The argument that the models presented Books I and II were a response to a perceived contemporary need is supported by Orderic’s efforts to bridge the chronological divide between the apostolic past and his own age. This is achieved in the text through a direct interjection. Mid-way through the list of emperors and kings Orderic laments that he will no longer be able to rely on the evidence of Bede and Paul of Monte Cassino as he approaches more recent events.⁹¹⁵ In the same sentence he digresses into a discussion on the present times, writing that they:

are embittered by many and varied calamities. While two prelates have now obstinately fought over the pontificate of Rome for six years, and after the death of Henry, king of the English, his nephew Stephen and son-in-law Geoffrey struggle over the kingdom with threats and armies, to the detriment of many.⁹¹⁶

As a summary of the present age this is a highly selective, and insightful, depiction. The aspects of the present that are recalled to mind are elements of human folly and chaos. That this is the sense of the present that is put forward at this point in Book I solidifies the connection between the proven holiness of the apostolic past and contemporary decline. Furthermore, the passage that this extract comes from – the list of emperors and kings – is itself a device, used in the text to illustrate the continuity of time between the present age and the time of Christ. Orderic recaps what he has done in Book I in the

⁹¹⁴ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:382.

⁹¹⁵ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:152-3.

⁹¹⁶ *multis variisque calamitatibus modo tetra sunt; dum duo præsules de romano pontificatu jam per sex annos ambitiose contenderunt, et post mortem Henrici regis Anglorum, de regno ejus Stephanus nepos, et Joffredus gener, ad multorum detrimenta, minis et armis inimicitias exercuerunt. HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:153.

epilogue: ‘I have begun the thread of narrative with the Incarnation of the Saviour, and have led it, through a series of emperors and kings [*per seriem imperatorum et regum*], up to the present day.’⁹¹⁷ The way Orderic describes the list of emperors and kings is as a tool, through which he has been able to bring the narrative up to the present time. The bridging of chronology is the primary aim.

As well as offering reliable models Books I and II also reflect upon the question of how to use them, shedding light on Orderic’s ideas of reform. The first half of Book II on the deeds of the Apostles is frequently interspersed with metanarrative references that draw readers’ attention to the current topic and reiterate what the text is discussing. For example, in one interjection Orderic explains that he has made brief extracts from the *Acts of the Apostles* and going forward he will make use of additional sources that are considered authentic.⁹¹⁸ A little later he again refers to the task he has undertaken, making use of the work of St Luke.⁹¹⁹ These passages are unusual in Book II for their frequency. These recurrent metanarrative passages could be an aid to a non-linear, episodic form of reading. Such interjections allow a reader to pick up the book in the middle without the need to have read from the opening prologue, supporting a reading that looked to specific examples when pertinent. A reader could certainly find the passages on St Paul and St Andrew with ease, as both are introduced with a short preamble.⁹²⁰ It is plausible that these metanarrative references also work as prompts, supporting the communication of meaning and encouraging the attention of listeners in a context of refectory reading. By allowing the reader to quickly locate particular passages and reminding listeners of the topic under discussion, the form of Book II facilitates access to the moral knowledge contained in the examples of lives of the Apostles.

⁹¹⁷ *lineam narrationibus incarnatione Salvatoris inchoavi, et per seriem imperatorum et regum usque in hodiernum diem perduxit.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:192.

⁹¹⁸ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:225. See also: 1:268.

⁹¹⁹ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:248.

⁹²⁰ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:260; 282-3.

Books I and II do not just offer models, however. They also function pedagogically to aid less confident or able readers to access the deeper meanings of the examples offered in the text. The usefulness of the examples presented in Books I and II is supported by Orderic's attempts to foster a certain kind of reader. Sigbjørn Sønnesyn has argued that Orderic had an ideal reader in mind when writing the *Historia*.⁹²¹ That reader – dubbed the *studiosi* – is characterised by persistence, insight, and enthusiasm, qualities necessary to unpick the moral arguments of the text. Sønnesyn stresses that the moral content of the *Historia* does not always flow logically from the narrative and so requires the attention of readers of this kind, who can uncover allegorical and moral meanings of the *Historia* as it is read as part of the liturgical cycle. Sønnesyn's argument is persuasive for Books III-X and is firmly grounded in an insightful reading of the metanarrative material in the text. However, I suggest that the start of Book XI marks a departure, where Orderic's expression of the misleading agency of the devil goes hand-in-hand with a more inclusive sense of audience. As a consequence of this, Books I and II include within them pedagogical tools that support readers to derive value from the models presented, even if those readers do not meet the exacting standards of the *studiosi*.

A key pedagogical tool in the first two books is their form. Both books are referred to as acts of abbreviation.⁹²² The decision to provide an abbreviation is explained as arising from a desire to encourage those who are less willing and able to read full volumes. Referring to the abbreviation of the life of Christ, Orderic writes: 'Certainly, in this exercise I have taken care to bring benefit to myself and to my fellows, wishing to confer some advantage on those who are unwilling to explore the profound and extensive works of the doctors [of the Church].'⁹²³ Claims to produce

⁹²¹ Sønnesyn, 'Mystical Morals of History,' 284-97.

⁹²² *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:192; II, 1:347.

⁹²³ *In hoc nempe sedimine mihi meisque similibus prodesse curavi; eis scilicet, qui profunda doctorum prolixaque rimari fastidiunt, conferre volens aliquid emolumentum.* *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:94.

abbreviations or write with brevity are a common convention in histories.⁹²⁴ As these claims often appear in texts that are expansive, even voluminous, Antonia Grandsen argued that they were ‘rhetorical flourishes’ that seldom reflected an author’s genuine intentions or the form of their work.⁹²⁵ The *Historia* could perhaps be a work of this kind, as claims to write abbreviations seem at odds with the work’s sheer size. However, it is still worth considering how Orderic’s claims to write abbreviations in Books I and II could have been understood. These claims could work with the use of short references to the topic under discussion, guiding readers and making the examples – and therefore moral knowledge contained within – as accessible and digestible as possible. The repeated claims to be writing an abbreviation should also be taken seriously as a form of argument. Whether or not the work was brief, explicitly claiming to write an abbreviation could have the effect of encouraging the less confident to persevere in their reading.

The prologue to Book II has a further pedagogical component, encouraging the reader to inhabit a certain mode of reading. Orderic writes that St Luke addressed his *Acts of the Apostles* to Theophilus. Without explaining who Theophilus is, Orderic explains the name’s meaning: ‘Theophilus means a lover of God’.⁹²⁶ Orderic adds that the name ‘can be applied to all who are eager and studious, and who are continually devoted to meditation on divine law, to whom the word of God is rightly directed’.⁹²⁷ An element of this explanation certainly does stress the need for the reader to be intelligent and committed, as Sønnesyn has argued.⁹²⁸ It also, however, encourages the reader to inhabit that mindset, rather than just demanding it of them. Orderic thus lays out for the reader how they need to approach the task of reading the text. He lays emphasis, above all, on the need for readers to strive to understand the text, stressing the qualities of

⁹²⁴ Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces*, 154.

⁹²⁵ Grandsen, ‘Prologues,’ 68.

⁹²⁶ *Theophilus quippe interpretatur Deum diligens. HE*, Chibnall, II, 1:164.

⁹²⁷ *quo designatur omnis studiosus et intelligens, et in diuinæ legis meditatione iugi feruens, ad quem sermo Dei iure dirigitur. HE*, Chibnall, II, 1:165.

⁹²⁸ Sønnesyn, ‘Mystical Morals of History,’ 295.

eagerness, studiousness, and fervent devotion. It is noteworthy, that Orderic does not place any demands on a readers intelligence or education. Rather, the passage presents the argument that anyone with the right approach can become the one to whom the work is addressed: another Theophilus.

The final pedagogical tool in these books is the passage on Christ's explanation of the parable of the vine.⁹²⁹ An element of the parable is that workers enter the vineyard at different hours of the day. Orderic offers several allegorical interpretations of the hours of the day, taken from Jerome and Rabanus Maurus.⁹³⁰ One of them is that the hours represent the different ages at which people enter the vineyard, from childhood represented by the morning to the eleventh hour, representing infirmity. In the margins of the manuscript a hand has been drawn pointing to the phrase 'the morning is childhood'.⁹³¹ This is not the only drawing of a hand in Book I.⁹³² The fact hands appear at all in the text indicates that either Orderic or later individuals used the work as a means of teaching in some capacity. That this hand points to childhood and Orderic was an oblate has led to the suggestion that its inclusion could be Orderic's work.⁹³³ Emily Albu even argued that the appearance of the hand is evidence of how deeply Orderic's identified with his own work.⁹³⁴ However, I think it is risky to assume that the hand – whether or not it was drawn by Orderic – is a personal message when its primary effect is upon other readers. Understood pedagogically, the hand draws attention to a particular aspect of the parable, inviting readers to consider for themselves when they entered the vineyard. According to this explanation, it can be seen as a tool that encourages Orderic's monastic audience to draw out the relevance of the material discussed to themselves. The appearance of pedagogical tools of this kind in the text supports the

⁹²⁹ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:45-6.

⁹³⁰ See: Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 53-4.

⁹³¹ *Mane puericia est. HE*, Chibnall, I, 1:143. See 1:143, n. 2.

⁹³² *HE*, Chibnall, 1:142, n. 1.

⁹³³ *HE*, Chibnall, 1:54, n. 1.

⁹³⁴ Albu, 'Worldly Woe,' 240.

argument that Books I and II were designed to present usable, relevant models that answered the challenge presented by decline in the modern age.

An Ecclesiastical History?

The models presented in Books I and II were directed exclusively at churchmen. As discussed above, the material on emperors and kings in Book I was presented primarily as a chronographic tool. The list of popes, which forms the second half of Book II has some similarities. It too appears to be concerned with chronography, hence the fact that Orderic endeavoured to keep the list up-to-date.⁹³⁵ However, the papal list also differs in function. Books I and II are similar in overarching structure; both begin with *vita* or *vitae* and, around half-way through, commence a list of individuals. And so it can be tempting to see them as analogous with one another. But, the differences between them are significant and shed light on the work's position as ecclesiastical history. The papal list, unlike the list of kings and emperors, is more akin to the passages on Christ and the apostles. Orderic explains that he decided to write a papal list '[f]or I consider this work to be necessary and say that it is advantageous for studious recipients and to others who desire instruction.'⁹³⁶ The reference to those who desire instruction (*docilis*) implies that the list of popes has a more substantial educational function. Orderic further adds: 'It is delightful to study [the popes'] triumphant course over the waves of the world, so that those who walk in the footsteps of these noble men might exert themselves to imitate their strenuous acts and so be saved.'⁹³⁷

In Book I we also find a renewed emphasis on the work's title of ecclesiastical history. The prologue to Book I appears before the rubric that marks the commencement

⁹³⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, 1:200, n. 2.

⁹³⁶ *Hoc enim opus necessarium duco, ac studiosis clientibus sibi aliisque docilibus commodum autumo. HE*, Chibnall, II, 1:191.

⁹³⁷ *triumphales cursus perscrutari bonis delectabile est inter fluctus mundanos, ut per hæroum uestigia gradientes desudent imitari strenuos actus atque saluificos. HE*, Chibnall, II, 1:190.

of the book.⁹³⁸ It is also prefaced with a rubric – ‘Here begins the prologue to the ecclesiastical history’ – which indicates that this passage reads as the prologue for the whole *Historia*.⁹³⁹ In this prologue Orderic lays out his task: ‘I aim to speak truthfully of ecclesiastical affairs, as a simple son of the church, carefully following the early fathers as I am able according to my small ability. I busy myself to explore and make plain the comings and goings of modern Christians, and so aspire to call my present work an ecclesiastical history.’⁹⁴⁰ The parable of the vineyard, as it appears at the start of Book I, also stresses the text’s status as ecclesiastical history. The parable implies the subject of the work is the vineyard itself, analogous with the church. Orderic explains that the vine represents the church and that God never ceases tending the vine across the world.⁹⁴¹ By explaining explicitly the meaning of the vine and placing the metaphor at the start of Book I, Orderic positions the *Historia* as a history of the vine.

The reading I have suggested of the relationship of Books I-II with Books XI-XIII and their function as a tool for reform amongst contemporary churchmen makes sense of this strong assertion of the work’s character as ecclesiastical history. According to this argument, the work’s character as ecclesiastical history hinges upon its function. Furthermore, I would argue that the emphasis placed on the work’s character as ecclesiastical history can be read as an assertion. This emphasis demands that the reader pay attention to how the text works as history for the church. Consequently, the title actually comes to form part of the argument about the usefulness of history writing for churchmen at this particular moment in time. It also has a retrospective quality, as the arguments put forward in the first two books provide a backdrop to the reading experience of the text as a whole. For example, by presenting the apostolic past in contrast with decline the present, Books I and II condition the reader to see accounts of

⁹³⁸ *HE*, Chibnall, I, 1:134.

⁹³⁹ *Incipit prologus in æcclesiasticam hystoriam*. *HE*, Chibnall, I, 1:130.

⁹⁴⁰ *De rebus æcclesiasticis ut simplex æcclesie filius sincere fari dispono, et priscos patres pro posse moduloque meo nisu sequens sedulo; modernis Christianorum euentus rimari et propalare satago, unde presens opusculum æcclesiasticam historiam appellari affecto*. *HE*, Chibnall, I, 1:130.

⁹⁴¹ *HE*, Le Prevost, I, 1:5.

war and suffering in the remainder of the *Historia* as further evidence of decline and as strong evidence for need for moral reform. This shows how Orderic could refashion the *Historia* as a whole over time. That he could shape the reading experience of the other eleven books, not through additions, marginalia or erasures, but through the composition of Books I and II reveals the elastic nature of single-work monumental histories. Orderic not only instrumentalised learning over time as I have argued; he also made careful use of a form of writing that invited large scale reimagination. The thirteen books of the *Historia* were not assembled haphazardly. Rather the accretion of books was an effective tool that allowed Orderic to reframe and rethink history dynamically, while preserving its legacy and evolution within the fabric of a single text.

Conclusion

At some point after 1136, Orderic added a new part to the preface to Book III, connecting this first-written book to the newly added Books I and II. The prologue laid out what Orderic had done in the previous books, noting their exemplary function ('To meditate on them [the early saints] or write faithfully about them is beneficial and pleasing to the soul, and a salutary remedy for a weakness of spirit').⁹⁴² It has been suggested that the new material added to Book III situates Orderic's material on the deeds of the Normans in a broader context of church history from the Incarnation.⁹⁴³ I think there is much to be said for reading the updates to the prologue as the forging of a connection between contemporary Norman history and the history of Christianity. The new additions, however, do nothing to mask the dramatic change in the tone, focus and purpose of Orderic's work between Books II and III. Rather, attention is explicitly drawn to this break: 'Now however, a different task [*aliud...opus*] is imposed upon me

⁹⁴² *de quibus meditari siue loqui fideliter iocundum est animæ et commodum, de interioribus morbis salubre remedium. HE, Chibnall, III, 2:2.*

⁹⁴³ Gasper, 'Theology of Reckoning,' 258-9.

by my superiors, and the matter put before me is the deeds of the Normans'.⁹⁴⁴ This chapter has shown that the way Orderic handled the transition between the first two books and Book III should not come as a surprise; embracing learning over time and the expression of multiple modes of history writing is a core part of his work and sense of history writing.

This chapter has offered an in-depth analysis of the multiple expressions of ideas of history writing in the text, reconciling their plurality through close attention to the text's chronological phases. In the place of incoherence, I have argued that Orderic demonstrates a reflective approach to writing, which includes addressing explicitly in the text the challenges he faced as a writer. By understanding the development of the *Historia* as a process of writing-in-time it has been possible isolate certain, enduring characteristics of Orderic's approach to history writing, while respecting the complexity of the text and ideas of history writing expressed within it. His approach to writing history involved instrumentalising time, making use of practical experience and dialogue with audience as the bedrock upon which to put forward and test out theories of history. The endurance of Orderic's approach to history writing, rather than its result, means that it is entirely possible to recover a cogent sense of Orderic's history writing as a whole.

This chapter has also shed light on the development of the *Historia* and Orderic as a history writer over time. The writing of the *Historia* was a multi-stage process, with distinct, identifiable moments of reconsideration and thought. A part of this process was dialogue between Orderic and his community about the content of the text, as well as ideas of history writing and Orderic's place as the community's historian. I have shown that this dialogue could be productive and creative; after *c.* 1127 Orderic does not appear to have followed a scheme laid out for him by anyone else, but nor did he unreflectively continue to insist upon his original ideas of history writing expressed in Book V. His use of conventions and expression of traditional ideas about the value and purpose of history

⁹⁴⁴ *Nunc autem a magistris aliud michi opus iniungitur, et de Normannicis euentibus materia porrigitur.* HE, Chibnall, III, 2:2.

writing were chosen in accordance with his developing ideas of history writing. Thus, his use of conventions was both meaningful and firmly rooted in his social context.

In investigating the development of the *Historia* over time, this chapter has also brought to light a key development in Orderic's thought. When Orderic wrote Book V he expressed for the first time and in the wake of Abbot Roger's death an argument for the value of history as consolation; a reminder of the guiding hand of God. He took as an assumption the goodness of his own community and did not think it necessary to demonstrate that his fellow monks would qualify to receive divine succour. By the time Orderic wrote Book XI his view was different. At this point there is more emphasis on the fall of man, on sinfulness, and on the need for personal struggle to improve oneself, according to proven knowledge of goodness. At the high-point of his writing career and under the auspices of Abbot Warin Orderic put forward an ambitious argument for the value of history as both demanding reform and providing the tools to emend oneself. While Orderic does not doubt the moral worth of the monks of Saint-Évroul at any time, in writing Book XI he nonetheless offered them a far more practical tool for their own salvation. As Orderic developed ideas of history writing, ideas of reform became ever more significant and important.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine the relationship between Orderic's history writing and contemporary church reforms. In addressing the question of church reform and its relationship to Orderic's work, I have examined passages associated with the church and ecclesiastical change. Until now, passages on church councils, marriage, and prelates have been the subject of only limited scholarly analysis: my thesis has offered an introduction to this material. It also provides a check to a tendency to emphasise Orderic's role as a historian of Anglo-Norman politics, as material concerning the wider church was integral to Orderic's sense of history writing and forms relational arguments with passages on political affairs in the duchy. Analysing Orderic's arguments about reform and their development over time has also led to a clearer sense of Orderic's processes of history writing and their relationship to his monastic career.

This thesis examined the significance of contemporary church reforms with respect to all thirteen books of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. The aim of this approach was to explore the impact of reform on the text's development of both structure and content over time. Each chapter of my thesis examined a different kind of material in the text, building upon the conclusions of the preceding chapters in order to reveal Orderic's systemic engagement with reform while confronting different aspects of the text's methodological challenges. By adopting this cumulative approach, I have developed methodologies for navigating the interpretative challenges posed by the text's form, structure, and content, in particular through the use of chronology as a structuring device.

In Chapters One and Two, I considered how far Orderic engages with different aspect of contemporary reform efforts, in order to test the theory that the *Historia* can be

read as a commentary on contemporary reforms. The first chapter assessed the argumentative and narrative effects of conciliar accounts in the *Historia*, in order to investigate Orderic's engagement with church reform as expressed through the material most closely associated with contemporary legal initiatives. Responding to a tendency to focus on canon lists, the chapter analysed conciliar accounts in full and within their wider narrative setting, questioning the assumption that the documentary appearance of this material isolated it from the rest of the text. It revealed that Orderic made a number of arguments through these accounts, notably concerning papal conciliar practice, ducal authority, and apocalypticism. Whereas the first chapter focused on the clearly delineated conciliar accounts, the second examined a widespread and amorphous body of material presented in the *Historia*, touching on depictions of betrothals and married life. It examined ideas about marriage communicated in the text, informed by a contemporary context in which marriage practices and laws were undergoing dramatic change. To navigate the methodological challenge posed by the volume of material, the chapter offered a chronological reading using the text's timeline of writing as a tool to unpick Orderic's arguments and their development over time. This revealed that Orderic's engagement with marriage evolved alongside the expansion and reimagining of his work.

Chapter Three and Four developed my argument that the *Historia* does comment upon contemporary reforms, in order to examine the relationship between Orderic's ideas of reform and his historical writing in greater depth. The third chapter investigated Orderic's ideas of reform, in light of the interest in contemporary church reforms uncovered in the previous chapters. It sought to analyse Orderic's distinctive languages of reform, avoiding a reliance on established vocabulary. The chapter found that Orderic used history writing to make a case against efforts to promote stricter religious life, contrasting the evidence of the past to implicitly establish reformers as innovators driven by excessive zeal and acting without the proof confirmed by the performance of miracles. The fourth chapter used the findings of the previous three to inform a critical reading of the metanarrative passages in the *Historia* according to a new chronological

framework, derived from an analysis of Orderic's writing career and immediate social context. It examined the ideas expressed in metanarrative passages, as distinct moments of inscription where Orderic reimagined his historical project. The chapter identified key phases in the writing of the *Historia*, connecting them to Orderic's life and place within the community of Saint-Évroul. It drew attention to the significance of Orderic's abbots, with particular emphasis on the death of Abbot Roger and abbacy of Orderic's friend Warin. Using the concept of writing-in-time, the chapter recovered a cogent sense of history writing in the text.

Collectively, these four chapters offer a sustained and detailed analysis of the *Historia* as a whole. By examining a range of material across all thirteen books, this thesis has implications for our understanding of Orderic and his work that can be obscured by more selective or partial analyses. For example, by comparing Orderic's use of recurrent analogies – such as Phineas or the parable of the vine – we can see how the aims and agendas of his history writing developed over time. Thus, by offering a sustained literary reading of the *Historia*, this thesis has shed light on numerous aspects of Orderic's writing processes and his ideas of reform. Whilst each chapter has offered new readings of the *Historia*, collectively they point to three broader implications that deserve future study. These relate to three main themes: eleventh- and twelfth-century church reforms, Orderic's history writing, and methodologies for analysing the *Historia*.

One of the main findings of this study is that Orderic had a cogent ideological position with respect to contemporary reforms. Indeed, he consistently criticised contemporary prelates for their legalistic efforts to enforce stricter standards of religious life and empathised with the experiences of ordinary priests and monks. By identifying Orderic's ideas of reform, this study raises the possibility that other contemporaries shared his outlook. Thus, it could be the case that my re-reading of the *Historia* exposes a hitherto unseen twelfth-century conversation about reform, which took place alongside contemporary polemic discourse. Normandy produced the most significant range of

polemical works defending married priests and their sons.⁹⁴⁵ Some of the arguments expressed in these texts – such as criticisms of the Gregorian weaponisation of law, the immorality of demanding celibacy, and individualism – are reminiscent of Orderic’s own, indicating potential intertextuality between ideas in the *Historia* and contemporary polemic works.⁹⁴⁶

To test the possibility that Orderic’s views were more widely shared, future studies could undertake comparative analyses. Many of Orderic’s ideas seem to have come from the textual milieu of Benedictine monasticism. Indeed, I have shown that his historical project acted as a communal space to think through the ontological implications of reform efforts for a community of traditional Benedictine monks. His ideas concerning *discretio*, and therefore its counter-point of overzealousness, seem to have been informed by ideals of leadership found in the Benedictine Rule. Consequently, we could examine the works of other Benedictine writers to test how far the criticism of church reformers through the use of this language is shared amongst Orderic’s contemporaries. Other avenues for comparative research into responses to reform include the narrative use of church councils, depictions of papal authority, and the use of miracles as a device to criticise contemporary prelates.

Orderic’s engagement with reform also has implications for the study of eleventh- and twelfth-century church reform itself. A significant conclusion of this study is that current approaches are problematic in the way they identify and analyse sources. On the one hand, there is a tendency among reform scholars to overlook authors’ creative processes. In scholarship on reform ideologies, marriage, and church councils certain kinds of texts are examined as evidence of practice. However, my analysis of Orderic’s work reveals the role the author plays in depicting these realities. Indeed, Orderic described the experiences of individuals as part of arguments about the contemporary church, such as in his accounts of clerical families. On the other hand, it is

⁹⁴⁵ Barstow, *Married Priests*, 2-3.

⁹⁴⁶ Barstow, *Married Priests*, 105-74; 119-23; 135; 162-5.

equally problematic to assume that only a narrow range of polemical texts engaged with ideologies of reform. Although Orderic did not use what has been identified as reform language, he nonetheless articulated criticisms of those churchmen seeking to enact changes. Thus, his text cannot be read as a source for real experiences of reform – but nor is it a polemical tract.

Consequently, it is necessary to look beyond polemic and include a wider range of sources as evidence of ideas of – and responses to – church reform in this period. Due to its scale, structure, and expansive period of writing, the *Historia* was never widely read. However, it is exactly these factors which make it such a valuable text through which to investigate ideas of reform. Orderic offers multiple perspectives and a diachronic assessment of change. We must examine other new voices, like Orderic's, that existed outside of polemical circles and at the level of individual communities. Histories in particular could be key. As a work of history, the *Historia* attempts to make sense of change over time. Orderic used evidence of the past to articulate arguments against reformers and to provide models as a remedy to the perceived deficiencies of modern church leaders. His use of the past – and of history writing to deploy that past – raises the possibility that historiographic works in general were uniquely placed to convey certain kinds of arguments about church reform.

A second conclusion of this study is the revelation of a close relationship between Orderic's history writing and church reform. This is a multi-faceted relationship that is in evidence in several ways. The substance of the text is often focused on issues pertinent to contemporary reforms, including conciliar law, attacks on nicolaitism, and new monasticism. The drive to promote stricter religious life is an issue that Orderic focuses upon, thus he constructs an argument critical of these efforts and supportive of his own community's way of life. Even Orderic's ideas of history writing are articulated relative to ideas of reform, as he seeks to find ways to make history useful as a tool for personal and communal moral improvement. Furthermore, the way the text developed over time is shaped by its engagement with reform. Thus, it is in Books XI-XIII that we

find the most incisive criticism of reformers' efforts and the contrasting of marriage practices with the ideal of fidelity. Consequently, this thesis places church reform at the heart of Orderic's historiographic activity. It shows that the decision to write ecclesiastical history at a moment of contested change in the church had meaning, positioning the *Historia* as a commentary on church reform.

Uncovering the text's engagement with reform reveals more unity and design than hitherto identified in the way that Orderic composed his work. Seemingly disconnected material is unified through a shared consideration of the state of the church. In particular material on church councils and prelates forms a consistent part of the arguments Orderic makes. Books I and II also belongs to the text as a discrete, but crucial, part that reshapes the reading of the whole and forms implied arguments with Books XI-XIII. Instances where Orderic re-read his work and retold stories are not accidental, but rather reflect upon earlier ideas and develop new ones. This accounts for the apparent incoherence in the text. The *Historia* is not a loose collection of material, but a purposeful text that exploits the rhetorical potential of historical writing.

A further implication of my analysis of reform in the *Historia* is to lay emphasis on Orderic's sophisticated sense of history writing. Although the assumptions concerning Orderic's simplicity as a writer and his lack of command of his subject have been increasingly challenged, they still have some currency.⁹⁴⁷ This thesis reveals the contemporary relevance of the themes Orderic explores, revealing that his work was a serious attempt to use history writing to navigate the pressing challenges that arose due to the reform of the church. His use of history writing as a tool to make pertinent arguments about reform shows that he had clear understanding of the persuasive and didactic potential of historical writing. However, he also revisited the question of how and why to write history. These two points are not incompatible. In fact, from as early as Book V Orderic consciously explored ideas of history writing, seeking ways to make his

⁹⁴⁷ As discussed in the Introduction, Section III.

work useful in a context of contemporary decline. Thus, this thesis identifies the expression of competing ideas in the *Historia* as part of Orderic's conscious approach to the writing of history for an age of reform.

By examining Orderic's engagement with reform, this thesis also highlights the dynamic impact of Orderic's audience on the text. Recent research has stressed the significance of Orderic's position at Saint-Évroul and of his Benedictine milieu.⁹⁴⁸ This thesis adds to this research by suggesting that Orderic's arguments developed through a more active dialogue between him and his audience. Instances of metanarrative, including autobiographical passages, are part of this dialogue, acting as moments of persuasion. Indeed, through such metanarrative Orderic seems to have attempted to persuade his audience that history writing was a means to navigate the ontological challenges posed by church reform. Given that *historia* was not an integral part of a monastic curriculum, this is an argument that needed to be made.⁹⁴⁹ Thus, through this reading of the text, I have shown how the *Historia* was, to some extent, a community endeavour.

A final implication of this thesis concerns methodologies for reading the *Historia*. This study has shown how crucial it is to examine the *Historia* as a whole text. Connections between the thirteen books are a key part of how Orderic communicated. Extractive approaches that focus on the evidential value of select passages obscure these connections and, therefore, Orderic's arguments. Furthermore, studying the text as a whole presents opportunities, by drawing attention to hitherto neglected or isolated material like accounts of church councils. It allows for a more nuanced approach to the text's inconsistencies too. Such passages can be situated within a wider textual setting, revealing how the retelling of a story forms part of argument. Crucially, examining all thirteen books affords new insights into Orderic as a writer, drawing attention to the

⁹⁴⁸ For example: Rozier, *Importance of Writing Institutional History*, esp. 23-38; 'Librarian and Cantor,' 73-5; Weston, 'Following the Master's Lead,' 56-60.

⁹⁴⁹ On monastic education at Saint-Évroul, see: Chibnall, 'General Introduction,' 14-23.

range of topics he explored and thus reinforcing the trend in modern scholarship away from the identification of the *Historia* as exclusively a work of Anglo-Norman political history.⁹⁵⁰

A methodological contribution this study offers is a new framework for the analysis of the text, informed by the text's chronology, Orderic's metanarrative reflection on history writing, and the social context of Saint-Évroul. This framework is not just a heuristic device; it is based on an analysis of the text's design and form. It reflects Orderic's processes of writing-in-time and his multiple expressions of ideas concerning history writing found in prefaces, epilogues, and interjections. It also resolves, to some extent, the practical barriers for modern study posed by the *Historia*, as it allows for the analysis of particular phases of the work as discrete objects of study. Therefore, this framework offers a means to undertake comparative study between parts of the text, thus navigating the problems posed by the text's scale, non-linear development, and apparent incoherence. It could even facilitate more precise comparative analyses between aspects of Orderic's text and the works of other history writers.

The identification of different phases of Orderic's work also affords the opportunity to ask entirely new questions of Orderic's history writing and writing career. For instance, a future study could examine Books III-IV along with Orderic's interjections into the *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, which represent the earliest period of Orderic's historiographic work (under Abbot Roger), before he set aside his anonymity. This framework also offers a tool to explore changes in the way Orderic practiced history writing. Daniel Roach has drawn attention to Orderic's use of the phrase *usque hodie*, noting that it appears less frequently in the later books.⁹⁵¹ This study offers an analytical framework to explore why this language changes when it does. Elisabeth Mégier's study of the first two books establishes the interconnectivity between Books I-

⁹⁵⁰ On this trend, see the Introduction, Section III.

⁹⁵¹ Roach, 'The Material and the Visual,' 69.

II and Books XI-XIII.⁹⁵² Taking these five books as a single object of study, in light of the form and development of the preceding books, could offer a way to draw out the links between them, shedding light on how Orderic made the apostolic past part of contemporary history. By disentangling the text's complex development and reconceptualising Orderic's evolving ideas of history writing, this thesis thus offers a new narrative for the evolution of the *Historia* that can inform the future study of the text. Research on the *Historia* is far from complete. But by understanding how Orderic continually reflected upon the wellbeing of the church through his writing of history over time, we can see how deeply he engaged with the social and spiritual welfare of both his community and society more broadly.

⁹⁵² Mégier, 'Jesus Christ,' 268-79.

Appendix 1: Dating the *Historia ecclesiastica*

The following approximate dating largely follows Marjorie Chibnall's edition.⁹⁵³

It is also based on the dating offered by Amana Hingst in *Written World: Past and Place in the Work of Orderic Vitalis* and the table provided in the recent collection of essays: *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations*.⁹⁵⁴

Book I 1136-1137x1140

Book II 1136-1137x1140

The consensus is that Books I-II and XI-XIII were substantially completed in the period 1136-7, however it is possible that Orderic continued to make additions up until he completed the epilogue to Book XIII in 1141.

Book III 1114/5-1123/4

Internal evidence confirms that Orderic began work on Book III by 1114 or 1115. Chibnall has suggested, however, that work could have begun earlier, even in the first decade of the twelfth century.⁹⁵⁵

Book IV 1125-1126

Book V 1127-1130

Book VI 1130X1133

A few additions were made to Book VI after the death of Henry I.

Book VII 1130X1133

Book VIII 1133-1135/6

⁹⁵³ *HE*, Chibnall, 2:xv; 3:xiv; 4:xix; 5:xi-xii; 6:xviii.

⁹⁵⁴ Hingst, *Written World*, xviii-xix; *Life, Works and Interpretations*, Rozier *et al*, xiv.

⁹⁵⁵ *HE*, Chibnall, 2:xv.

Book IX 1135

Given Book IX cannot have been begun before 1135 (as Orderic describes himself as sixty years of age) and Book X was written after it (Book IX is referred to in Book X), but X was substantially written while Henry I was alive, Orderic must have started Book X after completing Book IX in its entirety in 1135.⁹⁵⁶

Book X 1135-1136

Book XI 1136-1137x1140

Book XII 1136-1137x1140

Book XIII 1136-1141

⁹⁵⁶ See: *HE*, Chibnall, 5:xi-xii; X, 5:208.

Appendix 2: Church councils in the *Historia ecclesiastica*

This table includes a list of all of the substantial conciliar accounts in the *Historia* (absent shorter references). References refer to Marjorie Chibnall's edition, unless otherwise stated.

Reference	Date	Location	Kind of gathering	Convened by	Notes
IV, 2:284-92	1072	Rouen	Archdiocesan synod	William I; presided over by John of Avranches, archbishop of Rouen (1067-79)	Found in Book IV, it is the first account Orderic wrote. It is unique to Orderic's account (see 2:284-5, n. 4).
V, 3:24-34	1080	Lillebonne	Royal council and archdiocesan synod	William I	It is followed by a history of Christianity in Neustria and a list of the archbishops of Rouen.
V, 3:120-122	1049	Reims	Papal council	Pope Leo IX	It is situated in the middle of a passage on nicolaitism, itself related to the promotion of Fulk of Guernanville – a priest's son – to the position of prior of Saint-Évroul.
VIII, 4.264-6	1108	Rouen	Archdiocesan synod	William Bonne-Âme, archbishop of Rouen (1079-1110)	The account primarily concerns a conversation between two bishops – Ralph of Coutances and Serlo of Séez – concerning recent miracles.

IX, 5:8-18	1095	Clermont	Papal council	Pope Urban II	The account overlaps with Urban II's sermon preaching the crusade and the response to it. Orderic also refers as part of this account to a council held by Urban in 1094 at Piacenze.
IX, 5:18-24	1096	Rouen	Archdiocesan synod	William Bonne-Âme, archbishop of Rouen	Called in direct response to the council of Clermont, at the behest of Norman bishops who had been in attendance.
XI, 6:92-4	1106	Lisieux	Royal council	Henry I	Called after the battle of Tinchebray, the account refers to measures concerning ecclesiastical and political settlement.
XII, 6:202-4	1118	Rouen	Rouen council and archdiocesan synod	Henry I and Geoffrey Brito, archbishop of Rouen (1111-1128)	Attended by Cuno, cardinal bishop of Palestrina and a papal legate, who makes a speech. Unique to Orderic's account (see 6:202, n. 1).
XII, 6:252-76	1119	Reims	Papal Council and court	Pope Callixtus II	It is possible that Orderic was in attendance. The account describes in detail events that took place over several days.
XII, 6:290-4	1119	Rouen	Archdiocesan synod	Geoffrey Brito, archbishop of Rouen (1111-1128)	It is attended only by secular priests from the archdiocese and not the diocesan bishops. Events descend into violence. It is unique to Orderic's account (see 6:291, n. 4).
XII, 6:388	1128	Rouen	Archdiocesan synod	Henry I and a papal legate, Matthew, bishop of Albano	The council was called while Archbishop Geoffrey Brito was on his deathbed. Orderic is the only source for the canons of this council (see 6:388, n. 3).

XIII, 6:424-6	1132	Cluny	Cluniac assembly	Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny (1122-1156)	Orderic was in attendance at this event. Abbot Peter puts forward more stringent rules for Cluniacs to live by. The preamble to this account refers to the 1132 council of Pisa, convened by Pope Innocent II.
XIII, 6:528-30 and <i>HE</i> , Le Prevost, II, 1:460	1139	Rome	The Second Council of the Lateran	Pope Innocent II	Attended by Orderic's abbot, Richard of Leicester. Orderic remarks that the council was ineffective and that it produced few records.

Appendix 3: The Writing of the *Historia ecclesiastica*

The image depicts the evolution of the *Historia*, based on the dating given in Appendix 1. The cross-hatched sections denote hypothetical later

Book	1114	1115	1116	1117	1118	1119	1120	1121	1122	1123	1124	1125	1126	1127	1128	1129	1130	1131	1132	1133	1134	1135	1136	1137	1138	1139	1140	1141	
III	1114/5-1123/4																												
IV											1125-1126																		
V												1127-1130																	
VI														1130x1133, later additions															
VII														1130x1133															
VIII															1133-1135/6														
IX																	1135												
X																		1135-1136											
I																							1136 - 1137x1140						
II																							1136 - 1137x1140						
XI																							1136 - 1137x1140						
XII																							1136 - 1137x1140						
XIII																								1136-1141					
Abbot	Roger Le Sap (1091-23, d. 1126)									Warin Les Essarts (1123-37)												Richard of Leicester (1137-40)			Ralph of Prunelai (1140-51)				

List of Abbreviations

<i>ANS</i>	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
Chibnall, ‘General Introduction’	Marjorie Chibnall, ‘General Introduction,’ in <i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis</i> , vol. 1, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980) 1-126.
<i>HE</i> , Chibnall	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis</i> , ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-80), 6 vols.
<i>HE</i> , Le Prevost	<i>Orderici Vitalis ecclesiasticae historiae libri tredecim</i> , ed. and trans. Auguste Le Prevost (Paris, 1838-1855), 5 vols.
<i>HSJ</i>	<i>Haskins Society Journal</i>
<i>Life, Works and Interpretations</i> , Rozier <i>et al</i>	<i>Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations</i> , eds. Charles C. Rozier, Daniel Roach, Giles E. M. Gasper, and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016)

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