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The King and the Princes in Eleventh-Century France

HOW DID political power operate in early Capetian France? In his *Capetian Kings*, Fawtier explained it in the following way:

> Feudal society may strike the historian as having been too often anarchical in practice. But in theory it was a rigorously ordered society in which every individual had his fixed place in a strict hierarchy of lords and vassals. The keystone of the system was the king, the suzerain lord of all... Tenth-century France was a patchwork of innumerable nearly independent lordships; but no lord, however powerful, refused to recognise the king's theoretical supremacy... The king might be feeble. He might be weaker than some of his great vassals. Nevertheless, the great vassals owed him homage, and it is significant that they performed it.[1]

This account epitomizes a view of French society under the early Capetians (987–1108) which has been widely held for many years, and has been questioned only relatively recently. In many ways it is a just view. France was in this period a diverse and highly fragmented society, its kings chronically weak, controlling directly only the Île de France. There were several great nobles whose powers in practice often outweighed those of the king, and who played a prominent part in the constant round of wars—the so-called endemic anarchy. This picture has been given an added clarity and depth by the many important studies of early Capetian France produced since the last war. But it has also in many ways been refocused. Analyses of the disintegration of the French kingdom into a series of principalities and lordships, as well as regional and local studies, have underlined the great diversity of political and social structures in west Francia. They have also further highlighted the importance of the greatest nobles in the eleventh century, the territorial princes, some of whom exercised full and autonomous powers in their own lands, others who were dukes or counts in little more than name. Work on the royal government has traced the decay and early signs of revival of royal power, and has enabled it to be compared with and set against princely power. And it is here that the 'traditional' view has most been questioned, the view that the feudal links of the king and the theoretically subordinate nobles held the kingdom together, despite the anarchical state of

[1] R. Fawtier, *The Capetian Kings of France: Monarchy and Nation, 987–1328*, trans. L. Butler and R. J. Adam (1960), p. 60. This article was first read as a paper at the seminar on early medieval history held by Professor R. A. Brown, Mr. J. B. Gillingham and Dr. J. L. Nelson at the Institute of Historical Research in May 1978. I am indebted to them and to others and in particular to Dr. D. R. Bates, for valuable discussion of many of the problems raised here. For further analysis of them, see E. M. Hallam, *Capetian France, 987–1328* (1980), chs. ii–iii.

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society. France was certainly a patchwork of almost sovereign states of varying sizes, their leaders fighting and negotiating, jockeying for land and power, but although the king did remain God's anointed and was feudal overlord in theory, his overriding sacral powers and suzerainty in the kingdom were largely ignored even on the highest level from *c.* 1030 onwards. In practice the king dealt with the princes of northern France on an equal footing, and furthermore the princes enjoyed most of the royal powers and attributes in their own lands. This article examines and analyses these new perspectives, first looking briefly at some regions of France in the light of local studies in order to illustrate the diversity of political structures in the kingdom in this period, and then examining the powers and the relationship of the king and the princes.

The process of the disintegration of royal power, part of a western European phenomenon,[2] has been much studied for France, notably by Dhondt in *Études sur la Naissance des Principautés Territoriales en France (IXe–Xe siècle).* Others who have followed have modified aspects of his general thesis but have left intact his fundamental conclusions.[3] These, which were based to some extent on the work of Flach, were that in the ninth and tenth centuries the French kingdom began to split into principalities, areas where the king could not intervene without the prince's consent. The process began with those at the peripheries, Gascony and the Spanish March; followed by Burgundy and Aquitaine; Brittany; Normandy, Flanders and Anjou. The last group split away from Neustria, the area in the north of the west Frankish kingdom dominated by the Robertine house, the dukes of the Franks, who carved out their principality in the area between the Seine and the Loire.[4] Some of the principalities had an ethnic or racial basis, all were headed by great nobles who in many cases came from families of powerful Carolingian vassals—and who took over royal powers within their states. In this context Werner has emphasized the legitimacy of the transfer of power from king to prince, the blood ties of many of the princes with the royal house. In the second stage of disintegration there were again some quite legal grants underlying the splitting up of many of the principalities into counties, *pagi* and bannal lordships, whose rulers again took many royal powers. But very often these rights were taken over—some historians say usurped—from higher authorities too weak to retain them. The result was that effective power rested at different levels in different regions.

One of the great principalities which broke away from the king relatively early was Burgundy. In the tenth century Burgundia was singled out by Flodoard as one of the three divisions of the west Frankish kingdom whose great men supported Lothar when he was crowned king in 954; the other two were Aquitania and Francia.[5] Burgundy was in the early tenth century an important

[2] E.g. T. Manteuffel, 'Problèmes d'intégration et de désintégration des états Européens aux IXe–XIe siècles' in *L'Europe aux IXe–XIe siècles: aux origines des États Nationaux*, ed. T. Manteuffel and A. Gieysztor (Warsaw, 1968), pp. 21–9.

[3] J. Dhondt, *Études sur la Naissance des Principautés Territoriales en France (IXe–Xe siècle)* (Bruges, 1948); J. F. Lemarignier, 'La dislocation du "pagus" et le problème des "consuetudines"', *Mélanges d'Histoire du Moyen-Âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), pp. 401–10; J. Boussard, 'Les destinées de la Neustrie du IXe au XIe siècle', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, xi (1968), 15–28; K. F. Werner, 'Untersuchungen zur Frühzeit des Französischen Fürstentums (9–10 Jahrhundert)', *Die Welt als Geschichte*, xviii (1958), 256–89, xix (1959), 146–93, xx (1960), 87–119; *idem*, 'Kingdom and principality in 12th-century France', *The Medieval Nobility*, ed. and trans. T. Reuter (Amsterdam, 1978), pp. 243–90.

[4] J. Flach, *Les Origines de l'Ancienne France* (4 vols., Paris, 1886–1917).

[5] *Les Annales de Flodoard*, ed. P. Lauer (Paris, 1905), p. 139: 'Lotharius puer, filius Ludowici, apud Sanctum Remigium rex consecratur ab Artoldo archiepiscopo . . . ceterisque praesulibus ac proceribus Franciae, Burgundiae atque Aquitaniae'.

state with powerful dukes. The French duchy, distinct from the kingdom of Burgundy, was developed by Richard the Justiciar (888–921). Like many other princes, as Werner has shown us, he was descended from an important Carolingian noble family, and came to exercise the powers of a sub-king in the counties and *pagi* (their subdivisions) of Autun, Sens, Nevers and probably Auxerre.[6] But by the mid tenth century the state was beginning to disintegrate. The classic account by Chaume and several more recent studies by Richard trace this clearly.[7] Hugh Capet's brother became duke in the nine-fifties, and the duchy passed to his son and then to King Robert the Pious, who overran it to uphold his claim in the early eleventh century. After his death, Henry I of France granted Burgundy to his brother Robert who had attempted to become king but failed: clearly this was to buy him off. Burgundy then passed down to Robert's descendants. But the Capetian dukes were unable to maintain and consolidate their ducal power, and the counties which formed the constituent parts of the duchy became increasingly independent. Some of these split up into *pagi*, and in certain regions the *pagi* themselves disintegrated, to be replaced by entirely new political units, castellanies based on new centres of power.

By *c.* 1000 the counties of Burgundy, Dijon and Langres were no longer under ducal control. Sens was being drawn towards the royal lands while Provence and Lyon moved towards the kingdom of Burgundy. The ducal lands were centred on Avallon, Autun, Beaune, Blaisy and Châtillon, but the areas around them, Auxerre, Troyes, Nevers, Tonnerre, Chalon, Forez and Mâcon were dominated from the tenth century onwards first by counts, then in many cases by castellans. This area, 'sans roi, sans duc et sans prince' was the breeding ground of the Cluniac congregation which developed a structure of its own in default of a strong political framework.[8] The eleventh century was, says Richard, the twilight of the Carolingian duchy-principate: by its end ducal power was a shadow of its former self and it was only reassembled gradually during the twelfth century.

The seminal study by Duby on the Mâconnais[9] provides a valuable example of a society in the second stage of disintegration. In about 980, Duby suggests, the count of Mâcon exercised a strong domination in this region, but in succeeding years his powers passed to independent castellans and to important ecclesiastical establishments including Cluny. By 1026 the count of Mâcon controlled directly only the area overshadowed by his own castle and even in the city itself his power was strongly contested by the bishop. On the fringes of his lordship he was challenged at Dracé and Fleurie, Pierreclos and Scissé, by the lords of Beaujeu, Berzé, Brancion and Bâjé. The *pagi* had disappeared and bannal lords, with their own customary powers, had replaced the *ministeriales* and other administrators who had previously represented the public power. The count of Mâcon tried to buy the allegiance of many of these castellans by granting them his own allodial holdings as fiefs and demanding service in return. This however impoverished him and service was rarely rendered. Furthermore ties of vassalage multiplied

[6] Werner, 'Untersuchungen zur Frühzeit'.

[7] M. Chaume, *Les Origines du Duché de Bourgogne* (2 vols., Dijon, 1925–37), i; J. Richard, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne et la Formation du Duché du XIe au XIVe siècle* (Paris, 1954); *idem*, 'Châteaux, châtelains et vassaux en Bourgogne aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, iii (1960), 433–47; *idem*, 'Lignées féodales et géographie des seigneuries dans le duché de Bourgogne', *Bull. Phil. et Hist.* (1959), 137–54.

[8] J. F. Lemarignier, 'Political and monastic structures in France at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century', *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. F. L. Cheyette (New York, 1968), pp. 100–27.

[9] G. Duby, 'The nobility in 11th- and 12th-century Mâconnais', *Lordship and Community*, pp. 137–55, from G. Duby, *La Société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la Région Mâconnaise* (Paris, 1953); Lemarignier, 'La dislocation du "pagus"'

throughout the ranks of the nobility, and oaths of fidelity were often used to cement alliances with no land involved. This 'feudalism' was not an 'instrument of submission'[10] of one great noble to another: with the decay of the count's power it tended, rather, to encourage anarchical conditions, though it was rather more effective when used by the greater nobles to attract a clientele of lesser nobles. The bonds of vassalage were often criss-crossed and resulting patterns were exceedingly confused, while the prevalence of the allod in the area diminished their practical importance and made the Mâconnais over all a land of independent castellans. In the twelfth century this society began to stabilize under castellan domination, and no political centralization was achieved until the thirteenth.

Burgundy gives us an example of a highly fragmented society; Normandy, as the wealth of studies by Yver, de Boüard, Brown, Douglas and Le Patourel—to name but a few—have shown, was clearly the most centralized principality in France in the eleventh century.[11] Indeed the only principality to come anywhere near to it in political coherence was Flanders.[12] Although it lacked Normandy's territorial definition its counts retained a relatively strong control over the church, the nobility and the townsfolk. Again there were several independent lordships in Flanders, and these increased at times of relative comital weakness, such as the late eleventh century. But the count remained the dominant power, even if he was less effective than the Norman dukes.

The Norman state was based on a Viking settlement supposedly legalized in 911 by King Charles the Simple at Saint-Clair-sur-Epte, and extended and firmly consolidated by its founder Rollo and his descendants. Both Viking and Frankish elements were to be important in the making of this principality, and the achievements of its nobility were to be remarkable. Set against all the other principalities, its unity during the later eleventh century, and particularly during the later part of William the Conqueror's reign, is striking. Most fundamental, the duke retained control over the nobility, their castles, which could be built only under ducal licence, and their lands, which could be confiscated as a penalty for rebellion. William, count of Arques, for example, lost his estates as a punishment for treachery, and these, like other confiscations and with the vast ducal lands, could be used to reward the duke's more faithful followers. With his substantial domain and his control of key castles, the duke had a strong power base, but he needed personal strength and charisma—and these qualities men such as Robert the Magnificent (1027–35) *alias* Robert the Devil, and William himself had in no small measure.[13] Furthermore the ducal blood itself became by the eleventh century a means of determining noble status in the duchy, a contrast with other parts of France where the *sine qua non* for a good noble pedigree was a

[10] *Lordship and Community*, p. 141.

[11] C. H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), remains a classic, but many of its conclusions have been modified by later studies. See for example M. de Boüard, 'De la Neustrie Carolingienne à la Normandie féodale', *ante*, xxviii (1955), 1–14; L. Musset, 'Les domaines de l'époque franque et les destinées du régime domainiale, du IXe au XIe siècle', *Bull. Soc. Antiquaires de la Normandie*, xlix (1946 for 1942–5), 7–97; D. C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (1964); R. A. Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (1969); J. Yver, 'Les premières institutions du duché de Normandie', *Settimane di Studi del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo*, xvi (1969), 299–336; J. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976).

[12] F.-L. Ganshof, 'La Flandre', *Histoire des Institutions Françaises au Moyen Âge*, ed. F. Lot, R. Fawtier and others (3 vols., Paris, 1957–62), i. 343–426; R. Monier, *Les Institutions du Comté de Flandre de la fin du IXe siècle à 1384* (Paris, 1943); F. Vercauteren, 'La formation des principautés de Liège, Flandre, Brabant et Hainault, IXe–XIe siècles', *L'Europe aux IXe–XIe siècles*, pp. 31–41; E. Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility before 1300* (4 vols., Courtrai, 1975).

[13] Douglas, pp. 88–104; Brown, pp. 35–8.

connection with the Carolingians, however tenuous.[14] And blood ties were backed up in Normandy by gradually developing feudal links between the duke and the nobles, bringing the duke military service and aid. Here feudalism was a sign of a developing social hierarchy, rather than acting as the yeast of anarchy as in the Mâconnais. The other pillar of ducal authority was the church. The ecclesiastical province of Rouen corresponded fairly closely with the boundaries of the duchy; the ducal family controlled all the bishoprics and was founder and patron of many Norman abbeys—there was no widespread lay advocacy of religious houses in this part of France to diminish these rights. The church was protected by the dukes and generously endowed; it was to furnish men, money and military service, for administration and for war, in return.[15] The considerable degree of centralization in Normandy is further emphasized in the relative unity of custom throughout the duchy, a contrast with the neighbouring royal lands where *coutumes* proliferated.[16]

The unity of Normandy under William the Conqueror should not blind us to the great threat to ducal authority posed by the nobility when he was a minor and further hampered by his illegitimate birth. In 1047 his position within the duchy had become so precarious that he had to be rescued by King Henry I. The dangerous noble coalition which threatened William was defeated at the battle of Val-ès-Dunes, but the duke continued his laborious struggle against group after group of rebels until the ten-sixties, using external aggression against Francia, Brittany, Maine, Anjou and England to unite and reward his followers as well as to enrich and to glorify himself. During this period of anarchy, as Yver has shown, adulterine castles multiplied dramatically as many nobles tried to carve out bannal lordships for themselves. When they appear in any number, without a licence from the prince, these constructions are a sign of a weak central power, incapable of garrisoning its own fortifications, let alone preventing new ones from being built.[17] Precisely the same happened after William's death, and the same happened in Anjou in the ten-sixties and in the royal lands in the ten-thirties and forties. The recovery of power by the dukes of Normandy where the counts of Anjou and the kings of France failed underlines the personal strength and abilities of the Norman dukes as much as the undoubtedly important political structure of the duchy. Normandy shared the problems of the rest of France, but its leaders were more successful than other rulers in combating them.

Anjou shared in the earlier eleventh century many of the features of its near neighbour and enemy Normandy. Guillot's study of its power structure highlights the considerable authority of the notorious Fulk Nerra (987–1040) and his son Geoffrey Martel (1040–60).[18] They initiated a vigorous territorial expansion into Maine, the Saintonge and Touraine, and by a judicious mixture of successful war, marriage and diplomacy, which was the road to success for a

[14] Le Patourel, p. 289.

[15] Douglas, pp. 105–32; Brown, pp. 26–35.

[16] J. C. Holt, 'Politics and property in early medieval England', *Past and Present*, lvii (1972), 1–52, esp. 5–13; Lemarignier, 'La dislocation du "pagus"'.

[17] Douglas, pp. 53–80 *et passim*; J. Yver, 'Les châteaux forts en Normandie jusqu'au milieu du XIIe siècle', *Bull. Soc. Antiquaires de la Normandie*, liii (1955–6), 28–115. A dangerous lordship on the borders was Bellême, for which see J. Boussard, 'La seigneurie de Bellême aux Xe et XIe siècles', *Mélanges dediés à L. Halphen*, pp. 43–54.

[18] O. Guillot, *Le Comte d'Anjou et son Entourage au XIe siècle* (2 vols., Paris, 1972) modifies and supplements the still useful L. Halphen, *Le Comté d'Anjou au Xe siècle* (Paris, 1906); R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (1953), pp. 80–8; J. Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109 à 1151* (Paris, 1928); J. Boussard, 'L'origine des familles seigneuriales dans la région de la Loire moyenne', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, v(1962), 303–22.

prince in this age, they made Anjou a formidable state with a European reputation. Where Fulk switched from war to prayer, often with alarming rapidity, Geoffrey shifted from ally to ally, but both managed to dominate their own nobility and to exploit ecclesiastical resources very effectively. But after Geoffrey's death in 1060 there was no direct heir, and under his nephews Geoffrey the Bearded and Fulk Rechin (1060–1109) there was a marked weakness in comital power following a succession dispute, and the nobility of the region built up a considerable degree of territorial power. Maine was lost to Normandy and the Saintonge to Aquitaine. This was a principality in eclipse, and no real growth in comital power occurred until in the twelfth century Duke Geoffrey le Bel began to rebuild his power using a mixture of force and feudal bonds.

In some areas once covered by Neustria, political units cohered far more slowly than Burgundy, Normandy and Anjou. Indeed in some regions, such as Picardy, power devolved straight to the castellans, who remained dominant throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Bur's study of Champagne, a state based around the county of Troyes, and Chédeville's monograph on Chartres, an important constituent part of the land dominated by the counts of Blois, point to various reasons for the tardy development of the principality of Blois-Champagne, which showed a considerable diversity in its political structures and a relative lack of territorial and political coherence.[19] In the tenth century the house of Vermandois built up an important bloc of lands in the area, the nucleus of the later Champagne. This was overshadowed by the Robertine lands which became the royal principality later on, but when Odo I joined Champagne with Blois, the lands of his family almost encircled those of the king. The Capetians were unable effectively to dominate the counts: indeed in the early eleventh century Odo II (996–1037) attempted, not unsuccessfully, to dominate the king. There was almost constant war between the two in the early Capetian period, but the king did use other weapons against the counts as well. As overlord, and one close at hand, he managed generally to regulate the succession of the lands of Blois-Champagne to his own advantage, having them split between male heirs on the pattern frequently adopted by the nobility of the region, but rarely by the other territorial princes. As a long-term policy this met with only moderate success, for on the death of the holder of one part, the land tended to revert back to the holder of the other. In part this was an accident of mortality, but it is also possibly indicative of the way in which the division was regarded by the counts, as *parage*. Certainly this re-unification of the family's lands renewed the threat to the Capetians from their most powerful neighbours. But, like the royal lands, the Blois and Chartres and the Champagne halves of the estates were lacking in political coherence in the eleventh century, and again castellans dominated many areas. This was a tendency which increased into the twelfth century and somewhat weakened the counts of Blois-Champagne. But in Picardy the power of the castellans was even greater, for here, as Feuchère shows, there was no principality or great noble house at all. The king was not strong enough directly to dominate the region until the later twelfth century, but he was powerful enough to prevent anyone else from doing so.[20]

[19] M. Bur, *La Formation du Comté de Champagne, v. 950–v. 1150* (Nancy, 1977); A. Chédeville, *Chartres et ses Campagnes, XIe–XIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1973); see also T. Evergates, *Feudal Society in the Bailliage of Troyes under the Counts of Champagne, 1152–1284* (Baltimore and London, 1975) for a sketch of later developments which is rather overburdened with statistics, and J. Longnon, 'La Champagne', *Histoire des Institutions Françaises*, i. 123–36.

[20] R. Fossier, *La Terre et les Hommes en Picardie jusqu'à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (2 vols., Paris and Louvain, 1968); P. Feuchère, 'Une tentative manquée de concentration territoriale entre Somme et Seine: la principauté d'Amiens-Valois au XIe siècle', *Le Moyen Age*, lx (1954), 1–37.

The foregoing survey underlines the diversity of the political structures in France in the eleventh century. There were some relatively cohesive principalities, there were others where the prince's title was meaningless in practical terms, and many areas were controlled by castellans. But there were certain similarities between the principalities whether centralized or not. Each prince had his secular domain, a collection of lands and rights, and his ecclesiastical domain, the control over bishops and monasteries. Beyond this he had an entourage of nobles, greater and lesser, and of knights, who followed him perhaps as vassals, perhaps from self-interest, perhaps from fear, and who usually came from a wider area than that where his domain rights were concentrated. This gave him a general sphere of interest, but this was not necessarily territorial, nor fixed. The prince would be faced by hostile nobles, castellans and their own entourages, who might form coalitions against him often in conjunction with neighbouring princes. In this context, boundaries of principalities lose a great deal of importance.[21]

How does the Île de France and the surrounding areas where the king's domain was centred compare with this general pattern of power? Like the lands of the house of Blois, the Robertine principality which formed in the late ninth and tenth centuries did not have the clear territorial definition of a Normandy or a Burgundy, but it was an important power base for the family which, after holding the throne alternatively with the Carolingians from 888, became the one ruling dynasty with the backing of the church in 987. The Robertine principality, with the addition of some lands and a reasonably large collection of bishoprics and abbeys finally taken over from the Carolingians, became the Capetian principality—and this shared the characteristics of the other principalities as defined. It was centred on a domain concentrated around Paris and lands to the north of the Loire, Dreux, Mantes and Saint-Denis, and around Senlis and Compiègne reaching up to Soissons and Laon.[22] Then there was the royal following of nobles, the great nobles and the castellans such as the Garlande and the de la Tour, the counts of Étampes and the viscounts of Poissy, and the lesser castellans and knights, who became increasingly prominent in the royal entourage in the eleventh century as royal power declined: Lemarignier has demonstrated this very effectively.[23] At the same time the king's power was challenged by hostile nobles to whom he was the principal enemy, and totally ignored by many others. These were men such as the lords of le Puiset and Marle whose violent exploits were to be immortalized by Guibert of Nogent and Abbot Suger in the early twelfth century, but who were not as a breed an unusual phenomenon in the France of this period.[24]

The history of the Capetian principality in the eleventh century fits in well with the models of the other French states, sharing many of their features, but with idiosyncracies of its own. This one would expect, but it is not an angle taken very often by historians who prefer to examine royal power in the context of the kingdom rather than within the royal lands, where it was much stronger. From

[21] J. F. Lemarignier, *Recherches sur l'Hommage en Marche et les Frontières Féodales* (Lille, 1945), pp. 9–72.

[22] W. M. Newman, *Le Domaine royal sous les Premiers Capétiens, 987–1180* (Paris, 1937); cf. the territorial view of the royal domain portrayed by A. Longnon in *Atlas Historique de la France* (3 vols., Paris, 1885–9), i, *Atlas*.

[23] J. F. Lemarignier, *Le Gouvernement Royal aux Premiers Temps Capétiens, 987–1108* (Paris, 1965), pp. 67–139.

[24] Suger, *Vita Ludovici Grossi Regis*, translated as *Vie de Louis VI le Gros*, ed. H. Waquet (Paris, 1929), p. 82; Guibert of Nogent, *De Vita Sua*, in M. Bouquet, *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. L. Delisle (24 vols., Paris, 1869–1904), xii. 257, and translated as *Self and Society in Medieval France*, ed. J. F. Benton (New York, 1970), pp. 184–5.

various studies which have been made of the area it is possible to draw together an over-all picture of the royal principality in the eleventh century,[25] but it would greatly repay further research.

One impression emerges clearly from the primary sources and the secondary studies of the Île de France, that it was one of the most populous and almost certainly the richest area in France in the middle ages. This was to be of great advantage to the Capetians: in the eleventh century however the general instability of the area rather diminished their domainal profits. Royal power in the kingdom shrank in the period and although the king derived some advantage from his wide ecclesiastical domain, the practical value of this can be greatly overestimated.[26] Hugh Capet and his son Robert the Pious—this something of a misnomer—(987–1031) cloaked a contracting royal power with the panoply of Carolingian monarchy, but in the reign of Henry I (1031–60) the disguise was no longer necessary. When Robert died he left his eldest surviving son, Henry, as his crowned and designated heir, but his widow supported Henry's brother Robert. Together they gathered a powerful coalition of nobles, including Odo II of Blois, to oppose the new king. Henry was rescued largely through the good offices of Robert the Magnificent of Normandy, and he bought his brother off with Burgundy. But the disruptions of the succession crisis seem to have brought about a reverse to royal authority in the principality and the kingdom. Henry's concentration on the former, emphasized by Dhondt, was a realistic policy but confirmed the decline of royal authority in France as a whole.[27] Henry spent most of his reign fighting his more immediate neighbours, Blois-Champagne, Normandy and Anjou, and this Philip I was to do with less enthusiasm. Meanwhile although in the long term the concern of the kings with their immediate lands was to help to consolidate the royal principality, in the short term their authority was challenged in many areas of it. Great castellans had begun to emerge in the Île de France from the late tenth century and the early eleventh century, when the lords of Montlhéry had carved out an estate from the lands of the bishopric of Paris, and the Montmorency, Montfort and others from the royal lands—beginning with quite legal grants of land as benefices. But during Henry I's reign lesser castellans appear to have multiplied in the area, many with independent bannal lordships based on illegal castles. The whole group intermarried and its offshoots proliferated, and smaller and smaller units of landholding developed as many estates were divided in *parage,* a custom of the area. Ultimately this was to help the king, but by the end of the eleventh century much of the royal principality was dominated by castellan families such as the Garlande, Montlhéry and Rochefort. Many tended to remain faithful to the king but many, too, remained hostile. Eventually Louis VI was, like the dukes of Aquitaine and the counts of Anjou and Flanders, obliged to fight his way back to power, using feudal ties and a growing administration to back up his gains.

The king's power seems, when looked at in this way, to be very similar to that of the French princes. Does this proposition bear further investigation? Was the king in the eleventh century no more than a mere territorial prince, and then not even a very powerful one? The two questions which need to be asked in this

[25] F. Olivier-Martin, *Histoire de la Coutume de la Prévôté de Paris* (2 vols., Paris, 1922–30); G. Fourquin, *Les Campagnes de la Région Parisienne à la Fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1964); Lemarignier, *Le Gouvernement Royal.*

[26] As does Fawtier, pp. 67–75.

[27] J. Dhondt, 'Quelques aspects du règne de Henri Ier roi de France', *Mélanges dédiés à L. Halphen,* pp. 199–208; *idem,* 'Une crise de pouvoir Capétien, 1032–4', *Miscellanea Mediaevalia in Memoriam Jan Frederik Niermeyer* (Groningen, 1967), pp. 137–48.

context are first, how strong was the idea of the kingdom in eleventh-century France, and second, what royal powers did the king enjoy? It is widely accepted that from the ninth century until well into the thirteenth the word 'Francia' was generally used to describe only the modern Île de France and its surrounding regions. Flodoard used the term to encompass one of the three divisions of the kingdom,[28] and the Robertines whose principality was situated in the area were known as the 'duces francorum'. In the twelfth century the word 'regnum' was used to describe the royal principality, and Suger, when describing the victory of Louis VI over the German emperor in 1124 used the expression 'tota Francia' rather than the 'regnum francorum' for the kingdom.[29] This was a clear reflection of political conditions. In the late tenth century the princes of the South recognized Hugh Capet as king; a century later they had turned to the papacy as a more effective power. The kingdom, both in ideas and in fact, was in eclipse[30]—though it never entirely died out[31]—and Suger was to do more to emphasize royal powers and attributes than to revive the idea of the French kingdom. But this brings us to the second consideration: what were specifically royal powers in France in the eleventh century?

In *The State in the Middle Ages,* Mitteis suggested that 'the early Capetian period witnessed a marked revival of the sacramental concept of kingship: feudal law and divine right helped to tide the French monarchy over the most critical phase in its history'.[32] The notions of sacral kingship and of the king as lawgiver do appear in many letters, collections of canons and narratives produced between the accession of Hugh Capet and the death of Robert the Pious by the royalist ecclesiastics of northern France, who transferred Carolingian traditions of holy kingship, along with their political loyalties, to the new ruling dynasty. Here we need quote only a few examples. Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, portrays the king as the ultimate source of justice: his obligations are to uphold the law and to keep the peace, his duty the support of the church.[33] Even the unruly Odo II of Blois, in a letter probably written for him by Fulbert, is made to acknowledge these royal attributes, at the same time as he is claiming to inherit Troyes by right and not by royal grace (1022).[34] In Helgaud of Fleury's *Vita Regis Rotberti Pii,* a semi-hagiographical work, a king who was in reality an adulterer, simoniacal, and as ready to burn down monastic houses as to found them, is portrayed as an example to all ecclesiastics. This sycophantic adulation is explained in part by the writer's view of the kingly office:

Celestis imperii dignitas, . . . elegit in hoc seculo principes qui regerent hujus seculi

[28] *Les Annales de Flodoard,* p. 139.

[29] *Vie de Louis VI le Gros,* p. 220.

[30] C. T. Wood, *'Regnum Francie:* a problem in Capetian administrative usage', *Traditio,* xxiii (1967), 117–47; J. R. Strayer, 'Defense of the realm and royal power in France', *Medieval Statecraft and the Perspectives of History,* ed. G. Post (Princeton, 1971), pp. 291–9; G. M. Spiegel, '"Defense of the realm": evolution of a Capetian propaganda slogan', *Jour. Med. Hist.,* iii (1977), 115–29.

[31] Lemarignier, *Le Gouvernement Royal,* pp. 34–5; P. Fournier, 'De quelques questions concernant l'ancien droit public', *Journal des Savants,* new ser., xvii (1919), 5–18.

[32] H. Mitteis, *The State in the Middle Ages: a Comparative Constitutional History of Feudal Europe,* trans. H. F. Orton (Amsterdam, 1975), p. 119.

[33] F. Behrends, 'Kingship and feudalism according to Fulbert of Chartres', *Medieval Studies,* xxv (1963), 93–9.

[34] 'Officii tui radicem et fructum, justitiam loquor et pacem' (*Recueil des Historiens,* x. 501–2). Fawtier, pp. 65–6, suggests that this letter indicates that the great nobles of the realm recognized the king as the ultimate authority even when quarrelling with him. This is in some ways a fair point, although elsewhere in the letter Odo insists that the Troyes lands were his by right of inheritance, like Blois which had come down to him by right rather than by royal grant. L. Halphen, *A travers l'Histoire du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1950), pp. 241–50.

sceptra potentes. . . eum [Robertum] bonum elegit Christi Domini pietas et constituit super familiam suam *divina majestas*.[35]

But even on this level certain criticisms of the king are voiced: the weakness of royal power constantly shows through. Adalbero, bishop of Laon, whose principal area of attack on Robert was his over-reliance on Cluniac monks, also suggested that he did not uphold the royal dignity nor the religious ideal which made him king.[36] And Fulbert of Chartres, writing to Fulk, bishop of Orleans, early in 1008 says that:

our lord the king, whose position makes him the fountain-head of justice, is so beset by the treachery of the wicked that at present he is unable to avenge himself or aid us as he should.[37]

Again, Abbo of Fleury proclaims that the great men of the realm owe the king help and counsel for the ruling of his kingdom, but the assemblies of the great men of the realm, the *placita* to ratify royal decisions, became increasingly rare under the first two Capetians and then exceptional, at the same time as the royal entourage fell in social status, and royal acts lost the characteristics of Carolingian diplomas and became like private acts.[38] After *c.* 1030, instead of finding references to the ideals of kingship qualified with the admission that reality does not measure up to this at all, royal attributes get very little mention at all. This began to change again during the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries, when the vernacular *chansons de geste*, and particularly the *chanson de Roland*, developed the idea of 'la douce France'—though at first one associated more with the Carolingians than the Capetians. But there was no revival of latin works glorifying the monarchy and its role until towards the middle of the twelfth century Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis produced a number of works, in particular the *Vita Ludovici Grossi Regis*, and when the Carolingian cult, used quite widely in the late tenth century to stress the legitimacy of the new ruling dynasty, was again emphasized for Capetian use. This was to have a great future, but the popularity of Louis VI and his successors with ecclesiastical writers should not blind us to the great hiatus in such accounts during the later eleventh century. This seems to be a reflection of the lack of inspiration provided by Henry I and Philip I for contemporary writers such as the normally prolific Saint-Benoît (Fleury) monks[39]—even though Philip I was buried at Fleury—rather than the

[35] Helgaud of Fleury, *Vie de Robert le Pieux*, ed. R.-H. Bautier and G. Labory (Paris, 1965), pp. 56–7. Helgaud brushes aside Robert's union with Bertha of Blois, which greatly scandalized contemporaries, and concentrates on his pious gifts to the poor and religious houses, which are indeed confirmed by more critical writers and by charter evidence. See C. Pfister, *Études sur le Règne de Robert le Pieux, 996–1031* (Paris, 1885); W. M. Newman, *Catalogue des Actes de Robert II, Roi de France* (Paris, 1937). For the writings of Abbo, abbot of Fleury, which hark back to Carolingian theocratic traditions, see *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, cxxxix (Paris, 1880), col. 477; W. Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (1969). The closeness of the royal and the episcopal offices is emphasized in a coronation rite written by Fulrad, abbot of Saint-Vaast at Arras (988/92–1004); J. F. Lemarignier, *La France Médiévale* (Paris, 1970), pp. 66–7, 152; *idem*, 'Autour de la royauté française du IXe au XIIIe siècle', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, cxiii (1955), 5–36.

[36] *Recueil des Historiens*, x. 93–4; G. A. Hückel, *Les Poèmes Satiriques d'Adalbéron* (Paris, 1901); Lemarignier, 'Autour de la royauté'.

[37] *The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres*, ed. F. Behrends (Oxford, 1976), pp. 18–19 (no. 7).

[38] *Patrologia Latina*, cxxxix, col. 478; Lemarignier, *Le Gouvernement Royal*, *passim*.

[39] Hugh of Fleury, an important Saint-Benoît writer of the early 12th century, dedicated the version of his ecclesiastical history which he completed *c.* 1110 to Adela, countess of Blois, and his *Historia Moderna*, after 1114, to the Empress Mathilda (A. Vidier, *L'Historiographie à Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire et les Miracles de Saint Benoît* (Paris, 1965), pp. 76–8, 111–12). Hugh's earliest work, *Liber de regia potestate* (*c.* 1102), exalting the royal power, is dedicated to Henry I of England.

disappearance of historical accounts. The kings were not very inspiring material for the chroniclers: men such as William the Conqueror provoked far more interest.[40]

But what was the king's role as feudal overlord? Recent research has suggested that it is easy to overestimate the importance of feudal bonds in many areas of France, particularly in regions where there were numerous allods, in the eleventh century. Nevertheless the institutions of vassalage and the fief were widespread in some areas, and the relationship of lord and vassal was widely understood. The growing cult of chivalry set out an ideal relationship between lord and vassal based on honour and trust. In a celebrated letter, Fulbert of Chartres sets out these obligations: 'He who swears fidelity to his lord should always keep these six terms in mind: safe and sound, secure, honest, useful, easy, possible. . .' This was an idealized picture and Fulbert was well aware that this was the case.[41] For the mutual obligations of lord and vassal were, while widely recognized, frequently ignored in practice. Nevertheless, great nobles often had clienteles of vassals in feudal dependence on them, a pattern to spread upwards through society.

The king was caught up in feudo-vassalic relationships in his own principality in the same way as the princes were, and in addition, he had in theory a special place as feudal overlord within the kingdom. In the Île de France he had many vassals, as for example, the viscounts of Poissy and the counts of Étampes, men from the minor nobility of the region who were the mainstay of the entourage and frequently witnessed royal *acta*. Lesser nobles and knights too, as well as townsfolk appeared as the king's men—although in the eleventh century the royal network of vassalage was not strong enough to lend cohesion to the Paris area. In his position at the head of this group the king was very much like the princes. But it is his relationship with this latter group that was crucial to his power in the kingdom. He had no connections with the southern princes in the eleventh century—but what of the others, the dukes of Normandy, Burgundy and Aquitaine, the counts of Brittany, Anjou, Flanders, Blois-Champagne, with whom the king constantly fought and negotiated?

The ties of the princes to the king of France in the central middle ages have long been a subject of controversy. In his celebrated work *Fidèles ou Vassaux?*[42] Lot argued that the links between the king and the princes went broadly unchanged between the ninth and the twelfth centuries. More recently scholars have shown that liege homage with its implications of unreserved suzerainty was not paid to the king of France until the twelfth century. In the eleventh, although the king was seen as ultimate overlord in theory this gave him only very limited powers in practice. Homage and fidelity were given to him only spasmodically by

[40] William the Conqueror was a favourite subject of ecclesiastical biographers: William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, ed. J. Marx (Rouen, 1914); William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi Ducis Normannorum et Regis Anglorum*, translated as *Histoire de Guillaume le Conquérant*, ed. R. Foreville (Paris, 1952). The counts of Anjou also attracted a historical tradition: see *Chroniques des Comtes d'Anjou*, ed. P. Marchegay and A. Salmon (Paris, 1856–71).

[41] *Letters of Fulbert*, pp. 91–3 (no. 51); Behrends; J. Martindale, 'Conventum inter Guillelmum Aquitanorum comes et Hugonem Chiliarchum', *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, lxxxiv (1969), 528–48; J. Boussard, 'L'éviction des tenants de Thibaud de Blois par Geoffroy Martel, comte d'Anjou, en 1044', *Le Moyen Age*, lxix (1963), 141–9, gives a clear example of the theoretically illegal dispossession of the tenants of one lord by another.

[42] F. Lot, *Fidèles ou Vassaux? Essai sur la Nature juridique du lien qui unissait les grands vassaux à la royauté depuis le milieu du IXe jusqu'à la fin du XIIe siècle* (Paris, 1904); J. F. Lemarignier, 'Les fidèles du roi de France, 936–87', *Recueil de Travaux Offert à M. Clovis Brunel* (2 vols., Paris, 1955), ii. 138–62. Recent scholarship reflects the earlier views of Flach, i. 252–3 and E. Glasson, *Histoire du Droit et des Institutions de la France* (8 vols., Paris, 1887–1903), iv. 291–2.

the princes of northern France and not at all by those of the South. When they were paid this was a gesture of alliance rather than an act of submission on the part of the princes, a peace homage. For example, the counts of Flanders were vassals of the German emperors, as well as of the French kings, even though their ties with the Capetians were closer. Baldwin of Lille (1036–67) married the king's sister and was made guardian of the young Philip I, but there is no evidence that he paid homage to either Henry I or Philip I. Counts Robert I and Robert II who followed him seem to have done so: even so Robert II rendered homage to Henry I of England and Normandy in 1103 'salva fidelitate Philippi, regis francorum' and he was to do so again in 1109. Flanders was fairly consistently the ally of the Capetians in the eleventh century; Blois-Champagne was more consistently their enemy. The two sons of Bertha of Blois, mistress of Robert the Pious, Odo and Theobald, were both Robert's vassals, but Odo, after his brother's death in 1004, tried to indulge his immense ambitions and fought first Robert, then Henry. He was one of the leading lights in the coalition which tried to depose Henry in 1031. The pattern was to repeat itself. Stephen Henry of Blois and Meaux was both the vassal and the bitter enemy of Philip I.[43] The counts of Anjou ranged between support of and antipathy towards the Capetians, but were known as the king's *fideles* when allying with him. The same holds true for the more distant Aquitaine and Burgundy, although no count of Brittany did homage to the king during this period.[44] The Norman dukes did homage on the borders of their own lands and the royal principality, as when in 1013–14 Duke Richard and King Robert the Pious met on the frontier at Coudres, or when in 1060 the young King Philip I made a pact with Duke William.[45] Further meetings took place on the border after 1066, but until the middle of the twelfth century the Norman dukes seem to have refused outright to do homage: they were for the most part kings of England and no sovereign could do homage to another, but this also highlights the strong traditions of Norman independence dating back to the early days of the principality. When Louis VI became king of France, Henry I of England and Normandy was joined by the dukes of Aquitaine and Burgundy in refusing to do homage altogether. But with the gradual changes in the legal implications of homage the position of the king was to change in theory, and once he could back them up with force, in practice, as the events of Philip Augustus's reign showed.[46]

The dukes of Normandy showed far more resistance to intermittent *hommage en marche* to the king than did the other northern French princes: otherwise the dukes behaved very much as their neighbours did, changing from hostility towards the king to alliance and back again. Indeed the king gave the duke protection on one occasion and the dukes rendered the king service on several. The most striking manifestations of this were in 1047 when Henry I rescued William of Normandy from his enemies, just as in 1031 Robert the Magnificent had saved Henry I his throne. But the dukes of Normandy also sent troops to the French royal army in 1005–6, in 1048, in 1071, and these instances, as Professor Le Patourel points out, 'imply a lord-vassal relationship, in the contemporary sense, between king and duke'.[47] This is often understated by historians who play

[43] Glasson, iv. 133–77.

[44] Guillot, i. 95–7; Lot, pp. 27–47, 49–135; Lemarignier, *Le Gouvernement Royal*, pp. 49–50, 173.

[45] Lemarignier, *L'Hommage en Marche*, p. 90; *Recueil des Historiens*, xi. 85; cf. Le Patourel, p. 218.

[46] Lemarignier, *L'Hommage en Marche*, pp. 96–7; for some sources which reflect these traditions see *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, pp. 33–9; H. Prentout, *Étude Critique sur Dudon de Saint-Quentin* (Paris, 1916), p. 15. On the general issues, see T. N. Bisson, 'The problem of feudal monarchy: Aragon, Catalonia and France', *Speculum*, liii (1978), 460–78.

[47] Lot, pp. 193, 198, 200; Douglas, p. 47; Le Patourel, p. 218.

up the Anglo-Norman *regnum* and emphasize Normandy's independence from France. On the other hand this does not imply a feudal subordination on the lines suggested by Fawtier and others. Boussard suggests that military service was to be of considerable importance in the revival of royal power, for in the later eleventh century most of the princes of northern and central France began to render it on a regular basis, long before they attended regularly at the royal court and long before they paid homage frequently.[48] But until Philip I's reign, the rendering of military service by the princes to the king, like the oaths of *hommage de paix* until Louis VI's reign, appears to have been used as a sign of alliance, but was an 'obligation' which could be disregarded when political expediency dictated. The king's allies tended to render service and pay a *hommage de paix;* his enemies ignored such duties. All this adds to the impression that for most of the eleventh century the king was involved as a territorial prince with his neighbours, all struggling for land and power at the expense of one another, allying together or with rulers from further afield, from Germany or Italy, as expediency dictated.

The more one looks at the political milieu of the early Capetian kings, then, the more like the territorial princes they appear. It has often been said that even at the nadir of their political power the Capetians still had their special sacral and feudal attributes to fall back on. This may hold true for the twelfth century, but in the eleventh, as has been demonstrated, specifically royal powers were given little emphasis. Furthermore the princes shared most aspects of the royal sacral and judicial attributes: in this context, the more one looks at them, the more like kings they become. William the Conqueror is, as often, exceptional. He was, like many powerful men of the eleventh century, attributed with imperial powers and status by the writers of Norman chronicles and charters, going far beyond the pretensions of the French king as well as William's actual power; although, interestingly, the Capetians persisted in addressing the Norman dukes as counts until 1204.[49] But the other French princes were put very much on the level of the Capetians in the way in which they were addressed and in their regalian rights and powers. Fulbert of Chartres wrote to King Robert as 'benignissimo atque dilectissimo domino suo', and to Duke William of Aquitaine as 'dilectissime princeps'.[50] In their *acta* the princes often appear as 'Dei gratia princeps'—as the king was 'Dei gratia rex', and the diplomatic of royal, noble and episcopal charters is generally similar, once the king had dropped the Carolingian style diploma in favour of the noble instrument. The break here was in the early eleventh century.[51] And as *principes*, the greatest nobles exercised broadly the same regalian rights as the king in their own lands. There are many references in princely charters to 'fiscus noster' and 'foresta mea', again very much the royal style, although in reality the ducal or comital, like the royal fisc, had often passed under the control of lesser nobles.[52] Theobald III of Blois, confirming a grant to Marmoutier (1060–89) was described as 'principalis huius terrae dominus',[53] and

[48] J. Boussard, 'Services féodaux, milices et mercenaires dans les armées en France aux Xe et XIe siècles', *Settimane di Studi del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo*, xv (1968), 131–66.

[49] *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la Reine Mathilde pour les abbayes Caennaises*, ed. L. Musset (Caen, 1967), p. 54 (no. 2): 'convenientes imperii nostri excellentissimi pontifices'. M. Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford, 1978), p. 112; *Histoire de Guillaume le Conquérant*, pp. 128–9, 246–57; K. F. Werner, 'Quelques observations au début du "duché" de Normandie', in *Droit Privé et Institutions Régionales: Études Historiques offertes à Jean Yver* (Paris, 1976), pp. 691–709.

[50] *Letters of Fulbert*, pp. 32–3 (no. 17), 190–1 (no. 107).

[51] Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', p. 256; Lemarignier, *Le Gouvernement Royal, passim.*

[52] Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', p. 254.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 282 n. 38; *Cartulaire de Marmoutier pour le Dunois*, ed. E. Mabille (Châteaudun, 1874), p. 117 (no. 125).

as lords of their lands the princes had the duty to protect and defend their people. In a charter of Geoffrey Martel to Saint-Serge at Angers of 1046–9 certain customs are granted 'excepto . . . proelio generali pro defensione regni aut principis', excepting service for the defence of the principality or prince.[54] The princes were to uphold the ideals of peace and freedom, many directing the peace and truce of God movements in their own lands.[55] They fought hostile castellans to uphold these ideals, and, perhaps more to the point, their own powers—and they developed their own administrations. In this they had the backing of the church, over which again they exercised regalian rights in various degrees. Thus Fulbert of Chartres wrote of 'episcopis eius'[56] of Duke William of Aquitaine. In Normandy, ducal domination over the church was very strong, and papal legates were not given precedence over the local bishops, a contrast with the Île de France. The counts of Blois-Champagne controlled only a few bishoprics, but these they hung on to with some determination.[57] It is true that the French kings controlled more bishops than any single prince—a legacy of inheritance and of a special alliance with the church. But this did not enable them to intervene in the ecclesiastical affairs of the stronger principalities without the prince's consent. The king was in effect merely a territorial prince in his own lands; the territorial princes were kings in theirs. Indeed the only real difference between them was the royal title, conferred by the ceremony of crowning and special unction, and this the princes did not have—apart from the dukes of Normandy as kings of England.[58] But with the lack of emphasis on the king's sacral powers, a far cry from the days of Saint Louis, this distinction appears to have been unimportant in real terms. In the eleventh century the princes were the king's equals to all intents and purposes—and they were to remain so well into the twelfth. It is easy to exaggerate the growth of royal power under Louis VI and Louis VII. Not until the reign of Philip Augustus did the king become the dominant power in France.

But why did the royal power survive? One answer seems to be that it posed little real threat to the princes in the heyday of their authority. The king's title was never denied, the attributes which he held and for the most part shared with the princes were never forgotten. But the fact that his power was weak and that he behaved like a territorial prince—if one with a slight difference—made the princes treat him as such. Odo II of Blois, the bane of the lives of Robert the Pious and Henry I, and described by Herman Contract as 'princeps gallicae Campaniae',[59] is reputed by another contemporary chronicler, Wipo, frequently to have declared 'quod numquam rex fieri, sed semper magister esse regis vellet'.[60] This attitude—'I don't want to be king, just his master'—explains and also epitomizes much in the relationship between the king and the princes in eleventh-century France. The princes were generally indifferent to the royal office itself, but were far more interested in practical power. Hence the history of France in the eleventh century is very far from being the history of its kings.

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[54] Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', pp. 254–5; Guillot, ii. 93 (no. 118).

[55] Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', pp. 255–6; e.g. M. de Boüard, 'Sur les origines de la trêve de Dieu en Normandie', *Annales de Normandie*, viii (1958), 423–40.

[56] *Letters of Fulbert*, pp. 164–5 (no. 92).

[57] Werner, 'Kingdom and principality', pp. 253–4; Bur, pp. 151–92.

[58] M. Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J. E. Anderson (1973), pp. 108–30. The princes, like the Capetians, also associated their heirs with them as rulers (A. W. Lewis, 'Anticipatory association of the heir in early Capetian France', *American Hist. Rev.*, lxxxiii (1978), 906–27).

[59] *Recueil des Historiens*, xi. 18.

[60] *Ibid.*, xi. 4.

Richard I and Berengaria of Navarre

FROM THE mid twelfth century to the end of the thirteenth century the five reigning queens of England were Eleanor of Aquitaine, Berengaria of Navarre, Isabella of Angoulême, Eleanor of Provence and Eleanor of Castile. Simply to list these names is to suggest that their husbands had important political and diplomatic interests in south-western Europe. On the other hand to read what historians have written about the kings of England in this period is to gain the impression that this was not the case. Historians have tended to concentrate almost exclusively on the lands on either side of the English Channel, on the area of the old Anglo-Norman realm. It is easy enough to understand why they have chosen to confine their history within these narrow geographical limits. The northern Plantagenet lands and, above all, England are relatively rich in the kind of documentation to which historians of politics have grown accustomed: narrative sources and the records of central government. By contrast, there is relatively little of this type of evidence to be found in the lands which comprised the southern part of the Plantagenet empire. Although this difference may, in practice, cause historians to neglect the south,[1] we should not assume that the Plantagenets themselves shared this attitude. The paucity of familiar kinds of evidence may imply that politically and culturally, the south was a very different sort of society from the north; but it does not mean that the Plantagenets were northerners who believed that the south did not matter.

In this article, by focusing attention on just one of these royal marriages, I hope to suggest that if we are to understand the Plantagenets we must be prepared to travel south—as they did when they chose their queens. At the same time an investigation of the circumstances of Richard I's marriage should help to dispel two myths: the old, but still vigorous myth that he was a negligent king who was 'a total loss in the counsel-chamber',[2] as well as the flourishing modern myth about his activities in the bed-chamber.

The well-known facts about the marriage are few and can be quickly summarized. Berengaria of Navarre was brought to Richard's court, then at Messina in Sicily, in March 1191. She accompanied the crusader-king on his journey east and they were married in Cyprus, at Limassol, on 12 May 1191. After the crusade they saw little of each other and there were no children. These facts can be fitted quite easily into the conventional portrait of Richard as an irresponsible crusader, indifferent to serious matters of politics like the succession to the throne, sacrificing his kingdom's future for the sake of present pleasures. As a result no historian has bothered to give them much thought.

[1] The most notable exception to this was Sir Maurice Powicke, the only English historian of this period to give due weight to the affairs of the south-west, see F. M. Powicke, *The 13th Century* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 95–119, 234–318—though these are probably the least read pages in a book which is difficult to read. Powicke's references to Richard's marriage in *The Loss of Normandy, 1189–1204* (2nd edn., Manchester, 1961), pp. 85–6, 98, make it plain that he saw its diplomatic significance. However it is only through an investigation of the extraordinary circumstances of the wedding that we can see just how important it in fact was. Moreover—though Powicke himself would certainly not have liked this—his *Loss of Normandy*, precisely because it concentrates on Normandy, tends to reinforce the impression that the south did not matter much. In this article, as in much else, I am grateful to Mr. John Prestwich and Professor Christopher Brooke for their help and advice.

[2] J. Brundage, *Richard Lionheart* (New York, 1974), p. 260.