

# THE ENCOMIUM EMMAE REGINAE: A RIDDLE AND A SOLUTION

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The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* is an anonymous prose work of the eleventh century whose original title—if it ever had one—is lost.<sup>1</sup> The title by which the work is usually known amongst English scholars, though not amongst German or Scandinavian, is not medieval. It was invented by the maker of the *editio princeps*, Duchesne, in 1619. The alternative title, *Cnutonis Regis Gesta*, was used by Pertz in his edition for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* and comes from a late medieval gloss on the eleventh century manuscript, BL Add. 33241, Dr Campbell's L. It has no authority. Students of the work subsequently, fall roughly into two categories. Those who think it is in fact a panegyric of Cnut and those who think it was an encomium of Queen Emma. Prominent amongst the first group is the late Sir Frank Stenton who wrote 'The so-called Encomium Emmae is in effect a panegyric of Cnut'.<sup>2</sup> Since the *Encomium* deals in detail with little more than a single year in Cnut's life and after his accession mentions only his marriage to Emma, the birth of Harthacnut, and his visit to St. Omer *en route* for Rome, this is hard to swallow. Duchesne's title has the justification that the author of the work more or less says this is what his theme was but it fails to give weight, and modern scholars have followed him here, to the exact sense of what the Encomiast wrote about his work. He longs, so he says, 'to transmit to posterity . . . a record of deeds, which, I declare, touch upon the honour of you and your connections'.<sup>3</sup> This prepares us for the fact that Emma does not

<sup>1</sup>By far the best edition is that by the late Professor Alistair Campbell for the Royal Historical Society, *Camden Series*, lxxii (1949), to which reference may be made with confidence for information about the manuscripts, the dating, and the authorship, and to a remarkable commentary on the literary and historical aspects of the work. All citations are made from this edition.

<sup>2</sup>*Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1947), p. 686.

<sup>3</sup>*Encom.* p. 5. My italics. I have followed Dr Campbell's felicitous translation

appear until more than half way through. The book seems to have been intended to fall into three sections from its inception, and Emma appears only towards the end of Book II, though she is the central figure in Book III, in the sense that the events of the years 1035–41 are seen through her eyes. When the Encomiast said his subject was Emma and her connections he meant exactly what he said. But this was not all he meant, and to grasp his full intention it is necessary to first look at his *argumentum* and then at how he put this into practice.

The Encomiast seems to have been aware of the puzzlement likely to be caused by the comparatively small role Emma plays. Professor Campbell<sup>1</sup> points out that the obvious precedents for such an encomium as this are the second *Vita Mathildis* and Odilo's *Epitaphium Adalheidae*. He next says they are 'eulogistic accounts of royal ladies which recall the *Encomium* in matter, tone, and style', and he places the *Encomium* firmly in this literary tradition. He observes, incidentally, that the Encomiast is second to none in his use of the appropriate literary conventions. But the Encomiast must also have been aware that the subject of his encomium plays a much smaller part in it than either of the other royal ladies who had panegyrics devoted to them. He therefore cites a very apt literary comparison to justify what he has done—a comparison with Vergil's *Aeneid* written for the glorification of Augustus—whether he had actually read Vergil or not. He went on to summarize the argument of the book in these words: 'Swein, king of the Danes . . . brought the English kingdom under his rule by force, and, dying, appointed his son Cnut to be his successor in the same kingdom. The latter, when he was opposed by the English . . . afterwards won many wars; and perhaps there would scarcely or never have been an end of the fighting if he had not at length secured . . . a matrimonial link with this most noble Queen. He had a son, Harthacnut, by this same Queen and, while still living gave him all that was under his control. He was absent from England at his father's death, for he had gone to secure the kingdom of the Danes. This absence gave an unjust invader a

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except in minor matters, such as the transliteration of names, unless explicitly stated in the text.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* p. xxxix.

chance to enter the bounds of his *imperium*, and this man having secured the kingdom, killed the King's brother under circumstances of the most disgraceful treachery. But divine vengeance followed, smote the impious one, and restored the kingdom to him to whom it belonged. . . . And so Harthacnut, having recovered the kingdom, and being in all things obedient to the counsels of his mother, held the kingdom imperially. . . . Yea . . . and furthermore . . . he shared . . . the honour and wealth of the kingdom between his brother and himself. Noticing these matters, O Reader, and having scanned the narrative . . . understand that this book is devoted entirely to the praise of Queen Emma.<sup>1</sup>

There are, as we should expect in such a work, digressions that fall outside the plan. It seems to me that there are, in fact, only two such digressions, both understandable enough. Once Cnut is a legitimate king, married to Emma, and the father of Harthacnut, I do not think the *Encomiast* had any more interest in him. But he does recount that he made a pilgrimage to Rome, passing through St. Omer where the *Encomiast* saw him. The only part of the pilgrimage that interests him is, in fact, the visit to St. Omer. Likewise he takes space to say something of Emma's behaviour—exemplary, of course,—she was generous to the poor and cost the rich nothing during her exile in Flanders, where, presumably, he met her and the idea of an encomium was born. Otherwise the *Encomiast* writes relentlessly about what he says he would write about, the succession to the English crown during the period of Emma's influence in English politics. The text of the *Encomium* reveals that the *Encomiast* was concerned with the legitimate succession to the crown. The argument shows that he regarded Harold I as illegitimate in a wider sense than mere bastardy, and the *narratio* that Swein was an illegitimate king of the English. So, too, was Cnut until the death of Edmund Ironside and his marriage to Emma, who is hereafter presented as the bearer of legitimacy in a prolonged succession crisis not resolved when the *Encomiast* wrote. The most cursory reading of the *Encomium* shows how selective its author was. His principles of selection are equally evident. He has virtually nothing to say of

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* p. 9.

Swein before he set out to acquire the English crown. Swein had been raiding England for twenty years, but only his last campaign interests the Encomiast. He goes into the events between the death of Swein and the undisputed acceptance of Cnut into some detail—and some of that detail is less than flattering to Cnut—and then virtually drops him, apart from the exceptions already noted. In the third book Harold I, Harthacnut, Edward the Confessor and his younger brother Ælfred appear, as does Queen Emma, but again it is only their part in the problem of the English succession that interests the Encomiast. It must be understood from the start that the praise of Emma and her connections is strictly limited panegyric: this is a very political tract and a tract aimed at an immediate political situation. I do not think that this point has been sufficiently grasped and it does make a very considerable difference to how we read the *Encomium*.

For instance, the most commented upon features of the work that every commentator has chided its author for, are the suppression of Emma's first marriage to Æthelred—who is never mentioned by name but referred to, respectfully, as *princeps*<sup>1</sup>—and his alleged insinuation that Edward (the later Confessor) and Ælfred were the sons of Cnut as well as Emma. The Encomiast might well have made an impatient rejoinder to these criticisms. Dr Campbell drew attention to the important literary resemblances between the *Encomium* and the later *Vita Mathildis* and *Epitaphium Adalheidæ*. While a study of these resemblances is

<sup>1</sup>Sten Körner, *The Battle of Hastings* (*Bibliotheca Historica Lundensis*, xiv (Lund, 1964)), p. 61, says of one of these references (*Encom.* p. 22, *principem, qui interius civitati presidebat*): 'When the Encomiast tells of Cnut's siege of London, he tries to give the impression that it was a local chieftain who died there instead of the English king.' This is simply wrong. The Encomiast says that the London *cives* were prepared to accept Cnut but some of the *exercitus* left *cum filio defuncti principis*, who is named as Edmund (*Encom.* p. 22, 24). He is described as in command of the English army at Ashingdon (*ibid.* p. 26), is spoken of as *princeps* of the English (*ibid.* p. 28) and, on the same page, as *rex noster* by Eadric Streona. Cnut is called *Danorum principem* and *rex* in the same passage (*ibid.* p. 24). No-one could really doubt that the word *princeps* applied to the English leader meant king and was mainly used by the Encomiast to enable him to distinguish between Cnut, usually called king, and the English leader, usually called *princeps*, without naming them. The whole section is one in which Æthelred and Edmund need to be indicated in passages where Cnut too is prominent.

essential to the literary study of the *Enconium*, it is the differences that matter for its historical study. When their panegyrics were written, Queen Mathilda and the Empress were both dead; and the works are much nearer the conventions of hagiography than is the *Encomium*, which is a great deal less fulsome. The *Vita* and the *Epitaphium* were apparently aimed at preserving the memory of their subjects for a posterity that knew them not in the flesh: in spite of which the *Vita*, at least, was not written for posterity at all but had a marked and ingenious *Tendenz*<sup>1</sup> of strictly contemporary relevance. The *Encomiast* does not disguise the fact that his object is political: his *Tendenz* is open and on the surface and the political situation to which it had relevance was in a state of ongoing crisis when he wrote. It will be apparent after a close reading of the *Encomium* that the 'posterity' it was addressed to was near and at hand.

The sort of difficulty that arises if we assume this is a simple work of hagiography addressed to a more or less remote posterity is well illustrated by Dr Campbell, whom I cite not for the sake of disagreement but because he shows how judgements on the *Encomium* are closely tied to the assumptions the reader brings to bear in the first instance. He writes: 'We are made to feel Emma's vanity: she did not desire posterity to know that she was in any way connected with the English house which had failed to stem the Danish onset, although the suppression of this fact makes her claim to have been the cause of an Anglo-Danish reconciliation little less than absurd.'<sup>2</sup> But the alleged absurdity is created by the conventional reading. If Emma did not suppress the fact of her first marriage, then her claim is decidedly less than absurd—especially as her *encomiast* never claims she effected an Anglo-Danish reconciliation. She certainly did not seek to

<sup>1</sup>Odilo's *Epitaphium* for the Empress Adelheid is largely confined to her good works, but the second life of Queen Mathilda was commissioned by her great-grandson, Henry II. Henry was also the great-grandson of Henry I and only the second cousin of his predecessor, Otto III. Mathilda's great virtue in his eyes was her claim that Henry I should have been succeeded, not by his eldest son Otto, but by the elder son born to the purple, i.e. Henry II's grandfather. See Wattenbach-Holzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*, ed. F.-J. Schmale (Cologne, 1967), i, 40.

<sup>2</sup>*Encom.* p. xxiii and p. xlvi.

suppress her relationship to Edward the Confessor, indeed she might be thought positively to flaunt it. Is it suggested that Edward, who seems to me, as he does to Dr Körner, to be one of the principal personages at whom the *Encomium* was aimed,<sup>1</sup> though not quite in the way he suggests, did not know who his father was? Or that an audience for whom Edward was their joint king did not know his forebears or his exact relationship to Emma and Æthelred? Once we can accept that the Encomiast was writing a tract for the times the difficulties disappear.

This is not a piece of *outré* hagiography but was meant to be a very present help in time of trouble. The Encomiast himself refers to 'those whom ill-will towards this lady has rendered spiteful and odious'<sup>2</sup> and I shall suggest below that one of these was her eldest son. It is obvious from Book III that Emma was very sensitive about her part in the death of Ælfred and it is in this section that the most obvious *supressio veri* and simple lying are to be found. In a way both Dr Campbell and Dr Körner have seen this. Indeed, Dr Körner was the first to demonstrate that it is a political tract for contemporaries, though I think he simply has not seen the implications of his discovery. Dr Campbell writes: '... if he decides to tell an untruth, he [the Encomiast] generally contrives to do it by implication only',<sup>3</sup> and he draws particular attention to a passage describing Cnut's marriage-negotiations with Emma that sums up the business in a sentence. *Placuit ergo regi verbum virginis et . . . virgini placuit voluntas regis*. He says: '... these words achieve the effect that the Encomiast wishes. They contain no syllable of untruth, yet what reader, *ignorant of the facts* [my italics] could fail to forget that *virgo* need mean no more than woman; and that the Encomiast has already said that Emma was a famous queen when Cnut wooed her.'<sup>4</sup> Dr Körner makes a similar point except that he assumes that *virgo* here means virgin in the sense that a rose is a rose is a rose.<sup>5</sup> One wants to say to Dr Campbell but what if the intended audience were not ignorant of the facts? And both to him and to Dr Körner that they have failed to see the force of the reference to Emma as a famous

<sup>1</sup>*Battle of Hastings*, pp. 64 ff.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* p. lxix.

<sup>5</sup>*Op. cit.* p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>*Encom.* p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* p. xlvi.

queen. This is a *locus classicus* of the truth of Wittgenstein's *obiter dictum* about words: never ask the meaning, ask the use. In the eleventh century no-one was familiar with the notion of a virgin-queen. Queens were married: there was no other way to become one. What Dr Campbell has really shown is that the *Encomiast* has taken care to make clear that Emma was a widow before he uses *virgo* in a slightly *recherché* sense that might, however, be calculated to appeal to her eldest son. It seems to me that it is only a twentieth-century reader, not an eleventh-century one, who would take this passage in the sense in which Dr Campbell and Dr Körner have done. If *The Times* refers to the Duke of Edinburgh it almost never says he is the Queen's husband. But it would be silly to argue that *The Times* is suppressing something. It simply assumes that everyone knows. I think the *Encomium* is in the same case: its audience certainly knew who Emma's first husband was.

The second of the *Encomium's* famous fibs—his insinuation that Edward and Ælfred were Cnut's children bears even less close a scrutiny. When Cnut went a-wooing the *Encomiast* says right out that Emma knew that Cnut had sons by another woman and she made it a condition of the marriage that any son she and Cnut had should be his heir. In view of Cnut's arrangements for his succession there is no reason to doubt this. Then the *Encomiast* says that Emma bore a son, who is clearly stated to be the child of Cnut. Then he says 'The two parents, happy in the most profound and, I might say, unparalleled love for this child, sent, in fact, their other legitimate sons to Normandy to be brought up, while keeping this one with themselves, insomuch as he was to be heir to the Kingdom'.<sup>1</sup> In view of what he has just said about the marriage-contract and its provision about the succession, it is difficult to see how Edward and Ælfred could have been taken to be Cnut's children unless they were younger than Harthacnut. But the *Encomiast* having mentioned their despatch to Normandy, immediately goes on to describe Harthacnut's baptism. It seems to me that he is saying that once Harthacnut was born, in accordance with the contract, Edward and Ælfred are excluded from the succession. Whatever else Dr Körner has done, he has shown that

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 35.

the *Encomium* is concerned to insist that Harthacnut had a better right to the English crown than Edward. But, again, as his audience knew perfectly well who the father of Edward and Ælfred was, there was no need to say more than he has said. Of course, it is extremely unlikely—though not absolutely excluded—that Emma's first family were ever at Cnut's court. William of Poitiers says they were refugees from the cruelty of Cnut<sup>1</sup> but it is only with the advent of the Conqueror's father, Robert the Magnificent, that relations between Cnut's court and the Norman *curia* turned sour. Dr Campbell is surely right in saying that Cnut married Emma for the sake of a Norman alliance: he would scarcely have dared to ill-treat Emma's children if that were the case. But they would certainly have been unwelcome in England and we may think they knew this and resented it.

I do not wish to argue that the *Encomium* is a mine of undefiled truth. There is rigid partiality, suppression of fact, and downright lying. But what is wrong here is much less wilful and fantastical than is commonly supposed. It is necessary to look at the *Encomiast* carefully. By any standards he is an uncommonly well-informed author, but he is writing a political pamphlet for the occasion. If we bear this in mind, it is much easier to see what may be trusted and what may not.

Outside the kings and the contestants for kingship only two persons are given any prominence in the *Encomium*: Emma herself, which is natural, and Thorkell the Tall, which is not. Again, what is said about Thorkell relates almost entirely to his part in the English royal succession. Thorkell appears right at the beginning because the *Encomiast* thought he was the reason for Swein's final invasion of England. We are told Thorkell went to England with Swein's licence to avenge his brother; having prospered there (characteristically, we are not told whether he avenged his brother or not) he has become an ally of the English, taking with him forty ships and their complement of prime Danish warriors. Swein is urged by unnamed advisers, who are plainly telling him what he wants to hear,<sup>2</sup> to defeat Thorkell and

<sup>1</sup>*Histoire de Guillaume le Conquérant*, ed. R. Foreville (Paris, 1952), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>And so, having summoned Cnut, his elder son, he began to enquire what were his views concerning this matter. He, questioned by his father, fearing to

his English allies. Thorkell is not mentioned again until after Swein's death, when it is claimed that he played a major part in both Cnut's problems and Cnut's succession. The *Encomiast* distinguishes clearly between the campaign that Cnut undertook against the restored Æthelred II, of which he thought the main battle was fought at Sherston and gives the entire credit for the victory to Thorkell, and which was followed by another Danish victory, the work this time of Eric, who had ruled Norway in the Danish interest and was later to be earl of Northumbria,<sup>1</sup> and the campaign against Edmund Ironside after Æthelred's death. It is made clear that Cnut kept, or was kept, in the background in the first, vital, campaign and that Thorkell and Eric were the actual Danish leaders. The *Encomiast* shows no Danish bias and does more justice than the various recensions of the *Chronicle* to the English 'war-effort': nor does he seek to conceal the Danes' heavy casualties. He shows what seem likely to have been shrewd appraisals of the actual balance of strategic advantage. He thought that it was sheer desperation—the Danes being cut off from their ships were faced with total destruction if they lost—

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be accused, if he opposed the proposal, of wily sloth, not only approved of attacking the country but urged and exhorted that no delay should hold back the undertaking' (*Encom.* p. 11). Dr Campbell, followed by the *Handbook of British Chronology*, thinks that Cnut was the younger, not the elder, son of Swein (*Encom.* p. lvi). This is because later saga material says so. The only other near-contemporary source, Thietmar of Mersburg, does not give an opinion but he does name Harold before Cnut in one passage. I cannot believe the *Encomiast* to be mistaken here. There is nothing in the text to suggest any motive for lying, and, since Queen Emma must be one of his sources, she and the *Encomiast* could not have been misinformed here. The sagas may well have made Harold the elder son because he was king of Denmark. Dr Campbell takes the same line: 'It would, on the whole, appear more likely that Sveinn entrusted his established kingdom to his elder son, and took the younger one with him to England' (loc. cit.). But for twenty years the Danish warrior-economy had floated on English loot and tribute. If Athelred and Thorkell had succeeded in expelling the Danes from England, the repercussions on Denmark, with an army of unemployed, professional, warriors needing provision, must have been catastrophic. On the more positive side, the English kingdom was much richer than the Danish. While the later sagas or the contemporary Bishop of Merseburg, who was interested in, but ignorant of, England, might infer that the son who got Denmark was the elder, the *Encomiast* expected his audience to think the opposite. But I do not doubt he got his information from Emma.

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 22.

that turned the scale at Sherston. The *Abingdon Chronicle* presents Ashingdon as a crushing defeat, which it was, and offers no explanation as to why, after it, Cnut should have agreed to divide the kingdom with Edmund. The *Encomium* does explain Cnut's reasons. Ignorance of English topography prevented the Danes from cutting off the retreat of substantial numbers of English warriors. When Edmund offered peace terms, Cnut accepted because the Danes had suffered heavy casualties too, and, unlike the English, the Danish casualties could not easily be replaced.<sup>1</sup>

Cnut appears as a commander for the first time when he forbids Eric to continue a looting expedition and turns the army to London, *civitatem metropolim*, where Æthelred and a large part of the English army had retired.<sup>2</sup> At this point Æthelred and his son Edmund asserted his claim to the throne against Cnut's. In the campaigns that followed, the *Encomium* seems to imply that Cnut was in command; at any rate neither Thorkell nor Eric is given credit for winning the battle of Ashingdon,<sup>3</sup> and though Thorkell's presence there is mentioned, he seems to be a subordinate. On the other hand the *Encomiast* clearly thought the treason of the Earl of Mercia, Eadric Streona, was a decisive factor in the Danish victory. He does not differ greatly from the *Abingdon Chronicle* here, except that what the *Chronicle* treats as cowardice he treats as deliberate betrayal. The qualities attributed to Cnut are those of caution in contrast to the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 22. Dr Campbell takes this passage to mean that Eric was in command of the siege operations. Eric, desiring to emulate Thorkell's success in the battle of Sherston, had gone on a successful looting expedition: *Quo reverso rex . . . iussit civitatem Londoniam . . . obsidione teneri*. The *Encomiast* does not say that the command was given to Eric, though the passage makes perfect sense if one takes it as Dr Campbell took it. Since it seems likely that Cnut was at the siege in person, I prefer to think that Eric became a subordinate commander at this point. Likewise at Ashingdon it seems that Cnut was in command. Thorkell was certainly present and is described as *auctor primi prelii* (ibid. p. 24), implying that he was not the *auctor* of this one, and the *Encomiast* at the end of his account of Ashingdon says that the English casualties *adduntque decus honori Cnutonis et victoriae*, (ibid. p. 26), which seems definite enough.

<sup>3</sup>Loc. cit. I have used the name Ashingdon for the site of the battle to avoid confusion, but Dr C. R. Hart (*History Studies*, i (1968), pp. 1-12) has made out a good case for Ashdon at the other end of the same county of Essex.

unavailing but splendid courage of Edmund. It has been made clear<sup>1</sup> that Thorkell was at some point rewarded with *magnam partem patriae*, but his later tenure of the Earldom of East Anglia and his period as Cnut's vicegerent in England are not mentioned. After Ashington Thorkell disappears from the story. Eric returns again to execute Eadric Streona personally:<sup>2</sup> it is implied, but not directly stated, that he received a splendid appointment. But before we can assess the significance of the curious pre-eminence of the Danish Earls in the *Encomium* and their even more curious dismissal, we need to examine the problems of the Encomiast's veracity in all this.

According to the Encomiast, Thorkell first went to England to avenge his brother.<sup>3</sup> This is unlikely to be true. According to the *Abingdon Chronicle*, in 1009 an immense Danish army led by Thorkell arrived at Sandwich. Florence of Worcester<sup>4</sup> adds the information that soon afterwards another great Danish fleet arrived commanded by Hemming and Ecglaf. As Florence calls Hemming and Ecglaf *duces* and Thorkell *comes* he presumably thought them senior in status. The saga material says that Thorkell's brother was called Hemming;<sup>5</sup> Ecglaf was a senior Danish magnate and Earl Godwine's brother-in-law. If the sagas may be believed, the main Danish army in England was at this time divided into two parts. Ecglaf commanded the southern section with his base on the Thames at London, and Hemming commanded the northern section. Napier and Stevenson suggested with some plausibility that his headquarters was at Hemmingborough, on the Ouse near York. Hemming is not found in the English sources after 1009. The sagas claim that Hemming was the brother Thorkell avenged. The story goes that the English rose after Swein's death against the Danes: while Ecglaf escaped their wrath, Hemming fell victim and Thorkell later avenged him. If the sagas are right, this would place Thorkell's feud in or just after 1014, and obviously the feud could not explain Thorkell's expedition as the *Encomium* claims.

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>4</sup>*Florentii Wigorniensis Chronicon ex Chronicis*, ed. B. Thorpe (London, 1848), pp. 160–1.

<sup>5</sup>*The Crawford Charters*, ed. A. S. Napier and W. H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1895), p. 139.

Napier and Stevenson pointed out that there is nothing impossible or even improbable in the saga account of Thorkell's feud. There certainly was a reaction against the Danes in England after Swein's death<sup>1</sup> and Hemming must have died about this time, since he does not appear in the sources again and he was a man of some importance. In which case the Encomiast has heard a quarter of a century later a garbled story of Thorkell's feud that makes it a cause of his English expedition when it was a consequence. But where he does get it right is that Thorkell did defect and did play an important part in supporting Æthelred II in his last years. The defection may well have been due to a certain unease, superstitious or religious according to taste, at the killing of Archbishop Ælfheah, as the respectable, and nearly contemporary, source, Thietmar of Mersburg, reports.<sup>2</sup> Clearly Thorkell's defection, from whatever motivation, did call for action on Swein's part if he were not to lose a substantial section of his army as well as his profitable ascendancy in England. The *Encomium* again seems likely to be right in linking Swein's determination to recover the allegiance of his troops with or

<sup>1</sup>*The Chronicle*, C, D, E, s.a. 1014. In general for our period the *Abingdon Chronicle*, Plummer's C text, seems the nearest to the basic source for much of the information and I have usually cited it, but the D and E texts occasionally have additional information independent of that which they have in common with C. Substantial extracts from C are printed in *Two Saxon Chronicles*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1892). The complete text for the reign of Æthelred II and Edmund Ironside is in *English and Norse documents relating to the reign of Ethelred the Unready*, ed. M. Ashdown (Cambridge, 1930). The complete manuscript was edited by H. A. Rositzke, *Beiträge zur englische Philologie*, xxiv (Bochum-Langendreer, 1940). Translations may be found in Ashdown, in the late Professor Garmonsway's crib to Plummer in the Everyman edition, and in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas, and S. I. Tucker (London, 1961). It is becoming increasingly the habit to refer to this useful, annotated, translation, as an 'edition'. It is no such thing, not being in the original language. What is translated is more selectively chosen than might appear at first sight. I have referred to the *Chronicle* throughout by the number of the year of grace to facilitate reference to convenient editions.

<sup>2</sup>*Thietmari Merseburgensis episcopi Chronicon*, ed. R. Holtzmann, *MGH, SS. rer. Ger.*, n.s., 9 and *Ausgewählte Quellen*, ix, p. 400, with translation by W. Trillmich. Thietmar has a good deal of information about contemporary English affairs derived from an English correspondent. It is true that some of it is confused, but Thietmar is by far the most contemporary source. He was dead by 1018 and his *Chronicle* survives in the original Codex; he is not to be neglected.

without Thorkell to a second objective, the winning of the English crown. At any rate, the *Abingdon Chronicle*<sup>1</sup> treats his progress from the moment he landed as that of a victorious claimant to the throne. The *Encomiast* is, however, alone in giving an account of Thorkell's activities between the death of Swein and his emergence as earl of East Anglia in 1017. It is this part of his story that Dr Campbell treats with severe strictures and this is serious in that these passages are amongst the most important in the *Encomium* viewed as historical source material; if they can be believed. Dr Campbell thinks they are virtual fantasy. But it seems to me that his criticisms cannot hold.

Thorkell re-appears after Swein's death, when he is described by implication as Cnut's man, though scarcely Cnut's trusted man.<sup>2</sup> He stayed behind in England whilst Cnut went back to Denmark to raise more troops. The *Encomium* reports that he stayed 'not because he despised his lord',<sup>3</sup> but to look after Cnut's interest pending his return. Of this Dr Campbell wrote: 'It is scarcely necessary to point out the suspicious nature of the allusions to Thorkell which occur in the *Encomiast's* account of Knútr's visit to Denmark. In II, i the *Encomiast* has been at pains to suggest that Thorkell acted in agreement with Knútr in remaining in England, yet when Knútr arrives in Denmark, he expresses anxiety concerning the probable behaviour of Thorkell in the event of a Danish invasion of England. Then the *Encomiast* suddenly makes Thorkell rush to Denmark to placate Knútr, and only succeeded in doing so with difficulty. The glaring inconsistency between the suggestion of II, i, that Thorkell was working in agreement with Knútr, and the two passages in question, is the greatest artistic failure in the *Encomium*, but it at least makes obvious that the *Encomiast* was not honest in his account of Thorkell.'<sup>4</sup> It is important that it is natural to speak of 'artistic unity' in connection with the *Encomium*; here I am sure Dr Campbell is right. Moreover, if there really is a glaring inconsistency, it would be a lapse in a generally highly organized and carefully contrived pamphlet. But Dr Campbell is reading the *Encomium* here with pre-conceived notions derived from the

<sup>1</sup> s.a. 1013.

<sup>2</sup> *Encom.* p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. lvii.

Encomiast's alleged dishonesty in his treatment of Emma's first family.

The Encomiast does *not* say that Thorkell acted in agreement with Cnut in remaining in England. He reports this explanation of Thorkell's conduct and says this is *ut quidam aiunt*; what some, not himself, say. He then adds a personal comment *cujus rei patet veritas ex eo*, which Mr Campbell, by rendering *rei* as 'this', makes read like an endorsement: 'And the truth of this is apparent from the fact that. . .'.<sup>1</sup> If we render the phrase 'And the truth of the matter is clear from this . . .' the truth is left much more in the air. 'This' being the fact that a substantial portion of the Danish fleet and troops remained behind in England. As the Encomiast puts it: 'the King did not let more than sixty ships depart in company with himself.' This is surely ironic, since he goes on to put a much harsher comment into the mouth of Cnut himself when he tells his brother: 'Thorkell, our compatriot, deserting us as he did our father, has settled in the country, keeping with him a large part of our ships, and I believe he will be against us. . .'.<sup>2</sup> This surely makes plain that the truth of the matter was that the bulk of the Danish forces remained behind in England not because Cnut wanted them to but because he had no option. Just to make the position absolutely clear, the Encomiast in his own voice says quite unambiguously: 'Thorkell, remembering what he had done to Swein, and that he had also inadvisedly remained in the country without the leave of Cnut, his lord. . .'.<sup>3</sup> The Encomiast plainly did not believe Thorkell's excuse and to judge by Cnut's actions—he never trusted Thorkell wholly and eventually exiled him from England—neither did he. It must be remembered that the Encomiast was writing in the reign of Harthacnut, who had been closely associated with Thorkell in his youth and was perhaps brought up by him as a kind of hostage.<sup>4</sup> Thorkell, banished from England, had finished

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> In 1021 Cnut outlawed Thorkell (C, 1021). In 1023, according to the *Abingdon Chronicle*, Thorkell and Cnut were reconciled and exchanged hostages, namely their sons. Although the C text at first sight says this took place after Cnut's return to England (in this year Cnut came back to England and Thorkel and he were reconciled), it does not mean the events to be taken in sequence since it makes it clear that the reconciliation took place in Denmark ('and the King

up as ruler of Denmark and presumably had his admirers, as well as those who hated him—Thorkell was not the sort of man one could feel neutral about—at Harthacnut's court, perhaps including the King himself. A certain reserve was called for in the *Encomiast's* treatment of Thorkell, but, if what he said is read carefully, it is obvious that his treatment is critical, though he gives credit where credit is due.

As for the historicity of the *Encomiast's* story, I can see nothing against it. We know that Thorkell remained faithful to Æthelred until his exile. Late in 1013 Æthelred was with the fleet<sup>1</sup> and presumably Thorkell, then he went to the Isle of Wight for Christmas and thence to Normandy. It would seem probable that Thorkell remained faithful to Æthelred for the rest of his life, since the King paid his army £21,000 after Swein's death. Freeman made the sensible point that Æthelred's death left Thorkell free to choose a new allegiance.<sup>2</sup> If we accept Napier and Stevenson's reconstruction of Thorkell's feud with the killers of his brother, then it is likely enough that it was the death of his brother that made him change his allegiance back to the Danes. It is true that saga traditions are difficult sources to trust for precisely dated events such as this, but there was an anti-Danish reaction, as the *Abingdon Chronicle* makes clear: the *Chronicle* is hostile to

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took Thorkell's son with him to England'). Plummer thought Cnut's son was to be identified with Harold Harefoot, but Dr Campbell rightly argues for Harthacnut (*Encom.* p. 75, n. 10); Harthacnut never, as was customary for an *aetheling*, signs his father's charters. Further, Thorkell may have been succeeded as Harthacnut's guardian by Ulf Thorgilsson (*Encom.* p. 83). The *Encomiast* (*ibid.* p. 35) says that Cnut sent Harthacnut to Denmark with troops to secure the rule of the kingdom of Denmark when the boy was grown up. Dr Campbell (*ibid.* p. lxi) thinks it refers to Harthacnut's departure for Denmark pursuant to his agreement with Thorkell, i.e. in 1023. The boy can hardly have been more than five, so the *Encomiast's* 'grown-up' seems rather forced, but Harthacnut had certainly been sub-king of the Danes for some years before his father's death. Stenton seems to date his 'accession' to 1028, when he would have been barely ten (*ASE*, p. 398), so the *Encomiast* cannot have meant what we would mean by grown-up. Harthacnut's promotion was the consequence of the defeat of an alliance made by Ulf, (Stenton, *loc. cit.*), who, according to the sagas, was formerly Harthacnut's guardian. It looks very much as though Harthacnut spent most of his life in Denmark and was a virtual stranger to the English magnates in 1040, including presumably his mother.

<sup>1</sup>C, s.a. 1013.

<sup>2</sup>*Norman Conquest*, i, 356.

Thorkell and his Danes even when they were in Æthelred's service.<sup>1</sup> Thus, whether duty drove Thorkell back to the Danes or not, interest certainly suggested such a course. For dramatic effect the Encomiast would have done better to present Thorkell as arriving suddenly in Denmark and returning to the Danish side there and then, but, in fact, he makes clear that Thorkell had already returned to Cnut's lordship and that it was his delayed return from England against his lord's command that had angered Cnut.

Thorkell, then, comes to terms with his lord and presumably returns to England with Cnut's fleet since he was in effect the commander of most of the Danish forces for the major operations that won Cnut his kingdom. Dr Campbell is sceptical about Thorkell's visit to Denmark and thinks it uncertain that Thorkell even fought on Cnut's side 1015–16.<sup>2</sup> This is surely hypercritical. The *Encomium* is our only source for Thorkell's activities in these years and that it is right in saying that Thorkell had patched up his quarrel with Cnut and played a large part in his victory is suggested by the extraordinary position Thorkell was given after Cnut entered into secure possession of England. Cnut plainly did not trust Thorkell and outlawed him again in 1021: how could he conceivably have made Thorkell Earl of East Anglia and left him as his vicegerent unless Thorkell had proved himself indispensable in the campaigns of 1015–16?

The Encomiast is not wholly accurate in his account of the months of fighting that led up to Cnut's final victory. He had no version of the *Chronicle* amongst his sources and his knowledge of English topography seems to have been derived entirely from the pages of Asser.<sup>3</sup> Dr Campbell is again severe on the Encomiast, claiming that he constructed for himself an entirely artificial chronology.<sup>4</sup> It seems odd to me to talk of a chronology of any

<sup>1</sup>C, s.a. 1013, and Napier and Stevenson, op. cit. pp. 140–1.

<sup>2</sup>*Encom.* p. lviii. Thietmar (p. 396) confirms the Encomiast here.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* pp. xxxv ff.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* p. lxi, and he seems to me to force a greater precision on the Encomiast than could be expected. Thorkell arrived *chez* Cnut in Denmark 'when the summer sun was drawing near'. Dr Campbell takes this to mean early Spring 1015, and, as Thorkell was with Cnut more than a month before they left for England, which Dr Campbell takes to mean virtually no more than thirty days,

kind in a source that does not give a single date. He was dependent on the reminiscences of survivors a quarter of a century later. He makes one serious mistake of sequence when he places the battle of Sherston before the death of Æthelred II. Æthelred died on 23 April 1016 and the battle took place 'after Midsummer' according to the *Chronicle*, so he is about eight weeks out. I think that the Encomiast knew that Sherston was followed by a siege of London—as it was—and he has confused this with the earlier siege during which Æthelred, referred to only as *princeps*, died.<sup>1</sup>

In the last stages of the campaign, neither Thorkell nor Eric appears more than fleetingly. Once Cnut has won acceptance from the English, Thorkell is never mentioned and Eric makes one last, undeniably dramatic, appearance. The Encomiast, like the English sources, presents Eadric Streona as a treacherous villain responsible for much of the misfortune of the English. When Cnut is finally victorious, he orders Eric 'to pay him what we owe him,'<sup>2</sup> and Eric duly cuts off Eadric's head. It seems quite plausible that Eric did kill Eadric personally. From what we know of him he was perfectly capable of it, and this is the sort of gruesome fact that people remember where the sequence of more important events becomes confused with the passage of time. In fact, though the Encomiast does not mention it, Eadric's death was part of a

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he claims the Encomiast thought that Cnut arrived about midsummer, when, in fact, he arrived early September. Even if the Encomiast had any precise or approximate dates in mind, I do not think it possible to infer what they were from such vague indications. Dr Campbell supposes that the Encomiast's mistaken belief that the battle of Sherston took place in the reign of Æthelred stems from his artificial chronology, because he thinks that Thorkell rushed off to battle the moment he landed. I think the Encomiast was given a rough sequence of events, not always a correct one, and worked with this. He had no text of the *Chronicle* and no knowledge of English topography. His one effort at dating—the battle of Ashingdon—is disastrous. This battle took place in mid-October 1016. But the Encomiast places it in the Spring. I think Dr Campbell has got the explanation here. The Encomiast knew that Edmund drove the Danes from London to take refuge in Sheppey. Dr Campbell rightly suggests he took a hint from his Latin historians and sent Cnut into winter quarters. As he knew that Ashingdon followed the retreat to Sheppey fairly quickly, having sent them into winter quarters they have to come out again in the Spring. Of real chronology he neither knew nor cared.

<sup>1</sup> *Encom.* p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.

modest bloodbath. The *Abingdon Chronicle* reports the killing of three ealdormen and three kings' thegns as well as Edmund Ironside's brother,<sup>1</sup> but offers no explanation of their execution.

In 1015, when Cnut arrived back from Denmark, he was joined by Eadric Streona and, according to the *Abingdon Chronicle*, the West Saxons submitted to Cnut. In Spring 1016, after Æthelred II's death, the same source says that all the *witan* who were in London and the *burhwaru* (which I take to be the garrison of the *burh*, not 'the citizens'<sup>2</sup>) chose Edmund as king. Soon afterwards Edmund went and took possession of Wessex. The *Encomium* differs somewhat here. The *cives* of London, here

<sup>1</sup>C, s.a. 1017 preferring the *Abingdon Chronicle* on the fate of the aetheling Eadwig to Florence of Worcester.

<sup>2</sup>Both Professor Garmonsway and Professor Whitelock in their cribs render *burh* as borough and *burwaru* as citizens, thus creating a constitutional problem as to who these citizens were who had the right and power to choose a successor to an English king. The word *burh* means a fortification and the *Burghal hidage* includes both what were urban settlements that might later be called boroughs, such as Worcester, and others, such as Lyng (see D. Hill, *Proc. of Somerset Arch. and Nat. History Soc.*, iii (1967), 64–6), in which a wall of 412½ ft enclosed a promontory projecting into the Somerset marshes; Southampton, where the *burh* was not a wall around the town but a restored Roman fortress outside it; and cf. Dover Castle, called both *castel* and *burh* in different recensions of the *Chronicle*. *Burhwaru* are literally the defenders of the fortresses and should properly be translated as 'garrison', unless proof can be offered that particular texts have a wider meaning. In 1016, according to the *Abingdon Chronicle*, Edmund Ironside began to gather the *fyrd* but when the *fyrd* was gathered together nothing would satisfy them 'þæt se cyng ðær mid waere and hi hafdon þære burhware fultum of Lundene'. It seems to me very odd to translate this as 'that the King should be with them and they should have the support of the citizens [or townspeople] of London'. It was surely the garrison of London they wanted, who must have been *élite* troops to judge by their comparative success against the Danes. After Æthelred's death the *burhwaru* were besieged by the Danes for a time (C, s.a. 1016), who dragged their ships on to the west side of the bridge—surely London Bridge must be meant—and then surrounded the *burh* with what Dr Whitelock calls a ditch and Miss Ashdown a moat, so that no-one could get in or out. If, like the two scholars I have mentioned, one takes *burh* as borough or town, then one has to suppose the Danes undertook an immense feat of military engineering. This was begun and completed shortly after Æthelred's death in late April but before Edmund relieved London shortly after midsummer of the same year. So this ditch or moat round the town of London was built and abandoned in a space of two months. It is surely obvious that the *burh* is a much smaller fortification and cannot have been very far from the site of the Norman Tower. I hope to take up the important problems of the *burh* in a forthcoming paper.

certainly the townspeople, having buried Æthelred, offered to yield the city to Cnut but *pars exercitus* led by Edmund left the city to raise an English army against Cnut (surely the *exercitus* here are the *burhwaru*?). Florence of Worcester, who is the fullest English source for Cnut's activities, seems to confirm the *Encomium* and expand it. The chief men of England chose Cnut and, coming to him at Southampton, renounced their allegiance to the house of Cerdic. But sometime before midsummer Edmund accepted the submission of the West Saxons.<sup>1</sup> Thus, some West Saxon magnates had submitted to Cnut twice and repudiated him twice by 1017, and presumably the two West Saxon magnates Cnut had killed were ringleaders in all this turning of coats. The *Encomium* has here something more to tell us than the *Chronicle*.

Cnut was now secure in possession of England and without a rival for the Crown. The last adult son of Æthelred was killed by Cnut in 1017; Æthelred's children by Emma were too young to count in this juncture; as were Edmund Ironside's, who had been in any case spirited off to Hungary. The longest surviving son, Edward the Ætheling, later married a niece of Henry III, suggesting, since Edward can have had little to offer except pedigree, that the Salians were not too fond of Cnut.

This is the point at which, Thorkell having left the stage, Emma is about to make her entry, and it is convenient to sum up the enigma of what the *Encomiast* was at as it stands at this point. It will be apparent that he is highly selective. He has quite a lot to say about the last year of Swein's life and practically nothing else. He devoted the longest section of the book to Cnut's career from 1014–17, but, after making Cnut king, marrying him off to Emma, and providing him with a son and heir, he says virtually nothing more about him beyond his trip to Rome.<sup>2</sup> Even in his account of

<sup>1</sup>C, s.a. 1016.

<sup>2</sup>The problems of the date of Cnut's visit to Rome is a vexed one. It seems to me that the sources leave no alternative to accepting Dr Campbell's solution: that Cnut visited Rome twice, in 1027 and 1031 (*Encom.* p. lxii). The *Chronicles*, *D*, and *E*, put Cnut's visit s.a. 1031, as does Florence of Worcester, who has a much fuller account of the visit than the vernacular annals. He knew of a letter Cnut despatched by Lyfing, abbot of Tavistock, who, Florence remarks, became Bishop of Crediton in the same year. Although Cnut's letter must have been written in the vernacular, Florence gives a Latin version the authenticity

of which is not in doubt. Cnut says he has been in Rome for Easter, that a number of princes, notably the Emperor Conrad and King Rudolf of Burgundy, were also present, from whom Cnut obtained privileges of free travel for English pilgrims through their domains. Cnut writes to his English subjects en route for Denmark and it is clear he also came to Rome from Denmark: *Ego, itaque, quod vobis notum fieri volo, eadem via qua exivi regrediens, Denemarciam eo, pacem et firmum pactum, omnium Danorum consilio . . .* (p. 188). It is certain that Lyfing became Bishop of Crediton in 1027—he later became Bishop of Worcester and it is presumably through him that Cnut's letter was known there. The letter, however, was undated and Florence has taken his date (1031) from his set of vernacular annals. There is no doubt that Cnut was in Rome for Easter 1027, since he is recorded as attending Conrad's imperial coronation by Continental sources, notably the *Vita Cuonradi* (see Plummer, *Two Chronicles*, ii, 206). Cnut's letter must obviously be dated 1027. But how do we explain the annals' allocation of Cnut's Roman journey to 1031? It is possible that we have here only a single source used by all the annals that record Cnut's visit under this year. Dr Whitelock, in her translation of the *Chronicle*, p. 101, n. 5, says: 'The simplest explanation of this misdating of Cnut's journey is that the Chronicler knew it followed a great battle in Scandinavia, and placed it after Stiklestad, 1030, instead of Holy River, 1026.' It seems to me a very large assumption that a chronicler, not as a rule much interested in Scandinavian affairs, should date an event of this kind by reference to a Scandinavian battle, especially when Holy River was an Anglo-Danish disaster and Stiklestad a considerable, if short-lived, victory. No recension of the *Chronicle* at this period is in the habit of misdating isolated events, though consistent misdating by one or two years for blocks of entries is common. Adam of Bremen (ed. B. Schmeidler, *MGH, SS in usus sch.*, p. 125 (II, lxxv)) certainly places Cnut's visit in the time of Archbishop Libentius, 1029–32; but he associates the journey with Cnut and Conrad's plans for a marriage alliance which must be dated to the end of Cnut's reign, and, as he says Cnut and Conrad went to Rome together, it cannot be ruled out that he is recalling the visit of 1027. He does not, however, mention the coronation and he is quite unequivocal in assigning the visit to the time of Archbishop Libentius. The saga material also suggests that Cnut visited Rome late in his life (*Encom.* p. lxii, n. 6). The *Encomium* is also most naturally, but not certainly, taken to mean the same thing. Professor Barlow (*EHR*, lxxiii (1958), 649) has pointed to a passage in Goscelinus of St. Bertin's *Translation of St. Mildred* that says Cnut went to Rome at the very end of his life. Dr Barlow also gives reasons why this cannot be clinching evidence. But there seems to me to be really too much smoke about a second journey for there not to be a fire somewhere. It also seems significant that the *Encomiast* tells us that Cnut passed through St. Omer on his way to Rome. St. Omer was on the route to Rome from England at this time, as both Dr Campbell and Dr Barlow have pointed out, but in 1027, since Cnut travelled to Rome from Denmark and back, it would be extraordinary if he passed anywhere near St. Omer. As he was going to the Emperor's coronation I cannot see that it is likely, and he does say specifically of Conrad and Rudolf *per quorum terras nobis transitus est ad Romam*.

the campaign Cnut is kept in the background, and certainly if his military reputation depended on the *Encomium* it could not stand high. The Encomiast is not only selective but occasionally inaccurate. Nonetheless, he is no Roger of Wendover retailing inaccurate and scandalous gossip. Most scholars who have studied the *Encomium* have felt that whatever it was, it was a deliberately contrived piece of work by an author who knew what he was doing. It has what Dr Campbell rightly called artistic unity. Dr Körner has shown that it has also a *Tendenz*, though I do not think he has quite isolated what that *Tendenz* was. Whatever it was, it centred on the person of Queen Emma, to whom we must now turn.

To understand the Encomiast's presentation of Queen Emma we need to look at the end of the *Encomium*, the last section, in which Emma plays a central role. She—and I think the Encomiast—were uncomfortable about her part in the death of Ælfred. She was not going to admit any shortcomings in her maternal behaviour. The Encomiast's account of Emma's part in politics after 1035 is certainly partial, conceals much, and contains plain lies. But very few people at Harthacnut's court were in a position to call the kettle black and, whatever some of the *Encomium's* readers might have thought, they were in no position to say it out loud. This brings us to Emma's first entry. She makes an agreement with Cnut that any son born to them shall be his heir and that they send their other legitimate children to Normandy. I have already suggested that the Encomiast has no intention of persuading Edward the Confessor amongst others that he was the son of Cnut. The point here is that Edward and Ælfred, though not the sons of Cnut, are legitimate. Dr Körner is right to point out that the contrast between a *rex justus* and a *rex injustus* is an important part of the Encomiast's purpose.<sup>1</sup> He is not, however, concerned with an abstract, generalized, and theoretical, account of the matter. He treats the succession of the kings of his period in the light of his notion of legitimacy. The two kings Emma had no connection with, Swein and Harold, are not legitimate, the ones she did have connections with, Æthelred, Cnut, Harthacnut, and Edward, are legitimate. Edmund Ironside is, of course, the fly

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit. p. 51.

in the ointment. He was legitimate enough but does not fit into the scheme except that in some sort Cnut is presented as his legitimate heir and all reference to his children is suppressed: a *suppressio veri* sufficiently successful to have eluded the attention of scholars very much on the look out for such tendentious omissions.

After Edmund's death Cnut was chosen as king by the entire country, which thus 'voluntarily submitted itself and all that was in it to the man whom previously it had resisted with every effort'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the situation was still precarious for Cnut, so he married Emma. The object of this marriage was an act of reconciliation. But the Encomiast never says, as several of his modern students have said, that the marriage reconciled English and Dane. What he says is quite different: 'This was what the army had long desired on both sides, that is to say so great a lady, bound by matrimonial link to so great a man . . . should lay the disturbance of war to rest' (Dr Campbell's translation is mostly very felicitous).<sup>2</sup> The Encomiast does not say why the English army should desire this marriage, or the Danish either. I think he expected his readers to be perfectly familiar with the reasons. We have to work them out.

Emma represented some kind of continuity with the older line, a line the Encomiast is clear was a legitimate one: in the absence of any adult males, she was all there was. But Dr Campbell is surely right in thinking that her main attraction was reconciliation with Normandy.<sup>3</sup> So long as England was exposed to Viking attacks, it was essential that the English government should be on good terms with the Count of Flanders and the Duke of Normandy. Anglo-Norman relations and the denial of the Norman ports to the Vikings were obviously important throughout Æthelred II's reign.<sup>4</sup> Further, Cnut, in his famous proclamation to the English from Denmark early in his reign, did not present himself as conqueror but as one who would secure the right, traditional, order if the English would co-operate. He offers a sort of social contract: if the English would obey him he would see that

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>*Encom.* p. xlv.

<sup>4</sup>Stenton, *ASE*, 370 and E. John, *TRHS*, V.

they were not troubled by invasions from overseas.<sup>1</sup> If he was to deliver what he promised them, good relations with Normandy were essential. This he secured by the same means Æthelred II used, marriage to the same lady, and he kept the alliance until the accession of Robert the Magnificent destroyed it. Though Duke Robert quarrelled with Cnut, it was because of his support for Edward the Confessor, not from any desire to make an alternative alliance with Cnut's Scandinavian enemies. The Norman alliance was a major factor in English politics until 1087 and the effective passing of the Viking threat after nearly three hundred years. The fact that Cnut as well as Æthelred cherished it, ought to warn us to give it more prominence than we have hitherto been inclined to do. It is also well to bear in mind that this alliance mattered to West-Saxon and Danish kings of England alike but it mattered not a jot to the Dukes of Normandy except in so far as the Count of Flanders was drawn into the picture. In the circumstances it is easy to see why Cnut's marriage to Emma might have the approval of both armies.

To get the full flavour of the very special situation in which Emma lived out her second marriage, it must be remembered that Cnut had become king as the result of a massive and ghastly campaign culminating in the bloody battle of Ashingdon where, the *Abingdon Chronicle* says, all the nobility of England were destroyed and names the local bishop, Dorchester, the abbot of the local great house, Ramsey, along with three ealdormen and one king's thegn. More ealdormen and more kings' thegns perished in Cnut's purge of 1017. At the same time new names appear, Leofric of Mercia, Godwine of Wessex, and Siward of Northumbria and these were the establishment of the Encomiast's own day. It was Leofric and Siward who insisted on Harold Harefoot; Godwine who betrayed Ælfred and had just undergone trial for this before the Encomiast wrote; and Godwine who made,

<sup>1</sup>*The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I*, ed. A. J. Robertson (Cambridge, 1925), p. 140: 'When I was informed that we were threatened with danger greater than we could tolerate I went myself, with those who accompanied me, to Denmark, which was the chief source of danger to you, and, with God's support I have taken measures to prevent war [lit. unpeace] from coming to you from there ever again whilst you support me as you should and my life lasts.'

for his family, the costly mistake of backing Edward the Confessor. In 1017 the promotion of the two Englishmen, Godwine and Leofric, to such pre-eminence so soon in the new reign can only be explained as rewards for services rendered. Pace Freeman, Godwine and Leofric were English quislings (after all, the Saxon line in East Francia, the original *Liudolfinger*, had likewise risen as Carolingian quislings in Charlemagne's Saxon wars). The Danish members of the new establishment had likewise proved their worth the hard and brutal way. In 1017 none was greater or more prominent than Thorkell the Tall.

Thorkell is the only non-royal person who plays any great part in the *Encomium* and his part is as large as any. He had the kind of charisma for the English that struck fear and hatred in most of them. From 1008 until Cnut's accession, Thorkell was in the thick of the fighting. The *Abingdon Chronicle* under 1008 speaks of 'the immense raiding army we call Thorkell's army'. A very substantial number of English magnates lost their lives because of him. The Church was not spared and, even if Thorkell personally was not responsible, his men murdered St. Ælfheah, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1012. Even when Thorkell changed sides, the *Chronicle* does not suggest the English loved him any more. No doubt this had to do with the origins of the heregeld as a regular land-tax to pay for him, as well as to the fact that his change of side did not stop him ravaging the English. Then Thorkell earned his passage back to Cnut's favour if not his affections, if the *Encomium* is right, by bearing the brunt of the particularly bloody encounters of 1015–16. Now Thorkell's world was that of Swein, who had no lawful right to rule the English,<sup>1</sup> and that of Cnut, who likewise had no claim to the obedience of the English until he had reduced them to grumbling impotence. A single name, Thorkell, could summon up for the survivors, the

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 15: 'Feeling, therefore, that the dissolution of his body was threatening him, he summoned his son Cnut . . . and . . . committed the royal sceptre to him. . . . The Danes over whom he had the lawful right to rule very strongly approved this matter,' but Cnut was unable to 'retain the sceptre of the kingdom. . . . The English, mindful that his father had unjustly invaded their country, collected all the forces of the kingdom in order to expel him.' From these two passages it would seem that the Encomiast is using 'sceptrum' in a symbolic sense.

new men or whoever, in that personalized, face-to-face society, all that the *Encomiast* meant by illegitimate. Emma, by her marriage to Cnut, ushered in a new era of peace and stability: she is the very reverse of Thorkell.

Once Cnut was married and legitimized, the *Encomiast* has little more interest in Cnut. He quickly kills him off and in his third book Emma takes the centre of the stage. Apart from a few details of her stay in the *Encomiast's* own home country, where he presumably met her, received his commission, and heard her story, again all of Emma's activities that interest him relate to the English succession. Her troubles open with certain Englishmen who are inclined to ignore Cnut's disposition of the succession—Harthacnut the legitimate heir was away in Denmark and may well have been a complete stranger to the English magnates—and favour Harold Harefoot. The *Encomiast* says Harold was a suppositious son of Cnut by a certain concubine, really he was the son of a servant. The *Encomiast* is not alone in offering some version of this preposterous story. The *Abingdon Chronicle* flatly denies that he was Cnut's son<sup>1</sup> and the Godwinist *E* text has an only slightly softer version of the same denial. There is no reason to doubt that Harold was Cnut's full son and acknowledged by him. The non-English sources do not mention Harold's alleged false paternity and we may suspect that the *Encomiast* himself did not believe the story, since, in his account of Cnut's marriage negotiations, he admits that Cnut had sons by another woman.<sup>2</sup> The fact that the allegations about Harold appear also in the *Chronicle* suggests that this was the official story after 1040, and the fact that they appear in the *Encomium* suggests Queen Emma was the source of the official story. Whether anyone believed her or not, that was her story and she was sticking to it, and no-one evidently cared to contradict her.

Whatever Harold's paternity, Emma was implacably opposed to him. The first step Harold took, according to the *Encomiast*, and this is likely enough, was to seek consecration from the Archbishop of Canterbury, who brushed him off. It seems that at first Harthacnut was regarded as king with Harold as regent ruling in his name, though not with his consent. We have the

<sup>1</sup>C, s.a. 1035.

<sup>2</sup>*Encom.* p. 32.

evidence of Hermann's *De miraculis sancti Edmundi* for the information that Harold ruled England for a year before he became full king.<sup>1</sup> Florence of Worcester also says he began to reign 'as if legitimate king', but that he was hamstrung because the more legitimate king was expected.<sup>2</sup> It seems certain that Mercia and Northumbria were for Harold, that is, Earls Leofric and Siward, while Godwine of Wessex started as an ally of Emma and supporter of Harthacnut. The Encomiast gives no explanation of all this beyond saying that Harthacnut's return from Denmark was delayed.<sup>3</sup>

There must, however, be reasons for the division between the Earls and the very odd choice the northern Earls made of Harold. It should be noticed that this is the first appearance of what is to be a recurrent theme in English politics until 1066, Leofric and Siward against Godwine, and, after the deaths of the old Earls in the 1050s, of the house of Leofric and the house of Siward against the house of Godwine. Since we know from Domesday Book<sup>4</sup> that Godwine was richer, perhaps much richer, than Leofric or Siward, it is possible that, with Cnut gone, natural rivalries came to the surface. Why else should Leofric and Siward favour Harold? What conceivably could he offer? Had he lived, the English would have been back in 1016 with an attack from the North. Since his advance was at the expense of a Norman princess, he could expect no help from that quarter. Since it seems clear that Robert the Magnificent supported Edward the Confessor and mounted an expedition in his favour before Cnut's death,<sup>5</sup> it might have been expected that Earl Godwine,

<sup>1</sup>*Mem. of Bury St. Edmunds*, ed. T. Arnold (Rolls Series), pp. 47 ff.

<sup>2</sup>*quasi justus haeres coepit regnare; nec tamen ita potenter ut Canutus quia justior haeres expectabatur Hardecanutus* (ed. B. Thorpe, p. 190).

<sup>3</sup>*Encom.* p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London, 1970), p. 74.

<sup>5</sup>The story of the expedition comes from William of Jumièges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, ed. J. Marx (Paris, 1914), pp. 109–11, but needs to be taken in conjunction with a neglected charter allegedly granted to the abbey of Mont St. Michel by Edward the Confessor (Marie Faroux, *Recueil des Actes des ducs de Normandie* (Caen, 1961), no. 76) and witnessed by Duke Robert the Magnificent. If genuine, the charter must be dated 1033–4. As Mme Faroux points out, had it been intended as a royal charter from the period when Edward exercised *de facto* royal authority, it would have had English witnesses. Citing

who was most exposed to any Norman attack, might prefer to look to one of the princes at the Norman court as an alternative to Harold. We should expect him to be in alliance with Emma, as indeed he seems to have been at first. But Duke Robert died not long before Cnut, and by 1036 it was obvious that Normandy under a child-Duke would be unable to play any part in English politics for a decade at least. So the pressure on Godwine relaxed. But even so, Harold was a foolish choice: had he survived long, his supporters might have had to pay dearly for him. Emma may well have opposed him so absolutely out of vanity, but she was nevertheless right in that situation. If the world of Thorkell was not to return, a legitimate heir, who could only be one of her sons, able to bring Danish or Norman goodwill or preferably both, was what was required.

The central part of the *Encomiast's* account of this period is what seems to be to a modern reader, at least at first sight, an irrelevant sob story, the betrayal and death of the *aetheling* Ælfred. The Godwinist *E* text of the *Chronicle* maintains a significant

Dom Laporte, she suggests that it was given during the period of the expedition mentioned by William of Jumièges. The main subjects of the grant are 'Vennesire' and the 'port' called Ruminella. Vennesire is obviously a considerable grant containing *oppidis* and *villis*, and, it is suggested, is either Devonshire or Wevelshire. Ruminella is probably Trevelga in Cornwall. A grant of a whole shire, even by a prince in exile who only hoped to be in a position to make the grant good, is inconceivable in these terms. Vennesire was obviously a considerable grant, but not one amounting to a whole shire. It cannot be identified with any of the SW properties held by the Abbey in Domesday Book. Trevelga, on the contrary, was held by the Abbey in 1087 but not T.R.E. It is possible that the charter was fabricated to persuade William to grant these English properties to the Abbey, successfully in the case of Trevelga, unsuccessfully in the case of Vennesire, which cannot even be identified in Domesday Book. If this were the case, surely a fabricated charter would purport to be granted by a King Edward seated on his throne and enjoying the privileges of an English king, rather than an exiled, self-styled king, adopting a title for what proved a fiasco of brief duration? Edward apparently continued to use the title *rex* after 1034. He witnesses another Mont St. Michel charter (no. 111) after William became Duke as *rex*, and a Fécamp charter (no. 85) which survives in a contemporary copy. No. 85 is a late charter of Robert the Magnificent. Edward does not witness charters before the reign of Duke Robert and in nos. 69 and 70, which are probably earlier than no. 76, Edward does not use the royal title. Thus, when examining what Bk. iii of the *Encomium* has to say about what happened after Cnut's death, we need to realize that Edward probably had already assumed the title of king of England.

silence, but the more independent *Abingdon Chronicle* has a succinct account of the affair. Under the year 1036 it says that Ælfred came to England to visit his mother at Winchester but Godwine would not allow this because 'the popular cry was greatly in favour of Harold'. The Chronicler deplored this. Godwine, it is alleged: 'stopped him and put him in captivity, and he dispersed his companions and killed some in various ways; some were sold for money, some were cruelly killed, some were put in fetters, some were mutilated, some were scalped'. Ælfred himself, having first been blinded, was sent to Ely where he ended his evidently short life amongst the monks of Ely and was buried there by them.

The *Encomium* is mainly concerned with Emma's part in all this, though its account of the vicissitudes of Ælfred and his companions does not greatly differ from that of the *Abingdon Chronicle*, except that it is much more cautious about the part played by Godwine. Professor Barlow thinks the Encomiast exculpates Godwine:<sup>1</sup> he seems to be following Dr Körner here.<sup>2</sup> The Encomiast presents Godwine's part in the Ælfred incident in close association with Emma's. Ælfred came after a false letter of summons from his mother. The text of the letter is quoted: it was addressed to both Ælfred and Edward and, as Edward must have been one of the intended audience, this suggests the text of the letter was probably authentic. The Encomiast claims that Emma never sent it. It was a ruse by Harold to bring the princes to England so that they might be disposed of. Dr Campbell is surely right to say this cannot be taken seriously.<sup>3</sup> For one thing, it invites only one of the princes to chance his arm and, in any case, it is impossible to believe that Harold had the slightest interest in bringing either of them to England at this juncture. It

<sup>1</sup>Barlow, *op. cit.* p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Dr Körner does not discuss Godwine's part in Ælfred's murder and seems to think his part, as described by the Encomiast, has no significance. Dr Barlow accepts Dr Körner's point that the *Encomium* was written for Harthacnut against Edward the Confessor, so the death of Ælfred becomes an atrocity story to discredit Harold Harefoot without much relevance to the main purpose of the *Encomium*. Dr Barlow places some emphasis on Godwine's championship of Edward's claim to the throne in 1042 (*op. cit.* pp. 55 ff). Godwine is not amongst those who had incurred Edward's displeasure (p. 57).

<sup>3</sup>*Encom.* p. lxvii.

would seem, then, that the letter represents an authentic text actually sent by Emma. The *Abingdon Chronicle* says he was on his way to see his mother, and the *Encomium*, which makes it clear that Ælfred was aiming at the crown, is to be preferred. Why should Ælfred, who had not set foot in England so far as we know for a quarter of a century, pay a visit to his mother at such a time unless his object was political? But once Ælfred arrived, Godwine takes the centre of the stage.

The *Encomium* certainly never ventures the slightest direct criticism of Godwine, but the implications of its account are deadly. It needs to be remembered that Godwine had been arraigned by Harthacnut for his part in Ælfred's betrayal.<sup>1</sup> He escaped a judgement because the great magnates of England, who, whatever they thought of Godwine, were even more deeply implicated in Harold's *coup d'état* and could hardly afford to let him go down, acted as compurgators. In the event, Godwine made a magnificent present to Harthacnut that sounds remarkably like a wergeld. This had happened before Edward returned to England, so it must have been very fresh in the Encomiast's memory. Again, the Encomiast was a Flemish cleric and until 1066 the Count of Flanders was deeply involved in English politics on the predominantly anti-Norman side.<sup>2</sup> The Flemish Count was a

<sup>1</sup>*Flor. Wig.* i. 194, to the importance of which Stenton drew attention (*ASE*, p. 416). Florence says that Lyfing, Bishop of Crediton since 1027, who had been given the see of Worcester to hold in plurality by Harold I, was deprived of Worcester because of his share in Ælfred's betrayal. Dr Barlow (*op. cit.* p. 56) says that Godwine and Lyfing were punished 'for coming to terms with Harold' but Florence says it was *pro nece sui fratris Ælfredi*.

<sup>2</sup>It is usual to say that the count of Flanders made an alliance with Duke William by allowing him to become affianced to his daughter Matilda in 1049, but the marriage did not take place for another three years—about 1052 is Dr Barlow's estimate (*op. cit.* p. 31). I prefer to take it that Baldwin regarded his daughter's marriage as an insurance policy. I do not see how we can avoid the view that Duke William and the Godwine family were irreconcilable enemies and that William's prospects of the English succession could be achieved only by the ruin of the Godwines, as the events of 1051 show clearly enough. But Baldwin gave the utmost assistance to the Godwine family; without him Godwine must have been ruined in 1051 and Duke William's accession secured. I think Baldwin was sensible enough to see that after 1051 William was always a possibility as the next king of England and, should this come to pass, the whole balance of power in the territories bordering on the English Channel would change. I think he realized that if Duke William became King William,

faithful ally of the Godwines and Earl Godwine could not have survived the crisis of 1051 without his aid. We should not expect the Encomiast to be strident then. Florence of Worcester says that Godwine answered Harthacnut's charges by the classical excuse that he was only obeying orders. Harthacnut was his lord and he had only been obeying his commands. Bearing this in mind, we may turn to what the *Encomium* says.

Godwine met Ælfred somewhere near London and diverted him to Guildford. It is clear that Ælfred accepted Godwine as an ally and Emma would not have invited him without Godwine's support. When they met, Godwine took Ælfred into his protection *eiusque fit mox miles cum sacramenti affirmatione*.<sup>1</sup> Under the prevailing Germanist orthodoxy of *Anglo-Saxon England*, Dr Campbell rendered this meaningless by his translation 'and forthwith became his soldier by averment under oath'.<sup>2</sup> The Encomiast was not an Englishman but a Fleming from a part of the world, where, according to Professor Ganshof,<sup>3</sup> phraseology like this

Flanders would have no choice but to seek a permanent alliance with the new 'empire'. I also think, as his championship of the Godwines shows, he would have preferred to maintain the old *status quo*. At the very end of Edward's life, when it must have been apparent to everyone that the days of decision had arrived, Baldwin gave shelter and forces to Tostig. Tostig's wife was, of course, a near-kinswoman of Baldwin, though not as near as Duchess Matilda. He could easily have prevented Tostig from taking any political part in 1066 had he so chosen.

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>*Feudalism* (London, 1952), pp. 63 ff. In his introduction to this undeniably useful book, the late Professor Stenton wrote: 'It is a tribute to Professor Ganshof's skill as a writer that the reader is never conscious of a break in continuity as the survey passes from the obscurities of the Dark Ages, where the origins of feudalism lie, to the highly developed organization of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries . . .' (op. cit. p. vii). In other words, the Investiture Contest; the consequent decline of the East Frankish kingdom into the Germany of the princes, and the rise of Capetian West Francia from a poor relation of the East Frankish court to a major European power; the destruction of the Anglo-Norman and then the Angevin Empire; the Crusades; the economic revolution of the later part of the period, marked by the kind of agricultural activity the Cistercians made famous and the rapid progress of urbanization, make insufficient effect on this enquiry to amount to a break in the continuity Professor Ganshof's literary skill has created. This seems to me no tribute to his historical skill. In effect, he has reduced five centuries of European history to a synchronic survey that ranges over a large part of Europe and confines change to the level

was fast developing from a general classical sense to a 'feudal' term of art. What the *Encomiast* meant was that Godwine became Godwine's knight by an oath of fealty, i.e. his man. Here, as elsewhere, one element in the ceremony of creating the bond of lord and vassal, in this case fealty, stood for the rest. Godwine did Ælfred homage. And, just in case the implication might be missed, the *Encomiast* throws in an apparently casual remark that, having seen to the billeting of Ælfred's companions, Godwine withdrew to his lodgings *ut domino suo serviret cum debita honorificentia*. This is a good example of the *Encomiast's* technique. An apparently trivial remark at once nails the weakness in Godwine's defence. Ælfred, not Harold, was Godwine's lord. All this was written at a time when Godwine had survived the charges against him and was the foremost magnate in the political society in which Emma, Harthacnut, and Edward, had to live. The main function assigned to Godwine in the *Encomiast's* account is again apparently trivial. He diverted him from London (the significance of this we have no means of knowing now) and, for the rest, he arranged the billeting of Ælfred's men. This he did in separate lodgings and in small groups. Thus, when Harold's men appeared unexpectedly, Ælfred's companions had no chance of re-grouping. Given the necessity for some discretion, the *Encomiast* could not have indicated more plainly Godwine's part in the suppression of Ælfred's attempt to gain power. It is true that he never accuses Godwine directly, but then he never excuses him either; given that Godwine had been accused by the King of the betrayal of Ælfred only weeks before the *Encomiast* was writing, not to excuse under these circumstances was in fact to accuse.

We must here look at Dr Körner's claim that the *Encomium* was written against somebody and that somebody was Edward the Confessor. I am sure Dr Körner is right in thinking the *Encomium* had a *Tendenz* and that *Tendenz* has to do with the politics of Harthacnut's reign. To follow him further, however, would be to accept that Edward was stronger than Harthacnut, that, as a

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of semantics. It is as if the author of a book on drink treated Corton Clos du Roi, Exshaw Broderies, Vin du Maroc, and Baby Cham all under the heading of alcohol.

native-born prince of the old royal house, he had a more powerful party.<sup>1</sup> Dr Barlow, in his *Edward the Confessor*, is prepared to follow him here and as a result is led to deny that Edward had any lasting resentment against Godwine. Edward's savaging of the house of Godwine in 1051 is then adjudged a mere caprice. What seems to me significant is that the *Vita Edwardi*, which is really an *Encomium Edithae*,<sup>2</sup> although it presents Edward's court from a

<sup>1</sup>Op. cit. pp. 64 ff.

<sup>2</sup>The relationship between the *Encomium Emmae* and the *Vita Edwardi* has yet to be satisfactorily explained. Professor Barlow in his edition of the latter (London, 1962), points out (p. xxiii) that the *Vita* is close to the *Encomium* in *inventio* and in *dispositio*. There seems little doubt that both works are the product of the same literary school of St. Omer, which also produced two more literary figures who wrote on English subjects, Goscelinus and Folcard, unless Dr Barlow is right in thinking that one of them is the author of the *Vita* (op. cit. pp. xli ff.). The *Encomium* and *Vita* have the conventional rhymed prose of their time and milieu in common. It might even be possible to wonder if they have the same author if it were not that (a) there are no particular stylistic traits common to both but not to others writing in the same ambience (b) the author of the *Vita* has a taste for turning dreadful Latin verses quite foreign to the *Encomiast*. I might add, for what it is worth, my own impression that the *Encomiast* is a shrewder, more independent, commentator on English affairs than the author of the *Vita*. There can surely be no doubt, that, whoever the latter was, he must have had access to a manuscript of the *Encomium* at St. Bertin, and probably at the English court also,—which does not, of itself, prove he read it. As Dr Barlow points out (p. xxiii), the author of the *Vita* and the *Encomiast* 'pursue almost identical aims'. He thinks, I am sure rightly, that the author of the *Vita* did not set out to write a life of Edward but an *encomium* of Queen Edith and her connections. He has explained to the satisfaction of most of us the difficulties raised by the second book of the work when it suddenly becomes straightforward hagiography devoted to St. Edward generations before his canonization, by supposing that the catastrophe of 1066 forced a drastic change of plan. Queen Edith had now lost her husband, family, and status for ever; by way of consolation her panegyrist offers her the consolation of a husband with as high a status in heaven as he had ever held on earth. What strikes me about this is that the *Vita* and the *Encomium* are the only known examples of this particular genre; that is, both are political accounts from the point of view of their subjects, who are living queens, neither of whom is treated in a hagiographical style (both are given fulsome compliments but that is not the same thing). Dr Barlow mentions Helgaud's *Life* of Robert the Pious as near to the *Vita* in *elocutio* but its subject matter is very different. Again, the *Vita* seems to make the disasters of 1066 turn on the falling-out of Harold and Tostig and the *Encomium*, too, harps on the importance of fraternal amity—Cnut and Harold, Edward and Harthacnut. I do not think that this is a real political judgement: Tostig's expulsion from Northumbria was certainly a blow but the two great expeditions of 1066 were only slightly affected by

very pro-Godwinist point of view, does seem to me to have a clear implication that the King did not share that point of view. It is true Edward married Godwine's daughter, but, although he was in some sort co-king in 1041, and after 1042 the succession was a matter of urgency, he did not marry her until 1045.<sup>1</sup> The first thing he did when he managed to send Godwine into exile—in fact it is clear he meant to kill him if he could have got hold of him<sup>2</sup>—was to send Edith off to a nunnery,<sup>3</sup> and the *Vita Edwardi* is quite unambiguous in stating that when the crisis came Edward brought the death of his brother up again as a *casus belli*. I cannot believe that Edward entertained the slightest tender feelings for Godwine. On the other hand Godwine certainly showed no special fondness for the old royal house before Harthacnut and the absence of any alternative saddled him with King Edward. Edward was not without ambition and it looks very much as though he had attempted an invasion before Cnut's death, and if

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Tostig's defection. What the author of the *Vita* needed was an explanation that would chime in with his general theme of the beneficent omniscience of the Godwines: I think he found the solution in the *Encomium's* horror of fraternal quarrels.

<sup>1</sup>*E*, s.a. 1045.

<sup>2</sup>*D*, s.a. 1051; *Vita Edwardi*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>*D*, s.a. 1051; *Vita*, p. 23. The *Chronicle* says the nunnery was Wherwell, whose abbess was Edward's sister and therefore likely to have made Wherwell a much harsher retreat than Wilton, a community with which Edith was always on excellent terms, and to which the *Vita* despatched her. It is hard to see either source being misinformed here; whichever made the mistake, made it deliberately. The whole passage in the *Vita* is intended to soften Edward's rage at the Godwine family. The hounding-out of Godwine is attributed to the madness of Robert of Jumièges, as is the dismissal of Godwin's daughter. Edward is said to have mitigated the dismissal—Dr Barlow (*Vita*, p. 23) renders first *dissociaretur a rege* as 'separated from the King' (it seems stronger than that) and then *causam divortii* as 'reason for separation' (which again is too weak)—and to have ensured Edith a princely retinue. The *Vita* is flatly contradicted by Florence of Worcester (i, 207), who says she was sent with only a single attendant to Wherwell. It seems to me that some of Florence's information for this period came at first- or second-hand from Ealdred of Worcester and York, who ought to have known the truth. There is no motive which I can see for the annals to substitute Wherwell for Wilton. Though the original author or authors probably knew it was more an insulting and disagreeable retreat for the Queen, he, or they, make nothing of this in the text. I take it that Wilton is wrong and the *Vita* is toning down the King's hatred of the Godwines with considerable disregard for the truth.

William of Poitiers can be believed—he seems to me very much less tendentious than the *E* text of the *Chronicle*, for instance—he had made some kind of raid in the confusion that followed Cnut's death. The *Encomium* confirms that it was his younger brother, not he, who answered his mother's appeal, and after Ælfred's death he advised her to turn to Harthacnut 'because the English had sworn no oaths to him',<sup>1</sup> which hardly suggests that Edward himself had any belief in a strong Edwardian party. I do not think, then, that Dr Körner is right to argue that the *Encomium* is a disguised polemic against Edward, disguised through fear.

But Dr Körner is right to point to a certain reserve in the Encomiast's treatment of Edward. He very skilfully makes Edward acknowledge Harthacnut's superior claim out of his own mouth and places great emphasis on the fact that Edward came into his heritage entirely at Harthacnut's magnanimous behest. We need to remember, however, that Emma is the centre of the Encomiast's interest and that she is presented as the bearer of legitimacy. Harthacnut and Edward are legitimate kings where Harold was not, precisely because they are the sons of Emma, or, at least, so the Encomiast thinks. The last book is centred entirely on Emma. She is exculpated from any blame for the death of Ælfred, she summons both the legitimate heirs to her, she is associated with Harthacnut's peaceful acceptance of the crown and, although she is not specifically associated with Harthacnut's invitation to Edward, I think we are meant to take this for granted. The book finishes with a flourish on the virtues of legitimacy when the mother and both sons hold the kingdom without disagreement.

The trouble is that this is in some sort a true story, not Cinderella. and everything was not set for a permanently happy ending. The power in the kingdom lay with Cnut's magnates, no longer wholly controllable by the King. It was unlikely that an English king could again control all of Scandinavia as Cnut had done. But there were claims and claimants and endless possibilities of yet more raids, more gelds, more Thorkells. There were already signs of tension between the northern Earls and the rich Earl Godwine.

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 49.

It was going to be very difficult to prevent Godwine from becoming a kind of mayor of the palace, and neither Harthacnut nor Edward was likely to brook the position of a Chilperic. From Emma's point of view she was at the height of her power, but it is possible to detect a certain unease in the *Encomium*. Certainly its account of the reign of Harold Harefoot is both partial and selective. I do not think that it is credible to see Edward the Confessor as playing only the part the *Encomiast* assigns to him. No explanation is offered as to why the elder brother, who had already made two attempts to intervene in England, did nothing on his mother's appeal. The *Encomiast* never says who criticized her conduct over Ælfred's betrayal. It seems unlikely in the absence of evidence that Godwine dragged Emma into his defence of his conduct, and certainly the *Chronicles* assign no blame to her. It looks to me as though the criticism is likely to have come from Edward, who certainly did take the death of his brother very seriously, and who, as soon as he was king, seized his mother's property and deprived her of any status.<sup>1</sup> The *Encomiast*, and the *Chronicle* is no more informative, gives no reason why Harthacnut should have summoned Edward and made him co-king.<sup>2</sup> I have suggested that we need to keep what was happening in Normandy in mind in this period of English

<sup>1</sup>C, D, E, s.a. 1043 and see F. Barlow, 'Two Notes: Cnut's Second Pilgrimage and Queen Emma's disgrace in 1043', *EHR*, lxxiii (1958), 649 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Dr Körner (op. cit. p. 67) argues that Harthacnut and Emma were forced to accept Edward's return and the *Encomiast*, by giving Harthacnut the credit for model fraternal behaviour, made the best of a bad job. But what power or party did Edward command that would enable him to force his way back? If he had a party of any power in England it had been conspicuously silent until now. Again, the *Encomiast* says Harthacnut accepted Edward as joint ruler and the *Abingdon Chronicle* offers some support for this; only Harthacnut, who did have large Danish forces at his disposal where Edward had none, could have brought this about. Dr Körner (op. cit. p. 70) makes the fair point that the *Encomiast's* disapproval of the condominium thus established can be inferred, in spite of the nice things he says about it, from his comment on the arrangement between Cnut and Edmund Ironside, a *kingdom divided against itself cannot stand*. It might be pointed out that in the earlier case the kingdom was physically divided, roughly at the Thames, while in the second the kingdom was kept intact, and it was the kingship that was shared. After all Harthacnut had another kingdom, Denmark, with which he could be expected to be involved, so he would need a vice-gerent, at least in England.

history. By now it must have been apparent that the young Duke William was a factor to be reckoned with. If he were not yet in undisputed control of his duchy he was worth a straight wager to win even at very short odds. Since Edward seems to have enjoyed ducal goodwill, the Norman alliance might explain his return. But why should Harthacnut, a young man who might expect to marry and have sons, have established a joint kingship? If it were true that Edward had vowed to live a virgin—this is not the place to argue the case, but I believe it is true—then Harthacnut's action makes more sense. Again, if it is true, as William of Poitiers says it is, that Harthacnut was a sickly young man, then this, too, opens up possibilities of explanation. But what is clear is that none of our sources is in the least helpful, and in the case of the *Encomium*, since what is omitted bears directly on his chosen theme, Queen Emma and the English succession, the omission is probably deliberate.

It is evident that Emma's position was not so happy as the *Encomium* makes out. She was *persona non grata* in Normandy since the death of Richard II: when she went into exile it was Flanders she chose, not her native land, and until 1066, in spite of William's marriage to a Flemish 'princess', the Flemish court always preferred the Godwines to the Normans. When she 'fell' and was treated with some public contumely by Edward, it does not seem to have evoked the slightest reaction from Normandy.

In the light of this, then, the *Encomium* was a warning. There was Thorkell, known to many at Harthacnut's court personally, to recall the horrors of the world of illegitimate kings, and there was the casual mention of the great fleet Harthacnut left in an inlet in case of need<sup>1</sup> to call to mind Cnut's great fleet and the ghastly and costly campaigns of 1015–16. On the other hand, there was Emma, whose marriage to Cnut ushered in an age of legitimate kingship and peace and stability, topped off with divine approval to boot. According to Emma's encomiast He [I mean God] providentially removed Æthelred so that the English might be spared further bloodshed and be given an opportunity to recover: He obliged likewise with Edmund Ironside, so that England should not fall as a divided kingdom;<sup>2</sup> and yet again He

<sup>1</sup>*Encom.* p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* p. 30.

effected the timely demise of Harold I, having first prompted Harthacnut not to give up his enterprise by nocturnal tidings of Harold's approaching death. The English, then, were warned they would despise Queen Emma at their peril, but her day was nearly done and nothing very much followed from her fall. Nonetheless, the Encomiast is an intelligent, as well as a learned, man and I do not think that he could have made a better case for Emma. After all, Emma was no fool and her case was not without its strong points. We do the man who made that case an injustice if we consider him a liar and a deceiver on the scale scholars have been accustomed to do. If we remember he is a man writing for contemporaries in a political crisis that would take another generation to resolve, then he still has things to teach students of the last generation of England before the Conquest.