EARLY NORMANDY

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The year 2011 witnessed two 1,100th-anniversary celebrations relevant to the activities of Scandinavians overseas. On 2 September 911 a treaty designed to facilitate trade and promote good relations between the Byzantines and the Kievan Rus was agreed in Constantinople.¹ The treaty between the Frankish king Charles the Simple and the Viking army led by Rollo that marked the beginning of Normandy is almost virtual in comparison, in the absence of a text or a contemporary record; but, according to Dudo of Saint-Quentin, it too was granted in 911, at Saint-Clair-sur-Epte.² The exact nature of the power of the Vikings on the Seine at that moment is obscure: their takeover coincided with a hiatus in Frankish annal-writing, and no contemporary evidence survives from church or court in Rouen. The earliest witness is an original charter in King Charles’s name from March 918 which granted the abbey of Croix-Saint-Ouen and its dependencies to the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, praeter partem ipsius abbatiae quam annuimus Normannis Sequanesibus, uidelicet Rolloni suisque comitibus, pro tutela regni.³ The charter refers to the portio Nortmannorum but does not spell out its boundaries. From the 920s to the 990s Reims’s historians Flodoard and Richer occasionally reported on Norman affairs,⁴ but after what appears to have been almost a century without writing in Normandy itself, there was a surge in the reign of Richard II (996–1026) – charters, hagiography, and, of course, Dudo’s history, much of it closely associated with the dukes. These circumstances make early Normandy very difficult to reconstruct and assess. It is not a neglected subject, however: David Bates’s lucid analysis in

³ ‘Except for the part of the abbey’s lands which we have granted to the Northmen on the River Seine, that is, to Rollo and his companions, for the protection of the kingdom’; Recueil des actes de Charles III, ed. P. Lauer, Paris 1940, 209–12 (no. 92).
his Normandy before 1066 remains the benchmark for subsequent discussion, and Lucien Musset’s enduring scholarship has been extended in recent years by Francophone and Anglophone historians with intimate knowledge of both local and wider Frankish contexts. Despite all this attention, there is no consensus about how things stood in the tenth century, before the change of gear that followed the accession of Richard II.

Although Rouen and Kiev offer many contrasts, it is a measure of Scandinavian vitality overseas that the same year saw two such successes. The degree to which the people involved belonged to the same world continues to be a matter for debate. Recently I have argued for the utility of the concept of a Scandinavian diaspora in the Viking age: definitions of diaspora vary, but all rely on the essential element of a shared but flexible identity, preserved over distance and shaped in dynamic ways. In the early Middle Ages Scandinavians left their homelands and travelled and settled as far afield as Greenland and the Upper Volga. As now, there were many ways for diaspora connections to remain active, among them trade, migration, diplomacy, marriage, war, and religious mission. The concept of diaspora allows us to envisage a network of far-flung elite centres sharing a culture based on language, origins, and ongoing contacts. Connections between these groups occurred across large distances, but at the same time new regional identities were formed by the interaction between incomer Scandinavians and their immediate localities.

This model gives some theoretical substance to the spread of a conspicuously pan-Scandinavian culture across the North Atlantic, Britain and Ireland, northern Europe, and along the Russian rivers. Its reach is very observable, articulated as it was through dress accessories and art styles, a shared language and oral culture, shared religious and mythological traditions, and a common, non-Latin, alphabet. While Scandinavians tapped this diasporic identity and deployed their ‘Scandinavian-ness’ abroad, they also absorbed local resources and developed new, hybridized societies driven by more proximate influences. The model conceives of Scandinavian identity as a kind of artefact: every community would have had decisions to make about what role it would play in their new environment. Judging from later survivals, the Northern Isles of Scotland were at one end of the cultural spectrum – thoroughly Scandinavianized, with Norse spoken until the modern period – and Normandy at the other. Normandy, in fact, seems the odd one out. The tally of material culture is extremely low: only a handful of metal objects, such as the two oval brooches from Pîtres, no runic inscriptions, no sculpture or coins that namecheck Thor or Oðin, no preserved burials of traditional Scandinavian type. Nor is

5 D. Bates, Normandy before 1066, London and New York 1982. My debt to this book, especially chapter 1, will be clear throughout this article, but references will, regrettably, be kept to a minimum for reasons of space. Bates’s challenge that ‘a simple statement that the Scandinavian impact was small just will not do’ (p.16) has inspired me to confront this problem.

6 Musset’s output was extraordinary. Nordica et Normannica: recueil d’études sur la Scandinavie ancienne et médiévale, les expéditions des vikings et la fondation de la Normandie, Paris 1997, offers a very useful but necessarily limited selection and a bibliography. See also Postérité de Lucien Musset, ed. V. Gazeau and F. Neveux, Caen 2009, esp. P. Bauduin, ‘Lucien Musset et les débuts de la principauté normande’, 27–34. E. Searle, Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840–1066, Berkeley CA 1988, offered a contrasting interpretation. The subject of early Normandy is vast and spans many areas of expertise; unfortunately, only a fraction of the relevant scholarship can be cited in this short article, which cannot do justice to the detail of the many pertinent debates. The CRAHAM website contains a wealth of material, including up-to-date bibliographies (http://www.unicaen.fr/crahm/?lang=fr).


Rouen’s ‘Viking’ archaeology a match for York’s or Dublin’s: a new street plan was laid out, but without confirmed dates the authority behind this reconstruction of the town’s core is uncertain. Furthermore, sites in Rouen more firmly dated to the tenth century have not been accompanied, as I understand it, by any diagnostically ‘Scandinavian’ finds; but only a small proportion of the town has been excavated. While Northumbria’s new elite made a point of displaying its Scandinavian connections on metal, stone, and wood, there was, was, was not apparently no such display in Normandy – and yet its place-names match northern England’s in density and ‘Norseness’, and Scandinavian personal names were in some cases retained for generations. This apparently contradictory reflection of the Scandinavian impact provides the starting-point for my investigation.

There is no question that early Normandy continued to have Scandinavian connections. Richard I (942–96) and Richard II both had Scandinavian military allies, for example. In terms of trade, there is little evidence of the so-called ‘Viking economy’ of mixed bullion and coin, but minting was tightly controlled in the Carolingian period, and the Rouen regime, once established, soon issued its own coinage. Bullion and foreign coins were likely to have been routinely melted down and recoined without delay, leaving no evidence of their origin. In 2007, however, a mixed hoard buried c. 895 was discovered at Saint-Pierre-des-Fleurs, south of Elbeuf; its contents suggest that it was assembled in England and travelled to Normandy in Scandinavian hands. Jacques le Maho has argued that Rollo and his Vikings had already established a string of trading-places along the Seine before 911. While Rouen traded upstream as well, finds of Norman coins of the tenth and


10 Most recently, see J. le Maho, ‘Avant et après les Normands: les lieux d’échanges dans l’espace fluvio-maritime normand au haut Moyen Âge (VIIe–Xe s.)’, forthcoming. I am extremely grateful to Jacques le Maho for his help with my questions. Compare Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York, ed. R. A. Hall et al., York 2004; it is noteworthy that the earliest known written Old Norse (henceforth ON) in Latin script occurs on a coin of the 940s from York (cununc, ON konungr, ‘king’; 336).

11 Richard I turned to the rex paganus Sihtric in 943 (Les annales, ed. Lauer, 88; The Annals, trans. Fanning and Bachrach, 38), and Richard II hosted Svein Forkbeard, king of Denmark, and Olaf Haraldsson, later Norway’s king and patron saint: GND, II, 16–17, 24–7.

12 Royal control may have faltered by the late ninth century, when magnates and ecclesiastical houses also issued coins, but there is no evidence of a shift to uncoined metal; see J. Lafaurie, ‘Numismatique: des Carolingiens aux Capétiens’, Cahiers de civilisation médiévale 13, 1970, 117–37, esp. 130–5; for Norman coins, beginning with those of William Longsword (c. 927–42), see J. C. Moesgaard, ‘A Survey of Coin Production and Currency in Normandy, 864–945’, in Silver Economy in the Viking Age, ed. J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams, Walnut Creek CA 2007, 99–121.


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early eleventh centuries in northern England, the Hebrides, Denmark, and Russia, although few, represent the continuing activity of trading networks connecting Scandinavian centres.

Where settlement occurred in already occupied lands, historians have used Scandinavian cultural features to judge the volume of migration, based on the thinking that a heavy cultural imprint indicates significant numbers. The absence of classic indications of Scandinavian-ness has therefore fostered doubts about the Viking settlers of Normandy. Vincent Carpentier, for example, has recently argued that there was no significant immigration: in his view Scandinavian colonization is a misconception, and attributing a Scandinavian identity to the Normans perpetuates ‘a romantic and often racist conception of regional history’, a myth driven by linguists ‘infatuated with normannisme’. ‘Normalism’ and its élucubrations xénophobes et raciales are indeed undesirable. Also unhelpful, however (and potentially misleading), is the equation of numbers with cultural identity. Pierre Bauduin has taken a different approach, contending that the apparent absence of Scandinavian-ness was a result of rapid assimilation: in his view, Scandinavian identity had no particular currency in the tenth century, politically or culturally, and was quickly rejected. Focussing on the Franks and their relations with the new lords of Rouen, Bauduin has argued that an intense process of accommodation through the usual means – military alliances, marriages, relationships of amicitia, and spiritual kinship – integrated the leaders of la première Normandie swiftly into the Frankish elite. Both of these views play down the Scandinavian contribution, but it remains the case that Normandy’s histories – and its name – continued to advertise its northern origins, and the impact of Norse speech was widely imprinted on the landscape.

Before attempting to explain this situation, we should first question whether Normandy’s absence of evidence is ‘real’. It is worth remembering that at least some of the material that now supports the presence of substantial numbers of Scan-


18 Bauduin, Le monde franc, esp. 349–51; La première Normandie (Xe–XIIe siècles), 2nd edn, Caen 2006.

Dinavian immigrants in northern and eastern England was unknown until relatively recently: hundreds of coins, ingots, brooches, and other metal objects have been discovered by metal-detectorists since the activity caught the public imagination and a revolution in academic attitudes took place in the 1990s. Jane Kershaw’s recent study of brooch-finds, for example, concluded that metalwork continued to be imported from Scandinavia to the English Danelaw throughout the tenth century and that imitations with a very Scandinavian look were also produced locally. Of the 550 brooches in her corpus, only about twenty were known before the recent surge in metal-detecting, and new finds continue to be made. The brooches in question are mainly small, everyday objects, not the large oval brooches that would have been harder to lose. The recent availability of this kind of material is helping to reshape understanding of the Danelaw’s contacts with the homelands and focus attention on the potential role of an ongoing Scandinavian identity. Admittedly, the context was different in England. The first half of the tenth century saw the West Saxons extend their hegemony into areas which had been independent Scandinavian polities for fifty to eighty years: an opposing regional identity, articulated through dress, could have served a purpose for which there was no need across the Channel. As metal-detecting is illegal in France, however, it cannot be entirely safe to say that similar evidence does not exist in Normandy; twenty or thirty years ago we did not know that it existed in England. It is impossible to say whether metal-detecting in Normandy on the English scale would produce material with a similarly transformative potential. A modest stray-find from the Orne, a pierced Christiana religio coin of Louis the Pious, could be exceptional – or the tip of an iceberg. Simon Coupland has pointed out that since such coins, worn as ornaments, were common in graves in Scandinavia in the first four decades of the tenth century, this find could have belonged to an early settler.

There are other factors to consider: the Church would have inhibited converts from indulging in the kind of traditional funerary rites that would be archaeologically visible today, and such customs, which went out of fashion in Denmark in the tenth century, may not have been popular with any remaining pagans with Danish connections. Other types of evidence may have gone missing – sculpture, for example, which acted as a significant manifestation of Anglo-Scandinavian identity. In England our knowledge often derives from the visible reuse of tenth-century stone fragments in later buildings, but few Norman churches display reused fragments of any sort, let alone any decorated in Scandinavian art styles. The reversed-S serpents at Evrecy have been judged to have parallels in Yorkshire, but Evrecy seems to be quite exceptional. A comparison of the grave furniture of the early regimes at Rouen and York would be enlightening, but Rouen Cathedral’s cemeteries have yielded nothing to compare with the distinctive grave slabs under York Minster. Many

20 In 1997 the British government initiated the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which now covers most of England and Wales; see http://finds.org.uk/.
Figure 1. An original charter of 1006, Musée de la Bénédictine of Fécamp, no. 3, formerly Ibis (RADN, no. 9). Dimensions of entire charter: 66 x 47 cm.
years of destructive warfare in the ninth and tenth centuries and a radical rebuilding programme in the twelfth combined to obliterate most early churches in Normandy, but when rebuilding began under the dukes it showed no obvious Scandinavian affinities. According to Maylis Baylé, these arrived much later, as part of a more general influence from England after the Conquest.\(^{25}\) Unfortunately, the possible importance of wooden buildings and monuments, now lost, cannot be measured.\(^{26}\)

With these reservations in mind, on present evidence the prevailing impression is of an immigrant society which did not embrace multiculturalism. It did, however, use Norse. The impact of the native tongue of the newcomers has often been downplayed, thanks in part to Dudo’s statement that Richard I was sent to Bayeux for his education.\(^{27}\) Dudo’s explanation, put into the mouth of William Longsword (‘the city of Rouen much prefers the use of Roman rather than Dacian eloquence, and Bayeux uses the Dacian more often than the Roman tongue’), does not in fact say what some have concluded, that Norse had ‘died out’ in Rouen; in any case, scholars have found other motives for Dudo’s remarks.\(^{28}\) Even in the mid-eleventh century an ecclesiastical author showed continuing familiarity with the language when he referred to a ship ‘qui barbara lingua isneccia dicitur’.\(^{29}\) Although the Rouen regime may well have preferred the language of the Franks, it seems unlikely that Richard I and Richard II conducted relations with their Norse-speaking allies in anything but Norse.\(^{30}\) Rural language use is likely to have been subject to different forces, but it is more observable, being reflected, in different densities, across the region: in vernacular vocabulary such as étac (‘rocky pile’) and ho (‘small bay’), for example, derived from ON \textit{stakkr} and \textit{hóp}, and \textit{fisigardus}, ‘fishery’, from ON \textit{fiskigarðr}.\(^{31}\) Norse topographical words were frequently combined together in meaningful ways to produce place-names, such as \textit{Caldebec} (Caudebec), from ON \textit{kaldr}, ‘cold’, and \textit{bekkr}, ‘stream’,\(^{32}\) and \textit{Harofloz} (Harfleur), ON \textit{hár}, ‘high’, and (perhaps) ON \textit{flóð}, flood, tide (Figure 1).\(^{33}\) These, like the many hundreds of other major names with ON elements—such as toft, \textit{þveit}, dalr, lundr, bekk r, haugr, and \textit{hólmr} (> tot, tuít, dal, lon, bec, houge, houmet)—appear to have been formed in a Norse-speaking


\(^{27}\) Dudo, ed. Lair, 221–2; trans. Christiansen, 97.


\(^{31}\) Ridel, \textit{Les vikings}, 123.

\(^{32}\) De Beaurepaire, commenting on the presence of two places of this name on the Seine, suggested that Caudebec might have originally been the Norse name for the river; \textit{Les noms des communes et anciennes paroisses de la Seine-Maritime}, Paris 1979, 57. De Beaurepaire, commenting on the presence of two places of this name on the Seine, suggested that Caudebec might have originally been the Norse name for the river; \textit{Les noms des communes et anciennes paroisses de la Seine-Maritime}, Paris 1979, 57.

New Romance verbs were created from Norse nouns, and prefixes or suffixes added to create words unknown in Norse (e.g., *dellage*, from ON *deill*, ‘part, portion’). Borrowed words such as *fiskigarðr* or *æcer/akr* (‘acre’) were in such regular use in the eleventh century that they appear with declensional endings in Latin charters (see Figure 1). Some place-names, such as Clarbec (*clarus*, ‘clear’, and *bekkr*, ‘stream’), combine Romance and Norse (Figure 2). Dating these place-names is problematic in the absence of early forms, but while they do not have to have been coined in this period, they could not have been coined before; and there are enough eleventh-century witnesses to indicate that they were well established by then. Once borrowed words moved into the local language, they continued to form minor names – *Le Bec, La Hougue, La Hougquette, La Londe* – for many years. Place-names apparently combining Old English (OE) and Old Norse, on the other hand (such as Elbeuf, interpreted as compounded from OE *wella*, ‘watercourse’, + ON *búþ*, ‘temporary dwelling’), might, if the attributions hold up to linguistic scrutiny, offer evidence of the kind of language spoken in the Danelaw in the tenth century. This kind of linguistic impact reflects the vitality of Norse speech in combination with the local vernacular and seems therefore to testify to a significant Norse-speaking presence, not just in towns or at court but also in rural society.

The influence of a language should not simply be measured by how long it continues to be spoken, however: more analysis of the process of borrowing, both

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37 De Beaurepaire, *Les noms ... de la Seine-Maritime*, 70 (and 75, Étalondes).
from the linguistic and from the social perspective, would be useful. According to Elisabeth Ridel, the language of the earlier Germanic invaders of Gaul added perhaps 400 to 500 words to the Romance vernacular and affected its grammar. In contrast, only 145 or so Norse borrowings have been identified in Normandy.\(^{38}\) As they relate primarily to the maritime and commercial spheres, these borrowings have been judged to reflect only a minor, ‘niche’, contribution by the newcomers. This may be too dismissive. Put simply, borrowing seems to occur because enough speakers of a second language use it as an alternative to a native word, or because something new needs a name. For example, new vocabulary for ships’ rigging is understood to have been introduced into Normandy because the majority of users were Norse-speakers, and/or because Scandinavian immigrants brought new technology with them. On this principle, the place-name *Le Tingland* in the northern Cotentin, if it derives from ON *thing*, ‘assembly’,\(^{39}\) could indicate that there was a significant new population there, or that a new form of government was introduced (or both). On the other hand, there is no surviving Norse contribution to military vocabulary in Normandy,\(^{40}\) although it can hardly be denied that the Vikings constituted a significant military presence. It might follow that if a Scandinavian community took up farming on the local model, as is suggested by the continuity of estate structures, there may have been little impact on language. And so it seems: only a small number of examples of imported ‘rural vocabulary’ have been identified – *fortlenc* (OE *furlang*, ‘furlong’), *wendinc* (OE *wending*, ‘turning’), *hovelland* (OE *heafodland*, ‘headland’), *croute* (‘croft’), *gare* (OE *gara*, ‘gore’), and *estrac* (OE *straca*, ‘strip’)\(^{41}\) – and *mansloth*, from ON *mannshlútr*, a common word for a holding in the Danelaw, occurs in a single charter.\(^{42}\) It would be worth exploring if some of the Old English terms could instead be of Norse origin; in the absence of contemporary Scandinavian evidence they have usually been understood as straightforward borrowings from England. Without tenth-century charters, these terms necessarily appear in much later documents, although OE *æcer* (or ON *akr*), which occurs across the province, is attested as early as 1006 (hacreis, see Figure 1). Musset argued that all the terms were likely to be contemporary, and he associated them with early tenth-century immigrants from the Danelaw, thanks to a reference in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to a *jarl* Thorketill leaving England with his army to go *ofer sæ on Froncland*.\(^{43}\)

More significant, perhaps, are the borrowed terms relating to landholding that are embedded in place-names. Although most major towns kept their names, a radical

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\(^{40}\) Note, however, two thirteenth-century examples of ON *húskarl*, ‘retainer’: *Rogerius Huscaille* and *vallis Huscalli* (Ridel, *Les vikings*, 104).


\(^{43}\) ‘Les apports’, 449; ASC 916A (there is some confusion over the date, which has been altered in the manuscript, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, MS A*, ed. J. Bately, Cambridge 1986, 66). That this refers to Normandy is an assumption.
renaming occurred in the countryside. Around 1055 the abbey of Saint-Florent, near Saumur, asked Duchess Matilda for help in its effort to reclaim ancient possessions in the Cotentin which it had been granted some time before by one of the dukes: a charter asserts that ‘if by chance any of these [places] should be unknown to you or yours, you should not suppose that they have ceased to exist, but rather that they have lost their names’. Flottemanville – ‘villa of Flotman’, or ‘villa of the seamen’ – seems to have been one of the estates involved, exemplifying the problem. New names include a small number which compound the imported element *thorp* with Scandinavian personal names (e.g., *Torgistorp*); eleven simplex forms with a definite article are also recorded (*Le Torp, Le Tourps*). This suggests that the term was adopted into the local dialect, probably with the same meaning as its English counterpart, ‘secondary settlement’. *Thorp* presumably entered the lexicon in Normandy because it was useful. It is not clear how many rural sites which local inhabitants would have described as secondary settlements in their own language existed before the Viking takeover; it does seem, however, that a word was borrowed for that purpose when at least some people were speaking Norse, from which we might conclude that changes in rural organization were taking place at the time. Much more common than *thorp* is *delle*, ‘portion of workable land’ (ON *deill*). It has been suggested that a *delle* could have been the unit of distribution in the tenth century, or perhaps the component of a new type of tenure; it is very well attested in the minor names of the Danelaw. Place-names in -*tuit* or -*thuit*, from ON *þveit*, ‘clearing’, testify to land clearance, probably associated with an intensification of farming in previously wooded land. The many names in -*tot* (OE ‘toft’) plus a personal name, both Norse (Hattein*to*t) and Frankish (Robert*to*t), could represent a general reorganization of landholding, especially as in some parts of Normandy the older -*acum* names often seem to have been replaced by names in -*tot*. New place-names were frequently formed with Scandinavian personal names. Historians recognize that many factors determine naming strategies, but in the context of early Normandy it seems reasonable (in principle, if not in every case) to accept the likes of names such as Hásteinn and Thorgisl as plausible ethnic identifiers. Although Rollo’s family abandoned Scandinavian names, their retention by others seems significant in terms of cultural politics and family identity. Jean Adigard des Gautries suggested, for example, that three women’s names which are unknown in Scandinavia – Anschella, Osmunda, and Torfreda – might have been created in Normandy as calques on male names. Some names suggest origins elsewhere,

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44 *Quorum si forte aliqua tibi tuisque fuerint incognita, non tamen credas hec omnino non esse, sed potius nomina perdistisse;* P. Marchegay, ‘Charts normandes de l’abbaye de Saint-Florent’, *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie* 30, 1880, 666–8, no. 2. I am grateful to Richard Sharpe for comments on this passage. On the identification, see Musset, ‘Essai sur le peuplement’, 396.

45 J. Adigard des Gautries, ‘Études de toponymie Normannique I: les noms en -*torp*’, *Études germaniques* 6, 1951, 3–10; although few in number, they are found across Normandy (with a cluster in the Cotentin); for England see P. Cullen, R. Jones, and D. N. Parsons, *Thorps in a Changing Landscape*, Hatfield 2011.

46 Arnoux and Maneuvrier, ‘Le pays normand’, 15–16; like Ridel (*Les vikings*, 95), they have associated its diffusion with the spread of open-field farming, although the date for this remains uncertain.


such as OE Dunstan and Beorhstan, represented in the place-names Dénestanville and Brestanville.\textsuperscript{50} No such individuals appear in written sources, which could place the names in the tenth century, before charters came back into use.\textsuperscript{51} Danestanvilla is attested in 1051,\textsuperscript{52} and at least one of several Englesquevilles (angliscia uilla) occurs in a charter of 1014.\textsuperscript{53} The English Æthelings, exiled in Normandy from 1016 for over twenty years,\textsuperscript{54} might conceivably provide a later context for some of these place-names, as would 1066. Musset made the point, however, that, after the Conquest, English names had little prestige and were unlikely to have been imported then.\textsuperscript{55} Gaelic personal names, found only in western Normandy, are similarly and almost inevitably unattested until they appear in charters: Niellus in 1013x1020, for example.\textsuperscript{56} Contacts between western Normandy and the Celtic parts of Britain had a long history, however, and some may precede (or indeed post-date) the Viking period.\textsuperscript{57} Dicuil, Duncan, and Niall are found in the place-names Digulleville, Doncanville, and Néhou,\textsuperscript{58} and Néel, Beccan, Murdac, and Patric became family names. Why Gaelic personal names were retained as family names and English ones were not is unclear: perhaps differences of status and lordship were involved.\textsuperscript{59} The irony is that while English and Gaelic personal names may potentially be associated with Scandinavians who came to Normandy via one of the overseas settlements, they draw attention away from the much more numerous ‘bog-standard’ Norse names, whose bearers could have come from anywhere in the Scandinavian diaspora, including directly from the homelands.
Adigard des Gautries identified eighty-two certain (and dozens more potential) Scandinavian personal names in Normandy, many of them – from the familiar Håsteinn and Thorgisl to others, such as Óbeini or Amundr, unattested in Scandinavia – compounded with the Frankish place-name element -ville. Names such as Hastingivilla and Amundivilla (now Hattenville and Emondeville) appear in the earliest surviving records, and it has sometimes been assumed that they were coined by the Scandinavians themselves. More investigation is required, however, to look for signs that these names were formed in Norse, as shown, for example, by the genitive in Helperby, Yorkshire (Hjalpar by, 'settlement of Hjalp'). Genitives of names in -ville are, if anything, in Latin, and (without the benefit of detailed study) they have the look of names coined by Romance-speaking locals or Latinate record-keepers to refer to the new cohort of Scandinavian lords. It seems too that only Norse personal names, and not common nouns or adjectives, were compounded with -ville, although the identification of almost all doubtful or ambiguous first elements as personal names (as in Flottemanville, above) may falsely reinforce this contrast. If real, it would distinguish the names in -ville from England’s ‘Grimston-hybrids’, whose first elements include a greater range of Norse word types. The earliest surviving original charter, dated 1006, includes the grant of the church of Scrotiuilla (now Eretteville) (see Figure 1). It is unclear whether Skrauti of Scrotiuilla was the man who held the land in 1006 or the original Scandinavian recipient; if the latter, the name would represent the moment of takeover and distribution of lands to new holders, potentially as early as 911. It is perhaps more likely, however, that this kind of name changed as landholders succeeded one another. A connection between names and lordship was certainly understood in the twelfth century: Robert of Torigni observed that one of the sisters of Richard II’s wife, Gunnor, married Turulfus of Pont-Audemer, the son of a certain Torf, ‘after whom several towns are called Torfuille to this day’. I suspect that names were fixed only when documents became common. Names in -ville were also compounded with Frankish names or titles (Quiberville from Guibertus, Contevilla from conte), and although the assumption is often made that they pre-date 911, the lack of early records leaves the context of their formation, and their relation to Scandinavian names in -ville, open to question.

Many years ago Musset pointed out that a comparison of polytiques of the ninth century with documents of the twelfth would give the impression that nothing much had happened on Normandy’s large estates in the intervening centuries, whereas the names and place-names in surviving charters would suggest that a complete boulevirement had swept away all existing settlements. The challenge is to explain

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62 The medial vowel of Scrotiuilla, for example, could be a Latin genitive; the ON genitive would be Skrauta.
63 For this category of name, see G. Fellows-Jensen, Scandinavian Settlement Names in Yorkshire, Copenhagen 1972, 112–21.
64 RADN, no. 9; illustrated in C. H. Haskins, Norman Institutions, Cambridge MA 1918, plate 1.
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this puzzle. One possible solution is to envisage a continuity of local administration, coupled with significant displacement of landholding personnel and some reorganization of holdings, some of which occurred in a Norse-speaking environment. Further, more detailed study would refine or replace this general model with a better one. One problem to be faced is that, although most scholars have taken the modern map of identifiably Scandinavian place-names as a representation of the distribution of Scandinavian settlement, it does not necessarily represent the situation in the tenth century. Some topographical names, as we have seen, were a product of language borrowing, and could date from any time after the words from which they are formed entered the lexicon. Some early place-names, on the other hand, will have disappeared. Ridel has warned that subsequent urbanization and industrialization could have been responsible for blank areas on the distribution map.67

Other, more contemporary factors may also have been in play, judging from the English evidence. David Parsons identified twenty-five names in Domesday Book compounded from OE tun and a Scandinavian personal name in Suffolk, but none in neighbouring Essex; yet the ratio of Norse to English personal names among landholders in both counties was identical.68 He pointed out that Domesday Book revealed a marked distinction in social organization in Suffolk and Essex, the former having numerous free peasants, the latter none. Leaving aside the argument about the origins of free peasants, this example suggests that variations in social structure and distinctions of tenure could lie behind different patterns of name-coining.

Although this exercise cannot be repeated in Normandy, its place-names, carefully handled, are nevertheless a major source of information for the historian. Their analysis is not trouble-free, however, as Frank Stenton pointed out as long ago as 1945.69 Early spellings are essential to put the study on a secure footing, yet few are available in the absence of tenth-century charters or an early province-wide survey. Documents, when they do appear, tend to be preserved in large ecclesiastical archives, and areas without major religious houses are consequently poorly represented. Names in charters have all been Latinized and have therefore been transformed twice: by the transition to writing and by the influence of the local vernacular.70 Lost names have not been systematically collected, and names for smaller places – hamlets, fields, landscape features – have often been neglected. When François de Beaurepaire compiled his gazetteer of commune-names of the Manche in 1969, he was obliged to exclude the names of another 18,708 recorded minor places.71 More recent work has aimed to absorb minor names; however, because they are most often collected from the modern map, their analysis is even more complicated by issues of transmission and date than that of major names.72

70 Adigard des Gautries, Les noms, 244–9.
71 De Beaurepaire, Les noms... de la Manche, 17.
Perhaps because of obstacles such as these, place-names remain a regrettably underdeveloped resource for historians of early Normandy.\textsuperscript{73} Like all sources, they need care, but there is much to be learned from the study of names in charters, for example, or the mapping of types of place-name in relation to geology and land use; and while further analysis of place-names across the region may increasingly enlighten us about the process of settlement, their interpretation in closely local contexts may prove to be even more revealing.

Words and names are not being enlisted here to suggest that the Scandinavians who came to Normandy overwhelmed the locals, nor that they brought a packaged, ethnically defined way of life with them which they imposed when they settled. Trying to reconstruct the nature of early Norman society by hunting ethnically Scandinavian elements, preserved in fragmentary form in later texts, has yielded only a small harvest, and it would be misleading to aggregate the evidence and apply it across the territory that became Normandy. Independent enterprise and freedom from Frankish constraint may account for the hints in later periods of the exercise of different social norms — of outlawry, for example, or the death penalty for theft, or maritime law, such as rights to shipwreck; but such elements would have been only a part of the new way of doing things made possible by settlement. The English Danelaw, for example, was different from the rest of England in part because it was ‘Danish’, but also because it was conquered. If Charles’s grant gave Rollo access to existing institutions, it may also have offered an opportunity to push for more, to demand beneficial tenures in exchange for political support, along the lines of the privileges requested from the French king by Alan Barbetorte in 939, for example.\textsuperscript{74} To what extent the regime that took over on the Seine in 911 expected the authority that it had been granted to be long-term can never be known: there were precedents, some quite short-lived. Stenton, among others, deemed the arrangement of 911 merely to have provided the Vikings with a base for future operations, but Musset conceived of an organized, managed, transfer of authority.\textsuperscript{75} It may be optimistic to imagine a consistent programme: the grants of 924 and 933, conceded by a rival (and ultimately unviable) king, might have produced quite different results from that of 911. We do not really know how or when land changed hands, especially in those regions far removed from Rouen. Royal land could conceivably have been appropriated wholesale; it was in ducal hands in the eleventh century.\textsuperscript{76} Written evidence suggests little delay in the distribution of ecclesiastical property: when Gerard of Brogne wanted to restore Saint-Wandrille \textsuperscript{c. 944}, even the support of Richard I failed to convince the men holding the lands to hand them over, because, they said, their possessions had been hard-won.\textsuperscript{77}

In the last third of the ninth century Scandinavians took over the territories of two long-established English kingdoms and substantial parts of another. York’s new
rulers may have achieved their position with the assistance of the Church, but the only surviving evidence of a formal agreement is the treaty relating to East Anglia between the Viking king Guthrum and Alfred, king of the neighbouring West Saxons, made some time between 880 and 890 and preserved in a late eleventh- or early twelfth-century collection. This frið (‘peace’) treated the two rulers as equals, and its text defined the border, established procedures for dispute resolution, and regulated trade. It also gave the settlers a legal identity. As the surviving treaties between Kiev and Byzantium deal with Scandinavians off their patch, the treaty of Alfred and Guthrum is arguably more relevant to understanding the arrangement between Charles and Rollo. Yet Guthrum’s acquisition of East Anglia may have been less official and more opportunistic. The role of the treaty is unclear – whether it merely recognized Guthrum’s takeover of some (putative) pre-existing royal infrastructure, for example, or was actually instrumental in establishing his position as the ruler of a definite territory. After a complete dislocation, minting revived in East Anglia in the 880s with imitations of West Saxon coins, followed c. 895 by the Saint Edmund pennies, which made explicit reference to the last independent East Anglian king. Although the concentration of major Scandinavian place-names is less dense in East Anglia than in other parts of England, there appears to have been a greater impact on hundred-names (at least ten of Norse origin), and thus perhaps on administration.

Consensus on the issue of continuity in Normandy remains elusive. Considering the volatility of the first half of the tenth century, in particular, there was probably significant disturbance, yet there is no evidence for a revolution in rural administrative infrastructure: only four pagi acquired new Scandinavian names. Jean Yver argued that enough Carolingian infrastructure survived to allow Rollo and his successors to use the Carolingian legacy to ‘make’ Normandy a proper state, but could this have been true everywhere in equal measure? And was the entire territory under royal authority to the same degree before 911? A licensed takeover, as opposed to informal or unauthorized possession, would presumably have encouraged the continuity of whatever public power had previously been exercised in the interest of a centralized authority. On the other hand, the notion of ‘public power’

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may overestimate the importance of regulation from above in the ordinary matters of everyday life. Certainly, what became Normandy had a recognizably different identity from other regions of northern France: Musset pointed out how certain features of social organization, such as rural mayors and the tripartite organization of society, stopped at the borders of the province, as did its distinctive rural terminology. In the absence of evidence for the genesis of these characteristics, he hypothesized that they were imposed by the ducal administration of estates. The secret of Normandy’s success – the exceptional control exercised by its dukes – by this reckoning could be back-projected to the kings’ transfer of rights and lands.

Rollo and his army were not the only Vikings on the scene, however. When Thorketill left England for Francia, he may have been acting on intelligence: thanks to the disturbances of the ninth century and the instability of the early tenth, it would have been a good time for sons to pursue opportunities discovered by a generation of raiding fathers. Resistance to Rouen’s attempt to expand into western Normandy in 933 seems to have been Scandinavian-led, for example: Dudo identified its leader as Rulf (ON Herjolfr?). Richard I’s allies of the 940s and 960s, spectacularly invoked by Dudo as Viking mercenaries, may have been fresh legs from overseas or, alternatively, men independent of Rouen and of the influence of its archbishop (if Dudo’s description of them as pagans is to be trusted). In 945, after the murder of William Longsword and renewed Frankish attempts to claw back power in Normandy, the men of Rouen appealed to a certain Harald Nordmannus, who ‘was in command at Bayeux’. This evidence, admittedly spare, nevertheless suggests that in the tenth century Scandinavian power in Normandy may have been maintained by shifting personal relationships between men whose authority was not always institutional or embedded in local traditions. Some may have depended on treaties or other unattested arrangements with Bretons, Franks, or even the Vikings of Rouen. Rural settlements and commercial communities based on urban markets and river trade are almost undocumented, but, as we have seen, their Norse vocabulary is vividly reflected in the local vernacular and in place-names. Arguably, Scandinavian identity would have played out differently in contexts such as these. If so, a much more motley Scandinavian presence – of different origins and social status, each group with its own relationship with a local Frankish matrix – could have characterized the tenth century.

86 See note 43.
87 Dudo, ed. Lair, 187–90 and 218; trans. Christiansen, 64–8, and 94; the description of Rulf as a ‘manifold blasphemer’ may hint that he was pagan, though ‘perjurer’ could simply indicate disloyalty to Rouen; Adigard des Gautries pointed out that a Frankish name, Hairulf, is also represented in the region: Les noms, 62–3.
90 Van Torhoudt, ‘La résistance’, 614.
The ‘miscellaneous character’ of Scandinavian settlement has long been acknowledged – in particular, the difference between upper and lower Normandy. This has been explained in various ways: by the settlement of armies independent of Rouen, by different degrees of pre-existing infrastructure (and different levels of damage to it), and, for the west, by close connections with Brittany or the Irish-Sea zone. A disunited Church underlines this picture. Whatever the extent of the grant to Rollo, it was far from coterminous with the ecclesiastical province, although the arrangement seems to have included a partnership with Rouen’s archbishop. His archdiocese was seriously compromised; for much of the tenth century only Rouen and, perhaps, Evreux, had a continuously resident bishop. A few great abbeys were re-established in the tenth century, but the full diocesan structure seems only to have been reconstituted in the 990s. An episcopal vacancy at Avranches from the 860s to the 990s suggests that Rouen either had insufficient influence or lacked the political will to embark on restoration there. As for Coutances, according to its twelfth-century history, Rollo arranged for its bishop to be transferred to Rouen, ‘and there he worked as if he were in his own see’. This claim may be a later invention, but, as François Neveux has pointed out, the diocese of Coutances was not re-established in situ until 1049. Although Rollo and his successors did their best to appropriate Coutances’s episcopal power, it was some time before they could place bishops there and exploit their influence directly. This is not to say that anywhere without a bishop was ‘godless’; there is important evidence for rural churches. But it is likely that different kinds of religious influence and different degrees of centralized ecclesiastical power would have coloured local identities.

If there were numerous Viking constituencies in the tenth century, it would have been in the interests of the ducal family to erase them from memory. Dudo, of course, presented a picture of a single (and singular) province forged by destiny:

The land of Normandy will never be subject to the protection of more than a single lord…. For when Rollo was banished from the confines of Dacia he conquered [Normandy] for himself in one piece, and it was not divided up by anyone thereafter.

It has long been recognized that the reality was quite different. Although Dudo has in many ways been restored to historical favour in recent years, no one disputes

92 Bates nevertheless emphasized Rouen’s connections in western Normandy in the eleventh century: Normandy, 103. Éric van Thorhoudt makes a case for (at least) ecclesiastical continuity in his doctoral thesis, Centrality et marginalité en Neustrie et dans le duché de Normandie: maitrise du territoire et pouvoirs locaux dans l’Avranchin, le Bessin et le Cotentin (VF–XP siècles), Paris (Diderot), 2008, which I have unfortunately not yet been able to consult; see also van Thorhoudt, ‘La résistance’.
97 I should like to thank David Petts for sending me a draft version of his ‘Churches and Lordship in Western Normandy AD 800–1200’.
that contemporary concerns influenced his depiction of the past. The land that became Normandy was neither a political nor a monetary unit in 911, but the actual accomplishment of unity is difficult to date. Historians cite different routes to this achievement – internal colonization, the formation of a new aristocracy, monastic reform, episcopal revival, written bureaucracy, saints’ cults – with necessarily different timelines. There is little to override Dudo’s duke-centred spin: Flodoard’s principal focus was on matters of concern to the archdiocese of Reims. In particular, evidence for the extension of ducal power goes hand in hand with the evidence of documents, noticeably scarce until the eleventh century. Like Dudo, who insisted that Norman society was regulated from the start by Rollo’s laws (decreta, iura, leges, statuta), charters asserted that possession of land was guaranteed by the dukes’ written record.

This seems, however, to obscure a substantial period of almost exclusively oral process. As Gilduin Davy has pointed out, historians have given a possibly spurious written status to a series of acts in the name of Rollo and William Longsword which are referred to in later documents and often classified as ‘lost’. In contrast, a charter of Richard II for Saint-Ouen confirms grants made by Rollo, William, and Richard I explicitly without charters (absque cartarum notamine concessit). This may be more representative of how things worked in the tenth century. If the new rulers did employ an inherited Carolingian administration to entrench their authority, in the region dependent on Rouen or more widely across the province, they seem to have done so without leaving written traces. Many aspects of government and landholding continued to be oral elsewhere in Francia, of course, but the absence of charters in tenth-century Normandy seems to mark a break with previous practice. The disruption of monastic holdings may have temporarily removed one literate cohort from the picture, but the surviving diocesan Church could have supplied the dukes with scribes had they wanted them. Perhaps it was partly a question of recipients: Scandinavians could have been happy to receive their new lands without documentation, possession being validated through oral ritual, but when religious houses entered the picture they required written charters to define and guarantee their rights of lordship. Alternatively, a time-lag in the written expression of regalian rights might be expected when counts, not kings, came to exercise them; in Autun and Auxerre, however, counts issued charters modelled on royal diplomas in the early tenth century. On the other hand, there is a curious comparison to hand

100 Bates, Normandy, xii, Bauduin, La première Normandie, 78–83; see Moesgaard, ‘A Survey’, 101, for the Seine as a currency boundary.
103 RADN, no. 53 (c. 1025–6). Three of Richard I’s six surviving charters involve non-Norman parties.
104 Davy, ‘Le scribe’, 6, described eleventh-century secular clergy as ‘vectors of the translation of the Carolingian cultural patrimony into Normandy’.
across the Channel: no charters survive in England from 909 to 924, when King Edward the Elder was moving northwards and eastwards into the Danelaw and, we might assume, rewarding his followers with land taken from Scandinavian holders as well as confirming the possession of those who weathered the political change.106

Questions about Dudo’s authority extend to the issue of Normandy’s origins. We may wonder whether his emphasis on the Danish connection, for example, derived from Richard II’s friendship with Svein Forkbeard, king of Denmark c. 987–1014 (more bankable at the time of writing, perhaps, than an association with Norway’s Olaf Haraldsson (king c. 1015–28, 1029–30)). Dudo’s work was known in Norway at least by the later twelfth century, through William of Jumièges’s *Gesta*,107 but west Scandinavian tradition differed from Dudo in giving Normandy’s founder a Norwegian ancestry.108 This too may have derived from contemporary concerns—the desire to link Orkney with the kings of England after the Conquest, for example;109 if it did preserve earlier traditions, they would have to have survived for a very long time. The almost total absence of memory in Normandy of Olaf Haraldsson, baptized in Rouen and widely culted in Scandinavian circles overseas,110 is striking. Instead, Norman hagiography of the eleventh century concentrated on saints of the distant past and, like Dudo, projected an uncompromising, ducally led, regional unity back to the beginning.111

The ways in which the Norman Church repressed any impetus to express a Scandinavian cultural identity would repay further investigation. If Northumbrian sculpture of the tenth century portraying Thor and Sigurd had the blessing of the Church, its apparent absence from Normandy would suggest that the latter’s religious establishment was less culturally accommodating. Obstacles to the continued expression of Scandinavian culture may have come more from the Frankish aristocracy, on the other hand. Without more evidence, it is difficult to judge whether indigenous political structures, ecclesiastical culture, and social customs were just so strong that they drove out most imported alternatives in the early stages of settlement or whether this end-result can be explicitly attributed to the subsequent hegemony of Rouen.

The state of the evidence in early Normandy has often been seen as a problem: given the absence of other elements of Scandinavian culture, the evidence of language and place-names has seemed to some to be anomalous or in conflict with the argument that the Vikings of Rouen swiftly embraced Frankish politics and identity. In my view, Normandy’s personal names and place-names are not problematic: they testify to the presence of Norse-speaking immigrants. What remains to be

109 I owe this suggestion to Alex Woolf.
understood is why those who spoke Norse did not act more like their contemporaries in the settlements of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Rus. One traditional solution – the idea that they did not come directly from Scandinavia and were therefore less committed to the culture of the homelands – can be rejected, given that Scandinavians in other overseas settlements developed and maintained strongly diasporic identities. Other tentative ways of explaining why Normandy looks so different from its Scandinavian cousins have been offered here. One – that the evidence of material culture is lost or remains undetected – must be left open. Another – that the Scandinavian experience in Normandy was not monolithic, and that we should avoid transposing the evidence from Rouen across the province – builds on the observations of others. It may be helpful for future study to disaggregate Normandy and to conceive of more regional variation in the early stages of Scandinavian settlement, thanks to the legacy of pre-Viking differences, the uneven survival of infrastructure, different degrees of independence from Rouen, and the variables of immigration – settlers of different occupations and status arriving at different times, from different starting-points. If the grant of 911, dependent on conversion and compliance, made new lords into successors, backed by the Church, this was not necessarily how everyone first gained land or social, economic, or political power. If such heterogeneity did characterize the first stages of settlement, its disappearance from memory can be accounted for by the subsequent success of the ducal regime. Its monopoly of the record suggests that evidence from the eleventh century is unlikely to be much of an indicator for the tenth. Normandy retained its connections with the Scandinavian diaspora, and its Scandinavian roots were not forgotten; but cultural memory was overlaid by a new myth, the *gens Normannorum*, and Scandinavian identity was reformulated and repackaged in the service of the dukes.112

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