

**IDEALS, MASCULINITY AND INHERITANCE:
A STUDY OF FATHER / SON RELATIONSHIPS PRESENTED
IN THE NARRATIVE SOURCES OF ICELAND AND NORMANDY
IN THE ELEVENTH TO THIRTEENTH CENTURIES**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit
has been given where reference has been made to the work of others

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Preface

In this thesis the medieval Icelandic personal names and place names have all been spelt in the standardized Old Icelandic nominative case, except where they are quoted in contexts which require them to be inflected. Some Icelandic individuals had nicknames which were habitually applied to them by the saga authors and these have been presented in accordance with Icelandic practice as lower case and italicised. Norman personal names are all spelt in the modern English equivalents. Norman place names are presented in the modern French equivalents. Old Icelandic letters, Þ, Ð and Æ, (lower case þ, ð and æ) and diacritical marks over vowels have been used. The letter þ (thorn) is pronounced 'th' as in 'thing', the letter ð (eth) is pronounced 'th' as in 'feather'. For alphabetising, vowels with diacritical marks within words are mixed in with unaccented letters, ð comes after d, and words beginning with þ, æ and ö follow z in that order.

Surnames with hyphens are listed alphabetically in the bibliography by the first surname and non-hyphenated surnames are listed under the last surname. Icelandic scholars, in accordance with Icelandic practice, are listed in the bibliography under their first names, and given in the text with their full first, second and patronymic names. Icelanders invariably have patronymics (ending –son or dóttir) rather than hereditary surnames, the exception is Guðrún Nordal.

I have made reference to, and on the whole adopted, the fine translations of *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis* by M. Chibnall, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni* by E. van Houts, *Dudo of St Quentin, History of the Normans*, E. Christiansen, and *Grágás* by A. Dennis, P. Foote and R. Perkins, eds. I have also consulted the translation of *Sturlunga saga* by J. McGrew and G. Thomas, but have seldom adopted this as its interpretation is sometimes subject to inaccuracy.

References in footnotes are to page numbers unless otherwise stated.

Abbreviations

- ANS* *Anglo-Norman Studies*
- BL* British Library
- De Moribus* *De Moribus et Actis primorum Normanniae ducum*, ed. J. Lair (Caen, 1865-72).
- EH* *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1969-80).
- EHR* *English Historical Review*
- GC* *Gallia Christiana*, xi (Paris, 1759).
- GND* *Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*, ed. E. van Houts, 2 vols (Oxford, 1992-95).
- Grágás, Ia* *Grágás. Islændernes Lovbog i Fristatens Tid, udgivet efter det kongelige Bibliotheks Haandskrift*, 2 parts, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen (Copenhagen, 1852-70; reprinted Odense, 1974), part 1.
- Grágás, Ib* *Grágás. Islændernes Lovbog i Fristatens Tid, udgivet efter det kongelige Bibliotheks Haandskrift*, 2 parts, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen (Copenhagen, 1852-70; reprinted Odense, 1974), part 2.
- Grágás, II* *Grágás. efter det Arnamagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 334 fol., Staðarhólsbók*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen (Copenhagen, 1879; reprinted Odense, 1974).
- HSJ* *Haskins Society Journal*

- Islandske Annaler* *Islandske Annaler indtil 1578*, ed. G. Storm (Oslo, 1888).
- JMH* *Journal of Medieval History*
- Leges* *Leges Henrici Primi*, edited with translation and commentary by L.J. Downer (Oxford, 1972).
- Recueil* *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 a 1066*, ed. M. Fauroux (Caen, 1961).
- Regesta, i* *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154, vol i, Regesta Willelmi Conquestoris et Willelmi Rufi 1066-1100*, eds. H.W.C. Davis and R.J. Whitwell (Oxford, 1913).
- Regesta, ii* *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154, vol ii. Regesta Henrici Primi 1100-1135*, eds. H.A. Cronne from the collections of H.W.C Davis (Oxford, 1956).
- Regesta William I* *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum; The acta of William I (1066-1087)*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998).
- SS* *Sturlunga saga*, eds. Jón Jóhannesson et al., 2 vols (Reykjavík, 1946).
- TRHS* *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

CHAPTER ONE : Introduction

This thesis compares and analyses the relationships between fathers and sons of the aristocracy in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Iceland and eleventh- and twelfth-century Normandy. It asks how social constructs of ideals, of lifecycle, and of gender contributed to the conduct of the relationship. Equally important to the relationship and related to these, is the question of what strategies were employed in the transmission of power and property between generations. It focuses on the transition from childhood to adulthood as it affected aristocratic men; on the manner in which norms of behaviour and of inheritance shaped the way men perceived themselves, and were perceived by society; and on how expectations formed by these structures affected father / son interactions. The thesis uses the contemporary sagas and chronicles to engage with these questions, and then examines in detail the father / son relationships displayed by specific families from each region.

The thesis addresses in particular the period of transition from male childhood to male adulthood, a key period both in the life-cycle of the individual, and as a stage in the father / son relationship. The thesis asks what the sources can reveal about how social customs and perceptions of masculinity affected and informed the father / son interactions over this period in their relationship. The manner in which fathers managed the transfer of their property to the next generation can open up avenues to assessing the nature of the relationship between the father and son and is one of the few areas where the internal life of the family is also evident in the public actions of men which are more commonly recorded in the sources. What were the expectations which surrounded the transfer of property? What were the expectations held by contemporaries about how the father / son relationship should be conducted? The thesis will ask what can be learned of how the relationship worked, both as an ideal and in practice. Did the number of sons a father had have any consequences? What differences, if any, can be seen between the relationships of fathers with their inheriting sons and their other sons? Did the ability of the father to provide for all his sons alter the relationship at all? What outside influences affected the father / son relationship? What alternative routes to independence were available to non-inheriting sons? Was there an affective bond between fathers and sons? How would such emotions have been expressed in the

two regions? By directing these questions to the narrative sources it is possible to reconstruct some of the ways in which the father / son relationship worked in both societies.

Comparison is a useful method, as it allows for the questions posed by the historiography of one region to be asked of the other. This can often reveal commonalities and differences in both regions, which can challenge existing assumptions and can prove an incentive to further research and new approaches. A comparison which involves a specific group, in a specific context, also permits the evaluation of how far patterns can be discerned and in what respects individual circumstances dictate outcomes. The comparison of Iceland and Normandy recognises that the two supposedly shared a common Scandinavian heritage, but also that they evolved in very separate ways.¹ The two regions provide distinct social structures to serve as a background to questions concerning the conduct of the father / son relationship in terms of social norms and of property transfers. How are ideals of masculinity, inheritance structures and family dynamics represented in each region? Can the similarities, if there are any, be related to their heritage, or are they attributable to other common ground, such as their Christian institutions, or the development of governmental structures? Or do the two regions exhibit significant differences? If so can any differences which transpire be ascribed to distinct social constructs emerging individually in each area?

A comparison can test the generalisations that have arisen, and which have been applied in many cases without referring to the specific conditions existing in a certain area, or at a particular time. This is especially true of the father / son relationship which has been characterised as inevitably involving intergenerational conflict. It was Duby who identified sons as the 'natural enemies' of their fathers.²

¹ Iceland's heritage is the more direct, as the unpopulated island was colonised by mostly Norwegian emigrants in the ninth century. Normandy received its influx of Scandinavian bloodlines during the tenth century as a conclusion to a period of raiding and settlement. This was a colonisation of occupied territory, and therefore a very different proposition from that of Iceland. For two very different views on how Normandy was affected by its Scandinavian past see R. H. C. Davis, *The Normans and their Myth* (London, 1976) and E. Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (Berkeley, 1988).

² G. Duby, 'Women and Power', in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. T. Bisson (Philadelphia, 1995), 69-85 at 82.

However the view is one shared widely by medieval historians.³ Can the evidence of Iceland and Normandy support the general statements? What were the overriding factors which affected the relationship in each area and were they comparable? What does taking account of individual circumstances add to the overall picture?

The thesis examines these two regions in detail to see the relationship within the context of individual situations. There are numerous variables of life stages, birth status and birth order, wealth, political stability and social norms which could affect different relationships in different ways. For instance, the only, legitimate son of a generous and wealthy father in a period of political security, might have a very different experience of the father / son relationship than one of a number of illegitimate sons of a man who was deeply involved in a political crisis. The opportunities available to the individual sons in each situation might vary considerably and have a corresponding impact upon the relationship that developed with their fathers. Comparison therefore permits questions to be asked about whether general statements can be made about a central, nuclear-family relationship in both regions, or whether more refinement and definition is required. In terms of period, and political and economic background, the two societies were very different. The use of case studies to approach the questions which are raised concerning father / son relationships in periods of intense economic and political change, will thoroughly test the general statements and include a wide range of variables.

This thesis is grounded in the historiography of family history. There have been a multiplicity of approaches to this subject including the anthropological, the sociological, legal, structural and systematic.⁴ One of the key relationships within

³ D. Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, Mass, 1985), 120; R. Bloch, 'Medieval Misogyny', in *Political Institutions and Literary Monuments in the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change, A Symposium*, ed. E. Vestergaard (Odense, 1986), 87-117 at 101; H. Platelle, 'Le probleme du scandale: les nouvelles modes masculines sux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Revue Belge de Philologie et D'Histoire* 53 (1975), 1071-96 at 1089 concerning the conflict of husbands with bachelors.

⁴ See for example, J. Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, 1983) for an anthropological approach; D. Herlihy, *Medieval Households* gives a wide ranging account of the development of custom and roles within the family in Europe from late antiquity to the medieval period; T.K. Harevan, 'The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change', *American Historical Review* 96, 1 (1991), 95-124 discusses the arguments of sociologists and calls for awareness of the family as a continually changing unit affected by individual circumstances as well as by wider social changes; C.B. Bouchard, 'Family Structure and Family Consciousness among

the family is that of the parent and child, which was first brought to prominence forty years ago in Ariès' seminal work.⁵ He argued that childhood was essentially a modern concept which was alien to medieval parents.⁶ However, medieval historians have explored these notions and found them to be unsustainable. Despite the fact that, for the most part, the history of childhood in the medieval period has been obscured by the nature of the sources available, and the concerns of those who created those sources, much has been done to illuminate the experience of childhood, even in the eleventh and twelfth centuries where evidence is rarer than that available for the later medieval period. Historians have sought evidence for medieval childhood in miracle collections, *vitae*, the historical writings of monastic institutions, and in Iceland in the detailed saga literature.⁷ However, much of this work tends to focus largely on the mother / child relationship, or on alternative forms of fatherhood, especially ecclesiastical fatherhood.⁸ Often the area of father /

the Aristocracy in the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries', *Francia* 14 (1986), 639-58 questions the structural composition of 'family'; J.C. Holt, 'Feudal Society and the Family in Early Medieval England, i-iv', *TRHS* 5th Series, 32-35 (1982-5), 193-212, 193-220, 1-25, 1-28 explores developments in the laws and structures of 'family' in terms of inheritance; and there have also been case studies of individual families which have explored these and other aspects of family life, see for example, C.B. Bouchard, 'The Structure of a Twelfth-Century French Family: The Lords of Seignelay', *Viator* 10 (1979), 39-56.

⁵ P. Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. R. Baldick (New York, 1962). This book was the catalyst for the debate on childhood, and although much criticised, it is nevertheless the basis for the growth of this field. Other works on childhood include, N. Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT, 2001); J. Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (London, 1988); B.A. Hanawalt, *Growing up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (Oxford, 1993); D. Herlihy, 'Medieval Children', in *The Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures: Essays on Medieval Civilization*, eds. B.K. Lackner and K.R. Philp (Austin, TX, 1978), 109-41. For a discussion of the development of this field see B.A. Hanawalt, 'Medievalists and the Study of Childhood', *Speculum* 77, 2 (2002), 440-60.

⁶ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 33.

⁷ K. Quirk, 'Men, Women and Miracles in Normandy, 1050-1150', in *Medieval Memories, Men, Women and the Past 700-1300*, ed. E. van Houts (London, 2001), 53-71; C. Krötzel, 'Parent-child Relations in Medieval Scandinavia According to Scandinavian Miracle Collections', *Scandinavian Journal of Medieval History* 14, 1 (1989), 21-37; M.M. McLaughlin, 'Survivors and Surrogates: Children and Parents from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries', in *The History of Childhood*, ed. L. DeMause (London, 1974), 101-81; T. Nors, 'Illegitimate Children and their Highborn Mothers', *Scandinavian Journal of Medieval History* 21, 1 (1996), 17-37; C. Jorgensen Itnyre, 'The Emotional Universe of Medieval Icelandic Fathers and Sons', in *Medieval Family Roles: A Book of Essays*, ed. C. Jorgensen Itnyre (New York, 1996), 173-96; J. Jochens, 'Old Norse Motherhood', in *Medieval Mothering*, eds. J. Carmi Parsons and B. Wheeler (New York, NY, 1996), 201-22; E. Mundal, 'Forholdet mellom born og foreldre i det norrøne kjeldematerialet', *Collegium Medievale* 1 (1988), 9-26.

⁸ See for example, C.W. Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* (London, 1991); S. Grundy, 'The Viking's Mother: Relations between Mothers and their Grown Sons in Icelandic Sagas', in *Medieval Mothering*, eds. J. Carmi Parsons and B. Wheeler (New York, 1996), 223-37; Jochens, 'Old Norse Motherhood', 201-22; J. Carmi Parsons, 'The Pregnant Queen as Counsellor and the Medieval Construction of Motherhood', in *Medieval Mothering*, eds. J. Carmi

child relationships is limited to a paragraph or even a sentence. However, the research does show that childhood was a life stage which was recognised as distinct from adulthood in the medieval consciousness. But what were the parameters of childhood, where did childhood end and adulthood begin? How this transition affected the father / son relationship is a central question in this thesis. Duby's argument that adolescence was a prolonged group experience for males in medieval France is interesting, in that it is a precursor to the recent work on masculinity in the medieval period in terms of its attempt to tackle male roles in medieval society.⁹

This thesis will also build upon the recent scholarship exploring medieval roles in the context of gender. Much work has been done to draw attention to the role of women within the medieval family and their role in society. This made the pursuit of a similar debate upon the concept of masculinity and the role of men within society imperative.¹⁰ Historians who have explored the question of what makes a 'man' in the Middle Ages have sought to identify him by his actions, sexuality, dress and social role.¹¹ Their research has demonstrated that men and women in the medieval period explored the boundaries of gender. However, while work on the boundaries of gender is essential to widening the debate, there is a lack of focus on the experiences of secular, heterosexual, aristocratic men. This thesis intends to bring the debate back into the centre of the family, and given that these are aristocratic families, into the centre of the aristocratic class. In so far as the

Parsons and B. Wheeler (New York, 1996), 39-61; P. Stafford, 'Sons and Mothers: Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages', in *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1978), 79-100; R.V. Turner, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Children: An Inquiry into Medieval Family Attachment', *JMH* 14, 4 (1988), 321-35; G. Clark, 'The Fathers and the Children', in *The Church and Childhood*, ed. D. Wood (London, 1994), 1-27; J.L. Nelson, 'Parents, Children and the Church in the Earlier Middle Ages', in *The Church and Childhood*, ed. D. Wood, (London, 1994), 81-114.

⁹ G. Duby, 'Youth in Aristocratic Society', in *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. C. Postan (London, 1977), 112-22.

¹⁰ See for example the following collections, D. Hadley, ed. *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999); V.L. Bullough and J.A. Brundage, eds. *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York, 1996); C.A. Lees, ed. *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, MN, 1994); J.J. Cohen and B. Wheeler, eds. *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2000); J. Murray, ed. *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West* (New York, 1999).

¹¹ See for example, V.L. Bullough, 'On Being a Male in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. C.A. Lees (Minneapolis, MN, 1994), 31-45; M. Bennett, 'Military Masculinity in England and Northern France c.1050-1225', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. D. Hadley (London, 1999), 71-88; U. Linke, 'The Theft of Blood, the Birth of Men: Cultural Constructions of Gender in Medieval Iceland', in *From Sagas to Society: Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland* (Middlesex, 1992), 265-88; H. Platelle, 'Le probleme du scandale' 1071-96.

secular, aristocratic father / son relationship is concerned, apart from Aird's work on Robert Curthose, and Jochen's, and Itnyre's on Icelandic fathers, this is an area which has received little attention.¹²

Predominantly where secular father / son relationships are discussed it is the issue of inheritance and the tension it caused which is given prominence. There is a tendency to give great weight to the few examples about which there are detailed accounts. For instance, Robert Curthose and his notoriously stormy relationship with his father, William the Conqueror, for Normandy, and Tumi Sighvatsson's discordant relationship with his father, Sighvatr Sturluson, for Iceland. However, it is important to consider both these cases in the context of the sources which describe their conflict, and in terms of the other father / son relationships for which the sources provide evidence at this time. As a result of the lack of abundant evidence of the father / son relationship, is there a risk of reading too much into those which are well documented? Does the existence of such cases sound a note of caution? Could a famous case be misleading on two counts? Firstly, if the author was trying to convey an effect, or message, of an admonitory nature to his audience, it might mean that the case in question was highly fictionalised. Secondly, we should also ask if well known cases were memorable to the writers of our sources precisely because they illustrated aberrant behaviour, rather than the norm, which would be less remarkable and thus less likely to merit recording.

Establishing individual father / son relationships within the context of their individual circumstances requires not only assessing them in terms of their life stages, personal affluence or lack of it, and the number and legitimacy of sons, but also placing them within the wider context of the political, economic and social background of each region. The two regions were constructed very differently on a number of counts. Iceland was settled, mostly by emigrants from Norway, in the period 870-930. It was unique in the medieval European world in that the Icelandic

¹² W.M. Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and His Eldest Son', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. D. Hadley (London, 1999), 39-55; J. Jochens, 'En islande médiévale: a la recherche de la famille nucléaire', *Annales Économies Sociétés Civilisations* 40, 1 (1985), 95-112; Itnyre, 'Emotional Universe', 175.

settlement was ruled by a 'system of de-centralised self-government.'¹³ This system involved a fixed number of chieftaincies, the holders of which were farmers empowered with legislative and judicial authority. The chieftain and the farmer constituted the highest level of society in the country and as such are the aristocracy discussed in this thesis. There was a court system, ranging from local, to regional, to a national assembly through which grievances could be aired. According to *Grágás*, there were originally thirty-six chieftains in Iceland. A further three were added around 965. Nine more chieftaincies were instituted about 1005, bringing the total up to forty-eight chieftains in Iceland. Many scholars accept the view that by the thirteenth century the number of chieftaincies had contracted to reflect the growing dominance of five or six powerful families. There is also a tendency to accept that the structure of 48 chieftaincies was adhered to in the earlier period. This traditional view is summarized by Miller. 'In the power struggles of the last decades of the Commonwealth it appears that the number of chieftains had shrunk to about a dozen. It is usually supposed that the model postulated by the laws roughly represented reality until about 1150.'¹⁴ However, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson suggests that, while the laws represent the theory upon which society was based, in reality there was probably much greater fluidity, with potentially fifty to sixty chieftains in existence in certain periods and less at other times. He concludes that, 'the system of chieftaincies was characterised by instability throughout the whole Commonwealth period.'¹⁵ Significant shrinkage of the number of chieftains is generally ascribed to the twelfth century. Jón Jóhannesson comments that, 'in the twelfth century there are clear indications of a gradual takeover of chieftaincies, or parts of chieftaincies, by relatively few individuals or families.'¹⁶ Certainly by 1220 it is possible to identify five or six powerful clans who dominated the political life of Iceland. These included the Ásbirningar, Sturlungar, Oddaverjar, and Haukdælir families. The concentration of power in the hands of fewer and fewer men, was a reaction to the worsening financial situation of the Icelanders. Iceland was almost totally dependent upon the trade in woollens (*vaðmal*), which was the mainstay of Icelandic international commerce throughout the entire Commonwealth period. But by the end

¹³ J. Byock, *Medieval Iceland, Society, Sagas, and Power* (Middlesex, 1993), 3.

¹⁴ W.I. Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking. Feud, Law and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago, 1990), 22.

¹⁵ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth* (Odense, 1999), 56.

¹⁶ Jón Jóhannesson, *A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth* (Winnipeg, 1974), 227.

of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, Iceland was starting to feel the pinch of what has been termed the 'Little Ice Age'. The Icelanders were particularly vulnerable economically as, since the original colonists had denuded the country of trees within the first century of settlement and Iceland's climate meant that reforestation was never a possibility, Icelanders had no means to construct new vessels, which meant that international trade was increasingly in the hands of Norwegian merchants. Matters became even more tenuous in the thirteenth century when Icelandic woollen goods were less in demand due to changed circumstances in the main market of England. The international trade was significant to the chieftain class as they held rights of price setting on any international goods and also because they could use this as a means to secure the first option on the luxury goods. These were important to establishing one's status within society. The Icelandic elite subscribed to a system of conspicuous consumption and gift giving to form and maintain friendships and alliances.¹⁷

Thus, as a source of significant income for chieftains international trade was decreasing, due to the Icelanders' weakening trading position as the period progressed. But Iceland did not have alternatives to wool to offer in trade and the worsening climate meant that Iceland's resources alone could not sustain the population. Iceland's isolation left the country vulnerable to poor harvest in ways which other European countries were not. There was a decline in the wealth circulating in Iceland which corresponded to a decline in the number of people able to afford the commitments of a chieftain. The devolution of power into the hands of a few increased the opportunities for corruption, intimidation and ambition. It was this situation that enabled the Norwegian king to exploit the distrust among the Icelandic chieftains and gain control. The Commonwealth of Iceland came to an end 1262/4.

One of the singular features of chieftaincies in Iceland, in comparison with members of the aristocracy in other European countries, is the fact that the boundaries of the area defined as a *goðorð* (chieftaincy) were not fixed, and did not

¹⁷ R. Samson, 'Goðar: democrats or despots?' in *From Sagas to Society: Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland*, ed. Gísli Pálsson (Middlesex, 1992), 167-188 at 185.

reflect a static and corresponding area of landownership by the chieftain. This circumstance illustrates the fact that a chieftaincy was not manifest in any visible or physical manner, but rather was an abstract concentration of power, centred, for the most part, on juridical and legislative rights. In terms of actual value, the rank seems to have represented more of an expense than a source of income. Jón Jóhannesson comments that, 'the office of a chieftain does not appear to have been a lucrative position, considering the many expenses involved.'¹⁸ Why, then, should the position be sought after by ambitious men? In short, the answer was that a chieftaincy represented power and control. Using the rights and opportunities open to a chieftain, one could carve out a position in society where opposition to one's predatory acquisitions became more and more problematic for the other sectors of society. It was this aspect of chieftaincy that was increasingly exploited as the thirteenth century progressed. A chieftaincy gave a man authority over other men and the right to call upon their support. This authority was referred to as *mannaforráð*. Hastrup has described the function of a chieftain as being that of *primus inter pares*¹⁹. It is clear that if the laws promoted an ideology of first among equals, then the checks and balances intended to sustain this situation were inadequate to the task in the thirteenth century as economic and political stability declined.

However, in theory at least, there were certain restrictions imposed on a chieftain's power through the principle that a chieftain's authority was dependent upon the support and consent of his *þingmen* (followers). Thus, while bearing no comparison to electoral rank, the office was inextricably connected to, and reliant upon, maintaining a reciprocal relationship with the *þingmen*.²⁰ The *þingman* had the right to change his allegiance if he wanted, which was intended to act as a restraint upon the scope of the chieftains' power. However, in the thirteenth century the emergence of fewer chieftains, controlling larger areas, had the effect of curtailing this independence among their followers. In reality, a *þingman* who lived in a region where one chieftain held sway would have little alternative than to support that chieftain, unless he had the resources to enable him to purchase land

¹⁸ Jón Jóhannesson, 'History of Icelandic Commonwealth', 62.

¹⁹ K. Hastrup, *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland* (Oxford, 1985), 120.

²⁰ P. Meulengracht Sørensen, *Fortælling og ære* (Oslo, 1995), 179.

elsewhere and to move himself and his dependents into an area controlled by another chieftain.²¹

While Iceland in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a region which was experiencing economic decline and attracting the predatory intentions of the Norwegian king, Normandy in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries was undergoing a period of expansion on a grand scale. Normandy's claim to a Scandinavian past began with the Viking Rollo, who became the first count, in 911 when the King of France granted him lands in France in return for a cessation of his raiding and protection against future raiders. The settlement of Normandy was an individual enterprise thus the Danish connection was in all likelihood of little significance to the fledgling colony. Rollo founded a dynasty which expanded the boundaries of Normandy until it challenged its neighbours Brittany and Flanders in size and consequence. Rollo's son William Longsword succeeded his father and was assassinated in 942 by the Flemish count, Arnulf. Normandy experienced the first of its periods of ducal minority as Richard I was only a child. Richard's reign lasted until 996 and saw the expansion of Normandy's power and possessions at the expense of his southern and western neighbours. His son Richard II ruled until 1026 and after his death the duchy was disputed by his sons Richard III and Robert I. The death of Richard III within the year enabled Robert to consolidate his control of the duchy, to the extent that on his death only eight years later his illegitimate eight-year-old son William succeeded. William's hold on his inheritance was, nevertheless, tenuous during his minority, and the first two decades of his rule saw him constantly involved with internal and external opponents seeking to take advantage of his apparent weakness.

Normandy remained very much an ordinary Frankish satellite until the mid eleventh century, when the duchy seemed to exhale men. It began with the significant numbers of Normans who emigrated to the Apulian region of Italy, and it culminated in the Conquest of England in 1066, which has led historians ever since to seek some form of explanation which would explain this great feat. The one which is enduringly popular is that of the bold Viking blood which sang in their

²¹ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, 123.

veins as Duke William, (Rollo's great, great, great grandson) and his followers crossed the Channel. The Normans could claim a heritage which was distinct from all the other provinces in the Frankish kingdoms, and this made it very tempting both for the Normans themselves, and for later historians, to seek to explain the unprecedented expansion and success of the Normans in 1066 as a result of the unique heritage of that region. This conclusion seems coloured by a perception of Scandinavian heritage which many Scandinavian historians would find somewhat simplistic.

The impact of the Conquest of England in the middle of the period under discussion was as significant for the Normans in terms of the prospects and opportunities available to the aristocratic men, as the decreasing value of wool was for the Icelandic chieftains. Norman aristocrats could hope to increase their holdings through advancement under the new English royal dynasty. Moreover, it led to greatly increased expectations among sons that their prospects would rise accordingly with their father's promotion. It was a period of heightened expectations and of real profits. However, there was also an additional layer in Norman society which distinguished it from Iceland. While the Icelandic chieftains were collectively the highest rank in the region, Norman aristocrats all answered to a lord even when Duke William became the king, he was still in his capacity as Duke of Normandy a vassal of the King of France. After 1087, Norman aristocrats who held property in both England and Normandy were often in the difficult position of needing to satisfy two lords, the King of England, that is William Rufus and Henry I on the one hand, and Robert Curthose as the Duke of Normandy on the other. For the Norman elite the opportunities were enormous, but the risks to the continued possession of all one's property were high when one served two lords.

Thus Normandy was in the period under discussion undergoing an unprecedented period of expansion during which the father / son dynamic would appear to have been placed under considerable strain. The Icelanders' fortunes were also changing, but for the worse, as economic decline made them vulnerable to the Norwegian king's ambitions, and placed the father / son relationship under a different form of potential stress.

Iceland's contemporary sagas were written between 1180 and 1300, and Normandy's three chroniclers covered the period from the beginning of the eleventh century to the first decades of the twelfth century. The context for the composition of the sources bears comparison. The thesis will use the narrative sources to discover how the father / son relationship was affected by these political and economic factors. By using narrative sources for this thesis, a common point of comparison is made between the two very different regions. The narrative accounts of both regions offer detail and anecdote in addition to an historical account, and as such occasionally give glimpses into the private family life of the protagonists. They both portray societies in a period of flux. It is possible to compare eleventh- to early twelfth-century Normandy with late twelfth- to thirteenth-century Iceland in the context of the similarity of the narrative nature of the sources. Narrative sources come with their own set of problems but do offer both a qualitative view of society and an ideal view. The comparison also works in terms of the upheaval experienced by both societies due to significant events which changed the political climate. In many ways the international nature of medieval Christianity makes the comparison of the two regions more valuable, as the comparison does not concern two wholly distinct cultural, religious and social entities, and therefore provides a context which validates and illuminates the differences and similarities which are discovered. However, it is also worth noting that Iceland's isolation meant that it would have been somewhat behind mainland Europe in certain developments. For instance, Christianity was not adopted until 1000, and still had not fully established itself by the thirteenth century in all aspects of Icelandic life. Therefore the comparison of the two societies a century or more apart might well represent greater parity than at first supposed. By using the narrative sources carefully to construct a series of case studies this thesis aims to illustrate the ideals and practice which governed father / son relationships and to set out which general statements can be made, and what individual circumstances could effect changes to the relationship. The case studies follow a number of prominent families over several generations, and document the ensuing changes in fortune, political realities, and family dynamics. The aim is to establish which factors affecting father/son relationships were normative, and which were created by individual circumstances that are not applicable generally.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter Two discusses the source material, identifying their strengths and weaknesses as they pertain to the aims of this thesis. Chapters Three and Four explore social constructs and normative behaviours expressed in the sources. Chapter Three addresses the ideals of father and son presented in the sources, both in terms of the duties and obligations owed to each other, and of the emotional bonds that a father and son might share. It seeks the ideals or normative structures, consciously and subconsciously, expressed by the sources, and asks what impact these had on practice, and in what ways they differed for each society. Chapter Four establishes how life-cycle and gender could affect relationships between fathers and sons. It focuses on the key concept of transition between childhood, dependent male adulthood and independent male adulthood, asking how this transition was managed and perceived by medieval society. It examines the ways in which social norms were affected by concepts of masculinity and how relationships would be affected by the demands of gendered expectations by both the father and the son, and by society of the father and the son. Chapter Five places the father / son relationship in the context of inheritance structures. It establishes what structures were in place in the two regions. It discusses the apportionment of paternal property, including questions of partition, both equal and unequal, primogeniture and unigeniture and other forms of selection and the prevalence and impact of legitimacy, then goes on to question how far fathers were able to exercise autonomy, if at all. The impact upon the father / son relationship in response to these variations of structure is assessed. The chapter also examines the effect the changes in the social and political climate may have had upon practice, and subsequently on the father / son relationship. Chapters Six and Seven comprise detailed case studies of families from Normandy and Iceland. Chapter Six concentrates on the Icelandic families which are the Sturlungar, the Ásbirningar, the Haukdælir, the Vatnsfirðingar and the Oddaverjar. Chapter Seven addresses the Norman families which are the ducal family, the Bellême / Montgomery family and the Giroie / Grandmesnil family. The chapters investigate variables within the structure of individual families, and their implications for the father / son relationship are discussed, including questions of legitimacy and illegitimacy, family size, life-cycle and inheritance strategies employed. The two chapters compare the careers of inheriting and non-inheriting sons for signs of differences in the relationship of these sons with their fathers. They also assess the evidence for

affective or combative relationships. The issues raised in the preceding chapters are brought into the analysis of the families in each chapter and the individual cases within the families in order to ascertain if any normative trends emerge, either on a regional or a general basis. Chapter Eight is the conclusion, drawing together the themes addressed through the course of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO : Sources

Introduction

The comparison of Iceland and Normandy is based upon the narrative sources available in both areas. The contemporary sagas for Iceland and the chronicles for Normandy both provide complex and detailed resources to which the questions outlined in Chapter One can be directed. Narrative texts are complex, they embody multiple motivations, including the preservation of social, political and cultural memory and in some cases the re-imagining of those memories. Their authors can be motivated by personal ambition, external patronage, academic ideals, and often by all these and more. They express both consciously and subconsciously the moral, social and legal framework of the period, region and social class that they represent. Narratives are, above all, about people. They usually record the deeds of persons whose actions affected the course of events, and in many cases pass judgement upon those actions. In this way the narrative sources can provide an access to the internalised norms which drove people's public actions, and affected their private lives. Because narrative sources are concerned with relationships between people, at their heart they are often about the relationships between and within families. The Icelandic source material also includes the legal text *Grágás* which in its detail and comprehensiveness can balance and add to the picture presented in the sagas. However, Normandy has no comparable legal statements and the concentration there will be on the ways in which the three chroniclers approached their subject and any differences which emerge.

The narrative sources describe events in Iceland between 1117-1262/4 and in Normandy between 911-1135. Both societies benefited from sustained narrative sources in these periods, and in Iceland the comparison can also make use of the survival of an uncommonly detailed legal source. The Icelandic sources comprise the Icelandic contemporary sagas, *Sturlunga saga*,²² whose authorship is largely anonymous, with the significant exception of Sturla Þórðarson, and the lengthy legal

²² *Sturlunga Saga*, eds. Jón Jóhannesson et al., 2 vols (Reykjavík, 1946).

text *Grágás*,²³ dating to 1117. The Norman chroniclers, Dudo of St. Quentin²⁴, William of Jumièges²⁵ and Orderic Vitalis of Saint Évroul²⁶, form the basis of the examination of father / son relationships in Normandy. Normandy provides us with no legal statements for the period of the eleventh and early twelfth century comparable with *Grágás*.²⁷ Menuge advises caution in applying the legal material of the late twelfth century *Coutumes* to the eleventh century, not only because of the chronological gap, but also because they are ‘highly ideological, polemical and positioned, while creating the illusion of an ordered legal system.’²⁸ Charters which have survived as originals or as cartulary copies exist for a substantial number of religious houses in Normandy. However, there has been no attempt to form a ‘Norman collection’ of charters, except for the work of Fauroux, who has brought together the charters composed for, or subscribed to by, the Norman dukes prior to the conquest of England.²⁹ Norman charters were ecclesiastical in nature in the sense that they mostly dealt with donations to ecclesiastical establishments in some manner, and some may not add a great deal to the establishment of the secular father / son relationships pertaining at that time.³⁰ While not systematically making use of the charter sources, in places where they add to, corroborate or conflict with the Norman narrative sources they have been consulted.

The Icelandic Sources

These sources were produced by a society which was increasingly entering into a period of decline of its political and cultural autonomy. However, while the saga authors and the copiers of *Grágás* describe the intense political changes taking place in this period, it is by no means certain that they themselves considered the changes to be negative, or thought in terms of social and political decline. The

²³ *Grágás. Islændernes Lovbog i Fristatens Tid, udgivet efter det kongelige Biblioteks Haandskrift*, 2 parts, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen, (Copenhagen, 1879; reprinted Odense, 1974) and *Grágás. Efter det Arnarnagnæanske Haandskrift Nr. 334 fol., Staðarhólsbók*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen (Copenhagen, 1879; reprinted Odense, 1974).

²⁴ *De Moribus et Actis primorum Normanniae ducum*, ed. J. Lair (Caen, 1865-72).

²⁵ *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*, ed. E. van Houts, 2 vols (Oxford, 1992-95) 2nd edition 2001.

²⁶ *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford, 1969-80).

²⁷ E. Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (London, 1988), 10.

²⁸ N.J. Menuge, *Medieval English Wardship in Romance and Law* (Woodbridge, 2001), 17.

²⁹ M. Fauroux, *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 a 1066* (Caen, 1961).

³⁰ Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, 8, charters present ‘a major problem for historians interested in the law relevant to lay persons because what did not interest the clergy rarely, if ever, was recorded.’

introduction of royal control may indeed have appeared to some to present new opportunities to the country and its inhabitants. The historian should beware of overusing hindsight in analysis of the texts. The sources provide considerable detail and express the interest of contemporary Icelanders in the manoeuvrings of aristocratic families in a particular social and political context.

Sturlunga Saga

Sturlunga Saga is a collection of the *samtiðarsögur* (contemporary sagas) which were compiled in the early fourteenth century, about a generation after the collapse of the Icelandic Commonwealth in 1262/4. The compiler appears to have intended to create a historical narrative of recent history in Iceland, from the early twelfth century to the end of the Commonwealth. The result was a chronicle of events in Iceland between 1117 and 1264. The fourteenth century saw the creation of several compilations of loosely linked material, such as *Hauksbók*, a miscellany from c1330, *Flateyjarbók*, a compilation of kings' sagas c.1390 and *Moðruvallabók*, a collection of family sagas c.1350,³¹ and as such, *Sturlunga saga* can be seen as forming part of this tradition. Some scholars suggest that the compiler, and possibly the author of a few of the texts,³² was one of the three sons of Narfi Snorrason (1237-84), with Þorðr Narfason the Lawman (d. 1308) considered the most likely.³³ This theory is due in part to the fact that Þorðr appears to have had the opportunity to know Sturla Þorðarson (S.14), the author of the saga which forms the largest single section of the compilation, *Íslendinga Saga*, while they were both resident at Fagradal in the winter of 1271-72. A further connection between the two is a relationship through Sturla's wife Helga, who was a cousin of Narfi.³⁴

³¹ Stefán Einarsson, *A History of Icelandic Literature* (New York, 1957), 152.

³² Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics and Action in Thirteenth Century Iceland* (Odense, 1998), 11, mentions that the compiler is believed to have authored *Geirmundr þáttur heljarskinns* and *Haukdæla þáttur*, however she is not convinced of the strength of this attribution.

³³ Stefán Einarsson, *A History of Icelandic Literature*, 152; Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas. Iceland's Medieval Literature*, trans. P. Foote (Reykjavik, 1997), 188; R.G. Thomas, 'Introduction' in *Sturlunga saga*, trans. J. H. McGrew and R. G. Thomas, 2 vols. (New York, 1970), i, 13-45 at 13 all subscribe to the theory that the compiler was Þorðr Narfason from Skarð; whereas J.L. Byock, *Medieval Iceland. Society, Sagas and Power* (Middlesex, 1993), 34, merely places the compiler at Skarð and P. Hallberg, 'Sturlunga Saga' in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* ed. P. Pulsiano (New York, 1993), 616-8 at 616 makes no commitment other than to date the compilation to c.1300.

³⁴ Thomas, 'Introduction', 18. Thomas gives Helga as a third cousin of Narfi, but in the Jón Jóhannesson edition of *Sturlunga saga* Narfi and Helga's relationship is represented as far closer, as first cousins in fact, in *ættskrá* 20.

The compilation survives in the form of two paper copies made in the seventeenth century of two vellum manuscripts *Króksfjarðarbók* (AM122a fol.) and *Reykjarfjarðarbók* (AM122b fol.) dating from c.1360 and c.1400 respectively.³⁵ These were, in turn, copies of the original text. The two vellum copies are now considerably damaged. Fortunately for current historians, both seventeenth century copies were made while the original copies were fairly intact. Of these two copies, one is a text from 1630, with parts added by Jón Gizurason of Nupi at that time. The second, from 1635, is believed to be a superior transcription by Björn Jónsson, copied at the behest of Bishop Þorlákr. However, it too, is lost, although eighteenth century copies of it are still extant.³⁶ It was during the transcription of the compilation in the seventeenth century that the designation ‘Sturlunga saga’ was first applied to the text, dominated as it is by Sturla Þórðarson’s *Íslendinga saga*, which was both written by a member of the Sturlungar family and concerned many of the actions of the Sturlungar family.

Sturla Þórðarson’s (S.14) identification as the author of *Íslendinga saga* is based upon statements made by the compiler in his prologue (*Formáli*). In a short text which summarizes the thought and methodology behind the compilation, the compiler credits Sturla Þórðarson with the composition of *Íslendinga saga* in three statements. *Svá sem Sturla Þórðarson segir í Íslendinga sögum* (as Sturla Þórðarson said in his saga about the Icelanders), *Sturla skáld Þórðarson sagði fyrir Íslendinga sögur* (the skáld Sturla Þórðarson told the sagas of the Icelanders) and *Marga hluti mátti hann sjálf sjá ok heyra* (Many significant parts [of the saga] he [Sturla Þórðarson] saw or heard himself).³⁷ This last statement refers to the fact that the events in *Íslendinga saga* span the years 1183-1262/4 and that Sturla Þórðarson would have been witness to many of the events of the thirteenth century, having been born in 1214 and died in 1284.³⁸

³⁵ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 188.

³⁶ Thomas, ‘Introduction’, 16.

³⁷ *SS*, i, 115.

³⁸ *SS*, ii, 236, in *Sturlu Þátr*, written by the compiler about Sturla Þórðarson, the date of Sturla’s death is given as 1284, and his age at that date was *nær sjautugr* (around seventy). The date of 1284 for Sturla’s death is also given in all but one of the Icelandic annals, *Íslandske Annaler indtil 1578*, ed. G. Storm (Christiania, 1888), 29, 50, 70, 142, 196, 260, 323, 383, 484.

There are nine sagas in the collection, which taken chronologically start with *Borgils saga ok Hafliða*. This saga relates the events of a conflict between two powerful chieftains at the beginning of the twelfth century (1117-1121). It may also be one of the earliest in composition.³⁹ The events depicted in *Sturlu saga* follow, albeit with a chronological gap of around thirty years. It concerns the actions of *Hvamm Sturla Þórðarson* (S.2), the progenitor of the Sturlungar family during the mid-to-late twelfth century, who would dominate many of the later works. *Guðmundr saga dýra* chronicles the conflict of two chieftains which culminates in the ‘burning in’ (the setting alight of a property with the chieftain, his family and followers inside, while the attackers remain without to ambush those who try to escape) of Langahlíð in 1197. Burnings were not unheard of in the saga accounts but they seem to have been sufficiently rare that it is not surprising that this one merited its own saga. The core of the compilation is undoubtedly *Íslendinga saga*. The historian has the benefit of knowing who the author of this saga was, and the additional benefit that the author was an eyewitness, and in many cases a participant in the events described. Of course, the latter fact may also present a problem, if he was personally involved and had an interest in the outcome of events. *Sturla Þórðarson* (S.14) was a grandson of *Hvamm Sturla* (S.2) whose triumph over his archrival *Einarr Þorgilsson* was chronicled in *Sturlu saga*. The events of *Íslendinga saga* began as those of *Hvamm Sturla*’s own saga ended, with the death of *Hvamm Sturla* in 1183. The saga covers the years from then until the end of the Commonwealth.⁴⁰ As *Sturla Þórðarson* was born in 1214 and died in 1284⁴¹ his own recollections and those of his father’s generation were all that were needed to provide him with his subject matter. An early contemporary of this saga, also in the *Sturlunga Saga* compilation, is *Prestssaga Guðmundar Arasonar*, the saga of Bishop *Guðmundr* (G.9), whose turbulent incumbency of the bishopric of Hólar coincided with the rise of *Sturla Þórðarson*’s father and uncles to positions of power. His saga concerns the period 1161-1203 and describes the life of the bishop before he attained the bishopric of Hólar. It has been suggested that it was composed by

³⁹ For a discussion of the dating of *Borgils saga ok Hafliða* see Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 188-189.

⁴⁰ Although Jónas Kristjánsson argues that the saga can be said to end in around 1255 with the next decades rendered more as a series of notes, or a summary, than as part of the saga as a whole. *Eddas and Sagas*, 195.

⁴¹ Cf. footnote 38.

his friend, and secretary, Lambkár Þorgilsson (d. 1249) after the bishop's death in 1237.⁴² Both *Prestssaga Guðmundar Arasonar* and the later sagas, *Þórðar saga kakala* and *Þorgils saga skarða* both of which form part of the compilation and concern scions of the Sturlungar family during the 1250s, were probably known to Sturla Þórðarson. Sturla's own composition skirts around the events they describe even though they deal with members of his own family, suggesting that he was avoiding unnecessary repetition.⁴³ This would date them to no later than around 1280 in composition given that Sturla died in 1284. *Þórðar saga kakala* is an account of the career of Sturla Þórðarson's cousin in the years 1242-1250 as he took on the most powerful man in Iceland, and ultimately failed in his bid to take over that role for himself. *Þorgils saga skarðr* tells of the short career of Sturla Þórðarson's nephew as he made a similar bid between 1252 and 1258. Sørensen has suggested that the author of this saga was Þorgils' brother-in-law Þórðr Hítnesingr, which would also support its being a contemporary saga.⁴⁴ *Svínfellinga saga* also concerns events towards the end of the Commonwealth and relates the dispute between the sons of Ormr Jónsson and their maternal uncle Ögmundur Helgason. The final saga in the compilation is that of *Arons saga Hjörleifssonar*. While Aron died in 1255, it is believed that his saga was in fact a later composition which was added to the compilation some time after 1300 by someone who felt the subject matter to be complementary to the existing collection.⁴⁵

In addition to the nine sagas the compilation includes the prologue (*Formáli*), a series of genealogies (*Ættartölur*), and three short stories (*Þáttur*).⁴⁶ The *Ættartölur* are lists containing genealogical detail about seven prominent Icelandic families. Thomas believes that at least some of them were composed by the compiler,⁴⁷ perhaps with the purpose of clarifying who some of the protagonists of the sagas within the compilation were by placing them in the context of their wider family. The genealogical lists include information about both the patrilineal and the matrilineal descent of the family members, and also illustrate the marriages and

⁴² Jónas Kristjánsson, *Edda and Sagas*, 185; Thomas, 'Introduction', 20.

⁴³ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 198.

⁴⁴ P. Meulengracht Sørensen, *Sagas and Society; an Introduction to Old Norse Literature*, trans. J. Tucker (Odense, 1993), 50.

⁴⁵ Meulengracht Sørensen, *Sagas and Society*, 201.

⁴⁶ Thomas, 'Introduction', 19-20.

⁴⁷ Thomas, 'Introduction', 19.

children not only of the chieftains' nuclear families, but of the descent of brothers and sisters as well.⁴⁸ The *þáttr* comprise one contemporary account and two probably later compositions. *Sturlu þáttr*, which may have been composed by the compiler, is an account of the latter years of Sturla Þórðarson and includes accounts of his skaldic and literary prowess.⁴⁹ *Haukdæla þáttr* very briefly describes the Haukadals family history. Finally *Geirmundar þáttr heljarskinns* may have been added later to provide an introduction to the compilation.⁵⁰

Opinion is divided about the aims of the compiler, or indeed the authors within the compilation. For the most part, however, it is the author of *Íslendinga saga*, the longest by far of the sagas in the Sturlunga compilation, who attracts the greatest attention, not simply because we are reasonably sure who he is, but because of his close connection to the persons and events therein. Sturla Þórðarson is generally considered to be a reliable source. He has been seen as 'disciplined and calm',⁵¹ and it is claimed that 'his characters breathe real life'.⁵² However Sturla's close connection to events necessitates careful evaluation of his motivations within his work. Sørensen does not see the collection as politically motivated, but would agree that of all the sagas within it, *Íslendinga saga* has a political edge.⁵³ Gúðrun Nordal believes that *Íslendinga saga* is above all a political history.⁵⁴ She sees the saga as an 'artificial construction' of Iceland in this period, with the saga literature dominated by the ruling class who comprised its subject and audience.⁵⁵ Ultimately though, Gúðrun concludes '[T]he society of *Íslendinga saga* is a historical reality, not an idealization of a fixed pattern of behaviour.'⁵⁶ This is an important point as it suggests that there is historical reality in the saga, but that it is not derived from real events, rather they are constructed stories which reflected Icelandic political

⁴⁸ *SS*, i, 51-56.

⁴⁹ *Sturlu þáttr* includes an account of Sturla's visit to Norway in the early 1260s when his skaldic abilities drew him to the attention of the Norwegian king, Magnús, and gained him a commission to write the history of Magnús' father, king Hákon Hákonsson, which resulted in the saga, *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*.

⁵⁰ Hallberg, 'Sturlunga Saga,' 616.

⁵¹ Hallberg, 'Sturlunga saga', 618.

⁵² Stefán Einarsson, *A History of Icelandic Literature* (New York, 1957), 155.

⁵³ Meulengracht Sørensen, *Sagas and Society*, 49.

⁵⁴ Gúðrun Nordal, 'The Contemporary Sagas and their Social Context', in *Old Icelandic Literature and Society*, ed. M. Clunies Ross (Cambridge, 2000), 221-41 at 231.

⁵⁵ Gúðrun Nordal, 'The Contemporary Sagas', 222.

⁵⁶ Gúðrun Nordal, *Ethics*, 22.

struggles at that time. In this sense the saga could be seen as a tale of real, historical people taking part in social interactions which were based upon Icelandic society at that time, even if the events themselves served as literary or morally instructive motifs. Guðrún Nordal believes that the literary nature of the text can also be seen as a device by which the contemporary author ‘present[s] events to his reader and control[s] their significance in the context of his saga.’⁵⁷ Úlfar Bragason also considers the text to be a political document, but in the context of the ‘politics of genealogies’, suggesting that it is as a history of the development of lineage as a political tool, along the lines of the rise of patrilineal concepts on the continent, that the saga should be read.⁵⁸ This is a particularly important interpretation to consider from the point of view of the father / son relationship dynamic, and the context of inheritance policies, as the reading of the texts must take into account the possibility that the legitimisation of lineage may be one of the main preoccupations of the authors. However, in so far as *Íslendinga saga* is concerned, Gunnar Karlsson has identified an additional, and perhaps in some instances, an alternative motivation for the author. He expresses the view that Sturla Þórðarson’s empathy was for the most part with the victim rather than the victor, no matter their political stance in relation to his own, and questions whether this suggests an underlying Christian sensibility within the saga, or simply a longing on the author’s part for peace in an uncertain and volatile age.⁵⁹ Both Úlfar Bragason and Tranter call for the text to receive attention as a literary source in order to re-evaluate its use as a historical one, believing that the use of literary motifs can give as much insight into the contemporary society portrayed therein as a historical approach.⁶⁰ This is reflected in the work of Meulengracht Sørensen who argues that historians today can use the sagas as sources by moving forward from the assumption that the sagas reflected concrete facts, towards an approach which deals with the insight into the general

⁵⁷ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 22.

⁵⁸ Úlfar Bragason, ‘The Politics of Genealogies in *Sturlunga saga*’, in *Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350, Contact, Conflict and Coexistence*, eds. J. Adams and K. Holman, trans. A. Yates (Turnhout, 2004), 309-21 at 320-1.

⁵⁹ Gunnar Karlsson, ‘Siðamat Íslengingasögu’. in *Sturlustefna*, eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir & Jónas Kristjánsson, (Reykjavík, 1988) 204-221.

⁶⁰ Úlfar Bragason, ‘Sturlunga saga: Textar og Rannsóknir’ in *Skáldskaparmál* (Reykjavík, 1992), 176-206; S. Tranter, *Sturlunga Saga; the Role of the Creative Compiler* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1987), 15.

picture of social institutions, concepts and ideologies which the sagas provide.⁶¹ These interpretations of the saga in both its historical and its literary context are fundamental to this research, as both approaches allow the historian to identify contemporary attitudes that may prove as important to the question of father / son interactions as identifying which events recorded were accurate accounts of real events, and which were altered to suit literary or moral conventions. It is this picture of social constructs which this thesis aims to extract from the contemporary sources.

The *Sturlunga saga* compilation's greatest strength as far as this thesis is concerned is that it is one in which 'its authors witnessed many of the events that they describe.'⁶² Certain difficulties inherent in other texts, such as the distortions caused by chronological distance from the events depicted, will to an extent, be avoided here. But this advantage of the source also remains its greatest potential weakness as Byock explains, 'the authors are not disinterested parties. On occasion they are partial to particular personages and families.'⁶³ The saga authors were close to the events they described and while written evidence may have been available, they probably made much use of oral testimony and personal experience, and it is important to bear this in mind when assessing the intentions and motivations of the contemporary, or near contemporary, writers. 'The medieval Icelanders wrote the sagas about themselves and for themselves, thus opening an extraordinary window through which we can observe the operation of a medieval society.'⁶⁴ Despite the very strong likelihood of prejudice that a contemporary source carries, it may also have invaluable merit. Indeed, some of the inherent bias is countered by their contemporary nature too. It may be argued that the very audiences for which the sagas were intended also provided, through their awareness of their and their families' recent past, a measure of validation for some elements of the accounts described in the texts at their very inception. That is to say, the authors could not state anything which their audience would know to be blatantly untrue. But this

⁶¹ P. Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Den norrøne litteratur og virkeligheden', *Collegium Mediaevale; Interdisciplinary Journal of Medieval Research*, 2 (1989), 135-46 at 143, *En del tekstundersøgelser fra nyeste tid bygger på den forudsætning, at sagaer og eddadigte faktisk kan bruges som kildemateriale; men interessen er flyttet fra de begivenhedshistoriske og konkrete til det generelle billede af sociale institutioner og forestillinger og ideology.*

⁶² Hallberg, 'Sturlunga saga', 616.

⁶³ J. L. Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, 33.

⁶⁴ Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, 10.

‘validation’ by proximity to the events should be approached with caution, as some sagas are more contemporary than others, and as we have no way of knowing just how much ‘artistic licence’ was considered permissible by a thirteenth-century Icelandic audience. Some consideration of who formed that audience should be included here. Iceland’s literary heritage was strongly influenced by the performance-based skaldic compositions, and skalds were still highly prized performers in the thirteenth century. Both Sturla Þórðarson and his brother Óláfr *hvitaskald* Þórðarson made names for themselves in Iceland and at the court of the Norwegian king for their skills in this art form.⁶⁵ Sagas were a literary development unique to Iceland. They were homages to the Icelandic past composed and written down in the vernacular. Copies were made for use by chieftains who presumably had them read out loud for entertainment and aggrandizement. For instance, Sturla Sighvatsson, a chieftain not otherwise known for possessing a scholarly bent, expressed an interest in having copies made of his uncle Snorri’s sagas.⁶⁶ Sagas were also popular at the Norwegian royal court. So much so that the fashion for sagas brought about demand for sagas with non-Icelandic subject matter, for instance, the saga of King Hákon that was commissioned from Sturla Þórðarson by King Magnús, his son, and was intended for a Norwegian audience.⁶⁷

Therefore it is probable that the sagas were limited by their audience. Accounts of the granting of properties and powers by chieftains to their sons, the participants in lawsuits or fights, and the fostering or raising of sons may be considered fairly trustworthy, as the composer could not simply invent a person’s presence or participation at events when his audience knew this to be false. This factor is especially true in a society which was so interested in its past and in individual lineages. Miller also sees this control through the contemporary nature of the sources as important, but adds a caveat. The source, he says, is about the kin of the audience, and in some cases about the audience themselves, but it is constrained by ‘the conventions of the saga style and whatever dissimulations living authors might have to make so as not to offend living *dramatis personæ* and their kin.’⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 109.

⁶⁶ *SS*, i, 342.

⁶⁷ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 194.

⁶⁸ Miller, *Bloodtaking*, 50.

Furthermore, audience awareness of where someone was, what property they controlled and so forth, does not extend to accurate knowledge and recollection of the sentiments involved. Thus, commentary on motives, emotions and speech is often anecdotal, and of doubtful probity. We know that at least one author, Sturla Þórðarson, was a witness to, and participant in many of the events he describes, and that he is considered a measured and authoritative historian,⁶⁹ making him potentially one of the people best placed to have an acute awareness of the internal and external motivations of the characters portrayed. Yet this would be to ignore the very strong arguments for a personal, or family oriented-perspective, whether conscious or unconscious on his part as the events he described are not only highly emotive politically, but also closely affect members of his immediate family. In these cases it is of more value to the historian to assess the implicit social expectations or values expressed in the text, rather than to read for complete realism.

The Contemporary Sagas as sources provide many avenues for the historian to pursue. While the text may be treated as a literary or even historical document, the saga had something of a dual identity and these were not necessarily in conflict with each other. While on the one hand the saga was the creation of writers who may have been reflecting, or perhaps attempting to shape, the pattern of social and political interaction from a scholarly perspective, they were also inextricably linked to their subject by their proximity to it and as such the saga was a deeply personal document, exhibiting not just a philosophical or literary approach, but also a keen awareness of the events described, and even a motivation to depict them in a particular way which would both convince and attract a contemporary audience.

The sagas, while undeniably partisan documents, should not be read simply as political history. For the purposes of this study it is in the assessment of the prevailing attitudes and values in society that conclusions may be made. The sources can, through their implicit approbation or disapproval of actions recorded in them, illustrate the codes to which society subscribed. It is even possible to discern social mores in cases where the episodes or descriptions can be said to incorporate a formulaic nature. The key questions pertaining to this study involve the relationships

⁶⁹ Hallberg, 'Sturlunga saga', 61; Stefán Einarsson, *A History of Icelandic Literature*, 155.

between fathers and sons and the inheritance strategies practised by these families. The sagas' subject matter centres on the strategic manoeuvring of the ruling elite during the last 150 years of the Commonwealth, which means that the extremely detailed accounts include much in the way of examples of fathers and sons and the transfer of property. The sagas both explicitly and implicitly show the political application of inheritance, and through the detail of family interactions, the effect that these strategies had upon the father / son relationship. What makes the sagas so valuable above all is the wealth of detail concerning a considerable number of individuals, at least two generations (in some cases as many as four or five generations) of some forty six families, which allows the discussion of not only the notable cases which are often discussed, such as the Sturlungar family themselves, but also comparison with less well known families. Taking into account the complex interaction of the literary, instructive, and commemorative motives, among others, which may have shaped and informed the representation of this huge cast of characters, it may be possible to glean a more rounded picture of the variety and intricacy of events and relationships which shaped the lives of Icelanders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Grágás

Grágás, or 'Grey Goose' is the collection of Icelandic legal statements which came into existence in 1117, when several of the powerful chieftains and lawmen of Iceland gathered at the farm of Hafliði Másson to record the laws of Iceland in a written format.⁷⁰ Although no text survives from the twelfth century, the date of the first redaction is given by Ari, the author of the earliest of the Icelandic historical texts, *Íslendingabók*, which was completed not later than 1130.⁷¹ *Grágás* survives today in two well-preserved manuscripts from the thirteenth century known as *Komungsbók* and *Staðarhólsbók*.⁷² *Grágás* was an extensive legal text. There are around seven hundred pages of legal provisions on such diverse subjects as the

⁷⁰ A. Dennis, P. Foote and R. Perkins 'Introduction' in *Grágás, Laws of Early Iceland*, vol. i, trans. & eds. A. Dennis, P. Foote and R. Perkins (Winnepeg, 1980), 1-19 at 4.

⁷¹ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 117.

⁷² Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, 21, dates these two texts to 1250 and the 1260s respectively, however, Miller, *Bloodtaking*, 43, gives a slightly later date of 1260 and 1280 respectively. It may be significant that there were copies being made of this extremely complex legal text precisely at the period of greatest upheaval of Icelandic society leading up to and after the end of the Commonwealth and the incursion of the King of Norway into the legal framework of Icelandic society.

correct division among neighbours of parts from a beached whale, to, more significantly from the point of view of this study, the degrees of relationships through which one might inherit status and property. However, there is no indication that *Grágás* was ever consulted as an authority at the Alþing. Rather it was the continued function of the Lawspeaker to recite the laws at this assembly, even up to the end of the Commonwealth. This leaves open the question of the exact function of the legal text. That it was intended for use in a legal context is witnessed by the text itself, which makes provision for the existence of inconsistencies between the copies of the text, and stipulates which one should take precedence in a dispute.⁷³ However, there are no instances in the Contemporary sagas which demonstrate that the text was being produced at key legal proceedings, when the use of such an authority might be presumed to have been of aid to a litigant. The intent in its composition appears to have been as a book of legal learning, to guide the work of the legal practitioner by considering responses to real or hypothetical cases and by doing so to create a body of learning. Perhaps in this way it could be said to have also reflected practice.

Yet, *Grágás* is not an official record but was commissioned, and composed, by private individuals for their personal use. It represents the efforts of those individuals to record the laws of their society, which until this time had been transmitted and preserved orally. The writing of the laws coincides with the beginning of an era of considerable literary productivity in Icelandic literary and historical composition which contributed to the upsurge of creativity which culminated in saga production.⁷⁴ Thus the writing of the law text is arguably illustrative of the self-awareness of the Icelanders as members of a distinct national, social and cultural entity. With *Grágás* the Icelanders preserved their legal identity, and with the sagas they compiled a record of their historical identity. 'Together the sagas and the laws reflect the medieval Icelanders' conception of how their society worked.'⁷⁵ Byock believes that the text was undoubtedly an important one to the Icelanders of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: 'knowledge of the law is often essential to understanding medieval Iceland, especially events portrayed in its

⁷³ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 118.

⁷⁴ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Edda and Sagas*, 22.

⁷⁵ Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, 20.

sagas.”⁷⁶ But it remains open to question what its function was. It is certainly true that Iceland was a remarkably litigious society, and by referring to this text it is possible to gain insight into the logic behind some of the actions which the saga characters take. However, by comparing the actions of the Icelanders in the contemporary sagas with the legal text, it is possible to see the conflict of the ideology of legal scholars and the kind of practice which appears to have been credible to a thirteenth-century audience. One such example is the succession of two cousins to the property of their fathers. One cousin, Guðmundr Arason (G.9), was the illegitimate son of Ari (G.6), an Icelander who had amassed some wealth in Norway. On his father’s death in 1166, while Guðmundr was only a young child, he received no inheritance. According to *Grágás* this was exactly according to the laws. A legitimate heir who was either the son, daughter, father, paternal brother, mother, paternal sister, maternal brother or maternal sister of the deceased could pre-empt the claims of an illegitimate son.⁷⁷ As Ari had three legitimate brothers, they invoked their right to inherit and Guðmundr was set upon the path to an ecclesiastical career. However, his cousin Ögmundr (G.7) who was also an illegitimate son, but whose father died in 1207 when he was in his late thirties, inherited his father’s patrimony. This time the inheritance did not devolve on Ögmundr according to the provision set out in *Grágás*. Ögmundr had five legitimate sisters, and five legitimate paternal aunts, all of whom stood to inherit before his claim. Yet despite two of his sisters being married to powerful men in Iceland there was no challenge to Ögmundr’s right to inherit the patrimony.⁷⁸ In this way the narrative and the legal sources both complement and contradict each other, providing useful evidence of the conflict between ideology and practice, or perhaps of different ideologies of inheritance which coexisted.

The Norman Sources

Normandy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries may owe a debt to the Scandinavian origins of the ducal family. However, the source material for this

⁷⁶ Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, 20.

⁷⁷ *Grágás* Ia, 218-219 and II, 97.

⁷⁸ The husbands were the chieftain Kolbeinn Tumason, and the son of a chieftain Klængr Kleppjárnsson.

thesis is firmly grounded in the Frankish tradition of monastic historical production. The three chroniclers included in this study form a sequence which in a sense is itself a narrative of the period. Dudo of St. Quentin represents the 'beginning' of this sequence. He wrote about the tenth century, but may prove of more relevance when considered as a source for the concerns of the ducal house at the start of the eleventh century when he worked on his text. William of Jumièges is the 'middle' of this series, as he lived and wrote before and after the key event that dominates the history of the Norman elite in this period, the conquest of England in 1066 (for discussion of the argument that dates much of this chronicle to before 1066 see p.36). His text was completed by 1070 and its final stage was wholly contemporary with the Conquest. Forming the 'end' of the sequence is Orderic Vitalis of Saint Évroul, whose *Ecclesiastical History* is the product of the generation succeeding the Conquest. The Norman sources thus provide a more securely datable sequence than the Icelandic. Their spanning of 1066 enables questions about the impact of that event to be raised. Unfortunately there is no legal text strictly comparable with the Icelandic legal sources. However, there are potentially relevant sources, most notably charters, but as there has been no systematic collection of Norman charters, their use is problematic and limited in terms of this thesis. Discussion of the charters where they pertain to particular events or family circumstances mentioned in the chronicles will consider how they may be used to complement the three narrative sources for this period.

Dudo of St. Quentin

Dudo of St. Quentin is the first narrator of the Norman ducal house. As such, despite the reservations held by many historians, he remains a significant source for the ideology of the roles and accepted modes of behaviour of fathers and sons in pre-Conquest Normandy, albeit viewed through non-Norman eyes. Dudo's career at the Norman court is quite well documented. He was originally a canon of St. Quentin, but he was despatched from there to Normandy in 987 by the count of Vermandois, in whose territory the monastery lay, on a diplomatic mission to the duke. Once there he became a member of the ducal court until his appointment as dean of St.

Quentin around 1015.⁷⁹ Evidence of his role at the ducal court can be found in two charters which he composed. A charter dated 1011 ends with the note that Dudo, ‘*capellanus*’ of the duke composed and wrote the charter.⁸⁰ The second charter is dated 1015, concerning a gift to Dudo by the duke.⁸¹

Dudo was quite explicit about his motives for writing. In his lengthy prologue he directed a letter of dedication to Archbishop Adalbero of Laon, explaining how he was commissioned by Richard I in 996, and after his death in that year, encouraged to continue with the work by both Richard II and by count Rodolf, Richard I’s maternal half-brother.⁸² It was also here that he clearly set out what he was asked to achieve, that is, to ‘describe the customs and deeds of the Norman land’.⁸³ The text itself comprises four books, each one significantly longer than the last. Each book is preceded by a prologue usually in the form of a prayer or exhortation. The first book concerns the barbaric origins of the Scandinavians who came to the region, and their depredations in Normandy. They are epitomised in the fictional character of Hastings, a pagan Viking warrior. The second book is an account, much romanticised, of the arrival and installation of Rollo as the first Norman count. The third book contains the career and ‘martyrdom’ of William Longsword, Rollo’s son and heir to the county. Finally, book four is the lengthy account of Richard I, William Longsword’s heir and Dudo’s original patron in Normandy whose long reign comprised the second half of the tenth century.

Thirteen manuscripts of Dudo’s history survive.⁸⁴ Four date from the eleventh century. These originated in Mont Saint Michel, Fécamp, Canterbury and the oldest cannot be ascribed a place of origin. The Mont Saint Michel version travelled at some point to Jumièges. Twelfth-century copies were made at St. Wandrille, Bury St. Edmunds, and Canterbury again. Dudo was therefore both disseminated outside Normandy in the eleventh century, given that a copy was made

⁷⁹ E. Christiansen, ‘Introduction’ in Dudo of St. Quentin, *History of the Normans*, ed. E. Christiansen (Woodbridge, 1998), ix-xxxvii at ix.

⁸⁰ *Recueil*, no. 13.

⁸¹ *Recueil*, no.18.

⁸² *De Moribus*, 119-120.

⁸³ *De Moribus*, 119, *ut mores actusque telluris Normannicae... describerem*.

⁸⁴ Christiansen, ‘Introduction’, xxxiv-xxxv

at Canterbury and at Bury in that century, and was also copied even after the composition of William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*.

Understanding Dudo's motives and audience, despite his appalling reputation today, is important because it offers greater awareness of the aims and attitudes of the early Norman elite and their perception of their place within Frankish society. Hanawalt believes that the commissioning of the work by Richard I was part of a propaganda campaign, 'he hired a Frankish literary artist, a scholar and cleric who, in exchange for a lifetime of benefices from the Norman ecclesiastical establishment, would write a classy history that sounded authentic.'⁸⁵ While the dedication in the prologue to Bishop Adalbero of Laon, and the concern of the author to present the death of William Longsword as martyrdom suggests that it is an ecclesiastical text, the work can also appear to be overwhelmingly secular in intent. While instances of the father / son relationship are stilted and formulaic, the subject of the inheritance of the Norman patrimony is at the heart of the text. It is surely not a coincidence that each book ends with the death of the father and begins with the accession of the son to the patrimony. It is important not to forget that the ducal family were the instigators of the text. The relatively wide dissemination of the text might also suggest that the work was intended to be a public not a private history, although the distribution of the text does not necessarily reflect the conscious intent of the author. The result of that dissemination was perhaps as important as the intention of the author. The text, whatever its original intent, became part of the ducal justification of their position in Normandy, promoting the claims and the legitimacy of the Norman dynasty to as wide an audience as possible.

Until the late nineteenth century, Dudo enjoyed a relatively uncritical press. However the dawn of the twentieth century marked the beginnings of an avalanche of criticism. Dudo's reputation plummeted until the criticism culminated, in 1982, with Bates consigning him to oblivion.⁸⁶ Recent scholarship has partially redeemed his reputation by focusing less on his use as an historical source and more on his relevance as a source for ideals and attitudes towards identity in his own period.

⁸⁵ E. Albu Hanawalt, 'Dudo of St. Quentin – The Heroic Past Imagined', *HSJ*, 6 (1994), 111-18 at 111.

⁸⁶ D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London, 1982), 11.

This revision is partly due to Searle's reassessment of the text⁸⁷, and while not all historians are convinced by her argument, it has opened the path to other attempts to redefine Dudo and render him useful as a source.⁸⁸ Searle has argued that Dudo was not creating a work of history but rather a form of saga which was intended to create a defined identity for the Normans among their Frankish neighbours.⁸⁹ Jackman criticizes Searle for her emphasis on Gunnor, the mistress of Duke Richard I whose role in the commission and composition of Dudo's work Searle stresses, and also the Scandinavian traditions, which, he says, are accentuated disproportionately in her reappraisal of Dudo.⁹⁰ I hesitate to agree with either Searle or Jackman on this point, mostly because both of them present Gunnor as unarguably pagan and of a background unsullied by contact with Frankish culture. While this is possible, it is by no means certain given the gradual Christianisation of Denmark over the tenth century and the strong economic and political links between Denmark and Christian Europe.⁹¹ Christiansen subscribes to a view of Dudo which accentuates not the Scandinavian past of the dukes, but the ecclesiastical background of Dudo himself, seeing the text not as a saga-like 'victory song'⁹² of the Norman dukes, but as a form of secular hagiography. '[I]t was hagiography that moulded his work, not only in fixing its language but also in providing its main assumptions and ideas.'⁹³ He points out that as Dudo wrote his work between 994 and c.1020, this precedes the earliest surviving Norse saga by at least one hundred and sixty years making saga literature an unlikely source of inspiration to the Frankish cleric.⁹⁴ Hanawalt, like many others including Christiansen cites Dudo's debt to Vergil and his *Aeneid*.⁹⁵ Lifshitz however reminds the reader of the 'influence of the Hebrew bible'⁹⁶ and she suggests that the Christian milieu in which Dudo lived could have provided many of

⁸⁷ Searle, *Predatory kinship*.

⁸⁸ Christiansen, 'Introduction', xvii; F. Lifshitz, 'Dudo's Historical Narrative and the Norman succession of 996' *JMH*, 20.2 (1994), 101-20 at 109.

⁸⁹ E. Searle, 'Fact and Pattern in Heroic History: Dudo of St-Quentin', *Viator* 15 (1984), 122.

⁹⁰ D. Jackman, 'Review Article Eleanor Searle Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power', *Ius Commune Zeitschrift für Europäische Rechtsgeschichte, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Europäische Rechtsgeschichte*, 18 (1991), 374-7 at 375.

⁹¹ For instance, according to the Jelling stone, erected by King Harald Bluetooth in memory of his parents in 965, Denmark was fully Christian by that date, and while this claim is debateable it is evidence that Denmark could not be characterised as a wholly pagan region during Gunnor's lifetime.

⁹² Searle, 'Fact and Pattern', 122.

⁹³ Christiansen, 'Introduction', xxi.

⁹⁴ Christiansen, 'Introduction', xvii

⁹⁵ Albu Hanawalt, 'Dudo of St. Quentin', 113; Christiansen, 'Introduction', xxi.

⁹⁶ Lifshitz, 'Dudo's Historical Narrative', 109.

the themes pursued in the text. Lifshitz also posits that the dukes of Normandy were by this period thoroughly integrated into the Frankish culture in which they found themselves, aware of their interesting ancestry but not as concerned by it as they were by the securing of the succession.⁹⁷ This view chimes with the recent work on Carolingian historians which has highlighted the dynamic rewriting of family history and legitimisation of the succession of the Carolingians by their historians. Goffart, McKitterick and Hen illustrate that Carolingian historians were closely associated with the Carolingian dynasty and they perceive the conscious and judicious pruning of history, and even of the royal family tree, as a tool used by the victors among the competitive Carolingian elite to lend legitimacy and a sense of inevitability to the transmission of the patrimony from one generation to the next.⁹⁸ Dudo should be read with such historiography in mind. Dudo is undoubtedly an unreliable source as an accurate history of the earliest Norman dukes. But in two ways his work can inform this thesis. Firstly, his formulaic parent / child exchanges can provide a picture of the social values and attitudes which were considered ideals in the early eleventh century.⁹⁹ Secondly, the re-evaluation of Dudo in the context of the Carolingian historians also suggests his value as a source for the strategies of legitimisation of the succession by the ducal family at that date. Moreover, as the only source, not to regard the Normans through the hindsight of the Conquest, except possibly the early sections of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* of William of Jumièges, Dudo cannot be ignored.

William of Jumièges

We know very little about William of Jumièges other than that he was a monk at the monastery of Jumièges. Van Houts describes him as a ‘shadowy figure’ whose identity beyond that of a monk is unclear.¹⁰⁰ Chibnall suggests that the simple style of his work indicates that his education may have been attained during ‘long

⁹⁷ Lifshitz, ‘Dudo’s Historical Narrative’, 101.

⁹⁸ W. Goffart, ‘Paul the Deacon’s *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* and the Early Design of Charlemagne’s Succession’ *Traditio*, 42 (1986), 59-93; R. McKitterick, ‘Political Ideology in Carolingian Historiography’ in *The Uses of the past in the early middle ages* eds. Y. Hen and M. Innes (Cambridge, 2000), 162-174; Y. Hen, ‘The Annals of Metz and the Merovingian past’ in *The uses of the past in the early middle ages* eds. Y. Hen and M. Innes (Cambridge, 2000), 175-190.

⁹⁹ These will be addressed in Chapter Three.

¹⁰⁰ E. Van Houts, ‘Introduction’ in *Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges*, vol. i, ed. & trans. E. Van Houts (Oxford, 1992), xix-cxxxiii at xxx.

years among the traditions and records of a single great religious house.’¹⁰¹ Perhaps William was an oblate, or simply a monk from early adulthood, but neither can be proved conclusively. Van Houts reasons that, as William states at the beginning of Book VI in the text that he himself was witness to some of the events which followed, it is possible to conclude that William must have been at the monastery as an adult from around 1027 when Book VI starts,¹⁰² although presumably it is equally possible that he witnessed some of these events as a child and was able to add his perceptions to the memories of older men who were also present. His death can be similarly deduced as after 1070, the date of the last incidents to be featured in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*. William of Jumièges does not feature in the witness lists of any of the charters of Jumièges, but we do know that the house was closely associated with the ducal house through their gifts to the monastery since the time of William Longsword.¹⁰³

William was not, like Dudo, or indeed Orderic Vitalis, a well-travelled monk. At least there are no accounts of any journeys which might have added to his knowledge of events beyond the walls of Jumièges. Yet his text seems extremely secular in its preoccupations with succession and legitimacy. However, the idea that the secular and the ecclesiastical world were essentially separate, and characterised by different areas of interest, should be questioned. The external world and that of the monastic house were intertwined through the teaching role of the Church. Teaching was not an exclusive and internal function, it required the clerics to give themselves to both consideration of the external world and its problems and that they include in their texts records and models of behaviour which might be instructive to both an ecclesiastical and a secular audience. The monks were also connected to secular society in a more mundane fashion. Both the Church and the aristocracy were landowning sections of society and as such there were transactions of property taking place between the two worlds, partly as a result of pious donation by lay people, and partly through management of property within its purview by the

¹⁰¹ M. Chibnall, ‘Charter and Chronicle: the Use of Archive Sources by Norman Historians.’ in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. N. L. Brooke et al (Cambridge, 1976), 1-17 at 6.

¹⁰² *GND*, ii, 44, this has led van Houts to suggest that William was born around 1000, Van Houts, ‘Introduction’, xxxi.

¹⁰³ *Recueil*, no. 36, there are also charters by each duke since duke Richard I which confirm gifts to the monastery from themselves or those close to the ducal house, no. 14, 74, 75, and 92.

clerics. The outside world could also breach the walls of the monastery, through the influx of members which brought with it connections to local families, and if the entrant were an adult, the experiences he would have had first hand during his secular career. Finally, monks travelled on behalf of the monastery to conduct business or take part in ecclesiastical affairs which involved making journeys into and through the secular landscape. For instance William probably benefited from the return of a much travelled, very influential, and well-connected cleric to Jumièges in the years prior to his death. Robert Champart, the abbot until 1042, accompanied Edward the Confessor on his return to England and became bishop of London (1044-1050) and archbishop of Canterbury (1050-1051) through the patronage of that monarch. He returned to Jumièges in 1052 and remained there until his death three years later.¹⁰⁴ It is possible that Robert provided much in the way of oral testimony to William of Jumièges, and there may well have been other monks, whose mission took them beyond the perimeter of Jumièges at times, to whose experiences he may have turned.

The ducal family was itself closely connected to Jumièges. William Longsword had restored the monastery and his son Richard I had made at least one grant to it, all of which was confirmed by Richard II.¹⁰⁵ It is not inconceivable that, owing to the association with the ducal house, William of Jumièges had greater awareness of, and access to, information about the events of the ducal court than might at first be supposed. Nor is it impossible that William of Jumièges' impetus to write on this particular subject might have had much to do with the links between the monastic house and the ducal house. The dedicatory letter of the final form of the text further suggests the connection between the two institutions. William of Jumièges addressed his work to William, King of the English¹⁰⁶, and he states explicitly that it is his intention is to write about the deeds of the dukes of Normandy¹⁰⁷, 'that the excellent virtues of outstanding men in secular as well as divine affairs... should also live in men's perception in a way that is beneficial'¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Van Houts, 'Introduction', xxv.

¹⁰⁵ *Receuil*, no. 14.

¹⁰⁶ *GND*, i, 5; *Regis nutu Anglorum regi Willelmo*.

¹⁰⁷ *GND*, i, 5; *Normannorum ducum gestis*.

¹⁰⁸ *GND*, i, 6; *ut uirtutes optimorum uirorum tum in secularibus tum in diuinis excellentissime, ... utiliter et in hominum noticia uiuant*.

William of Jumièges' text is a history of the dukes of Normandy from Rollo to the present day, and his overriding concern within the text appears to be the succession of the dukes. In this it bears a striking resemblance to Dudo's work on which it relies as a source and may have been intended as a continuation. There are seven Books, and each of them records the central events of the reigns of one duke: Book I is the semi mythical Viking Hasting; Book II, Rollo (911-930); Book III, William Longsword (930-942); Book IV, Richard I (942-996); Book V, Richard II (996-1026); Book VI, Richard III (1026-1027) and Robert I (1027-1035); and ending with Book VII, William II the Conqueror (1035-). The short reign of Duke Richard III was incorporated into Book VI along with his brother Robert's longer rule. The first four books relied heavily on the work of Dudo of St. Quentin. However William of Jumièges greatly abbreviated Dudo's composition and also discarded much of Dudo's commentary on the Viking heritage of Rollo. The subsequent books relied upon contemporary witnesses including William of Jumièges' own experiences.

Prior to van Houts' work on the text, it was generally accepted that William of Jumièges wrote the *Gesta* around 1070.¹⁰⁹ The date of 1070 was probably arrived at due to the fact that the last events described by William of Jumièges took place in the immediate aftermath of the Conquest of England in 1066 during William the Conqueror's campaigns to suppress remaining resistance to his authority. The final paragraphs of the *Gesta* attributed to William of Jumièges include the crushing of the northern rebellion centred on York, and the expedition of the sons of Harald Hardrada which began from Ireland, both of which took place in 1069.¹¹⁰ Van Houts has suggested instead that the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* was completed prior to the Conquest of 1066, and that it was this event which caused William of

¹⁰⁹ R. Allen Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1969), 20; Davis, *The Normans and their Myth*, 49; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, xiii. However Bates revised his opinion, D. Bates, *The Conqueror* (Stroud, 1989), 27 and Douglas did not commit himself to the 1070-71 date entirely, commenting that the work 'continues until' that date in D. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1964), 11.

¹¹⁰ *GND*, ii, 181.

Jumièges to amend and expand his work to include the Conquest and other information pertaining to England at a later date.¹¹¹

There are 49 copies of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*.¹¹² Of these, one may have been copied as early as the late eleventh century, fourteen date to the twelfth century, six to the thirteenth century, two to the fourteenth century, and the rest are either later copies or their date of copying cannot be determined. Of the twelfth-century copies the geographical dispersal of the text is impressive. Copies were either made or owned by Reading abbey, the abbey of St. Victor in Paris, the monastery of Saint Évrroul, which held Orderic Vitalis' copy around 1113, St. Denis in Paris, Jumièges, Durham Cathedral priory, Holy Cross priory at Waltham, and Le Bec where Robert of Torigni's copy may have been made. The wide dissemination of the text, in addition to the close connections of Jumièges to the ducal house raises the question of the audience for the text. The secular nature of the source would seem to argue against an ecclesiastical audience. Yet this supposes that monastic life and the secular world were two separate entities, whereas, as has been suggested, the gifts, interactions, and entry of some members of family into the monastic houses, suggests that the secular and spiritual worlds often collided within the walls of monastic houses, and it may well have been in such institutions that William's work found an audience who would act as a conduit between him and the lay elite and *vice versa*.

Historians have differed on the usefulness and reliability of William of Jumièges' *Gesta* as a source for the history of Normandy in the tenth and eleventh centuries. McKitterick implies that by using Dudo of Saint-Quentin as a source, William of Jumièges is tainted by the same reputation for invention and unreliability that has dogged Dudo.¹¹³ However, Bates is more moderate recommending only that William of Jumièges be treated with caution as he 'set out quite deliberately to

¹¹¹ Van Houts, 'Introduction', xxxii-xxxv. Briefly, Van Houts argues that the original end of the *Gesta* was chapter 12 in book VII which deals with events in 1057. The end of this chapter left the resolution of some conflicts inconclusive which would be compatible with the text having ended before their conclusion. The subsequent chapters deal with events leading up to and after the conquest, leaving the earlier events without a satisfactory resolution, suggesting to Van Houts that the later addition of the events 1058-1070 was overwhelmingly coloured by the experience of the conquest.

¹¹² Van Houts 'Introduction', xcvi-cxix.

¹¹³ R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians* (London, 1983), 326.

present a selective version of events in order to praise the achievements of the Norman rulers.¹¹⁴ Allen Brown considered that William of Jumièges' sources were impressive enough to warrant consideration of the *Gesta* as a valid and useful text. He comments that, as a monk at a 'great ducal foundation', William of Jumièges would have had access to the higher echelons of society through the connections of the monastery with the Norman elite, and that these connections could be used as sources for his work.¹¹⁵ Chibnall's assessment of William of Jumièges' education and resources echoes this more favourable judgement, and in addition suggests that the abbey's own written records, including the charters of the abbey, would have provided William with a rich fund of evidence from which to draw in the composition of his *Gesta*.¹¹⁶

Thus it is probable that the monastery of Jumièges was connected to the Norman elite through its transactions and its monks' familial relationships. In this respect the work of William of Jumièges is important for his virtually contemporary account of the perceptions and preoccupations of the Norman elite during the Conquest period, certainly insofar as they impacted upon the monastery itself. Moreover, as the monastery was founded by the ducal house, it is unsurprising that William considered their history to be a subject worthy of his attention.¹¹⁷ The monks may have felt it important to establish and reiterate their connections to the most important family in the region in order to secure the continued favour of that family. Van Houts defines the *Gesta* as 'a history about a line of succession of individual persons, who follow one another by hereditary or other means. In such a history emphasis is laid on the function of the person more than on the person himself.'¹¹⁸ Certainly dominant within the text are the themes of family relationships and the social training of aristocratic males up to and including the conquest period.¹¹⁹ Each book has a series of identical sections beginning with a portrait of the duke, then an account of his political and military endeavours during his reign, followed by his marriage and offspring, listing his ecclesiastical foundations and

¹¹⁴ Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, xiii.

¹¹⁵ Allen Brown, *The Normans*, 104, n. 67.

¹¹⁶ Chibnall, 'Charter and Chronicle', 5-6.

¹¹⁷ Van Houts 'Introduction', xxiii.

¹¹⁸ Van Houts, 'The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*: A History Without an End.' in *ANS* 2 (1980), 106-18 at 107.

¹¹⁹ These themes will be discussed in Chapter Three.

finally the selection of his heir.¹²⁰ Van Houts suggests that this structure indicates that its original, and continuing purpose, was ‘the legitimisation of the reigning prince.’¹²¹ In this sense it bears comparison with Dudo whose aims may not have been very different. The *Gesta* provides images of eleventh-century family relationships, especially those of father and son, or father substitute and son, and the strategies that were involved in ensuring the transfer of authority and property from one to the other. Bearing in mind that the politics of the eleventh century were often family affairs, the *Gesta* also offers the potential to explore these relationships more fully than in Dudo’s much more sparse account and also, in its singularity of purpose, provides a contrast to the overwhelming detail provided by Orderic Vitalis.

Orderic Vitalis

Tabuteau says of Orderic Vitalis, that ‘although no legal historian, he is by far the most valuable source aside from the charters.’¹²² This comment with regard to his utility for the legal historian, refers to the sheer volume of detail which this source provides. Orderic is an extremely verbose chronicler at times, and in some parts no detail seems too small to be included. He is particularly interested in the families who are most closely connected to his monastic house at St. Évrout, those who were descended from the founders, those who were neighbours and donors to the monastery, and those whose rivalries and conflicts threatened the stability enjoyed by the monks. This concentration of detail upon the families most nearly concerned with this locality strongly influences the selection of families for the Norman case studies in Chapter Seven. His *Ecclesiastical History* runs to thirteen books. We know a considerable amount about the life of Orderic Vitalis, because unusually for a medieval chronicler, he provides us with some biographical detail. He was born in England in 1075, just a decade after the conquest, to a Norman father, Odelerius of Orleans who was employed as a clerk in the household of Roger of Montgomery at Shrewsbury, and an English mother about whom nothing more is known. Orderic was named after his godfather, a priest. His education began at an early age. From 1080 Orderic attended school in Shrewsbury where his schoolmaster was an Englishman named Siward. Orderic’s father made a pilgrimage

¹²⁰ Van Houts, ‘A History Without an End’, 111.

¹²¹ Van Houts, ‘A History Without an End’, 115.

¹²² E. Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, 13.

to Rome in 1082, and pledged to restore the Church of St. Peter in Shrewsbury on his return. It may also have been at this point that he made up his mind to commit not only himself but two of his three sons to the monastic life as well.¹²³ Orderic was to spend only five years at the school in Shrewsbury before he was sent as an oblate to Saint Évrout in 1085 at the age of ten.¹²⁴

His work on the *Ecclesiastical History* may have begun as early as 1114¹²⁵ and was not completed until 1141.¹²⁶ The history was arranged in thirteen books.¹²⁷ However the books were not completed successively as the first was book iii and one of the last was book i. Book i is ecclesiastical in nature telling the Life of Christ and a history of the Church followed by a history of the Roman Empire, the Lombards, Franks, English and Normans, It appears to have reached its final form in 1136 although the history section continues to 1138 and space was left for later additions. Book ii contains the lives of the apostles and of the popes. Again it is a later book finished around 1137 with additions in 1139/40. Book iii concerns the history of the house of Saint Évrout and the Norman Conquest. It was finished in 1123. Book iv is an account of the history of Normandy and England in the decade succeeding the Conquest, completed around 1125. Book v is a history of the Archbishops of Rouen and also an account of gifts to the monastery of Saint Évrout. It was completed around 1127. Book vi concerns mainly the history of Saint Évrout and can be dated between 1130-1135 as it concerns the translation of relics to the monastery in 1131 and a miracle recorded in 1133. However Chibnall dates the epilogue to as late as 1141. Book vii forms the beginning of a chronological approach to a history of Normandy and England, it ends with the death of William the Conqueror in 1087, it was written in the early 1130s. Book viii is a treatise on the new monastic orders, written probably during the latter years of the reign of Henry I. Book ix contains a history of the first crusade and was completed in 1135,

¹²³ *EH*, v, 146.

¹²⁴ *EH*, vi, 552

¹²⁵ M. Chibnall, 'Introduction', in *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall. 6 vols. (1969-80) vol. i, 1-125 at 32.

¹²⁶ Chibnall, 'Introduction', 113. This may correspond with his death no later than 1142. Chibnall has found a reference to the death of a monk named Ordericus in the record of the monastery, and although it is not certain that this is indeed Orderic Vitalis, the unlikelihood of another monk with an English name gives Chibnall cause to conclude that this is the date of the chronicler's death. Orderic would have been sixty seven years old.

¹²⁷ Chibnall, 'Introduction', 45-48.

although it may have been begun considerably earlier. Book x is a history of England, Normandy and Jerusalem up to 1101. It was completed in 1135. Book xi completes English and Norman history up to 1113, and Book xii takes the history up to 1131. They were both completed after the death of Henry I in 1135 and before that of the abbot Warin of Les Essarts in 1137. Book xiii completes the history up to 1137, and concludes with an epilogue composed in 1141.

It seems something of a shame that after a lifetime's work, the *Ecclesiastical History* does not appear to have been widely disseminated in the medieval world. Parts of it, notably books vii and viii were copied. One copy is known to have existed at St. Stephen's of Caen in the late twelfth century, and it may have been used by both near contemporary chroniclers Wace and Robert of Torigny. In the thirteenth century the treatise on the new monastic orders of book viii had been copied by the monks of St. Taurin d'Évreux. But it was not until the sixteenth century that the text became more widely read.¹²⁸ The apparently limited consumption of Orderic's text should be considered in the light of the accidents of survival of medieval texts as a whole. However, it may also be useful to contrast it with that of Dudo's and William of Jumièges' texts, which both appear to have had periods of relative popularity given the number of copies for which there are records. Shopkow certainly believes that the small number of copies of Orderic's work reflects more than simply the accident of survival but a lack of an audience.¹²⁹ This presents the historian with questions as to why Orderic's history may have been less popular. One answer may be in the very size of the text. Orderic's opus would have required much greater commitment from the copier than the texts of Dudo and William of Jumièges. Another may lie in the subject matter. While all three authors dealt with the history of the ducal house, Orderic's account was also very closely connected to issues concerning the monastery of St. Évroul and the disputes between the families most closely connected to that area of central and southern Normandy, in particular in the lands where the borders of the archbishoprics of Lisieux, Évreux and Sées converged. This extremely local geographical slant may have led to its retaining little of interest to those outside this region who might have felt that

¹²⁸ Chibnall, 'Introduction', 113-115.

¹²⁹ L. Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington DC, 1997), 232-234.

William of Jumièges provided a more manageable account of the ducal house, without all the extra, and they may have felt extraneous, local detail provided by Orderic. Shopkow also notes that St. Évroul did not benefit from significant patrons, unlike both Dudo and the monastery at Jumièges, which were both more closely connected to the ducal house.¹³⁰

If the reading of the *Ecclesiastical History* was mostly restricted to the monastery of St. Évroul after its composition, this is not the case for either its author or its sources. St. Évroul was a monastery which, like Jumièges, had connections to the upper echelons of Norman society. In a charter of 1050, William II confirms grants made by Robert of Grandmesnil, his brother, Hugh, and William of Giroie giving property to the monastery and also granting the monks the right to elect their own abbot.¹³¹ Robert of Grandmesnil became a monk at Saint Évroul after a career as a member of the ducal court.¹³² Another member of an aristocratic family who entered St. Évroul was Reginald, the son of Arnold of Échauffour who entered the monastery as an oblate in c.1060, and was both well travelled and, through his wider kin, well connected.¹³³ He lived as a monk for 52 years, dying c. 1112, which meant that he was a contemporary of Orderic.¹³⁴ Drogo, the son of Geoffrey of Neufmarché, Roger, the son of Erneis of Coulonces and nephew of William of Warenne, the earl of Surrey and Arnold, the son of Humphrey of Tilleul, entered the monastery during the abbacy of Mainer (c.1066-1089).¹³⁵ As Orderic records that they were young knights, and that Arnold even had a squire of his own when they entered the monastic life from the household of Hugh of Avranches, the earl of Chester, it seems that they probably entered St. Évroul towards the second half of Mainer's abbacy, after Hugh had become established as the earl.¹³⁶ Their monastic careers thus coincided with at least the earlier years of Orderic's career. It is also interesting to note that these men of noble rank were involved in the external affairs of the monastery, which reinforces the impression that the monks were far from

¹³⁰ Shopkow, *History and Community*, 233.

¹³¹ *Recueil*, no. 122.

¹³² *FH*, ii, 40.

¹³³ *EH*, ii, 126-128.

¹³⁴ *EH*, ii, 126.

¹³⁵ *GC*, xi, 820.

¹³⁶ *EH*, iii, 118, 226.

isolated from the laity and their activities.¹³⁷ The number of monks related to the aristocracy at any one monastery is hard to assess, but it is probable that a monastery with wealthy and influential patrons like Robert of Grandmesnil would have attracted more of that ilk, resulting in a goodly proportion of the community who could not only claim highly placed family members, but who were in all likelihood in contact with them. This would have provided a historian of contemporary events and those of the recent past with a far wider scope than might at first be perceived. Moreover, Orderic was not restricted to Saint Évrout, he travelled widely. He was at Rheims in 1119, he also visited Cambrai, Worcester, Shrewsbury and Crowland Abbey.¹³⁸ It appears both from the close connections of the monastery of St. Évrout with the local aristocracy, and from the limited dissemination of the work that the audience for Orderic's history was both local and well placed to be informed about his subject already. Thus the families who dominated the text would also, at least those members who had joined the Church, form its audience. This in turn informs the discussion of the case studies in Chapter Seven.

Orderic's work contains a huge quantity of detail. However, this detail is interwoven with the implicit and explicit judgement of the narrative voice. Orderic was a monk with opinions and he was not afraid to express them. Not only is it important to bear in mind the ecclesiastical background of Orderic and also his own specific experience of fatherhood as an oblate which might colour his interpretation of the father / son dynamic, but Orderic was also decidedly partisan with regard to the welfare of his monastic home. As two of the most important and detailed families to emerge from the text are the Giroie / Grandmesnil family and the Bellême / Montgomery family it is essential to bear in mind Orderic's admiration of the former as founders of his house, and his antagonism towards the Bellême part of the latter family as the architects of the downfall of the Giroie / Grandmesnil. Orderic's value as a source is both as a repository of detail about the family members often excised from more narrowly focused texts, especially in terms of information about non-inheriting sons, and as a reflection of the ideals which

¹³⁷ *EH*, iii, 118, *Nonnulli generositate pollebant et exterioribus curis in rebus æcclesiasticis uigebant.*

¹³⁸ M. Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Woodbridge, 1984), 36.

affected Norman society, or possibly Norman ecclesiastical society. He adds flesh to the bones of Dudo and William of Jumièges' accounts.

Conclusion

The first point which emerges from a comparison of these sources is the contrast between the secularity of the Icelandic sources and the production of all the Norman sources in an ecclesiastical environment. Yet the monastic houses' place as part of the society in which they functioned suggests that the separation between the secular and the spiritual should not be overstated. Certainly Dudo and William of Jumièges can be seen to pursue decidedly secular themes and both worked for lay patrons, although it is wise always to remember the clerical profession of the authors. Orderic's subject matter was so diverse that the secular and the spiritual both found a home in his work, though again the opinions of an ecclesiastical author, his monastic outlook and his specific context must be taken into account. Conversely it must not be forgotten that Iceland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the sagas were being written, was a Christian country. Thus the mores of a Christian society almost certainly would have informed the attitudes of the Icelandic authors to their saga subjects to some extent.

While the sources may reflect the religious and social ideology of family structure and individual conduct within it, such attitudes can offer commentary on the probable historical reality as well. Key to this is the question of the audience and its relationship to the author. Was it the aim of the author to inform, instruct or warn his audience about acceptable behaviours? Or was it his concern to recount events which had led to the current situation, leaving the audience to draw their own moral lessons? Can we in fact distinguish between these two aims? The narrative nature of the sources invite engagement with the persons described. Their concerns and their relationships would almost certainly have needed to hold a relevance to the society in which they would have found their audience. In the Icelandic sources in particular the role of the audience in regulating the extent to which the author could elaborate on, or indeed exaggerate and imagine, events was significant. Yet the contemporary, or near contemporary nature of the sources, both Icelandic and Norman also meant

that the audience would have been instrumental in determining what they wanted to hear.

The sources provide a rich material within which the historian can seek the social and cultural constructs and inheritance strategies which developed out of, or indeed contributed to, the evolution of relationships. The narrative sources are all, to some extent, documents of legitimisation, justification and clarification as to how the current elite came to occupy their respective positions. This purpose directly involves the explanation of the changes within families which were made to accommodate the advancement of one or more members of the family, through acquisition, promotion or by other means, and what effect this had upon family relationships as a result, all of which closely concern this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE : Ideals of Father and Son Roles

Introduction

It is essential to situate the aristocratic father / son relationship within the context of the society in which it operated. What were the constructs and concepts of 'father' and 'son' which governed how these two familial roles operated within the family and within the wider social sphere? Following from these questions one has to ask, is it possible to distinguish between ideal behaviours and reality? Yet perhaps it is more fruitful not to think in terms of ideals and realities, but of examples inspiring emulation and negative examples inspiring an opposite reaction. These narrative sources addressed historical and even near contemporary events and people with which the audience would have been familiar. This familiarity would have allowed the medieval authors to engage the empathy of their audience but also could have given them the opportunity to provoke a response from them which reflected their awareness of socially acceptable norms. It may even have permitted the authors to intentionally provide positive and negative examples which were intended to gently encourage the adoption of socially, or even ecclesiastically, sanctioned behaviours.

Social ideals are important because they were both formed by and formed behavioural norms. Normative attitudes to the role of father and son would have affected how a father and son comported themselves. Ideas of correct or aberrant behaviour influence people. Pressures of peer expectations, family expectation and wider social expectations can be apparent from narrative sources and of use in reconstructing relationships as they add to the picture not perhaps of what did happen, but what parts of society felt *should* happen, which may then have had the effect of becoming what *did* happen. These concerns bring us back to the audience, or the intended audience of the sources. Both sources were produced in Christian societies, and in Normandy the texts were clerical works. In both societies it may be possible to discern an intent to instruct the audience, or at least introduce to them a value system, recognisable to many of them, concerning sanctioned behaviours, or behaviours which the author would have liked to see become sanctioned. An ideal is obviously something to aspire to, although it is difficult to quantify how much these

aspirations worked to affect the audience. But the patterns on display in the sources presented to an audience images which they would very probably recognise and accept or reject.

‘What is a father?’ and ‘What is a son?’ These are fundamental questions that lead to further questions, ‘what was a good father / son?’ ‘What constituted a bad father / son?’ and perhaps most importantly, ‘how were these value judgements indicated in the sources?’ To address this last question, more are required such as, ‘what were the duties and obligations of a father or a son as depicted in the sources?’ and ‘were father / son relationships expected to be affective relationships?’ We should also ask, ‘what expectations of fathers / sons did society hold?’ and whether these positive or negative images were derived from an ecclesiastical or a secular perspective, if, indeed, there is any value in separating the two in the context of medieval society.

Historiography

In Eadmer’s *Life of St Anselm*, the saint is depicted chastising a monk whose care of oblates had been characterised by beatings, ‘if you want your boys to be adorned with good habits, you too, besides the pressure of blows, must apply the encouragement and help of fatherly sympathy and gentleness.’¹³⁹ It is interesting that Anselm (as depicted by Eadmer) should use the term ‘fatherly’ to describe a caring approach to childrearing, especially in view of the fact that his own relationship with his father was one of discord.¹⁴⁰ This suggests that there was a pattern of ideal behaviour, recognisable to Anselm, Eadmer and Eadmer’s audience, which was ‘father-like’, and that this in turn did not denote a relationship ideally characterised by physical abuse. Was Anselm’s criticism indicative of a simple division of fathers into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ categories? Was Anselm’s definition of the paternal role normative in medieval societies, in particular those of Iceland and Normandy? Indeed, did Eadmer’s early twelfth-century hagiographical text have any

¹³⁹ Eadmer, *The Life of St Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury*, trans. R.W. Southern (London, 1962), 38, *Si pueros vestros cupitis ornatis moribus esse. necesse est ut cum depressionibus verberum, impendatis eis paternae pietatis et mansuetudinis levamen atque subsidium.*

¹⁴⁰ Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm*, 7.

resonance with the secular ideals and norms in either Normandy or Iceland at this date?

Much scholarship has accepted a gendered divide of the parental relationships, frequently assigning the father the more authoritative, disciplinary role. Herlihy's depiction of the medieval father as 'an older, distant, but powerful figure' and the much younger mother whose accessibility to her sons and her role as intercessor was linked to her comparative youth, has proved very influential.¹⁴¹ This view is in part influenced by the sources themselves, which portray fathers as figures of authority and power. Such is the impression of William the Conqueror that we receive from the texts, and Aird has argued that it is in this role that William presents such a challenge to his son Robert Curthose.¹⁴² There is no denying that the relationship of William the Conqueror and his eldest son was, by modern standards, dysfunctional, yet was it so by medieval standards? Did the ideal father and ideal son become involved in intergenerational conflict? Or are William and Robert illustrations of aberrant behaviours, a parsimonious father and a rebellious son, highlighted and given attention as such, with the intention that they act as a warning to the audience against such actions?

Scholarship on fathers and sons is still thin. Historians have long since extended the scope of research beyond the external or political life and into the internal or family life of medieval man. Yet it is not medieval 'man', in the sense of a male-gendered person, who has dominated this exploration of medieval social history, or at least, not the medieval lay 'man'. Historiographical developments such as women's history and gender history have contributed enormously to the production of a wealth of material on the history of the family as a social as well as a political unit. However, it is still true that to access the men of the family, especially as fathers, it is largely necessary to deduce their role as a negative, or mirror, to that

¹⁴¹ Herlihy, *Medieval Households*, 120; also in his articles D. Herlihy, 'The Generation in Medieval History', *Viator*, 5 (1974), 347-64 and D. Herlihy, 'Medieval Children' in *The Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures; Essays on Medieval Civilization*, eds. B. K. Lackner and K. R. Philp (Austin, TX, 1978), 109-41.

¹⁴² Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 47.

of mothers, who have received by far the greater attention from historians.¹⁴³ Recently work has been done to redress the balance of research into the family on gender lines. This has begun to dispel some of the myths that have arisen about medieval fathers and sons, engendered by Ariès' assertion that childhood had not yet been 'discovered' in the Middle Ages.¹⁴⁴ The natural inference to be drawn was, that if childhood did not exist, then parental relationships to the child would not exist either. Scholarship on motherhood has shown the way in debating this theory, and fatherhood, after a more dilatory start, has also been reassessed in the light of sources that offer wider scope for the interpretation of fathers as members of a family unit. Historians have considered the writings of churchmen, hagiographies, histories and miracle stories as a means to broaden our image of the variety and complexity of the medieval father and the medieval son.¹⁴⁵ However Walker Bynum has sounded a note of caution, 'analysis should make clear why we cannot isolate an image from its intellectual or its institutional context and why we cannot take it as literal comment on the objects or situations from which the metaphors are constructed.'¹⁴⁶

With the above in mind, the sources require the assessment of these concepts in the context of the people and institutions who produced them, and the audience

¹⁴³ Some of the existing scholarship on motherhood relevant to the medieval period includes, J. Carmi Parsons and B. Wheeler, eds. *Medieval Mothering* (New York, 1996); P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers* (London, 1983), 2nd edition 1998, 143-65; Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation*; N. Hodgson, 'The Role of Kerbogha's Mother in the *Gesta Francorum* and Selected Chronicles of the First Crusade' in *Gendering the Crusades*, eds. S. Edgington and S. Lambert (Cardiff, 2001), 163-76; T. Nors, 'Illegitimate Children'; S. Shahar, 'Cultural Attitudes and Strategies of Oppression: Medieval Motherhood' in *Female Power in the Middle Ages*, eds. K. Glente and L. Winther-Jensen (Copenhagen, 1989), 45-51; P. Stafford, 'Sons and Mothers'; P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith* (Oxford, 1997), 75-81; M. Claussen, 'Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the *liber manualis*', *French Historical Studies*, 19, 5 (1996), 785-809; C. Walker Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth Century Cistercian Writing', *Harvard Theological Review*, 70,3-4 (1977), 257-83; Turner, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine'; R. V. Turner, 'The Children of Anglo-Norman Royalty and their Upbringing', *Medieval Prosopography*, 11;2 (1990), 17-52.

¹⁴⁴ Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, 33.

¹⁴⁵ M. McLaughlin uses the writings of Peter Damian, 'Secular and Spiritual Fatherhood in the Eleventh Century', in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. J. Murray (New York, 1999), 25-43; D. Lett considers the use of miracle stories and hagiographies as significant in changing our perception of the medieval father in the section, 'Tendre souverains' in *Histoire des Pères et de la Paternité*, eds. J. Delumeau and D. Roche (Paris, 2000), 17-40; Itnyre 'Emotional Universe', uses the sagas as historical and literary documents of the complex relationships of fathers and sons in medieval Iceland; C. Bouchard refers to letters and *vitae* written by medieval clerics in her exploration of fatherhood in *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1998), 77-9; Krötzel 'Parent-Child Relations' also makes use of miracle stories to paint a different picture of fathers' sensibilities to that which Ariès inspires.

¹⁴⁶ Walker Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother' 284.

for whom they were compiled. There are three factors affecting the sources in this study. Firstly, the sources may exhibit explicit cultural ideals held by the author, which colour the representations of 'fathers' and 'sons'. Secondly, there are the implicit expectations held by the wider society of the roles of 'father' and 'son', which are also reflected in the sources. Thirdly, the depiction of individual 'fathers' and 'sons' may be provided in the texts to embody the perfect or the imperfect as examples for the audience, yet this portrayal is always in dialogue with reality, and to some extent controlled by factors outside the text. Lett argues this in respect of miracle collections. He suggests that the authors' aims were to stimulate belief, therefore the situations and behaviour of the protagonists needed to be credible to their audience. Thus in his opinion, miracle stories of emotionally connected fathers and sons must have some basis in medieval reality.¹⁴⁷ This view can also inform the assessment of the impact that images of ideal fathers and sons may have had upon their audiences in Iceland and Normandy.

Fathers are, by definition, male persons. Consideration of the ideals of fatherhood must thus begin from or involve notions of gender. Historians have sometimes attempted to categorize what features should be considered masculine, or were considered in the past to be inherently masculine. Words such as authority, power, strength, and control occur in the historiography of masculinity.¹⁴⁸ The implications of these gendered characteristics on the father / son relationship in Iceland and Normandy in the period will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Four. Not unconnected to this series of male descriptors are the terms, 'strict', 'discipline', 'paternal authority', 'dominant' and 'distant', all of which have been

¹⁴⁷ Lett, 'Tendre souverains', 27.

¹⁴⁸ For example, T. Ditz, 'The New Men's History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power. Some Remedies from Early American Gender History', *Gender and History* 16,1 (2004), 1-35 at 12; and specific to the medieval period some examples are C.J. Clover, 'Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe', *Speculum* 68, 2 (1993), 363-87 at 380; J. Jochens, 'Before the Male Gaze: the Absence of the Female Body in Old Norse', in *Sex in the Middle Ages*, ed. J.E. Salisbury (New York, 1991), 3-29 at 4-5; J. Jochens, 'The Medieval Icelandic Heroine: Fact or Fiction?', *Viator* 17 (1986), 35-50 at 42; Duby, 'Women and Power', 78; J. Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1988), 28; Quirk, 'Men, Women and Miracles in Normandy' 55, 57 infers that less emotional display was expected of fathers, suggesting that men were expected to be more stoic than women.

attributed to the medieval father.¹⁴⁹ The idea of the stern father may contribute to Duby, Herlihy, and Aird's thesis that, in Duby's words, sons 'were the natural enemies of their father'.¹⁵⁰ However, there are also instances where historians' views of the father includes such images as provider and protector, and in some cases, fathers are portrayed as being tender, affectionate and even nurturing.¹⁵¹ The first series of words describing the father's role is the one with which perhaps we are most familiar. This represents the categorisation which assesses a man's role in respect of his power over others; women, children, servants, vassals, and perhaps most importantly for this thesis, other men in his immediate family circle.

The head of household or *paterfamilias* role, emphasized in some of these works, is significant in the context of this thesis. The protector / provider role carries with it notions of the provision of care, albeit that these can be linked to power. The role of provider and protector suggests one which combines two seemingly contradictory elements. Firstly, it involves control over others, especially if one considers that there may be situations in which the provision and protection might be withdrawn contingent upon the conduct of the recipient. This is exactly the situation facing Robert Curthose, according to Orderic, when he bemoans the lack of funds for the support of his own band of followers, and his father makes such provision conditional upon his receiving obedience from Robert.¹⁵² Secondly, the role is evocative of a duty of care, perhaps more than that, of an expectation that a father's role evokes in him the sense of responsibility and perhaps even the desire to provide for the children, in this case the sons, dependent upon him. Just such an interpretation of the role of a father is portrayed by Dudo, who has Rollo suggest that King Charles should stand as a father to him, entailing both love and aid.¹⁵³ Interestingly he also perceives the role of a son as embodying the same characteristics. There is ambiguity in this role, which appeals to two different sets of characteristics, those which traditionally speak to masculine traits (the strong and

¹⁴⁹ Respectively, Walker Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother', 269; McLaughlin, 'Secular and Spiritual Fatherhood' 31-2; Nelson, J. 'Parents, Children and the Church' 100; Aird, 'Frustrated masculinity', 47, Herlihy, *Medieval Households*, 120.

¹⁵⁰ Duby, 'Women and Power', 82.

¹⁵¹ Krötzel, 'Parent-Child Relations', 36; Shahar, 'Cultural Attitudes', 46.

¹⁵² *EH*, iii, 98. *conuenienter in omnibus michi obsequere.*

¹⁵³ *De Moribus*, 168, *Hic mihi sit paterno amore pro patre; ego filiorum delectatione ero illi pro filio succurrat mihi si necesse fuerit. ut pater filio ego illi ut filius patri Gaudeat mea prosperitate; tristetur mea adversitate.*

powerful protector and provider) and a more feminine role (the provider of comfort and affection, closer to that of nurturer).

This is reflected in the third set of descriptors above, implying an explicitly caring role which borrows extensively from 'female' characteristics. Walker Bynum acknowledges the prevalence in ecclesiastical sources of stereotypes of 'mother' and 'father', 'gentleness, compassion, tenderness, emotionality and love, nurturing, and security are labelled female (or "maternal"); authority, judgement, command, strictness, and discipline are labelled male (or "paternal).'¹⁵⁴ But the sources are, as Walker Bynum points out, not inclined to simplify parental roles along gender lines, because many of the people offering the affective comfort of the 'mother' are men, and these men also embody the paternal authority figure, leading to a complex paternal figure. It may be that these traits were heavily influenced by the clerical attitudes to fathers, but men displaying love, care, and tenderness, according to some historians, are usually fathers, or men fulfilling a fatherly role within the Church structure.¹⁵⁵ McNamara has argued that the adoption of typically female gendered nurturing and pacifist roles within the Church for ecclesiastical men came about as a misogynistic response to the insecurity that lay masculinity, which included strength and power as its features, produced in the churchmen. She sees such churchmen as usurping these gendered roles for men in the Church and reducing women to objects of opprobrium, lacking control and virtue.¹⁵⁶ This 'crisis' in masculinity which will be explored in Chapter Four has implications for images of ideal fathers, in that there could be conflicting images in the sources involving the peaceful, caring, forbearing father and the powerful, stern, authority figure.

The task of discovering the son in medieval history, at first appears less problematic. There have been a number of studies which deal specifically with sons in the medieval period, yet the historiography is if anything sparser than for fathers.¹⁵⁷ Historians have generally considered children and sons in particular in

¹⁵⁴ Walker Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother' 269.

¹⁵⁵ Walker Bynum, 'Jesus as Mother', 270; McLaughlin, 'Secular and Spiritual Fatherhood', 33-4.

¹⁵⁶ J. A. McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. C.A. Lees (Minneapolis, MN, 1994), 3-29.

¹⁵⁷ Notable exceptions to this include, Duby, 'Youth'; Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity'.

conjunction with their mothers in studies of family history and family dynamics.¹⁵⁸ The overriding interest has been in the alliance of sons and mothers, discussed by Herlihy as part of the thesis of inevitable conflict between fathers and sons.¹⁵⁹ Thus the son who emerges from the historiography appears somewhat one-dimensionally as a nexus for family conflict. Was the rebellious son such a common topos in the sources for Iceland and Normandy?

Ideal Imagery?

What then do the sources reveal in their imagery of fathers and sons of the culturally constructed ideals of these two roles? Were there instances in which men were described as behaving 'like a father' or 'like a son'? *Sturlunga saga* does not generally offer similes to depict father-like or son-like behaviour, preferring instead adjectives and actions. This makes direct commentary on behaviour difficult to discern. Typical, or even atypical fathers and sons must be inferred rather than found explicitly described in the text. Thus the saga sources' attitudes to the ideal father and son must be deduced through a systematic reconstruction of relationships which build an overall picture of how fathers and sons were portrayed and which images carried positive and which negative connotations in the context of the text. These will be discussed below (pp.55-61, pp.67-70).

Dudo, of all the sources, not just the Norman ones, is most explicit in what he expects of a father and a son in the way of behaviour. One of the images he uses is the tale of Dedalus and Icarus to illustrate the strength of his story and the weakness of his skills. What is of interest is his use of father / son images which contrast the skill of the father and the impetuosity of the son.¹⁶⁰ Another more flattering image of sons was described above (p.51), where two leaders, Rollo and Charles agree to be as father and son, united in love, mutual aid, and emotional empathy.¹⁶¹ Dudo makes several connections between the role of father and the role

¹⁵⁸ Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation*; Shahar, 'Cultural Attitudes', 45-51; Stafford, 'Sons and Mothers' 70-100; Claussen, 'Fathers of Power', 785-809; Turner, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine', 321-35; Turner, 'The Children of Anglo-Norman Royalty', 17-52; Grundy, 'The Viking's Mother', 223-37.

¹⁵⁹ Herlihy, *Medieval Households*, 120.

¹⁶⁰ *De Moribus*, 138-9.

¹⁶¹ *De Moribus*, 168.

of ruler. Rulers are described as regulating, benignly encouraging, maintaining, comforting, and excellent in the manner of fathers to sons.¹⁶² Thus Dudo's narrative from the late tenth and early eleventh century reflects values of ideal fatherhood characterised by a balance of caring and authority. His view of sons was more mixed. Sons could be impatient, betraying their youth through hasty action,¹⁶³ but good sons were just as fathers, expressing unity through love, mutual aid and an affective bond.¹⁶⁴ However, the positive image of fathers as 'providers' does place sons in the category of dependents, as the recipients of the regulation, benign encouragement, maintenance, and comfort.

William of Jumièges does not offer many illustrations of 'father-like' or 'son-like' behaviours. Instead, rather like *Sturlunga saga* (p.53), his opinion is inferred from statements that build to form a coherent picture. Orderic Vitalis is surprisingly sparing, given the sheer volume of his text, in his use of the descriptive 'father-like', and even more so 'son-like'. While there are a great many instances when he uses the words as exact labels, he makes far less use of them in an illustrative sense, even in terms of religious imagery. He does describe God as exhibiting 'fatherly love'¹⁶⁵, and he also occasionally describes clerics as 'father', although it appears he is far more likely to give them their official title such as abbot, although the two essentially meant the same thing to a Benedictine monk.¹⁶⁶ Orderic does have William the Conqueror describe himself as a '*pater patriae*' in the context of a father provider.¹⁶⁷ Orderic's views on sons, while not fully apparent from explicit statements about son-like actions alone, are suggestive of a more negative image. In book viii he compares the good habits of '*honestus patrem mos antiquorum*' to the deplorable fashions and actions of '*petulans iuventus*'.¹⁶⁸ Though here we have to infer 'son' from '*iuventus*' in relation to the explicit '*patres*'. Insofar as it is possible to infer Orderic's views on the ideal father and son from his use of the terms as descriptions, it seems that like Dudo there was a balance between

¹⁶² *De Moribus*, 221, *moderans*, 263, *fomite benignissimo*, 272, *sustentabat*, 274, *recreans dulce*, 269 *praecellens pater*.

¹⁶³ *De Moribus*, 138-9, 260-1.

¹⁶⁴ *De Moribus*, 168, 182.

¹⁶⁵ *EH*, iii, 320.

¹⁶⁶ *EH*, iii, 264; *La Règle de Saint Benoît*, ed. H. Rochais (Paris, new edition 1997), 12 n. 3. n. 7; 16 n. 24.

¹⁶⁷ *EH*, iv, 100.

¹⁶⁸ *EH*, iv, 188.

authority and affection in his image of ideal fatherhood. His opinion on sons is like the sagas and William of Jumièges more accessible through his accounts and interpretations of the actions of sons, which will be discussed below.

Ideals of Duty, Obligation and the Rights of Fathers and Sons

If we go beyond these general descriptions, what was expected of an ideal father and an ideal son in terms of their duties, obligations and rights in relation to each other? What actions excited condemnation? Were these notions normative? Were they intended to be normative? Establishing the duties of a father to a son, and conversely of a son to his father, in this period is possibly best begun for Iceland by considering the legal statements as they affected fathers and sons and then pursuing these through the accounts and interpretations of the actions of sons and fathers in the narrative texts. In terms of Normandy the duties of father and son must needs be approached solely via the narrative sources.

Iceland

The inheritance structure delineated in the Icelandic laws in which legitimate sons appeared first, and a father was only excluded from inheritance by a legitimate grandson or granddaughter, makes the importance of the son and the father to each other on a legal basis clearly apparent.¹⁶⁹ From these inheritance principles are derived some of the social regulations for care and administration of a father's or a son's interests. A father was responsible in the laws for the upbringing of his children whether legitimate or illegitimate. However the parents divided responsibility for their children between them, two thirds of the responsibility belonging to him and one third to the mother. This division meant that if the father or the mother died the full responsibility for the raising of the children devolved on the other parent, but with the deceased's heirs owing the cost of the upbringing of the children who had been in the care of the deceased.¹⁷⁰ This suggests that if a mother died, the property she left to her children could conceivably be claimed by their own father to defray the costs of their upbringing. The concern of the legal

¹⁶⁹ *Grágás*, Ia, 218.

¹⁷⁰ *Grágás*, Ib, 5.

statements thus appears to have been to specify the responsibilities of kin. However the promotion of the superior status of the father in the schedule may indicate a social and cultural emphasis on the paternal obligations and by association suggest that the father was a senior and superior figure. A son was obliged to maintain his mother, and if he could afford it, his father as well.¹⁷¹ This legal obligation meant he was bound to enter into debt bondage, if he had no other means of support, in order to provide for his parents' welfare. A father was also obliged to provide for his children's upkeep, but only if he was not fully extended by the provision of support to his own parents. Moreover, the laws state that while a son was obliged to enter into debt bondage, as a last resort, to support his parents, a father had a choice as to whether to enter into debt bondage to support his children. Indeed he could decide to sell the child into debt bondage instead. This would seem to suggest that in the laws, the son was considered to owe rather more duties of care to the father, than the father to the son.

The obligation of a son to maintain his father was also a feature of the obligations of an illegitimate son, though such a son could expect less from his father in return. An illegitimate son was able to receive a gift of twelve ounce units from his father by law, but only if the gift was not larger than the share of his father's legitimate heirs, unless with their consent. An illegitimate son also stood in line to inherit. However, he was excluded by his legitimate paternal siblings, his paternal grandparents and his father's paternal and uterine siblings. In view of the illegitimate son's limited rights derived from his father, his own obligation to provide for the maintenance of his father, equal to that of a legitimate son, given that even a paternal uncle could then claim any inheritance his father later received, appears to be a potentially thankless duty, and certainly not one based on reciprocity in inheritance terms.¹⁷²

One of a father's obligations was to care for any property which came into the ownership of his under-age children.¹⁷³ This is explicitly stated as resulting from the inheritance structure, with the father standing as heir to his children's property.

¹⁷¹ *Grágás*, Ib, 4-5.

¹⁷² *Grágás*, Ia, 218-221, 247, Ib, 24.

¹⁷³ *Grágás*, Ia, 230.

The property was therefore seen as ultimately his until his children came of age and produced heirs of their own. However, until the children reached their majority the yield of that property was also to be to the benefit of the father. This principle can be seen in action in the transfer of property from his foster-father to Tumi Sighvatsson (S.17).¹⁷⁴ Tumi's foster-father (who was also the second husband of Tumi's maternal grandmother) made the gift between 1203 and 1206 when Tumi was between four and six years old, but he continued to administer it. The complete transfer of the administration of the property to Tumi's father Sighvatr (S.8) took place in around 1211 when Tumi would have been twelve years old. His foster father was leaving the region and asked Sighvatr to take control of the property.¹⁷⁵ Yet Sighvatr's desire to profit from the property meant that when Tumi was twenty-three in 1221, his father had still not relinquished the property into Tumi's hands.¹⁷⁶ Thus analysis of the laws in conjunction with the sagas suggest that while society held that a father had an obligation to his son, this could be a mixed blessing for some sons. On balance the laws seem to offer more rights to the father than the son, and more obligations to the son than the father, although this is a fine line. Thus the law seems to provide a normative picture in medieval Iceland of greater emphasis on a filial than a paternal duty of care, and not one simply based on the expectation of property, since it seems to apply also to the illegitimate offspring.

As one might expect, the duties and obligations of fathers and sons are not explicitly defined in the sagas as in the laws. However, a common feature in the sagas seems to be an unwritten rule of loyalty, which was expected to be demonstrated in both directions. Fathers appeared to assume, with much justification, that they would receive the loyal support of their sons in their disputes. Chapter Five will discuss the prevalence of the medieval Icelandic inheritance strategy of establishing heirs independently in their early twenties. This practice meant that many Icelandic fathers effectively made their chosen son independent by

¹⁷⁴ SS, i, 243, *Sigurðr gaf þau goðorð Tuma, syni Sighvats.*

¹⁷⁵ SS, i, 258, *Vildi Sigurðr, at Sighvatr tæki við goðorðum þeim, er hann hafði gefit Tuma, syni hans.*

¹⁷⁶ SS, i, 287, *Tumi Sighvatsson kærði þat fyrir feðr sínum, at hann vildi láta sér bú fá ok mannaforráð sumt eða allt þat, er Sighvatr átti ok Sigurðr gaf honum.*

means of gifts of property, and often arranged profitable marriages.¹⁷⁷ What is of interest is that the strategy does not seem to have diminished the loyalty of these favoured sons once they were independent of their fathers and may have become in effect the equal in power and status to the father. While the loyalty of sons who remained within the ambit of their father's household, and who might conceivably still have hoped to benefit from his patronage, could be considered to have an element of self-serving about it, the sons who had formed followings, power bases, and fortunes of their own are also portrayed as displaying considerable loyalty to their fathers in their endeavours. Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Guðrún Nordal have both commented on this feature of the father / son relationship in *Sturlunga Saga*.¹⁷⁸ Miller also sees the absence of a single case of patricide in the entire corpus of the sagas as evidence of the strength of the social expectation that there were bonds of loyalty and obligation existing between fathers and sons, the breaking of which would have been considered if not heinous, at least remarkable and unusual events.¹⁷⁹ In 1237 Sighvatr Sturluson (S.8) expressed his concern to his son Sturla (S.18) over the latter's political strategies which had brought him into conflict with powerful opponents. His rebuke of his son's actions implies that Sighvatr considered Sturla foolish. Yet, in 1238, he nonetheless followed Sturla into the battle of Örlyggstaðr, where not only he and Sturla met their deaths but also three of his other sons.¹⁸⁰ This display of loyalty of father to son is matched by that of son to father. Sighvatr's nephew Böðvarr Þórðarson (S.12) also displayed filial loyalty by entering into the same disputes as his father and in honouring his father's wishes in 1237 for the disposition among the family of the inheritance which he was entitled, according to the legal statements, to claim in its entirety.¹⁸¹ Böðvarr was an independently established son yet his portrayal reflects that of many such sons of the elite in the sagas, providing unswerving loyalty to his father. The saga details four instances in which Böðvarr provided support at the request of his father, over a period of eighteen years, in 1216, 1226, 1229 and 1234.¹⁸² Kolbeinn (S.19) and Þórðr *kakala*

¹⁷⁷ There are at least thirteen cases where fathers pursued this option. *SS*, ii, 222, (O.45); i, 501, (O.41); ii, 149, (H.24) and (H.25); i, 302, 346 (H.15); i, 270, (H.12); ii, 236 (S.30); ii, 122, (S.26); i, 386, (S.20); i, 346, 371, (S. 19); i, 284, (S.18); i, 379, (S. 13); i, 303, (S.12).

¹⁷⁸ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, 45; Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 29.

¹⁷⁹ Miller, *Bloodtaking*, 160.

¹⁸⁰ *SS*, i, 407-8.

¹⁸¹ *SS*, i, 401.

¹⁸² *SS*, i, 268 310, 333, 376.

(S.20) Sighvatsson provide examples of non-inheriting sons from the sagas who also demonstrated this consistent loyalty to the causes of their father. Kolbeinn was not his father's main heir, but Sighvatr had established him in his own household at Grenjaðarstaðr in 1232.¹⁸³ In the years following that gift he was unswerving in his loyalty to his father, answering summons for assistance twice in 1234 and in 1238 was at the battle of Örlyggstaðr with his father and brothers.¹⁸⁴ Þórðr *kakala* was neither his father's main heir, nor a recipient of a family holding, yet he was also present at key moments when his father required the support of his sons.¹⁸⁵ In the same family Sveinn Sturluson (S.4) was an illegitimate son who remained loyal to his father throughout a prolonged period beginning in the 1160s until his father's death in 1183.¹⁸⁶ From the sources it is not clear that he received any family property or promotion as a result of his loyalty, yet after his father's death he continued to demonstrate the same loyalty to the new head of the family, his much younger legitimate half-brother. It does not appear that his illegitimacy was the issue which brought about his lack of familial property. Sveinn's contemporary, Tumi Kolbeinsson (A.7) who died in 1184 was also an illegitimate son and he held the family chieftaincy and property after his father, despite the existence of a legitimate brother.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, it cannot be argued that loyalty was entirely unrelated to prospects, that is, that sons were loyal by virtue of their being sons without any reference to expectations of promotion financially or socially, in the matter of expected filial behaviour. But the case of Sveinn is certainly indicative of a strong normative convention towards loyalty of sons. Thus in the very repetition of these instances of loyalty and support, in a variety of different familial and inheritance contexts, the sagas appear to reveal socially normative images of fathers and sons in Iceland in the century before the end of the Commonwealth which illustrate strong ties of loyalty were considered, if not the mutual duty of the fathers and sons, at least to carry significant customary obligation.

¹⁸³ SS, i, 346, *Fór Kolbeinn norðr til föður síns ok var þar um vetrinn. En um várit tóku þeir feðgar heimildum á Grenjaðaestöðum... ok gerði Kolbeinn þar bú sæmiligt.*

¹⁸⁴ SS, i, 371, 391.

¹⁸⁵ SS, i, 362, 372, 391.

¹⁸⁶ SS, i, 82, 92-4, 98.

¹⁸⁷ SS, i, 229.

The number of these instances needs to be set against the rarity of the portrayal of rebellion. The rebellious or disobedient son seldom occurs in the sagas and the instances where he appears are perhaps key to the definition of the ideal, or inspirational, father and son in medieval Iceland. There are only three sons who fall into this category, and only two who actually opposed their father. Tumi Sighvatsson (S.17), whose father had refused to cede him the chieftaincies which had been allotted to him (p.57), responded by beginning a campaign to take over the lands of one of Iceland's bishops.¹⁸⁸ Despite having a very valid claim to the property which his father held, it is perhaps significant that he lashed out against an alternative target, rather than against the man who had frustrated his hopes, that is, his father. Snorri Sturluson's (S.9) sons Jón (S.24) and Órækja (S.25) both acted in direct disobedience of their father's expressed wishes.¹⁸⁹ In this respect they stand alone in the *Sturlunga saga* collection. These limited examples of father / son conflict are interesting for the establishment of socially acceptable father / son interactions from the saga sources. There are three significant features of the representation of these three men as disobedient or disgruntled sons.

Firstly, in the cases of Snorri's sons, at the time of their conflict with their father they were in a position to have strong expectations of becoming their father's heir. Indeed as Icelandic practice included establishment of such a son during his twenties (pp.112-5) they should arguably have been established as such before the ages at which they openly defied their father. In this sense, it could be supposed that the saga author was in fact levelling criticism against Snorri for not conferring upon them what was in fact their right to expect. It is interesting to note that Tumi's brother had been established in just such a way, which meant that Sighvatr had at least performed his socially expected role, even if not in Tumi's favour, thus Tumi was disappointed but not the victim of a father who did not fulfil his proper function of designating an heir. Snorri by contrast did exactly that, promoting neither son and leaving both in doubt as to their status. In this sense Snorri can be seen as a father who is lacking.

¹⁸⁸ SS, i, 287, ii, 239.

¹⁸⁹ SS, i, 335, 361.

The second feature which is striking about these sons, is once again the division between the behaviours of Tumi and of his two cousins, Jón and Órækja. Tumi's anger and disappointment was redirected to focus upon the lands of the bishop, while his cousins, by ignoring paternal orders, and even in Órækja's case joining his father's political opponents for a time, focus their anger and disappointment upon their father, making them a rare, and perhaps consciously instructive, negative example of the normative 'son' in the sagas.

Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly is the fact that these incidents of filial disobedience, and possible paternal failure of provision, formed part of *Íslendinga saga*, the saga composed by their cousin Sturla (S.14). This is worth noting as it speaks both to the probable accuracy of the depiction of his own family members in his own generation, but of even greater interest is that Sturla does not depict any other father / son relationships breaking down, just those of his uncles and cousins. This raises questions both of his relationship to those branches of his family, and also of his motivation in including these incidents. Was he in fact deliberately constructing negative norms as portrayed by his uncle Snorri and cousins Jón and Órækja in order to contrast them with his own father whom he portrays in all respects as a successful man, including his conduct as a father. Sturla's father did make a clear selection of his heir, and provided for his other sons. It is possible then to see the Sturlunga brothers, Þórðr, Sighvatr and Snorri and their sons as consciously expressing the topos of 'good' father / son and 'bad' father / son, and in Sighvatr's case 'misguided' father / son, with the author's nuclear family getting to play the 'good guys'. Moreover, in terms of the whole text, against the exploration of these rare instances of filial rebellion, the potentially normative function of the reiteration of filial and paternal loyalty is thrown into ever sharper relief.

Normandy

Ascertaining the duties, obligations and rights of fathers and sons in Normandy presents an even greater challenge to the historian as we lack legal statements for the region from the period. The chroniclers do not explicitly state their, or indeed wider society's, interpretation of what an ideal father and an ideal son should be. The historian is left to infer from the context of incidents whether the

author, and the audience, would have viewed a father or son positively or negatively. It is important to bear the authorial motivation for presenting such images in mind as well. The ideals presented through example and commentary on behaviours may well have been intended to influence action as much as to be representational.

Dudo's accounts of father / son interactions are not detailed, but there are two features of the duty of an aristocratic father to his son in tenth century Normandy which emerge from his account and might reflect a normative ideal. Firstly, both Rollo (D.1) and William Longsword (D.2) arranged for the fostering and education of their son and heir.¹⁹⁰ Dudo used the terms *emutrio* and *educio* which suggest that the provision of care was both a nurturing and an educational role for the father. Secondly, the fathers publicly introduced their sons to their vassals and designated them as heirs.¹⁹¹ Thus the paternal role included a public acknowledgement and affirmation of their sons according to Dudo. However, the sons referred to in Dudo were also their fathers' heirs, and no non-inheriting sons were illustrated in the text, which may mean that any normative picture of paternal obligation which is revealed applies to fathers and their heirs rather than fathers in general. This text, as has been shown, provides a highly edited account of tenth-century ducal family history. But arguably, since it is such an edited version, the actions it presents represent ideals, if the text was designed to function in a legitimating fashion.

William of Jumièges offers distinct images of the duty of a father and the expected behaviour of a son. As in Dudo the clearest paternal obligation, at least at the ducal level, to emerge was the necessity of designating an heir through public presentation to one's vassals.¹⁹² The practice familiar in the Carolingian court of designation of a successor and even co-ruler, appears to have been accepted by the chroniclers as pertaining also in Normandy in the tenth and early eleventh centuries.¹⁹³ Also in parallel with Dudo and indeed, heavily influenced by his text,

¹⁹⁰ *De Moribus*, 179, 221.

¹⁹¹ *De Moribus*, 181, 202.

¹⁹² *GND*, i. 73, 135, ii. 81.

¹⁹³ McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 48-9, 108, 179; J. Nelson, 'Charlemagne – Pater Optimus?', in *Am Vorabend der Kaiser Krönung*, eds. P. Godman, et. al. (Paderborn, 2002), 269-281 at 280.

William depicts a Norman duke arranging for his son's education.¹⁹⁴ The duty of a son is harder to recover from the text, however one statement may prove indicative of social expectations of the role. William depicts the young Richard (D.4) following his father Richard I's (D.3) orders, which suggests that obedience was expected of an ideal son, or was a model for others to emulate.¹⁹⁵ A negative image of the ideal son is proffered by William of Jumièges in the instance of Baldwin of Flanders, who usurped his father's position and expelled him from his own lands.¹⁹⁶ It is clear from the context that William of Jumièges, and perhaps his audience, disapproved of a son who pre-empted the inheritance process. This supports the view that for Jumièges obedience was valued in a son, as usurpation appears to have been the ultimate form of disobedience and was negatively portrayed in the source.

Certain fundamental beliefs seem to inform Orderic's writing with regard to the obligation of father to son and son to father. Orderic's own views may have been coloured by his own experiences. He was given as an oblate to St Évrout at the age of ten after five years of schooling in Shrewsbury, and his description of his father's decision suggests the obligation of obedience which a son was expected to display towards his father. Orderic explains that as a boy he would not have presumed to have questioned his father's wishes.¹⁹⁷ This ideal of filial obedience appears to guide Orderic in his assessment of the duties of a son to a father. While the approbation of the author is seldom explicit, Orderic rarely illustrates sons questioning their fathers, rather an unquestioning obedience was what the former oblate monk appears to have considered appropriate in a son. This is evident from his account of the return of Ansold of Maule, after at least twenty years pursuing his fortune in Italy, to his father's household in Normandy. It appears that in Orderic's view no further explanation of his return is required than that his father asked him to do so.¹⁹⁸ How much Ansold's return may have been prompted by a natural filial obedience and how much by his awareness of his father's elderly state and the potential for paternal inheritance sooner rather than later, which claim his being present in Normandy

¹⁹⁴ *GND*, i, 89.

¹⁹⁵ *GND*, ii, 39.

¹⁹⁶ *GND*, ii, 53.

¹⁹⁷ *EH*, vi, 552. *Paternalis nempe uotis tenellus puer obuiare non presumpsi, sed in omnibus illi ultro adqueui.*

¹⁹⁸ *EH*, iii, 181. *petitione patris.*

would make it easier for him to promote, is debateable. But whether Ansold was the embodiment of obedience or not is perhaps less important in the discussion of ideals and normative influences than the fact that Orderic chose to portray it as an incident of obedience to one's father. His unadorned account, with no explanatory detail, could be said to invest it with a normative value.

The dutiful, obedient son motif is given greater authority when contrasted with the extremely negative view Orderic demonstrates towards its antithesis; that is, his portrayal of Robert Curthose (D.27), and Arnulf of Bellême (BM.9), sons who either attempted or succeeded in reversing the power balance in the father / son relationship by usurping their fathers' positions. Thus Orderic's criticism of Robert is based upon that son's inability to remain loyal and obedient to his father, to the extent that he rebelled not once, but twice.¹⁹⁹ The fate of William Talvas I, who in Orderic's account resembled evil incarnate, is instructive as it reveals that in the view of the monastic author, a disloyal son represented the most fitting chastisement for this dreadful man. Orderic introduces the usurpation of William's fiefs by his own son Arnulf, immediately after describing the hideous mutilation of William Giroie by William Talvas. It appears that Orderic, and perhaps Orderic's audience, could not conceive of a worse earthly punishment of such a man than to have the ultimate disobedient son. However, Orderic did allow that there could be extenuating circumstances which would permit a son to take on his father's role while that parent still lived. William Clito (D.33), William Talvas II (BM.21) and Guy of Ponthieu (BM.22) all fit this category. Orderic seems to believe that William Clito's efforts to reclaim Normandy were acceptable even though his father was alive, because his father was imprisoned.²⁰⁰ The situation of William Talvas II was virtually the same,²⁰¹ while Guy of Ponthieu was able to take on his father's forfeited property even though his father was still alive too.²⁰² A father who had forfeited either his property or his freedom appears to rank alongside a dead father, and therefore a son who replaced him received no criticism, unlike a son who attempted to wrest control of some or all of his father's property while his father was

¹⁹⁹ *EH*, ii, 356-58, iii, 96-110.

²⁰⁰ *EH*, vi, 188, 190 and 236.

²⁰¹ *EH*, vi, 224.

²⁰² *GND*, ii, 266.

physically and politically active. Orderic's critical view of sons who lacked respect for their fathers can also be found in his commentary on William (GG.25), the son of Hugh of Grandmesnil. William had been set upon a career at the court of the king, but chose to emigrate to Apulia instead. Interestingly Orderic ascribes to his decision the term 'shallow reasons',²⁰³ suggesting that Orderic saw ingratitude or lack of respect for the father in this rejection of the father's choice for the son, even though William undoubtedly went on to have a successful career in Apulia.²⁰⁴ The text does not unambiguously state that the original placement in the household of the king was at the instigation of his father, but if the incident is considered in its context this seems a reasonable assumption. Orderic placed this comment within a summary of the careers of all the sons of Hugh as part of his account of Hugh on his demise. The account forms part of a list of Hugh's achievements, and suggests that Hugh's sons' attainments were in some part due to choices that their father made for them, or helped them to make. Orderic's presentation of disobedience as aberrant behaviour in a son should similarly be read in the context of his antipathy toward the Bellême family. In the rebellious son Orderic presents a negative image of the ideal son, the son who he believed perhaps that he had been, both to his biological father, and to his religious fathers.

The duties of a father are far less explicit in Orderic. As in the case of Hugh, discussed above, Orderic offered tacit approval of fathers who ensured that all of their sons were provided for through inheritance, acquisition, marriage or education, which suggests that Orderic believed that a father's duty was to provide a path in life for his sons. His descriptions of families in the text are characterised either at the introduction, or at the death of the father, by a short history of the career of each of the man's sons and daughters. For example; the description of the fate of each of Roger of Montgomery's (BM.12) sons:²⁰⁵ at their father's death Robert (BM.15) received the Norman estates, Hugh (BM.16) the English lands, Roger (BM.17) and Arnulf (BM.19) achieved advantageous marriages as a result of their father's advice²⁰⁶, and Philip (BM.18) and Everard (BM.20) received a clerical education to

²⁰³ *EH*, iv, 338, *leuitate ductus*.

²⁰⁴ *EH*, iv, 338, William married the daughter of Robert Guiscard who came with an extensive dowry.

²⁰⁵ *EH*, iv, 302.

²⁰⁶ *EH*, iv, 302, *consilio patris*.

launch them on a path through the Church hierarchy. The careers of the sons of Hugh of Grandmesnil (GG.9) are treated similarly.²⁰⁷ Robert (GG.24) inherited the Norman property, William's (GG.25) career was discussed above, Ivo of Grandmesnil (GG.27) was presented as the recipient of his father's honour in England, and Aubrey (GG.28) appears to have been educated for the clergy, although reminiscent of his elder brother this was not the path he chose to take. These short histories of the occupations of the sons of men who figure in the history appear to serve both as genealogical information, but also as commentary on the father. The juxtaposition of the attainments of the sons with the description of the fathers' overall merits and achievements suggests that they were closely associated in Orderic's mind, and probably his audience's. To some extent the summary of the father's achievements in relation to his sons formed a judgement by the author, directed to the audience, on the success or failure of the man. Part of that success or failure was defined by his role as a father and how well his sons were doing after his death, and by inference how well his care as a father had prepared them for the future. It therefore appears that a father who made provision for his sons was fulfilling an essential aspect of the normative father's role.

Orderic's view must have been affected by his own institutional upbringing during which, as he says, he revered six abbots as '*patres et magistros*'.²⁰⁸ In the *Ecclesiastical History*, therefore, fathers are the authority figures to whom obedience and loyalty are due. But fathers' had duties too. Orderic, immersed in the rule of Benedict, undoubtedly saw them fulfilling a similar role to that of abbot, in that they were to instil respect in their sons through discipline and good examples.²⁰⁹ It appears that in Orderic's view they were also to provide for their son's futures in whatever manner they were able, even if it meant consigning their son 'weeping', into the care of strangers in another country.²¹⁰ For their part sons above all must be obedient, and a rebellious son was an aberrant and reprehensible creature.

²⁰⁷ *EH*, iv, 338-40.

²⁰⁸ *EH*, vi, 554.

²⁰⁹ *La Règle de Saint Benoît*, 12 n.6.

²¹⁰ *EH*, vi, 552, where Orderic describes himself as '*plurens*'.

In terms of the norms of obligation and privilege of fathers and sons, both societies seem to have shared the strong normative concept that sons should demonstrate obedience to their fathers. The Icelandic audience appear to have been familiar with the father as a man who made provision for his sons, made clear his preference of a head of family for the next generation which would have been in the interests of retaining family unity amidst the political power-games of the Icelandic chieftain class. The Icelandic father was a powerful role. The Norman father may have been even more powerful as there was no expectation resting on the father to relinquish any powers or property into the hands of a son as part of the inheritance strategy. However, there was also tacit approval of fathers who nevertheless displayed an interest in the prospects of their sons. Neither society seems to have recognised or accepted disinterest as usual in a father, just as disloyalty was not welcomed in a son.

Ideals of Emotional Investment

Ariès' theory was that emotional attachment of parents to children was unknown in the medieval period. Much work has been done to counter that perception (p.4), and it is relevant to ask here questions related to the emotional ties of fathers and sons as represented in these sources. Did these particular narrative authors invest in the idea of an affective father / son bond? If so was such a bond considered as desirable, natural, or necessary? In these narrative sources, the images of the affective father, or even the stern disciplinarian father, and the loyal and obedient son are beset with the difficulty of discerning reality from ideal, or rather the norm from the exception. However, by addressing examples in their context some idea of the expectations of society of these relationships can be discerned.

Iceland

The contemporary sagas may at first appear something of an emotional wasteland. The relentless suit and counter suit, the endless feuds, and the political manoeuvring which dominate the texts serve to obscure the examples of fathers and sons interacting on an emotional level. However, within the ebbing and flowing fortunes of the political players, the structure which underpinned those protagonists was that of the family. This means that the sagas are dealing at all times with both

political struggles and family dynamics and in this context it is possible to find references to father / son emotional interactions. ‘Today many assume that paternal-filial ties will be imbued with affection; there is some evidence that medieval Icelanders shared this supposition.’²¹¹ Sighvatr Sturluson usually displayed his partiality for his favourite son Sturla by his deeds, rather than by his explicit statements. In 1217, Sturla attacked a þingman of Sighvatr’s in an area where his father’s political control was at that time unstable. Sighvatr made a show of disciplining him, but the effect was mitigated by his explanation to Sturla that he was only pretending to be angry to appease others.²¹² Twenty years later in 1237 it is possible to see that Sighvatr’s emotional bond to his son remained strong; he was not blind to his faults, but he remained reluctant to present his son with any serious remonstrations. Sighvatr mocked Sturla as a rebuke for his aggression which had led him to make enemies of powerful men.²¹³ It is clear that he believed Sturla’s actions to be ill-advised, but beyond this gentle sarcasm, Sighvatr continued to support his son literally to the death the following year.

While emotions are rarely explicit in the sagas, there are occasions where they were demonstrably present. It seems that the audience of the contemporary sagas would not have been surprised to encounter an affective relationship between a father and a son. In 1223, when Gizurr (H.15) was fourteen Þorvaldr (H.7) presented him to his friend Sighvatr and was depicted as saying, ‘and this is my beloved son, Sighvatr; it seems to me of the utmost importance that you should look favourably on him.’²¹⁴ Þorvaldr was making a clear statement of support for this particular son through the formal presentation of him to Sighvatr, who would have been a powerful friend, but the statement included terms of love and implied pride in his son, which invests Þorvaldr’s action, at least in the saga writer’s presentation of it, with more than a political motivation. Similarly, there is an example of paternal emotion in the grief of Gizurr as a father and husband on the death of his sons and wife at the burning of Flúgumyrr. ‘Gizurr said, “Páll kinsman, you can now see

²¹¹ Itnyre, ‘The Emotional Universe’ 175.

²¹² *SS*, i, 261-2, *Siðan tók Sighvatr á inum mestrum hrakningum við Sturlu, ok hét hann honum brottför... Ekki þykkir mér þetta svá illa sem ek læt, ok mun ek um klappa eftir. En þú lát sem þú vitir eigi.*

²¹³ *SS*, i, 407-8.

²¹⁴ *SS*, i, 299-300, “*Hér er nú ástin mín, Sighvatr bóndi, ok þat þætti mér allmiklu máli skipta, at þér litis giftusamliga á þenna mann.*”

Ísleifr my son, and Gróa my wife.” And it seemed to Páll that he turned away and tears, like hailstones, started from his eyes.²¹⁵ It seems that even the author Sturla Þórðarson was unable to keep his feelings as a father from colouring his account of that event where his own daughter, Ingibjörg, was involved. Although she survived the fire, he described her as ‘still a child, she was quite worn out.’²¹⁶ This might be interpreted as the concern of Sturla, the father, rather than Sturla the historian, in his record of her distress.

Some sons, like those of Jón Loftsson (O.5), admired their father, and one is depicted as expressing the desire to emulate him.²¹⁷ Fathers could, like Þorvaldr Gizurarson (H.7), openly express their love for their sons. Conversely there is an account of a father / son interaction which implies that negative emotions could also be associated with the relationship, although the negativity is implicit and the whole incident hard to interpret. The example seems to be one of supreme paternal indifference to a son. It is the case of Þorkell, who was petitioned by the captors of his son Valgerðr for a ransom to secure his release from certain death. Þorkell rejected them. His son requested that his father take his confession before the sentence was carried out (Þorkell was a priest), and during the confession and last rites administered by the father ‘Men thought that they heard him (Valgerðr) ask his father to pay for him, and did not get it.’²¹⁸ The death sentence was then carried out with the father present. Nothing is known of Þorkell and Valgerðr’s relationship prior to this incident, and no explicit judgement is made of either the father, or the son’s behaviour. Very probably their actions would have been redolent with meaning to a medieval Icelandic audience, but the characteristic understatement of saga writing means that we just have a sentence which implies, but does not state, that the son made a final plea to the father and was ignored. Whether the contemporary audience would have interpreted the scene as one of indifference or of hostility on the part of the father, it appears to be imbued with negative emotional ties, although what the feelings of the son had been for his father prior to this moment are unknowable as neither man appears elsewhere in the saga. Perhaps most

²¹⁵ SS, i, 494, “Páll frændi,” segir hann, “hér máttu nú sjá Ísleif, son minn, ok Gróu, konu mina.” Ok fann Páll, at hann leit frá ok, stökk ór andlitinu sem hagikorn væri.

²¹⁶ SS, i, 494, Var hon mjök þrekuð, barn at aldri.

²¹⁷ SS, i, 192.

²¹⁸ SS, ii, 157-8, Þóttust menn þat heyra, at hann bað föður sinn leysa sik, ok fekkst þat eigi.

significant of all is the circumspect way in which the saga author does not state that the son made a final plea to his father to save him, but instead suggests it by the statement 'men thought they heard him'. Was the reluctance to state this definitely prompted by contemporary ideas of what would have been appropriate in this instance? Frustratingly for the historian it is not clear why the author skirted around the statement, was it because he was anxious not to overtly be seen to criticize one or both of the men? Was it the behaviour of the father or the son which he did not want to confront? Was Þorkell's refusal or Valgerðr's plea the more reprehensible in the eyes of the Icelandic audience? Or was the statement merely the accurate record of the event, in which those present were not sure of what they had heard? The scene is the only one in the Contemporary sagas where a father was present at the death of his son and, though given the opportunity, made no effort to save him. As such it appears to present an antithesis of what the Icelandic audience would have considered the norm, or the norm aspired to by them.

The sagas do not offer a one dimensional illustration of the emotional aspect of the parent child relationship. However, where there are positive images of dutiful, loyal sons, and fathers who provide for and support their sons' endeavours, it is not uncommon to find that the emotional relationship of the father and son involved admiration or love, while less harmonious father / son relationships can be accompanied by negative emotional imagery.

Normandy

The affective bond of father and son appears uncomplicated and explicit in Dudo's text, yet it is imbued with a complex imagery. The affective bond is expressed in Dudo through greeting formulae. These formulae do not describe actual relationship ties shared by the dukes and their sons, but imply the forms of interaction which contemporary society may have found acceptable, or desirable between a father and his son. The term, 'they embraced and kissed', apparently formed part of a standard greeting practice which men who were political enemies were as likely to engage in as those who were friends or relatives. Typically, the exchange would follow along the lines of that between Rollo and King Athelstan of

England, who on their first meeting ‘embraced each other and kissed’²¹⁹. But, in all the instances involving a father and a son, and in the case of the friendship which according to Dudo developed between Rollo and Athelstan, the terminology includes a distinct vocabulary of affection. Unlike the purely political embraces, the family exchanges are characterised by words such as *dulciter* and *amabiliter*. Rollo (D.1) greeted William (D.2) in the following fashion. ‘The kindly father received his darling offspring in loving fashion, and embraced him fondly, as was right.’²²⁰ William described his own son, Richard I (D.3), as ‘my most beloved son’²²¹. It is noticeable that each of the three dukes in Dudo’s text are described as greeting their sons with an affectionate embrace. A cynic might find this uniform sweetness and light in these father / son, duke / heir exchanges less than convincing. However, while not wholly accepting Dudo’s portrayal of the conflict free relationships of the dukes and their sons, in which the father was without exception doting, and the son was constantly respectful and loving, the differences in language between the political and the familial exchanges do suggest that to Dudo and probably his audience, such a relationship was to be desired if not always achieved. Did society assume that the ideal relationship between a father and a son would be one of mutual affection? Or did society anticipate a more formal relationship based on the lord / vassal concord? While the vocabulary of emotion in the formulaic embrace is not conclusive, it is telling that in Dudo it is used to characterise only relationships between fathers and sons and in one case a friendship. Dudo emphasized that the relationship of a father and son was not just one of mutual aid, but also involved love. ‘Let this man be to me as a father with fatherly love; I will be a son to him, with the love of sons.’²²²

William of Jumièges’s presentation of the emotional investment of fathers in sons, and even more so sons in fathers, is scanty. It is in his description of the reaction of fathers to the death of their sons that William approaches an account of

²¹⁹ *De Moribus*, 148, *mutuo amplexati et oscula libati*. Other instances of purely political nature are the greeting between duke William and King Henry where they exchanged kisses, 200, and two meetings between the enemies Richard I and Theobald which were part of an attempt to effect a solution to their enmity, 279, 280.

²²⁰ *De Moribus*, 182, *tunc carissimum pignus excepit amabiliter benignus pater: utque fas erat amplexus est dulciter*.

²²¹ *De Moribus*, 202, *filius meus delectissimus*

²²² *De Moribus* 168, *hic mihi sit paterno amore pro patre; ego filiorum delectatione*.

emotional responses. William of Bellême (BM.1), the audience is informed, died of grief on hearing of the death of one of his sons.²²³ Theobald of Chartres was punished (by divine intervention?) for his attack upon the Duke of Normandy by the death of his son the same day, which implies that a level of attachment existed in order for Theobald to have been duly punished by it.²²⁴ These comments upon the effect on fathers of the loss of a son can be interpreted as demonstrating that either paternal affection was expected by the eleventh-century audience, or that William wished to depict fathers' emotional bond to their sons as a naturally affectionate one.

Orderic offers similarly slim descriptions of emotion. However the problems of interpretation are very different. The description of the parting of Orderic from his father to begin his career as an oblate at St Évroul, while more detailed than any other account of father / son emotion by the other Norman chroniclers discussed here, is fraught with the complexity that surrounds autobiographical accounts. The portrayal is suggestive of attachment. Odelerius, 'weeping... sent me away into exile for love of thee and never saw me again.'²²⁵ How far this is a simple account of events seared on Orderic's memory, or the recollection of an old man affected by it, is uncertain. But Orderic's inclusion of the emotion is nonetheless significant. Moreover, Odelerius' expression of emotion with regard to his son is not a completely isolated case. The grief of Henry I on hearing the news of his sons' deaths aboard the White Ship may show that despite the reticence of the sources on the subject, fathers were expected to have an emotional investment in their offspring.²²⁶ However, this instance is also problematic as one of the sons of Henry I lost on the White Ship was his only legitimate heir, Prince William, which introduces a political and dynastic element into Henry's reaction to the death of his son. Nevertheless, if William the Conqueror was presented by Orderic as a more remote father who demanded obedience and used the limitation of resources to enforce it,²²⁷ his portrayal of Henry I in some ways offers a counter to that image, by illustrating a father who was perhaps emotionally invested as well as dynastically invested in his son. These examples show that Orderic, while clearly expressing the

²²³ *GND*, ii, 50.

²²⁴ *GND*, i, 125.

²²⁵ *EH*, vi, 552, *plorans... et pro amore tuo in exilium desinavit, nec me unquam postea uidit.*

²²⁶ *EH*, vi, 300.

²²⁷ *EH*, iii, 98, *conuenienter in omnibus michi obsequere.*

view that sons should be loyal to their fathers (pp.63-6), does not present the image of the father as simply distant and authoritarian by nature. This raises the question of whether these two 'father' roles were opposites, or two different facets of fatherhood exhibited according to circumstances. Fatherhood may be an emotionally complex state. Orderic appears to believe that it was the role of the father to exert authority over his sons, despite the emotional bond he may have had with his sons, not because there was no bond there at all.

Explicit displays of paternal or filial love or anger, or indeed any internalised emotion in the conduct of the relationship, are however, not common, even in Orderic. But there are other ways in which such feelings may be discerned. One of these is the involvement of fathers in ameliorating the difficult situations in which their sons might find themselves. The rebellions of Robert Curthose were resolved by important men, and these included, possibly not coincidentally, the fathers of some of the young men involved in Robert's entourage. In the case of Roger of Montgomery, it is possible he took part in the attempts at reconciliation of the king and his first born son because his own heir, Robert of Bellême (BM15), was one of Robert's followers.²²⁸ Were his reasons dynastic or affective? Ivo (GG.27) and Aubrey (GG.28), who were also amongst the inciters of the king's son,²²⁹ were the fourth and fifth sons of Hugh of Grandmesnil, thus not his expected heirs. So Hugh's advocacy of a peaceful resolution of the conflict may have been motivated more by concern for the safety of his sons as a father rather than as a lord.²³⁰ This then reopens the possibility of interpreting Roger of Montgomery's actions in the same way. Were these fathers actively engaged in recovering political and dynastic interests by championing an end to the conflict of the king and his son to the exclusion of any putative affective bond between themselves and their sons? Or could the interpretation be more complex, involving fathers' awareness of potential political fallout as dangerous to the prospects of their sons not only on a dynastic level but for domestic and emotionally invested reasons as well?

²²⁸ *EH*, iii, 100.

²²⁹ *EH*, ii, 358.

²³⁰ *EH*, iii, 110.

The father / son relationships in Orderic's history include the choler of William the Conqueror and Robert Curthose's relationship after his rebellious expeditions, the grief of a bereaved Henry I, the multileveled concern of magnates with sons who made poor political choices, and the very personal account of Orderic's own parting from his father as a child, retold at a much later stage of his life. What is clear is that in seeking the affective bond in the texts we must consistently consider the complexity of relationships and the shifting circumstances that introduced variables into each relationship. These are factors which will be considered later in the case studies.

The Norman sources offer examples of paternal emotional bonds, but what is striking is that apart from Dudo's portrayal of mutually affectionate embraces between fathers and sons, the emotional investment of sons in their relationships with their fathers are not explicitly depicted at all. Was the older generation the only one expected to respond with affection? Did sons not return affection but only offer respect? Or was filial affection so accepted, expected and prevalent that it did not merit any mention?

Conclusion

The 'father' and the 'son' in medieval Iceland and Normandy were complex constructs. The ideals of authors, both secular and ecclesiastical, interacted, in these texts, with political, social and cultural concerns. The overriding image is that harmony between a father and a son was desirable. How much this was an ideal shaped by the needs of society, or a reality shaped by a normative cultural ideal of fathers and sons is debateable, and perhaps circular. Ideals of behaviour affect the conscious and unconscious actions of those at whom they are aimed and form part of the fabric of convention.

The Icelandic sources suggest that loyalty of both father and son to each other was important. Solidarity between the generations appears to have been promoted. A father should provide for his sons, and the most responsible fathers, it is implied, were those who made clear provision for the son around whom the next generation of the family would form a following. The son in turn should take his

independent establishment and seek to grow and then to consolidate his power both as an ally of his father in all his endeavours, but also as a means of increasing the family influence during, and in time after, his father's life-time. The son should be loyal above all and disloyalty to a father was rare in any of the sagas in the compilation. That Snorri's sons were disloyal is explicable in terms of his having failed in that paternal duty of provision. Sturla Þórðarson also seems to suggest in his depiction of his cousin Sturla and uncle Sighvatr, that a father could have an excess of affection for his son and that this was not necessarily a good thing. Sighvatr's remonstrations with Sturla were not sufficiently strong to sway Sturla from his ultimately destructive path. An ideal father was one who was loyal to his sons, protected their interests, avenged the wrongs done to them, was able to exert some discipline and above all one who relinquished control over at least one of his sons during his life-time. An ideal son was one who was loyal to his father, especially when he was established independently of his father and it was loyalty which formed the overwhelmingly important feature of a son's obligation and emotional investment in his father in the Icelandic sources.

In Normandy the texts offer images of differing levels of emotional attachment between fathers and sons, perhaps as a reflection of the different functions of the texts. However, the texts all indicate that an ideal father was a complex character who was both emotionally connected to his sons, and concerned with the promotion of the family and their continued dynastic progression. This dual role as an affective parent and dynastic planner should not be considered contradictory and should not be divided as either one or the other. Henry I's reaction on hearing of Prince William's death could be interpreted either as devastation at the appalling dynastic consequences of his loss, or as a personal tragedy of losing a child. Yet it does not seem necessary in my view to divide the two interpretations. The Norman authors depict a father as both stern and loving, with Dudo more inclined toward explicit reference to the latter than either of the later authors, although Orderic also seems to suggest that both aspects were present in his sketch of his brief relationship with his father. The Norman monastic authors saw the father's role as a protector, provider and authority figure probably motivated by affection for his progeny. If they place little stress on the emotional bond, they present a normative picture which would ensure that a father's sense of duty, if

nothing else, should have motivated him to fulfil those roles. An ideal son on the other hand, like an Icelandic son, was expected to offer unswerving loyalty. Obedience above all else appears to have been cherished in a son. Disloyal, disobedient, or simply impatient sons were viewed as unnatural, or at best misguided. Yet unlike the Icelandic sons there was no clear expectation of provision prior to their fathers' death. Dudo's account is suggestive of a form of shared power towards the end of ducal reigns, however this may have been an inheritance provision and not necessarily true delegation of significant power in the Icelandic sense.

The sources appear to display a subtler and more complex definition of 'father' and 'son' than the conventional imagery of the stern father and the rebellious son. While elements of both exist in the texts, a father could also be loving, and a son could be loyal. Perhaps the strongest image which dominates the texts is the admiration for loyalty demonstrated either by father or son. Whether this is an exhortation to the audience, or an expectation of society in general, the ideal of mutual support and respect, despite its ecclesiastical overtones, is one where ubiquity might indicate that it also resonated with a secular audience and their concerns. The greatest difference between Icelandic and Norman ideals of 'father' and 'son' appears to be based around the duty of son to father and father to son of loyalty and expectation. An Icelandic son may have had realistic expectations of recompense within his father's lifetime for his loyalty to his father, while in the Norman sources the *quid pro quo* element of expectation and loyalty for the son was not as much of a social convention as in Iceland. Ultimately, a Norman son on receiving nothing but discouragement from his father was expected to remain loyal nonetheless. Icelandic society did not approve of disloyal sons, but the lack of timely provision by a father might be considered extenuating circumstances.

From these ideals both the harmony and the tensions of relationships arise, for at the heart, the ideal of the 'good' son, as an obedient and loyal retainer of his father, seems to be at odds with the demands of the ideal of the 'adult' male, whose fullest expression is met in Iceland by independence from the father, and in Normandy in married fatherhood. The ideals explored in this chapter raise questions such as 'can a son become an adult and remain a son?' and 'when does a father

cease to be a father?' The issues of how constructs of masculinity and perceptions of life-cycle affected the father / son relationship will be addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR : The Transition to Adulthood and Masculinity

Introduction

Chapter Three addressed the question of what ideals of ‘father’ and ‘son’ were recognisable to the authors and audiences of the texts from medieval Iceland and Normandy. This chapter asks how these normative portrayals were influenced by the underlying constructs of life stages and gender in these societies, and reflected in their historians. How did contemporaries define ‘man’, given that both father and son are male gendered roles? How were key life-cycle changes and stages defined? What effect did such life-cycle stages have upon expectations, of the way ‘man’ should be defined, or vice versa? That is to say how were men expected to express their masculinity when performing the different roles of ‘father’ and ‘son’ as the son progressed from childhood to adulthood, and how did expectations of masculinity affect their performance of these roles? This chapter asks in what ways transitional life-cycle stages, fatherhood, sonhood and masculinity were socially constructed in this period and addresses the manner in which these underlying cultural and social constructs may have influenced the medieval authors and also been recognised by and credible to their audiences.

Life Stages: Transition to Adulthood (in the Father / Son Relationship)

‘Father’ and ‘son’ are stages in the life-cycle which are often equated to ‘youth’ and ‘maturity’, but the father / son relationship was also a life-long relationship which could change as the participants went through the life-cycle. One of the key points in the relationship was the stage at which sons sought to become defined socially as male adults. This age of transition would necessarily impact upon the father / son relationship as it altered from one between a male adult and a male child to one between two male adults which often involved the relative gendering of the individuals involved.²³¹

²³¹ J. Tosh, ‘What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *History Workshop Journal*, 38 (1994), 179-202 at 191-2.

Isidore of Seville presented six stages of life for a man, ‘*infantia*’, ‘*pueritia*’, ‘*adolescencia*’, ‘*iuventus*’, ‘*gravitas*’ and ‘*senectus*’.²³² According to Isidore, *infantia* accounted for the first seven years of life and after that came *pueritia* which ended at fourteen. *Adolescencia* was a period of life from fourteen to twenty eight; *iuventus* characterised a man until his fiftieth year; *gravitas* was an age of decline from fifty to seventy and *senectus* had no fixed length, but was characterised by a descent into decrepitude. Isidore’s definition of the stages one could expect to experience in life was just one of many such ‘ages of man’. These were schedules devised by thinkers throughout the Middle Ages. Burrow has described the scientific and philosophical inquiries into the subject in classical antiquity and medieval Europe.²³³ These authorities propounded the theories that there were three, four, six, or even seven ‘ages’ in which men underwent transition from childhood through very prolonged stages of youth to increasingly complex divisions of maturity and into old age. The definitions of ‘childhood’, ‘adolescence’ and ‘youth’ present such disparate features that one theory sees adolescence continuing to the age of twenty-five or thirty²³⁴, while another calls eighteen the end of adolescence²³⁵ and the beginning of adulthood.²³⁶

It is important to rid ourselves of modern concepts of adolescence and youth, the two being virtually synonymous in modern parlance. Isidore perceived adolescence as being a period of life which did not preclude reproduction, while youth followed adolescence and formed the prime of a man’s life, although Isidore does not distinguish between physical prime and intellectual maturity. Because adolescence is such a loaded term, and so variously defined in medieval texts, I have preferred to use the concept of ‘transition to adulthood’ as the key life-cycle period. It is at this point that transfer of land, power, marriage and so on might occur, though not necessarily all at one time. Indeed, it is this blurring of the stage of

²³² Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi, *Etymologiarum Sive Originum*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), xi, ii.

²³³ Burrow, J.A. *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought*, (Oxford, 1986).

²³⁴ Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, 37.

²³⁵ Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, 23.

²³⁶ Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, 20-21, perceives part of the problem being the number of terms inherited from classical Latin whose definitions became unstable in the hands of medieval scholars. Among the terms which became used interchangeably rather than as distinct and different stages were *infantia*, *pueritia*, and *adolescencia*.

transition which helps make it so problematic, but also a fruitful area of study, doubly so because of its gender significance.

The assumptions that the medieval aristocracy made about age are relevant to the questions arising from the father / son relationship. The relationship was not a static, unchanging interaction, but altered as the participants altered, and one of the most fundamental changes which impacted any familial relationship was the child growing up and the parent growing older. The relationship of a parent with a child might differ greatly from that of a father with a son who was entering maturity, and different still from the relationship of a father with a son once the parent had reached old age. It is the stage of transition of a man from childhood to manhood which may offer some of the most interesting insights into, and certainly the greatest opportunity to study, how fathers and sons interacted in the medieval period as this is also arguably the stage about which the sources offer the most detail. This stage, with its vague boundaries and implications for gendering the participants, could become key to the progress of a relationship, and this has been addressed in the literature on fathers and sons relevant to this thesis.²³⁷ Sons whose fathers managed this transition phase of their offspring well appear to have echoed the normative ideals presented in the previous chapter of loyalty and obedience. However, fathers who struggled to develop a balance between retaining the power of the head of the household and retaining the loyalty of their sons illustrate the strains which the transition stage of a man's life could bring upon the intergenerational relationship, a problem which, arguably, the normative ideals addressed.

Iceland

The Icelandic laws *Grágás*, make a number of clear statements governing when Icelandic male childhood ended and adulthood began. The legal statements assign sixteen as the age at which childhood ended in at least nine places. This is evident from the ending of the responsibilities of kin, foster-parent or a legal administrator, towards maintenance and representation on behalf of the child at that age.²³⁸ That an Icelandic male child was considered a 'man' at the age of sixteen is

²³⁷ For example, Duby, 'Youth', 112-22; Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 39-55.

²³⁸ *Grágás*, Ia, 17, 161, 222-3, 225-6, 234; Ib, 7, 22, 23; II, 207.

further supported by the many laws which refer to his rights to property. Sixteen was the age at which a youth could claim his inheritance,²³⁹ and begin to administer the property of others.²⁴⁰ It was also the age at which he attained the right of self determination. For example, prior to this age, in order that he might later enter the Church, his legal administrator arranged for his training with a priest.²⁴¹ Similarly, this was the age at which he could decide where to live, an issue which would have been decided for him up to that point.²⁴² Moreover a sixteen year old could participate in the arrangement of his widowed mother's betrothal and remarriage.²⁴³ This constituted a significant reversal of the child and adult relationship in a legal sense.

Yet on closer study, there were considerable elements of ambiguity concerning these states and especially this key transitional phase in life. Childhood appears to be specifically defined in the laws only by default, as the period before certain key rights are assigned. Before the age of sixteen, one could not hold property, have care of others, or even make any decisions about where and with whom one was going to live each year. However, in a number of important areas, Icelandic youths were already burdened by some significant rights and responsibilities well before the age of sixteen. Twelve was a very significant milestone birthday for a male Icelander, and it could be argued that this is when an Icelandic male began to leave childhood behind. A twelve year old male was considered physically mature, in that his labour was counted as a 'man's' in legal terms.²⁴⁴ Moreover, a twelve year old could be judged sufficiently mature to commit, prosecute, or even judge a capital crime.²⁴⁵ Legally, any physical harm caused by a male, over the age of twelve, was something for which he could be held fully accountable in the courts.²⁴⁶ A twelve year old could, potentially, be judged capable of taking up the inherited office of chieftain, if there was agreement that he

²³⁹ *Grágás*, Ia 225-6.

²⁴⁰ *Grágás*, Ia, 225-6, 230-1.

²⁴¹ *Grágás*, Ia, 17.

²⁴² *Grágás*, Ia, 129.

²⁴³ *Grágás*, Ib, 29, 203.

²⁴⁴ *Grágás*, Ia, 159; II, 320.

²⁴⁵ *Grágás*, Ia, 38, 168.

²⁴⁶ *Grágás*, Ia, 166.

should do so.²⁴⁷ A chieftaincy was the highest level of secular authority in Iceland at the time, yet he would have had to wait four years for the right to ownership of any property which accompanied this inheritance. In most areas the legal statements leave men facing a period of staged transition from child to adult.

Close reading of the legal statements present a number of caveats. For example, inheritance at sixteen was only possible if it was agreed that he was mentally capable of managing his property 'to the last unit'.²⁴⁸ If there was doubt about his competence to manage his property, his rights to take part in the arrangement of his mother's marriage²⁴⁹ and to prosecute in cases of serious crime, such as murder²⁵⁰ were called into question. A judgement on a young man's fitness to inherit was not considered final until the age of twenty, until which time he was given opportunities to alter men's opinion of his abilities. It becomes clear that the Icelanders built into the selection of sixteen as an age of competence, a cushion of four years. This is evident in many matters relating to property. There was another unusual caveat which might affect an Icelander's ability to function as a fully adult male at sixteen which again suggests the significance of the age of twenty. If a young man's father died when he was sixteen or more, he was considered fully able to administer his own property, and that of others. However, if he had lost his father before the age of sixteen he would inherit and manage his own property at sixteen, as before, but the right to administer the property of others would be withheld until he reached the age of twenty.²⁵¹ A young man with claims upon land or property which was not asserted, or may have been poorly managed, by his legal administrator while he was still a child, also had a breathing space of four years, after reaching sixteen, during which to bring his claims before the courts.²⁵²

It appears that the Icelanders recognised a period during which young men could continue to grow in maturity and ability, a period of 'trial run', as it were, when childhood was to some extent ended, but before finally being judged fully

²⁴⁷ *Grágás*, Ia, 142.

²⁴⁸ *Grágás*, Ia, 222-3.

²⁴⁹ *Grágás* Ib, 29.

²⁵⁰ *Grágás*, Ia, 167.

²⁵¹ *Grágás*, Ia, 225-6.

²⁵² *Grágás*, Ia, 225-6; Ib, 76.

adult, and thus fully answerable, by their peers. It would seem from the legal statements that the Icelanders were concerned that youths might struggle to successfully make the transition from child to adult at twelve or sixteen. To remedy this, they allowed each young man a little leeway, by stretching elements of that transition over a total of eight years to the age of twenty, providing everyone with a comfort zone. However, these laws also blurred the point of transition, a not uncommon occurrence, as even today there are different ages at which legal rights are conferred. These different legal milestones potentially created as many problems as they provided leeway. They could complicate rather than resolve the problem of defining maturity. This blurring, coupled with the significant gender connotations of the transition, opened up avenues for the development of much tension and difficulty.

If we turn to the sagas for guidance on this transition, we encounter further problems. Although the sagas are rich in detail and protagonists, in a great many cases we cannot tell what age a man was when he undertook various actions. However, there are cases where the age of young men at certain key points in their lives can be asserted with some confidence. In 1249, at the age of fifteen, Guðmundr Ormsson successfully petitioned his foster-father for his inheritance from his father, who had died when he was seven years old.²⁵³ Moreover, on receiving his property, he left his foster-home and chose to live with his elder brother, which contradicts the statement that men under sixteen could not determine their place of residence. Einarr Þorvaldsson (V.18), took up his inheritance and chieftaincy at no more than fifteen years of age,²⁵⁴ and Kolbeinn *ungi* Arnórsson (A.15), was fifteen, or possibly sixteen, when he took up management of a property in Hegraness.²⁵⁵ However, what all these young men had in common was that their fathers had already died before they reached their legal majorities, which perhaps allowed an earlier transition, and also may suggest the significance of a father in influencing that point of transition. The sagas show us that fathers who lived to see their sons enter this transitional phase of their lives would begin to offer their sons greater responsibility. The age range, however, appears to be possibly wider than the laws suggest. Ísleifr

²⁵³ SS, ii, 89-91.

²⁵⁴ SS, ii, 10.

²⁵⁵ SS, i, 311.

Gizurarson's (H.25) father placed him and his elder brother in control of some lands when he was between the ages of sixteen and twenty, and his brother no more than twenty one.²⁵⁶ Sturla Sighvatsson (S.18) was in control of one of the family properties by the age of twenty-two.²⁵⁷ In this case the property was a substantial family possession which was given to him with the full support of his father Sighvatr. Similarly his cousin Böðvarr (S.12) had received a large family farm at some time during his twenties from his father Þórðr. In these cases the age of transition to this aspect of adulthood is less clear. It could be argued that control of property was a significant point which signalled the end of the transition from childhood to male adulthood in medieval Iceland. This would have had a significant impact upon men whose fathers were unable or unwilling to provide an independent property for their sons, or who had already selected another son for that position. Reaching the life stage of fully adult male was thus roughly in line with the laws, but was not simply a matter of reaching any particular age.

However, there were other aspects to the transition. The legal statements carried no stipulations concerning permitted ages at which to marry. Such information is also sparse in the sagas. There are, however, some instances where the age of an individual is known which indicate that a very broad range of ages at first marriage was possible, but that in general the early to mid twenties was the age at which most might have expected to marry. Þórðr Sturluson (S.7) married at 21, his brothers Sighvatr (S.8) and Snorri (S.9) at 27 and nineteen respectively, although Snorri's marriage may have been precipitated by the fact that his mother had spent his inheritance while he was a child and his fortunes needed replenishing.²⁵⁸ Sturla Sighvatsson (S.18) married at 24 and his cousin Órækja (S.25) at 27.²⁵⁹ Hallr Gizurarson (H.24) married at 21, although his father's first marriage was arranged when Gizurr (H.15) was only fifteen.²⁶⁰ This is the only example of a marriage of such a young groom. Perhaps most interesting in terms of discovering in what ways marriage formed a transitional stage in a young man's life, and in his relationship with his father, is the episode of Jón Snorrason (S.24), whose dissatisfaction with his

²⁵⁶ *SS*, ii, 149.

²⁵⁷ *SS*, i, 287

²⁵⁸ *SS*, i, 231, 233, 237 respectively.

²⁵⁹ *SS*, i, 299, 359.

²⁶⁰ *SS*, i, 480, 302.

father was closely related to Snorri's refusal to help him secure a bride.²⁶¹ Jón was 26 years old. Was his discontent related to his expectation to be married before that age? Or did his relationship with his father lead him to seek marriage in order to bring about his transition to adulthood. Certainly it suggests that marriage was one of the important markers of the transition to male adulthood.

Another means of signalling a man's adult status was participation in litigation. The sagas show us young men engaged in this activity at a surprisingly young age. Guðmundr Ormsson, while still fifteen, had been present at the þing and had intervened in a legal action brought by his brother against Guðmundr's foster-father.²⁶² Gizurr Þorvaldsson (H.15), prosecuted the murderer of his half-brother in 1221 when he was just twelve.²⁶³ However in 1223 when he was fourteen his father, who had advocated his taking on the adult role of prosecutor in the trial two years earlier, presented him to another chieftain and the saga describes the scene as Þorvaldr presenting his children, 'börn'.²⁶⁴ Was the saga author countering the presentation of Gizurr as adult by re-conferring child status upon him here? It should be noted that Þorvaldr introduced all his children in this scene, and Gizurr was one of the youngest: his half brothers would all have been in their late teens and early twenties at least, yet they too were described by the author as 'children'. Were they children because at that stage none of them were property holders? The author could have used the term 'sons' rather than 'children'. However, Þorvaldr also had daughters, so the usage here might simply be the use of a gender neutral term rather than a specific comment upon the life stage of Gizurr and his elder half-brothers.

The impression given by *Grágás* that transition to adulthood for an Icelandic male involved stages, rather than a fixed point, is both confirmed by, and complicated by, the sagas. The evidence from *Sturlunga saga* demonstrates that the ages at which certain milestones were achieved were even more varied than the laws allowed. The blurring of the line of transition meant that there was no clear point at which sons had to receive property, marriage or a role in the legal arena, and

²⁶¹ *SS*, i, 335.

²⁶² *SS*, ii, 90.

²⁶³ *SS*, i, 283.

²⁶⁴ *SS*, i, 299.

consequently the father had a very important role in either permitting or withholding these elements of adult status. This created a fertile area for frustration to flourish, which could potentially be compounded, as we shall see, by the gendered implications of the transition.

The awareness of the Icelandic father that circumstances could change and could influence how they related to their sons is evident in the statement of Þórðr Sturluson (S.7) about his illegitimate sons when Sturla (S.14) was fourteen, his brother, Óláfr (S.13), would have been older and Guttormr (S.15) and Þórðr (S.16) both younger.²⁶⁵ Þórðr (S.7) stated that he did not know if his other sons (that is, not including his legitimate son Böðvarr (S.12)) would be suited to chieftaincies as they were young and illegitimate. Some historians would focus on the issue of illegitimacy as the most important feature here (pp.116-7). However, it could be argued that the age of his sons was as important to Þórðr in this case. The father expressed his doubts based upon his sons' ages and their birth status, not on their birth status alone. That his opinion was mutable is shown by his later provision for all his illegitimate sons, including farms for both Óláfr and Sturla, who went on to become a chieftain. The key to this scene is the awareness of the father that the stage of life that his sons were at led him to doubt their abilities, and at a later stage in the relationship he seems to have revised that opinion.

As sons entered the stage of transition, which could begin as early as twelve, but despite the legal statements did not truly end until the son took on a household of his own, the relationship between fathers and sons began to evolve. Male adulthood was as much a social construct as a legal status. There was a period of fluidity, created by the legal and social framework of statements and expectations, which provided an important background to the actions of young men, setting boundaries of which they were aware, but which could be either adhered to, or ignored, or exploited, at this key transitional stage in the male life-cycle. The ambiguity surrounding their status allowed young Icelandic men to explore the possibilities of adulthood gradually, rather than making a sudden, 'rites of passage' style entry into the adult male world. But this fluidity opened up the potential for conflict between

²⁶⁵ SS, i, 303.

the generations as both father and son sought to negotiate this loosely defined stage in the son's life. This was, as we shall see, also affected by the gender definitions which accompanied this key transitional stage.

Normandy

Normandy lacks legal statements to compare with *Grágás*, so it is necessary to turn directly to the narrative sources for information about the stages which defined a son's transition to male adulthood. One feature of Isidore of Seville's definition was the distinction he made between adolescence and youth. While Duby has interpreted *iuvenis* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to denote bachelors,²⁶⁶ Isidore's account, admittedly from a much earlier date, makes no such division. In Isidore's view an adolescent could become a father (and presumably that could include marriage), while if a man waited until he had passed his youth to marry that would have most first marriages occurring in a man's fifties. Duby's argument is strongly influenced by the *Ecclesiastical History*. If male adulthood is defined as the head of a household, then Orderic's use of the term *iuvenis* appears to describe men who could no longer be termed children but neither had they attained full male adulthood. Thus a 'youth' could indeed be a man in his fifties if he remained a landless and unmarried knight. However, Orderic's use of the term is not without complication, as he uses it both to describe the adult male status of an individual but also to imply criticism at certain key episodes.

A key question is the meanings in respect of biological ages and social capacity that the sources give to certain terms: *puer*, *adolescens*, *iuvenis*, and *tiro*. The terminology employed to describe the men in the case studies demonstrates the difficulty of interpreting the stage that any individual was at. Orderic uses three terms which might indicate a life-cycle stage between boyhood and full adult manhood: *adolescens / adolescentia*, *iuvenis / iuventus*, and *tiro*. But his usages here do not suggest internal consistency in his own view of the stages. They do not always refer to people who shared comparable life-stage characteristics. Nor are they clearly demarcated one from another. The situation is complicated by the fact that some terms, like *puer*, can also carry emotional weight, both positively, inviting

²⁶⁶ Duby, 'Youth', 112 and 119.

sympathy for youth, and negatively, with meanings which highlight the irresponsibility of this stage, or the illegitimacy of its aspirations and ambitions. For instance, Orderic used the term *puer* to describe Nicholas (D.21) when he became an oblate; the sons of Giroie, who were not knights when their father died; and Geoffrey of Laigle on his death on the White Ship.²⁶⁷ As five of Giroie's sons were described as '*aetate puerili*' rather than '*milites*' this suggests quite a range covered by the term *puer*. However the use of the term in the case of Geoffrey of Laigle raises interesting questions. The presence on the White Ship of a boy, in the sense of one still preparing for full induction into a male adult role, need not have been unusual. It is entirely possible a boy could have been acting as a squire and still be termed *puer*. But in nearly the next passage Orderic changed his mind and described Geoffrey as '*vir*'.²⁶⁸ Therefore it appears that it was perfectly possible to be both boy and man at the same time in Orderic's view. The term *puer* may have referred to Geoffrey's actual youth at his death, or it may have been intended to provoke an emotional response from the audience and emphasize the tragedy. It may be, however, that it indicates something of the complexity of this boy / man transition, with *puer* referring to his unmarried and unpropertied status at his death, while the term *vir* may have implied that he had at least attained some elements of male adulthood, perhaps having been knighted.

The use of *adolescens* is equally ambiguous, For instance, the same Nicholas (D.21) apparently became an abbot while an adolescent, although no exact age is given. It was presumably remarkable enough for his age to invite comment.²⁶⁹ Prince William was described as an *adolescens* when he became a husband at seventeen and his death shortly thereafter was as a married man.²⁷⁰ Orderic also described Robert Curthose as '*adolescens*' in 1066 when he and his mother were given custody of Normandy in William the Conqueror's absence. Robert can have been no more than fifteen or sixteen at this date, which along with the description of Prince William might be a good indication that *adolescens* is broadly comparable with the late teens. However Orderic also described Robert Curthose as '*adolescens*'

²⁶⁷ *EH*, ii, 298; ii, 24; vi, 298.

²⁶⁸ *EH*, vi, 300.

²⁶⁹ *EH*, iv, 306.

²⁷⁰ *EH*, vi, 300-2.

during his rebellion which took place over a decade later when Robert was in his mid to late twenties.²⁷¹ Moreover judging from Orderic's usage *iuuenis* appears to both follow and coexist with *adolescens*. During the same account of the rebellion Orderic described Robert as '*ambitione iuuenili*'²⁷² Again this is suggestive of a pejorative interpretation of his actions. William of Jumièges' arguably more neutral view of Robert makes this description of him at this age of interest. William of Jumièges preferred to refer to Robert Curthose as a 'youth' even at the stage of his designation as his father's heir in 1066, which demonstrates that the definition was not fixed in the way that Isidore of Seville's definitions would have us believe.²⁷³

Duby has suggested that *puer* and *adolescens* were stages of training after which a man became a 'youth',²⁷⁴ however Orderic's terminology does not fully support this, he was capable of terming a knight *adolescens* and conflating *puer* and *vir* in describing a single man. *Adolescens* from Orderic's usage could be interpreted as broadly the late teens, if the first instances of Prince William and Robert Curthose are considered. However, in both cases the term carries perhaps more than one meaning. Prince William died a husband, but still an adolescent, and Robert was clearly in his mid to late twenties when the description was also applied on his rebellion. Thus the term is not simply indicative of biological age. The usage could also be intended to engage empathy and heighten tragedy, or to imply criticism and negative connotations of peoples' actions.

Further confusion is added by the use of *tiro*. Again Orderic used it to suggest intemperate youth: the flatterers of Robert Curthose, including Robert of Bellême (BM.15) and Ivo (GG.27) and Aubrey (GG.28) of Grandmesnil, are described as '*tirones*'.²⁷⁵ However, it was also used without negative commentary, as in the description of the sons of Roger of Hereford, Reginald (B.7) and Roger (B.8)²⁷⁶, and Robert of St. Ceneri (GG.14). In the latter case the description as a

²⁷¹ *EH*, ii, 356.

²⁷² *EH*, ii, 356.

²⁷³ *GND*, ii, 178

²⁷⁴ Duby, 'Youth', 112.

²⁷⁵ *EH*, ii, 358, iii. 96.

²⁷⁶ *EH*, ii, 318.

'*tiro*' occurs on his presentation to Robert Curthose in 1088,²⁷⁷ which, given his father died in around 1060, would mean that he was at the very least in his late twenties and likely his thirties, and again this is perhaps more a reference to his being unmarried and unpropertied than to his age.

William (GG.25), the son of Hugh of Grandmesnil, was described as '*iuuenis*' on his decision to emigrate to Italy rather than follow the path arranged for him by his father of an advantageous marriage.²⁷⁸ Duby would argue that a married man was no longer a youth.²⁷⁹ But perhaps it was not attaining the age at which one could marry that counted, but marrying itself which made one a man to equal one's father. Yet Orderic's terminology questions even whether that milestone was sufficient. Orderic sometimes used *iuuenis* and *adolescens* to describe married men. When he perished on the White Ship in 1120, Prince William was a married man, but mourned by Orderic as '*adolescens*'.²⁸⁰ However, despite his marriage he was also seventeen years of age and perhaps this makes his continued 'youth' explicable. Here the sympathy for biological youth may have blurred the social status William had acquired. But Richard, earl of Chester, had witnessed one of Henry I's charters in 1113 and was married to Matilda, the daughter of Adela of Blois, Henry's sister. If he was acting as the earl of Chester at least seven years before the sinking of the White Ship, and was also a married man, it seems reasonable to assume that he had been functioning in an adult milieu on an equal basis with other adult males for some time. It is, therefore, interesting that he should be referred to as '*iuuenis*' and '*cum uxore*' in the same sentence.²⁸¹ This is not an isolated case. Simon of Moulins-la-Marche is also said to have died in his 'youth' even though he died in possession of the property of his father which had passed to him from his elder brother Robert, fifteen years after his father died at a ripe old age (*ad annosam senectutem*). Simon was no child of his father's dotage. He had served in the court of King Henry before being placed in possession of the patrimony, and he, like Richard of Chester, was a married man.²⁸² However, unlike Richard of Chester, Simon did not perish tragically

²⁷⁷ *EH*, iv, 154-6.

²⁷⁸ *EH*, iv, 338.

²⁷⁹ Duby, 'Youth', 119.

²⁸⁰ *EH*, vi, 300-302.

²⁸¹ *EH*, vi, 304.

²⁸² *EH*, iii, 132-134; vi, 231.

on the White Ship. So his case adds another level of complication to our reading. What may be of greatest significance was what both these men had in common with the young prince William, namely that they all died childless. In terms of the relationship of fathers and sons in medieval Normandy, it may have been felt necessary to become a father in order to match one's own father's full male adulthood.

Yet what all these usages suggest is a lack of a very clear and universally accepted point of transition. The sources demonstrate that no simple correlation between biological maturity and socially constructed maturity existed. Icelandic laws provided a tight age range within which maturity was reached, but the sagas do not fully support the picture provided by the laws. In the narrative sources the fluidity of life-cycle stages was more apparent. Normandy lacks the precision offered by normative legal sources. Here the narrative sources suggest that property, marriage, knighting and even becoming a father were all important in making the transition. But again there is no one single point, and no simple connection with biological age. In each case this critical transition was one which could clearly influence the father / son relationship, yet it lacked any clarity in terms of a consciously accepted timetable. The determination of when and how the transition came about was to a great extent in the hands of individual fathers.

This blurring and uncertainty becomes doubly significant when we consider the importance of this transition for gender identity. Gardiner notes that 'gender forms through power relationships that are mobile and both temporally and site specific, asymmetrical relationships that may appear different to those who are differently situated.'²⁸³ Thus in considering the father / son relationship from the perspective of gender, it is important to keep in mind the fluidity of this key transitional phase when male children became male adults and changed the dynamic of the whole relationship.

²⁸³ J. Gardiner, 'Introduction', in *Masculinity Studies and Feminist Theory: New Directions*, ed. J. Gardiner (New York, 2002), 1-29 at 14.

Masculinity

Tosh asks ‘What should historians do with masculinity?’ With this question he expresses the problems and the opportunities open to historians who acknowledge the necessity of readdressing the sources with an awareness of what it meant to be a man in the past.²⁸⁴ With regard to this thesis, appreciating medieval attitudes to masculine gendered roles and behaviours informs the reconstruction of the relationships of fathers and sons, and leads to greater understanding of the beliefs and motivations behind the actions of father and son as individuals, and as representatives of their cultural heritage. This thesis contributes to the research already undertaken by seeking to access men’s experiences of family life and the pressures of social and cultural expectations upon them in the roles of father and son. Analysis of medieval masculinity offers an opportunity to see how this affected the father / son relationship, especially with regard to the period of transition from male child to male adult. Therefore it is important to ask, what were the characteristics which defined a ‘man’? How did men express their masculinity in the medieval Icelandic and Norman worlds? Perhaps most importantly, were all men in these societies considered equally masculine?

For the most part this thesis is concerned with the establishment of the norms dictating lay masculine behaviour, given that fatherhood is of necessity a lay role. However, it is important to remain aware of the tensions between lay masculinity and ecclesiastical masculinity, summarized by McNamara in her article ‘The *Herrenfrage*’ precisely for the period relevant to Normandy.²⁸⁵ In her view lay masculinity and ecclesiastical masculinity collided over the association of maleness with strength, dominance, control of women and military skill, none of which were avenues open to a cleric. However, the clergy promoted a view of masculinity which praised male authority and purity. Thus in this definition of masculinity it was chastity and a disassociation from violence, which might be interpreted as the loss of control, which made them fully masculine. Lay views of masculinity are very

²⁸⁴ Tosh, ‘What should historians do with masculinity?’

²⁸⁵ McNamara, ‘The *Herrenfrage*’ 3-29; also addressed by J. Murray, ‘Hiding Behind the Universal Man: Sexuality in the Middle Ages’, in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, eds. V.L. Bullough and J.A. Brundage (New York, 1996). 123-52 at 130.

difficult to access directly, especially for Normandy, where all the sources are clerical. However, as will be seen, a number of scholars have used the saga sources to great effect in assessing Icelandic masculinity.

Recently scholars have determined that the advances in our understanding of the past, which the investigations into women in history have brought about, now need to be balanced by similar studies of men in history.²⁸⁶ Some historians now agree that the isolation of women's history and men's history into two different spheres of the external, public and political world for men, and the internal, private and familial world for women, is simply not viable.²⁸⁷ Ditz in particular is concerned that masculinity should not be studied in isolation from femininity, and that men's history should be informed by their interaction with women.²⁸⁸ Other historians have pursued this course and have made studies of the interaction between genders in the medieval period, especially in terms of the ecclesiastical approaches to male and female roles, and the mother / son relationship.²⁸⁹ Understanding the constructions of masculinity and femininity in the medieval world should certainly be informed by the interactions of male and female roles.

²⁸⁶ For general commentary on masculinity as a subject for historians see Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*; Gardiner, 'Introduction' 1-29; Ditz, 'The New Men's History' 1-35; Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?' 179-202; N. Partner, 'No Sex, No Gender', *Speculum*, 68, 2 (1993), 419-43 helped to establish gender as relevant to the medieval world and her work has been built upon by many scholars including, Bloch, 'Medieval Misogyny'; C. Walker Bynum, 'Men's Use of Female Symbols', in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, eds. L.K. Little and B.H. Rosenwein (Oxford, 1998), 277-89; Clover's work on Scandinavian masculinity has informed much commentary see for example, C. Clover, 'Maiden Warriors and Other Sons', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 85, 1 (1986), 35-49 and 'Regardless of Sex' and recently several anthologies have been produced reflecting the variety of approaches to medieval masculinity, see for example, *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* eds. Bullough and Brundage; *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities*; *Men in the Medieval West*, ed. J. Murray (New York, 1999); *Medieval Masculinities* ed. D. Hadley.

²⁸⁷ Gardiner, 'Introduction', 11, argues that masculinity 'is not one static thing' but a fluid, complex and constantly altering construct; Walker Bynum has shown that the medieval clergy 'swapped in and out of female and male roles dependent on circumstances' in 'Men's Use of Female Symbols', 289; Smith, 'Gender and Ideology in the Early Middle Ages', in *Gender and Christian Religion*, ed. R.N. Swanson (London, 1998), 51-73 at 53 looks at the corpus of intellectual resources available to the medieval world and finds them diverse and divergent in terms of attitudes to gender, resulting in a complex and in some way contradictory picture and Clover disputes the gender division of external and internal for medieval Scandinavia 'Regardless of Sex' 364-5.

²⁸⁸ Ditz, 'The New Men's History', 3-4.

²⁸⁹ On ecclesiastical constructs of masculinity and femininity see for instance, Partner, 'No Sex No Gender'; McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*'; McLaughlin, 'Secular and Spiritual Fatherhood'; and for mother / son relations see for example, Jochens, 'Old Norse Motherhood'; Stafford, 'Sons and Mothers'; Claussen, 'Fathers of Power'; Grundy, 'The Viking's Mother' 223-235.

However, it is also important to consider not just the exchanges between the sexes, but also those between men. A feature of masculinity studies has been the enquiry into how men defined themselves and were defined by how others, women and other men, perceived them.²⁹⁰ This question of perceived masculinity is central to understanding the father / son relationship at this critical phase. Masculinity in this period was tied to performance, it was publicly performed, publicly judged and publicly maintained. Tosh's work suggests that masculinity was, for men, both desirable and something to be realized through both biology and action, an attribute to be attained as much as a qualification achieved by biological fact. He comments that while a male child can be exhorted to 'be a man', the likelihood of hearing the reverse addressed to a female child 'be a woman' is and probably was, more unusual.²⁹¹ Therefore, a child gendered 'male' did not automatically enter 'male' adulthood, but went through a series of processes or experiences in which he demonstrated his masculinity to himself and to those around him in such a way that he could be said to have reached 'male' adulthood.²⁹² Medieval men, as much as men from later historical periods, may have needed to offer validation of their gender, that is their masculine identity, through outward expressions of 'male' gendered behaviour or 'male' gendered milestones or rites of passage within the life-cycle. This has obvious implications for the transition stage already discussed and for father / son relationships.

In particular, it is suggested, the attainment of control over others and particularly women was significant in the realisation of this goal.²⁹³ Typically

²⁹⁰ Some of the historians who have studied the performance nature of masculinity are Murray, 'Hiding', 130 who asks, 'If a person does not act like a man, is he a man?' in the context of ecclesiastical and secular masculine values and goes on at 135 and 140 to state that activities and proof of virility were linked to the definition of oneself as 'man'; Ditz, 'The New Men's History', 26, also agrees that masculinity is to an extent publicly defined, 'they are gendered by what they did.'; others who propound this conclusion are Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity', 184; Bullough, 'On Being a Male' 31-45; McLaughlin, 'Secular and Spiritual Fatherhood' 40; Clover, 'Regardless of Sex' 375, 380; Smith, 'Gender and Ideology', 59; Mundal 'The Position of Women in Old Norse Society and the Basis for their Power', *NORA* 1 (1994), 3-11 at 9, one of the female roles she argues was to rank men according to their status as men.

²⁹¹ Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity', 181.

²⁹² Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity', 184; Murray, 'Hiding' 134-135; Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity' 44, defines Norman male adulthood as 'access to power', 'an independent household' and 'public recognition'.

²⁹³ Ditz, 'The New Men's History', 11; N. Damsholt, 'Theories of Patriarchy and Women's History', in *Female Power in the Middle Ages*, eds. K. Glente and L. Winther-Jensen (Copenhagen, 1989), 55-76; Platelle, 'Le Probleme du Scandale' 1089 discusses the ways in which courtly love was

masculine attributes, according to Ditz, were the subordination and control of those intrinsically weaker, specifically women, but including other men who were weaker either economically, socially or politically.²⁹⁴ Command of other men, control of property and most importantly marriage and the production of progeny were important signifiers of 'male' gendered activity in this society.²⁹⁵ Power served as a marker of masculinity, but power over whom and how many was a variable which altered perceptions of those with it and those without it, both from within and from without. That is, both the individual's own perception of his masculinity, and the perception of others, especially those from his own social class, including perhaps most importantly, his father. The need for affirmation of one's masculine status had implications for the father / son relationship. The relationship involved men who, by becoming fathers, had demonstrated virility and the power over women which conferred upon them unarguable masculine status, but also men who, as sons, began the relationship as subordinate by virtue of their childhood, and who would be increasingly seeking throughout the relationship to establish for themselves, and for their perception by others, a defined, gendered identity. How the father approached this transition of his son from 'male' child to 'male' adult, and how the son interacted with his father throughout this change in his role was in many ways central to the manner in which the relationship played out. The argument that masculinity was achieved, not automatically conferred, raises an important question for this thesis. Was the father / son relationship affected by the social and cultural conventions which required men to offer validation of their gender? This is certainly the view of Turner who perceived the father as both the embodiment of masculinity, and the barrier which prevented his sons achieving the fullest expression of their adult masculinity.²⁹⁶ This view is shared by other historians, especially those who have studied the relationship between William the Conqueror and Robert

characterised by an underlying competition for access to and control of women, that is to say, fathers and husbands were in control of women and the power which came from being householders and heads of families, by subverting that control through seduction, unmarried men were challenging that power.

²⁹⁴ Ditz, 'The New Men's History', 12.

²⁹⁵ Murray, 'Hiding', 139-40 on the importance of fertility and virility; Jochens, 'Medieval Icelandic Heroine' 42 linking 'virility, fertility and power to the control and command of others' that is women and other men.

²⁹⁶ Turner, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine', 330.

Curthose.²⁹⁷ The notion that intergenerational tension between fathers and sons was caused by the restriction of the latter to a subordinate masculine status by the former is supported by some of the case studies in this thesis. However, the perception of the inevitability of conflict as a result of this tension is not wholly supported by the case studies.²⁹⁸ For instance, in *Sturlunga saga* there are only two incidents of significant filial disobedience, both of which involve the sons of Snorri Sturluson (S.9), Jón (S.24) and Órækja (S.25). But significantly the division between the father and his sons entailed the question, key to masculine status, of access to power. In Jón's case his disobedience was a direct result of his father's refusal to support him in seeking an advantageous marriage. In Órækja's case his father did not honour the dowry provisions which he had promised to secure Órækja's marriage which would have given Órækja a Sturlung family property. To add insult to injury, the only access to power Snorri offered Órækja was the role of caretaker for his half-sister's son's heritage, which was, moreover, a position subject to challengers, not least of whom was his half-sister. Órækja perceived this as a slight and felt that the offer lacked the prominence due to his position as Snorri's heir, and it led him to his rebellion.²⁹⁹ This low occurrence of rebellious sons is matched in the Norman sources, where outright conflict between father and son was equally rare, according to the chroniclers.³⁰⁰

Clover argues that Old Norse sources appear to show that there was a 'one gender' system operating in Iceland that divided Icelandic gender concepts into the 'strong and the weak, the powerful and the powerless or disempowered'³⁰¹. Significantly, she defines 'able-bodied men' as standing firmly on the masculine side of the 'fault line', with the infant, the aged, the impoverished and the infirm as

²⁹⁷ Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 40; Green, J. *The Aristocracy of Norman England*. (Cambridge, 1997), 357-8; Christelow, S. Mooers. 'The Division of Inheritance and the Provision of Non-Inheriting Offspring among the Anglo-Norman Elite', *Medieval Prosopography* 17,2 (1996), 3-44 at 18; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, 250.

²⁹⁸ In Iceland the sample in the case studies is 150 and there are few conflicts between fathers and sons. Only the sons of Sighvatr Sturluson (S.8) and Snorri Sturluson (S.9) disagree with their fathers, of whom only the sons of Snorri actively oppose him, these conflicts are recorded at *SS*, i, 287 (S.17), 335 (S.24) and 394 (S.25).

²⁹⁹ *SS*, i, 335 and 361.

³⁰⁰ The Norman case studies include two cases of outright rebellion against a father, those of Arnulf of Bellême (BM.9) recorded in *GND*, ii, 112 and *EH*, ii, 14; and Robert Curthose (F.27), *EH*, ii, 356-8, iii, 96-110 however, these are only two cases out of a sample of 100 men who attempt to usurp their fathers.

³⁰¹ Clover, 'Regardless of Sex', 380.

the only males who cross over to the 'feminine' side of the equation.³⁰² Yet Ditz comments, 'Because access to women was unevenly distributed, exploring the terms of that access also underscores the second premise of men's history, which is that gender order is also about differentiation among men.' If this 'differentiation' is explored in the Icelandic material then the connection that Clover makes between power and masculinity and weakness and femininity can be subject to finer definitions, including independent and dependent masculinity.³⁰³ Among the elite not all men, not even all able-bodied men, in the family could attain equal status. But should a man from an elite family be gendered anything less than masculine? Should all men be defined as equally masculine? If masculinity and power are linked, as Clover and many other historians have argued, then the most powerful within society must surely be the most masculine. The most powerful in Icelandic society were the chieftain class, and those who were extensive landholders. Clover has argued her case in relation to Norse society. But if power is linked in some ways to masculinity, it may apply to Normandy too. In Normandy the ducal family were arguably the most powerful to the exclusion of all other families, even those of the aristocracy. But does this mean that all other men, that is, dependent men, felt feminised by their failure to attain this pinnacle of power? More importantly, were all men within the families equally masculine, especially given the range of attributes which seem to denote masculinity?

It is rare in medieval history to have testimony to the internal motivating factors behind individual actions, but in both the Icelandic and the Norman material we are provided with one incident in each which suggest that masculinity was a basis for intergenerational conflict, certainly in the mind of the authors, and probably the audience. These cases are those of Tumi Sighvatsson and Robert Curthose. These cases indicate the significance of issues of masculinity in relations between fathers and sons at this key transitional stage. They also, however, indicate the complex interaction of factors in each individual case.

³⁰² Clover, 'Regardless of Sex', 380.

³⁰³ Ditz, 'The New Men's History', 16.

Firstly, in *Sturlunga saga*, Sturla Þórðarson, the author, describes his cousin Tumi Sighvatsson's (S.17) confrontation with his father over the promotion of his younger brother Sturla (S.18) to a substantial property while Tumi had been deprived even of his own chieftaincies, gifted to him as a child by his maternal step-grandfather.³⁰⁴ Significantly Tumi's complaint was presented to the audience in terms of gender, of achieved and perceived masculinity. The saga states that 'Tumi Sighvatsson repeatedly begged his father to give him his homestead and its goðorð, ... he said that he hadn't developed into *any less able a man* (my italics) than his brother Sturla, who had by then taken up his establishment at Sauðafel and his goðorð in the Dales.'³⁰⁵ Tumi's speech makes a direct connection between his own development as a man and the recognition of this achieved masculinity through the acquisition of property. This is one of the places where the saga author makes explicit the importance placed upon the attainment of independent control of one's own household by men as a public demonstration of their masculinity. Tumi identified the promotion of Sturla as a threat, not just to his material prospects, but as a slur upon his 'manliness' in contrast with that of his brother.

The statement in question is open to another interpretation. '*Sagðist eigi verr til manns kominn en Sturla*' can be translated both as 'he said he had not become a worse *man* than his brother Sturla' or 'he said that he had not become a worse *person* than his brother Sturla'. The problem of translation lies in the dual meaning of *maðr* as both 'man' and 'human of either gender'. Murray has argued that the commonly accepted usage of 'man' as a synonym for 'human' experience can work to the disadvantage of scholars, but that by divorcing the one from the other, we can liberate 'male' experiences from the 'human'.³⁰⁶ That is, as 'man' was, and still is, commonly used to mean all people of both genders, undoubtedly neglecting one gender, women, entirely, it is also possible to ask whether interpreting 'man' as all people has also meant that we have failed to fully investigate references as specific to the experience of men. Perhaps the possible dual interpretation of Tumi's reported speech does not represent a great difficulty after all. For this statement occurs in the

³⁰⁴ SS, i, 243.

³⁰⁵ SS, i, 287, *Tumi Sighvatsson kærði þat fyrir feðr sínum, at hann vildi láta sér bú fá ok mannaforráð sumt eða allt þat, er Sighvatr átti ok Sigurðr gaf honum, - sagðist eigi verr til manns kominn en Sturla, bróðir hans, er þá hafði tekit bú at Sauðafelli ok mannaforráð i Döllum.*

³⁰⁶ Murray, 'Hiding', 123.

context of a male author working in a medieval Icelandic society which gendered power as a masculine trait.³⁰⁷ In the context of a statement about power, the statement essentially conveys the same sentiment whether using the gender specific translation or the gender neutral one. Tumi's question can be asked in two ways, was he *less* of a man / person than Sturla, or was he less of a *man / person* than Sturla? Either emphasis suggests a gendered implication to his personal value and status in comparison with his brother in a society where strength and power were male gendered commodities.

Yet was Tumi, with the potential loss of future power which his father's decision suggested, at risk of being categorized as feminine by his social peers, or was it rather the threat to the level of his perceived and attained masculinity which caused his complaint? Tumi certainly was not gendered feminine by his father's refusal to respond to his claims to chieftain status. Had he been so judged by his peers he could never have inspired a following later that year, with which he took over the lands of the bishop of Hólar by force.³⁰⁸ Clover argues that it is unlikely that a man in full possession of his health and in his physical prime would be gendered feminine, yet neither can all men attain an equal level of masculinity, if as has been discussed above, masculinity were linked to access to women, power and command over other men. Thus in Iceland we may need to recognise two levels of masculinity, neither of which could be termed 'weak' in the very pejorative sense that 'womanly' suggests. In contrast to Clover's argument, these levels reflected a division *within* the 'strong', 'powerful' definition of 'masculinity' between dependent and independent, subordinate and dominant males. Within the elite class one's masculinity would thus be determined not simply as the opposite of feminine, but through comparison with other men in the peer group. As a chieftain was a member of the most powerful group within society, it would follow that Icelandic masculinity reached its fullest expression as an independent male as the head of a household in the possession of a family chieftaincy. It was this social, economic, and political independence which embodied the goal of the dependent males within this

³⁰⁷ Clover, 'Regardless of Sex', 377; C. Clover, 'Maiden Warriors and other Sons', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 85, 1 (1986), 35-49; Jochens, 'Before the Male Gaze', 4-5; Jochens, 'The Medieval Icelandic Heroine' 42 all cite instances of masculinity deriving from power, and descriptions of women in power roles couched in masculine terms support this.

³⁰⁸ *SS*, i, 287, ii, 239.

social group. Did this set up the pattern of two rival masculinities as suggested by Tosh, in which the power ascribed to masculinity is graduated with one dominant masculinity wielding authority, or at least social seniority over the other dependent masculinity?³⁰⁹ The potential of a powerful role within the chieftain class would thus cause greater dissatisfaction among the sons who failed to attain it, because of its reflection on the perception of their masculinity. Could a subordinate masculinity in fact remain comfortably masculine without completing the transition from dependent male to independent male?

Gender is here linked to, and complicated by, economic circumstances, which help to put Tumi's distress at his father's decision in context. Iceland was a land of diminishing opportunities in the thirteenth century as trade in wool declined and the Icelandic climate worsened. Resources became concentrated in the hands of the few as the end of the Commonwealth drew near. The link between power and perceived masculinity made the division between dependent and independent masculinities more acute in times of limited resources. Thus Tumi's anxiety in 1221 becomes more explicable in this context. Alternative routes to the status of adult male, in terms of marking one's transition from childhood to adult masculinity, even if not the attainment of the highest level of independent masculinity, for Icelandic men included selling one's sword arm to the Norwegian king, trading, or the life of a retainer to one's father or independently established brother.³¹⁰ Sons accompanied their fathers or their brothers, acting as representatives at assemblies, as extra muscle in attacks on the family's enemies, and as hostages to alliances between their fathers. Their role was therefore, certainly subordinate, 'weaker' even than independent men, but it cannot be rendered as 'feminine' as they were still operating within, and judged according to, 'masculine' concepts of power. The role of such men was not feminine, but it was subordinate, less than fully independent, less than *fully* masculine.

³⁰⁹ Tosh, 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?', 190-191.

³¹⁰ Ari Þorvarðsson represents the first two of these possible avenues (G.6) SS, i, 118, 120; the illegitimate sons of Þórðr Sturluson all served in the third capacity before their advancement as did Kolbeinn Sighvatsson SS, i, Ólafr (S.13) and Sturla (S.14) 315, 320, Kolbeinn (S.19) 344-346, Sturla (S.14) 362, 376, Þórðr tíggi (S.16) 378, Guttormr (S.15) 455.

Clover restricts her interpretation of 'feminine' to women in general, children, the aged, the infirm, paupers, and the disenfranchised,³¹¹ but she would not accept that an 'able bodied man' of the elite class could be gendered as 'weak',³¹² and I would agree. However, could they be considered in the same single category as the powerful independent chieftains who enjoyed the freedom to dominate society through their attainment of wealth and chieftain rank? Tumi's successful occupation of the lands of the bishop was not the action of a 'weak' person, but was in fact a demonstration to his father and his peers of his claim to powerful masculinity. It was, thus, both an attempt to redress the material loss which Sturla's gain represented, and a reassertion of his 'masculine' identity which had been challenged by his father's promotion of his brother. Tumi may have hoped to reverse the effect that his father's action must have had upon the public perception of his masculinity and this led him to explore an alternative route to the acquisition of independence and power. This suggests that issues of dependency and independence may have been one of the ways masculinity was judged by contemporary Icelanders; that there was a distinction made in the eyes of the elite between the men who were the leaders of society, and those who were members of the elite, but nevertheless, within that privileged bracket, dependent males.

Tumi was a fully fit and strong male with no gender threatening debilities, yet he had not achieved the fullest expression of his masculinity if it is assessed in terms of power and independence. By choosing Tumi's brother, Sighvatr had created an obstacle to Tumi's transition to male adulthood. Tumi attempted to make a name for himself in a masculine gendered activity, that of military prowess, in order to reassert his claim to full masculinity. A third factor enters into this matrix, namely, questions of inheritance and the status of future sons. Tumi's despondency at his restriction to dependent male status was justified as it had serious implications for the social rank of any heirs Tumi might have had. The situation of the son of a chieftain who did not achieve the status and resources of his father, involved risks of diminishing returns for his own heirs, as they would form part of a cadet branch of the family. Wealth and power were not merely desirable in terms of the social

³¹¹ Clover, 'Regardless of Sex', 380.

³¹² Clover, 'Regardless of Sex', 380.

recognition of his masculinity, but were essential to the performance of that most basic of functions, the provision for his heirs, itself an issue tied up with his performance as a father. Once Tumi was cast in a subordinate role to his brother, it implied that his heirs would in turn be subordinate to Sturla's sons. The obvious conclusion would be the fall of Tumi's line from contention for the possession of the chieftaincy, to a greater degree with each succeeding generation. Ultimately, Tumi's failure to secure his father's support could lead to his legacy to his own sons being that of dependent masculinity. Masculinity was not merely a matter of personal self-image, but could have a long-term dynastic impact and was connected to questions of inheritance which are discussed in Chapter Five.

Yet there were other fathers who did not, or could not, establish their selected son, who did not experience a breakdown in relationship with their sons. For example Brandr Kolbeinsson (A.16) the son of Kolbeinn Arnórsson *kaldaljós* (A.12) was in his mid thirties when he died, a year before his father.³¹³ Brandr, until the last year of his life when he inherited from a cousin, was still living with his father, apparently harmoniously. His father had not established him independently in his mid twenties, possibly because he did not have enough family property to do so. Yet in Brandr's case there is no evidence of resentment, or frustration on his part with regard to his father's provision, unlike in the cases of Tumi Sighvatsson and Jón Snorrason *murtr* (S.24). The continued harmony of the relationship may reflect either the compatibility of the father and son, a lack of ambition in the son, or an acceptance that there were not sufficient resources with which his father could establish him. The cases did differ, however, Brandr's father had at least provided him with enough means, or at least guaranteed his future prospects sufficient to contract a marriage as Brandr had a wife living with him at his father's farm.³¹⁴ Rather than become established on his own property, Brandr developed a new nuclear family within his father's household.³¹⁵ Similarly Kolbeinn Sighvatsson (S.26) unlike his brother Tumi seems not to have felt any compunction to dispute the selection of his brother Sturla as their father's heir. His acceptance and support for

³¹³ *SS*, ii, 79.

³¹⁴ *SS*, i, 443.

³¹⁵ Brandr found at Staðr *SS*, i, 443 (1240), ii, 45 (1244). Kolbeinn resident at Staðr. *SS*, i, 443 (1240), ii, 69 (1245).

his father in a retainer role continued into his late twenties or even mid thirties, when his father acquired a property for Kolbeinn as well.³¹⁶ Kolbeinn Sighvatsson was therefore able to undertake a dependent position without apparently damaging his masculine status and was able to enter the independent category at a later stage in his career. Similarly it appears that Kolbeinn (A.12) shared the role of householder, rather than confer it upon his son, yet Brandr did not exhibit any signs of dissatisfaction with the arrangement which suggests that different men in different circumstances were either less concerned by the implications of gendered role definitions, or realistic about the possibilities of their individual situations and able to accept shared or even subordinate masculine status without resorting to demonstrations of 'machismo'. These cases will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

What then of Normandy? Was masculinity at issue in the relations of fathers and sons, especially at this crucial point of transition in the region? Here it is useful to consider the case of Robert Curthose. Robert's case has been well documented in precisely this respect by Aird,³¹⁷ who has fruitfully applied Tosh's theories of dominant and subordinate rival masculinities to it. Robert's case also raises questions about whether Clover's thesis of power and independence as concepts linked to masculinity is confined to the Norse world. Was 'frantic machismo' restricted to the experience of Norse men in the medieval world?³¹⁸ I would suggest that the term is equally valid when applied to Robert Curthose (D.27). Robert's case also suggests that the medieval audience could well believe that his rebellion was caused by resentment of his dependent male status. Two related incidents suggest that Robert was dissatisfied with his role and saw it in terms of subordination, and by implication, gender defining. Robert, encouraged by his own following, which gives a public dimension to his perceived masculinity,³¹⁹ was portrayed as accusing his father of treating him as a 'hireling', or a waged servant: the terminology is suggestive of service, of inferiority, of dependency and maybe by inference, of

³¹⁶ *SS*, i, 346.

³¹⁷ Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 39-55.

³¹⁸ Clover, 'Regardless of Sex', 380.

³¹⁹ *EH*, iii, 96.

femininity.³²⁰ The exchange with William concerns what is due to a father, which is obedience, and what the son requests, which is sufficient resources to support a following of his own. Therefore on Robert's side it is about adult masculinity perceived as independence, and through independence, power. Restricted as he was from fully entering male adulthood by his father's refusal to share power with him, Robert's rebellions, like Tumi's attack on the bishop's lands, could also be interpreted as the exhibition of 'frantic machismo' in order to stress his strength, military skills and thus his masculinity as a qualification for power as a fully adult male. He too lacked the marital unit and the command of other men in an independent household which would have supported his assertion of masculine status. In addition to the complaint expressed through Orderic's perception of his grievances by means of this speech, in a later, but narratively connected, passage Orderic stated that Robert was in receipt of money (silver and gold) from his mother in order to sustain him.³²¹ This had equally damaging implications for his transition to fully adult male status. Not only did it reveal him as a dependent, but a dependent who needed to be rescued by a female.³²² Thus for Robert, as for Tumi, the lack of recognition by their father of their adult male status placed their masculinity in question. Orderic's presentation of the case makes it clear that land, money, the wherewithal to support followers and thus have an independent household were as critical to this transition to full adult male status in Normandy as in Iceland. There was, perhaps, more of a hint of feminisation in the Norman account. Robert's mother's intervention when she was herself a subordinate to her husband could have only served to emphasize his inferiority as a male, and he was also approximated to the lowest of men, servants and paid soldiers. This dual implication of subordination may simply reflect Orderic's antipathy, or it may indicate that for Robert, even more than for Tumi, a lack of achieved full adult masculinity was imbued not only with the status of continued dependent masculinity, but even had connotations of femininity. Initially therefore, Tumi's position, and the position of Icelandic sons who had been passed over for designation as their fathers' heirs, and indeed Norman

³²⁰ *EH*, iii, 98, *mercennarius tuus semper esse nolo*.

³²¹ *EH*, iii, 102.

³²² Aird 'Frustrated Masculinity' 47, explains that Robert's position within the hierarchy of his father's household was synonymous with that of women and servants, so the necessity of receiving financial support from one similarly subordinated, even if she were the Queen, may have simply exacerbated Robert's resentment of the situation.

sons who were not their fathers' heirs, was preferable to Robert's. They could all be said to be to a greater or lesser extent dependent males, while Robert as his father's heir apparent hovered closer in some respects to femininity. Nevertheless, Robert had the greater overall prospects which would ultimately guarantee him independent male status, although it would then be up to him as an individual to consolidate his membership of that group and preserve it for his own heir. While Icelandic fathers could to a certain extent choose their heirs, Norman fathers were more circumscribed, and Robert's eventual inheritance was not in doubt, only the timetable of his transition given his father's continued good health. Yet Robert's conflict with his father may not be representative of all father / son relationships in Normandy in the period. Firstly, Robert as the eldest would have seen himself, and been seen, as an inheriting son and as such his situation was different from that of a son with fewer expectations and therefore perhaps greater options including service to another lord, emigration or the Church. Secondly, Robert in particular may prove an exceptional case as he was the son of a duke and a king when he rebelled.

It is also worth questioning whether all Norman fathers were equally concerned with retaining such control over their inheriting sons. Certainly it is true that not all Norman fathers withheld resources or marriages from their sons. Perhaps with the very intent of managing their sons' transition to full adult male status without inciting their sons to desperate measures to assert their masculinity. Henry I arranged for Prince William to become a married man at around seventeen.³²³ As with Robert Curthose, Prince William's position as royal heir colours the case. For Henry, the marriage was probably fulfilled dynastic ambitions rather than presented a means by which his son could assert his masculinity. However, the sons of Roger of Montgomery also present examples of a father who was capable of contemplating the independent status of not one, but several of his sons. Orderic records that not only had his heir Robert of Bellême come into the control of his mother's property on her death, which effectively established his full adult male status, but his father had also been involved in finding marriages and property which would establish at least two other sons.³²⁴

³²³ *EH*, vi, 300-302, Prince William married Matilda, the daughter of Fulk of Anjou in 1119.

³²⁴ *EH*, iii, 148-150, iv, 302, Roger the Poitevin; *EH*, iii, 148-150; iv, 302, vi, 30-32, Arnulf.

Conclusion

Historians have alerted us to the necessity of examining masculinity from the point of view of a perceived and achieved status, and in relation to other men, as well as *vis á vis* women. By exploring these ideas for Iceland and Normandy it appears that masculine identity and status were at issue during the transition from childhood to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and for this reason issues of life-cycle stages, and more critically the blurring of them in social and legal contexts, raised the potential for conflict in the father / son relationship. Masculinity was, as Clover suggests, a mutable commodity, and the phase of transition from dependent male to independent adult male could span a few years or a life-time. In the case of Ansold of Maule (p.128) a man could reach his fifties before receiving through marriage a public demonstration of his attained male adulthood. One of the key features of transition for most sons was the involvement of their fathers in their promotion to adult masculinity. This is especially evident in Iceland but also in Normandy.

This brings us back to Gardiner's statement about the formation of gender through relationships that are constantly shifting and appearing differently to different participants.³²⁵ Her argument supports the theory that gender was relational, that there were not simply *alternative* masculinities but masculinities within masculinity, that age, social position, property, number of siblings were all factors which could affect the status of an individual, and all these were elements which were open to change. Thus masculinity was not a static status, either attained or not, but a fluid structure, subject to different levels of perceived attainment, both achievable and losable at different stages of life and in response to different circumstances in life. An important element in understanding the dynamics of the father / son relationship in the medieval period is to explore the social and cultural constructs of 'male' roles and gendered behaviours which were expressed in the narrative sources.

³²⁵ J. Gardiner, 'Introduction', 14.

This chapter has established some definitions, and some problems of definition. In the discussion of Tumi Sighvatsson and Robert Curthose it is apparent that questions of inheritance, and the expectations of inheritance, were very important to their individual relationships with their fathers. The question which is perhaps most important is 'were Tumi and Robert typical, or did the normative constructs implied by the sources prevail?'

CHAPTER FIVE : Inheritance

Introduction

This chapter explores one of the social and economic structures which would have had a significant impact upon the father / son relationship dynamic. In the previous chapters the link between property and power as signifiers of adult male status was explored (pp.94-5). Men who wished to attain the highest secular male status needed to hold land, by one means or another, to assert their ability to control others and thereby express the fullest aristocratic adult male status.³²⁶ Ditz has proposed that this basic control *of* others, and freedom from control *by* others is a basic component of the attainment of power.³²⁷ In these medieval societies, land was the means by which the control over others could be achieved.³²⁸ Land offered a basis for subsistence, power and status in both societies, making marriages and control over subordinates possible. This property could be accessed in a number of ways: through marriage, as a reward for service, by force. But the most direct route would have been internal familial inheritance.³²⁹ It was through land that adult status, independence of decision and action, access to marriage, and the expression of power within society could most simply be achieved. Therefore, issues of inheritance had a central role in father / son relationships. Inheritance may also have added a layer of complication to the relationships of fathers to their heirs, and fathers to their non-inheriting sons. Each individual connection would probably have had an underlying level of expectation. Inheritance, or its absence, might have added a number of tensions to the father / son relationship which was already burdened by wider social ideals of how that relationship should function.

³²⁶ L. I. Hansen, 'Slektskap, eiendom og sociale strategier i nordisk middelalder', *Collegium Medievale*, 2 (1994), 103-64 at 105-7.

³²⁷ Ditz, 'The New Men's History', 12.

³²⁸ See for instance the comments of Samson, 'Godar: democrats or despots?' 173-4, where he discusses the Icelandic model in which both landholding and personal authority involved control over people; J. Martindale, 'Succession and Politics in the Romance-Speaking World, c.1000-1140', in *England and Her Neighbours 1066-1453*, eds. M. Jones and M. Vale (London, 1989), 19-41 at 23.

³²⁹ The narrative sources offer examples of all of these routes to property and power with inheritance being the dominant method of acquiring property amongst the elite of both societies. This is explored in detail in the case studies in chapters six and seven.

A number of questions must therefore be asked of the source material to discover how inheritance may have affected the father / son relationship in each region. How was family property distributed at inheritance? What strategies were employed and did they differ between each region? Did the inheritance structures rigidly follow custom or was there evidence that fathers had any degree of freedom in the disposition of their property? Was primogeniture an ever-increasing feature of the period, or were there still inheritance opportunities for younger sons? If division of inheritance was practised, how did this affect the careers of the sons involved, was partition equal, or unequal, and if unequal, who was more favoured of the sons? What levels of tolerance were there for inheritance by illegitimate sons? These questions are all important for the exploration of the nature of the impact of inheritance strategies on the father / son relationship. Betzig has commented that 'Noble men in the Middle Ages, as in other ages, found three means to funnel wealth onto a single heir. One was patrilineal inheritance – which cut that field in half; another was unigeniture – which singled out one, usually the first-born, son; the third was monogamous marriage – which limited the field of potential heirs to children by one 'legitimate wife.'³³⁰ Did fathers in medieval Iceland and Normandy make use of these strategies? If the inheritance structure was restricted to a few or only one son, the dealings of the father with all his sons might have become more complex. This chapter explores these issues and attempts to establish what inheritance customs pertained in each society and how these impacted upon the ways in which fathers and sons interacted.

Icelandic Inheritance Practice

Once again *Grágás* provides a legal framework which can be compared with the narrative sources. The legal statements suggest a strict schedule of heirs, beginning firstly with all of a man's legitimate sons, subsequently (2) his legitimate daughters, (3) his father, (4) his legitimate brothers by his father, (5) his mother, (6) his legitimate sisters by his father, (7) his legitimate brothers by his mother, (8) his legitimate sisters by his mother, (9) his illegitimate sons, (10) his illegitimate daughters, (11) his illegitimate brothers by his father, (12) his illegitimate sisters by

³³⁰ L. Betzig, 'Medieval Monogamy', *Journal of Family History* 20, 2 (1995), 181-216 at 196.

his father, (13) his illegitimate brothers by his mother, (14) his illegitimate sisters by his mother, (15) his legitimate paternal and maternal grandfathers and his legitimate grandsons, (16) his legitimate paternal and maternal grandmothers and his legitimate granddaughters, (17) his legitimate paternal and maternal uncles and legitimate paternal and maternal nephews, (18) his legitimate paternal and maternal aunts and legitimate paternal and maternal nieces.³³¹ Any sole member of one of these groups would exclude all claimants from the succeeding groups.³³² The implications of the legal provisions for illegitimate sons, and the evidence of the narrative sources will be discussed below (pp.116-23). Thus the Icelandic legal text states that inheritance was to devolve in the first instance upon a legitimate son, and in the event of more than one son, that the division was to be equal.³³³ Moreover, any *pre-mortem* gifts or assignments to one son would need to be subtracted from that son's share of the *post-mortem* inheritance to retain the equality of the shares of the sons.³³⁴

It is possible that this legal framework would create an equal expectation of inheritance among sons and therefore each son's relationship with his father would, in terms of future prospects, be subject to a similar level of pressure, whether the son was elder or younger. However, if there were a variety of inheritance strategies, there would have been a commensurate effect upon the father / son relationship with regard to individual sons' inheritance expectations. Sons of the same father who did not expect to inherit equally, or perhaps faced the prospect of inheriting either all or nothing based upon the relationship that they established with their father, might be expected to have very different relationships with their father than those whose prospects were externally dictated by an immutable legal prescription.

Icelandic historians are generally sceptical about the rigidity with which the legal statements were applied in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Miller, while noting the legal evidence, is not convinced that partition, particularly equal partition, was observed in every case, especially with regard to the inheritance of multiple

³³¹ *Grágás*, Ia, 218-9.

³³² *Grágás*, Ia, 219.

³³³ *Grágás*, Ia, 220-1.

³³⁴ *Grágás*, Ia, 221.

sons.³³⁵ Byock takes the view that in the context of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Iceland, the schedule of inheritance laid out in *Grágás* could be interrupted and reinterpreted by power-brokers in the guise of the chieftains.³³⁶ In one of the examples he provides, a daughter's claim is seriously put forward in challenge to a son's by a chieftain who obviously felt that, the legal statements to the contrary, her claim was worth the effort to prosecute in the courts against the chieftain who supported the son.³³⁷ Both the protagonists in the legal case were legitimate. Jón Viðar Sigurðsson also notes the flexible approach to inheritance practice in Iceland in this period.³³⁸ He perceives the twelfth, and particularly the thirteenth, centuries as periods in which inheritance customs were undergoing radical change, with some of the aristocracy choosing to adopt inheritance by a single son rather than division for reasons of family unity, while others he contends left the form of partition up to their sons. Overall the picture Jón Viðar offers is a complex shifting of inheritance practice governed in many ways by pragmatic concerns of family unity and survival in a fluid political and economic climate. This view is echoed and expanded upon by Jochens' case study of Þórðr Sturluson's disposition of his property among his sons.³³⁹ Nordal however, seems to suggest that division was occurring. However, she concentrates for the most part on issues of partition among illegitimate offspring which will be discussed below (pp.117-8).³⁴⁰

Agnes Arnórsdóttir and Jochens both contend that there was an element of selection in the inheritance strategies used in Iceland in this period, but argue that it was not necessarily the first-born who was selected.³⁴¹ Jochens discusses this selective component in the designation of Icelandic heirs, describing it as the father nominating the son who was '*le plus capable*'.³⁴² But did fathers really, as Jochens claims, base their preference of one son over the others on 'a pragmatic evaluation

³³⁵ Miller, *Bloodtaking*, 128, 130.

³³⁶ Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, 173-82.

³³⁷ Byock, *Medieval Iceland*, 177-9.

³³⁸ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, 95-100.

³³⁹ Jochens, 'En Islande Médiévale', 95-112.

³⁴⁰ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 34.

³⁴¹ Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, 'Kvinner og "*krigsmenn*". kjønnenes stilling i det islandske samfunnet på 1100- og 1200-tallet', unpublished MPhil. Dissertation, University of Bergen, Norway, 1990, 54; Jochens, 'En Islande Médiévale', 96-97.

³⁴² Jochens, 'En Islande Médiévale', 99, 'the most capable'.

of their personal abilities’?³⁴³ How did a father go about the task of identifying the ‘right stuff’ in one of his sons? What if two, or more, of his sons were equally gifted? Was it possible that such a choice could be dispassionate? It appears that, while there is no consensus as to a normative form of inheritance pertaining in Iceland, there is agreement that the legal statements did not constitute inflexible principles as far as Icelandic inheritance was concerned. The case studies can provide an insight into the ways in which the father / son relationship in Iceland before the end of the Commonwealth might be affected by inheritance strategies and by the element of paternal choice which, to a certain extent appears to have existed in Iceland in this period.

There are just five relatively clear cases of partition between legitimate brothers in the case studies, although the narrative sources do not make clear whether the specifics of the divisions were on an equal or unequal basis. Nevertheless, in some of the cases it is possible to surmise that an unequal partition was made, either by the father, or by the brothers after their fathers’ deaths. There were two incidents of partition between legitimate brothers in the Sturlungar family. The first partition was between Sturla (S.2) and Snorri (S.3) Þórðarson.³⁴⁴ Sturla went on to become a powerful chieftain, while his brother had very little impact upon the saga, which might mean that his part of the inheritance was not comparable to that of his brother. The second, between Sturla Þórðarson’s (S.2) three sons, involved splitting the inheritance in three between the eighteen year old Þórðr (S.7), fifteen year old Sighvatr (S.8) and five year old Snorri (S.9).³⁴⁵ In the Haukdaelir family there is one case of partition among legitimate sons. Klængr (H.19) and Ormr (H.20) Bjarnarson shared their inheritance from their father, but they too were minors when their father died.³⁴⁶ Páll (V.3) and Snorri (V.4) Þórðarson of the Vatnsfirðingar family also shared their inheritance from their father.³⁴⁷ However, the narrative sources do not indicate whether they also shared the inheritance, at least in

³⁴³ Jochens, ‘En Islande Médiévale’, 98, *selon une estimation pragmatique des capacités personnelles.*

³⁴⁴ SS, i, 88.

³⁴⁵ SS, i, 229 for their ages on death of father; i, 234, 237 both Sighvatr and Snorri are cited as having received forty hundreds as their share of their father’s property. Þórðr’s share is not specified but is intimated by the text.

³⁴⁶ SS, i, 284 their father died in 1221 when Klængr (the eldest) was five years old (SS, i, 347); SS, i, 304 the saga notes that their step-father took charge of the inheritance of his wife’s sons in the plural.

³⁴⁷ SS, i, 103.

part, with their other two legitimate brothers Teitr (V.5) and Ívarr (V.6).³⁴⁸ The fact that neither Teitr nor Ívarr made any impact on the historical record, unlike their brothers, might suggest that their inheritance, if indeed they received any, was less than that of their more prominent brothers. However, this carries with it the weaknesses inherent in carrying an argument from a negative. The Oddaverjar family also had a case of shared inheritance by legitimate brothers. However, it concerns an inheritance from a brother. Loftr (O.3) and Loðmundr (O.4) Sæmundarson divided the inheritance from their brother Eyjólftr (O.2), which implies that Eyjólftr was the sole heir to their father.³⁴⁹ This case is interesting in that it dates to the middle of the twelfth century and is one of the earliest recorded in the source material. It therefore raises questions about whether a progression from partition to unigeniture over the period might be an oversimplification of the development of inheritance practice in the 150 years preceding the end of the Commonwealth. This may have been a case of primogeniture, but, given the work of Jochens and Agnes Arnórsdóttir (p.111), it is also possible that this was a case of selection by the father, which was then subjected to the claims of his brothers, based on the legal statements, following his death. Two of the five cases involved inheritance by minors and it is possible that in cases of inheritance by legitimate sons where the fathers had not survived to single out one of them for preference, the descent strategy put forward in the legal statements would probably have applied. In none of these cases can the division of the property be conclusively proven to be equal or unequal.

One of the ways in which an aristocratic father could publicly demonstrate his identification of one son among his other sons as his main heir appears to have been the establishment of that son independently on a property of his own, often either acquired by the father for that purpose, or provided from the property already held by the father. The case studies provide evidence to support this contention that a *pre-mortem* establishment was usually followed by that son becoming his father's main heir, in an allocation of property which did not include retrospectively the original gift of property, despite the stipulation of the legal statements to the

³⁴⁸ SS, i, 55, the only reason we know that Páll and Snorri had two more brothers is that Teitr and Ívarr are named in the genealogical lists of *Ættartölur*.

³⁴⁹ SS, i, 409.

contrary.³⁵⁰ There were six cases where some form of selection among legitimate heirs appears to have taken place. The first was the inheritance from Þórðr Sturluson (S.7). This case is complicated by the fact that Þórðr only had one legitimate son, but warrants consideration as a demonstration of the selective process in action, as shall be discussed in the section on illegitimacy (pp.117-25). However, here it is sufficient to note that his legitimate son Böðvarr (S.12) was established on a prominent Sturlungar family property in his twenties.³⁵¹ He later went on to become his father's main heir, despite a division of the property which did not reflect the stipulations of the legal statements in several respects with regard to both legitimate daughters and illegitimate children.³⁵² A second case of selection from the Sturlungar family was that of Sturla Sighvatsson (S.18). This instance of selection is strongly indicative of favouritism rather than the impartial, considered choice of the 'most capable' son envisaged by Jochens. Sighvatr Sturluson (S.8) had seven sons, of whom only one, possibly two, could be said to have inherited from him.³⁵³ However, it can be argued that this disposition of their father's property had not been the original intention of Sighvatr, as he cannot have anticipated perishing in the same engagement as four of his sons. Moreover, Þórðr's (S.20) recovery of his family's property was more due to his own political campaigning rather than a simple case of inheritance.³⁵⁴ Sighvatr's intentions can be construed from his behaviour towards his sons Tumi (S.17) and Sturla (S.18). It was noted in Chapter Four that Sturla had by the age of twenty-two been gifted with a substantial property by his father, much to his brother Tumi's disappointment.³⁵⁵ Tumi's reaction to Sturla's establishment is indicative of a contemporary understanding that a choice of some kind excluding Tumi had been made already by their father. Tumi's resentment of his father's selection of Sturla for establishment and his subsequent poor decisions regarding his occupation of the bishop of Hólar's lands by force, suggest that to him, and probably to the saga's audience, Sighvatr had already made a public decision over the eventual dispersal of inheritance among his sons, or at

³⁵⁰ *Grágás*, Ia, 221.

³⁵¹ *SS*, i, 333. Böðvarr was no more than 30 in 1229 when this reference to his residence at Staðr takes place, and in the context he was already fully established there.

³⁵² *SS*, i, 401.

³⁵³ Þórðr (S.20) and Tumi (S.23) who were the only sons to survive their father and brothers. Tumi (S.17) the elder had died in 1222 and their father and four other brothers all died at the battle of Örlyggstaðr in 1238, *SS*, i, 437-8.

³⁵⁴ Þórðr's efforts were detailed in his own saga. *SS*, ii, 1-86, '*Þórðar saga kakala*'.

³⁵⁵ *SS*, i, 287.

least that Tumi's expectations had received a substantial knock. Sighvatr's decision was therefore made while both his sons were at the very latest in their early twenties, which indicates that the relationship of father and son was very important during the formative years of teenage and early twenties, and possibly even earlier. Whether Sighvatr would have excluded all but Sturla from inheritance is doubtful. While he was alive he also established another son, Kolbeinn (S.19), although this occurred a decade after he had indicated that Sturla was his favoured son, and during a period while he continued to render unconditional support to Sturla.³⁵⁶ It appears from the evidence that Sighvatr would have continued to support Sturla as his main heir, but maybe he intended, like his brother Þórðr (S.7) (pp.148-9), to divide some of his property among his remaining sons. Nevertheless, Sighvatr appears to have intended either inheritance by one son, or a division that would have been unequal. The last in the examples of selection from the Sturlungar family is the case of Sighvatr Böðvarsson (S.27). This Sighvatr was the second son of Böðvarr Þórðarson (S.12). His elder brother Þorgils (S.26) died before their father, but he also had a younger brother Guðmundr (S.28). After Þorgils' death Böðvarr established Sighvatr on the family property at Staðr making it clear that Sighvatr was his intended heir from his remaining two sons.³⁵⁷ While Sighvatr may have been the next in line after Þorgils chronologically, the evidence of their cousin Sturla's (S.18) elevation to heir over his elder brother Tumi (S.17) suggests that had he wished Böðvarr could equally have selected Guðmundr.

The Haukdælir family also provide the other three examples suggestive of selection as one of the accepted inheritance strategies in medieval Iceland. Moreover, they continue to support the contention that favouritism was as important an element of the selection process as any consideration of birth order. Firstly, Þorvaldr Gizurarson (H.7) appears to have been established on a property as much as twenty years prior to his father's death in 1206, either through his first marriage, or in addition to that marriage.³⁵⁸ Both his brothers were also married, however, while both held important offices in Iceland, Hallr (H.8) became Lawspeaker and

³⁵⁶ *SS*, i, 346.

³⁵⁷ *SS*, ii, 221 and 223.

³⁵⁸ *SS*, i, 60. Þorvaldr lived Hruni with his first wife Jóra.

Magnús (H.9) became bishop of Hólar,³⁵⁹ Þorvaldr became the chieftain and head of the family. This suggests either that he had been acknowledged as the heir by his early marriage and establishment, or that after their father's death the brothers came to an agreement that he should accede to the greater part of the inheritance. Subsequently two of Þorvaldr's sons appear to have been singled out for preference in inheritance from their siblings. Firstly, it should be noted that Þorvaldr's first marriage was later called into question on the grounds of consanguinity and an unusual arrangement arrived at.³⁶⁰ The couple were allowed to continue in their marriage for ten years before dissolving the marriage.³⁶¹ It was possible therefore that at the point that Björn Þorvaldsson (H.12) appeared to be the favoured heir of his father, he might strictly be described as an illegitimate son, considering that his parents' marriage had been declared invalid. Nevertheless Björn had benefited from an extremely profitable marriage, undoubtedly based upon what might have been considered to be very good prospects of becoming his father's main heir, whatever the final interpretation of his birth status might have been.³⁶² Björn had one elder brother still living and three younger brothers, yet his marriage into a very important family and to an heiress, in contrast to the unmarried state of all his other brothers, suggests that his contemporaries certainly expected him to be the important member of that family. It may therefore be possible to surmise that this was in part due to some public recognition by his father that he had indeed selected Björn for the role of main heir. However, Þorvaldr married for a second time and his preference for his son of that marriage from a very early age was pronounced. Whether Björn would have had to share his inheritance with this brother, or even have been superseded by him, cannot be established as he died when his younger half-brother Gizurr (H.15) was only twelve.³⁶³ It was very clear that from that time on, Gizurr, despite the claims of his elder half-brothers, was the new designated heir to his father.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁹ *SS*, i, 220 and 157.

³⁶⁰ *SS*, i, 230, 243.

³⁶¹ Ultimately it was the death of Jóra, the first wife which ended the marriage before the dissolution could take place.

³⁶² *SS*, i, 270.

³⁶³ *SS*, i, 279-83.

³⁶⁴ *SS*, i, 299-300 he is presented as his father's favourite at fourteen and i, 302 married at fifteen to the daughter of Snorri Sturluson (S.9) a powerful chieftain.

Thus in matters of inheritance by legitimate sons in Iceland in the medieval period it is clear that a great deal more leeway than the legal statements reflected was available to fathers seeking a strategy to transfer the family property in a manner which either preserved the power of the family in the hands of one son, or distributed it among more than one son. However, Icelanders in this period do not appear to have wholly accepted marriage to the exclusion of all other sexual relationships, be they long-term alliances or fleeting liaisons. The result, inevitably, was the high proportion of illegitimate sons in the sample.

Illegitimacy and Inheritance in Iceland

In Iceland, the question of legitimacy presents a serious problem, given that the proportion of illegitimate sons was so high. Out of the sample of 150 men in the Icelandic case studies,³⁶⁵ the birth status of 135 was known, and a further seven were debateable.³⁶⁶ There were 72 legitimate sons and 60 illegitimate. However either figure could rise by the addition of the seven men whose legitimacy was unclear. Therefore, the sagas present us with a minimum of 40 percent of sons who were the product of extra-marital relationships. With this proportion of illegitimate men it would not be incredible if at least some inherited as a result of the schedule laid out in the legal statements. However, as the case studies show, illegitimate sons were not always postponed by members of family in the eight categories before them in the legal provisions.³⁶⁷

Some historians have credited legitimacy with being one of the decisive factors in determining the issue of who stood to inherit. Frank refers to illegitimacy as ‘a permanent disability in thirteenth century Iceland where the canon law provision that subsequent marriage legitimised the infant seems not to have been recognised.’³⁶⁸ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Guðrún Nordal also appear convinced

³⁶⁵ See Chapter Six for detailed discussion of the composition of the five Icelandic families.

³⁶⁶ These men were Jón (O.37) and Loðmundr Eyjólfsson (O.38) (SS. i, 409), and the five sons born of the irregular marriage of Þorvaldr Gizurarson and Jóra Klængsdóttir described above (p.116), Guðmundr (H.10), Klængr (H.11), Björn (H.12), Einarr (H.13) and Teitr (H.14). (SS. i, 230).

³⁶⁷ *Grágás*, Ia, 218-9.

³⁶⁸ R. Frank, ‘Marriage in Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Iceland’, *Viator* 4 (1973), 473-84 at 476.

that illegitimacy was an insurmountable bar to inheritance.³⁶⁹ Guðrún Nordal sets out three tenets to support her stance. Firstly, she states that the principles governing inheritance only led to sharing of the inheritance when it was divided between illegitimate siblings.³⁷⁰ Yet the evidence of the case studies does show that there were cases where partition took place in cases of legitimate heirs (pp.112-3) as discussed above. Secondly, she asserts that ‘legitimacy can become a decisive factor in determining the eligibility of heirs. It is only when legitimacy is doubtful that there is a family dispute about inheritance’.³⁷¹ However the disputes of the entirely legitimate Sturlungar brothers over the ownership of the ancestral chieftaincy, the *Snorrungagoðorð* do not support this contention.³⁷² Finally, she believes that even if a father wished to favour an illegitimate son, ‘the deceased’s wishes can easily be disregarded.’³⁷³

However, other scholars convincingly argue that there was in fact significant acceptance of illegitimate heirs within society.³⁷⁴ Guðrún Nordal’s conclusion that there was a ‘social stigma’ attached to illegitimacy, and that, moreover, it left sons at the mercy of the wider kin group,³⁷⁵ is disputed by Jochens, who comments that far from social disapprobation of illegitimate children ‘women contracted no apparent stigma from such relationships and could go on to marry other men. Although in law illegitimate children did not inherit as fully as their legitimate siblings, in fact they could do very well.’³⁷⁶ She sees the Church as ‘struggling against deeply ingrained sexual practices that must have been bequeathed from the pagan past.’³⁷⁷ Byock adds his doubts to Jochens’ on the subject of the effect of the values of the Christian Church on medieval Iceland. In fact it appears that the impact of Christianity in this

³⁶⁹ Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, ‘Sturla Þórðarson’, in *Sturlustefna*, eds. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir and Jónas Kristjánsson (Reykjavík, 1988), 9-36 at 11-13 where she states that Sturla Þórðarson (S.14) was seriously disadvantaged by his illegitimacy and that it governed his development into a historian, suggesting that he had been intended for the church given that he was ineligible for inheritance; Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 33-41 argues that illegitimacy was a bar to inheritance where legitimate heirs existed.

³⁷⁰ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 34.

³⁷¹ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 34.

³⁷² *SS*, i, 303, 315, 447.

³⁷³ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 37.

³⁷⁴ J. Jochens, ‘The Church and sexuality in medieval Iceland’, *JMH* 6 (1980), 377-89; Agnes Arnórsdóttir, ‘Kvinner og ”krigsmenn”’, 186; J. Byock, ‘Governmental order in early medieval Iceland’, *Viator* 17 (1986), 19-34; Nors, ‘Illegitimate Children’, 17-37; Miller, *Bloodtaking*, 146.

³⁷⁵ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 40.

³⁷⁶ Jochens, ‘The Church and sexuality’, 384.

³⁷⁷ Jochens, ‘The Church and Sexuality’, 388.

one area was, on closer inspection of the contemporary sources, somewhat less than impressive. Byock points to the uncommonly high level of lay control over, and participation in, the Church in Iceland at the time.³⁷⁸ Frank agrees with Jochens that there was 'little enthusiasm'³⁷⁹ in Iceland for marital monogamy. Agnes Arnórsdóttir also believes that laws do not necessarily reflect reality.³⁸⁰ Nors has demonstrated in her article on the number of highborn women who entered into concubinage in Denmark as late as the thirteenth century, that far from carrying a social stigma in Scandinavian societies, even at this late date, important families could contemplate with equanimity that a female member could form a joint household with a man without the benefit of marriage vows. Provided that the man formally recognized the issue of the relationship, there would be no questioning of their right to inherit from him.³⁸¹ According to Miller 'The genealogies of the chieftain families of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries suggest that the rules on marriage were ignored or excused.'³⁸² His argument is that much of the reason for the continued production of illegitimate heirs can be found in the fact that there was a serious lack of potential brides outside the proscribed degrees of consanguinity. A chieftain sometimes contracted a concubine relationship with a woman from a lower social class rather than enter into an unequal marriage with her, because there were simply no eligible marriage partners from among his own class. Or a chieftain would form a joint household with a woman from his own class, but be unable to marry her due to their genealogical proximity. This was the case for Þorvaldr Gizurarson and his wife Jóra, the dissolution of whose marriage was discussed above (p.116). Clearly, the corollary to Jochens', Frank's and Byock's argument that there was a general lack of interest in pursuing marital monogamy in Iceland, would be that there would inevitably be the production of a significant number of illegitimate offspring. In these circumstances it would seem that, if there was the expectation of a proportion of every generation being illegitimate, then society must have had mechanisms both to accept these children and also to find a place both socially and

³⁷⁸ Byock, 'Governmental order', 43, 'Virtually nowhere in medieval Europe, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, did laymen exercise as much control over the church as they did in Iceland.'

³⁷⁹ Frank, 'Marriage', p. 474.

³⁸⁰ Agnes Arnórsdóttir, 'Kvinner og "krigsmenn"', 186. She states that the development of marriage to the exclusion of other relationships was slow even after the end of the Commonwealth and that the laws on illegitimacy were not fully reflected in practice.

³⁸¹ Nors, 'Illegitimate Children', 17-37.

³⁸² Miller, *Bloodtaking*, 146.

legally for them. It is clear from the legal statements that illegitimacy was not a bar to inheritance. There were provisions for them to inherit in the laws. They were not excluded from inheritance, just delayed by a finite number of relatives. They were also entitled to inherit before legitimate grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, and cousins of the deceased.³⁸³ Nevertheless, it was a distinct disadvantage to an illegitimate son to be placed ninth in the schedule of claimants after his legitimate siblings of both genders, his grandparents, legitimate uncles and aunts.³⁸⁴ Despite this there seems to have been a level of acceptance within Icelandic society that illegitimate children formed a significant part of that society.

The case studies reveal a variety of circumstances which could affect the impact of illegitimacy upon individual sons. Certainly the legal provisions appear to have been observed to the letter in the case of Guðmundr Arason (G.9), for example, whose legitimate paternal uncles claimed his father's property on the grounds of his illegitimacy and 'beat him to his books'.³⁸⁵ He eventually became Bishop of Hólar, a clerical career for which he appears to have been extremely unsuited. Jochens, however, would highlight the case of his cousin Ögmundr *sneis* Þorvardsson, who inherited from his father despite being an illegitimate son with five legitimate sisters. The difference in the two cases was the self-interest of Ögmundr's father and Guðmundr's uncle Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson (G.3). In Guðmundr's case it was of direct benefit to Þorvarðr to uphold the legal statements with regard to asserting his superior claim to his brother Ari's (G.6) legacy over that of Ari's illegitimate son. However, when it came to his own illegitimate son, he made every effort to establish him as his heir. The two cousins represent the two sides of the debate about the relevance of legitimacy to inheritance rights, while Ögmundr was clearly his father's heir, and no challenge was mounted to his succession despite the marriages of his legitimate sisters and legitimate aunts into some of the most powerful families in Iceland, who could certainly have forced through a challenge on influence alone, Guðmundr, in exactly the same position failed to inherit from his father. The irony is that it was Guðmundr's, uncles including Ögmundr's father Þorvarðr, who claimed

³⁸³ Grágás, Ia, 218-219.

³⁸⁴ Grágás, Ia, 218-219.

³⁸⁵ SS, i, 121-122

his father's inheritance as their own based upon his illegitimacy.³⁸⁶ Þorvarðr exhibits the double standards of attitudes to illegitimacy in Iceland in the period. In most cases illegitimacy did not matter, and when it was your own son, it mattered least if you wanted them to inherit. However, if it profited you to make an issue of it, then it was a useful tool for the enterprising and the acquisitive. It is perhaps telling that Ögmundr was not established by his father pre-mortem, and that he was known to be very short of funds during his own chieftaincy.³⁸⁷ Þorvarðr's actions towards his nephew may be explicable in terms of self-preservation. If the chieftaincy was struggling for power and resources, it may have been that Guðmundr's father's wealth was extremely important to keep the chieftaincy and the family properties solvent.

Thus illegitimate sons with no legitimate brothers, but with legitimate sisters, like Ögmundr *sneis* Þorvardsson (G.7) could inherit. But even more surprisingly, illegitimate sons with living legitimate brothers sometimes inherited too. Tumi Kolbeinsson (A.7) inherited his father's property and chieftaincy, despite a living, legitimate, brother, Arnórr (A.8).³⁸⁸ Furthermore, legitimate uncles did not always press their claims against illegitimate nephews despite their justification in the laws. Sæmundr Jónsson (O.7) for example, refrained from interfering in the inheritance of his illegitimate nephews and nieces from his half-brother Ormr (O.9), despite his valid claim in the eyes of the law.³⁸⁹ He was the legitimate brother of the illegitimate Ormr and in the schedule of inheritance set out in *Grágás* he was entitled to inherit from his illegitimate half-brother before Ormr's illegitimate children. Although close kin could bar the inheritance of their illegitimate relatives, it appears that the actions of Þorvardr (G.3) and his brothers to exclude Guðmundr Arason (G.9) from his father's property may have been more unusual than relatives who had a legitimate claim, not exerting it, to the benefit of their illegitimate relatives. Cases were often complex. Sæmundr Jónsson (O.7) for example, may have had an ulterior motive. Sæmundr's own children were all illegitimate, and he may not have wanted to encourage any of his relatives who might seek to inherit his property against his

³⁸⁶ *SS*, i, 121-122.

³⁸⁷ *SS*, i, 192.

³⁸⁸ *SS*, i, 53.

³⁸⁹ *SS*, i, 270-1.

children's claims to be inspired by his interfering in the transfer of the inheritance to Ormr's children. But it may not merely have been expediency which motivated Sæmundr. In the text Sæmundr's action is described as '*drengiliga*'³⁹⁰, a term which means brave, but which has the added connotations of 'noble-minded' or 'high-minded'³⁹¹, and he is described as being well-disposed to the children of his brother Ormr.³⁹² There is a degree of approbation of Sæmundr's actions in *Íslendinga saga*, though it should be noted that this text was written by an illegitimate younger son. Nevertheless, the comments do suggest that inheritance by illegitimates was not subject to blanket or straightforward disapproval and even received some approval in the wider community.

Illegitimate sons in Iceland could certainly pursue successful careers. The illegitimate sons of Þorvaldr Snorrason (V.10) achieved great successes despite their birth. Two became chieftains³⁹³, and another, Illugi (V.15), after the death of his chieftain father and brothers, was supported by his deceased father's þingmen, even when there was a legitimate infant son, Einarr (V.18), whose cause they might have supported.³⁹⁴ Here it may be a question of preferring the proven skills of an illegitimate adult over the dubious protection of a minor, albeit one born in wedlock. Whether the þingmen offered Illugi support as a stopgap between the death of his father and the attainment of majority by his legitimate younger brother, or they preferred him outright as a candidate for their chieftain cannot be proved, as Illugi was killed in 1241, before Einarr, his brother reached the age of sixteen, (he may have been as young as fourteen). There is some evidence that Illugi was offering Einarr his support, possibly intended as training for the future chieftain, when he took his younger brother at the age of thirteen on an expedition to pursue enemies of his father's chieftaincy.³⁹⁵ However, whether Illugi would have become a chieftain, or merely functioned as one until his brother was able to undertake the responsibility, it is clear that his contemporaries all recognised his ability to carry out that role and did not exclude him from it on the grounds of his illegitimacy.

³⁹⁰ SS, i, 270.

³⁹¹ R. Cleasby, Gudbrand. Vigfusson, eds. *Icelandic-English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1874). 105.

³⁹² SS, i, 271.

³⁹³ SS, i, 323, Þórðr (V.13) and Snorri (V.14).

³⁹⁴ SS, i, 448.

³⁹⁵ SS, i, 445.

Other illegitimate sons who were able to take on important roles were those of Þórðr Sturluson (S.7), (p.148). He had four illegitimate sons, Óláfr (S.13), Sturla (S.14), Guttormr (S.15) and Þórðr (S.16). Of these sons, Óláfr held the office of Lawspeaker, the highest legal position in the country,³⁹⁶ and Sturla became a chieftain as well as a very wealthy man.³⁹⁷ Þórðr Sturluson (S.7) had endeavoured to give his illegitimate offspring an advantage by including them in his bequests. However, they could not have flourished had society not accepted their right to assert themselves as chieftains and high office-holders. One incident when Þórðr's illegitimate sons were children has been seen as confirmation that illegitimacy was a disadvantage.³⁹⁸ Þórðr stated in the saga that he was not willing to pursue a case to claim part of the family chieftaincy, because his legitimate son Böðvarr already had a chieftaincy and his other sons were young and illegitimate. However, Þórðr went on to say that he did not know if these sons would be able to be chieftains.³⁹⁹ Should this statement be taken as an acceptance that illegitimacy rendered them unsuitable to claim a chieftaincy? Or should it be interpreted as a value judgement by Þórðr, questioning whether his young sons were capable of undertaking the role of a chieftain? Does it refer as much to their youth as their illegitimacy? This incident in fact raises the question as to whether an illegitimate son stood a better chance of success as an adult, when his qualities and abilities could be judged by his peers. Certainly the ten years between this statement by Þórðr and his final disposition of his property among all five of his sons appears to have changed his mind with regard to their abilities. Óláfr and Sturla in particular benefited from being adults who had had time to impress their father with their abilities as they each received a larger share of the inheritance than their other illegitimate brothers and their legitimate and illegitimate sisters. Sturla moreover received Eyrr, a family property, and later went on to become a chieftain.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁶ SS, ii, 85.

³⁹⁷ SS, i, 401, 509, ii, 167, 235, 236.

³⁹⁸ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 44, for instance suggests that it contributed to Sturla's (S.14) feelings of inferiority in relationship to his father,

³⁹⁹ SS, i, 303.

⁴⁰⁰ SS, i, 401.

There are other negative views of illegitimacy expressed in the saga sources. However, like the above statement of Þórðr Sturluson, they should be assessed in context. For instance, Þorvaldr Gizurarson (H.7) seemed to sneer at the political marriage of Kolbeinn ungi Arnórsson's (A.15) legitimate sister to Órækja Snorrason (S.25),⁴⁰¹ the illegitimate son of Snorri Sturluson (S.9). But we should not read into this too great a disapproval of illegitimacy by Þorvaldr. He supported the marriages of both his selected sons, Björn (H.12) the elder, and his favourite son, Gizurr (H.15), to illegitimate women, the first for her fortune and the second for political reasons. His comment upon the fact that Kolbeinn was demeaning his sister had less to do with the illegitimacy of Órækja, than it was a reflection of Þorvaldr's politics in this period. He and his son Gizurr were in opposition to the groom's father. The Icelanders were extremely flexible in their exploitation of whichever methods or values suited their purpose, and often, when their purpose changed, so did their values. Legitimacy could become a useful tool where inheritance disputes were concerned. When the tool was not useful to the protagonists, it was simply not selected. This tool was limited in its efficacy by the needs of those who chose to employ it. There was no consistency in its use. The example of Þorvarðr Þorgeirsson shows that he found the principle of legitimacy a convenient instrument, but one which he felt entirely able to dispense with when it suited him. His attitude would seem to be a fairly typical one.

Icelandic inheritance strategies were mutable and allowed for the practice of favouritism. The cases in this chapter illustrate the complexity and variety of inheritance strategies available to fathers in Iceland, and this in turn highlights how the father / son relationships would have been affected by many different degrees of expectation which could develop as a result. The fluidity of potential inheritance outcomes meant that no son of the aristocracy would begin his life in expectation of receiving nothing from his father by way of inheritance, but also that no son could be certain of receiving anything. The implication for father / son relationships would appear to be that, where there was no concrete principle to include or exclude sons, there was instead all to play for as far as a man's sons were concerned. Inheritance was an issue which had the potential to divide sons among themselves, or even

⁴⁰¹ *SS*, i, 359.

damage the father / non-inheriting son relationship. Yet as was shown in Chapter Three (pp.59-61), disloyalty between fathers and sons was not a frequent theme of the narrative source. Perhaps the cultural emphasis upon loyalty between the father and son enabled Icelandic fathers to contemplate a variety of forms of inheritance strategies, while the existence of an element of uncertainty might have been extremely destabilizing in a culture where the bond was less socially conditioned.

Norman Inheritance Practice

Unlike Iceland, historians tackling the issue of inheritance practice in Normandy do not have a legal text to refer to. Our knowledge of Norman inheritance in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries is derived almost entirely from practice, since there are no legal statements from the period.⁴⁰² The *Coutumes de Normandie* date to the end of the twelfth century, and even the *Leges Henrici Primi*, which was apparently compiled in the first decades of the twelfth century may reflect as much the legal background of Anglo-Saxon England than present a picture of Norman customs of inheritance in the eleventh and early twelfth century.⁴⁰³ Le Patourel and Menuge both counsel against projecting such sources back into earlier periods.⁴⁰⁴

The work of Duby and Holt has been of considerable influence in forming the view of a developing patrilineal trend in family strategies and the growth of primogeniture as the preferred form of transmission of family property in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Northern France and Anglo-Norman England.⁴⁰⁵ Much scholarship has followed this work and has focused on the question of the

⁴⁰² Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, 10.

⁴⁰³ J. Downer, 'Introduction', in *Leges Henrici Primi*, ed. J. Downer (Oxford, 1972), 2-78 at 7.

⁴⁰⁴ J. Le Patourel, 'The Norman Succession 996-1135', *EHR* 86 (1971), 225-250 at 230; Menuge, *Medieval English Wardship*, 17.

⁴⁰⁵ Duby developed the theory of a transition from a cognatic to an agnatic descent system in his seminal work on the Mâconnais region in France beginning in the eleventh century in which he identified a shift of emphasis in inheritance both from bilateral to patrilineal descent and from partition to indivisible inheritance. G. Duby, 'Lineage, Nobility and Knighthood. The Mâconnais in the Twelfth Century – A revision', in *The Chivalrous Society*, trans., C. Postan (London, 1977), 59-80 at 69; Holt's work on the development of primogeniture in England has also been influential. Of particular interest for the purposes of this thesis is his establishment of the argument for a division of inheritance principles between primogeniture which governed descent of patrimonial property, and the option of partition among younger sons of property attained through acquisition by the father during his lifetime, J. Holt, 'Politics and Property in Early Medieval England', *Past and Present* 57.3 (1972), 3-52 at 12-7; also Holt, 'Feudal Society' i, 199 and 205.

form which inheritance took over the eleventh and early twelfth centuries in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England, with many identifying this period as one of change from partible inheritance to unigeniture, most commonly primogeniture.⁴⁰⁶ Hudson and Garnett, like Holt, have asserted that a key element in the development of inheritance strategies in Anglo-Norman England in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries was the impact of the Conquest itself, both in introducing Norman practices to England and blending them with Anglo-Saxon norms, but also in itself creating the circumstances in which new acquisitions were available and also adding a layer of lordship to society. Lord's roles as both lord and vassal added a component of outside influence to the individual families' strategies of inheritance, which was unlike the situation which pertained in Iceland.⁴⁰⁷

However, Stafford has questioned the interpretation of the eleventh century as a dynamic period of familial structural upheaval, citing the need to accept that the evidence presented by the sources constitutes a 'snapshot' of families at a single instance in their life-cycle, location and circumstances, and that they are therefore as subject to change in response to local issues as well as (or even rather than) forming part of a general trend towards one system or another.⁴⁰⁸ Newman and Martindale

⁴⁰⁶ See for instance K. Leyser, 'The Anglo-Norman Succession 1120-1125', *ANS* 13 (1990), 225-241 at 226-227 where he argues that primogeniture was becoming predominantly acceptable to contemporaries citing the support for William Clito by the king of France; S. Milsom, 'Inheritance by Women in the Twelfth and early Thirteenth Centuries' in *On the Laws and Customs of England*, eds. M. Arnold et. al. (Chapel Hill, 1981), 68-89 at 62 perceives the prospects of a younger son in England in the twelfth century as being closely linked to his homage to his brother as his lord for his property, without which the eldest brother could assert a claim to the property no matter how the father had directed the dispersal; C. Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility in the Reign of Henry I: The Second Generation* (Philadelphia, 1988), 36 interprets the perceived narrowing of families' focus to a patrilineal structure as limited to inheritance, where she sees primogeniture increasing, while for the most part families continue to develop wider cognatic and bilateral links in almost every other respect; Christelow, 'The Division of Inheritance' 7, 11-12 and 13 suggests that the departure of sons to Italy was caused by the investment of parents in the practice of primogeniture and created fractures within the nuclear family.

⁴⁰⁷ Holt, 'Feudal Society' i, 205; Holt, 'Feudal Society' ii, 202-3, 207, 209; J. Hudson, 'Anglo-Norman land law and the origins of property', in *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy; Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt*, eds. G. Garnett and J. Hudson (Cambridge, 1994) 198-222 at 201-203, he discusses the confluence of notions of land-holding from both regions' heritages and the impact of lordship upon land-holding; G. Garnett, 'Ducal Succession in Early Normandy', in *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy*, eds. G. Garnett and J. Hudson (Cambridge, 1992), 80-110, at 110, in which he comments on the greater availability of property to disperse among several heirs.

⁴⁰⁸ P. Stafford, 'La Mutation Familiale: A Suitable Case for Caution' in *The Community, the Family and the Saint. Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*, eds. J. and M. Swan (Turnhout, 1998). 103-125 at 110.

echo this view.⁴⁰⁹ Indeed, historians can agree that several systems could and did coexist, not just as part of different familial concerns but even within the practice of inheritance itself.⁴¹⁰ Garnett and Crouch have argued that the Conquest was followed as much by partition as an inheritance strategy as by a progressive development of the principle of primogeniture.⁴¹¹ Crouch gives examples of partition taking place even among the lesser gentry where resources were so slim as to seriously threaten the continued viability of the patrimony to support the family members. However, he accepts that this was not the only means by which a father could provide for younger sons and that fathers could be selective in their approach to which of their sons might receive the inheritance.⁴¹²

These issues concerning the form that inheritance took over the eleventh and early twelfth century are especially relevant to the father / son relationship of the Norman elite during this time. Just as in the case of Iceland, the level of expectation among sons of receiving none, some, or all, of the paternal property would have undoubtedly had an impact upon the conduct of father / son interactions. If, as Turner and Aird have argued, an heir in expectation of inheritance would be frustrated by his father's continued existence,⁴¹³ then according to Duby's thesis of a progressive development from partition among all sons to the widespread acceptance of primogeniture, the eleventh and early twelfth centuries should provide evidence of a steadily deteriorating father / son relationship between fathers and eldest sons, while the father / younger son relationship would be characterised by either affection or indifference dependent upon how much the son could reasonably expect his father to provide for him outside the already allocated paternal property.

The picture provided by the narrative sources is mixed. Dudo's concern to present the descent of the duchy as predestined meant that his text is pared down to father / son transmissions of property which are rigorous in their simplicity and lack of extraneous actors (p.33). Yet Martindale has noted that, in his own way, Orderic

⁴⁰⁹ Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility*, 36; Martindale, 'Succession and Politics', 30.

⁴¹⁰ Stafford, 'La Mutation Familiale', 107; Hudson, 'Origins', 202-3.

⁴¹¹ Garnett, 'Ducal Succession', 110; D. Crouch, and C. de Trafford, 'The Forgotten Family in Twelfth-Century England', *HSJ* 13, (1999), 41-63 at 46-48.

⁴¹² Crouch, 'The Forgotten Family', 49-50; Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: the Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), 6-13, 96.

⁴¹³ Turner, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine', 330; Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 40.

Vitalis was equally at pains to portray inheritance as following a direct and simple line from father to single, and particularly eldest, son.⁴¹⁴ One of the clearest examples in his text is that of Ansold of Maule. Ansold inherited from his father Peter in 1100. What was significant in this example was the apparent strength of the principle of primogeniture. Ansold had pursued a career in Apulia for over thirty years when his father recalled him to Normandy to stand ready to take over his property on Peter's death.⁴¹⁵ This is all the more interesting given that Peter had three other sons, any of whom might arguably have inherited instead of the long absent Ansold. The case of the descent of Maule in the early twelfth century would appear to suggest that primogeniture had established an extremely strong hold upon the interactions of fathers and sons with regard to inheritance. However, we know nothing of the relationship between Ansold and Peter before Ansold left the country, or why his father chose to recall him prior to his death. There may have been many circumstances which resulted in Ansold's recall which had little to do with inheritance principles.

Garnett argues that there was never any question of the duchy itself being subject to any form of partition even in the tenth century, and this is borne out by the narrative sources.⁴¹⁶ Therefore the duchy itself would have been subject to a policy of unigeniture from its very inception. However, Holt argues that acquisitions could be, and were, distributed amongst more than one heir.⁴¹⁷ There are eight examples in the case studies which demonstrate the difficulty of discerning a trend over the eleventh and early twelfth century. The examples could be interpreted both to suggest that over the whole period partition among more than one son was taking place in one form or another, and to argue that in many of them primogeniture was a characteristic of the transmission of property from father to son. Three such transfers of property occurred in the ducal family. They were between Richard III (D.9) and his brother Robert (D.10),⁴¹⁸ between the three sons of Robert the archbishop (D.5),

⁴¹⁴ Martindale, 'Succession and Politics', 26-7, lists the following references for incidents in the *Ecclesiastical History* where Orderic uses the term 'heres' synonymously with 'son' in many contexts, (*EH*, ii, 214, 262, 352, 356; iii, 192, 210; v, 196; vi, 52, 300, 328.)

⁴¹⁵ *EH*, iii, 174-6.

⁴¹⁶ Garnett, 'Ducal Succession', 110.

⁴¹⁷ Holt, 'Politics and Property', 12-13.

⁴¹⁸ *GND*, ii, 40, the duke declares Richard his heir and instructs Robert to pay homage to his brother in return for the Hiémois.

Richard (D.14), Ralph (D.15) and William (D.16),⁴¹⁹ and finally between the sons of the Conqueror, Robert Curthose (D.27), William Rufus (D.29) and Henry I (D.30).⁴²⁰ The partitions, especially the last, reflect both the potentially unequal nature of division and also the ways in which primogeniture did not exclude partition once the acquisitions were taken into account. It was not just the ducal family which could make a division of the family property. Roger of Montgomery (BM.12) divided his Norman and English property between his two eldest sons.⁴²¹ Again the division demonstrated that primogeniture dictated the descent of the paternal lands into the hands of Robert of Bellême (BM.16). However, for a member of the upper echelons of the post-Conquest aristocracy, that still left substantial acquisitions in England to bequeath to his second son Hugh of Montgomery (BM.16). However, division of property was not restricted to families with the means to make large grants to more than one son. There are also three cases of partition for the Giroie / Grandmesnil family. In the mid-eleventh century the lesser nobility family of Giroie shared the inheritance of their father's property between the two eldest sons, Arnold (GG.2) and William (GG.3), in a bid to secure it against the predations of a powerful neighbour.⁴²² Whereas it was apparently part of a programme of survival for their great-uncles, William (GG.21) and Robert (GG.22) appear to have made a partition of their inheritance from their father without any indication of extremis. Their father had actually successfully restored the family fortunes, including the prize of the castle of St. Ceneri.⁴²³ However, the text is brief and it is not clear whether this was the policy of their father, or William's decision to share the property with his brother after their father's death. It is interesting however, that in both the eleventh-century and the twelfth-century cases of partition in the Giroie branch of the family it was only the two eldest sons who shared in the inheritance, just as in the much more prominent Ducal and Montgomery families.⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁹ *EH*, iii, 84, according to Orderic the three sons were all heirs to their father, however the exact nature of the division is unclear, Robert became count of Evreux, Ralph acquired substantial properties which later became the source of a bitter dispute between the dukes and the counts, and William emigrated to Apulia after marrying the widow of Robert of Grandmesnil (GG.9) a member of the lesser nobility, it is unclear just how substantial William's inheritance could have been.

⁴²⁰ *EH*, iv, 94-6, Robert received the paternal inheritance of Normandy as well as the acquisition of Maine, William received the acquisition of England and Henry received a cash sum but no land.

⁴²¹ *EH*, iii, 148.

⁴²² *EH*, ii, 24.

⁴²³ *EH*, iv, 156.

⁴²⁴ *EH*, ii, 24, all of Giroie's younger sons were described as minors when the inheritance took place; *EH*, iv, 294, information about William and Robert's brother Matthew (GG.23) is scant, he is not

In the Grandmesnil branch of the family an early twelfth century partition of inheritance took place in Apulia. Again the information is too thin to judge whether it was an equal partition or a form of primogeniture and acquisition division. However, the text states that the two sons of William Grandmesnil (GG.25) shared the fifteen castles in Italy that comprised their father's fortune.⁴²⁵

These examples of partition of paternal property could in most cases also be argued as evidence for the rise of primogeniture. Certainly the emphasis in the narrative accounts of Robert Curthose were on his expectation of inheriting from his father, and it is thought to have contributed to his poor relationship with his father. However, the other cases demonstrate that the principle of primogeniture, as applied in the eleventh century, and especially after the vast acquisitions of the Conquest in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, was not as exclusive of other sons as might be supposed. If the principle was gaining ground, it was still not constraining fathers to restrict inheritance to one pre-selected son.

The eighth example of partition of the father's property among his sons represents the extra element, not found in Iceland, that of intervention by a greater authority, in the person of a lord. In the Breteuil family case study one partition was recorded as taking place. However, it was explicitly stated that it was the king and not the father who made the division among William (B.3) and Roger (B.4) of the Norman and the English lands respectively. Although given the above examples, it appears that the king's decision was conventional with regard to the disposition of the lands,⁴²⁶ not all royal decisions were as respectful of inheritance norms or traditions. For instance, the descent of the castle of Moulins-la-Marche did not conform to any pattern yet discussed.⁴²⁷

mentioned at all in conjunction with their inheritance after their father's death, but in another part of the text entirely.

⁴²⁵ *EH*, iv, 338.

⁴²⁶ *GND*, ii, 226 and *EH*, iii, 128, William, the elder received Breteuil, Roger, the younger, received Hereford.

⁴²⁷ The descent of the castle of Moulins-la-Marche is discussed by E. Tabuteau, 'The Family of Moulins-la-Marche in the Eleventh Century', *Medieval Prosopography* 13.1 (1992), 29-65.

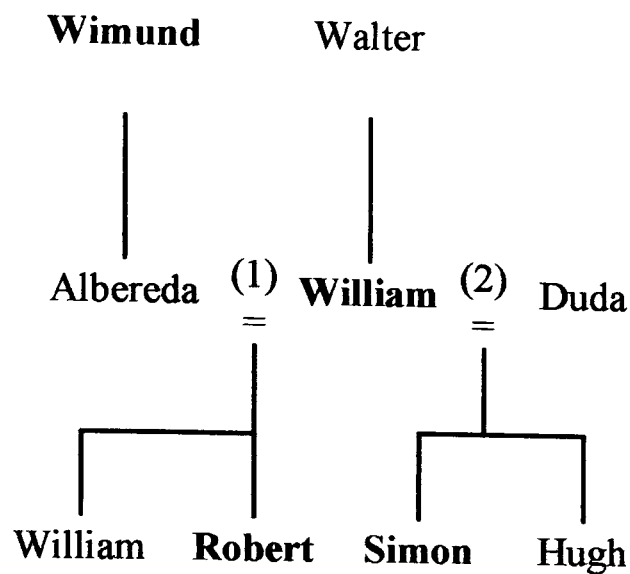


Fig. 5.1 – The descent of the castle of Moulins-la-Marche.

The castellan of Moulins-la-Marche had been a certain Wimund, whose daughter, Albereda, was married to William, the son of Walter of Falaise. Through his marriage William came to hold the position of castellan. To inherit such a position by marrying an heiress might not have been unusual. However, Tabuteau has identified Wimund as the father of eight sons, all of whom may have left Normandy for a career in Italy.⁴²⁸ Unlike in the case of Ansold, the siren voice of primogeniture does not seem to have lured the eldest of them, or indeed any of the brothers, back to Normandy. Tabuteau suggests that their father may have forfeited the possession by taking part in a rebellion which caused, or allowed, the duke to pass the possession to William, Wimund's son-in-law rather than allow it to descend through Wimund's own sons. Searle has noted that this strategy of arranging for female inheritance over the claims of the male line allowed lords to select a vassal from a wider range of candidates who could then be considered as a husband for the heiress.⁴²⁹ This ducal intervention took place before the Conquest.⁴³⁰ The inheritance of the castle in the twelfth century was equally convoluted. Albereda and William had divorced by 1077, and by 1090 William had married Duda, but retained the castle which had come to him through his first wife. When William died around 1100 it was not his eldest son William who succeeded him, but Robert his second son by Albereda. This might be evidence against the rise of primogeniture in the

⁴²⁸ Tabuteau, 'The Family of Moulins-la-Marche', 40-47

⁴²⁹ E. Searle, 'Women and the Legitimisation of Succession at the Norman Conquest', *ANS* 3 (1980), 159-170, at 160.

⁴³⁰ *Receuil*, no. 225.

twelfth century. But William's exclusion from the patrimony of his father William may be explicable in the context of the rebellion of Robert Curthose of 1077, in which a 'William of Moulins-la-Marche' was involved.⁴³¹ If the William who was in the company of Robert Curthose was the son, and not the father, then it is possible that the King (William Rufus) sought to limit the power of those who had exhibited support for his brother's cause by intervening and installing William's younger brother Robert as the castellan of Moulins-la-Marche. The vicissitudes of the castle of Moulins-la-Marche did not end with the inheritance of Robert of Moulins-la-Marche. In around 1115, Robert was involved in a rebellion against the king which resulted in his forfeiture of the castle, and in a final twist, the castle was given to his half-brother Simon, who was the elder of the two sons of William of Moulins-la-Marche senior and his second wife Duda. Thus, ducal or royal intervention superseded the patrilineal descent of the castle three times in around half a century.

Another case illustrating the precedence of political convenience on the part of the lord is that of the inheritance of Laigle in the early twelfth century. Richer II of Laigle's case represents the ways in which the two coexisting inheritance principles of primogeniture and partition could come into conflict. Richer's father Gilbert had married Juliana, the daughter of Geoffrey of Mortagne in 1091.⁴³² Gilbert was closely associated with the administration of Henry I. He attested many of Henry I's charters from the beginning of his reign until 1118 at the latest.⁴³³ Gilbert died probably c. 1115-18 after which his attestations of Henry's charters ceased. Richer II was involved in the 1118 conspiracy to claim Normandy for William Clito (D.33), and therefore cannot have been born much after 1100.⁴³⁴ Richer would have been between eighteen and 26 years old at his father's death and we are told by Orderic laid claim to the whole of his father's property, both the

⁴³¹ *EH*, ii, 356-8, iii, 96-110. This would make more sense in terms of the date of the rebellion, as William senior would have been a settled, middle-aged, father in 1077, given that charter evidence suggests he was a father of two by 1066 and possibly still married to Albereda, while his son, William junior may have been a young bachelor and far more likely to be part of the retinue of the twenty-six year old, Robert Curthose than his father who could have been in his early forties at least.

⁴³² *EH*, iv, 202.

⁴³³ *Regesta* ii, 558 (1101), 662 (1103), 762 (1106?), 779 (1106?), 811 (1107?), 875 (1108), 911 (1107-1109), 918-920 (1109), 931 (c.1109), 941 (1110), 947-50 (1110), 972 (1108-1111), 988 (1111), 99 (1111), 1002 (1111), 1030 (c.1113), 1048-50 (1109-1116) 1188 (1108-1118), 1196-97 (1107-1118).

⁴³⁴ *EH*, vi, 188.

Norman and the English lands. It may be that he felt he had some justification as his father's eldest son to claim to the whole inheritance, both paternal inheritance and paternal acquisitions.⁴³⁵ However, although he ultimately came into possession of the whole inheritance, in some part this was despite the claims of his younger brothers. As Richer had been involved in supporting William Clito, Henry I was extremely reluctant to recognise any claim to the English property, preferring instead to espouse the counterclaims of Richer's younger brothers, Engenulf and Geoffrey, who appear to have been raised in the royal household and served at that time as young knights or possibly, given their probable ages, as squires.⁴³⁶ That Richer ultimately inherited the whole of the property had less to do with the triumph of the principle of primogeniture than the able support of his uncle Rotrou of Mortagne and Richer's threat to offer his allegiance to the French king at a politically sensitive moment.⁴³⁷ Faced with this situation Henry I withdrew his support for Richer's brothers' claims and allowed the whole inheritance to go to Richer. The case seems to represent confusion within Norman and Anglo-Norman society in the first decades of the twelfth century over which form of inheritance had primacy. For Richer to make the claim to the whole inheritance suggests that such a claim was not wholly unheard of at that time. However, that Henry I was able to suggest that Richer's brothers also had rights to some of the property, intimates that primogeniture was not an immutable fixture in inheritance practice at this stage either. Perhaps the most telling feature of the inheritance was that the eventual settlement served the immediate interests of the English king and it was politically expedient for him to allow the principle of primogeniture to apply in this case, even though it was ultimately to the detriment of two young men who served loyally in his household.

If there were trends in inheritance strategies to be observed, DeAragon argues, the disruptions and forfeitures caused by rebellions would serve to obscure

⁴³⁵ *EH*, vi, 196.

⁴³⁶ *EH*, vi, 196. Both brothers would have been younger than Richer who was at most in his mid twenties at this date. They may still have been teenagers and reliant upon their lord (Henry I) to take up their claim at a time when they were too young or inexperienced to press their case.

⁴³⁷ *EH*, vi, 196, Rotrou negotiated on Richer's behalf with Henry, emphasizing that it would not be in Henry's interest to lose the allegiance of the castellan of Laigle in his confrontation with the French king; for confirmation of this action by Richer, see Luchaire, *Louis VI*, 119, no. 245.

them.⁴³⁸ Her argument is focused in particular on the turmoil of King Stephen's reign, but it is equally valid to apply it to the rebellions of Robert Curthose in the two decades after the Conquest. These internal aristocratic disputes suggest that even if a general trend towards primogeniture had been taking place and had also survived the upheaval of the Conquest, there may yet have been forfeitures and non-standard inheritance situations which would stem from these events that must be taken into account in assessing how the patterns of inheritance strategies might have affected the father / son relationship. In the case studies of Norman families there are no less than eight members of these families who took part in rebellions, which then had implications for both their own inheritance prospects and also that of their heirs.⁴³⁹ The narrative sources show that four of them can be seen to have adversely affected the inheritance prospects of their heirs by their rebellious actions. These were Robert Curthose (D.27),⁴⁴⁰ Robert of St Ceneri (GG.5),⁴⁴¹ Arnold of Echauffour (GG.10)⁴⁴² and Ivo of Grandmesnil (GG.27).⁴⁴³

The outside intervention in the plans of the family meant that the father / son relationship could be disrupted at any time through the actions of either the father or the son, or even simply by the desire of the lord to use descent in the female line to select a completely new vassal, or for even more distant political reasons. The father / son relationship could be affected by external pressures as well as by the growing expectations of eldest sons, and the continuing hopes of younger sons.

Illegitimacy and Inheritance in Normandy

Another element to be added to the complex interaction of lord, father, son and developing custom, was the changing status of illegitimate children in medieval Norman society. The identification of illegitimate sons, in particular when it comes to inheritance, finds the Norman sources far more reticent than the Icelandic ones. In

⁴³⁸ R. DeAragon, 'The Growth of Secure Inheritance in Anglo-Norman England', *JMH*, 8 (1982), 381-391 at 383-4, 389.

⁴³⁹ Robert Curthose (D.27), Robert of St Ceneri (GG5), Arnold of Echauffour (GG.10), three sons of Roger II of Montgomery, Robert of Bellême (BM.15), Roger of Poitou (BM.17) and Arnulf (BM.19) and two sons of Hugh of Grandmesnil, Ivo (GG.27) and Aubrey (GG.28)

⁴⁴⁰ *EH*, iv, 92.

⁴⁴¹ *EH*, ii, 80.

⁴⁴² *EH*, ii, 90-2.

⁴⁴³ *EH*, v, 308, vi. 12.

part this may be due to the nature of the sources. All the Norman authors were clerics, while the sagas were composed by laymen. Thus, the Norman sources may not exactly reflect the same social attitudes that Norman lay authors, had they been writing at that time, might have held. The narrative sources allow us to identify just 21 of the one hundred in the case studies as illegitimate. That is just 21 percent, compared to nearly double that figure in Iceland. Moreover, the ducal family alone accounts for eighteen of those illegitimate sons.⁴⁴⁴ Out of the remaining case studies, a more representative figure of the effect that the clerical authors may have had upon the representation of illegitimate sons is two out of 53, or just over four percent.⁴⁴⁵

While in some cases the Norman writers do reveal that some of their subjects were illegitimate, in most cases there are reasons why they do so, either because the issue was so well known it could not be avoided, such as the birth status of the Conqueror (D.22), or where the illegitimacy of an individual pertained to the events under discussion, as was the case, for example, with Eustace of Breteuil (B.6). Because of the problematic nature of the Norman chroniclers' reticence about acknowledging the existence of illegitimate sons, except in such cases, Newman cautions that '[w]e may be identifying natural children as younger non-inheriting legitimate children'.⁴⁴⁶ Yet, by the same token, we may also be identifying non-inheriting sons as illegitimate, simply because they do not inherit. For example, White suggests that Oliver (BM.8), the son of William Talvas (BM.5), may not have been illegitimate, but deliberately sidelined by the Duke to achieve the promotion of Roger of Montgomery who was married to Oliver's half-sister, Mabel of Bellême.⁴⁴⁷ Oliver was only mentioned twice in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, and not at all in the *Ecclesiastical History*. In Orderic Vitalis' interpolations in the *Gesta*, Oliver was referred to as the '*fratre*'⁴⁴⁸ of Arnulf (BM.9) the son of William Talvas, and the '*germanus*' of the same Arnulf.⁴⁴⁹ Neither of these terms specify that Oliver was Arnulf's illegitimate brother, or even his half-brother. Yet in Chibnall's appendix to the *Ecclesiastical History*, concerning the descent of the house of Bellême, Oliver is

⁴⁴⁴ (D.1), (D.2), (D.3), (D.4), (D.5), (D.6), (D.7), (D.8), (D.21), (D.22), (D.23), (D.31), (D.32), (D.34), (D.35), (D.36), (D.37), (D.38) and (D.39), see genealogies 7a, 7b and 7c.

⁴⁴⁵ Giroie (GG.12) and Fulk (GG.13) the sons of Fulk Giroie (GG.4), see genealogy 10a.

⁴⁴⁶ Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility*, 199.

⁴⁴⁷ G. White, 'The First House of Bellême', *TRHS* 4th Series, 22 (1940), 67-99 at 85.

⁴⁴⁸ *GND*, ii, 86.

⁴⁴⁹ *GND*, ii, 112.

described as William Talvas' illegitimate son.⁴⁵⁰ Whether Oliver were legitimate or not, the outcome of the Duke's involvement in the Bellême family's distribution of their property resulted in nothing for Oliver. However, this was not an inevitable result for illegitimate sons in Normandy, even at the beginning of the twelfth century. One of the last illegitimate sons to successfully inherit from his father, Eustace of Breteuil (B.6), was helped enormously by the support of his father in law, Henry I. In fact, Eustace's case represents yet another intervention by a lord in the inheritance of a vassal,⁴⁵¹ but this time with the interests of the illegitimate son promoted above the claims of rivals for the inheritance of the land and title.

Historians have considered the impact which illegitimacy would have had upon the prospects of sons in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and concluded that the twelfth century saw a narrowing of the possible avenues available to them.⁴⁵² Given-Wilson, Curteis and de Trafford accept that there was a reduction in the acceptance of bastardy during the medieval period.⁴⁵³ However, de Trafford also notes that while inheritance was a right which the illegitimate child was denied, many other forms of advancement such as gifts, or clerical promotion, remained open to the illegitimate child which meant that they were not only accepted as members of the family, but that provision for their futures would have been a concern for the family.⁴⁵⁴ As the most detailed of the narrative sources for the Norman case studies is the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis, composed in the beginning of the twelfth century, the difficulty of identifying illegitimate sons as such becomes explicable. If, as Given Wilson and Curteis argue, the acceptance of illegitimacy was beginning to decline, the ecclesiastical narrative sources might be one of the first places in which the historian could perceive this change in attitudes. As a result, sons who appear to be either younger non-inheriting sons, or even legitimate heirs from the eleventh century may well have been illegitimate sons whose origins might have been glossed over by Orderic to appease twelfth-century sensibilities. The options for illegitimate sons were certainly decreasing over the

⁴⁵⁰ *EH*, ii, 362-5.

⁴⁵¹ *EH*, vi, 40; *GND*, ii, 230. In Orderic's account, Eustace was his father's vassals' preferred heir and had the support of the King. In William of Jumièges' account, Eustace is described as a usurper.

⁴⁵² de Trafford, 'The Forgotten Family', 53-63; Given-Wilson and Curteis, *The Royal Bastards of Medieval England*, (London, 1984), 42, 176.

⁴⁵³ Given-Wilson and Curteis, *Royal Bastards*, 176.

⁴⁵⁴ de Trafford, 'The Forgotten Family', 63.

period in a way not replicated in the Icelandic sources. This is apparent in the ducal family. The first eight members of the family were all of born out of wedlock, and none of the chroniclers were able to satisfactorily gloss over the issue of the legitimacy of the first four dukes.⁴⁵⁵ However, by the beginning of the twelfth century circumstances were very different. The ducal family continued, mainly thanks to the profligacy of Henry I, to have a large number of illegitimate members. But there was one significant difference. None of Henry's many illegitimate sons were eligible to inherit from their father. But, limiting the production of acceptable heirs to a single monogamous relationship had the effect of increasing the risk that the patrimony would pass out of the patrilineal descent group through the failure of the line. This was exactly the circumstance that befell Henry I. However, Searle perceives that there was a positive effect for families of the aristocracy. '[W]hile individuals were inconvenienced by the church's growing definition of marriage as monogamous, the seigniorial world in fact welcomed and encouraged clerical aid in reducing the 'pool' of legitimate claimants, and thereby reducing the dangers and violence of succession-disputes... They were not converted to a new morality of marriage. They were making use of a new control over inheritance.'⁴⁵⁶

The sources give very little information regarding the relationship of fathers with their illegitimate sons. There was one exception; the close collaboration between Henry I and his eldest illegitimate son Robert of Gloucester (D.34). Robert was born while Henry was still the king's younger brother and his relationship with his father appears to have been one of sustained trust and loyalty throughout Henry's life. It is possible to chart the confidence that Henry had in Robert from the earliest witnessing of a royal charter in 1113 until over twenty years later when Robert was entrusted with the royal treasury in 1135.⁴⁵⁷ When Robert's only legitimate brother died in 1120 on the White Ship, Henry did not establish his own illegitimate son as his heir in the same way as he had orchestrated Eustace of Breteuil's inheritance in 1100. However, he did ensure that Robert was richly provided for with large estates and titles including the earldom of Gloucester.⁴⁵⁸ By the beginning of the twelfth

⁴⁵⁵ William of Jumièges introduced the phrase *more danico*, *GND*, i, 59, 79.

⁴⁵⁶ Searle, 'Women and the Legitimation', 169.

⁴⁵⁷ *EH*, vi, 174, 448.

⁴⁵⁸ *EH*, vi, 516.

century, illegitimacy was becoming a bar to inheritance in the normal manner, but, illegitimate sons, at least those made visible despite the reluctance of the clerical chroniclers, could be a part of their father's lives, and indeed could become both trusted and enriched by a close association with him despite the circumstances of their birth.

Conclusion

The aristocratic father / son relationships in Iceland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and in Normandy in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries were closely connected to inheritance issues. Aristocratic fathers were connected to power through their birth status, property owning, title and personal authority. Sons, through their biological relationship to their fathers, had strong claims to make the same connection. Therefore the relationship was inevitably complicated by the level of expectation each of his sons had of holding that power for themselves. The most direct route would have been through inheritance from their fathers. So the ways in which the legal and social framework of each region moulded strategies for inheritance had a considerable impact upon the father / son relationship. For instance, an Icelandic father appeared to have a great deal of choice about the selection of an individual son, a few of his sons or even all of his sons to inherit, even if they were illegitimate. Although there were legal statements which clearly would have limited him, the narrative sources demonstrate that in Iceland the legal statements were intermittently applied in the matter of inheritance. In terms of his relationship with his sons this could stimulate an equal level of expectation and ambition among all his sons until he made his choice clear. A Norman father on the other hand may have been becoming increasingly restricted in his choice, at least in terms of his main heir, as primogeniture was becoming a widely used, although not a universal, custom. Nevertheless, he retained some autonomy in selecting how his other sons, if he had any, might benefit from some portion of his property after his death. Thus, Norman sons were not clearly divided into those with all the expectation and those with none, but into those who were guaranteed something, and those who might yet attain something. The most interesting feature of the differing conventions of inheritance was the way in which Icelandic sons, through *pre-mortem* establishment, would in the families where this option was exercised, have

an ongoing relationship with a father after the inheritance decisions would appear to have been taken. While in Normandy, inheritance was necessarily something which occurred after the death of the father and the relationship was based upon expectations by both father and sons of what would happen, not in dealing with the aftermath of his provisions during the father's lifetime.

It is perhaps interesting to note that while Icelandic fathers appear to have enjoyed greater freedom to distribute their property as they wished, they were also living in an age of increasingly limited resources and political upheaval, which placed different sorts of constraints upon them and may have reduced the expectations of their sons. The circumstances were reversed in Normandy. As the period progressed fathers experienced less control over the way in which they could pass their property to their sons, but as a result of the Conquest a great many of them had a great deal more to pass on. However, the Conquest also represented another complication. The effect of inheritance issues upon the father / son relationship might include not just antagonism among heirs, and ambition among non-inheriting sons, but also the intervention of a third party, that is a lord. Thus inheritance in Normandy over the period may not have involved an atmosphere of certainty among fathers and sons, but just the opposite, as a result of the huge political and economic upheaval which ensued following the Conquest.

There were some significant differences which developed between the impact of inheritance practices on illegitimate sons in Iceland and Normandy. Among the Normans and Anglo-Normans the prospects for a royal bastard might have been quite good, but the virtual disappearance of illegitimate offspring from the source material suggests that while they may have continued to have a role in their family's life, the Church was drawing strict boundaries around the ways they could function within society. The restriction of the right to inherit must have had a direct impact on the father / illegitimate son relationship, as it removed one of the structures which overlay the relationship of a father with a son (even a younger son) who had an expectation of acquiring something through his relationship to his father in terms of inheritance. Icelandic society however, was proving a far harder nut to crack as far as the Church was concerned. The Oddaverjar family actually comprised

more illegitimate than legitimate men over the period, 26 to 22.⁴⁵⁹ Tulinius has suggested that a concerted effort was being made to restrict the rights of illegitimate children in the thirteenth century and notes that such a policy would have caused significant disruption and resistance in a society in which illegitimacy was common.⁴⁶⁰ In Iceland there is evidence that illegitimacy was an issue which could be raised when there was a dispute, but, it still remained possible to thwart the letter of the law and pursue an individual course when one was a member of the aristocracy.

Inheritance therefore constituted yet another layer to add to the social and cultural conventions that governed how fathers and sons interacted. There were so many permutations which could affect each individual transfer between generations that it is impossible to point to any one case and declare, 'there is a simple case of this or that inheritance strategy.' In fact it may be misleading to refer to inheritance practices as strategies. Certainly fathers and sons in one family, and at one particular time, may have developed a conscious strategy to benefit the immediate family situation. But as circumstances shift so do plans, and it is unlikely that each transfer was the result of a well thought-out policy, but was rather a blend of reactions to changing situations, evolving customs, ever mutable family size and structure, outward political and economic pressures, socially constructed ideals, and the dynamics of personal relationships between individuals.

⁴⁵⁹ See genealogies 6a and 6b.

⁴⁶⁰ Torfi Tulinius, 'Inheritance, ideology, and literature: *Herverar saga ok Heiðreks*', in *From Sagas to Society, Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland*, ed. Gisli Pálsson (Middlesex, 1992), 147-60 at 159-60.

CHAPTER SIX : Icelandic Case Studies

Introduction

The preceding three chapters have identified constructs which influenced the development of father / son relationships. These next two chapters demonstrate in what ways concepts of 'father', 'son', 'life-cycle' and 'masculinity' and the dictates of inheritance conventions could affect the father / son relationships in selected families, and what influence external elements, such as political or economic change had upon these already complex interactions. The chapters ask questions about how relationships may have developed within certain families over several generations. By selecting and examining a number of families as case studies, it is possible to identify both the trends, and the complexity of shifting circumstances, that shaped how father / son relationships were conducted in both Iceland and Normandy.

In order to achieve the fullest possible understanding of the circumstances surrounding individual father / son interactions, one of the main tasks of this chapter will be to attempt to reconstruct, insofar as is possible, the families involved. Birth order and marital status of the parents may have comprised significant variants in the circumstances affecting the relationships of fathers with their sons. By determining in what order sons were born and whether they were legitimate, as well as other conditions such as relative ages of fathers and sons, ages of sons when significant milestones such as marriage and accession to personal independence were reached, it may be possible to ascertain how these variables affected, and were affected by, the father / son relationship. Finally these two chapters will attempt to establish what effect the death of fathers while their sons were still minors had upon the sons' prospects. Although the impetus of the thesis is the examination of father / son relationships, the analysis of the effects of the absence of the relationship can prove a useful point of comparison. Five Icelandic families will be discussed in this chapter, while the next will discuss five Norman families.

The five families selected for the Icelandic case studies are; the Sturlungar, the Ásbirningar, the Haukdælir, the Vatnsfirðingar and the Oddaverjar.⁴⁶¹ All these families represent the elite chieftain class in Iceland. They experienced fluctuating fortunes in the face of economic decline and political disorder as the end of the Commonwealth approached (pp.7-9). The Haukdælir increased their power, while the Ásbirningar and the Vatnsfirðingar declined, and the Sturlungars fought constantly both with others and among themselves.⁴⁶²

Methodology

The goals of this chapter necessitate the reconstruction of families, a task which our sources do not make easy. In respect of the establishment of birth order, the historian is constrained by the available evidence to accept the statements of the sagas, given that there are no other sources available. However, within the *Sturlunga Saga* compilation there are a series of genealogical lists (*Ættartölur*), of unknown authorship (pp.20-1).⁴⁶³ Unfortunately very little discussion of the nature or reliability of this small part of the compilation has been undertaken. For instance in his comprehensive work on Icelandic medieval literature, Jónas Kristjánsson does not mention them in his otherwise thorough account of the *Sturlunga* compilation.⁴⁶⁴ How the *Ættartölur* were intended to be used in the context of the saga compilation is open to question, but their inclusion does provide a starting point for the reconstruction of the Sturlunga, Oddaverjar, Vatnsfirðingar and Ásbirningar families which all feature in this section.⁴⁶⁵ It is also a convention of saga composition to introduce a new protagonist or situation with a brief genealogical summary of key participants, which might include paternal and maternal family connections, marriages, children and sometimes a small vignette concerning the careers of any or all of them. Comparison of these sketches with the genealogies helps to flesh out the connections of individuals within the families to each other. Despite the obvious caveats of unknown authorship and motivation in composition, the genealogical information supplied by the *Ættartölur* and by the introductory sketches was subject

⁴⁶¹ See genealogies 1a to 6b.

⁴⁶² Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, 71.

⁴⁶³ Thomas, 'Introduction', 19.

⁴⁶⁴ Jónas Kristjánsson, *Eddas and Sagas*, 187-202.

⁴⁶⁵ *SS*, i, 51-56.

to audiences who were very familiar with the material. By comparing the various accounts in the genealogies and the text it is clear that there was generally continuity when birth order was concerned and therefore for the purposes of family reconstruction I am going to accept the birth order of brothers as presented in the text.

Birth order and status were not the only variables which could impact upon a father / son relationship. The age of the sons relative to each other and their father could also have implications for the relationship. In *Sturlunga saga*, the authors made good use of well-known events such as the death of a king, pope or bishop to date events affecting their protagonists, although not nearly as frequently as modern historians would prefer. However, saga writers usually introduce subsequent incidents by placing them within a chronological framework connected to a given dateable event by using seasons as markers of the passing of time. Unfortunately, protagonists are usually introduced as adults and it is often necessary to use another method to discover their age relative to their siblings and parents. By using the legal statements concerning the ages at which certain activities began to be undertaken and rights were conferred, it is then possible to infer the probable age, or at least a minimum possible age, of an individual at certain key events, such as marriage or property administration. *Grágás* illustrates that sixteen was closely connected in the laws to the right to control of property, to claim an inheritance,⁴⁶⁶ and to administer the property of others.⁴⁶⁷ However, there were also certain activities in the legal arena in which men could participate from as early as twelve. A twelve year old could prosecute certain cases in the courts, or even judge a capital crime.⁴⁶⁸ A twelve year old could also, potentially, be judged capable of taking up the inherited office of chieftain, if there was agreement that he should do so.⁴⁶⁹ Thus in the administration of property, where men in the study are participating on these terms they have been assumed to be above the age of sixteen, or twelve in matters of legal prosecutions. Although, as was noted in Chapter Four, these were by no means universally observed conventions (pp.83-5).

⁴⁶⁶ *Grágás*, Ia, 225-6.

⁴⁶⁷ *Grágás*, Ia, 225-6, 230-1.

⁴⁶⁸ *SS*, i, 283.

⁴⁶⁹ *Grágás*, Ia, 142.

Given that a great many of the protagonists in the sagas were taking part in hostilities, it is also important to establish a minimum age at which participation might occur. There are few examples from the sagas where the ages are known from dates of birth or explicit description. Among these are a small number of examples of young men taking part in fights where their age can be established. The youngest recorded participants were Einarr Þorvaldsson (V.18), who was thirteen,⁴⁷⁰ Ketilbjörn Gizurarson (H.26) who was fourteen,⁴⁷¹ and Klængr Bjarnarson (H.19) who had his own group of followers on an expedition at sixteen,⁴⁷² and Guðmundr Ormsson who was sixteen.⁴⁷³ However, as such acknowledgements of age were uncommon it must be asked whether these individuals ages denoted exceptional cases. Therefore with these examples in mind it seems probable that participation in hostilities would have been viable from one's mid-teens.

The ages at which marriage and fatherhood were probable are even harder to establish. Yet, it may be possible to establish an age at which marriage or fatherhood were possible. This thorny issue has been thoroughly addressed by Herlihy, who cautions against certainty in attempting to establish an average age of marriage, especially for men, in the medieval period.⁴⁷⁴ Therefore, this chapter makes no such attempt to tackle the question of the 'normal' age at marriage for men in the sample. Instead, it is concerned merely to reach a satisfactory *terminus a quo*, an age before which fatherhood and marriage would not be likely. For example, Þorvarðr (G.3) and Ari Þorgeirsson (G.6) were brothers who both embarked upon sexual relationships, resulting in children, while still teenagers. The former was seventeen; the latter may have been as young as fourteen, but certainly no older than sixteen, when the relationships began.⁴⁷⁵ Þorvarðr was a father of at least two children, by more than one mistress, by the time he was twenty, and Ari was the father of four children by his mistress, Úlfheiðr, by the time he was twenty-one. Þorvaldr Gizurarson (H.7) arranged the marriage of his fifteen-year-old son, Gizurr (H.15), in

⁴⁷⁰ SS, i, 445, he accompanied his elder half-brother Illugi on an expedition with the express purpose of seeking out their father's killers for revenge.

⁴⁷¹ SS, i, 477, he brought a group of armed men to support his father.

⁴⁷² SS, i, 347.

⁴⁷³ SS, ii, 91, he accompanied his elder brother into a fight.

⁴⁷⁴ Herlihy, *Medieval Households*, 107-11.

⁴⁷⁵ SS, i, 72-3, 118, 123.

1224.⁴⁷⁶ However, there are no other marriages for which the age of the groom can be established that involved such a young groom. It does not appear to have been unusual for men in their late teens and early twenties to have affairs and illegitimate children. For example, Sturla Sighvatsson's mother, Halldóra, quietly ensured that her son's mistress and illegitimate daughter were removed from his household, before the newly wed twenty-four year old returned to the property with his bride. Therefore for the purposes of reconstruction of families, where no clearer information is available, I will use as a *terminus a quo*, sixteen for fatherhood of illegitimate children and twenty for marriage and fatherhood of legitimate children, given that a marriage probably required the acquisition of greater resources than acquiring a mistress or conducting a liaison, resources which a very young man, not yet established in his own property, would have been unlikely to be able to provide. These generalisations, while by no means without problems, at least supply a framework around which to build a tentative reconstruction of the earliest probable date of birth of some of the protagonists where no other data is available. Where several brothers exist and a firm date of birth can be established for one of them I am assuming an average age gap of two years between siblings, given that births could occur much further apart, but it would have been unlikely that they regularly occurred closer together. Once again this *terminus a quo* is adopted in order to be able to work from a minimum probable position in family reconstruction.

Finally, throughout the case studies I make a distinction between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This reflects the increase in political and economic upheaval in Iceland as the end of the Commonwealth approached.⁴⁷⁷ The case studies can illustrate how instability in the public arena could impact upon the internal father / son relationships.

The Sturlungar⁴⁷⁸

This family dominate the compilation, in part due to the fact that a family member, Sturla Þórðarson (S.14), was the of author *Íslendinga saga*, the largest saga

⁴⁷⁶ SS, i, 302.

⁴⁷⁷ Miller, *Bloodtaking*, 22; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, 82-3, 110-5.

⁴⁷⁸ See Genealogies 1a and 1b.

by far in the collection, and he was overwhelmingly concerned with recording the events which affected his family. However, the Sturlungar family also inspired two other sagas *Þórðar saga kakala* and *Þorgils saga skarða*, which suggests that their prominence was not wholly due to self-absorption. Of the families selected for case study, the detail available for family reconstruction and even more importantly for individual motivations, is proportionally far greater for the Sturlungar than for any other family. They comprised 37 men, of whom twenty were known to be legitimate and thirteen to be illegitimate. Therefore, in the family as a whole over a third of the men were illegitimate.

Information about father / son relationships and property transmission in the twelfth century is limited to two generations. Þórðr Gilsson' sons (S.1), *Hvamm Sturla Þórðarson* (S.2) (1116-1183)⁴⁷⁹ and his brother Snorri (S.3) seem to have shared the inheritance of their father's property in Fell.⁴⁸⁰ There is insufficient information to be clear if the partition was unequal, but of the two brothers only Sturla came to prominence as a chieftain.

Hvamm Sturla (S.2) had six sons, three illegitimate, Sveinn (S.4), Björn (S.5) and Halldórr (S.6) and three legitimate, Þórðr (S.7), Sighvatr (S.8) and Snorri (S.9). None of the illegitimate sons can be shown to have shared in the inheritance from their father although it is possible that they received gifts from their father which were not recorded in the saga. Sveinn was the eldest, born some time after the late 1130s, and his relationship with his father appears to have been close. He supported his father in his disputes and business ventures and lived for a time with his mistress at his father's farm.⁴⁸¹ Sveinn was also able to contract a marriage which also suggests he had the means to support a wife and very probably this came through his relationship with his father⁴⁸². Björn was born some time in the 1160s after the death of Sturla's first wife and before his second marriage.⁴⁸³ Halldórr is only known from

⁴⁷⁹ SS, i, 60, 229.

⁴⁸⁰ SS, i, 64, Þórðr Gilsson died after 1148, SS, i, 66, 67 Sturla had property in Fell in 1150, SS, i, 88 Snorri (S.3) also had property there.

⁴⁸¹ SS, i, 54, 82, 89, 92-4, 98, 105, 108, Sveinn was active in the 1160s and 1170s.

⁴⁸² SS, i, 54, Sveinn married Úrsula Snorradóttir.

⁴⁸³ SS, i, 76.

one incident in the sources and the circumstances are somewhat bizarre.⁴⁸⁴ A farmer who had displeased Sturla was forced to foster Halldórr for a time, but then the boy was soon returned to his maternal kin. However, it does illustrate how father / son relationships could vary, Halldórr does not seem to have been integrated into the family at all, unlike his brothers Sveinn and Björn.⁴⁸⁵ Sturla's eldest legitimate son Þórðr (S.7) (1165-1237)⁴⁸⁶ was born when his father was 49, which was a considerable age gap. At the time that his father died, Þórðr was eighteen and lived with his father at Hvammr.⁴⁸⁷ As in the case of his father, Þórðr did not inherit exclusively, but shared some part of his inheritance with his two younger legitimate brothers Sighvatr (S.8) and Snorri (S.9), whose cases as sons whose father died when they were minors will be addressed later in this chapter (p.175).⁴⁸⁸

The thirteenth century focuses mainly on the three legitimate sons of Sturla (S.2) as fathers. However, there is one recorded descendant of Sveinn Sturluson, Sturla (S.11). His relationship with his father is not recorded but it can be inferred from his continued association with, and service to, the Sturlungar family that his father had been instrumental in his development. It was Sturla (S.11) who was considered a suitable temporary guardian of the inheritance of Snorri Sturluson, his legitimate uncle after his violent death in 1241.⁴⁸⁹

Þórðr Sturluson (S.7) had one legitimate son, Böðvarr (S.12), and four illegitimate sons, Óláfr (S.13), Sturla (S.14), Guttormr (S.15) and Þórðr *tiggi* (S.16). Böðvarr was born between 1193 and 1200, when his father was in his mid thirties.⁴⁹⁰ Þórðr's illegitimate sons were all born to their father's mistress Þóra during Þórðr's late forties and fifties.⁴⁹¹ It was only after Þóra's death that Þórðr remarried for a

⁴⁸⁴ SS, i, 98.

⁴⁸⁵ SS, i, 232, Sveinn and Björn's association with their paternal kin continued after the death of their father.

⁴⁸⁶ SS, i, 229, 401-2.

⁴⁸⁷ SS, i, 229.

⁴⁸⁸ SS, i, 234, 237, 315.

⁴⁸⁹ SS, i, 455, *Þau höfðu handsalat áðr Sturlu Sveinssyni féit til varúðar.*

⁴⁹⁰ SS, i, 232 Böðvarr's parents married in 1192. SS, i, 268, Sturla was calling upon Böðvarr's support by 1216 making his probable dates of birth 1193-1200.

⁴⁹¹ SS, i, 232, 303. Sturla (S.14) was born in 1214. Óláfr (S.13) could potentially have been born as early as the late 1190s as we do not know when his parents' liaison began, but in 1224 Þórðr described all his illegitimate sons as 'young' and as the other three would have been children of ten and under it is likely that Óláfr too was still a child in order to be included in this group.

third time, which suggests that it was a stable, long-term liaison. Þórðr's relationships with his sons offer points of comparison. Firstly, for Böðvarr the relationship was considerably longer, lasting until he was 37-44 years old in 1237.⁴⁹² Óláfr, the eldest of the illegitimate sons would probably have been in his mid twenties, Sturla was 23, Guttormr and Þórðr *tiggi* were probably close in age behind Sturla as Þórðr (S.16), by 1235, may have been living in a property of his own.⁴⁹³ Secondly, Böðvarr was for at least thirteen years an independently established chieftain, which would have meant that father and son had a prolonged relationship in which they were both father and son, and social equals.⁴⁹⁴ This case provides a clear example of the *pre-mortem* establishment of a son, for Staðr did not feature at all in Þórðr's death bed allocations, indicating that as far as he was concerned it was no longer a part of his property, but wholly Böðvarr's. This sheds important light on the whole concept of *pre-mortem* settlements in Iceland as it illustrates that Icelandic fathers really were giving their sons independence through such gifts. Óláfr (S.13) may also have been set up by his father *pre-mortem* just as his elder legitimate brother before him. As early as 1234, Óláfr is described as being resident at Bjarnarhöf,⁴⁹⁵ and although the text does not use the terms *átti* (owned), *gerði bú* (set up residence) or *taka við bú* (take up residence), all of which were terms often used to describe ownership of property, it does refer to the farm as his *heim* (home), and in 1236 he is described as moving that home to Borg, a property with which he continued to be associated throughout the 1240s.⁴⁹⁶ In addition, the fourth brother Þórðr is also recorded as having *gerði bú* at Langadal in 1235, again prior to his father's death, although it is possible it was his residence but not his own property, it does indicate he was living independently of his father at that time.⁴⁹⁷ While these properties do not appear to have been prominent family farms, nevertheless it is entirely possible that their father played a part in their achieving independent status before his death.

⁴⁹² SS, i, his parents were married in 1192, SS, i, 232, and he is leading men to support his father in 1216, SS, i, 268. If sixteen is taken as the likely earliest usual age at which a young man shouldered adult responsibilities, this suggests that Böðvarr was born no later than 1200.

⁴⁹³ SS, i, 386, Langadal.

⁴⁹⁴ SS, i, 303, 1224 he has a chieftaincy, 333, 1229 he was already resident at Staðr.

⁴⁹⁵ SS, i, 377, 379.

⁴⁹⁶ SS, i, 402, 404.

⁴⁹⁷ SS, i, 386.

Þórðr's dispersal of property at his death amongst his sons is significant in several ways.⁴⁹⁸ Böðvarr received 500 hundreds, which constituted just less than 50 percent of his father's property.⁴⁹⁹ The rest was divided between Þórðr's widow, legitimate daughters, illegitimate sons and illegitimate daughters. Óláfr and Sturla received 100 hundreds and Guttormr and Þórðr (S.16) 80 hundreds each. All the illegitimate sons received a greater settlement than any of their sisters who all received 40 hundreds.⁵⁰⁰ The second illegitimate son, Sturla (S.14) also received Eyrr, his father's final residence and an important family farm.⁵⁰¹ This settlement on his own property can be taken to suggest that Sturla was particularly favoured, possibly that he had an especially close relationship with his father. As the eldest, and only legitimate son, Böðvarr's consent was sought by his father, before the division of property was finalised. Whether this was a legal or customary requirement, or simply a courtesy is not expressed. But Þórðr's reported speech (composed, it should be noted, by one of the illegitimate beneficiaries) describes Böðvarr as *arfi*, his 'heir', when making the request.⁵⁰² According to the legal statements Böðvarr was the only member of the family entitled to inherit.⁵⁰³ Given that he had over thirteen years of complete independence as a chieftain to establish a strong following and influence among his peers and in the courts, he was in a strong position had he wanted to challenge the claims of his young, inexperienced and much less affluent illegitimate brothers. Therefore, by his consent, he was, in effect, transferring control back into the hands of his father. The mutual trust that the request and the consent imply are illustrative of the ideals of filial loyalty discussed in Chapter Three. If Þórðr were uncertain of his son's loyalty or integrity, and he wanted to secure his illegitimate children's future, he could have settled those sums upon his illegitimate offspring *pre-mortem* and presented Böðvarr with a *fait accompli*. Thus, the transaction between father and son is indicative of a harmonious

⁴⁹⁸ SS, i, 401.

⁴⁹⁹ SS, i, 401, Jochens, 'En islande Médiévale', 95.

⁵⁰⁰ SS, i, 401. Þórðr died in 1237 when his eldest and only legitimate son Böðvarr was in his late thirties or forties, but his illegitimate sons were born later, only Sturla's (S.14) (SS, ii, 236) date of birth is given in the saga material, but as he was the second of the four sons, and their mother died in 1224 (SS, i, 303) it is possible to reconstruct their ages fairly closely. Sturla was born when his father was 49, and 23 years old when his father died, Óláfr would have been a few years older and Guttormr and Þórðr *tiggi* no more than their late teens or just entering their twenties.

⁵⁰¹ SS, i, 401.

⁵⁰² SS, i, 401.

⁵⁰³ *Grágás*, Ia. 218.

relationship. It demonstrates a sustained level of loyalty and trust, both in the confidence which his father showed by entrusting him with an important farm in the 1220s, and also in the resolution of his father's estate in 1237. In 1224, Þórðr appeared to judge his younger sons unworthy of inheritance, citing their youth and illegitimacy.⁵⁰⁴ However, this should not be taken to indicate a lack of investment in his relationship with those sons. In 1224 Sturla was only ten years old, Óláfr not much older and Guttormr and Þórðr *tiggi* both younger, it would appear that it was their youth, more than their illegitimacy, which made him doubt their abilities. It may be more illuminating to consider Þórðr's bequests, which appear to show that he was concerned to provide for their future prosperity and indicates a level of investment in them. His particular selection of Sturla for the prestigious Eyrr property may imply that that relationship was especially close.

Böðvarr (S.12) and Sturla (S.14) both became fathers themselves. Böðvarr had four sons, Þorgils (S.26), Sighvatr (S.27) and Guðmundr (S.28) by his wife and an illegitimate son named Ingimundr (S.29)⁵⁰⁵. Þorgils was born when his father was between 26 and 33.⁵⁰⁶ In 1241, at the age of fifteen, he was a hostage of Gizurr Þorvaldsson (H.15) along with his uncle Guttormr (S.15).⁵⁰⁷ In 1244, at eighteen he travelled to Norway and did not return until 1252.⁵⁰⁸ This absence, whether voluntary, or enforced by the Norwegian king, may have affected his relationship with his father. For on his return, he did not wait for his father to offer a *pre-mortem* establishment, but installed himself on his late uncle Snorri's estate at Reykjaholt.⁵⁰⁹ His actions suggest that during his absence in Norway he had attained full adult male status, perhaps through service to the king, and returned with the resources and ability to establish himself. He was in a sense bypassing his father. It is possible that his return after pursuing an independent career in Norway created a distance in the relationship between father and son. However, it is worth noting that despite nearly a decade's absence, Böðvarr did not establish one of Þorgil's younger brothers instead. Just a year later, in 1253, Böðvarr gave up the central family farm to

⁵⁰⁴ SS, i, 303.

⁵⁰⁵ Ingimundr appears to have been a loyal retainer of his father and brothers, but no other provision for him can be shown. SS, ii, 125, ii, 139, 143, 148, 191.

⁵⁰⁶ SS, ii, 104.

⁵⁰⁷ SS, i, 455, 465.

⁵⁰⁸ SS, ii, 106, 118.

⁵⁰⁹ SS, ii, 122.

Þorgils, which indicates either that the father and son had reconnected and established a closer bond, or that Böðvarr recognised a shift in the balance of power in the relationship.⁵¹⁰ Böðvarr moved to another of the family estates, and in a sense this might be interpreted as a form of retirement. Þorgils meanwhile proceeded to run through the resources of Staðr, and to live at a further three establishments in just five years.⁵¹¹ As Böðvarr had managed Staðr since his own twenties, and had administered his substantial inheritance from Þórðr for twenty years, it is questionable whether his decision to relinquish control to his apparently profligate and until now, mostly absent, eldest legitimate son was forced upon him, either as a matter of political constraint, or out of respect for the practice of establishing sons from which he had himself benefited (p.148), or perhaps represents a case of poor judgement by Böðvarr based on his newly reformed relationship with a prodigal son. Þorgils predeceased his father, leaving the latter free to select another son to serve as his heir.⁵¹² Böðvarr appears to have had confidence in his second son Sighvatr's (S.27) abilities, or at least his loyalty, as he immediately established him at Staðr in 1259, when Sighvatr was no more than 30 years-old.⁵¹³ But Sighvatr had not been established on another property by his father before that time. He had lived with his father and brother until then.⁵¹⁴ Guðmundr Böðvarsson (S.28) was a retainer first of his father, then of his brother Sighvatr during the 1260s.⁵¹⁵ In 1274 he emigrated to Norway to become a retainer of the king, which suggests that he did not receive any substantial inheritance from his father.⁵¹⁶ This suggests that either Böðvarr did not believe in dividing his property between more than one son, or that he did not consider Guðmundr worthy, or that by the last decades of the Commonwealth his resources were considerably reduced. Nevertheless there were other routes to independent status, or at least to improving one's prospects of attaining it, that Icelandic sons could pursue, Guðmundr chose to explore the possibilities of advancement through service to the Norwegian king.

⁵¹⁰ SS, ii, 149.

⁵¹¹ SS, ii, 149, 196, 208, 209.

⁵¹² SS, ii, 221, 223.

⁵¹³ His elder brother Þorgils was born in 1226 (SS, ii, 104).

⁵¹⁴ SS, ii, 221.

⁵¹⁵ SS, ii, 221, 226, 229.

⁵¹⁶ SS, ii, 226.

Sturla Þórðarson (S.12) had two legitimate sons, Snorri (S.30) (1244-1306),⁵¹⁷ and Þórðr (S.31). Sturla was thirty when he became a father. Like Þorgils (S.26) there was a period during which Snorri's father was absent from his life. In his case the separation was caused by his father's being summoned to Norway when Snorri was nineteen.⁵¹⁸ Father and son were reunited in Norway as Sturla had his family join him soon after, and they returned as a family in 1271, when Snorri was 25. Sturla gave over control of Staðarhól to him at this time. This was one of the family farms, and had been his father's main residence for twenty years from 1235 to 1255.⁵¹⁹ Snorri inherited when he was 40 years old. His legitimate younger brother Þórðr (S.31) was a cleric at the court of the Norwegian king.⁵²⁰

Sighvatr Sturluson (S.8) (1170-1238)⁵²¹ as a father presents very conflicting images. He had seven legitimate sons. Tumi (S.17), Sturla (S.18), Kolbeinn (S.19), Þórðr (S.20), Markús (S.21), Þórðr (S.22) and (Tumi S.23) and no illegitimate sons. Tumi (S.17) (1198-1222)⁵²² was Sighvatr's eldest son. Tumi had been fostered at a very early age, possibly as young as four years old, with his maternal grandmother and step-grandfather, Sigurðr Ormsson.⁵²³ Sigurðr possessed more than one chieftaincy, and he transferred some of these to his step-grandson Tumi as a gift while Tumi was still a child.⁵²⁴ However, as Tumi was too young to administer the chieftaincies himself, Sigurðr continued to do so until 1211, when he transferred the authority to manage them into the hands of Tumi's father Sighvatr when Tumi was thirteen years old. His relationship with his father rapidly deteriorated around 1221, when, while still just 23, he became impatient to assert his independence as an adult male, and was faced with the obstacle of his father's preference for his younger brother Sturla (S.18). It may be that the early gift of the chieftaincies had set Tumi's expectations high and made the preference of his father for his younger brother all the more unpalatable. The underlying causes of his discontent and the implications of the dispute with his father and his subsequent actions are examined in detail in

⁵¹⁷ *SS*, ii, 288.

⁵¹⁸ *SS*, ii, 230.

⁵¹⁹ *SS*, ii, 236.

⁵²⁰ *SS*, ii, 235.

⁵²¹ *SS*, i, 229, i, 438.

⁵²² *SS*, i, 239, i, 288.

⁵²³ *SS*, i, 239, between 1202-1204.

⁵²⁴ *SS*, i, 243, some time between 1202 and 1211.

Chapter Four. (pp.98-102). Tumi predeceased his father, but given their stormy relationship, it is entirely possible that he would not have been in a good position to inherit had he lived.

The relationship of Sighvatr with his other sons provides a stark contrast to his conflict with Tumi. Two of Sighvatr's other six sons received property in their father's lifetime. Sturla Sighvatsson (S,18) (1199-1238)⁵²⁵ was the second and, arguably, favourite son of Sighvatr Sturluson (S.8). By the age of 22 Sturla had already been established by his father.⁵²⁶ Sturla was capable of acts of political foolishness, and yet retained his father's support throughout his life. For instance, at eighteen, Sturla attacked a farmer in a dispute over a sword. This was ill-judged because Sighvatr at the time had only tenuous control over the area. The loyalty of the þingmen in the region had not yet been won and the situation was politically volatile.⁵²⁷ Although, on learning of the incident Sighvatr 'began to scold Sturla severely',⁵²⁸ he later let Sturla off the hook in private, telling him that for appearances' sake he had to make a fuss but that he did not consider it serious.⁵²⁹ Interestingly, Tumi (S.17) gave his support to Sturla's action, which, given the circumstances facing his father in that region, was politically naïve at best. It may be that Sighvatr was correct to deny Tumi a significant degree of power, on the grounds of his lack of political awareness, but it in no way explains his preference for Sturla. Especially as in the incident Tumi was merely the apologist for an irresponsible action, while Sturla was the actual perpetrator. Jochens has argued for a selective inheritance process in which the father decides which son is '*le plus capable*' of his potential heirs.⁵³⁰ If this were the case, then the evidence of the saga is not a ringing endorsement of Sighvatr's judgement. The saga evidence suggests that father / son relationships could be shaped by favouritism and influenced by quirks of character as much as by conscious decision making. Sighvatr absolved Sturla of blame for his actions as an unruly eighteen year old,⁵³¹ and twenty years later, when Sturla's actions threatened the future of the entire family, Sighvatr, an experienced chieftain

⁵²⁵ SS, i, 237.

⁵²⁶ SS, i, 243, 284.

⁵²⁷ Guðrún Nordal, *Ethics*, 56-57.

⁵²⁸ SS, i, 261.

⁵²⁹ SS, i, 261.

⁵³⁰ Jochens, 'En islande Médiévale', 97-99.

⁵³¹ SS, i, 261.

of over forty years, only mildly rebuked his son, gently teasing him with the implication that he thought Sturla may have become a little too big for his boots.⁵³² The relationship of Sighvatr and Sturla appears one in which the father, out of favouritism, found it hard to refuse, or to chastise his son, even though he evidently had no such limitations when it came to dealing with his eldest son Tumi (S.17).

Sighvatr's third son Kolbeinn (S.19) also received an establishment, newly acquired by his father in 1231. Kolbeinn would have been in his twenties or 31 at the most.⁵³³ This may have been a reward for a career in which he supported both his father and his more favoured brother, even at one stage becoming a *heimamann*, 'retainer', of Sturla.⁵³⁴ Thus Kolbeinn's experience demonstrates how socially constructed ideals of loyalty of sons could have concrete benefits for some. Kolbeinn's steadfast service to his father and elder brother ultimately saw him given a similar preference to his brother. Similarly, while the fourth son, Þórðr Sighvatsson *kakala*, (S.20) was not the recipient of a family property, he was given an important role during his twenties or early thirties, managing the estates of Kolbeinn *ungi* which had been given into the care of his father in 1235.⁵³⁵ Sighvatr's fifth and sixth sons, Markús and Þórðr *krókr* do not seem to have profited from their father's benevolence. They could have been anywhere in age from their late teens to early thirties, and died alongside their father and two of their elder brothers.⁵³⁶ Both functioned as followers of their father's party, taking on the role of loyal retainers.⁵³⁷

Little is known of the relationship of Tumi Sighvatsson (S.23) the younger with his father as he may have been as young as sixteen at the death of his father.⁵³⁸

⁵³² *SS*, i, 407-8.

⁵³³ *SS*, i, 346; All Sighvatr's sons were old enough to fight at Örlyggstaðr in 1238 (*SS*, i, 436), if the youngest was sixteen, Kolbeinn would have been born no later than c. 1214. However, as his next eldest brother Sturla (S.18) was born in 1198 it is difficult to envisage a break of sixteen years between the first two of Sighvatr's sons and the next five being born. Therefore it is more probable that Kolbeinn was born somewhere between 1200-1210.

⁵³⁴ *SS*, i, 344.

⁵³⁵ *SS*, i, 386. As with Kolbeinn, Þórðr's date of birth is not known, however with three younger brothers fighting at Örlyggstaðr he cannot have been born much after 1216, and probably sooner, sometime between 1202-1216.

⁵³⁶ (S.21) and (S.22) could have been born between 1204-1218 and 1206-1220 respectively.

⁵³⁷ *SS*, i, 420, but i, 408, in 1237 when Sighvatr is reprimanding Sturla, he sarcastically refers to Markús and Þórðr as followers, suggesting that Sighvatr at least foresaw a different future for these two sons as well.

⁵³⁸ *SS*, i, 436. Tumi was at the battle of Örlyggstaðr but survived.

However, it is clear that even a seventh son could exhibit loyalty to his father, as he too was present at the battle that claimed his father's and brothers' lives. The battle was the conclusion of the aggressive policy of Sturla Sighvatsson (S.18). However, the presence of every one of his brothers except Þórðr *kakala* (S.20), who was out of the country at the time, is suggestive of the ties of family loyalty, and in particular the loyalty of all the sons to their father who took part despite his misgivings about Sturla's ambitions, discussed above (pp.153-4).

It is worth remarking the unusual naming pattern of Sighvatr's sons. Tumi and Kolbeinn both drew from the chieftain family of their mother, Halldóra Tumadóttir, while Sturla and Þórðr were both Sturlungar names. Only Markús is unusual in either family. It is the reuse of two of the names which demands attention. If Tumi alone had been reused it would be tempting, in the light of the strained relationship between Sighvatr and the elder Tumi (S.17), to see the second Tumi (S.23) as an attempt to erase the elder Tumi from the family record by literally replacing him; an argument made all the more plausible as the younger Tumi was in fact the youngest son, making it possible that he was even born after the death of his eldest brother in 1222, if his mother remained fertile after twenty-four years of marriage. But this could not account for the fourth (S.20) and sixth (S.22) sons respectively being named Þórðr. There can be no suggestion of replacement in this case as the elder Þórðr outlived the younger. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the elder of the Þórðrs had a poor relationship with his father to justify his replacement. Nor could the two Þórðrs be the result of confusion on the part of the saga writer, given that one of the writers who described them both as distinct individuals was Sturla Þórðarson (S.14), these men's first cousin. Why did Sighvatr and Halldóra recycle two important ancestral names, one from each of their families, when naming their sons? Although it is tempting to see the two Tumis in the context of the breakdown of the relationship with the elder Tumi, the two Þórðrs challenge this interpretation and the reasoning behind the decision, unique in the Icelandic case studies, may remain a mystery.

Only three of Sighvatr's sons became fathers, Jón Sturluson (S.32) and Sighvatr Tumason (S.37) both lost their fathers when they were minors and will be discussed below (pp.177). Þórðr (S.20) had four illegitimate sons, Jón (S.33), Þórðr

(S. 34), Úlfr, (S.35) and Styrmir (S.36). Their case demonstrates that it was not just the bond between father and son that was important for illegitimate sons when inheritance was at issue, but also one's father's power. Þórðr (S.20) had made himself one of the most powerful chieftains in Iceland, but he had many enemies, and was exiled to Norway for the final four years of his life. He was not in a position to promote and support his illegitimate sons. Thus when he died, his sister Steinvör was able to claim as her right all his lands, leaving his sons without any property at all.⁵³⁹ It was the political background to their case which proved decisive.

Snorri Sturluson (S.9) (1178-1241),⁵⁴⁰ if the sources are to be believed, was a disaster as a father. He had two sons, the eldest, Jón *murtr* (S.24) (1203-1231),⁵⁴¹ was legitimate. The youngest, Órækja Sturluson (S.25) (1205-1245)⁵⁴² was illegitimate. Jón, like his cousin Böðvarr, was his father's only legitimate son, but his relations with his father suggest comparison with his cousin Tumi instead. Between the ages of seventeen and twenty Jón was a hostage of the Norwegian king ensuring his father's favourable conduct in Iceland.⁵⁴³ After returning to Iceland Jón's career shows evidence that his father may have been grooming him for a position of power. He conducted legal cases for his father throughout his early twenties.⁵⁴⁴ In 1227, when Jón was 24, his father negotiated to have the hereditary Sturlunga family chieftaincy divided between the branches of the family and for one third to be settled upon Jón.⁵⁴⁵ Jón appears to have interpreted these actions as a signal of his father's intentions to support his independent establishment. As his father's only legitimate son, with just one illegitimate younger brother, Órækja, he may have had reason to feel confident that he would be his father's choice for settlement on a property and independence. However, this was the one thing Snorri could not bring himself to do. Whether he doubted Jón's abilities, or mistrusted his capacity to remain loyal when in possession of his own property, Snorri made no attempt to give Jón a farm of his own to run. By 1229 it is not clear whether Jón was especially impatient, or whether 26 was late for such an establishment, but Jón had

⁵³⁹ SS, ii, 209.

⁵⁴⁰ SS, i, 229, 454.

⁵⁴¹ SS, 304, 343.

⁵⁴² SS, i, 301, he was eighteen in 1223, suggesting a date of birth of 1205.

⁵⁴³ SS, i, 286 & 304.

⁵⁴⁴ SS, i, 310 (1226), 319 (1228), 335 (1229).

⁵⁴⁵ SS, i, 315.

become frustrated at what he evidently saw as a delay.⁵⁴⁶ He wanted to marry Helga Sæmundardóttir, one of the most eligible heiresses in Iceland. To be taken seriously as a suitor, he needed the backing of his father and substantial property. He asked his father for the ecclesiastical estate and income of Stafaholt. Snorri countered with an offer of Borgarland and the inheritance from Jón's mother, which would not have involved Snorri parting with any of his own property.⁵⁴⁷ Jón evidently did not consider it sufficient to attract his desired bride and perhaps, given the extent of his father's wealth around that time, Jón had inflated expectations.⁵⁴⁸ Disaffected, he planned a journey to Norway against his father's wishes. At the last moment, Snorri relented and offered the original dowry.⁵⁴⁹ But Jón departed anyway and died abroad leaving Snorri with no legitimate heir.⁵⁵⁰

Órækja's turbulent relationship with his father appears to have been the guiding factor in his career, rather than his illegitimacy. Snorri initially encouraged Órækja. Snorri entrusted a lawsuit to him when he was eighteen, while Jón was in Norway.⁵⁵¹ At first the relationship appeared to follow the pattern of loyalty and reward that seems to have characterised other father / son relationships. After Jón's death in 1231, Órækja was Snorri's only remaining son. In 1232, at the age of 27, his father arranged an extremely advantageous marriage for him and his position seemed assured. Yet Snorri failed to honour the dowry agreements, making, and then breaking, two separate promises to give an important ecclesiastical staðr.⁵⁵² This is reminiscent of Snorri's vacillation over Jón's marriage settlement, just a few years before, which had wrecked Jón's attempt to secure the hand of an heiress. By 1236 Órækja was in his thirties and the only property he was associated with was the administration of his nephew Einarr Þorvaldsson's estate, to which he had no legal claim. In an effort to rectify this, he joined with his father's opponents and gained as a result one of the dowry properties, Stafaholt, that he had been promised four years

⁵⁴⁶ The exact age at which a son might be established is rarely stated, Sturla Sighvatsson (S.18) had his own farm by 22, but there is no way to be sure if this was average or early.

⁵⁴⁷ *SS*, i, 335.

⁵⁴⁸ *SS*, i, 303 just five years earlier in 1224 he had become the richest man in Iceland after forming a union with a very wealthy widow.

⁵⁴⁹ *SS*, i, 335.

⁵⁵⁰ *SS*, i, 343.

⁵⁵¹ *SS*, i, 301.

⁵⁵² *SS*, i,359-361.

earlier.⁵⁵³ It was the only instance of a son taking up with his father's enemies in the case studies. Father and son were later reconciled and Órækja continued to support Snorri until his death in 1241. There is a distinct pattern to Snorri's relationship with both his sons. It appears that Snorri simply could not bring himself to relinquish to either of his sons the means to become independent of their father, and in this way he succeeded in alienating both of them. Thus, whatever the faults of impatience or disloyalty exhibited by Jón and Órækja, they appear to have been mitigated by the fact that their father also failed to live up to the ideals of provision, protection and loyalty expected of a father in Icelandic society. Snorri's refusal to allow either of his sons to fully develop their adult male status when both of them had very good reasons to expect preference from him is all the more surprising when contrasted with his brothers Þórðr (S.7) and Sighvatr (S.8), who from a larger pool of sons each gave preference to three or more sons, enabling many of Jón and Órækja's cousins to make the transition from dependent to independent men, a journey Snorri never permitted to either of his sons despite his vast resources. Why he denied his sons what so many Icelandic fathers obviously felt an obligation to provide is a matter for speculation. Jochens suggests that for some reason Snorri was simply dissatisfied with the sons that he had.⁵⁵⁴

Summary - Sturlungar

The twelfth-century Sturlung case studies conform closely to the pattern of inheritance suggested by the laws, and from what little can be gleaned about Sturla (S.2) and Sveinn's (S.4) relationship, also demonstrate the ideals of harmonious father / son interactions. However the thirteenth century represents far greater diversity in both elements of the relationship. One of the key components of the nature of the father / son relationship appears to have been the issue of inheritance, property transfer, and the level of expectation of this that sons had. In the thirteenth century examples a detailed and complex picture, which involved a great deal of flexibility in the ways in which fathers could distribute property, emerged. Linked to this was the issue of the expectations of sons. If the father had a degree of choice over the settlement of his property, certainly during his life-time, and in some ways

⁵⁵³ SS, i, 394.

⁵⁵⁴ Jochens, 'En islande Médiévale', 97.

after his death as well, the eldest legitimate sons nevertheless appear to have held at some level an expectation of both the *pre-mortem* establishment and of inheritance being due to them. Tumi (S.17) and possibly Þorgils (S.26) both demonstrated by their actions that they held expectations which were probably linked to their birth status. Jón (S.24) too, although he was the sole legitimate son, was also an eldest son and the two combined appear to have given him the confidence to aspire to a marriage at the very highest level of Icelandic society. That two out of these three were disappointed in their assumptions suggests this was a less than concrete convention. This underlying expectation might explain why, out of all the examples for which we have sufficient information to form an opinion, Böðvarr experienced a harmonious relationship with his father. Böðvarr's father was the only one to establish his eldest legitimate son in the role he had hoped for in a timely manner.

The importance to the prospects of sons of an affective relationship with their father is demonstrated by the Sturlungar sample. Sturla, (S.18) for example, was not established merely by default due to the poor relationship of Sighvatr with Tumi (S.17). There was a genuine level of affection. It is significant perhaps that only one of Sighvatr's six remaining sons strayed as far as Norway. The rest were all closely connected to their father, which may also speak to a level of affection as the basis for their loyalty as much as duty imposed by social convention. Younger and illegitimate sons did not necessarily expect to get an equal share, or to receive family property, but if an affective relationship could be achieved with one's father then some form of provision could be hoped for. Using his own family as an example it appears that Sturla Þórðarson (S.14) was concerned to demonstrate the benefits of patience and loyalty as characteristics desirable in a son. The sons who displayed these traits, such as Kolbeinn Sighvatsson (S.19), Sighvatr Böðvarsson (S.27) and not insignificantly, Sturla himself, all eventually benefited from their fathers' generosity. The sons who get bad press from Sturla are those he believes displayed impatience or arrogance in their expectations, such as Tumi Sighvatsson (S.17) and Jón *murtr* Snorrason (S.24). Therefore the makeup of one's character was also key to the continued harmony of the father / son relationship.

But it is also important to place both Tumi and Jón in a cultural context. These two young men saw members of their own family, their own generation,

established as independent male adults, while they remained in the category of dependent males. The refusal of their fathers to admit them into the ranks of fully adult males through the acquisition of property, power, and independence threatened their future prospects and affected how their peers perceived them. The breakdown of the father / son relationship which followed represented aberrant behaviour on the part of sons, from whom loyalty was expected. But it was also potentially understandable in terms of their upbringing, which would have led them to hold expectations, justified or not, of matching the status of their fathers.

The Ásbirningar ⁵⁵⁵

In contrast to the other Icelandic families in the case studies, the ratio of illegitimate men in the family to legitimate men was just one in ten. The evidence of father / son interactions is limited but some conclusions can be drawn from the transfers of property.

The first transfer of the twelfth century appears to have favoured Arnórr Ásbjarnarson (A.2) over his two brothers, although both Þorsteinn (A.3) and Böðvarr (A.4) functioned within elite society, it was Arnórr who became the chieftain.⁵⁵⁶ The saga does not address how the property then passed to Arnórr's son Kolbeinn (A.5) but his own relationship with his sons Tumi (A.7) and Arnórr (A.8) inspires some speculation. Arnórr Kolbeinsson (A.8) was his father's only legitimate son. He appears to have inherited part of the Ásbirningar family lands given the fact that his own son, Kolbeinn Arnórsson *kaldaljós* (A.12), owned Staðr, in Skagafjörður, the Ásbirningar family's district.⁵⁵⁷ However, Arnórr was probably not his father's main heir, it was his illegitimate brother Tumi (A.7) who is described as a *mikill höfðingi* 'powerful chieftain'.⁵⁵⁸ It seems to be a case of an illegitimate son superseding a legitimate one in terms of inheritance. The evidence is scanty, but it may be possible that Arnórr was considerably younger than Tumi. Tumi might have developed a long-standing relationship with his father to the extent that by the time

⁵⁵⁵ See Genealogy 2.

⁵⁵⁶ *SS*, i, 54, (Arnórr). i, 68, (Þorsteinn). i, 44, 50, (Böðvarr)

⁵⁵⁷ *SS*, i, 142.

⁵⁵⁸ *SS*, i, 229.

Kolbeinn (A.5) died Tumi's power overcame that of his brother's legally stronger claim. Arnórr may even have been a child at the death of his father. His date of birth cannot conclusively be proven, but it is implied by the fact that his legitimate son was just three years old when he died, which prompts speculation that he died fairly young.⁵⁵⁹ Given that he died in 1180 and his father in 1166, it is possible that he was as young as nine when his father died.⁵⁶⁰ Tumi Kolbeinsson's first mention in the text is dated to 1173, but as an already established chieftain and the father in law of Ingimundr Þorgeirsson *prestr* (G.5).⁵⁶¹ The wedding took place in 1172 and was Sigríðr Tumadóttir's first marriage. The bride cannot have been younger than twelve, and as she was a legitimate child it is unlikely that her father was younger than twenty years old when she was born making Tumi's date of birth no later than 1140. Tumi cannot have been younger than his late twenties when his father died. However, the above is speculation, and it is entirely possible that Arnórr was himself the elder son. If there were any reason to believe that were so it would present an even clearer case of paternal favouritism if a younger illegitimate son had been preferred.

Tumi Kolbeinsson (A.7) had three sons, an illegitimate son, Þorsteinn (A.9), and two legitimate sons, Kolbeinn (A.10) and Arnórr (A.11). Despite his own father's illustrious career, Þorsteinn followed a more passive pattern with a career in the Church as an abbot.⁵⁶² Kolbeinn and Arnórr were both minors when their father died in 1184 and the position this put them in will be discussed below (pp.175-6), however, as Kolbeinn was about eleven he was on the cusp of eligibility to function, albeit with some restrictions, as a chieftain.⁵⁶³ Both he and his younger brother held lands in Skagafjörður, whether concurrently or successively is not clear, but while there is no positive evidence to prove that he postponed his brother Arnórr (A.10)

⁵⁵⁹ SS, i, 130, ii, 83.

⁵⁶⁰ Allowing for twenty to be the earliest a man might marry.

⁵⁶¹ SS, i, 124.

⁵⁶² SS, i, 130.

⁵⁶³ SS, ii, 69, Kolbeinn is described at dying *hálfertugr at aldri* 'in his mid thirties' the same as both his son and his brother, SS, i, 250, as he died in 1208, he was born around 1173, making his age when his own father died in 1184, around eleven. *Grágás*, ia, 142 states that a twelve year old could administer a chieftaincy.

this is suggested by the absence of any reference to Arnórr placing him in possession of property in Skagafjörðr before 1208, and Kolbeinn's death.⁵⁶⁴

In the thirteenth century the family was plagued by the early deaths of four chieftains;⁵⁶⁵ Kolbeinn Tumason (A.10) in 1208, his brother Arnórr (A.11) in 1221, Arnórr's son Kolbeinn *ungi* (A.15) in 1245 and his cousin Brandr Kolbeinsson (A.16) in 1246 leaving minor heirs. Kolbeinn *ungi* was just thirteen when his father died.⁵⁶⁶ The only father / son relationship about which we are informed in terms of its nature rather than its outcome is that between Kolbeinn Arnórsson (A.12) and Brandr (A.16). Kolbeinn had two sons, Brandr and Páll (A.17). Kolbeinn died in 1246 after Brandr who had died earlier that year.⁵⁶⁷ Kolbeinn was nearly seventy when he died. Brandr moreover was a father of a two sons aged seven and six when he died, which suggests that he was born some time between the late 1190s and 1219.⁵⁶⁸ He had therefore some time before his death for a relationship with his father to develop. The chieftaincy had descended through the other branch of the family. This might explain why Brandr, the eldest legitimate son, was not established by his father. Despite this, Brandr and his father seem to have been close. Brandr was married before 1239, which provides evidence that he had at least the resources to attract a bride: it is probable that it was his father who furnished this.⁵⁶⁹ Brandr, his wife and children, appear to have been co-habiting at Staðr with his father up until the death of Brandr's cousin Kolbeinn Arnórsson *ungi* (A.15) in 1245.⁵⁷⁰ By giving Brandr a share in the family farm Kolbeinn (A.12) ensured Brandr's status would be perceived as equal to that of his father, rather than dependent upon him. The continued harmony of the relationship may reflect either the compatibility of the father and son, a lack of ambition in the son, or an acceptance that there were not sufficient resources with which his father could

⁵⁶⁴ SS, i, 250, is the first reference to Arnórr at a *bú* – farmstead (1208), while the first one specifying the property takes place in 1218, Ás, in Skagafjörðr, SS, i, 272.

⁵⁶⁵ SS, ii, 69.

⁵⁶⁶ SS, i, 287.

⁵⁶⁷ SS, ii, 79, i, 83.

⁵⁶⁸ SS, ii, 85.

⁵⁶⁹ SS, i, 443.

⁵⁷⁰ SS, i, 443 Brandr was resident at Staðr in 1240, SS, i, 443, ii, 45, 69, Kolbeinn was resident at Staðr throughout the 1240s, SS, ii, 85 Brandr's wife described as *húsfreyja* at Staðr 1240 which can mean wife or mistress of the household, which suggests that both Brandr and his father were sharing the responsibility for the property.

establish him. Brandr and Kolbeinn's relationship appears to have been harmonious. Both these circumstances suggest that the father and son had a relationship of mutual respect and trust. Páll (A.17), was Kolbeinn's second son and after the death of his father and brother, he took over and sold his brother's property, despite the existence of two legitimate nephews whose claims surpassed his own.⁵⁷¹ The sale of the Ásbirningar property supports Jón Viðar Sigurðsson's claim that they were one of the chieftain families to decline over this period.⁵⁷²

Summary - Ásbirningar

Twelfth-century inheritance in the family suggests that the exclusion of any son, even an illegitimate one, was not a foregone conclusion. However, throughout the whole period the family do appear to have avoided equal division of the father's property, partly perhaps due to the small number of sons in each generation and may also be a sign that the fathers were preserving the property in times of decreasing resources. However, the early deaths of four successive chieftains may also have contributed to the decline of the family's power. However, the family does provide an example of a father and son from the thirteenth century who not only enjoyed a seemingly harmonious relationship, but managed to do so while sharing the family property rather than dividing it in a *pre-mortem* establishment of the son by the father. In the light of the diminishing resources it may be that this was the nearest approximation to an establishment that Kolbeinn could have offered. The willingness of a father with little property to share his own farm with a son rather than keep him wholly dependent and unmarried throws the actions of the extremely wealthy Snorri Sturluson into even sharper relief (pp.156-8).

The Haukdælir⁵⁷³

There were seven, possibly as many as eleven illegitimate sons in this family over the period, a proportion of between 25 and 40 percent. The ratio actually rose in the thirteenth century as the end of the Commonwealth drew near. The family

⁵⁷¹ SS, i, 525, he sold Staðr to Gizurr Þorvaldsson and bought Úlfstaðr.

⁵⁷² Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, 71.

⁵⁷³ See Genealogy 4.

experienced one case of consanguinity invalidating a marriage, and it appears from the rise in illegitimate sons that contracting a marriage was becoming problematic.

The first relationship which can be explored in detail in this family is that of Gizurr Hallason (H.6) and his sons at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century. Gizurr had three legitimate sons, Þorvaldr, (H.7), Hallr (H.8) and Magnús (H.9). The relationship between Gizurr and Þorvaldr would have had plenty of time to develop. Gizurr died in 1206, and Þorvaldr's first marriage ended in 1196 after the birth of five sons, which suggests that he was himself born not much after 1166 and would therefore have been around 40 by the time his father died.⁵⁷⁴ Þorvaldr and his first wife had an establishment at Hrúni, which was either given to him by his father, or came to him through his marriage.⁵⁷⁵ As his first wife died in 1196 and they were married for at least ten years, it is likely that Þorvaldr was established in his twenties some time during the 1180s. Hallr Gizurarson exercised many of the options open to the ambitious younger son: he married, he became an accomplished practitioner of the law, culminating in the post of Lawspeaker, and he finally became an abbot in Helgafell.⁵⁷⁶ Magnús also married, and had property in Tunga, but by being ordained a priest he opened the way to becoming a bishop.⁵⁷⁷ Therefore, while it does not appear that Þorvaldr's younger brothers shared in equal portions with him, they nevertheless had alternative careers open to them. Each of Gizurr's (H.6) sons' careers would have satisfied every impulse which the constructs of ideal adult male behaviour imposed upon them. They married, held property, fathered children and wielded authority.

The thirteenth century is where the detail becomes both more available and more complex. Most of the information concerns the sons of Þorvaldr (H.7). He had six sons, Guðmundr (H.10), Klængr (H.11), Björn (H.12), Einarr (H.13), Teitr (H.14) and Gizurr (H.15). The irregularities of Þorvaldr's first marriage have been outlined at (p.116). It may have led to confusion over the legitimacy of all his sons except Gizurr, his only son by his second marriage, which suffered no clerical set

⁵⁷⁴ *SS*, i, 60-2, 230, 243.

⁵⁷⁵ *SS*, i, 60.

⁵⁷⁶ *SS*, i, 60, 220, 305.

⁵⁷⁷ *SS*, i, 270.

backs. Þorvaldr's sons appear to demonstrate a clear case of favouritism, or in fact two cases within one family. The saga presents both Guðmundr (H.10) and Klængr (H.11) as first and second in the birth order, yet it was Björn who was to receive all the signs of selection as a main heir. However, unlike Tumi Sighvatsson neither Guðmundr nor Klængr demonstrate hostility towards their father's choice.⁵⁷⁸ It may well be that Þorvaldr showed his son Björn a great deal of favour at an early age, which would have led his brothers whether older or younger to reduce their expectations accordingly. Björn's (H.12) early success was attained through the auspices of his father-in-law Ormr Jónsson.⁵⁷⁹ But the fact that he married the heiress Hallveig Ormsdóttir, and through her obtained a chieftaincy and a great fortune, suggests that he had his father's support and contribution. It is highly unlikely that Ormr would have considered Björn as a suitor for his daughter had he not imagined that the alliance would bring significant benefits to the Oddarverjar family, not least of which would be Björn's succession to his father's chieftaincies. As the wedding took place when Gizurr Þorvaldsson (H.15), who would be his father's new favourite, was less than ten years old, it is probable that Björn must have looked very likely to be his father's heir, and his legitimacy or lack of it was not an issue, especially as both the bride and her father were themselves illegitimate. However, Björn died in 1221 before he could realise his potential.⁵⁸⁰ Einarr (H.13) became a retainer of his younger legitimate brother.⁵⁸¹ Teitr (H.14), however, developed into a fine lawyer who served as the Lawspeaker twice, the first time (1219-21) during his father's lifetime.⁵⁸² Moreover, he may also have had property of some kind as a certain Þóroddr Þorvaldsson was described as his 'húskarl'. The employment of a housecarl certainly suggests that the employer owned a house.⁵⁸³

Þorvaldr's closest relationship however appears to have been with his youngest son, Gizurr Þorvaldsson (H.15). Gizurr was born in 1209 when his father would have been in his forties. This alone suggests that it was favouritism and not logic or pragmatism which drove Þorvaldr's selection of Gizurr as his main heir

⁵⁷⁸ Although Klængr died in 1210, possibly before any clear choice had been made, *SS*, ii, 415.

⁵⁷⁹ *SS*, i, 271.

⁵⁸⁰ *SS*, i, 279.

⁵⁸¹ *SS*, i, 414, 415.

⁵⁸² *SS*, ii, 448.

⁵⁸³ *SS*, i, 439.

after the death of Björn. An Icelandic man in his forties in the thirteenth century could not have counted on living into his sixties or seventies, which would have been necessary in order to ensure the smooth transition of property from a father to an established son, moreover Þorvaldr still had three sons, at least one of whom, Teitr, had demonstrated his capacity for taking on responsibility while still a comparatively young man.⁵⁸⁴ It is unlikely that it was the confusion over their legitimacy which caused Þorvaldr not to choose any of these sons, other case studies show that an aristocratic father could overcome unequivocal illegitimacy, so a dissolved marriage should not have constituted a problem. The selection presents a clear case of favouritism. Þorvaldr signalled his preference for Gizurr in two separate incidents in the saga. Firstly, he allowed Gizurr to present the case against Loftr Pállsson, the killer of his elder half-brother and formerly most favoured of Þorvaldr's sons, Björn (H.12). The presentation of the case by Gizurr rather than any of Björn's full brothers is significant in and of itself, but Gizurr's age, just twelve years old in 1221, is a clear indication that his father was grooming him for his future role as head of the family group.⁵⁸⁵ Secondly, the saga provides an incident where Þorvaldr presents all his children to Sighvatr Sturluson and a scowling Gizurr at fourteen years of age is presented as the one on whom Þorvaldr hopes Sighvatr will look most favourably.⁵⁸⁶ In assessing this instance of precocious sagacity and menace by Gizurr, it should be recalled that he would become the bane of the Sturlungar and these anecdotes may represent a topos, a series of portents, as it were. But the preference of Þorvaldr for Gizurr seems not to be the issue, as it is borne out by the evidence of Þorvaldr's promotion of Gizurr in the legal arena, and his securing of an important political marriage for him when he was only fifteen.⁵⁸⁷

Gizurr represents the first transfer of power and property from the thirteenth century. The relationships of his cousins with their fathers are far less detailed. Magnús Hallason (H.16), the illegitimate son of Hallr the abbot, managed to

⁵⁸⁴ As Þorvaldr's marriage to Jóra was restricted to ten years and ended in 1196, his sons must have been born between 1186-96, Teitr as the youngest of the five was probably mid twenties when he became Lawspeaker for the first time.

⁵⁸⁵ SS, i, p. 283, *Gizurr Þorvaldsson var þá tólfvetra gamall. Hann sótti Loft til sektar.*

⁵⁸⁶ SS, i, 299-300.

⁵⁸⁷ SS, i, 302, Ingibjörg Snorradóttir, the marriage was a failure, but as the daughter of one of the richest and most powerful men in Iceland, the marriage had great prospects for Gizurr, and at fifteen he was very young to be married. Þorvaldr could have made the marriage with one of his elder sons had he wanted to promote their interests as much as Gizurr's.

contract a marriage suggesting either that he had some resources, or that he was able to get them through marriage.⁵⁸⁸ Hjalti Magnússon (H.17), the eldest legitimate son of bishop Magnús Hallason (H.9) was described as increasing the number of men at his home in 1242, which suggests that the home in question was one over which he had authority and that he had resources to employ men there for its protection in times of turmoil.⁵⁸⁹ The bishop's younger legitimate son Gizurr Magnússon (H.18) was offered as a hostage in 1242, and took part in peace negotiations between his kinsman Gizurr Þorvaldsson and Órækja Snorrason. It therefore appears that in this instance an elder brother received a property and the younger became a family retainer. Yet Klængur (H.19) and Ormr Bjarnarson (H.20) in contrast, shared equally in their father's property, but as he died while they were minors, it may be that the legal provisions prevailed in the absence of paternal selection.⁵⁹⁰

Gizurr Þorvaldsson's sons did not survive their father. Hallr (H.24), Ísleifr (H.25) and Ketilbjörn Gizurarson (H.26) were of questionable legitimacy as Gizurr married their mother when they were already in their teens. But the evidence shows that Gizurr was treating them as the heirs to his property, which begs the question whether marriage after the birth of children could bestow legitimacy upon the offspring of the union, or whether Gizurr simply did not intend for the irregular birth status of his sons to have any impact upon his decisions. Hallr had accompanied his father on his business travels, perhaps as a form of training, and both he and Ísleifr were given land by their father when they were in their late teens, or at the most when Hallr was twenty-one years old.⁵⁹¹ Hallr was also the bridegroom of Ingibjörg Sturludóttir for a very important alliance between his father and an old enemy. The lack of a marriage formalizing Gizurr's relationship with the young men's mother does not seem to have affected his intentions for them.

Summary – Haukdælir

The issues to emerge from the Haukdælir case study most clearly are the complexity of establishing legitimacy or illegitimacy of a son, and the pronounced

⁵⁸⁸ SS, i, 60.

⁵⁸⁹ SS, ii, 6.

⁵⁹⁰ SS, i, 452.

⁵⁹¹ SS, ii, 149.

influence of favouritism on the selection of inheriting sons. Where there is evidence in sufficient detail to reconstruct not just the form of property transfer, but the relationship underlying it, they demonstrate how far it was an affective bond that drove paternal choice. Another significant feature of the family's strategy as a whole was that in most cases there was some form of selection of one son above the others, although there was also significant provision for non-selected sons to have careers with which to support themselves. This may reflect the growing power and wealth of the family that they had the means to achieve this. In this respect the Haukdælir closely resemble the Sturlungar in terms of the occurrence of the practice of *pre-mortem* establishment, favouritism, unequal inheritance, and a robust attitude to the rights of illegitimate sons. One advantage of making a clear selection of the future head of the family was to make all the members of the family certain of their role, either as a dependent, or as the leader. By clearly establishing a single main heir but supporting as far as possible the careers of other sons, and by claiming for the father the right to decide for himself whether illegitimacy was going to be an issue, the Haukdælir were able to consolidate their position among Iceland's elite and to rival the strength of the Sturlungar and Oddaverjar families.

The Vatnsfirðingar⁵⁹²

Illegitimacy was a status that dominated the Vatnsfirðingar family. Of nineteen men in the sample, eleven were illegitimate, 60 percent. In fact of the four generations in the sample, all the illegitimate sons stem from the later two generations from the late twelfth and the thirteenth centuries.

Unusually, we know the disposition of property among the earliest generation of two brothers, Þórðr Þorvaldsson (V.1) and Hermundr Þorvaldsson (V.2). Þórðr was clearly the head of the family and in possession of the family lands, while his brother was part owner of a ship.⁵⁹³ Þórðr had four legitimate sons, Páll (V.3), Snorri (V.4), Teitr (V.5) and Ívarr (V.6). Of the latter two only their names are known from the genealogical lists. However, Páll and Snorri shared fully in the

⁵⁹² See Genealogy 5.

⁵⁹³ *SS*, i, 12, 20, 24, 25, 38, Þórðr was referred to by the toponym Vatnsfirði, while *SS*, i, 20, Hermundr átti þar skip.

family property.⁵⁹⁴ They were referred to jointly as the Vatnsfirðingar in 1164, and in 1171 they were both acting as chieftains of the district.⁵⁹⁵ How the selection of these two brothers came about is not clear, but an equal division among heirs was clearly possible.

All of the sons from the following generation were illegitimate, but had vastly differing fortunes. Vigfúss Pálsson (V.7), Páll's only son, appears to have been completely bypassed by his uncle Snorri.⁵⁹⁶ Given the fact that so many illegitimate sons in the case studies had been successful in getting all or part of their father's property at inheritance, it is plausible that Vigfúss at least had an expectation, if not a claim, to his father's share of the chieftaincy. In the light of Snorri's lack of a legitimate heir, it is again possible to discern a double standard with regard to illegitimate sons' access to family property. Snorri had four illegitimate sons, Haflíði (V.8) and Þórðr (V.9) Þorvaldr (V.10) and Bárðr (V.11). Haflíði predeceased his father, but it is possible that Þórðr, who died seven years after his father, may have administered the chieftaincy before his brother Þorvaldr took it over as there is no reference to Þorvaldr Snorrason (V.10) being resident at Vatnsfjörðr before his brother's death.⁵⁹⁷ Bárðr's subsequent career is obscure.⁵⁹⁸

Þorvaldr Snorrason had seven sons, two legitimate, Einarr (V.12) and Einarr (V.18), and five illegitimate, Þórðr (V.13), Snorri (V.14), Illugi (V.15), Ketill (V.16) and Páll (V.17). Þorvaldr married twice. The first Einarr was born to his first marriage, but he died as a child.⁵⁹⁹ The second Einarr was born to his second marriage but Þorvaldr died when this son was just a year old.⁶⁰⁰ It is not clear why both Þorvaldr's legitimate sons were named Einarr, it was not a Vatnsfirðingar name, nor was it a Sturlungar name, to which family his second wife belonged. Einarr was a family name of Þorvaldr's first wife and it is possible that there was an element of replacement in the naming of his second legitimate son Einarr. It was

⁵⁹⁴ *SS*, i, 103.

⁵⁹⁵ *SS*, i, 122 and 103 respectively.

⁵⁹⁶ *SS*, i, 105.

⁵⁹⁷ *SS*, i, 55, Haflíði died in 1190; *SS*, ii, 459, Þórðr died in 1201, *SS*, i, 213, Þorvaldr was resident at Vatnsfjörðr in 1203.

⁵⁹⁸ *SS*, i, 294-5.

⁵⁹⁹ *SS*, i, 55.

⁶⁰⁰ *SS*, i, 323.

with his illegitimate sons that Þorvaldr had the opportunity to develop relationships. The two eldest evidently enjoyed some measure of success under their father, as on his death in 1228 they were able to take over his chieftaincy despite the existence of their infant legitimate brother.⁶⁰¹ There is no record of Þorvaldr's relationship with any of his other sons. Illugi (V.15) prosecuted his father's killer, which as an illegitimate son fell to him as a duty, whether or not he was in fact entitled to inherit,⁶⁰² but it might equally be indicative of loyalty born of a deeper relationship. Moreover, Illugi commanded a great deal of support from his father's former followers, which suggests that at least in the mind of his father's men, Illugi was closely connected to his father.⁶⁰³

Summary - Vatnsfirðingar

The Vatnsfirðingar had a high proportion of illegitimacy, and the status does not appear to have been a bar to the inheritance either of Þórðr or Þorvaldr Snorrason in the early thirteenth century, nor Þórðr and Snorri Þorvaldsson in 1228. It was only after their deaths that the claim of Einarr Þorvaldsson began to be raised. While Einarr was legitimate and might have been able to build a good case, if his brothers had continued to be powerful chieftains throughout his childhood, he might have found it very hard to challenge them without an equally powerful chieftain on his side. This was in fact exactly the route taken by his mother, who allied herself with Kolbeinn *ungi*, her own father's enemy, in order to secure her son's inheritance in 1242.⁶⁰⁴ In this family the role of the father does not appear so pronounced. Neither Snorri Þórðarson (V.4) nor Þorvaldr Snorrason (V.10) clearly designated an heir or heirs from among their sons, which, especially in the case of Þorvaldr's sons appears to have led to some confusion with sons establishing claims through action rather than from clear paternal statements. Had Illugi not died just as his legitimate half-brother Einarr reached the age of fifteen, there might have been conflict as to who was actually entitled to run the chieftaincy, the legitimate heir, or the man who had the loyalty of his father's followers.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰¹ *SS*, i, 323.

⁶⁰² *Grágás*, Ia, 168; *SS*, i, 358.

⁶⁰³ *SS*, i, 448.

⁶⁰⁴ *SS*, i, 471.

⁶⁰⁵ *SS*, i, 449.

The Oddaverjar illustrate another chieftain family dominated by issues of illegitimacy. In the twelfth century the Oddaverjar family were among the most powerful, if not the most powerful in Iceland. Indeed it was to the head of the Oddaverjar the Icelanders turned to settle the long-running dispute of *Hvamm* Sturla and Einarr Þorgilsson.⁶⁰⁷ Like the Vatnsfirðingar, over half of the men in the family were illegitimate.

The first division of property which took place in the twelfth century was that between the three legitimate sons of Sæmundr Sigfússon (O.1), Eyjólfur (O.2), Loftur (O.3) and Loðmundr (O.4). Initially it appears that the eldest legitimate son, Eyjólfur, profited.⁶⁰⁸ As the legal statements provided for partition between heirs of equal status it must have been either selection or a social custom of preference for the eldest son which prevailed, and although eldest sons, it seems, did have expectations in Iceland, it is also clear that these were often misplaced, so in this case it was probably selection which caused the eldest son to inherit. In 1158, Loftur and Loðmundr split the family property between them.⁶⁰⁹ However, while Loftur's children went on to dominate the political landscape, Loðmundr's children were lost to obscurity until his great-granddaughter presented a claim based upon his right to have held half of Oddi according to the laws when the division of inheritance was made. This illustrates the fact that although family members might manipulate their way into sole possession of family property, a claim could be brought forward, even three generations later which, with the support of a powerful enemy of the family, could seriously diminish family prosperity. This was the situation facing the Oddaverjar in the 1240s when Órækja Snorrason took on the case of Álfheiður Eyjólfsdóttir.

Jón Loftsson (O.5) had one legitimate son Sæmundr (O.7), and six illegitimate sons by various mistresses, Páll (O.8), Ormr (O.9), Þorsteinn (O.10),

⁶⁰⁶ See Genealogy 6a and 6b.

⁶⁰⁷ *SS*, i, 229.

⁶⁰⁸ *SS*, i, 409.

⁶⁰⁹ *SS*, i, 409.

Einarr (O.11), Hallbjörn (O.12) and Sigurðr (O.13). Sæmundr (1154-1222)⁶¹⁰ had a long relationship with his father, who died in 1197. He appears to have embodied the loyal son, in his pursuit lawsuits on his father's behalf in 1171 and still in 1195.⁶¹¹ Given that he was actively involved in Icelandic politics and legal pursuits while his father lived it is unusual that he was never cited as resident at his own property. There is no record that he ever set up a separate establishment, he never married and very probably remained at Oddi with his father. However, the lack of independence does not appear to have caused any friction. Sæmundr's inheritance of the family property suggests that even without *pre-mortem* establishment he was his father's main heir, either by right of being the only legitimate heir, or through the choice of his father.

In fact none of Jón's sons appear to have been established independently *pre-mortem* by their father. The tension that could be expected in such circumstances does not appear to have occurred, and indeed Jón's sons seem to have had a very high regard for their father. After his death Ormr (O.9) discussed with Sæmundr (O.7) his ambition to emulate his father if he could.⁶¹² Not only does this suggest that the relationship had involved respect on the part of his sons, but it also denotes the ways in which sons might perceive their fathers as models. Thus the imperative to become independent, to marry, control others, to become a father, which was part of the construct of male gendered behaviour among the elite, may have been closely connected to the need to emulate one's father.

Sæmundr (O.7) had seven illegitimate sons. Páll (O.15) predeceased his father, but it appears that Sæmundr was a generous father, possibly too generous, as Páll died on a tour of Norway where his ostentatious lifestyle earned him the mocking title 'earl of Norway.'⁶¹³ Vilhjalmr (O.16), is the only one of Sæmundr's sons who never appears to own a property, although he may have shared a property with one or more of his brothers at different stages.⁶¹⁴ However, what is striking is the number of Sæmundr's illegitimate sons who held family property after his death.

⁶¹⁰ SS, ii, 447, i, 298.

⁶¹¹ SS, i, 105, 181.

⁶¹² SS, i, 200.

⁶¹³ SS, i, 269-70.

⁶¹⁴ SS, i, 345, 416.

Haraldr (O.17) held the main family farm at Oddi⁶¹⁵; Andréas (O.18) held Eyvindarmúli, and later bought Skarðr⁶¹⁶; Filippus Sæmundarson (O.19) lived at Hváll⁶¹⁷; Hálfðan Sæmundarson (O.20) owned Keldur⁶¹⁸; Björn Sæmundarson (O.21) held Gunnarsholt and Vellir⁶¹⁹ Sæmundr, like his father, made no clear designation of an heir through *pre-mortem* selection. The division came about because his children could not agree on a fair partition and called upon their father's friend and foster-brother Snorri Sturluson to make the partition for them.⁶²⁰ Clearly they had all expected some part of the inheritance and in the end all of Sæmundr's sons received some property, which may not have been a wise strategy in the period of economic decline. Moreover, by not designating a clear leader, Sæmundr failed to ensure that the family would act in unison when confronted with political decisions.

Jón Loftsson's (O.5) illegitimate sons had varying fortunes, which raises questions about why they differed in experiences. Were the illustrious careers of Páll and Ormr and to a lesser extent Þorsteinn due to greater abilities, paternal favour, or maybe the rank of their mothers? Páll and Ormr were progeny of Jón's liaison with Ragnheiðr, the sister of bishop Þorlákr, whereas his other mistresses may have been less well connected.⁶²¹ Páll (O.8) (1155-1211)⁶²² became a bishop in 1195. He also in the manner of Icelandic clerics, was married with two sons. As the eldest of these sons, Loftr (O.22), was established at Skarðr in around 1200 and thought 'likely to become a chieftain'.⁶²³ Páll must have become a father at some point around 1180, when he was in his mid twenties and by the age of 40 he reached the highest levels of society as the most influential cleric in Iceland, the bishop of Skálholt. Ormr Jónsson (O.9) received property and power, both from his uncle Þorlákr, and when he took as his mistress Þóra the sister of Kolskeggr *in augði* and had children by her who were Kolskeggr's only heirs.⁶²⁴ Much as his father had done, Ormr went on to

⁶¹⁵ SS, i, 345.

⁶¹⁶ SS, i, 345, 501.

⁶¹⁷ SS, i, 345, 473.

⁶¹⁸ SS, i, 345, 386, 407, 416, ii, 14, 84.

⁶¹⁹ SS, i, 345, 508.

⁶²⁰ SS, i, 299.

⁶²¹ SS, i, 54.

⁶²² SS, ii, 429.

⁶²³ SS, i, 243.

⁶²⁴ SS, i, 140, when Ormr's uncle became a bishop he transferred all his secular property to his nephew, 243 Kolskeggr allowed Ormr to administer the properties that his sister stood to inherit.

have numerous illegitimate children, and they all benefited from the influence and wealth that Ormr had been able to generate from the property of his mistresses and his own. He had three illegitimate sons, Jón (O.24), Sigurðr (O.25) and Andréas (O.26). Jón predeceased his father, but Sigurðr and Andréas, whose mother had also been an heiress, shared their mother's property of Vallaland with their sister.⁶²⁵ Ormr's relationships with women appear to have been very profitable both for him and his sons. Þorsteinn (O.10) married the illegitimate daughter of a chieftain at sometime during the 1190s.⁶²⁶ Einarr (O.11) does not seem to have had a stellar career and became a retainer of Sturla Sighvatsson.⁶²⁷ Nothing is known of Hallbjörn (O.12), but Sigurðr Jónsson (O.13) also married.⁶²⁸

The text does not provide information about the paternal provision for all the sons of the final generation of the Oddaverjar, but the sons of Andréas (O.18), for instance, were all provided with property. Interestingly the eldest Þórðr (O.41) had Vellir, the property of his uncle Björn and not of his own father. It was the second son Eyjólfur (O.42) who lived at Skarðr while Brandr (O.43) had a property at Skógar, only Magnús of all Andréas' sons does not appear to have benefited.

Summary – Oddaverjar

The Oddaverjar are distinctive in the case studies in that they have a very high proportion of illegitimate sons, 54 percent, but more so because they alone of the case study families appear to routinely practice division of the paternal property among all sons. If this pattern begun by Jón, was maintained it promised to cause problems for the Oddaverjar. Indeed already by the second generation there was a problem identifying who represented the head of the family. Some obviously felt it should be Hálfðan Sæmundarson, however he was reluctant and actually refused a chieftaincy.⁶²⁹ Without consolidating family power under the ægis of one family member, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson interprets the power of the Oddaverjar family as waning due to this inability to settle on a leader.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁵ SS, i, 271.

⁶²⁶ SS, i, 60, 205-9.

⁶²⁷ SS, i, 405 'heimamann' of Sturla Sighvatsson.

⁶²⁸ SS, i, 51.

⁶²⁹ SS, i, 345.

⁶³⁰ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, p. 99.

Early demise of the father

In examining the ways in which fathers and sons interacted, and how the relationship affected them, it is useful to briefly consider how the absence of a father might have had a different set of outcomes for sons to those experienced by sons whose fathers lived long enough to both protect their interests and potentially to become obstacles to their progress. How did the loss of a father at an early age make a difference to sons' lives? It is always problematic to start from a negative, so how does one describe the effect of absence? One area which shows very interesting results is the proportion of transfers of property intact from father to son when the son was a minor. The reason this can be of use is that taken in the context of an aristocracy facing political instability and economic decline in the thirteenth century, a comparison with the earlier twelfth century shows that a father could make a considerable difference to his sons' lives in certain circumstances. In Chapter Three (pp.55-61) the normative imagery of the father as protector and provider was very important, and it was in times of crisis that this aspect of the father's role became increasingly significant.

In the twelfth century there were five sons in the sample who were minors when their fathers died. Sighvatr (S.8) and Snorri (S.9) Sturluson who were both legitimate sons, were thirteen and five respectively, and they both inherited 40 hundreds from their father in 1183.⁶³¹ The other three minors from the twelfth century were all from the Ásbirningar family. Kolbeinn (A.10) and Arnórr (A.11) Tumason were also legitimate sons, Kolbeinn would have been around eleven and Arnórr was just two.⁶³² Despite his youth, Kolbeinn became a chieftain in 1183/4.⁶³³ Arnórr appears to have inherited from his brother and not his father, since in 1208 when Kolbeinn died he was living with his step-father.⁶³⁴ This suggests that primogeniture rather than equal partition was the principle applied in the case of

⁶³¹ SS, i, 234, 237.

⁶³² SS, ii, 69, Kolbeinn (A.10) was in his mid thirties when he died in 1208, which would place his birth around 1173. SS, i, 133, 229, their father died in 1184, SS, i, 238, Arnórr (A.11) was eighteen in 1200.

⁶³³ SS, i, 161.

⁶³⁴ SS, i, 250.

these two young boys, perhaps because, while Kolbeinn was on the cusp of the earliest acceptable age to act in the capacity of a chieftain, Arnórr was an infant. Finally Kolbeinn Arnórsson (A.12) was just three when his father died.⁶³⁵ However, by 1198 there is the first mention of Kolbeinn in residence at the family farm, which suggests that the transfer of property was successful.⁶³⁶ There were no illegitimate sons who can be definitely established as minors in the twelfth-century sample.

The above cases would appear to suggest that in terms of accessing their fathers' property, the inheritance rights of minor sons in Iceland in the twelfth century were generally observed. However, while the two Sturlungar brothers shared in the division of their father's property, in the Ásbirningar family in a similar situation it appears that the younger of the two was excluded. The following table illustrates intergenerational property transmission in Iceland in the twelfth century and distinguishes between both legitimate and illegitimate sons, and sons who fell into an age range which could be established as definitely above twelve, or definitely below thirteen. This reflects that twelve was legally the minimum age that a chieftaincy could be assumed, and it should be recalled that independent administration of all other property was restricted to those above sixteen in the legal statements.

Age and Birth Status	12th Century Sons	Number of Sons Inheriting	Percentage Inheriting
Legitimate under 13 Years	5	4	80%
Illegitimate under 13 Years	-	-	-
Legitimate over 12 Years	6	6	100%
Illegitimate over 12 Years	4	2	50%

Fig. 6.1 – Inheritance of family property in twelfth-century Iceland by sons whose ages can be determined at the death of their father.

⁶³⁵ SS, i, 130, Arnórr (A.8) died in 1180, SS, i, 83. Kolbeinn died just before his 70th year in 1246.

⁶³⁶ SS, i, 142.

This demonstrates that, in the twelfth century, fathers could reasonably expect that even in the event of their premature death, their legitimate sons would be almost certain to inherit. There are no statistics for illegitimate minor sons in the case study, however only half of the illegitimate adults in the case studies can be shown to have inherited. It would appear from this that birth status far more than the absence of a father's support was detrimental to a son's prospects in terms of access to family property.

In the thirteenth century, there were ten minor sons in the sample. Eight were legitimate, two illegitimate. Jón Sturluson (S.32) was the legitimate and only son of Sturla Sighvatsson (S.18). His prospects were undoubtedly damaged by his father's central role in bringing about the battle of Örlyggstaðr at which he and three of his brothers perished. In that year, 1238, Jón had accompanied his mother to Norway, so he was not even in Iceland when his father, died. The family did not return to Iceland until 1242, at which time Jón is described as 'still a child'.⁶³⁷ On Jón's return his ambitious uncle Þórðr *kakala* (S.20) sought to recover and to keep the power wielded previously by his father and brother, Jón's grandfather and father. However, when he too was defeated there was little support left in Iceland for a young scion of the Sturlungar family, especially perhaps one whose father had made himself extremely unpopular just before his death. Jón had to be content with a portion of his inheritance, the property in Borgafjörðr, which his uncle Þórðr had secured for him.⁶³⁸ Jón's cousin Sighvatr Tumason (S.37), the legitimate minor son of Tumi Sighvatsson (S.23), did not inherit any property either. His father had held Grundr, Arnabæli and Flatey, but these properties passed to other family members or outside the family and there is no further mention of Sighvatr's fortunes after his father's death when he was three years old.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁷ SS, i, 447, Jón was sent to Norway, ii, 1, Jón returned, *barn at aldri*. Jón's parents married in 1223 and he could have been born as early as 1224, however, in a detailed account of a raid upon his parents, farm in 1229 (SS, i, 326) the family and retainers who were present were described. Jón's mother had just given birth to a daughter, and another daughter was present, but there was no mention of Jón. Had he already been born he would have been no more than five and unlikely to have been fostered out at such a young age, although there were precedents in his uncle Tumi (S.17) and great uncle Snorri (S.9). However, in order for him to be described as 'still a child' in 1242, it is more likely that he was born after the raid of 1229, some time in the 1230s. This would have made him no more than eight when his father died.

⁶³⁸ SS, ii, 86.

⁶³⁹ SS, i, 447, his parents married in 1241; SS, ii, 49, his father died in 1244; SS, i, 440, ii, 7,33 for the property held by his father.

There were three minor sons in the thirteenth century from the Ásbirningar family. Kolbeinn *ungi* Arnórsson (A.15) was just thirteen when his father died. He was his father's only son.⁶⁴⁰ Like Jón Sturluson, Kolbeinn was in Norway when his father died, but he gained control of his father's property and chieftaincy. Like his father and uncle, Kolbeinn *ungi* died in his mid thirties and his property devolved upon his cousin Brandr. (p.162). However, Brandr's death just a year later resulted in another minority, and this time Brandr's two legitimate sons did not inherit. Kálfr (A.18) and Þorgierr Brandsson (A.19) were seven and six respectively when their father died. It was their uncle, Brandr's full brother Páll who claimed the inheritance, and sold it. Their father had been a member of a cadet branch of the family, who unexpectedly inherited and whose chieftaincy was brief, making it probable that their father did not have the time to build up the resources and support for his sons that might have helped them to secure their inheritance from the predations of their uncle.

Klængr (H.19), and Ormr (H.20) Bjarnarson of the Haukdælir were five and under four when their father died.⁶⁴¹ In 1224 while they were still under ten years old their mother, Hallveig Ormsdóttir, arranged to share her household with Snorri Sturluson (S.9).⁶⁴² Hallveig was the daughter of Ormr Jónsson (O.9), and a considerable heiress in her own right, their father, Björn, had been a powerful chieftain. The arrangement between Snorri and Hallveig was not unusual in Iceland. It was a formal partnership, involving the joining of their property, which the partners could dissolve at any time. It was a sensible option for Hallveig to make such a connection with a powerful chieftain while her sons were young. It provided a measure of protection of their interests, and given her former father-in-law, Þorvaldr (H.7), was a powerful chieftain with a growing preference for his son Gizurr (H.15), she may have felt that her sons' interests and claims were best served by an alliance with another powerful chieftain. However, her choice of Snorri Sturluson did not best serve her sons who found on reaching their majority that

⁶⁴⁰ SS, i, 287.

⁶⁴¹ SS, i, 347, Klængr was sixteen in 1232, giving his birth as 1216, five years before his father's death in 1221. SS, i, 279. Ormr, his younger brother according to the genealogies would have been born between 1217-22.

⁶⁴² SS, i, 304. At that time she gave control of her sons' fortune of 800 hundreds to Snorri.

relieving Snorri of their inheritance was extremely problematic. Hallveig's death meant that Snorri then controlled their inheritance from their mother as well. Klængr and Ormr were both in their twenties with the situation still unresolved.⁶⁴³ Snorri had granted them Breiðabólstaðr.⁶⁴⁴ But Bersastaðr, Reykjaholt and Stafaholt were withheld. They briefly recovered Reykjaholt before losing it to the Sturlungar family.⁶⁴⁵ Klængr died at 25, and Ormr did become a chieftain, although he never recovered the whole of their inheritance.⁶⁴⁶

From the Vatnsfirðingar family there were one legitimate and two illegitimate minor sons. Einarr Þorvaldsson (V.18) was just one year old when his father died.⁶⁴⁷ Einarr's illegitimate elder brothers Þórðr (V.13) and Snorri (V.14) initially took over the chieftaincy and property, but four years later they died, leaving Einarr still too young to mount a serious claim.⁶⁴⁸ At this point, Einarr's biggest problem was his acquisitive grandfather, Snorri Sturluson (S.9), and Einarr's illegitimate brother Illugi (V.15), who enjoyed the support of their father's following, was involved in a prolonged struggle to wrest control of the chieftaincy and property from Snorri. Finally, when Einarr was fifteen, after the death of Illugi, and through the careful manoeuvrings of his mother, Einarr was able to establish himself in his father's property and chieftaincy.⁶⁴⁹ Two of Einarr's illegitimate half brothers were minors as well when their father died, Ketill (V.16) and Páll (V.17).⁶⁵⁰ Neither of them were recorded holding any part of their father's property.

If these thirteenth-century cases are presented in the same format as above, an altered picture emerges.

⁶⁴³ SS, i, 452, In 1241 when they argued with Snorri about access to their property. He kept the land and only gave them the valuables and the books.

⁶⁴⁴ SS, i, 412.

⁶⁴⁵ SS, i, 445, 452.

⁶⁴⁶ SS, i, 457; ii, 15.

⁶⁴⁷ SS, i, 323.

⁶⁴⁸ SS, i, i, 356-7.

⁶⁴⁹ P. Ricketts, 'Property, Power and Identity: A Study of Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Widows in Iceland and Yorkshire', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Liverpool, 2004, 174-8 for a complete analysis of Einarr's mother's role in securing his inheritance.

⁶⁵⁰ Illugi and Snorri were both the same age (SS, i, 323) and Snorri was eighteen when he died in 1232 (SS, i, 357) which means that at their father's death they were fourteen. Ketil and Páll were both listed after Illugi in *Ættartölur* (SS, i, 55), they are described as 'young' (SS, i, 323) at their father's death in 1228, moreover their inactivity during Illugi's struggles with Snorri Sturluson suggests that they were both very young when their father died.

Age and Birth Status	13th Century	Number of Sons Inheriting	Percentage Inheriting
Legitimate under 13 Years	8	2 (5*)	25% (62.5%*)
Illegitimate under 13 Years	2	0	0%
Legitimate over 12 Years	13	11	84%
Illegitimate over 12 Years	15	13	86%

Fig. 6.2 – Table marking inheritance of family property in thirteenth-century Iceland by sons whose ages can be determined at the death of their father.

* Jón Sturluson (S.32), Klængr Bjarnarson (H.18) and Ormr Bjarnarson (H.19) partial inheritance.

The prospects for legitimate minor sons dramatically decreased in the later period, and even including the three cases where only partial recovery of the inheritance, the figure is still short of the twelfth-century level. This significant drop in the ability of legitimate minor sons to inherit signals the importance of fathers' surviving to ensure that their sons could inherit during times of political turmoil. The situation for illegitimate minor sons is difficult to assess, given the lack of examples. But illegitimacy for adult sons appears to be less of a bar to inheritance as the region became less stable. Political upheaval, it seems, led not to more stringent application of the laws, excluding all but the legitimate, but rather it opened up inheritance to an even wider group of people, where the strongest won the prize, and the weakest, especially children, no matter how enshrined their rights in law, suffered.

Conclusion

The case studies demonstrate that there were few certainties in the father / son relationship either in the twelfth or the thirteenth centuries in Iceland. Fathers are represented as figures of authority but also of generosity in some circumstances. Their overwhelming duty was that of provision of clarity, not just property, for the following generation. Sons appear generally to conform to images of loyalty. Those

who do not play any significant role as leaders of the family nevertheless can be found acting as retainers, offering support, dependent but not lacking dignity.

Throughout the period, and perhaps more so in the thirteenth century, one of the key elements that affected the father / son relationship was that of *pre-mortem* establishment. The *pre-mortem* gift of property was seen as, and indeed did form, an important precursor to the eventual inheritance. From the perspective of the father, a son was a key member of his household, potentially offering a significant contribution to the current prosperity and the future prospects of the family unit. The ideal son was above all loyal, which made the adoption of a strategy of *pre-mortem* establishment eminently desirable. The intention was that his growing power would benefit the father, and smooth the eventual transfer of property after the father's death. Such an establishment was therefore the ultimate sign of paternal approval, it represented future intentions but also meant an immediate fiscal independence from the paternal home. This key transaction of trust represented to the medieval Icelanders the importance of a stable and productive relationship between a father and his sons. But, significantly, where there were instances of discord, the catalyst, or maybe its outlet, was the issue of the *pre-mortem* transfer of family property.

The *pre-mortem* establishment was both a form of inheritance and a gift. The property would pass in its entirety to the son during his father's lifetime. It was a complete transfer, and would not later be considered as part of the property to be allocated after the father's death. The connection between the two appears to be the fact that the first son selected in this way generally became the main heir. A father could set up more than one son in this manner, but it was key in terms of becoming the head of the family to be the first. It was an important stage in the development of the father / son relationship, both between the first selected son, and the remaining sons. All sons could still have reasonably expected some form of paternal support, but inevitably the result in most cases involved one son reaching the fullest expression of independent masculinity, leaving his brothers as dependents, or to seek out other routes to independence, which may explain why some chose to seek advancement in Norway. Therefore, the selection of the main heir was a key aspect of shaping the expectations of sons and would have represented a slight to any very ambitious sons if another brother were singled out in this way.

It was expectation that formed another key component of the father / son relationship. The evidence of the case studies strongly suggests that there were three distinct and conflicting mores existing concurrently in this period; the legal statements defining all sons as equal in importance; the flexibility in selection which the elite fathers felt able to display; a strong social bias toward the rights of the eldest legitimate son. Moreover, when these three elements went into battle, it was usually the autonomy of an aristocratic father that prevailed. When the expectation of an establishment was not met it could cause friction between fathers and sons, not simply because of issues of material wealth, but because the possession of property was so closely linked in society to ideals of adult male status. A lack of recognition by one's own father of one's masculinity could have repercussions for how one was perceived within society as a whole, and especially among one's peers. However, the Icelandic fathers did not appear to feel constrained to follow a particular pattern when applying the strategy. This led to a series of expectations among Icelandic sons, some of which were incompatible with the solutions arrived at by fathers. From a number of perspectives the eldest sons had good reason to hope that they would be the selected heirs. They had the longest association with their father during which to establish a bond. There was also a practical element: if a suitable candidate existed, why would a father tempt fate by waiting for a much younger son to grow up enough to build a strong following? Therefore there was some justification for eldest sons, and particularly eldest legitimate sons to feel a greater level of expectation and this explains in part why their disappointment could be greater.

The third key feature of the father / son relationship to emerge was the importance of the affective bond. The case studies demonstrate that where there is sufficient detail to reconstruct the manner of the transfer of property between generations, it was the affective bond, or lack of it, between father and son which proved very influential. Icelandic fathers could, and did, practice favouritism. The level of autonomy of Icelandic fathers allowed for the exhibition of this bond, which is illustrated by the situation of illegitimate sons. It was not their illegitimacy alone which disqualified them from inheritance, indeed if they had the favour of their father and that father was sufficiently in control of his property and followers, an illegitimate son was not at any disadvantage. The careers of illegitimate sons in

these examples underline how far illegitimacy must be seen alongside other factors and in the context of individual circumstances, rather than as an issue which outweighs all others. It did represent a weakness which could be exploited by others, but it was by no means inevitably a weakness.

The families in these case studies exhibit the diversity of variables which could affect father / son relationships: favouritism, political uncertainty, prolonged separations, relative wealth, compatible characters and legal arguments were just some of the elements which could affect any one member of any family. However, some overall strategies can be identified. For instance, the Sturlungar and the Haukdælir predominantly practised selection of a main heir, and provision for other sons, which both clearly indicated the next head of the family but also mitigated problems of thwarted expectations in most cases. Indeed, the example of Snorri Sturluson appears to be held up as a mirror to the rest of the family as a dire warning of what happened when one did not fulfil this duty as a father. The Ásbirningar family was hampered by a series of minorities and declining prosperity. However, Kolbeinn and Brandr were practising a modified form of *pre-mortem* establishment by sharing the family farm. The Vatnsfirðingar and the Oddaverjar clearly demonstrate that illegitimacy was no bar to inheritance. The Oddaverjar practised division among all sons, but the strategy lacked a clear designation of a leader to guide the family through the upheavals of the mid-thirteenth century.

The case studies show that in Iceland the survival of the father beyond his sons' childhood could have a significant impact upon his sons' prospects. It shows that a father was not a dispensable family member, nor an undesirable person for sons to have around. He may have been the most important person in his sons' life from the point of view of his sons being capable of retaining and maintaining the family's prosperity. However, this role was affected by changes to life-cycle stages, and as he and his sons got older, a father's role changed from an indispensable protector, to represent both a potential ally and also a possible obstacle in his sons' path to self-determination. What is most interesting is that apart from a few notable examples limited to the Sturlungar family, fathers and sons in the case studies appear generally to have been allies.

CHAPTER SEVEN : Norman Case Studies

Introduction

As in the previous chapter, case studies of five Norman families offer insights into the conduct of father / son relationships in terms of norms of masculinity, life-cycle, ideals and inheritance practice. Variants such as birth order, legitimacy, age gaps between fathers and sons are considered, as well as external influences of political, economic and social change. Of particular interest in this chapter will be two areas where Normandy differed significantly from Iceland. Firstly, Normandy was undergoing a period of expansion and rising fortunes. The potential created by the Conquest for the Norman elite to increase their prosperity offers a direct contrast to the waning fortunes of Iceland. Secondly, Norman aristocrats, unlike Icelandic chieftians, did not wield the highest authority in the region. There was another layer of lordship in the form of the king which tempered their autonomy of action. Both of these differences had the potential to affect the father / son relationship among the Norman aristocracy.

In Normandy, even more than in Iceland, a clear division of the period in political terms can be identified. This chapter addresses the events of 1066, and analyses the impact that this may have had upon the way in which father / son relationships developed. Five families provide the basis for these case studies, four of which essentially form two wider family units connected by significant marriages. I have presented these as linked families. The ducal family represents the pinnacle of Norman society. The Bellême/Montgomery families reached the level of counts and earls. Finally, I will examine the Giroie/Grandmesnil families, whose fortunes rose and fell over the period, but remained members of the landholding aristocracy throughout, even if somewhat tenuously at times.

From the sample of 100 men, 23 can be shown from the sources to have been illegitimate; this compares to nearly 40 percent from the sample Icelandic men.⁶⁵¹ It is probable that the ecclesiastical authorship of the sources had a considerable

⁶⁵¹ The Norman figure rises to 24 if Oliver (BM.8) is included, his case is discussed (pp.212-3).

impact upon the portrayal of illegitimacy in Normandy. But was legitimacy a significant variable in Norman father / son relationships? This chapter asks how illegitimacy affected the father / son relationship over the period. As in the previous chapter it also addresses the question of how the absence of a father in the cases of minor sons affected the prospects of sons.

Methodology

As with the Icelandic families, the first task is to reconstruct the families involved from the narrative sources, determining circumstances that may have affected the father / son relationship such as birth order, legitimacy, relative ages of fathers and sons, and the ages of sons at significant points of their life such as marriage or inheritance. It is then possible to examine how these variables applied to the fathers and sons in question, and to assess how ideals of obligation and affection, gender definition and inheritance strategies affected their relationships.

In as far as establishing the birth order of sons, Dudo's text is less than helpful due to the genealogical pruning discussed in Chapter Two (p.33). However, Orderic Vitalis in the *Ecclesiastical History* adopts a motif familiar from the sagas, that is the presentation of genealogical sketches at certain points of the text. Although the practice is less pronounced than in the sagas, Orderic nevertheless included genealogical information about some families either on the introduction of an individual who would become significant to the overall text, or in response to the death of an individual. In reconstructing the birth order of sons, the case studies reflect the genealogical lists which appear to represent sons in order of the eldest to youngest. However, there is an important caveat concerning the birth orders supplied by the narrative sources. Apart from the case of the sons of William the Conqueror, where the records of more than one chronicler, as well as the charter evidence, appear to confirm that Robert Curthose was the eldest, followed by Richard, William Rufus and Henry, there are no sources to corroborate most of the genealogical lists.⁶⁵² Therefore, it should be asked whether the lists reflect the

⁶⁵² The birth order of the sons of the Conqueror are moreover generally accepted by historians. for example; D. Crouch, *The Normans: The History of a Dynasty* (New York, 2002), 111; F. Barlow,

attempts of the chroniclers themselves to reconstruct the order of birth of sons by what was known of their later careers and consequently whether they are illustrative of the normative patterns of inheritance of a later period, especially where the chronicler was projecting back into the more distant generations from the period of composition. However, it should also be noted that in the case of Orderic Vitalis, from whom much of the reconstruction of the Giroie / Grandmesnil families is undertaken, the birth order presented in his accounts could equally demonstrate the application of family memory to the reconstruction of earlier generations. The families in question were patrons of his monastic house, and their close connection to St. Évrroul would have given Orderic access to family tradition in terms of birth order and status. While not conclusive, given that family memory could also be vague, or selective for reasons of justification of current familial organisation and property distribution, it may be that the birth order of the sons in the four generations of these two connected families, as presented in Orderic, was at least true as far as family memory allowed.

Arriving at definitive dates for births and marriages is far more problematic than for the contemporary sagas, as although there is some dating information in each of the texts, the convention of establishing seasonal markers as time elapsed is not a feature of chronicle composition in the same way as the saga sources. The establishment of the age gap between father and sons must therefore be, in general, far more tenuous in the Norman sources. There are, however, some cases where there is sufficient information to justify speculation. For example, the death of Roger of Montgomery can be dated to around 1093, as according to Orderic he died six years after the death of William the Conqueror.⁶⁵³ His eldest son was baptised by abbot Thierry of St. Évrroul, which places his birth between 1050 and 1056, so Robert was at least 37 years old, or even in his early forties, when his father died.⁶⁵⁴

In the absence of legal statements on ages of maturity pertaining to Normandy in the period it is difficult to arrive at a clear notion of the ages at which

William Rufus (London, 1983), 3; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 394; C.W. David, *Robert Curthose Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, Mass, 1920), 4-5.

⁶⁵³ *EH*, iii, 148.

⁶⁵⁴ *GC*, xi, 817-818.

Norman men might be expected to begin taking part in activities which might help in reconstruction of families. As with the Icelandic case studies I have arrived at a speculative *terminus a quo* in areas where transition to male adulthood is indicated. The *Leges Henrici Primi*, which dates to the end of the period discussed here, cites fifteen as the earliest age at which a man could represent himself in court and sit in judgement on others.⁶⁵⁵ It is also according to this source the age before which an heir could be placed under wardship if his father died.⁶⁵⁶ It is important to note that this source was produced in post-Conquest England for the Anglo-Norman elite. However, it provides some guidance as to attitudes to ages at which transition from child to adult might have been expected to begin, at least by early twelfth-century Anglo-Normans' standards. Medieval thought concerning the age at which sexual maturity, and thus fatherhood, could potentially begin is reflected in the discussion of the ages of man by among others Isidore of Seville, who wrote that fourteen was the age at which fatherhood became a possibility.⁶⁵⁷ In addition to philosophical discussion, Menuge, points out that canonically marriage in the medieval period for men was deemed permissible in terms of maturity at fourteen, although the source is a thirteenth-century one.⁶⁵⁸ Crouch and Bouchard have both suggested that the age at which training for an adult military role was completed occurred at some point between the mid teens and early twenties.⁶⁵⁹ It therefore appears that the mid teens presents a minimum age at which men could be expected to become fathers and to take part in military engagements. It may also have been the age at which responsibility for property and authority was possible. For example, it is the oldest that the young Robert Curthose could have been when he was entrusted along with his mother with the regency of Normandy in 1066: he cannot have been born much before 1051⁶⁶⁰ and was therefore, at the most, fifteen years of age when he received

⁶⁵⁵ *Leges*, 184, 186.

⁶⁵⁶ *Leges*, 224.

⁶⁵⁷ *Etymologiarum*, xi, ii.

⁶⁵⁸ Menuge, *Medieval English Wardship*, 85; Bracton, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, eds. G. Woodbine and S. Thorne (Cambridge MA, 1968-77), vol ii, 251.

⁶⁵⁹ D. Crouch, *The Image of the Aristocracy in Britain 1000-1300*, (London, 1992), 137, notes that Henry I is recorded as receiving the belt of knighthood in 1086 when he would have been in his late teens, and that William Marshal in the mid twelfth century was knighted around the age of twenty, at 131; Bouchard, *'Strong of Body'*, 80, suggests the mid teens as marking the end of training for boys in her study of eleventh- to thirteenth-century France.

⁶⁶⁰ Crouch, *The Normans*, 111 speculates that he was born during or shortly after 1052; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 394, believes he was born between 1051-54.

his first taste of power according to the sources.⁶⁶¹ But this is an area which raises many questions about medieval assumptions about maturity.

The Ducal Family⁶⁶²

The tenth-century origins of the ducal family are portrayed in the mythologized history of Dudo, and as such, the earliest examples of the father / son relationship are obscured. Three elements emerge from Dudo's early eleventh-century account. The first is the illegitimacy of the heirs to the duchy. William Longsword (D.2), Richard I (D.3) and his sons, Richard II (D.4), Robert (D.5), Mauger (D.6), Geoffrey (D.7) and William (D.8) are all portrayed as the offspring of unions which were not sanctioned by the Church.⁶⁶³ The second feature of Dudo's account is the formulaic, strong affective bond which Dudo, his patrons, and perhaps his audience expected from the relationship.⁶⁶⁴ Yet there is evidence within the text of similar exchanges taking place between the Norman leaders and their political allies and enemies.⁶⁶⁵ Therefore, these expressions of paternal love must be seen in the context of a formulaic and mannered text as part of a literary conceit. Finally, for the first two generations of the ducal family the chronicler does not provide any mention of brothers, which could mean that William (D.2) and Richard (D.3) were only sons, the sole surviving sons, the eldest sons or simply sons selected from any number of brothers later excluded in order to justify the subsequent descent of the duchy. Dudo's first mention of ducal brothers was Rolf, Richard I's (D.3) uterine half-brother,⁶⁶⁶ followed by Richard II's (D.4) paternal brother Robert (D.5), who was one of Dudo's patrons.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶¹ *GND*, ii, 178, *EH*, ii, 208.

⁶⁶² See genealogies 7a, 7b and 7c.

⁶⁶³ *De Moribus*, 157, 173 William (D.2) was described as the son of Rollo and Popa; *De Moribus*, 181; *GND*, i, 78; *EH*, iii, 80, Richard's (D.3) mother was not named by Dudo, but William of Jumièges called her Sprota, and Orderic followed his example, they all agreed Richard was illegitimate; *De Moribus*, 289, named Geoffrey (D.7) and William (D.8) as two sons of Richard (D.3) from unnamed concubines, and at 290 stated that he had a further five sons by Gunnor, although he did not name them, however William of Jumièges, *GND*, i, 128, named three of these five sons of Gunnor as Richard (D.4), Robert (D.5) and Mauger (D.6).

⁶⁶⁴ *De Moribus*, 182, Rollo (D.1) and William (D.2) exchanged several embraces and kisses; *De Moribus*, 191, 202 (*delectissimus*), 220 (*amplexatus eum amabiliter et osculatus dulciter*) and 222 (*amorem dilectissimi*), William and Richard I (D.3) were portrayed sharing similar exchanges.

⁶⁶⁵ *De Moribus*, 148, 200, 279 and 280.

⁶⁶⁶ *De Moribus*, 297, and in the prologue 125.

⁶⁶⁷ *De Moribus*, 123-125, 126-128.

William's succession was described as taking place during his father's lifetime after Rollo withdrew from the position in favour of his son.⁶⁶⁸ Dudo's description of the event suggests a form of retirement entered into voluntarily by the father, leaving the son to take on his father's role while his sire was still living. The simplest explanation of this event appears to be that Rollo designated his successor, and possibly made him a co-count, in order to regularise and protect the succession against any challenges by other claimants, possibly other unnamed sons. But Dudo's intention appears to have been the presentation of a harmonious relationship in which even the succession was settled through an amicable transition of power from the elder to the younger generation. The key elements in this transfer of power are the legitimisation through exclusion of alternative heirs and designation by the father of the succession, and the harmony of the relationship, which later generations of dukes would have been keen to see emphasized. Richard I (D.3) was a minor when his father died, whose prospects will be considered in a later section (p.232).

Richard I's (D.3) relationship with his sons as described by the sources provides little in the way of detail. Dudo portrays Richard I confiding his choice for his heir among his sons to his half-brother Rolf of Ivry.⁶⁶⁹ Dudo's account adds that Richard I stipulated that his other sons were to offer their brother homage in return for their own lands. These statements hint at an unequal partition of property which left the selected main heir, Richard II, in the position of lord to his other brothers. Richard I reigned for 54 years (942-996) which suggests that even though he succeeded as a minor, his own sons may have been as old as their thirties or even early forties when he died. We do not know when Richard II was born, and as he did not marry until after his father's death he could have been a minor when his father died.⁶⁷⁰ Yet his full brother Robert became Archbishop of Rouen in 989, which, although not conclusive, suggests that at least one of Richard I's sons was not an infant when their father died.⁶⁷¹ Other than his father's selection of him from among a number of illegitimate sons as his heir, we know nothing of the father / son

⁶⁶⁸ *De Moribus*, 173-174; *GND*, i, 72.

⁶⁶⁹ *De Moribus*, 297.

⁶⁷⁰ *Recueil*, no. 11, dates the beginning of the marriage to between 996-1008.

⁶⁷¹ *GC*, xi, 26-28.

relationship. Similarly for his relationship with his other illegitimate sons little can be recovered of the relationships, other than that he fulfilled the role of provider as far as ensuring that they would have property of some kind, and in the case of Robert, also secured a powerful position for him as Archbishop of Rouen. The archbishopric can also be seen as a device employed to retain regional power, both secular and spiritual within the nuclear family of dukes. The proportions of the secular inheritance of Richard I's sons are not clear. Robert's (D.5) possession of the county of Évreux may have been achieved through his father, but the earliest evidence of his ownership is indicated in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*.⁶⁷² Mauger (D.6) witnessed a charter as count of Corbeil in 1012.⁶⁷³ We do not know whether the county was granted by his father, or his brother Richard II. Geoffrey (D.7) is only referred to by Dudo's account, nothing is known of his career.⁶⁷⁴ William (D.8), was also an illegitimate son of Richard I.⁶⁷⁵ However, the only provision in terms of property described in the sources for William are the properties given by his ducal brother according to William of Jumièges.⁶⁷⁶

Richard III (D.9) was, according to William of Jumièges, the chosen heir of his father Richard II (D.4).⁶⁷⁷ Richard was not a minor when his father died. He was born between 997 and 1012, based on the earliest date at which his parents married and the fact that he was a father by his death in 1027.⁶⁷⁸ Richard is never explicitly said to be the eldest son, although he was named first by William of Jumièges in the list of Judith's sons.⁶⁷⁹ The account of his receiving the inheritance of the duchy by his father is couched in terms of selection due to the counsel of wise men, rather than by right of primogeniture or any other tradition.

⁶⁷² *GND*, ii, 48, William of Jumièges records the restoration to Robert of his lordship of Évreux by his nephew duke Robert I (D.10) after a brief confiscation.

⁶⁷³ *Recueil*, no. 14bis

⁶⁷⁴ *De Moribus*, 289.

⁶⁷⁵ *De Moribus*, 289.

⁶⁷⁶ *GND*, ii, 8-10.

⁶⁷⁷ *GND*, ii, 40, *Nouissime autem ascitem Richardum suum filium consultu sapientum suo ducatu prefecit.*

⁶⁷⁸ *Recueil*, no. 11, the charter concerning Richard's (D.9) mother Judith's dowry is dated 996-1008 with the beginning of her husband's reign and the death of her father providing the limits of the possible date for the start of the marriage;

⁶⁷⁹ *GND*, ii, 28.

The clearest hint of a father / son relationship from among the sons of Richard II (D.4), is the account of his instructions to his son Robert (D.10). The depiction of the father instructing his son, and the language of obedience reflect the imagery of authority in the father and obedience of the son in Norman society, discussed in Chapter Three (pp.61-6).⁶⁸⁰ However, both chroniclers who feature the scene were probably heavily influenced by hindsight, as they were both aware that Richard III's tenure of the duchy lasted only a year and both imply Robert I (D.10) was ambitious and even possibly complicit in the early death of his brother.⁶⁸¹ Therefore it is by implication only that the relationship between Richard II (D.4) and his son Robert (D.10) was strained by a tendency towards disobedience on Robert's part. The case of Richard III's succession also raises questions about the nature of inheritance custom at that time. If Richard were the eldest legitimate son and primogeniture was established at that time, then the suggestion that Robert was in any way overly ambitious would make more sense. It is perhaps in that context that the later chroniclers perceived the inheritance, with the connotation that by the late eleventh- and early twelfth-century primogeniture was more prevalent and they were reading back into the past conditions existing in their own period. However, as Richard III cannot be established as the eldest son, nor that primogeniture was practised as early as 1026, it cannot be ruled out that Robert may well have had reason to believe he had the right to press a claim to at least part of the inheritance, and the deathbed instructions of his father could reflect the tensions which might arise when a son, whether the eldest or not, is selected for inheritance of the majority of the paternal property over another potential heir.

It is Robert's relationship with his father that introduces the topos of the over-mighty son into the source material, and casts further doubt upon the evidence

⁶⁸⁰ *GND*, ii, 40, *fratremque eius Rodbertum comitatui Oximensi, ut inde illi debitum persolveret obsequii.*

⁶⁸¹ *GND*, ii, 40, William of Jumièges' account, stressed that Robert was called upon to give his obedience to his brother. It could be read as suggestive of a knowledge, or suspicion, on the part of the author that such support was not to be forthcoming; *EH*, iii, 84, Orderic also inferred that there was some suspicion surrounding the death of Richard III, suggesting that he was poisoned. He made no attempt to assign blame for this, which in itself is suggestive of a suspicion which he may have felt it impolitic to make clear, that is, that Robert was in some way responsible for his brother's death. Yet it must be borne in mind that not only were the authors both separated by time from the events of the succession of 1026, but also that the conclusion that Robert was in some way a usurper of his brother is drawn by reading between the lines rather than any concrete statement in these two sources.

of Dudo's accounts of universally affectionate father / son interactions.⁶⁸² William of Jumièges, in his account of Richard II's very specific instructions that Richard III is to receive the homage of his brother Robert appears to be suggesting that inheritance, and by inference father / son relationships, did not always run smoothly.⁶⁸³ Orderic reinforces this impression with his vague insinuations of skulduggery over the death of Richard III, '*Ricardus tercius ueneno infectus non plene biennio peracto periiit*'.⁶⁸⁴ Whether all these inconclusive and unspoken suspicions amounted to a real breakdown in Robert's relationship with first his father, and then his brother, is debateable given the date of the sources. It is perhaps worth noting that Jumièges merely stressed the deathbed instruction to Robert to give homage to his brother, whereas it was Orderic, writing well after the death of William the Conqueror, Robert's son, who took the implication of discord one step further and suggested that there was foul play involved in Richard's death. However, Robert does appear to provide evidence that the genealogical pruning of Dudo may well have masked less than amicable father / son relationships for the sons not selected as their fathers' main heir in the early eleventh-century. Moreover, his case provides an indication that the case of Robert Curthose's tense relationship with his father was not wholly isolated, nor was it peculiar to the post Conquest period. These hints of conflict in the father / son relationship in connection to inheritance may also indicate a specific circumstance related to the ducal family, that is, the impartibility of the duchy. If so, then questions are again raised as to what Dudo's account hides in terms of succession, and whether it is designed with that in mind. Nevertheless, it is significant that whatever the reality of Robert's relationship with his father there appears to have been acceptance of the principle that a father should make provision for his sons' futures when he is able. Thus Robert did not emerge from the relationship an impoverished younger son, but as lord of the Hiémois.⁶⁸⁵ Richard III (D.9) and Robert (D.10) both had illegitimate sons, Nicholas (D.21) and William (D.22), who were minors when their fathers died, their very different experiences will be discussed later (pp.234-6)

⁶⁸² *De Moribus*, 182, 191, 202, 220, 222.

⁶⁸³ *GND*, ii, 40.

⁶⁸⁴ *EH*, iii, 84.

⁶⁸⁵ *GND*, ii, 40.

William (D.11) was given to the monks at Fécamp as an oblate.⁶⁸⁶ Judith and Richard's (D.4) marriage began in 996 and if William's brothers Richard and Robert were older than him, then he was probably born no earlier than 1001 if a two-year average age gap is postulated.⁶⁸⁷ If he were indeed born in 1001, this would have meant he was at the least sixteen when his mother died (1017-24) and it is likely that the oblation took place while both his parents were alive.⁶⁸⁸ But as the latest possible date for his mother's death was 1024, which was the year in which his father remarried, it is worth questioning whether the oblation was made in the interests of making the best possible provision of a path in life for a younger son, or whether it is possible that he was just an infant at the time of his father's remarriage, and that in the interests of improving the prospects of her own sons, Richard's second wife, Papia, may have had a role in arranging the oblation of her husband's youngest son from his first marriage. Papia's sons Mauger (D.12) and William (D.13) were both minors at their father's death and will be discussed below.

Michael (D.23) was the son of Archbishop Mauger (D.12). Mauger was implicated in the rebellion of his brother William of Arques (D.13) in the mid 1050s and his position as archbishop was taken from him.⁶⁸⁹ We do not know when Michael was born, but in the 1120s he was still living as an old man and a respected knight at the court of his kinsman King Henry in England.⁶⁹⁰ Whether his father or another agent arranged his training as a knight, it appears that unlike Mauger's uncle Robert who was able to hold and transfer a significant secular county to his sons, Mauger was unable to make any provision for his son, perhaps due to his own fall from grace. There is no evidence that Michael ever held any lands, although his presence at the English court suggests that he may have hoped to find better opportunities there than in Normandy.

⁶⁸⁶ *GND*, ii, 28.

⁶⁸⁷ *Recueil*, no. 11.

⁶⁸⁸ *Recueil*, no. 21, Judith attested this charter as comitess which is dated to 1015-17, however in *Recueil* no. 30, which has a suggested date between 1117-1124 her successor Papia, as comitess, acts as a witness.

⁶⁸⁹ *GC*, xi, 28-30. Mauger was archbishop of Rouen from 1049-1055.

⁶⁹⁰ *EH*, iii, 86. Chibnall dates the composition of this book by Orderic to 1127 (*EH*, i, 46) and as he portrays Michael as still living it seems that this cousin of the Conqueror may have been born considerably later than his cousins William (D.22) and Nicholas (D.21).

The case of the sons of Archbishop Robert (D.5) raise many questions about the variables that could affect inheritance in the early eleventh century. Despite his clerical role, Robert married a woman named Herleva and had three sons.⁶⁹¹ As a father, he appears to have considered provision for all his sons from his secular possessions to be part of that role.⁶⁹² The statement in the *Ecclesiastical History* implies division of the inheritance, however, it is only from subsequent events that a picture of the form that the partition took emerges. Richard (D.14) seems to have inherited his father's county of Évreux.⁶⁹³ Ralph's portion, which was later the subject of a contested inheritance on the death without heirs of his own son, appears to have included a substantial amount of property.⁶⁹⁴ However, there is no statement concerning the extent of the provision for William (D.16). It was apparently enough to make it possible for him to contract a marriage with Hawise, the widow of Robert of Grandmesnil, and sister of William Giroie, during the 1040s, when both the natal and marital sides of the bride's family were enjoying a period of prosperity, the culmination of which being the foundation of St Évrout in 1050.⁶⁹⁵ Therefore William held an unspecified inheritance from his father by 1037 and gained a wife some time between 1041 and 1049. In the 1040s, before any of the major rebellions which later led to forfeiture of estates, William's elder brother Richard held the county of Évreux, and he had five cousins who were either counts or dukes,⁶⁹⁶ it may be that William perceived his opportunities to advance in an already crowded Norman aristocracy, were limited. For whatever reason, William decided that his

⁶⁹¹ *EH*, iii, 84.

⁶⁹² *EH*, iii, 84, the text states that he made partition of his county between his three sons followed secular law, unfortunately, Orderic does not elaborate on this subject, *quibus Ebroicensem comitatum et alios honores amplissimos secundum ius seculi distribuit*.

⁶⁹³ *EH*, iii, 128, Richard is not explicitly given the county, but Orderic proceeds to describe him as 'count of Évreux' in subsequent events, which implies that this formed his share of the inheritance.

⁶⁹⁴ *EH*, v, 184-186, the list of Ralph's son's property contested by William of Évreux (D.24) and Robert Curthose (D.27) included Bavant, Noyon-sur-Andelle, Gacé, Gravençon, Écouché and other estates.

⁶⁹⁵ William's marriage to Hawise must have taken place some time between 1041 and 1049 as Robert Grandmesnil died in 1040 according to Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 85 and William and Hawise had a daughter who was herself married by 1062, although not much earlier according to G. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard* (London, 2000), 154, 269.

⁶⁹⁶ In the 1040s his cousins numbered William Werlenc, count of Mortain (D.17), Robert, count of Eu (D.18), William, count of Soissons (D.19), William, count of Arques (D.13) and his first cousin once removed was William, duke of Normandy (D.22).

future lay in Apulia, whence he departed with his wife at some point in the 1040s or possibly the very early 1050s.⁶⁹⁷

As with Richard III (D.9), Richard of Évreux (D.14) was never explicitly described as the eldest of his father's sons, but he occurs first in the list of Archbishop Robert's sons.⁶⁹⁸ It is apparent that, whatever his brothers received, Richard was considered the heir to the county of Évreux. However, the significant feature of the inheritance from the archbishop may not be related to the birth order of his sons or the distribution of his property among them, but the apparent irregularity of their father's marriage while serving as archbishop, and how that affected, or did not affect, their inheritance. As sons of an archbishop in the twelfth century, they would almost certainly have been considered illegitimate. However, the situation in the first half of the eleventh century appears much more fluid. There are a number of possible explanations for the successful transfer of property to the archbishop's sons. The first might reflect a similar situation to Iceland, in that as the archbishop held office from 979 to 1037, that is, for a period of nearly sixty years.⁶⁹⁹ This would have potentially allowed him considerable scope to create a power base from which to ensure that no matter what the irregularity, his sons would inherit smoothly. Another possibility is that illegitimacy simply did not register as a disqualification from inheritance in the first half of the eleventh century. In a related sense, it may be that they were not considered illegitimate as clerical marriage was not a contentious issue in the period. By the time Orderic wrote, it was not an acceptable practice, but Orderic's silence on the subject may indicate that he was unsure how to handle the irregularity in relation to a member of the ducal family. The absence of a contemporary challenge may be significant, but did it mean that the sons of the archbishop were considered legitimate, or simply that illegitimacy was not an issue, or that there was an issue but no one who was in a position to mount a counterclaim? There may also be a practical explanation for the apparent lack of challenges to their inheritance. Their nearest kin were all in some way affected by

⁶⁹⁷ William had no further role in Orderic's account of the second half of the eleventh century, which suggests that he and his bride may already have departed during the 1040s. It seems unlikely that they remained long in Normandy after the marriage, and Hawise makes no donations to the foundation by her sons of her first marriage in 1050, which she might conceivably have done were she still resident in Normandy.

⁶⁹⁸ *EH*, iii, 84.

⁶⁹⁹ *GC*, xi, 26-8.

issues of illegitimacy. Their uncles, who had contracted less contentious marriages as fully secular members of society, Richard II (D.4), Mauger of Corbeil (D.6) and William of Eu (D.8) were all, nevertheless, themselves illegitimate. In Richard's (D.14) case, there is no clear evidence that primogeniture was firmly established. Richard did inherit the Évreux lands, suggesting that he was the primary heir, but the other sons also had part of their father's property, which when the case of their cousins, Richard III (D.9) and Robert (D.10) is taken into account, appears to support a general trend of partition, albeit perhaps unequal partition between sons in terms of inheritance in the first half of the eleventh century. As fathers in their turn, both Richard (D.14) and Ralph (D.15) appear to have managed to pass their property to their sons William (D.24) and Robert (D.25) respectively.

William of Werlenc (D.17) was the son of Mauger of Corbeil (D.6), however nothing is known of their relationship. By the 1050s William had either through his father, or by his connection to the ducal house, obtained the county of Mortain, only to lose it through the intervention of his cousin William the Conqueror.⁷⁰⁰

William of Eu (D.8), had three sons, Robert of Eu (D.18), William (D.19) and Bishop Hugh of Lisieux (D.20). Again the father / son relationships within this branch of the family are not described in the sources, but the distribution of the father's property is clearer. Unlike Richard III (D.9) and Richard of Évreux (D.14), Robert of Eu (D.18) does not appear to have shared his inheritance in any way with his brothers.⁷⁰¹ However, the chronicles may be demonstrating the editorial power of hindsight here, as William (D.19), rebelled against his cousin William the Conqueror and may have forfeited any lands which had come to him through his father.⁷⁰² Hugh (D.20), became bishop of Lisieux,⁷⁰³ but there is no indication that he participated in the inheritance from their father either, although the extensive secular possessions of his uncle Archbishop Robert (D.5) (p.190) illustrate that holding ecclesiastical office and temporal property were not mutually exclusive in the eleventh century. Therefore, by 1047 at the latest Robert (D.18) was installed as

⁷⁰⁰ *EH*, iv, 98.

⁷⁰¹ *GND*, ii, 10.

⁷⁰² *GND*, ii, 128, interpolation by Orderic.

⁷⁰³ *GC*, xi, 766-770.

count of Eu.⁷⁰⁴ William had retreated to the court of King Henry of France and received from him the heiress of Soissons and thereafter became count of Soissons owing fealty to the French king, Henry (1031-1060).⁷⁰⁵ Hugh entered the Church around 1037 and became bishop of Lisieux from 1050 to 1077.⁷⁰⁶ Thus the sons of William of Eu (D.8) illustrate the alternative ways in which sons could prosper in the eleventh century, one benefited from paternal property, another through the intervention of a rival lord after a rebellion, and the third pursued an ecclesiastical career.

In the post-Conquest period, father / son relationships in the ducal family are portrayed in greater detail, especially with regard to the sons of the Conqueror. William the Conqueror had four legitimate sons, Robert Curthose (D.27), who was explicitly listed as the eldest,⁷⁰⁷ Richard (D.28), William Rufus (D.29) and Henry (D.30). Robert was born no earlier than 1051 and was probably born no later than around 1054.⁷⁰⁸ His rebellions against his father, 1077-79⁷⁰⁹ and again after his mother's death in 1083⁷¹⁰ illustrate an antagonistic relationship, and are suggestive of the strongly normative influence of the association of power with independence. William of Jumièges' account of the transfer or sharing of authority over Normandy in 1067 seems to suggest that there was at least some form of recognition of Robert Curthose as his father's heir in Normandy when he was at most sixteen years old.⁷¹¹ Orderic relates that Robert was not given the duchy of Normandy in 1067, but that he was recognised by William as his heir to the duchy and caused his vassals to offer fealty to him at that stage.⁷¹² In 1063, according to Orderic, William arranged the betrothal of his eldest son to Margaret the heiress of Maine, and although the marriage never took place due to the death of the bride, William and Robert

⁷⁰⁴ *Recueil*, 105.

⁷⁰⁵ *GND*, ii, 128, interpolation by Orderic.

⁷⁰⁶ *EH*, iii, 14; *GC*, xi, 766-770.

⁷⁰⁷ *EH*, iv, 80 and 92, he is also listed first of William's sons at ii, 104.

⁷⁰⁸ *Recueil*, no. 124, 126, Matilda, his mother began witnessing charters as William's wife in 1050-1. Robert's inclusion as regent of Normandy in 1066 and 1067 (*GND*, ii, 178, and *EH*, ii, 208), albeit with his mother's support, suggests that Robert cannot have been a very minor child in 1066, it seems reasonable to suggest that he would have been between twelve and fifteen years of age.

⁷⁰⁹ *EH*, ii, 356-358, iii, 96-98.

⁷¹⁰ *EH*, iv, 80.

⁷¹¹ *GND*, ii, 178.

⁷¹² *EH*, iv, 92.

maintained the claim to Maine.⁷¹³ Had Margaret survived and the marriage taken place the relationship between Robert and his father might have been very different, as it would have provided Robert with the resources of Maine in his command from a relatively early age. By 1077 when his first rebellion took place he may have been as much as 26 years old and at least 23. Aird has suggested that after the abortive attempt to arrange a marriage for Robert, William was thereafter reluctant to allow the marriage of his sons as this kept them very much reliant upon their father as their only source of influence and material support.⁷¹⁴ For Robert, who had had an early taste of future power both from his betrothal and his recognition as his father's heir to Normandy while still in his teens, the long wait thereafter for this promise to bear fruit appears to have resulted in frustration and rebellion. The estrangement between father and son seems to have had a decided impact upon Robert's ultimate inheritance. According to Orderic, the oaths of the Norman vassals, received by Robert as heir to William in Normandy in 1066, were binding upon William and he could not alter the passing of the duchy to his eldest son. However, Orderic's account of William's deathbed bequests suggests that he took steps to ensure that Robert could not benefit in any way from the vast acquisition of his reign, that is, England.⁷¹⁵ The restriction that the vassals' oaths placed upon William's freedom of action is of interest, as it suggests the continued possibility of selection of an heir, and not simply an equal division of inheritance. It was not Robert's position as the eldest son which Orderic expressed as the main reason his father was not able to disinherit him entirely, but the oaths of fealty he had received which rendered his disinheritance impossible. Whether it was these oaths, or the principle of primogeniture, which dominated the motivation of Robert's supporters in his battles with his siblings over the two decades of dispute between the sons of William the Conqueror is not clear from the sources. In particular, it should be noted that what may not have been a universally applicable principle in 1087 might well have grown to be adequate justification by the 1120s when new efforts were made to support Robert's claims through William Clito. It may well have been personal loyalty or self-interest which governed the actions of Robert's supporters more than any ideals. The age gap between William and his eldest son may have been as little as 24 years

⁷¹³ *EH*, ii, 116, 304.

⁷¹⁴ Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 46-47.

⁷¹⁵ *EH*, iv, 92.

and, as William died at sixty years of age, his eldest son was between 33 and 36 when he inherited the duchy of Normandy. Yet his rebellions of 1077-79 and 1083-87 at the ages of no more than 26 and 32 respectively may not necessarily be connected to the short age gap between father and son and the length of the wait that Robert faced. The rebellions could also reflect the heightened expectations of Robert, given the enormity of his father's acquisitions in England, and his early taste of power as representative of his father in Normandy during the early years of Conquest. These early introductions to power may have seemed to Robert to constitute a series of unfulfilled promises, given William's later reluctance to delegate any of that power to his heir.

Robert's own progeny signal that there was a change in prospects for illegitimate sons in the post-Conquest period. Richard (D.31) and William (D.32) were believed by Orderic to be the issue of a liaison during Robert's second rebellion against his father in the mid 1080s.⁷¹⁶ If this were the case then both these sons would have been young adults when their legitimate brother William Clito (D.33) was born. Yet there is no evidence that (at any stage) their father ever considered them as possible heirs to the duchy.

William Clito was born of his father's marriage to Sibyl of Conversano in 1100.⁷¹⁷ Robert would have been between 46 and 49 years old. It may have been, as Aird suggests, that William the Conqueror deliberately withheld marriage from his sons to limit their independence.⁷¹⁸ However, it is interesting to note that neither Robert, nor his brother William, rushed to marriage after their father's death. Robert waited over a decade and William never married at all. Robert's motives for delaying the marriage are a matter for speculation. His own experience as the son of a young father may have prompted him to delay the getting of legitimate progeny as long as he could, wanting to avoid taking his own father's role as a man with an impatient, frustrated and rebellious heir. Yet on his father's death, Robert was already at least 33 years old and possibly 36, making such a concern less likely. Robert's own father died at the age of sixty, and nevertheless with this example

⁷¹⁶ *EH*, v, 282.

⁷¹⁷ *EH*, v, 278.

⁷¹⁸ Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 55.

before him, by not marrying and producing legitimate heirs before his late forties, Robert took the risk of leaving a minor heir to a less than secure duchy, given that he could not have been unaware of the ambitious nature of both his brothers.⁷¹⁹ Perhaps marriage represented just one means of attaining one's independent male adulthood, and as Robert had achieved that, finally, by means of inheritance of the duchy, the matter of marriage no longer appeared as pressing. Ultimately Robert's decision to wait until he was in his late forties to marry would not have spared his heir the same experience of a prolonged adolescence as his father, as Robert lived until his early eighties. Yet his relationship with his sole legitimate son in no way mirrored his own experience with his father as circumstances were to dictate that he had little contact at all with William Clito (D.33). He was never able to develop any sort of a relationship with his only legitimate son, as he was imprisoned by his brother Henry after the battle of Tinchebrai when William Clito was between three and five years of age, but more probably five.⁷²⁰ William Clito was raised by his half-sister's husband, Helias of Saint-Saëns,⁷²¹ and became the focus for the ambitions and plots of the French king,⁷²² discontented Norman nobles⁷²³ and political opponents of his uncle Henry I.⁷²⁴ It may be significant that William Clito had no access at any stage to his imprisoned father and therefore no opportunity to form a relationship. Perhaps most interesting of all in the case of William Clito, is that by the time he was sixteen or seventeen, both he, his contemporaries, and the chronicler felt that he was not only of an age to claim his inheritance, but also that the imprisonment and neutralization of his father seems to have effectively orphaned him. Orderic phrases his claims in terms of William claiming his hereditary right to his paternal inheritance, even though Robert Curthose was alive.⁷²⁵ The relationship between William and his father Robert was thus interrupted and even the order of inheritance

⁷¹⁹ William Rufus (D.29) and Henry I (D.30).

⁷²⁰ *EH*, v, 278, Orderic states that William Clito was born three years after his parents' marriage which would give his birth as 1103, however at *EH*, v, 300 Orderic seems to give William's birth date as a year after his parents' marriage, giving his birth date as 1101.

⁷²¹ *EH*, vi, 92.

⁷²² *EH*, vi, 184, 370. The French king offered William support in his attempts to recover Normandy in 1118, and later in 1127-28 was involved in finding William a wife and awarding him the county of Flanders. The text states that the marriage took place when William was 26, and that the king's gift of Flanders followed the marriage and lasted a brief sixteen months until William's death in 1128.

⁷²³ *EH*, vi, 188. A number of nobles holding property in Normandy supported William in 1118, including Eustace of Breteuil (B.6) and Richer of Laigle (L.8).

⁷²⁴ *EH*, vi, 190. Baldwin the count of Flanders also lent aid to William in 1118.

⁷²⁵ *EH*, vi, 188-190.

was usurped. William Clito's experience seems to echo that of a minor heir, finding his inheritance usurped by those more powerful. Orderic describes his attempts to recover the duchy of Normandy for his family in terms of a restoration of his inheritance, rather than in terms of a son representing the claims of a living father.⁷²⁶ While other young male heirs, including his own father, may have chafed at the need to wait for their father to die in order to reach their full male adult potential, William Clito was in the position of deposing his father during his lifetime, a circumstance only echoed by one other son in this study,⁷²⁷ and it is the only instance where such a usurpation did not incur condemnation from Orderic.

Richard (D.28), was the second son of William the Conqueror. We cannot know exactly when he died, however as his death took place while hunting in the New Forest it was clearly after the Conquest, and given that he does not figure at all in the accounts of his brother Robert's rebellion of 1077, when both his other brothers are given a role by Orderic, it appears that he died before 1077.⁷²⁸

If Robert Curthose represents the topos of the disobedient and unruly son in Orderic's account of the ducal family, then William Rufus (D.29), with Henry (D.30) in a supporting role, provides the contrast. Orderic depicts the relationship of William the Conqueror with his two youngest sons as characterised by complete harmony.⁷²⁹ It is probably no coincidence that Orderic depicts William and Henry as both dutifully present when their father succumbed to his deathbed, while Robert was not just absent, but disloyally so, at the court of the French king, his father's greatest political rival.⁷³⁰ However, according to Orderic, there were important differences between William's treatment of his third and fourth sons. Both sons exhibited loyalty to their father throughout his life, but it was William Rufus who reaped the benefits. This may in part have been due to the respective ages of these sons at their father's demise. William Rufus would have been between 27 and 31

⁷²⁶ *EH*, vi, 188, 190 and 236, especially 190. *in paternam hereditatem reuocaret Guillelmum*.

⁷²⁷ Arnulf (BM.9), son of William Talvas (BM.5).

⁷²⁸ *EH*, ii, 356-358.

⁷²⁹ *EH*, iii, 114 *Guillelmum et Henricum amicabiliter benedixit*, this is interestingly much closer to the language Dudo used to describe almost every ducal father / son encounter in his work, but reserved by Orderic for this specific interaction, giving it far greater impact and significance within the context of William the Conqueror's relationships with his sons.

⁷³⁰ *EH*, iv, 80.

years old, Henry was just eighteen.⁷³¹ There may simply have been a longer history of filial respect and loyalty between William the Conqueror and his third son, and that this was made apparent in his division of his property between his two younger sons. William Rufus received the enormous acquisition of England, while Henry received a monetary bequest of five thousand pounds.⁷³² On his deathbed, in Orderic's portrayal of the scene, William the Conqueror made it clear that he preferred William (D.29) to the absent Robert (D.27) for the inheritance of England. In terms of the division of inheritance, the form of the partition is not startling, the patrimony to the eldest son, the acquisition to the younger. Yet the enormity of the acquisition carried with it a statement of dissatisfaction with the elder son, and a corresponding suggestion of approbation for the younger. Moreover, Orderic adds the detail of the Conqueror taking specific steps to reinforce his allocation of the acquisition, namely in a letter conveying his wishes to the archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc.⁷³³ This carries the impression, undoubtedly Orderic's intent, that William the Conqueror was making significant efforts to exclude Robert from as much of the inheritance as possible. The lesson contained in Orderic in this case appears to be that the rewards for filial loyalty and obedience were great.

Henry I (D.30), the fourth son of William the Conqueror was also an heir to a secular provision by his father. There is a slight suggestion that at an early stage in his life his parents intended him for the Church. We know that for some time in his youth he was sent for schooling.⁷³⁴ Bouchard, however, notes that this was not a wholly unprecedented path for a son of the nobility who was nevertheless intended for a secular career.⁷³⁵ In so far as the provision by William for Henry was concerned, Orderic states that he stood as the heir to his mother's English lands.⁷³⁶ Barlow suggests that William the Conqueror's decision to give Henry treasure rather

⁷³¹ Historians appear to have reached a consensus that William Rufus was born no earlier than 1056 and most likely around 1060, Crouch, *The Normans*, 111 believes his birth occurred no later than 1060; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 394, suggests his birth occurred between 1056-60. and Barlow argues from William of Malmesbury's calculation that William Rufus died above the age of forty that his birth was c. 1060 or earlier; *EH*, ii, 214. Henry was born a year after his mother's coronation in 1069.

⁷³² *EH*, iv, 92-4.

⁷³³ *EH*, iv, 96.

⁷³⁴ *EH*, iv, 120.

⁷³⁵ Bouchard, 'Strong of Body', 78.

⁷³⁶ *EH*, ii, 214 and iv, 148.

than property might simply be a replacement of this maternal inheritance with its value in money terms.⁷³⁷ But equally it may have been in addition to the existing provision of the lands. Ultimately it appears that Henry received both money and lands, for he was able to mortgage his brother Robert on his departure for the Holy Land with a substantial donation of money,⁷³⁸ and this occurred after the grant of his mother's lands from William Rufus, suggesting that Rufus honoured not only the maternal inheritance, but the paternal gift of money as well.⁷³⁹ However, Henry had obviously not been given his mother's English property at her death in 1083, when he would have been around fourteen, and it appears that he was less than content with the inheritance allotted to him by his father.⁷⁴⁰ Perhaps, Henry, like Robert had been harbouring elevated expectations based upon the scale of their father's acquisitions. On his father's death Henry would have been just eighteen years old, but provision had been made for him to enter the adult male world equipped with money, and eventually property as well.

Henry I (D.30) had numerous illegitimate progeny including at least six sons, named in the sources, who will be discussed below.⁷⁴¹ He also had one legitimate son, William (D.40). William's (D.40) life proves a useful point of comparison with the experiences of his cousin, William Clito (D.33), in terms of the relationship they each had with their fathers. William's (D.40) relationship with his father was very different from the non-relationship William Clito had with his imprisoned absent, father. The cousins were born at almost the same time. However, even in the circumstances of their birth the differences were evident. Prince William was born into a royal family, unlike any of his predecessors in the first Norman royal house, except his own father. Moreover, William was the first of his house destined from birth for the role of king. It was noted on page 199 that neither Robert Curthose, nor William Rufus sought an early marriage upon attaining their inheritance, despite their fairly advanced ages at their father's death. Robert was at least 33 and William

⁷³⁷ Barlow, *William Rufus*, 49.

⁷³⁸ *EH*, iv, 118-120.

⁷³⁹ *EH*, iv, 148.

⁷⁴⁰ *EH*, iv, 94.

⁷⁴¹ *GND*, ii, 248, *EH*, vi, 236, Robert of Gloucester (D.34), *GND*, ii, 248, *EH*, vi, 236 and 296, Richard (D.35), *GND*, ii, 248, *EH*, vi, 310, Reginald of Cornwall (D.36), *GND*, ii, 248, Robert (D.37), *GND*, ii, 248, Gilbert (D.38), *GND*, ii, 248, William (D.39). Given-Wilson and Curteis, *Royal Bastards*, 63 also identify a further three male illegitimate children of Henry I.

Rufus would have been 31 at most or in his late twenties. Henry I, by contrast, within a year of his acquisition of England, had found a bride, and within two years he had a legitimate heir.⁷⁴² It appears that while his brothers' interest in securing a legitimate heir was less than urgent, Henry placed it among his greatest priorities once he was in a position to command a territory. Henry I had many illegitimate sons. At least some of these appear to have been born before Henry I's accession to the throne and subsequent marriage (pp.205-6). Apparently, Henry was concerned not just to provide for the succession to his inheritance, but to provide an appropriate vessel for that inheritance, which he appears to have considered was a legitimate son. Henry's attitude to his son was inextricably linked to his concerns for the continuity of his own line. Henry's father may have been wary of arranging marriages for his sons, but Henry had no such qualms, ensuring that Prince William became a married man at an early age.⁷⁴³ For Henry, marriage was certainly an issue of dynastic significance that outweighed any concerns of paternal control over his son that might have otherwise influenced his actions. Herlihy and Aird suggest one of the paternal roles was to limit sons' access to brides.⁷⁴⁴ This limitation may have been a conscious attempt to preserve paternal authority over sons' freedom of action, or in order to appropriate the potential brides for the fathers as second or third wives. But, Henry's preference for secure dynastic descent overrode other considerations, and Prince William was married to Matilda, the daughter of Fulk of Anjou, in 1119 when the groom was just seventeen. The death of Prince William at the age of eighteen as a casualty of the White Ship disaster was met by extreme grief on the part of King Henry.⁷⁴⁵ Henry's distress can be seen on two levels. Firstly, that of the grief of a parent at the loss of a child to whom there is an emotional attachment, and secondly that of the threat of dynastic failure. It is to the former that Orderic appears to attribute Henry's response. However, Henry's openly dynastic approach to both his own and his son's early marriage, and his swift remarriage subsequent to the loss of his only legitimate son, suggests that for Henry, securing the descent of his property patrilineally was of great importance to him. However, it is probably a

⁷⁴² *EH*, iv, 272, Henry's marriage took place soon after he became king in 1100 and as Orderic states that his son was married at seventeen (*EH*, vi, 300-302) and died six months later on the White Ship in 1120 (*EH*, vi, 330), Prince William's birth must have been accomplished by 1102, or 1103 at the very latest.

⁷⁴³ *EH*, vi, 300-302.

⁷⁴⁴ Herlihy, *Medieval Households*, 120, Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', 55.

⁷⁴⁵ *EH*, vi, 300, Henry, it is recorded collapsed at the news.

mistake to attempt to separate the two in terms of the father / son relationship in the period. It is entirely possible for the personal tragedy and the dynastic implications to have been inextricably linked, without one detracting from the import of the other.

Henry as a father is also approachable from his relationships with some of his illegitimate sons, in particular, Robert of Caen, the earl of Gloucester (D.34) and Richard (D.35). In an interpolation into the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Robert of Torigni designates Robert of Caen as the eldest of Henry's sons.⁷⁴⁶ The exact date of Robert's birth is unknown, but it can be reconstructed to a certain extent through his attestation of his father's charters. Robert is recorded regularly witnessing his father's charters almost every year from 1113 onwards.⁷⁴⁷ This suggests that Robert was considered old enough, and important enough as a witness from this date, given that a later interpolation to include an illegitimate son appears an unlikely prospect. Therefore Robert's birth can have occurred no later than the last decade of the eleventh century. Given the frequency with which Robert witnessed his father's charters after he first began to do so, it seems that Robert was a close ally of his father's throughout his career.⁷⁴⁸ Robert was surely the son of a young father, possibly in his early twenties, and as such his early childhood experiences would have been as the son of a young man who was neither a king, nor at that stage expected to be one. Robert's career was very much tied to his close relationship with his father. He was elevated in stages into the highest levels of Anglo-Norman society. He married Mabel, the daughter of Robert fitz Hamon, at some point between 1107 and 1114.⁷⁴⁹ At some time around 1121, his father conferred the title of Earl of Gloucester upon him. However, despite the close relationship he appears

⁷⁴⁶ *GND*, ii, 248.

⁷⁴⁷ *Regesta*, ii, 1015a is the first of the charters dating to 1113 in which Robert is recorded as a witness.

⁷⁴⁸ *Regesta*, ii, There are nineteen in total which cover the years 1113-1121 and record him witnessing as Robert, the king's son. The change to Robert, earl of Gloucester occurs around 1121 in no. 1301 and this appellation continues in over eighty charters dated between 1121-1135.

⁷⁴⁹ It appears from the charter evidence that Robert received the title, earl of Gloucester around the year 1121, however the marriage appears to have predated the title. *Regesta*, ii, 1069. Henry confirms a grant to St. Mary's in Tewkesbury and also confirms the exemptions enjoyed by Robert fitz Hamon, and 'now of Robert the King's son.' Which suggests that Robert (D.34) was by 1114 in possession of the property of his deceased father-in-law; Furthermore, *Earldom of Gloucester Charters, The Charters and Scribes of the Earls and Countesses of Gloucester to AD 1217*, ed. R. Patterson (Oxford, 1973), no. 166 suggests that the earliest date for this marriage would have been some time after the death of Robert fitz Hamon in 1107.

to have had with his father, and the preferences he was shown by him, Henry I does not seem to have seriously considered at any stage any attempt to secure the throne of England for him, or any of his illegitimate sons.

The second of Henry's illegitimate sons recorded in the source material is Richard (D.35). Richard does not appear in the chronicles until the events of 1119-1120.⁷⁵⁰ However, there is a charter dated to 1114, which includes the witness 'Richard the King's son'.⁷⁵¹ This would suggest that Richard was born at the latest in the final years of the eleventh century. Robert of Torigny implies in his interpolation into the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, that Richard was Henry I's second son.⁷⁵² Richard appears to have enjoyed a similar relationship with his father as Robert (D.34), although he has left little record in the charters apart from that early attestation. The assumption that Henry was favourably disposed towards this son, derives partly from his role as advocate for his sister Juliana (Henry I's illegitimate daughter) and her errant husband Eustace of Breteuil (B.6) after their 1118 rebellion.⁷⁵³ That they were treated with leniency may indicate that Richard had considerable influence upon his father. The task does not seem to have harmed his prospects either, given that the result of the action was Richard's betrothal to the newly created heiress of Breteuil, Amice, the daughter of Ralph of Gael. Richard's proximity to the royal court meant that he too perished alongside his legitimate brother William (D.40) on the White Ship in 1120.⁷⁵⁴ Richard would not have been more than a few years older than his eighteen-year-old legitimate brother.

Henry I's conduct towards his all his sons, illegitimate and legitimate, demonstrates that he was establishing his sons with the resources to enable them to act independently of their father, but which would also probably permit them to create networks of followers and power in support of their father. Henry, rather than placing restrictions upon his sons, appears to have relished the prospect of sons who were fully functioning, adult, independent men.

⁷⁵⁰ *EH*, vi, 216, 228, 237-8, 246, 278, 296 and 304.

⁷⁵¹ *Regesta*, ii, 1062.

⁷⁵² *GND*, ii, 248-50.

⁷⁵³ *EH*, vi, 278.

⁷⁵⁴ *EH*, vi, 296 and 304.

The sons of Stephen of Blois form the final part of the assessment of the evidence for the father / son relationship in terms of the structures that affected their interactions in the ducal family. William of Sully (D.41) was the eldest legitimate son of Stephen of Blois, the husband of William the Conqueror's daughter Adela. He was born around 1080-1087 and his father died at some point after 1101.⁷⁵⁵ Yet it was not William, the '*primogenitus*', who inherited the patrimony of Blois, but William's younger brother Theobald (D.42).⁷⁵⁶ William married a daughter of Gilo of Sully and according to Orderic lived a long and peaceful life relying on his inheritance from his father-in-law.⁷⁵⁷ Chibnall has suggested that William may have been in some way retarded for the inheritance to pass him by, but she provides no evidence to support this.⁷⁵⁸ Chibnall's argument is rooted in the belief that primogeniture was the overriding principle governing the distribution of property among sons. But if primogeniture was so sacrosanct by the early twelfth century that one must needs be retarded to be excluded, why was he permitted to marry? Surely any heirs produced of such a marriage constituted a risk of claims against the property in the future? There are other possible explanations. It is possible that William lacked ambition, or that his younger brother Theobald was a favoured son for some reason. William appears to have been content with his lot, neither he nor his heirs had any impact upon his father's patrimony or upon the wider political scene, unlike his younger brothers.

Theobald of Blois (D.42), was the second son of Stephen of Blois and Adela. Orderic was clear in his designation of Theobald as the heir to the paternal inheritance '*haeres haereditatis paternae*'.⁷⁵⁹ Why Theobald, rather than William became the heir to his father is unclear. Moreover, it seems that there was no suggestion that Stephen (S.43) should share in the county of Blois. Is this a clear

⁷⁵⁵ *EH*, vi, 42, William's younger brother Stephen (D.43) was rewarded for his role in the battle of Tinchebrai which took place in 1106. Stephen could not have been less than around fifteen years of age in order to take part in a military engagement, giving his last possible birth date as 1091. Between William and Stephen in the birth order was Theobald (D.42). Thus William's probable date of birth, no later than around 1087. Given that in 1101, when their father went on crusade (*EH*, v, 324), neither William, nor Theobald were considered old enough to take command of a troop of knights (*EH*, vi, 158), William was unlikely to have been born much earlier than 1080.

⁷⁵⁶ William is described as the eldest son of Stephen of Blois and Adela in two places, *EH*, iii, 116 and vi, 42.

⁷⁵⁷ *EH*, vi, 42.

⁷⁵⁸ *EH*, iii, 116, n.3.

⁷⁵⁹ *EH*, iii, 116.

case of favouritism in the first decade of the twelfth century? Stephen (D.43), the future king of England, received all of his early honours from his uncle, King Henry (D.30), including his knighthood, the county of Mortain and the hand of the king's niece, the heiress Matilda of Boulogne, as his wife.⁷⁶⁰ Stephen, perhaps in practical acknowledgement of his position as a favourite in the household of his royal uncle, is not recorded as receiving much provision from his father's property. Stephen and Adela of Blois had a fourth son, Henry (D.44). He was given to the monks at Cluny as an oblate.⁷⁶¹ He later became bishop of Winchester. Thus the relationship of Henry with his father was interrupted not by the early death of the father, but by the early removal of the child from the nuclear family to the monastic family. Whatever the arrangement made in the preceding generation, it appears to have been binding upon William's sons, Odo (D.45), Raier (D.46) and Henry (D.47).⁷⁶² Henry (D.47) was the abbot of Fécamp described in the *Gallia Christiana* as the nephew of Henry, the bishop of Winchester.⁷⁶³

Summary – Ducal Family

The ducal family do not appear to have practised any single approach to inheritance during the two centuries of activity under review. In the pre-Conquest period it appears that while the paternal property, if it were a county or duchy, was expected to devolve upon one heir – if not intact, then at least a greater part of it – there was also concern to ensure the provision for other sons. In the depictions of sons from the pre Conquest period in Normandy in the ducal family, little of the internal father / son relationship can be discerned. Dudo's doting fathers and affectionate sons appear formulaic and contrived, indicative perhaps of the norms approved at the time, although whether they were commonly practised is speculative. Moreover, Dudo's heavily pruned family tree contrasts significantly with the number of progeny who enter the account after the end point of his work. The evidence appears to point at a lack of distinction in the first half of the eleventh century between legitimate and illegitimate sons in terms of inheritance. Equally, although the presentation of these cases by William of Jumièges and particularly

⁷⁶⁰ *EH*, vi, 42; for the descent of Boulogne see *EH*, iv, 274, Matilda was the only daughter of Henry's sister in law and her husband Eustace of Boulogne.

⁷⁶¹ *EH*, iii, 116; *ab infantia*, and *EH*, vi, 42; *a puericia*.

⁷⁶² *EH*, vi, 42, 536.

⁷⁶³ *GC*, xi, 209.

Orderic Vitalis, imply that the eldest son was favoured by the largest portion of the inheritance, there is no way of verifying that they were correct in their assumption that the eldest sons were those selected as the main heirs. In the majority of cases, where a father had more than one son, there seems to have been a level of expectation among all sons that provision by the father was possible, although, in the cases of Robert (D.10) and William (D.16) the provision may not have lived up to the levels of expectation held by these sons. Therefore, it is suggested that partition, while practised in the eleventh century, was by no means an equal division, and could disappoint or exclude sons. This points to potential sources of tension in the father / son relationship in the pre Conquest period. But there is insufficient evidence to support it, and it is equally possible to argue for the opposite, that where sons hoped to gain some part of an inheritance it was in the best interests of the sons to remain on good terms with their fathers.

In the post-Conquest period William of Sully's case illustrates that primogeniture was not fully established as an immutable inheritance principle. Provision for all sons appears to have been a matter of the inclination of the father, and to a certain extent of the father having the opportunity to do so. Provision in the secular manner for sons appears to have been fairly fluid, with no one principle governing the descent of property. One of the clearest conclusions to be drawn is that the provision for all sons, even one who might be considered in the position of heir, was very much dependent upon the circumstances surrounding his father's position at the time of his death. The number of sons of the ducal family who joined the Church and who sought promotion abroad, both dropped after the Conquest, perhaps unsurprisingly. The sons of the ducal family may have considered their links to the ruling family to be an asset which made the lure of opportunity and enterprise in other theatres less compelling than for members of other families. This is particularly evident in the sons of King Henry, none of whom entered the Church or left the country for pastures new. They all appear to have felt that proximity to a king was of far greater potential benefit than any alternative career.

What appears clear from the evidence was that father / son relationships were subject to a number of variables, not least of which was the interaction of the father and son on a personal level. The right of the eldest son to expect the largest share is

hinted at by the sources, but was not necessarily straightforward. Robert Curthose inherited the patrimony, but may have felt effectively sidelined by the immense acquisition inherited by his younger brother. William of Sully was, in fact, sidelined by his younger brother.

The Bellême / Montgomery Family ⁷⁶⁴

The Bellême lands commanded the southern borders of Normandy while the Montgomery property was in the heartland of central Normandy. In this way the two families neatly sandwiched the monastery at St. Évroul, which accounts for the detail which Orderic was able to provide concerning these interlinked families. In the pre-Conquest period Orderic concentrated on the Bellême family, but by the end of the period the marriage of the Bellême heiress into the Montgomery family meant that the property of the two families combined and it was this newly constructed family which went forward into the post-Conquest period.

William of Bellême (BM.1) had six sons, Warin, Fulk, Robert, William, Ivo and Benedict. The descent of the family property in this generation is complicated. What emerges from the studies made of this period in the family history is a complex picture of shared inheritance and fraternal succession, even including succession by clergy to secular property.⁷⁶⁵ Chibnall writes of this complex inheritance that 'the only explanation seems to be some form of division. Orderic, I would suggest, is blinded to this by his obsession with primogeniture.'⁷⁶⁶ The complications surrounding the descent of the family property in the first half of the eleventh century highlight the difficulty of reconstructing relationships from the source material. It raises many questions. How far can we be sure that the property was divided among brothers? Were the shares equal or unequal favouring certain of the brothers? Is it possible that the partition was at the behest of their father? Or was

⁷⁶⁴ See genealogies 9a and 9b.

⁷⁶⁵ For a discussion of the various permutations of the descent of the Bellême inheritance in the first half of the eleventh century see White, 'The First House' 67-99; K. Thompson, 'Family and Influence to the South of Normandy in the Eleventh Century: The Lordship of Bellême', *JMH* 11,3 (1985), 215-226.

⁷⁶⁶ Chibnall, *EH*, ii, appendix, 364.

there an inheritance by the eldest surviving son, and the complexity caused by the reorganisation to satisfy the needs of the remaining four sons?

In the following generation only one legitimate son was recorded in the chronicles: Arnulf (BM.9), the son of William Talvas (BM.5). However, there is some doubt whether his half-brother was an illegitimate son of William's or the legitimate son of his second marriage (pp.212-3). Arnulf's relationship with his father appears to have been one of conflict given that he is the only son in the sample to successfully usurp his living father, while that father was both free from imprisonment by a lord and not in some form of retirement imposed by old age. The other instances of sons taking over the inheritance while their father lived are either depicted as amicable, as with William Longsword and his father Rollo (p.189), or as unavoidable due to parental indisposition, such as William Clito responding to the imprisonment of Robert Curthose (pp.199-201) and William Talvas II taking on his father Robert of Bellême's property when his was imprisoned (pp.218-9). There was one other son who took over from his living father, Guy of Ponthieu (pp.219-20), but we do not know the circumstances. Arnulf was also one of the few sons in the sources who were described as having had a hostile relationships with their fathers.⁷⁶⁷ Orderic appears ambivalent concerning Arnulf's relationship with his father. On the one hand he viewed William Talvas' expulsion with approbation, given that in his opinion, William Talvas was a wicked man with little to recommend him.⁷⁶⁸ Orderic's hostility to the line of Bellême found continued expression in his condemnation of William Talvas' daughter Mabel, and her son Robert of Bellême (BM.15), the heiress and the heir of the Bellême property respectively whose lordship over the patrons of St. Évrout was the cause of much bitterness in Orderic's account. However, Orderic seems to have been less than sanguine about the act of usurpation. He consigned Arnulf to an equally bad end in which, as a punishment for his own equally wicked nature, he is murdered.⁷⁶⁹ The inference to be drawn from Orderic's portrayal is that there may be no worse fate for a wicked man than for the natural order of things to be upset by a son deposing his

⁷⁶⁷ The other example being that of Robert Curthose, whose rebellions met with less success (pp.197-9).

⁷⁶⁸ *GND*, ii, 112, interpolation by Orderic; *EH*, ii, 14

⁷⁶⁹ *GND*, ii, 112.

father. However, the act of usurpation itself was so repugnant to Orderic that in itself it deserved to be punished. Arnulf was probably born at some point before 1033 as by 1048 he attested a ducal charter presumably during the period in which he rebelled against his father.⁷⁷⁰ The paucity of examples of rebellious sons suggests that Orderic's condemnation echoed that of elite society more generally, and that there were powerful social mores curtailing this type of behaviour.

Arnulf's half-brother Oliver is mentioned only once in the chronicle sources, in an interpolation by Orderic in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*.⁷⁷¹ Orderic describes the death of Arnulf (BM.9) Oliver's brother, including the information that Oliver was believed to have murdered his brother. He adds the information that Oliver ended his life as a monk at the abbey of Bec under William the abbot.⁷⁷² Orderic does not make explicit Oliver's birth status, describing him as '*germanus*' to Arnulf. It is not clear whether Oliver was the son of William Talvas I's first marriage to Hildeberg,⁷⁷³ which would have made him the full legitimate brother of Arnulf and Mabel, or of William Talvas I's second marriage to the daughter of Rodolf of Beaumont,⁷⁷⁴ which would have made him a legitimate younger half-brother to Arnulf and Mabel, or whether he was the son of a liaison of William Talvas I's which would mean he was an illegitimate son. Historians disagree on this point. White suggests that he could have been the son of William's second marriage, and that he has only been accepted by historians as illegitimate because this appears to fit the fact that he did not inherit the patrimony after the deaths of Arnulf, his father and bishop Ivo.⁷⁷⁵ Van Houts accepts that Oliver was the legitimate son of the second marriage.⁷⁷⁶ Thompson prefers to see Oliver as illegitimate.⁷⁷⁷ White describes one of the arguments in favour of Oliver's illegitimacy as being the fact that the French king did not take the opportunity to promote a rival heir to the inheritance, given that the lands crossed the border into the French king's ambit and Roger II of Montgomery was one of the Norman duke's most favoured vassals in

⁷⁷⁰ *Recueil*, no. 115.

⁷⁷¹ *GND*, ii, 112.

⁷⁷² *GC*, xi, 226-227. William was abbot of Bec 1093-1124.

⁷⁷³ *GND*, ii, 108.

⁷⁷⁴ *GND*, ii, 108.

⁷⁷⁵ White, 'The First House', 85.

⁷⁷⁶ Van Houts, *GND*, ii, 112, n. 3.

⁷⁷⁷ Thompson, 'Family and Influence', 222 and 224, implied rather than explicitly stated.

that period.⁷⁷⁸ The argument follows that only Oliver's illegitimacy would have dissuaded the French king from such a course. However two counter arguments can be made. Firstly, there is no evidence to suggest that the principle of excluding all inheritance by illegitimate heirs was fully accepted in the first half of the eleventh century. The Duke of Normandy himself was a bastard at this date. Secondly, the French king's decision not to support Oliver against Roger II of Montgomery might have had less to do with Oliver's supposed illegitimacy than it had to do with the opportunity Roger's involvement in Bellême gave the French king to divide the loyalties of one of the Norman duke's closest allies. The argument does not seem to have been properly proven that Oliver was either legitimate or illegitimate, or even that he was not a full brother of Arnulf and Mabel, who was simply, either for political reasons as a result of his sister's marriage to one of the duke's most valued and powerful vassals, or by his own inclination, or for some unspecified reason of unsuitability, passed over for the inheritance. The conclusion that he must have been illegitimate because he did not inherit appears a circular one, and one which does not wholly fit into the emerging picture of the eleventh century as a period in which many permutations of inheritance were still possible.

Roger of Montgomery (BM.12) was one of five brothers. However, by the middle of the century, Roger had emerged as the brother with control. He married William Talvas' (BM.6) daughter Mabel by the early 1050s and died in 1093.⁷⁷⁹ He appears to have inherited most, if not all of the patrimony by the 1050s. However, as only one of his brothers, Gilbert, can be shown to have lived beyond the 1050s, this does not conclusively prove that partition, in this family at this date, was not an option. Gilbert's death is attributed to a scheme of Roger's wife Mabel that went awry.⁷⁸⁰ Two points are worth noticing with regard to his career. First, he was accompanying Arnold of Échauffour when he died, perhaps as a member of his household, or maybe simply as a visitor to his household. He does not appear to command the same position in society as his brother Roger, who by this date held

⁷⁷⁸ White, 'The First House', 88.

⁷⁷⁹ Thompson, 'Family and Influence', 227-228. She dates the marriage of Mabel, William's daughter to Roger of Montgomery to the late 1040s or early 1050s; J. Mason, 'Roger of Montgomery and his sons (1067-1102)', *TRHS* 5th Series, 13 (1963), 1-28 at 1, dates the marriage to 1050-54.

⁷⁸⁰ *EH*, ii, 122. The date of his death is derived from the fact that he was accompanying Arnold of Échauffour who also died c. 1063.

the Montgomery property and was married to a significant heiress. Secondly, were it not for the information regarding his other brothers elsewhere in the narrative, one would be tempted to presume that Orderic invented Gilbert for the sole purpose of furthering his character assassination of Mabel of Bellême, whom he credited with Gilbert's accidental murder.

Roger (BM.12) and Mabel had five sons, and Roger also had a son by his second marriage. Robert's (BM.15) relationship with his father belongs largely to the post-Conquest years. We can quite securely date Robert's birth to between 1050 and 1056.⁷⁸¹ Orderic states that Roger II of Montgomery died six years after the Conqueror.⁷⁸² If Roger died in 1093, his eldest legitimate son would have been between 37 and 43 years of age. Robert had a prolonged wait to inherit the paternal property given that his father lived until his eldest son was around 40 years old. In many ways, the circumstances and events of Robert's relationship with his father Roger, parallel the relationship of Robert Curthose with William the Conqueror, yet the relationship appears to have been much more harmonious. Robert of Bellême and Robert Curthose were both born in the 1050s to men who made enormous territorial acquisitions when their eldest sons were in their early to mid teens, both experienced a prolonged adolescence in the shadow of their dynamic fathers. Yet there the similarities end. Robert of Bellême seems to have remained on good terms with his father throughout his long wait for inheritance. How do we account for the difference? Firstly, While Robert (BM.15) had to wait until his late thirties at the earliest to inherit his father's patrimony, he had another claim upon an inheritance which came to him much sooner. His mother Mabel was the heiress of the entire patrimony of Bellême and her death in 1079 made Robert, as her heir, the new lord of Bellême at the age of 23-29.⁷⁸³ Moreover, from a statement made in the *Ecclesiastical History* it seems that during the later years of his father's life Roger was mainly resident in England. It is possible to speculate that he may have counted

⁷⁸¹ According to Orderic, Robert was baptized by Thierry, abbot of St. Évroul (*EH*, ii, 48). Thierry's was abbot 1050-1059 (*GC*, xi, 817-818), but in 1057 he departed on a pilgrimage and died abroad (*EH*, ii, 68-74). Therefore, Robert's birth occurred at some point during the six years that he was present in Normandy in that role. These dates correspond to the probable date of his parents' marriage. It is probable that Robert was the eldest son, Orderic twice lists him first in the birth order, and given his preoccupation with the family of Bellême, he was probably very familiar with the more recent history of the family, (*GND*, ii, 118, interpolation by Orderic; *EH*, iii, 138).

⁷⁸² *EH*, iii, 148.

⁷⁸³ *EH*, iii, 136; White, 'The First House', 96-99.

on Robert as a substantial local landholder in his own right to administer his estates while he was absent.⁷⁸⁴ This is speculation, but it would fit with the picture of the relationship of Roger with his eldest son which emerges from the text. Robert and Roger appear to have had a mutually supportive relationship which did not begin with Robert's entry into the landholding strata of the aristocracy. The young Robert became involved with Robert Curthose's following in the 1070s and he joined Robert's rebellion against the Conqueror in 1077.⁷⁸⁵ Robert would have been between 21 and 27 years of age when he joined the group of mainly young men who formed Robert Curthose's following. Yet the rebellion did not estrange him from his father. Instead Roger II of Montgomery was one of the magnates who persuaded William the Conqueror to forgive his son. Orderic attributes their motives to the greater good of the kingdom. However, it is possible that Roger, and other fathers of rebels amongst the magnates, were also concerned to bring about the redemption of their errant sons as well.⁷⁸⁶ The contrast with William the Conqueror's concern to control his son, and Roger's to bring his son back into the fold as it were, begs the question, which father's behaviour was more typical of the period? It certainly raises questions about too easily accepting William and Robert Curthose's relationship as representative of the period. Roger not only successfully restored Robert to William the Conqueror's good graces, but made it possible for Robert to marry as well.⁷⁸⁷ Robert was therefore a landholding, married man well before his father's death in 1093. Further evidence of Roger's continued concern for the prosperity of his eldest son is to be found in his continued support of him in the face of his rebellion against William Rufus in 1088, when he not only crossed to Normandy to protect his Bellême holdings, but also negotiated with the king for his release.⁷⁸⁸ The contrast with Robert Curthose is very clear. Robert of Bellême was supported politically by his father over a sustained period, he received both property and a marriage and he may have been trusted to act in his father's stead during Roger's long absences from Normandy. The comparison with Robert Curthose is important. Although there are

⁷⁸⁴ *EH*, iii, 148.

⁷⁸⁵ *EH*, ii, 358.

⁷⁸⁶ *EH*, iii, 110.

⁷⁸⁷ *EH*, iv, 158, his marriage is arranged to Agnes the heiress count Guy of Ponthieu by 'king William'. Since one of Robert's first acts upon the coronation of William Rufus was to rebel against him, for which he was imprisoned, it seems more likely that the marriage was arranged by William the Conqueror. The marriage probably dates to the early 1080s given that Robert was part of Robert Curthose's bachelor court up to the late 1070s.

⁷⁸⁸ *EH*, iv, 148.

differences in their situations which should be noted. Robert of Bellême's accession to maternal property, and his marriage under the auspices of the king were both conferred upon Robert (BM.15) from routes outside the father / son relationship. Therefore Robert's attainment of adult male independence was a *fait accompli* which his father had no control over. Did Robert's independent power place his father in the position of establishing an agreeable relationship out of necessity, perhaps to prevent his newly powerful son from being tempted to usurp him? This was a situation the Conqueror never had to face as he never allowed Robert (D.27) to develop the resources to rebel effectively. Yet Roger's initial support for his son, when he negotiated his return to the bosom of the royal court in 1077, was undertaken when Robert (BM.15) was vulnerable, before he had inherited from his mother, and neither of them could have anticipated her murder just two years later. Without Roger's support at that crucial time, even after inheriting from his mother, Robert might not have been readmitted to court, and gained the favour of the king in the acquisition of his heiress bride. Robert's success does not appear to have been achieved wholly in spite of his father, but maybe even in part because of his father. Certainly the case supports the Icelandic model that a son with some independence is actually less likely to prove rebellious than one whose father withheld resources from his sons.

Roger had five other sons. Hugh's (BM.16) relationship with his father seems as amicable and supportive as that of his elder brother. Hugh was listed twice by Orderic as his father's second son.⁷⁸⁹ He is portrayed as being present among a company of sixteen knights who set out to avenge his mother's murder in 1079,⁷⁹⁰ which would suggest that he was born no later than around 1064 and if his elder brother could be born no earlier than 1050, then Hugh was probably born no earlier than 1052. If so Hugh would have been in his thirties at his father's death in 1093 when he inherited his father's acquisitions in England, although he gained the sobriquet 'of Montgomery', which might indicate that he also held some of his

⁷⁸⁹ *EH*, iii, 138; *GND*, ii, 118, interpolation by Orderic.

⁷⁹⁰ *EH*, iii, 136.

father's Norman patrimony.⁷⁹¹ He shared the inheritance of his father's property with his elder brother Robert. According to Orderic, Robert had the patrimony in Normandy and Hugh the acquisitions in England.⁷⁹² However, to this very stark division must be added the questions that the topographical surname applied to Hugh raises. Hugh's relationship with his father is not revealed in the same detail as that of his elder brother, nevertheless it may have been subject to the same strains of a prolonged youth as his elder brother.

Roger the Poitevin (BM.17) was the third son of Roger II of Montgomery.⁷⁹³ His father did not include him in the division of the family inheritance, but he did arrange to make his future secure. Roger was provided with a wife and a county which from Orderic's account appears to have been achieved prior to Roger II's death.⁷⁹⁴ Mason agrees that the marriage to the heiress of Poitou took place before Roger II's death, dating the marriage to 1086 and the succession of Roger to the county through his wife's claim to 1091, when his brother-in-law died.⁷⁹⁵ Thus by his father's death he would have already had some measure of independent property for as many as seven years. The next son of Roger II of Montgomery, Philip 'Grammaticus' (BM.18), appears to have been destined for the Church by his father.⁷⁹⁶ Philip seems to have had other ideas. We know that he had at least one child, possibly illegitimate, a daughter who became an abbess.⁷⁹⁷ He also accompanied Robert Curthose on his expedition to Antioch as part of the First Crusade in the late 1090s, where he died.⁷⁹⁸ It is not clear whether his role in this campaign was clerical or military, however he never held any recorded ecclesiastical position which suggests that despite his early education he chose a secular career. If he rejected his father's choice of career path for him, this might explain why he, of all the sons of Roger II appears to have been the least well provided for. Arnulf

⁷⁹¹ *EH*, iii, 148, for Hugh's inheritance of the English lands, 136 for the appellation 'of Montgomery' as early as 1079, however, this might have been applied to the account in hindsight and is therefore not a reliable indication of his father's provision for him at that date.

⁷⁹² *EH*, iii, 148.

⁷⁹³ *EH*, iii, 138; *GND*, ii, 118, interpolation by Orderic.

⁷⁹⁴ *EH*, iii, 148-150; iv, 302.

⁷⁹⁵ Mason, 'Roger of Montgomery', 13-14.

⁷⁹⁶ *EH*, iv, 302, Orderic describes him as educated as a boy, which might often indicate a future in the church.

⁷⁹⁷ *EH*, vi, 36. Matilda.

⁷⁹⁸ *EH*, iv, 302.

(BM.19), the fifth son of Roger II⁷⁹⁹ also received paternal provision and direction for his career. Orderic claimed that his father arranged for him to hold a county and for his marriage to the daughter of a King of Ireland before his death.⁸⁰⁰ But Orderic is inconsistent here, and ascribes the marriage to Arnulf's own efforts in another statement.⁸⁰¹ Mason agrees that the comital rank, if not the marriage were achieved prior to Roger II's death.⁸⁰² Is Orderic's depiction of Roger making extensive provisions for his sons, perhaps an idealised topos of the 'good father', as Arnulf (BM.9) is perhaps representative of the 'bad son'? Roger's sixth son, born to his second marriage will be discussed in the section on minor sons. It appears that Roger II was concerned to make *pre-mortem* provision for those of his sons who would not inherit at his death. But the resources he had at his disposal to make this possible should be taken into consideration when comparing him to other fathers. Nevertheless, it may be a significant feature of his idealised role in the father / son relationship is that he did indeed make provision for all of his sons, and all but the eldest two were definitely provided for *pre-mortem*.

Robert of Bellême's son William Talvas II (BM.21) is another of the sons who replaced his father *pre-mortem*. However, the circumstances more closely resembled those of William Clito (pp.199-201) than Arnulf of Bellême. William's parents married in the early 1080s.⁸⁰³ Orderic states that in 1102, when his son would have been at most 21 years old, Robert laid claim to the inheritance of Ponthieu, the county of William's maternal grandfather, on his behalf.⁸⁰⁴ There can be two interpretations of this claim, one is that Robert took over his father-in-law's property using his son's claim as his justification, and then administered it himself.

⁷⁹⁹ *EH*, iii, 138; *GND*, ii, 118, interpolation by Orderic.

⁸⁰⁰ *EH*, iii, 148-150; iv, 302.

⁸⁰¹ *EH*, vi, 30-32.

⁸⁰² Mason, 'Roger of Montgomery', 17-18. Arnulf became earl of Pembroke before 1093.

⁸⁰³ *EH*, iv, 158, Robert's marriage was arranged after his inheritance of his mother's property in 1079 and by William the Conqueror, therefore before 1087; *EH*, vi, 445, n. 4. Chibnall suggests a date for William's birth as 1105-1111, however this conflicts in several ways with other information concerning William. First, in 1102 Robert sought the inheritance of Ponthieu on William's behalf. he can hardly have done so for a son as yet unborn (*EH*, vi, 12-14). Secondly, he may have had as many as seven children by 1127 (*Calendar of Documents Preserved in France Illustrative of the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. i, ed. J. Round (London, 1899), no. 970.) which would make the date of 1111 impossible unless William had a child a year from the age of nine. The 1105 date while possible, is nearly as improbable given that he would have had to produce a child every year from the age of fifteen, not impossible but unusual.

⁸⁰⁴ *EH*, vi, 12-14.

The other interpretation is that he transferred the property directly to William. Two facts suggest that Robert did indeed give his son the property in Ponthieu either in 1102, or at some point before his imprisonment in 1112 (Robert of Bellême switched sides in the conflict of the sons of William the Conqueror one too many times, and as a result, in 1112, he was imprisoned by Henry I and never released.⁸⁰⁵) The first is the statement by Orderic that in 1119 King Henry restored to William Talvas II his father's Norman property.⁸⁰⁶ Elsewhere, Orderic describes William Talvas II as heir to his father's lands in Normandy and Ponthieu.⁸⁰⁷ The omission of Ponthieu from the restoration of 1112, might mean that William always controlled the property. However, the county of Ponthieu was outside the authority of the Norman duke, so he would only have been able to restore the Norman lands to William. A second fact suggesting that William was administering at least the Ponthieu property in his own right before he was granted his father's Norman lands, is his marriage. William was married to Ella, the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy and the widow of the count of Toulouse. Ella's first husband died in 1112,⁸⁰⁸ which means that William did not marry her before the imprisonment of his father. If William were a completely landless son of a disgraced father, it is unlikely that Ella's family would have considered him a suitable second husband. It is also very probable that William married her before the restoration of the Norman lands, as by 1127 William and Ella had produced seven children.⁸⁰⁹ The marriage could have taken place immediately upon the restoration and the couple set about having one child a year for seven years. But it seems more likely that during his father's politically active period William was given control of the Ponthieu inheritance which came to him from his mother and that at some point after his father's imprisonment, but before the restoration of the Norman lands to William, he married Ella, not as a young man with good prospects, but as the count of Ponthieu, equal in rank to her previous husband.

Finally Guy (BM.22), the son of William Talvas II (BM.21), represents another case of a son who took control of his father's property while his father was

⁸⁰⁵ *EH*, vi, 178; in n.1 Chibnall argues for the date 1112.

⁸⁰⁶ *EH*, vi, 224, the event coincides with Prince William's marriage which took place in 1119.

⁸⁰⁷ *EH*, iv, 158.

⁸⁰⁸ Richard, J., *Le Comté de Tripoli sous la Dynastie Toulousaine 1102-1187* (Paris, 1945), 6.

⁸⁰⁹ *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France* no. 970.

still alive. Guy was born after 1113 as his mother's first husband did not die until 1112. Guy's father was disseised of his property in 1135, when Guy would have been at most 21 years old.⁸¹⁰ In an interpolation in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Robert of Torigni states that Guy became count of Ponthieu during his father's lifetime.⁸¹¹ There is no obvious opprobrium directed against Guy in the source, suggesting that this transfer of power was not considered a usurpation by contemporaries, and it may be connected to his father's forfeiture of the Norman lands.

Summary – Bellême / Montgomery

The Bellême / Montgomery family illustrate the extent to which descent of family lands could be complex. Was the pre-Conquest allocation to sons achieved through fraternal inheritance progressively one brother to the next? Or was the paternal property divided among brothers, and only then amalgamated in the hands of one brother as the others died? Both the Bellême and the Montgomery families had large numbers of brothers available in the first half of the eleventh century. However, mortality in both families appears to have been high, and marriage rates low. This contrasts with the extent to which Roger of Montgomery appears to have utilised marriage in the post-Conquest period to provide for all of his sons, and this is perhaps indicative of the greater resources available to him as one of the great beneficiaries of the Conquest in terms of English lands. Half of the post-Conquest sons were married and all of these marriages occurred before their fathers' deaths. Although it is difficult to establish whether all sons were provided for in the first half of the eleventh century, the practice of making provision for all sons was, if Orderic is to be believed, one of the key concerns of Roger of Montgomery as a father. Significantly in the Bellême / Montgomery families Orderic presents his audience with two contrasting images, the 'ideal father' in Roger of Montgomery, who protected his sons' interests, possibly even favoured Robert of Bellême despite his faults in Orderic's eyes, and who provided for all his sons; and the 'wicked son', personified in Arnulf (BM.9) who usurped Orderic's natural order by rebelling against his father. Arnulf was not the only son to replace his father in his father's

⁸¹⁰ *EH*, vi, 446.

⁸¹¹ *GND*, ii, 266.

lifetime in the two families. However, while Arnulf did so by violent means, and earned Orderic's, and possibly society's condemnation, as the perpetrator of an unnatural act, William Talvas II (BM.21) did so as a result of the incarceration of his father, a situation which, we have seen in the case of William Clito, appears to receive no criticism. It seems that a perpetually imprisoned father virtually corresponded to a dead father in the eyes of the chronicler and his audience.

The Giroie / Grandmesnil Family ⁸¹²

The Giroie / Grandmesnil were vassals of the Bellême family, and none of the scions of either branch ever held the titles of count or earl. They are connected in this thesis by virtue of a marriage alliance and their status as co-founding families of St. Évrour. The reconstruction of the family must include a discussion concerning the probable dating of Giroie's marriage. According to Orderic's account, Giroie was betrothed to the daughter of Heugon, whose dowry would have included Montreuil and Échauffour, and after the death of his betrothed Giroie claimed the dowry with the aid of his lord William of Bellême from Duke Richard.⁸¹³ William of Bellême's support in this was supposedly attained after Giroie distinguished himself in an action against William's rival the count of Maine, which Chibnall and White have suggested occurred in 1020.⁸¹⁴ According to Orderic, it was after this that Giroie married Gisla, the daughter of Thurstan of Bastenbourg.⁸¹⁵ Orderic, who was apparently familiar with the family who were co-founders of St. Évrour, states that Giroie's son William (GG.3) enjoyed the respect of two Norman dukes, Richard and Robert.⁸¹⁶ This implies that Giroie himself had died by 1026.⁸¹⁷ At the latest, Giroie had died by 1035, as Duke Robert was involved in the resolution of a dispute between his sons and Gilbert of Brionne.⁸¹⁸ The evidence is problematic. If Giroie died by 1026 and had eleven children, it is almost an impossibility that his marriage began in 1020. Even if he died in 1035 which makes the birth of eleven children more probable, the 1020 date of his marriage presents a problem in terms of the

⁸¹² See genealogies 10a and 10b.

⁸¹³ *EH*, ii, 22.

⁸¹⁴ White, 'The First House', 77; Chibnall, *EH*, ii, 22, n.2.

⁸¹⁵ *EH*, ii, 22.

⁸¹⁶ *EH*, ii, 26.

⁸¹⁷ Richard III (1026-1027). Robert I (1027-1035).

⁸¹⁸ *EH*, ii, 24.

foundation of St. Évroul, for both Giroie's sons and grandsons by his daughter Hawise were involved in the foundation in 1050.⁸¹⁹ If Orderic's chronology is followed, and White and Chibnall's dating of the conflict with the count of Maine is accepted, it appears that Hawise's sons were almost certainly in their early to mid teens at the most at the foundation of St. Évroul, and therefore at the death of their father, possibly as early as 1040, they would have been minor heirs.⁸²⁰ Moreover, his sons Arnold (GG.2) and William (GG.3), who were in Orderic's terms '*miletēs*' during the dispute resolved by Duke Robert, would have been in their early teens at that point, which raises the question of social maturity again. It seems probable that Giroie married somewhat earlier than the 1020 date, but given the circumstances of the struggle for inheritance described by Orderic as reaching a resolution under Duke Robert, it may be that his eldest two sons were in their late teens or early twenties during the 1030s.

Giroie had seven sons. The first of these was Arnold (GG.2).⁸²¹ Arnold was one of the two sons of Giroie to reach maturity before his father's death. Orderic terms him a '*miles*', but implies that he and his brother William (GG.3) were not long out of childhood, given that they are described as '*pupilli*' in their struggle to maintain their inheritance in the face of the aggression of Gilbert of Brionne.⁸²² Albeit that it is probable that Orderic was using the term to engage the sympathy of his audience for the family who were so closely connected to his monastic house, it appears that Arnold and his brother William were the only two of Giroie's sons to have reached maturity before the death of their father. Giroie, it seems, was unable to ensure the smooth transfer of his property to his sons. Even though their father was apparently on good terms with the lords of Bellême, having impressed William I of Bellême, though his service to the family in the 1020s, his two eldest sons were apparently not in a strong position to assert their claims to their father's lands. Arnold and his second brother William's (GG.3) eventual success in retaining their patrimony leaves the allocation of the paternal property open to more than one interpretation. First, that there was parity between the two eldest brothers. Secondly,

⁸¹⁹ GC, xi, 817-818 the first abbot Thierry (1050-1059); *Recueil*, no. 122, the foundation charter. *EH*, ii, 16, Orderic explicitly states the date of the foundation of his monastic house.

⁸²⁰ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 85.

⁸²¹ *EH*, ii, 22 for the seven sons of Giroie and Gisle; ii, 24, Arnold '*primogenitus*'.

⁸²² *EH*, ii, 24.

that William inherited from his brother in fraternal succession. If the first were the case it would indicate that partition in some form gave all sons a claim upon their father's property, if the second case were applied, it would argue for primogeniture. While Arnold and William fought together to retain their inheritance, this does not prove that they shared it at his death by right, merely that faced with an external threat upon their father's death they acted in unison to maintain the family hold upon their lands. Whether this implies they held the property as equals cannot be determined. It may even be possible that William (GG.3) was married before the death of his father as part of the paternal provision for him and that his father's intentions were that Arnold inherit. Orderic describes Giroie's other sons, Fulk (GG.4), Robert (GG.5), Ralph (GG.6), Hugh (GG.7), and Giroie (GG.8) as still boys when their father died and they will be discussed below (pp.236-7).⁸²³

William Giroie (GG.3) was married twice and had a son from each marriage. The eldest was Arnold of Échauffour (GG.10). It was noted (p.222) that Arnold's father was probably in his teens or early twenties in the 1030s. Arnold died in, or shortly after 1063.⁸²⁴ Orderic informs us that Arnold had at least eight children which suggests his marriage to Emma, the daughter of Thurstan Haldup, cannot have transpired any later than 1054 and as all of his children were minors at his death suggests that his marriage occurred between the late 1040s and 1054.⁸²⁵ From these calculations it is clear that Arnold was married well before his own father's death in 1056.⁸²⁶ This has implications for the father / son relationship that existed between William Giroie and Arnold of Échauffour. William probably became a father as a young man in his late teens or early twenties, and very likely was responsible for the arrangement of his own son's marriage. There is no suggestion that William sought to control his son's access to resources by keeping him a bachelor. The marriage was potentially a very good alliance for the family, as Emma's brother Eudo was the steward of the Norman duke, although he may have

⁸²³ *EH*, ii, 24, 'puerili ætate'.

⁸²⁴ *EH*, ii, 90-92, 116 and 124. Arnold rebelled against the Norman duke for three years in response to the confiscation of his property in 1060, after achieving a reconciliation with the duke during the duke's campaign in Maine (which can be dated to 1063 by Orderic's comment that the duke held Maine for 24 years) Arnold died shortly after this.

⁸²⁵ *EH*, ii, 124-126.

⁸²⁶ *EH*, ii, 60-2, 66.

acquired the position after the marriage.⁸²⁷ It may be that the alliance created by the marriage was of more value to William than the security of maintaining his son as a bachelor. But it is equally possible that William had no such desire and sought the marriage on his son's behalf with the intention of giving his son all the advantages accruing from the status of a married man. Arnold inherited from his father in 1056, and as his brother William (GG.11) was settled in Italy, it appears that he benefited from all the Norman lands. However, his death just seven years later left his own two sons as minor heirs, and the impact that the absence of a father had on them will be discussed below.

William 'of Montreuil'(GG.11) was the son of William Giroie by his second marriage. Orderic uses the appellation 'of Montreuil' despite William's early departure for Apulia.⁸²⁸ His uncle Fulk (GG.4) had held at least half of the fee of Montreuil until his death in around 1040.⁸²⁹ Some or all of the property may have been transferred, or at least promised to William (GG.11), after his uncle's death. If this is the case, his father may have initially planned a division of the family property among his two sons. However, the appellation may be a later application by Orderic, perhaps to stress the long departed William's connections to Normandy and to that property in particular, perhaps it was part of Orderic's attempt to discredit Fulk's sons who are discussed below (pp.225-7). William was still in Normandy in 1050 when he is recorded as confirming his father's grants to St. Évroul and making some gifts of his own.⁸³⁰ It cannot have been long after this date that William left for Apulia. The chronicle records that by 1056 he was well established and in the position to send gifts of considerable value back to St. Évroul.⁸³¹ William's departure for Italy may have taken place while he was relatively young. He was born of his father's second marriage, and his father was considered a young man in around the 1030s so it is probable that in 1050 William was no more than in his twenties. His departure from Normandy took place when he was a young man, with

⁸²⁷ *EH*, ii, 124.

⁸²⁸ *EH*, ii, 58, 98.

⁸²⁹ *GND*, ii, 92-3, n.5, Van Houts notes that Fulk died in the company of Gilbert of Brionne whose death is dated to around 1040.

⁸³⁰ *EH*, ii, 34.

⁸³¹ Loud, *Robert Guiscard*, 131, 235-236, points out that while he may have married the daughter of Richard of Capua by 1056, the capture of the cities and the papal service ascribed to him by Orderic took place in the 1060s and 1071 respectively.

a living father, and one elder brother, but also with numerous uncles, all of whom may have had a claim upon family property. It could be argued that his prospects for advancement within Normandy were actually quite good. Given his father's propensity to promote his uncles to family property (pp.236-7), his expectations could have been set quite high. However, it is possible that the pressure of claimants on family property inspired him to seek elsewhere for advancement. William may have intended to travel abroad and then return as his uncle Ralph did. We do not know on what terms William was with his father. Orderic was unlikely to record discord between one of his house's founders and his son. If there were a dispute, however, it ended within less than six years given William's desire to recognise his father's foundation with a substantial gift.

Giroie (GG.12) and Fulk (GG.13) are the only two illegitimate sons to be recorded by Orderic for the Giroie / Grandmesnil families,⁸³² a much smaller percentage of the 31 members of the families, compared to the ducal family's 18 out of 47. The ecclesiastical nature of the sources material must be borne in mind here. Perhaps the question asked of this section should not be, were these the only two illegitimate men born to the Giroie / Grandmesnil family over a period of one hundred years or more? A better question might be, why are these two illegitimate sons included in a text in which illegitimate sons outside the ducal house do not figure prominently? An answer to this may be found in Orderic's abiding interest in, and concern to protect, the property to which his monastery of St. Évroul held claims, and also in his deep knowledge of this founding family. Giroie and Fulk were both sons of Fulk Giroie (GG.4) who was a minor during the succession of his elder brothers which occurred some time between 1026-1035 (p.236), and died around 1040 (p.236 n.885).⁸³³ Fulk was by no means the only man in the sample to have died unmarried while a relatively young man, yet he is the only one outside the ducal family whose illegitimate children were recorded by a chronicler. It is therefore unusual that Orderic mentioned them, and probable that he included these two sons for a specific reason. For the answer, we should turn to Orderic's own backyard, as it were. In the foundation charter of 1050 the gifts by William (GG.11),

⁸³² *EH*, ii, 28.

⁸³³ *GND*, ii, 92-3, n.5

their cousin, were confirmed by Giroie and Fulk. The charter does not specifically explain the relationship of Giroie and Fulk to William, but uses the term ‘*cognatus*’.⁸³⁴ Orderic’s rendering of the text of the charter makes no change to the term ‘*cognatus*’.⁸³⁵ However, in his introduction to the family he made their birth status clear; they were Fulk’s sons ‘*ex concubina*’.⁸³⁶ The first matter of note is that when the charter was written the monks felt it necessary to include the confirmation of two young illegitimate members of the founding family (in 1050 they could even have been minor sons). This implies that in 1050 illegitimate sons could be considered to have valid claims against property in their father’s family. That there was reason for the charter writer to do so is proven by the actions of one of them, Giroie (GG.12) a decade later when the region experienced a certain amount of chaos following the forfeiture of the family lands by Arnold of Échauffour in 1060.⁸³⁷ According to Orderic, Giroie was among those who profited from the confusion surrounding the temporary banishment of Arnold by producing claims to property previously given to the monastery at St. Évroul, property which according to Orderic he managed to keep despite the attempts by the monks to recover it. Therefore, it appears that Orderic included the illegitimate sons of Fulk Giroie (GG.4) because he had a specific reason to do so. One of them had contested the monastery’s rights to family property and had exerted a counter-claim. This apparently still rankled with Orderic sixty years later as the monks never managed to recover this property.⁸³⁸ It may also be that by the early twelfth century, Orderic considered that adding the information that they were illegitimate might make a difference to their rights. This supports the probability that illegitimacy became more of an issue in the latter part of the period than it had previously been. The next obvious question is whether this case was unusual and why there are so few other records of illegitimate sons making claims to property, or confirming the gifts of property to which they might have had a claim. One answer could be that Orderic had no specific reason to include accounts of other illegitimate children whose activities did not impinge on St. Évroul in the same way. It also raises the question of the birth status of other men, who are described as ‘the son of XXX’, but about

⁸³⁴ *Recueil*, no. 122.

⁸³⁵ *EH*, ii, 34.

⁸³⁶ *EH*, ii, 28.

⁸³⁷ *EH*, ii, 96-98.

⁸³⁸ *EH*, ii, 98.

whom there is no information concerning the marital status of their fathers. Some of these may also have been illegitimate, and the information excluded. This also raises the question as to whether Orderic had a specific reason to exclude others. The illegitimacy prevalent in the ducal family is not repeated in any of the other families in the texts. Unless we believe that illegitimacy was restricted to the ducal family, it seems likely that illegitimacy was present at around the same levels and that the chroniclers applied an ecclesiastical edit to the birth status of at least some of those included in the text, and excluded others. It is interesting that Orderic did not describe Giroie (GG.12) as illegitimate in the text where the claim on the land of St. Évroul was made.⁸³⁹ This inconsistency begs the question, did Orderic have a specific reason to suggest that Fulk's sons were illegitimate, when in fact they were not?

Robert (GG.14) was the only recorded son of Robert Giroie (GG.5). Robert's father had been a minor son who was awarded a position as castellan of the castle of St. Céneri, however he had rebelled and died in 1060.⁸⁴⁰ Robert (GG.14) may have been a minor heir, although it cannot be conclusively proven, certainly he would have been fairly young when his father lost the castle of St. St. Céneri, as he died in 1124.⁸⁴¹ His career as a young man was greatly affected by the downfall in the 1060s of the Giroie branch of the family. Robert (GG.14) appears to have been centred in Italy during his early career, perhaps using the connections of his cousin William (GG.11) who had departed for Apulia as much as a decade before. Robert held no part of his father's holdings until much later, after he had returned from Italy and served for some time as a knight before seeking the restoration of his father's property from Robert Curthose in 1088.⁸⁴² Thus the death of Robert's father, combined with the loss of ducal approval for the family, created a hiatus of nearly thirty years before Robert was able to secure his father's original position. His case represents the importance of lordship in affecting the way property and position was transferred from father to son.

⁸³⁹ *EH*, ii, 96.

⁸⁴⁰ *EH*, ii, 28, Chibnall, ii, 78-9, n.3.

⁸⁴¹ *EH*, iv, 154-156, the castle of St. Céneri was restored to Robert in 1088, he held it for 36 years, although the Latin text in the Chibnall edition gives *xxvi*, this appears to be a typographical error, and the longer period is supported by *EH*, iv, 292-296, giving Robert as living for thirty years beyond the siege of Domfront which Barlow dates to 1094 (Barlow, *William Rufus*, 296).

⁸⁴² *EH*, iv, 154.

Robert as we have seen above was restored to his family's property in 1088. He married twice, first Radegunde, by whom he had a son named William (GG.20), Radegunde died in 1092-4 at around the same time that her son William (GG.20) died as a hostage of Robert of Bellême.⁸⁴³ Orderic accused Robert of Bellême of murdering the child, and while this is probably further evidence of Orderic's bias against the family, it is likely that while a hostage in Robert of Bellême's household, the young William (GG.20) succumbed to a childhood illness or accident. Robert may have married Radegunde during his long career in Italy. However given that no other children of the marriage are recorded, and that William died as an infant (Orderic uses the term *infans*, not *puer* to describe William⁸⁴⁴) it is probable that Robert married after recovering his patrimony in 1088 and that William was born between 1089-1091. Robert's second wife was named Felicia and he had six children with her, including three sons; William (GG.21), Robert (GG.22) and Matthew (GG.23). It is worth noting that that Robert reused the name William for his first son from his second marriage. Orderic states that on Robert's (GG.14) death in 1124 William and Robert divided the inheritance between them. The exact nature of the division is not stated.⁸⁴⁵ Of Matthew we learn nothing more than his existence.⁸⁴⁶ One conjecture, based upon his name could be that he entered the Church. The name Matthew occurs nowhere else in the Giroie / Grandmesnil sample, or indeed any of the other Norman families, and its biblical nature suggests a possible renaming at oblation.

Hawise, one of the daughters of Giroie (GG.1) married Robert of Grandmesnil (GG.9).⁸⁴⁷ They had three sons, Hugh (GG.15), Robert (GG.16) and Arnold (GG.17). Robert (GG.9) died in around 1040.⁸⁴⁸ According to Orderic Robert (GG.9) divided his property between his two eldest sons Hugh (GG.15) and

⁸⁴³ *EH*, iv, 292-294; For the dating of the death of Radegunde and William, Chibnall gives a date of 1092, *EH*, iv, 292, n. 2; Barlow dates the siege of Domfront which was an event contemporary with this to 1094, *William Rufus*, 296.

⁸⁴⁴ D. Lett, *L'enfant des miracles; Enfance et société au moyen âge, xiie-xiiiè siècle*, (Paris, 1997), 362-363. Suggests that the term *infans* was fairly specific to very young children.

⁸⁴⁵ *EH*, iv, 156.

⁸⁴⁶ *EH*, iv, 294.

⁸⁴⁷ *EH*, ii, 30.

⁸⁴⁸ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 85.

Robert (GG.16).⁸⁴⁹ Orderic describes the division as conscious on the part of Robert, ‘*terramque suam filiis suis Hugoni et Rotberto diuisit*’.⁸⁵⁰ Arnold (GG.17), was according to Orderic commended to the joint care of his brothers by their father at his death.⁸⁵¹ Nothing is known of Arnold other than that in 1050 he confirmed the gifts of his brothers to the foundation at St. Évroul, and shortly thereafter joined a general exodus of young Norman men to Apulia, along the same lines as his cousin William (GG.11).⁸⁵² How well his brothers carried out their charge to take care of him is debateable given that he left the region permanently.

Hugh (GG.15) was the only one of these brothers to marry and have children in Normandy. He had five sons; Robert III (GG.24), William (GG.25), Hugh (GG.26), Ivo (GG.27) and Aubrey (GG.28). Robert is recorded in one incident supporting his father in a conflict against Robert Curthose, so we might surmise he had a good relationship with his father in order to do so, or at least a loyal relationship.⁸⁵³ William (GG.25), was the second son of Hugh of Grandmesnil (GG.15). Orderic comments that he was favoured as a young man by King William.⁸⁵⁴ Despite the prospect of his father’s acquisitions in England, to which he might have had strong expectations of succeeding, and the (possibly anecdotal) good opinion of King William, William left Normandy and the potential promise of England permanently. The earliest confirmed date for his career in the Mediterranean region is in connection with his participation in the siege of Durazzo of 1081.⁸⁵⁵ But William is also recorded as the husband of Mabel the daughter of Robert Guiscard. As Robert Guiscard married Mabel’s mother in 1058, Mabel, even were she born immediately, would not have been able to marry until 1071 at the earliest.⁸⁵⁶ Nevertheless it is certain that William was in the region by the beginning of the 1080s and could have arrived as early as the late 1060s. What we do know is that he emigrated while his father was still living, at least eighteen years before

⁸⁴⁹ *EH*, ii, 30.

⁸⁵⁰ *EH*, ii, 40.

⁸⁵¹ *GND*, ii, 96.

⁸⁵² *EH*, ii, 58.

⁸⁵³ *EH*, iv, 230.

⁸⁵⁴ *EH*, iv, 338.

⁸⁵⁵ Chalandon, *Essai sur le Règne d’Alexis Ier Comnène (1081-1118)* (Paris, 1900), 74.

⁸⁵⁶ Loud, *Robert Guiscard*, 125.

Hugh's death.⁸⁵⁷ It is possible William was much less patient than his other brothers who all remained within the orbit of their long-lived father, or that he believed, given the number of his brothers, the pressure on his father to provide for all of them would reduce his prospects. Hugh (GG.26) predeceased his father.⁸⁵⁸ Ivo (GG.27), the fourth brother, may have benefited from the death of Hugh and the emigration of William in terms of the fact that it was he who eventually received some of his father's acquisitions in England, namely a share of the town of Leicester and the position of castellan and sheriff of the same town.⁸⁵⁹ In 1077 he and his younger brother Aubrey joined the rebellion of Robert Curthose.⁸⁶⁰ Hugh (GG.15), in the same way as Roger of Montgomery (BM.12), was among the magnates who petitioned William the Conqueror to forgive Robert Curthose.⁸⁶¹ It seems that Hugh was concerned by the antics of his youngest two sons, and sought to minimize the repercussions their actions could have caused. Ivo married a daughter of Gilbert de Gant, probably after 1080, given that he took part in the 1077-9 rebellion of Robert Curthose and this appears to have been the action of unsettled young men, but the marriage could have occurred after his father's death.⁸⁶² Of Aubrey (GG.28), the fifth son of Hugh of Grandmesnil, little is known other than he took part in Robert Curthose's 1077 rebellion and later accompanied him on Crusade, although these activities are interesting in themselves.⁸⁶³ Ivo and Aubrey present an interesting addition to the questions surrounding the issue of the tensions between fathers and sons. Unlike Robert Curthose, and Robert of Bellême, who also took part in the rebellion, neither Ivo nor Aubrey were eldest sons. If the tension inherent in Robert Curthose's relationship with his father was due to his position as the expected heir of his father, and it is worth noting that there has been no argument that William Rufus or Henry were natural opponents of their father, then Ivo and Aubrey's reasons for joining the rebellion must be questioned. Perhaps because of their position in 1077 as the youngest of five brothers (we do not know precisely when Hugh died and William emigrated), they may have perceived their prospects as being considerably

⁸⁵⁷ *EH*, iv, 336-8.

⁸⁵⁸ *EH*, iv, 338.

⁸⁵⁹ *EH*, vi, 12, 18. Ivo (GG.27) appears to have inherited the Leicester property as it is in his possession in 1101, however, there is no evidence that he was given any control over the property prior to his father's death.

⁸⁶⁰ *EH*, ii, 358.

⁸⁶¹ *EH*, iii, 110.

⁸⁶² *EH*, iv, 230.

⁸⁶³ *EH*, iv, 338; v, 34, 98.

reduced. With five sons to provide for, Hugh's resources may have been stretched, so his youngest two sons might have felt that joining with the probable heir to the duchy was a wise move, one which Robert might reward them for when he came into his father's property. The participation does not appear to have damaged Ivo's relationship with his father as he later became included in the allocation of his father's property.

The two sons of William (GG.25), William (GG.29) and Robert (GG.30), shared in their father's properties in Italy.⁸⁶⁴ Their cousin Ivo (GG.31), the son of Ivo (GG.27) was unable to succeed to his father's property. Ivo's father was a companion of Robert Curthose at his rebellion in the 1077-79, making it unlikely that he was a married man at that point. As a consequence it is probable that Ivo (GG.31) was born in the 1080s at the earliest. Ivo's father's career was peppered with rebellions, resulting, in 1101, in a disgrace which necessitated his departure from England on a pilgrimage. The terms of Ivo's (GG.27) departure included the forfeiture of his position as castellan and sheriff of Leicester, into the hands of Robert of Meulan, for a period of fifteen years. In this agreement, at the end of the fifteen years, Robert was supposed to pass the Leicester holdings to Ivo's son Ivo along with his niece's hand in marriage.⁸⁶⁵ However, Robert defaulted on this agreement and when Ivo died on the White Ship, he was neither married, nor in possession of any part of the Leicester property.⁸⁶⁶ Ivo would have been at most twenty when his father departed on his pilgrimage, however it is possible that he was a great deal younger. Once again absence of the father and the intervention of a lord are features of an interruption in the transmission of property from a father to a son.

Summary – Giroie / Grandmesnil Family

Unsurprisingly, as the founding family of Orderic's house, there are no instances of the 'bad son' explicitly described here. There are, however, hints that some sons may have been dissatisfied, or frustrated, by their position, given the number of sons who emigrated, such as William (GG.11), Arnold, (GG.17) and

⁸⁶⁴ *EH*, iv, 338.

⁸⁶⁵ *EH*, vi, 18-20.

⁸⁶⁶ *EH*, vi, 304.

William (GG.25). Other sons, such as Ivo (GG.27) and Aubrey (GG.28) hint at discontent expressed in other ways. Of the families in the case studies, it is this family which has the highest proportion of sons leaving Normandy, both before and after the Conquest. However in these families the frustration of the sons may not have been linked to the father / son relationship, but to the impact that lordship had upon the family. As the least powerful of the families in the case studies, they were potentially subject to more intervention from their lords. The interruption of the transfer of property between generations may have had a significant impact on the ways in which the relationships worked. However, another significant aspect of these families was the large number of minor sons in the pre-Conquest sample. It is not clear that the families were subject to a change in the focus of inheritance over the period. Instead of a clear shift to primogeniture, in most cases the families appear to have adopted the principle of provision for more than one son throughout the period, although a shift may have been obscured by provision through acquisitions which are not clear in the source.

Early Demise of the Father

As in the previous chapter, the Norman sons who lost their fathers when they were young are assessed in terms of the effect that the lack of a relationship with a father had upon them, most specifically with regard to their subsequent access to paternal property. As most sons' ages at the death of their fathers can only be arrived at within quite broad age ranges only those who were below their middle teenage years have been included in the sample.

There were thirteen minor heirs over the period. Richard I (D.2), was probably born in the late 920s or early 930s as he is described as a boy by Dudo on his father's death in 942/3.⁸⁶⁷ Orderic suggests that he was ten years old at his father's death.⁸⁶⁸ His minority was not without problems, at one point he was a hostage of the King of France, however, the support of his father's followers was strong enough to ensure that his father's expressed wishes for him, according that is

⁸⁶⁷ *De Moribus*, 209, 223; William Longsword died in 942 according to *GND*, i, 94, however his death is dated to 943 by both Dudo *De Moribus*, 209.

⁸⁶⁸ *EH*, ii, 8.

to Dudo, were honoured.⁸⁶⁹ Two sons of Richard II (D.4) were born of his second marriage, which began no earlier than 1017 and may have taken place as late as 1024.⁸⁷⁰ As their father died in 1026 we know that Mauger (D.12) could not have been any older than eight at his father's death and may have been as young as one year old given that he had a younger brother who could conceivably have been posthumous. He entered the Church, although it is not clear whether he did so as an oblate, or later by his own decision as an adult.⁸⁷¹ His career was fitting for the son of a duke, elevating him as high as the archiepiscopacy of Rouen in 1049.⁸⁷² Mauger's brother William (D.13), the fifth legitimate son of Richard II (D.4), cannot have been more than about six when his father died in 1026. Richard II may have made it clear before his death that he wished property to be provided for his youngest minor son. However, it appears that it was neither his father, nor his brother Duke Robert (D.10), who died when William would have been between eight and fifteen, who gave him property, but his cousin Duke William (D.22). The grant of property may have been made in an attempt to avoid any counter-claims that a legitimate half-uncle might have made against an illegitimate heir to the duchy.⁸⁷³ If so, the strategy was not a complete success, as William rebelled against his nephew in the 1050s and forfeited his property.⁸⁷⁴ The descent of the duchy by fraternal succession in 1027 meant that the principle would have been established in the minds of Normans when William (D.13) rebelled. The prospects of both these sons do not seem to have been compromised by the death of their father at such an early age, but a number of circumstances are worth noting. Both Mauger (D.12), and his nephew Nicholas whose case is discussed below (pp.234-5) were placed as oblates in the Church, effectively excluding them from secular succession, it may be that both placements took place under the aegis of Duke Robert with the intention of limiting rivals to his own illegitimate son William (D.22). That William (D.13), was not placed in the Church may indicate that he was too young even by 1035, or that his mother, or her family, had a role in choosing a different path for him, or that

⁸⁶⁹ *De Moribus*, 221-2.

⁸⁷⁰ *Recueil*, no. 21, Judith witnesses as comitessa 1015-17, no. 30, Papia 1017-1024.

⁸⁷¹ *GND*, ii, 102; *EH*, iii, 86; *GC*, xi, 28-30.

⁸⁷² *GC*, xi, 28-30.

⁸⁷³ *GND*, ii, 102..

⁸⁷⁴ *EH*, iii, 254; Douglas *William the Conqueror*, 62-63 dates this to around 1052-53. If William were born no earlier than 1020, and possibly as late as 1027, it is unlikely that he would have acquired the property and the supporters to sustain a rebellion much before the late 1040s or early 1050s, which agrees with Douglas' suggested dates.

Robert always intended the provision that was later made for him, perhaps as a reflection of the wishes of his father. Any of these interpretations are possible.

Nicholas (D.21) was the son of Duke Richard III (D.9). Richard cannot have been born before 997, given the earliest possible date of his father's marriage.⁸⁷⁵ As Richard died in 1027, his son could have been any age from his mid teens to an infant. Orderic states that he was installed as the abbot of St. Ouen while *in adolescentia*.⁸⁷⁶ However, 'adolescens' covered a wide age range. His appointment as abbot took place in 1042, fifteen years after his father's death. Orderic appears to believe that Nicholas' installation as abbot occurred nearly ten years earlier, he writes that Nicholas was abbot for nearly sixty years, instead of the fifty ascribed to him in *Gallia Christiana*.⁸⁷⁷ In order to be offered as an oblate at Fécamp during his uncle Robert's reign, it is probable that Nicholas was no older than six or seven when his father died.⁸⁷⁸ Maybe it should be asked whether Nicholas was the son of Richard III and his wife Adela, whose marriage took place 1026-1027.⁸⁷⁹ It is entirely possible that Nicholas was born in 1027, given as an oblate to Fécamp before 1034 as part of Robert's plan to secure the patrimony for his own illegitimate son William, who would have been of a similar age, and became an adolescent abbot in 1042 aged fifteen. This chronology demonstrates that Nicholas could have been his father's legitimate, minor heir whose position was usurped by an ambitious and powerful uncle. However, Nicholas does not appear to have needed to be legitimate in order to be an heir in the first quarter of the eleventh century. He was the son of first legitimate duke in the Norman line and he had two illegitimate cousins, one of whom went on to inherit the duchy, not just as an illegitimate son, but also as a minor son (William the Conqueror). The most dominant factor which ensured that the only known son of Richard III did not inherit the duchy from his father was not his illegitimacy, or even his minority, but appears to have been a combination of a

⁸⁷⁵ *Recueil*, no. 11.

⁸⁷⁶ *GC*, xi, 141-143, he became the abbot in 1042 and remained in the position for 50 years until 1092.

⁸⁷⁷ *EH*, ii, 298, *GC*, xi, 141-143.

⁸⁷⁸ *EH*, iv, 306, he is given to the monks at Fécamp as a *puer monachus*. Orderic states that his oblation took place under abbot John, which dates his oblation to after 1028 when John took up the position (*GC*, xi, 206-207). D. Alexandre-Bidon and D.Lett, *Children in the Middle Ages*, trans. J. Gladding (Indiana, 1999), 49 the usual age for oblation of a child is given as six or seven years of age. Orderic himself did not become an oblate until the age of ten, *EH*, vi, 553.

⁸⁷⁹ *Recueil*, no. 58.

number of factors which included his misfortune to lose his father while a young child, to lack any popular support for his claims among the Norman aristocracy and to have a determined and ruthless rival in the form of his uncle Robert. According to Orderic, it was Robert who decided that Nicholas would enter the Church, not Nicholas' own father and with that act, Nicholas' claims to Normandy were eliminated.⁸⁸⁰ It is worth noting here the how unusual the name Nicholas was in the ducal family. Given that he was the son of a duke and that his cousin William (D.22) who was in exactly the same position as an illegitimate son, received a family name, the choice of Nicholas appears curious. One possible explanation is that Nicholas was not the name he received from his father, but the one he received on entering the Church. That renaming could take place is supported by the experience of Reginald (GG.19) the son of Arnold of Échauffour, who was renamed Benedict at his oblation.⁸⁸¹ Moreover Orderic himself received the new name of Vitalis upon his oblation at St. Évroul.⁸⁸² Therefore it is not impossible that Nicholas was the name given to him by the Church, obscuring a name closer to the names common among sons of the ducal family. Had his father continued the unbroken line of Richards to his son, Duke Robert might have been very relieved to have the Church transform a potential Richard IV into an innocuous Nicholas.

The experience of Nicholas' cousin William (D.22) was very different. He was the illegitimate son of Duke Robert, born in 1027.⁸⁸³ Robert died on Crusade when William was only eight. Yet we do know that Robert considered William his heir and took steps to ensure that the Norman aristocracy accepted him as such, arranging before his departure to the Holy Land for oaths to be taken in recognition of William's claim.⁸⁸⁴ The support of Robert's followers ensured that William's prospects were not damaged by his being a minor son. However, given his later experiences as a father, perhaps it was not his material prospects that were affected by the lack of a relationship with a father, but his ability to relate to his own sons, in

⁸⁸⁰ *EH*, iv, 306.

⁸⁸¹ *EH*, ii, 126.

⁸⁸² *EH*, vi, 554.

⁸⁸³ *EH*, iii, 86. If William was an eight year old at his father's death in 1035, he had to have been born in 1027.

⁸⁸⁴ *GND*, ii, 80. The charter evidence also supports the view that Robert was keen to establish William as his heir. *Recueil*, no. 60, a charter dated around 1030 in which William is described as *filio ejus Willelmo successor ipsius*. This could have been a later addition with hindsight, however Fauroux does not mark it as obviously such.

particular Robert Curthose. As William had had responsibility from childhood, he may not have appreciated the effect that the lack of personal autonomy might have had on his eldest son's self-esteem.

There were a considerable number of minor sons in the Giroie / Grandmesnil families in the pre Conquest period. Five of Giroie's seven sons are described as being minors at their father's death. Fulk's (GG.4) career was short, yet despite that his brother William ensured that he had property. Fulk held half the fee of Montreuil.⁸⁸⁵ There are three explanations for the apportionment of this property to Fulk. One is that the fee constituted his rightful share of a partitioned inheritance. The second is that the apportionment was directed by his father Giroie as part of a selective process and honoured by William. The third explanation is that Fulk's acquisition of half of the fee of Montreuil may have been entirely due to a decision of his brother William, possibly out of a need for an ally, especially given the early death of their eldest brother Arnold which might have left William feeling rather vulnerable and bereft of support. William may have felt that by giving Fulk land he would both increase the influence of the family, and ensure that Fulk was a grateful and loyal family member.⁸⁸⁶ Or William may have been demonstrating his new role as head of the family by taking on a paternal role, that of provider.

Robert of St. Céneri (GG.5), was the fourth son of Giroie, and his acquisition of the castle of St. Céneri through the gift of his brother William intimates that William, assuming the role of the 'ideal' father in the absence of his own, was making provision for his brothers. Some time before the foundation of St. Évroul, William received the castle of St. Céneri from his lord Geoffrey of Mayenne for his aid in a conflict against William's other lords, the Bellême family.⁸⁸⁷ William installed Robert as the castellan of St. Céneri. William's policy of bringing forward his younger brothers and giving them roles in the promotion of the family power

⁸⁸⁵ *EH*, ii, 22.

⁸⁸⁶ *GND*, ii, 92-93, n.5, Van Houts notes that Fulk died in the company of Gilbert de Brionne and around the same time, that is 1040. It is strange that this should be so, given that the enmity between the sons of Giroie and Gilbert apparently still pertained at this date, indeed, Robert, Fulk's next younger brother is implicated in the killing of Gilbert de Brionne. One explanation that may apply is that Fulk was with Gilbert, not as a follower or guest, but a hostage intended to halt the conflict. Whether his death was connected to Gilbert's is not made clear.

⁸⁸⁷ *EH*, ii, 28, 36 that this occurred before 1050 is made clear because Robert gave gifts to St. Évroul from this property in the foundation charter cited in the text.

certainly seems to have worked extremely well in Robert's case. Robert came to the notice of Duke William, and made an impressive marriage to the Duke's cousin Adelaide.⁸⁸⁸

Ralph (GG.6), was the fifth son of Giroie. He carried the sobriquet, *Mala Corona*, and the direction of his career is difficult to follow. He may have originally been intended for the Church. Ralph may have acquired a taste for education, even if he did not immediately embrace the Church as his vocation. According to Orderic he travelled to Gaul and Italy, where he studied, before returning to Normandy and eventually entering the monastery at Marmoutier six years before his death.⁸⁸⁹ Hugh (GG.7), the sixth son of Giroie died young on a journey from St. Céneri.⁸⁹⁰ The seventh and last son of Giroie, named for his father (GG.8), would have been an infant when his father died. He too seems to have been set on a secular path. His only known act in the source was a raid on the land of the Church at Lisieux.⁸⁹¹ Giroie's action was followed shortly thereafter by his early death. The raid on the Church land however, provides a glimpse at a possibly less rosy picture of the Giroie brothers than Orderic had been at pains to deliver. What would have motivated a young man to carry out an act of violence on land belonging to the Church? It is tempting to speculate that even with a brother as supposedly generous with the family properties as William (GG.3), a seventh son had very little in the way of prospects on the immediate horizon. Perhaps Giroie was a less than patient youth. These cases are interesting as they demonstrate that William used his position as eldest brother to take on a role akin to that of father and to promote his younger brothers, either through affection, duty, a practical desire to enhance the family's overall strength and influence, under the influence of social norms, or a combination of all these.

The impact of Arnold of Échauffour's (GG.10) early death had important repercussions for the careers of his sons, William (GG.18) and Reginald (GG.19).⁸⁹² Arnold forfeited his properties of Échauffour and Montreuil through rebellion and

⁸⁸⁸ *EH*, ii, 28.

⁸⁸⁹ *EH*, ii, 74-76.

⁸⁹⁰ *EH*, ii, 30.

⁸⁹¹ *EH*, ii, 30.

⁸⁹² *EH*, ii, 124-126.

died shortly thereafter in 1063. William cannot have been born before the late 1040s (p.223), but he had a younger brother who was at least five at their father's death which would mean that William was probably born between the late 1040s-1056, and thus between seven and about fourteen when his father died.⁸⁹³ According to Orderic, William's minority was a miserable existence, during which at first the whole family threw itself on the mercy of Eudo, their mother's brother, but William left his family to become a squire, 'armiger', at the court of King Philip of France, and after being knighted there, emigrated to Apulia to join his kin (presumably his uncle William (GG.11)). Thus William's prospects were seriously affected by the fall from grace of his father, who was unable to make any provision for his son. Reginald, however, had always been intended for oblation, and it was not in reaction to their reduced circumstances. On entering the Church, Reginald was renamed Benedict.⁸⁹⁴ Later in his career as a monk he had the opportunity to travel to Apulia several times where he visited his elder brother.⁸⁹⁵

The final member of this group, and the only one who can conclusively be proven to be a minor son after the Conquest was the sixth son of Roger II of Montgomery, Everard (BM.20). As Everard was born to his father's second marriage to Adelais after the death of Mabel of Bellême, it is possible to state that he cannot have been any older than thirteen at his father's death, even if his father had instantly remarried.⁸⁹⁶ Roger II did not fail to make provision even for this son, whose birth occurred late in his father's life. Everard was trained in letters, and appears to have accepted the role his father selected as he was later to become a clerk in the royal chapel under both William Rufus and Henry I.⁸⁹⁷

As the sample is dominated by minor heirs from the pre-Conquest period, it is not possible to discern trends over the whole period. However, what does emerge is the pattern of dislocation which could affect minor sons and to this was added the factor which affected all Norman sons, that of the extra layer of lordship present in Normandy which was lacking in Iceland. Minor sons were very dependent upon

⁸⁹³ *EH*, ii, 126.

⁸⁹⁴ *EH*, ii, 126, for the oblation of Reginald before his father's death.

⁸⁹⁵ *EH*, ii, 126-128.

⁸⁹⁶ *EH*, iii, 138.

⁸⁹⁷ *EH*, iii, 138; for his education, iv, 302.

having someone available to take on the role of provision, either in the form of one's father's followers supporting claims to inheritance, or in the form of a relative, for example, one's brother, taking on the paternal responsibility of provision for all sons.

Conclusion

The evidence of the case studies supports Crouch's view that fathers were providing for a wider number of sons than simply the eldest.⁸⁹⁸ However, many variables affected the father / son relationship and individual cases differed greatly dependent upon circumstances. Among the factors which might affect the relationship were the influential social norms of the fathers' duty of provision and the sons' duty of obedience, the number of sons in each family and the corresponding resources available to the father to provide for them, the level of expectation of sons, and the ability of sons to remain patient in terms of their expectations, and the external factor of the Conquest which altered those expectations. Thus, each family, and each father / son transfer of property within each family, practised different strategies, probably in answer to specific circumstances affecting each transaction. Therefore, fathers and sons were bound by ties of expectation, which could affect the nature of the relationship. Reduced expectation, or prolonged and unresolved expectation, could result in the loosening of the bonds of obedience and loyalty proffered by sons. However, it should be noted that this was not an inevitable consequence of the relationship, not even in all cases of extremely long-lived fathers.

There appears to have been a greater expectation among fathers and sons following the Conquest that it would be possible for the father to provide either a secular property, or the opportunity for a son to attain it. This is suggested by the drop both in entry into the Church and in emigration as options selected by sons in the post-Conquest period. Before the Conquest nine sons entered the Church, that is seventeen percent, either by their own choice, or more often as oblates given to the Church by their fathers. But after the Conquest this figure dropped to five, just ten

⁸⁹⁸ Crouch, 'The Forgotten Family', 46-48.

percent. Why did the choice of an ecclesiastical career fall? Taken in conjunction with the corresponding, although slightly smaller, decline in the selection of emigration as an option, from five to three, the preference of Norman fathers and sons in the post Conquest period appears to have been much more towards the secular and the relatively local. Certainly many sons appear to have felt that their chances of promotion lay in not completely disassociating themselves from the milieu in which their fathers had influence and authority, however that may have chafed for a son with a healthy and long lived sire.

Emigration as an option throughout the period may also be explicable not solely in terms of fractious or inadequate relationships with fathers, or even lack of expectation of prosperity in Normandy, but on closer examination it is clear that some who travelled as far as Italy were escaping not just paternal control, but ducal / royal control. Italy was a refuge and an opportunity for the sons of disgraced fathers as much as the sons of fathers who made no provision for younger sons.⁸⁹⁹ It could also be the resort of the man who had managed to earn ducal or royal disapproval himself.⁹⁰⁰

Another factor which affected father / son interactions in Normandy during the period was the control that the lord exercised over the descent of lands. The involvement of the lord in the final structure of individual inheritance cases was very visible.⁹⁰¹ Inheritance was often settled from above at the behest, and in the interest of, an heir's lord in these case studies. However, there is no reason to suppose that this was a characteristic that increased in the post-Conquest period, or was caused by it. It is possible that the intervention of the lord was as prevalent before the Conquest, and it is the increase in detail in the sources available to us which create the impression that lords were taking a more active role in inheritance distribution. Certainly the cases of Girioe and his betrothed's inheritance, and William, the son of Arnold of Échauffour, illustrate that the interference of the lord

⁸⁹⁹ For example, William, the son of Arnold of Échauffour, Robert, the son of Robert of St. Céneri.

⁹⁰⁰ For example, William of Soissons, Ivo of Grandmesnil.

⁹⁰¹ For example, Robert the son of Robert of St. Céneri (whose lands were not passed to him at the death of his father, but by his lord, Robert Curthose a quarter of a century later).

in the inheritance process was not a new phenomenon, but perhaps just better recorded and reported in later examples.

It was also the intervention of a lord, or a political enemy which could present Orderic in particular with a moral problem. Orderic promoted the concept of obedience to the authority of fathers as among the virtues of sons. However, what was the position of a son whose father's absence had been caused not by death but by imprisonment or banishment by his lord? Orderic's solution appears to have been to accept the absence of a father for these causes as virtually equivalent to that of the death of the father. Therefore, if the son were to assume the father's role and claim his lands, Orderic considered it akin to inheritance rather than usurpation. This view can be seen in his attitude to William Clito, William Talvas II and Ivo, son of Ivo of Grandmesnil. However, the usurpation of a father remained a great sin in Orderic's eyes, and he reserved his greatest criticism for Arnulf of Bellême and Robert Curthose. In Orderic's view, to make a claim against an impotent, neutralized and possibly in terms of gender, emasculated, father was acceptable, but for a son to impose that situation on a father instead of it being brought about by a lord, or for him to challenge a father who was at the peak of his power and make demands of him, was unacceptable behaviour in a son.

One aspect of these ecclesiastical sources appears to be a gradual pruning of illegitimacy from the historical record. Other than the ducal family, whose issues of legitimacy were so well known by contemporaries that a gloss would have been rendered impossible, there are only two sons positively identified as illegitimate from the source material, Giroie and Fulk, the sons of Fulk Giroie.⁹⁰² That these two men exist in isolation among the four other families in these case studies, just two among 53, as opposed to eighteen among 47 in the ducal family, supports the probability that there was considerable editing out of the record of the illegitimate sons by the ecclesiastical authors.

How far could Robert Curthose's rebellions be considered typical of sons in Normandy in this period? He does not solely represent all disobedient sons, for

⁹⁰² Oliver of Bellême's case is speculative.

Robert was not wholly alone. Arnulf of Bellême is also represented as a rebellious son, Robert of Bellême, was at the very least a rebel, if not a rebellious son, although as he joined with Robert Curthose when his father's position was so closely connected to William the Conqueror his action must be seen as a challenge to his father too. It should also be asked what motivated Ivo and Aubrey of Grandmesnil to join in Robert's rebellion? As younger sons were their expectations so low that they discarded the potential of promotion via their father in the indeterminate future for a risky promise of more immediate gains? Their action must in some way be seen as a temporary rejection of their father's authority. Sons in Normandy it appears may well have felt the pressures of their situation as sons, especially as dependent sons. However, the rebels do remain in the minority, and it is interesting that in all but Robert and Arnulf's cases, reconciliation was initiated by the fathers and achieved. The return of these sons to their socially constructed place within the father / son relationship under the impetus of their fathers' actions is suggestive of two apparently opposite parts of the fathers' role. Firstly, the acceptance of their sons back into the family was indicative of the duty of care of the fathers, as their support of these sons was key to their rehabilitation in the eyes of the king, and therefore for their future prospects under their lord. Secondly, the re-entry of the sons into the normative father / son relationship was an expression of the reasserted authority of the father over the son. These cases demonstrate that frustration was not universal, but sufficient cases occurred that it needs to be asked what other outlets than rebellion might have been found by such sons. Clearly a less destructive means of establishing one's independence, and masculine status was emigration. It allowed a son to absent himself from being in the position of opposing his father. It may be that the normative pressure of obedience placed on a son made distance rather than outright disobedience the preferred option. Nevertheless, the relatively small number of sons who selected the option of leaving Normandy suggests that expectation and hope overrode frustration in many cases.

CHAPTER EIGHT : Conclusion

This thesis has highlighted a number of areas in which social and cultural constructs in both Iceland and Normandy created a framework of obligation and expectation. Many of these constructs would appear apt to generate rather than dispel tensions in the father / son relationship. Yet the sources do not support the inevitability of a breakdown in the relationship. Dysfunctional father / son relationships were presented as warnings of the dangers of straying from the socially approved norms, and they have a normative power through the negative example they set. In fact they have served this purpose almost too well, as they stand in such stark relief against the background of the narrative sources that we do not always set them in the context of the larger cast from which they are drawn, especially in respect of the sagas and the *Ecclesiastical History*. This thesis has sought to discover what general statements can be made with the context in mind. But it has also raised questions about seeking general trends without thorough assessment of the complexity of individual cases. Fathers and sons had both public and private roles, which inevitably overlapped. The number of sons a father had, the birth order of those sons, the age gap between father and sons, and between brothers, the legitimacy of sons, and the attitude of each society to birth status, the resources of the father, and the political context were all variables which made each relationship in some manner different.

It is clear from both the sagas and the chronicles that the father and son roles were strongly influenced by ideals of harmonious intergenerational interaction. The inherent tension of a relationship in which one member represented both the protector and the inhibitor to progression of the other, necessitated a mechanism for the avoidance of conflict. Each society evolved a contract of sorts in which the father and son had socially and culturally defined roles, with heavy social censure reserved for those who breached its terms. These constructs represented not simply a set of mores established from principle, but the rules without which society could not effectively function. The rarity of the examples of those who seriously flouted the conventions can be read both as representing the need to isolate such behaviours as aberrant, and as an indication of the extent to which the constructed ideal influenced these societies. However, between the two societies a significant

difference has emerged which is suggestive of conditions which were more favourable to harmony in Iceland than in Normandy. The overriding quality characterising the father / son relationship both as a normative image, and as exhibited by fathers and sons in the sagas, was that of loyalty. This loyalty, moreover, was expressed in both the relationships of the father and dependent sons, and to an even greater extent in the interactions of the father and his independent sons. The duty of clarity and provision placed upon the Icelandic father was thus matched by the obligation of the son to maintain family unity, especially after his emancipation from his father's household. This contrasts with Normandy, in that the different customs pertaining to the establishment of sons entailed a delay that put equally strong norms of loyalty and obligation under strain. Norman sons, as the Icelandic sons, were expected to give complete loyalty to their fathers but, unlike Icelandic sons, without the anticipation of a possible reward within their fathers' lifetime. Moreover, for an Icelandic son, the failure of a father to fulfil his terms of the father / son contract was considered at least a mitigating circumstance if he then rescinded his filial loyalty.

One interesting feature of each region is that despite significant political and economic change, socially constructed patterns of behaviour remained in many ways stable. The normative image of the father and son displaying mutual respect and loyalty in the Icelandic sources, which one would expect to have been tested by political upheaval and economic decline, does not noticeably display signs of strain. Similarly in the Norman texts, there was no apparent connection made either by the authors, or in the case studies, of an easing, or an increase, of inherent tensions after the prospects of all sons rose as a result of the expansion of opportunity after the Conquest. This speaks both to the durability and the influence of socially and culturally constructed norms on individuals' conduct.

Within the context of these socially constructed norms governing the interaction of fathers and sons there was a key life stage affecting the relationship of fathers and sons which put these norms under pressure, and the ways in which each society dealt with this emphasizes the importance of comparison as a method. The thesis has examined a relationship that is experienced both intergenerationally, and in terms of shifting life-cycle stages for both participants, and it is apparent that

relationships cannot be seen as static, they were influenced by both real and conceptual life-cycle changes. Taking these elements into account, a picture has emerged of a relationship where the men involved in it went through phases of transition in which the balance of power was key to its internal dynamic. The point at which fathers became the parents not of children but of male adults was central to the development of the relationship, and inevitably issues of masculinity formed a background to father / son relationships in the period under discussion. Father and son were both male roles and as such need to be considered in terms of gender. Constructs of masculinity informed the behaviour of men in this transitional phase both as fathers and as sons. This comparison has raised the question as to whether masculinity can be addressed as an either / or status between two adult, secular, heterosexual, aristocratic men in the nuclear family. This is suggestive of a correlation between social concepts of masculinity and power. If attaining full masculine status in a social and political context is dependent upon power, then the dynamic between the father, as an adult male, and the son, as someone in transition to adult male status, becomes extremely interesting.

This thesis has addressed the issue of masculinity and proposed a revision of Clover's arguments for a male / female binary, to include levels of masculinities within masculinity. Masculinity in the Sturlung Age appears to have fluctuated, not just, as Clover would suggest, between the 'male' and the 'female', but between at least two levels of publicly asserted 'masculinity', the dominant and the dependent. Clover perceived all able-bodied men to represent the 'strong' masculine gender group, calling it group A. I would suggest that it is not only the 'weak' feminine gender group, group B, that offers an alternative gender definition. Instead, there was a second masculine gender group, which I will term group A minus. Therefore if as Clover suggests all men begin as children in group B, then they became members of group A minus as they went through the lifecycle, and it is from this group that they might have aimed to make the shift to A. It is in this context that it becomes easier to understand how in some cases men were content to remain in, or return to, group A minus. Some chieftains voluntarily relinquished their positions, as is the case of Ingimundr Einarsson, and this becomes more explicable if it is understood that Ingimundr was content to do so because he was entering not group B, but group A minus, which was still comfortably within the masculine field. In a

sense, members of group A were the 'übermales' of Icelandic 'masculinity'. For some of those who were born into the chieftain class, like Tumi Sighvatsson, it was hard to reconcile the gap between the expectation of entering group A, which built during the formative stages of childhood and transition when that goal was attainable, and the reality of facing a career in which the means of achieving that goal had been given to one's brother. It was not the membership of group A minus which caused the 'frantic machismo' of men like Tumi, but whether or not each individual had accepted the level of 'masculinity' which he had attained.

It has been useful to address the scholarship on gender comparing each region to the other, as it has evolved questions of how, if the fullest expression of masculine status involved imitation, and often replacement, of the father, were sons, especially non-inheriting sons, to express their own transition to adult masculinity? The existence of more than one form of masculinity can answer some of these questions. It seems that masculinity in these societies must be understood in terms of publicly achieved status, but a status which was vulnerable to perception, not just by one's peers, but also by oneself. The difficulties which arose in the cases of Tumi Sighvatsson and Robert Curthose could be ascribed to the self-perception of individuals in the context of their expectations, as much as to the publicly perceived masculinity they had attained. If masculinity was a desired status without which one's role within society was severely limited, and that status could only be attained through the demise of one's father, then the lack of overwhelming levels of rebellion and a descent into chaos must be explicable in terms of a series of connected masculinities, which allowed for sons to function as dependents, but still be gendered masculine. This is supported by the sources in that, to a large extent, pragmatism appears to have characterised many relationships between fathers and sons in terms of which level of masculinity most sons could expect to attain. The lack of significant father / son disputes and rebellions in *Sturlunga saga* implies that most sons appear to have been, if not content, then at least accepting of their status as men, who while gendered masculine, were nevertheless dependent males who had not fully achieved the transition to group A, with the concomitant achievements of marriage, property, chieftaincy and fatherhood. Similarly, if the same questions concerning gradations within masculinity as a construct, rather than a binary of masculinity and femininity, are addressed to the Norman sources, a similar picture

of pragmatic acceptance connected to expectation emerges, and similarly the exceptions to acceptance, such as Robert Curthose, become more explicable in terms of their individual expectations.

The key feature of expectation which affected the father / son relationship in both regions was that of the provision of resources by the father to his son or sons. In both societies this was closely linked to strategies of inheritance. Access to the fullest expression of adult masculine status was most commonly achieved through the attainment of the father's property and position. But the father should not be interpreted as simply an obstacle to the son in every case. Inheritance was complicated by a number of variables, including the number of sons a father had, the level of selection that he was able to practice, the relative power of the father, and in the case of Normandy the further complication of lordship. Thus in each case father / son relationships were affected by differing levels of expectation, and in the cases where there was more than one son, concurrent and sometimes conflicting expectations between brothers. Finally, as one further level of complication which impedes the formation of overly general statements, it is important to consider how the individual sons dealt with their own expectations, and how individual fathers tackled the problem of reconciling their sons' expectations with their own circumstances and goals.

The comparison of the two regions has been useful in reaching an understanding of how the functioning of inheritance structures could shape, and contribute to, father / son interactions. They offer different examples of the ways in which this aspect of the relationship could be approached in the medieval period. In Iceland the sagas demonstrate that legal statements should not be accepted as indicative of the inevitability of structures being universally adhered to. The fathers in this narrative source responded to circumstances as they arose and applied differing strategies dependent upon their own and their sons' self-interest. Significantly, Icelanders developed a very idiosyncratic form of inheritance which seems to have been specifically designed to avoid the build up of tension inherent in a relationship between male gendered, but differently situated, men. The *pre-mortem* establishment of one or more sons dependent upon the resources of the father was key to the differences which can be discerned between the two societies. The

practice exhibits a pragmatic solution to the problem of potentially rebellious sons. Moreover the system appears to have worked. While not practised universally, either due to resources, or simply, in the case of the Oddaverjar, through lack of necessity given the seeming lack of intergenerational or fraternal friction, or possibly a lack of desire to choose on the part of Oddaverjar fathers, the *pre-mortem* gift of property appears not only to have diffused potential tensions, but to actually have promoted the continuation and even the expansion of the contract of loyalty between fathers and independent sons. While the establishment of a son essentially designated him as the main heir, the expectations of other sons were also catered for in the Icelandic system of provision as the case studies demonstrate a large proportion of sons could still anticipate some form of support as a reward for continued service, in the form of property or marriage.

The Norman structures were in many ways equally fluid. By the end of the period, the progression of primogeniture as a structure was by no means fully achieved, and the element of selection was still available in terms of paternal acquisitions. However, there were restrictions which increasingly affected the father / son relationship over the period. Eldest sons' expectations were rising, and perhaps justifiably so. Nevertheless, in Normandy there were still options of provision open to Norman fathers, including the disposal of acquisitions and the arrangement of marriages, which would also have served to justify the continued expectation of sons, even when the form of inheritance appeared to be predetermined. Yet there were differences in terms of nuance here. In Norman families perhaps for younger sons, expectation came to be replaced by hope, while in Iceland sons may have had reason to continue in expectation for longer. These very different structures of inheritance and provision, especially in term of the independent *pre-mortem* establishment, created circumstances more conducive to conflict in Normandy, but they were in themselves not a guarantee that conflict would ensue. Perhaps this was due as much to an awareness that it was not simply one's father who stood as an obstacle to advancement, but also one's lord, who as the case studies reveal could, and very often would, intervene in the descent of the paternal property. Thus to engage one's father in a skirmish over access to property and power, would not in itself provide a certain route to success. Once again this highlights the very specific circumstances which affected Robert Curthose and may explain his actions, as in his

relationship with his father, his lord and his father were essentially the same man. Equally, the situation of Arnulf of Bellême in his usurpation of his father may have been located in very specific circumstances, perhaps his rebellion was based upon an assumption that his lord would not oppose his actions.

Another aspect of inheritance which closely affected father / son relationships was the extent to which attitudes to birth status changed over time. This is a key feature of the comparison between Iceland and Normandy. While Icelandic legal statements placed illegitimate sons at a disadvantage in terms of inheritance, the sagas demonstrate that difficulties only arose if fathers were unable to exert their power sufficiently to advance their sons despite their birth status. Norman fathers however faced increasing restrictions on their ability to do so, which is reflected in Henry I's case, as despite his numerous illegitimate sons, he could not secure the patrilineal descent of his property. Clearly the implications here for father / illegitimate son relationships were very different in each society. An illegitimate son was gradually becoming an outsider in terms of the family in Normandy, while in Iceland he continued to play a central role.

The father / son relationship was therefore closely affected by potential and actual provision of property through inheritance and indeed by other means. But the motives underlying each provision have also been examined by this thesis and illustrate that yet another factor affecting the father / son relationship should be considered. The existence of an emotional bond between fathers and sons has been challenged by statements which suggest that for reasons of generational difference and of opposing goals, fathers were distant and restrictive, while sons were ambitious and necessarily unruly elements. However, the case studies demonstrate that there were a great many variables which affected each relationship and added nuances for which such general statements do not make allowance. Expectation itself strongly influenced evolution of the relationship, but affective bonds also developed, or failed to develop, and had an impact on individual fathers and sons which are not explicable in terms solely of social or inheritance structures. These are the hardest of the variables to recover from the sources, however, some instances are revealing and should lead us to question how we interpret relationships in general. For example, the rejection of Tumi Sighvatsson by his father is remarkable,

especially in the context of the close relationship the saga reveals he enjoyed with his other sons. It is hard to account for it in any other way than a direct response to Sighvatr's marked favouritism towards, and emotional investment in, Tumi's brother Sturla. The Norman sources are more reticent, if one does not include the excessive emotional displays of Dudo's early dukes. However, there are instances which also raise questions of motivation. For example, was Henry I's grief at the death of his son, Prince William explicable only in terms of a dynastic plan thwarted? Or was there an emotional investment in him too? Similarly, can Hugh of Grandmesnil's advocacy of a return to peace in the negotiations to reconcile William the Conqueror with Robert Curthose perhaps also indicate that he was motivated by concern for the security of his youngest two sons?

Indeed there is reason to question whether the natural state of sons should be considered to be as a challenge their fathers. Not only does the argument that the sons were natural opponents to their fathers not address the affective bond as a factor, but it does not fully explore the ways in which a father was not only an obstacle to his sons' advancement, but also the most accessible gateway, although not as has been seen in the case studies the only gateway, to advancement. This thesis has shown that *post-mortem* inheritance was just one of a number of ways in which a father could make provision for his sons, and the only one which involved waiting until his demise. The open antipathy which has been identified as the usual state of the relationship between medieval fathers and sons does not entirely reflect the range of the expectations which a son might have, all of which were in some way affected by and centred around his father. A bond of self-interest, if not of actual affection, could be said to have existed on the part of a prudent son. For when one stands in anticipation of advancement, the candidate who has laughed at his superior's jokes is more likely to find preferment than the one who has attempted a hostile takeover. As a strategy, loyalty carried fewer risks. Thus self-interest would have supported and been supported by the social and cultural ideals of 'sonhood'. Such a strategy may also have made dependent masculinity an acceptable compromise for sons who were in effect occupying a 'holding area'. Their candidacy for advancement would have given them a legitimate reason in their eyes and those of their peers for their subordinate masculinity. Which would also explain

how tension arose when their peers, and they themselves, perceived that for whatever reason such expectations had not been met, or were unlikely to be so.

This thesis has demonstrated that father / son relationships were subject to a great many external pressures over the course of the periods under review in Iceland and Normandy. Fathers and sons needed to weather the storms of changing political allegiances and fortunes, the patronage and displeasure of lords, in Normandy especially, the competition of numerous progeny for the favour of the father and the pressures of conforming to the mores instituted by society for accepted paternal and filial behaviour. Moreover, relationships were affected by internal factors, such as the age gap between father and son, the longevity of the father, his trust in his sons, in their reliability and judgement. Bearing all these variables in mind, it is hardly surprising that the picture that emerges appears so diverse and complicates attempts to build a normative picture of the period.

Genealogies

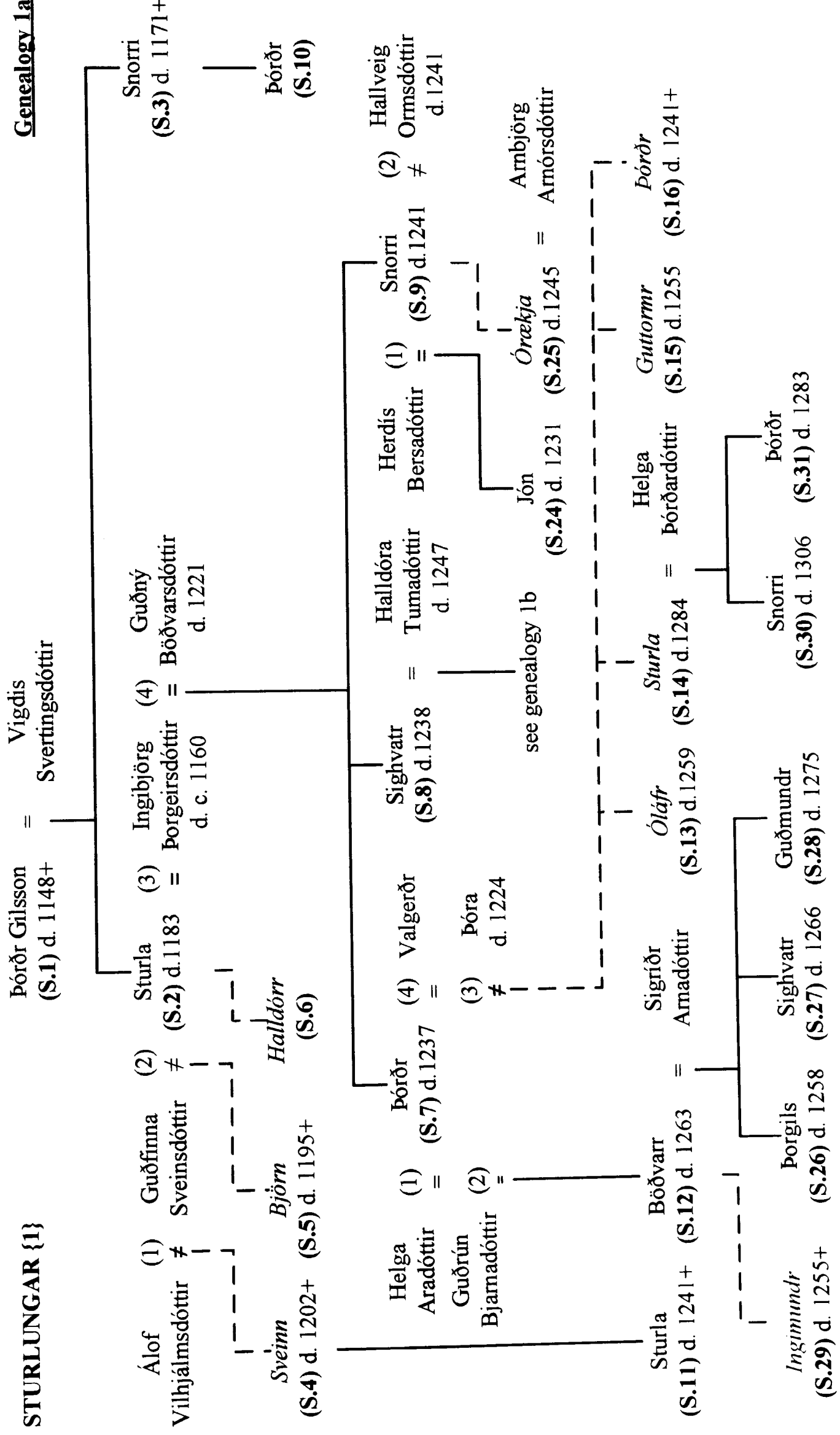
Key to Genealogies

=	Marriage
≠	Less formal union
_____	Legitimate offspring
-----	Illegitimate offspring
\$	Unclear whether the child of a marriage or a liaison
+	After a date means the earliest possible date for the event
*	Died as a child
!	Marriage suspended by bishop due to consanguinity
@	Person occurring more than once on same genealogical tree
?	Chronology of relationship unclear
(1) (2) etc.	Denotes chronology of marriages and liaisons where known
<i>Italics</i>	Denotes illegitimate people

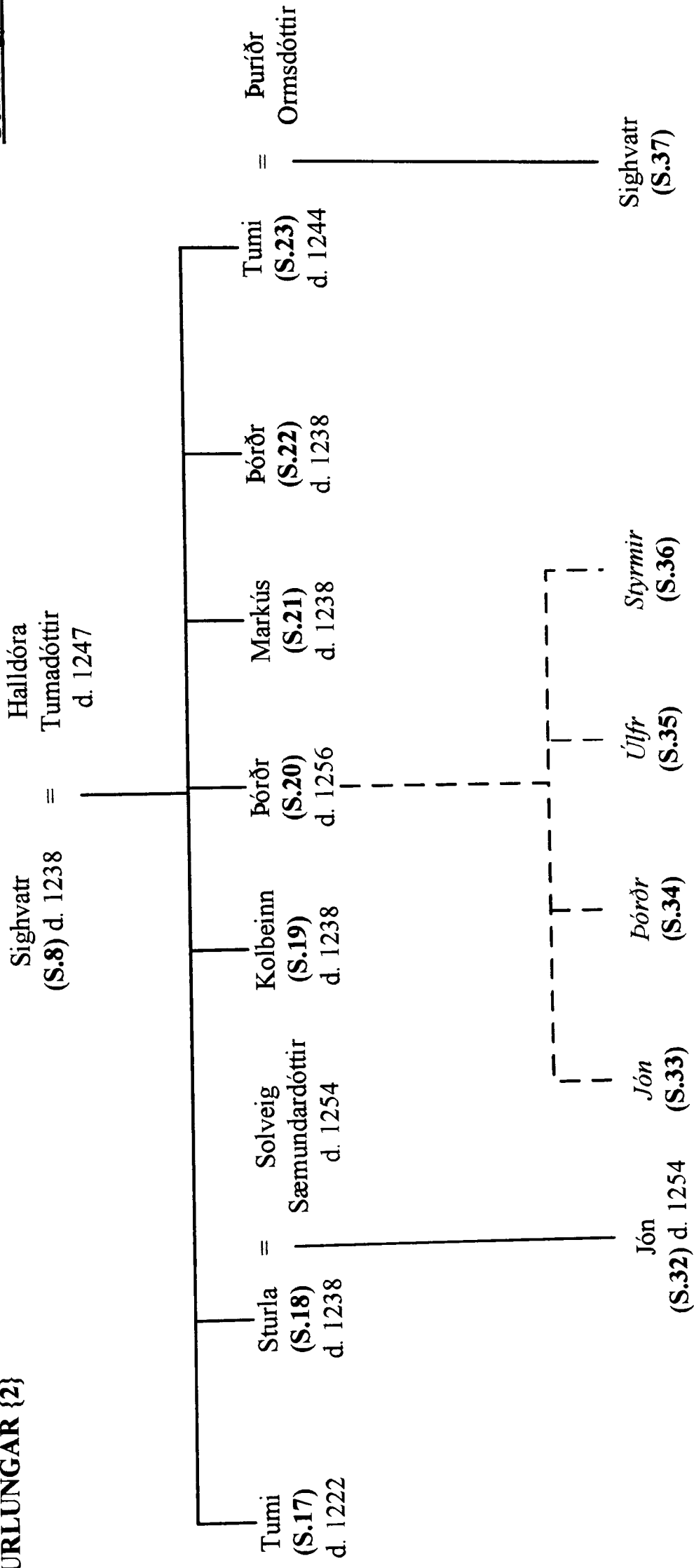
Many of the men discussed in the thesis, including all the case study subjects have each been allocated an identifying code e.g. (S.1), (S.2), (H.3) with which they are identified both in the text and the genealogies.

The genealogies are not intended to represent complete reconstructions of the families, especially with regards to the female line.

Genealogy 1a

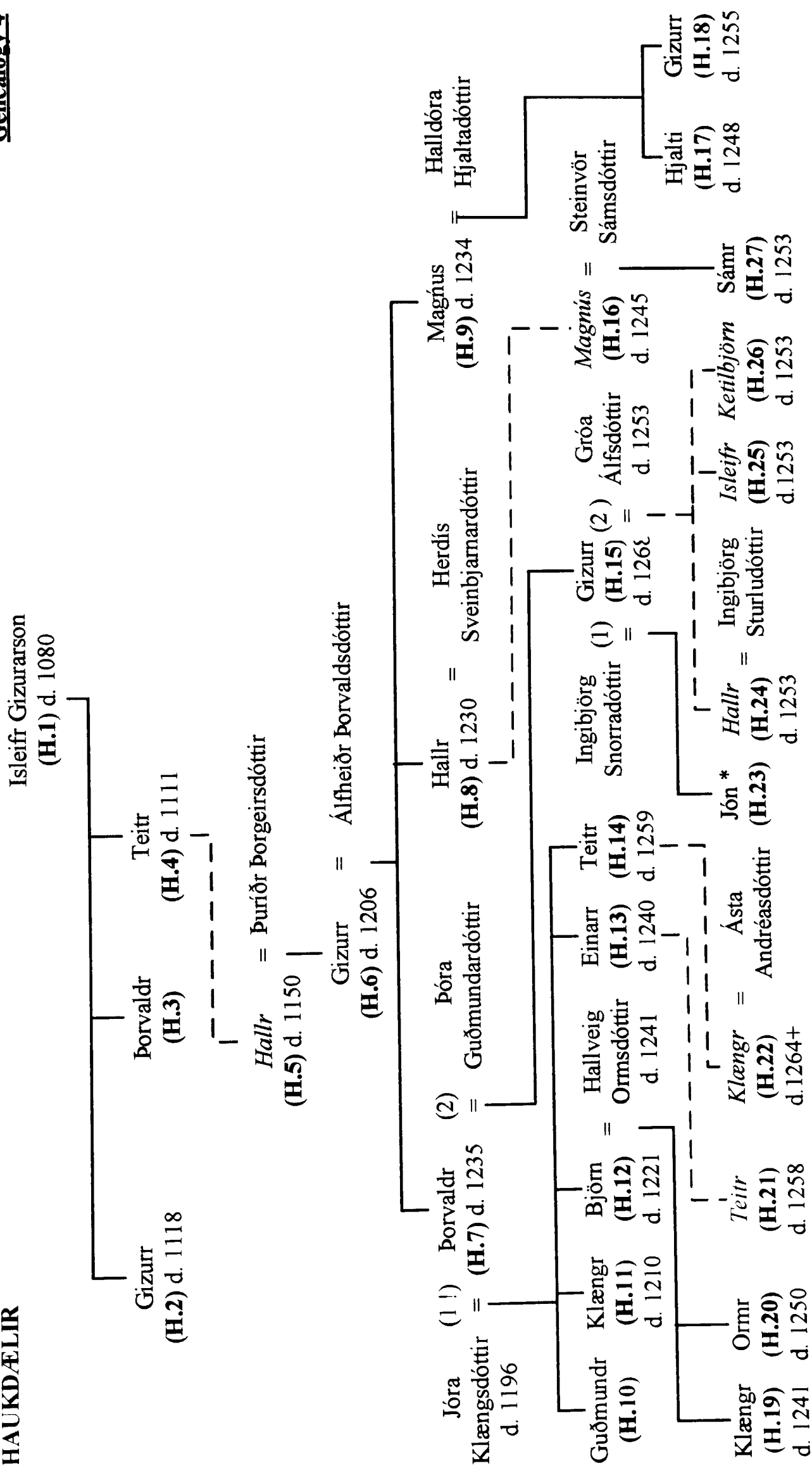


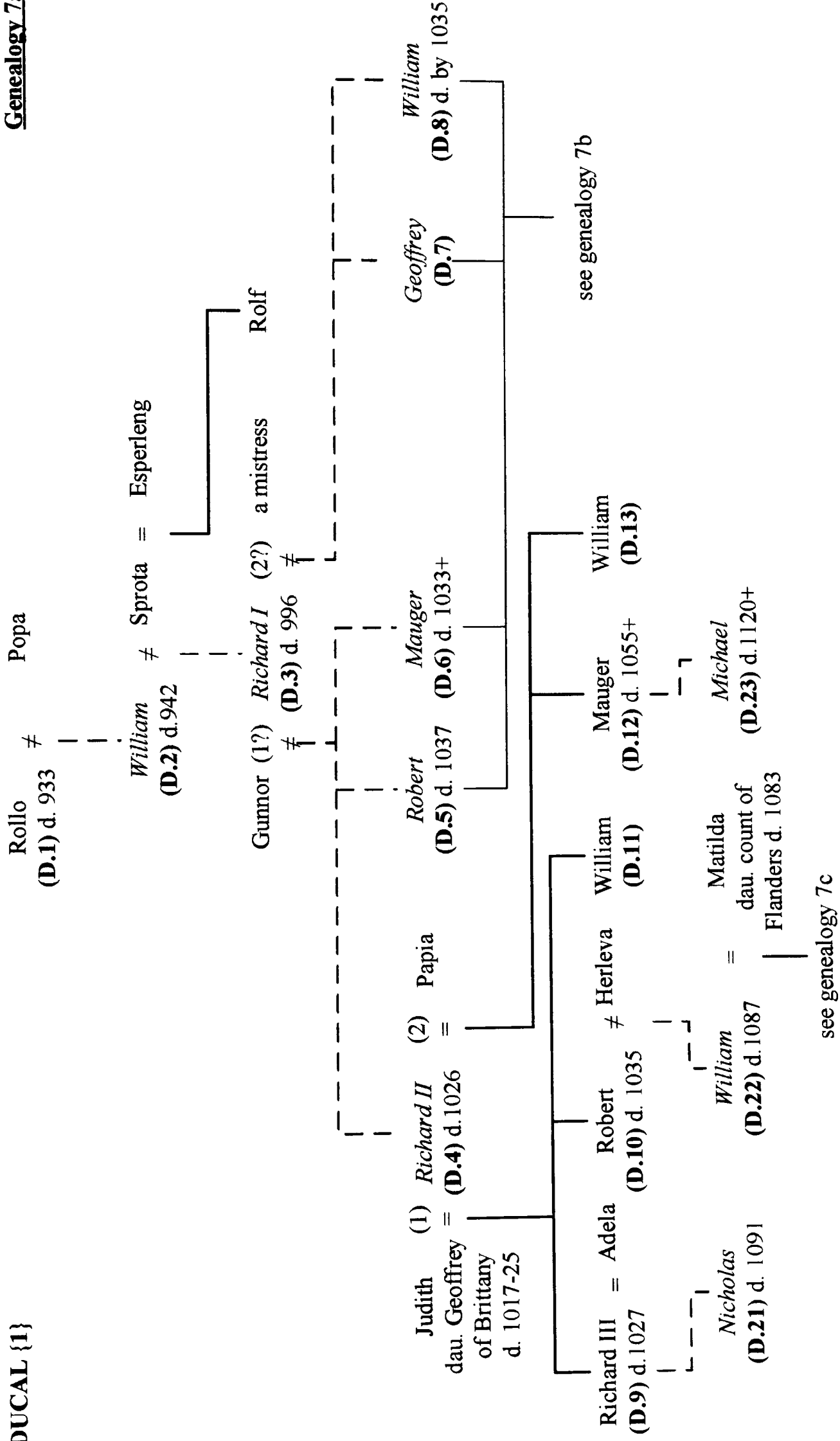
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HAUKDÆLIR

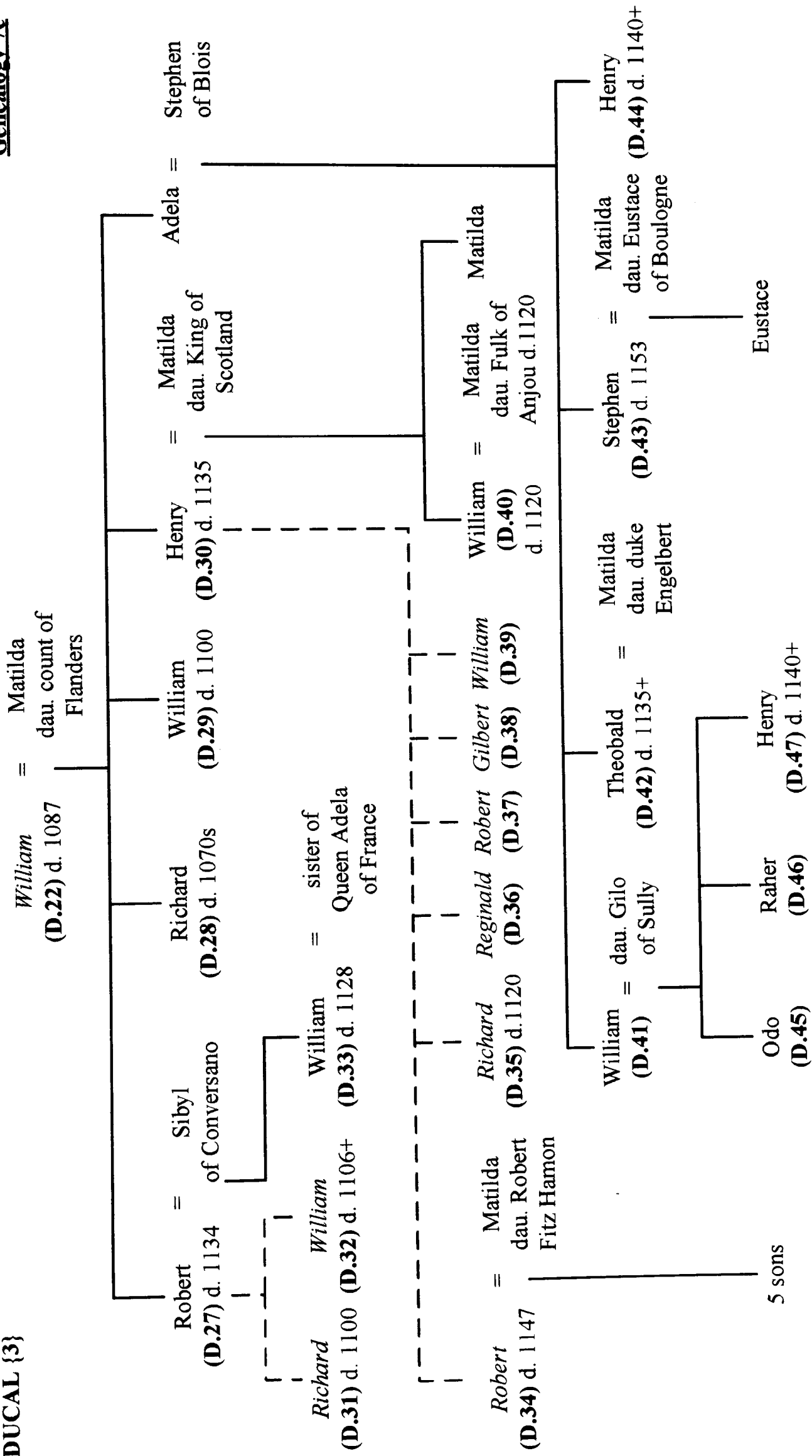
Genealogy 4



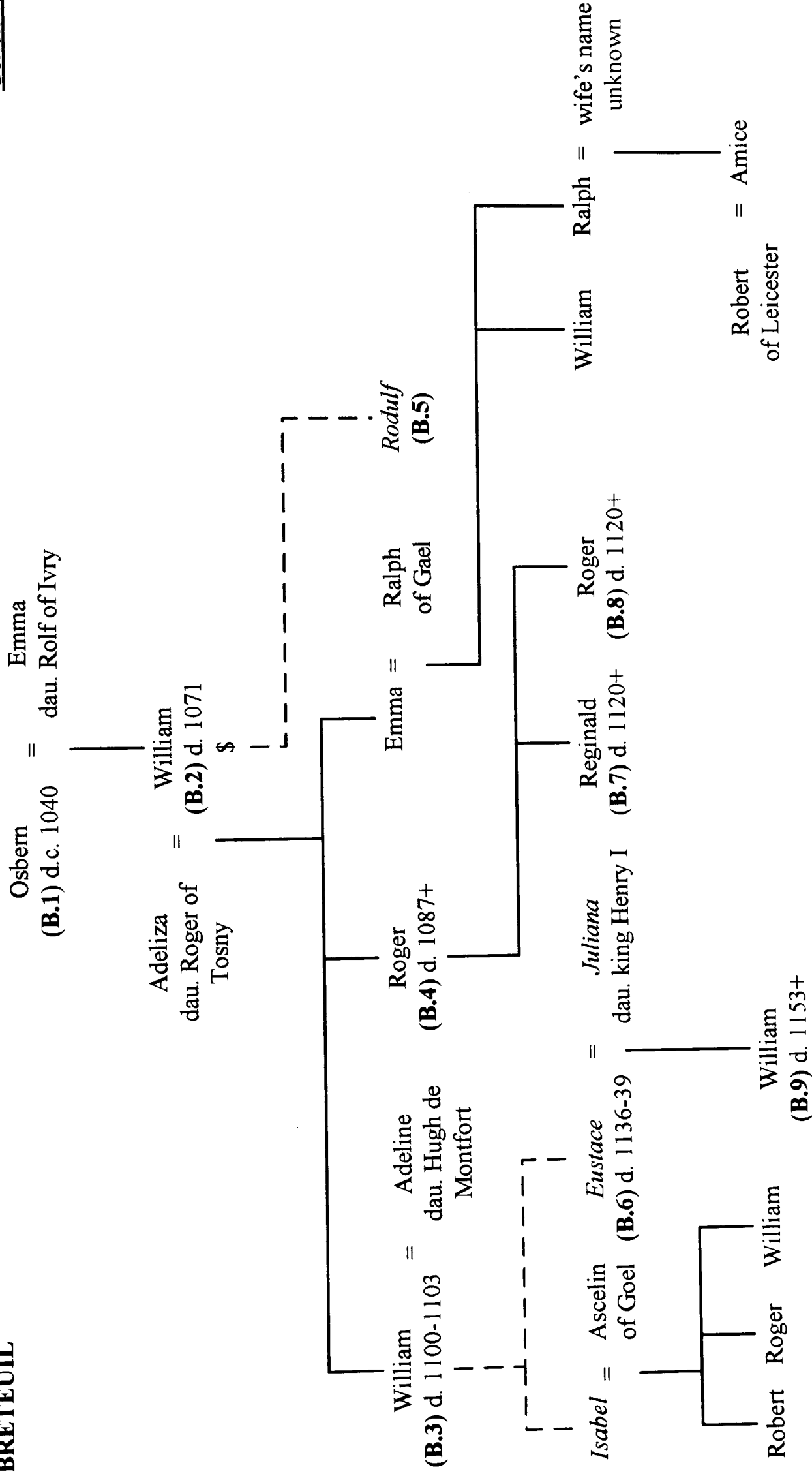


Genealogy 7c

DUCAL {3}

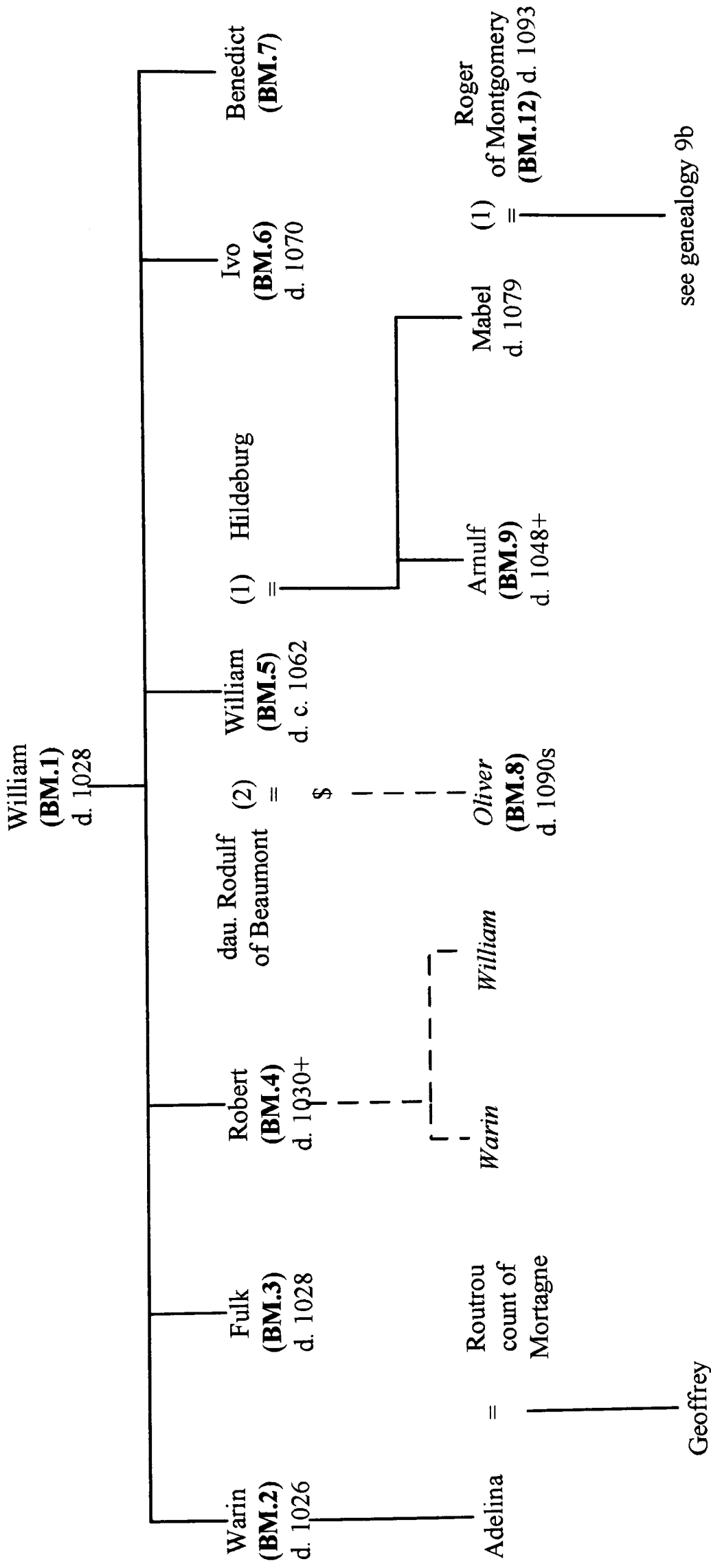


BRETEUIL

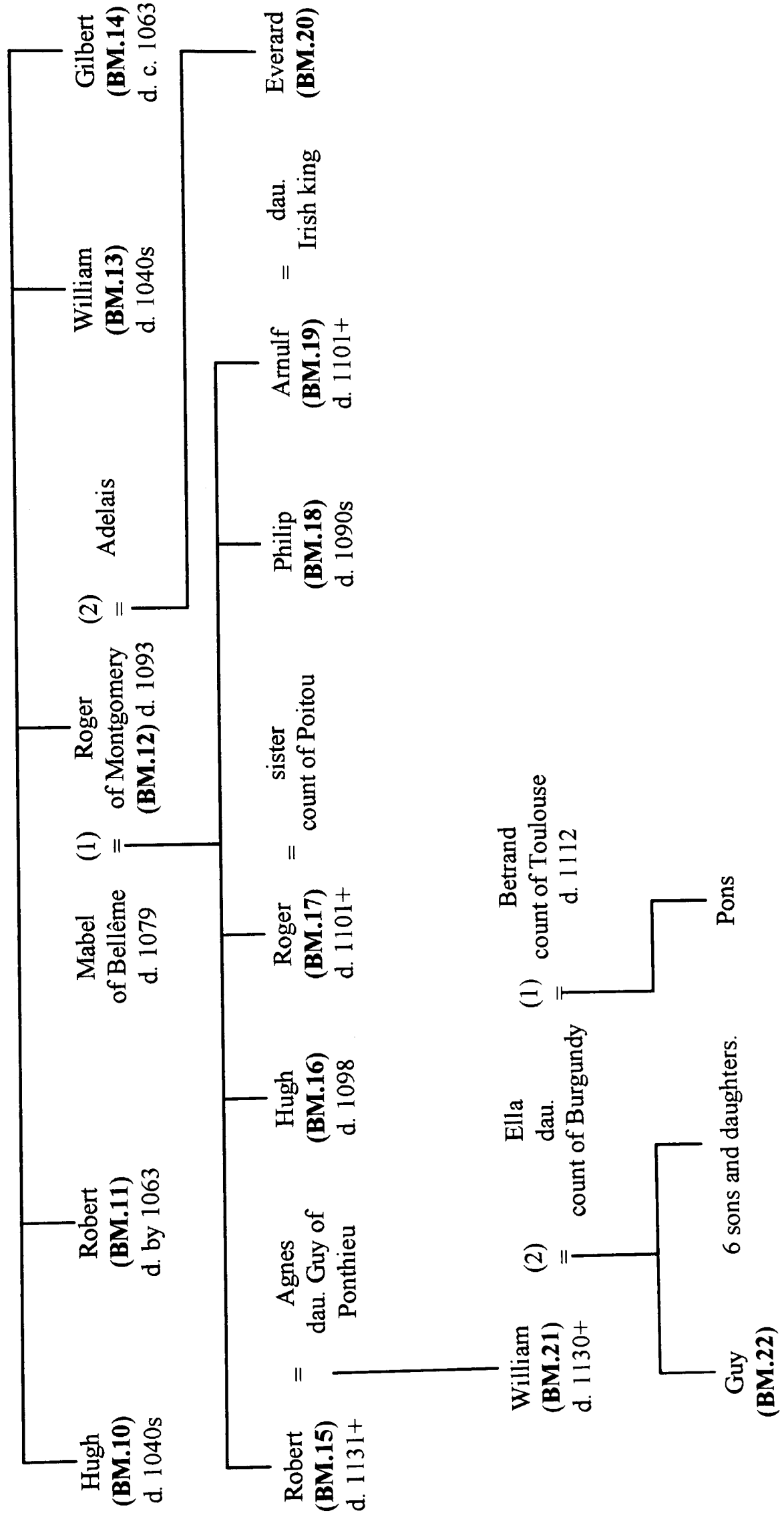


BELLÊME / MONTGOMERY {1}

Genealogy 9a

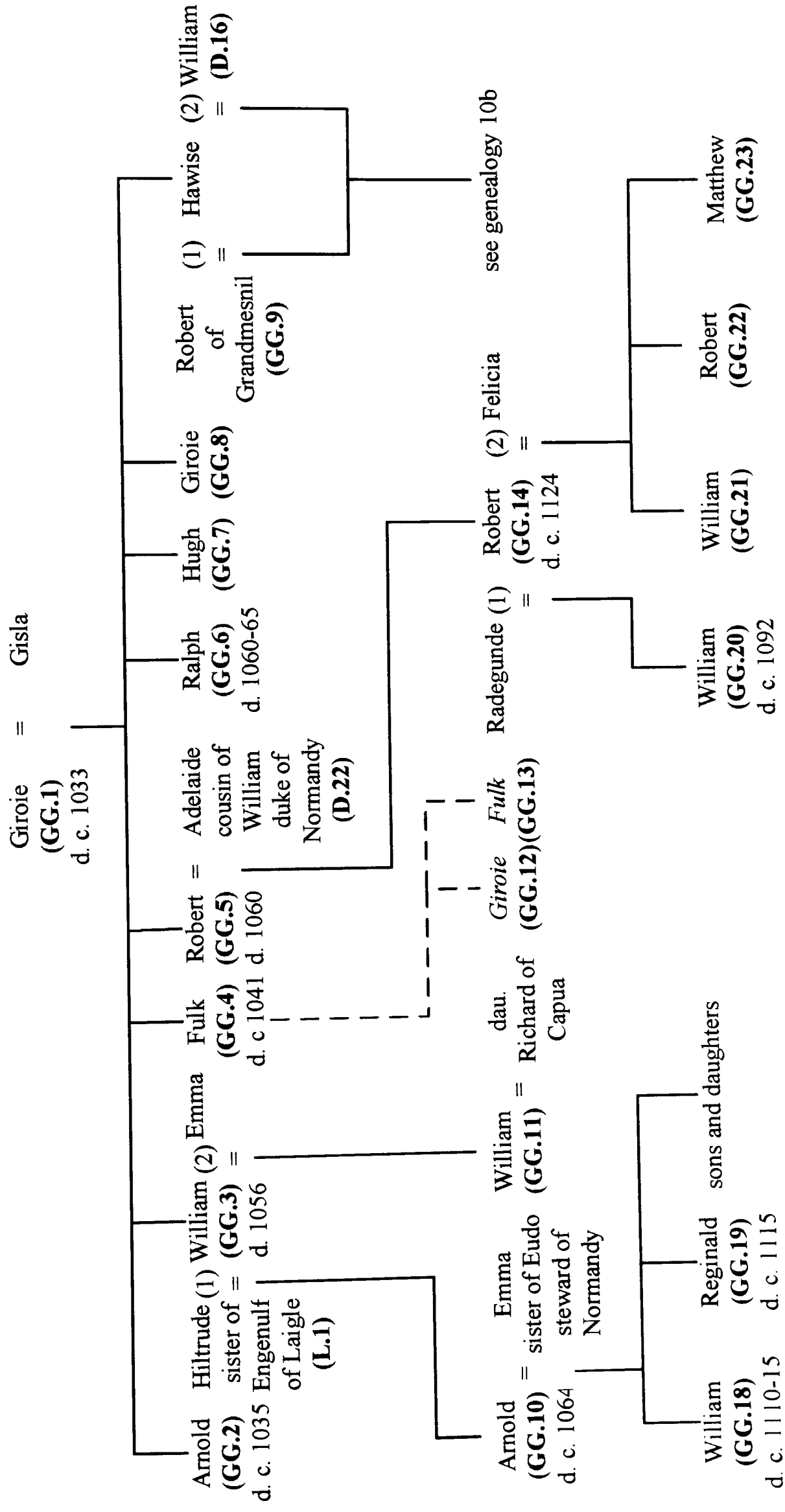


BELLÊME / MONTGOMERY {2}



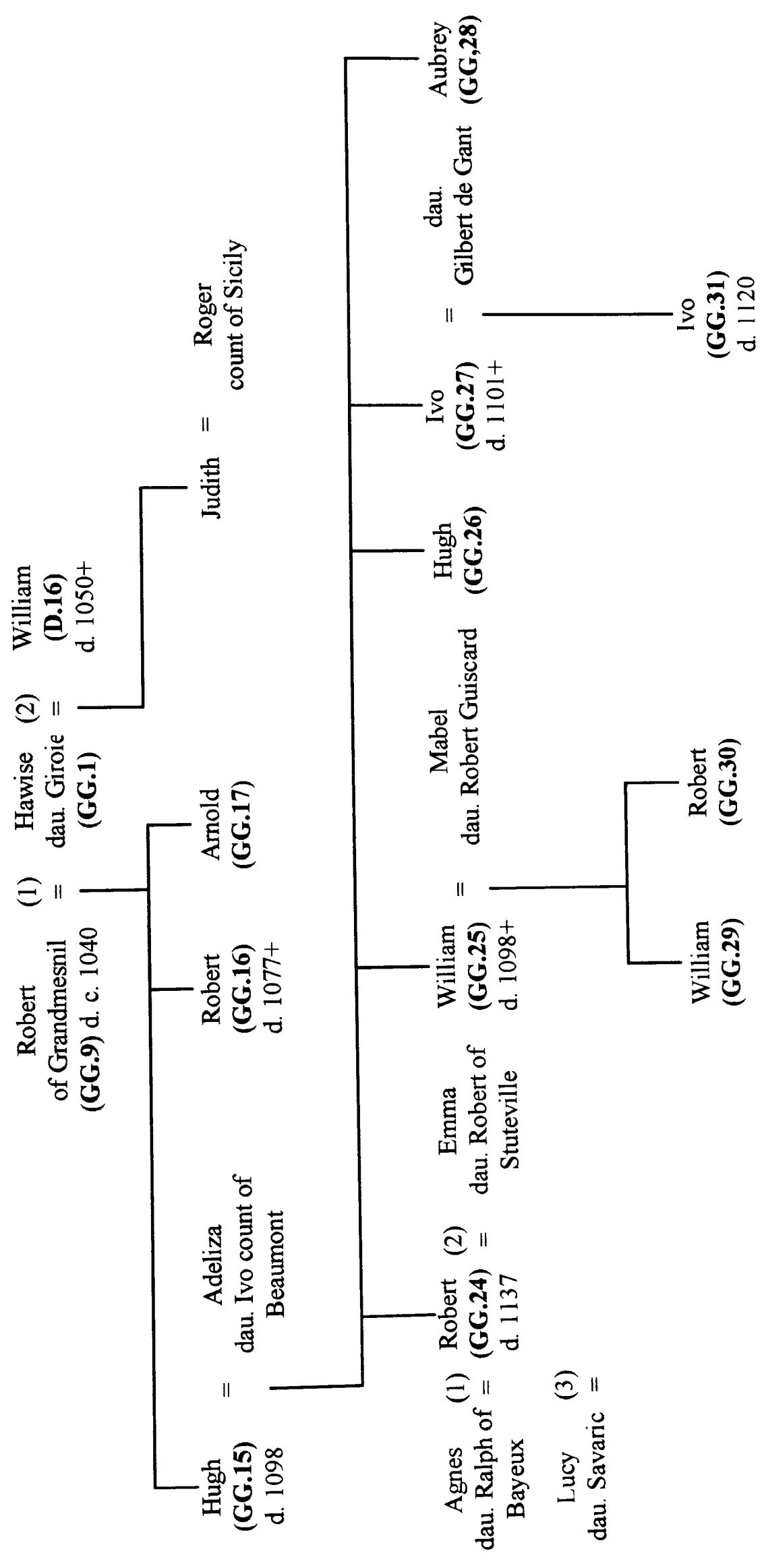
GIROIE / GRANDMESNIL {1}

Genealogy 10a



GIROIE / GRANDMESNIL {2}

Genealogy 10b



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