In this year Æthelstan, king of the English, pillar of the dignity of the Western World, died an untroubled death.¹

In considering Athelstan’s foreign policy, the above quotation is of considerable interest, marking as it does the stark contrast between the dearth of information in the English sources and the king’s prestige as seen from outside. Why should an Irish annalist make such an astonishing remark regarding an English king? Furthermore, why did foreign rulers suddenly seek alliances, fosterings and marriages with him and his family? The answer can only lie in the contrasting military situations. By the time of Athelstan’s accession in 924 England had had many military successes. From a point of near extinction in the 870s, not only had Wessex regained its own territory but land up to the Humber/Mersey line had been taken back from the Danes. Success in war was all-important and news of it travelled quickly, creating around the successful ruler an aura of power and making the victor’s goodwill much sought-after in diplomatic circles. In this military atmosphere, the house of Wessex had already succeeded where others had failed, a process which continued under Athelstan, and had emerged from its long wars more powerful at the end than at the beginning — the only western dynasty to do so. The English navy too was growing in strength — Athelstan attacked Scotland by land and sea in 934 as far as Caithness, sent ships first to support Alain Barbetorte’s return to Brittany in 936, and then a fleet to Flanders in 939. There is also another, more mysterious, reference which will be dealt with when Germany is considered.

In contrast, western, Christian, Europe was still very close to the verge of disaster. It is easy to forget that the Vikings were not the only external threat. In the south the Arabs presented a constant menace and the Magyars were persistently attacking from the east,

at their high point almost reaching Paris and the Channel coast, while constant wrangling and civil war were undermining the political unity of Charlemagne's empire. In England, however, the unifying effect of military success provided the opportunity for Athelstan to develop a coherent foreign policy with two strands. One strand led towards the continent, involving a peaceful diplomacy of friendship and alliance; the second, towards his Celtic neighbours and their closely intertwined Scandinavian connections, was a diplomacy backed by military force and aggression in face of the threat from both Norwegian and Dane. Of the countries facing the eastern seaboard of England, the central three — Germany, Flanders and Francia — were all joined to England by marriage in a flurry of dynastic bridal activity unequalled again until Queen Victoria's time. The outer two — Norway and Brittany — were linked by friendship, fosterings and self-interest. At first sight it might seem strange to say that England had any interests in common with Norway, but it is worth remembering here that the nascent Norwegian kingdom was becoming quite distinct from the Norse presence in the British Isles. For reasons contained within its own continental foreign affairs, the kingdom of Denmark, rather than Denmark as a centre of pirates and raiders, scarcely enters the equation at this point, having suffered three crushing defeats in a short time first, in 891, by Arnulf of Germany, then by Sweden, and then by Germany again in 934.

One final point of interest in considering foreign relations lies in the changing ideas of kingship in Europe at that time — a point to be raised, only to be dismissed as too large a subject to develop now. Suffice it to say, firstly, that the ancient ideal of heroic Germanic kingship was no longer adequate. Kings were starting to broaden their views and Athelstan, like Charlemagne and Alfred before him and Otto the Great later, surrounded himself not only with soldiers, but with scholars and teachers — a kind of intellectual comitatus — whose members required payment, not in rings and land, but in manuscripts and relics, an interest shared by the king and one which was well understood and exploited abroad. Secondly, following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, there had long been an underlying wish on the continent for an imperial revival in a new form. In England, with its different history, this was also present, if


3 'Æpelstan cyning feng to Norðhumba rice. 7 ealle ha cyningas þe on pyssum iglande waer on ge wylde. aerest Huwal West Wala cyning. 7 constantic Scotta cyning. 7 Uven Wenta cyning. 7 Ealdred Ealdulfing from Bebbenbyrig. 7 mid wedde 7 mid aþum frþ gefestnodom, on þere stowe þe genenned is eÆtomum on iiiidis liuli 7 æel deofel geld to cwædon. 7 syþþam mid sibbe to cyrdon.' Plummer and Earle, *Chronicles*, 107, s.a.926; Whitelock, Douglas and Tucker, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 68-9, D text, s.a.927.
in more nationalistic terms as a wish for hegemony over the whole of the British Isles — an idea seemingly accepted by other native rulers when the English king was strong, as in the General Submission to Edward the Elder in 920,\(^2\) and later at Eamont to Athelstan in 927.\(^3\) Such ideas are important in foreign relations as they affect how rulers regard both themselves and each other. However, in this paper, I intend to confine myself to the two aspects of foreign policy already outlined, and to try to demonstrate their effects upon these countries or groups of countries in turn with brief descriptions of the contemporary situation in each, starting with the two which had had the longest standing relations with England — Brittany and Flanders.

First to Brittany which had principally been settled in two waves of immigration, initially by Saxons in the fifth century — in the 850s the area around the lower Loire was still known as the *Otlinga Saxonum*\(^4\) — secondly by Celts fleeing Anglo-Saxon pressure in Great Britain. This second group was led largely by 'saints' from South Wales — Malo, Samson, Brieuc — and the south west of Britain — Congar, Cado, Tudwal, Illtud, and Budoc. All were intellectual men who went abroad as apostles and, furthermore, were closely related to royal houses. The ties thus created continued into the Anglo-Saxon era with much evidence for considerable influence in both directions. For example, in about 899 Alan the Great vowed a tithe of goods to the Holy See in Rome in return for victory over enemies described as Normans; a vow reminiscent of Alfred's promise from at least 887 to send regular gifts to the Pope — a fact which could easily have been known to Alan.

Brittany had been very active in the ninth century, enlarging its territory three-fold, but it was then pillaged by Danes who were trying to set up a kingdom of Nantes similar to those in York and Dublin. Finally, after the creation of Normandy in 911, which allowed the Vikings to devote their undivided attention westwards, Brittany passed from paying Danegeld to a state of exhaustion and submission. The duchy collapsed, and the chronicler of the abbey of Redon wrote 'Britannia destructa est'.\(^5\) The native population fled, the land being peopled largely by roving Norse armies until 937. The important monastery of Landévennec, like many others, was sacked and the monks fled with their relics to Flanders, an act of which the consequences will be considered later when dealing with that country.

Many leading Bretons, both secular and clerical, fled to England, the latter bringing with them relics, cults, and many gospels, psalters and grammars, the supply of which dried up after 937. Among the nobles was the son-in-law of the last duke with his son, Alain

Figure 7
England, Europe and the Celtic World
Barbetorte, future leader of Brittany, who was baptized and brought up at Athelstan’s court. Here he was in the company of Louis d’Outremer, the son of Charles the Simple and Athelstan’s sister, Eadgifu. This seemed to form the basis of good relations in later life between the two, even to the point that Alain, a very powerful ruler in his own right, became Louis’s vassal in 940. The distress of those Bretons left behind is obvious in an urgent plea for help sent to Athelstan from Radbod of St Samson at Dol, and the writer’s anguish is all the more obvious when one realizes he was writing to a foreign king. Radbod refers to Edward the Elder’s request to join the St Samson confraternity and apparently knowing of Athelstan’s interest in relics, he sends some of his most valuable examples — an early instance of an attempt to gain the king’s favour by this means.

During this time Athelstan was re-organizing the Church in the south west of England and he used many Breton gifts to enrich his foundations. For example, he gave the recently acquired Samson relics to his new monastery at Milton Abbas, dedicated to Saints Michael, Mary, Branwalader and Samson. The joining of these last two relatively unknown saints to Michael and Mary is striking proof of the interest taken in Breton saints at the highest level. Relic lists from Glastonbury and Exeter all show evidence of Breton saints, mostly quite important ones with considerable cults in Brittany. There are also several church dedications, for example: Winwaloe the founder of Landévennec is patron of churches in Gunwalloe, Tremaine, Landewednack (Cornwall) and Portlemouth (Devon). St Budoc is honoured at Budock and Budock Vean (Cornwall) and St Budeaux (Devon) with a relic at Glastonbury. Athelstan himself owned relics of St Judoc, founder of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer, which he gave to the New Minster. The Salisbury Psalter, probably written for Breton exiles between 914 and 939, includes references to both Judoc and Winnoc, his nephew. There is, finally, one other reference to Athelstan’s links with the Breton church. This appears in a fire-damaged copy of a letter, introducing a miles, now an anchorite, from Brittany who is travelling to England in peace time and seeking Athelstan’s help. Both the man himself and his monastery are unknown, and the only dating factor is Athelstan.

By 936 a fragile balance had been established between Francia, Flanders and Normandy, saving Brittany from partition, and petitions were sent to Athelstan for the return of Alain Barbetorte. The Norman historian, Dudo of Saint-Quentin, claims that Athelstan made the
first overtures to William Longsword, but this could possibly be Dudo’s pro-Norman sympathies speaking. 10 Much more likely is the Breton account that the call came from Abbot Jean of Landévennec, in exile at Montreuil, who had been spending his time rallying Breton support. 11 With Athelstan’s blessing, plus ships and a small troop of men since not only was Alain a godson, but as the Breton historian informs us, the Norse were ‘odieux à ce prince comme frères des Danois, fléau de l’Angleterre que son père et lui avaient combattus’ 12 Alain returned to be successfully reinstated and as an indication of the support and friendship he had received, he afterwards maintained the best of relations with England. It may clearly be seen, therefore, that Athelstan’s relations with Brittany were close, supportive, and strong at all levels.

Among all the continental powers Flanders had probably had the longest and closest ties with England — perhaps because it was the nearest and controlled the ports of entry from England into Europe. Saxons seem to have colonized the area now known as the Boulonnais, 13 while Anglo-Saxon missionaries had played a very great part in the conversion of Flanders. Flemings were well-represented in England and from these links came marriage ties, such as that between Alfred’s daughter, Ælfthryth, and Count Baldwin II of Flanders. 14 Flemish merchants were very active selling a variety of goods and buying goldwork, jewellery and embroideries and, as in Brittany, many clerics came to England bringing relics and books. For instance, Grimbald, one of Alfred’s helpers, possibly brought the Utrecht Psalter 15 as well as a Prudentius manuscript. 16 Monks of Saint-Josse fled to Winchester in 901 with their relics, 17 and those of Saint-Bertin to Bath. Nor was the traffic only one way. In an account of the miracles of St Bavo, 18 sub anno 940, an entry describes an elderly Englishman, inspired by a vision to go and help in the restoration of the church in Ghent. Secondly, and less admirably, in
NOTES: Æthelstan and his sisters are in CAPITALS. # indicates a break in the line of succession

Figure 8
The Continental Marriages of King Athelstan's Sisters
the 'Life' of St Bertulf, *sub anno* 933, there is the story of another Englishman who tried to steal relics of St Bertulf and other saints from the church to give, or sell, to Athelstan — a clear indication of knowledge of the king's desire for relics.

After the treaty of Verdun in 843, which split Charlemagne's empire, Flanders became part of the frontier of West Francia ruled by Charles the Bald. The county was relatively successful against Viking attack and able to strengthen its position until the Danes, defeated in England, threw themselves on Flanders, pillaging it for many years. As in Brittany the population and monks fled; only the area around Bruges was spared and from that nucleus a revived Flanders developed under Baldwin II. An unscrupulous man of savage energy, he expanded southwards, struggling for Vermandois whose ruler, Herbert I, together with Fulk, archbishop of Rheims, he caused to be murdered, and in 890 he succeeded in stopping the Danes. The result of these successes, and of his growing power was his marriage to Alfred's daughter, Ælfthryth, by whom he had two sons — Adelolf and Arnulf.

Each of these cousins played important parts in Athelstan's personal affairs and in his relations with Francia. It was Adelolf who led the embassy from Hugh the Great in 926 for the hand of the king's sister, Eadhild, '... [who] was demanded from her brother by Hugh, king of the Franks. The chief of this embassy was Adulf, son of Baldwin, earl of Flanders, by Ethelswitha, daughter of King Edward.' Later, in 933, he buried Edmund, Athelstan's drowned brother, with fitting ceremony at Saint-Bertin. Arnulf, on the other hand, was in the welcoming party for Louis d'Outremer on his return from England and remained his friend and supporter, while maintaining his sympathies towards England. Continuing his father's policy of expansion, Arnulf eventually came up against the new duchy of Normandy in a long struggle for Montreuil on the river Canche into which Athelstan was drawn. Arnulf won in the end but only after arranging the murder of William Longsword.

20 '... se here up andlang Mæse ofor on Frangland 7 þær sæt an gear', Plummer and Earle, *Chronicles*, 77-84, at 77, A text, s.a.880-892; Whitelock, Douglas and Tucker, *Anglo-Saxon* Chronicle, 50-4, A text, s.a.880-92.
21 '... Hugo rex Francorum per nuncios a germane expetit. Princeps hujusce legationis fuit Adulfus, filius Baldewini comitis Flandriae, ex filia regis Edwardi Ethelswitha', *WmM. Gesta* ed. T.D. Hardy, i (London: English Historical Society, 1840), 216. Translation from J. Stephenson, *William of Malmesbury, The Kings before the Norman Conquest* [WmM, Kings] (Lampeter: Llanerch Enterprises, 1989), 118. (William made a mistake here, Adulf's mother was Ælfthryth, daughter of King Alfred, and therefore sister to Edward; see Grierson, 'The relations between England and Flanders', 88.)
In 939 difficulties arose between England and Flanders over this struggle for Montreuil. Arnulf, in competition with Normandy and in support of Otto I (whose interest lay in keeping Francia unstable), took Montreuil against Louis IV (d'Outremer). Athelstan, however, chose to support his nephew and sent a fleet against the rebels who were attacking the Flemish coast. This was not a success; the English sailors attacked the coast themselves and, according to Flodoard, 'ravaged certain places near the coast of Thérouanne. They went back across the sea returning home without having carried out any of the business for which they came.'

It is unclear why this happened—perhaps the sailors simply went berserk, or perhaps it was a policy to deter the Danes. Could Athelstan even have foreseen the possibility of Arnulf giving help to rebels in the future?

Alternatively, and here we must refer back to Brittany and the flight of the monks from Landévennec and ask, was this journey an expedition in search of relics? These monks had written to England asking for sanctuary, meanwhile making their way to Saint-Judoc, on the left bank of the Canche, near to Montreuil and its count, Helgaud (see note 10). He welcomed them, but opposed any flight to England, wanting the relics of St Gwennolé for himself. Therefore, the monks built themselves a new church near to Saint Walois, its establishment being confirmed by one of the few authentic charters of Landévennec — probably from 924 as Helgaud died in 926. However, knowing that the monks had written to England, it seems reasonable to suppose that Athelstan was fully aware of the situation and could possibly, following a kind of secret agenda, have used the 939 expedition to try to acquire these relics, especially as Flodoard's wording is rather strange. Be that as it may, it is the first recorded example of an English expeditionary force being sent into Europe and, together with the help given to Barbetorte and yet another possibility which will be considered under Germany, it raises the question of whether Athelstan might have been tempted into more continental adventures had he lived. It could also be seen as the first stirrings of an English policy of holding a balance of power. The more immediate result, however, was a rift with Flanders which from then on became a home for English malcontents.

Sadly, from the point of view of record, there is an enormous lacuna in our knowledge of Normandy at this period. Here the Norse invasions were such that, unlike Brittany and Flanders where although grievous harm was done a thread of continuity persisted, the break was complete. By the mid-ninth century the annals of the abbey of Fontenelle had dried up and no others were written until the end of the tenth century, while no charter before 960 can be treated with confidence. Under the Carolingians the region had been rich and prosperous, although the abbeys were often charged with sheltering

24 'From Flodoard's Annals', in EHD, i, 316.
refugees from Carolingian might, but at this time the duchy was very unstable. Nevertheless it is hard to believe that there were no contacts between England and Normandy in the first decades of the tenth century. Normandy supported both Brittany, no doubt because of its Norse residents, and the kings of Francia, William Longsword paying homage to Raoul in 928, and again in 933 in return for part of the coast next to Brittany. On the other hand, the duchy was strongly opposed by Arnulf of Flanders, especially over Montreuil. All three of these groups were in touch with England in different ways so that it is indeed hard to believe that there was no Anglo-Norman communication.

In his policy towards France, Athelstan’s principal objective was to support a Carolingian house now nearing its demise due to both external attack and internal wrangling. Northern France was divided between four great nobles, leaving the king only a rump of demesne land around Laon and Paris. The four were Hugh the Great, duke of the Franks and of Aquitaine, holder of the lands between the Seine and Loire; Hugh the Black, brother to King Raoul and claimant to the Burgundian succession; Herbert de Vermandois, descendant of Charlemagne and owner of huge estates near Flanders; and William of Normandy the only one who, owing his lands to them as he did, felt much allegiance towards the Carolingians. To the north east there was Lotharingia, heartland of Charlemagne’s empire which had lost Alsace in 910 and been totally ravaged in 912 by the Hungarians. However, after a brief flirtation with Germany, the duchy rallied to Charles the Simple but, after Charles’ defeat and deposition at Soissons, Lotharingia accepted German protection in 925, becoming the fifth duchy of the kingdom of Henry the Fowler.

In addition to these divisions France probably suffered more than any other country from invasion. It is sometimes said that many of the accounts of Viking depredations in Europe as elsewhere are exaggerated, written by panic-stricken clerics only interested in the damage to churches and monasteries; but the Annals of Saint-Bertin and especially Ermentarius in his history of St Philibert both give measured and telling accounts — ‘the number of ships increased, the multitude of Norsemen grew beyond counting; everywhere there was slaughter of Christians, robberies, devastations, burnings ... Bordeaux, Périgueux, Saints, Limousin, Angoulême were captured and the city of Toulouse; likewise the cities of Angers, Tours and Orléans were razed to the ground’. 25 Viking fleets and armies penetrated deep into France along the great rivers of the Loire and

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the Seine as far as Burgundy. The annals speak of the depopulation of many major towns such as Rouen, Nantes and Orléans, all of which had been trading centres for many years and the destruction of which led to the ruin of the surrounding areas. Meanwhile, under Arab attack, the south east around Grenoble had lost two-thirds of its population. To add to the confusion, the legitimate line of succession in Francia had been broken three times at the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth centuries, the last being in 922 when Charles the Simple was deposed and imprisoned. Whereupon his wife, Eadgifu, Athelstan’s sister, fled to England, taking her son, Louis, with her, to be raised at the prestigious court of his grandfather, Edward the Elder, and subsequently of his uncle, Athelstan.

In 926 one of these French magnates, Hugh the Great, sent an embassy to Athelstan at Abingdon, asking to marry one of the king’s sisters and sending the most sumptuous gifts (see below). Tenth-century society was ruled by gifts and gift-giving at every level, not least in diplomacy. Gifts of relics marked the way to success for rising rulers and their warlike followers as relics were seen as the outward and visible signs of abstract ideals of justice, mercy and protection for the weak. Hugh’s gifts to Athelstan were prime examples of this, echoing those made by Byzantine rulers:

... perfumes such as never had been seen in England before; jewels, but more especially, emeralds ... many fleet horses ... an onyx vase so exquisitely chased that the cornfields really seemed to wave, the vines to bud ... the sword of Constantine the Great ... on the pommel, upon thick plates of gold might be seen fixed an iron nail, one of the four ... used for the crucifixion ... the spear of Charles the Great ... reported to be the same which, driven into the side of our Saviour by the hand of the centurion, opened ... the joys of paradise to wretched mortals: the banner of the most blessed martyr Maurice ... of the Theban legion with which the same king, in the Spanish war, used to break up the battalions of the enemy ... part of the holy and adorable cross enclosed in crystal ... a small portion of the crown of thorns enclosed in a similar manner ...

This list includes both secular and sacred items, all of the highest importance and some of them closely linked to Charlemagne, thus seeming to convey the idea that Charlemagne’s divine favour and virtus had now been transferred to Athelstan. Perhaps the anti-Carolingian Hugh was also anxious to remove a possible future focus for Carolingian loyalty plus, at the same time, attempting to ensure...

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26 ‘... odores aromatum qualia nunquam antea in Anglia visa fuerant: honores gemmarum, præsertim smaragdorum ... equos cursores plurimos ... vas quoddam ex onichino, ita subtili calatoris arte sculptum, ut vere fluctuare segetes, vere germinare vites ... ensem Constantini magni, in quo literis aureis nomen antiqui possessoris legebatur; in capulo quoque super crassias auri laminas clavum ferreum affixum cerneres, unum ex quatuor quos Judaica factio Dominici corporis aptarat supplicio: lanceam Karoli Magni ... ferebatur eadem esse qua, Dominico lateri centurionis manu impacta ... hiato Paradisum miseris mortalibus aperuit: vexillum Mauricii beatissimi martyris, et Thebæ legionis principis, quo idem rex in bello Hispano quamlibet infestos et confertos inimicorum cuneos dirumpere: ... particulam sanctæ et adorandæ crucis crystallo inclusam: ... portiunculam quoque coronæ spinae, eodem modo inclusam ... ’,

Hardy, WmM. *Gesta*, 216-17; Stephenson, WmM, *Kings*, 119.
Athelstan’s neutrality in Frankish dynastic quarrels. To Athelstan such a marriage would have presented itself as a means both of confirming his own international position and of guaranteeing a royal future for his nephew, Louis (see genealogical table). In any event, the request was granted and the alliance thus engendered no doubt did help Hugh later when, in 936, the French throne fell vacant. At that point, his loyalty to the Carolingians revived; he urged the other nobles to recall Louis d’Outremer, the last remaining Carolingian heir, from England and another embassy was sent to Athelstan, this time at York.

Apparently, Athelstan — despite the earlier marriage of his sister — was not entirely confident of the good faith of the envoys, and demanded pledges. Once these had been received however, it was agreed that Louis would receive Frankish allegiance on the beach at Boulogne, the arrival of both parties to be signalled by beacons.

... and so the duke, with the princes of the Gauls, came to Boulogne to receive the lord king and, gathered together on the sand of the nearby shore, announced their presence to those who were on the other shore by burning some hovels. For King Athelstan had gone there with his royal cavalry ready to send his nephew to the waiting Gauls. By his command several houses were burned, demonstrating to those opposite that he himself had arrived.27

Later, after the terrible Hungarian invasions of 937, Louis was back at Saint-Omer, possibly to maintain his English contacts; he also tried to keep open the ports of Guines and Quentovic in which he was helped by Arnulf of Flanders who, in his turn, Louis helped to expel the Normans from Flanders. Later still Louis, imprisoned by Hugh the Great, was only freed after pressure from all his English contacts — Athelstan, Arnulf, Otto the Great and Konrad of Burgundy — the last three forming a solid, continental bloc which then proceeded to devastate the lands of both Normandy and Hugh the Great.

With the death of Charlemagne, it had proved impossible to rule the kingdom which he had established from the Pyrenees to the Elbe; the treaty of Verdun, already mentioned, had divided it into East and West Francia leaving Lotharingia, an open wound in the middle, to become a factor in Franco-German politics until the present day. The German part had become accustomed to rule by a member of its own dynasty and so felt different from West Francia whose princes seemed to them strangers. Ultimately, in 911, Conrad the Young was elected emperor — a prophetic act later seen as the birth of Germany.28

27 ' Dux itaque cum Galliarum principibus domnum regem excepturi, Bononiam veniunt, ac secus ipsas litoreas arenas collecti, tuguriorum incendio presentiam suam is qui in altero litore erant ostendebant. Ibi enim Adelstanus rex cum regio equitatu nepotem propestolantibus Gallis missurus aderat. Cujus jussu domus aliquot succensae, sese advenisse trans positis demonstrabant ...'. Pertz, Richer i, 124-6.
28 Carlrichard Brühl, Deutschland-Frankreich, die Geburt Zweier Völker (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau, 1990), 11, n. 32.
In Germany, as in France, the position of the king had weakened towards the end of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth centuries, with the result, again as in France, of the emergence of large and powerful principalities — Saxony, Bavaria, Franconia and Swabia. However, the position of the German crown was strengthened by the accession first of Henry the Fowler of Saxony in 919, and then of his son, Otto the Great, although struggles with the great duchies were to continue throughout Otto’s reign.

Relations between England and Germany sprang as much from a sense of shared kinship and common origin as from anything else; St Boniface urged the Anglo-Saxons to ‘have pity for them [Saxons] because it is customary to say of them “we are from one blood and from one bone”’. Further, as Karl Leyser explains: ‘Das angelsächsische England des zehnten Jahrhunderts hatte mehr mit der Welt des Ostfränkischen Reiches gemein als zu irgendeiner anderen Zeit ...’ These extended into cultural and ecclesiastical affairs, since Germany had been converted principally by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, and it was Germany which gained most from English marriages and the influence derived therefrom. A further similarity between the two states was that each had a line of kings emerging from a single, strong, family, which exercised a hegemony with developing imperial ideas, even if in rather different ways.

Under Frankish pressure, Saxony had become the defender of the northern frontier against both Scandinavian and Magyar attack and had thereby built up a very effective army under Henry the Fowler. He was the first non-Frank ever chosen to rule in Germany but, seen as _arriviste_ by his neighbours and one not likely to last, he was in an ambivalent position and therefore felt a strong need to establish his own dynasty. He also had designs on Lotharingia, to which he had no claim whatsoever, and this brought him eventually into confrontation with Louis IV, Hugh the Great, and Arnulf of Flanders, all related to Athelstan. Hence it was greatly to his advantage to ally himself with England, especially after the marriage of Eadhild to Hugh the Great, in an attempt to forestall a resurgence in Lotharingian loyalties towards the house of Charlemagne.

Therefore this marriage, which took place in 930 between his son, Otto, and Athelstan’s sister, Eadgyth, was seen as a triumph in Germany and chronicled as such — every German annalist writing of it in enthusiastic terms: Liudprand of Cremona: ‘... the same King Otto, before he came to the throne, married a most noble lady

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from out of the people of the English ... by name Otgith ... ',\textsuperscript{31} Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim: ' Influential through [her] nobility, powerful also because of [her] outstanding merits, Edith, highest descendant of great kings, whose calm face [shone] with brightest candour, and [who] glowed with the wondrous charm of her regal form; ... They tell, furthermore, [that she was] born of the blessed race of King Oswald, praised in song throughout the world because he suffered death in Christ’s name ... '.\textsuperscript{32} It raised the Ottonians above the status of a simple Saxon dynasty by linking it, a new ruling house, to an old and successful one; thus, Widukind of Corvey: 'this girl, born from out of the people of the English was famous, not less for holy religion, than for the regal power of her mighty race.'\textsuperscript{33} At the time of the marriage the Reichenau Memorial Book entry names Otto as king after his father and mother. In addition, there is a much-quoted, if corrupt, annal from Lausanne,\textsuperscript{34} saying that Otto was consecrated king during his father’s lifetime in Mainz in 930, so that, clearly, the principal aim of the marriage with the English king’s sister was to secure Otto’s succession. All this is in stark contrast to the silence of the English chronicles, and we might not even know of the marriage were it not for Æthelweard, William of Malmesbury and the German annals, so what did Athelstan get out of this? Why did he agree, even to the point of sending two sisters?

One clue may be found in the memorial books of Reichenau and Saint Gall. These record the bridal embassy sent by Athelstan under Bishop Cenwald of Worcester in 929, which covered the southern empire and divided gifts of silver among monasteries in the king’s name. By such generosity Athelstan and his bishops would have gained a wide reputation in the Empire. No doubt the king also hoped to gain wider support for his nephew, Louis, as well as good relations with a rising European power which might even lead to military alliances against the Vikings. In support of this, there is a strange entry \textit{sub anno} 934 in the \textit{Casus Sancti Galli} written by a monk living in the Swiss monastery of Saint Gall: ‘while Otto was engaged for a time with the English under their king, Adeltag, his father-in-law, fighting with united strength against the Danes under their king,


\textsuperscript{32}’Nobilitate potens, primis meritis quoque pollens, / Edita magnorum summo de germine regum, Cuius praecelior facies candore serena, / Regalis formae miro rutilabat honore /... / Hanc tradunt ergo natam de stirpi beata / Oswaldi regis laudem cuius canit orbis, / Se quia subdiderat morti pro nomine Christi,’ \textit{Hrotswita Gesta Oddonis, MGH, Scriptorum}, iv, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hanover: Hahn, 1861), 320-1, lines 66-97 at 321, lines 85-8 and 95-7. (In the belief that Edith was descended from St Oswald, Hrotswita and her contemporaries were, of course, quite wrong.)

\textsuperscript{33}‘Haec nata ex gente Anglorum, non minus sancta religione quam regali potentia pollentium stirpe clarvit,’ Widukundi monachi Corbiensis, \textit{MGH, Scriptorum}, iii, ed. G.H. Pertz (Hanover: Hahn, 1839), liber iii, 449, para.41.

\textsuperscript{34}T. Reuter, \textit{Germany in the early Middle Ages, c. 800-1056} (London: Longman, 1991), 145.
Knut...'. 35 However, there are certain difficulties with this record. For example, Adeltag/Athelstan was not Otto's father-in-law, but his brother-in-law and there is no possible explanation for this except as a simple mistake. Furthermore, the naming of the Danish king as Knut is a problem. The high king of Denmark at the time was Gorm, not Knut, but there was a sub-king, Chnuba; Gorm's second name was Harthacnut and he also had a son, Knut. In any case, the Hamburg Annals (Gest. Hamb. pont. I, 59) names the king involved as Harald, Gorm's son. All of which illustrates the difficulties which exist in the annals regarding personal names. What is undoubtedly true, is that in 934 war broke out between Germany and Denmark — noted in the oldest and most precisely-dated annal in Corvey — and the Danes were forced into peace. Also in 934 Athelstan ravaged Scotland by land and sea as far as Caithness. (See note 48.) Therefore, if an English fleet was in the North Sea, it is surely not beyond the bounds of possibility that it could have joined an ally and relative against a common enemy.

Finally, the Ottonian marriage of 929-30 had further significance for relationships between the Reich and its neighbours and associates. It drew the Liudolfingers into a large net of relations and, in its train, brought them an international position almost equal to the Carolingians. According to Æthelweard, Otto chose Eadgyth at first sight, while Ælfgivu, the sister who accompanied her married a 'certain king, "juxta upetereos montes"'. R.L. Poole, 36 among others, believes this must have been Konrad of Burgundy, a duchy just coming under the long shadow of Ottonian government. If so, then Konrad's daughter Gisela, who married Henry the Wrangler, would have been half-West Saxon and thereby strengthened relationships between Otto and England considerably more. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the sources to prove this. Be that as it may, it seems that the Anglo-Burgundian marriage was a further offshoot of Ottonian influence which, at the same time, established the means of renewing German hegemony over Burgundy for Henry the Fowler and Otto. Already then, by 935, English links were opening up to the Ottonians Burgundian lands down the Rhône valley into the Alps and Italy even before Otto's second marriage to Adelheid of Burgundy.

In the early tenth century, then, Wessex was the fulcrum of western and central European alliances and Athelstan's sisters secured a place for Henry and his family in far-reaching marriage relationships undreamed of among leaders in the West until a similar process began with Otto's sisters. The importance of the Wessex link to the Ottonians
is clear from the number of embassies travelling between the two countries in the 940s, and from the evident and sincere grief and dismay over Eadgyth’s early death; especially as it appears to have been a happy marriage. This may be seen in Otto’s fury when Eadgyth, seeking refuge in a nunnery, was threatened by a rebellious noble, and from the fact that he sent to England for a second wife. Perhaps his feelings for his wife also lie behind Otto’s preferential treatment of Magdeburg, his ‘morning gift’ to Eadgyth and the city wherein she was buried. Here he founded a great monastery to St Maurice, a cathedral and a metropolitan church; furthermore he ensured the city’s economic prosperity by setting up a new market and by building a protective wall all round to ensure the safety of merchants. Finally, ‘B’\textquotesingle s \textit{Life of Dunstan} has a shadowy yet surprising insight into Otto’s plans after his painful loss. Dunstan had a vision, just before Edmund’s murder at Pucklechurch, in which he saw an ambassador from the East Franks, speaking Saxon, who came to ask the king secretly for a second wife as Eadgyth was dead. When the real ambassador finally arrived it was on the day of Edmund’s murder.\textsuperscript{38}

Lastly to Scandinavia and, although it is very difficult to disentangle it from the threads of the Celtic world, some brief words may be said concerning Norway. The ninth-century history of Norway is very obscure especially in its chronology, largely because, as with other peoples, very little was written down until after the conversion to Christianity which was a very long process here, as in Scandinavia generally. Denmark became officially Christian c.960, Norway at the beginning of the eleventh century, while the conversion of Sweden took place gradually during the eleventh century.\textsuperscript{39} Nevertheless, it is clear that Harald Fairhair had established his kingship over Norway at the battle of Hrafnsfjord, in either 872 or 885 (as has been said, the chronology is difficult) after which many of his opponents fled to join their compatriots in Iceland, the Scottish islands, and elsewhere whence they proceeded to harry Norway itself. Ironically, as it might seem to us, Harald was incensed by this. He sent punitive expeditions to clear out these ‘pirates’, imposed his best friend, Rognvald, over the powerful earldom of Orkney, seized Man and sought the support of England. About 931 he sent a deputation to Athelstan at York offering many gifts, including ‘a ship with a golden beak and a purple sail, furnished within all round with a close-set row of golden shields’\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Memorials of Saint Dunstan}, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, Ixiii (London: Longman, 1874), 44-6 at 45, para. 32.


\textsuperscript{40} ‘Haroldus quidam, rex Noricorum, misit e\textquoteright navem, rostra aurea et velum purpureum habentem, densa testudine clipeorum insauratorum intrinsecus circumgyratam’, Hardy, \textit{WmM}, \textit{Gesta}, 215; Stephenson, \textit{WmM, Kings}, 118.
and, more importantly, his favourite son, Haakon to be fostered — a very serious matter in Scandinavia at that time. Athelstan accepted the boy willingly, had him baptized and ‘taught him the right faith and good habits and all kind of learning and manners’. In 900, Harald, well before his death and probably in imitation of the Carolingians whom he much admired, although intending Erik Blood-axe to be his main heir, divided his kingdom equally between his sons, thus sowing the seeds of bitter future conflict. However, after Harald’s death c. 934, Erik was expelled after only two years as king and the Norwegians asked for the return of Haakon; the invitation was accepted by the English court and the boy was sent back, according to tradition in the company of Sigurd, his Anglo-Scandinavian chaplain. It is interesting to note that during his time at Athelstan’s court, Haakon seems to have absorbed some English ideas. As king, he imposed a nefgildi or ship tax, very similar to scipfyrd, and one which covered both inland and coastal areas; he decreed that all freemen should be armed, and created a beacon system capable of raising the whole country to arms within a week.

For two hundred years before Athelstan’s accession Scandinavians had been raiding and settling in the islands to the north and west of Scotland. Unlike the heirs of Rome in the land-based regions of continental Europe, their whole way of life was dominated by the sea which to them was a gateway, not a barrier. They were Norsemen, not Danes like those who had invaded England from the east, and having overrun the Hebrides, they moved, in a natural progression, first to Ireland, then to Wales and south west England, where they both fought against and combined with other Vikings coming round the south coast from East Anglia and Europe. In Ireland they faced a rich and varied culture, untouched by Rome, and one which chronicled their activities minutely, if not always chronologically. Here, they took full advantage of the constant internecine warfare in the island, often acting as mercenaries, eventually becoming integrated into Irish society. They made several attacks in the south west of England, sometimes in alliance with the Cornish, but were eventually driven off.

By the mid-ninth century the Norse were well-established in Ireland with bases at Dublin, Wexford and other towns, quickly forming an alliance with the Danes of York under Ivarr the Boneless and his brother Sihtric. At first they defeated the Irish Norse at Carlingford Lough but then joined forces with them to rule Dublin for some twenty-five years. These men, from the royal Yngling family, with their descendants went on to create a dynasty destined to rule Dublin until the twelfth century. They were the first to be named as kings in the Irish chronicles and their history is twined into every

section of the western Viking world. Together, Norse and Dane fought the kings of Ireland and, separately, invaded Strathclyde, Dalriada, and Northumbria. Under these forceful and energetic leaders was formed the idea of a Dublin/York axis, coupled with ambitions to conquer the Western Isles, Scotland and the north and east of England — an aim which was pursued with relentless determination until the death of Erik Blood-axe in 954. One of the most famous of these kings of Dublin was Olaf Kvaaran, nephew to Athelstan by the marriage of his uncle, Sihtric, to Athelstan's sister, and who probably hated the English king for driving him out of York in 927. In 937, he appeared as a prime mover in the anti-English alliance which was destroyed at Brunanburh and, later still, he made two more attempts to regain his kingdom of York. Before all this, however, after a twenty-year civil war the Norse were expelled for a time from Dublin by the Irish in 902, many fleeing to the Wirral. There was also considerable Norse immigration into Cumbria and the Solway, while others involved themselves in raids as far as Dunkeld. This activity put great pressure on both Strathclyde and Scotland which came to a climax in a great battle at Fortriu, in 904, where the Scots thoroughly defeated the invaders.

Scotland itself was divided into four regions, each with its own language — Picts in the north and east, Northumbrians in the southeast, Welsh in Strathclyde, and the Scots (from Ireland) in Dalriada (modern Argyll). Unfortunately, the sources for this period are very poor but it is clear that, by his death in 858, Kenneth MacAlpine, king of Dalriada, had overcome the Picts and established a kingdom of the Scots. After him the Scottish succession appears very complex, but by the beginning of the tenth century Constantine II, later to appear several times in English history, had begun what was to be a very long and contentious reign.

The kings of Dublin were really sea kings, and the extraordinary efforts to establish conjoint rule in York and Dublin in the tenth century are only explicable in terms of maritime superiority in the Irish Sea area and the fjords of northern England and southern Scotland ... It has been argued that the main means of communication between York and Dublin was the sea route via the estuaries of Clyde and Forth, however indirect this may appear to the average land-based historian ... (This involves a sea journey through sheltered island waters with an overland portage of only twenty miles).  

In 917 two Viking kings, the brothers Sihtric and Ragnald, arrived in Ireland from Northumbria to avenge the expulsion of 902. Sihtric re-took Dublin, inflicting the greatest of all defeats on the Irish and putting the Norse at the zenith of their power in Ireland. This left Ragnald free to withdraw to Northumbria where, the same year, he took York, to be succeeded on his death in 920 by Sihtric, while a

third brother, Guthfrith, previously on campaign with Ragnald, took over Dublin. This Dublin control over York is one of the most remarkable features of the period. It was also one of the greatest threats to England yet there is little reference to it in the chronicles which, largely written in the south, appear to lack an understanding of the geopolitical situation. Edward the Elder, however, did understand it and so it is not surprising that when his sister, Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, died in 918, he took over Mercia as quickly as possible, sending his niece, Æthelflæd's daughter and heir to Mercia, away to Wessex. While this may appear, and almost certainly was, ruthless, it is easy to understand Edward's urgency in the face of such vigorous and active campaigners. Under these circumstances, it was just as vital for Edward to have good relations with Scotland with its easy access to York, as it was for Constantine and the rulers of Strathclyde and Cumbria to ally themselves with the strongest military ruler in the islands, hence the General Submission of 920, which Ragnald also signed, presumably as it recognized his rule over York. It is also quite probable that, during this long period of upheaval, the rulers of Bamburgh, feeling themselves isolated from the south of England, might have sought the support of the king of Scots against the Scandinavians on more than one occasion. This could explain why, in 927, Athelstan attacked Bamburgh and drove out Ealdred, ealdorman of Northumbria, reinstating him only after receiving his submission.

After Athelstan's accession in 924 he moved rapidly to gain control over events in the north. Having met Sihtric at Tamworth he assured him of his position as king of York, secured his conversion to Christianity and agreed to Sihtric's marriage with his sister. However, when Sihtric died the following year Athelstan took York, driving out Guthfrith together with Sihtric's son; he destroyed the Viking fortifications and swept on up to Bamburgh which, as we have seen, he forced into submission. These were startling and historic events, as it was the first time a king from the south had held court at York. It was probably made more acceptable — to the Danes at least — by the fact that Athelstan, like his father and grandfather before him, neither drove out nor expropriated Scandinavian settlers, but allowed them to keep their own laws and assemblies. (A charter from between 925-41, but probably c.935, entitles him: '... Adelstani regis Anglorum Denorumque gloriosissimi ...'). He sent embassies to all the northern rulers who had given support to the Vikings of York — to Constantine of the Scots, probably to Constantine's brother, Donald of Strathclyde, and to Owain of Cumbria — offering them either war, if such support continued, or peace and protection in return for 'boundary-homage' and the repression of paganism. After witnessing

his exhibition of power they were willing to come to terms, signing the agreement at Eamont/Dacre that same year.44

Perhaps the most intriguing possibility emerging from Athelstan's dealings with the north is one which appears in the Icelandic Egíls saga.45 This describes a meeting which Athelstan arranged with Erik Blood-axe, after the latter had been raiding in Scotland and the Western Isles. At this meeting, the king offered Erik the earldom of Northumbria in return for his fealty, his conversion to Christianity, and protection of the land against invasion from the Scots and the Norse from Ireland. The saga says that this was done by Athelstan out of remembered friendship for Erik's father and goes on to say that Erik apparently did indeed rule in York until Athelstan's death.46 This might seem improbable but, on reflection, there are features which make it faintly possible. Firstly, our knowledge of Northumbrian history in this period is very blurred and much could have happened without leaving any trace. Secondly, the fostering out of their sons by Scandinavian nobility was very common and the ties thus created could be as strong as those of blood. (There is a tombstone at Kirk Michael in the Isle of Man with a runic inscription which reads: 'it is better to leave a good foster-son than a bad son'.)47 If Harald had sent Haakon, might he also have sent Erik, his chosen heir, away from possible trouble at home? Finally, after Erik was expelled from Norway in about 937, he did harry Scotland and England. Then, having won the support of Earl Rognvald, his father's friend, in the Orkneys, he gained York and so, for a short time, the east/west Dublin/York axis was broken in favour of a north/south Orkney/York alliance. In English eyes, it could have appeared quite useful to accept Erik as an alternative ruler and, moreover, one which could reduce the Irish Norse threat.

The Eamont/Dacre accord gave relative peace to the northern borders until, in 934, Constantine broke his part of the treaty — possibly by refusing tribute. Athelstan invaded and according to Simeon of Durham 'ravaged Scotland with his land force as far as Dunfoeder and Wertermore, and with his navy as far as Caithness'.48 This is the expedition which might possibly have gone on to help Henry the Fowler against the Danes. No battle ensued but Athelstan clearly emerged as the great king, with his reputation much enhanced and it seems likely that Constantine offered his son

44 See note 3.
as a hostage for the future. Later however, in 937, an alliance was formed of all the northern kings plus Olaf Kvaaran from Dublin in order to combat, as they would no doubt have seen it, the threat from an over-mighty and all too successful king. They invaded Northumbria, trying to gain local support, but in the battle which followed, known for years after as the Great Battle, at Brunanburh, the invaders were totally crushed, with very heavy losses on both sides. Olaf escaped to Dublin ‘... the kings Anlaf and Constantine were forced to flee ... returning home with a few followers’ and the victory was seen both at home and abroad as a spectacular triumph. Notably, and perhaps fortunately for them, the one group missing from the Celtic alliance was the Welsh.

The absence of a Welsh contingent at Brunanburh is probably best explained by the policies pursued by Alfred, Edward the Elder and Athelstan himself. Wales itself did not come under serious attack from the Vikings until the mid-ninth century at which time they were strongly repulsed by Rhodri Mawr of Gwynedd, who had consolidated his rule over north and central Wales. On his death in another great battle against the Norse on Anglesey in 878, his lands were divided between his six sons, who then proceeded to terrorize the princes of south Wales who, one by one, appealed to Alfred for assistance, as may be read in Asser’s biography of the king. In fact, Alfred’s Welsh policy has been rather neglected by historians in favour of his wars with the Danes, but it is clear that he must have offered protection to the south Welsh, as they gave him support in return. Heavy attacks had been made on both the English west country and on south Wales all of which had been repelled, although small Scandinavian bases were founded around Swansea and the islands in the Bristol Channel. However, still anxious to obtain a west coast port, Scandinavians with their Northumbrian allies attacked Chester. The English adopted a scorched earth policy and drove the invaders back, again with Welsh assistance, this time from Anarawd of Gwynedd. Later, Alfred helped Anarawd against his brother, thus gaining his support, and the first recorded visit was made by a Welsh king to an English court.

In many ways Anarawd typifies the dilemma in which all Welsh rulers of this period found themselves; should they ally themselves with the Scandinavians (pagan) against the English (Christian), or vice versa, and Anarawd did both in turn. We know that Scandinavians had been active on the Welsh marches for some time from a charter of Burgred in 855 which reads ‘when the pagans were in the province of the Wrekin-dwellers’. Therefore, when Æthelræd of Mercia

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491 ‘... reges Anlafum et Constantium ad naves fugere compellentes ... cum paucis redeunt in suam', Arnold, Syrnemis, ii, 125, para. 107, s.a. 937; Stephenson, Simeon, 89.
50 Keynes and Lapidge, ‘Asser’s life of Alfred, ch. 80.
became aggressive towards him, Anarawd allied himself to the Danes of York. Such an alliance was attractive to the Danes as it offered a link to Dublin via Chester but it did not last and Anarawd returned to Alfred and the start of a homage to Wessex which lasted for many years, although relations with Mercia remained uneasy. After the Norse were expelled from Dublin, they first tried to settle on Anglesey but again were driven out, probably by Hywel or his brother, and went to Chester, where they became a thorn in the side of both Welsh and Mercian for many years.

It is clear, however, from his actions, that Athelstan was not content with homage from the Welsh; he wanted real subordination. After his successes in York and Northumbria, he immediately turned to Wales to receive the submission of Hywel, Owain and Idwal Foel. Hywel, now the most powerful of Welsh kings, was very active at the English court where he signed numerous charters as _subregulus_ and always as the first Welsh name, most notably at Hereford in 927. Here, Athelstan fixed the Anglo-Welsh border along the Wye and demanded an enormous tribute as well as the submission of Welsh rulers:

... so that he actually brought to pass what no king before him had even presumed to think of, which was, that they should pay annually, by way of tribute, twenty pounds of gold, three hundred of silver, twenty-five thousand oxen, besides as many hunting dogs as he might choose, which from their sagacious scent could discover the retreats and hiding-places of wild beasts, and birds trained to make prey of others in the air.52

Hywel was almost certainly present at Exeter, probably in 928, when the Welsh were expelled from the city. He attended Witenagemots twice in 931 and again, with his brothers, Idwal and Morgan, in 932. It is true that he led no expeditions against the English, but it is hard to believe that he liked them — they had killed his grandfather and enforced submission on his uncle, his brothers and himself in turn. It seems much more likely that, with Wessex too close for comfort, any smaller ruler had to be hard-headed and pragmatic and, after all, Hywel did survive as king for fifty years.

When, in 934, Constantine broke his oath and Athelstan attacked Scotland, Hywel, Idwal and Morgan were kept very close to the English court, as was Tewdwr of Brecon, and there were almost certainly Welsh levies in Athelstan’s army. This campaign would have been strong proof to client kings of English power and the Welsh were again with Athelstan at Christmas that year. Finally, the closeness to England could go a long way to explaining why Wales itself was

52 "... _ita quod nullus ante cum rex vel cogitare præsumpserat, ipse in effectum formavit, ut ei nomine vectigalis annuatim viginti libras auri, trecentas argentii, penderent, boves viginti quinque millia annumerarent, praeterea quotlibet canes qui odorisequa nare speleae et diverticula ferarum deprehenderent, volucres quae aliarum avium praedam per inane venari nosserent_," Hardy, _WmM, Gesta_, 214; Stephenson, _WmM, Kings_, 118.
free from either Danish or Norse attack for about forty years. It is therefore not really surprising that they kept out of the Norse/Celtic alliance in 937. After the battle, Welsh kings become notable again, this time for their absence and do not appear in charters, even under Edmund.

I hope then that I have been able to adduce sound reasons for my original thesis: that, through the reputation of his house for military success which he himself greatly enhanced, Athelstan was able not only to maintain the influence which his father and grandfather had won in Brittany and Flanders, but to increase and extend it throughout much of western Europe, as well as in these islands. By the marriages of two of his sisters, added to the refuges offered to both Alain Barbetorte and the future Louis IV, some stability was given to Francia in the second quarter of the tenth century. By the marriages of two more sisters, the new Ottonian house in Germany received both the accolade of dynastic respectability plus a greatly extended influence of its own over Burgundy which stretched as far as Italy, while in Norway Haakon introduced the first faint stirrings of conversion, as well as some English ideas.

At home a policy of vigorous, even aggressive, action secured wider bounds for England than ever before plus safety from invasion, with one notable exception which itself ended with the total defeat of his enemies. In view of this overwhelming victory and his widely spread influence abroad, it is small wonder that the Ulster writer should describe Athelstan as ‘the pillar of the dignity of the western world’ or that another, later, Celtic writer should say: ‘The Saxons, on the other hand, behaved more wisely. They kept peace and concord among themselves, they cultivated the fields, and they re-built the cities and castles. They threw off completely the dominion of the Britons and under their leader, Adelstan, who was the first among them to be crowned king, they ruled over the whole of Loegria’. 53

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<td>911</td>
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<td><em>Eadgifu m. Charles the Simple</em></td>
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<td>c.939/40</td>
<td><em>Ælfgifu, Athelstans' sister m. Konrad the Peaceable,</em> of Burgundy. At some time near to this <em>Eadgiva m. Louis of Aquitaine.</em></td>
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