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Alexandra Sanmark

POWER AND CONVERSION - A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
CHRISTIANIZATION IN
SCANDINAVIA

University College London 2002
Ph.D. Thesis

Department of Archaeology and Ancient History,
Uppsala University, 2004

Doctoral thesis from University College London 2002, revised 2003

ABSTRACT

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ISSN 1100-6358, ISBN 91-506-1739-7.

This book examines the Christianization of Scandinavia with the help of comparative material from Anglo-Saxon England, Old Frisia and Old Saxony. It is shown that Christianity spread from secular rulers and aristocracy downwards in society. In order to achieve widespread acceptance of Christianity, rulers employed specific measures, mainly legislation and material support to clerics. It is clear that in the conversion process, missionaries were necessary, but subordinate to secular rulers.

Various kinds of pressure were present in all conversions covered by this study, ranging from mild inducement to brutal force. The conversion of Saxony was particularly violent. While not as harsh, the conversion of Norway belongs in the same part of the spectrum. Forceful conversions included the use of military force, but also the introduction of strict laws and rigorous control systems. Rewards of social, political and material nature were however also significant.

Most important among the new laws were those that regulated the daily life of the population according to the Christian calendar, requiring observance of the seasonal fasts, Sundays and feast days. Other early decrees concerned baptism, churchyard burial and marriage regulations. Early Christian legislation, furthermore, provides a different picture of the Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom than the Icelandic sources, suggesting that this was mainly a 'nature religion'. The eddaic gods seem to have been either essentially literary creations, or of little significance for the wider population. The popular cultic rituals appear to have focused on other supernatural beings and magical practices.

Keywords: Christianisation, legislation, Christian calendar, popular religion

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Abbreviations

- Adam - Adam of Bremen. 'Historien om Hamburgstiftet och dess biskopar', *Adam av Bremen. Historien om Hamburgstiftets och dess biskopar*, tr. E. Svenberg, eds, C. F. Hallencreutz, K. Johannesson, T. Nyberg, and A. Piltz, Skrifter utg. av Samfundet Pro Fide et Christianismo 6 (Stockholm 1984), pp. 13-292
- BL - 'The Law of the Borgarthing', *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, ed, R. Meissner, Germanenrechte, Neue Folge (Weimar 1942), pp. 2-73
- CB - 'The Correspondence of St. Boniface', *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany. Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, and Lebuin, together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. and tr, C.H. Talbot (London 1954), pp. 65-152.
- Corr - Burchard of Worms. 'Corrector', *Die Bussordnungen der abendländischen Kirche nebst einer rechtsgeschichtlichen Einleitung*, ed, F. W. H. Wasserschleben (Halle 1851), pp. 624-82.
- DL - 'The Law of Dalarna', *Dalalagen och Västmannalagen*, Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, andra serien, second edition, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1979), pp. 3-113
- DOM - *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed, Joseph Strayer (New York 1982-89)
- EL - 'The Law of the Eidsivathing', *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, ed, R. Meissner, Germanenrechte, Neue Folge (Weimar 1942), pp. 75-133

- FL - 'The Law of the Frostathing', *The Earliest Norwegian Laws. Being the Gulathing Law and the Frostathing Law*, ed. and tr, L. M. Larson (New York 1935), pp. 213-404
- GL - 'The Law of the Gulathing', *The Earliest Norwegian Laws. Being the Gulathing Law and the Frostathing Law*, ed. and tr, L. M. Larson (New York 1935), pp. 35-201
- GutL - 'The Law of Gotland' (*Gutalagen*), *Skånelagen och Gutalagen*. Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, fjärde serien, second edition, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1979), pp. 203-90
- HE - Bede. 'The Ecclesiastical History of the English People', *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People, The Greater Chronicle, Bede's Letter to Egbert*, eds, J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford 1994)
- HL - 'The Law of Hälsingland', *Södermannalagen och Hälsingelagen*. Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, tredje serien, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1940), pp. 261-413
- KLNM - *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid. Från vikingatid till reformationstid* (Malmö 1956-78)
- LM - *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich and Zurich 1977-1998)
- MGH - *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (1823-)
- PG - *Patrologiae Graecae*, ed, J.P. Migne (Paris 1857-66)
- PL - *Patrologiae Latinae*, ed, J.P. Migne (Paris 1878-90)
- Regino - Regino of Prüm. 'De Ecclesiasticis Disciplinis et Religione Christiana, Collectus, Libri duo', *PL*, second series, vol. CXXXII (Paris 1853), cols. 279-399, esp. cols. 284-5
- RGA - *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde, Zweite, völlig neu bearbeitete und stark erweiterte Auflage unter Mitwirkung zahlreicher Fachgelehrter*, ed, H. Beck et al. (Berlin and New York 1973-2001)
- SdL - 'The Law of Södermanland', *Södermannalagen och Hälsingelagen*. Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, tredje serien, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1940), pp. 3-258
- SL - 'The Law of Småland', *Äldre Västgötalagen, Yngre Västgötalagen, Smålandslagen kyrkobalk och Bjärkörätten*, Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, femte serien, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1946), pp. 423-49
- Tangl - *MGH Epp. Selectae I, Bonifacii et Lulli Epistolae*, ed, M. Tangl, second edition (Berlin 1955)
- Theodore - 'The Penitential of Theodore', *Medieval Handbooks of Penance. A translation of the principle libri poenitentiales and selections from related documents*, eds. and trs, J. T. McNeill and H. M. Gamer (New York 1938), pp. 179-215.
- UL - 'The Law of Uppland', *Östgötalagen och Upplandslagen*. Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, första serien, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1933), pp. 3-216
- VA - Rimbart. 'Ansgars liv', *Boken om Ansgar*, tr, E. Odelman (Stockholm 1986).
- VB - Willibald. 'The Life of St. Boniface', *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany. Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba and Lebuin, together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. and tr, C.H. Talbot (London 1954), pp. 25-64

- VL - 'The Law of Västmanland', *Dalalagen och Västmannalagen*, Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, andra serien, second edition, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1979), pp. 3-181
- VLn - 'The Life of St. Lebuin', *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany. Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, and Lebuin, together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. and tr, C.H. Talbot (London 1954), pp. 229-34
- VS - Egil, Abbot of Fulda. 'The Life of St. Sturm', *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany. Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, and Lebuin, together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. and tr, C.H. Talbot (London 1954), pp. 181-204.
- VWb - Alcuin of York. 'The Life of St. Willibrord', *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany. Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, and Lebuin, together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. and tr, C.H. Talbot (London 1954), pp. 3-24
- YVG - 'The Later Law of Västergötland', *Äldre Västgötalagen, Yngre Västgötalagen, Smålandslagens kyrkobalk och Bjärkörätten*, Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, femte serien, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1946), pp. 203-420
- ÄVG - 'The Older Law of Västergötland', *Äldre Västgötalagen, Yngre Västgötalagen, Smålandslagen kyrkobalk och Bjärkörätten*, Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, femte serien, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1946), pp. 3-200
- ÖL - 'The Law of Östergötland', *Östgötalagen och Upplandslagen*. Svenska landskapslagar. Tolkade och förklarade för nutidens svenskar, första serien, eds, Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén (Stockholm 1933), pp. 3-245

Chapter 1

Introduction

This book is a slightly modified version of a Ph.D. thesis from University College London. The aim is to examine the Christianization of Scandinavia, with the help of comparative material from Anglo-Saxon England, Old Frisia, and Old Saxony. The study focuses on the methods of conversion and their effects on the lives of the wider population. It is important to point out that since this thesis was written at a British university, some background information about the Christianization of Scandinavia has been included. This is primarily intended for those readers who are unfamiliar with the Scandinavian languages and who are thus unable to read the majority of works concerning the introduction of Christianity in this area.

Definitions and terminology will first be discussed. The terms ‘conversion’ and ‘Christianization’ have been subject to some confusion. One source of confusion is that many scholars have used these without providing a definition.¹ Another is that a number of diverging definitions of these concepts have been put forward. James C. Russell has recently compiled a comprehensive overview of these, which will be summarised here. A number of scholars have stated that ‘conversion’ entails ideological and behavioural modifications of the individual, which result in the adoption of a new world view. One such scholar is A. J. Krailsheimer, who argued that ‘implicit in the idea of conversion is that of forsaking the past unconditionally and accepting in its place a future of which the one certain fact is that it will never allow the previous patterns of life to be the same again’. Similar definitions have been presented by Hugh T. Kerr and John M. Mulder, as well as by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark. Arthur Darby Nock stated that conversion encompassed a ‘deliberate turning from indifference or from one form of piety to another’ and that this turning ‘implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right’. To this strict definition Nock added his concept of

adhesion, which was a kind of ‘religious modification’. This modification was the result of political and cultural developments in a society and did not involve permanent changes of belief or lifestyle. Ramsay MacMullen gave a more liberal definition of conversion as ‘that change of belief by which a person accepted the reality and supreme power of God and determined to obey him’.²

James Russell himself, on the other hand, focused on the transformations of society caused by the introduction of Christianity. In order to describe these transformations Russell preferred to use ‘Christianization’. He believed that under optimal circumstances, the degree of Christianization of a society could even be measured. For this purpose, ‘the transformation of the beliefs, attitudes, values, and behavior (BAVB)’ should be studied.³ In my view, such studies are difficult to carry out, since a yard-stick for Christianization then needs to be constructed. This constitutes an almost impossible task, seeing as opinions of what constitutes the ‘correct’ Christian beliefs and lifestyle have continuously been changing over time. Irrespective of this, Russell’s definition of Christianization is valuable. However, in this thesis, changes in societal institutions have been added to the central elements of Russell’s definition. In this way, the concept of Christianization becomes more useful.

Another common definition of Christianization is the long-term changes caused by the introduction of Christianity. Some scholars have used ‘conversion’ to describe the first stage of this process. In the eyes of these scholars, conversion was not constituted by individual acceptance of Christianity. It was instead, in the same way as Christianization, concerned with transformations of society, and thus a collective process.

For the purposes of this thesis, the concept of conversion has been slightly redefined. Conversion will be used to denote the actions taken by secular rulers and/or clerics to achieve the Christianization of a society according to the contemporary norms of Christianity. This new definition is thus somewhat similar to what Russell called ‘attempted societal Christianization’.⁴ Conversion has moreover been divided into two parts. Stage 1 involves missionary efforts, in a particular territory, with no or very little secular support. Stage 2 begins when a secular ruler takes charge over the spread of Christianity in a territory. The rulers can be either internal or external to the kingdoms. The end of this stage is signified by the emergence of a defined and organised ecclesiastical network. In the geographical areas included in this study, this stage lasts for approximately 150 years. It must be stressed that it is not implied that the circumstances of these phases of conversion were exactly the same in the

different geographical areas. The intention is only to show where in the Christianization process a particular area was, at a particular point in time.

The terminology used to describe pre-Christian cultic ideas and practices will now be considered. Two terms that are commonly used are 'paganism' and 'pre-Christian religion'. Neither of these will be used in this thesis. 'Paganism' has been avoided because of its obvious negative connotations.⁵ 'Pre-Christian religion' is too narrow a definition to comprise all aspects of the pre-Christian cult. Evidence suggests that this cult consisted of three main strands. One of these was magic, which is not always included in the concept of religion. For the purposes of this study, the wider concept of 'pre-Christian religious custom' has therefore been adopted.⁶ Consequently, expressions such as 'change of religion' and 'the new religion' will not be used. The term 'pre-Christian' is used for people, objects, and traditions which existed before the beginning of the conversion period. 'Non-Christian' applies to people, objects, and traditions that were present during the conversion period.

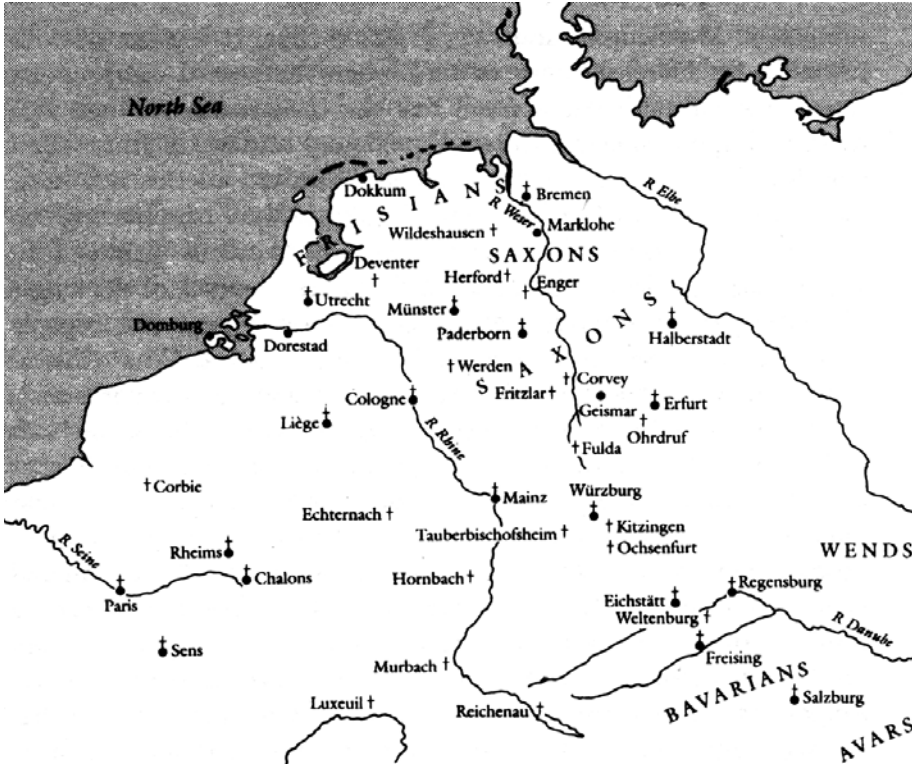
'The Church' is another term that will not be employed. This expression implies a coherent organisation that could ensure the uniformity of Christian teachings and practices. In the early Middle Ages the papacy had not yet manifested itself as the central ecclesiastical power. Regional versions of Christianity could therefore develop, which were accepted by local clergy, of which the papacy would not necessarily have approved. The divergent medieval Christian teachings are also evidenced by the drawn out disputes between clergy at this time. By the time of the conversion of Scandinavia, the more unified ecclesiastical organisation of the Later Middle Ages was emerging.

Religious syncretism will not be discussed. This is a huge area, which deserves extensive treatment, and is therefore outside the scope of this study.

As was stated above, this thesis focuses on the Scandinavian countries, i.e. Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Finland and Iceland, which are not part of Scandinavia, are outside the scope of this study. Due to the nature of the primary and secondary source material, the amount of detail given to the different Scandinavian countries varies slightly between chapters. In chapter 3, the emphasis is mainly placed on Sweden. In part II much use is made of the Norwegian provincial laws, although early Swedish legislation is cited when applicable. Archaeological evidence is drawn from all three Scandinavian countries. For comparative purposes, source material from the Sámi peoples will also be used. Part III is structured around the ecclesiastical regulations in the Norwegian laws. Material from Sweden and Denmark is supplied on those



Map 1. Britain c. 600 AD

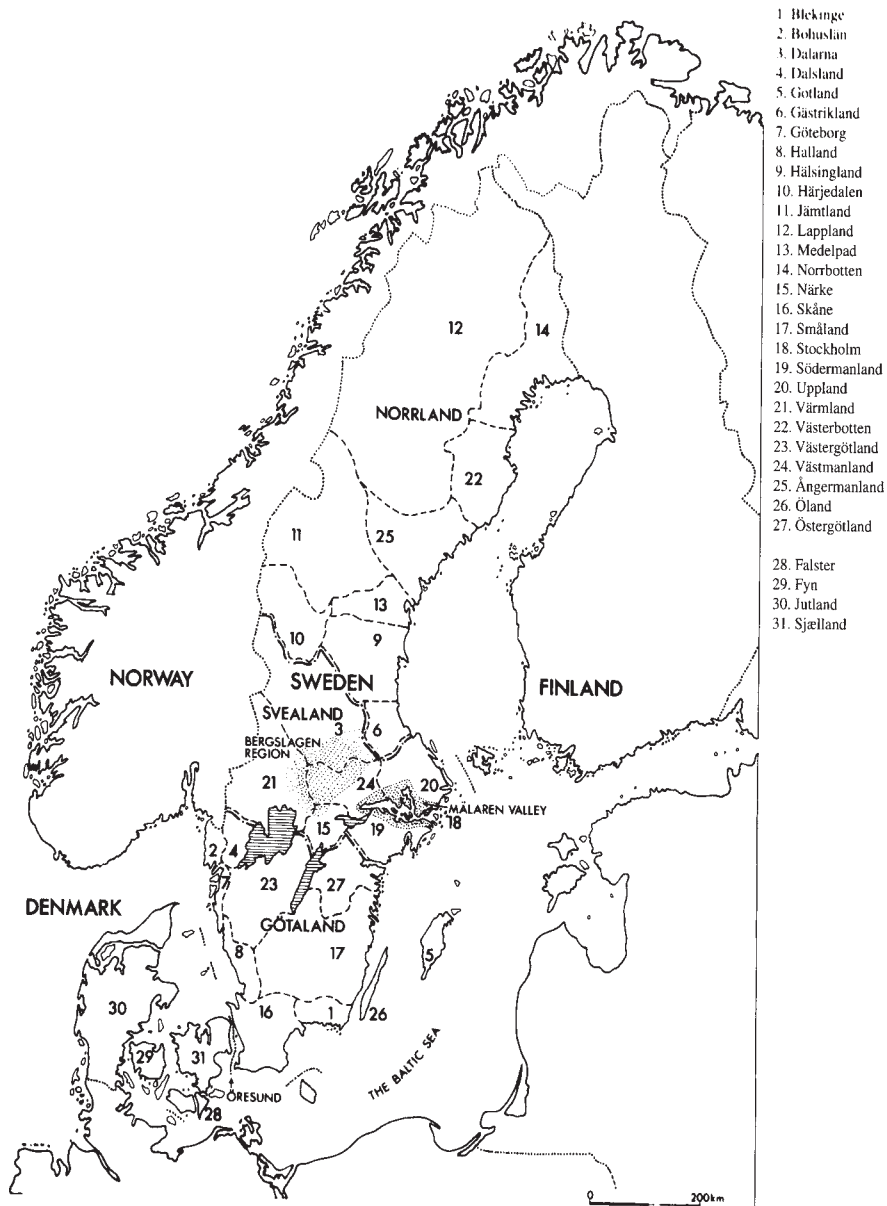


Map 2. Frisia and Saxony in the eighth century



Map 3. Denmark

Map 4. Sweden with provinces and regions



- 1 Blekinge
- 2 Bohuslän
- 3 Dalarna
- 4 Dalshand
- 5 Gotland
- 6 Gästrikland
- 7 Göteborg
- 8 Halland
- 9 Hälsingland
- 10 Härjedalen
- 11 Jämtland
- 12 Lappland
- 13 Medelpad
- 14 Norrbotten
- 15 Närke
- 16 Skåne
- 17 Småland
- 18 Stockholm
- 19 Södermanland
- 20 Uppland
- 21 Värmland
- 22 Västerbotten
- 23 Västergötland
- 24 Västmanland
- 25 Ångermanland
- 26 Öland
- 27 Östergötland
- 28 Falster
- 29 Fyn
- 30 Jutland
- 31 Sjælland

occasions when it has been deemed suitable. It must be kept in mind that the realms of Sweden, Norway and Denmark had not been established during the Viking Age and the early medieval period. During this time, loyalties were determined by warfare, temporary treaties and marriage alliances. Thus, areas of kingship and overlordship were constantly changing. Archaeological and written evidence moreover makes it clear that a common Scandinavian culture

NORWAY

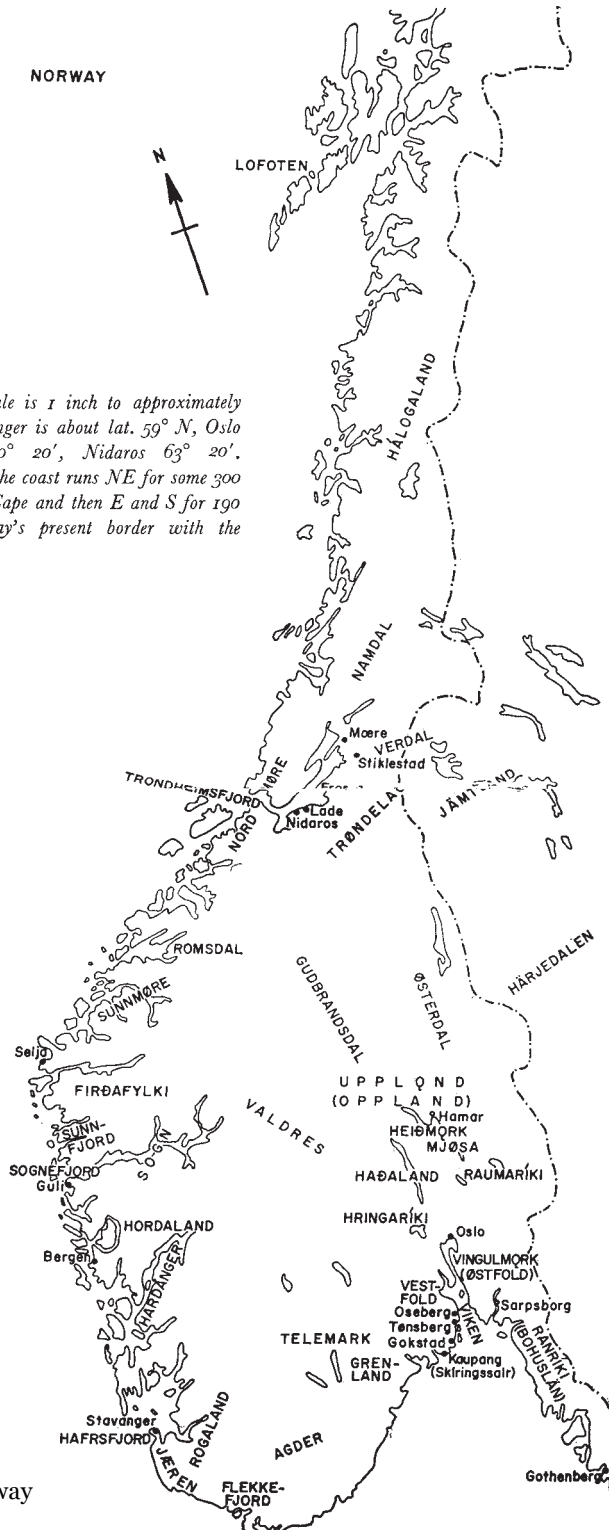


Fig. 8. The scale is 1 inch to approximately 75 miles. Stavanger is about lat. 59° N, Oslo 60°, Bergen 60° 20', Nidaros 63° 20'. Beyond Lofoten the coast runs NE for some 300 miles to North Cape and then E and S for 190 miles to Norway's present border with the Soviet Union.

Map 4. Norway

existed, albeit with regional differences. These differences were however not defined by the modern national borders.

The modern names of the Scandinavian countries have been used to designate the Viking Age and early medieval kingdoms. The names of present-day provinces have been used to enable readers to locate places and sites referred to in the text. The inhabitants of the Viking Age and medieval kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden will be referred to as 'early Scandinavians' or 'Scandinavians'. For the sake of simplicity, the Sámi peoples have not been included in this definition.⁷ It should moreover be noted that 'Norse' is only used in relation to the Norwegian and Icelandic literary sources.⁸

Partly due to the scarcity of sources for the conversion of Scandinavia, a comparative approach will be employed throughout this thesis. By using material from various geographical areas, an attempt will be made to discern if common patterns of conversion can be found. The different degrees of inducement and force that featured in medieval Europe will also be studied. The conversions of Anglo-Saxon England, Denmark, and Sweden involved comparatively less force than the conversions of Frisia, Saxony, and Norway. Analogies between the conversions in England, the Continent, and Scandinavia can aid the understanding of the Scandinavian conversions. It must nevertheless be continuously kept in mind that similarities in themselves are not firm evidence. Support must also exist in the Scandinavian sources. It must moreover be pointed out that the discussions of Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony are intended to illustrate the spread of Christianity in these areas. They do not therefore constitute comprehensive treatments of these conversion processes.

In an effort to gain more information about how the introduction of Christianity affected the wider population, more modern conversions have also been investigated. For this purpose, some suitable case studies have been chosen. These are the South Sea Islands of Polynesia, and the Maya and Aztec Nations of North and Meso America. The Spanish conquest and conversion of Mexico has been used to illustrate the methods employed in violent conversions, while the conversion of Polynesia has been used as an example of a more peaceful conversion. Apart from a small number of specific examples from America, the results of these studies have not been discussed in this thesis. They have, however, provided highly valuable insights into the process of conversion, and have contributed to the overall structure of the thesis. With

the help of the rich source material from these conversions, questions to ask of the medieval sources could be formed.

Some scholars of conversion have previously applied comparative methods in their research. Lesley Abrams compared the parts played by kings and bishops in the conversions of Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia. Claire Stancliffe studied the role of kings in the Roman mission to Anglo-Saxon England and in St. Patrick's mission to the Irish.⁹ Henry Mayr-Harting carried out a comparative study of the conversions of England and Bulgaria. He also used the conversion of Polynesia in his analyses of the spread of Christianity in these two geographical areas.¹⁰ Moreover, both Richard Fletcher and N.J Higham have made use of parallels with more recent conversions in Africa.¹¹ The anthropologist Clifford Geertz has carried out a comparative study of the role of Islam in Morocco and Indonesia. In both countries, Islam was in competition with ethnic religions. The main aim of Geertz's systematic study was to examine long-term religious changes in the different socio-political contexts. The field work was carried out in the 1950s and 1960s, although historical events from the sixteenth century and onwards were covered.¹²

In this thesis, the whole process of conversion, as defined above, will be considered. More attention will however be paid to stage 2 of this process. In part III, some elements of the continuing efforts of Christianization after the close of stage 2 will also be discussed. The duration of the two stages of conversion can naturally be difficult to measure exactly. This is particularly true regarding stage 1. The end of this stage can in most cases be determined. In the geographical areas included here, this is marked either by the baptism of an internal secular ruler or the military invasion of a territory by an external Christian ruler. It is however an almost impossible task to determine when this stage begins. This can be illustrated by an example from Sweden. Ansgar's visit to Birka in c. 829/30 is the first recorded mission to this area. It is however unlikely that Ansgar was the first missionary to have visited Sweden. Archaeological finds demonstrate that the population in Scandinavia were in contact with the Christian parts of the world already in the Migration Period, and particularly during the Viking Age.¹³ Some of these finds are overtly Christian. The eighth-century Irish crozier that was discovered at Helgö is one such example.¹⁴ Although these finds are not necessarily indications that missionaries were present, this possibility cannot be ruled out. What these finds indisputably show is that contacts with Christians and their culture did occur long before the first documented missions.

Stage 2 began at slightly different points in time in the Scandinavian countries. The Danish King Harald Gormsen (Bluetooth) was baptised c. 960. The conversion of Norway was begun by Hákon Aðalsteinsfostri (935-61). The more wide-scale conversion of this kingdom was however set in motion by King Olav Tryggvason in c. 995. In Sweden, King Olof Erikson Skötkonung accepted Christianity around 1000. The end of stage 2 in Scandinavia is not only signified by the emergence of a more stable ecclesiastical organisation. It is also marked by the closer links between Scandinavia and the papacy. Archbishoprics were founded in Lund (1103/04), Nidaros (1153), and Uppsala (1164). Moreover, in 1152/3, Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear was sent as a papal legate to Norway and Sweden. In all the Scandinavian kingdoms, stage 2 can thus be seen to last approximately 150 years.

In Anglo-Saxon England, stage 2 began with the baptism of King Aethelberht of Kent in c. 597. This period ended around 735 when the archbishopric of York had been permanently established, and the diocesan network had taken a more stable form. On the Continent, the Frankish conquests and conversions mark the start of stage 2. In Frisia, this began under the rule of Pepin of Herstal (635-714), while the conquest of Saxony was carried out by Charlemagne from c. 772. These territories were then incorporated into the Frankish Empire. In order to eradicate pre-Christian religious custom, the system of the visiting synodal courts (*Sendgerichte*) was created. Important documents from these courts were collected and edited during the tenth century. Also in these areas, stage 2 thus comprised a period of approximately 150 years.

The sources that are used in this study will now be considered. The scarcity of primary sources is a well-known problem for scholars of the conversion of northern Europe. This problem is particularly prevalent for those studying Scandinavia. Consequently, it becomes necessary to use a wide variety of source material. In order to achieve the aims of this thesis, some sources are of particular value.

Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People' must be seen as one of the most important primary sources for the conversion of England. This work was completed in c. 731 and provides a description of the spread of Christianity in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms from the arrival of Augustine in 597 and into the eighth century. Bede based this account on named informants and documentary evidence, such as papal letters. It must however be kept in mind that Bede clearly omitted material that did not suit his purposes.¹⁵ Historians

nevertheless tend to regard Bede's work as a reasonably reliable source, and it has been extensively used in studies of the Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁶

From Saxony and Frisia, there are a large number of saints' lives, such as those of Boniface, Willibrord, Lebuin, and Sturm. As with all hagiographies, great caution must be exercised when using these as historical sources. Therefore, only some use has been made of this type of material. Similar problems arise concerning the extant missionary sermons, which were often written down 100-200 years after their proposed delivery.¹⁷ Thus, selected use of surviving missionary sermons from continental Europe has been made. A more useful source for the study of conversion seems to be the collected correspondence of Boniface. The letters contained in this collection are regarded as genuine. They can therefore be seen to provide a good picture of Boniface himself, as well as of his co-operation with the papacy and the Frankish rulers.

The source material for the conversion of Scandinavia is of also varying quality. The Swedish saints' legends belong to the sources that have received the heaviest criticism. There are a number of reasons for this. These texts were written down as late as in the thirteenth century, with the specific purpose of being read on liturgical feasts. They are moreover filled with literary anecdotes. As has been demonstrated by many scholars, only very little of their information can be corroborated by other sources.¹⁸ In this thesis, these sources have thus not been used as evidence for the process of conversion in Sweden.

The Icelandic sagas and other Old Norse sources must also be discussed. Most of these texts were written down in Iceland during the thirteenth century. Their exposition is moreover very literary. Modern scholars have therefore doubted their relevance to Viking Age and early medieval Scandinavia. These sources can be divided into five main categories; kings' sagas, bishops' sagas, *Islendinga sögur*, *Fornaldar sögur*, and poetry.

The bishops' sagas can be seen as the most reliable of the sources in the first four categories. These sagas may, to a greater extent than the rest, be derived from documentary material. The overall value of all the different kinds of sagas as sources for the conversion of Scandinavia is however rather limited. They have therefore on occasion been cited in this thesis. They have however not been regarded as firm evidence. The fifth category, i.e. scaldic and eddaic poetry can be seen as more valuable. The extant verses were written down in Christian times, mostly during the thirteenth century. Their poetic metre is often very intricate, and some scholars have therefore argued that the verses are more or

less literal reproductions of poems that had been orally recited for centuries. Others have suggested that the verses were composed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is nevertheless important to note that even if the latter suggestion is correct, the verses may reflect at least parts of Scandinavian pre-Christian society and mythology. It must however be added that the verses' cryptic nature often makes them very difficult to interpret.¹⁹ In this thesis, this type of material has on a few instances been deemed to be valuable, yet it only forms a very small part of the overall evidence.

More useful information about the conversion of Scandinavia is provided by the Life of Ansgar and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*. Scholars have regarded The Life of Ansgar as a valuable source, particularly for missionary activity in the ninth century. It was written down shortly after Ansgar's death in 865 by Rimbert, Ansgar's successor as archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen. Rimbert was also one of Ansgar's confidants, and he may even have accompanied Ansgar on his second mission to Birka. C.F. Hallencreutz has pointed out that although Rimbert's main perspective was theological, he also showed detailed interest in the societies that Ansgar visited. Rimbert's descriptions of the *milieux* clearly break with hagiographical traditions. Rimbert did moreover, on at least one occasion, make use of papal correspondence. It must however be pointed out that Rimbert wrote from the perspective of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen.²⁰

This missionary perspective is more clearly seen in Adam of Bremen's *Gesta*. Adam was a canon at Bremen from c. 1066, and his work has generally been regarded as less reliable than the Life of Ansgar. Adam clearly based many of his statements on hearsay. One such example is the Cyclops that according to Adam lived on an island around the North Pole.²¹ Adam did however also use a great deal of documentary sources, such as the Life of Ansgar, papal correspondence, and various annals. He was furthermore in contact with people who were well-informed of Scandinavia, including the Danish king Sven Estridsen and also missionary bishops, such as Radulf of Schleswig and Adalvard the Younger. Therefore, despite its obvious weaknesses, the *Gesta* contains useful information about the process of conversion in Scandinavia.²² As the reader will find, this thesis makes much use of both the Life of Ansgar and Adam's *Gesta*. Efforts have however been made to corroborate Rimbert's and Adam's statements with other source material.

None of the sources discussed above do however provide a great deal of information as to how the introduction of Christianity affected the life of the

general population. For this purpose, legislation and penitentials are more valuable. These types of source material can also provide more information about the aims of secular rulers and clerics. They can moreover throw light on surviving pre-Christian cultic ideas and practices among the wider population. It should naturally be kept in mind that allowances must be made for disparities between the normative material and its enforcement in practice. A problem connected to the penitentials is that it is impossible to establish how the confessants answered the questions contained in these works.²³

The most important Anglo-Saxon normative sources are the laws of the earliest Christian kings, and 'The Penitential of Theodore'. For the conversions of Frisia and Saxony, the Carolingian legislation as well as the decretal collections of Regino of Prüm and Burchard of Worms are particularly useful.

For Scandinavia, the earliest Norwegian provincial laws are of paramount value. Many of these laws have not hitherto been extensively used by scholars of conversion. The normative sources will be further discussed in chapter 4. This chapter also contains a summary of the debate regarding the source-status and the dating of the Scandinavian provincial laws. Several Scandinavian scholars have, after reading this thesis, considered the summary rather superfluous. It has nevertheless been included in this book, for the benefit of readers who are not familiar with the *Stand der Forschung* on this particular topic.

In order to obtain further information about the conversion of the wider population, archaeological evidence will also be used. This type of evidence is necessarily selective, and it is not intended to be representative of the Scandinavian archaeological material as a whole. It is instead used to illustrate the documentary evidence, and also to fill in some of the gaps for which we have no written source material. The archaeological evidence will be drawn from excavated cult sites, burial grounds, churchyards, and churches. The Scandinavian rune stones, moreover, provide unique material for the study of conversion. Comparative archaeological material from geographical areas outside Scandinavia is, apart from in a very small number of instances, excluded from this study. Finally, place-name studies, as well as research carried out by anthropologists and historians of religion will also be consulted.²⁴

Some valuable pieces of secondary literature should also be discussed. The five volumes that were published by the project 'The Christianization of Sweden' (*Sveriges kristnande*) must be seen as a major contribution to scholarship in this field. One of the greatest achievements of this project was the wide-ranging

review and thorough analyses of the primary sources. The participants have also carried out a large number of regional studies that are most valuable. The works of Stefan Brink, Anne-Sofie Gräslund, Anders Hultgård, and Bertil Nilsson have been particularly useful for this thesis. The project however focused on ‘missionaries, bishops, and kings and their role in the process of Christianization’. No attempt was made to find out how the introduction of Christianity affected the wider population. It should also be pointed out that no comparisons with other conversions were made. These publications are, moreover, written almost exclusively in Swedish, with the exception of some brief summaries in English.²⁵

German scholars have been eminent in publishing and analysing sources valuable for the conversions of Frisia and Saxony. Scholars such as Gottfried Flade, Franz Flaskamp, and Albert Michael Koeniger deserve to be specifically mentioned. There are also a number of more recent scholars who have made significant contributions to the study of the introduction of Christianity in Frisia and Saxony. Richard E. Sullivan has provided us with many valuable insights, particularly regarding the work of individual missionaries. The works of Rosamund McKitterick and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill highlight the role of the Frankish rulers and the development of the ecclesiastical organisation. For the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England, several scholars are of particular importance. Henry Mayr-Harting provided a comprehensive treatment of the primary written sources in *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*. N.J. Higham gave special attention to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and their rulers.²⁶ Attention must also be drawn to a number of other major scholars in this field, such as James Campbell, Martin Carver, Catherine Cubitt, and Patrick Wormald.²⁷

Richard Fletcher’s recent book *The Conversion of Europe. From Paganism to Christianity 371-1386 AD* provides a valuable overview of the spread of Christianity across Europe. Despite the wide approach of this work, however, the results are essentially presented in chronological order. The author has also made very little use of normative source material and archaeological evidence. Lutz E. von Padberg also gives a chronological overview of conversion in the Middle Ages in his book *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter*. This work does nevertheless contain some interesting discussions of specific issues, such as missionary preaching and social changes resulting from conversion.²⁸ A review of the research into the conversions of Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony is provided by chapter 2 of this thesis. Even if a

lot of this material is well known, a comparative treatment of this kind has not been previously attempted.

This thesis focuses on five specific questions. The first question is: *What are the requirements for successful conversion?* This problem is treated in part I. The second question is: *What strategies were pursued by secular rulers and clerics?* This issue is discussed in part I, and more specifically in part III. The third question is: *How did conversion affect the life of the wider population?* Also this question is considered in part III. The fourth question is: *Both forceful and more peaceful methods were used in conversion. What were the differences in the methods and their effects?* Attempts at answering this are made primarily in part I. The fifth question is: *What elements of pre-Christian religious custom and Christianity led to continuity or change after conversion?* These issues are discussed in part II.

Notes to Chapter 1

- 1 Some examples include: Richard Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe. From Paganism to Christianity 371-1386 AD* (London 1997); Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, third edition (London 1991); the participants in the project 'The Christianization of Sweden' (see below).
- 2 James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity. A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (New York and Oxford 1994), pp. 26-30; Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)* (New Haven and London 1984), p. 5.
- 3 Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, p. 31.
- 4 Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*, p. 31.
- 5 Cf. Anders Hultgård, 'Övergångstidens eskatologiska föreställningar', *Nordisk Hedendom. Et symposium*, eds, Gro Steinsland et al. (Odense 1991), pp. 161-8, esp. pp. 161-2.
- 6 Today historians of religion include magic in their definitions of religion. Scholars of other disciplines, however, at times still distinguish between religion and magic. It should also be noted that historians of religion tend to only include rituals in their definitions of religious custom. In this thesis, however, both myths and rituals have been included in the definition of religious custom.
- 7 Anders Hultgård used the term 'old Scandinavian religion' for the religious custom of the inhabitants of the early Scandinavian kingdoms, thus excluding the Sámi and the Fins. See Hultgård, 'Övergångstidens eskatologiska föreställningar', p. 162.
- 8 Cf. John Lindow, 'Mythology and Mythography', *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature. A Critical Guide*, eds, Carol J. Clover and John Lindow, *Islandica XLV* (Ithaca and London 1985), pp. 21-67, esp. p. 22.

- 9 Lesley Abrams, 'Kings and Bishops and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian Kingdoms', *Church and People in Britain and Scandinavia*, ed, Ingemar Brohed (Lund 1996), pp. 15-28; Claire E. Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion: some comparisons between the Roman mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster, vol. 14, ed, Karl Hauck (Berlin 1980), pp. 59-94. It should be pointed out that Stancliffe also made use of comparative material from Sweden.
- 10 Henry Mayr-Harting, *Two Conversions to Christianity, The Bulgarians and the Anglo-Saxons* (Reading 1994); Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 7.
- 11 Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*; N.J.Higham, *The Convert Kings. Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester and New York 1997).
- 12 Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago and London 1968). I am grateful to Olof Sundqvist at Högskolan i Gävle for drawing my attention to this work.
- 13 Jan Arvid Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande* (Stockholm 1996), pp. 161-3.
- 14 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 19-44, esp. p. 38.
- 15 *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People, The Greater Chronicle, Bede's Letter to Egbert*, eds, J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford 1994), pp. xviii-xx; KLM vol. 1, cols. 396-8. Patrick Wormald has pointed to Bede's 'monastic background and patristic commitment' and how this affected his view of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. See Patrick Wormald, 'Bede, "Beowulf" and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England. Papers in Honour of the 1300th Anniversary of the Birth of Bede Given at Cornell University in 1973 and 1974*, ed, Robert T. Farrell, *British Archaeological Reports* 46 (Oxford 1978), pp. 32-95, esp. pp. 32-3, 58-63, and 68. For Bede's own motives and his use of sources see: James Campbell, 'Bede I', *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte 1986), pp. 1-28 and James Campbell, 'Bede II', *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte 1986), pp. 29-48.
- 16 Cf. Abrams, 'Kings and Bishops', p. 16.
- 17 The value of the missionary sermons has been discussed by Richard E. Sullivan and Lutz E. von Padberg. See Richard E. Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', *Speculum* 28 (1953), pp. 705-40, esp. p. 715. This article is also published in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot 1994); Lutz E. von Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart 1998), pp. 190-7.
- 18 Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna, påvebrev och tidiga prov på inhemsk historieskrivning', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 115-40, esp. pp. 137-8; Tryggve Lundén, *Svenska helgon* (Stockholm 1972); Toni Schmid, 'Eskil, Botvid och David. Tre svenska helgon', *Scandia* 4 (1931), pp. 102-114; Toni Schmid, *Den Helige Sigfrid* (Lund 1931); Toni Schmid, *Sveriges kristnande från verklighet till dikt* (Stockholm 1934); Lesley Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', *Anglo-Saxon Studies* 24 (1995), pp. 213-49, esp. pp. 233-6.
- 19 Lars Lönnroth, 'En fjärran spegel. Västnordiska berättande källor om svensk hedendom och om kristningsprocessen på svenskt område', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya*

- perspektiv*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 141-58, esp. pp. 143-4; KLNLM vol. 5, cols. 531-5 and vol. 3, cols. 480-8; Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Om eddadigtenes alder', *Nordisk hedendom. Et symposium*, eds, Gro Steinsland *et al.* (Odense 1991), pp. 217-27.
- 20 Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', pp. 118-21; KLNLM vol. 14, cols. 296-9; Tore Nyberg, 'Adam av Bremens syn på Norden', *Dokumentation av medeltidsymposiet i Lidköping 21-22 april 1990 i anledning av Götiska förbundets 175-årsjubileum*, Götiska minnen 106 (Lidköping 1990/1), pp. 13-21, esp. p. 13.
- 21 Adam IV:41.
- 22 Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', pp. 121-4; KLNLM vol. 5, cols. 283-9.
- 23 Aron J. Gurevich pointed to the particular value of the penitentials for the study of 'pagan beliefs of the parishioners' and the changing nature of Christianity. He also argued that it is through the penitentials that we can gain insights into the daily life of the people of the Middle Ages. Aron J. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge 1988), pp. 80 and 95. 24 Relics have been excluded from this study. There are, to my knowledge, no relics in Scandinavia that date from stages 1 or 2 of the conversion period. See KLNLM, vol. 14, cols. 47-54; *Reliker och relikvarier från svenska kyrkor. Tillfällig utställning*. Statens historiska museum (Stockholm 1951).
- 25 Bertil Nilsson, ed, *Kontinuitet i kult och tro från vikingatid till medeltid*, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 1 (Uppsala 1992); Henrik Williams, ed, *Möres kristnande*. Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 2 (Uppsala 1993); Bertil Nilsson, *Kvinnor, män och barn på medeltida begravningsplatser*. Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 3 (Uppsala 1994); Stefan Brink, ed, *Jämtlands kristnande*. Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 4 (Uppsala 1996); Bertil Nilsson, ed, *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*. Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), p. 11.
- 26 Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*; Higham, *The Convert Kings*.
- 27 See for example: James Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity in England', *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte 1986), pp. 49-67; James Campbell, 'Observations on the Conversion of England', *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte 1986), pp. 68-84; Martin Carver, 'Boat-burial in Britain: Ancient Custom or Political Signal?', *The Ship as Symbol in Pre-Historic and Medieval Scandinavia. Papers from an International Research Seminar at the Danish National Museum, Copenhagen 5th-7th May 1994*, eds, Ole Crumlin Pedersen and Birgitte Munch Thye (København 1995), pp. 110-24; Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650 - c. 850* (London and New York 1995); Wormald, 'Bede, "Beowulf" and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy'.
- 28 Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*; von Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter*.

PART I

CONVERSION – METHODS AND POPULAR RESPONSE

From the time of Ancient Christianity missionary work was seen to encapsulate two goals. These were the positive goal of acceptance of Christianity and the negative goal of extinguishing non-Christian beliefs and cults. These goals have also been named ‘Christianization’ and ‘depaganisation’. Augustine of Hippo did not approve of the use of force in Christianization. He believed that the acceptance of Christianity by an individual must be a fully voluntary act, which should take place before baptism. Augustine was aware that this was not always the case in practice, but he was eagerly trying to enforce it. In order to achieve the negative goal of depaganisation, however, Augustine allowed and even invited the use of force. He approved of anything from the destruction of ‘pagan’ shrines, to death penalties for persistent performances of ‘pagan’ practices.¹

During the Middle Ages, changes took place in the theoretical standpoint regarding the use of force in pursuit of the positive goal. A formalisation of the practices that Augustine had wished to eradicate can be seen already in the writings of Pope Gregory I. He recommended strict economic penalties for the unbaptised, so that they would be compelled or induced (*compellatur*) to be baptised. The Fourth Council of Toledo (633) condemned the practice of forced baptism, although recognised it as valid. It was moreover stated that a person who had been forcibly baptised, must also be forced to remain a Christian. In the Middle Ages, therefore, baptism became the primary goal for missionaries. Once the population had been baptised, there would be more opportunities for the missionaries to give them Christian instruction. Baptism thus formed the beginning of conversion rather than the end result of a period of teaching. Despite this lack of instruction, a person who had been baptised was referred to as a ‘believer’ (*fidelis*) from the very moment of her or his baptism. The church historian Hans-Dietrich Kahl argued that the transition to Christianity during the Middle Ages was much more of a formality than an act of confession.

The medieval meaning of *conversio* was thus different from that of Ancient Christianity. Moreover, the medieval concept cannot be translated with 'conversion' in the modern sense of the word, i.e. an inner change of faith.² Hans-Dietrich Kahl has argued that the prevailing Christian outlook during the Middle Ages was 'cultic-institutional' (*kultisch-institutionell*). This means that, rather than internal faith, ceremonies and outward behaviour were seen to be significant. The formal act of baptism, without any requirements of Christian belief, is one such example. The opposing outlook of a 'personal and ethical' (*persönlich-ethischen*) religion did not become widespread until the Renaissance.³

This standpoint has also been expressed by Colin Morris. According to Morris, the weak sense of individualism in early medieval Christianity was caused by several factors. He highlighted the many communal elements present in this religion, e.g. in the writings of the Church Fathers and the New Testament. Through studies of these texts Morris showed that 'the believer is identified with Christ, and is therefore identified with all other believers'. Morris moreover argued that medieval Christian worship was centred on the maintenance of liturgy and ritual. One of the few possibilities for more individual devotion was provided by the monasteries. The members of the population who chose to explore their religiosity in this way must however be regarded as exceptional. In order for a stronger sense of individualism to emerge, some 'formidable barriers' had to be removed. Society was hierarchical and based on tradition, thus leaving little room for social mobility. The individual was caught up in a web of loyalties, and had little chance to select her or his own values. Morris furthermore stated that the general level of learning was too low for exchange, or even formulation, of ideas. From the 1050s, changes in some of these areas of society began to take place. This was particularly the case during the twelfth-century Renaissance when scholars rediscovered the personal elements of Ancient Christianity. After the end of the twelfth century, however, individualism was again stifled. The hierarchical character of the papal reform movement had in the long run inhibited the expression of free opinion. The emergence of civil legislation and canon law strengthened governmental machinery. The application of logic to theology moreover led to studies of Christianity that were divorced from devotion. Only with the Italian Renaissance was self-expression and self-exploration once again recovered.⁴

The different strategies employed in conversion have been discussed by many scholars. By the 1930s, three different categories of early medieval missionary methods had been defined. These were termed *Wortmission*, *Tatmission*, and *Schwertmission*, i.e. mission by word, mission by acts, and mission by sword. In *Wortmission* scholars included missionary preaching and accounts of missionaries who had performed miracles. *Tatmission* involved acts carried out in order to prove the powerlessness of the old gods, such as profanation and destruction of non-Christian shrines and idols. *Schwertmission* denotes the systematic use of direct political or military force to achieve the positive goal of Christianization. A fourth category, *Gelegenheitsmission* has been used for ‘incidental conversion’, i.e. when Christianity was adopted as a side-effect of other policies. The empirical value of these categories is very limited. A more recent scholar stated that every specific act of missionary work must be judged in its own right, as well as in the ‘context of the general aim of the mission’.⁵ Moreover, by dividing missionary work into these categories, the varying degrees of military force or political pressure that played a part in conversion are not taken into account. It could therefore be more beneficial to view missionary methods as part of a spectrum. Kahl saw direct coercion (*direkter Zwang*), i.e. conversion under the immediate threat of death, as one extreme. The other extreme was peaceful conversions, completely devoid of any force. Between these two, there were varying degrees of indirect inducement (*indirekte Nötigung*).⁶ As will be demonstrated in this chapter, indirect inducement includes pressure of political and social nature. Kahl’s definition of *indirekte Nötigung* is however too narrow and too negative. Therefore, in this thesis the various kinds of advantages and rewards that could be gained through the acceptance of Christianity have been added to this concept.

Chapter 2

The Conversions of Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony

2.1. The Role of Secular Rulers in Conversion.

Christianity officially entered Anglo-Saxon England in 597, when King Aethelberht of Kent was baptised by the Roman missionary Augustine. Aethelberht was married to Bertha, a Frankish Christian princess. It thus seems clear that Aethelberht had a positive attitude towards Christianity already before the arrival of Augustine. It may even have been Aethelberht who invited the Roman missionaries to Kent.⁷ After his baptism, Christianity was spread across England on a large scale. This was carried out via Aethelberht and other overkings, who put pressure on their subject kings to accept Christianity. It is not likely that underkings were forced to receive baptism, and there is no evidence that overkings employed military force in the name of conversion. Instead, overkings made use of the strong bonds of loyalty which tied the underkings to their overlordship. It must however be pointed out that the sub-kings' willingness to obey their overkings is likely to have been enhanced by military threats imposed by the overking. Nevertheless, the lesser kings did presumably not only agree to be baptised out of obligation, but also for the political, economic, and social advantages that they could gain. Once a minor king had been convinced to accept Christianity, missionaries were dispatched to his kingdom to evangelise among the greater population.⁸ This pattern emerges with extraordinary clarity from the surviving sources, and will be highlighted by a few examples from the history of the conversion of England.

Aethelberht of Kent acted as overlord of the Southumbrian kingdoms. Around 604, King Saberht of Essex was baptised by the Roman missionary Mellitus, who most likely had been sent there by the Kentish king. After this event, Aethelberht built a church in London and appointed Mellitus as its bishop. Some years later (627), another subject king, Redwald of East Anglia,

also accepted Christianity and received baptism in Kent. The influence of Aethelberht's overkingship on this decision is demonstrated by Bede's statement that when Redwald took over this overkingship, he immediately returned to his old religious custom.⁹ The key role played by overkings for the spread of Christianity can be further demonstrated by the involvement of the Northumbrian overlords with their Southumbrian subject kings. In 635 King Oswald of Northumbria stood as godfather at the baptism of King Cynegils of Wessex. This ceremony was performed by Bishop Birinus, who was given Dorchester-on-Thames as his episcopal see, as a joint gift from the two kings.¹⁰ King Oswiu, the successor of Oswald, managed to convince King Sigeberht of the East Saxons to accept Christianity (653), through their long discussions held at the Northumbrian court. As a result, Cedd was consecrated missionary bishop for the kingdom. Oswiu was also instrumental in the baptism of Peada, sub-king of the Middle Angles. The Northumbrian king agreed to the marriage between his daughter Alchfled and Peada, on the condition that Peada was baptised. The difficulties of trying to make a king accept Christianity without a powerful overking can be demonstrated by an example from Mercia. Despite the many attempts to convince the powerful King Penda to be baptised, he remained a non-Christian until his death.¹¹

In Frisia and Saxony, Christianity was enforced via military conquest. The conquering Frankish armies were accompanied by bishops and missionaries, who then settled in newly won areas. The local population was forced to accept Christianity as part of Frankish lordship. It is however important to remember that the Frankish emperors were not only eager for conquest, but were also champions of Christianity. The strong link between Frankish military power and conversion commenced during the rule of Pepin of Herstal. Before this time, missionaries, such as Wilfrid and Wihbert, had evangelised in Frisia without secular support. They did not manage to convince the Frisian kings to receive baptism, nor any larger parts of the population. Willibrord decided to follow a different strategy and turned to Pepin for help. He consequently received a part of Frisia, which was under Frankish lordship, as his missionary area, and from now on Christianity began to gain ground. Five years later, in 695, the evangelization had progressed so far that an episcopal see could be established at Utrecht, and Willibrord consecrated its bishop.¹² The significance of the Frankish involvement in the conversion was expressed by Boniface in the following words:

Without the patronage of the Frankish prince I can neither govern the faithful of the Church nor protect the priests, clerics, monks and nuns of God, nor can I forbid the practice of heathen rites and the worship of idols in Germany without his orders and the fear he inspires.¹³

Charlemagne's conquest of Saxony took very violent forms. There are reports of massacres, such as the one in 782, when 4,500 Saxons were beheaded. The Franks also forcibly removed large groups of Saxons from their homes and re-settled them in small groups in the Frankish heartland. The Saxon people were substituted by men loyal to the emperor and also by monks or priests, whose role it was to ensure Frankish control and the enforcement of Christianity at the same time. It has been argued that it was in this way that the Saxons were finally subdued. During his conquest, Charlemagne put himself in charge of the evangelization. In 777 he divided Saxony into missionary zones, each under the supervision of a bishop, and he also dispatched missionaries, such as Sturm, Willehad, and Liudger, to areas where he felt they were needed.¹⁴ Earlier attempts to convert the population had been rather unsuccessful. The two Hewalds (the 'White' and the 'Black') preached to the Saxons around the lower Lippe until they were killed by the non-Christian population. Lebuin only narrowly escaped the same fate after preaching at the yearly meeting of the Saxons at Marklo. On this occasion Lebuin seems to have made use of the Frankish backing in aid of his task. He is reported to have threatened the Saxons by stating that if they were unwilling to be baptised, they would be invaded by a nearby king and many would be killed.¹⁵

It is thus clear that once a secular ruler took charge over the spread of Christianity in a territory, the religion began to spread on a wider scale. Secular rulers could aid this process by various methods, which will now be discussed.

Legislation was used to enforce the general observance of Christianity. Aethelberht introduced penalties against theft from 'the Church' and clergy. The Laws of King Eorcenberht of Kent (c. 640) seem to have included more detailed regulations. According to Bede, all idols should be destroyed and 40 days of fast should be observed at Lent. Offenders against these laws were to be punished.¹⁶ In Frisia, the Frankish rulers outlawed the practice of 'paganism'. Carloman confirmed a law, previously issued by Charles Martel, which made the performance of 'pagan' practices illegal and subject to a penalty of 15 *solidi*. In 744, Pepin III issued a law that required bishops to ensure that no acts of 'paganism' were carried out in their dioceses.¹⁷ Charlemagne's First Saxon Capitulary, *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, also outlawed practices

regarded as 'pagan', such as human sacrifice, cremations, and making offerings to springs or groves. This law also required the Saxons to conform to a more Christian lifestyle, e.g. by submitting to baptism, attending church regularly, marrying within the prescribed degrees of consanguinity, and paying tithes. The penalties for breaking these regulations varied from heavy fines to capital punishment. In 797 the Second Saxon Capitulary (*Capitulare Saxonium*) was issued. This law has often been favourably compared to the first, since the agreed penalties are milder. There is however nothing to suggest that the earlier law had been generally annulled.¹⁸

The Carolingians also used legislation to put missionaries under royal protection. Missionaries enjoyed the usual protection of all clergy which was included in Frankish law. As well as this, missionaries could receive specific proof of protection. In 690, Pepin prohibited anyone to interfere in Willibrord's preaching, and in 753 the Saxons were obliged to permit Christian missionaries to enter their country. Charlemagne's legislation also protected clergy with heavy penalties against violators.¹⁹

It is naturally hard to ascertain to what extent the laws were actually enforced. Many of the judges in Anglo-Saxon England may have been illiterate.²⁰ The tradition of oral recitation of the laws is however likely to have carried on. In this way, the new laws may have been applied within the kingdoms. In the introduction to the Laws of King Ine it was stated that this code should be enforced 'throughout our nation, so that no *ealdorman* nor subjects of ours may henceforth pervert these our decrees'.²¹

It has been stated that the required administrative machinery to enforce the laws in Saxony and Frisia may not always have been at hand. A letter from Alcuin to Charlemagne's treasurer Megenfrid, however, suggests that the laws were actually enforced, and this on a broad scale. In this letter, Alcuin discussed the violent Saxon reaction to Christianity and stated that:

If the light yoke and easy load of Christ were preached to the hard Saxon race as keenly as tithes were levied and the penalty of the law imposed for the smallest faults, perhaps they would not react against the rite of baptism.²²

Secular rulers also promoted Christianity through economic backing of missionary work. Missionaries were in need of living quarters and land from which they could support themselves. As Christianity spread, funds were required for the erection and up-keep of churches and monasteries to

accommodate the needs of new Christians.²³ It is possible that the presentation of gifts gave the clergy a sense of obligation to the kings, which may have further contributed to strengthen their relationship. The sources provide us with plenty of examples of Anglo-Saxon kings who fulfilled the needs of missionaries. Aethelberht gave Augustine lodgings and later erected the church of SS. Peter and Paul in Canterbury. Other kings, such as Anna of East Anglia, Sigeberht of East Anglia, and Oswald of Northumbria, supplied monasteries and episcopal sees with land and gifts.²⁴ Pepin, Carloman, and Charlemagne all gave endowments for the foundation and upkeep of monasteries and churches, and thus enabled the foundation of important houses such as Echternach, Fulda, Kitzingen, and Ohrdruf. The First Saxon Capitulary required the Saxons to pay tithe and provide land for churches. Charlemagne thus established, at least in theory, the economic basis required for the support of individual churches by the greater population.²⁵

In conjunction with their overlordship, secular rulers offered material and political gains to their subjects in order to further the spread of Christianity. In this manner, a favourable climate for missionary work was created. The advantages offered were not directly connected with the Christian teachings. Kings might thus have given Christianity added attraction, in ways which were not possible for missionaries. According to Bede, Aethelberht showed special favour to those who had been baptised. This presumably happened also in other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The Carolingian conquest destroyed the existing political structures in Frisia and Saxony. This created a situation which was exploited by Frankish rulers. Native leaders who accepted Frankish lordship, and thus also Christianity, were presented with positions of power and wealth. When Hessi, chieftain of the Ostphalians, 'along with many others' surrendered to the Franks, Charlemagne gave them 'countships and rewarded them with great honors'.²⁶

The examples given above demonstrate that it was not until stage 2 of conversion that Christianity gained any larger numbers of adherents. The significance of secular support is further demonstrated by the missionaries' constant efforts during stage 1 to convince kings to be baptised and to obtain their favour.²⁷ During stage 2, a number of fundamental differences emerge between the roles of secular rulers in the various geographical areas. The most obvious difference is the degree of force employed in conversion. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms seem to have been converted by relatively peaceful means, but with the exercise of indirect compulsion (*indirekte Nötigung*). This is

contrasted by the violence employed in the conversions of Frisia and, in particular Saxony, where coercion (*direkter Zwang*) was used.²⁸ The severe methods employed in this area are reflected in Charlemagne's legislation, which is harsher than the surviving legislation from any other area. It is interesting to note that Frisian and Saxon legislation includes more obvious protection of the clergy, than do the English laws. This presumably reflects the greater need for protection in these areas, where warfare was part of conversion. It must also be pointed out that legislation from both Frisia and Saxony contained regulations that were aimed to achieve the negative goal of depaganisation. As will be shown in section 2.3, the destruction of non-Christian shrines also took place in these areas. These conversions can thus not be fitted into the concept of *Schwert-mission* as this concept included only the use of force in pursuit of the positive goal of Christianization.

Another important difference between the geographical areas is seen in the roles played by overlords and subject kings in conversion. The role of the Anglo-Saxon overking was mainly to persuade his underkings to accept baptism. Once the underking had adopted Christianity, it was he who introduced the religion to the local population. This probably took place with the help of the overking, but from this stage his role begins to diminish. In Frisia and Saxony, it was the Frankish overlords who introduced and enforced Christianity on to the population. Many of the local rulers still adhered to their old religious custom, and played little or no active part in conversion at this time. Finally, it should be pointed out that the Anglo-Saxon underkings and the Frankish rulers used more or less the same measures to spread Christianity, i.e. legislation, economic help to missionaries, and rewards to converts, although they administered these in slightly different ways.

What remains to be determined is whether the different strategies of conversion employed by secular rulers and missionaries created different types of popular response. This will be discussed in section 2.5.

2.2. The Spread of Christianity within Society.

Christianity was brought to England, Frisia, and Saxony mainly via kings and aristocracy, and it was from these groups that the religion spread to the wider population. One reason put forward for this 'top-down conversion', is the perceived nature of 'Germanic' kingship. It has been argued that there was hardly a distinction between religious and secular matters in pre-Christian

society. The ruler has been seen to be the leader of both the cultic and the political parts of society, appearing as the intermediary between his people and the gods. This meant that the people's well being was seen to rest upon the king's relationship with the gods. Such a ruler would have been in a powerful position to introduce Christianity, and it could be argued that when he was baptised, the population felt strongly obliged to follow his example.²⁹ The existence of a pre-Christian sacral kingship is supported by the ease with which baptised rulers took on their role as Christian kings, whose powers were seen to be bestowed directly from God. The tendency by underkings to follow the religious decisions of their overking also suggests a link between pre-Christian rulers and their religious custom. There is, however, no explicit evidence of this type of kingship in the sources. Indeed, according to Bede, Coifi was the pre-Christian high priest in the court of King Edwin.³⁰ This suggests that the role of priest and ruler may also have been separate. The concept of pre-Christian sacral kingship must therefore be discussed with some caution.

The strong bonds of loyalty that seem to have operated at all levels of Germanic society could provide another reason why the acceptance of Christianity by the wider population followed the baptism of their king. The Anglo-Saxon kings appear to have taken important decisions at meetings with their advisers, i.e. the most influential members of their kingdoms. This was presumably a prudent step to minimise the risk of rebellions. The kings however appear to have held very powerful positions. The advisers were reliant upon the kings' goodwill and were thus rather likely to concur with the kings' wishes.³¹ The kings' followers presumably had their own loyal retainers, who would follow the policies of their lord. In a similar fashion, the bonds of loyalty must have trickled down to the lower sections of society.

According to Bede, both King Edwin of Northumbria and King Sigeberht of Essex held council meetings at which they proposed that their kingdoms should become Christian. The kings were successful, and both meetings resulted in the joint baptisms of the kings and their advisers. It is likely that the people in the countryside were slower to comply with the decisions of the king, since the quality of their lives did not directly depend on his benevolence. Bede's account of Coifi's speech at the court of King Edwin could serve as an indication of the possible impact of the king's favour on the decision-making of the advisers. In his capacity of high priest, Coifi claimed that no one had served the old gods better than himself, but that despite this, there were 'many' to whom Edwin showed 'greater favour', and who received 'greater honours'. This

demonstrated, according to Coifi, that the pre-Christian gods were without power, and he therefore urged the council to accept Christianity. It has thus been argued that, if even a high priest could be moved to receive baptism in order to receive favours from the king, other members of the king's following must have been as likely, if not more, to be baptised for this reason.³² The strength and importance of the bonds of loyalty can be further demonstrated. Mercia remained a non-Christian kingdom until the death of King Penda. During his lifetime, Penda had allowed missionaries to preach in his territory, although he himself had refused to accept Christianity. According to Bede, Penda also stated that he 'hated and despised those who, after they had accepted the Christian faith, were clearly lacking in the works of faith'. If these were the circumstances under which missionaries had to work, it is not surprising that they were unable to persuade the king's followers to be baptised.³³

Arnold Angenendt has pointed out that there were surprisingly many sons of Christian kings and heirs to kingdoms, who remained non-Christian, although their fathers had been baptised. Some examples include Eadbald, son of Aethelberht, and the sons of Redwald. Angenendt saw this as a measure of 'dynastic policy'. In the case of a successful non-Christian rebellion, the unbaptised son would constitute a suitable candidate for the throne.³⁴

The acceptance of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy is strengthened by Patrick Wormald's interpretation of *Beowulf*. He pointed out that the 'pagan Germanic gods' are absent from this poem, and that we instead find 'pagan Germanic heroes' and descriptions of their heroic life style. Wormald argued that these elements, which previous scholars have interpreted as 'lingering paganism', should be seen as the aristocracy's need to preserve the heroic past of their ancestors.³⁵

Also in Frisia, members of the nobility seem to have been among the first to be baptised, and evidence suggests that they influenced the acceptance of Christianity among the wider population. Wurssing, who worked as the aide of Willibrord, appears to have played this part. It is reported that he was 'acceptable to all the people', and that large numbers of Frisians received baptism because of his example. Moreover, several members of Wurssing's family became priests and took active part in evangelization. It thus seems clear that the nobility also bolstered the spread of Christianity by providing recruits for the native clergy.³⁶ Decisions regarding what attitude to take towards the Christian religion and its representatives seem to have been made at collective gatherings. After Willibrord's reported destruction of the pre-Christian shrine on the island of

Heligoland, he is said to have been taken to the king. His fate was then determined by the casting of lots at what seems to have been a local assembly.³⁷

If a Saxon chieftain accepted Christianity, it appears that the religion would be imposed onto all members of society. According to Bede, the White and the Black Hewalds were killed by Saxon 'pagans', so that they would be prevented from approaching the chieftain. The Saxons thus appear to have feared that the missionaries would be able to convince the chieftain to receive baptism. This suggests that, at this stage, the nobility held friendlier attitudes towards Christianity than the 'less elevated Saxons', and were thus more likely to agree to be baptised. This is supported by the statement that those who killed the Hewalds were punished by Saxon nobles.³⁸ Moreover, after the baptism of the defeated rebel Widukind in 785, missionaries were able to spread Christianity among the Saxon population, at a much larger scale than ever before. The Saxon chieftains were presumably more useful to the missionaries when they had been baptised, than if they had been simply killed by the Franks.³⁹

The evidence presented here suggests that the decisions whether to be baptised or to oppose Christianity were made collectively at all levels of society. It has already been stated that the concept of individual Christian faith was not widespread at this time. The role of the individual during stage 1 and 2 of the conversion will be further discussed in section 4.2. Here it will suffice to point to the communal characteristics of early medieval Christianity described above and also to the collective nature of pre-Christian society. The decisions regarding baptism were thus presumably taken on co-operative rather than individual bases.⁴⁰ This, together with the bonds of loyalty that existed within Germanic society, could explain why decisions taken at lower levels in society often seem to have followed the line taken by their leader. It is likely that the spread of Christianity was slower in the lower layers of society, where the population was not directly linked to their ruler.

Evidence however indicates that it also happened that a few people accepted Christianity before the baptism of their principal leader. Bearing in mind the arguments given above, it seems likely that also many of these decisions were communal, although taken by smaller groups in society. Some possible examples of Christians in Anglo-Saxon England before the 'official' introduction of Christianity will here be given. According to the Life of Columba, there were two Christian Englishmen at Iona before the death of Columba in 597. James Campbell has moreover pointed out that both archaeological and literary sources show that close contacts existed between Christian Franks and

Saxons and the Anglo-Saxons.⁴¹ The fifth-century boy's grave at Long Wittenham (Berkshire) is of interest in this context. This grave was east-west orientated and contained a stoup with biblical scenes. It could thus be seen to be a burial of an early Christian Anglo-Saxon. The boy may however also have belonged to a Christian Frankish family living in England.⁴² Possible presence of Christians before the 'official' introduction of Christianity has also been seen in the *Hwicce* of Worcester. The first Anglo-Saxon bishop arrived in this area in around 680. In the Anglo-Saxon cemetery of Beckford, there are however four graves of sixth-century date, which are east-west orientated. The authors of the archaeological report pointed out that St. Helen's church at Worcester seems to have been of Roman or British origin. They also stated that Worcester may have been an important Christian centre in the time of the Beckford cemetery.⁴³ The east-west aligned graves could thus indicate surviving Romano-British Christianity. They could also indicate that Christian influences from other areas were present in Worcester at this time.

Nevertheless, the overall evidence suggests that in most cases Christianity was virtually imposed on to the population by the leading members of society. The baptisms of kings and chieftains played a key role for the spread of Christianity to the wider population. This seems to be the case in all the geographical areas, even though local rulers were baptised under very different circumstances. The evidence thus suggests that indirect compulsion (*indirekte Nötigung*) was a significant factor in most conversions, at all levels of society.⁴⁴ The distinction between forced and voluntary conversion is therefore not as sharp as it might, at first sight, appear to be.

2.3. Missionary Methods.

The sources from England, Frisia, and Saxony, contain many descriptions of mass baptisms that were carried out soon after the missionaries' arrival in an area. The evidence suggests that in order to receive baptism, converts were only required to recite the baptismal formula. This included the renunciation of the devil and the declaration of faith in God and the Holy Trinity. In a baptismal formula from Saxony, which was used during the reign of Charlemagne, the subjects were required to renounce not only the devil, but also *Tunaer*, *Woden*, and *Saxnote*. There seem to have been occasions when even less than a baptismal formula was required. Boniface complained that there were priests who performed baptism, without first questioning their

subjects about their belief in the articles of the Creed. One reason for the lack of pre-baptismal instruction, was presumably insufficient manpower.⁴⁵ According to Gregory I, Augustine baptised more than 10,000 people on Christmas Day 597. We are told that Paulinus spent 36 days at Yeavinger, during which he was constantly occupied with preaching and baptising. Boniface is reported to have baptised thousands, both in Hesse and Frisia. Although the numbers of people in such accounts have presumably been exaggerated, it is clear that there were few missionaries in relation to the population in these areas.⁴⁶

During the reign of Charlemagne, the Saxons were forced to receive baptism as part of their acceptance of Frankish lordship. Forced mass baptisms took place at Lippespringe, after Charlemagne's defeat of the Saxons in 776, and also the following year at Paderborn. Moreover, in 782/5 the First Saxon Capitulary was issued, which made the refusal of baptism a capital crime. The enforcement of such measures did not leave any time for pre-baptismal instruction. Alcuin referred several times to the 'failure of the mission in Saxony', which he claimed to be 'due to hasty baptism of pagans who knew nothing of the faith'.⁴⁷ Of the few recorded cases of more personal instruction, almost all involve rulers or members of the aristocracy. Anglo-Saxon kings, such as Aethelberht, Edwin, and Cynegils, received instruction from missionaries, who spent time at the royal courts. Willibrord instructed members of the important Wurssing family in Frisia. In these areas, it thus seems to have been possible for highly appointed men and women to gain a deeper knowledge of Christianity before their baptism. The local rulers in Saxony were forcibly baptised, in much the same way as the rest of the population. Widukind was baptised as part of his peace agreement with Charlemagne. Hessi, chieftain of the Ostphalians, surrendered to the Franks and received baptism shortly afterwards.⁴⁸ It is unlikely that Christian instruction played any significant part in these and other similar cases.

Indeed, the overall significance of preaching and instruction can be put into question. Richard E. Sullivan has pointed out that preaching was emphasised by medieval writers, and features in almost every account of missionary history.⁴⁹ When Pope Vitalian wrote to King Oswiu of Northumbria, he promised to select a suitable man as archbishop of Canterbury, who could 'root out' the old religious custom 'by his preaching and with the help of the word of God'.⁵⁰ However, as we saw above, both rulers and the wider population often appear to have accepted baptism for other reasons than religious

conviction. It was also pointed out that missionaries were few in relation to the population. Preaching is thus unlikely to have been of decisive importance during the early stages of conversion.

Despite this, the contents of extant missionary sermons need to be discussed. This is not an altogether straightforward task. Only a small number of sermons have been preserved, and these are later representations, allegedly delivered to non-Christian audiences. One of the most common type of extant sermon is that which aimed to convince non-Christians of the powerlessness of their gods. For these purposes the missionaries could exploit the fact that the old religious custom lacked anything that could be likened to the Christian theology. This strategy was recommended to Boniface by Bishop Daniel of Winchester. According to Daniel, the missionaries should at first not question the idea that the non-Christian gods had been created through intercourse between male and female. It would then be possible for the missionaries to argue that these gods were nothing but ordinary humans. The missionaries should also try to convince the non-Christians that the universe had a beginning. If they refused to agree, the missionaries should ask them how their gods could have brought an existing universe into their power. The aim of these and similar arguments, was to make the non-Christians confused about their own religious custom. Not until this goal had been achieved, should they be given the Christian message. In many of the extant sermons from the Continent, missionaries also directly attacked non-Christian gods. In Hucbald's version of Lebuin's sermon, non-Christians were told that 'not one of them [the pagan gods] could be of help to itself or to anyone else'. Willehad tried to persuade his listeners that it was 'silly and vain to seek help from stones and to hope for the solace of help from deaf and mute images'.⁵¹

Another theme in missionary sermons appears to have been the exaltation of the power of the Christian god. Daniel recommended that missionaries should mention that initially all peoples had been 'pagan', but that the majority were now Christian. The superiority of the Christian god should be further demonstrated by pointing out that the 'pagans' lived in 'the frozen lands of the north', while the Christians lived in countries that were 'rich in oil and wine'. In his alleged sermon to King Radbod, Willibrord claimed that 'there is no God except the one God, who created the heavens, the earth, and the sea and everything which is in them'. Sullivan argued that this is 'a fair example of the manner in which the Christian God was presented to the pagans in a missionary sermon'. Lebuin told the Saxons 'that they would receive greater benefits than

they ever had known before if they would accept the Christian God'.⁵² It has been argued that the pre-Christian religious custom was based around obtaining material benefits from the gods. It is therefore possible that such statements proved to be helpful for missionaries in the spread of Christianity.⁵³

There is also some evidence that missionaries attempted to explain concepts of Christian theology. Sermons delivered in Frisia and Saxony include themes such as sin, baptism, and the Trinity. This type of sermon, however, does not seem to have been a matter of great significance to missionaries. One reason could be that it must have been difficult for missionaries to explain the Christian teachings to those who were unfamiliar with the religion. It was presumably easier to attack the old religious custom.⁵⁴ This ties in with the idea of baptism as the beginning rather than the end result of a period of preaching. Another reason was the level of education among medieval clerics. They were not expected to be able to recite and explain more than the Lord's Prayer and the Creed.⁵⁵

The other missionary methods that were employed in Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony will now be discussed. The destruction of non-Christian shrines will first be treated.

According to Gregory I, the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons would be more successful if the population could continue to visit their old shrines. He therefore instructed the Roman missionaries not to destroy temples, but instead re-consecrate them as churches. Idols, on the other hand, should be demolished. The Law of King Eorcenbert of Kent also ordered the destruction of idols. There are no accounts of missionaries in England destroying either temples or idols, and it is therefore difficult to establish whether they followed the instructions given by Gregory and Eorcenbert.⁵⁶ Brian Hope-Taylor has suggested that the presumed pre-Christian cult building at Yeavinger (Northumberland) was converted for Christian use by Paulinus. The evidence in support of this theory is however meagre. The most substantial argument seems to be that three pillars inside the building, which presumably had some function in the pre-Christian cult, appear to have been removed at some point in time.⁵⁷ An example from the conversion of Mexico could also be of interest in this context. Here, all kinds of Indian shrines were systematically destroyed. The destruction of idols was however seen as particularly important. The reason was that idols could be hidden and used in private ceremonies.⁵⁸

In Saxony and Frisia the destruction of shrines connected to traditional cult practices seems to have been a significant feature in the conversion. The

medieval sources provide plenty of examples of missionaries performing such acts. Some famous examples include the time when Willibrord destroyed the shrine at Walichrum, and when Boniface cut down the oak at Geismar. Bishop Albericus of Utrecht, who was in charge of the Frisian mission, ordered his missionaries to 'carry out a general program of destruction of pagan centres of worship'. Liudger is consequently reported to have destroyed many idols in the Frisian district. Richard Sullivan argued that such 'carefully staged' desecrations 'served the missionaries as a dramatic means of convincing the pagans of the powerlessness of their gods to avenge the Christian violators'. Sullivan added that these acts also tied into the missionary preachings of the superiority of the Christian god.⁵⁹

The Frankish armies also appear to have followed this policy of destruction. Charles Martel's forces are reported to have burnt many Frisian shrines during their campaign of 734, and Charlemagne himself directed the obliteration of the Saxon shrine Irminsul. Such measures were seen as successful by missionaries, who frequently exhorted Carolingian rulers 'to root out paganism with the sword, destroying every sign and symbol of the worship of pagan gods'.⁶⁰ The destruction of non-Christian shrines thus appears to have formed part of the military conquest. Evidence suggests that if missionaries carried out such acts on their own, they would have put themselves in extremely dangerous situations. Cultic sites and objects are thus most likely to have been destroyed by armies alone, or by armies accompanied by missionaries. It must however be pointed out that some caution must be exercised in relation to all the medieval descriptions referred to above. It is possible that these were derived from, or influenced by, biblical accounts of the destruction of shrines and idols.⁶¹

The erection of monasteries was also significant for the spread of Christianity. Also in this sphere, the involvement of secular rulers is clearly seen. King Alhfrith of Bernicia and Deira granted thirty hides of land for the foundation of a monastery at Ripon. King Wulfhere of Mercia is another such example. He donated fifty hides of land so that the monastery at Barrow in Lindsey could be erected.⁶² It has already been pointed out that Pepin, Carloman, and Charlemagne enabled the foundation and running of many monasteries, including Echternach, Fulda, Hersfeld, Kitzingen, and Ohrdruf.⁶³ These houses were established for the 'officially promoted' conversion, and also to colonise new land. Charlemagne, in particular, made use of the monasteries for the expansion of his powers. By 775, he had taken control of all the most important monasteries between Worms and Hesse.⁶⁴

Monasteries formed permanent bases for missionaries, and many became important for the spread of Christianity to the surrounding countryside. When Cedd had been consecrated missionary bishop of the East Saxons, he established the monasteries at *Ythancaestir* (Bradwell-on-Sea) and Tilbury to further Christianity among the population. Bede reported that both Aidan and Cuthbert travelled in the areas around Lindisfarne, preaching and baptising. Other important monasteries which were founded as missionary bases include Nursling, Hanbury, and Fladbury.⁶⁵ Willibrord utilised the monastery at Utrecht as his base for the evangelization among the south-eastern Frisians. Fritzlar, Ohrdruf, and Fulda are further examples of monasteries that began as missionary stations. The importance of these houses is further demonstrated by the fact that many became centres of episcopal sees. The English bishoprics of Hexham, Lichfield, Worcester, and Leicester all began in this way, as did the Saxon bishoprics of Bremen, Münster, and Paderborn.⁶⁶

There is strong evidence to suggest that missionaries kept in close contact with their bases, while they were away on their missions. This seems to have been the case for those who remained relatively close to their monasteries, such as Willibrord and Willehad in Frisia, but also for those who ventured further afield. When Liudger was sent on a mission to Dokkum, provisions were made so that he could return periodically to Utrecht. Moreover, in c. 791/2, when Liudger left to supervise the mission based in Münster, he remained in charge of his missionary area in Frisia. These links of communication meant that the missionaries could be supervised and their work co-ordinated. In this way the uniformity of their teachings among the non-Christians could be better ensured.⁶⁷

The early monasteries were erected in places where they could provide the best possible support for missionaries. The majority of monasteries in England, Frisia, and Saxony were situated in places that were either defended, or defensible. River crossings, elevated sites, and earlier fortifications were common such locations. Burgh Castle and Breedon-on-the-Hill were constructed inside earlier forts, while Monkwearmouth was erected at the mouth of the river Wear. The monastery of Utrecht was an old fortress. Fritzlar and Erfurt were both built on elevated sites. Fulda was located in a very strong strategic position, on a hilltop by a river crossing. According to the Life of Sturm, this location was chosen by Sturm after the advice of Boniface. Sturm had at first established a hermitage at Hersfeld. Boniface, however, told him to leave this place, on account of the 'ferocious' Saxons who lived nearby.

Instead, Boniface advised Sturm to 'look for a spot farther away, deeper in the woods', where he could live and work without putting his life in danger. Sturm searched for a long time for a site that would satisfy Boniface, before he found the place where Fulda was finally erected. This example demonstrates the importance of monasteries as retreats outside potentially dangerous non-Christian territories. The monastery of Echternach further illustrates this point. Both Willibrord and Willehad spent time there, when Frisian rebels had driven them away from their missionary areas.⁶⁸

The missionary methods, in which the involvement of secular rulers does not appear to have played a decisive role, will now be considered.

Missionaries brought many skills and objects that were previously unknown to the local population. The majority of people in England, Frisia, and Saxony supported themselves by agriculture and herding. They lived in sparsely populated villages, which mostly consisted of wooden huts. Novelties brought by missionaries are thus likely to have attracted their interest and attention, and could in this way benefit the missionaries in their work. When Augustine and his companions met Aethelberht on the Island of Thanet, they carried a silver cross, and a panel decorated with the image of God. Lebuin preached to the Saxons dressed as a priest. He also bore a cross and a copy of the Gospels. The missionaries thus seem to have made deliberate use of Christian objects at their meetings with non-Christians. They also seem to have been aware of the effects such items could have on the non-Christian population. Boniface asked Abbess Eadburga to send him a copy of the Epistle of St. Peter, decorated with letters of gold, in order that 'a reverence and love of the Holy Scripture may be impressed on the minds of the heathens'.⁶⁹

The missionaries also introduced the population to skills and objects that were not directly connected with Christianity. Many of these could be seen at the monasteries, and clearly impressed contemporaries. The monastic buildings, constructed according to the new architectural styles, provide one such example. The church at Monkwearmouth was built in the Roman style, by stonemasons and glass-makers from Gaul. King Nechtan of the Picts asked Abbot Ceolfrith for architects who could build him a similar church. The economic life of the monasteries was another important feature which could impress the local population. The monasteries were successful agricultural institutions. They often used new land and also introduced different crops, such as the vineyard planted at Fritzlar. There were also workshops where new technical skills, such as metal working and milling, were practised. The

accounts of Wilfrid's successful fishing, although contestable, may provide a simplified model of what benefits missionaries could gain from the introduction of new skills. We are told that Wilfrid taught some starving people how to fish with nets. He moreover caught plenty of fish, which he distributed among the hungry. Following this, he found them willing to listen to his preaching.⁷⁰

Learning and education were also important features that arrived with the missionaries. The Roman missionaries seem to have brought a large number of books to England. Benedict Biscop created an impressive book collection at Jarrow and Monkwearmouth. According to the Life of Boniface, many holy men came to Boniface's aid, in particular readers and writers. Formal schools were established in conjunction with the monasteries, where sons of the nobility often received their education. Many of these schools also became important centres for the training of new missionaries. Aidan founded a school for boys at Lindisfarne, where the future bishops Cedd and Chad were educated. Willibrord brought back thirty boys from Denmark, who received instruction and baptism.⁷¹ These boys may have been intended to become missionaries to the Danish kingdom.

In order to be able to preach to, and interact with, the non-Christian population, it was necessary for missionaries to have a clear grasp of the local language. This was evidently a problem for Augustine and his companions. On their way to England, they wished to turn back to Rome, because they were afraid of going 'to a barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving nation, whose language they did not even understand'. Gregory I encouraged them to carry on, and advised them to use interpreters. The missionaries followed this advice, and brought Frankish companions to their meeting with King Aethelberht. These interpreters must have played a vital part in the missionary work until the Romans themselves had mastered the English language.⁷² The Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Frisia and Saxony do not seem to have experienced problems of understanding the local languages. The Frisian and Saxon tongues were probably very similar to Old English, and thus relatively easy for the Anglo-Saxons to learn. This was presumably one of the reasons why the Anglo-Saxon missionaries chose to evangelise in these areas in particular.⁷³ The importance of adequate language skills is demonstrated by Boniface's concern with this matter. He refused to evangelise among non-Germanic tribes, on the grounds that he did not know their language. When the young missionary Gregory wished to go out and evangelise, Boniface first made sure that Gregory was able to preach in the local tongue.⁷⁴

The lifestyle and skills of the missionaries must also have been important for the spread of Christianity. Hagiographies provide us with many descriptions of the humble behaviour of saints. Although it is important not to take such descriptions too literally, missionaries were probably concerned to set good examples to both non-Christians and the newly baptised. They are therefore likely to have tried to adhere as much as possible to the Christian lifestyle that they were teaching. According to Bede, Aidan led a life of strong self-discipline and austerity at Lindisfarne. He travelled almost exclusively by foot and he stopped to speak to everyone he met, rich or poor. Aidan influenced ‘men of all ranks by his humility and devotion’. He is moreover reported to have been ‘intimate with the Northumbrian kings and nobles, and honoured by churchmen in the south’. Willibrord is also reported to have observed a strict Christian personal life. We are moreover told that he ‘provided for the welfare of beggars’. Liudger is said to have invited both the poor and the rich to share his meals during his travels.⁷⁵ Such acts of charity must have played an important part in creating good relationships with the local population, and must also have given Christianity a more favourable image.

An example from the conversion of the Aztec Indians can illustrate how the behaviour of individual clerics could play a significant role for the population’s attitude towards Christianity, regardless of the general context of the conversion. After some time of missionary work, the Franciscans realised the importance of understanding the Aztec culture. These monks therefore learnt the local languages and also studied Indian history. The Franciscans moreover led very austere Christian lives, which were very similar to the Aztec ideals. They walked barefoot, wore torn habits, and practised self-mortification. As a result, the Aztec held the Franciscans in high esteem. Despite the violent Spanish conquest, good interpersonal relationships could thus be created between these two groups. Later on, the Franciscans were replaced by secular clerics. These men held completely different attitudes towards the Indians, and the majority never learnt to speak the native languages. The Aztecs thus felt that they were treated with contempt and their church attendance declined rapidly.⁷⁶

This section has demonstrated that one of the most striking variances between the geographical areas appears to have been the different types of baptism that were employed. However, in all these areas, the missionaries’ principal aim was to baptise the population as quickly as possible. There does not therefore seem to have been much time for instruction before any type of

baptism. This further supports the idea that the distinction between forced and voluntary conversion was rather blurred. It is however possible, that rulers and aristocracy in England and Frisia received more instruction than the Saxon chieftains. Another difference between the different geographical areas is seen in the role of the monasteries. In Frisia and Saxony monasteries were used as safe retreats from violent attacks from non-Christians. The monasteries in England do not seem to have been required for this purpose. The dangers of non-Christian attacks in Frisia and Saxony meant that the choice of a suitable site became a matter of extreme importance.

There also seems to have been some variations in the methods of preaching used in the different areas. Bishop Daniel recommended that missionaries should conduct calm discussions with the non-Christians in order to gradually convince them of the supremacy of the Christian god. The missionaries in Frisia and Saxony seem to have used a slightly more aggressive approach. In the extant sermons they directly attacked the non-Christian gods, which might have left less space for communication between missionaries and non-Christians. The more aggressive approach employed in Frisia and Saxony can also be seen in the systematic destruction of the non-Christian shrines. This does not seem to have been a feature of the methods of conversion that were employed in England.

It must yet again be emphasised that preaching does not appear to have played a significant role during the early stages conversion in any geographical area. Instead other elements of the Christian culture seem to have been of greater importance. This was clearly expressed by Richard Sullivan, who stated that the missionary 'in his role of farmer, builder, and technician was perhaps more impressive to the pagan than was the missionary as a preacher of a new religion'.⁷⁷ Naturally, these elements would have played different roles for different groups in society. Some are likely to have been of decisive importance for the baptism of rulers. Through Christianity, rulers could gain new symbols of power, which they could actively use to their advantage. For the Anglo-Saxon kings, one particular benefit must have been the ability to create their own written legislation. The connection between law and religion can be demonstrated by the Anglo-Saxon charters, which 'continue to *look* like objects of reverence rather than record'.⁷⁸ The situation would have been different in Frisia and Saxony, where rulers were forced to accept the laws imposed by the Franks. Rulers and local aristocracy in all the geographical areas could, however, benefit from other aspects of the Christian culture. These may thus

also have played a direct role for the acceptance of baptism by the leading layers in society. One such example is the ability to erect impressive buildings in the form of churches and monasteries. Another example is access to the learning and education brought by the clergy. Such gains could be one explanation as to why some of the elite in Frisia and Saxony were supportive of the Franks.

For the wider population the situation would however have been different. They would not have been able to make active use of most of the novelties that arrived with Christianity. They were not wealthy enough to erect stone buildings, nor would education have been available to them. Some other aspects, such as new technology and new crops could nevertheless improve their standard of living. These novelties may therefore have given the population a more positive view of Christianity. They are however unlikely to have been as significant for the general population as they were for the leading layers in society. It must yet again be underlined that Christianity was virtually imposed on the wider population in all the geographical areas. They would therefore, sooner or later, have had to accept baptism, with or without these benefits.

2.4. The Role of the Papacy.

The papacy played an active part in the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England. It served as a provider of missionaries, and as a source of advice and encouragement. The first Roman mission, headed by Augustine, was sent by Gregory I in 596. Augustine requested reinforcements and a second mission was dispatched, in which Mellitus and Paulinus took part. Pope Honorius I (625-38) sent Bishop Birinus, who evangelised among the West Saxons. These Roman missions, together with the missions of the Irish, became a major force in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Joseph Lynch has pointed out that the 'Anglo-Saxon church... was the first regional church outside Italy to acknowledge in continuing, concrete ways' the religious authority of Rome.⁷⁹ However, as shown above, missionaries were dependent on the support of the Anglo-Saxon kings in order to spread Christianity on a wider scale.

In the later part of the seventh century, Anglo-Saxon missionaries took the initiative to evangelise among the non-Christian peoples of Frisia and Saxony. The earliest missionaries in these areas worked independently of the papacy. In 692, Willibrord travelled to Rome to ask the pope for 'permission and

approval' of his mission, which he consequently received. This was the starting point for the close relationship that emerged between the papacy and the Anglo-Saxon missionaries. This bond was strengthened during the first half of the eighth century, particularly in the time of Boniface. The papacy now served the vital function of a 'missionary agency', giving overall guidance to the 'pliant' missionaries. During this time, the Frisian missionaries remained in close contact with relatives and acquaintances in England. Through these connections they received valuable support, such as advice and recruits, for which they might otherwise have relied on the papacy. Despite this, the co-operation of the papacy remained important to the missionaries.⁸⁰ It must be stressed, however, that it was not as vital for the spread of Christianity as the support of the Frankish kings.

Contacts were also established between the Frankish kings and the papacy, which led to the alliance of 751. At this time, Pippin the Short was in need of papal approval for his overthrow of the Merovingian king. The pope, in turn, needed Frankish support against the Lombards, who were threatening to invade Rome. Thus Pippin, on behalf of himself and his successors, swore an oath of loyalty to the papacy. Pope Stephen II (752-7) consequently came to Gaul where he reanointed Pippin and the Carolingian dynasty as kings of the Franks. From this time, the papacy became a permanent feature in the western world. The Carolingians were however unwilling to give up their power over ecclesiastical matters. As their power grew, they took increasing charge of these matters at the expense of the papacy. The effects of this strategy are clearly seen in the evangelization process, where the culmination was reached when Charlemagne assumed full responsibility for all aspects of missionary activity. The papacy's role in Frisia and Saxony was thus reduced to lending its support to the Carolingian joint goal of conquest and conversion. Pope Hadrian I frequently congratulated Charlemagne for his 'immense victory' in Saxony, and did on no occasion imply that the papacy had played any part in the conversion.⁸¹

The following sections will discuss the different types of support provided by the papacy, and how these could benefit missionaries in their efforts to spread Christianity.

During the pontificate of Gregory I, the tradition that the papacy alone could create archdioceses began to be established. From this time, archbishops also had to receive a pallium from the papacy, before they could carry out their duties. This made the involvement of the papacy essential during the first stage

of the establishment of a new territorial church. However, once a kingdom had received an archiepiscopal see, rulers tended to take charge over the further development of the ecclesiastical organisation. This was done through the appointment of archbishops who were obedient and loyal to the ruler.⁸² Missionaries thus became more dependent on secular rulers rather than the papacy for the foundation of new dioceses.

Gregory I planned to create a systematic diocesan network in England. Augustine was made bishop and Gregory gave him authority to consecrate new bishops.⁸³ The pope instructed Augustine to found two metropolitan sees, one in London and the other in York, each with twelve dependent bishoprics. During the time of Augustine, Canterbury was founded as the archiepiscopal see and only two more sees, London and Rochester, were created. The cause of this deviation from Gregory's instructions was probably Aethelberht's restricted powers over Essex. It is possible that Aethelberht intended to make London his ecclesiastical and political capital, but that his powers over Essex were not strong enough to carry this through. The foundations of other episcopal sees also seem to have been made by overkings and their lesser kings, in locations suitable to them. Dorchester-on-Thames (Wessex) was created jointly by the overking Oswald of Northumbria and his subject king Cynegils. King Oswald also founded the episcopal see at Lindisfarne.⁸⁴

The first episcopal see in Frisia was established at Utrecht in 696, and Willibrord was consecrated bishop by Pope Sergius I. According to Bede, this consecration took place at the request of Pepin. It has however been suggested that it was the papacy who insisted on this, and the papacy's involvement could thus be greater than that claimed by Bede.⁸⁵ Charlemagne divided Saxony into bishoprics, according to his own wishes and without any involvement of the papacy. Bremen was the first see to be founded (785), soon followed by others, such as Paderborn, Verden, Osnabrück, and Münster. These bishoprics were placed under the existing archiepiscopal sees of Cologne and Mainz. Pope Leo III's presence at the dedication of the episcopal church at Paderborn could suggest that the papacy had been involved in the foundation of this see. However, the account describing the proceedings makes it clear that it was created by royal orders, independently of the papacy. Leo seems to have been present at the ceremony merely since it coincided with a papal visit to Saxony.⁸⁶ It is thus clear that it was the Franks who created the new episcopal sees in Saxony.

The papacy issued letters which approved the missionaries' enterprises, and placed these men under its protection. Gregory I asked prominent figures in Frankia to protect and support Augustine on his way to England. As a result, Augustine received Frankish help, which presumably improved his prospects for success in England. Aethelberht was probably more willing to receive and listen to missionaries who had been helped by his wife's kinsmen.⁸⁷ Missionaries in Frisia and Saxony, such as Willibrord, Boniface, and Sturm, were also placed under papal protection. Furthermore, in 722, Pope Gregory II issued a letter to Charles Martel asking him to protect Boniface and help him in all his needs. In response to this, the Frankish king issued a letter which stated that Boniface should 'remain unmolested and undisturbed' wherever he went.⁸⁸ Papal recognition could thus help missionaries to gain royal backing. This, in turn, may have made it easier to attract the support of local dignitaries. However, since the Carolingians saw conversion as a means of furthering their own political goals, it is likely that the missionaries would have gained their support even without the prompting of the papacy. This was the case of Willibrord, who obtained the help of Pepin two years prior to his first contacts with the papacy.

The papacy also issued letters of encouragement to Anglo-Saxon kings and their queens to promote the spread of Christianity. Examples include Gregory I's letters to Aethelberht and Bertha, and Boniface V's letters to King Edwin and Ethelburga. Boniface's letter to Edwin was an attempt to convince the king to accept baptism. As shown above, Edwin's delayed baptism was most likely due to Redwald's overkingship. It is therefore doubtful that the papacy could have greatly influenced Edwin in this matter. Letters to those who were already baptised, such as Aethelberht, Bertha, and Ethelburga, were probably more effective. These letters were often accompanied by expensive gifts. Richard P. Abels stated that in Anglo-Saxon society, a gift 'bore a value beyond its simple market price'. The acceptance of a gift meant that the recipient became indebted to the donor, and 'morally obliged himself to requite the favor'.⁸⁹ A similar situation may have been created when an Anglo-Saxon queen or king accepted a gift from the papacy. It is therefore possible that they experienced a kind of moral obligation to listen and follow the advice of the pope. This may have resulted in increased support of the missionaries in England.

Spiritual encouragement and advice was provided by the papacy to missionaries in all the geographical areas. The papacy was of crucial importance in this matter, since this could not be offered by secular rulers. Gregory I kept

in contact with his missionaries in England until the end of his pontificate. He gave Augustine advice on Christian practices and also warned him not to boast of his achievements. Succeeding popes, such as Boniface V and Honorius I, maintained the contact with England through their letters to the archbishops of Canterbury.⁹⁰ There is little evidence of papal spiritual guidance of missionaries in Frisia. The correspondence of Boniface is the most informative, and demonstrates that Rome provided him with a great deal of support and advice. This covered a variety of matters, such as methods of evangelization and the correct procedure of Christian practices. There is no surviving evidence of papal advice to missionaries active in Saxony. The only known letter which contains any papal advice regarding the Saxons is a reply to a letter from Charlemagne. It is however plausible that Frisian and Saxon missionaries received advice directly from the papacy during their many visits to Rome. Missionaries such as Willibrord, Wilfrid, and Boniface are all known to have made this journey. Furthermore, Willehad and Liudger are reported to have received papal encouragement in Rome, when they had been driven away from their missionary areas by the non-Christian population. In this way, the papacy was able to exert a small degree of influence over the evangelization in Saxony. It must however be pointed out that neither Willehad nor Liudger returned to missionary work until this was ordered by Charlemagne.⁹¹

The papacy presented missionaries with certain types of material support. Gregory I is reported to have sent Augustine and his companions 'all such things as were generally necessary for the worship and ministry of the Church', including sacred vessels, altar cloths, vestments, and relics. This type of support was clearly beneficial to missionaries. Royal gifts in terms of land and churches were, however, ultimately of greater importance. Gregory II urged Boniface to report to Rome, if he lacked any means to carry out his work. This demonstrates the papacy's willingness to contribute to the Frisian mission. According to written sources, Rome also supplied missionaries with relics, which could be used for consecration of churches. As mentioned above, the Frisian missionaries also received material support from Anglo-Saxon England, such as books and vestments. The most vital material support was however provided by the Carolingian rulers and nobility, both in Frisia and Saxony.⁹²

This section has demonstrated that missionaries in all the geographical areas were in contact with the papacy, although the degree of their dependence on the papacy varied significantly. The importance of papal support was, to a great extent, determined by the power relationship between secular rulers and the

popes. Missionaries in England were thus more reliant on the papacy than those in Frisia, while it was of very little importance to missionaries in Saxony. In all the geographical areas, however, missionaries were ultimately dependent on the help of secular rulers.

2.5. Resistance and Opposition to Christianity.

Judging from the evidence in the medieval sources, the most frequent response by non-Christian rulers and peoples to strategies of conversion appears to have been baptism and acceptance of Christianity. Many such cases have been discussed above. The widespread adoption of Christianity in a society was however not instantaneous. The evidence strongly suggests that the religion had to be put through periods of trial at different levels of society, before it could be accepted. The attempts by rulers and missionaries to introduce Christianity were often opposed by different non-Christian factions. Their opposition ranged from rather passive and peaceful resistance to reactions of a more violent nature.⁹³

Resistance to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England seems to have been relatively peaceful, with occasional incidents of violence. It was demonstrated above that King Penda of Mercia refused to be baptised and that he did not show any favour to those of his subjects who did. There is however no evidence that the missionaries who were allowed to preach in his kingdom suffered any form of violent treatment. Further examples of at least seemingly peaceful opposition to Christianity can be found in Bede's Ecclesiastical History. King Redwald is reported to have abandoned Christianity after the death of Aethelberht in 616. We are also told that the East Saxons returned to their old religious custom after an outbreak of plague. In neither case is there any evidence of persecution of missionaries, ill treatment of Christians, or destruction of churches.⁹⁴ The most obvious examples of more forceful resistance against Christianity are the murders of King Eorpwald of East Anglia and King Sigeberht of Essex. When these deeds had been accomplished, both kingdoms are reported to have returned to their old religious custom. Other examples of forceful resistance, although of less violent nature, are the expulsions of Bishop Mellitus of London and Bishop Justus of Rochester. According to Bede, this was done some time after the deaths of King Aethelberht and King Sigeberht. The successors of these kings had chosen the old religious custom over Christianity, and the bishops were thus forced to leave their

episcopal sees. Mellitus and Justus decided 'by common consent' to return to Gaul, 'rather than remain fruitlessly among these barbarians who had rebelled against the faith'. Archbishop Laurence chose to stay in Kent. Thus, if we are to trust Bede, the bishops do not seem to have feared for their lives.⁹⁵ There are no other reports of any other Christians who received harsh or violent treatment at this time. It is however important to bear in mind that this may in fact be due to the nature of the source material, rather than actual circumstances. It may not have been in Bede's interest to describe the Anglo-Saxons as a people who had opposed Christianity strongly and violently. Indeed, James Campbell has argued that one of Bede's aims was to demonstrate how Christianity could benefit a baptised king.⁹⁶

It must however be emphasised that there is further evidence to support the idea that the Anglo-Saxons expressed their opposition to Christianity by peaceful means, for example via acts and visual statements connected to the old religious custom. This has been suggested by e.g. Martin Carver, who argued that the East Anglian ship-burials at Snape, Sutton Hoo, and Caister-on-Sea were reactions to the adoption of Christianity in Kent. Carver argued that the other burial mounds at Sutton Hoo, as well as the finds of possible ritual killings, also constituted a reaction to Christianity. He thus concluded that the cemetery at Sutton Hoo was constructed by the aristocracy of the newly created kingdom of East Anglia, 'in order to legitimate their claim' to this territory and 'repel the ideological advances of Frankish Christianity'.⁹⁷

Missionaries who were active during stage 1 of the conversion of Frisia, seem to have been well received by rulers and population. The Frisian kings Aldgisl and Radbod agreed to meet with missionaries, such as Wilfrid and Willibrord. These kings were never baptised, nor did they give the missionaries any support in their work. They did however allow the missionaries to preach to the people of Frisia.⁹⁸ There are no martyrdoms reported from this time, and it is thus possible that missionaries were able to carry out their work without positioning themselves in serious danger.

One form of non-violent resistance may have been to present arguments against Christianity. Bishop Daniel's letter to Boniface, which contained advice on how to lead discussions with non-Christians indicates that discussions of religious nature may have taken place.⁹⁹ There is some evidence of similar discussions from the meetings between the Frisian kings and missionaries. Radbod is reported to have argued with Bishop Wulfram of Sens about the relative merits of Valhalla and the Christian heaven. Radbod expressed his

preference for Valhalla since it was ‘peopled by departed warriors’ over heaven which was ‘filled with paupers’. Also Boniface appears to have experienced that non-Christians expressed their resistance through religious discussions. Boniface stated that the population had reminded him that ‘the English people’ and King Ethelbald of Mercia in particular, were ‘scorning lawful marriage’ and lived ‘in wanton adultery like the people of Sodom’.¹⁰⁰ It was argued above that preaching does not appear to have been of huge importance for widespread acceptance of Christianity. It is equally doubtful if opposition by arguments played any significant part in the resistance. It was demonstrated above that the decisions to receive baptism seem to have been made mainly on other than religious grounds. The lack of a theology would moreover have made it difficult for non-Christians to argue their case successfully.

The Frisian sources provide numerous examples of violent non-Christian uprisings from stage 2 of the conversion. Many of these resulted in the killings or expulsions of missionaries. During the rebellion following the death of Pepin of Herstal in 714, Willibrord and his companions were forced to withdraw from their base at Utrecht into ‘safe’ Frankish territory. Another Frisian rebellion broke out after a quarrel between Charles Martel and Radbod. The Franks were driven away from parts of the Frisian territory and in these areas priests were persecuted. It is also reported that the Frisians restored the old religious custom and rebuilt their shrines.¹⁰¹

The Saxons seem to have carried out violent rebellions, more or less constantly between 772 and 804. Their enduring and hardy resistance was described in these words by the chronicler Einhard:

...it is hard to say just how many times they [the Saxons] were beaten and surrendered as suppliants to Charlemagne, promising to do all that was exacted from them... Sometimes they were so cowed and reduced that they even promised to abandon their devil worship and submit willingly to the Christian faith; but however ready they might seem from time to time to do all this, they were always prepared to break the promises they had made.¹⁰²

The Saxon opposition appears to have been particularly forceful from 778 when it came under the leadership of Widukind. In 784 Widukind invaded Frisia and, according to the Life of Liudger, he ‘compelled the Frisians to relinquish Christ and sacrifice to idols’. It is moreover stated that Widukind ‘burnt their [the Frisians’] churches’ and ‘drove out God’s servants’. The seriousness of such attacks for missionary achievements and for the continuing spread of Christianity is clearly seen in Boniface’s letter to Abbot Fulrad of St. Denis.

Boniface begged the abbot to plead with Pepin to protect a number of newly established churches along the Saxon border. The missionary feared that if the Saxons attacked, the churches would be destroyed and ‘thirty years of constant labour’ could thus be wiped out in an instant. Another part of the Saxon fight against Christianity seems to have been to force Christians to revert to the old religious custom. This is suggested by a letter from Pope Hadrian to Charlemagne, in which Charlemagne was urged to show leniency towards those who had been forced to abandon Christianity between 782 and 785. Further evidence of this non-Christian strategy can be seen in a letter addressed to Louis the Pious. In this letter a Saxon described how his father and uncle were compelled to give up their property since they refused to abandon Christianity during a Saxon uprising.¹⁰³

In both Frisia and Saxony missionaries ran the risk of receiving violent treatment from non-Christians, even when there were no large-scale rebellions. Such instances could also seriously affect the continuing conversion. The murders of Boniface and the Hewald brothers provide two such examples.¹⁰⁴ It was however possible for missionaries, who for some reason had enraged the population, to escape unharmed. We are told that Willehad attacked the non-Christian gods when he preached to the population around the river Lauwers. It is furthermore reported that some of his listeners were so angered by his words that they wished to put him to death. Other parts of the population, however, managed to convince them that Willehad’s fate must be determined by the gods. Therefore lots were cast. These fell in Willehad’s favour and he was thus free to go. Willibrord’s fate seems to have been determined in the same way after his reported destruction of the shrine on the island of Heligoland.¹⁰⁵

The factors that may have influenced the strength of non-Christian resistance will now be discussed. The seemingly less violent resistance to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England could be put down to a number of reasons. Firstly, rulers and missionaries appear to have spread Christianity by rather peaceful means, which may not have triggered any violent reactions. Secondly, the political and social structure of Anglo-Saxon society may have reduced the more active and violent expressions of non-Christian resistance. The lesser kings do not seem to have been in strong enough positions to successfully fight against their overlords, and moreover, even if they were, they might not have wished to. It is interesting to note that Redwald and the sons of Saberht do not seem to have rebelled against Christianity while Aethelberht was alive. However, soon

after his death they returned to their old religious custom. In a similar fashion, the local aristocracy in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms may have been unwilling to revolt against their king's decision to receive baptism.

There are, however, further recorded instances of violent reactions against the top layers of society, such as the murders of Eorpwald and Sigeberht. It is possible that once an Anglo-Saxon king had been baptised, there were no legitimate means for non-Christian factions to compel him to return to the old religious custom. The only way to restore the religious custom in the kingdom might therefore have been to assassinate the king, or to await his death.¹⁰⁶ Bede interpreted the assassination of Sigeberht purely as a reaction against Christianity. Royal murders may however have been caused as much by political opposition against the local king or overlord, as by opposition to Christianity itself. It seems that Sigeberht had been convinced to be baptised by King Oswiu of Northumbria, and his assassination may thus have been partly caused by the wish for political independence from Northumbria. Redwald's apostasy could also be partly explained by a wish for independence.¹⁰⁷

As demonstrated above, non-Christian resistance on the Continent during stage 1 of the conversion seems to have been rather peaceful. At this time missionaries were working in small groups, independently of secular power. Non-Christians may not therefore have perceived the missionaries as threatening and may not have felt a need to use force against them. Scholars have also argued that it was a strong tradition from pre-Christian times, to receive strangers and to treat them well.¹⁰⁸ The violent attacks on missionaries and churches began from the time when missionaries became closely linked to the Carolingian conquest of non-Christian territories. The Frisians and Saxons appear to have seen the missionaries as representatives of the Carolingians and their expansionist policies. Missionaries therefore became targets of the retaliations against the Franks. Moreover, the Carolingian combination of expansionism and conversion seems to have created a type of 'cultural imperialism', which may have caused some of their opponents to make the old religious custom a central part of their resistance. They may thus have opposed Christianity more strongly and violently than they otherwise would have.¹⁰⁹ This can be demonstrated by the example of Saxony, where the Franks used particularly violent methods and where resistance to Christianity became very fierce. Apart from the violent conquest, the strict regulations and the harsh penalties of the First Saxon Capitulary have been seen as major contributing factors to this strong resistance. The payment of tithes, required by the

Capitulary, was heavily enforced among the Saxons, and seems to have caused the rebellions between 792 and 804 in the northern parts of the territory.¹¹⁰ It is interesting to note that the Saxon population never seem to have been totally united in their rebellions against the Franks. According to Sullivan, there were always some Saxons who remained loyal to Frankish overlordship. Saxon society seems to have been ruled by chieftains without a uniting central power. This could explain the differences in the Saxon response to Christianity. There was no Saxon overking with the authority to make Christianity the religion of the whole Saxon population.¹¹¹

Provocative methods of conversion could cause non-Christians to kill or wish to kill missionaries. This is suggested by the examples of Boniface, Willibrord, and Willehad.¹¹² Attacks on individual missionaries may also have been carried out for economic gains, since missionaries could possess items that were desirable to the local population. It is possible that the image of the Frisians and the Saxons as fiercely anti-Christian may be partly due to Carolingian propaganda. This can be highlighted by the example of King Radbod, who was depicted by the Carolingian writer Bugga, as an 'enemy of the Catholic Church'. The hagiographies however all state that Radbod gave missionaries a friendly reception. Moreover, according to the *Vita Wulframni* the king once came very close to accepting baptism. Radbod also supported the legitimist Merovingian party, which was Christian.¹¹³

In all areas of this study non-Christian resistance seems to have been a mixture of political and religious opposition. However, the way in which Christianity was introduced appears to have had a major impact on non-Christian response. It has been shown that peaceful resistance to Christianity occurred mostly in Anglo-Saxon England and during stage 1 of the conversion of Frisia. The most violent resistance is seen in response to the Carolingian military conquests of Frisia and Saxony. In these areas, the Carolingians did not have any bonds of loyalty, and thus tried to create new ones. The absence of an overking in Saxony can further explain the more violent, but divided, reaction in this area. The Saxons' forceful resistance was presumably also caused by the more provocative methods used by missionaries in this area. It could thus be said that the very factors that made the conversions of the Anglo-Saxons relatively peaceful did not exist in Saxony. Finally it should be noted that the newly baptised East Saxons are reported to have destroyed their old temples.¹¹⁴ No such actions by Christians in Frisia or Saxony have been recorded.

2.6. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has shown that secular rulers and aristocracy were instrumental for widespread acceptance of Christianity. Missionaries who were active during stage 1 of conversion needed to gain the support of local rulers. During stage 2, the situation was different. Rulers who wished to spread Christianity to other areas, or who wished to make their kingdom Christian, used missionaries for their own purposes. Such rulers were of course dependent on missionaries for performing religious functions. It is however clear that missionaries were subordinate to rulers in their work. Rulers inaugurated conversion by giving social and material rewards to those who were baptised. They issued legislation in support of Christianity. They also provided protection and material aid to missionaries. The members of the aristocracy were moreover important for widespread conversion, particularly through the building of churches and monasteries.

This further demonstrates that the categories of *Wortmission*, *Tatmission*, and *Schwertmission* are of little service in the study of conversion. These concepts are based on the idea that missionaries were the moving forces in the spread of Christianity. It is only in the concept of *Schwertmission* that secular rulers were assigned more active parts. Kahl's spectrum of conversion has instead been shown to be more useful. His definition does not, however, include all factors that were advancing Christianity. The gains that the different groups in society could receive from accepting Christianity must be taken into consideration. Such gains include written legislation, improved political contacts, material rewards, education, and innovations.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Hans-Dietrich Kahl, 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtlichen Mittelalters. Bausteine für eine Phänomenologie bis ca. 1050', *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, vol. 2, *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. Knut Schäferdiek (Munich 1978), pp. 11-76, esp. pp. 40-4; LM vol. 6, cols. 670-2; RGA vol. 4, pp. 506-9; Gonsalus Walter, *Die Heidenmission nach der Lehre des Hl. Augustinus* (Münster in Westfalen 1921), pp. 67-8 and 115-16.

² Kahl, 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtlichen Mittelalters', pp. 42, 44-5, 49-51, 55-6, and 72-74; Knut Schäferdiek, 'Missionary methods', *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, ed. Birgit Sawyer *et al.* (Alingsås 1987), pp. 24-6, esp. p. 24; Franz Flaskamp, *Die Missionsmethode des hl. Bonifatius*, *Geschichtliche Darstellungen und Quellen* 8 (Hildesheim 1929),

- p. 40; PL vol. LXXXIV, cols. 379-80. For the writings of Gregory I, see e.g. Gregory I, 'Gregorii I papae registrum epistolarum', *MGH Epistolae*, vol. 2 (Berlin 1899), p. 192.
- 3 Kahl, 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtlichen Mittelalters', pp. 50-1.
- 4 The communal spirit of the New Testament can be seen for example in the writings of St. Paul: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus'. Galatians 3.28. The more individual Christianity that emerged during the eleventh and twelfth centuries can be seen e.g. in the new depictions of a suffering Christ, and the increasing clerical thoughts on individual salvation. Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London 1987), esp. pp. 1-63 and 139-67. It should also be pointed out that John Hines has argued that a sense of personal individuality existed in England before the twelfth-century Renaissance. The evidence for this is, according to Hines, to be found in the heroic wish for immortality expressed in Anglo-Saxon poetry. John Hines, 'Religion: the limits of knowledge', *The Anglo-Saxons. From the Migration Period to the Eighth Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. John Hines (Woodbridge 1997), pp. 375-410, esp. pp. 383-4.
- 5 Schäferdiek, 'Missionary methods', pp. 24-6; Herbert Achterberg, *Interpretatio Christiana. Verkleidete Glaubensgestalten der Germanen auf deutschem Boden*. Diss. Greifswald (Leipzig 1930), p. 87; Kurt Dietrich Schmidt, *Grundriss der Kirchengeschichte*, third edition (Göttingen 1960), pp. 157-61; RGA vol. 4, pp. 508-9. The role of gods in pre-Christian religious custom is discussed in section 4. 1.
- 6 Kahl, 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtlichen Mittelalters', pp. 42-3. Jens Peter Schjødt also argued that 'a change of religion' is always affected by various degrees of pressure. See Jens Peter Schjødt, 'Nogle overvejelser over begrebet "Religionsskifte" med henblik på en problematisering af termens brug i forbindelse med overgangen til kristendommen i Norge', *Medeltidens fødsel. Symposier från Krappereups Borg 1* (Lund 1989), pp. 187-201, esp. p. 188.
- 7 Gregory I announced in a letter to Queen Brunhildis that the Angles had expressed a wish to be baptised. John Cuthbert Godfrey, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge 1962), p. 74; Ian Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English', *Speculum* 69 (1994), pp. 1-17, esp. pp. 9-10; Arnold Angenendt, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons considered against the background of the early medieval mission', *Angli e Sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare: 26 aprile - 1° maggio 1984, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo* 32 (Spoleto 1986), pp. 747-92, esp. p. 781. For two comprehensive overviews of the mission of Augustine, and particularly regarding connections with the Franks see: Richard Gameson, 'Augustine of Canterbury. Context and Achievement', *St. Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud 1999), pp. 1-40 and Ian Wood, 'Augustine and Gaul', *St. Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud 1999), pp. 68-82.
- 8 Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 64-5 and 99-100; Carole M. Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*. Cassell Religious Studies (London and New York 1998), pp. 101-8; Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine'; Angenendt, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 757-8; Abrams, 'Kings and Bishops', p. 19; Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650 - c. 850*, p. 11.
- 9 HE II.3 and II.15; Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*, pp. 101-2 and 105-6; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 65; Nicholas Brooks,

- The Early History of the Church of Canterbury. Christ Church from 597 to 1066.* Studies in the Early History of Britain (Leicester 1984), pp. 63-4.
- 10 HE III.7; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 99; Angenendt, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 757-8.
- 11 HE III.22 and III.21. Essex had returned to the old religious custom after the deaths of Kings Saberht and Aethelberht c. 616.
- 12 HE V.9-12 and 19; VWb pp. 7-9; Heinrich Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation des Frankerreiches bis zum Tode Karls des Grossen', *Karl der Grosse. Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, vol. 1, *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. Helmut Beumann (Düsseldorf 1965), pp. 454-87, esp. p. 462; Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid - Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg 1954), pp. 96-102; Franz Flaskamp, *Die Anfänge friesischen und sächsischen Christentums* (Hildesheim 1929); Franz Flaskamp, *Willibrord/Clemens und Wynfrith/Bonifatius*. Sonderdruck aus St. Bonifatius (Fulda 1954); James Thayer Addison, *The Medieval Missionary. A Study of the Conversion of Northern Europe, AD 500-1300* (New York and London 1936), pp. 39-43; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 199-200; Heinz Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius. Ihre Bedeutung für die Missionsgeschichte ihrer Zeit', *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, vol. 2, *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, ed. Knut Schäferdiek (Munich 1978), pp. 192-226, esp. pp. 202-3; LM vol. 9, col. 213; J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford 1983), pp. 144-5; Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (London and New York 1994), p. 317. Willibrord was not the first missionary to receive secular support. This case can be compared to King Dagobert I's support of Amandus. See Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 200.
- 13 CB 30; Tangl 63. For the Carolingian involvement in the mission of Boniface see also: J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'A background to St. Boniface's mission', *England before the Conquest. Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, eds. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (Cambridge 1971), pp. 35-48.
- 14 Rosamund McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians 751-987* (London and New York 1983), pp. 61-3; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 183-4; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 213-5; RGA vol. 2, pp. 185-6; Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation', pp. 472-3; LM vol. 8, col. 270; VS p. 200; Louis Halphen, *Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire*, Europe in the Middle Ages, Selected Studies (Amsterdam, New York, and Oxford 1977), pp. 47-51.
- 15 HE V.10; VLn pp. 230-3; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 214.
- 16 Aethelberht c. 1, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and tr. F.L. Attenborough (Cambridge 1922), pp. 4-5; HE III. 8.
- 17 Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', pp. 223-4; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 731; McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 55. Carloman's law, which was issued in 743, stated the following: *Decrevimus quoque, quod et pater meus ante praecipiebat, ut qui paganas observationes in aliqua re fecerit, multetur et damnetur quindecim solidis. MGH Leges*, vol. I (Hanover 1885), p. 18; *Pippini principis capitulare suessionense* (744), c. 6: *Et omnino, decrevimus, ut unusquisque episcopus in usa parochia sollicitudinem habeat, ut populus christianus paganus non fiant [paganismum non faciant]. Et per omnes civitates legitimus forus et mensuras faciat, secundum habundantia temporis.* No penalty for guilty parties was stated. *MGH Leges*, vol. I, pp. 20-2. There was also a piece of legislation named *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, in which thirty 'superstitions

- and pagan practices' were outlawed. Alain Dierkens stated that this law most likely dates from 744. Richard Sullivan moreover argued that it enjoyed the force of law. See *MGH Leges*, vol. I, pp. 19-20; Alain Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne. A propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*', *Magie, Sorcellerie, Parapsychologie*, ed, Hervé Hasquin (Brussels 1985), pp. 9-26, esp. p. 17; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 731.
- 18 P.D. King, *Charlemagne* (London 1986), pp. 24-5, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, ed, P.D. King (Lancaster 1987), pp. 205-7 and 230-2.
- 19 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 730; HE V.10; Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', p. 213; The First Saxon Capitulary c. 5, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 205. The *Capitulare Saxonium* made theft from clergy or hostility towards them punishable by heavy fines. See *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, pp. 230-2.
- 20 Richard P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley 1988), p. 7.
- 21 Ine c. 1, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 36-7.
- 22 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 732-3; *Alcuin of York c. A.D. 732 to 804 – his life and letters*, ed. and tr, Stephen Allott (York 1974), no. 57.
- 23 Hermann Lau, *Die angelsächsische Missionsweise im Zeitalter des Bonifaz* (Preetz 1909), pp. 62-3.
- 24 HE I.25-6, III.19, I.33, and III.3; Godfrey, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 99; Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 30-2 and 43-5; Ben Whitwell, 'Flixborough', *Current Archaeology* 126 (1991), pp. 244-7.
- 25 Relations of Pepin II also provided Anglo-Saxon missionaries with monasteries. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 316; Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', p. 204; McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, pp. 56-7 and 60; Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (London 1998), p. 53; Friederich Prinz, 'Schenkungen und Privilegien Karls des Grossen', *Karl der Grosse. Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, vol. 1, *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed, Helmut Beumann (Düsseldorf 1965), pp. 455-6; Josef Semmler, 'Pippin III. und die fränkischen Klöster', *Francia* 3 (1975), pp. 90-146; The First Saxon Capitulary, cc. 15-16, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 206.
- 26 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 722-3; HE I.26. Bede also stated that Pepin of Herstal 'bestowed many favours on those who were willing to receive the faith'. See HE V.10.
- 27 It is interesting to note that St. Patrick stated that he 'kept giving rewards to kings'. This suggests that also he followed the same strategy. *The Irish Penitentials. Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, vol. V, ed, Ludwig Bieler (Dublin 1963), c. 52; *Liber Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopii, The Book of Letters of Saint Patrick The Bishop*, ed. and tr, D. R. Howlett (Dublin 1994), pp. 86-7.
- 28 Richard Fletcher has pointed out that the impression that conversion was particularly forceful in Saxony could due be to the fact that the sources from Charlemagne's reign give more information about the Saxon campaigns, than do those of his predecessors Charles Martel and Pepin. See Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 213.
- 29 William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England. The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester 1970), pp. 11-15; Claire E. Stancliffe, 'Kings and

- Conversion: some comparisons between the Roman mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster, vol. 14, ed, Karl Hauck (Berlin 1980), pp. 59-94, esp. pp. 74, 76-7, and 90; Barbara Yorke, 'The Reception of Christianity at the Anglo-Saxon Royal Courts', *St. Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed, Richard Gameson (Stroud 1999), pp. 152-73, esp. pp. 154-6.
- 30 HE II.13.
- 31 DOM vol. 12, pp. 665-6; Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*, pp. 98-9.
- 32 HE II.13-14; Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion', pp. 72-3 and 90.
- 33 HE III.21.
- 34 Angenendt, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 750-4; Cf. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 64.
- 35 Wormald, 'Bede, "Beowulf" and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', pp. 35-57 and 63-9.
- 36 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 738; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 201.
- 37 Wvb pp. 10-11.
- 38 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 738; Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 316; John Hines, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons', *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, eds. Dennis H. Green & F. Siegmund (forthcoming). Bede stated that the Saxons suspected that 'if the Hewardls came to the viceroy and talked to him, they might turn to him away from their gods and bring him to a new faith, the Christian religion, and so gradually the whole land would be compelled to change its old religion for a new one'. See HE V.10.
- 39 Arnold Angenendt, 'Taufe und Politik im frühen Mittelalter', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster, vol. 7, ed, Karl Hauck (Berlin 1973), pp. 143-68, esp. pp. 158-61; Hines, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons'; Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation', p. 468; Ian Wood, 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', *Irland und die Christenheit. Bibelstudien und Mission*, ed, Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart 1987), pp. 347-61, esp. p. 352.
- 40 Sullivan 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 737-8; Flaskamp, *Die Missionsmethode des hl. Bonifatius*, pp. 37-40; Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*, p. 101.
- 41 Campbell, 'Observations on the Conversion of England', pp. 69-71; Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity in England', esp. pp. 53-4.
- 42 James Campbell, 'The Lost Centuries: 400-600', *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed, James Campbell (Oxford 1982), pp. 20-44, esp. p. 37.
- 43 The four graves were located in cemetery A. Vera I. Evison and Prue Hill, *Two Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Beckford Hereford and Worcester*, CBA Research Report 103 (York 1996), p. 40.
- 44 Lesley Abrams has pointed out what Bede described as 'voluntary' decisions to accept baptism often do not appear to have been voluntary, but instead the result of pressures put forward by more powerful members of society. See Abrams, 'Kings and Bishops', p. 19.

- 45 CB 14; Tangl 26; Flaskamp, *Die Missionsmethode des hl. Bonifatius*, pp. 40-1; Lau, *Die angelsächsische Missionsweise im Zeitalter des Bonifaz*, p. 60; John Arnold MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology. The Mythology of All Races in Thirteen Volumes*, ed, John Arnold MacCulloch, vol. II (Boston 1930), p. 18.
- 46 Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, p. 8; HE I.26 and II.14; VB cc.V and VIII; Lau, *Die angelsächsische Missionsweise im Zeitalter des Bonifaz*, p. 61; Flaskamp, *Die Missionsmethode des hl. Bonifatius*, pp. 37-8 and 40-1.
- 47 Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation', p. 468; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 718; The First Saxon Capitulary, c. 8, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 206; *Alcuin of York*, nos. 57, 59, and 56.
- 48 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 712-13, 722-3 and 738; Angenendt, 'Taufe und Politik im frühen Mittelalter', p. 160.
- 49 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 713.
- 50...*ut ipse et viva voce et per divina oracula omnem inimici zizanium ex omni vestra insula cum divino nutu eradicet*. HE III.29; Anna Maria Luiselli Fadda, 'The Vernacular and the Propagation of the Faith in Anglo-Saxon Missionary Activity', *Missions and Missionaries, Studies in Church History Subsidia 13*, eds, Pieter N. Holtrop and Hugh McLeod (Woodbridge 2000), pp. 1-15, esp. p. 6.
- 51 CB 11; Tangl 23; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 715-8.
- 52 CB 11; Tangl 23; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 717.
- 53 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 722.
- 54 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 718-20.
- 55 Eugen Paul, *Geschichte der christlichen Erziehung*, vol. 1. *Antike und Mittelalter* (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna 1993), pp. 176-7.
- 56 HE I.30 and III.8. The issue of pre-Christian 'temples' is discussed in chapter 3.
- 57 This building was a rectangular timber structure with a fenced enclosure at its southern end, which served as a focus for burials. There was, moreover, a massive pillar at the building's north-west corner, and inside there were three other free-standing pillars. The find of a large deposit of ox-skulls has been seen as evidence of ritual feasting. Brian Hope-Taylor, *Yeavinger. An Anglo-British Centre of Early Northumbria* (London 1977), pp. 97-102, 258-9, and 277-8.
- 58 Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico. An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain 1523-1572* (Berkeley 1966), pp. 36-8.
- 59 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 720-1.
- 60 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 720-1; VB c.VI, pp. 45-6; Vvb pp. 12-13; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 182.
- 61 See for example: 1 Kings 15.13 and 2 Chronicles 15.16.
- 62 Higham, *The Convert Kings*, pp. 253 and 266.
- 63 Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', p. 204; McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, pp. 56-7 and 60; Prinz, 'Schenkungen und Privilegien Karls des Grossen', pp. 455-6; Semmler, 'Pippin III. und die fränkischen Klöster'.
- 64 McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 60.

- 65 Godfrey, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 110; HE III.22, III.5, and IV.27; Michael Aston, *Monasteries* (London 1993), pp. 40-1 and 46; According to the well-known, although dubious, foundation charter for Breedon-on-the-Hill (Leicestershire), this house was founded for 'the growing and multiplying of the number of Christians'. A priest should be instituted to 'bring the grace of baptism and the teaching of the gospel doctrine to the people committed to his care'. See *Cartularium Saxonicum*, ed, Walter de Gray Birch (London 1885-93) vol. 2, no. 434 (841 AD); John Blair, 'Minster Churches in the Landscape', *Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, ed, Della Hooke (Oxford 1988), pp. 35-59, esp. p. 37. James Campbell argued that the 'number of passing references to monasteries in his [Bede's] text indicates that they were numerous'. He pointed out that monasteries were not Bede's main concern, and that it is thus likely that many more monasteries, than those mentioned by Bede, existed. See Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity in England', pp. 51 and 65-6.
- 66 Aston, *Monasteries*, p. 41; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 219.
- 67 Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation', p. 471; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 709-11.
- 68 Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 320; Rosemary J. Cramp, 'Monastic sites', *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed, David M. Wilson (Cambridge 1976), pp. 201-52, esp. pp. 212 and 229; David Parsons, 'Sites and Monuments of the Anglo-Saxon Mission in Central Germany', *Archaeological Journal* 140 (1983), pp. 280-321, esp. pp. 281-6, 291-4, and 315; VS pp. 182-8; Flaskamp, *Die Missionsmethode des hl. Bonifatius*, pp. 25-6. Martin Carver has suggested that monasteries in the north and west of Britain may have been erected in adapted prehistoric strongholds. Martin Carver, 'Conversion and Politics on the eastern seaboard of Britain: Some Archaeological Indicators', *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World. The Proceedings of a Day Conference held on 21st February 1998*, ed, Barbara E. Crawford, St John's House Papers, no. 8 (St. Andrews 1998), pp. 11-40, esp. p. 23.
- 69 Joseph H. Lynch, *The Medieval Church. A Brief History* (London and New York 1992), pp. 55-6; Martin Welch, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester 1992), chapters 2 and 3; HE I.25; VLn, pp. 230-2; CB 21; Tangl 35.
- 70 HE IV.13; Richard E. Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity: A Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Methods', *Church History* 23 (1954), pp. 17-35, esp. p. 24. This article is also published in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot 1994); Lynch, *The Medieval Church*, pp. 55-6; Eddius Stephanus, 'The Life of Bishop Wilfred', *The Life of Bishop Wilfred by Eddius Stephanus. Text, Translation and Notes*, ed, B. Colgrave (Cambridge 1927), c. XLI. Ian Wood has pointed out that Bede associated Wilfrid's successful fishing to his work among the South Saxons, while Stephanus, the author of the Life of Wilfrid, stated that this took place during Wilfrid's Frisian mission. Ian Wood, 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', p. 361.
- 71 HE I.29, III.26 and III.28; VB c. VI, p. 47; Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity', p. 24; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 100; Godfrey, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 104-5; VWb pp. 9-10; Richard Gameson, 'The Earliest Books of Christian Kent', *St. Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed, Richard Gameson (Stroud 1999), pp. 313-73; Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term, 1943* (Oxford 1946), pp. 132-73.
- 72 HE, I.23 and I.25; Luiselli Fadda, 'The Vernacular and the Propagation of Faith', pp. 3-4; Higham, *The Convert Kings*, p. 118.

- 73 Bede stated that Egbert knew that the Angles and Saxons originally came from the Continent. HE V.9. See also Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 198.
- 74 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 714; Franz Flaskamp, *Die homiletische Wirksamkeit des hl. Bonifatius* (Hildesheim 1926) pp. 17-18; Flaskamp, *Die Missionsmethode des hl. Bonifatius*, pp. 32-3; Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', pp. 220-1.
- 75 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 728-9; Wood, 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', pp. 360-1; VWB p. 18; HE III.5; F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, third edition (Oxford 1971), p. 119.
- 76 William Madsen, 'Religious Syncretism', *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 6, *Social Anthropology*, ed. Manning Nash (Austin 1967), pp. 369-91, esp. pp. 397-80; Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, pp. 37-8; Edwin Williamson, *The Penguin History of Latin America* (London 1992), p. 99; Michael M. Meyer and William L. Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, third edition (New York and Oxford 1987), pp. 187-193.
- 77 Sullivan, 'Early Medieval Missionary Activity', p. 24.
- 78 Patrick Wormald, *Bede and the Conversion of England. The Charter Evidence*, Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow 1984), p. 13.
- 79 HE I.25-7, I.29, III.7, and III.3. Birinus appears to have worked completely independently of Canterbury. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 117; Peter Hunter Blair, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge 1956), p. 121; Lynch, *The Medieval Church*, pp. 50-1.
- 80 HE V.11; Rosamund McKitterick, *Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences*, Eighth Brixworth Lecture, Vaughan Paper no. 36 (Leicester 1990), pp. 1-2 and 27; Richard E. Sullivan, 'The Papacy and Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages', *Medieval Studies* 17 (1955), pp. 46-106, esp. pp. 68-80. This article is also published in *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot 1994).
- 81 Sullivan, 'The Papacy and Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages', pp. 68-84; Lynch, *The Medieval Church*, pp. 62-66; LM vol. VI, cols. 1669-70; Walter Ullman, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages. A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power* (London 1955), pp. 44-118.
- 82 Angenendt, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 769-70.
- 83 HE I.27. Augustine may have been consecrated bishop already on his way to England. This is suggested by a letter from 597 in which Gregory referred to Augustine as bishop. See Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, p. 5.
- 84 HE I.29, I.27, II.3, II.15, III.3, and III.7; Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, pp. 9-14; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 94-5; Eric John, *Land Tenure in Early England. A Discussion of Some Problems* (Leicester 1960), p. 29; D.P. Kirby, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum: its contemporary setting*. Jarrow Lecture (Jarrow 1992), pp. 12-13; Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650 - c. 850*, p. 11.
- 85 HE V.11; Sullivan, 'The Papacy and Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages', pp. 70-1. It is not entirely clear whether Willibrord was consecrated bishop or archbishop. However, no more episcopal sees were established in Frisia at this time. Comment made by Mostert in response to Angenendt's paper 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons'. See Angenendt, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', pp. 789-90.

- 86 Sullivan, 'The Papacy and Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages', p. 83; McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 62; LM vol. 4, col. 1885, vol. 6, cols. 1509 and 914, vol. 6, col. 1613, vol. 8, col. 1499. Bremen, Osnabrück, and Münster were placed under the see of Cologne, while Paderborn and probably also Verden came under Mainz.
- 87 HE I.24; Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury*, pp. 6-7; Georg Jenal, 'Gregor der Grosse und die Anfänge der Angelsachsenmission (596-604)', *Angli e Sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare: 26 aprile – 1° maggio 1984, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo* 32 (Spoleto 1986), pp. 793-857, esp. pp. 795-800.
- 88 In May 719 Pope Gregory II sent Boniface on a mission to the 'pagans' in an unspecified area. HE V.11; VB c. V; CB 3; Tangl, 12; CB 9; Tangl, 20; Schieffer, *Winfrid - Bonifatius*, pp. 97-102; LM vol. 9, col. 213.
- 89 HE I.32 and II.10-11; Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 31. For the significance of gifts, see also: Marcel Mauss, *The Gift. Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, tr. I. Cunnison (London 1970).
- 90 HE I.27, I.31, II. 7, and II.18-9.
- 91 CB e.g. letters 3, 12, and 16; Tangl 12, 24, and 28; Sullivan, 'The Papacy and Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages', pp. 71 and 81-3. In his letter to the pope, Charlemagne asked for advice on how to deal with Saxons who had returned to their old religious custom. This must be seen as a rather minor issue in relation to Charlemagne's overall missionary strategy.
- 92 HE I.29; CB 3; Tangl 12; VWb p. 8; VB c. VII, p. 49; Sullivan, 'The Papacy and Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages', pp. 80-4. Missionaries such as Willibrord, Boniface, Wilfrid, and Liudger received relics from Rome.
- 93 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 734-7; Cf. Angenendt, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', p. 754.
- 94 HE II.15 and III.30.
- 95 HE III.22, II.15, and II. 5-6; Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*, p. 106; Barbara Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of early Anglo-Saxon England* (London 1990), p. 48.
- 96 James Campbell has also on several occasions pointed out that Bede dealt rather selectively with his source material. Campbell, 'Bede I', pp. 12-13; Campbell, 'Bede II', pp. 36-47.
- 97 The boat-burials at Snape and Sutton Hoo have been dated roughly to the period around 600. Most of the boat-burials at Caister-on-Sea belong to the period of c. 720-820. Carver, 'Boat-burial in Britain: Ancient Custom or Political Signal?', pp. 113-22; Martin Carver, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Sutton Hoo: An Interim Report', *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge 1992), pp. 343-371, esp. pp. 353-4 and 363-5; Martin Carver, 'Reflections on the Meanings of Monumental Barrows in Anglo-Saxon England', *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, eds. Sam Lucy and Andrew Reynolds (London 2002), pp. 132-43, esp. pp. 133 and 140.
- 98 HE V.9-11 and V.19; VWb pp. 7-8; VB c. IV, pp. 35-6; Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*, pp. 119-20; Wood 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', p. 351.
- 99 CB 11; Tangl 23.
- 100 Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*, p. 122; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 734-5.

- 101 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 735-7; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 201-2.
- 102 Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne, Two Lives of Charlemagne. Einhard and Notker the Stammerer*, ed. and tr, L. Thorpe (London 1969), p. 62.
- 103 Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation', p. 469; Halphen, *Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire*, pp. 48-51; RGA vol. 2, pp. 185-6; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 182; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 736-7.
- 104 HE V.10; VB, c. VIII, pp. 57-8.
- 105 Wvb pp. 10-11; Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', pp. 735-6; Wood, 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', p. 356; Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 319.
- 106 HE II.15 and II.5; Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion', pp. 73-4.
- 107 HE III.22, II.15, and II.5; Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 48.
- 108 Wood 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', pp. 349-51 and 356-7.
- 109 Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', p. 218; LM vol. 9, c. 207; Wood, 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', p. 351.
- 110 Halphen, *Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire*, p. 49; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 183-4; RGA vol. 2, p. 186; *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 16; *Alcuin of York*, nos. 56-7.
- 111 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 723; Hines, 'The Conversion of the Old Saxons'.
- 112 Carole Cusack suggested that Boniface deliberately provoked the non-Christians in order to achieve the martyrdom that he had predicted for himself. Cusack pointed out that Boniface was, at this time, an old man and an experienced missionary who must have been aware of the dangers of destroying shrines in non-Christian territories. See Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples*, p. 127.
- 113 Wood, 'Pagans and Holy Men, 600-800', pp. 351-2.
- 114 HE III.30.

Chapter 3

The Conversion of Scandinavia

3.1. The Role of Secular Rulers in Conversion.¹

This section will begin by investigating the varying degrees of influence that were exercised by external rulers in connection with the missions to Sweden. The majority of the missionaries who were active in Viking Age and early medieval Sweden seem to have come from Germany and Anglo-Saxon England. According to the Life of Ansgar and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, German missionaries were regularly sent from the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen to the northern parts of Europe.² The Frankish emperors acted as a strong force behind these missionaries and used them in their attempts to gain overlordship or influence over secular leaders in the north.³

The activities of Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Sweden are more difficult to trace, as these men hardly appear in the extant written sources. However, other types of evidence make it clear that a substantial number of English missionaries must have been present in Sweden. Their influence can be seen in many areas, such as liturgical traditions, church architecture, Christian terminology, and inscribed crosses on rune stones. Moreover, the saints' legends of Eskil, Sigfrid, and David describe the lives of English missionary bishops in Sweden. It is however important to remember, as was stated in chapter 1, that the reliability of these legends must be put into question. It must also be pointed out that the missionaries described in these sources cannot be identified in any other material.⁴ There is no evidence to suggest that there was any organised missionary enterprise originating from England. It is therefore unlikely that these missionaries were supported by Anglo-Saxon secular power. However, there were close contacts between Norway and England, and many English missionaries probably came to Sweden this way. According to Adam of Bremen, King Olav Tryggvason sent English bishops, such as Sigfrid and Grímkell, to Götaland and other parts in Sweden. According to Snorri

Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, King Sigurðr Jórsalafari went on a crusade to the 'pagans' in Småland in c. 1124. It has however been convincingly argued that this account is not a true reflection of events.⁵ There are no other indications in the source material that kings in Norway exercised military force to promote Christianity in Sweden. It is nevertheless plausible that these kings acted as a political lever behind at least some of the English missionaries. Danish kings also seem to have been a force behind missionary activity in Swedish territory. They held a very powerful position as overlords in Western Scandinavia and controlled the exit to the Baltic Sea. In this way they were able to exercise political influence also in Sweden. Rimbert stated that when Ansgar went on his second mission to Birka, King Horik of Denmark sent a message to King Olof at Birka. Horik is reported to have asked Olof to allow Ansgar to introduce Christianity, just as Horik had done in Denmark.⁶

The political relationship between Denmark and Sweden seems to have been similar in later times. Danish kings therefore appear to have had further opportunities to involve themselves in the conversion of Sweden. At the battle of Helgeå in c. 1026 Knut, King of Denmark and England, defeated the Swedish king Anund Jakob. As a result, Knut gained the overlordship over Götaland, and possibly also Svealand between c.1026 and 1028/1030. It has traditionally been thought that this battle took place at Helgeå in Skåne. Bo Gräslund has however argued that it was instead fought at Helgå in Uppland. If so, Knut's influence in Svealand may have been greater than previously believed.⁷ As king of England, Knut had shown himself devoted to the interests of the clergy. Many of his advisors were Anglo-Saxon churchmen, such as Archbishop Wulfstan of York, who probably drafted the king's law code. A quarter of this law was concerned with ecclesiastical matters, such as legislation on tithes. Knut was thus directly involved in the ecclesiastical organisation in England, perhaps in the development of its parochial system. It is possible that Knut used his experience from England to spread and organise Christianity in Sweden.⁸

There are also some traces of influence from Byzantine Christian culture. This is suggested by a small number of finds of Christian objects from Russia and the eastern Baltic area, such as pendant crosses with rounded ends and so-called 'resurrection eggs'. These types of objects have mostly been found in the eastern parts of Sweden, notably at Birka and Sigtuna. No Byzantine mission has however been documented and the archaeological evidence is very sparse. It therefore seems improbable that many Byzantine missionaries came

to Sweden. Any such influence is more likely to have come through the connections that existed between Sweden and the East. These are evidenced by the many runic inscriptions about Vikings who travelled to Russia. There were also political connections, such as those established by the marriage of Olof Skötkonung's daughter, Ingegerd, to Jaroslav of Kiev and Novgorod. There is however no evidence that secular leaders from the region of Eastern Christianity were involved in missionary work in Sweden.⁹ It is therefore unlikely that any political pressure on rulers to accept Christianity came from this direction.

This overview has attempted to clarify the ways in which foreign rulers were involved in the conversion of Sweden. The strongest external pressure, although of indirect nature, appears to have come from the Frankish emperors, particularly Louis the Pious. Kings in Norway and Denmark also seem to have had some impact on the introduction of Christianity into Sweden. However, no ruler was able, or willing, to convert Sweden by military force, in the way that the Carolingians had done in Frisia and Saxony.

The first documented mission to Sweden is that of Ansgar to Birka in c. 829. During the ninth century many other missionaries were sent to Birka from the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen. These men seem generally to have been received in a friendly manner both by rulers and population. Some members of the local population appear to have accepted Christianity as their religion. Ansgar is reported to have baptised many at Birka, including the *praefectus* Hergeir. These missionaries did not, however, manage to convince either King Björn or the later King Olof to accept Christianity. Bishop Unni, who arrived at Birka in the tenth century, was equally unsuccessful in convincing the kings who ruled at this time to receive baptism.¹⁰ The necessity of the support of a Christian ruler for widespread acceptance of Christianity was shown in chapter 2. Since the kings in Sweden were not yet Christian, it is not surprising that Christianity did not gain a firm foothold. This did not take place until the baptism of King Olof Skötkonung in c. 1000. King Olof is likely to have had a positive attitude to Christianity before this time, and may even have invited missionaries to his kingdom. After his baptism, bishoprics began to be established and missionary bishops were sent to more distant parts of Sweden. The religion seems to have spread in a similar way to England, i.e. from the secular ruler to the aristocracy and then further down in society. The rulers promoted Christianity via the bonds of loyalty in society, and do not seem to have employed military force.¹¹

Chapter 2 demonstrated the ways in which baptised rulers tried to implement widespread acceptance of Christianity. Such rulers gave social and material rewards to Christians and issued legislation in support of Christianity. They also provided missionaries with protection and material aid. Each of these elements will now be considered in relation to rulers in Sweden.

The employment of social and material rewards in order to encourage the spread of Christianity will first be discussed. Since the kings at Birka were not Christian, it is unlikely that they offered any rewards to those who agreed to be baptised. It appears however that baptised kings in Sweden used rewards in the same way as Christian rulers in other geographical areas. This can be demonstrated by the example of the kings at Sigtuna. This town must have been planned and built as a royal base of power, rather than as a commercial centre. The majority of excavated buildings from the earliest phase were dwelling houses. There is no evidence of trade and production until the middle of the eleventh century. This meant that there were not sufficient means of production within the town to support all the inhabitants. Supplies must therefore have been delivered from the surrounding countryside. Sigtuna thus seems to have functioned as a meeting-place, from which the king arranged his alliances with other powerful men. Scholars have argued that the king exercised his control not by military means, but instead by exerting his influence over the people. The giving of gifts must be seen as an important means of establishing power at this time. A runic inscription from Siguna dated to the early twelfth century reads 'the king is the most hospitable. He gave the most, he is the most popular'. Snorri Sturluson tells us that when Olav Haraldsson rebuilt Trondheim he distributed plots of land to the farmers and merchants that he liked and who wanted to build in the town. It has been argued that Olof Skötkonung used the plots in Sigtuna in the same way to secure the loyalty of powerful local magnates. Sigtuna with its c. 1,000 inhabitants was a large town at this time. It was something out of the ordinary in an essentially agrarian society. It must thus have been a place in which it was prestigious to own property. The gift of a piece of land in the town may well have strengthened the magnates' loyalty to their king.¹²

There is no evidence of any formal legislation from the conversion period in Sweden. It was however shown above that written Christian legislation appeared in England from the time of the first Christian king. In Part III it will moreover be argued that the first Christian kings in Norway issued Christian legislation. It could thus be expected that at least publicly stated prohibitions

of pre-Christian practices appeared in Sweden from the time of Olof Skötkonung. It is also likely that attempts were made to enforce the observance of a few selected Christian practices.¹³ This is supported by several pieces of evidence, which suggest that Olof and his successors wished to be seen as Christian kings. Around the time of his baptism, Olof began to issue coins at Sigtuna. These were the first coins minted in Sweden. For this task, Olof employed Anglo-Saxon moneyers. The coins were decorated with Christian crosses together with the picture of Olof. Some bore the words *OLAF REX SVEVORUM* and others *OLAF REX AN SITUN*. The majority of the coins were very similar to those issued by Olof's contemporary King Ethelred II of England. At a slightly later date, coins with the inscription + *OLFAF ON SIDEI* were produced. Many scholars have interpreted this as 'God's Sigtuna', and it could thus be one of the clearest pieces of evidence of Sigtuna's role as a missionary centre. However, this particular interpretation cannot be relied on, as the text can be read in several different ways.¹⁴

King Olof had his stronghold at Husaby in Västergötland, and this is also the place where he is reported to have been baptised. Husaby church with its tall west towers and royal balcony has been dated to the twelfth century. The towers and balcony were modelled on Frankish royal churches, such as St. Denis and the imperial chapel at Aachen. Such features are also found at the monastery of Corvey, which was established during the reign of Louis the Pious as a centre for evangelization in Scandinavia.¹⁵ The evidence from Sigtuna and Husaby, thus strongly suggests that Olof and his successors had knowledge of the activities of Christian rulers, and that they wished to portray themselves as such. It was presumably the examples of these men who gave kings in Sweden the impetus to accept Christianity. As was demonstrated above, legislation in support of Christianity was a part of Christian kingship that Swedish kings may well have adopted. The observance of Christian practices is moreover likely to have been included in the magnates' loyalty to their king.

The need for royal protection of missionaries in Frisia and Saxony clearly emerged in the previous chapter. It is evident that this was an important element also in Sweden. Rimbart, the author of the *Life of Ansgar*, reported that the missionary Nithard was killed by 'pagans' at Birka, and that all the other missionaries were exiled. The guilty parties do not seem to have received any punishment from the king. It thus seems that even though the missionaries and their work had been approved by the thing, they were not in practice under the king's protection. It was presumably for this reason that Ansgar, during

his second mission, specifically asked the king to help and protect the missionaries.¹⁶ Missionaries working with Christian kings appear to have enjoyed their protection in the areas that were firmly controlled by the king. According to Adam of Bremen, Bishops Adalvard and Egino wished to destroy the 'temple' at Gamla Uppsala. King Stenkil however convinced the bishops that such an act would bring their deaths. The bishops therefore preached in Götaland where they are also reported to have destroyed idols. There are no reports of violent reactions in response to their activities in this area.¹⁷

Missionaries in Sweden also received economic support from secular rulers. The missionaries in Birka received initial support from Louis the Pious. He is reported to have provided Ansgar with gifts for the people at Birka. Some time later, when Gautbert was preparing to leave for Sweden he was 'generously' rewarded with 'what was needed' in order to carry out the Christian service together with 'the necessary economic resources', jointly from the emperor and Bishop Ebo of Reims. This was necessary for the missionaries as the king at Birka was not Christian. According to Rimbert, the first church in Birka was built by Hergeir on his own land.¹⁸ Since the king was not Christian, he was presumably not as motivated as a Christian ruler to provide missionaries with land for a church. During Ansgar's second visit, King Olof gave the missionaries a piece of land in Birka where they could erect a church. He does however not seem to have been as generous as for example King Aethelberht of Kent, for the missionaries had to buy a house in order to find a place to live.¹⁹ It must be pointed out that no archaeological evidence of a church has yet been found at Birka, although several possible locations have been suggested.

Christian kings in Sweden have been seen as very important for church building, particularly during the first parts of stage 2 of conversion. This argument is based on the large number of early churches that were erected in connection with royal farms and hamlets (*husabyar*). It is however important to note that the kings at this time were still itinerant. The erection of churches at various royal strongholds could therefore be expected. The connection between churches and *husabyar* is particularly clear in Östergötland, but it is also found in several other provinces. At King Olof's estate at Husaby in Västergötland, a church was erected in the twelfth century, which appears to have been preceded by a wooden church. In Sigtuna there are remains of a church from the second quarter of the twelfth century at the presumed site of the royal farm. Around this church there are older graves of a different alignment, which strongly suggest the existence of an older, wooden church.

This could be the episcopal church that, according to Adam of Bremen, existed in Sigtuna in the 1060s. Other examples of churches on royal estates are Husby-Sjuhundra and Kungs Husby in Uppland. The situation seems to have been similar also in later times. It is obvious that the church at Gamla Uppsala was built on royal land, which the king later donated to the clergy.²⁰ This connection between churches and *husabyar* further supports the argument that the king at Birka did not fund the erection of a church. According to Rimbert, the royal estate at Birka was situated some distance away from the town. Remains at Hovgården on the nearby island of Adelsö have been identified as the likely location of the royal estate in the ninth century. There are no traces of a church at this site,²¹ and it thus seems that if a church for the Christians of Birka was erected at this time, it was built within the town.

This section has demonstrated that varying degrees of external influences were present in the introduction of Christianity in Sweden. This influence seems to have been almost exclusively limited to political pressure, without the use of military force. Christianity did not gain a significant foothold until kings in Sweden had been baptised and actively began to promote the religion. Thus, it has yet again been demonstrated that in order to turn a non-Christian society into a Christian one, a Christian ruler was essential.

The role of secular rulers in the conversion of Denmark will now be discussed. Also in this kingdom, external influences from the Frankish emperors are clearly evidenced. Harald Klak was the first king to be baptised. He had been exiled from his realm, and was baptised in order to receive the support of Louis the Pious. It is however unlikely that Harald returned home and his impact on the conversion of Denmark was probably minor. Louis the Pious, on the other hand, was actively working for the conversion of this area, and organised the missions of Ansgar and Archbishop Ebo of Reims. Christianity did not however gain a strong hold in Denmark until the baptism of Harald Gormsen (Bluetooth) around the year 960. The king's major motive for baptism seems to have been to avoid a conflict with the Franks. With Denmark under Christian rule, the Franks would have lost their legitimate excuse to start a war.²²

According to the Chronicle of Widukind, written c. 970, Harald ordered the Danes to reject their old gods and honour the Christian priests. It should also be mentioned that Harald issued cross-marked half-bracteates 'to proclaim the Christianity of his newly converted kingdom'. Moreover, the well-known text on the rune stone at Jelling stated that Harald 'made the Danes Christian'.

Although this statement has been seen as a 'great exaggeration', it is clear that his baptism was the catalyst for the wider spread of Christianity within Denmark. Also here, the baptism of a powerful king was essential for widespread conversion. There are no indications in the primary source material that Harald used military means to enforce Christianity among the population. Indeed, the existence of both non-Christian and Christian monuments at Jelling, (i.e. two burial mounds, rune stones and a church) have been seen to signify a gradual and peaceful conversion.²³

The clerics who were active in the conversion of Denmark came both from the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen and England. From the end of the tenth century the Viking expeditions to England gained renewed energy. The Danish-English realm was created, and between 1013-1042 the whole of England was under Danish rule. The Anglo-Saxon influences appear to have been particularly strong during the reigns of Sven Forkbeard (987-1014) and Knut the Great (1019-1035), who brought a number of English bishops to Denmark.²⁴

Also in Norway, native kings were instrumental in the conversion. The kings' inspiration to receive baptism came from abroad, but there are no indications that external military force played any part in these events. Stage 1 and the earliest phase of stage 2 in the conversion of Norway are similar to the conversions of Sweden, Denmark, and Anglo-Saxon England. After this time, there is more resemblance to the Carolingian conquest and conversion of Frisia and Saxony. The first king to be baptised was Hákon Aðalsteinsfostri. He had been brought up and baptised in England, and after his return to Norway he tried to spread Christianity by peaceful means. He managed to do so along the coastal parts of western Norway. His powers were however limited and he was not able to start a 'general conversion'. This process did not begin until the reigns of Olav Tryggvason (995-1000) and Olav Haraldsson (Olav the Holy, 1016-28). These kings had also been baptised abroad, and employed foreign clergymen to their aid. The overall evidence suggests that these clerics primarily came from Anglo-Saxon England. Adam of Bremen however stated that Olav Tryggvason asked the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen to send him clerics in order to spread Christianity to the people of the north. According to the sagas, Olav Tryggvason and Olav Haraldsson used extremely violent means to spread Christianity, and had to fight against considerable opposition among the powerful families. The two Olavs seem to have been inspired to introduce Christianity by the same motive: to unite the realm under their power.²⁵ It must be pointed out that the writers of the sagas may have exaggerated the

violent aspects of the conversion. The kings' efforts to make Norway Christian may, at least partly, also have been caused by a stronger orientation among the aristocracy towards Christianity. On the basis of this, it has been suggested that clerics may also have been working peacefully to convince the aristocracy to accept baptism.²⁶

In the early 1020s Olav Haraldsson 'officially' introduced the observance of Christianity at the thing of Moster. At this meeting, the ecclesiastical regulations of the Older Gulathing Law were issued, which had been composed with the aid of the king's bishop Grímkell.²⁷ Subsequently, all the legal districts received similar ecclesiastical regulations. These are the laws of the Frostathing, the Eidsivathing and the Borgarthing. These regulations will be discussed in detail in Parts II and III. Here it suffices to say that harsh penalties were imposed on those who did not observe the required Christian practices. The punishments varied between fines and outlawry. Outlawry was the harshest penalty in the Norwegian laws, and was as close as it is possible to come to the death penalty.²⁸ The harshness of these regulations can thus be compared to those issued by Charlemagne in Saxony. If King Olof Skötkonung and Harald Gormsen issued Christian laws, the punishments for breaking these regulations must have been significantly milder.

3.2. The Spread of Christianity within Society.

In chapter 2 it was shown that Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony came from the top layers in society and then spread downwards to the wider population. Evidence from Scandinavia suggests that this model of top-down conversion can be applied also here.

It was argued that a kind of sacral kingship existed in Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony, which influenced the population to be baptised at the same time as their king. Evidence indicates that similar conditions may have existed in Scandinavia. According to Adam of Bremen, there were non-Christian cult leaders at Gamla Uppsala who carried the people's offerings to the gods during the sacrifices.²⁹ It however seems more likely that religious functions were fulfilled by the kings or chieftains of the various groups in early Scandinavian society. This can be supported by evidence from the province of Jämtland. In this province, eight farms with sacral names that are likely to have been seats of local chieftains have been identified. The fact that the farms bear sacral names accords well with the idea of the chieftains as leaders of the pre-Christian

cult. Some of these farms moreover have names containing *sal* or *hov*. These elements have been connected to cult buildings. It has therefore been argued that such farms were named after their long houses, in which the cultic rituals were held.³⁰ An analogy from Iceland should be mentioned in this context. Evidence clearly shows that the Icelandic chieftains (*goðar*) functioned both as legal and religious leaders. It has furthermore been argued that the pre-Christian *goðar* were obliged to host cultic rituals at their farms.³¹ Taking these pieces of evidence into consideration, it is thus more than possible that chieftains in Scandinavia were influential regarding the introduction of Christianity in at least two respects. They could use their legal power in order to influence the local thing to accept Christianity. Moreover, once the leaders had been baptised, their religious authority may have caused the wider population to feel inspired or even obliged to accept Christianity.

It would seem that the spread of Christianity within Sweden was most similar to its diffusion within the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.³² However, parallels can also be found with both Frisia and Saxony. It was demonstrated above that Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England was spread via the bonds of loyalty that existed between the different layers in society. Anglo-Saxon kings seem, at least to some extent, to have been able to influence their advisers to accept Christianity as their religion. In Viking Age and early medieval Sweden, bonds of loyalty similar to those in Anglo-Saxon England, appear to have existed. Evidence suggests that it was through these that Christianity filtered down to the greater population. However, kings in Sweden seem to have been in less powerful positions than their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. In this period, Sweden was a rather loose federation of provinces. Royal power was exercised through thing meetings within the provinces. The rural aristocracy were often very influential, and could thus be of decisive importance for the acceptance or rejection of Christianity. It therefore happened that rulers experienced real difficulties in introducing the observance of Christianity into their territories.³³ It seems clear, however, that in areas where Christian royal power was strong, the members of the things were more likely to follow the wishes of their king. Consequently, Christianity seems to have spread faster in areas that were firmly under the control of a Christian ruler. This can be clearly seen in the provinces of Västergötland and Östergötland, where Christian royal power was well established from the eleventh century onwards. It was in these areas that Christianity first took root, and it was also here that the earliest ecclesiastical structures emerged.

In Uppland, Christianity did not gain a firm foothold until slightly later. According to Adam of Bremen, Olof Skötkonung planned to destroy the 'temple' at Gamla Uppsala. Adam however tells us that when the population heard about his plans, they 'came to an agreement' with Olof. It was decided that if Olof wanted to be a Christian, he could exercise his royal power in those parts of Sweden 'that he himself preferred'. As a result, Olof seems at least temporarily to have given up his attempts to spread Christianity in the central and northern parts of Uppland. He established the episcopal see at Skara in Västergötland, which was situated close to his stronghold at Husaby. This see was founded around the year 1000, while the see at Sigtuna was not founded until the 1060s. There was no episcopal see at Gamla Uppsala until some time after 1134.³⁴ Evidence thus suggests that the ruling elite in Uppland did not wish to accept Christianity as their religion. Olof Skötkonung was presumably not in a powerful enough position to violently enforce the observance of Christianity in this area.³⁵

The rune stone on the island of Frösön (Jämtland) declares that 'Östman, son of Gudfast had this stone erected and this bridge constructed and he had Jämtland Christianised'. It has been suggested that this text refers to a decision taken by the local thing (*jamtamot*), and that Östman was a lawman at the thing. If so, the decision to accept Christianity seems to have been collective, and taken more or less voluntarily. Parallels have been drawn with Iceland, where the acceptance of Christianity was discussed by the Althing. When the members were unable to reach a decision, the lawman Þorgeirr was asked to settle the matter. Þorgeirr then decided in favour of Christianity.³⁶ Another suggestion is that the text on the Frösö stone demonstrates that an element of power was exercised in the conversion. The inscription has been compared to Harald Gormsen's claim to have 'made the Danes Christian', on the rune stone at Jelling. This argument was based on the idea that people would not have accepted the inscription on the Frösö stone from a lawman. Some scholars have however also doubted that such lawmen existed at this time in Jämtland. Östman may therefore instead have been a minor king or chieftain who enforced Christianity onto the people of Jämtland.³⁷ This appears to be the most likely scenario. It seems improbable that Östman could have claimed that he made Jämtland Christian, unless he had been a very powerful man. It must be noted that whichever interpretation we prefer, it is clear that Östman was an important man in the top layer of society. This further supports the idea that Christianity in Sweden spread from 'top to bottom'.

In chapter 2 it was argued that members of the nobility in Frisia were among the first to accept Christianity and that these families also became important for the spread of the religion among the wider population. The upper layers of Swedish society appear to have played a similar role. This is suggested by evidence from the rune stones, which were erected by one or more individuals. About three quarters of these stones carry an explicitly Christian message in words and/or ornamentation. To erect a rune stone must have been a rather expensive and prestigious act, which not all members of the population would have been able to carry out. It must however be pointed out that the large numbers of rune stones, particularly in Uppland, suggest that they were not exclusively an aristocratic phenomenon. Henrik Williams has nevertheless stated that the homogenous characteristics of the inscriptions indicate that they represented only a limited group of society.³⁸ Scholars have argued that people who had accepted Christianity as a result of their connections with a Christian centre, such as Sigtuna or Skara, may have erected rune stones around their farms in the countryside. It was particularly common to erect such stones near bridges and roads, where they would have been visible to many people. In this way, rune stones are likely to have brought the Christian message to the population in rural areas. The coins issued at Sigtuna are also likely to have increased the general awareness of Christianity, at least for those parts of the population that came into contact with money. Evidence indicates that these coins circulated in a wide area and were handled again and again by their owners. It has also been argued that this coinage was funded by the wealthy families in the valley of Lake Mälaren.³⁹ These pieces of evidence thus further reinforce the importance of the aristocracy for the spread of Christianity.

Another important contribution to the spread of Christianity by magnates is the erection of private churches. According to the Life of Ansgar, Hergeir (Birka's *praefectus* and 'adviser of the king'), built a church on his own land. Moreover, a number of churches that date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries have been found through archaeological investigations. Hackås church in Jämtland, which was built on the grounds of the important farm of Hov, and Västerhus church on Frösön are two possible examples of early private churches. Olle Ferm and Sigurd Rahmqvist have given several examples of early churches in Uppland that are likely to have been built by magnates. The aristocracy in Frisia seems to have become the first priests. It has been suggested that magnate farms in Jämtland were turned into priests' settlements (*prästgårdar*).⁴⁰ This could indicate a similar development in Sweden.

It must also be pointed out that there is some evidence to suggest that conversion did not always follow the general pattern of top-down conversion. The graves at Birka that can be identified as Christian suggest that parts of the population received baptism even though the king was not Christian. It is also interesting to note that many of the women at Birka seem to have been baptised earlier than the men. The number of possible female graves is larger than the number of presumed Christian male graves. Burials in trapezoid coffins provide one such example. There are 31 such sexable adult burials at Birka, and out of these 22 are female. There are also grave finds that suggest that women were baptised early. Eight of the nine pendant crosses that have been found at Birka came from female graves. The ninth pendant cross was found in a double grave. It seems to have belonged to the woman, while the man appears to have worn a Þórr's hammer. Several of the pendant crosses are of 'simple, almost poor' craftsmanship. This is not usual for Viking Age jewellery and it therefore seems that the symbolic value of the crosses was greater than their value as pieces of jewellery. It is thus plausible that these crosses could indicate adherence to Christianity. They have all been dated to the first half of the tenth century and have been put in connection with the mission of Bishop Unni to Birka in 936.⁴¹ That women were positive towards Christianity is also suggested by finds from the island of Gotland. Excavations of a number of burial grounds have revealed seven pendant crosses. Six of these belonged to women. It must however also be kept in mind that women may have been more likely than men to wear such crosses.⁴²

There are other pieces of evidence which have been seen to suggest that women were at times quicker than men to accept Christianity. The text on a rune stone in Enberga (Uppland) reads: 'Gisl and Ingemund... raised this stone after Halvdan their father and after Ödis their mother. May God help her soul'.⁴³ This text implies that it was only the mother who had been baptised. Rune stone evidence also suggests that women could play active parts in the spread of Christianity. Anne-Sofie Gräslund has shown that 39% of the rune stones in Uppland that contain 'gender-indicating' words mention women. Some of these stones were erected by women and others have inscriptions that commemorate women. Moreover, 55% of the inscriptions that mention bridge-building refer to women. It should also be noted that there are several examples of such rune stones from both Denmark and Norway. The building of bridges was part of the development of a congregational Christian lifestyle. It was therefore seen as a pious act, similar to alms giving, and became part of the system of indulgence.⁴⁴

Finally, also hagiographical evidence has been seen to suggest that women were particularly receptive to the Christian message. The Life of Ansgar tells us about the pious widow Frideborg. This description is coloured by traits typical of this genre. It has however been pointed out that Frideborg has a male counterpart in Hergeir, which creates a balance between the sexes. It was therefore argued that Frideborg may actually have existed. However, even if she did not, it may not be a coincidence that Rimbart used a woman as an *exemplum* of 'ideal Christian behaviour'.⁴⁵

A cautionary remark regarding the source material presented above must be added. It could be argued that it suggests that women played active and important roles in pre-Christian society, rather than that women were more interested in Christianity than men.

In Denmark, the aristocracy appears to have agreed to accept Christianity at the meetings of the things. The rune stone at Jelling may however reflect a decision taken at a major thing meeting between King Harald Gormsen and the aristocracy. Harald may also have travelled around at the different things in order to introduce Christianity as the 'official' religion of the whole kingdom. The majority of the aristocracy was presumably as positive to Christianity as their king. It is otherwise unlikely that Harald would have been able to retain the throne after his baptism.⁴⁶ It thus appears that Christianity in Denmark was spread in the same way as in Sweden and Anglo-Saxon England, i.e. rather peacefully through the bonds of loyalty in society.

The aristocracy also aided the spread of Christianity through the erection of churches. During stage 2 of the conversion, they built wooden churches and later on churches of stone. Estrid, the sister of Knut the Great, began to build the cathedral of Roskilde around 1027.⁴⁷ The members of the Christian aristocracy are also the most likely to have buried their dead in churchyards in the early stages of the conversion. The churchyard at Sebbersund, which dates from the beginning of the eleventh century, could be one such example.⁴⁸

Also in Norway, the thing meetings played an important part in the spread of Christianity. During the forceful conversions of Olav Tryggvason and Olav Haraldsson, these meetings were presumably more of a formality than in Sweden and Denmark. It seems that for those parts of the aristocracy who were opposed to the kings, the possibilities to influence these meetings were very small. The kings instead used the thing meetings to introduce Christian legislation. The thing at Moster (near Bergen) held in the 1020s when the Older Gulathing Law was adopted is one such example. On the rune stone at Kuli,

which is located near Trondheim, it is stated that Christianity had been in Norway for twelve winters. Dendrochronological dating from a nearby excavation has suggested that this stone was raised in 1034, i.e. around twelve years after the thing at Moster. The importance of this particular meeting was stressed by Dagfinn Skre, who argued that 'contemporary society', presumably saw this as the 'definite breakthrough in the conversion of western Norway'.⁴⁹ The top layer of Norwegian society and also the proprietary farmers of the 'upper middle class' erected churches from the later part of the eleventh century. Their activity is particularly clearly seen in Romerike, where 35 out of the 37 churches were situated on large farms.⁵⁰

There is some evidence to suggest that parts of the population accepted Christianity before the time of the Christian kings. This is indicated by Christian influences on traditional burial practices. It has been stated that during the last half of the tenth century, the number of 'pagan' burials along the south-eastern and western coasts of Norway fell 'dramatically'. It is important to remember that such changes may reflect cultural influences rather than spread of Christianity. It has however been argued that these changes are significant since they suggest an awareness of Christian burial practices.⁵¹ It must also be added that, as was argued in chapter 2, due to the collective nature of pre-Christian society and early medieval Christianity, also the decisions to accept Christianity before the 'official' conversion are likely to have been collective, taken by smaller groups in society.

A find that might indicate acceptance of Christianity among the Norwegians is the ornamented reliquary that is now in Copenhagen. This small house-shaped casket appears to be of Pictish origin, and produced in the eighth or early ninth century. On its base there is a tenth-century runic incision, which reads 'Ranvaig owns this casket'. According to a Danish inventory from 1737, the casket comes from a church in Norway. It never appears to have been buried, and now contains late medieval relics. On the basis of this, James Graham-Campbell has argued that the reliquary 'may never have lost its primary significance'. It is therefore possible that Ranvaig is the name of a Christian who lived in Norway during the tenth century.⁵²

Christianity seems to have gained a rather firm footing in Norway around the time of Olav Haraldsson's death at the battle of Stiklestad (1030). Shortly after his death Olav was reassessed and he came to be venerated as a saint (Olav the Holy). His cult spread rapidly in Norway and also to the rest of Scandinavia.⁵³ This could signify that, by the time of Olav's death, Christianity

had been widely accepted. One could equally argue that the spread of Christianity was hastened by the emergence of a local saint's cult. An example from Mexico can illustrate how significant a local saint can be for widespread acceptance of Christianity. In 1531, the Indian version of the Virgin Mary appeared. She was called The Indian Virgin of Guadalupe ('the dark-skinned virgin') and came to represent the new Indian Catholicism, as distinguished from Spanish Catholicism. From this time, Indian Catholicism began to spread swiftly across Mexico. The contemporary chronicler Motolinía stated that, by 1537 nine million Indians had been baptised.⁵⁴

In conclusion: This section has demonstrated that the most significant forces in the conversions of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway came from the top layers in society. There were however some important differences between the positions of the rulers in these realms. Harald Gormsen was a ruler who, although dependent on the support of the aristocracy, appears to have governed a consolidated realm. It therefore seems unlikely that he needed to actively use military force in order to further Christianity in Denmark. Norway, on the other hand, was not united under one ruler. As was pointed out above, the attempts of the two Olavs to spread Christianity were only part of their fights to become rulers of a consolidated realm. Resistance to these attempts seems to have caused civil war. Nor Sweden was yet a united kingdom. The actions of Swedish kings and chieftains, however, differ significantly from those of their Norwegian counterparts. There is very little evidence to suggest that they tried to spread Christianity by violent means. The overall evidence thus suggests that rulers in Sweden were in less powerful positions than both Danish and Norwegian kings.

The rulers of the Scandinavian kingdoms were thus, in slightly different ways, dependent on the support of the elite in the various districts. The meetings of the things must therefore have played a significant role for the spread of Christianity. The sources only provide us with a few references to such thing meetings, and we can therefore not establish the exact course of events. However, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the arguments put forward by Olav Tryggvason and Olav Haraldsson were rather more forceful than those presented by Danish and Swedish rulers. Finally it should be noted that the overall evidence from all the Scandinavian countries suggests that, irrespective of the degree of violence employed in the conversion, the wider population could not exercise much choice whether to accept or reject Christianity.

3.3. Missionary Methods.

The aim of this section is to investigate what missionary methods were employed in the conversion of Scandinavia. Due to the scarcity of source material on this particular topic, the material from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway will here be treated together.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that different types of baptism were practised in the various geographical areas. In Saxony, rulers and population were forcibly baptised, while in Anglo-Saxon England and Frisia, more voluntary forms of baptism seem to have been practised.

The picture of the conversion of Sweden provided by the primary sources suggests that forced baptisms did not take place in this kingdom. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 demonstrated that in the provinces where the leading layers were Christian, the religion was spread by peaceful means, and there was probably no need for forced baptism. In those provinces where the ruling elite was less positive towards Christianity, the religion spread at a slower pace. The Christian rulers who wished to convert all parts of Sweden were presumably not powerful enough to employ forced baptism on the population in these areas, should they have wished to. The situation appears to have been similar in Denmark and also in Norway during the reign of Hákon Aðalsteinsfostri. Olav Tryggvason and Olav Haraldsson, on the other hand, may at times have given the population the choice between baptism and death, as had been the case in Saxony.⁵⁵

The catechumenate needs to be discussed in relation to baptism and missionary work in Scandinavia. According to the traditions of Ancient Christianity, ‘converts’ should receive Christian instruction as catechumens before they could be baptised. In the third century, the normal duration of the catechumenate was set to three years. As child baptism became more and more common, the baptismal rites began to change. The initiating rites of the catechumenate were integrated into the baptismal formula, and the catechumenate was thus in practice removed. This was fully developed in the so-called *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*, which came to predominate baptism during the Middle Ages. The primary sources indicate that the overriding aim for missionaries in Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony was to baptise the population, without giving them much pre-baptismal instruction. It is thus likely that these missionaries used the baptismal order set out in the *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*. This is indicated for example by letters from

Pope Zacharias to Boniface where the pope called for the reintroduction of longer periods of pre-baptismal instruction. It has already been mentioned that Alcuin complained about the 'hasty baptism of pagans who knew nothing of the faith'. As a result of such clerical grievances, the baptismal formula was divided into two parts. This meant that it was possible for missionaries to perform baptism either as one act, or to let the introductory parts of the baptismal formula form the beginning of a catechumenate.⁵⁶

The constant lack of clergy in Scandinavia is apparent both in the Life of Ansgar and in Adam of Bremen's *Gesta*. Birka was on several occasions without a priest for many years. Adam of Bremen tells us about German clergymen who were appointed to episcopal sees in Scandinavia, but who never took up their positions. The number of clergymen in this area thus appears to have been rather low. It is therefore likely that missionaries had to preach to large audiences and they were probably not able to dedicate much time to pre-baptismal instruction.⁵⁷ Their primary aim, or wish, may thus have been to baptise the population quickly, as missionaries in England, Saxony, and Frisia had done.

Evidence from Scandinavia however suggests that this was not always the case in practice. Missionaries appear, at least at times, to have made use of the longer catechumenate. The duration of the catechumenate could moreover be extended to cover more than the stipulated three years. Baptism could thus be delayed until the catechumens were on their deathbeds. According to Rimbert, Ansgar baptised many at Hedeby, but there were also 'countless numbers' who became catechumens. In Iceland, during the first mission, many are reported to have received baptism, although two of the chieftains would only agree to become catechumens.⁵⁸ Rune stone evidence from Sweden also suggests that the longer catechumenate was practised. The texts on several stones in Uppland refer to people who died 'in white clothes' (*i hvitavādum*). Scholars have argued that this word may refer to the baptismal robes, which the baptised should wear after the ceremony. It has therefore been suggested that these people were catechumens, who received baptism just before their deaths.⁵⁹

There seem to be at least three explanations for the appearance of the longer catechumenate in Scandinavia. The first is provided by Rimbert, who stated that many preferred this to immediate baptism. The reason was that these people wished to be baptised and cleansed from their sins just before their deaths. They were thus hoping to go straight to paradise. A second explanation for the longer catechumenate could be that it provided a good option for those who were not

entirely convinced that they wished to be baptised. As catechumens they were allowed to attend services in church, and could thus still take part in the Christian life. The third explanation, which occurs in Egil Skallagrímsson's saga, is of a more practical nature. Here it was stated that Torulf and Egil became catechumens in England so that they would be able to work for the king. This was the custom among both traders and men who were employed by Christians. The saga explicitly stated that catechumens could be together with both Christians and non-Christians and 'believe in that which was best suited to their mood'.⁶⁰

The usage of the longer catechumenate may have meant that the population in Scandinavia at times had greater opportunities to receive pre-baptismal instruction than the people of England, Frisia, and Saxony. It should however be noted that it is unlikely that the longer catechumenate was practised during Olav Tryggvason's and Olav Haraldsson's attempts at converting Norway. Moreover, all over Scandinavia, the leading layers are likely to have received more thorough Christian instruction than the wider population. This is suggested by the close co-operation between rulers and missionaries described in the medieval sources.⁶¹ Finally it must be kept in mind that we do not know how many of the catechumens in Scandinavia were eventually baptised.

Missionary preaching and extant missionary sermons will now be discussed. In chapter 2, the significance of preaching for the spread of Christianity was put into question. Its importance for the conversion of Scandinavia must also be questioned. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 showed that the observance of Christianity was enforced through the things by the leading layers in society. It also seems clear that clerics at this time were few in relation to the wider population. In many cases the general population may therefore not have come into close contact with a missionary priest until after Christianity had been made the 'official' religion in their district. When these people did meet with missionaries, they are likely to have accepted baptism as a matter of course.⁶² It should also be pointed out that sermons do not seem to have become a fixed part of the Christian service in Scandinavia until the end of the twelfth century.⁶³ These pieces of evidence further suggest that personal religious conviction did not play any significant part in conversion in the Middle Ages.

The contents of missionary sermons can be studied through the early homily books from Norway and Iceland. These books contain collections of sermons and texts in the vernacular. The earliest of these texts were edited at the end of the eleventh century. The majority were however edited during the twelfth

century. The two most important collections are The Old Norwegian Homily Book and The Icelandic Homily Book. The sermons contained in these books are not literal reproductions of missionary sermons. Instead they mostly consist of rather free translations of the preachings of earlier theologians. They can therefore not be seen as genuinely Scandinavian.⁶⁴ In spite of this, these collections have been seen as significant source material for the 'official and normative religion' that was preached during the conversion period in Scandinavia. These sermons must have had a much larger impact on the population than ecclesiastical texts in Latin.⁶⁵

Rune stones can also provide us with information about the contents of missionary preaching in Scandinavia. It has been suggested that these stones were designed according to 'a certain theological-juridical pattern' laid down by those in charge of the mission, possibly the pope'.⁶⁶ This must of course be seen as an exaggeration. Torun Zachrisson has argued that the 'second wave' of rune stones (c.1050-1125) in Uppland was directed by missionaries at Sigtuna. She suggested that these stones were made by rune carvers, who knew the Christian teachings well, and who travelled around the diocese together with the bishop.⁶⁷ Extant evidence cannot confirm this suggestion. It does however seem likely that the contents and designs of the rune stones were influenced by clerics. This was argued by Per Beskow who pointed out that clerics represented 'learning and literary education'.⁶⁸ It must nevertheless be kept in mind that the rune stones may reflect those elements of missionary preachings that were most appealing to those who paid for the stones. The role of the rune carvers and their personal experiences of Christianity must also be taken into consideration.⁶⁹

The evidence presented in chapter 2 suggested that missionaries only tried to explain the most fundamental concepts of Christianity to their listeners. A similar picture is provided by the Scandinavian evidence. The contents of the early homily books suggest that Christian eschatology was a particularly preponderant theme. This is also suggested by Swedish rune stone evidence, where the expression 'May God help his/her soul' occurs frequently. The homily books suggest that such invocations express the hope that the deceased will be allowed to enjoy heaven, and not face the ordeals of hell. The sources also contain direct references to both paradise and hell. The inscription on the rune stone in Folsberga (Vallby parish, Uppland) reads 'Christ let Tummes soul come into light and paradise and in the best world for Christians'. In a stanza of a Christian scaldic verse dated to c. 1000, the dying poet declares that hell is the one thing that he fears.⁷⁰ The missionaries also seem to have introduced

the population to the concept of purgatory. The detailed prayer formulas on older rune stones and the animal ornamentation on the more recent stones have been seen to represent contemporary beliefs about the place that preceded paradise. At this time it was held that the dead had to be protected on their way to paradise. Survivors were taught that they could do this by performing pious deeds. This was a common theme on the Continent from the seventh century that, during the following centuries, was transmitted to Scandinavia. Its importance for both missionaries and Christians is indicated by the relatively large number of stones that refer to pious deeds, such as bridge-building and pilgrimage.⁷¹

Evidence suggests that missionaries in Scandinavia also attempted to explain the concept of sin to the population. This is another frequently occurring theme both in the Old Norwegian Homily Book and The Icelandic Homily Book. One of the sermons described how baptism made a child that 'previously was the slave of sin' a child of God. The congregation was also warned of the temptations of the devil.⁷² The Old Norwegian Homily Book furthermore includes an explanation of the doctrine of original sin, and contains a detailed list of possible sins. Evidence from Sweden demonstrates that people in this area had also been introduced to such teachings. The word for sin appears on rune stones, e.g. in the expression 'forgive him crimes and sins', which is found on the stone at Skånelaholm (Uppland). Scholars have moreover seen the serpents on rune stones as representations of the devil, which further suggests that the early Scandinavians reflected on the concept of sin.⁷³ It seems that missionaries also introduced the population to the Christian virtues. A text by Alcuin entitled 'about the virtues and vices' is included in The Old Norwegian Homily Book. The same collection contains a sermon that mentions several Christian virtues, such as humbleness, obedience, and compassion.⁷⁴ Traces of such teachings have also been seen in the Swedish rune stone material. A few inscriptions occur in which God is asked to help the soul of the commemorated 'more than they deserved'. Such requests have been seen as evidence of Christian humbleness before God, rather than prayers for particularly sinful people.⁷⁵

In order to explain the Christian theology to the population, missionaries on the Continent seem to have made use of local mythology. This is indicated by the 'vulgarized versions of Biblical accounts of the origins of the world and of man' that appear in many sermons.⁷⁶ The idea of compromise and adaptation goes back to Augustine of Hippo. He argued that God was present everywhere, even in non-Christian societies. The traditions of these societies did thus not

necessarily belong to the non-Christians and could, through consecration, be brought back to the Christians.⁷⁷ This type of Christian reinterpretation has been named *Interpretatio Christiana*. The evidence from Scandinavia clearly shows that missionaries in this area used similar methods. Scholars have argued that through the so-called *Interpretatio Scandinavica*, Christian figures were given names and shapes from corresponding beings in the Scandinavian mythology. Anders Hultgård has pointed out that the reinter-pretations of this kind in the homily books belong to the early conversion period, and become less and less common during the course of the Middle Ages.⁷⁸

Scholars have argued that a common reinterpretation was to describe Satan as the Serpent of *Miðgarðr*. According to the literary mythology, this serpent was the enemy of the gods. A particularly interesting example of this kind of reinterpretation is found in the *Niðrstignings saga*. This tale is constructed around the description of Christ's descent into the kingdom of the dead, which is included in the Gospel of John. One of the sections of the *Niðrstignings saga*, which does not have any equivalent in the Latin original, includes a description of how the sky suddenly opened up and Christ emerged with an army. Christ looks out over Jerusalem where a trap has been set for the Serpent of *Miðgarðr* (*midgarzorme*), i.e. Satan. It has previously been argued that the early missionaries used the Norse myth about Þórr catching the Serpent of *Miðgarðr* on a fishing-line for the allegory of Christ as a bait and trap for the devil.⁷⁹ The rune stone at Altuna (Uppland) is a likely example of this. This stone depicts a figure, holding with a hammer, in the act of catching a large serpent. It should be noted that the figure is standing in a boat, and that one of his feet has gone through the bottom of the vessel. (See figure 1).⁸⁰

Scholars' use of the term 'Norse mythology' in connection with *Interpretatio Scandinavica* points to the literary mythology of the gods. In chapter 4 it is however shown that the Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom included many supernatural beings, other than the mythological gods. Such beings clearly played very important parts in popular myths and rituals. This argument is supported also by the sermons in the homily books. In these texts no gods are explicitly mentioned, although there are possible allusions to Þórr in relation to the Serpent of *Miðgarðr*. The sermons do however directly refer to several other types of supernatural beings, such as giants, trolls, and *vættir*.⁸¹ In the sermons, these beings are either explicitly named as devils, or placed on an equal standing with such demons. Chapter 4 demonstrates that terms, such as 'devils' and 'demons', were frequently used by missionaries across northern Europe for



Figure 1. The rune stone at Altuna, U1163 (Uppland, Sweden).

Satan, played a central part in the spread of Christianity among the Vikings. The uniquely Scandinavian depictions of a bound crucifixion may have emerged from this image of Christ. This is found on the rune stone at Jelling and on early pendant crucifixes from Scandinavia.⁸² (See figures 2, 3, and 4)

Missionaries' usage of *Interpretatio Scandinavica* has been put forward as an explanation for this phenomenon. Scholars have suggested that the early Scandinavians were unable to relate to the idea of a victorious Christ who was nailed to the cross. It has also been argued that they believed that it was possible

all beings belonging to non-Christian religious customs. The terminology in the Norse and western European sources is thus strikingly similar.

Scholars have suggested that missionaries presented a victorious Christ to the population in Scandinavia. This image of Christ frequently appears in early Germanic art. One such example is found in Godeschalk's *Evangeliarium* from 786, which shows a triumphant Christ on the cross wearing a crown on his head. It is also found in sources from England. In an Anglo-Saxon prayer book, dated to 1000-1050, an interesting example is found. In one of the prayers it is stated that Christ allowed his 'glorious palms' (*gloriosas palmas; wuldorfullan handbreda*) to be fixed to the cross.

Stories of the victorious Christ are likely to have appealed to the early Scandinavian warrior mentality. It has also been suggested that missionaries took pains to present Christ as figure of strength and luck, who could ward off malignant powers. It is therefore possible that the Revelation of St. John, which describes Christ as the victor over



Figure 2. The bound crucifixion on the rune stone at Jelling (Denmark).

Figure 3. Crucifix with bound Christ.



Figure 4. Crucifix with bound Christ.



to incapacitate someone by magic ties. Missionaries should thus have made use of this concept in order to explain why Christ could not remove himself from the cross. The evidence for this belief is however rather tenuous, and other interpretations can be put forward. Crosses with arms that are artistically interlaced in the middle occur on rune stones in Södermanland and Östergötland. This type of ornamentation also appears in Hiberno-Scottish and Carolingian art from the ninth and tenth centuries, and has been seen to represent the Biblical expression ‘a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him’.⁸³ It should also be noted that in the Anglo-Saxon prayer cited above it is stated that Christ let his hands be fastened (*permissisti configere; afæstnigean lete*) to the cross. Moreover, on the earliest of the Anglo-Saxon depictions of the crucifixion mentioned above, there are no visible signs of nails through Christ’s hands or feet.⁸⁴ The argument that the bound crucifixion was of Scandinavian origin can thus be put into question.

Anders Hultgård has pointed out that the clergy’s usage of familiar expressions in a Christian context must have had large psychological effects for the population. It is likely to have given the population associations to the past, and may have provided them with feelings of continuity and safety in relation to the new Christian rituals. It thus appears that this approach was both beneficial and rewarding for the evangelising clergy.⁸⁵ Clerics’ usage of this concept regarding feasts of pre-Christian origin will be considered in chapter 5.

An example from the conversion of the Aztecs can further highlight the importance of adaptations to traditional ideas and practices. The Franciscan missionaries had difficulties in making the Indians attend the Christian services. They therefore transformed old Indians songs and dances by setting new native Christian words to local tunes. As a result, the Indians became willing to go to church regularly. These songs are still alive today, which shows the extent of their success.⁸⁶

Evidence indicates that missionaries in Scandinavia tried to simplify the Christian teachings also in other ways. Prayers on Swedish rune stones were often directed to Christ and the Virgin Mary, as in ‘may God and the Mother of God help his/her soul’. When the word ‘God’ (*Guð*) appears in Christian texts without closer definition, it usually refers to the Father and not Christ, as is obviously the case here. It has therefore been argued that missionaries in Scandinavia preached Christomonism, i.e. they did not make a distinction between God and Christ. This is particularly interesting as this would have

been heretical. According to Snorri Sturluson, Olav Haraldson told Arnljot that 'you should believe that Jesus Christ created heaven and earth and all the people'. Evidence from Frisia also needs to be considered in this context. In his sermon to King Radbod of Frisia, Willibrord is reported to have told the king to be baptised 'in belief in one omnipotent God, our lord Jesus Christ'.⁸⁷ This further suggests that missionaries as a result of their attempts to make their teachings simpler, could at times take this so far as to spread unorthodox teachings.

The frequent appearance of 'Mother of God' on the rune stones has been seen as a direct reflection of clerics' usage of this expression. It thus appears that the Virgin Mary played a significant part in missionary preaching. It has already been demonstrated that many women were involved in the erection of rune stones. The inscriptions containing 'Mother of God' may thus suggest that Mary appealed to women in particular.⁸⁸

Other missionary methods that were employed in Scandinavia will now be taken into consideration. The destruction of non-Christian shrines will first be discussed.

Written evidence suggests that missionaries in Scandinavia took part in such activities. Adam of Bremen provides some examples from Sweden. He stated that the English missionary Wolfred chopped up an idol of Þórr. As was pointed out above, Adam also stated that King Stenkil advised Bishops Adalvard and Egino against trying to destroy the 'temple' at Gamla Uppsala. The bishops are reported to instead have destroyed idols in Götaland, which was under the control of the king.⁸⁹ The destruction of shrines may thus at times have been joint actions between missionaries and kings, as it seems to have been in Saxony and Frisia. This may also have been the case in Norway, as some of the sagas state that bishops accompanied the kings' armies.⁹⁰

There is no evidence to prove that missionaries in Scandinavia destroyed non-Christian cult buildings. Only a small number of possible cult buildings have been found, and scholars have therefore argued that the early Scandinavians often performed their cultic rituals in the open air. Moreover, the presumed cult buildings which have been excavated, do not resemble Adam's description of a temple 'totally covered with gold'.⁹¹ Multi-functional hall buildings may instead have housed many of the cultic rituals. The halls were presumably used also for other types of gatherings, as well as for dwelling. Evidence moreover suggests that also smaller buildings were used for cultic rituals.

At Sanda (Uppland, Sweden) a large hall was excavated, which was in continuous use between the eighth and the twelfth centuries. Opposite this building there was a cairn, in which ceramics and potsherds were found. Below the cairn, there were also a number of hearths that contained lambs' bones. The cairn was thus interpreted as a sacrificial *høgrgr*. Borg, which is also situated in Östergötland, provides further information. Here, a small building of pre-Christian date was excavated. Outside this construction, 98 'amulet rings' and large amounts of animal bones were discovered.⁹² In Mære (Trøndelag) in Norway, a structure that contained nineteen *guldgubbar*⁹³ was found underneath a twelfth-century church. *Guldgubbar* are thin sheets of gold with depictions of men, women, and animals, which are usually seen as votive offerings in connection with the fertility cult.⁹⁴

At Borg in Lofoten, another hall building that contained a number of *guldgubbar* has been excavated. This house was c. 80 meters long and 7.5-9 meters wide (inner measurements). It was erected in the Migration Period and used until the 10th century.⁹⁵ In Denmark, multi-functional hall buildings have been identified e.g. at Gudme and Lisbjerg. The hall at Gudme was erected in the fourth century, while the hall at Lisbjerg dates from the eleventh century. Both sites have been interpreted as having functioned both as significant farmsteads and cultic centres.⁹⁶ The remains of a long house were found at Kungsgårdsplatån (i.e. The Plateau of the Royal Estate) at Gamla Uppsala. Scholars have now suggested that these are the remnants of the 'temple' referred to by Adam.⁹⁷

Hans-Emil Lidén has suggested that the cult building at Mære was converted into a church during its last phase.⁹⁸ This could indicate that some missionaries at times worked along the same ideas as those put forward by Gregory I, i.e. that temples should not be destroyed, but instead re-consecrated as churches. There are however very few, if any, such examples from Scandinavia. Another missionary strategy may have been to 'reconsecrate' pre-Christian cult sites for Christian usage. A famous example is provided by the finds at Frösö church in Jämtland. In the place where the earliest high altar is likely to have been located, the charred remains of a wooden stump together with large amounts of animal bones, mostly bear, were found. These finds have been carbon dated to the Viking Age and this site has thus been seen as 'incontestable evidence for cult site continuity' from pre-Christian to Christian times.⁹⁹

It must however be pointed out that only a small part of Frösö Church has been excavated. The presumed cult site was moreover located in the only area

of the church where the remains from pre-Christian times had not been disturbed by later burials. This point becomes particularly important since the church is located on an Iron Age burial ground. Within the churchyard there are three burial mounds, and just outside its boundaries a number of Iron Age hearths have been found. Two of these contained animal bones. One has been seen as a possible cooking pit, the function of the others has not yet been determined.¹⁰⁰ Bearing these circumstances in mind, not too much emphasis should be placed on the fact that the animal bones were found exactly underneath the presumed site of the old altar. The circumstances do not however put the argument of cult site continuity into question.

Another well-known likely example of a 'reconsecrated' pre-Christian cult site is Hørning in Denmark. Here, a wooden church, which has been dendrodated to c. 1060, was erected immediately on top of a levelled burial mound. A chamber grave dating from c. 1000 was found underneath the mound. This grave contained a woman buried in the body of carriage, together with large amounts of grave-goods. The closeness in time between the burial and the building of the church, strongly suggests that the church was deliberately placed on top of the flattened mound.¹⁰¹ Some further possible candidates for cult site continuity need to be mentioned. Underneath the Romanesque church at the monastery in Eskilstuna, post-holes dating from the earlier Iron Age were discovered. A number of *guldgubbar* were also found.¹⁰² Other sites that may have been 'reconsecrated' by Christians are the churchyard at Estuna in Uppland and the church at Hackås in Jämtland.¹⁰³

The comparative study in chapter 2 demonstrated that monasteries were of great significance for the spread of Christianity, particularly as missionary bases. It is therefore interesting to note that no monasteries were founded in Scandinavia until towards the end of stage 2 of conversion. In Norway, the first monastic house seems to have been established at Selja outside Bergen around 1100. Other examples of early Norwegian monasteries are Niðarholmr (Trondheim) and Munklífi (Bergen). These houses were all founded before 1150. In Denmark the first monastery was established in Roskilde in c. 1080. By around 1150, a number of Benedictine monasteries had also been founded. These include St. Knud's (Odense), Allehelgenskloster (Lund), and Ringsted (Zealand). The first monasteries in Sweden were Alvastra (Östergötland) and Nydala (Småland). These houses were founded in 1143.¹⁰⁴

Missionaries in Scandinavia may have used the early episcopal seats as bases for their work. Many of these churches were established at royal strongholds,

and may thus have served as safe retreats for clerics. Skara, Husaby, Jelling, Roskilde, and Nidaros could be such examples.¹⁰⁵ There is however another possibility that needs to be considered. Before the parochial system had been fully developed, a system of large parishes centred around ‘mother churches’ may have existed. Such parishes have been traced in several parts of Scandinavia, such as Skåne (Medieval Denmark), Uppland and Hälsingland (Sweden), and Trøndelag (Norway).¹⁰⁶

Large mother parishes existed in Anglo-Saxon England before the medieval parish system had fully emerged. These were based around minster churches, which were staffed by a number of clerics. The Old English word for these churches was *mynster*. This word corresponds to the Latin *monasterium*, which translates both as ‘minster’ and ‘monastery’. The early Anglo-Saxon usage of this word was rather loose. It denoted both houses of secular clerics, as well as those inhabited by regular clergy and nuns. By the tenth and eleventh centuries, the meaning of *mynster/monasterium* had been further diffused. It was now used for any ecclesiastical foundation with a church.¹⁰⁷ Most scholars agree, that regardless of whether the minsters were ‘monasteries proper’ or mother churches of large parishes, their staff performed pastoral care among the population in the surrounding countryside.¹⁰⁸ It thus seems that there was no clear distinction between monasteries and other churches staffed by a number of clerics.

Dagfinn Skre has argued that the Norwegian provincial laws suggest that not only large parishes, but also minster-type churches existed in this kingdom. The main church in a district was called a *hovedkirke* or a *fylkeskirke*. These churches seem to have been in charge of the pastoral care in their territory.¹⁰⁹ Jonas Ros has moreover recently suggested that the church of St. Per in Sigtuna was a minster church for the surrounding territory.¹¹⁰ These arguments, together with the evidence of large mother parishes from several parts of Scandinavia, suggest that minster-type churches staffed with a number of monks or clerics may have played the part of monasteries in the first centuries of conversion in Scandinavia. The Scandinavian source material, very rarely provides us with the names of founders of particular churches. No such details regarding minster-type churches can thus be presented. It does however seem likely that they would have been founded by the powerful members of society.

In chapter 2 it was argued that also buildings of stone, such as churches and monasteries, made great impressions on the population in Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony. This is likely to have been the case also in

Scandinavia, although not until the later part of stage 2 of the conversion. It has already been pointed out that the first monasteries in Scandinavia were founded during later phases of the conversion than in the other geographical areas. This seems to have been the case also with churches of stone. In England stone churches began to be erected from the earliest Christian times. The churches built by King Aethelberht in Canterbury were made of stone. There is archaeological and architectural evidence of at least seventeen stone churches that were built during the seventh century, i.e. during the first one hundred years after the arrival of Augustine.¹¹¹ Some wooden churches were also constructed during this time. In Scandinavia, on the other hand, wooden churches appear to have been the norm for at least the first century of stage 2 of the conversion. During the eleventh century in Sweden, such churches seem to have been erected at e.g. Husaby, Skara, and Sigtuna. The earliest stone churches were not constructed until the twelfth century. Timber from the stone churches at Herrestad, Örberga, and Hagebyhöga in Östergötland have been dendrochronologically dated to c. 1112-19. The first stone churches in Sigtuna and Skara have been dated to c. 1100-25 and c.1140-50 respectively. The stone church at Husaby seems to stem from around the same time.¹¹² In Denmark the first stone churches were erected from around the 1030s. It has already been mentioned that the cathedral in Roskilde began to be erected in 1027. The church of St. Jørgensbjerg, also located in Roskilde, was probably built no later than 1035.¹¹³ The first stone churches in Norway were presumably built at the end of the eleventh century. The situation in this kingdom was slightly different, since wooden churches continued to be the norm for several centuries after the introduction of Christianity.¹¹⁴

The missionary methods, in which the involvement of secular rulers does not appear to have played a decisive role, will now be discussed.

In chapter 2 it was argued that the novelties brought by missionaries aided the spread of Christianity. Missionaries such as Augustine and Lebuin seem to have made deliberate use of Christian objects. Such examples include clerical dress and processional crosses.¹¹⁵ Missionaries in Scandinavia are likely to have employed the same strategy. According to Rimbert, Gautbert was given 'what was needed' in order to carry out the Christian service. Evidence indicates that the population in Scandinavia had encountered Christian objects before the time of the first documented missions.¹¹⁶ Despite this, it is likely that missionaries attracted the attention of the local population, just as Augustine

seems to have done at the Isle of Thanet. Their performance of Christian rituals may also have made a significant impact on the local population.

Learning and education were also shown to have given Christianity added attraction in the eyes of the non-Christians, particularly for the members of the upper layers in society. It is clear that Ansgar saw education as an important element for the spread of Christianity. Rimbert stated that Ansgar bought boys and slaves, whom he brought up to serve God. He is also reported to have established a school for boys in Denmark. This school seems to have attracted not only many pupils, but also helpers and servants. This demonstrates the importance of educational establishments for the diffusion of Christianity. Moreover, just like Aidan's school at Lindisfarne, Ansgar's educational efforts are likely to have provided the first generation of native priests and missionaries.¹¹⁷ It has also been pointed out that in this way, parts of the next generation of non-Christians could be diminished.¹¹⁸

The example from the conversion of the Aztecs cited in chapter 2, demonstrated that the lifestyle and skills of missionaries could be of crucial importance for the success of their work. The source material indicates that missionaries in Scandinavia, just as those in Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia, and Saxony attempted to live according to the Christian rules that they were teaching. Although hagiographical evidence must be treated with caution, it is worth pointing out that Rimbert stated that Ansgar enticed many to be baptised 'through his exemplary way of life'. Ansgar is also reported to have told missionaries to Birka that they must not desire or claim anyone's property, but instead follow the example of Paul and work to support themselves.¹¹⁹

Finally, the significance of languages for missionary work will be discussed. The Anglo-Saxon missionaries to Frisia and Saxony may have been motivated to evangelise in these particular areas because of their 'common ancestry' with the local population. A further source of inspiration for these missionaries may have been the resemblance between the languages. The Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Scandinavia may have been inspired by similar reasons. It is possible that these missionaries were Anglo-Scandinavian descendants of Viking settlers in England.¹²⁰ It is difficult to establish what language such Anglo-Saxon missionaries would have spoken. It has however been suggested that the early Scandinavian languages survived in England to the eleventh century and that an 'Anglo-Norse' mixed language was spoken until the early twelfth century. It is therefore possible that there was at least some mutual comprehensibility between the Anglo-Saxon missionaries and the inhabitants

in Scandinavia.¹²¹ These missionaries were thus most probably able to learn the Scandinavian tongues rather easily. These languages were moreover very similar at this time.¹²² A missionary who had learnt one, could thus presumably also master the others.

The example from the Aztecs further suggested that missionaries who learnt the local language well could establish better relationships with the population. That such concerns featured also in the conversion of Scandinavia is supported by several pieces of evidence. Adam of Bremen reported that a Danish king dissuaded Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen from travelling to Scandinavia by telling him that ‘wild peoples could more easily be converted by persons who spoke their own language and who led similar lives than by persons unacquainted and strange to their customs’. Also the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen seems to have made conscious efforts to send missionaries who would be able to communicate well with the local population. Ansfrid and Rimbert who were sent to Birka were both of Danish origin. Adam of Bremen stated that Odinkar the Older, who was consecrated bishop for the Swedes, was of Danish birth and could therefore ‘easily convince the wild peoples concerning all aspects of the Christian faith’.¹²³

In conclusion: Chapters 2 and 3 have on numerous occasions shown that, in the work of spreading Christianity, missionaries were subordinate to secular rulers. Despite this, the role of the missionary as an individual must not be forgotten. This section has demonstrated that the actions, behaviour, and skills of individual missionaries could have an effect on the popular reception of Christianity. More concrete examples of missionary skills concern language proficiency, educational aptitude, and ability to form personal relationships. Capability to simplify and adapt the Christian teachings in accordance with local traditions must moreover have been significant for widespread acceptance and understanding of Christianity. Also this strategy is evidenced in the Scandinavian source material. It is clear that clerics introduced only the most basic concepts of Christianity, such as sin, paradise, and hell. The population was encouraged to perform pious deeds in order to protect themselves and dead relatives. Missionaries seem to have avoided more complex issues, such as the triunity of God. God and Christ were instead presented as one.

3.4. The Role of the Papacy.

It has already been pointed out that the majority of missionaries to Scandinavia appear to have come from either England or Germany. Many of these missionaries may have been brought to Scandinavia by local rulers. The Danish and Norwegian kings are particularly likely to have invited Anglo-Saxon missionaries. Some of these missionaries also appear to have come on their own initiative. The papacy does not seem to have been in any way involved in the Anglo-Saxon missionary activity. These men must therefore have been reliant on the Scandinavian rulers for the necessary support. The German missionaries on the other hand, received some passive support from the papacy. The initiative and the most important support, however, came from the emperors and the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen. In their efforts to spread Christianity further north, the emperors tried to uphold the domineering position over the papacy that had been established by Charlemagne.

It was demonstrated in section 2.4 that the papacy was forced into a submissive role during the reign of Charlemagne. This state of affairs continued under Louis the Pious. He founded the see of Hamburg and made this see responsible for the churches and missionary activity north of the Elbe. The emperor also appointed Ansgar as its first bishop. Pope Gregory IV obediently confirmed the foundation of the see and gave Ansgar his pallium. On this occasion Gregory also named Ansgar as the papal legate to the north together with Bishop Ebo of Reims. Some years later, in 847-8, Louis the German amalgamated the sees of Hamburg and Bremen and gave the new see archiepiscopal status. It is interesting to note that the papal bull confirming this act stated that the pope had followed the wishes expressed by Louis the Pious and his son.¹²⁴ The papacy began to play a more active role in the conversion of Scandinavia from the pontificate of Gregory VII. This was part of the papal reform movement and the claims for *libertas ecclesiae*. It was through this movement that the papacy gained new strength and began to extend its powers over western Christianity. As a result Hamburg-Bremen's direct supremacy over the ecclesiastical life in the north gradually declined.¹²⁵ A significant step in this direction was the foundation of the archbishopric of Lund in 1103/4, which was made responsible for the whole of Scandinavia. It should be noted that the initiative for this foundation was taken by the Danish kings, not the papacy. The Danes were motivated by their wish to gain control over ecclesiastical matters in Scandinavia. Through the establishment of this

archbishopric, Scandinavia was linked directly to Rome. The influence of Hamburg-Bremen was thus greatly diminished.¹²⁶

The degrees of papal involvement in the various aspects of the conversion of Sweden will now be discussed. Gregory VII seems to have been the first pope who was in direct contact with Sweden. In 1080 and 1081 he issued letters to kings in Sweden in which he forwarded the claims of Rome as the universal church. Sweden was offered to become part of an ecclesiastical *regnum* independent of the 'Holy Roman' emperors. After a request from the pope, the Swedish king sent a clergyman to Rome, who should be instructed of the apostolic guidelines for the continued development of the ecclesiastical organisation in Sweden.¹²⁷

Before the foundation of the archbishopric of Lund, the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen exercised their right to create bishoprics and appoint bishops in Sweden. The papacy was therefore not necessary for the establishment of new episcopal sees and there is no evidence of any direct papal involvement. According to Adam of Bremen, bishoprics were founded for bishops from Hamburg-Bremen. Two such instances are mentioned: Skara was founded for Bishop Thurgot and Sigtuna for Adalvard the Younger.¹²⁸

In the so-called Florence document *Scara, Liunga, Kaupinga, Tuna, Strigin, Sigituna*, and *Arosa* are listed as Swedish episcopal seats.¹²⁹ The interpretation of these names is not totally straightforward. It does however seem that the places referred to are: Skara, Linköping, Eskilstuna, Strängnäs, Sigtuna, and Västerås. The dating of this document has also been discussed. It was traditionally dated to the 1120s, and has as such been seen as a list of episcopal sees in Sweden at this time. Some scholars have however pushed the date of this document back to the first few years of the twelfth century. It has then been put into connection with the foundation of the archbishopric of Lund and the papacy's growing influence in Sweden. These scholars have therefore seen the document as a papal plan for the new archiepiscopal province.¹³⁰ This could be compared to Gregory I's detailed plan for a diocesan framework in Anglo-Saxon England.

The location of the episcopal sees in Anglo-Saxon England was determined by the will of local kings. The evidence suggests that this was the case in practice also in Sweden. Kings' involvement in the foundation of the early episcopal sees is emphasised by Adam of Bremen. This is also indicated by the fact that these sees were established at royal strongholds. According to Adam, the see of Skara was founded by Olof Skötkonung. C. F. Hallencreutz argued that Olof

wished to co-operate with Hamburg-Bremen on a rather selective basis. He was therefore not willing to allow a bishop from Hamburg-Bremen to be established in his own town of Sigtuna. He therefore chose Skara in Västergötland as the episcopal seat. Skara was presumably the only place of considerable size in this province at this time.¹³¹ It could also be suggested that Olof preferred to establish the episcopal seat in Västergötland, where Christianity had, at this time, a stronger footing than in Uppland. According to Adam of Bremen, it was King Stenkil (d. c. 1066) who established the episcopal seat at Sigtuna.¹³² This seat was moved to Gamla Uppsala probably some time between 1134 and c. 1140. Gamla Uppsala was an old royal residence. It was also an important thing site. The moving of the bishopric to this particular place may also have been inspired by a desire to show that the resistance to Christianity in Uppland had now been defeated.¹³³ There is no indication that the papacy was involved in the establishment of any of these episcopal sees. In the foundation document for the archbishopric of Uppsala, the sees of Skara, Strängnäs, Aros (Västerås), and Linköping are listed as surrogate sees.¹³⁴ This means that if the Florence list was a papal plan, it was never fully realised. Chapter 2 pointed out that Gregory's plan for England was not followed since episcopal sees were founded by kings in the places that they held to be suitable. The deviations from the Florence list may have been caused by similar reasons. Even if kings in Sweden were willing to follow a papal plan, the political circumstances may not have allowed this.

The archbishopric of Uppsala was founded in 1164, by papal initiative. From this time the popes were in more direct control over ecclesiastical matters in Sweden.¹³⁵ It is clear that also this foundation was determined by political considerations. Hamburg-Bremen never had any desire to give Sweden its own archbishop, since that would mean the loss of their control. This can be compared to the situation in Saxony. No archiepiscopal see was founded in this area during the early conversion period. The Saxon bishops were instead subject to either Mainz or Cologne, and could thus be controlled by Charlemagne. The papacy's first attempt to create an archbishopric in Sweden took place during the visitation of its legate Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear in 1152/3. This attempt failed, probably due to internal political turbulence. When the political situation had turned more favourable for the papacy, the archbishopric could be located in Uppsala.¹³⁶

It was demonstrated above that the papacy issued letters of protection for missionaries both in England and Frisia, which seem to have encouraged

secular and ecclesiastical authorities to give help to the missionaries. The papacy gave Ansgar the *ius missionis* for the north and threatened to excommunicate anyone who opposed the spread of Christianity in these areas.¹³⁷ This is the only evidence of the papacy issuing such letters for missionaries active in Sweden. It is not known what, if any, effects this bull had for Ansgar's work.

Missionaries in England and Frisia received some material support from the papacy. There is no evidence that the papacy gave any material support to missionaries in Sweden. The German missionaries received financial support from the higher clergy and the emperor. Gautbert was given material support jointly from the emperor and Bishop Ebo. According to Rimbart, Ansgar had been given the monastery of Torhout by Louis the Pious, but lost this monastery after the emperor's death. As a consequence, Ansgar suffered from severe poverty, which caused many of his men to leave.¹³⁸ This demonstrates the importance of imperial support, and also indicates that the papacy did not provide any financial support to the missionary activity of Hamburg-Bremen. It is possible that missionaries received spiritual guidance through similar channels.

The papacy began to show some interest in Denmark from the time of Knut the Great's visit to Rome in 1027. This visit was however initiated by the king himself, who wished to ally his kingdom with the papacy. After this visit, Knut introduced the payment of the Peter's Pence in Denmark. Later in that century, King Sven Estridsen carried on in the spirit of Knut in order to strengthen the bonds with Rome. It was from this time that the popes began to make stronger demands of the Danes. Sven himself was forced to dissolve his illicit marriage to Queen Gunhild. The papacy also stressed the importance for kings to defend Christianity and honour the priests. The Danish people were moreover threatened with excommunication if they did not stop blaming priests for 'great changes in seasonal temperatures' and 'all different kinds of physical illnesses'.¹³⁹

Hamburg-Bremen attempted to establish a number of episcopal sees in Denmark. According to Adam of Bremen, this archbishopric had by 948 appointed bishops in Ribe, Schleswig, and Aarhus (Jutland). However, at least two of these bishops never arrived in Denmark. The territorial diocesan organisation was instead created by the Danish kings. This work was begun by Knut the Great, who appointed bishops in Lund, Roskilde, and Odense. Under Sven Estridsen, the diocesan network received a more stable structure. By this

time, sees had been founded also in Dalby (which shortly afterwards was placed under Lund), Schleswig, Ribe, Aarhus, Viborg, and Vestervig (Børglum).¹⁴⁰

The papacy did not pay any greater attention to Norway until 1152, when Nicholas Breakspear was sent to Scandinavia. Norway had received its first stable territorial diocesan organisation during the reign of Olav Kyrre (1066-1093). This organisation was based on the legal districts, and the locations of the episcopal seats were subject to some changes during the initial stages. By 1125, however, these had been firmly established in Bergen, Nidaros (Trondheim), Oslo, and Stavanger. During his visit, Nicholas Breakspear elevated Nidaros to archiepiscopal status. At this time the see of Hamar was created, and included in the new archdiocese. Apart from the sees on the Norwegian mainland, the jurisdiction of Nidaros extended to Greenland, Iceland, the Orkneys, and the Shetland Islands.¹⁴¹

This section has demonstrated that a shift of power occurred in the Scandinavian missionary field. The papacy gradually took over from the emperor and Hamburg-Bremen as the major supporter of the mission and the development of the ecclesiastical organisation. However, both the emperor and the papacy had to consider the wishes of the kings in Scandinavia, for example regarding the location of the episcopal sees. Thus even when the papacy had grown stronger, it was not able to fully implement the demands of reduced lay involvement in ecclesiastical matters.

3.5. Resistance and Opposition to Christianity.

This section will first consider resistance to Christianity in Sweden during stage 1 of the conversion, i.e. until the end of the tenth century.

The only extant reports of violent actions against missionaries are the killing of Nithard and the consequent expulsion of his companions from Birka. According to the Life of Ansgar, the attackers carried out this deed because of their 'hatred of Christianity'. It is however likely that there were also other reasons behind this attack. This is supported by Rimbert's statement that the attackers also stole all the missionaries' property.¹⁴⁴

The friendly attitude to Christianity and its representatives during stage 1 of the conversion of Sweden can be explained by several reasons. In chapter 1 it was pointed out that archaeological evidence demonstrates that the Scandinavians had been in contact with Christians from the Migration Period

onwards. Christianity can therefore not have been totally unknown to the population of Sweden.¹⁴⁵ This is also indicated by Rimbert's report of the old man at Birka who stated that some parts of the population had encountered Christianity abroad already before the arrival of Ansgar.¹⁴⁶ The potential advantages of establishing good relationships with Christian rulers presumably also lay behind the friendly reception of missionaries by local kings and magnates. Such men may also have invited Christian missionaries to their territories. This is indicated e.g. by the Life of Ansgar, where it is stated that King Björn asked Louis the Pious to send missionaries to Sweden.¹⁴⁷ It was however not until the end of the tenth century that most members of the leading layers in Sweden were ready to accept Christianity as their religion, and to work for its spread among the wider population.

Resistance to Christianity during stage 2 of the conversion of Sweden will now be discussed. This chapter has shown that the pressures that were exercised in this area were almost exclusively of a political and social kind. Military force does not appear to have been used. The conversion of Sweden can thus be likened to the efforts of the Anglo-Saxon kings to make their kingdoms Christian. Chapter 2 introduced the idea that the degree of violence in non-Christian resistance was closely linked to the degree of force employed in the conversion. It could therefore be expected that non-Christian resistance in Sweden was mostly like that in Anglo-Saxon England, i.e. rather peaceful, with some occasional incidents of violence. In the areas where Christian rulers were powerful and where they were able to make use of their loyal men, the religion seems to have been generally accepted more quickly than in other areas. In Uppland, the old religious custom clearly survived longer than in the southern parts of Sweden. This was presumably because the Upplandic ruling elite was opposed to Christianity. There is no evidence to suggest that their resistance was expressed through actions of war, although there are some reports of isolated violent incidents.¹⁴⁸

Overall, there is little evidence of violent resistance to Christianity in Sweden during stage 2 of the conversion. The legends of the saints contain a few descriptions of missionaries who suffered martyrdom, such as Eskil and Botvid. However, for reasons stated above, these sources cannot be relied upon as firm evidence. It has moreover been argued that these descriptions were inspired by the need for local martyrs, cults, and places of pilgrimage.¹⁴⁹ Stronger evidence for violent resistance is provided by Adam of Bremen's statement that Wolfred, Erik, and 'several' other missionaries were martyred in Sweden.¹⁵⁰

The only record of a non-Christian rebellion is that of Blotsven described in the *Hervarar saga*. We are told that King Inge forbade sacrifices and ordered that everyone in Svealand should observe Christianity. The population was angered by this decision and asked Inge to abandon the religion. When Inge refused he was forced to withdraw to Västergötland. Blotsven, a powerful man in Svealand, offered to reintroduce the sacrifices if the population would accept him as their new king. This was agreed, and Blotsven ruled for three years. He was then killed by Inge, who brought back the observance of Christianity. The *Hervarar saga* was presumably not written down until the fourteenth century, and scholars have questioned the reliability of the account cited above. Through independent sources it can be verified that Inge was king in Sweden c. 1075-1110. It is also clear that Inge had connections with Västergötland. However, neither the existence of Blotsven, nor that Inge had to flee from Uppland because of a non-Christian rebellion can be confirmed by other sources.¹⁵¹

According to the *Gesta* of Adam of Bremen, non-Christian resistance in Uppland was stronger than in the southern parts of Sweden. This is seen in two of Adam's statements already cited in this chapter. The first is the statement that the population in Uppland would not accept Olof Skötkonung as their king.¹⁵² The second is Adam's claim that King Stenkil dissuaded Bishops Adalvard and Egino from trying to destroy the 'temple' at Gamla Uppsala. The king feared for the bishops' lives, and thought that he himself would be deposed.¹⁵³ The rebellion described in the *Hervarar saga* could thus be a reflection of an authentic conflict between Christian royal power and non-Christians around Uppsala. Such a conflict is however unlikely to have turned as violent as is claimed by the saga.¹⁵⁴

It has been argued that the chieftains in Uppland were opposed to the more centralised kingdom that was emerging under the Christian kings.¹⁵⁵ This seems to slightly echo the extension of Frankish influence over Frisia and Saxony, although Uppland was never conquered. It is possible, as one scholar has argued, that the link between Frankish political power and Christianity caused the Frisians and the Saxons to make the old religious custom the core of their resistance.¹⁵⁶ The population of Uppland may have reacted in a similar manner. In this way their strong resistance to Christianity could be at least partly explained. It must be however yet again be pointed out that there is no evidence that their opposition turned into war.

Archaeological evidence supports Adam's picture of mostly non-violent resistance to Christianity. Scholars have argued that if there had been serious,

and violent, religious conflicts between non-Christians and Christians, this would have left traces in the rune stone material. They have, however, not found any such signs.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, if there had been violent uprisings, or civil war, it is difficult to imagine that the thousands of Christian rune stones would not have been demolished.

In Västergötland and Södermanland there is a very small number of rune stones that overtly reflect pre-Christian religious custom, and which could be seen to express resistance to Christianity. Some of these stones have been decorated with what has been commonly interpreted as Þórr's hammers. Others have inscriptions that refer to Þórr. It has been argued that the iconographic usage of the hammer was a reaction against Christianity and the symbol of the cross. It may have served as a revitalisation or a strengthening of pre-Christian traditions.¹⁵⁸

Further indications of non-violent resistance to Christianity can be seen in the lingering practice of cremation burial. It is notoriously difficult to determine the religion of a grave by its features. This is partly due to the almost complete lack of regulations governing Christian burial at this time. However, as was mentioned in chapter 2, cremations, mounds and ship burials have been identified as non-Christian burial practices. Martin Carver has moreover argued that such features were used by non-Christians to express religious and political opposition. This appears to have been the case also in Sweden.¹⁵⁹ Cremation was the dominating burial rite in the central parts of Sweden during most of the tenth century, but was gradually replaced by inhumation burial. However, in Västmanland cremation graves were common until the mid-eleventh century, and in Tiundaland, north-west of Uppsala, cremation graves still appeared during the early years of the twelfth century. All these graves are located in an area to the west of Köping, Enköping, and Uppsala. The majority of the early rune stones, i.e. from before the 1050s, and the earliest stone churches are situated south east of these places. Scholars have thus concluded that this was an area of Uppland where early successful missionary work was carried out.¹⁶⁰ Conversely, the area with the late appearance of cremation graves could be an area where the old religious custom survived for a longer period of time, and where the population was opposed to Christianity.

Evidence from Sweden thus clearly suggests that resistance to Christianity was expressed by essentially non-violent means, although occasional incidents of a more violent nature seem to have taken place. It has thus yet again been shown that methods of conversion can be linked to non-Christian response. It

is clear that there were large regional differences in the speed of acceptance of Christianity within Sweden. It is interesting to note that it was in the area where non-Christian resistance seems to have been the strongest and the most long-lasting that the Swedish archiepiscopal see was to be founded.

The primary written sources for Denmark do not provide a great deal of information about the nature of the response of the Danish population. According to Adam of Bremen, King Sven Forkbeard led a 'pagan' uprising against his father Harald Gormsen. That Sven's uprising was motivated by opposition to Christianity should however be taken with caution. The overwhelming evidence makes it clear that Sven was a Christian, and that he promoted the spread of the religion in his kingdom. Adam's depiction of Sven as a 'pagan' can presumably be explained by Sven's lack of support for the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen.¹⁶¹ Evidence that could be of greater interest in the study of popular response to Christianity is provided by the church bell that was found in the sea outside Hedeby. According to the Life of Ansgar, the king at Hedeby allowed a bell in the church, although the non-Christians previously had seen this as an 'abomination'. Although the excavated church bell has not been dated, it does not seem impossible that it was thrown into the water by opponents to the religion.¹⁶² There are no indications in the extant sources that resistance to Christianity was expressed by violent means. The lack of violent opposition is supported by the evidence that a large part of the aristocracy in the tenth century was positive towards Christianity.¹⁶³

In this context the burials at Hørning and Mammen need to be discussed. As mentioned above, the Hørning-grave was an inhumation burial in a chamber grave located underneath a mound. This grave contained large amounts of grave-goods and has, mainly on this basis, been dated to c. 1000. Scholars have not pointed to any possible Christian elements, and the burial has therefore been seen as non-Christian.¹⁶⁴ This rich burial could thus indicate that, by the turn of the millenium, there were still influential members of society who had not accepted Christianity as their religion, and who chose to express their opposition in this manner.

Religious orientation was however not clear-cut for the people living in the years shortly after the 'official' introduction of Christianity. This can be illustrated by the Mammen-grave, which has been dendro-dated to 970/71. This grave shares many characteristics with the burial at Hørning. It is also a richly furnished chamber grave, containing an inhumation burial, situated underneath a mound. Christian influence has however been seen in several

specific features of this grave. One such example is the large wax candle, which has been interpreted as a Christian symbol of life and resurrection. Other possible Christian features are the west-east orientation of the grave and the trapezoid shape of the grave chamber.¹⁶⁵ The decorations on the well-known Mammen-axe, have been seen as both Christian and non-Christian. In the words of Annette Iversen and Ulf Näsman: ‘The vegetative motif on one side of the blade can, for instance be read as the pagan world-tree Ygdrasil or as the Christian Tree of Life, and the bird figure on the other side could be the cock Gyldenkame of the Nordic myth and/or the legendary Phoenix that ...can symbolise Christ’.¹⁶⁶ After careful consideration of all the specific features of this grave, scholars have concluded that it is both Christian and non-Christian. Iversen and Näsman have moreover stated that this grave is thus ‘probably characteristic of the generation living after the Christianisation’.¹⁶⁷

In Norway, opposition to Christianity seems to have been rather more violent than in the rest of Scandinavia. The sagas state that, during the reigns of Olav Trygvason and Olav Haraldsson, non-Christians fought against the introduction of Christianity by extremely violent means. This should however not be seen purely as a reaction against Christianity. It must be kept in mind that many of the kings’ opponents were Christians, who reacted against their efforts to unify the realm.¹⁶⁸ Evidence of tension in the conversion of Norway has also been seen in the literary evidence. The term ‘paganism’ (*heiðinn dómr*) was created, which in the last decades of the tenth century, was used in opposition to Christianity (*kristinn dómr*). The conversion period has thus been seen as a ‘dramatic time of profound changes’.¹⁶⁹

3.6. Concluding Remarks.

There is no need to repeat the results of the comparisons between the different geographical areas in detail. It has been demonstrated that the conversions of the Scandinavian countries essentially followed the patterns that were seen in chapter 2. There are, however, some differences that need to be pointed out.

On the Continent and in England, missionaries seem to have baptised the population, without giving them a great deal of Christian instruction. In Scandinavia, there is evidence to suggest that, at least at times, the longer catechumenate was practised. The reason for its reintroduction was clerics’ increasing concern with pre-baptismal instruction, which arose particularly from the problems associated with the quick baptisms of the Saxons. Several

possible reasons why the population may have preferred the longer catechumenate to immediate baptism were given in section 3.3. From the point of view of the missionaries, there were also some advantages to be gained. In their eyes, 'full baptism' was an irrevocable act. It was presumably easier for them to entice the population to become catechumens than to accept immediate baptism. The longer catechumenate may have been particularly useful for those missionaries who were active during stage 1 of conversion.

Rune stone evidence from Sweden indicates that a large number of women were active in the spread of Christianity. It is possible that women, in other geographical areas and in earlier centuries, were equally active. Due to the nature of the extant sources, this is however difficult to establish. The Swedish rune stone material is thus, in this respect, unique.

Scholars have been puzzled by the fact that there were no monasteries in Scandinavia during the early conversion period. The importance of monasteries for the spread of Christianity clearly emerges both in England and on the Continent. Evidence from several areas in Scandinavia indicates that before the parochial system had been fully developed, a network of larger parishes existed. In this chapter it has therefore been suggested that minster-type churches played the role of monasteries in the conversion of Scandinavia. Such a system may have been based on the earliest Anglo-Saxon parochial organisation, brought to Scandinavia by English clerics.

Notes to Chapter 3

1 Cf. Alexandra Sanmark, 'The role of secular rulers in the conversion of Sweden', *The Cross goes North. Processes of conversion in northern Europe AD 300-1300* (York 2002), pp. 551-8.

2 VA 11, 14, 19, and 25-6; Adam I:58-61, II:58, III:15-16, IV:9, and IV:29. For a detailed review of the activities of the missionaries from Hamburg-Bremen in particular, see Walter Göbell, 'Die Christianisierung des Nordens und die Geschichte der nordischen Kirchen bis zur Errichtung des Erzbistums Lund', *Schleswig-Holsteinische Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1, *Anfänge und Ausbau* (Neumünster 1977), pp. 63-104.

3 VA 9 and 12; Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz, 'Missionsstrategi och religionstolkning. Till frågan om Adam av Bremen och Uppsalatemplet', *Uppsalakulten* och Adam av Bremen, ed. A. Hultgård (Nora 1997), pp. 117-130, esp. p. 124; Lauritz Weibull, 'Ansgarius', *Scandia* XIV (1941), pp. 186-99, esp. p. 188; Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz, 'Riksidentitet, stiftsidentitet och den vidare Europagemenskapen', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. Bertil Nilsson, *Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5* (Uppsala 1996), pp. 243-68, esp. pp. 245-6. The political motives behind Ansgar's mission have been emphasised and discussed by Mathias Bäck. See Mathias Bäck, 'Tröghets- och motståndsfaktorer i mellansvensk

- vikingatid. Om distributionen av främmande föremål i centrala Sverige med utgångspunkt i Birka och dess omland', *Karmøyseminaret 1997* (Stavanger 2000), pp. 8-30.
- 4 Lundén, *Svenska helgon*; Schmid, 'Eskil, Botvid och David'; Schmid, *Den Helige Sigfrid*; Schmid, *Sveriges kristnande från verklighet till dikt*; Erik Segelberg, 'Missionshistoriska aspekter på runinskrifterna', *Kyrkohistorisk årskrift* 83 (1983), pp. 45-57; John Toy, 'The Commemorations of British Saints in the Medieval Liturgical Manuscripts of Scandinavia', *Kyrkohistorisk årskrift* 83 (1983), pp. 91-103; Lars-Olof Larsson, 'Den helige Sigfrid och Växjöstiftets äldsta historia. Metod- och materialfrågor kring problem i tidigmedeltida kyrkohistoria', *Kyrkohistorisk årskrift* 82 (1982), pp. 68-94; Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, pp. 13-41 and 140; Sven Ulric Palme, *Kristendomens genombrott i Sverige* (Stockholm 1959), pp. 69-78, 104-5, and 113; Staffan Hellberg, 'Tysk eller engelsk mission? Om de tidiga kristna läneorden', *Maal og Minne* 1986, pp. 42-9; Linn Lager, 'Art as a Reflection of Religious Change: The Process of Christianisation as Shown in the Ornamentation on Runestones', *Early Medieval Religion*, ed. A. Pluskowski, *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, vol. 17:2 (2000), pp. 117-132, esp. p. 130; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 19-44, esp. pp. 40-1; Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', pp. 136-9; Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', pp. 213-49.
- 5 Adam II:57; Lönnroth, 'En fjärran spegel', pp. 151-4; The possible existence of an overall authority for the Anglo-Saxon missions has been explored by Lesley Abrams. See Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', pp. 244-5.
- 6 VA 26.
- 7 Bo Gräslund, 'Knut den store och sveariket. Slaget vid Helgeå i ny belysning', *Scandia* 52:2 (1986), pp. 211-38, esp. pp. 228 and 230-2; Peter Sawyer, 'Knut, Sweden and Sigtuna', *Avstamp - för en ny Sigtunaforskning. 18 forskare om Sigtuna, heldagseminarium kring Sigtunaforskning den 26 november 1987 Gröna Ladan, Sigtuna*, ed. Sten Tesch, Kommittén för Sigtunaforskning (Sigtuna 1989), pp. 88-93. Peter Sawyer suggested that there may have been some kind of formal treaty between King Knut of Denmark and a Swedish king. He based this argument on information provided by the chronicler known as Florence of Worcester.
- 8 Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 396-7, 409-10, and 459; Stefan Brink, 'Sockenbildningen i Sverige', *Kyrka och socken i medeltidens Sverige*, ed. O. Ferm (Stockholm 1991), pp. 113-42, esp. pp. 116-18.
- 9 Mats Roslund, 'Tidig kristen tro i Sigtuna', *Makt och människor i kungens Sigtuna. Sigtuna-utgrävningen 1988-90. 28 artiklar om de preliminära resultaten från den arkeologiska undersökningen i kv. Trädgårdsmästaren 9 och 10, Sigtuna*, ed. Sten Tesch (Sigtuna 1990), pp. 139-45, esp. p. 141; Jörn Staecker, *Rex regum et dominus minorum: die Wikingerzeitlichen Kreuz- und Kruzifixanhänger als Ausdruck der Mission Altdänemark und Schweden*. Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology (Stockholm 1999); Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', pp. 33, 37, and 41-2; Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', pp. 116-18; Williams, "'Gud hjälpe hennes själ'", *Kristna inslag i runinskrifterna*, Bertil Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria, I. Missionstid och tidig medeltid* (Stockholm 1998), pp. 177-84, esp. pp. 181-2. The medieval stone slabs with 'Tree-of-Life' ornamentation (*liljestenar*) have been interpreted as evidence of Byzantine Christian influence in Sweden before the arrival of the Catholic missionaries described in the primary written sources. This interpretation has since been subject to debate. See Leon Rhodin, Leif Gren, and Verner Lindblom, 'Liljestenarna och Sveriges kristnande från Bysans',

- Fornvännen* 95 (2000), pp. 165-81; Markus Dahlberg, 'Liljestenar och källkritik', *Fornvännen* 96 (2001), pp. 102-6; Leif Gren, 'Förebilder till liljestenarna måste redovisas – replik till Markus Dahlberg', *Fornvännen* 96 (2001), pp. 267-9.
- 10 VA 11-12, 14, and 17; Adam I:60-1.
- 11 Thomas Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 217-242, esp. pp. 219-21; Anne-Sofie Gräslund has pointed out that the archaeological evidence suggests that Christianity continued to be present in Sweden in the period between the missions to Birka and the baptism of Olof Skötkonung. See Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet. Om religionsskiftet i Skandinavien från en arkeologisk horisont*, Occasional Papers in Archaeology (Uppsala 2001), p. 130.
- 12 Brita Malmer, Jonas Ros, and Sten Tesch, eds. *Kung Olofs mynthus i kvarteret Urmakaren, Sigtuna*. Sigtuna museers skriftserie 3 (Stockholm 1991), pp. 5-6; Sten Tesch, 'Det sakrala stadsrummet - den medeltida kyrkotopografin i Sigtuna', *Meta*, no. 1 (2000), pp. 3-26, esp. pp. 4-6; Sten Tesch, 'Sigtuna - Royal Stronghold and Early Town', *The Emergence of Towns: Archaeology and Early Urbanisation in Non-Roman, North-West Europe. The Swedish Institute of Urban History 75 Years: An Anniversary Symposium, September 3rd 1994*, eds, L. Nilsson and S. Lilja (Stockholm 1996), pp. 113-26.
- 13 In Iceland the *goðar* elected lawspeakers, who should recite the laws at the Althing. These men could also be consulted in case the laws were forgotten. See Dag Strömbäck, *The Conversion of Iceland. A Survey*, tr, Peter Foote (London 1975), p. 15, n. 1. The ecclesiastical regulations introduced during stage 2 of conversion are discussed in chapters 5, 6, and 7.
- 14 Brita Malmer, 'Sigtunamyntningen som källa till Sveriges kristnande', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 85-113, esp. pp. 100-3 and 108-10; Malmer *et al*, *Kung Olofs mynthus*, pp. 11, 14, 34, and 42; Brita Malmer, 'Kort orientering om myntningen i Sigtuna ca 995-1030', *Avstamp - för en ny Sigtunaforskning. 18 forskare om Sigtuna, heldagseminarium kring Sigtunaforskning den 26 november 1987 Gröna Ladan, Sigtuna*, ed, Sten Tesch, Kommittén för Sigtunaforskning (Sigtuna 1989), pp. 74-5.
- 15 Ann Catherine Bonnier, 'Kyrkor, dopfuntar och gravmonument', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 181-214, esp. p. 200; Palme, *Kristendomens genombrott i Sverige*, pp. 49-50 and 115-20; Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', p. 223. It should also be noted that Ansgar was a monk at Corvey.
- 16 VA 17 and 28.
- 17 Adam IV:30.
- 18 VA 10-11 and 14.
- 19 VA 28.
- 20 Bonnier, 'Kyrkor, dopfuntar och gravmonument', pp. 192-3, 200, and 210; Adam IV:29; Tesch, 'Det sakrala stadsrummet', pp. 7-10; Stefan Brink, 'Tidig kyrklig organisation i Norden - aktörererna i sockenbildningen', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 269-90, esp. pp. 276-8.

- 21 Torun Zachrisson, *Gård, gräns, gravfält. Sammanhang kring ädelmetalldepåer och runstenar från vikingatid och tidig medeltid i Uppland och Gästrikland*, Stockholm Studies in Archaeology 15 (Stockholm 1998), p. 152.
- 22 VA 7; Ian Wood, 'Christians and pagans in ninth-century Scandinavia', *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, eds, Birgit Sawyer et al. (Alingsås 1987), pp. 36-67, esp. pp. 42-3 and 51; Peter Sawyer, 'The process of Scandinavian Christianization in the tenth and eleventh centuries', *The Christianization of Scandinavia*, eds, Birgit Sawyer et al. (Alingsås 1987), pp. 68-87, esp. pp. 68-70; Martin Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie* (København 1987), pp. 18-25.
- 23 Peter Sawyer, 'The process of Scandinavian Christianization', pp. 69-70; Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, trs, Susan M. Margeson and Kirsten Willams, second edition (London 1998), pp. 161-5; Aksel E. Christensen, *Vikingetidens Danmark paa oldhistorisk baggrund* (København 1977), pp. 223-41; Olaf Olsen, 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', *Viking og Hvidekrist. Norden og Europa 800-1200*, ed, E. Roesdahl (København 1992), pp. 152-161, esp. pp. 153-4; Knud J. Krogh and Olaf Olsen, 'Fra hedenskab til kristendom', *Da Klinger Muld... 25 års arkæologi i Danmark*, eds, Steen Hvass and Birger Storgaard (Aarhus 1993), pp. 233-47, esp. p. 233; Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, pp. 23-5; James Graham-Campbell, *The Viking World* (London 1980), pp. 200-1; Inge Skovgard-Petersen, Aksel E. Christensen, and Helge Paludan, *Tiden indtil 1340. Danmarks historie*, vol. 1, eds, Aksel E. Christensen et al. (København 1977), pp. 164-74. According to Adam of Bremen, the baptism of Harald Gormsen was a direct result of an invasion of Jutland by the German king Otto I. This has however been refuted by modern scholars, since Adam's claimed 'invasion' does not appear in any contemporary source. See Peter Sawyer, 'The process of Scandinavian Christianization', pp. 77-8.
- 24 Adam II:41, II:55, and IV:8; Olsen, 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', p. 154; Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, pp. 25-7; James Graham-Campbell, 'The Power of Silver', *Beretning fra nittende tværfaglige vikingesymposium*, eds, Else Roesdahl and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen (Aarhus 2000), pp. 7-20, esp. p. 10.
- 25 Dagfinn Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway. Strategy, Organization and the Course of Events', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 23 (1998), pp. 1-19, esp. pp. 7-13; Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, pp. 165-6; Absalon Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes indflydelse paa den Norske* (Kristiania 1890); Gro Steinsland, 'Religionsskiftet i Norden - et dramatisk ideologiskifte', *Medeltidens fødsel. Symposier från Krappereups Borg 1* (Lund 1989), pp. 203-12; Adam II:57. Fridtjov Birkeli has provided a thorough overview of the research about the conversion of Norway. See Fridtjov Birkeli, *Hva vet vi om kristningen av Norge? Utforskningen av norsk kristendoms- og kirkehistorie fra 900- til 1200-tallet* (Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø 1982); Snorri Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 1. *Från Ynglingasagan till Olav Tryggvasons saga*, tr, Karl G. Johansson (Stockholm 1991); Snorri Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 2. *Olav den Heliges saga*, tr, Karl G. Johansson (Stockholm 1993).
- 26 Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 19.
- 27 Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 10; Magnus Rindahl, 'Dei Norske mellomalderloverne. Alder, overlevering, utgåver', *Skriftlege kjelder om nordisk mellomalder*, ed, Magnus Rindahl, KULTs skriftserie 38 (Oslo 1995), pp. 7-20, esp. p. 8.
- 28 The Frostathing Law added that anyone who had 'dealings' with outlaws could be given a fine of three marks, or could even be outlawed themselves. See FL III:23-4.

29 Adam IV:27.

30 Per Vikstrand, 'Jämtland mellan Frö och Kristus', *Jämtlands kristnande*, ed, Stefan Brink Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 4 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 87-106, esp. p. 91; Jens Peter Schjødt, 'Fyrsteideologi og religion i vikingetiden', *Mammen. Grav, kunst og samfund i vikingetid*, ed, Mette Iversen *et al.* Jysk Arkæologisk Selskabs Skrifter XXVIII (Aarhus 1991), pp. 305-10, esp. p. 307; Gro Steinsland and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *Människor och makter i vikingarnas värld* (Stockholm 1998), pp. 144-5; Olof Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring. Rulers and religion in ancient Svea Society* (Uppsala 2000), chapters 5-7; Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', pp. 221 and 236; Stefan Brink, 'Political and social structures in Early Scandinavia. A Settlement-historical pre-study of the Central Place', *Tor* 28 (1996), pp. 235-81, esp. pp. 255-8 and 260-1.

31 The ancient 'Germanic' word *goði* or *guði* must originally have meant 'performer of sacrifices' (*ἱερεὺς*). *Goði* is found in Ulfilas' Gothic biblical translation and also in Viking Age runic inscriptions. Dag Strömbäck stated that the first sense of the word is 'he who has to do with the divine', which 'must mean the keeper of the cult place, the performer of the sacrifices'. Strömbäck, *The Conversion of Iceland*, pp. 38-9 and 41-9; KLNLM vol. 5, cols. 363-5; François-Xavier Dillmann, 'Kring de rituella gästabuden i fornskandinvisk religion', *Uppsalakulten och Adam av Bremen*, ed, A. Hultgård (Nora 1997), pp. 51-74, esp. p. 64; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Fra godord till riker: gode- og godords-institusjonenes utvikling på Island på 1100- og 1200-tallet*. Unpublished *hovedfagsoppgave* in history, spring 1987 (n.p.); Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, eighth edition (Oxford 1901).

32 Cf. Bonnier, 'Kyrkor, dopfuntar och gravmonument', p. 212; Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', pp. 220 and 239; Segelberg, 'Missionshistoriska aspekter på runinskrifterna', p. 56.

33 KLNLM vol. 9, col. 13; Gunnar Smedberg, 'Uppsala stifts äldsta historia', *Kyrkohistorisk årskrift* 83 (Uppsala 1983), pp. 59-77, esp. p. 59. Claire Stancliffe argued that the Anglo-Saxon kings could exercise more personal power than kings in Sweden, since their groups of advisers often consisted of their relations and members of the aristocracy. She further argued that the key difference between Anglo-Saxon England and Sweden was that the things were open to all free men. Evidence from Scandinavia however makes it clear that it was the most powerful members of society who were influential at the things. Some of the things were moreover representational meetings, attended only by the leading layers in society. This issue is further discussed in chapter 4. See Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion', p. 72.

34 Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', p. 228; Adam II:58; Tesch, 'Det sakrala stadsrummet', p. 5; Bertil Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria. I. Missionstid och tidig medeltid* (Stockholm 1998), pp. 79-80.

35 Stefan Brink, *Sockenbildning och sockennamn. Studier i äldre territoriell indelning i Norden*, Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi 57 (Uppsala 1990), pp. 46-67; Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, pp. 271-2.

36 Henrik Williams, 'Runjämtskan på Frösöstenen och Östmans bro', *Jämtlands kristnande*, ed, Stefan Brink, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 4 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 45-64, esp. pp. 46-8; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristna inslag i Jämtlands vikingatid', *Jämtlands kristnande*, ed, Stefan Brink, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 4 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 21-44, esp. pp. 21-6; KLNLM vol. 18, col. 706; Jørn Sandnes, 'Jämtene kristet seg selv. Jämtlands kristning sett fra vest', *Jämtlands kristnande*, ed, Stefan Brink, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 4 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 107-16, esp. pp. 112-13. Scholars have moreover

- argued that a communal decision to accept Christianity may have been an attempt by the population to avoid a 'crusade' from either Norwegian or Swedish territory.
- 37 Williams, 'Runjämstkan på Frösöstenen och Östmans bro', p. 48; Vikstrand, 'Jämtland mellan Frö och Kristus', pp. 94-7; Stefan Brink, 'Problemet "Jämtlands kristnande" i ett tvärvetenskapligt perspektiv. Slut betraktelse och syntes', *Jämtlands kristnande*, ed. Stefan Brink, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 4 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 215-20, esp. p. 207; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristna inslag i Jämtlands vikingatid', p. 26.
- 38 Lager, 'Art as a Reflection of Religious Change', pp. 120-1; Segelberg, 'Missionshistoriska aspekter på runinskrifterna', p. 56; Henrik Williams, 'Runstenstexternas teologi', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 291-312, esp. p. 291. Henrik Williams has produced a list of ways in which Christianity is expressed on rune stones. This has, to my knowledge, only been published in Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, p. 193.
- 39 Malmer, 'Sigtunamyntningen', p. 99; Zachrisson, *Gård, gräns, gravfält*, pp. 126-9 and 154; Lager, 'Art as a Reflection of Religious Change', p. 130.
- 40 VA 11; Bonnier, 'Kyrkor, dopfontar och gravmonument', p. 188; Brink, 'Tidig kyrklig organisation i Norden', pp. 276, 279-80, and 284; Olle Ferm and Sigurd Rahmqvist, 'Stormannakyrkor i Uppland under äldre medeltid', *Studier i äldre historia tillägnade Herman Schück 5/4 1985*, ed. Robert Sandberg (Stockholm 1985), pp. 67-83; Vikstrand, 'Jämtland mellan Frö och Kristus', pp. 91-2.
- 41 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 313-34, esp. pp. 317-22 and 327-8; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kreuzanhänger, Kruzifix und Reliquiar-Anhänger', *Birka II:1 Systematische Analyse der Gräberfunde*, ed. Greta. Arwidson, Kungl. Vitterhets och Historie och Antikvitets Akademien (Stockholm 1984), pp. 111-18, esp. p. 117; Adam I:60.
- 42 The grave goods in these burial ground have been dated to the twelfth century. See Lena Thunmark-Nylén, 'Samfund och tro på religionsskiftets Gotland', *Medeltidens födelse. Symposier från Krappereups Borg 1* (Lund 1989), pp. 213-32, esp. pp. 213 and 215-18.
- 43 Birgit Sawyer, *Kvinnor och familj i det forn- och medeltida Skandinavien*. Occasional Papers on Medieval Topics 6 (Skara 1992), pp. 81-2.
- 44 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', pp. 327-8; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Runstenskinnorna ännu en gång', *Tor 27:2* (1995), pp. 459-74, esp. p. 459; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 78-9; Claus Krag, *Vikingatid og rikssamling 800-1130. Aschehougs Norgeshistorie*, vol. 2, ed. Knut Helle (Oslo 1995), pp. 198-9.
- 45 VA 11 and 20; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', p. 326; Birgit Sawyer, *Kvinnor och familj i det forn- och medeltida Skandinavien*, pp. 84-5.
- 46 Aksel E. Christensen, *Vikingetidens Danmark paa oldhistorisk baggrund* (København 1977), pp. 223-41; Olsen, 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', pp. 153-4; Krogh and Olsen, 'Fra hedenskab til kristendom', p. 233; Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, pp. 23-5.
- 47 Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, p. 25; Olsen, 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', pp. 154 and 158; Axel Bolvig, *Kirkekunstens storhedstid* (København 1992), p. 76; Hans-Emil Lidén, 'De tidlige kirkene. Hvem bygget dem, hvem brukte dem, og hvordan?', *Møtet mellom hedendom og kristendom i Norge*, ed. Hans-Emil Lidén (Oslo 1995), pp. 129-43, esp. pp. 136-7; Leif Chr. Nielsen, 'Hedenskab og Kristendom. Religionsskiftet afspejlet i vikingetidens grave',

- Fra Stamme til Stat i Danmark 2. Høvdingesamfund og Kongemagt*, eds, Peder Mortensen og Birgit M. Rasmussen, Jysk Arkeologisk Selskabs Skrifter XXII (1991), pp. 245-67, esp. p. 260. The church at Roskilde is the first documented stone church in Scandinavia. See Olsen 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', p. 158.
- 48 Peter Birkedahl and Erik Johansen, 'Nikolajberget', *Skalk*, no. 1 (1993), pp. 3-8.
- 49 According to the sagas, Olav Tryggvason summoned meetings at the local things and 'persuaded' the participants to accept Christianity. Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 10. The Gulathing covered an area around Bergen on the south-west coast of Norway.
- 50 The top layer included kings, *jarls*, *lendmenn*, and *stallarar*. Lidén, 'De tidlige kirkene', pp. 131 and 135; Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', pp. 17-19.
- 51 Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', pp. 8-9; Brit Solli, 'Fra hedendom til kristendom. Religionsskiftet i Norge i arkeologisk belysning', *Viking* LVIII (1995), pp. 23-48, esp. pp. 27-34.
- 52 Martin Blindheim, 'A house-shaped Irish-Scots reliquary in Bologna, and its place among the other reliquaries', *Acta Archaeologica* 55 (1986), pp. 1-53, esp. pp. 41-44; James Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts. A Select Catalogue* (London 1980), no. 314; James Graham-Campbell and Dafydd Kidd, *The Vikings* (London 1980), p. 34.
- 53 Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 412.
- 54 The tradition of the Virgin of Guadalupe sprung from the vision of an Aztec man. According to this man, the Virgin appeared on the hill of the Aztec goddess Tonantzin, i.e. the mother of the traditional Indian gods. The man reported that the Indian Virgin spoke to him and claimed to be the mother of God. The Virgin of Guadalupe shared some characteristics with the goddess Tonantzin, but also represented many of the Christian ideals, such as of love and mercy. Madsen, 'Religious Syncretism', pp. 377-9; Meyer and Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, p. 188.
- 55 Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 10; Peter Sawyer, 'The process of Scandinavian Christianization', pp. 73-4.
- 56 Tangl 80; *Alcuin of York*, nos. 57, 59, and 56; Åke Sandholm, *Primsigningsriten under nordisk medeltid* (Åbo 1965), pp. 12-22; KLNLM vol. 13, cols. 440-1; Ludwig Eisenhofer, *Handbuch der katholischen Liturgik*, vol. 2, *Spezielle Liturgik* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1933), pp. 255-6.
- 57 Adam III:53, IV:23, and IV:30. Lay participation in religion during the early stages of conversion is discussed in chapter 7.
- 58 VA 24; KLNLM vol. 13, cols. 440-1; Sandholm, *Primsigningsriten under nordisk medeltid*, pp. 23-47. Already in the time of Ancient Christianity it happened that catechumens waited a long time before they were baptised. Emperor Constantine is one such example.
- 59 The tradition of wearing white robes after baptism is known from the fourth century onwards. Eisenhofer, *Handbuch der katholischen Liturgik*, vol. 2, pp. 261-3 and 276-7; Sven B. F. Jansson, *Runinskrifter i Sverige*, third edition (Stockholm 1984), pp. 116-18; *Upplands Runinskrifter*, eds, Elias Wessén and Sven B. F. Jansson, vol. I (Stockholm 1940-3), p. 408.
- 60 VA 24; *Egil saga Skalla-Grimsonar*, ed, Sigurður Nordahl (Reykjavík 1933), chapter 50; KLNLM vol. 13, cols. 441-3 and vol. 3, cols. 522-4; Sandholm, *Primsigningsriten under nordisk medeltid*, pp. 23-47; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Den tidiga missionen i arkeologisk belysning - problem och synpunkter', *Tor* 20 (1985), pp. 291-313, esp. pp. 294-6. Egil Skallagrímsson's

- saga appears to be based on oral traditions as well as documented genealogies, and has therefore been seen as one of the most reliable of the Icelandic sagas. It must however be kept in mind that it does not seem to have been written down before c. 1230.
- 61 See for example: VA 11, 24, 26, and 32-3; Adam I:61 and II:50. Ansgar is reported to have tried to convince King Horik to receive baptism by telling him stories from the Bible.
- 62 The reasons for this are discussed in section 3.2.
- 63 Arnved Nedkvitne, 'Ny tro, nye mentaliteter?', *Kyrka - Samhälle - Stat. Från kristnande till etablerad kyrka*, ed, Göran Dahlbäck, *Historiallinen Arkisto* 110:3 (1997), pp. 99-120, esp. p. 103.
- 64 Anders Hultgård, 'Old Scandinavian and Christian Eschatology', *Old Norse and Finnish Religions and Cultic Place-Names*, ed, Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo 1991), pp. 344-57, esp. p. 347; Anders Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring, kontinuitet och ackulturation', *Kontinuitet i kult och tro från vikingatid till medeltid*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 1 (Uppsala 1992), pp. 49-103, esp. p. 57; Hultgård, 'Övergångstidens eskatologiska föreställningar', p. 165; Bertil Nilsson, 'På en kyrkas invigningsdag', *Från tid och evighet. Predikningar från 200-tal till 1500-tal*, ed, S. Borgehammar (Skellefteå 1992), pp. 221-8, esp. p. 227; *Gamal norsk homilieboek: Cod AM 691^o4*, ed, G. Indrebø (Oslo 1931); *Homiliubók. Isländska homilier efter en handskrift från tolfte århundradet*, ed, Theodor Wisén (Lund 1872); *The Icelandic Homily Book: perg. 15^o4 in the Royal Library, Stockholm*, ed, Andrea de Leeuw van Werner (Reykjavík 1993).
- 65 Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring', p. 57.
- 66 Hans Christiansson, 'Den onda ormen; Runstensornamentikens kristna budskap. Ett tolkningsförsök', *Tor* 27:2 (1995), pp. 449-57, esp. p. 451.
- 67 Zachrisson, *Gård, gräns, gravfält*, pp. 129-35. The inscriptions on the rune stones of the 'second wave' are more formulaic than those on the older stones in Uppland, while the pictures are more ornate.
- 68 Per Beskow, 'Runor och liturgi', *Nordens kristnande i europeiskt perspektiv. Tre uppsatser av Per Beskow och Reinhart Staas* (Skara 1994), pp. 16-36, esp. pp. 18-19.
- 69 Erik Segelberg, 'God help his soul', *Ex Orbe Religionum. Studia Geo Widengren ... oblata* 2, eds, J. Bergman... H. Ringgren, Studies in the history of religions, Supplement to Numen 22 (Liège 1972), pp. 161-176, esp. p. 166; Williams, "Gud hjälpe hennes själ", p. 178; Williams, 'Runstentexternas teologi', p. 291; Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz, 'Runstenarnas teologi; våra första uttryck för inhemsk kristendomstolkning', *Religion och Bibel* XLI, Nathan Söderblom-Sällskapet Årsbok 1982, pp. 47-56, esp. p. 50; Cf. Lager, 'Art as a Reflection of Religious Change', p. 130.
- 70 *Kristr lati koma and Tumma i lius ok paradisi ok i þann hæim bæzta kristnum*. See Jansson, *Runinskrifter i Sverige*, pp. 118-9; Hallencreutz, 'Runstenarnas teologi', p. 55. The stanza has been attributed to Hallfreðr Óttarsson Vandræðaskald.
- 71 Beskow, 'Runor och liturgi', p. 20; Per Beskow, 'Runornas vittnesbörd', *Signum* 20:4 (1994), pp. 111-14, esp. pp. 112-14; Zachrisson, *Gård, gräns, gravfält*, p. 147; Christiansson, 'Den onda ormen'; Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz, 'Missionary Spirituality - the Case of Ansgar', *Studia Theologica, Scandinavian Journal of Theology* 36 (1982), pp. 105-118, esp. pp. 112-16; Williams, "Gud hjälpe hennes själ", pp. 177-9. A major source for the texts on the rune stones seems to have been the death liturgy, which included *commendatio animae*, masses for the dead, and interment. Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', pp. 327-8; Anne-Sofie

- Gräslund, 'The Conversion of Scandinavia - A Sudden Event or a Gradual Process?', *Early Medieval Religion*, ed. A. Pluskowski, *Archaeological Review from Cambridge*, vol. 17:2 (2000), pp. 83-98, esp. p. 88.
- 72 Nilsson, 'På en kyrkas invigningsdag', pp. 221 and 225.
- 73 KLM vol. 17, cols. 616-18 and 621; Christiansson, 'Den onda ormen', pp. 450-2. The runic inscription reads: *forgefi hanum sakaR ok syndiR*.
- 74 Nilsson, 'På en kyrkas invigningsdag', pp. 224-5 and 227.
- 75 One such example is the rune stone at Lilla Lundby, which bears the inscription *Gu hialpi sal hans bætr þæn hann hafr til gæva*. See Jansson, *Runinskrifter i Sverige*, p. 121; Richard Wehner, *Svenska runor vittnar. Svenska runstenars vittnesbörd om landets äldsta missionshistoria* (Gävle 1981), p. 34.
- 76 Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 716.
- 77 Arthur D. Nock, *Conversion. The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford 1933), pp. 261-2; Valerie I.J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford 1991), pp. 76-7. See also chapter 5 of this thesis.
- 78 Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring', pp. 59-61.
- 79 Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring', pp. 58-60.
- 80 Williams, "'Gud hjälpe hennes själ'", pp. 180-1.
- 81 Cf. Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring', pp. 58-61.
- 82 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Pagan and Christian in the age of conversion', *Proceedings of the Tenth Viking Congress, Larkollen, Norway, 1985*. Universitetets Oldsaksamlings Skrifter, ny rekke 9 (Oslo 1987), pp. 81-94, esp. pp. 88-9; Helge Ljungberg, *Röde Orm och Vite Krist. Studier till Sveriges kristnande* (Stockholm 1980), p. 65; Strömbäck, The Conversion of Iceland, pp. 49-58; Christanson, 'Den onda ormen', pp. 454-5; Helge Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen och kristendomen. Studier över det nordiska religionsskiftet under Vikingatiden*. Nordiska texter och undersökningar 11 (Uppsala 1938), pp. 94-5; Henrik von Achen, 'Den tidlige middelalderens krusifikser i Skandinavien. Hvitekrist som en ny og større Odin', *Møtet mellom hedendom og kristendom i Norge*, ed. Hans-Emil Lidén (Oslo 1995), pp. 267-300; Luke 11.22; The Anglo-Saxon prayer is found in: *A Pre-Conquest English Prayer-Book*, ed. Bernard James Muir (Woodbridge 1988), pp. xiv and 145. I am grateful to Stephan Borgehammar at the Department of Theology at the University of Lund for drawing my attention to this text. It is important to note that Anglo-Saxon depictions of the crucifixion from the eleventh century are of the drooping, suffering Christ wearing only a loin-cloth. Janet Backhouse, D.H. Turner, and Leslie Webster, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art 966-1066* (London 1984), nos. 126, 127, 128, and 269.
- 83 Strömbäck, *The Conversion of Iceland*, pp. 49-58; Bernhard Salin, 'Några krucifix och kors i Statens Historiska Museum', *Svenska fornminnesföreningens tidskrift VIII* (1893), pp. 277-312; Zachrisson, *Gård, gräns, gravfält*, pp. 142-5; Wehner, *Svenska runor vittnar*, p. 51; Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, p. 238; Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, pp. 152 and 308. Signe Horn Fuglesang argued that the origin of the bound crucifixion cannot be explained due to the lack of comparative source material. See Signe Horn Fuglesang, 'Crucifixion iconography in Viking Scandinavia', *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress, Århus 24-31 August 1977*, eds, Hans Bekker Nielsen et al. (Odense 1981), pp. 73-94.

- 84 Backhouse, and Webster, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art*, nos. 126, 127, and 128; Muir, *A Pre-Conquest English Prayer-Book*, p. 145; Charlton T. Lewis, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary* (Oxford 1891); Franz Blatt, *Lexicon mediae latinitatis danicae*, vol. 2 (Aarhus 1988); J. Bosworth and Northcote T. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford 1882).
- 85 Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring', p. 58.
- 86 Richard C. Trexler, *Church and Community 1200-1600. Studies in the History of Florence and New Spain*, Storia e letteratura, Raccolta di studi e testi 168 (Rome 1987), pp. 566-7 and 581; Madsen, 'Religious Syncretism', pp. 376-7.
- 87...*credens in unum Deum omnipotentem, dominum nostrum Iesum Christum*. See Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen*, pp. 85-7. Per Beskow argued that missionaries adopted this approach in order to stress God's unity as opposed to the polytheistic pre-Christian religion. See Beskow, 'Runornas vittnesbörd', pp. 112-13; Jan Arvid Hellström stated that clerics did not compromise regarding certain Christian teachings. Among these he included the concept of the Holy Trinity. See Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, p. 234. Henrik Williams has pointed out that there are a few rune stones on which *Guð* is used together with a verb in the plural. These texts could be seen to reflect God's triunity. See Williams, 'Runstenstexternas teologi', pp. 306-7. See also Segelberg, 'God help his soul'; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', p. 329.
- 88 Beskow, 'Runornas vittnesbörd', p. 112; Segelberg, 'God help his soul', pp. 165-8, Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', pp. 329-30.
- 89 Adam II:62, IV:9, IV:30, and II:58.
- 90 Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 1, pp. 251-62; Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 2, pp. 58-62; Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 13.
- 91 Adam IV:26.
- 92 Cecilia Åqvist, 'Hall och harg - det rituella rummet', *Religion från stenålder till medeltid. Artiklar baserade på religionsarkeologiska nätverksgruppens konferens på Lövsstadbruk den 1-3 december 1995*, eds, Kerstin Engdahl och Anders Kaliff, Riksantikvarieämbetet Arkeologiska undersökningar, skrifter 19 (Linköping 1996), pp. 105-20, esp. pp. 111-17; Ann-Lili Nielsen, 'Hedniska kult- och offerhandlingar i Borg', *Religion från stenålder till medeltid. Artiklar baserade på religionsarkeologiska nätverksgruppens konferens på Lövsstadbruk den 1-3 december 1995*, eds, Kerstin Engdahl och Anders Kaliff, Riksantikvarieämbetet Arkeologiska undersökningar, skrifter 19 (Linköping 1996), pp. 89-104, esp. pp. 95-102; Ann-Lili Nielsen, 'Pagan Cultic and Votive Acts at Borg. An Expression of the Central Significance of the Farmstead in the Late Iron Age', *Visions of the Past. Trends and Traditions in Swedish Medieval Archaeology*, eds, H. Andersson, P. Carelli, and L. Ersgård, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology 19, Riksantikvarieämbetet arkeologiska undersökningar, skrifter 24 (1997), pp. 373-392; Karin Lindeblad, 'Borg socken - förändringar i tid och rum 200-1200 e kr', *Slöinge och Borg. Stormansgårdar i öst och väst*. Riksantikvarieämbetet arkeologiska undersökningar, skrifter 18 (Linköping 1996), pp. 53-77, esp. pp. 63-70.
- 93 *Guldgubbar* is the Swedish term. The Danish word is *guldgubber*, and the Norwegian *gullgubber*.
- 94 Hans-Emil Lidén, 'From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church. The Excavation of Mære Church in Trøndelag', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 2 (1969), pp. 2-32; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', *Kontinuitet i kult och tro från vikingatid till medeltid*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 1 (Uppsala 1992), pp. 129-50, esp. p. 131. The *guldgubbar* will be further discussed in chapter 4.

- 95 Gerd Stamsø Munch, 'Hus og hall. En høvdinggård på Borg i Lofoten', *Nordisk hedendom. Et symposium*, eds. Gro Steinsland *et al.* (Odense Universitetsforlag 1991), pp. 321-334; Frands Herschend and Dorthe Kaldal Mikkelsen, 'The main building at Borg (I:1)', *Borg in Lofoten. A chieftain's farm in North Norway*, eds. Gerd Stamsø Munch *et al.* (Tapir Academic Press 2003), pp. 41-76.
- 96 Charlotte Fabech and Jytte Ringved, 'Magtens geografi i Sydsandinavien – om kulturlandskab, produktion og bebyggelsemønster', *Produksjon og samfunn. Om erverv, spesialisering og bosetning i Norden i 1. årtusen e. Kr.*, ed. Heid Gjøstein Resi (Oslo 1995), pp. 11-30, esp. pp. 17-18; Jens Jeppsen and H.J. Madsen, 'Trækirke og stormandshal i Lisbjerg', *Kuml 1996-96*, pp. 149-171, esp. pp. 165-8.
- 97 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', p. 23.
- 98 Lidén, 'From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church', p. 21.
- 99 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', p. 132; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', pp. 23-4; Margareta Hildebrand, 'Frösö kyrka på hednisk grund', *Arkeologi i fjäll, skog och bygd*, vol. 2, *Järnålder – medeltid* (Uddevalla 1989), pp. 153-66.
- 100 Hildebrand, 'Frösö kyrka på hednisk grund', pp. 158-62; Ove Hemmendorff, 'De seneste utgrävningarna vid Frösö kyrka', *Frösökrönikan* no. 2 (Östersund 1992), pp. 39-42. I am grateful to Ove Hemmendorff at Jamtli (Jämtlands läns museum) for drawing my attention to these issues.
- 101 Olfert Voss, 'Hørning-graven. En kammergrav fra o. 1000 med kvinde begravet i vognfading', *Mammen. Grav, kunst og samfund i vikingetid*, Jysk Arkæologisk Selskabs Skrifter XXVIII, ed. Mette Iversen *et al.* (Aarhus 1991), pp. 189-203.
- 102 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', p. 132; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', pp. 23-4.
- 103 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', pp. 132 and 139. In other cases Christian cult sites may have been established close to pre-Christian cult sites, although not on exactly the same spot. One such example could be when a magnate who had housed a pre-Christian cult site erected a church on his land. See Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', pp. 133-8.
- 104 *Medieval Scandinavia. An encyclopedia*, eds. Phillip Pulsiano *et al.* (New York and London 1993), pp. 415-16; KLNLM vol. 8, cols. 527-44.
- 105 Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', p. 227; Olsen, 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', p. 158.
- 106 Stefan Brink, 'The Formation of the Scandinavian Parish, with some Remarks Regarding the English Impact on the Process', *The Community, the Family and the Saint. Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe*. Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress University of Leeds 4-7 July 1994, 10-13 July 1995 (Brepols 1998), pp. 19-44, esp. pp. 25-8; Mats Anglert, *Kyrkor och herravälde. Från kristnande till sockenbildning i Skåne*, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology 16 (Lund 1995), pp. 179-82. Claus Blaaberger has investigated the medieval parish formation in Denmark. He did not however attempt to answer the question regarding the earliest parishes. See Claus Blaaberger, *Sognedannelsen i dansk middelalder* (Hørsholm 1992), pp. 22-3.
- 107 Richard Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London 1989), p. 128; Blair, 'Minster Churches in the Landscape', pp. 35-59; John Blair, 'Introduction: from Minster to Parish Church',

- Minsters and Parish Churches. The Local Church in Transition 950-1200*, ed, John Blair, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph 17 (Oxford 1988), pp. 1-20; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 149.
- 108 Blair, 'Minster Churches in the Landscape', pp. 37-8; Blair, 'Introduction: from Minster to Parish Church', p. 1; Sarah Foot, 'Parochial ministry in early Anglo-Saxon England: the role of monastic communities', *The Ministry: Clerical and Lay. Studies in Church History* 26 (1989), pp. 43-54, esp. pp. 43-50; Alan Thacker, 'Monks, preaching and pastoral care in early Anglo-Saxon England', *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, eds, John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester 1992), pp. 137-70; Catherine Cubitt, 'Pastoral care and conciliar canons: the provisions of the 747 council of Clofesho', *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, eds, John Blair and Richard Sharpe (Leicester 1992), pp. 193-211.
- 109 Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', pp. 15-17.
- 110 Jonas Ros, *Sigtuna. Staden, kyrkorna och den kyrkliga organisationen*. Occasional Papers in Archaeology 30 (Uppsala 2001), pp. 147-60. Ros based this argument on several types of evidence. In documents from the beginning of the seventeenth century, St. Per is named as a 'head church'. In the seventeenth century there was also a rune stone in the church, which has been interpreted as evidence that someone who lived outside Sigtuna was brought to St. Per to be buried. Minster churches in England had the burial rights for their parishes. The location of St. Per may also be of significance. This church is situated to the west of all other churches in Sigtuna. There are several examples from Anglo-Saxon England where the main church in such a sequence is dedicated to an apostle. Ros has moreover suggested that the canons of St. Per lived in their own houses within Sigtuna. According to Domesday Book, Anglo-Saxon canons who belonged to a minster church lived in their own houses.
- 111 HE I.33; Richard Morris, *The Church in British Archaeology*, CBA Research Report 47 (1983), p. 34 and table iii; H.M.Taylor and Joan Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (Cambridge 1965), vol. 1, pp. 134-48, 408-9, and 429-30, vol II, pp. 503, 518-19, 575-7, 655-6, and 720.
- 112 Bonnier, 'Kyrkor, dopfuntar och gravmonument', p. 197; Christina Ryd, *Den 1000-åriga domkyrkomiljön i Skara. En studie med tonvikt på biblioteket, skolan och domkyrkan byggda i tre olika slags nygotik* (Skara 1981), p. 1; Henrik Cornell, 'De tidiga kyrkorna', *Den svenska historien*, vol. 1, *Från stenålder till vikingatid*, ed, C. Wannern (Stockholm 1992), pp. 220-3, esp. pp. 220-1.
- 113 This dating is based on the find of a coin hoard in the foundation trench of the church. See Graham-Campbell, 'The Power of Silver', p. 14.
- 114 Leif Chr. Nielsen, 'Hedenskab og Kristendom', p. 258; Olsen, 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', pp. 157-8.
- 115 HE I.25; VL pp. 230-3.
- 116 VA 14; Åke Andrén, 'Svensk medeltid i kyrkohistoriskt perspektiv', *Svensk medeltidsforskning idag*, ed, Göran Dahlbäck, Humanistisk-samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet (Uppsala 1987), pp. 75-100, esp. pp. 75-6; Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, pp. 161-4. See also chapter 1 of this thesis.
- 117 VA 8 and 15.
- 118 Wood, 'Christians and pagans in ninth-century Scandinavia', p. 60.
- 119 VA 33 and 15.
- 120 Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', p. 216; Cf. Adam, IV:A.

- 121 Torben Kisbye, 'Danelagen - sprogstruktur, befolkningsstruktur', *Nordboer i Danelagen*, eds, Hans Bekker-Nielsen *et al.* (Odense 1982), pp. 43-66; Torben Kisbye, *Vikingerne i England - sproglige spor* (København 1982); Michael Barnes, 'Norse in the British Isles', *Viking Revaluations*. Viking Society Centenary Symposium 14-15 May 1992, eds, Anthony Faulkes and Richard Perkins (London 1993), pp. 65-84, esp. pp. 68-9; R. I. Page, 'How long did the Scandinavian languages survive in England? The epigraphical evidence', *England before the Conquest. Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, eds, P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (Cambridge 1971), pp. 165-82; Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', p. 216.
- 122 Else Roesdahl, 'De skandinaviske kongeriger', *Viking og Hvidekrist. Norden og Europa 800-1200*, ed, E. Roesdahl (København 1992), pp. 32-41, esp. p. 32.
- 123 Adam IV:A, II:26; VA 33; The papacy also seems to have been aware of the advantages that could be gained from learning about local traditions. Pope Gregory VII asked King Inge to send a cleric to Rome who could provide information about the customs and traditions of the Swedes. Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', pp. 125-8.
- 124 Ebo had been given the *ius missionis* for the north by Pope Pascal I. The initiative to begin this evangelization however seems to have been Ebo's own. VA 12-14 and 22-3; *Danmarks Riges Breve*, ed, Franz Blatt, vol. I (København 1975), nos. 22-3 and 24-5; Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz, *När Sverige blev europeiskt. Till frågan om Sveriges kristnande* (Stockholm 1993), pp. 18 and 20.
- 125 Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', pp. 125-8; LM vol. VI, cols. 1671-4; Ullman, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, pp. 262-343.
- 126 King Sven Estridsen had, through his own contacts with the papacy, attempted to establish an independent Danish archbishopric already in the 1070s. After the king's death, the plans were put on hold. However, when Archbishop Liemar of Hamburg-Bremen began to support the emperor in the investiture contest, the Danish kings were again able to establish direct contacts with the papacy. It is reported that it was King Erik I Ejegod who managed to obtain the papal privilege for the foundation of the archiepiscopal seat in Lund. Erik seems to have visited Rome in 1098. It is possible that he was at this time on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Hallencreutz, 'Riksidentitet, stiftsidentitet och den vidare Europagemenskapen', pp. 253-4; Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, pp. 73-7; Markús Skeggjason, 'Eiríksdrápa', *Knýtlingasaga, Sögur danakonunga*, eds, Carl af Petersens and Emil Olsson, vol. 2 (København 1925), chapters 80-1, pp. 190-2; Judith Jesch, 'Kingship in Markús Skeggjason's *Eiríksdrápa*', unpublished paper presented at The International Medieval Congress in Leeds (2001).
- 127 *Diplomatarium Suecanum. Svenskt diplomatarium*, vol. 1 (Stockholm 1829), nos. 24-5; Hallencreutz, 'Riksidentitet, stiftsidentitet och den vidare Europagemenskapen', pp. 252-3.
- 128 Adam II:58 and IV:29.
- 129 Sven Tunberg, *En romersk källa om Norden vid 1100-talets början*, Språkvetenskapliga Sällskapets i Uppsala förhandlingar 1910-12 (Uppsala 1912); Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, p. 79; Kjell Kumlien, 'Sveriges kristnande i slutskedet - spörsmål om vittnesbörd och verklighet', *Historisk tidskrift* 82 (1962), pp. 249-297, esp. pp. 263-80.
- 130 Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, pp. 76 and 79; Hallencreutz, *När Sverige blev europeiskt*, pp. 76-8; Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', p. 127; Brink, 'Tidig kyrklig organisation i Norden', p. 272. Tore Nyberg argued that this is a description of the existing episcopal sees in Sweden at the beginning of the twelfth century. See Tore Nyberg, 'Stad, skrift och stift. Några

- historiska inledningsfrågor', *Adam av Bremen. Historien om Hamburgstiftets och dess biskopar*, tr, Emanuel Svedberg, eds, C. F. Hallencreutz, K. Johannesson, T. Nyberg, and A. Piltz, Skrifter utg. av Samfundet Pro Fide et Christianismo 6 (Stockholm 1984), pp. 295-339.
- 131 Adam II:58; Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, pp. 66 and 81; Hallencreutz, 'Riksidentitet, stiftsidentitet och den vidare Europagemenskapen', pp. 247-8; Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', p. 228. It has been suggested that Husaby was founded as a predecessor to Skara, but the evidence for this is very tentative. Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, pp. 79-81.
- 132 Adam IV:29.
- 133 Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, pp. 67, 79, and 83; Henrik Janson has argued that Gamla Uppsala was not a pre-Christian cult site but instead an episcopal seat which supported Pope Gregory VII. At this time Archbishop Liemar of Hamburg-Bremen supported the German emperor. Janson therefore suggested that Adam of Bremen's depiction of Uppsala as a non-Christian stronghold is a scurrilous portrait of a Christian centre opposed to the emperor. This interpretation of Adam of Bremen must be seen as highly dubious. See Henrik Janson, *Templum nobilissimum*. Adam av Bremen, Uppsalatemplet och konfliktlinjerna i Europa kring år 1075 (Göteborg 1998); L. Gahrn, 'H. Janson, Templum nobilissimum. Adam av Bremen, Uppsalatemplet och konflikt-linjerna i Europa kring år 1075', *Fornvännen* 95 (2000), pp. 128-31.
- 134 Smedberg, 'Uppsala stifts äldsta historia', p. 69. The see of Åbo was at this time regarded as 'not fully developed', and the see of Växjö had not yet been founded.
- 135 Hallencreutz, 'Riksidentitet, stiftsidentitet och den vidare Europa-gemenskapen', pp. 256 and 261; Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, p. 83.
- 136 Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna', pp. 128-9 and 132. According to Saxo Grammaticus, the population of Svealand and the population of Götaland could not agree where the archiepiscopal see should be located. Nicholas Breakspear later became Pope Adrian IV (1154-59).
- 137 *Danmarks Riges Breve*, vol. I, no. 23; VA 13 and 23.
- 138 VA 14 and 21.
- 139 *Danmarks Riges Breve*, vol. I, no. 422; Adam III:12; Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, pp. 27-9.
- 140 Adam II:4, II:41, IV:8, II:36, II:55, and IV:2; Peter Sawyer, 'The process of Scandinavian Christianization', pp. 78-9; Brink, *Sockenbildning och sockennamn*, p. 31, n. 48; Olsen, 'Kristendomen og Kirkene', p. 154; Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, pp. 29-30.
- 141 The diocese of Bergen is mentioned on the Florence list. Krag, *Vikingatid og rikssamling 800-1130*, pp. 201-3; KLMN vol. 9, col. 712; *Regesta Norvegica*, vol. I, ed, Erik Gunnes (Oslo 1989), no. 92.
- 142 VA 11-12, 14, and 26-7; Adam II:60-2.
- 143 Adam II:38; Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, p. 65.
- 144 VA 17.
- 145 Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, pp. 161-204; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', pp. 38-9.
- 146 VA 27.

- 147 VA 9.
- 148 Brink, *Sockenbildning och sockennamn*, pp. 46-67; Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, pp. 271-2.
- 149 Lundén, *Svenska helgon*, p. 23; Schmid, 'Eskil, Botvid och David', pp. 108-9; KLMN vol. 2, cols. 192-4.
- 150 Adam II:62 and III:54.
- 151 The other sources include medieval charters and papal letters. *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda*, ed, Guðni Jónsson, vol. 2 (Reykjavík 1959), pp. 70-1; Lönnroth, 'En fjärran spegel', pp. 148-51.
- 152 Adam II:58.
- 153 Adam IV:30. It has also been stated that violent reactions against Christianity took place in Västergötland after the 1030s. This suggestion was based on a papal letter which refers to the 'newly Christianised people' in this area. There is however no other evidence to support this. See Nilsson, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, p. 81.
- 154 Lönnroth, 'En fjärran spegel', p. 151.
- 155 Lindkvist, 'Kungamakt, kristnande, statsbildning', pp. 224-5 and 236-7.
- 156 See section 2.5.
- 157 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 127-8. Hellström argued that Christians and non-Christians lived side by side during the conversion period in Sweden. See Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, pp. 185-6.
- 158 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Arkeologin och kristnandet', pp. 31-2; Williams, "Gud hjälpe hennes själ", p. 177; Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring', pp. 90-4.
- 159 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristna inslag i Jämtlands vikingatid', p. 29; Bertil Nilsson, 'Till frågan om kyrkans hållning till icke-kristna kultfenomen. Attityder under tidig medeltid i Europa och Norden', *Kontinuitet i kult och tro från vikingatid till medeltid*, ed, Bertil Nilsson, Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 1 (Uppsala 1992), pp. 9-48, esp. p. 24. Martin Carver's arguments are discussed in chapter 2. See for example: Carver, 'Boat-burial in Britain: Ancient Custom or Political Signal?'; Carver, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Sutton Hoo: An Interim Report'. Gunnar Anderson argued that the regulations regarding mounds in the Older Law of the Gulathing were mostly issued for non-religious reasons. See Gunnar Andersson, 'A Struggle for Control. Reflections on the Change of Religion in a Rural Context in the Eastern Mälaren Valley', *Visions of the Past. Trends and Traditions in Swedish Medieval Archaeology*, eds, H. Andersson, P. Carelli, and L. Ersgård, Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology 19, Riksantikvarieämbetet Arkeologiska undersökningar skrifter 24 (Lund 1997), pp. 353-372, esp. p. 367.
- 160 Anders Broberg, 'Religionsskifte och sockenbildning i Norduppland', *Kyrka och socken i medeltidens Sverige*, ed, O. Ferm (Stockholm 1991), pp. 49-79, esp. pp. 49-62; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Den tidiga missionen i arkeologisk belysning', pp. 303-7 (figure 4).
- 161 Peter Sawyer, *Da Danmark blev Danmark. Fra ca. år 700 til ca. 1050*, vol. 3, *Gyldendal og Politikens Danmarkshistorie*, ed, Olaf Olsen (København 1988), p. 244.
- 162 VA 32; Jens Kongsted Lampe, 'Hedningarne en vederstyggelighed', *Skalk*, no. 2 (1993), pp. 28-30. According to Kongsted Lampe, the bell was dendrochronologically dated to the second half of the tenth century, by a piece of wood from which the bell was once suspended. However, according to a personal comment from Prof. Schietzel (excavator of Hedeby), the wood sample could not be used for dating as it had been badly damaged by worms and insects.

- 163 Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, p. 25; Morten Warmind, 'Religionsmøde og trosskifte', *Norden og Europa i vikingetid og tidlig middelalder*, ed, Niels Lund (København 1994), pp. 163-78, esp. p. 164.
- 164 Voss, 'Hørning-graven. En kammergrav fra o. 1000 med kvinde begravet i vognfading'.
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- 168 Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 1; Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 2; Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, pp. 165-6; Krag, *Vikingatid og rikssamling 800-1130*, pp. 123-165; Brink, *Sockenbildning och sockennamn*, p. 38.
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PART II

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN MYTHS AND CULTS FROM PRE-CHRISTIAN TO CHRISTIAN TIMES IN SCANDINAVIA

The aim of part II is to consider continuity and change in myths and cultic practices from pre-Christian to Christian times in Scandinavia. The issues that will be focused on are those for which the comparative material can prove particularly beneficial.

Parts II and III are based on sources that hitherto have not been widely used in the study of conversion. For Scandinavia, the most important source material is provided by the ecclesiastical regulations (*kristinn réttir*) of the four earliest Norwegian provincial laws.¹ As in previous chapters, comparisons will be made with Anglo-Saxon England and the northern parts of continental Europe. The decretal collections of Regino of Prüm and Burchard of Worms have been particularly useful. Like the Norwegian laws, these sources have so far been virtually unexplored in the search for information with a bearing on the daily life of the wider population.

One reason for focusing on the ecclesiastical regulations from Norway is that these contain detailed and vivid regulations concerning early Christian life and practices. The ecclesiastical regulations of the Danish and Swedish provincial laws seem, in comparison, rather meagre. Another reason is that the Norwegian provincial laws are older than their Danish and Swedish counterparts. The first written Danish provincial laws are unlikely to have been produced before the last decades of the twelfth century. These have not survived, and the earliest surviving texts date from the first half of the thirteenth century. The earliest Swedish provincial laws derive from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.²

In Norway, the earliest extant manuscripts of the provincial laws have been dated to the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. The Gulathing Law has

survived in a number of manuscripts. The oldest complete version is the so-called *Codex Rantzovianus*, which is dated to c. 1250. Parts of this law have also been found in three older fragments. All scholars agree that the three fragments date from before 1250. Magnus Rindal has suggested that they were produced in the period between 1200 and 1250. Other scholars have argued that two of these should be ascribed to the end of twelfth century, and have dated one to c. 1180.³ (see figure 5) The Law of the Frostathing has survived in a number of manuscripts from the fourteenth century. The earliest of these has been dated to before 1350.⁴ The oldest manuscript of the Borgarthing Law dates from c. 1300. Other manuscripts of this law date from later in the fourteenth century. All extant copies of the law of the Eidsivathing have been ascribed to the period after 1300.⁵

The origin and dating of the Scandinavian provincial laws have been the subject of much discussion. One of the main issues has been how far the extant manuscripts can be used to extract information about earlier laws. This debate was sparked off, in particular, by Elsa Sjöholm's study of the Swedish provincial laws. Sjöholm rejected the idea that the provincial laws derive from common ancient Germanic laws, as was argued particularly by scholars such as Konrad Maurer and Wilhelm E. Wilda. Instead she presented two main arguments. The first one is that the extant medieval laws represent legislation introduced by king and aristocracy. The other is that the extant laws were based purely on Mosaic and Roman law, brought to Scandinavia by clerics. Sjöholm therefore argued that the extant provincial laws represent legislation that was current at the time when the documents were produced, and that it is virtually impossible to trace older laws in these sources.⁶

Sjöholm's theories have been severely criticised by a number of scholars of Nordic history and law. Their criticism contains numerous multifaceted arguments, and only the most crucial points will be reviewed here. Particular attention will be paid to those parts that may have a bearing on the use of the Norwegian laws in this thesis.

The Norwegian historian Sverre Bagge agreed with Sjöholm that scholars must not assume that Germanic customary legislation pre-dated the provincial laws, and thus interpret the laws from this viewpoint. Bagge however added that much of Sjöholm's criticism was directed at aspects of the Germanic tradition that modern scholars have already broken with. Bagge moreover found a number of fundamental problems with Sjöholm's analyses. One of his main complaints was that Sjöholm managed to explain 'everything' through her two main

arguments, and that these arguments therefore do not represent a methodological approach, but a 'conception of reality'. This conception contains some contradictory elements. On the one hand, it presupposes that the lawmakers in medieval Scandinavia copied slavishly from foreign laws. On the other hand, it sees these lawmakers as rational actors, who consistently formulated laws that suited their own interests.⁷

Let us turn to Bagge's criticism of Sjöholm's theory regarding the influence of foreign laws on the Scandinavian legislation. According to Bagge, the comparisons between the laws are presented in such a way that it becomes difficult to understand which similarities Sjöholm actually claims to have found. Sjöholm has also failed to address those similarities which can be explained from similar societal conditions. Nor has she placed any of the regulations in their social context. It should also be mentioned that no reasons are given as to why the lawmakers should have been so dependent on foreign law.⁸ Bagge further found a number of problems connected to the sources on which Sjöholm based her comparative study. Her main source for European legislation is the eleventh-century collection *Lombarda*. This work contains Lombard laws, as well as imperial edicts from the Carolingian period and onwards. According to Sjöholm, this collection is not the direct source of influence in Scandinavia. She has therefore been able to conclude that all the elements in the provincial laws that are in any way similar to *Lombarda* show that either this collection, or one with corresponding contents, was the model for the Scandinavian provincial laws. Everything that does not resemble, or only slightly resembles this collection, is seen to be the result of influence from another application of Roman law. There is no systematic overview of the Swedish laws where those sections that are not similar to Mosaic or Roman law are included. Bagge thus concluded that 'with this method one can prove virtually anything', and that Sjöholm's contribution to the debate of what remains of the Germanic tradition is of 'dubious' value.⁹

Let us now turn to Bagge's criticism of Sjöholm's other main theory, i.e. that the provincial laws are the result of the efforts of the 'official' power, and only represent laws current at the time when the documents were produced. Bagge argued that this theory could be useful, because it may throw some light on political aspects of lawmaking and also provides criteria for dating. But again, he found some deep-seated problems. Sjöholm has assumed that kings who introduced legislation had one overriding aim: to maximise their income from fines. She has failed to address important issues, such as conflicting royal

interests and changes in royal interests over time. In her study, Sjöholm moreover denied that the peasantry had any impact on the development of law. Bagge asked how kings could have failed to take into account at least some of the farmers' wishes. Did kings only promote their interests through brute force?¹⁰ Bagge went on to point out that it has not been established whether there was any state consolidation at the time when the extant Swedish provincial laws were written down. It can therefore be doubted whether an 'official' power legislating in the way suggested by Sjöholm actually existed. Bagge also pointed out that it is extremely difficult for lawmakers to liberate themselves from what has already been established. For these reasons, Bagge believed that Sjöholm's material cannot be used to attack general theories about the connections between the development of a consolidated state and the upholding of law.¹¹

Bagge furthermore pointed out that Sjöholm's study is predominantly based on Swedish law. Some shorter discussions concern Danish and Norwegian laws, while Icelandic legislation does not feature at all. In Bagge's view, Sjöholm is 'neither particularly thorough nor particularly well-informed regarding the other Scandinavian countries..., at least not Norway'. He added that through studying the Icelandic laws some of Sjöholm's conclusions regarding the 'official' power and its significance could have been 'corrected'.¹²

Ole Fenger, the Danish authority on the history of law, has also criticised Sjöholm's studies. Fenger pointed out that her analysis is based on hypotheses regarding the development of royal power that may be appropriate for Sweden after the 1280s, but which cannot be simply adopted for the examination of other, and earlier, Scandinavian laws. Fenger argued that only a small part of the Scandinavian legal material appears to be the result of royal policies of codifying the laws. There are too many elements in the laws that contradict the existence of an overriding policy of this kind. We should moreover not assume that all traditional law would have been excluded from the medieval provincial laws. Older legislation may well have survived in sections that were 'not politically sensitive' to kings or aristocracy. Fenger has also argued that the medieval laws were codified in order to obtain an overview of their contents and to include any alterations that were maintained to have taken place. Fenger concluded that for scholars, who possess a thorough knowledge of the legal system represented by kings and clergy, the provincial laws can serve as sources for the period before the surviving documents were produced.¹³

Stefan Brink has also voiced his criticism of Sjöholm's ideas, particularly by drawing attention to the works of the legal historian Martina Stein-Wilshuis.

Stein-Wilkeshuis has analysed three tenth-century treaties between the *Rūis* and the Greeks described in Nestor's Chronicle. She has concluded that certain practices mentioned in these treaties, such as public announcements of crimes and elaborate oath-takings, have 'direct counterparts' in the early Scandinavian provincial laws. Brink pointed out that if this interpretation is correct, it is possible to trace elements in these laws 'back to as early as c. 900 AD'. He concluded that 'this observation totally opposes the theory formulated especially by Elsa Sjöholm (1988), regarding the age of the provincial laws and the possibility of tracing earlier reminiscences in these lawbooks'.¹⁴

Berta Stjernquist has contributed to the debate by pointing to sections in the Swedish provincial laws that do not fit in with Sjöholm's argument that these laws were formulated by kings and aristocracy. One such example is the inheritance law named *bördsrätten*, which both clergy and aristocracy saw as inhibiting the formation of large estates.¹⁵ Tore Iversen has also argued, after detailed studies of the Norwegian provincial laws, that the material can provide information about the time before the manuscripts were produced. Iversen therefore stated that he wished to 'distance himself' from Sjöholm's view of medieval legislation.¹⁶

In his study of Icelandic law, Peter Foote has identified sections, e.g. in *Grágás*, that appear to be significantly older than the extant manuscripts. Foote has pointed out that, although the source criticism expressed by scholars such as Elsa Sjöholm has some validity, it has resulted in a growing distrust and avoidance of early legal material. Foote remarked that 'we should not be so busy reading between the lines that we fail to tackle the lines themselves'. Scholars must instead make 'sensible use of the laws as sources of information', i.e. by taking the advice of legal historians and philologists for 'sound categorisation' and dating.¹⁷

The review of the recent debate presented here, clearly demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of scholars have argued that the extant provincial laws contain pieces of older legislation. Their efforts to date these laws will now be discussed, with particular emphasis on the ecclesiastical regulations.

The Law of the Gulathing will first be taken into consideration. Chapters I:10, I:15, and I:17 claim to have been introduced by King Olav Haraldsson and Bishop Grímkell at the thing of Moster (i.e. in the 1020s). King Magnus Erlingsson (1161-84) revised the Gulathing Law, presumably in 1163/4. In extant versions of this law, some sections are attributed to 'Olav', some to 'Magnus', and some to both Olav and Magnus. It is important to point out that

several other chapters than those attributed to Olav Haraldsson and Bishop Grímkell are marked ‘Olav’. Most scholars from the time of Konrad Maurer, however, agree that this ‘Olav’ must be Olav Haraldsson.¹⁸ (see figure 5)

Tore Iversen has dated certain sections of the ecclesiastical regulations in the Gulathing Law to the beginning of the twelfth century. He based this argument on the particular use of the noun *eign* that appears in the parts



Figure 5. Manuscript fragment from the Older Law of the Gulathing dated to c. 1180. This is a page from the ecclesiastical regulations. At the bottom of the page, the letters that attribute different sections of the text to Magnus (M.), Olav (OL.), and both (bað.), can be seen.

attributed to Olav alone and in those attributed both Olav and Magnus. On these occasions, *eign* is used for the king’s landholdings, rather than in the later sense of private property. Parallels to the first meaning of *eign* appear in European texts from the early Middle Ages until the twelfth century.¹⁹

Konrad Maurer argued that the Gulathing Law was most likely written down at the beginning of the twelfth century, or possibly at the end of the eleventh century. He stated that the contents of some of the chapters suggest that they were issued in a time when Christianity had only recently been ‘officially’ introduced. To illustrate this, Maurer pointed to regulations regarding divination and other magical practices, and also to chapters which indicate that the number of clerics was small. According to Maurer, these elements could however not be used as firm evidence for dating. He therefore turned to other elements in the laws.²⁰ One such example is the *Útgerðarbálk*,

where a man by the name of Atli is mentioned. Maurer argued that this most likely refers to the same Atli who acted as spokesman for the farmers at the meeting of the Gulathing in 1040. Maurer thus concluded that the law must have been written down some time after the death of Olav Haraldsson in 1030, but before Magnus' revision in the 1160s. Maurer did not however believe that this took place during the reign of Olav Kyrre (1066-93), because the law does not contain any explicit references to this king. He argued that it would have been impossible for the compilers of the 'Olav-text' to refer to Olav Kyrre as 'Olav', so shortly after the death of Olav Haraldsson. He thus concluded that the Gulathing Law was most likely written down at the beginning of the twelfth century. He saw this as part of the power struggle between clerics and secular rulers, where the latter, in order to substantiate their claims for power maintained that their laws went back to the time of Olav. Such a scenario can be implied from the kings' sagas. Magnus Olavsson (Magnus the Good, 1035-47) is reported to have sworn to follow the laws issued by his father. In the later period both King Magnus Erlingsson's father, Erling Skakke, and King Sverrir are said to have referred to Olav's laws in their fight against clerics.²¹

Ebbe Hertzberg concluded that the ecclesiastical regulations were written down during the reign of Olav Kyrre. He based this conclusion on three main arguments.

Firstly, Saint Halvard's Day is included in the list of feast days. Halvard was probably accepted as a saint after c. 1050. Secondly, tithes are not mentioned in the text attributed to Olav. They do however feature in Magnus' revision of the law. According to the kings' sagas, tithes were introduced in Norway by King Sigurðr Jórsalafari after his return from a crusade in 1111. Thirdly, the Olav-text presumes the existence of a bishop with a fixed seat. This is unlikely to have existed before the reign of Olav Kyrre.²²

Knut Robberstad argued that the first ecclesiastical regulations were written down before the second half of the eleventh century. He based this conclusion on a number of arguments. He began by referring to the tradition among the saga writers discussed by Maurer, but drew attention to the strong influences from Anglo-Saxon England and argued that the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition was transmitted to Norway. He pointed out that the first Christian Anglo-Saxon king, Aethelberht of Kent, introduced Christian legislation only a few years after his baptism. Robberstad added that some kind of episcopal organisation presumably existed before the time of Olav Kyrre, and that the references in the Gulathing Law to fixed episcopal sees may therefore date to the time before his reign.²³

Magnus Rindal observed that since the provincial laws contain regulations from different periods, the arguments expressed by scholars such as Hertzberg only provide information about the age of the individual regulations, and do not tell us anything about the time when the laws were first written down. In order to tackle this question, he instead turned to a number of sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.²⁴ According to the monk Theodoricus, who wrote the history of the Norwegian kings in c. 1180, Olav ordered laws to be written down in the vernacular. Theodoricus also stated that these laws were still honoured by the population. In Archbishop Eystein's Latin version of the legend of St. Olav (*Passio Olavi*), it is stated that Olav Haraldsson proclaimed laws and had these written down. In the saga of Hákon Hákonsson (from c. 1265) we are told of a thing meeting at Frosta where Gunnar Grjónbak referred to the laws of Olav Haraldsson, and stated that Olav had made these the law in all of Norway. Rindal argued that so far, no scholars had provided strong enough arguments to refute the twelfth- and thirteenth-century tradition that laws were committed to writing in the time of Olav Haraldsson. He was therefore of the opinion that the Gulathing Law may originally have been written down in the first half of the eleventh century, possibly already during the reign of Olav Haraldsson.²⁵ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson has expressed the same view of the saga tradition as Rindal, and has thus also suggested that the ecclesiastical regulations were written down in the time of Olav Haraldsson.²⁶

Knut Helle used Absalon Taranger as a starting point for much of his work. Both Helle and Taranger argued that the first ecclesiastical regulations were introduced by Olav Haraldsson. They however believed that these laws were not written down, but instead orally transmitted. This is indicated by various pieces of evidence. One such example is the nature of the language, which seems to bear traces of the spoken word. Chapter 314 moreover stated that Atli 'announced' these laws to the people of the Gulathing. Helle added that if the ecclesiastical regulations had been written down when they were originally introduced, greater similarities in wording between these regulations in the four provincial laws should be expected. Helle and Taranger instead agreed that the Gulathing Law was first written down during the time of Olav Kyrre. Helle saw the references to fixed episcopal seats as one of the most convincing arguments for this. He argued that the law may of course have been written down at a later point in time, but hardly after 1117-18, i.e. when the first Icelandic laws were committed to writing. The most plausible time, according

to Helle, was the reign of the ‘church friendly’ Olav Kyrre, rather than those of his ‘warlike’ successors (1093-).²⁷

It should be noted that Helle stated that the absence of tithe regulations in the text attributed to Olav cannot be used to date these chapters to the time before 1111, as suggested by Hertzberg. Helle pointed out that the sagas only state that Sigurðr Jórsalafari promoted the payment of tithes. According to an episcopal list, tithes were introduced by Bishop Simon of Nidaros, a contemporary of Sigurðr. Helle thus argued that tithes were gradually introduced, possibly starting from the area around Nidaros. In the territory of the Gulathing, tithes are first mentioned in Magnus’ revision of the law. Helle therefore stated that on the basis of absence of tithe regulations, the Olav-text can only be dated to the time before the 1160s.²⁸

Taranger and Helle based their work on two comparative studies. The first study involved a comparison between the ecclesiastical regulations of the Gulathing Law with those in the Law of the Borgarthing. Helle’s aim was to identify which regulations were likely to have been among those included in the oldest version of the Gulathing Law. The Borgarthing Law was chosen as the starting point, because it contains fewer later additions than the laws of the Frostathing and the Eidsivating. Helle further stated that the Borgarthing Law is ‘as strict’ as the Gulathing Law. Through their comparisons, Taranger and Helle identified a number of regulations in the laws of the Gulathing and the Borgarthing which must have been among those introduced by Olav Haraldsson. Their finds included regulations concerning baptism, churchyard burial, marriage, impure foods, building of churches, maintenance of priests, prohibitions against non-Christian practices, as well as regulations requiring the observance of Sundays, feast days, and seasonal fasts. It should be added that Taranger, who unlike Helle was concerned with all the provincial laws, argued that these regulations are likely to have been included in all four of the laws.²⁹

Their second comparative study focused on Norwegian and Anglo-Saxon legislation. Both Taranger and Helle demonstrated that the Norwegian provincial laws are in many ways similar to Anglo-Saxon laws, particularly those of the tenth and eleventh centuries. They thus argued that Bishop Grímkell had used English legislation as a starting point for the ecclesiastical regulations introduced at Møster. A brief overview of the similarities between Norwegian and Anglo-Saxon legislation identified by these scholars will here be presented. Their first observation concerned the structure of the laws. In

the Norwegian provincial laws, the ecclesiastical regulations are contained in separate sections, placed at the very beginning of the law books. This division is found in English legislation after the time of Athelstan (925-39), but very rarely features in Germanic laws. Taranger and Helle moreover identified a number of parallels between individual regulations. According to the laws of King Edgar (959-75), Sundays began at noon on Saturday and lasted until dawn on Monday. Laws to the same effect are found in the Gulathing Law. The list of feast days included in the laws of Ethelred (978-1016) may have served as a pattern for the list of feast days in the Gulathing Law. Taranger and Helle also identified similarities in the laws regarding the fast leading up to Easter. Moreover, both English and Norwegian law required priests to inform their parishioners about the approaching fast and feast days. It also seems clear that the particular regulations regarding the forbidden degrees of marriage found in the laws of Ethelred were included in the Law of the Gulathing. Finally it should be noted that several Anglo-Saxon laws prescribed outlawry as punishment for the performance of magic. This regulation is mirrored in chapter 28 of the Gulathing Law.³⁰

The ecclesiastical regulations in the Law of the Borgarthing will now be considered.

Rudolf Meissner stated that it was not possible to determine when this law was first written down. He did however argue that the first ecclesiastical regulations were oral laws introduced by Olav Haraldsson, and that some of these can be found in the extant Borgarthing law. That the Borgarthing Law was originally orally transmitted is suggested in particular by the words that appear at the end of two sections: 'Now our Christian law is told, as we hold it in our memory'. Meissner moreover pointed out that the law clearly contains regulations that derive from different times. He identified sections that he saw as 'particularly old', but did not always attempt to date these. The most important of his arguments will here be discussed.³¹

Meissner stated that the law regarding the repair of churches reminded him of the harsh methods of Olav Haraldsson. This regulation stated that if farmers neglected to repair their church, the king had the right to intervene. He could take the farmers' property and cattle, but was not allowed to kill anyone or to burn their houses down. Meissner also pointed out that there are two chapters attributed to Bersi, who was a lawman in the time of Olav Kyrre. He argued that these sections were presumably written down after Bersi's lifetime. The Borgarthing Law moreover mentions the payment of fees to priests

for specific services, although regulations regarding tithes are also included. Meissner saw the obligation to pay for clerical services as a relic of older laws. In his view, they must pre-date the reign of Sigurðr Jórsalafari (1122-1130). Meissner also pointed out that the Borgarthing Law does not mention head-tithe, which presumably was introduced by Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear in 1152. This further suggests that this law derives from the time before the mid-twelfth century. Some examples of elements that Meissner argued were ‘old’, but which he did not attempt to date, must also be mentioned. The first is the rule that the bishop should only receive three marks from the property of those who were outlawed for breaking the ecclesiastical laws. The remainder of the property should go to the king. The second example is the regulation that gave the farmers, not the bishops, the right to select priests.³²

Hertzberg argued that the Borgarthing Law was written down during the reign of Olav Kyrre. He based this conclusion on similar arguments as Meissner, i.e. the laws attributed to Bersi and the payment of fees to priests. Hertzberg added that the law seems to assume the existence of fixed episcopal seats.³³ Didrik Arup Seip, who referred to most of these elements, suggested that the first written Borgarthing Law appeared in the eleventh century.³⁴

The law of the Eidsivathing will now be discussed. Rudolf Meissner argued that also this law was derived from older legislation. He based this conclusion on similar grounds as he used for the Borgarthing law, i.e. the mention of fees to priests and the old-fashioned division of the property of outlaws. Meissner added that the feast day of St. Magnus of Orkney, who was canonised in 1135, is a late addition, since it is positioned ‘outside’ the row of feast days in the manuscript.³⁵ Hertzberg argued, as he did for the provincial laws discussed above, that the law of the Eidsivathing was written down during the time of Olav Kyrre. Also he was swayed by the obligation to pay fees for various clerical services.³⁶

Finally, the Law of the Frostathing will be taken into consideration. The dating of the ecclesiastical regulations in this law causes some particular problems. The extant version of the Frostathing Law contains parts of a revision of an earlier law. This revision was carried out by Archbishop Eystein, sometime between 1164 and 1180, in order to incorporate canon law into the existing legislation. Eystein’s work was named *Gullfjǫður*. The version which he revised was called *Grágás*.³⁷

Jan Ragnar Hagland and Jørn Sandnes have argued that most of the ecclesiastical regulations in the Law of the Frostathing derive from Bishop

Eystein's *Gullfjǫður*. They referred to chapter II:26, which cites an indulgence from Pope Alexander III (1159–81). Two other chapters are ascribed to Archbishop Jon Birgersson (1152–57). They added however that the extant law was a revision containing some additions from later times, probably from the 1240s.³⁸

Hagland and Sandnes argued that *Grágás*, the old Frostathing Law, may have been written down during the reign of the reign of Magnus Olavsson, but more likely under Olav Kyrre. This conclusion was based on a number of sources. According to King Sverrir's Saga, which dates from the early thirteenth century, Magnus Olavsson ordered that this law should be written down. We are also told that King Sverrir referred to *Grágás* in his struggle against Archbishop Eirik around 1190. Eirik, on the other hand, is reported to have followed the laws contained in *Gullfjǫður*. According to Snorri Sturluson, the law-book 'which is still in Trondheim' had been written down by the order of Magnus Olavsson. Snorri had visited Nidaros in 1219–20, and his choice of words suggests that he himself had seen this book. Hagland and Sandnes argued that it might have been this book that Gunnar Grjónbak referred to as 'the law-book of King Olav the Holy' at the meeting of the Frostathing in 1223. They also pointed to the statement in *Fagrskinna* (from c. 1230), that Erling Skakke 'obeyed the laws of the holy King Olav' and the laws of the people of Trøndelag. Hagland and Sandnes stressed that these sources are not independent and should thus be treated with caution. They did however argue that these sources suggest that an older Frostathing Law (*Grágás*), which was held to contain old and 'right' law, existed at the latest in the twelfth century. This law presumably existed even before 1100, as it is otherwise improbable that it could have been associated with Magnus Olavsson or Olav Haraldsson. Hagland and Sandnes did not however believe that extensive writing in the Norwegian language took place before Olav Kyrre's time. It may therefore have been during his reign that *Grágás* was committed to writing.³⁹

Trygve Knudsen did not propose a date for the writing down of the Frostathing Law. He did however point to elements that derive from the twelfth century. Apart from the chapter dated to the pontificate of Alexander III, Knudsen drew attention to the division of the law into sixteen chapters. The *kristinn rétttr* itself is divided into two parts. Such a division is not found in any other provincial law. It may have been derived from Archbishop Eystein's law, as such divisions are found in twelfth-century collections of canon law.⁴⁰

The nature of the Norwegian things and the issuing of laws need to be briefly discussed. In the Viking Age and the early Middle Ages, law seems to have been adopted at so-called 'law-things' (*lögthing*). A law-thing was a meeting attended by selected representatives from the four legal provinces in the kingdom, i.e. those of the Gulathing, Frostathing, Eidsivathing, and Borgarthing. These meetings seem to have been dominated by the most powerful families. The decisions taken by these representational things were then referred to the local things, where the wider population could participate. At very important thing meetings, the kings also exercised control by sending their own representatives. It could thus be presumed that the ecclesiastical regulations were introduced through the collaboration of royal power and the influential layers of society. Scholars have argued that Olav Haraldsson himself attended the thing at Moster, together with representatives from the whole kingdom. The ecclesiastical regulations introduced there were then presumably referred to, and adopted by the 'law-things'.⁴¹

The enforcement of the Norwegian laws will be discussed in detail in chapter 7. Here only a few points will be mentioned. Sverre Bagge has argued that in legal cases between powerful men, the laws were not rigidly applied. It instead appears that the person with the most powerful backing was the most likely to win the case. Bagge however added that, for the ordinary peasants, the laws are likely to have been less flexible. Cases involving these people appear to have followed the rules of the extant provincial laws 'more directly'.⁴² It should also be pointed out that many of the ecclesiastical regulations in all the provincial laws seem to be reflections of legal proceedings held at the things. This suggests that the laws were discussed and put to use by the things.

This review has demonstrated that the majority of scholars argue that the Norwegian provincial laws consist of regulations from various periods. Suggestions as to when the first provincial laws were written down vary between the 1020s and the beginning of the twelfth century. Most scholars however suggest the reign of Olav Kyrre as the most likely time. It has also been demonstrated that some scholars have suggested that the first ecclesiastical regulations were oral laws and that at least some of these made their way into the written provincial laws. For the purposes of this thesis it is not necessary to establish whether the first laws were oral or written. Nor do we need to ascertain at what point in time the first written laws were produced. What is essential, however, is to try to establish which regulations of the Norwegian laws were introduced during stage 2 of the conversion.

In chapters 5, 6, and 7, this will be attempted by comparative studies with legislation from other geographical areas and also by making use of the scholarship presented above. It will be shown that by comparing the early Christian laws from all the geographical areas included in this thesis, five different types of regulation can be identified. The first type concerns 'depaganisation', i.e. prohibitions against practices that were seen or named to be 'pagan'. In Anglo-Saxon England, the only regulations of this type forbade sacrifices to objects connected with the pre-Christian religious custom. 'Pagan' practices were prohibited also in Saxony, together with soothsaying, the burning of witches, and the performance of cremations.⁴³ The second type are prohibitions issued to protect Christianity and its representatives. King Aethelberht of Kent imposed punishments for stealing from members of the clergy. Similar regulations were imposed by Charlemagne. He also punished anyone who plotted 'with pagans against Christians'.⁴⁴ A third kind of legislation relates to church buildings. In the First Saxon Capitulary it was stated that the churches should be honoured and that asylum should be granted in church.⁴⁵ The fourth type concerns economic aspects. Charlemagne's First Saxon Capitulary required all members of the population to pay tithe. The population was moreover required to provide their churches with land and servants.⁴⁶ The fifth kind of legislation decreed the observance of certain Christian practices. The main focus was placed on five particular practices, i.e. seasonal fasting, the observance of Sundays and feast days, Christian marriage laws, and regulations regarding baptism and burial.

Finally, it must be pointed out that a number of scholars have convincingly argued that things and legislation existed in Scandinavia long before the Viking Age.⁴⁷ The introduction of law via thing meetings thus seems to have been a well-established tradition in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is also important to note that the early Christian kings were accompanied by clergymen, with experience of Christian legislation. Bearing these issues in mind, it would be rather more surprising if the first Christian kings did not introduce any ecclesiastical legislation than if they did so.

Chapter 4

Pre-Christian Religious Custom and Early Christianity in Scandinavia

4.1. The Nature of Pre-Christian Religious Custom

The aim of this section is to investigate the nature of pre-Christian religious custom. In relation to this, an attempt will be made to establish whether cultic objects were related to the veneration of gods, or whether they were connected to other supernatural beings. This question has arisen from the tendency among modern scholars to automatically assume that such objects represented pre-Christian gods described in the mythology.⁴⁸ Another issue that will be investigated is what the 'idols' referred to by medieval writers actually constituted. This is an aspect that hitherto has been largely ignored by scholars. Finally, the issue of change and continuity from pre-Christian to Christian times will be briefly considered.

Most of the accounts of Norse mythology were written down during the thirteenth century, some few hundred years after the introduction of Christianity. The *Edda* of Snorri Sturluson gives the most detailed information. In this work, Snorri described the gods and goddesses as the strongest and most important beings of the pre-Christian religious custom. Examples of such divinities are Oðinn, Þórr, Týr, Freyr, and Freyja.⁴⁹ The Sun, personified as Sol, and Bil (a being who followed the moon), were included among the goddesses. Other mythological beings were assigned lesser parts. The eddaic poetry of the tenth to the thirteenth centuries also provides some information. As was stated above, these verses have been seen to better reflect pre-Christian society than the other Norse sources. All these sources are however very literary and show signs of influence from Christianity. They can therefore not be relied upon to give us an accurate picture of the nature and structure of pre-Christian cultic ideas and rituals. Scholars have moreover pointed out that Snorri Sturluson's most important sources derive from the area of Lade (near

Trondheim) around the end of the eleventh century. It has therefore been suggested that Snorri's mythology may only be representative of the conceptions of the people in that particular area, at that particular time.⁵⁰

Some evidence of the mythological gods is provided by theophoric place-names. It must however be emphasised that for many of the mythological deities, the only evidence that these were venerated by the early Scandinavians comes from the literary sources. Their place in the pre-Christian cult can therefore not be fully substantiated, and it is possible that some of these are pure creations of the scalds.⁵¹ It must moreover be pointed out that scholars have argued that the picture of the mythological gods that emerges from place-names does not always fit into that provided by the Norse mythology.⁵² Margaret Clunies Ross warned of the danger of connecting ritual and myth, and argued that 'Because we know so little of the ritual life of the early Scandinavian people before they were converted to Christianity, our views on the relationship between ritual and myth must remain largely speculative'. Clunies Ross added that scholars of religion in non-western societies have demonstrated that these two elements are not always closely interrelated. Such scholars even found a number of cases where ritual and myth had no close correspondence at all.⁵³

In an attempt to retrieve more reliable information about the cultic ideas and rites of the pre-Christian population in Scandinavia, this chapter makes use of secular and ecclesiastical legislation. This includes material from Scandinavia, Anglo-Saxon England, and the Frankish Empire. As will be demonstrated below, many of these laws appear to have been based on information about the religious practices of the population. The 'first type' of Christian legislation, i.e. prohibitions against 'pagan' practices, will thus be used as indicators of what pre-Christian cultic ideas and practices were still common among the population. Practices that were repeatedly legislated against can be seen as those that were difficult to erase and those that rulers and churchmen perceived as the most threatening. The stated punishments can also indicate how serious the various offences were regarded to be. Comparisons will moreover be made to the pre-Christian religious custom of the Sámi peoples. The Sámi were hunters and nomads in the northern parts of Scandinavia and Finland. They were formerly called *Laps* and have given name to the province of Lapland. The systematic conversion of the Sámi did not begin until the seventeenth century. During this time, travelling missionaries recorded their experiences of Sámi ritual practices.⁵⁴ These accounts, together

with modern archaeological and historical investigations, have provided us with substantial knowledge of the Sámi pre-Christian religious custom.

Recent historians of religion have regarded Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom as constituted by two main strands. One is the myths and cults connected to individual and personal deities who were seen as 'ruling and reigning'. The other strand consists of more 'animistic' cults connected to a wide variety of beings, such as *norns* (goddesses of fate), *vættir*⁵⁵, trolls, *alfar*, giants, and dwarves. Many of these beings were connected to home and nature and played important roles in people's everyday lives and for their general survival.⁵⁶ During the first half of the twentieth century scholars who had based their ideas on the Icelandic sources argued that the cult connected to the gods was the most important component of pre-Christian religious custom. This strand was named 'higher religion', while the cult connected to other beings was termed 'lower religion'. Today these terms are infrequently used, and scholars now mostly avoid weighting the two strands.⁵⁷ One of the exceptions is Gro Steinsland who argued that the giants were 'as necessary' as the gods in the eyes of the pre-Christians.⁵⁸ Stefan Brink has moreover stated that the pre-Christians in Scandinavia had a 'pantheon' of spirits and 'lower' deities.⁵⁹

Recent scholars have moreover argued that the pre-Christian cult was practised at three levels in society; at local level, at regional level, and at supra-regional level. The cults at local level were those held within the household. Regional cultic gatherings presumably took place at magnate farms, while the supra-regional cultic rites were large 'central' sacrifices for whole territories. The cults of the gods have been seen to be linked to the upper layers in society. It has thus been argued that the sacrificial feasts held in honour of the gods were only for the most important members of a territory.⁶⁰ Within the family, other beings may therefore have been the focus of the cult.

The evidence used in this chapter however indicates that the 'animistic' strand should be even further emphasised. It will be argued that this formed the greater and indeed the most significant part of the pre-Christian religious custom. This means that the role and significance of the gods is even further reduced.

This chapter will also take the concept of magic into consideration.⁶¹ According to Bertil Nilsson, magical rites can 'hardly be regarded as cult practices in the strict sense'.⁶² The difference between religion and magic is however subtle, and the two can be very difficult to separate. The main difference lies in psychological attitude. Religion is signified by reverence of the divine

powers, to whom the believers turn in submissive prayer. Within the sphere of magic, humans have the ability to control supernatural powers through incantations and other such practices.⁶³ During the Middle Ages, the distinction between religion and magic was not always made clear. The reasons for this could be various and will not be discussed in detail. It will suffice to point out that magic also features within Christianity. Aron J. Gurevich argued that ‘the most attractive aspect of Christianity for the ordinary believer has been its ceremonial, very much permeated by magic’.⁶⁴ It has moreover been argued that many pre-Christian magical practices were ‘Christianized’ and integrated into the medieval liturgy. The magical practices that the medieval clergy fought to abolish have been seen as those that had not been incorporated into the Christian rituals.⁶⁵

The lack of a distinction between religion and magic is demonstrated by medieval writers’ and legislators’ habit of including magical practices in their definitions of ‘paganism’ or ‘idolatry’. This can be seen, for example, in the Penitential of Theodore, in Regino of Prüm’s collection of decretals and in the Norwegian the Law of the Eidsivathing.⁶⁶ Another example is provided by Chapter 5 in the Laws of Knut. The English title of this chapter is ‘of paganism’ (*Be haedenskiþe*), while the Latin translates as ‘of the abolition of the superstitions of the people’ (*De gentiliū superstitionibus abolendis*).⁶⁷ There is no evidence to tell us whether the people of the Viking Age consciously distinguished between religion and magic. The large amounts of early legislation against magical practices however suggest that magic had a very important role in pre-Christian times. As was stated in Chapter 1, the term pre-Christian religious custom has therefore been adopted. This term incorporates all kinds of cultic ideas and practices, including magic. Magic can thus be seen as the third strand of pre-Christian religious custom.⁶⁸ This means that, without attempting to weight the individual elements, the pre-Christian gods constituted only one of the three strands of the religious custom.

One of the earliest sources from Anglo-Saxon England that contains provisions against pre-Christian practices is the ‘Penitential of Theodore’, which probably dates from the late seventh century.⁶⁹ The chapter named ‘of the worship of idols’ has been seen as ‘a genuine picture of what particular sins of idolatry the contemporary ecclesiastics thought were being perpetrated’.⁷⁰ The first provision of this chapter imposed one to ten years’ penance for those who sacrificed to demons (*qui immolant demonibus*). According to Audrey Meaney, this refers to sacrifices to pagan gods, since ‘the idea that they [the pagan gods]

were demons was commonplace in early Christian thought'. Herbert Achterberg has however clearly demonstrated that terms such as *diabolus*, *deamon*, and *unholde* were not only used for pre-Christian gods, but also for many other beings connected to the cult. He concluded that 'all objects of belief (*Glaubens-gestalten*) of pre-Christian times, those of the pagan Germans, as well as those of the pagan Romans are evil demons, servants, and subordinates... of Satan himself'.⁷¹ Theodore's first provision must thus be interpreted as a prohibition against sacrifices to all beings connected to non-Christian cults, and not exclusively against sacrifices to gods. Provision 5 of the same chapter regulated the eating of sacrificed food. In the Latin this is expressed by: *Qui cibum immolatum commederit*. This was translated by John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer as 'one who eats food that has been sacrificed'. According to Meaney, the Latin should be interpreted as 'whoever eats food that has been offered [to pagan gods]'. This is despite the fact that the verb *immolo* plainly means to offer or present.⁷² It can therefore not be concluded that all food offerings were made to gods. In the light of the argument above, Meaney's interpretation of this provision must be widened to include all beings with their roots in the pre-Christian religious custom.

The Laws of King Wihtrud of Kent, issued c. 695, contained two regulations against sacrificing 'to devils' (*deoflum*). 'Pagan' practices were also prohibited in the Laws of Edward and Guthrum and those of Ethelred, but without giving any detailed specifications. The Laws of Knut (issued 1020-23) prohibited the veneration of the sun and the moon, fire or rivers, wells, stones or trees, and also outlawed the 'veneration of pagan gods' (*weorþige hædene godas*).⁷³ The extant legislation from Anglo-Saxon England must be interpreted as prohibitions against all beings that were connected to the pre-Christian religious custom. Indeed, it is only in the Laws of Knut that the veneration of gods was directly referred to. This piece of legislation may have been aimed at the Scandinavians who were in England at this time. Their presence may also have caused a resurgence of the cult of the old gods among the local Anglo-Saxon population.⁷⁴ It is noteworthy that the veneration of natural features, such as trees and wells, was outlawed on several occasions in the Anglo-Saxon laws. It is also interesting that magic is legislated against throughout the period covered by this section. What constituted 'Christian' magic (i.e. legitimate) and 'unchristian' magic (i.e. illegitimate) will however have varied over time.

Theodore's penitential contains provisions against magical practices, such as diabolical incantations, divinations, and auguries. Penances vary between

forty days and five years, which can be compared to the one to ten years' penance for sacrificing to demons. This suggests that magic was practised and that it was seen as a rather serious offence. This is further supported by the reports of the papal legates from 786 and Alcuin's letter of c. 793-804. In these sources, the complaints that were made about 'paganism' in England refer to magical, superstitious, and even just local practices. Examples of such complaints include the wearing of amulets, the casting of lots, the mutilation of horses, and tattooing. No mention was made of veneration of either gods or idols. The practice of magic was also made illegal in the Laws of Knut.⁷⁵

There is very little evidence that the eddaic gods were venerated in Anglo-Saxon England. One piece of evidence is provided by the names of the days of the week, which derive from Tiw, Thunor, Woden, and Frig/Freo. Another indication that these gods were venerated is that the royal genealogical lists trace descent back to Woden. Some of these lists also include Baeldaeg and Seaxnet (Tiw).⁷⁶ Place-names, such as *Wodneslave* (Bedfordshire), i.e. Woden's mound (*hlaw*), *Thunreslau*, (Essex), i.e. Thunor's mound, and *Thunresfeld* (Wiltshire) could be seen as further evidence.⁷⁷ It must however be pointed out that such place-names are very difficult to date. It is therefore hard to establish if they originate from pre-Christian times, or if they are later creations.

The evidence of pre-Christian idols in Anglo-Saxon England will now be discussed. Bede referred to idols on a few occasions in his Ecclesiastical History. He stated that King Eorcenberht of Kent issued a law requiring that all idols (*idola*) should be destroyed, and that parts of the East Saxons restored their old temples and again began 'to worship images' after an outburst of plague. Bede also described how the Christian King Oswiu taught the East Saxons that 'objects made by the hands of men could not be gods. Neither wood nor stone were materials from which gods could be created'. Finally, Bede stated that when Coifi, the 'pagan high priest' at the Court of King Edwin had accepted baptism, he destroyed the structures at Goodmanham. None of these descriptions, however, provide any details of the nature of the idols. Bede may never have seen a cult site connected to pre-Christian religious custom, and may have based his ideas of these from descriptions in literary sources.⁷⁸ In order to highlight the vague character of Bede's description of idols, his account of Goodmanham will here be quoted in full.

When King Edwin had accepted Christianity, he asked who should first profane the altars and the shrines of the idols together with their precincts, Coifi answered "I will; for through the wisdom the true God has given me no

one can more suitably destroy those things which I once foolishly worshipped, and so set an example to all". And at once, casting aside his vain superstitions, he asked the king to provide him with arms and a stallion; and mounting it he set out to destroy the idols. Now, a high priest of their religion was not allowed to carry arms or to ride except on a mare. So, girded with a sword, he took a spear in his hand and mounting the king's stallion he set off to where the idols were. The common people who saw him thought he was mad. But as soon as he approached the shrine, without any hesitation he profaned it by casting the spear which he held into it; and greatly rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he ordered his companions to destroy and set fire to the shrine and all the enclosures. The place where the idols once stood is still shown, not far from York, to the east, over the river Derwent. Today it is called Goodmanham, the place where the high priest, through the inspiration of the true God, profaned and destroyed the altars which he himself had consecrated. [my underlining]⁷⁹

The only firm conclusion that can be drawn from this account is that Bede seems to have had an idea that Goodmanham consisted of altars (*aras*), enclosures (*septa*), shrines (*fana idolorum*), and idols (*idola*).⁸⁰ It cannot be used to establish what Bede's 'idols' consisted of, nor what they represented to pre-Christians. The complexity of the problem of establishing what constituted 'idols' can be further highlighted by Aldhelm's letter to Heathfrith (written in the 680s). In this letter Aldhelm stated that 'crude pillars' (*ermula cruda*) were subject to veneration. This expression has been given numerous interpretations, such as 'Roman altars or other carvings', 'a re-used neolithic menhir', or 'some kind of totem-pole'. It has also been argued that in pre-Christian times, pillars with carved images of animals' heads or 'some natural feature, such as a rock' shaped like the head of an animal, were placed at sacrificial sites. Aldhelm's *ermula cruda* and Bede's idols at Goodmanham have been seen as pillars decorated with carved heads of animals. It was suggested that this custom developed from a pre-Christian tradition of placing heads of sacrificial victims on wooden posts.⁸¹

The wooden posts at Yeavinger, which appear to have had ritual functions must also be discussed here. During the early phase at this site, the central monolith of a pre-historic stone-circle was removed and replaced by a series of pillars 'that serve for the attachment of radial series of inhumation graves'. When the presumed cult building (D2) was erected, burials were focused on its external enclosure, which housed free-standing posts. Another pillar was erected at one of the corners of the building, and inside there were also three free-standing pillars. Finally, a pillar was raised as focal point for the timber

'theatre' (building E). Brian Hope-Taylor believed that these pillars were decorated by carvings of some kind.⁸²

The evidence from the Frankish Empire will now be discussed. During the reigns of Pepin the Short and Charlemagne the regular episcopal visitations of the dioceses were extended into 'synodal courts' (*Sendgerichte*). These visiting courts were constituted by bishops and priests, and were one of the first steps towards the Inquisition of the later Middle Ages. The overall aim was to investigate the religious practices of the population, and to abolish those that were regarded as 'pagan' or 'superstitious'. The penalties imposed by these courts were often very harsh. Corporal punishments, such as flogging and even scalping, were practised.⁸³

After the time of Pepin and Charlemagne, documents for the use of the *Sendgerichte* began to be collected. One such work was put together by Regino of Prüm (d. 915) in the beginning of the tenth century. The collection had been requested by the Archbishop of Trier, and this work has thus particular relevance for the eastern parts of the Frankish Empire. The collection has become well known for its exhaustive epitome, and immediately became one of the standard works of ecclesiastical law. Regino also formulated 89 questions for the investigators (*Sendbote*) based on his synthesis of the material. The investigators were presumably free to choose which questions to ask the laity during their visitations. As far as we know, no records were kept of the investigations. There is thus no information about which questions were most frequently asked or what the responses were. Regino's work has nevertheless been seen as one of the best ways to show us the state of 'the Church' and the life of the people of the mid to late Carolingian period.⁸⁴ Gurevich has moreover argued that the authors of penitentials knew 'quite well the real conditions in the parishes and formulated their questions according to these'. He therefore concluded that 'we may take their word that much of what they were concerned about actually existed'.⁸⁵

There is, to my knowledge, only one scholar who has made any use of Regino's collection in order to study the cultic ideas of the population. In 1928, Wilhelm Boudriout employed some of Regino's source material in his investigation into Germanic pre-Christian religious custom. Boudriout did however not study the contents of Regino's questions. Instead, he made more use of the decretal collection and questions of Burchard of Worms (d.1025). Burchard greatly relied on Regino's work for his own collection, and many scholars of later periods continued to use Regino's work.⁸⁶ Book XIX of his

Decretum, often referred to as the Corrector, became a popular reference work for confessors. It was thus often copied separately from the rest of Burchard's work.⁸⁷ In this chapter, use will be made of both Regino's questions and Burchard's Corrector. The aim is to study the nature of pre-Christian religious custom, and also to identify what parts of this custom were still present among the population in Christian times.

There is an interesting connection between Regino of Prüm and Anglo-Saxon England. At the end of his list of questions, Regino recommended the investigators to use either the Penitential of Theodore or that of Bede, 'so that according to what is there written he may either question the confessant or when he has confessed lay upon him the measure of penance'.⁸⁸

As mentioned above, no records from the synodal courts have survived. There is however indirect evidence that these courts tried to achieve their aims, and that they imposed punishments on members of the laity.⁸⁹ In two Frankish capitularies from the 850s it was stated that the people who, despite threats of excommunication, did not attend the meetings of the synodal courts, should be forced to do so by royal officials. Moreover, the correspondence of Pope Nicholas I (858-67) demonstrates that the pope received many pleas for advice from bishops regarding suitable penalties for offenders tried by the synodal courts. In his letters, the pope referred to the offenders by name. It therefore seems apparent that the bishops' questions related to actual trials, rather than theoretical discussions. Presumably, only the most problematic cases were brought to the attention of the papacy, and it thus seems likely that other cases than those mentioned in papal letters were tried by the synodal courts.⁹⁰ It should be pointed out that names of offenders brought before synodal courts also appear in proceedings from ninth-century synods.⁹¹ Furthermore, Bishop Benno II of Osnabrück (1066-86) is reported to have imposed penances on offenders at synodal court meetings. The offences mentioned include adultery, perjury, blasphemy, and neglecting the Christian feast days.⁹²

Wilfried Hartmann stated that the number of extant manuscripts of Regino's and Burchard's collections strongly suggests that these works were utilised. Eleven copies of Regino's work have survived until today, all of which date from the tenth or eleventh centuries. Twelve of the approximately eighty extant manuscripts of Burchard's *Decretum* date from the time before 1050. Thus, taking all the evidence into consideration, Hartmann concluded that at least in the eastern parts of the Frankish empire, and at least under capable bishops, the synodal courts actually functioned. He moreover argued that the medieval

parishes were so small that the rural clergy knew his penitents personally. It is therefore possible that they could oversee that imposed penances were actually performed.⁹³

The regulations in the works of Regino and Burchard will now be discussed. In a chapter named ‘of sorcerers and diviners’, Regino included four questions that aimed to investigate practices that were regarded as ‘pagan’.⁹⁴ These questions were mostly concerned with magic and superstition. The first question inquired whether there were any sorcerers, prophets, or diviners. Another aimed to establish whether shepherds, cattle drivers, or hunters used diabolical incantations in order to liberate their animals from pestilence or destruction, or to harm those belonging to someone else. There is also a question that inquired whether there were any women who claimed they had ‘on certain nights, ridden on animals together with demons who had taken the guise of women’.⁹⁵ Regino only formulated one question that related to practices of a more religious kind. The investigators were to inquire whether there was anyone who venerated trees, springs, stones, or altars, and whether anyone brought offerings to such places. It should also be established whether anyone believed in the existence of a supernatural being (*numen*) who could bring down good or evil in any such places.⁹⁶ It is interesting that Regino chose to use *numen* in particular. This word was widely used for divinity, spirits of beloved people, oracles, prophecies, and divinations.⁹⁷ Moreover, in the Ancient Roman religion, a supernatural power, named *numen* or *genius loci*, was believed to be present in particular places.⁹⁸ Sources of a more literary nature often used *dei* to describe the powers that were venerated by ‘pagans’. Some examples include Willibald’s *Life of Boniface*, Alcuin’s *Life of Willibrord*, Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, and the *Gesta* of Adam of Bremen.⁹⁹ It is highly unlikely that these writers were as well informed about pre-Christian religious custom as Regino must have been. His choice of the word *numen* was thus most likely deliberate, and based on his thorough knowledge of ‘anti-pagan’ legislation. It must be noted that also Burchard avoided referring to gods in his questions and chose to focus on superstitious ideas. It is also worthy of note that Gregory I, in his letter to Mellitus, referred to the powers venerated by the non-Christian Anglo-Saxons as ‘devils’ and ‘the devil’.¹⁰⁰ These pieces of evidence strongly suggest that pre-Christian religious custom consisted of cults connected to a variety of beings, of which the gods may not have been the most significant.

Boudriout found evidence to suggest that beings of various kinds, such as ‘sirens of the woods’, spirits, werewolves, witches, and goddesses of fate formed

the larger part of Germanic pre-Christian religious custom. He only found five pieces of evidence of cults connected to the Germanic mythological gods.¹⁰¹ The Old Saxon baptismal formula required converts to denounce *Tunaer*, *Woden*, and *Saxnote*,¹⁰² as well as other *unholden* (i.e. divinities or other beings that were regarded as non-Christian).¹⁰³ There are also four references to Mercury and Jupiter that Boudriout found noteworthy. Provisions 8 and 20 of the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* outlawed the cults of Mercury and Jupiter. According to *Interpretatio Romana*, these gods represented *Woden* and *Tunaer*. In one of the pseudo-Bonifacian sermons, the veneration of the same two gods was condemned as sacrilegious. Finally, in a letter to Boniface, Pope Gregory III spoke of a Christian priest who had sacrificed to Jupiter/ *Tunaer*. It should be noted that many other practices were condemned both in the *Indiculus superstitionum* and in the sermon, such as auguries and veneration of natural objects (e.g. trees and wells).¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that all the references to gods mentioned above date from the early phase of stage 2 of the conversion.

Two other texts that are likely to derive from the same phase are the Merseburg charms. These were found in a tenth-century manuscript, but the charms themselves are believed to be of earlier dates. One of the charms refers to *Woden* and *Friia*, and can thus provide evidence for the veneration of the eddaic goddesses and gods. The other charm, however, concerns the *Idisi*. These beings resemble the Norse female spirits of the *Disir* (e.g. norns and valkyries). There is also a possible personification of the sun. It should also be mentioned that the German names of the days of the week suggest that *Woden*, *Friia*, *Tunaer*, and *Tiwaz* were known in the north-western parts of continental Europe.¹⁰⁵

The occurrence of 'idols' in the continental source material will now be discussed. The First Saxon Capitulary stated that the churches should enjoy greater honour than the 'shrines of the idols'. Regino made no references to idols as such in his questions.¹⁰⁶ Burchard imposed two years penance for idol veneration. He also enquired whether anyone had eaten the 'offerings made to an idol' (*idolothytus*).¹⁰⁷ Such offerings were defined as those 'made to the dead, to wells, to trees, at cross roads, or cairns'. Burchard thus referred to all these objects as idols. Idols appear on several occasions in the literary sources, such as in the *vitae* of Willibrord, Sturm, and Liudger. However, neither these accounts nor the extant legislation, give any clear definition or description of an idol.¹⁰⁸

It has been shown that the sources from England and the Frankish Empire provide very little evidence of lingering veneration of pre-Christian gods. Legislators were clearly more concerned with all other beings connected to the pre-Christian cult. Both Regino's and Burchard's questions concentrate on the veneration of natural sites and magical practices. It is interesting to note that the majority of references to non-Christian gods and idols appear in the more literary sources. One reason could be that these are influenced by biblical references to idols.¹⁰⁹

Pre-Christian religious custom in Scandinavia will now be discussed. The sources from this area provide a similar picture as the material from Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent. The earliest Norwegian provincial laws will first be investigated. The Older Law of the Gulathing stated that no one should sacrifice to a 'pagan god' (*heiðit guð*), mounds (*hauga*), and *høgrgr*.¹¹⁰ The ecclesiastical Law of King Sverrir, which is directly derived from the Gulathinglaw, repeated these provisions. Sverrir, however, added a prohibition against sacrifices to *vættir* (*blota hæidnar vetter*).¹¹¹ The Later Law of the Gulathing did not repeat the prohibitions against sacrificing to gods. Also here, legislation against the veneration of *vættir*, groves, mounds, and waterfalls was instead included.¹¹² In the Law of the Frostathing, sacrifices to 'pagan gods' were prohibited. However, neither the Law of the Borgarthing, nor that of the Eidsivathing, contain any references to gods. The Law of the Eidsivathing outlawed the keeping of any objects connected to 'paganism', while the Borgarthing Law prohibited the population from putting their trust in any 'objects/beings that they sacrificed to' (*blótskapp*).¹¹³ The Borgarthing Law moreover stated that anyone who 'sat outside and woke up trolls' would be permanently outlawed.¹¹⁴

The veneration of gods thus only appears in two of the earliest four Norwegian laws, and in the regulations directly derived from the Older Gulathing Law. It is clear that the word *blót* was used to refer to sacrifices of various kinds. Therefore, general prohibitions against sacrifices must be seen to refer to sacrifices to all non-Christian supernatural beings, not just the gods. It is also of interest that the veneration of gods is not mentioned in the Icelandic laws. Indeed, the *vættir* are the only beings connected to the pre-Christian cult that are specifically mentioned in this material.¹¹⁵

The Norwegian provincial laws also legislated against magic. The practice of magic was punished by outlawry, and those who believed in the power of magical practices would be liable to pay a fine.¹¹⁶ In the same way as the laws

in the other geographical areas, the Norwegian regulations prohibited magical practices, such as soothsaying, incantations, and curing the sick. It is however interesting that these laws at times decreed the practice of 'legitimate' or 'Christian magic'. Some foods that were forbidden by the Christian dietary regulations could be eaten, as long as they were sprinkled with consecrated water and salt.¹¹⁷

Of the ten extant early Swedish provincial laws, only three contain any prohibitions against non-Christian practices. *Gutalagen* (the Law of Gotland) made it illegal to invoke groves and mounds, 'pagan' gods, holy places (*vi*), and 'stave-yards' (*stafgarbr*). This is one of the oldest Swedish laws, believed to have been written down in the beginning of the thirteenth century. It has been seen as a confirmation that Christianity had become the official religion on the island soon after 1200.¹¹⁸ Archaeological excavations of burial grounds and churchyards suggest that non-Christians and Christians had co-existed until this time.¹¹⁹ The information regarding pre-Christian religious custom is therefore likely to be rather authentic. The wording of the provision against 'pagan' practices in *Gutalagen* is of particular interest. The verb 'invoke' (*haita*) is used with the preposition *a*, which indicates that it was the groves, the mounds, the holy places, and the 'stave-yards' themselves that were venerated.¹²⁰ The same applied to the gods. Cult sites and gods were thus ascribed equal standing.

Upplandslagen (the Law of Uppland) stated that no one should venerate groves or stones, or sacrifice to idols (*affgubum*). It was demonstrated in Chapter 3 that Uppland was one of the provinces where resistance against Christianity lasted the longest, which could explain the inclusion of this clause. No punishment was stated for this offence, which suggests that it was by this time not regarded as a problem of huge proportions.¹²¹ The same prohibitions were included in the Law of Hälsingland, which is directly derived from the earlier Law of Uppland.¹²² It is interesting that all the Swedish provincial laws included legislation against black magic and that many imposed harsh punishments for such practices. According to the Older Law of Västergötland, witchcraft was the only offence for which a woman could be given capital punishment. The Law of Östergötland imposed capital punishment for women who were caught practising witchcraft, and in the Law of Uppland capital punishment was imposed for manslaughter by means of witchcraft.¹²³

Apart from the few prohibitions in the Norwegian and Swedish provincial laws, there are various kinds of objects, which can be seen as evidence that the

eddaic gods were venerated in Scandinavia. These have been subject to extensive discussion, and various interpretations have been put forward. Thus, only the most important parts of this debate will here be considered.

There are only a few cases when scholars have agreed on a single interpretation. One such example is the hammer symbol, which has been connected to the cult of Þórr. Hammers most frequently occur as pendants, either on their own, or suspended on rings together with other miniature artefacts. They are also depicted on a small number of rune stones.¹²⁴ Another case that most scholars agree on is the image of a man on an eight-legged horse on a Gotlandic picture stone. This is seen to be a representation of Óðinn.¹²⁵

There are however a number of objects which have been subject to livelier debate. The finds of human-shaped figurines will first be discussed. The eleventh-century bronze statuette from Eyrarland in Iceland is a particularly interesting example. This figure is holding a hammer-like object, and has thus been seen as a representation of Þórr. Other interpretations include a depiction of Freyr, a gaming-piece, a toy, a weight, or a man holding a Christian cross. The phallic figure from Rällinge in Sweden is another interesting example. This figure, just like the one from Eyrarland, dates from the eleventh century, and has traditionally been thought to represent Freyr. It must however be pointed out that there is no firm evidence to support this interpretation. The figure from Lindby in Skåne also needs to be discussed. This has been seen to depict the one-eyed Óðinn, as one of its' eyes is straight and the other curved. Miariam Koktvergaard Zeiten stated that this 'might' be the image of a god. Her overall conclusion regarding the human-like Danish figures was however that, since none of these have been found in cultic contexts, they can 'only with difficulty' be interpreted as 'images of gods or amulets'.¹²⁶

The interpretation of the *guldgubbar* has also been widely discussed. As was mentioned in chapter 3, these depict men, women, and animals. On some of the plates, there is a man and a woman embracing.¹²⁷ In 1897, Magnus Olsen argued that the motifs represented the eddaic myth of the marriage between Freyr and Gerd. Olsen supported his argument by stating that place-names in the area where the *guldgubbar* were found indicated that it had been a cult centre dedicated to Freyr. The connection between the *guldgubbar* and the fertility cult was criticised by Wilhelm Holmqvist, who pointed out that several of the *guldgubbar* portray single figures. Only very few of these figures are depicted with sexual organs, and then in a very discreet manner. They can

in no way be compared to other phallic figures, such as the one from Rällinge. Holmqvist added that the embracing couples were ‘portrayed with unexceptionable modesty’. In 1969, the connection between the *guldgubbar* and Freyr was picked up by Hans-Emil Lidén. Lidén suggested that the mentioning in the *Vatsdælasaga* of a ‘weight on which “Froy was stamped in silver”’ is a reference to *guldgubbar*. Olaf Olsen has however argued that this saga dates from post 1250 and can therefore not be relied on as firm evidence. Today, most scholars agree that *guldgubbar* were used as votive offerings in fertility rites. No agreement as to what they actually depict has been reached.¹²⁸

There are also a number of objects, which scholars have found even more difficult to interpret. The stave is one such example. A miniature helmeted warrior holding a stave has been found at Birka. Miniature staves moreover often appear on ring-shaped pendants. Various interpretations of these objects have been put forward. Some scholars have suggested that the stave represented a magic wand. According to eddaic mythology, Oðinn practised the operational magic named *seiðr*, and the stave has thus been linked to his cult.¹²⁹ In the eddaic myths, however, it is especially the *völva* (the diviner) who uses the stave. The Old Norse word for stave is *vǫlr*, and *völva* means ‘the bearer of the stave’. It has therefore also been argued that the stave was the attribute of these women in particular. There are, however, at least two other interpretations of the symbolic meaning of the stave. It has on occasion been seen as a fertility symbol. This was suggested e.g. for the ‘bamboo-like staff’ from the Oseberg ship burial. The stave has also been associated to Þórr, as it sometimes appears on Þórr’s hammer amulets.¹³⁰

The spear and the sword have also been interpreted in numerous ways. These weapons appear in images of warriors from the Vendel period, such as on the Torslunda-dies. Miniature spears and swords have moreover been found across Scandinavia.¹³¹ Some scholars have argued that both the spear and the sword should be connected to Oðinn. This was based on the eddaic myths, where Oðinn is the god of war armed with the spear *Gungnir*. Snorri moreover named the sword ‘the fires of Oðinn’.¹³² Other scholars have stated that, in the Germanic world, the sword was the mark of a chieftain. As Oðinn was seen as the ruling god, they have connected the sword to his cult. One scholar has however pointed out that, during this time, all men needed weapons. He therefore argued that miniature weapons should not necessarily be interpreted in the context of eddaic mythology. Miriam Koktvergaard Zeiten, on her part, concluded that these objects served as magical helpers in the fight against

demons. In this context it should be added that the spear has also been seen as a fertility symbol. This interpretation was suggested for the spears carried by the figures on the Oseberg tapestry.¹³³

Miniature chairs have also been interpreted in several different ways. Scholars have seen the chair as a symbol of rank, and as such, it has been connected to various eddaic deities. Oðinn, as the most powerful god, has been most frequently suggested. However, since miniature chairs at times appear with hammers and small female figures, they have also been connected to Þórr and Freyja. Another interpretation was put forward by Karl Hauck, who argued that the chairs might have signified the heavenly seat of Christ.¹³⁴

This brief overview has demonstrated that the interpretation of potentially cultic objects is extremely problematic.¹³⁵ It has moreover been shown that most of these objects have been connected to different eddaic gods by different scholars. The reasons for these diverging interpretations are naturally numerous. One particular problem, however, may be that many scholars have consistently attempted to interpret these objects within the framework of the eddaic mythology. This may not always be the best place to search for answers. It is likely that some cultic objects were instead linked to parts of the pre-Christian mythology that are unknown today. Some may have been connected to other gods than the eddaic ones. Others may have been linked to various kinds of supernatural beings, and yet others may have had purely magical purposes. In this context it is also essential to point out that there are a number of potentially cultic objects that scholars have not been able to connect to any of the eddaic gods. Some such examples include axes, face masks, certain animals, and also some human-shaped figures.¹³⁶ These objects have, however, received very little scholarly attention, possibly since no links between them and the eddaic mythology have been established.

Stronger indications that the eddaic gods were venerated are provided by theophoric place-names. Examples from Sweden include Torsåker, Torshälla (i.e. Þór's *hearg*), Odensala, and Ullvi.¹³⁷ In Denmark, the names of the gods appear in place-names such as Odense, Torslunde, Thors Mose, Thisted, and Frøbjerg.¹³⁸ Some Norwegian examples include Torset, Frøyset, Nerdrum (*Njarðarin*), and Onsøya (*Óðinsøy*).¹³⁹ It may seem odd that theophoric place-names survived after the introduction of Christianity. John Kousgård Sørensen has suggested that there is a possibility that the names extant today may be the last remnants of a larger network of cult-related names, the majority of which were changed by clerics into names of a more neutral kind.¹⁴⁰ There is,

however, no evidence to prove that the clergy did attempt to abolish such place-names.¹⁴¹ One obvious example of a place with a theophoric name that remained unchanged is Odense. This is particularly interesting since Odense was made an episcopal seat. In this chapter it has been shown that the cults of the gods do not seem to have formed the most significant part of pre-Christian religious custom. The clergy may thus not have perceived theophoric names as particularly threatening, and may not have tried to change these.¹⁴² Moreover, as the cults of the gods faded away, it is possible that place-names related to their cults received new names as a natural course of events, without any need for clerical involvement.

The concept of pre-Christian idols will now be further discussed. According to Adam of Bremen, the 'temple' at Gamla Uppsala contained the idols of Óðinn, Þórr, and Freyr. Óðinn was placed on a throne in the middle of the building and carried weapons. Þórr held a spire, and Freyr was depicted with a large phallus.¹⁴³ The reliability of Adam's description of the cult site at Gamla Uppsala has been seriously questioned. This concerns his rendering of the idols, the temple, the sacrificial well, as well as the surrounding landscape. His *Gesta* has been seen to contain diverse influences apart from his own evaluations and adjustments. Such influences include Christian legends, classical narrative genres, *Interpretatio Romana/Christiana*, eddaic mythology, and Augustinian perspectives.¹⁴⁴ It was demonstrated in Chapter 3 that archaeological excavations at Gamla Uppsala have not found anything that resembled the 'temple' in Adam's *Gesta*. It has instead been argued that the cultic rituals were held in the excavated hall building. Gamla Uppsala was a site of very high standing. It would therefore not be surprising if the cult practices performed here were connected to the royal and aristocratic cults of the gods. It should be noted that no traces of Adam's 'idols' have been found. Wooden figures would however only have been preserved if they had been deposited in waterlogged conditions.¹⁴⁵ It could be argued that if the wooden 'idols' did exist, they might have been scaled-up versions of the human-shaped figurines from Rällinge and Eyrarland. However, as will be shown below, the large wooden human-like figures that have been found at other cultic sites are all rather simplistic. There is thus, so far, is no evidence that such large elaborate figures as those described by Adam existed. The existence of the 'idols', or at least the accuracy of Adam's description, must therefore be questioned.

The 'anti-pagan' legislation from Norway and Sweden is of greater interest in relation to idol veneration. The concepts of *staf*, *stallr*, *hauga*, *støng*, and

hǫrgr need to be discussed in order to establish what they may have represented to pre-Christians.

The Law of the Eidsivathing made it illegal to keep *staf* and *stallr* in the house.¹⁴⁶ There are various interpretations of *stallr*, such as altars that were stained with sacrificial blood, or platforms for idols. These ideas are based on information given in Icelandic sagas, and can thus not be relied upon as firm evidence.¹⁴⁷ The original meaning of *stallr* was simply ‘a stand upon which something could be placed’.¹⁴⁸

Since the word appears in ‘anti-pagan’ legislation, it is likely to have been an object with some function in the pre-Christian cult. *Staf* appears, apart from in the Law of the Eidsivathing, in the legislation against *stafgarþr* (‘stave-yards’) in *Gutalagen*. Scholars have suggested numerous interpretations of *staf*. Only those that are of interest in relation to pre-Christian cult practices will here be mentioned. Stefan Brink has argued that *staf* could refer to ‘images of gods’ or pillars ‘with another mythological function’. The existence of such pillars is suggested by place-names, such as Nälsta (Södermanland and Uppland). This name is derived from *Nærtha-staff*, which was first documented in 1334. Scholars have argued that this name denoted a pillar connected to the goddess *Niærd.¹⁴⁹ It is however important to keep in mind that this name was first recorded in the fourteenth century. It should moreover be noted that names of this kind are extremely rare. *Staf* has also been seen to refer to rods in enclosures around cult or thing sites. This idea was based on the regulation in the Law of the Frostathing regarding a *vébond*. This was a kind of ‘band’ attached to the rods of such an enclosure.¹⁵⁰ It is not known whether these rods or poles played any part in the actual cult. The meaning of *stafgarþr* has also been subject to wide discussion. Interpretations vary between cult sites, fenced sites, and house foundations. What does seem clear is that these sites had some kind of cultic significance.¹⁵¹

The chapter in the Later Law of the Gulathing which deals with non-Christian practices made it illegal to erect a *stǫng* (pillar) and call it a *skáldstǫng*. Scholars have interpreted *skáldstǫng* as a form of *niðstǫng*, which is a term that appears in Norwegian and Icelandic legislation. The laws do however not provide any definition of this term. According to the sagas, a *niðstǫng* was a pillar erected in order to abuse someone. Such pillars could be wooden sculptures in the shape of men, or poles on which the head of a horse had been placed. It is not clear however if such pillars played any part in cult practices. Another transcription of the Law of the Gulathing substituted *skáldstǫng* with

flannstøng. *Flann* denotes the male genitals and it has therefore been suggested that a *flannstøng* was a phallic pillar.¹⁵² If this interpretation is correct, such pillars are likely to have played a part in pre-Christian fertility rites. Phallic stones, which have been seen as parts of the fertility cult, are found both in Norway and Sweden. In Norway, so-called ‘holy white stones’ are standing beside arable land in the provinces of Vestlandet, Trøndelag, and Helgeland. These stones, which date from the third to the eighth centuries, are normally between 20 and 50 centimetres tall.¹⁵³ In Östergötland in Sweden, there is a phallic stone construction named Rödsten (‘the red stone’). (see figure 6) This name was first documented in 1360. The shape of the construction, and also long-standing local traditions, suggest that it must have played a role in the fertility cult. It is still believed that misfortunes will occur if the stone is not regularly painted red, white, and black. This may derive from the widespread sacrificial practice to paint cultic objects red with blood.¹⁵⁴



Figure 6. Rödsten (Östergötland, Sweden).

In the context of *staf* and *støng*, written and archaeological evidence of other types of posts must also be discussed.

The five wooden posts with animal-heads that were found in the Oseberg ship burial will first be mentioned. These posts were once equipped with handles, and it has thus been argued that they were used in cultic processions. The figures on the Oseberg tapestry that are depicted carrying various objects have been interpreted as participants in such a procession.¹⁵⁵

High seats pillars must also be considered. According to written source material, the owner of a house used to sit in a high seat (*ϕndvegi*) flanked by carved pillars. Possible archaeological traces of such a high seat have been found at Mære in Norway.

It has been argued that these pillars had some kind of cultic significance. According to several sources, including *Landnámabók* and *Eyrbyggja saga*, Norwegian settlers brought their high seats pillars to Iceland. When the settlers sighted land they threw the pillars overboard, and in the place where the pillars were washed up, the new house was built. The *Eyrbyggja saga* further stated that these pillars were sometimes decorated with images of gods. It must however be kept in mind that this saga was presumably written down during the course of the thirteenth century.¹⁵⁶

Finally, wooden posts erected on burial mounds will be taken into consideration. Ibn Fadlān, an Arab envoy from the caliph in Baghdad, described the burial of one of the Scandinavian chieftains in Russia. According to this account, the Scandinavians constructed a burial mound and 'in the middle of it they raised a large pole of birch. Then they wrote the name of the [dead] man and the name of the king of the Rus' on it'.¹⁵⁷ Archaeological evidence from the Isle of Man supports this statement. A post-hole (c. 70 cm. in diameter) was found in the centre of the Viking burial mound at Ballateare (Jurby). Similarly, at Balladoole (Arbory), a large post-hole was found next to a cairn containing a boat-burial.¹⁵⁸ Archaeological finds from other geographical areas show that there were also other kinds of wooden posts on burial mounds. There are some examples of boat-burials, where the ships' mast was used in this way. The 'boat-chamber grave' at Hedeby consisted of a subterranean grave-chamber over which a Viking warship had been placed. The mound was built over the ship, and the mast would thus have been protruding from the mound.¹⁵⁹ Mound 2 at Sutton Hoo has been interpreted as another example of this rare type of ship-burial.¹⁶⁰

These pieces of evidence demonstrate the difficulties of establishing what the *staf* and *stǫng* in the Norwegian laws refer to. Further objects prohibited in the Norwegian 'anti-pagan' legislation will now be discussed.

The Laws of the Gulathing outlawed the making of sacrifices to mounds (*hauga*). Scholars have argued that ancestors played important parts in pre-Christian religious custom, and that the mounds therefore were some kind of cult site.¹⁶¹ That veneration of ancestors featured among pre-Christians in Scandinavia is also suggested by the Life of Ansgar. Rimbert stated that the population at Birka built a temple to their dead king Erik and 'began to give him offerings, just as to a god'.¹⁶² It has already been pointed out that *Gutalagen* suggests that burial mounds, as well as other features, were subject to direct veneration. The levelling of the burial mound underneath the church at Hørning further supports that these sites were of cultic significance.¹⁶³

Among the cultic objects prohibited by the Law of the Eidsivathing were sacrificed foods.¹⁶⁴ This can be compared to Theodore's and Burchard's regulations regarding sacrificed food (*cibum immolatum* and *idolothytus*).¹⁶⁵ The same chapter of the Law of the Eidsivathing also prohibited human-shaped figures made of dough or clay. The law does not indicate the significance or function of these objects. One possible interpretation is that they were connected to magical practices. They may also have been used in rituals related to the other two strands of pre-Christian religious custom.

Hqrgr has been subject to considerable discussion among scholars. Sacrifices to a *hqrgr* were prohibited by the Older Law of the Gulathing, while the Later Law of the Gulathing made it illegal to construct a *hqrgr*. After thorough research, Olaf Olsen argued that the meaning of this word had changed over time. He suggested that it originally denoted natural and man-made formations of stone. In later times, as pre-Christian religious custom was changing, *hqrgr* began to be used for sacrificial cairns. As the religious custom was subject to further changes, idols were placed on or by such cairns, which became the next type of *hqrgr*. Olsen suggested that the earliest idols were crude wooden poles, which were later replaced by 'more naturalistic images of gods'.¹⁶⁶ There are some problems with this theory. There only seems to be a few examples of wooden 'images' that have been found in or by cairns. Such examples are the crude and simplistic human-shaped figures of the Late Iron Age, from Braak in Schleswig and Foerlev Mølle in Denmark.¹⁶⁷ (see figure 7) These few cases cannot be seen as sufficient evidence to prove that wooden images were placed by every *hqrgr*. It thus seems that the word *hqrgr* could simultaneously be used for features of stone by which sacrifices took place, both with and without wooden pillars. It was previously argued by Vilhelm Grønbech, that since *hqrgr* was used to describe numerous objects, it is uncertain what each writer had in mind.¹⁶⁸ Anders Hultgård has moreover argued that the *stallr*, which appears in the Scandinavian written sources, may have denoted a large construction of wood or stone, and may thus have been similar to a *hqrgr*.¹⁶⁹ In this context it must also be mentioned that no finds of what Olsen called 'more naturalistic images' of gods have hitherto been made. It should furthermore be noted that Wijnand Van der Sanden and Torsten Capelle have stated that the identifications of crude wooden figures as specific gods and goddesses must be seen as very uncertain.¹⁷⁰

This overview has demonstrated that the early Christian legislation is difficult to interpret. It is possible that some of the terms, such as *staf*, *stqng*,



Figure 7. Human shaped wooden 'idol' ('Frøya fra Rebild', Denmark).

stallr, and *hǫrgr* at times refer to some kind of 'idols'. There is however not sufficient evidence to determine what such 'idols' may have represented and what part they played in the pre-Christian cult.

In his travel account Ibn Fadlān described the sacrificial practices of the Scandinavians in Russia (the *Rūs*). According this source, these people used to bring offerings to free-standing wooden posts that had been erected on the riverbanks:

When their ships arrive at this port, they all embark and bring bread, meat, onions and beer. They seek out a tall pole, with a human-like face, that has been driven into the ground: around there are smaller images and behind these tall wooden poles that have been driven into the ground. They turn to the largest image, bend down and pray and say: "Lord, I have come from a faraway land and I have brought this many woman slaves, and this many sable skins" until he has enumerated all the goods that he has brought. Then he says: "I have come to you with these gifts", and with these words he puts them down in front of the wooden image and says: "I want you to give

me a merchant who has many dinars and *dirhems* and who will buy from me all that I want and who will not oppose what I say”, and then he leaves. But if it is difficult for him to sell and the days pass by, he will return with his gift a second and a third time. If, despite this, he does not receive what he wants, he carries his gift to each of the small images and says: “These are my lord’s wives, daughters and sons”, and carries on to go from one image to the next in order to pray to them and to ask for their help and to humiliate himself in front of them. But often his selling goes well... and then he says: “My lord has satisfied me, and now I must thank him”. He then kills a number of sheep and horned cattle, and distributes part of the meat as gifts but carries the rest to the large wooden image and to the small ones that stand around him, but hangs the head of the oxen and sheep on wooden poles that have been driven into the ground.¹⁷¹

It should be kept in mind that the original text has not survived, and that the event was recorded by a man with little understanding of Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom.¹⁷² The description moreover bears some similarities to the biblical accounts of people sacrificing to idols.¹⁷³ Despite these reservations, this account provides us with some interesting information. Ibn Fadlān clearly suggests that wooden pillars, some with carved faces, were venerated by the early Scandinavians. The *staf* and *stǫng* that were outlawed in the Norwegian laws may have been pillars of this type. It is also interesting that the carved pillars seem to resemble Aldhelm’s *ermula cruda*. Ibn Fadlān does not however leave us any wiser as to what such pillars represented to the early Scandinavians. It must nevertheless be pointed out that they do not seem to resemble the gods of the eddaic mythology.

It has been shown that the evidence from England, the Frankish Empire, and Scandinavia is rather circumstantial, and cannot be used to draw out detailed information about the veneration of idols by pre-Christians or non-Christians. In order to gain further knowledge, evidence from the Sámi peoples will be employed.¹⁷⁴ Dag Strömbäck argued that comparisons between Norse and Sámi mythology were just as natural as they were necessary, since the Sámi and the early Scandinavian peoples had been in close contact for centuries.¹⁷⁵ Such contacts are clearly suggested by various pieces of evidence. Osteological analyses of skeletons from the churchyard at Västerhus (Jämtland) have shown that this population was more heterogeneous than contemporary comparative populations in the southern parts of Sweden. This heterogeneity was believed to be the result of intermarriages between the Sámi and the early Scandinavians. Influences of early Scandinavian Viking Age culture have moreover been seen in the Sámi artefacts from the Late Viking Period.¹⁷⁶

The Sámi pre-Christian religious custom included both gods and spirits. The spirits were of various kinds, such as protectors of animals and plants, and played a more direct role in everyday life than the gods. There was also a strong shamanistic element. It is important to point out that there was no set mythology, but that there were large variations in the myths and cult practices of the different clans. At first sight, the Sámi religious custom may therefore seem very different from that of the early Scandinavians. Scholars from the seventeenth century until the 1960s found some similarities between the pre-Christian Scandinavian and Sámi religious customs. They pointed out that the Sámi and the early Scandinavians at times venerated the same gods or the same type of gods. The most common examples are the sun and a god of thunder.¹⁷⁷ It is not surprising that these were the only similarities that were found. During this time, scholars regarded Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom as that described in Snorri's *Edda* and in the eddaic poetry. More recent research has however painted a rather different picture of this religious custom, which suggests that there were important parallels between the Scandinavian and Sámi cultic traditions. A few scholars have pointed out that bear and horse bones (skulls, in particular) have been found at both Scandinavian and Sámi cult sites. Similarities between the Scandinavian sites of Frösön and Borg, and the Sámi cultic site of Unna Saiva (Lapland) have thus been identified.¹⁷⁸

Scholars of various disciplines have argued that shamanism formed a rather important part also of the Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom. Historians of religion have pointed to the shamanistic characteristics of Óðinn. The iconography of Migration Period bracteates has moreover been seen to depict the archetypal representations of 'the shaman's... journey to the Other World'. These bracteates depict men surrounded by various kinds of animals. The heads of the men, often shaped like birds, have been interpreted as the soul. The surrounding animals have been seen to represent the protecting spirits that escort the shamans to the world of the dead. Strömbäck held that Sámi shamanism existed in the concept of *seiðr*. The issue of shamanism among the early Scandinavians has since been widely discussed.¹⁷⁹ Hans Mebius has re-examined Strömbäck's work in the light of subsequent research. He concluded that 'the existence of a Nordic-Germanic shamanism...is indisputable'.¹⁸⁰ According to Lotte Hedeager, *seiðr* included the two major shamanistic elements of ecstasy and soul journeying.¹⁸¹ The evidence of shamanism in Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom is particularly interesting since shamanism presupposes 'animism', i.e. belief in the existence of spirits. If the early



Figure 8. Human shaped wooden seite from Marsfjället, Vilhelmina (Lapland, Sweden).

Scandinavians practised shamanism, a belief in the existence of spirits must also have been present. This supports the evidence that other supernatural beings, apart from the gods, were important in the Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom.

Cultic objects and their role in the Sámi religious custom will now be examined. The Sámi 'idols' were the seides. These were natural or worked objects of wood or stone, which varied greatly in size. The natural wooden seides could be a stump or a log. The man-made ones were mostly crude sculptures, such as rods with funnel shaped ends or with carved 'simple' faces.¹⁸² (figure 8)

Much attention has been given to the Samuel Rheen's seventeenth-century description of idols in Lule Lappmark. In this report Rheen included a drawing of three seides, shaped as humans and carrying axes, which were said to be depictions of Þórr.¹⁸³ (figure 9)

This is however the only example of such images, which suggests that they were not particularly common. The natural stone seides were oddly shaped stones of varying size. (figure 10) One example is the one at the sacrificial site of Rautasjaure (Lapland). This site consisted of a gathering of stones resulting from a landslide. In the middle of these was the seide, an enormous stone, c. 6 meters tall. The seides could however also be

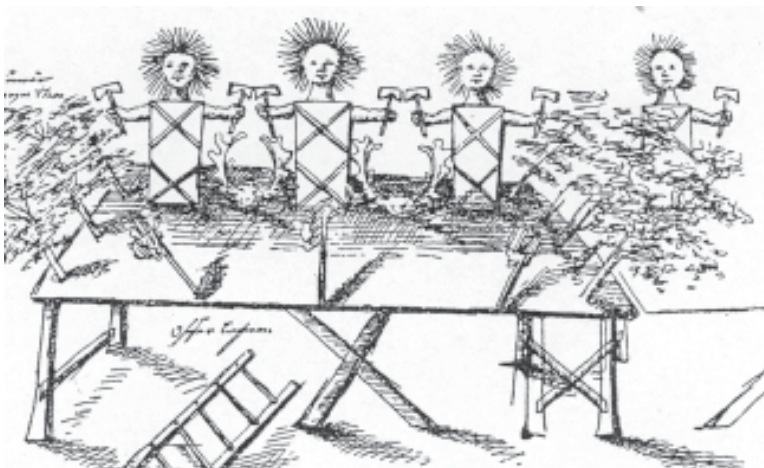


Figure 9. Human shaped Sámi seites carrying axes (Lapland, Sweden).



Figure 10. Large stone seide (Arjeplog parish, Lapland, Sweden).

very small stones. The man-made stone seides were often cairns or ‘altars’ of varying types and sizes.¹⁸⁴

Several seides could be erected at the same sacrificial site. On these occasions one of the seides was often taller than the other. Johannes Tornæus described a row of posts in the shape of humans that he had seen on an island in the Torne River. The first was of the height of a man and the other four were somewhat smaller. Each of the pillars had something resembling a hat on its head.¹⁸⁵ Another example comes from the sacrificial site of Vidjakuoika (Lapland). This site once consisted of approximately ten small mounds, on and around which large seides had been placed. Each of these seides had been surrounded by several smaller ones, some of which were not more than twenty centimetres tall.¹⁸⁶ Such groups of seides seem to have represented a kind of family to the Sámi. This can be demonstrated by the words of Rheen: ‘And by certain mountains there are two, three, or more stones erected, and of such stones they call the first *Stohrjunckare*, the second his *Acke* or woman, the third son or daughter, and the several other stones male and female servants’. Rheen described the largest pillar, the *Stohrjunckare*, as a ‘governor of a god’. He had the power over all animals and could give the Sámi good luck in hunting. The smaller seides were beings of more domestic character that were connected to home and household. This and other pieces of evidence make it clear that the various seides served different functions. Some could give good luck in the hunting of animals, such as bear and reindeer, others could provide good luck in fishing, and yet others were influential in the home and household.¹⁸⁷

There were different types of sacrificial sites and seides also in another sense. There were seides for whole clans, those for a family and even those for individual Sámi. The seides that were venerated by a clan were often very large and situated in prominent positions. The smaller seides, especially when part of a group, were often the seides of families or individuals.¹⁸⁸ The relationship between a Sámi and his seides can be illustrated by an account from the seventeenth century. According to this, before a Fisher Sámi went out fishing he would generally visit a seide and say: “If I now succeed in catching fish in the sea or river, I promise thee their intestines and livers”. If the fishing turned out well, the Sámi would fulfil his promise.¹⁸⁹

It has thus been shown that there were significant parallels between the cultic ideas and practices of the early Scandinavians and the Sámi. The rich Sámi material can therefore help us to further understand the Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom.

Ibn Fadlān’s account of the early Scandinavians’ veneration of wooden pillars is remarkably similar to the Sámi veneration of the seides. The similarities are seen both in his description of the pillars and in the Scandinavians’ relationship with supernatural powers. This suggests that for the early Scandinavians such pillars could represent a ‘family’, in the same way as the seides did for the Sámi. The Scandinavians may therefore also have regarded the tallest pillar as a ‘governor’. However, instead of giving luck in hunting, this one appears to have been seen to provide success in trading. The smaller images may have been *vættir* or other supernatural beings with which the Scandinavians had more personal relationships. Thus none of the images must necessarily have represented gods. If indeed some of these images should be seen as gods it must be remembered that Ibn Fadlān’s description dates from the beginning of the tenth century. It does therefore not conflict with the argument that the cult of the gods disappeared rather quickly after the introduction of Christianity. It was moreover pointed out above that the Sámi clans did not have one common mythology. The situation is likely to have been similar among the early Scandinavians. It is thus possible that there were large variations in cultic ideas and practices between different geographical areas. It is also possible that gods and spirits that do not appear in the eddaic mythology were being venerated. This could explain our difficulties in identifying what their objects of veneration symbolised. It is interesting to note that the early Norwegian laws contained strong regulations regarding contacts with the Sámi. In these laws, the Sámi were directly associated with pre-Christian religious

custom. The Law of the Eidsivathing stated that no one should put their trust in the Sámi, witches, sorcery, magical herbs, or in anything that belonged to 'paganism'. Anyone who visited the Sámi would be permanently outlawed. The Borgarthing Law imposed the same punishment on anyone who went to the Sámi for divinations.¹⁹⁰

There are further parallels between the pre-Christian Sámi and Scandinavian cult practices that need to be examined. Sámi sacrificial sites often consisted of a seide surrounded by a circular enclosure. Ørnulv Vorren examined nineteen such sites and found traces of cairns inside c. 50% of these. In some of the other enclosures Vorren found 'some unusually large stones'. (figure 11) The cairns were of varying character. Some were rather irregular and others better constructed. It is interesting to note that some cairns of the latter kind had a large hollow in the middle. According to a nineteenth-century account, wooden posts (seides) had once been placed in such hollows.¹⁹¹

These cairns seem rather similar to Olsen's definition of the *hqrgr*. It is however important to note that the Sámi did not erect wooden seides at all sacrificial cairns. It is clear that cairns were sacrificed to, with or without the addition of wooden seides. This substantiates the argument given above that the *hqrgr* may have been used simultaneously for both cairns with wooden



Figure 11. Sámi circular sacrificial site.

pillars and those without. Legislation against *hǫrgr* may thus at times have been aimed purely at cairns or stones. It should also be noted that Burchard's provision against the eating of 'food offered to idols' included cairns in the list of places to which such offerings could be made. Burchard thus included cairns in his definition of 'idols'. Among the objects on this list were also natural objects, such as trees and wells.

There are further indications in the Scandinavian source material that the cults of other supernatural beings were connected to specific features in the landscape. This is suggested by the place-names containing the element *vittra*. In Christian times *vittra* has been used to refer to a heterogeneous group of small subterranean beings. These beings were also called *alfer*, which is derived from the Old Norse *alfar*. The *alfar* appear in the eddaic mythology. Moreover, the scaldic verse *Austrfararvisur*, which is dated to 1018 and included in the Saga of Olav the Holy, describes a sacrifice to the *alfar* (*alfablót*). This was composed by King Olav's scald Sighvatr. As it is a scaldic verse, the story of this sacrifice may be seen as more reliable than the mythology of the *Edda*. Scholars have argued that this particular verse is likely to contain reflections of actual cultic activities.¹⁹² In the province of Ångermanland in the northern parts of Sweden, a number of place-names containing *-vittra* have been recorded. All these names refer to stones, to which stories of the activities of the *vittra* are linked.¹⁹³ Although it cannot be established when these names came into use, they suggest that the *alfar* were connected to certain natural features.

Groves also appear to have played an important role in the Scandinavian pre-Christian cult. After close study of sacral place-names, Per Vikstrand has argued that the importance of the groves themselves, not just their connection to certain gods, must be stressed. Vikstrand stated that 'the holy grove' is likely to have served as a metaphor for various kinds of cosmological and religious ideas.¹⁹⁴

In this context it can moreover be mentioned that some places with cultic significance, bore names that were not connected to any gods. One such example is Helgö in Lake Mälaren. Another example might be the meadow next to the church at Mære, which according to local tradition was named *Helgin*. This appears to be derived from *Helgvin*, i.e. sacred meadow.¹⁹⁵

Thus taking all the evidence into consideration, it is clear that the idols referred to in the medieval sources could represent numerous features of varying character:

1. Natural stone formations
2. Man-made stone formations, such as cairns
3. Man-made stone formations with wooden pillars
4. Free-standing crude wooden pillars
5. Figures of clay or dough
6. Various kinds of natural objects, such as trees and wells
7. Images of the eddaic gods

The idea that idols were images of the gods in the Norse mythology is clearly the one that has the least support in the sources. It has already been shown that the evidence of such idols is almost non-existent. The widespread presence of these must therefore be seriously questioned, unless new evidence emerges. Numbers 1-6 on the list above are of greater interest.¹⁹⁶ The medieval sources make it clear that in pre-Christian Scandinavia cultic practices were related to various beings and objects, such as gods, *vættir*, and natural sites. The comparisons made with the cult practices of the Sámi suggest that objects used in the pre-Christian Scandinavian cult need not have been related to the cult of the gods. Indeed, they often appear to have been related to various kinds of supernatural beings. Therefore we cannot with any degree of certainty conclude that all idols referred to in the medieval sources were linked to the veneration of gods. Moreover, medieval writers often referred to the veneration of idols in very wide senses. It has already been shown that Theodore's provisions against 'demons' (which were shown to represent any being connected to pre-Christian cult) and magical practices were included in the chapter named 'of the worship of idols'.¹⁹⁷ In one of his questions, Regino of Prüm described a number of magical practices as 'idolatrous'.¹⁹⁸ In none of these texts did the authors explicitly mention idols. Expressions such as 'worship of idols' and 'idolatrous' seem to have been used merely as figures of speech in reference to surviving pre-Christian religious custom. Furthermore, in the provisions containing these expressions there are no specific references to gods. It thus becomes even clearer that references to idols must not necessarily be connected to the veneration of gods. It was mentioned above that the *staf* outlawed in the Norwegian legislation could at times refer to pillars that related to the cults of goddesses and gods. It must however be pointed out that although such pillars may well have played a part in the pre-Christian cult, pillars symbolising other beings were probably more common.

It has been shown that in all the geographical areas, the majority of laws focused on the veneration of natural sites, in particular groves, trees, and wells. Moreover, on every occasion when 'pagan' practices were enumerated in the source material included in this study, natural cult sites were included. Burchard's Corrector demonstrated that also these sites could be seen as a type of idol. The overall evidence thus suggests that natural sites formed a large part of pre-Christian cult practices. This is further supported by the importance of such sites in the Sámi cult. The comparisons made with the Anglo-Saxon and the Frankish material have also shown that very little legislation was specifically aimed at the veneration of gods. There is only one instance in which gods occur on their own (i.e. in the Saxon baptismal formula). Moreover, the overwhelming majority of the laws against the gods appeared in the early phases of stage 2 of conversion. The prohibition against the veneration of gods in the Laws of Knut must be seen as 'early'. It appears to have been aimed primarily at those parts of the Scandinavian population who were in the beginnings of conversion. Legislation against magic and supernatural beings, on the other hand, continued to appear into the later stages of conversion.

It thus seems that the cults of the gods was the first strand of the old religious custom to have died out. It was shown in sections 2.1-2 and 3.1-2 that the top layers in society were the ones that first adopted Christianity. If we accept the argument that the cults of the gods were most closely linked to these groups, it would thus not be surprising if these cults were the first to disappear. When the elite no longer hosted central sacrificial feasts, i.e. the gatherings where sacrifices to gods are most likely to have taken place, such sacrifices may naturally have ceased for all members of society. The link between the gods and the aristocracy would also help to explain why the cults connected to other beings lived on. These cults seem to have been practised at other levels of society, where the general acceptance of Christianity was slower. It must however be pointed out that these other supernatural beings may also have been important in the daily life of the elite. This is, above all, likely to have applied in pre-Christian times, but also to some extent in early Christian period.

This further supports the argument that the gods may not have held such significant positions among pre-Christians as was claimed by the literary mythology. According to surviving missionary sermons, clerics fought hard to abolish the non-Christian gods. It has however already been pointed out that such sermons were often written down long after the time when they are reported to have been held. The reliability of these must thus be put into

question.¹⁹⁹ Evidence which is closer in time to the conversion clearly shows that clergy, from the earliest times, were more concerned with the other strands of the old religious custom (i.e. 'animistic' ideas and magic). A suggestion put forward by Helge Ljungberg can give us some ideas why the gods were prominent in the literary mythology. Ljungberg argued that in the time of Snorri and other poets and historians, the cults connected to the gods had died out. They had lost all their old connotations and were now pale and lifeless beings. It was therefore 'safe' to write about them, and Snorri's interest may thus have been purely literary and antiquarian.²⁰⁰ It should moreover be noted that Snorri was one of the most powerful Icelandic *goðar*, and had close contacts with Norwegian kings and *jarlar*.²⁰¹ If we accept the argument that the cults of the gods were linked to the very top layers of society, Snorri's emphasis of the role of the gods in pre-Christian Scandinavian mythology thus becomes even less surprising.

Another interesting parallel is provided by Alf Henrikson. He pointed out that the Ancient Romans venerated an extremely large number of different supernatural beings. These were rather 'dusky' beings, which were not connected to any adventure stories. When the Romans took over the Greek mythology most of these beings were lost, since they could not be fitted into this new mythology.²⁰²

By taking all the evidence into consideration a picture of the Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom as a 'nature religion' clearly emerges.²⁰³ It is important to note that there are significant variations between the different belief systems that have been defined in this way. A number of more general characteristics can however be identified. A nature religion can be defined as belief in the existence of a supernatural world and supernatural powers. People feel that their lives are dependent on these powers. The function of the religion is to benefit the individual in his current life, not after his death. The religion moreover leavens the whole society and its culture. There are no priests. Sacrifices are performed by individuals, often the head of a household. The medicine men acts as shamans, and thus establish contacts with the spirits. Cults connected to the ancestors also have an 'unshakeable position'. Another typical trait of such religions is that they contain belief in the existence of both gods and spirits. Gods are seen to exist behind natural phenomena such as thunder, rain, and wind, as well as the sun and the moon. The spirits are however more important than the gods, since they play more significant roles in people's daily life. If we apply this to pre-Christian Scandinavia, it could

further explain the relatively rapid disappearance of the gods, as well the survival of belief in the existence of other supernatural beings.²⁰⁴ It is also interesting to note that beings described in the eddaic mythology were often derived from nature. Þórr originate from thunder and lightning, while Óðinn and Týr may have been modelled on the wind and the sky. Giants have been interpreted as embodiments of ‘the wild and impressive nature of western Norway and Iceland’.²⁰⁵ It is thus possible that the strong personalities of the eddaic gods and other beings were mostly developed by Christian writers, such as Snorri Sturluson.

Some further observations regarding nature religions can be made in order to throw new light on Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom. Scholars have had a tendency to identify human-shaped objects as images of the eddaic gods, since these were formed liked humans.²⁰⁶ Such identifications may however not always be correct. An important part of ‘animism’ is anthropomorphism. This means that, in the same way as dead things can come alive, plants and animals can take human-like shape. The Sámi human-shaped seides have been seen as expressions of this.²⁰⁷ It is thus possible that ‘animism’ and anthropomorphism were part also of Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom. This further suggests that pillars resembling humans need not have represented, or been seen as, the eddaic gods.

It was argued above that magic clearly was very important during the Viking Age and that there may not have been a distinction between religion and magic at this time. On the basis of this, magic was seen as the third strand of pre-Christian religious custom. This is supported by the fact that in nature religions the boundary between religion and magic is not fixed, and cross-overs between the two spheres are very common.²⁰⁸ It was also argued that, even without attempting to weight the individual elements, the gods constituted only one of the three strands of pre-Christian religious custom. The evidence presented in this section has demonstrated that the gods constituted a part that was significantly smaller than this. Thus the importance of the gods, which scholars once saw as the main part of pre-Christian religious custom, must be reduced in favour of more ‘animistic’ beliefs in the existence of spirits and other supernatural beings.

In conclusion: We must now return to the issue of change and continuity from pre-Christian to Christian times in Scandinavia. This section has demonstrated that there was both continuity and change in the cultic ideas and practices of the population after the introduction of Christianity. The

disappearance of the gods constituted a break, which seems to have taken place rather quickly and painlessly. The survival of the other two cultic strands into later times shows that there was also a considerable element of continuity.

4.2. The Nature of Early Christianity in Scandinavia

The communal versus the individual elements in pre-Christian religious custom and early Christianity in Scandinavia will now be considered.

Pre-Christian society appears to have been centred on communal life, leaving little room for the individual. Arne Odd Johnsen argued that this is seen in most areas of life. The family was a unity in 'economic, religious, and legal aspects'. Land was regarded as family property. The judicial system was founded on communal and/or family solidarity. The blood-feud is the most characteristic expression of the family's sense of duty to protect its members. The communal elements of the religious custom are seen particularly in the ancestor cult.²⁰⁹

Pre-Christian religious custom thus seems to have been closely inter-linked with the social, judicial, and political parts of society. Evidence suggests that the execution of rite and cult was handled by members of the community. It also appears that the core of pre-Christian religious custom was constituted by rituals. These regulated both the life of the individual and that of society. They appear to have accompanied the individual from birth to death, and also to have marked seasonal changes. As was pointed out in section 4.1, such rites seem to have been performed at three levels of society, i.e. at local, regional, supra-regional levels. The sacrificial feasts held at supra-regional level appear to have been gatherings for the population of a larger region, under the direction of a king or chieftain. Places named *Hov* or those with names containing the element *vi*, often in conjunction with the name of a god, have been seen as typical sites for such feasts. *Ullvi* provides an example of the latter. This suggests that it was at these sites that the cults related to the gods were performed. The cultic rites at local level were held by the smaller household communities at the farms. The proprietary peasant couples presumably filled important cultic functions at these rituals.²¹⁰ As was suggested in section 4.1, such rites are likely to have been dedicated, not to gods, but to other supernatural beings connected to home and life in general. This is further suggested by *Sighvatr's*

description of the *alfablót* in *Austrfararvisur*. Sighvatr and his travelling companions happened to visit a particular hamlet at a time when cultic rites were held. *Austrfararvisur* states that Sighvatr had, one night, sought lodgings at several farms in this hamlet. He had however been turned away from them all. At one of the farms, he was told that the household was sacrificing to the *alfar*.²¹¹ It was argued in section 4.1 that the second strand of pre-Christian religious custom constituted a more important part than the cults of the gods. If we accept this argument, a large and significant part of the cultic rites would have taken place at a local level.

As we saw above, the pre-Christian cult seems to have been centred on the family and the wider community. There are, however, a few pieces of evidence to suggest that the early Scandinavians could at times experience more personal relationships with supernatural powers. Such evidence has been seen in the Norse literature, for example in a poem attributed to the Christian scald Hallfreðr Óttarsson Vandræðaskald. This poet stated that he had in the past experienced a personal relationship with Oðinn and his fylgia. Another example comes from a scaldic poem contained in Egil Skallagrímsson's Saga. Here, we find the expression 'I was confident in believing him [Oðinn]'.²¹² More accurate information may be provided by Ibn Fadlān's contemporary account of the *Rūs*' sacrificial rites. This account implies that individuals could seek out their cult sites, when they experienced a need for assistance. Their individual trust in the wooden images also appears to have played a part. The Scandinavians' relationship with the images seems to have been rather businesslike, with the exchange of sacrifices for material gains in life. Other sources also suggest that this was a common relationship experienced by pre-Christians in relation to supernatural beings.²¹³ It must, however, be pointed out that also Christians can be seen to have a businesslike relationship with their god. This is expressed through votive offerings, pious deeds, and pilgrimages to holy sites and shrines.

The cultic rituals held at supra-regional level are unlikely to have expressed personal relationships with supernatural powers. The same may apply also to regional and local cult rites. However, local cults in particular, must be seen to have expressed the desires of groups consisting of fewer people. It is possible that relationships of a more individual kind were experienced within the sphere of magic. Those who performed magical practices may have felt that they were able to control or influence matters through their own powers, such as in the healing of illnesses.

It could be argued that Christianity was more individual than pre-Christian religious custom for at least two reasons. One reason could be that the acceptance of baptism was the result of individual faith. Another reason could be that Christians believed that they could influence their afterlife by leading pious lives.²¹⁴ It has already been pointed out that the concept of individual faith did not become widespread until the Renaissance and that faith was not a requirement for baptism. Medieval Christianity was instead focused around rituals, in a similar way as the pre-Christian religious custom.²¹⁵ Chapter 3 demonstrated that missionaries in Scandinavia are likely to have carried out mass baptisms on populations that were largely unaware of the contents of the Christian teachings. Moreover, these 'conversion moments' (i.e. baptisms) were communal experiences, possibly inspired by, or resulting from, decisions taken by the local thing. This further reduces the role of the individual in the acceptance of Christianity. It also demonstrates the importance of Christian rites. Baptism signified entry into the Christian community. After this ceremony, the population was required to follow a Christian lifestyle, and to observe Christian marriage and burial regulations. Early Christian legislation from England, Saxony, and Norway all dealt with outward behaviour, and not issues of faith. These regulations will be discussed in detail in Part III.

The views held by the Scandinavians of how acts and deeds in life could affect the afterlife will now be considered. The Bible includes teachings about paradise, hell, and judgement day. During the conversion period in Scandinavia, ideas about purgatory and the fate of the soul after death were however vague. The issues of personal salvation had thus not yet been established, and a rather wide variation of opinions was present on this matter. A much used theological text by clerics in Scandinavia was that of *Elucidarius*. According to this source, there were several possibilities for the soul after death. These included: to go straight to God and paradise, to suffer temporary torments, to go through purgatory proper, and to end up in hell. The message of clerics in Norway to the local population, before c.1200, can be seen in The Old Norwegian Homily Book. This message was simple: hell is a gruesome place, while paradise is a good place to be. It would not have been possible for clerics to express themselves more clearly if they were to stick to the international Christian dogmas at this time. The message of how the soul should reach paradise was thus transmitted to the population through legends and vague descriptions, which were partly conflicting. This is clearly reflected in the references to Christian eschatology on Swedish rune stones (see section

3.3). As a result of this lack of clarity, it seems to have been a commonly held view in Scandinavia between c. 1000 and 1200, that only those who were not Christian ran the risk of suffering the torments of hell. During these centuries, the theme that Christians could also go to hell if they ignored personal moral rules was increasingly emphasised in theological texts and preachings. It is, however, not clear how strongly clerics in Scandinavia attempted to spread this message to the population.²¹⁶ Private confession is another individual element of Christianity that may not yet have been established as common practice in Scandinavia. It was not made obligatory until 1215, when the Fourth Lateran Council stated that everyone over the age of twelve should confess their sins at least once a year.²¹⁷ It must moreover be pointed out that the earliest extant vernacular translations of the Creed date from the fourteenth century.²¹⁸

The little extant evidence of knowledge of personal salvation and individual belief is provided by rune stones. The expression 'God/Christ help her/his soul' appears on many rune stones. The runic inscription from Vallby parish (Uppland) must again be mentioned. This inscription reads: 'Christ let Tumme's soul come into light and paradise and in the best world for Christians'.²¹⁹ Such inscriptions, together with those that refer to bridge-building,²²⁰ may indicate knowledge of personal salvation and the possibilities of influencing one's own afterlife. Some early Christians may thus have felt that if they built a bridge they would be let into paradise. Acts like bridge-building may at the same time have been inspired by a wish to influence the present life. The latter seems rather similar to the businesslike relationship that pre-Christians appear to have had with supernatural powers.

On the rune stones at Källbyåsen it is stated that the deceased 'had good faith in God' (*hafði goða tro til Guðs*). The inscription from Rörebro reads: '...the good farmer had good faith in God'. Richard Wehner has interpreted these two stones as 'a sign of a generally prevailing conviction of the individual's appreciation of his Christian duty'.²²¹ It has already been pointed out that the concept of individual faith had not yet become widely spread. It can moreover be risky to draw such large conclusions from two isolated cases. Wehner's statement must thus be seen as an over-interpretation. It should also be noted that some rune stones indicate that early Christians experienced themselves as part of a community. The expression 'all Christians' appear in runic inscriptions on the island of Gotland.²²² This is further supported by The Old

Norwegian Homily Book where it is stated that people should ‘pray for themselves and all Christians’.²²³

As was stated in chapter 3, the rune stones can be seen mostly to represent the more wealthy people. The strongest indications of knowledge of Christian concepts thus relate to the upper layers in society. The lack of evidence for this in other groups may not only be caused by the lack of source material. The link between widespread acceptance of Christianity and the upper layers of society has been demonstrated on numerous occasions in this thesis. It is clear that these groups in society were in touch with clerics and missionaries. They are thus the ones who are most likely to have received Christian instruction and individual baptism. It is therefore unlikely that the wider population, i.e. the majority of early Christians, could be familiar with complex concepts such as purgatory, sin, and personal responsibility for the afterlife.

It was shown in Chapter 3 that it was the top layers in society that erected the early churches on their land. This demonstrates a degree of continuity from pre-Christian times when local chieftains fulfilled the cultic functions. In early Christian times, the cult therefore seems to have been carried out in roughly the same places and to have been hosted by the same people (i.e. the local leader). One such example is the island Frösön (i.e. The Island of Freyr), which seems to have been the seat of pre-Christian chieftains. An early private church was built on this island, where evidence of a pre-Christian cult site has also been found. The place-name indicates that Freyr was among the supernatural beings that were venerated on this island. At times, personal continuity, in the sense that local chieftains became the first priests, may also have occurred. This seems to have been the case in Frisia, where evidence indicates that the aristocracy became the first priests. Orri Vésteinsson found that in Iceland, between 1100 and 1175, all priests were chieftains, or sons of chieftains.²²⁴ It has been suggested that magnates’ manors in Jämtland were turned into priests’ settlements (*prästgårdar*). This could indicate a similar development in Scandinavia.²²⁵ Even if this was not the case, it is likely that the local chieftains, as owners of the churches, were the ones who appointed the priests. This was frequently the case in the *Eigenkirchen* in the Frankish Empire. This means that the groups of people, who met to take part in cultic activities at regional and supra-regional levels must have been roughly the same before and after the introduction of Christianity.²²⁶ Therefore, there was a degree of continuity both in the cult and in the social sphere. The break does

not seem to have come until the twelfth century when parishes began to develop as the core of the Christian communities.²²⁷

Many scholars have believed that medieval Christianity emphasised the individual rather than the collective. This has been suggested as one reason why many women in Viking Age Scandinavia seem to have adopted Christianity at an early stage.²²⁸ The women buried in early medieval churchyards were often placed with other women, instead of with their families as was the pre-Christian tradition. Anne-Sofie Gräslund has interpreted this as a sign that women were now regarded as individuals. In view of the evidence presented above, the element of individuality hardly seems to have been present in the period when Gräslund suggests that women were attracted by this. Moreover, the separate burial of women in the churchyards did not give women a unique position. It seems plainly to have been a question of segregation. When this occurred, the men were buried on the south side of the church, while the women were buried on the north side.²²⁹ This type of segregation was practised mostly in the Nordic countries, but it also occurred in other parts of Europe. Some examples include the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Raunds (Northamptonshire) and the cemetery of St. Gertrud in Kiel in Northern Germany.²³⁰ This custom has been connected to the spatial separation of men and women inside the churches, and goes back to the traditions of Ancient Christianity. At this time, such segregation seems to have been carried out as a result of both Jewish and widespread Ancient traditions, and not purely for religious reasons.²³¹ The division of burials in churchyards can also be seen in social terms. According to the Law of the Eidsivathing, the churchyard was divided into four sections for burial of the different layers of society. After close study of the churchyard at Västerhus, one scholar has moreover argued that the segregation is more likely to mirror the secular divisions in society.²³² The separate burial of women must therefore be interpreted more as a sign that early Christianity gave rise to new communal identities, rather than as evidence that women were seen as individuals.

In conclusion: this section has demonstrated that the collective elements, together with the participation in rituals, were dominating traits both in pre-Christian religious custom and in the Christianity of the conversion period in Scandinavia. The concept of individual Christian belief did not become widespread until centuries later. Christianity was, moreover, introduced into a collective society, and it is therefore only natural that this religion, in the same way as the old religious custom, was mostly collective.

Notes to Chapter 4

- 1 The Laws of the Gulathing (GL), Frostathing (FL), Borgarthing (BL), and Eidsivathing (EL). I am grateful to Peter Foote for reading a draft version of parts II and III of this thesis, and for providing valuable and encouraging comments regarding my view of the source-status and the dating of the early Norwegian provincial laws.
- 2 KLM vol. 10, cols. 229-33. The Swedish provincial laws include: the laws of Västergötland (ÄVG and YVG), Uppland (UL), Småland (SL), Södermanland (SdL), Gotland (GutL), Östergötland (ÖL), Hälsingland (HL), Dalarna (DL), and Västmanland (VL).
- 3 Knut Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova* (Leikanger 2001), pp. 11-13; *Den eldre Gulatingslova*, eds, B. Eithun, M. Rindal and T. Ulset (Oslo 1994), pp. 11-22; Knut Helle, *Under kirke og kongemakt 1130-1350. Aschehougs Norges-historie*, vol. 3, ed, Knut Helle (Oslo 1995), p. 18.
- 4 *Frostatingslova*, trs, Jan Ragnar Hagland and Jørn Sandnes (Oslo 1994), pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.
- 5 KLM vol. 2, col. 149 and vol. 3, col. 527.
- 6 Elsa Sjöholm, *Sveriges medeltidslagar. Europeisk rättstradition i politisk omvandling* (Lund 1988); Elsa Sjöholm, 'Sweden's Medieval Laws. European Legal Tradition – Political Change', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 15 (1990), pp. 65-87; Wilhelm E. Wilda, *Das Strafrecht der Germanen* (Aalen 1962, originally published in 1842); Konrad Maurer, *Udsigt over de nordgermanske retskilders historie* (Kristiania 1878); Per Norseng, 'Law Codes as a Source for Nordic History in the early Middle Ages', *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 15 (1991), pp. 137-66, esp. pp. 151-2. It should be noted that, already in the 1930s, Per Nyström put forward ideas similar to those expressed by Sjöholm. See Per Nyström, 'Landskapslagarna', *Historieskrivningens dilemma och andra studier av Per Nyström*, ed, T. Forser (Stockholm 1974), pp. 62-78.
- 7 Sverre Bagge, 'Elsa Sjöholm: *Sveriges medeltidslagar. Europeisk rättstradition i politisk omvandling*, Lund 1988', *Historisk tidsskrift utgitt av den norske historiske forening*, vol. 68 (1989), pp. 500-7, esp. p. 500.
- 8 Bagge, 'Elsa Sjöholm', pp. 500-1.
- 9 Bagge, 'Elsa Sjöholm', pp. 501 and 507.
- 10 Bagge, 'Elsa Sjöholm', pp. 503-4.
- 11 Bagge, 'Elsa Sjöholm', pp. 503 and 507.
- 12 Bagge, 'Elsa Sjöholm', p. 506.
- 13 Ole Fenger, 'Om kildeverden af normative tekster', *Tradition og historieskriving. Kilderne til Nordens ældste historie*, eds, K. Hastrup and P. Meulengracht Sørensen (Aarhus 1987), pp. 39-51; Ole Fenger, 'Elsa Sjöholm: *Gezetze als Quellen mittelalterlichen Geschichte des Norden*', *Historisk Tidsskrift* (Denmark), vol. 79 (1979), pp. 112-24; Ole Fenger, 'Afsluttende bemærkninger', *Historisk Tidsskrift* (Denmark), vol. 81 (1981), pp. 222-5; Norseng, 'Law Codes as a Source for Nordic History', pp. 152 and 154.
- 14 Stefan Brink, 'Law and legal customs in Viking Age Scandinavia', *The Scandinavians from the Vendel Period to the tenth century*, eds, G. Ausenda and J. Jesch (Woodbridge forthcoming); Martina Stein-Wilckshuis, 'Scandinavian Law in a tenth-century Rus'-Greek commercial treaty', *The Community, the Family and the Saint. Patterns of Power in Early Medieval*

- Europe*. Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress University of Leeds 4-7 July 1994, 10-13 July 1995 (Brepols 1998), pp. 311-22.
- 15 Berta Stjernquist, 'Gården, ätten och byn', Synpunkter på förhållandet mellan mark och social organisation', *Hus, gård och bebyggelse, Föredrag från det XVI nordiska arkeologmötet, Island 1982*, ed. G. Ólafsson (Reykjavík 1983), pp. 231-9, esp. pp. 237-9; Norseng, 'Law Codes as a Source for Nordic History', p. 156.
- 16 Details of Iversen's arguments will be presented below. Tore Iversen, 'Jordeie og jordleie – Eiendomsbegreppet i norske middelalderlover', *Collegium Medievale*, vol. 14 (2001), pp. 79-114, esp. p. 84.
- 17 Peter Foote, 'Reflections on *Landabrigðisþáttur* and *Rekaþáttur* in *Grágás*', *Tradition og historieskriving. Kilderne til Nordens ældste historie*, eds. K. Hastrup and P. Meulengracht Sørensen (Aarhus 1987), pp. 53-64, esp. p. 54.
- 18 Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 11 and 17-18; Konrad Maurer, *Die Entstehungszeit der älteren Gulatingslög* (Munich 1872), pp. 56 and 63-4.
- 19 Iversen, 'Jordeie og jordleie', pp. 92-4.
- 20 Maurer, *Die Entstehungszeit der älteren Gulatingslög*, pp. 56-60 and 73.
- 21 Maurer, *Die Entstehungszeit der älteren Gulatingslög*, pp. 62-4 and 67-74; *Sverris saga etter Cod. AM 327^o4*, ed. G. Indrebø (Kristiania 1920) chapters 112 and 117; 'Magnús saga Erlingssonar', *Fagrskinna. Nóregs kononga tal*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1902-3), § 268; Snorri Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 3. *Magnus den gode till Magnus Erlingsson*, tr. Karl G. Johansson (Stockholm 1994), p. 38.
- 22 Ebbe Hertzberg, 'Vore ældste lovtexters oprindelige nedskrivelsestid', *Historiske afhandlinger tilegnet Professor Dr. J.E. Sars paa hans syttiende fødselsdag den ellefte oktober 1905* (Kristiania 1905), pp. 92-117; GL 18, 8-9 and 15.
- 23 Knut Robberstad, *Retts saga*, I (Oslo 1971), pp. 151-5; KLNLM vol. 5, cols. 559-61. It should also be noted that Laurence M. Larson argued that the Gulathing and the Frostathing must 'in considerable part, have taken form in the eleventh century, or as early as the first generation of the Christian age'. *The Earliest Norwegian Laws. Being the Gulathing Law and the Frostathing Law*, ed. and tr. Laurence M. Larson (New York 1935), p. vii.
- 24 *Den eldre Gulatingslova*, p. 11.
- 25 *Den eldre Gulatingslova*, pp. 11-12; *Soga um Hákon Hákonsson etter Sturla Tordarson*, ed. and tr. Kr. Audne (Oslo 1928), chapter 91, pp. 78-9; *Monumenta historica Norvegiae*, ed. G. Storm (Kristiania 1880), pp. 29 and 130.
- 26 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Norsk historie 800-1300. Frå høvdingemakt til konge- og kyrkjemakt* (Oslo 1999), pp. 102-4.
- 27 One example of where oral law seems to have left traces in the text is the habit of beginning a chapter with a hypothetical *no*, which occurs most frequently in those parts of the law that seem to be the oldest. It is argued that *no* was used by the lawmen in order to gain the attention of their listeners. Another such example is that several regulations are expressed in the first person (*ek*), e.g. '...as I now have said'. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 20-3 and 39-43. Absalon Taranger, 'De Norske folkelovbøker (før 1263)', *Tidsskrift for retsvidenskap*, ny række V, (1926), pp. 183-211; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*; GL 314.
- 28 Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 21-2.

- 29 Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 178-80; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, esp. pp. 208-9.
- 30 More detailed descriptions, including primary references, of the similarities between English and Norwegian legislation will be given in footnotes to chapters 5, 6, and 7, where relevant sections of Norwegian legislation are discussed. Some similarities with German legislation will also be highlighted. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 180-2; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*.
- 31 *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, ed, Rudolf Meissner, Germanenrechte, Neue Folge (Weimar 1942), pp. xv-xxxiii; BL I:35.
- 32 *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, pp. xv-xxxiii; BL I:16, I:12, I:8, II:4 and III:4.
- 33 Hertzberg, 'Vore ældste lovtexters oprindelige nedskrivelsestid', pp. 105-6 and 113-6.
- 34 KLNLM vol. 2, cols. 149-50.
- 35 *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, pp. xv-xxxiii.
- 36 Hertzberg, 'Vore ældste lovtexters oprindelige nedskrivelsestid', pp. 106-16.
- 37 KLNLM vol. 5, cols. 593-4 and vol. 4, cols. 656-661; *Frostatingslova*, pp. ix-x. The Norwegian *Grágás* should not be confused with the Icelandic law of the same name.
- 38 *Frostatingslova*, pp. xxxi; FL II:26, II:3, and III:17. The papal letter has been dated to 1162-71.
- 39 *Frostatingslova*, pp. ix-xi; *Sverris saga etter Cod. AM 327^o4*, chapters 112 and 117; 'Magnús saga Erlíngssonar', § 268; Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 3, p. 38.
- 40 KLNLM vol. 4, cols. 660-1.
- 41 KLNLM vol. 18, cols. 351-2; Eric Gunnes, *Rikssamling og kristning 800-1177. Norges historia*, vol. 2, ed, Knut Mykland (Oslo 1976), pp. 126-8; Torstein Jørgensen, 'Kristningen av Norge - naturlig samfunnsutvikling eller resultat av bevisst misjonsstrategi', *Frå haug ok heidni*, no. 2 (1995), pp. 3-14, esp. p. 13.
- 42 Sverre Bagge, 'Law and Justice in the Middle Ages: A Case Study', *Medieval Spirituality in Scandinavia and Europe*, eds, L. Bisgaard et al. (Odense 2001), pp. 73-85, esp. pp. 81-2.
- 43 HE III.8; Wihtrud, cc. 12-13, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 26-7; The First Saxon Capitulary, cc. 6, 7, 9, 21, and 23, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, pp. 205-7.
- 44 Aethelberht, c. 1, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 4-5; The First Saxon Capitulary, cc. 3, 5, and 10, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, pp. 205-6.
- 45 The First Saxon Capitulary, cc. 1 and 2, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 205.
- 46 The First Saxon Capitulary, cc. 15-17. C. 15 stated that 'to each church the people of the area of its jurisdiction are to make over a homestead and two *mansi* of land; and for every 120 men among them,... they are to hand over one *servus* and one *ancilla* to the said church'. See *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, pp. 206-7.
- 47 Brink, 'Law and legal customs in Viking Age Scandinavia'; *Frostatingslova*, pp. xvii-xix.
- 48 It is difficult to establish whether non-Christians religions distinguish between gods and other kinds of supernatural beings. Such a distinction will however be made in this chapter because of the tendency among modern scholars not to include beings such as giants and *vættir* among the pre-Christian gods. Cf. Geo Widengren, *Religionens värld* (Stockholm 1953), pp. 25-6.

- 49 The Old Norse names will be used for the gods in Scandinavia. For Anglo-Saxon England and Saxony, the Old English and the Old German names will be used, respectively. It is important to point out that even though some of the gods bore more or less the same names, there may have been variations in their characteristics between the different geographical areas.
- 50 Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (København 1900); E.O.G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry* (Oxford 1976), pp. xi-lxxx; MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, pp. 15-30, 183, and 196-201; Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen*, pp. 42-9; Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, pp. 229 and 231-3; Britt-Mari Näsström, 'Offerlunden under Frösö kyrka', *Jämtlands kristnande*, ed. Stefan Brink, projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 4 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 65-85, esp. pp. 67-8; Lönnroth, 'En fjärran spegel', pp. 140-3; Anders Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', *Religion från stenålder till medeltid. Artiklar baserade på religionsarkeologiska nätverksgruppens konferens på Lövsadbruk den 1-3 december 1995*, eds. Kerstin Engdahl och Anders Kaliff, Riksantikvarieämbetet Arkeologiska undersökningar, skrifter 19 (Linköping 1996), pp. 25-57; Lindow, 'Mythology and Mythography', pp. 40-1.
- 51 Preben Meulengracht Sørensen has argued that the eddaic poetry can be seen as a limited door to the mythological universe that lay behind the verses. See Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Om eddadigtens alder', p. 224.
- 52 This applies for example to place-names connected to the name Porr. See Per Vikstrand, *Gudarnas platser. Förkristna sakrala ortnamn i Mälardalskapen* (Uppsala 2001), pp. 163-5.
- 53 Margaret Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes. Old Norse myths in medieval Norse Society*, vol. 1, *The myths* (Odense 1994), p. 13.
- 54 It must however be pointed out that the Sámi had been exposed to Christian ideas for roughly as long as the Scandinavians. Samuel Rheen, 'En kortt Relation om Lapperne Lefwarne och Sedher, wijdskieppellsser, sampt i många Stycken Grofwe wildfarellsser', *Bidrag till kännedom om de svenska landsmälen ock svenskt folkliv* 17:1 (Stockholm 1898) (Rheen's article was written in 1671); Edgar Reuterskiöld, ed, *Källskrifter till Lapparnas mytologi*, *Bidrag till vår odlings häfder* 10 (Stockholm 1910); Knut Leem, *Beskrivelse over Finnmarkens Lapper, deres Tungemaal, Levemaade og forrige Afguds-dyrkelse* (København 1975) (This account was originally written in 1767); Johannes Tornæus, 'Berättelse om Lapmarckerna och Deras Tillstånd', *Bidrag till kännedom om de svenska landsmälen ock svenskt folkliv* 17:3 (Stockholm 1901) (This article was written in 1672); Håkan Rydving, *Samisk religionshistorisk bibliografi* (Uppsala 1993); Håkan Rydving, *The End of Drum-Time: Religious Change among the Lule Saami, 1670s-1740s* (Uppsala 1993).
- 55 'Parallels to the Norse word occur widely in the Germanic region: Old High German *wiht*, applied to spirits and men, ...the Anglo-Saxon *wiht* had the generic meaning of 'creature' or sometimes a demoniac being or devilkin.' See MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, p. 228.
- 56 Ljungberg, *Röde Orm och Vite Krist*, p. 117; Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, p. 229. The *Poetic Edda* contains references to supernatural beings of various kinds. *Den poetiska eddan*, tr. Björn Collinder (Örebro 1957). The complex concept of 'animism' has been widely discussed by scholars. See for example: Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion. An Introduction* (Oxford and Malden, Massachusetts 2000), pp. 14-15.
- 57 Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen*, p. 282; Hellström, *Vägar till Sveriges kristnande*, pp. 229-30.

- 58 Gro Steinsland, 'Giants as Recipients of Cult in the Viking Age?', *Words and Objects. Towards a Dialogue Between Archaeology and History of Religion*, ed, Gro Steinsland (Oslo 1986), pp. 212-22, esp. pp. 220-1.
- 59 Stefan Brink, 'Mythologizing Landscape. Place and Space of Cult and Myth', *Kontinuitäten und Brüche in der Religionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Anders Hultgård zu seinem 65. Geburtstag am 23. 12. 2001*, ed, Michael Stausberg (Berlin 2001), pp. 76-112, esp. pp. 85 and 88.
- 60 Gro Steinsland has argued that certain myths and rituals were tied to the rulers in Scandinavian society. She stressed in particular the myths of the holy wedding (*hieros gamos*), between a god and a giantess that is described in number of eddaic poems. This matrimony results in the birth of a child, which is the prototypical *jarl* or king. In *Skirnismál*, the mythological couple consists of Freyr and Gerd. According to Snorri, the son of this alliance is Fjolne, the first of the powerful Ynglinga-kings. The *jarlar* in Trøndelag similarly traced their roots back to a holy alliance between Óðinn and the giantess Skade. It thus seems clear that rulers legitimised their power through links with the mythological gods. Gro Steinsland, 'Hersker-maktens ritualer. Kan mytologien sette oss på spor av riter, gjenstander og kult knyttet til herskerens intronisasjon', *Plats och praxis. Studier av nordisk förkristen ritual*, eds, Kristina Jennbert, Anders Andrén, and Catharina Raudvere (Lund 2002), pp. 87-101; *Den poetiska eddan*, pp. 67-70; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla. Noregs konunga sögur af Snorri Sturluson*, ed, Finnur Jónsson (København 1893-1900), vol. I, pp. 9-85; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 37-8; Lidén, 'De tidlige kirkene', pp. 135-6.
- 61 Magic has been defined as a 'specific mode of human behaviour which disregards natural causality and is based on the expectation of results from men's participation in the universe'. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 81.
- 62 Nilsson, 'Till frågan om kyrkans hållning till icke-kristna kultfenomen', pp. 29-30.
- 63 KLNLM vol. 11, cols. 214-8; Ljungberg. *Den nordiska religionen*, pp. 301-4; Helge Ljungberg, *Formordisk livsåskådning*. Nordens serie utgiven av Föreningen Norden 4 (Stockholm 1943), pp. 28-9. It was mentioned above that historians of religion today include magic in their definitions of religion. Scholars of other disciplines, however, at times still distinguish between religion and magic.
- 64 Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 96.
- 65 Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 96; Flint, *The Rise of Magic*.
- 66 In Theodore's penitential the provisions against magic and sacrifices are found in the chapter named 'of the worship of idols'. Theodore I.xv; Regino question 44; EL I:24. The usage of expressions such as 'idolatry' will be discussed below.
- 67 The Laws of Knut, II, 5, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed, Felix Liebermann (Halle 1903-16), vol. 1, pp. 312-13.
- 68 Cf. Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen*, chapter 11.
- 69 The authorship and date of this penitential have been debated by scholars. It now seems established that the extant documents were not the work of Theodore of Tarsus (Archbishop of Canterbury 665-90) himself. Thomas Charles-Edwards has however pointed out that 'a version of his [Archbishop Theodore's] penitential teaching was already known outside England within a generation of his death'. The *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, which was compiled before 725, contains rules that are quoted as Theodore's. Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'The Penitential of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodori*', *Archbishop Theodore. Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*, ed, M. Lapidge (Cambridge 1995), pp.

- 141-74, esp. pp. 141-2; Allen J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Jersey 1983), pp. 63-5; John T. McNeill, 'Folk-paganism in the Penitentials', *The Journey of Religion XIII* (1933), pp. 450-66, esp. p. 453; *Medieval Handbooks of Penance. A translation of the principle libri poenitentiales and selections from related documents*, eds. and trs, John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer (New York 1938), pp. 179-82; Audrey L. Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Idolators and Ecclesiasts from Theodore to Alcuin; A Source Study', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 5, ed, David Griffiths (Oxford 1992), pp. 103-25, esp. p. 103.
- 70 Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Idolators', p. 117; Audrey L. Meaney, 'Pagan English Sanctuaries, Place-Names and Hundred Meeting-Places', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 8, ed, David Griffiths (Oxford 1995), pp. 29-42, esp. p. 30.
- 71 Theodore I.xv.1; Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Idolators', p. 104; Meaney, 'Pagan English Sanctuaries', p. 30; Achterberg, *Interpretatio Christiana*, pp. 170-1; 'Poenitiale Theodori', *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, eds, Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs (Oxford 1869-78), vol. III, pp. 173-204, esp. p. 189.
- 72 Theodore I.xv.5; *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, p. 190; Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Idolators', p. 104; R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Wordlist from British and Irish Sources* (London 1965); Axel W. Ahlberg, *Latinsk-svensk ordbok*, second edition (Stockholm 1966); Karl Ernst Georges, *Ausführliches lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch aus den Quellen zusammengetragen und mit besonderer Bezugnahme auf Synonymik und Antiquitäten unter Berücksichtigung der besten Hilfsmittel*, eighth edition (Hanover 1918); Lewis, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*.
- 73 Wihtrud cc. 12-13, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 26-7. These provisions may have been inspired by the Penitential of Theodore. See Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Idolators', p. 104. The Laws of Edward and Guthrum, c. 2, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 130-1. These laws were traditionally dated to the beginning of the tenth century. However, D. Whitelock has demonstrated that they most likely date from 1008. See Nilsson, 'Till frågan om kyrkans hållning till icke-kristna kultfenomen', p. 28, n. 58; The Laws of Ethelred, c. 1, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 236-7; The Laws of Knut, II, 5, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 312-13. The prohibitions against the veneration of celestial bodies go back to Late Antiquity and appeared in many ecclesiastical texts during the early Middle Ages. Willhelm Boudriout, *Die altgermanische Religion in der amtlichen kirchlichen Literatur des Abendlandes vom 5. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Bonn 1928), pp. 35-8. Veneration of the sun also appears in Snorri's *Edda* (see above).
- 74 It is also interesting to note that Hans Kuhn has argued a kind of 'Nordic syncretism' emerged in Anglo-Saxon England from the mid-tenth century. Kuhn stated that from this time a new picture of *Oðinn* appeared, which was clearly influenced by Christianity. See Hans Kuhn, 'Das Fortleben des germanischen Heidentums nach der Christianisierung', *La conversione al cristianesimo nell'Europa dell'alto medioevo: 14-19 April 1966, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo* (Spoleto 1967), pp. 743-57, esp. p. 752.
- 75 Theodore I.xv.4. This provision starts by stating that the penance for performing incantations and divinations varies between forty days and one year, 'according to the nature of the offence'. It then carries on to quote a canon that stated that members of the laity should be punished for such offences by a five-year penance. Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Idolators', pp. 113-18; The Laws of Knut, II, 5, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 312-13.

- 76 MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, pp. 18-19; David N. Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *Early Medieval Kingship*, eds, P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds 1977), pp. 72-104, esp. pp. 77-80; David N. Dumville, 'The Anglian collection of royal genealogies and regnal lists', *Anglo-Saxon England* 5 (1976), pp. 23-50; HE I.15; Eric John, 'The Point of Woden', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 5, ed, David Griffiths (Oxford 1992), pp. 126-34; Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (London 1880-88), vol. I, pp. 163-5, and vol. III, appendix I; Margaret Gelling, *Signposts to the Past. Place-names and the History of England* (London 1978), p. 161; *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, eds, M. Lapidge et al. (Oxford 1999), pp. 351-2; David Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London and New York 1992), pp. 11-21.
- 77 Meaney, 'Pagan English Sanctuaries', pp. 34 and 36.
- 78 HE III.8, III.22, III.30, and II.13; John Blair, 'Anglo-Saxon Pagan Shrines and their Prototypes', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 8, ed, David Griffiths (Oxford 1995), pp. 1-28, esp. p. 2.
- 79 HE II.13.
- 80 Blair, 'Anglo-Saxon Pagan Shrines and their Prototypes', p. 2; Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, pp. 30-1.
- 81 Blair, 'Anglo-Saxon Pagan Shrines and their Prototypes', pp. 2-3; Meaney, 'Pagan English Sanctuaries', p. 30.
- 82 Hope-Taylor, *Yeavinger*, esp. pp. 100 and 258-60; Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, pp. 45-7.
- 83 Albert Michael Koeniger, *Die Sendgerichte in Deutschland*, vol. 1, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Seminar München, III. Reihe, Nr. 2 (Munich 1907), pp. 1-2, 15, 102-3, and 181-5; R. W. Dove, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte des deutschen Kirchenrechts. Erster Artikel', *Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht*, IV. Jahrgang (1864), pp. 1-45; R. W. Dove, 'Beiträge zur Geschichte des deutschen Kirchenrechts. Zweiter Artikel', *Zeitschrift für Kirchenrecht*, V. Jahrgang (1865), pp. 1-42; Gottfried Flade, *Vom Einfluss des Christentums auf die Germanen*. Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte, vol. 10, eds, Erich Seeberg, Robert Holzmann, and Wilhelm Weber (Stuttgart 1936), pp. 7-122; Wilfried Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter. Zum geistlicher Gericht über kriminelle Vergehen von Laien im früheren Mittelalter (6.-11. Jahrhundert)', *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, vol. 28, eds, Otto Kresten and Adam Wandruszka (Vienna 1986), pp. 103-24, esp. pp. 109-15.
- 84 This collection was completed in 906. Volume I treats the investigation of the clergy and volume II that of the laity. Punishments were decided with the help of penitentials. Regino provides detailed accounts of the penitentials and council decisions for each of the 89 questions. Koeniger, *Die Sendgerichte*, pp. 134-6 and 160; James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London 1995), pp. 31-2; Flade, *Vom Einfluss des Christentums auf die Germanen*, pp. 1-6; Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', pp. 119-20.
- 85 Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, pp. 80 and 95.
- 86 Boudriout, *Die altgermanische Religion*; Flade, *Vom Einfluss des Christentums auf die Germanen*, p. 4; Koeniger, *Die Sendgerichte*, p. 174; Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', p. 120.
- 87 Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, pp. 32-3; Corr pp. 624-82.
- 88 *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 179 and 217.
- 89 Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', p. 114.

- 90 Nicholas I, 'Nicolae papae epistolae', *MGH Epistolae*, vol. 6 (Berlin 1925), pp. 257-690, esp. p. 612; Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', pp. 114 and 116; 'The Capitulary of Soissons', *MGH Concilia*, vol. III, *Die Konzilien der Karolingischen Teilreiche 843-859*, ed, Wilfried Hartmann (Hanover 1984), pp. 251-93, esp. p. 289; 'The Capitulary of Quierzy', *MGH Concilia*, vol. III, *Die Konzilien der Karolingischen Teilreiche 843-859*, ed, Wilfried Hartmann (Hanover 1984), pp. 403-27, esp. p. 414.
- 91 One such example is the Synod of Mainz in 852. A man named Albgis who had abducted someone else's wife was ordered to do penance for seven years on bread, water and vegetables. At the same synod a murderer by the name of Batto was given a lifelong penance. Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', p. 117; 'The Synod of Mainz', *MGH Concilia*, vol. III, *Die Konzilien der Karolingischen Teilreiche 843-859*, ed, Wilfried Hartmann (Hanover 1984), pp. 235-52, esp. p. 248.
- 92 Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', pp. 121-2; Norbert of Iburg, 'Vita Bennonis II. episcopi Osnabrugensis', *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicum in usus scholarum*, vol. 56 (Hanover 1902), esp. p. 8.
- 93 Almost all evidence of the activities of the synodal courts comes from the eastern parts of the Frankish empire. Hartmann however pointed out that the lack of evidence from the western parts of the empire does not necessarily show that the courts did not function there. He pointed to the evidence that demonstrates that the synodal courts operated also in Italy. Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', pp. 118-20 and 122.
- 94 Regino, *De incantatoribus et sortilegis*, questions 42-5. I am grateful to Monica Hedlund at the Department of Classical Philology at the University of Uppsala for her translation of this text.
- 95 Regino questions 42 and 44-5.
- 96 ...*velut ibi quoddam numen sit quod bonum aut malum posit inferre*. Regino question 43.
- 97 Georges, *Ausführliches lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*; Axel W. Ahlberg, *Latinsk-svensk ordbok*, second edition (Stockholm 1966).
- 98 Brink, 'Mythologizing Landscape', p. 84; Alf Henrikson, *Antikens historier* (Stockholm 1996), vol. II, pp. 24-5, and vol. I, pp. 217-18.
- 99 VB c. 8; *MGH Scriptores*, vol. II (Hanover 1829), pp. 331-353, esp. p. 344; VWb c. 10; *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. VII (Hanover and Leipzig 1920), p. 124; HE III.22; Adam IV:27.
- 100 HE I. 30.
- 101 Boudriout, *Die altgermanische Religion*, pp. 51-60. Belief in werewolves in Germany and Anglo-Saxon England was also pointed out in: MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, pp. 293-4.
- 102 *Saxnote* appears as *Seaxnet* in Anglo-Saxon genealogies. See MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, pp. 18-19.
- 103 Lau, *Die angelsächsische Missionsweise im Zeitalter des Bonifaz*, pp. 60-1; Achterberg, *Interpretatio Christiana*, pp. 69-79. The baptismal formula reads: *Forsachistu diobolae? et respondeat: ec forsachu bolgeldae. end allum dioboles uercum? respendeat: end ec forsacho alum dioboles uercum and uordum tunaer ende woden ende saxnote ende allum them unholdum the hira genotas sint*. This formula is also briefly discussed in chapter 3.
- 104 Boudriout, *Die altgermanische Religion*, pp. 57-60; The *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* is simply a list of thirty 'superstitions and pagan practices' without any

- explanations or comments. *MGH Leges*, vol. I, pp. 19-20; Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme', pp. 18-22.
- 105 MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, pp. 17-18 and 184; Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. I, p. 224.
- 106 ...*quam vana habuissent idolorum*. The First Saxon Capitulary, c. 1, *MGH Leges*, vol. I, pp. 48-50, esp. p. 48, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 205.
- 107 This should be compared to Theodore's provision regarding sacrificed food (*cibum immolatum*). Theodore I.xv.5.
- 108 Corr LXXXII, p. 648; Georges, *Ausführliches lateinisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*; VWb c. 14; *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. VII, p. 128; VS, c. 22; *MGH Scriptores*, vol. II (Hanover 1829) pp. 365-77, esp. p. 376; Altfrid, 'Vita S. Liudgeri episcopi Mimgardfordensis', *MGH Scriptores*, vol. II (Hanover 1829), pp. 403-19, esp. pp. 408 and 410. On these occasions the words *idola* and *simulacra* were used.
- 109 See for example: I Corinthians 10.19-20, Acts 7.41, 3 Genesis 19.4 and 26.1, I Samuel 12.21, Jeremiah 10.1-9.
- 110 GL29; *Blot er oss oc kviðiat at vér scolom eigi blota heiðit guð. ne hauga. ne horga*. See Nilsson, 'Till frågan om kyrkans hållning till icke-kristna kultfenomen', p. 35. *Hørgr* corresponds to Old English *hearg* and Old High German *harug*. See Olaf Olsen, *Hørg, Hov og Kirke*. Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie 1965 (København 1966), p. 75. The meaning of *hørgr* will be discussed below. GL 29 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80.
- 111 Kong Sverres Christenret, c. 79, *Norges Gamle Love indtil 1387*, eds, R. Keyser and P.A. Munch (Christiania 1846-1895), vol. 1, p. 430.
- 112 This law has been dated to the reign of Magnus Lagabøter (1263-80). The Later Law of the Gulathing, c. 3, *Norges Gamle Love*, vol. 2, p. 308; KLNLM vol. 8, col. 100.
- 113 FL III:15; BL I:16; EL I:24. BL I:16 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80.
- 114 ...*bat er vbotaverk, ef maðr sitr vti ok væckir troll vp*. BL I:16. For the dating of BL I:16 see footnote 66 above.
- 115 The Althing decision of c. 1000 outlawed sacrifice, except in secret, and *Grágás* made sacrifices to *vættir* illegal. *Grágás. Islændernes lovbog i fristatens tid*, ed, V. Finsen (København 1852-83), I:7, p. 22; Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen*, p. 279; Nilsson, 'Till frågan om kyrkans hållning till icke-kristna kultfenomen', p. 37.
- 116 EL I:45; BL I:16; GL 28 and 32; FL III:15. GL 28 and 32 and BL I:16 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle also pointed out that in several Anglo-Saxon laws outlawry was prescribed as punishment for performing magic. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80 and 182; e.g. The Laws Edward and Guthrum, c. 2, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 134-5; The Laws of Ethelred, IV, 7, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 248-9.
- 117 GL 31; FL II:42. These regulations applied to animals that had drowned in running water, fallen over cliffs, or been choked by their halter. The Christian dietary regulations will be

- discussed in chapter 5. GL 31 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80.
- 118 GutL I:4. *vi* has been seen as the best linguistic evidence of pre-Christian cult sites. Stefan Brink, 'Fornskandinavisk religion - förhistoriskt samhälle. En bosättningshistorisk studie av centralorter i Norden', *Religion och samhälle i det förkristna Norden. Ett symposium*, eds, Ulf Drobin *et al.* (Odense 1999), pp. 11-55, esp. pp. 32-3; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', pp. 33-4.
- 119 Thunmark-Nylén, 'Samfund och tro på religionsskiftets Gotland', pp. 213-14 and 223.
- 120 *Engin ma haita a huatchi a hult eþa hauga. eþa haþin guþ huatchi avi eþa stafgarþa*. GutL I:4; Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, p. 117.
- 121 UL kyrkobalken 1.
- 122 HL kyrkobalken 1.
- 123 ÄVG tjuvabalken 5:2; ÖLG vådamålsbalken 31:1; UL manhelgdsbalken 19. DL kyrkobalken 11 imposed fines for witchcraft.
- 124 These rune stones are briefly discussed in chapter 3. Krister Ström, 'Thorshammerringe und andere Gegenstände des heidnischen Kults', *Birka II:1 Systematische Analysen der Gräberfunde*, ed, Greta Arwidson, Kungl. Vitterhets och Historie och Antikvitets Akademien (Stockholm 1984), pp. 127-140; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Den tidiga missionen i arkeologisk belysning', pp. 292-5; Åqvist, 'Hall och harg - det rituella rummet', p. 115; KLM vol. 4, col. 157; Miriam Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', *Acta Archaeologica* 68 (1997), pp. 1-74, esp. pp. 25-8.
- 125 Anders Andréén, 'Dörrar till förgångna myter. En tolkning av de gotländska bildstenarna', *Medeltidens födelse. Symposier från Krappereups Borg 1* (Lund 1989), pp. 287-319, esp. pp. 296 and 299; Inger-Lise Kolstrup, 'Ikonografi og religion', *Nordisk Hedendom. Et symposium*, eds, Gro Steinsland *et al.* (Odense 1991), pp. 181-203, esp. pp. 181 and 183.
- 126 Richard Perkins, *Thor the Wind-raiser and the Eyrarland Image*. Viking Society for Northern Research, vol. xv (London 2001), esp. pp. 88-158; Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, no. 101. James Graham-Campbell was one of the scholars who saw the Eyrarland figure as a gaming-piece. He is however now convinced by Richard Perkins' argument that the figure is an image of Þórr. James Graham-Campbell, personal comment; Hans Christiansson, 'Missionstidens konst', *Konsten i Sverige. Fortiden och den första kristna tiden*, eds, Mårten Stenberger *et al.* (Stockholm 1974), pp. 41-86, esp. p. 53; Gro Steinsland, 'Scandinavian Paganism', *From Viking to Crusader. The Scandinavians and Europe 800-1200*, eds, E. Roesdahl and D.M. Wilson (New York 1992), pp. 144-151, esp. p. 147; Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', pp. 10-12.
- 127 Margrethe Watt, 'Guldgubberne fra Sorte Muld, Bornholm. Tanker omkring et muligt hedensk kultcentrum fra yngre jernalder', *Nordisk hedendom. Et symposium*, eds, Gro Steinsland *et al.* (Odense 1991), pp. 373-86; H. R. Ellis-Davidson, *Viking and Norse Mythology* (New York 1982), p. 83. The finds of *guldgubbar* in Scandinavia, with particular focus on the 2,300 *guldgubbar* from Sorte Muld in Denmark, are discussed in the article by Margrethe Watt.
- 128 Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, no. 514; Lidén, 'From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church', pp. 16-19 and 25-7; Wilhelm Holmqvist, 'The Dancing Gods', *Acta Archaeologica* 31 (1960), pp. 101-27, esp. pp. 106-8; *Vatsdælasaga*, chapter 15, ed, Finnur Jónsson, *Samfund*

- til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, vol. LVIII (København 1934-35). Hans-Emil Lidén's argument will be further discussed below, in connection to high seats.
- 129 Birgit Arrhenius, 'Vikingatida miniaturer', *Tor* 7 (1961), pp. 139-64, esp. pp. 141-2 and 157-8; Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, nos. 516 and 519; Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', pp. 24-5.
- 130 Anne Stine Ingstad, 'The Interpretation of the Oseberg-find', *The Ship as Symbol in Pre-Historic and Medieval Scandinavia. Papers from an International Research Seminar at the Danish National Museum, Copenhagen 5th-7th May 1994*, eds, Ole Crumlin Pedersen and Birgitte Munch Thye (København 1995), pp. 139-47, esp. pp. 142-3; Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', pp. 24-5; Arrhenius, 'Vikingatida miniaturer', p. 158; Erik Jonsson, *Oldnordisk ordbog ved det kongelige nordiske oldskrift-selskab* (København 1863); Leiv Heggstad, *Gamalnorsk ordbok med nynorsk tyding. Nyumvølt og auka utgåve av "Gamalnorsk ordbok" ved Hægstad og Torp* (Oslo 1930).
- 131 Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', pp. 17-18; Arrhenius, 'Vikingatida miniaturer', pp. 151-2 and 155; H. R. Ellis-Davidson, *Pagan Scandinavia* (London 1967), p. 96 and plate 41.
- 132 Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', pp. 17-18; Arrhenius, 'Vikingatida miniaturer', pp. 151-2 and 155.
- 133 Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', pp. 17-18; Ingstad, 'The Interpretation of the Oseberg-find', pp. 141-3; Arrhenius, 'Vikingatida miniaturer', pp. 151-2 and 155. For a detailed description of the Oseberg tapestry see: Bjørn Hougen, 'Osebergfunnets billedvev', *Viking* 4 (1940), pp. 85-124.
- 134 Miniature chairs have been found e.g. at Birka, on Gotland, and in several places in Denmark (including Fyrkat and Hedeby). Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, no. 520; Arrhenius, 'Vikingatida miniaturer', pp. 149-50 and 156-7; Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark', pp. 21-22.
- 135 These difficulties have previously been highlighted by Signe Horn Fuglesang, who stated that apart from the hammer symbol, none of the attributes on Viking Age amulets were 'obvious' and identifications with Óðinn, Þórr, and Freyr rest 'mainly on inference'. Signe Horn Fuglesang, 'Viking and medieval amulets in Scandinavia', *Forvannen* 84 (1989), pp. 15-27, esp. p. 16.
- 136 Koktvergaard Zeiten, 'Amulets and amulet use in Viking Age Denmark'.
- 137 Stefan Brink, 'När norrlänningen bytte religion', *Helgonet i Nidaros. Olavskult och kristnande i Norden*, ed, Lars Rumar, Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet 3 (Stockholm 1997), pp. 240-52, esp. pp. 246-9; Olsen, *Hørg, Hov og Kirke*, p. 106; Vikstrand, *Gudarnas platser*.
- 138 Harald Andersen, 'Vier og lunde', *Skalk*, no. 1 (1998), pp. 15-27. Andersen stated that "Thor" is part of many personal names. It can thus be difficult to establish if the names containing this element were named after the god or after a person.
- 139 Ola Stemshaug, *Namn i Noreg* (Oslo 1976), pp. 33, 96, and 108.
- 140 John Kousgård Sørensen, 'The Change of Religion and the Names', *Old Norse and Finnish Religions and Cultic Place-Names*, ed, Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo 1991), pp. 394-403, esp. pp. 397-9.
- 141 One possible exception is Goodmanham. In his description of this cult site, Bede stated that 'today it is called Goodmanham'. It could thus be suggested that this site had had a cultic name in pre-Christian times. HE II.13.

- 142 Cf. Brink, *Sockenbildning och sockennamn*, pp. 53-4.
- 143 Adam IV:26. Adam also stated that the English missionary Wulfred chopped up an idol of Þórr, and that Bishops Adalvard and Eginio destroyed idols in Götaland. According to Adam, one of these was a statue of Freyr. Adam did however not provide any descriptions of these figures. Adam II:62; IV:9, and IV:30.
- 144 Else Nordahl, '...templum quod Ubsola dicitur' i arkeologisk belysning, *Aun* 22 (Uppsala 1996); Magnus Alkarp, 'Källan, lunden och templet - Adam av Bremens Uppsala-skildring i ny belysning', *Fornvännen* 92 (1997), pp. 155-61; Ann Catherine Bonnier, 'Gamla Uppsala - från hednatempel till sockenkyrka', *Kyrka och socken i medeltidens Sverige*, ed. O. Ferm (Stockholm 1991), pp. 81-111, esp. pp. 81-92; Tore Nyberg, 'Adam av Bremen', Unpublished paper presented at Arkeologiskt-historiskt-medeltida symposium 3-4 April 1997 in Alingsås, Sweden. Olof Sundqvist gives a good overview of the various criticisms of Adam's description of Gamla Uppsala. See Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, pp. 106-23.
- 145 This was the case with the wooden phallus from Danevirke, which has been interpreted as a part of a 'fertility effigy'. Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, no. 512.
- 146 EL I:24.
- 147 KLMN vol. 17, cols. 38-41; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', pp. 34-5 and 49-50; Klaus Düwel, *Das Opferfest von Lade. Quellenkritische Untersuchungen zur germanischen Religionsgeschichte*, Wiener Arbeiten zur germanischen Altertumskunde und Philologie 27, ed. H. Birkhan (Vienna 1985), pp. 38-48.
- 148 Jonsson, *Oldnordisk ordbog*; Heggstad, *Gamalnorsk ordbok med nynorsk tyding*.
- 149 GutL I:4; Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, p. 114; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', pp. 34 and 50; Stefan Brink, 'Forsaringen - Nordens äldsta lagbud', *Beretning fra femtende tværfaglige vikingesymposium*, eds. Else Roesdahl and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen (Aarhus 1996), pp. 27-55, esp. p. 37.
- 150 FL I:2; KLMN vol. 18, col. 374.
- 151 Ingemar Olsson, *Gotlands stavgardar. En ortnamnsstudie* (Visby 1976), pp. 95-103 and 120-1.
- 152 *Norges Gamle Love*, vol. 2, p. 496 and vol. 5, p. 561; KLMN vol. 12, cols. 517-18 and 295-6. The *nidstong* should be compared to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of placing animals' heads on pillars. See Meaney, 'Pagan English Sanctuaries', pp. 30 and 38-9 (n. 23).
- 153 Brink, 'Mythologizing Landscape', pp. 90-1.
- 154 Bengt Cnattingius, 'Rödsten', *Meddelanden från Östergötlands och Linköpings Stads Museum 1954-5*, pp. 35-50; Torun Zachrisson, 'Folkliga föreställningar', *Fornlämningar och folkminnen*, eds. Mats Burström, Björn Winberg, and Torun Zachrisson (Stockholm 1996), pp. 87-103, esp. pp. 93-4; Åke V. Ström, 'Die Hauptriten des Wikingerzeitlichen Nordischen Opfers', *Festschrift Walter Baetke. Dargebracht zu seinem 80. Geburtstag am 28 März 1964* (Weimar 1966), pp. 330-42, esp. pp. 331-4.
- 155 The height of the posts varied between 50 and 54 centimeters, and the length of the handles between 52 and 74 centimeters. Sigurd Grieg, 'Kongsgaarden', *Osebergsfundet utgit av den Norske stat*, eds. A.W. Brøgger and Haakon Schetelig, vol. II (Oslo 1928), pp. 1-286, esp. pp. 65-6; Haakon Schetelig, 'Vestfoldskolen', *Osebergsfundet utgit av den Norske stat*, eds. A.W. Brøgger, Hj. Falk, and Haakon Schetelig, vol. III (Kristiania 1920), pp. 1-448, esp. pp. 70-83, 113-35 and 153-62.

- 156 Peter Foote and David M. Wilson, *The Viking Achievement. The Society and Culture of Early Medieval Scandinavia* (London 1970), pp. 160 and 400; KLNLM vol. 7, cols. 290-4 and vol. 4, col. 104; *Íslendingabók: Landnámabók*, ed, Jakob Benediktsson, Ízlensk fornrit, vol. 1 (Reykjavík 1968), e.g. SH 8-9, and S297 (H258); 'Eyrbyggja saga', *Íslendinga sögur*, eds, Grímur M. Helgason and Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavík 1969), pp. 1-142, chapters 4-6; Lidén, 'From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church', pp. 17-18; Johan Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog* (Kristiania 1893), vol. 3; Emil Birkeli, *Høgsætet. Det gamle ondvege i religionshistorisk belysning* (Stavanger 1932), pp. 1-36. Hans-Emil Lidén has argued that the excavations at Mære have exposed the remains of a high seat. A number of *guldgubbar* were found in four post-holes of a Viking Age structure. The posts do not seem to have had any structural function. According to the *Landnámabók*, Torraddr the Old, a chieftain and priest at Mære, brought his 'high seat post' to Iceland. The *Vatsdælasaga* furthermore stated that a man named Ingemund had been given the 'weight on which "Froy was stamped in silver"' as a gift from the king. He lost his treasure, but was told by a prophetess that he would find it when he built his farm on Iceland. Later, Ingemund settled in Iceland, and when he dug the holes for the high seat posts, he found his weight again. *Vatsdælasaga*, chapter 15; Lidén, 'From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church', pp. 17-18.
- 157 Ibn Fadlān's travel account, chapter 92, *Araber Vikingar Væringar*, ed. and tr, Stig Wikander, Svenska Humanistiska Förbundet 90 (Norrtälje 1978), p. 69.
- 158 There are further parallels between Ibn Fadlān's account and the archaeological evidence from the Isle of Man. Ibn Fadlān stated that one female slave as well as various animals were sacrificed and cremated at the funeral. At Ballateare, evidence of human sacrifice was found. Remains of offerings of livestock were found both at Ballateare and Balladoole. Ibn Fadlān's travel account, chapters 87-92, pp. 65-9; Gerhard Bersu and David Wilson. *Three Viking Graves in the Isle of Man*. The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series: No. I (London 1966), pp. 10 and 51.
- 159 Egon Wamers, 'The Symbolic Significance of the Ship-graves at Haiðaby and Ladby', *The Ship as Symbol in Pre-Historic and Medieval Scandinavia. Papers from an International Research Seminar at the Danish National Museum, Copenhagen 5th-7th May 1994*, eds, Ole Crumlin Pedersen and Birgitte Munch Thye (København 1995), pp. 148-59, esp. pp. 148-9.
- 160 Martin Carver, 'Boat-burial in Britain: Ancient Custom or Political Signal?', pp. 115-16; Carver, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Sutton Hoo: An Interim Report', pp. 355-7.
- 161 GL 29; KLNLM vol. 5, cols. 119-21; Emil Birkeli, *Fedrekult i Norge. Et forsøk på den systematisk-deskriptiv fremstilling* (Oslo 1938); Emil Birkeli, *Huskult og hinsidestro. Nye studier over fedrekult i Norge* (Oslo 1944); Emil Birkeli, *Fedrekult fra Norsk folkeliv i hedensk og Kristen tid* (Oslo 1943); Arne Odd Johnsen, *Fra ættesamfunn til statssamfunn* (Oslo 1948), pp. 119-60; Brink, 'Mythologizing Landscape', pp. 85-6; Anne-Sofie Gråslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', p. 142. For the dating of GL 29 see footnote 63 above.
- 162 VA 26.
- 163 Voss, 'Hørning-graven. En kammergrav fra o. 1000 med kvinde begravet i vognfading'.
- 164 ...*matblot eða læirblot gort i mannzliki af læiri eða af dægi*. EL I:24.
- 165 The importance of food in pre-Christian religious custom will be further discussed in part III.
- 166 Finally some kind of building may have been erected over the images. See Olsen, *Hørg, Hov og Kirke*, p. 110. For a detailed investigation of *hørg* (*harg*) in place-names see: Allan Rostvik, *Har och harg* (Uppsala 1967), pp. 14-96.

- 167 Peter Riismøller, 'Frøya fra Rebild', *Kuml* 1952, pp. 119-32; Harald Andersen, 'Hun er Moder Jord', *Skalk*, no. 4 (1961), pp. 7-11; Wijnand Van der Sanden and Torsten Capelle, *Götter, Götzen, Holzmenschen* (Oldenburg 2002), pp. 20 and 82-3.
- 168 Vilhelm Grønbech, *Vor folkætt i oldtiden I-IV* (København 1909-12), vol. 4, p. 7.
- 169 Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', p. 50.
- 170 Van der Sanden and Capelle, *Götter, Götzen, Holzmenschen*, pp. 101-2.
- 171 Ibn Fadlān's travel account, chapter 85, *Araber Vikingar Våringar*, pp. 64-5; *Ibn Fadlāns Reisebericht*, ed. A. Zeki Validi Togan, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes XXIV*, 3 (Leipzig 1939), pp. 86-7; *Putešestvie Ibn-Fadlana na Volgu*, ed. and tr. I. Krakovskij, USSR Academy of Sciences (Moscow and Leningrad 1939), pp. 79-80. The two latter works were consulted in order to get a closer understanding of Ibn Fadlān's original text. All three translations are based on a document found in 1923 by A. Zeki Validi Togan. The text in this document was somewhat better than those previously known.
- 172 Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', p. 46.
- 173 See for example: I Corinthians 10.19-20; Acts 7.41.
- 174 I would like to thank Neil Price at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Uppsala for his valuable comments on the Sámi material.
- 175 Dag Strömbäck, *Sejd och andra studier i nordisk själsuppfattning*. Med bidrag av Bo Almqvist, Gertrud Gidlund, Hans Mebius, ed. Gertrud Gidlund (Hedemora 2000), pp. 196-7. Strömbäck's study was originally published in 1935. It was reprinted with contributions by present-day scholars in 2000.
- 176 Inger Zachrisson, 'Saamis - Swedes - Russians - Organised Cooperation or not', *Nordisk TAG. Rapport fra den første nordiske TAG-konference i Helsingør, 15-17 november 1985*, ed. K. Kristiansen (København 1987), pp. 75-86, esp. pp. 75-6; Lars Werdelin, 'The stature of some medieval Swedish populations', *Fornvännen* 80 (1985), pp. 131-41, esp. pp. 136-41.
- 177 Rheen, *En kortt Relation om Lappernes Lefwarne*, pp. 35-7; Reuterskiöld, *Källskrifter till Lapparnas mytologi*, pp. 32-3 and 56; T. I. Itkonen, *Heidnische Religion und spätere Aberglaube bei den finnischen Lappen* (Helsinki 1946), p. 1; Uno Holmberg, *Finno-Ugric, Siberian. The Mythology of All Races in Thirteen Volumes*, ed. John Arnold MacCulloch, vol. IV (Boston 1927), pp. 217-18; Hans Mebius, *Värrö. Studier i samernas förkristna offerriter* (Uppsala 1968), pp. 80-102; Axel Olrik and Hans Ellekille, *Nordens Gudeverden*, vol. 1, *Vætter og Helligdomme* (København 1926-1951), pp. 105-144.
- 178 Inga Serning, *Lapska offerplatsfynd från järnålder och medeltid i de svenska lappmarkerna* (Uppsala 1956), p. 106; Elisabet Iregren, 'Under Frösö kyrka – ben från en vikingatida offerlund?', *Arkeologi och religion. Rapport från arkeologidagarna 16-18 januari 1989*, eds. L. Larsson and B. Wyszomirska. University of Lund. Institute of Archaeology report series 34 (Lund 1989), pp. 119-33. Anne-Sofie Gräslund stated that the similarities between Frösön and Unna Saiva could suggest that Sámi influences were reinterpreted by the Scandinavians according to their own religious custom. As will be shown below, these similarities are more likely to express the similarities between the Scandinavian and the Sámi pre-Christian religious customs. See Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 104-5.
- 179 Folke Ström, *Nordisk hedendom. Tro och sed i förkristen tid* (Göteborg 1961), pp. 106 and 114-15; Lotte Hedeager, 'Odins offer. Skygger af en shamanistisk tradition i nordisk folkevandringsstid', *Tor* 29 (1997), pp. 265-78; Karl Hauck, 'Text und Bild in einer oralen Kultur.

- Antworten auf die zeugniskritische Frage nach der Erreichbarkeit mündlicher Überlieferungen im frühen Mittelalter', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, Jahrbuch des Instituts für Frühmittelalterforschung der Universität Münster, ed, Karl Hauck, vol. 17 (Berlin), pp. 510-645; Ronald Grambo, 'Problemer knyttet til studiet av seid.' *Nordisk hedendom. Et symposium*, eds, Gro Steinsland *et al.* (Odense 1991), pp. 133-40; Georges Dumézil, *De nordiske guder* (København 1969); Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (London 1989); Thomas A. DuBois, *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age* (Philadelphia 1999), chapter 6: 'The Intercultural Dimensions of the Seiðr Ritual', pp. 121-38; P. Buchholz, 'Shamanism – the testimony of Old Icelandic literary tradition', *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 4 (1971), pp. 7-20; Strömbäck, *Sejd och andra studier i nordisk själsuppfattning*, pp. 160-206; KLNLM vol. 15, cols. 76-9. It is also interesting to note that Walter Burkert has identified shamanistic patterns among the Ancient Greeks. See Walter Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred. Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London 1996), pp. 67-9. For discussions of shamanism in various parts of the world see: *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed, Neil S. Price (London and New York 2001).
- 180 Hans Mebius, 'Dag Strömbäck och den fornnordiska sejden', *Sejd och andra studier i nordisk själsuppfattning*. Med bidrag av Bo Almqvist, Gertrud Gidlund, Hans Mebius, ed, Gertrud Gidlund (Hedemora 2000), pp. 273-306, esp. pp. 293-4.
- 181 Hedeager, 'Odins offer'; Strömbäck, *Sejd och andra studier i nordisk själsuppfattning*, pp. 160-206. In this context, attention must be drawn to Margaret Clunies Ross' critical review of Lotte Hedeager's book *Skygger af en anden virkelighet: Oldnordiske myter*. Samlerens Universitetet (Haslev 1997). See Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Lotte Hedeager, *Skygger af en anden virkelighet: Oldnordiske myter*. Samlerens Universitetet (Haslev 1997)', *Alvismál* 8 (1998), pp. 113-14.
- 182 Tornæus, *Berättelse om Lapmarckerna*, pp. 26-7; KLNLM vol. 1, col. 288; Rafael Karsten, *Samefolkets religion. De nordiska lapparnas hedniska tro och kult i religionshistorisk belysning* (Stockholm 1952), p. 19; Erik Daunius, 'Om de hedniska lapparnas gudabilder', *Västerbotten. Västerbottens läns hembygdsförenings årsbok 1926*, pp. 17-85, esp. p. 53.
- 183 Rheen, *En kortt Relation om Lappernes Lefwarne*, p. 36.
- 184 Tornæus, *Berättelse om Lapmarckerna*, p. 27; KLNLM vol. 1, cols. 288-9; Serning, *Lapska offerplatsfynd från järnålder och medeltid*, pp. 11-12; Ørnulv Vorren, 'Sacrificial Sites, Types and Function', *Saami Religion. Based on Papers read at the Symposium on Saami Religion held at Åbo, Finland, on 16th-18th August 1984*, ed, Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo 1987), pp. 94-109; Ørnulv Vorren, 'Circular sacrificial sites and their function', *Sámi Pre-Christian Religion. Studies on the oldest traces of religion among the Sámis*, eds, Louise Bäckman and Tore Ahlbäck (Stockholm 1985), pp. 69-82.
- 185 Tornæus, *Berättelse om Lapmarckerna*, p. 27.
- 186 Serning, *Lapska offerplatsfynd från järnålder och medeltid*, pp. 13-14.
- 187 Rheen, *En kortt Relation om Lappernes Lefwarne*, p. 39; Holmberg, *Finno-Ugric, Siberian*, pp. 100-14; Karsten, *Samefolkets religion*, pp. 22, 24, and 28.
- 188 Karsten, *Samefolkets religion*, pp. 28-9; Holmberg, *Finno-Ugric, Siberian*, p. 104; Lars Ivar Hansen, 'Politiske og religiøse sentra i Nord-Norge. Sentrumfunksjoner i en flerkulturell kontekst', *Religion och samhälle i det förkristna Norden. Ett symposium*, eds, Ulf Drobin *et al.* (Odense 1999), pp. 71-108, esp. p. 102; Rheen, *En kortt Relation om Lappernes Lefwarne*, p. 40.
- 189 Leem, *Beskrivelse over Finnmarkens Lapper*, p. 441; Holmberg, *Finno-Ugric, Siberian*, p. 111.

- 190 EL I:45; BL I:16. For the dating of BL I:16, see footnote 66 above. Meissner has pointed out that EL I:45 seems ‘particularly old’ since it is stated that the property of those who were outlawed should be divided between the bishop, the king, and the outlaws themselves. *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathing*, pp. xxii-xxiii.
- 191 Vorren, ‘Sacrificial Sites, Types and Function’, pp. 104-8; Vorren, ‘Circular sacrificial sites and their function’, pp. 69-82.
- 192 Folke Ström, *Nordisk hedendom*, pp. 89 and 198-9; Anders Hultgård, ‘Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?’, pp. 35-6.
- 193 The *vittra* place-names are: Vitterstenen (the stone of the *vittra*), Vitterhällarna (the flat rocks of the *vittra*), and Vitterfåla (the foot-print of the *vittra*). Vitterstenen refers to a large rock with indentations, in which the *vittra* were believed to live. Vitterhällarna are flat rocks with large holes, where the *vittra* were believed to have cooked their food. Vitterfåla is a stone with a presumed foot-print of a *vittra*. These features are all situated in the parish of Bjurholm, Västerbottens län. I am grateful to Torun Zachrisson for providing me with material from her inventory of this parish.
- 194 This argument was based on the fact that the element *lund* (grove) appears in connection with a large number of different gods. See Vikstrand, *Gudarnas platser*, p. 291.
- 195 Lidén, ‘From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church’, p. 15.
- 196 Burial mounds could possibly also be added to the objects on this list.
- 197 *De cultura idolorum*. Theodore I.xv; *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, p. 189.
- 198 Regino question 44. *Perscrutandum si aliquis subulcus vel bubulcus sive venator vel caeteri hujusmodi dicat diabolica carmina super panem aut herbas et super quaedam nefaria ligamenta, et haec aut in arbore abscondat, aut in bivio aut in trivio projiciat, ut sua animalia liberet a peste et clade, et alterius perdat: quae omnia idololatriam esse nulli fideli dubium est, et ideo summopere sunt exterminanda.* [my underlining]
- 199 Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen*, pp. 82-8. See also chapter 1 and section 3.3 of this thesis.
- 200 Ljungberg, *Den nordiska religionen*, pp. 45 and 290.
- 201 Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 1, pp. 8-12; Lindow, ‘Mythology and Mythography’, pp. 40-1.
- 202 Alf Henrikson, *Antikens historier*, vol. II, pp. 24-5, and vol. I, pp. 217-18. For the Ancient Greek and Roman religions see: Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion. Archaic and Classical*, tr. John Raffan (London 1985) and Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred*.
- 203 Anders Hultgård has previously argued that Scandinavian pre-Christian religious custom bore clear traits of a nature religion, but without developing this argument further. See Hultgård, ‘Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?’, p. 28. It is however important to point out that ‘nature religions’ as such do not exist, but are scholarly constructions.
- 204 Åke Hultkrantz, ‘Naturfolkens religion’, *Primitiv religion och magi. Naturfolkens trosliv i regional belysning*, ed. Åke Hultkrantz, second edition (Stockholm 1968), pp. 1-18.
- 205 MacCulloch, *Eddic Mythology*, pp. 192-4; Steinsland, ‘Giants as Recipients of Cult in the Viking Age?’, p. 212; Ellis-Davidson, *Viking and Norse Mythology*, pp. 51-59.
- 206 Two such examples are Peter Riismøller and Harald Andersen. See Riismøller, ‘Frøya fra Rebild’ and Andersen, ‘Vier og lunde’.

- 207 Hultkrantz, 'Naturfolkens religion', pp. 8-9.
- 208 Cf. Hultkrantz, 'Naturfolkens religion', p. 12.
- 209 Johnsen, *Fra ættesamfunn til statssamfunn*, pp. 68-75 and 119-21; C. F. Hallencreutz pointed out that the collective nature of the blood-feud is evidenced also on rune stones, where the death of an individual is the concern of the family and relatives. See Hallencreutz, 'Runstenarnas teologi', pp. 54-5.
- 210 Steinsland and Meulengracht Sørensen, *Människor och makter i vikingarnas värld*, pp. 71-2; Folke Ström, *Nordisk hedendom*, p. 70; Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, pp. 170-9; Brink, 'När norrlänningen bytte religion', pp. 246-9; Helge Ljungberg, 'Trúa. En ord-historisk undersökning till den nordiska religionshistorien', *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* 62 (1947), pp. 151-71, esp. pp. 170-1; Ljungberg, *Fornnordisk livsåskådning*, p. 42-3.
- 211 Folke Ström, *Nordisk hedendom*, pp. 89 and 199; Anders Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', pp. 35-6.
- 212 Åke V. Ström, 'Personal Piety in Nordic Heathenism', *Old Norse and Finnish Religions and Cultic Place-Names*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo 1991), pp. 374-80, esp. pp. 374-5; Carl-Martin Edsman, 'Vikingar och Vite Krist. Om Religionsskiftet i Norden', *Saga och sed*, ed. Lennart Elmevik, Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademiens Årsbok 1991, pp. 37-49, esp. pp. 40-1; Egil saga Skalla-Grímsonar, p. 367.
- 213 Cf. Sullivan, 'The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan', p. 722.
- 214 Wehner, *Svenska runor vittnar*, p. 27; Beskow, 'Runor och liturgi'; Beskow, 'Runornas vittnesbörd'; Gro Steinsland, 'Religionsskiftet i Norden og *Voluspá* 65', *Nordisk hedendom. Et symposium*, eds, Gro Steinsland et al. (Odense 1991), pp. 335-46, esp. p. 339.
- 215 Nedkvitne, 'Ny tro, nye mentaliteter?', p. 107.
- 216 KLNLM vol. 3, cols. 598-602, and 438-44; Arnved Nedkvitne, *Møte med døden i norrøn middelalder. En mentalitetshistorisk studie* (Oslo 1997), chapter II; Nedkvitne, 'Ny tro, nye mentaliteter?', pp. 102-5; Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, tr. A. Goldhammer (London 1984), pp. 96-234. The Life of Ansgar contains several references to purgatory and heaven. See Hallencreutz, 'Missionary Spirituality', p. 112; Bertil Nilsson, 'Från gravfält till kyrkogård', *Kristnandet i Sverige. Gamla källor och nya perspektiv*, ed. Bertil Nilsson. Projektet Sveriges kristnande, publikationer 5 (Uppsala 1996), pp. 349-385, esp. p. 376; *Gamla norsk homiliebok: Cod AM 691°4*.
- 217 KLNLM vol. 2, cols. 181-9. Recent scholars seem to agree that private confession had been established on the Continent before 1215, and that the Fourth Lateran Council thus only bolstered an existing practice. Rob Meens, 'The Frequency and Nature of Early Medieval Penance', *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages*, York Studies in Theology II, eds, P. Biller and A.J. Minnis (York 1998), pp. 35-61.
- 218 KLNLM vol. 2, col. 601.
- 219 *Kristr lati koma and Tuma i lius ok paradisi ok i þann hæim bæzta kristnum*. See Jansson, *Runinskrifter i Sverige*, pp. 118-9 for this text and also for other examples.
- 220 The runic inscriptions with references to bridge-building are discussed in chapter 3.
- 221 Jansson, *Runinskrifter i Sverige*, p. 121; Wehner, *Svenska runor vittnar*, p. 27.
- 222 Wehner, *Svenska runor vittnar*, p. 27. The expression 'all Christians' may correspond to 'Christendom', a widespread notion in the Middle Ages.

- 223 *Gamal norsk homiliebok: Cod AM 691^o4*, p. 87. I am grateful to Peter Foote for drawing my attention to this homily, and for translating the text cited above.
- 224 Orri Vésteinsson, *The Christianization of Iceland. Priests, Power, and Social Change 1000-1300* (Oxford 2000), pp. 182-90. See also Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Forholdet mellom verdslig og religiøs makt på Island i fristatsperioden', *Myte og ritual i det førkristne Norden. Et symposium*, eds, P. Schjødt et al. (Odense 1994), pp. 129-139, esp. pp. 134-7.
- 225 Vikstrand, 'Jämtland mellan Frö och Kristus', pp. 91-2; Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, pp. 306-11.
- 226 This type of continuity can also be found at local level. This matter will be discussed in chapter 8.
- 227 Nedkvitne, 'Ny tro, nye mentaliteter?', p. 107.
- 228 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', p. 330; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Runstenskivnorna ännu en gång', p. 462; Birgit Sawyer, *Kvinnor och familj i det forn- och medeltida Skandinavien*, p. 81.
- 229 The cemeteries of Västerhus (Jämtland), Frösäter (Uppland), Karleby (Västergötland), and Garde (Gotland) provide some examples of segregated churchyards. It must be pointed out that not all early medieval churchyards were segregated. Moreover, when this type of segregation was carried out, it was not always strictly followed. The location of children's graves vary. They often seem to be located in the 'high status areas' of the churchyards, or even inside the churches. There are also numerous cases where clusters of children's graves have been found. Jörn Staecker, 'Searching for the Unknown. Gotlands churchyards from a Gender and Missionary perspective', *Lund Archaeological Review* 2 (1996), pp. 63-86, esp. pp. 65, 70, and 73; N.G. Gejvall, *Westerhus. Medieval Population and Church in the Light of Skeletal Remains* (Lund 1960); Kristina Jonsson, 'Bland barnaföderskor, spädbarn och "vuxna barn" - social och religiös kontroll speglad i gravmaterialet från Västerhus', *Meta*, no. 4 (1999), pp. 12-35; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kristnandet ur ett kvinnoperspektiv', p. 330; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, p. 85.
- 230 Staecker, 'Searching for the Unknown', p. 73; Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture. The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London 1994), p. 134; Andy Boddington, 'Raunds, Northamptonshire: analysis of a country churchyard', *World Archaeology* 18:3 (1987), pp. 411-25, esp. p. 420.
- 231 Ecclesiastical writers have seen this division as mirroring the different roles of men and women in the fight against evil. Bertil Nilsson, *Kvinnor, män och barn på medeltida begravningsplatser*, pp. 27-51.
- 232 EL I:50; Kristina Jonsson, 'Bland barnaföderskor, spädbarn och "vuxna barn"', p. 29.

Part III

THE REGULATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN EARLY CHRISTIAN SCANDINAVIA

The three chapters contained in this section will examine medieval rulers' and clerics' attempts to regulate the life of the wider population. The most important sources are the 'fifth type' of ecclesiastical regulations, i.e. the laws that decreed the observance of certain Christian practices. Through studies of Anglo-Saxon, Continental, and Norwegian laws, it will be argued that five Christian practices were included in the legislation issued during stage 2 of conversion, i.e. the observance of fast and feast days, marriage regulations, churchyard burial, and baptism. These regulations appear to have been the ones that made the largest impact on the daily life of the population. Chapter 5 deals with the laws of forbidden food. In chapter 6 the introduction of the fasting provisions will be discussed. Chapter 7 concerns work, another important aspect of daily life, and also the three significant life events of marriage, baptism, and burial.

Laws concerning these five practices appear in all four of the Norwegian provincial laws. In the Law of the Gulathing, they are included in the sections attributed to Olav, i.e. the parts that are regarded as the oldest. They are also among the regulations that Knut Helle identified as those presented by King Olav at the thing of Moster, and which are now found in the laws of the Gulathing and the Borgarthing. Also the laws of the Eidsivathing and the Frostathing contained regulations regarding the same five Christian practices. These regulations are, however, at times more difficult to date, since the law of the Eidsivathing, and particularly that of the Frostathing, contain a larger number of later additions. Following the thoughts of Absalon Taranger, it does however not seem unreasonable to assume that regulations concerning the five practices to the same effect as those in the laws of the Gulathing and the Borgarthing, were included in also the earliest laws of the Eidsivathing and the Frostathing. These laws are likely to have appeared in the time when Christianity was first introduced, or at least in the duration of stage 2 of the

conversion. In this context, we should keep in mind that Knut Helle stated that the regulations which he argued were issued by Olav Haraldson were those necessary in order to make 'the early church work'.¹

Finally it should be noted that, in the following chapters, some of the more complex regulations in the laws will also be discussed, although they may have been introduced after stage 2 of the conversion.

Chapter 5

Christian Dietary Regulations

This chapter will investigate the Scandinavian clergy's attitude to feasts that originated from pre-Christian traditions, and also their introduction of Christian dietary regulations. An attempt will be made to establish the reasons why rulers and clergy chose to introduce regulations regarding food and feasting during stage 2 of the conversion. At this time, only a few other Christian practices were required by law. Finally, the impact of these regulations on the daily life of the wider population will be examined.

In the past, scholars have briefly considered the efforts to abolish non-Christian cultic gatherings in Scandinavia.² However, no study of the Norwegian and Swedish legislation concerning non-Christian and Christian feasts has yet been carried out. The introduction of Christian dietary regulations into Scandinavian society has been subject to even less scholarly attention. The short overviews of the food regulations in the early Norwegian laws by Absalon Taranger and Konrad Maurer are, to my knowledge, the only existing studies on this subject.³ Certainly there has been no investigation as to how these two types of legislation may have affected the wider population.

Scholars have argued that ritual feasting played a significant part in the pre-Christian cult.⁴ Support for this argument can be derived from a number of sources. According to *Gutasagan*, the people belonging to different things on Gotland held sacrifices with 'livestock, food and drink'. The participants were called 'seethe brothers since they seethe together'. To seethe has been seen to refer to the cooking of and eating of the sacrificial meal.⁵ Adam of Bremen also provided some information. On one occasion in his *Gesta*, he referred to the building containing the three wooden idols at Gamla Uppsala as a *triclinium*. François-Xavier Dillmann has pointed out that this word, in both classical and medieval Latin, denotes a dining room or a dining hall. According to an addition to the main text, made by Adam or possibly one of his assistants, nine-day feasts (*commessiones*) were celebrated during the

customary sacrifices at Uppsala. It is moreover stated that drinking ceremonies (*in eiusmodi ritu libationis*) took place during these sacrifices.⁶

Three of the Old Norse sources contain detailed descriptions of pre-Christian cultic feasts. It has already been pointed out that it is difficult to establish to what extent these sources can be seen to reflect pre-Christian traditions. These accounts must therefore be treated with caution. The descriptions of cultic feasts in Snorri Sturlusson's *Hákonar saga goða* have however been seen as more reliable than the rest. These descriptions are believed to derive from an earlier oral tradition. According to Snorri, feasts were held at which meat was ritually consumed, and beer was drunk in honour of the pre-Christian gods. Several Icelandic writers stated that such ritual feasts were held at regular intervals throughout the natural year, such as at the beginning of winter.⁷ The holding of celebrations to mark seasonal changes occurs among most European peoples. One such example is the winter solstice, a heritage that goes back to prehistoric times. The classical Greek and Latin authors and also the Church Fathers make it clear that the solstice celebrations were deeply rooted in folk-practice. Monica Brătulesco has pointed out that all such festivals were concerned with the fertility of the fields and the cattle, as well as the health of the people.⁸ The indications in the Nordic source material of regular seasonal feasts may thus well be accurate reflections of pre-Christian traditions.

The link between food and pre-Christian cult practices is also supported by archaeological evidence. Excavations of lake Käringsjön (Halland, Sweden), a sacrificial cult site during the Roman Iron Age, revealed large numbers of ceramic vessels that contained traces of various kinds of foods.⁹ At the Iron Age sacrificial site of Skedemosse (Öland, Sweden), concentrations of small bones, that had been split and the marrow removed, were interpreted as remains of sacrificial feasts.¹⁰ The spring at Röekillorna (Skåne, Sweden) is also of interest in this context. This spring appears to have been used for cultic activities from the early Neolithic to at least the Roman Iron Age. At this site large amounts of animal bones, particularly from horses and dogs, were found. Also here some of the bones had been split, presumably for sacrificial meals. It should moreover be noted that a large proportion of the tools that were found have been seen as suitable for cutting or for use during meals.¹¹

There are other finds that clearly suggest that sacrificial food offerings were made to the dead. Some examples include the pottery and bone finds that have been made in and around graves from the Iron and Viking Ages in Scandinavia. One such example is the Oseberg ship-burial. Here the remains of two oxen

were found. One had been buried in the stern, together with large amounts of kitchen utensils. The other was found along the side of the vessel. There are also the Viking Age graves on Gotland in which metallic containers with dishes made from e.g. fish, eggs, and wild birds were found. In graves from Vendel (Uppland), dating from the Migration period and the earliest Vendel Period, offerings of vegetabilia have been found. The existence of such customs is further supported by Ibn Fadlān. He stated that the *Rū̄s* presented one of their dead with beer and various types of food. A tradition to leave such offerings on graves during funerals and anniversaries existed in the Baltic countries during the Middle Ages. This custom was also present in Sweden as late as the nineteenth century. It has thus been suggested that also pre-Christians offered food to the dead on various occasions, not only during burial ceremonies.¹²

There is moreover archaeological evidence that indicates that ritual feasting took place during funerals. This has been suggested e.g. for the burial ground at Lindholm Høje in Denmark. This site was in use between the sixth and the tenth centuries, although most graves date from the eighth and ninth centuries. In the cremation graves, bones from dogs, horses, sheep, pigs, and cows were found. The remains of these animals, with the exception of the dogs, generally consisted of the extremities, the skull, and the neck vertebrae. This suggests that the meaty parts of the animals were eaten, possibly during ritual funeral meals.¹³

It appears that the pre-Christians also held feasts that primarily fulfilled social and political functions. Indeed, feasting has been described as the ‘most important social institution’ in pre-Christian Scandinavia, and ‘the key stone of the Scandinavian political system’.¹⁴ The Frostathing Law stated that ‘in three places, in church, at a thing, and at a merrymaking all men shall be equally sacred in their persons, but nowhere else does a man incur outlawry on account of the place’. The fact that the feast is mentioned alongside the two other maybe most significant places of social gatherings supports the argument that it held an important position in early Scandinavian society.¹⁵ The political function of feasts can be illustrated by an example from Adam of Bremen. In his description of the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen’s diplomatic mission to King Sven Estridsen, he stated that: ‘as is the religious custom among the barbarians, they feasted each other sumptuously on eight successive days to confirm the treaty of alliance’. That feasting took place at popular gatherings is also supported by archaeological evidence. The Iron Age, circular *tunanlegg* in northern Norway have been seen as economic and political centres where

large gatherings, such as thing meetings and cultic rituals, were held. The most interesting aspects of these sites are, in this context, the large ‘seething-pits’ that have been found. These pits were presumably used for cooking the food for all the people who were gathered and possibly also for use in cultic rituals. This should be compared to the ‘seething’ of sacrificial meat described in *Gutalagen*.¹⁶

Other sources suggest that feasts performed an important role in the formation of relationships between different groups in society. Subjects appear to have invited chieftains to their feasts in the hope of receiving support and protection. This can be seen in the tradition of feasts and gift-giving described in the Law of the Gulathing. According to this law, it was customary for a king to show his gratitude for being entertained at a feast by donating a piece of landed property. This gift was called *drekkulaun*, which is derived from *drekka* (drink) and *launa* (reward).¹⁷ It is likely that also ‘social’ and ‘political’ feasts had some kind of cultic significance. It was argued above that kings and chieftains played sacral roles in pre-Christian society, and that the population felt that in order that they should have a high quality of life, their leader needed to have a good relationship with the supernatural powers. It has moreover been suggested, that in order for this relationship to be effective, a strong personal relationship between leader and population was necessary. Such relationships appear to have been formed through ‘social’ feasts. Rulers and clerics may therefore have seen it as important to take also this type of traditional feasting into their control. Moreover, as part of their attempts to transform the traditional Scandinavian society, they may in this way have hoped to break the cultic relationship between chieftain and population.

The ways in which rulers and clerics dealt with non-Christian feasts will now be discussed. Pope Gregory I stated in his well-known letter to Mellitus, that the Anglo-Saxon sacrificial feasts should be transformed into Christian occasions. It has been frequently pointed out that Gregory thus spelt out his strategy to spread Christianity gradually among the Anglo-Saxons.¹⁸ In this matter he seems to have been influenced by the teachings of Augustine of Hippo. Augustine did not require converts to renounce their old cultic ideas and practices, but argued that they must instead be warned of the dangers connected with these traditions. He moreover stated that:

Keeping up the good habits the idolaters practiced, cherishing the things and buildings they cherish too; this is not following in their footsteps...
Quite the contrary. In doing this we make something our own which never

belonged to them, and give it back to the one true God, consecrating it in all manner of ways to his honor and that of his saints, and all for his greater glory.¹⁹

Augustine thus argued that new adherents to Christianity could be allowed to hold on to some of their old traditions.²⁰ Gregory made use of an example from the Book of Leviticus in order to support his compromising attitude towards Anglo-Saxon feasts. According to this book, God forbade the Israelites to sacrifice to their demons by killing animals in the fields. He instead ordered them to bring the sacrificial animals to the priests at the Tabernacle. The compromising element was not clearly spelt out in the Bible, but Gregory argued that God's intention was that 'with changed hearts, they [the Israelites] were to put away one part of the sacrifice and retain the other, even though they were the same animals as they were in the habit of offering, yet since the people were offering them to the true God and not to idols, they were not the same sacrifices'.²¹ Gregory thus suggested that the missionaries in England should adopt this approach, in the hope that the Anglo-Saxons should respond in the same manner. Gregory's reasoning behind this seems clear. It would not have been possible to stop the Christian Anglo-Saxons from slaughtering their animals and holding communal meals. Gregory's approach was therefore instead to alter the religious context of the meals and feasts.

A slightly different approach can be seen in the Penitential of Theodore. Here it was stated that those who had received baptism must not eat with 'pagans'.²² This provision appears to have been an attempt to break the newly baptised away from their old groups with which they used to feast. Additionally, this may have been a way to define new groups, which would eat together to celebrate Christian occasions.

On the continent rulers and clerics were also clearly troubled by parishioners taking part in meals that formed part of non-Christian rites. Funeral meals appear to have been a particular concern. Regino enquired whether there were people who said incantations over dead bodies at night, and who ate and drank, and 'took pleasure' in these people's deaths. Burchard prescribed penances for drinking at funerals carried out according to 'pagan rites'. Burchard also attempted to regulate other types of non-Christian ritual meals, and included the following question in his *Corrector*: 'Have you gone to a place other than the church or a religious place which your bishop or priest has shown to you... and have you lit a candle or a little torch there to venerate the place, or brought bread or some offering, or have you eaten there...?'²³ These regulations appear

to have been intended to take control of non-Christian sacrificial feasts, in a manner similar to Gregory I. The participation in meals that were connected with religious ceremonies was not prohibited. Such meals must however be carried out according to Christian traditions, and in places where they could be supervised by clergy. Considering the difficulties that must have been connected with prohibiting communal meals, Regino's prohibition against funeral meals is likely to have been issued in the same spirit of transformation.

It seems that Burchard attempted to break up old 'feasting communities', just like the author of the Penitential of Theodore. Burchard included a prohibition against the consumption of 'pagan' and 'Jewish' food.²⁴ As will be demonstrated below, he followed the biblical dietary regulations closely and prescribed penances for breaking any of these. Any type of 'forbidden food' that pre-Christians may have consumed is thus likely to have been regulated by Burchard. Jewish and Christian food regulations had very strong degrees of similarity, since they originated from Mosaic Law. The most significant difference was that the Jews followed the Mosaic Law more closely. They would thus not have allowed any food that was forbidden for Christians. Burchard's provision is therefore unlikely to have been issued as a prohibition against any particular type of food. It is more likely that its aim was to stop Christians from taking part in meals that were organised by Jews or 'pagans'. This regulation, and also that in the Penitential of Theodore, was thus clearly part of rulers' and clerics' fight against non-Christian ritual meals. The occurrence of these regulations may therefore not only have been purely due to repetition of earlier canons. They may furthermore have been part of the growing concern among ecclesiastics to separate Christians from non-Christians, and to limit the contacts between these groups. This concern began to emerge during the fifth and sixth centuries, and is mirrored in canonical legislation. Amongst other things, it became illegal for Christians to go to Jewish physicians, to attend non-Christian religious observances, and to dance with people of other religions.²⁵

Evidence indicates that, similarly in Scandinavia, rulers and clerics attempted to bring all kinds of popular feasting into their control, and to thus transform traditional feasts into Christian celebrations. This approach can be particularly clearly seen in the regulations concerning the ale feasts that were included in the Norwegian provincial laws. The law regarding the funeral ales provides one such example.

Olaf and Magnus: And whenever, on the death of a man, his heir wishes to give an ale feast, whether on the seventh or the thirtieth morning, or even later, that is called an inheritance ale. But if men give an ale and call it a soul's ale, they shall invite the priest from whom they buy the services; they shall invite him as one of three at the fewest; and the priest ought to attend an inheritance ale or a soul's ale as a matter of course. If he refuses to attend, he shall forfeit the tithes (*O[laf]*: the payments) that he should receive in a twelvemonth from the levy district where the feast was given. And the man who is the heir after him for whom the feast was given shall take *M[agnus]*: the tithes (*O[laf]*: the payments) and use it for the spiritual welfare [of the deceased] *Both*: If there are several funeral feasts, the priest shall go first to the one to which he was first invited and shall remain there the first night; in the morning he shall go to the second. *Both*: Even if there be three gatherings and he will have to travel the same road twice in one day, he shall, nevertheless, bless all the ales. But if he cannot [do this], let him go to the second feast and drink there while the ale lasts.²⁶

This law makes it clear that the initiatives to these ale feasts were taken by the population, which strongly suggests that these gatherings belonged to pre-Christian traditions. The importance attached to clerical supervision is made evident by the requirement for priests to attend all such feasts, even if several took place on the same day. Moreover, a priest who failed to fulfil this duty stood to lose his entire income from that particular district for that year. This must be seen as a very severe punishment, which if enforced, must have made it impossible for clerics to ignore this duty.

The Norwegian laws also included provisions regarding other types of ale feasts. Chapter 7 of the Older Law of the Gulathing stated that:

...every husbandman and his wife shall join in an ale feast, all sharing equally, and bless it on Holy Night with thanks to Christ and Saint Mary for peace and a fruitful harvest (*til Krist þakka ok sankta Mariu, til árs ok til friðar*). And if this is not done, they shall pay a fine of three marks to the bishop. And if a man allows three winters to pass without giving this ale feast, and he is accused and convicted of this, or [if he fails to heed] the penalties that we have added to our church law, he shall have forfeited his goods to the last penny; and the king shall have one-half of it and the bishop one-half. But he has the choice of going to confession and doing penance; [then he may] remain in Norway; but if he refuses to do this, he shall depart from the king's dominions [*landeign*].²⁷

The same law required that another ale feast, 'such as men call a neighbourhood ale', was to be held before All Saints' Day. This feast should also be dedicated to Christ and Mary for peace and a fruitful harvest (*til árs ok til friðar*). Moreover, the Law of the Frostathing stated that every householder should

host an ale feast at St. John's Eve (June 24). On this occasion however, no particular purpose for the feast was mentioned.²⁸

These regulations are in stark contrast to the law regarding the funeral feasts. As we have seen above, the aim of the latter was to control feasts that were celebrated as part of old traditions. The law placed the legal obligations almost exclusively on the priests. The one requirement that was made of the population was that they should invite a priest to all their 'inheritance ale' feasts. There was however no fine for failing to do so. The Christmas, All Saints' Day, and St. John's Eve's feasts, on the other hand, were required by law in the same way as some of the more usual Christian practices. Baptism and fasting provide two such examples from the Norwegian laws. The punishments for failing to hold these feasts were moreover at times very harsh. A husbandman who neglected to host a Christmas ale would be given a fine of three marks, or could even be outlawed. The punishments for failing to hold the 'neighbourhood ale' and the St. John's Eve's feast varied between a fine of three *öre* and three marks.²⁹ The experienced need to introduce legislation for the holding of these gatherings could suggest that they were 'new' feasts brought in by rulers and clerics, rather than transformations of pre-Christian traditions.

One scholar has argued that it is 'beyond doubt' that the Christmas and the St. John's Eve's feasts were transformations of pre-Christian cult rituals. This was based on the idea that *til árs ok til friðar* was originally a pre-Christian formula, which was then used in a Christian context. It must nonetheless be pointed out that this cannot be conclusively proven. Other scholars have argued that *til árs ok til friðar* was a Christian formula, brought to Scandinavia by missionaries.³⁰ Without further evidence it is difficult to establish which theory is the most plausible, and no attempt to do so will here be made. Instead, as another attempt to determine the origin of the ale feasts, their individual characteristics have been studied. The results of this investigation indicate that they were all derived from pre-Christian traditions. These traditions do however seem to have been of slightly varying kinds.

That the 'neighbourhood ale' was based on a pre-Christian tradition is suggested particularly by the fact that this feast already had a popular name. The Older Gulathing Law did not however require this feast to be held on a specific day. The only requirement was that such a feast should be held, 'in honour of Christ and Mary', before All Saints' Day.³¹ This suggests that these feasts may have belonged to a general kind of pre-Christian gathering, for which no particular feast day existed. The aim of this legislation may therefore have

been to make sure that traditional gatherings, which may have had cultic significance, were now held in honour of Christ. The Christmas and St. John's Eve's feasts, on the other hand, appear to have been transformations of specific pre-Christian feast days. It was argued above that celebrations to mark seasonal changes occur among most European peoples. It is therefore likely that also the pre-Christian Scandinavians held cultic rituals at times such as midwinter and midsummer. This is also indicated by the fact that the Norwegian laws required that the Christmas and St. John's Eve's feasts were held on particular days. It is especially interesting that a feast was required for the comparatively minor Christian feast day of St. John's Eve. The law did not however prescribe a fine for failing to hold this feast on the assigned day, as long as it was held before Christmas. This regulation was probably intended to ensure that this feast was kept separate from the Christmas ale.³²

One of the overall aims of issuing the regulations concerning the ale feasts was presumably to make the population come together for Christian occasions, in the same way as they appear to have done for their pre-Christian feasts. In order to achieve this aim, rulers and clerics made use of people's traditional and natural ways of meeting. This approach is likely to have been of particular importance in those areas where there were not sufficient churches or priests for people to meet in church on feast days. It should also be pointed out that the laws gave detailed instructions for the organisation of the Christian ale feasts. The Older Gulathing Law stated that for the 'neighbourhood ale'

...[there shall be] ale from one measure of malt for each freeman and another for his wife. And let three householders at the fewest give the ale in common, unless they live so far out among the isles or so high up on the mountain side that they are not able to bring their brewing to the homes of other men; in such cases they shall brew as much ale singly, *M[agnus]*: as would be their share (*O[laf]*: as all three should).³³

This provision suggests that rulers and clergy tried to make these feasts into large and significant gatherings. According to the Law of the Frostathing, ale for St. John's Eve should be brewed from 'two measures [of malt]'. It was however added that 'the archbishop has agreed that men may join together in larger or smaller numbers as they prefer'.³⁴ These regulations were thus not as strict as those regarding the 'neighbourhood ale'. In the Frostathing Law legislators nevertheless pointed out to the population that the archbishop, and thus by extension the lesser clergy, had the power to control and interfere in such feasts and gatherings. It was demonstrated above, that the Older Gulathing

Law strictly required the presence of priests at the funeral ales. It may therefore seem odd that no such requirements were made for the other ale feasts. This may however not be so surprising. The Christmas and St. John's Eve's feasts were held on Christian feast days, when priests would have been needed in church. Moreover, at least in theory, there would have been too many feasts on Christmas and St. John's Eve for the priests to attend them all.

It must be kept in mind that we do not know to what extent the population held the required ale feasts. Nor do we have any information about the nature of the feasts that did take place. Such gatherings may at first have been rather syncretic, even those where priests were present. What is clear is that rulers and senior clerics tried to regulate these parts of people's lives in great detail. Since it appears that these feasts were transformations of pre-Christian gatherings, the feasting regulations may not have significantly changed the timing and the scale of the feasts. However, they are likely to have gradually changed the cultic elements of the feasts.

In Sweden, rulers and clerics also attempted to bring pre-Christian feasts into their control. The provision in *Gutalagen* that outlawed sacrifices to groves, mounds, and other 'holy places', also prohibited 'any kind of cult rite with food or drink that is not in accordance with Christian traditions'. This law seems to have been at least partly aimed at sacral meals held at pre-Christian cult sites.³⁵ It may seem harsher than the regulations issued in Norway. The general message of these laws was however the same: the holding of non-Christian rituals and feasts must cease, and from now on all feasts were to be held in places where the presence of clerics could be expected. It is interesting to note that *Gutalagen* included mounds among the cult sites. This suggests that at least some of the prohibited feasts were funeral meals. It was demonstrated above that laws specifically aimed at such feasts were issued both on the Continent and in Norway. The existence of these pieces of legislation support the argument that funeral feasts were a well-established pre-Christian tradition. This is further suggested by Ibn Fadlān, who stated that the *Rūs* brewed beer specifically for their drinking ceremonies during funerals.³⁶ These traditions may have been particularly hard for rulers and clerics to abolish.

The Christian dietary regulations included in the first Christian laws will now be considered. According to the Old Testament, Christians were not allowed to consume blood, animals that had died of natural causes, or those that had been killed by beasts.³⁷ The New Testament stated that Christians

should 'abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled'.³⁸ During the Middle Ages these regulations were not always strictly enforced. Already Augustine of Hippo had argued that the dietary regulations should not be regarded as law, but instead as moral guidelines. He was of the opinion that the prohibitions in the New Testament had been necessary only during the transition from Judaism to Christianity, when Christians were concerned not to drive away the Judeo-Christians. He therefore only saw sacrificial foods, strangled animals, and cattle that had died of natural causes as prohibited food. The strong biblical tradition regarding forbidden foods could explain the concern with these issues in the penitentials of the Middle Ages. Some medieval theologians and legislators followed in the footsteps of Augustine, while others adhered more closely to the Bible.³⁹ Some also introduced food regulations that did not have their roots in the Bible. Such inconsistencies and innovations clearly indicate that there were other reasons apart from biblical tradition that lay behind the medieval dietary prescriptions.⁴⁰ This section will concentrate on the issuing of dietary rules to stop surviving pre-Christian traditions, although other reasons for their appearance will be briefly considered.

The medieval regulations that prohibited the consumption of sacrificial offerings will first be dealt with. Apart from biblical tradition, these regulations are likely to have been used as a measure to stop non-Christian ritual feasting. The Penitential of Theodore stated that the penance for eating sacrificed food should be measured out according to the age and upbringing of the offender, and the circumstances under which the offence had come about. Special consideration should also be given to the sick.⁴¹ These recommendations demonstrate a willingness to be understanding of offences of this kind, and should perhaps be seen as a continuation of Gregory I's idea of gradual conversion. The consideration regarding the offender's upbringing is of particular interest. Would someone who had been brought up as a non-Christian have received a lighter punishment than someone who had been given a Christian upbringing? This provision could also reflect the Irish tradition of distinguishing between offences that were committed knowingly and those committed unknowingly.⁴² It is thus possible that lighter penances were prescribed in cases where genuine mistakes had been made. The provision may furthermore reflect the rather common regulation, which was repeated in Theodore's Penitential, that it was not an offence to eat 'unclean' flesh in times of necessity.⁴³ This is however rather unlikely, since it would have been

a considerable compromise to allow the consumption of sacrificed food, even if it were for reasons of necessity.

On the Continent many regulations against the eating of sacrificed food were issued. Pope Gregory II responded negatively to a request from Boniface as to whether the newly baptised population should be allowed to eat sacrificed food over which the sign of the cross had been made. The First Saxon Capitulary prescribed a fine for sacrificing meat to 'demons' and then eating it in their 'honour'. Also Burchard issued a provision of this kind. He prescribed penances for anyone who had eaten 'offerings made to an idol' (*idolothytus*).⁴⁴ These continental regulations appear to have been of a less conciliatory nature than those in the Penitential of Theodore.

During the Middle Ages many regulations regarding the consumption of horse flesh were issued. This practice was not prohibited in the Bible, and the reasons behind these regulations have been subject to discussion. Some scholars have argued that they were reactions against a lingering pre-Christian cultic tradition of sacrificing horses. According to Gerald of Wales, horses were sacrificed in Ulster even in the twelfth century. Gerald described a royal consecration ritual. A filly was slaughtered and cut into pieces. The meat was then cooked with water in a cauldron. Standing in this cauldron, the new king drank some of the broth. The people who were present at the ceremony then consumed the horse flesh. Scholars regard this as an authentic description of an ancient royal inauguration. They do not however believe that this was still practised during the twelfth century.⁴⁵

There are also much earlier references to the eating of horse flesh in Ireland. The *Canones Hibernenses*, which date from the seventh century, prescribed the unusually harsh penance of four years on bread and water for the consumption of horse flesh. Scholars have argued that this provision was issued against a lingering pre-Christian tradition. Such outright prohibitions against this practice were however rare. Other scholars have therefore argued that the regulations may have articulated the general Christian disapproval of horse flesh, which had been present since the fourth century.⁴⁶ This can be seen as the reason behind the provision in the Penitential of Theodore. Here it was stated that although it was not customary to eat horse flesh, it was not considered as forbidden food. Similarly, in the report of the papal legates from 786, the English were told to avoid this type of meat, as Christians did in the East.⁴⁷ It is important to point out that the absence of prohibitions does not exclude the possibility that non-Christian Anglo-Saxons ritually consumed horse flesh.

R.I. Page's study of the 893 (894) entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is of interest in this context. According to this entry, the Vikings had been 'plagued with food-shortage' and had therefore 'eaten a good part of their horses'. Page noted that the Old English *fretan* was used for 'to eat', rather than *etan*. *Fretan* was normally used of beasts, animals, and monsters. Page moreover pointed out that in the 893 entry, the Anglo-Saxons were called 'the Christians' and argued that Norse sources make it clear that the consumption of horse flesh was seen as a 'heathen' custom. He thus concluded that the Anglo-Saxon used the word *fretan* to express 'his disgust at their [the Vikings'] reversion to a pagan custom'. It thus seems clear that the Anglo-Saxons, at least by this time, viewed this practice 'as incompatible with Christianity'.⁴⁸

Also on the Continent, concern was expressed over the consumption of horse flesh. Boniface reported to Pope Gregory III that many of 'his' Christians ate horse flesh. The pope responded by prohibiting this practice, and added that it was a 'filthy and abominable custom'. This prohibition has been seen both as a result of current Christian thinking, and as a measure to stop Christians from apostasizing.⁴⁹ Archaeological evidence from the Continent suggests that horses played a part in the pre-Christian cult. Horses were buried next to chieftains until the second half of the seventh century in Alemannia, and until the end of the eighth century in Saxony. Among the Alemanns there are many examples of burials of decapitated horses, such as in the burial ground of Mindelheim (Bavaria). In Frankish areas, a number of graves that contained horses' skulls and/or feet have been found.⁵⁰

The medieval penitentials included a number of provisions that directly prohibited the consumption of blood. These were of diverse kinds, and included many prohibitions that were not derived from biblical tradition. Several of these regulations were clearly intended to abolish different types of surviving pre-Christian practices. One example is Regino's prohibition against consuming 'anything with blood'. He primarily referred to the biblical regulation, but added that since it was a 'pagan' custom, the observance of this provision was of particular importance.⁵¹ It has previously been argued that prohibitions against consuming blood were attempts to stop the lingering pre-Christian cult practice of drinking sacrificial blood from animals and humans. This was proposed e.g. for the provision in the *P. Vallicellianum I* (*Poenitentiale valicellanum*) which prohibited the ingestion of 'blood of animals alive or dead or killed (for a sacrifice) to idols'.⁵² It is however important to note that there is no firm evidence that pre-Christians drank

blood during their sacrifices. It has already been pointed out that Regino is likely to have been well acquainted with pre-Christian cult practices, or at least with what was considered as 'pagan'. It may therefore be of significance that he did not legislate against the drinking of blood, but instead stated that to eat 'anything *with* blood' was a 'pagan' custom. Regino may thus have made use of biblical regulations in order to stop ritual consumption of sacrificed animals. Such animals may not have been slaughtered in the 'correct' manner, and may therefore have contained blood.

The penitentials of Theodore and Burchard both included provisions that prohibited the consumption of blood. None of these provisions however referred to the drinking of blood as part of sacrifices. They were instead clearly aimed at abolishing magical practices. Theodore's prohibition for women to consume their husband's blood as a health remedy provides one example. Another one is found in the Corrector. Here penances were prescribed for women who mixed their menstrual blood into their husband's food or drink in order to gain more of their love.⁵³ In chapter 3 it was argued that magic formed the third strand, and a significant part, of pre-Christian religious custom. If this argument is accepted, such provisions are likely to have played an important role in rulers' and clerics' attempts to eradicate surviving pre-Christian cult practices.

Burchard also tried to abolish the performance of magical practices that involved the consumption of various other bodily substances, and of certain types of food. In the Corrector, he forbade Christians to eat scabs, urine, or excrement for reasons of health. He prescribed penances for women who killed fish by inserting them into their vaginas, and then cooked them for their husbands. The aim of this practice was to make the husbands love their wives more. There were also penances for women who, for the same reason, let bread be baked out on their naked buttocks, and then gave the bread to their husbands to eat. Burchard furthermore enquired whether there were women who believed that they went out at night, through closed doors, and then together with other women, killed Christians 'without using visible arms'. He carried on to ask whether these women believed that they cooked and ate the people that they had killed, and then finally replaced their hearts with straw or wood, in order to bring them back to life.⁵⁴

The medieval penitentials also included dietary regulations, which do not appear to have been used to abolish non-Christian ideas and practices. Many of these provisions were directly derived from the Bible. The Penitential of

Theodore prescribed penances for eating animals killed by dogs, hawks, wolves, or other beasts. It was moreover forbidden to eat animals strangled by 'nets'.⁵⁵ Regino and Burchard prescribed penances for e.g. eating animals killed by beasts, animals that had died of natural causes, or those that had been suffocated. Burchard also prohibited the eating of birds that had been thrown out of their nests, and fish that had been found dead in the river.⁵⁶

Biblical tradition may however not have been the sole reason for the inclusion of these provisions in the penitentials. These regulations forbade the consumption of dead animals for which the time and cause of death would have been difficult to establish. They may thus have been intended to prevent the population to eat meat that could threaten their health. The same reason could be behind the appearance of other medieval dietary restrictions that were not based on the Bible. The Penitential of Theodore stated that a liquid, into which a mouse or a weasel had fallen, could under some circumstances be consumed, as long as the animal was removed and the liquid sprinkled with holy water. Regino prescribed penances for drinking liquids in which weasels, mice, or any 'unclean' animal had been killed.⁵⁷

It has however been stated that 'ritual avoidance always has an expressive value', and that 'medical benefits should be seen as mere by-products'. Other explanations for dietary regulations have thus been put forward. It has been argued that people in the Middle Ages feared matters that could not be fitted into their cosmology. They came to regard such matters as 'polluted', and as a result, rules of ritual avoidance emerged. The concept of 'pollution' could also explain other medieval dietary restrictions. The Penitential of Theodore stated that animals with which men had had sexual intercourse were to be killed and their flesh thrown to the dogs. It was moreover forbidden to eat pigs that had consumed human flesh until one year had passed since the incident.⁵⁸

Rulers and clerics in Scandinavia also appear to have made use of dietary regulations in order to abolish surviving pre-Christian practices. It was demonstrated above that the consumption of sacrificed food was prohibited both in England and on the Continent. There is no evidence from Scandinavia of any outright prohibitions of this kind. It is however possible that the regulations aimed at taking control of traditional feasts, that were discussed above, were also intended to stop the consumption of sacrificed meat during such occasions. The provision in the Eidsivathing Law that prohibited the population from keeping sacrificial food (*matblot*) in their outhouses may have been issued for the same purpose.⁵⁹

Almost all the early Norwegian laws, however, prohibited the consumption of horse flesh. In the same way as other such medieval legislation, some scholars have argued that these were expressions of the general Christian disapproval of this practice, rather than attempts to stop lingering pre-Christian rituals. This argument was based on the fact that the Norwegian provincial laws contained many other Christian dietary regulations, which were not believed to have been directed at remaining pre-Christian practices.⁶⁰ It has however already been demonstrated that rulers and clerics in the other geographical areas introduced all kinds of Christian dietary rules. These men furthermore seem to have made use of many such rules in order to abolish non-Christian practices. It is thus clear that the presence of general Christian food regulations does not exclude the possibility that horses were ritually consumed in Norway.

There is moreover substantial evidence to suggest that horses did play a part in pre-Christian Scandinavian cultic rites. There are some indications in the laws themselves. The harsh punishments prescribed to anyone who had consumed horse flesh suggest that this was a practice that rulers and clerics were particularly concerned to abolish. The Older Gulathing Law stated that this offence should be punished by a fine of three marks, unless it took place during Lent in which case the stated punishment was permanent outlawry. Permanent outlawry was also the punishment prescribed by the Borgarthing Law on anyone who ate horse, dog, or cat.⁶¹ This law made exceptions for people who had been lost in the wilderness, without food, for seven days. The explanation given for this concession was that it was 'better that man eats dog, than dog eats man'. A person who had eaten forbidden meat under these circumstances was obliged to confess his actions to a priest. Anyone who failed to do so would be liable to pay a fine, or could even be outlawed.⁶²

The wording of the 'outlawry clause' in the Borgarthing Law may be significant. Here it was stated that 'when someone eats one of these [animals] without necessity then he has forfeited fortune and peace, land and property, and must leave for a heathen land and never return to where Christians are.'⁶³ In most clauses on outlawry, only the first part of this quote was commonly used. The only other occasions when the expression 'to leave for a heathen land' appeared were in the outlawry clauses regarding those who refused to baptise a child, neglected to pay tithe, or performed illegal marriages and divorces.⁶⁴ That this expression was used in the provision regarding the eating of horse, dog, and cat suggests that this was not seen as a Christian practice.⁶⁵ Finally, it should be added that the prohibition against horse flesh in the Older

Gulathing Law appeared in a chapter that forbade the eating of meat during the seasonal fasts. Anders Hultgård argued that the fact that horse flesh was forbidden at all times of the year clearly indicated that horses were consumed in a ritual context.⁶⁶

There is further evidence to suggest that horse flesh was ritually consumed by pre-Christians. In Ari's *Íslendingabók* it is stated that when the Icelandic Althing accepted Christianity as their religion, the population was allowed to keep some of their traditions for a short period of time:

...regarding the exposing of children and the consumption of horse flesh the old laws were to be valid. People should be allowed to sacrifice in secret if they wished to, but hit by the 'lesser outlawry' if this was made known by witnesses. After a few winters however, this kind of heathendom was removed, just as the other [kind].⁶⁷

This account, which dates from c. 1130, makes it clear that at least some parts of the Christian population at this time regarded the eating of horse flesh as a kind of 'heathendom'. Ari had based his description on information that he had personally retrieved from 'old intelligent persons', who may not have been very far removed in time from the pre-Christian period.⁶⁸ This source thus strongly suggests that horses were important in the pre-Christian cult. This is further supported by *Hákonar saga goða*, which stated that horse flesh was ritually consumed at pre-Christian feasts.⁶⁹

R.I. Page has moreover drawn attention to the saga of Sverrir Sigurðarson. According to this source, Sverrir passed through the countryside with 'a band of thugs' as part of his attempts to claim power over Norway. On one occasion Sverrir and his companions met 3,000 well-armed men, who refused to let them pass. In order to be able to continue, Sverrir tried to blackmail the army and therefore ordered that two horses should be slaughtered. He then turned to the army and said that 'it would come to the ears of people far and wide if they were so miserly with their food that Christian men had to eat horse flesh in their land to keep alive'.⁷⁰

Ibn Fadlān provides us with further interesting information. It was pointed out above that his travel account could be seen as a valuable source, particularly since it provides a contemporary description of some pre-Christian practices. In his account, Ibn Fadlān reported that a dog and two horses were amongst the animals that were killed at the funeral of a Viking chieftain.⁷¹ Although of slightly later date, Adam of Bremen's *Gesta* is also of interest in this context. Adam stated that nine individuals of every male being were sacrificed at the

cultic feasts at Uppsala. Among these, he specifically mentioned horses and dogs.⁷² This suggests that pre-Christians used dogs alongside horses in their cult rites.

Archaeological evidence from pre-Christian sacrificial sites must also be taken into consideration. At Skedemosse, bones from horses constituted as much as 35% of the excavated bone material, and were thus the most frequently appearing type of bone. On the surrounding settlement sites the corresponding figure was only 4.5%. Remains from other species of animals were also found in the sacrificial bog, including the bones from fifteen dogs.⁷³ Similar discoveries were made outside the presumed pre-Christian cult building at Borg (Östergötland). Here archaeologists found deposits of 'amulet rings' and c. 75 kilos of uncremated animal bones. An unusually large part of the bones consisted of skulls and jaws, which strongly suggests that this was not ordinary food refuse. Many came from horses and dogs, and there were also some from cats. It is clear that at least one of the dogs had been decapitated, and two pelvic bone fragments showed traces of blows from a sharp tool. It should be pointed out that horses, dogs, and sometimes also cats appear in graves from the Later Iron Age and the Viking Age. Many of the horses and dogs were buried in magnates' graves, which suggest that these animals held important positions during this period. Similarly, cats have almost exclusively been found in graves.⁷⁴ It should also be noted that at the possible cult site in Mære (Trøndelag), horse bones were discovered, and on Frösön, finds of bones from both horses and dogs were made.⁷⁵

Altogether the various kinds of evidence strongly suggest that not only horses, but also dogs and cats, were sacrificed as part of the pre-Christian cult. It thus seems that rulers and clerics in Norway actively used legislation in order to stop ritual feasting. The prohibitions against the eating of specific animals could explain the absence of legislation against consuming sacrificed food, since they seem to have prohibited a lot of what was ritually consumed. It should be pointed out that no legislation against sacrificial drinking of blood was issued in Norway. It was demonstrated above that this kind of legislation only appeared in one source included in this study. The almost total absence of such laws thus suggests that this was not a common pre-Christian cult practice. It may instead have been a perceived picture of pre-Christian cult rites that existed among some Christians during the Middle Ages.

All the Norwegian provincial laws contained various other Christian dietary regulations. These were of slightly different character from those issued in

England and on the Continent. It was shown that in these areas, the medieval regulations repeated all the biblical rules, and thus clearly stated the ideals that Christians should strive to live up to. The Norwegian laws, however, mostly consisted of the exceptions that they allowed from the biblical rules. There were only two of the biblical regulations that were directly expressed. According to all the laws, it was illegal to eat animals that had died of natural causes, and the Borgarthing Law forbade the consumption of strangled animals. Most of the laws allowed the eating of animals that had been killed by beasts and dogs, and thus indirectly stated that people were allowed to disregard the biblical prohibition against this type of flesh.⁷⁶ The laws also contained exceptions that were clearly made in relation to the biblical rules against eating blood and strangled animals. Some examples include the permissions given to consume animals that had been choked by their halter, animals that had drowned, fallen off cliffs, or been killed by falling trees. On several occasions however, further instructions were added, which pointed out to the population that these cases were exceptions to Christian dietary restrictions. According to the Borgarthing Law, cattle that had been killed by trees or fallen off cliffs, could only be eaten if some of their blood had emerged.⁷⁷ The Older Gulathing Law stated that animals that had been killed in similar ways should be 'hung up till the blood dries up'. Some laws moreover required that before such animals could be eaten, they should be sprinkled with consecrated water and salt.⁷⁸ The nature of these laws thus suggests that a general awareness of the biblical regulations existed among the law makers, and possibly also among the wider population.

Just as in England and on the Continent, rulers and clerics in Norway appear to have used biblical regulations for other purposes than to fight surviving pre-Christian practices. In Norway, unlike the other geographical areas, it however appears that legislators applied these rules when they could be used to prevent the population from consuming food that could cause ill health. It was stated above that the prohibition against eating animals that had died of natural causes was almost the only biblical regulation that was repeated in the laws. It is clear that such animals may have been dead for a long time and may thus not have been suitable to eat. The allowed exceptions seem to be for those cases when time and possibly also cause of death could be established. One such example is the permission to eat animals that had been strangled by their halters. Another example is found in the Borgarthing Law. This law stated that if someone's only cow died, they were allowed to eat it. If someone owned

two cows and they both died, the one that had died first could not be eaten. If someone owned three cows that died, they could use the one that had died last. However, if someone had more than three cows and they all died, then none should be eaten.⁷⁹

Some of the regulations from England and the Continent that were seen to have been issued, at least partly, to prevent the spread of ‘pollution’, appeared also in Norway. The Frostathing Law stated that if anything ‘defiling’ fell into any food or drink, it should be sprinkled with hallowed water before consumption. According to the Older Law of the Gulathing, a cow with which a man had had sexual intercourse should be thrown into the sea, and all further use of the cow was prohibited.⁸⁰ It thus appears that the concept of ‘pollution’ was present also among rulers and clerics in early medieval Norway. It may not however have been as strong here as in the other geographical areas, since the overriding aim of the biblical food regulations in Norway seems to have been the prevention of ill health.

This could be due to a number of reasons. Norway was in the early the Middle Ages a marginal agricultural society. The population may therefore not have been able to afford to waste any food.⁸¹ They are therefore likely to have resisted dietary regulations that were new to them, and which could mean that they would at times go hungry. It is moreover possible that the early Scandinavians had their own traditional taboos in order to prevent the consumption of bad food, and they may therefore easily have adopted Christian regulations with similar benefits. Such rules may thus have been the only ones that rulers and clerics were able, or willing, to enforce.

The detailed nature of the various exceptions in the Norwegian laws suggests that in-depth discussions on food regulation had taken place. These laws may even have been based on specific legal ‘cases’ that had been taken to the things.⁸² The evidence thus indicates that the resistance against Christian food regulations was stronger than in England and on the Continent. This may seem odd, since the population in these areas also made their living from agriculture. One explanation could be that Anglo-Saxon England was less marginal, and food may thus have been easier to come by. We must also ask whether there were other elements in early Scandinavian society that made their resistance towards the Christian dietary regulations stronger. Did they have other traditional dietary taboos and regulations, which were being violated by the Christians? There are no straightforward answers to these questions.

It has however been demonstrated that rulers and clerics in the other geographical areas also granted some exceptions. According to the Penitential of Theodore, it was not an offence to consume 'unclean' flesh for reasons of 'necessity'.⁸³ Is it possible that such provisions were frequently applied, so that also in these geographical areas, very few of the biblical laws were actually enforced? This is another question that we cannot answer. It does however seem likely that these allowances for exceptional circumstances formed the justifications behind the Norwegian concessionary laws.

In conclusion: It is interesting to compare the leniency in enforcing most Christian dietary restrictions to the harsh punishments for the consumption of horse flesh. This reinforces the idea that the eating of horse flesh was a lingering pre-Christian cultic ritual, which rulers and clerics were eager to abolish. This prohibition thus had the potential to introduce some minor changes to the eating patterns of the early Scandinavians. The other dietary regulations in the early Norwegian laws had less capacity to do so. It can therefore be argued that Christian dietary regulations, on the whole, are unlikely to have significantly altered the daily eating habits of the wider population.

Notes to Chapter 5

¹ Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, p. 180; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 179-80.

² Anders Hultgård, 'Altskandinavische Opferrituale und das Problem der Quellen', *The Problem of Ritual. Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Religious Rites Held at Åbo, Finland on the 13th -16th of August 1991*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo 1993), pp. 221-59; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?'

³ Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 390-6; Konrad Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', *Historisk tidsskrift udgivet af Den norske historiske forening* 3, Tredie Række (Kristiania 1895), pp. 1-113, esp. pp. 86-94.

⁴ Dillmann, 'Kring de rituella gästabuden i fornskandinavisk religion', pp. 51-74; Hultgård, 'Altskandinavische Opferrituale'; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?'; Aron J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture* (London 1985), pp. 226-32; Sundqvist, *Freyr's offspring*, pp. 170-9.

⁵ *Gutasagan* is an addition to *Gutalagen*, which is likely to derive from a compilation of Gotlandic traditions put together at the end of the twelfth century. Hallencreutz, 'De berättande källorna' pp. 134-5; GutL 1:4; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', p. 34; Margareta Backe, Bengt Edgren and Frands Herschend, 'Bones thrown into a Water-Hole',

Sources and Resources. Studies in Honour of Birgit Arrhenius, eds, Greta Arwidsson et al. Pact 38 (Rixensart 1993), pp. 327-42, esp. p. 337.

- ⁶ On the other occasions Adam used the word *templum*. Adam IV:27; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', pp. 42-3; Dillmann, 'Kring de rituella gästabuden i fornskandinavisk religion', pp. 66-7; Lewis, *An Elementary Latin Dictionary*.
- ⁷ Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', pp. 36-46; Åke V. Ström, 'Die Hauptriten des wikingerzeitlichen nordischen Opfers', pp. 337-42; Dillmann, 'Kring de rituella gästabuden i fornskandinavisk religion'; Düwel, *Das Opferfest von Lade*; Ottar Grønvik, 'Kormaks vers om Sigurd jarls blot', *Festskrift til Finn Hødnebo 29. desember 1989*, eds, B. Eithun et al. (Oslo 1989), pp. 82-90, esp. pp. 88-9; Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 1, pp. 141-7.
- ⁸ *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed, Mircea Eliade (New York 1993), vol. 15, p. 386.
- ⁹ Holger Arbman, *Käringsjön. Studier i halländsk järnålder* (Stockholm 1945), pp. 9-83 and 167-73; Anne Carlie, 'Käringsjön – en offerplats för bondebefolkning eller ledarskikt? Studier kring en romartida kultplats och dess omland i södra Halland', *Tor* 30 (1998-99), pp. 123-64.
- ¹⁰ Ulf Erik Hagberg, *Skedemosse. Studier i ett öländskt offerfynd från järnåldern* (Stockholm 1967), p. 18; Ulf Erik Hagberg, 'Religionsgeschichtliche Aspekte des Moorfundes vom Skedemosse auf Öland', *Vorgeschichtliche Heiligtümer und Opferplätze in Mittel- und Nordeuropa. Bericht über ein Symposium in Reinhausen bei Göttingen in der Zeit vom 14. bis 16. Oktober 1968*, ed, H. Jankuhn (Göttingen 1970), pp. 167-71, esp. pp. 168-70.
- ¹¹ Berta Stjernquist, 'Spring-cults in Scandinavian Prehistory', *Gifts to the Gods. Proceedings of the Uppsala Symposium 1985*, eds, Tullia Linders and Gullög Nordquist (Uppsala 1987), pp. 157-78; Berta Stjernquist, 'Germanische Quellenopfer', *Vorgeschichtliche Heiligtümer und Opferplätze in Mittel- und Nordeuropa*, ed, H. Jankuhn (Göttingen 1970), pp. 78-99, esp. pp. 87-95; Berta Stjernquist, 'The Basic Perception of the Religious Activities at Cult-Sites such as Springs, Lakes and Rivers', *The World-View of Prehistoric Man. Papers presented at a symposium in Lund, 5-7 May 1997, arranged by the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities along with the Foundation Natur och Kultur, Publishers*, eds, Lars Larsson and Berta Stjernquist, Kungl. Vitterhets och Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, konferenser 40 (Stockholm 1998), pp. 157-78, esp. pp. 157-65.
- ¹² Sjøvold, *Osebergfunnet og de andre vikingeskipsfunn*, p. 10; Gustaf Trotzig, 'Färdkost på den sista resan', *Gutar och vikingar* (Stockholm 1983), pp. 395-6; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', p. 142; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Särdrag inom vikingatidens gravskick', *Nordsvensk forntid*, Kungl. Skytteanska samfundets handlingar 6 (Umeå 1969), pp. 133-50; Ann-Marie Hansson, 'Vegetabilier som gravgåva: Rapport av växtmakrofossilanalys av två brandgravar, A1 och A2, samt av sotfläck, A10, under grav A2 räå 26, Vendel, Vendel sn, Up', *SIV. Svealand i Vendel och vikingatid. Rapport från utgrävningarna i Vendel* (Stockholm 1997), pp. 93-7; Ibn Fadlān's travel account, chapter 89, *Araber Vikingar Värningar*, p. 67. Scholars have discussed whether pre-Christian funeral rites were part of the pre-Christian cult. That this was the case is supported by the evidence of ancestor veneration that was presented in section 4.1, and also by the pieces of legislation in which burial mounds were regarded as cult sites.
- ¹³ Thorkild Ramskou, *Lindholm Høje Gravpladsen* (København 1976).
- ¹⁴ Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, p. 227; Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, pp. 44-5.
- ¹⁵ FL IV:58.

- ¹⁶ Adam III:18. The *tunanlegg* have a number of general characteristics. They were located outside the settlements and away from the best agricultural soil. The buildings at these sites were erected around an oval or semi-circular open space, with an open gavel facing this area. The number of archaeological finds in these structures are fewer and more homogenous than those of excavated farmhouses. For these reasons, it has been suggested that these structures served as lodgings at popular gatherings. Johansen, Olav Sverre. 'Vikingerene lengst i norr', *Beretning fra syvende tværfaglige vikingesymposium*, eds, Hans Bekker-Nielsen and Hans Frede Nielsen (Aarhus 1989), pp. 21-46, esp. pp. 27-41. I am grateful to Frands Herschend at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Uppsala for drawing my attention to these sites.
- ¹⁷ Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, p. 230.
- ¹⁸ HE I.30; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, p. 146; Nilsson, 'Till frågan om kyrkans hållning till icke-kristna kultfenomen', pp. 10-13; Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism*, pp. 33-4.
- ¹⁹ PL vol. 33, cols. 185-7; Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, p. 76, n. 54.
- ²⁰ Nock, *Conversion*, pp. 261-2; Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, pp. 76-7.
- ²¹ Leviticus 17.1-9; HE I.30.
- ²² Theodore II.iv.11.
- ²³ Regino question 55; Corr LXXIX and LVII, pp. 644 and 648. I am grateful to Stephen Instone at the Department of Greek and Latin at University College London for his help with the translations of these texts.
- ²⁴ Corr CLXXVI, p. 664.
- ²⁵ Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, pp. 15-16; Karl Böckenhoff, *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art in mittelalterlichen Kirchenrechtsquellen des Morgen- und Abendlandes* (Münster 1907), pp. 52 and 97.
- ²⁶ GL 23. This translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, pp. 52-3. A similar regulation was included in chapter I:49 of the Law of the Eidsivathing. Tore Iversen has dated GL 23 to the beginning of the twelfth century, on the basis that the word *landeign* is used in its old sense of 'the dominion of the king'. Iversen, 'Jordeie og jordleie', p. 92. Iversen's arguments are also discussed in the introduction to part II. It should also be noted that GL 23 is stated to have been originally introduced by Olav. The references to payments to priests suggest that it dates before the introduction of tithes, i.e. before the period between 1111 and c. 1160. GL 23 moreover belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 21-2 and pp. 179-80; Hertzberg, 'Vore ældste lovtexters oprindelige nedskrivelsestid'. For the significance of ale-brewing for cultic and political gatherings in pre-Christian Norway, see: Lars Pilø, *Bosted - urgård - enkeltgård. En analyse av premissene i den norske bosetningshistoriske forskningstradisjon på bakgrunn av bebyggelsehistorisk feltarbeid på Hedemarken*. Draft version of Ph.D. thesis from the Institute of Archaeology at the University of Oslo.
- ²⁷ GL 7. This translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 40. Tore Iversen has dated GL 7 to the beginning of the twelfth century, on the basis that the word *landeign* is used in its old sense of 'the dominion of the king'. Iversen, 'Jordeie og jordleie', p. 92. Helle has argued that chapters I:6-7 represent 'early' attempts to Christianize non-Christian feasts. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, p. 180. It should also be noted that chapters 6-7 are stated to have been originally introduced by Olav.

- ²⁸ GL 6; FL II:21. For the dating of GL 6 see footnote 27 above.
- ²⁹ GL 6-7. For the dating of these chapters see footnote 27 above.
- ³⁰ Hultgård, 'Religiös förändring', pp. 57-8 and 61; Hultgård, 'Altskandinavische Opferrituale', pp. 242-53; Dillmann, 'Kring de rituella gästabuden i fornskandinavisk religion', pp. 58-9; Wolfgang Lange, *Studien zur Christlichen Dichtung der Nordgermanen 1000-1200* (Göttingen 1958), p. 119; Klaus von See, *Mythos und Theologie im Skandinavischen Hochmittelalter* (Heidelberg 1988), pp. 84-7; Düwel, *Das Opferfest von Lade*, pp. 68-9.
- ³¹ GL 6. If this feast was not held at the 'appointed time', a fine of three öre would be payable, and if a year passed without 'sharing an ale', the fine would be increased to three marks. For the dating of GL 6 see footnote 27 above.
- ³² GL 7; FLII:21. The fine for not holding the Christmas ale on 'Holy Night' was set at three marks. For the dating of GL 7 see footnote 27 above.
- ³³ GL 6. This translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, pp. 39-40. For the dating of GL 6 see footnote 27 above.
- ³⁴ FLII:21. This translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 234.
- ³⁵ *Þa en nequar verþr at þi sandr oc laiþas hanum so vitni a hand et hann hafí haizl nequara þa miþ mati eþa miþ dryckiu senni sum ai fylgir cristnum siþi þa ir hann sacr at þrim marcum viþr kirchiu menn En þair syct vinna.* GutL 1:4; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', p. 34; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Kultkontinuitet - myt eller verklighet?', p. 142; Nilsson, 'Till frågan om kyrkans hållning till icke-kristna kultfenomen', p. 37; Stefan Brink, 'Mythologizing Landscape', p. 89.
- ³⁶ Ibn Fadlān's travel account, chapter 87, *Araber Vikingar Våringar*, p. 66.
- ³⁷ Leviticus 7.23-6, 17.12-15, and 22.8, Deuteronomy 14.21.
- ³⁸ Acts 15.29.
- ³⁹ Böckenhoff, *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art*, p. 78; Karl Böckenhoff, 'Die römische Kirche und die Speisesatzungen der Bussbücher', *Theologische Quartalschrift* 88 (1906), pp. 186-220, esp. pp. 187-8. It is interesting to note that traditions regarding forbidden foods have survived into present times, most notably among Jews and Moslems.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London 1966) and Rob Meens, 'Pollution in the early middle ages: the case of the food regulations in the penitentials', *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. 4:1 (1995), pp. 3-19, esp. p. 5.
- ⁴¹ Theodore I.xv.5.
- ⁴² Cf. Böckenhoff, *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art*, pp. 74-5.
- ⁴³ Theodore I.vii. 6.
- ⁴⁴ This was the only food that Gregory II regarded as 'forbidden'. CB 14; Tangl 26; Böckenhoff, *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art*, p. 90; The First Saxon Capitulary c. 21, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 207; Corr LXXXII, p. 648.
- ⁴⁵ Gerald of Wales, 'Topographia Hibernica', part III, c. 25, *Topographia Hibernica et Expugnatio Hibernica*, ed. James F. Dimock, *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, vol. 21:5 (London 1867), p. 169; *L'Irlande au Moyen Age. Giraud de Barri et la Topographia Hibernica (1188)*, ed. and tr. Jeanne-Marie Boivin (Paris and Genève 1993), pp. 155-274, esp. p. 254; *The History and Topography of Ireland*, tr. John J. O'Meara, revised

- edition (London 1982), pp. 109-10. In O'Meara's translation the section discussed above appears in part III, c. 102.
- ⁴⁶ Böckenhoff, *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art*, p. 51; Pierre Bonnassie, 'Consommation d'aliments immondes et cannibalisme de survie dans l'Occident du Haut Moyen Age', *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 44:5 (1989), pp. 1035-56, esp. p. 1040.
- ⁴⁷ Theodore II.xi.4; Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Idolators', p. 113.
- ⁴⁸ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, tr. G.N. Garmonsway (London 1960), p. 87; R. I. Page, *Anglo-Saxon Aptitudes. An Inaugural Lecture Delivered Before the University of Cambridge on 6 March 1985* (Cambridge 1985), pp. 12-19. The Norse evidence will be discussed below.
- ⁴⁹ Bonnassie, 'Consommation d'aliments immondes', p. 1040; Böckenhoff, *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art*, p. 102; CB 16; Tangl 28. This letter is dated 731, i.e. the year of Gregory II's death. Talbot attributed this letter to Gregory II. According to Tangl, however, this letter was issued by Gregory III.
- ⁵⁰ Bonnassie, 'Consommation d'aliments immondes', p. 1040; Edouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne, d'après les sépultures, les textes et le laboratoire*, vol. 4 (Paris 1959), p. 24; Laure-Charlotte Feffer and Patrick Périn, *Les Francs*, vol. 2, *A l'origine de la France* (Paris 1987), pp. 172-4. Rob Meens has argued that the archaeological evidence from the Continent suggests that horses and dogs found in graves were 'burial gifts' rather than 'sacrifices'. However, the fact that the remains often consisted of skulls and feet suggests that the meaty parts of the animals were indeed eaten. As was shown above, this was clearly the case in Scandinavia. Rob Meens, 'Eating animals in the early Middle Ages. Classifying the animal world and building group identities', *The Animal/Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, eds. A.N.H. Creager and W. C. Jordan (Rochester 2002), pp. 3-28, esp. pp. 10-11; Cf. Ramskou, *Lindholm Høje Gravpladsen*.
- ⁵¹ Böckenhoff, *Speisesatzungen mosaischer Art*, pp. 95-6; Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 92. I am grateful to Henrik Vitalis at the Department of Classical Philology at Uppsala Universitet for his translations of Regino's text.
- ⁵² The *P. Vallicellianum I (Poenitentiale valicellanum)* was presumably put together in the tenth century. *Die Bussbücher und die Bussdisciplin der Kirche nach Handschriftlichen Quellen dargestellt*, ed. Herm. Jos. Schmitz (Mainz 1883), vol. 1, pp. 238 and 320-22.
- ⁵³ Theodore I.xiv.16; Corr CLXIV, p. 662. The clergy's fight against 'unchristian' magical practices is discussed in section 4.1.
- ⁵⁴ Corr CXV, CLX, CLXI, and CLVIII, pp. 654 and 661. I am grateful to Henrik Vitalis at the Department of Classical Philology at the University of Uppsala for his translation of these texts. It should be noted that Rob Meens has argued that some magical practices forbidden by medieval penitentials had developed from Christian dietary rules, rather being survivals of pre-Christian cult practices. Meens, 'Eating animals in the early Middle Ages', p. 10.
- ⁵⁵ Theodore II.xi.1-2. Theodore referred to the prohibition in the Acts of the Apostles against eating blood and strangled animals. The prohibition against eating animals killed by hawks was not a Roman tradition, but derived from the Greeks. Böckenhoff, 'Die römische Kirche', p. 192.
- ⁵⁶ Regino question 46; Corr CXVI, CXVII, CXVIII, and CXIX, pp. 654-5.
- ⁵⁷ If a mouse that had fallen into a liquid was still alive, and the liquid was sprinkled with holy water, it could be consumed. If however, the animal had died, the liquid should be poured out. Theodore I.vii.8. If a mouse or a weasel had died in a liquid that contained much food, the

liquid should be purged and could then be eaten in times of need. Theodore I.vii.9; Regino question 48; Cf. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 91.

⁵⁸ Bonnassie, 'Consommation d'aliments immondes'; Meens, 'Pollution in the early middle ages', pp. 3-19; Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp. 29-32 and 39-40; Theodore II.xi.8-9.

⁵⁹ EL I:24.

⁶⁰ KLNLM vol. 7, col. 280.

⁶¹ GL 20; BL I:5; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 394-5. GL 20 is one of the chapters identified by Iversen as dating from the beginning of the twelfth century. See footnote 26 above. GL 20 and BL I:5 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80. It should also be noted that GL 20 is stated to have been originally introduced by Olav.

⁶² The laws of the Frostathing and the Eidsivathing punished this offence by exile, while the Borgarthing Law prescribed a monetary fine. The Law of the Frostathing stated that someone who had been lost for seven days was allowed to eat anything, apart from human flesh. No other type of meat was however mentioned as prohibited. See EL I:29; BL I:5; FL II:43. For the dating of BL I:5 see footnote 61 above.

⁶³ *En ef maðr etr æinhuern Þænn lut nauðsynialaust, þa hæfir han firergort fe oc friði, lande oc lausum æyri, fare a land hæiðit oc kome aldri þær, sem krisnir menn ero.* BL I:5. For the dating of this chapter see footnote 61 above.

⁶⁴ BL I:4, I:11, 1:15, and I:17; EL I:52. BL I:4, 1:15, and I:17 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80.

⁶⁵ It should however be noted that there is little other evidence to suggest that animals other than horses were ritually consumed.

⁶⁶ GL 20; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', p. 42. Laurence M. Larsson and Rudolf Meissner both believed that the regulations against horse flesh were issued against the use of horses in pre-Christian cult practices. They did not however give any evidence in support of their arguments. See *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings, Germanenrechte Neue Folge*, ed. Rudolf Meissner (Weimar 1942), p. 13, n. 2; *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 48, n. 55. For the dating of GL 20 see footnote 61 above.

⁶⁷ *Íslendingabók VII, Íslendingabók*, ed. Anne Holtsmark, Nordisk Filologi, Serie A: Tekster, vol. 5 (København 1967); Strömbäck, *The Conversion of Iceland*, pp. 13-21.

⁶⁸ Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', pp. 41-2; Dillmann, 'Kring de rituella gästabuden i fornskandinavisk religion', pp. 60-1; Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, p. 13. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson suggested that this was a reflection of Irish penitentials. See Dillmann, 'Kring de rituella gästabuden i fornskandinavisk religion', p. 70, n. 28.

⁶⁹ Sturluson, *Nordiska kungasagor*, vol. 1, pp. 141-7; Hultgård, 'Fornskandinavisk kult - finns det skriftliga källor?', p. 42.

⁷⁰ *Sverris saga etter Cod. AM 327^o4*, p. 27; Page, *Anglo-Saxon Aptitudes*, pp. 17-18.

⁷¹ Ibn Fadlān's travel account, chapter 89, *Araber Vikingar Väringar*, p. 67. The other sacrificed animals were two cows, a cock, and a hen.

⁷² Adam IV:27.

- ⁷³ Hagberg, *Skedemosse*, pp. 18-19; Hagberg, 'Religionsgeschichtliche Aspekte des Moorfundes'.
- ⁷⁴ The building at Borg has been radiocarbon-dated to the tenth century. Ann-Lili Nielsen, 'Hedniska kult- och offerhandlingar i Borg', pp. 95-102; Ann-Lili Nielsen, 'Pagan Cultic and Votive Acts at Borg', pp. 381-8; Lindeblad, 'Borg socken – förändringar i tid och rum', pp. 63-70; Bengt Wigh, *Animal Husbandry in the Viking Age Town of Birka and its Hinterland* (Stockholm 2001), pp. 118-20 and 140. In the excavated graves at Högby Gård and Tångstad (Östergötland) bones from horses, dogs and possibly also cats were found. The graves have been dated to the beginning of the ninth century. Anders Lindahl, 'Kvinnogravar från omkr. 800 e. Kr. Vid Högby Gård i Högby socken och vid Tångstad i Kimstads socken. Med antropologiskt bidrag av Nils-Gustav Gejvall', *Meddelanden från Östergötlands och Linköpings Stads Museum 1948-50*, pp. 69-84, esp. pp. 80-4. Other examples of horse burials from Sweden are twenty of the chamber graves at Birka and a number of boat graves at Vendel and Valsgärde. Some Danish examples include the boat-burials at Ladby (Fyn) and Hedeby. At Ladby, remains of at least eleven horses were found (as well as several dogs). At Hedeby, three horses had been buried in a pit outside the grave chamber. In the Oseberg ship-burial in Norway, at least ten horses were found inside the vessel. A few horses had moreover been buried along the side of the ship. Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Birka IV. The Burial Customs. A Study of the Graves on Björkö* (Stockholm 1980), pp. 39-49; Else Roesdahl, *Danmarks vikingetid* (Gyldendal 1980), pp. 193-4; Thorleif Sjøvold, *Osebergfunnet og de andre vikingeskipfunn* (Oslo 1972), p. 10
- ⁷⁵ Lidén, 'From Pagan Sanctuary to Christian Church', p. 14; Iregren, 'Under Frösö kyrka – ben från en vikingatida offerlund?'.
- ⁷⁶ BL I:5; EL I:26; FL II:42; GL 31. The Eidsivathing law was the only law that did not state that it was allowed to eat animals that had been killed by beasts. For the dating of BL I:5 see footnote 61 above. For the dating of GL 31 see chapter 4, footnote 70.
- ⁷⁷ BL I:5. For the dating of BL I:5 see footnote 61 above.
- ⁷⁸ GL 31; FL II:42. For the dating of GL 31 see chapter 4, footnote 70.
- ⁷⁹ BL I:5; GL 31. For the dating of BL I:5 see footnote 61 above. For the dating of GL 31 see chapter 4, footnote 70.
- ⁸⁰ FL II:42; GL 30. GL 30 are among those identified by Iversen as dating from the beginning of the twelfth century. See footnote 26 above. GL 30 is moreover stated to have been originally introduced by Olav.
- ⁸¹ Cf. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, p. 91.
- ⁸² It was pointed out in chapter 4 that many of the ecclesiastical regulations in the Norwegian provincial laws appear to be reflections of legal proceedings of the things.
- ⁸³ Theodore I.vii. 6.

Chapter 6

Seasonal Fasting Regulations

In this chapter the introduction of the seasonal fasts from the beginnings of stage 2 of conversion and onwards will be examined. These regulations form another part of the 'fifth type' of early Christian legislation. Seasonal fasting is an area that has previously received very little attention from scholars. The provisions regarding fasting in the works of Theodore, Regino, and Burchard have thus hitherto remained virtually unexplored. The earliest Norwegian laws contain a large number of fasting regulations. No detailed study of these regulations has however been carried out since Absalon Taranger's synopsis of 1890.¹ A new in-depth investigation of these is therefore long overdue.

The Norwegian provincial laws make it clear that rulers and clergy were concerned to introduce seasonal fasting from the very beginning. This chapter will examine the reasons for this concern. The methods employed in order to enforce the observance of the fasts, and the impact of the various fasting regulations on traditional Scandinavian society, will also be investigated.

Fasting was seen as an important virtue from the time of the earliest Christians. This practice had its roots in the Bible, where people are reported to have fasted for various reasons, such as to obtain divine aid, to repent, to mourn, and to express their devotion to God.² In Ancient Christianity, a number of seasonal fasts were introduced. These took place on the two days before Easter and also on every Wednesday and Friday. Before 400, the Romans moved the Wednesday fasts to Saturdays. During this time, it was also held that a fast should last 'from evening to evening' (*a vespera ad vesperam*). On fast days, Christians were therefore only allowed one frugal meal in the evening.³

The practice of fasting gained increasing importance during the course of the Middle Ages. In this period, theologians argued that fasting was a way of gaining expiation of sin. This view reaffirmed the fasts as times of mourning, sorrow, and self-denial. Meat and wine were moreover considered to be

conducive to sin, and it was held that every Christian should practise some form of fasting. Medieval theologians also desired to distinguish more clearly between the profane and the sacred areas of life. They therefore emphasised the idea that Christians needed to prepare themselves, e.g. by fasting, before they could take part in religious ceremonies. The conception that the prayers of the fasting would rise to heaven, while the prayers of the satisfied would sink to the ground, became wide-spread. All these factors contributed to the increased significance of fasting, not only before communion, but also throughout the liturgical year.⁴

The medieval seasonal fasts were subject to variation over time, and they also varied between the different geographical areas. The most common fasting seasons were however Lent (often called *Quadragesima*), the Quatember fasts, the Rogation Days, and the fasts on the vigils of major feast days. Lent covered the weeks before Easter. There were moreover three other periods named *Quadragesima*, which took place in the weeks leading up Christmas, to the day of John the Baptist, and to Assumption Day. The nature of the restrictions during these seasons varied. In Eastern Christianity, dietary restrictions applied. In the West, however, these seasons were periods of sexual abstinence. It was thus prohibited to get married and to have sexual relations.⁵ The Quatember fasts, also called Ember Days⁶, consisted of four three-day fasts. These fasts were held at different times in England and on the Continent. During the latter half of the eleventh century, the papacy therefore established that the Quatember fasts should be held on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after the first Sunday in Lent, Pentecost, the feast of the Holy Cross (14 September), and St. Lucy's Day (13 December). The Rogation Day fasts took place on the three days preceding Ascension Day (30 April – 3 June). All Fridays were also fast days. The Saturday fasts were however not emphasised by medieval theologians until the eleventh century.⁷

The dietary regulations during the fasts were also subject to variation. According to Ancient Christian teachings, only complete abstinence from food and drink had been approved as 'real fast' (*jejunium naturale*). However, over the course of the Middle Ages, fasting requirements were relaxed. From the seventh century, a variation of food restrictions that went under the name of *abstinentia*, began to emerge. These restrictions mainly included abstinence from what has now been termed 'red meat'. The consumption of fish and shellfish was allowed during many fasts. The regulations regarding the consumption of fowl were divergent. Some authorities allowed the

consumption of fowl during Lent. This was based on the idea that birds were aquatic animals. Others permitted the consumption of fish-eating birds only. There were also different versions of 'semi-fasts' (*semi jejunia*). As a result wine, fish, fowl, egg and milk products began to be allowed during many seasonal fasts. By the thirteenth century, this relaxed observance had become widely accepted.⁸

The sources from Anglo-Saxon England make it clear that the Christian fasts were introduced from the beginning of stage 2 of conversion. Bede stated that King Eorcenberht of Kent issued a law that required everyone to fast for forty days during Lent. The only other of Eorcenberht's regulations that Bede mentioned was that all idols should be destroyed.⁹ King Wihtred of Kent also issued a law code, in which fasting was included as one of few Christian practices. This law made it illegal for men to serve meat to the members of their households during a fast. Slaves who ate meat on their own initiative during such times were also to be punished. The only other Christian regulations that were included concerned illicit marriages, respecting the Sunday, and making offerings to devils.¹⁰ The Penitential of Theodore brought the eastern Christian traditions to England. In this work it was stated that 'the people' should observe three forty-day fasts per year. These were the fasts that preceded Easter and Christmas, and the one following Pentecost.¹¹ The Dialogue of Egbert moreover stated that the Ember Day fasts had been brought to England by Augustine.¹²

It is clear that rulers and clerics on the Continent also tried to enforce the Christian seasonal fasts as part of their first efforts of conversion. In the First Saxon Capitulary it was prohibited to eat meat during Lent. Regino and Burchard prescribed penances for those who did not observe Lent, the Quatember fasts, and the Rogation Day fasts. Burchard moreover required Christians to observe the Saturday and the vigil fasts.¹³

That missionaries tried to enforce fasting from the earliest phases of conversion is also indicated by an entry in Nestor's Chronicle. Here it is stated that Prince Vladimir of Kiev let representatives of the Muslims, the Catholics, the Jews, and the Greeks explain their religion to him, in order that he should choose which suited him best. When Vladimir asked the Catholics what their conditions were, they answered: 'To fast according to ability. When you eat and drink, it shall always be done in honour of God. This is what Paul has taught us'.¹⁴

It was usual Christian practice to allow people who were unwell to refrain from fasting. Regulations to this effect were included on at least two occasions in Burchard's Corrector.¹⁵ Although, no such regulation appears in the sources from Anglo-Saxon England, it is likely that this custom was present also here. In England and on the Continent, all fasts were broken after midday. The Roman religious custom of fasting until sunset was thus not required in these areas.¹⁶ In Anglo-Saxon England, it was moreover stated that fasting was required of everyone over the age of twelve.¹⁷

The punishments for breaking the fasting regulations will now be discussed. King Wihfred's Law stated that a freeman who had served prohibited food during a fast should redeem each of his guests by the payment of his *healsfang*. *Healsfang* was a tenth of the *wergeld*, which was 'the legal value set on a person's life'. Slaves would be liable to pay a fine of six shillings or they would undergo the lash. Freemen who broke the prohibitions regarding work on Sundays and making offerings to 'devils' would also be liable to pay the *healsfang*. No fine was payable for entering illicit marriages. Such offenders would however be excluded from church.¹⁸

The penances prescribed by the Penitential of Theodore for disregarding a fast depended on how important the fast was regarded to be. If someone neglected the Christmas or Pentecost fasts, the penance was set to forty days. If someone broke the Lenten fast, they would be required to do penance for a full year. The importance attached to fasting is however most clearly illustrated by the provision which stated that someone who habitually ignored the fasting seasons should be 'cast out of the Church'.¹⁹ This punishment only appeared on four other occasions in the whole penitential, and then for offences of very serious nature. It was prescribed for people who celebrated the Jewish Easter, and for those who had knowingly permitted a heretic to celebrate Mass in a Catholic church. It should moreover be given to priests who had committed adultery with 'a strange woman', and to any unordained person who had performed baptism.²⁰ It should be noted that on two of these occasions, the penitential allowed the punishment to be transformed into a long period of penance. This option was not given to someone who had consistently neglected to fast.²¹

The First Saxon Capitulary stated that a person who had eaten meat during the Lenten fast 'out of contempt for Christianity' was to be put to death. Allowances were made for those who had eaten meat out of necessity, and all transgressions of this law should therefore be investigated by a *sacerdos*. The

punishments prescribed by this capitulary are notoriously harsh. That the death penalty was prescribed for neglecting to fast during Lent may thus not seem odd. However, not all offences against the Christian regulations were punished this severely. A person who sacrificed to springs, or who ate in honour of 'demons', or who disobeyed Christian marriage regulations, would 'only' be liable to pay a fine. The death penalty was prescribed for not consenting to baptism, and for performing cremations. It thus seems that Charlemagne saw fasting as an important Christian practice, which he fervently tried to enforce in Saxony.²²

Burchard prescribed penances of between three and forty days for neglecting any of the seasonal fasts. It is interesting that the penance for breaking the Lenten fast was set to twenty days, while the prescribed penance for not observing a Quatemberfast was forty days. Lent was regarded as the most important fast of the Christian year, and thus usually incurred the highest punishments. This was case in the Penitential of Theodore, and as will be shown below, also in the Norwegian laws.²³ Burchard moreover enquired whether anyone had scorned on a fast prescribed by the 'holy church', and had refused to observe this together 'with other Christians'. If so, the prescribed penance was forty days on bread and water. This provision seems to have been issued against anyone who habitually neglected to fast, in the same vein as the provision in the Penitential of Theodore. This is indicated by the fact that Burchard included separate provisions that dealt with each of the other fasts individually. Burchard's penance was however not nearly as severe as that in the Penitential of Theodore.²⁴ In certain areas on the Continent, much harsher punishments were prescribed. In the diocese of Würzburg the non-observance of fast and Sunday regulations was punishable by confiscation of property or even exile.²⁵

The penitentials also included provisions that prohibited people from fasting on Sundays. According to Christian traditions, fasting was not practised on Sundays and feast days. These were instead occasions of special celebration and commemoration of the resurrection of Christ.²⁶ In the New Testament it is said that the Apostles gathered on the first day of the week to 'break bread'.²⁷ The Christian traditions can be demonstrated by the regulations in chapter 41 of the Rule of St. Benedict. This law prescribed that the monks should fast on Wednesdays and Fridays during the summer months, and on all weekdays during the winter months. No fasts were however prescribed for Sundays and feast days.²⁸ Some parallels from Irish monasteries are also of interest in this

context. Columban stated that, on Sundays and feast days, the monks' daily meal should consist of 'more and better' food. In other Irish monasteries, the monks were allowed two meals on such days.²⁹

Close study of the individual provisions against fasting on Sundays can provide us with various suggestions for their existence. In the Penitential of Theodore it was prohibited to 'fast out of negligence on the Lord's day'. The prescribed penance for a first offence was a one-week fast, which would be increased if the offence was repeated.³⁰ This provision seems to have been issued to ensure that the population paid attention to the Christian calendar. If they neglected to do so they might fast on a Sunday by mistake, and thus contravene Christian traditions. The existence of this provision moreover suggests, maybe not surprisingly, that rulers and clerics experienced difficulties in teaching the Anglo-Saxons the Christian calendar, and in making them adjust their lives accordingly.

A further provision in the Penitential of Theodore stated that anyone who fasted on Sundays 'out of contempt for the day' should be 'abhorred as a Jew by all the Catholic churches'. Since the prescribed punishment was neither a regular penance, nor a threat to cast guilty parties out of 'the Church', this provision was presumably aimed at non-Christians. It may primarily have been issued against the Jewish, whose fasting traditions were different from Christians. Their fasts would at times have fallen on Sundays or Christian feast days, and the Jewish would thus have been in breach of Christian customs.³¹ A further aspect of this provision is that it legitimised Christians to exclude those who did not conform to their way of life. Its key intention therefore does not appear to have been the enforcement of the Christian fasting seasons. It instead seems to have been an overall measure designed to make members of Christian societies more vigilantly Christian and also to convert, exclude, or drive away all non-Christian groups.

Burchard prohibited anyone from fasting on a Sunday because of 'self restraint and holiness'. The prescribed penance was twenty days on bread and water, which demonstrates that this provision, unlike that in the Penitential of Theodore, was directed at Christians.³² Burchard's choice of words moreover makes it clear that the provision was directed against those who fasted deliberately on a Sunday. It therefore excluded people who had been forced to do so, perhaps due to lack of food or illness. The purpose of this regulation appears to have been to ensure that the population obeyed the instructions they received from rulers and clergy.³³ It thus seems to have been part of their

attempts to stop the emergence of heretical teachings and practices. By punishing someone who had fasted on a Sunday by a renewed period of fasting, the authority of rulers and clerics was even more clearly demonstrated to the population. Moreover, since Sundays and feast days were occasions of celebration, and the fasts were times of mourning and self-denial, rulers and clerics in effect told people what mood they should be in on particular days.

The introduction of seasonal fasting among the early Scandinavians will now be considered. The earliest Norwegian laws contained regulations regarding all the seasonal fasts that were required by law in the other geographical areas. The Laws of the Gulathing and the Borgarthing stated that the major Quadragesimal fast, i.e. Lent (*langafasta*), lasted the seven weeks between Ash Wednesday and Easter. This fast was extended to nine weeks for monks and clerics, and sometimes also for lay people who were undergoing penance. Evidence however suggests that it was the last six weeks of the *langafasta* that were seen as the most important. The Borgarthing Law named these weeks 'every men's fast' (*alra manna fasta*). During this period, the law prescribed harsher punishments for not fasting than it did for the same offence in the first week. The importance attached to the six-week fast is likely to have been based on the Gregorian idea that the Lenten fast should include 36 days of effective fasting.³⁴

The other Quadragesimal fasting seasons were called *gagnfǫstur*. These seasons were different in two respects from those seen in the other geographical areas. Firstly, the restrictionary period leading up to Assumption Day was not mentioned. Instead another season in the weeks before Michaelmas was introduced. Secondly, the duration of these seasons was set to three weeks, instead of four. The term *gagnfǫstur* was also used for the two weeks that preceded the seven-week Lenten fast. The population was not required to fast during these seasons. Instead, as preparation for the approaching Christian feasts and the *langafasta*, they must not get married or engage in sexual activities.³⁵

The Quatember fasts were called *imbrudagar*. The Norwegian laws did not state when these fasts took place, only that they arrived four times a year. It can therefore not be established whether these were held in accordance with Continental or Anglo-Saxon traditions.³⁶ It should be pointed out the *imbrudagar* are not included in the Older Gulathing Law, and may thus have been introduced into this area at a later stage.

The Rogation Days, i.e. the three day-fast that preceded Ascension Day, went under the name of *gangdagar* (gang days). In addition, there was a ‘lesser gang day’. This was held on April 25, which was a day dedicated to St. Mark the Evangelist.³⁷ The laws moreover enumerated fourteen or sixteen vigil fasts that should be held on the eve of major feast days.³⁸

Finally, all the early Norwegian laws included the Friday fast. This is noteworthy, since the observance of this fast was not mentioned by any other source in this study. Fridays, besides being called *frjádagr*, came to be named *fōstudægr* (fast day). This suggests that the observance of this weekly fast became customary among the Norwegians. In this context, it should also be noted that the Icelandic Homily Book, which dates from the twelfth century, contains two sermons that are concerned with the importance of seasonal fasting.³⁹

There are several other aspects of the fasting regulations in Norway that appear to have been similar to those in the other areas of this study. The laws stated that everyone over the age of twelve should observe the fasts, with the exception of those who were ill.⁴⁰ It moreover seems that also in Norway the tradition of breaking a fast after noon, rather than in the evening, was followed.⁴¹ The Norwegian laws furthermore prescribed three different types of dietary restrictions (*abstinentia*) during the various fasting seasons. The least strict form of fast was the ‘non-meat fast’. As was stated above, the medieval prohibitions against meat were mostly restricted to ‘red meat’. During such fasts, the Norwegians were thus allowed to eat foods that contained milk, eggs, fish, and possibly also fowl. A stricter type was the ‘dry fast’ (*purrfasta*), which apart from meat also excluded all ‘white foods’, i.e. eggs and dairy produce. The strictest type was the ‘water fast’ (*vatnfasta*), when only the consumption of bread and salt was allowed. It should be noted that the Law of the Gulathing did not differentiate between different types of *abstinentia*. This law only stated that abstinence from meat should be observed on fast days.⁴² The water and the dry fasts may therefore not have been included among the earliest ecclesiastical regulations. At this time, the ‘non-meat fast’ instead seems to have applied to all seasonal fasts.

Diagram 1 shows the number of fast days in a year apportioned between the various types of *abstinentia*. Slight variations occur between different years. The reason is that Christian feast days fall on different days of the week in different years. This diagram has been based on a ‘model calendar’, which applies to specific years of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The calculations

Types of Abstinencia

according to early Norwegian laws

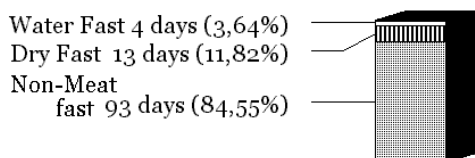


Diagram 1: The number of fast days in a year apportioned between the three types of *abstinencia*. Absolute numbers and percentages. The diagram is applicable to years with dominical letter C. Source: The earliest laws of the Borgarthing, the Eidsivathing and the Frostathing.

have also been based on the assumption that the stricter forms of *abstinencia* would take precedence over the less strict types.⁴³

The diagram clearly shows the dominance of the ‘non-meat fast’. The stricter forms of *abstinencia* were only to be observed on a few days per year. The ‘dry fast’ should be followed on the lesser gang day and the *imbrudagar*. The ‘water fast’ should be adhered to on Good Friday, as well as on the vigils of All Saints’ Day, Assumption Day, and St. Olav’s Day. The food regulations in earlier times, before these strict *abstinencia* seem to have been introduced, would thus not have been significantly different.

The Norwegian laws introduced four key measures in order to successfully introduce the observance of the seasonal fasts. Firstly, clerics were made responsible to inform their parishioners of the approaching fasts. Secondly, clerics who neglected these duties were to be punished by the bishop. Thirdly, the general population was also given legal obligations regarding the spread of information. Fourthly, anyone who failed to fulfil these obligations, or ignored any of the other fasting regulations, would be harshly punished.

Legislators tried to ensure that all members of the population would be informed when the various fasts took place. The priests were therefore obliged to notify their parishioners in two different manners. In the first instance, they were required to make announcements in church. According to the Law

of the Borgarthing, the priest should do this while standing ‘in the door to the choir’.⁴⁴ The intention seems to have been to make sure that these announcements were delivered as part of the service. This was presumably the best opportunity for priests to talk to a gathering of their parishioners. It

is unlikely that the dispersed parishioners were able to come to church every Sunday and feast day, particularly in the period when churches were few and far between. It would not therefore have been sufficient to announce the fasts during the services. As an additional means of communication, the priests were required to carve a ‘calendar’ on a wooden cross. (See figure 12) On these calendars the approaching fasts should be marked. The crosses were then to be carried from farm to farm along an agreed route, so that the message from the priest was brought to everyone. Clerics were required to send out these crosses ‘before each holy day or fast day and as many nights before as the men of the *fylki* have agreed upon’.⁴⁵

The second key measure to ensure the general observance of the fasts was to punish clerics who had, in any way, neglected their duties of informing their congregation. Every summer at the thing, the bishops would carefully investigate the work of the priests and particularly whether they had incorrectly announced any of the fasts or feast days. All priests were required to attend these meetings, otherwise they were to pay a fine of three silver marks. According to the Frostathing Law, priests who had failed to send a cross forth, or who had sent it at the wrong time, would be liable to pay the bishop three *öre*. The Eidsivathing Law stated that if a priest had made a mistake in his announcement of a fast or a feast day, either in church or on a cross, he would be required to pay a



Figure 12. Calendar stave from Lödöse (Västergötland, Sweden). No Norwegian calendar in the form of a cross has yet been found. This find, which has been dated to the middle of the twelfth century, might however give an idea of how the calendars used by the Norwegian priests were designed. On the Lödöse stave, the 365 days of the year have been marked by lines. Saints’ days and their degree of sanctity have also been marked. The numbers 1-7, which correspond to the dominical letters in later calendars, as well as the phases the sun and the moon also appear. By using these markings all the festivals of the year could be worked out.

fine of three marks. According to the Older Gulathing Law, a priest who committed this offence twice could even be removed from his office. It was also stated that a priest who had failed to make sure that the calendar on one of his crosses covered the whole time period that the cross would be on its way, before being returned to the priest, would be fined three marks. Moreover, clerics who realised that they had made a mistake on a cross, were required 'to run and ride' (*rænna eða riða*) to all the farms along its route, in order to inform everyone of their mistake. If they did not manage to do this, and people as a result ate at the wrong time, the priests would be fined 'as much as has been decided for the day'.⁴⁶

The third important measure was to impose legal obligations regarding the crosses on to the general population. The laws stated that each farmer who received a cross was required to carry it to 'the nearest farmstead from which smoke arises according as the freemen have agreed at the thing'. People who lived near each other should come to an agreement about who would carry it forward. When a bearer of a cross arrived at a farm, he should first give the cross to the husbandman. If the husbandman refused to receive it, the bearer should take the cross to the house and place it above the door. He should then 'go inside to notify the household'.⁴⁷ It would thus not have been possible for anyone to whose house a cross had been brought to refuse to receive it, or to claim that they had not been given its message.

If a cross had failed to reach any of its destinations, it was the responsibility of the priest to investigate who had not fulfilled his duty of carrying the cross forward. According to the Frostathing Law, the suspected party would be summoned to the thing, where he should either clear himself by swearing an oath of innocence, or pay the 'cross fine'. If a suspect refused to come to the thing, the priest should ask the help of the freemen. All men together should then go to the suspect and 'take from him a double fine'. Of this fine, the freemen should be given one half, and the priest three *öre*. If the freemen refused to help the priest in this matter, they would all be liable to pay a three *öre*-fine.⁴⁸ In addition, the bailiff (*ármaðr*) was legally required to investigate whether the crosses had been carried to their correct destinations. If he found that this was not the case, he should sue any guilty parties for the fine.⁴⁹ Checks were thus introduced at all levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, i.e. from the lower clergy to the bishops themselves. This system moreover made sure that when someone had neglected a fast it would always be possible to identify a party who had failed in his/her duties, and who could be held accountable for what

had happened. It could either be priests who had not informed their parishioners in the correct manner or laity who had ignored, or failed to pass on, information sent to their dwellings.

The fourth important measure was the imposition of harsh punishments for neglecting the fasting regulations. As was the case in the other geographical areas, the harshness of the punishments depended on the degree of importance that was attached to the fasts. This can be demonstrated by an example from the Frostathing Law. This law prescribed a six *öre*-fine on anyone who knowingly ate meat on a Friday. However, if this offence was committed during Lent the offender would be outlawed. Moreover, as was mentioned above, the punishment for ignoring the *langafasta* could depend on when this offence was committed. According to the Borgarthing law, the eating of meat during the first four days was punishable by a fine of three marks. Later on in this fast, the same offence would be punished by outlawry.⁵⁰

It was demonstrated above that The Penitential of Theodore stated that anyone who habitually neglected to fast should be expelled from 'church'. The penitential thus penalised such offenders by its harshest punishment. This was the case also in Norway, where those who consistently ignored the fasts were to be outlawed. It has already been stated that outlawry was the harshest penalty in the Norwegian laws, and was as close as it is possible to come to the death penalty. This punishment was also used for murders and other such serious crimes. There are slight variations as to when this punishment should be prescribed for transgressions of the fasting regulations. Absalon Taranger argued that the original system was similar to that in the Law of the Borgarthing, and that guilty parties would be outlawed the second time that they had neglected a fast. Other laws did not impose this punishment until the third time that the offence had been committed. Previous neglects of the seasonal fasts were punishable by fines.⁵¹

Members of the laity could only avoid punishment for neglecting a fast if they managed to convince the thing that they had been genuinely ignorant of that fast. This explanation could be accepted in cases when the guilty party took an oath that no cross had been brought to their dwellings. There were also occasions when the laws recognised that people could ignore a fast because they had 'become confused about the days'. This reason was accepted by the Borgarthing Law if people who were on their own, or two people who were together, failed to observe the Friday fast. In such cases the guilty parties should go to confession and perform the prescribed penance, but they would not have

to pay a fine. However, if this offence was committed by three or more persons who were together, they would be liable to pay a fine of three marks each, since ‘they could not all be confused about the day’.⁵² The laws contained further provisions for people who had accidentally neglected a fast. If someone ate meat on a Friday, and was asked: ‘why do you eat meat when other people are fasting?’, he should immediately spit his food out. If he did so, and explained that he had been mistaken about the day, it did not constitute an offence against the law. However, if he swallowed his food, this would be ‘an expensive bite’, since such offenders were liable to pay a fine.⁵³

In conclusion, it must be pointed out that this system of enforcement seems to have changed slightly over time. It is however important to note that all its fundamental parts are included among those regulations in the Gulathing Law that have been identified as the earliest by scholars such as Taranger and Helle.

There is very little information about the nature of the early medieval fasting regulations in Sweden. It cannot therefore be established if equally strict methods of information and control were employed in this area. The available evidence does however suggest that the punishments for breaking the fasting regulations were milder than in Norway. The Swedish laws stated that those who neglected a fast should pay a fine of three *marker*. *Yngre Västgötalagen* added that guilty parties should also fast on another day. These laws prescribed their harshest punishments, i.e. twelve-*marker* fines and outlawry, for offences such as murder and assault. Only five of the ten Swedish provincial laws give any specifications regarding what foods were forbidden during the fasts. Most of these regulations only prohibited the eating of meat. Two of the laws however make it clear that distinctions were made between meat and ‘white foods’, although they do not state when the different diets were to be followed.⁵⁴

The detailed nature of many of the Norwegian fasting regulations suggests that these, in the same way as some of the food regulations discussed in chapter 5, resulted from interaction between legislators and the wider population. Their contents furthermore suggest that rulers and clerics experienced difficulties in making the population observe the Christian fasts. There were presumably many reasons for this. Those who were opposed to Christianity would obviously have resisted the introduction of the fasts. However, resistance may also have been present among Christians, as some of the fasting regulations are likely to have brought changes to everyday life. In order to determine which regulations that the population may have resisted, the potential effect of each one must be established.

The concept of fasting will first be considered. Fasting has been seen as a long-standing and 'almost universal phenomenon within both Eastern and Western cultures'. This was practised by the Romans before the feast of Ceres. North American Indian tribes, such as the Cherokee and the Creek, fast at New Year. The Ossetes of the Caucasus observe a daily fast in the month preceding harvest. Theodore H. Gaster has moreover argued that both the Christian Lent and the Moslem Ramadan are 'in the main, reinterpreted survivals' of such traditions.⁵⁵ It is thus possible that fasting was practised in pre-Christian Scandinavia. This concept may therefore not have been novel to the Scandinavians of the conversion period, and they may not have been opposed to fasting as such. The particular Christian fasting regulations are however likely to have been new, and may therefore have caused resistance and opposition.

The potential impact of the dietary restrictions will naturally have depended on the constitution of the population's everyday diet. Excavations of Viking Age settlements have shown that the population ate a varied diet, consisting of different kinds of meat (particularly pork, mutton, and hen), as well as vegetarian produce. In settlements situated near water, the consumption of fish (e.g. cod and herring) and sea birds was naturally of particular importance. A number of dairy products such as sourmilk, whey, and cheese were moreover consumed. In general, it does however seem that an important part of the diet was constituted by various kinds of vegetabilia, such as beans, peas, grain. Nuts, fruits and berries also constituted important supplements.⁵⁶ The beverages seem to have been of varying kinds, such as water, milk, fruit juices, beer, mead, and wine.⁵⁷

The importance of vegetabilia in the every day diet can be particularly well demonstrated by an analysis of potsherds from excavated settlements in Sweden. Potsherds found at Vendel, Valsgårde (Uppland), and Barva (Södermanland) have been examined. 92% of the sherds from these sites contained traces of vegetabilia, while only 56% had any residue of animal products. These results suggest that meat was an important, although not the dominant type of food among the early Scandinavian population.⁵⁸ It must however be pointed out that meat may often have been spit-roasted.⁵⁹ The preparation of meat may therefore not always be traceable in finds of ceramic pots.

The distributions of the various types of *abstinentia* were illustrated by diagram 1. The effect of the exclusion of dairy produce that was required during the dry and the water fasts is difficult to estimate. However, since this

restriction only applied to sixteen days of the year, its impact on overall eating habits should not be overestimated. The largest impact of this restriction may have been its very existence and its regulating effects of life. The same can be argued regarding the water fasts. Although this type of fast was very strict, it was only to be observed four days per year. The ban on the consumption of meat that applied to all the *abstinentia* must have had a significantly larger impact on the eating habits of the population. It must however be pointed out that on 96% (100% according to the Gulathing Law) of all fast days, i.e. during the non-meat and the dry fasts, the consumption of fish and maybe also fowl was still allowed. The impact of the non-meat fast and the dry fast would thus have been greatest in areas where these animals were not always easy to come by. This is especially significant since, although the early Scandinavians appear to have eaten a lot of vegetabilia, meat was often added to vegetable dishes, such as various types of bread.⁶⁰

The early Scandinavians are thus likely to have experienced some problems in following the dietary restrictions during the fasts, and may therefore have been opposed to their introduction. There are however other aspects of the fasting regulations that demanded larger adjustments of the population, and which may therefore have created greater degrees of resistance and opposition.

The second and third phases of settlement at the ring-fort of Eketorp on the island of Öland (Sweden) are of interest in this context. Phase II lasted between c. 400 and 700, and phase III from c. 1170 to 1240.⁶¹ There is very little variation in the consumption of 'red meat' between these two phases.⁶² The consumption of fish however increased dramatically during the third phase. According to the osteological report, 80% of the total weight of the fish remains from these two phases derives from phase III. Less than 6% belong to Eketorp II.⁶³ The huge rise in fish consumption must have been caused by an increase in the supply of herring. Over 91% of the fish bones came from this species. The stock of herring in the Baltic Sea grew particularly from the thirteenth century. The rise in fish consumption in Eketorp III cannot therefore have been caused purely by the introduction of fasting regulations. On the other hand, these figures do not contradict the hypothesis that fish consumption is likely to increase in Christian times.

The large number of fast days is one of the aspects of the fasting regulations that may have caused the most resistance and opposition. The cumulative effect of these fasts is illustrated by diagram 2.⁶⁴ It is seen that the Norwegians were required to fast almost one third of the days in every year (c. 30%). For a

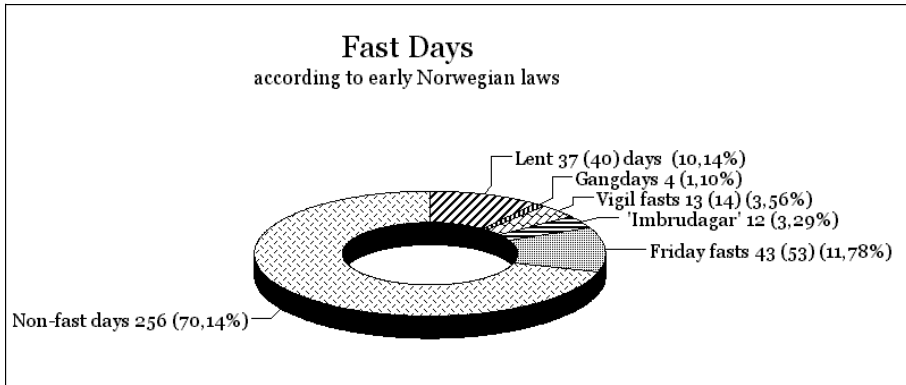


Diagram 2: The number of fast days in one year apportioned between the seasonal fasts, the vigil fasts and the weekly Friday fasts. Absolute numbers and percentages. The diagram is applicable to years with dominical letter C. Source: The four earliest Norwegian provincial laws.

population who made their living from manual labour and who presumably started their working day at sunrise,⁶⁵ the requirement that they should work without food until midday, during a third of the year, must have been seen as rather interfering. It may also have been a requirement that they found difficult to follow. The fact that these regulations applied to all healthy people over the age of twelve may also have been experienced as out of the ordinary, and could thus have created certain amounts of popular defiance.

Another possible reason for resistance against the fasting regulations may be that they, just as the other dietary restrictions, could prevent the holding of traditional feasts. Rulers and clerics are likely to have found the prohibitions against meat the most useful for this purpose. It has already been shown that animals such as horses, cats, and dogs were often ritually slaughtered. Moreover, after analysis of the potsherds from the cemeteries at Vendel, Valsgårde, and Barva, it has been suggested that meat was more significant in cultic rituals than as part of the everyday diet. Only 45 % of the sherds from these sites showed traces of vegetabilia, while 91% contained remains of animal products. These figures should be compared to 92% and 56%, respectively, for the potsherds from the settlement sites.⁶⁶

Yet another reason why rulers and clerics may have found it difficult to make the Norwegians observe the Christian seasonal fasts can be put forward. The laws suggest that the many, and often rather complex, fasting regulations caused bewilderment among the population. They may have found it particularly difficult to know when the movable fasts were to take place. Examples include the *langafasta*, the gang days, and some of the *imbrudagar*.

In later times, people may also have been unsure about what food they were allowed on particular fast days. One such example could be the four Fridays a year that were part of the *imbrudagar*. On Fridays, the population would normally only have been prohibited from eating 'red meat'. However, during the *imbrudagar*, 'dry fast' should be observed, and these stricter regulations thus presumably replaced the usual non-meat fast. Another time when confusions may have arisen is when a vigil water fast took place on a Friday.

This chapter has shown that the Christian fasting regulations are likely to have fundamentally interfered in a number of areas of everyday life. It would therefore seem rather surprising if the early Scandinavians had not tried to resist the introduction of these regulations. It is furthermore likely that Christians who were willing to follow the fasting regulations, may despite this, at times have failed to do so. They may have made mistakes regarding the Christian calendar, or they may not have been able to obtain the right type of food required for a particular fast.

On the whole, the Norwegian laws provide a picture of a well-structured system of information, control, and punishment. The desired level of organisation of all echelons of society clearly suggests that legislators wished to introduce the fasts among the whole population. The interaction between rulers, clerics, and the population that can be seen in the laws almost gives the sense of a dialogue. As was stated above, this suggests that these were not empty pieces of legislation. Instead they seem to have been laws that were used and which legislators truly attempted to enforce. It may therefore have been difficult both for priests and parishioners to neglect their duties regarding the fasts. As the number of priests and churches grew and the parish system developed, these obligations must have become increasingly difficult to ignore.

In all the geographical areas of this study, fasting was introduced as part of rulers' and clerics' first efforts of conversion, together with a small number of other Christian practices. This was the case even during the early Middle Ages, when fasting had not yet gained the same degree of significance as in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Theologians' increasing emphasis on this practice may therefore not have been the only reason why rulers and clerics in Norway so keenly tried to enforce the fasts. This detailed regulation of everyday life may have been a particularly useful tool to stop lingering pre-Christian practices. It is therefore possible that the introduction of the seasonal fasts may have paved the way for the continuing work of rulers and clergy to transform the traditional Scandinavian society into a Christian one.

Notes to Chapter 6

- 1 Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 372-90. See also Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', pp. 81-6.
- 2 2 Samuel 12.16-23, Daniel 9.3, 1 Kings 21.27, Nehemiah 1.4, Psalms 35.13, Luke 18.12.
- 3 *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, third edition, ed, Walter Kasper (Freiburg im Breisgau, Basel, Rome, and Vienna 1995-2001), vol. 3, cols. 1189-90; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed, F.L. Cross, third edition, ed, E.A. Livingstone (Oxford 1997), pp. 599-600; *Kirke-Leksikon for Norden*, ed, Fredrik Nielsen (Aarhus 1900-29), vol. II, pp. 17-19; *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum. Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der Antiken Welt*, ed, Theodor Klauser (Stuttgart 1941-2000), vol. 7, cols. 473-4, and 509-12; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', p. 85; PL vol. XX, cols. 555-6.
- 4 DOM vol. 5, pp. 18-9; Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast. The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1987), pp. 34-5; KLNLM vol. 4, cols. 182-3; Franz Gerhard Cremer, *Die Fasteansage Jesu* (Bonn 1965), pp. 126-9.
- 5 LM vol. IV, col. 304; DOM vol. 5, pp. 18-9 and vol. 4, pp. 435-6; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', pp. 82-3; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 372-88; *Kirke-Leksikon for Norden*, vol. II, pp. 17-19; Karl Bihlmeyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 2, *Das Mittelalter* (Paderborn 1962), vol. 2, p. 126; Cremer, *Die Fasteansage Jesu*, pp. 21-52. The Quadregesimal fasting periods are seldom mentioned in modern dictionaries. One exception is *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, eds, G. Krause and G. Müller (Berlin 1976-), vol. 11, p. 53. The occurrence of these seasons in Norway are discussed by Absalon Taranger and Konrad Maurer. Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 382-3; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', pp. 83-4. According to John Ryan, Irish monks fasted during Lent, in the forty days before Christmas, and the forty days after Pentecost. The penitentials of Finnian and Cummean however only state that sexual abstinence should be practised during these periods. Fasting at Pentecost was also recommended by St. Jerome. John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism. Origins and Early Development*, second edition (Dublin 1986), pp. 392-3; *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 96 and 103.
- 6 The Quatember fasts were named *quattor temporum* in Latin, *Quatember* in German, *ymbrendæg* in Old English, and *imbrudagar* in Old Norse. Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 383-7; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', pp. 83-4.
- 7 LM vol. IV, col. 304; DOM vol. 4, pp. 435-6; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', pp. 82-4; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 372-88; *Kirke-Leksikon for Norden*, vol. II, p. 19; *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, vol. 7, cols. 509-10 and 520-3; Bihlmeyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 2, p. 126; Cremer, *Die Fasteansage Jesu*, pp. 10-21.
- 8 Burchard of Worms was particularly influential regarding the different types of *abstinentia*. DOM vol. 5, p. 18; Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 37-8; *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 3, col. 1190; LM vol. IV, col. 305; *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 599-600; *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed, F. Cabrol (Paris 1907-53), vol. 1, pp. 212. *Kirke-Leksikon for Norden*, vol. II, p. 20; PL vol. 77, col. 1351; PG, vol. XLII, col. 829.

- 9 HE III.8.
- 10 Wihtried, cc. 3-6 and 9-15, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 24-7.
- 11 Theodore II.xiv.1. The fasts following Pentecost is presumably the one called 'the fast of the Apostles'. The fast leading up to Assumption Day referred to above lasted only two weeks, and can thus not be included among the 'forty-day fasts'. *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. 11, p. 53; Cf. *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, pp. 96 and 103. The statement that these regulations applied to 'the people' can be explained by the fact that clerics were normally required to fast during longer periods.
- 12 Egbert stated that the English followed the tradition of the 'Ancient Church' and that The Ember Days Fasts fell on the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays in the first full week of Lent, Pentecost, in the last full week before the Autumn Equinox, and in the last full week before Christmas. These dates were similar to those prescribed by the papacy in the eleventh century. See Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 383-5; *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, vol. III, pp. 403-13; 'Selections from the Dialogue of Egbert', *Medieval Handbooks of Penance. A translation of the principle libri poenitentiales and selections from related documents*, eds. and trs, John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer (New York 1938), pp. 239-43, esp. p. 241; Henry Soames, *The Anglo-Saxon Church, its History, Revenue and General Character*, fourth edition (London 1856), p. 215-16.
- 13 The First Saxon Capitulary, c. 4, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 205; Regino question 49; Corr LXVIII, LXVI, LXX, and LXXII, p. 646.
- 14 Vladimir was however not tempted by this offer, and therefore asked the Catholics to return home. He finally chose to be baptised by the Greeks. Nestor, *Nestorskrönikan*, pp. 75-94.
- 15 Corr LXVI and LXXII, p. 646.
- 16 This rule was accepted for Germany in 813 at the synod of Mainz. Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, p. 390; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', p. 85.
- 17 This is indicated by a calendar which can be dated to 1119. See Soames, *The Anglo-Saxon Church*, p. 215; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, p. 390.
- 18 Wihtried, cc. 11-12, 14-15, and 3-5, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 24-7; *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 469-70; *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. I, pp. 112-13.
- 19 Theodore I.xi.4-5.
- 20 Theodore I.v.3, I.ix.5, I.ix.11, and I.v.9.
- 21 This applied to people who had celebrated the Jewish Easter, and those who had allowed a heretic to hold Mass. Theodore I.v.3 and I.v.9.
- 22 The First Saxon Capitulary, cc. 4, 7, 8, 20, and 21, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, pp. 205-7.
- 23 Corr LXVIII, LXVI, LXX, and LXXII, p. 646; DOM vol. 5, p. 18; Theodore I.xi.4; *Kirke-Leksikon for Norden*, vol. II, p. 18.
- 24 Corr LXVII, p. 646; Theodore I.xi.5.
- 25 Kahl, 'Die ersten Jahrhunderte des missionsgeschichtlichen Mittelalters', pp. 56-7. The text from Würzburg is printed in Koeniger, *Die Sendgerichte*, pp. 194-6. In Poland, offenders against the fasting regulations could have their teeth knocked out.

- 26 *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 9, col. 727.
- 27 Acts 20:7. The fast required before the reception of Communion did not constitute a regular Sunday fast. This was because communion was only received a few times a year, and because Mass was celebrated in the morning, after which the fast was broken. DOM vol. 5, p. 18.
- 28 Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. and tr, Justin McCann (London 1952), c. 41, pp. 98-9 and 188, n. 67; DOM vol. 5, p. 19.
- 29 Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, pp. 387 and 389.
- 30 Theodore I.xi.2. *Si quis autem in Dominica die pro negligentia jejunaverit*. The penance for further offences varied between twenty and forty days. *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, vol. III, p. 186.
- 31 Theodore I.xi.3. *Si pro dampnatione diei jejunaverit, sicut Judeus abhominetur [abhominabitur] ab omnibus aecclesiis catholicis*. *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, vol. III, p. 186; *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions*, ed, Rosemary Goring (Ware, Hertfordshire 1995), pp. 172 and 428; Edward Westermarck, 'The principles of fasting', *Folklore XVIII* (1907), pp. 391-422, esp. pp. 416-18; Ismar Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Frankfurt am Main 1931), pp. 126-30.
- 32 Corr LXIX, p. 646.
- 33 It should also be noted that medieval theologians were concerned to prohibit excessive fasting. Cassian stated that fasts should not be observed for more than five consecutive days. According to Columban, it was a vice to let the abstention of food go too far. Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, pp. 386 and 394.
- 34 GL 27; BL I:6; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 374-8. In the Penitential of Egbert, this period was called *ān ofer eall folc*. Taranger stated that the requirement of the nine-week fast for monks and secular clerics may only have applied to the higher ranks of the clergy. Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 376-7. GL 27 and BL I:6 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80. It should also be noted that GL 27 is stated to have been originally introduced by Olav.
- 35 GL 27; BL I:7; FL III: 9; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 377 and 382-3; KLMN vol. 4, col. 189; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', p. 83. For the dating of GL 27 see footnote 34 above. The regulations in the Borgarthing Law (BL I:7) regarding sexual abstinence belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle has moreover pointed out that these prohibitions correspond to a regulation included in the laws of Ethelred. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-81; *The Laws of Ethelred*, VI, 25, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 252-3.
- 36 BL I:6; EL I:27; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', p. 84; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 383-7. Fritzner suggested that the *imbrudagar* fell on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, instead of Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The population would then have been required to fast four days, rather than three, during these weeks. Taranger, however, stated that there is no evidence to support this argument. For the dating of BL I:6 see footnote 34 above.
- 37 FL II:31; GL 18; KLMN vol. 4, col. 189; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', p. 81. GL 18 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version

of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80.

38 The Gulathing Law included fourteen vigil fasts, while the Frostathing Law mentioned sixteen. GL 17; FL II:25. The Gulathing Law stated that fasts should be observed before the following feast days: Saint John's Day (June 24), Saint Peter's Day (June 29), The Mass-day of the Holy Men of Selja (July 8), Saint James' Day (July 25), The Earlier Saint Olaf's Day (July 29), Saint Lawrence's Day (August 10), The Earlier Saint Mary's day, i.e. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15), Saint Bartholomew's Day (August 24), Saint Matthew's Day (September 21), Michaelmas (September 29), The Mass-day of the Two Apostles Simon and Jude (October 28), All Saints' Day (November 1), Saint Andrew's Day (November 30), Saint Thomas' Day (December 21).

According to the Frostathing Law, fasts should be observed before the following feast days: Saint Paul's Day (January 25), Saint Mathias' Day (February 24), Saint Gregory's Day (March 12), Saint Magnus' Day (April 16), The Mass-day of the Two Apostles (May 1, Philip and James), Monday of Whitsun Week, Saint Botholf's Day (June 17), Saint Swithun's Day (July 2), Saint Margaret's Day (July 20), Saint James' Day (July 25), Saint Bartholomew's Day (August 24), The Later Mass-day of the Holy Cross (September 14), Saint Matthew's Day (September 21), The Mass-day of the Two Apostles, Simon and Jude (October 28), Martinmas (November 11), Saint Clement's Day (November 23), Saint Thomas' Day (29 December). GL 17 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. He also drew attention to the similarities between the Christian feast days required by the Norwegian laws and those found in the Laws of Ethelred. The Laws of Ethelred, V 12,3-18 and VI 22-5, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 240-3 and 252-3; Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 353-64. It should moreover be noted that GL 17 is stated to have been introduced by King Olav and Bishop Grímkell at Moster.

39 GL 20; FL II:38; BL I:6; EL I:27; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', p. 82; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp. 372-3. It should be noted that -dægr is derived from *dægr*, which denotes both 'day' and 'half a twentyfour-hour period'. See Heggstad, *Gamalnorsk ordbok med nynorsk tyding*. For the dating of GL 20 see chapter 5, footnote 61. For the dating of BL I:6 see footnote 34 above. Helle has pointed out that in GL 20 it is stated the expression 'that day we call Friday', suggests that something new was being introduced. That knowledge of the Christian days of the week is not presumed, further indicates that this regulation dates from the very early stages of the conversion. Cf. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, p. 185; *Homiliu-bók*, pp. 35-7 and 61-4.

40 FL II:32 and II:41; EL I:27; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, p. 390; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', pp. 85-6. The Frostathing Law included one exception to this tradition. According to this law, only those over fifteen years of age should observe the water fast on St.Olaf's Eve. FL II:39.

41 This is indicated by the Frostathing Law, which stated that on the major gang days, the single meal of the day must be consumed after noon. FL II:31; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, p. 390.

42 GL 20; EL I:27; FL II:31, II:32, II:38, II:39, and II:41; BL I:6; Maurer, 'Nogle Bemærkninger til Norges Kirkehistorie', p. 85; Taranger, *Den Angelsaksiske kirkes inflydelse paa den Norske*, pp.

388-90; KLMN vol. 4, col. 190. For the dating of GL 20 see chapter 5, footnote 61. For the dating of BL I:6 see footnote 34 above.

43 The 'model calendar' has been based on dominical letters (*littera dominicalis*). The chosen years have C as their dominical letter. Such years include e.g. 1087, 1108, 1126, 1137, and 1192. It must however be pointed out that the movable Christian feasts would not necessarily have taken place at the same time in these years. The dates of the movable fasts would thus also have varied. Such variations have however been disregarded, since they would not have had any bearing on the number of fast days during the chosen years. See C. R. Cheney, *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History* (Cambridge 1945), pp. 8-9; and table 21, pp. 124-5; Alf Henrikson, *Alla årets dagar. En evighetskalender*, third edition (Stockholm 1970), p. 392. As was pointed out above, the *imbrudagar* are not included in the older Law of the Gulathing. The number of fast days included in the Gulathing Law is thus 103 days a year. Non-meat fasting regulations seem to have applied to all these days.

44 BL I:13. This law also stated that the population should be informed about the approaching feast days. Priests were required to announce feast days that took place on a Monday or a Tuesday on the Sunday of the week before. Feasts that took place on a Wednesday should be announced on the directly preceding Sunday. BL I:13 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle has moreover pointed out that similar requirements were made of priests in laws from ninth and tenth-century England. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-82.

45 BL I:13; EL I:10; GL 19; FL II:22-3. This method was also used to inform the population of approaching feast days and meetings of the things. *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 413; *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsvathings*, p. 33, n. 4. For the dating of BL I:13 see footnote 44 above. GL 19 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80. It should also be noted that this chapter is stated to have been introduced only by Olav, i.e. that Magnus did not repeat these regulations in his revision of the Gulathing Law. This could suggest that chapter 19 was no longer needed in the time of Magnus.

46 FL II:22; EL I:10-11; GL 15. GL 15 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80. It should moreover be noted that GL 15 is stated to have been introduced by King Olav and Bishop Grímkell at Møster.

47 FL II:23; EL I:10 and I:11; GL 19. For the dating of GL 19 see footnote 45 above.

48 FL II:22. Similar regulations were included in GL 19. For the dating of GL 19 see footnote 45 above.

49 FL II:23.

50 FL II:38 and II:41; BL I:6; EL I:27. For the dating of BL I:6 see footnote 34 above.

51 KLMN vol. 4, cols. 601-3; BL I:6; GL 20; FL II:38. The Law of the Gulathing prescribed a three-öre fine for the first time that someone had knowingly eaten meat. For a second offence the fine was increased to three marks, and the third time the guilty party would be outlawed. The Law of the Frostathing punished such offenders twice by a fine of six öre, and then outlawry would be prescribed. The fines prescribed by the Borgarthing Law varied between three öre

- and three marks. For the dating of GL 20 see chapter 5, footnote 61. For the dating of BL I:6 see footnote 34 above.
- 52 BL I:6. For the dating of BL I:6 see footnote 34 above.
- 53 GL 20; BL 1:6; EL I:27. For the dating of GL 20 see chapter 5, footnote 61. For the dating of BL I:6 see footnote 34 above.
- 54 UL Kyrkobalken 16; YVL Kyrkobalken 56; SL Kyrkobalken 13 § 3; DL Kyrkobalken 13; VL Kyrkobalken 24; HL Kyrkobalken 16; Smålandslagen prescribed a fine of three marks on anyone who ate 'meat when he should abstain and butter when he should fast' (*tha köt han sculde fyrmae oc tha smör han swclde fastae*). At this time *ferma* meant mainly abstinence from meat, while *fasta* meant abstinence from almost all kinds of food. In KLNLM it is incorrectly stated that this regulation appears in Södermannalagen. See KLNLM vol. 4, col. 183.
- 55 *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 5, pp. 287-90 and vol. 13, p. 148.
- 56 Roesdahl, *Danmarks vikingetid*, pp. 133-5; Anders Ödman, 'House and home', *From Viking to Crusader. The Scandinavians and Europe 800-1200*, eds, E. Roesdahl and D.M. Wilson (New York 1992), pp. 136-43, esp. p. 142; Sven Isaksson, 'Vikingarna var inga köttfrossare', *Populär Arkeologi*, no. 2 (2001), pp. 34-6; Björn Ambrosiani and Kenneth Svensson, 'Birka', *Så åt man förr*, ed, Ulf Bergström (Stockholm 1992), pp. 21-36, esp. pp. 23-6 and 28-9; Graham-Campbell, *The Viking World*, pp. 122-6. Bengt Wigh's analyses of the animal bones from Birka showed that particularly fish, but also fowl, were important parts of the population's diet. Wigh stated that the introduction of Christianity 'probably in no way influenced the consumption pattern' at Birka and in the surrounding areas. This argument was based on the idea that 'neither mutton nor beef fall into the categories of food known to have been influenced by the Christian creed'. Wigh made no mention of the dietary regulations during the fasting seasons. Wigh, *Animal Husbandry in the Viking Age Town of Birka and its Hinterland*, pp. 132-4 and 142.
- 57 Roesdahl, *Danmarks vikingetid* (Gyldendal 1980), p. 135.
- 58 Sven Isaksson, *Food and Rank in Early Medieval Time*. Theses and Papers in Scientific Archaeology 3 (Stockholm 2000), pp. 55 and paper VII, pp. 1-31, esp. p. 19.
- 59 Cf. Graham-Campbell, *Viking Artefacts*, pp. 10 and 201.
- 60 It must yet again be pointed out that in the Gulathing Law, where the different *abstinentia* are not mentioned, the non-meat fast would have applied to all fast days. Isaksson, 'Vikingarna var inga köttfrossare', p. 34.
- 61 Ulf Näsman and Erik Wegraeus, 'Introduction', *Eketorp. Fortification and Settlement on Öland/Sweden. The Setting* (Stockholm 1979), pp. 7-12, esp. p. 7; Kaj Borg, 'Eketorp III', *Eketorp III. Den medeltida befästningen på Öland. Artefakterna*, ed, Kaj Borg (Uppsala 1998), pp. 11-67, esp. p. 62.
- 62 Joachim Boessneck and Angela von den Driesch, 'Die Tierknochenfunde mit Ausnahme der Fischknochen', *Eketorp. Befestigung und Siedlung auf Öland/Schweden. Die Fauna* (Stockholm 1979), pp. 24-421, esp. pp. 24 and 26 (tables 4 and 6).
- 63 The remaining 14% could belong to either phase II or III. The adjusted ratio of the number of fish bones between Eketorp II and III is 1:17. Arne Hallström, 'Die Fischknochen', *Eketorp. Befestigung und Siedlung auf Öland/Schweden. Die Fauna* (Stockholm 1979), pp. 422-92, esp. pp. 422 and 443. I am grateful to Henrik Fallgren at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Uppsala for drawing my attention to the excavations of Eketorp.

64 Diagram 2 has been based on the same ‘model calendar’ as was used for diagram 1. Since the fasts at times overlap, certain adjustments have been made. The total of 37 days in the *langa-fasta* has been calculated by deducting all Sundays, and the three *imbrudagar* that fell during Lent. 40 days of ‘effective fasting’ was required during this season. The number of vigil fasts (according to the Gulathing Law) in these years was 13, since one of these fell on a Friday. The number of Friday fasts were in theory 53 (January 1 fell on a Friday). The number of actual Friday fasts has been calculated by deducting the 7 Fridays that fell in Lent, and the 3 that fell during the *imbrudagar*. Fast days that fell on Sundays or feast days have been not been counted as fast days. It is, however, not known what regulations actually applied in such cases at this time in Norway. As was pointed out above, the *imbrudagar* are not included in the older Law of the Gulathing. The number of fast days included in the Gulathing Law is thus 103 days a year (i.e. 28% of the year).

65 That the day began at dawn is indicated by the Gulathing Law where it is stated that the Saturday ‘shall be [counted] holy from noon on, when a third of the day remains’. GL 16. This chapter belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle has moreover pointed out that in the laws of King Edgar (959-75) it was stated that the Sunday began at noon on the Saturday and lasted until dawn on Monday. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-81; The Laws of Edgar, II, 5, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1, pp. 198-99.

66 Isaksson, *Food and Rank*, Paper VII, p. 19.

Chapter 7

Regulation of Work, Marriage, Baptism, and Burial

In chapters 5 and 6, the Christian dietary restrictions and the seasonal fasts were discussed. In this chapter, the remaining regulations of the ‘fifth type’ of early Christian legislation will be explored. These are the laws regarding work, marriage, baptism, and burial.

The introduction of some restrictionary periods as well as the observance of Sundays and feast days will first be discussed. It was mentioned in chapter 6 that rulers and clergy tried to enforce the observance of the Quadragesimal ‘fasts’ called *gagnfǫstur*. The Norwegian laws prohibited marriages and sexual relations during these periods.¹

Diagram 3 demonstrates that through the introduction of all the seasonal fasts, i.e. including the *gagnfǫstur*, rulers and clergy in Norway attempted to regulate almost 40% of the year.² In addition to this, rulers and clerics also tried to enforce the general observance of Sundays and feast days. Regulations to this effect were also included in the Law of King Wihtred and in the First Saxon Capitulary.³ As a general rule, the Norwegian laws prohibited the performance of all types of work on these days. Exceptions were made for particular feast days, when the population was allowed to carry out necessary tasks, such as taking care of their livestock. Such rules however only applied to very few days, for example at certain times during Christmas and Easter. All Sundays and a number of feast days began as early as noon on the preceding day, ‘when a third of the day remains’, and lasted until dawn the following day.⁴ In diagram 4 the share of the year that was taken up by Sundays and feast days can be seen. Because of the many variations and inconsistencies in the provincial laws,⁵ the number of feast days has been based on the regulations in the Older Law of the Gulathing. In the years covered by the ‘model calendar’, the number of Sundays and feast days in this district amounted to a total of 87

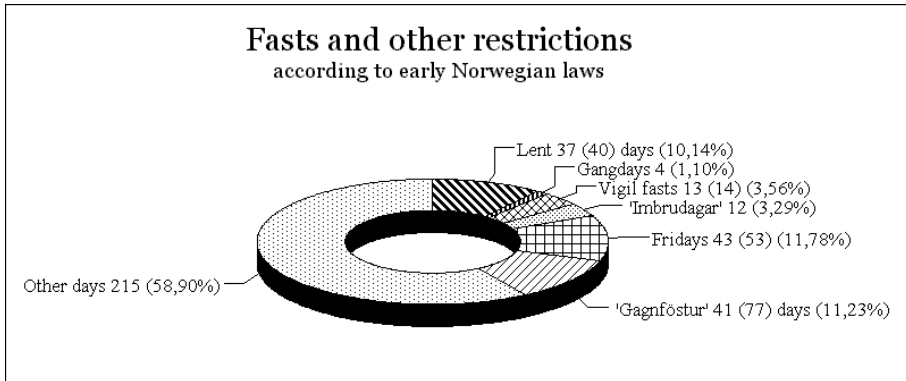


Diagram 3: The number of days in one year apportioned between the seasonal fasts, the vigil fasts, the weekly Friday fasts, and the *gagnföstur*. Absolute numbers and percentages. The diagram is applicable to years with dominical letter C. Source: The four earliest Norwegian provincial laws.

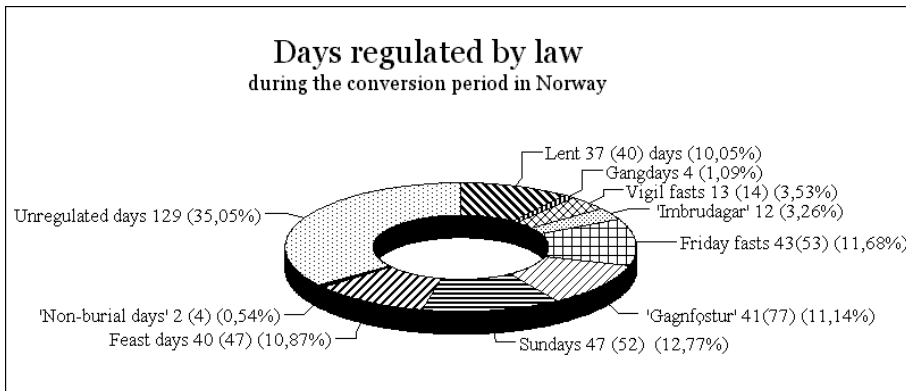


Diagram 4: The number of days in one year apportioned between the seasonal fasts, the vigil fasts, the weekly Friday fasts, the *gagnföstur*, Sundays, feast days, and 'non-burial days'. Absolute numbers and percentages. The diagram is applicable to years with dominical letter C. Source: The four earliest Norwegian provincial laws.

days.⁶ That means that the population was prohibited from working during almost one quarter of the days in a year. And on 70% of these, work was prohibited from the afternoon of the preceding day. It is thus evident that the introduction of Sundays and feast days must have greatly interfered in the daily life of the early Scandinavians. This is made even clearer by the exceptions made to these regulations. It has already been mentioned that the tending of livestock was allowed on certain holy days. Another such example is found in the Frostathing Law. In chapter II:26 it is stated that Pope Alexander III (1159-81) had agreed that 'with respect to the herring fishery in Norway... one may

fish at any time when the herring seeks the shore except on the days of the highest rank'. There were also regulations that allowed the population to finish off work that had been started 'before the day becomes holy'. On feast days it was thus allowed to bring home of 'a load of hay or wood' that had already been prepared. However, only the amount that the household would need during the festival could be brought under shelter. This regulation therefore seems to have been of limited value for the population. They may have wished for exceptions, such as the one given for the fishing of herring, which could be applied during the harvest season and for the hunting of game. Finally, it must be pointed out that all the laws prescribed punishments on anyone who had worked at forbidden times. Freemen would be liable to pay a fine of between three and six *öre*. If it was a bondman who had worked without his master's consent, the master should pay three *öre*, or have the bondman flogged. The Frostathing Law furthermore stated that someone who worked on three successive Sundays would be made an outlaw.⁷ It should also be noted that during four days of Easter week it was prohibited to bury the dead.⁸

The full impact of the introduction of the Christian fasts and feasts on the life of the population is demonstrated by diagram 4. It is interesting to note that there only remained one third of the year, which was not covered by any restrictionary periods. The regulating effects of the Christian calendar are even more clearly seen in table 1 (above).

Table 1 shows how the fasts and feasts enumerated in the Older Law of the Gulathing were distributed over the year. This table has been based on the same 'model calendar' as the diagrams. The dates of the movable Christian feasts are those of e.g. 1126 and 1137.⁹ In this table, each day is assigned three boxes, which designate Sundays and feast days, fast days, and *gagnföstur* respectively. A day can thus be colour coded in three different ways.

The table clearly shows the difficulties of putting the Christian regulations into practice. Clashes occur between fast days on one hand and Sundays and feast days on the other. It has been demonstrated above that fasting should not be practised on Sundays and feast days. A particularly obvious clash in e.g. 1126 or 1137 takes place on October 31. The following day, November 1, is All Saints' Day, which should be preceded by a fast. In 1126 or 1137, October 31 is a Sunday. Special rules for such clashes have survived from the Later Middle Ages. There is, however, no extant evidence to show how the conflicts between fasts and feast days were solved during the conversion period in Norway. Another problem is to establish the time when a fast ended and the following feast day

Table 1

Calendar of Sundays, Feast Days, Fast Days, and Gagnføstur according to the four earliest Norwegian laws

Sundays & Feast Days
 Fast Days
 Gagnføstur

January	February	March	April	May	June
1 F	1 M	1 M	1 Th	1 Sa	1 Tu
2 Sa	2 Tu	2 Tu	2 F	2 Su	2 W
3 Su	3 W	3 W	3 Sa	3 M	3 Th
4 M	4 Th	4 Th	4 Su	4 Tu	4 F
5 Tu	5 F	5 F	5 M	5 W	5 Sa
6 W	6 Sa	6 Sa	6 Tu	6 Th	6 Su
7 Th	7 Su	7 Su	7 W	7 F	7 M
8 F	8 M	8 M	8 Th	8 Sa	8 Tu
9 Sa	9 Tu	9 Tu	9 F	9 Su	9 W
10 Su	10 W	10 W	10 Sa	10 M	10 Th
11 M	11 Th	11 Th	11 Su	11 Tu	11 F
12 Tu	12 F	12 F	12 M	12 W	12 Sa
13 W	13 Sa	13 Sa	13 Tu	13 Th	13 Su
14 Th	14 Su	14 Su	14 W	14 F	14 M
15 F	15 M	15 M	15 Th	15 Sa	15 Tu
16 Sa	16 Tu	16 Tu	16 F	16 Su	16 W
17 Su	17 W	17 W	17 Sa	17 M	17 Th
18 M	18 Th	18 Th	18 Su	18 Tu	18 F
19 Tu	29 F	29 F	19 M	19 W	19 Sa
20 W	20 Sa	20 Sa	20 Tu	20 Th	20 Su
21 Th	21 Su	21 Su	21 W	21 F	21 M
22 F	22 M	22 M	22 Th	22 Sa	22 Tu
23 Sa	23 T	23 T	23 F	23 Su	23 W
24 Su	24 O	24 O	24 Sa	24 M	24 Th
25 M	25 Th	25 Th	25 Su	25 Tu	25 F
26 Tu	26 F	26 F	26 M	26 W	26 Sa
27 W	27 Sa	27 Sa	27 Tu	27 Th	27 Su
28 Th	28 Su	28 Su	28 W	28 F	28 M
29 F		29 M	29 Th	29 Sa	29 T
30 Sa		30 Tu	30 F	30 Su	30 O
31 Su		31 W		31 M	31 F

Table 1 (continued)

Sundays & Feast Days
 Fast Days
 Gagnføstur

July	August	September	October	November	December
1 Th	1 S	1 W	1 F	1 M	1 W
2 F	2 M	2 Th	2 Sa	2 Tu	2 Th
3 Sa	3 Tu	3 F	3 Su	3 W	3 F
4 Su	4 W	4 Sa	4 M	4 Th	4 Sa
5 M	5 Th	5 Su	5 Tu	5 F	5 Su
6 Tu	6 F	6 M	6 W	6 Sa	6 M
7 W	7 Sa	7 Tu	7 Th	7 Su	7 Tu
8 Th	8 Su	8 W	8 F	8 M	8 W
9 F	9 M	9 Th	9 Sa	9 Tu	9 Th
10 Sa	10 Tu	10 F	10 Su	10 W	10 F
11 Su	11 W	11 Sa	11 M	11 Th	11 Sa
12 M	12 Th	12 Su	12 Tu	12 F	12 Su
13 Tu	13 F	13 M	13 W	13 Sa	13 M
14 W	14 Sa	14 Tu	14 Th	14 Su	14 Tu
15 Th	15 Su	15 W	15 F	15 M	15 W
16 F	16 M	16 Th	16 Sa	16 Tu	16 Th
17 Sa	17 Tu	17 F	17 Su	17 W	17 F
18 Su	18 W	18 Sa	18 M	18 Th	18 Sa
19 M	19 Th	19 Su	19 Tu	19 F	19 Su
20 Tu	20 F	20 M	20 W	20 Sa	20 M
21 W	21 Sa	21 Tu	21 Th	21 Su	21 Tu
22 Th	22 Su	22 W	22 F	22 M	22 W
23 F	23 M	23 Th	23 Sa	23 T	23 Th
24 Sa	24 Tu	24 F	24 Su	24 O	24 F
25 Su	25 W	25 Sa	25 M	25 Th	25 Sa
26 M	26 Th	26 Su	26 Tu	26 F	26 Su
27 Tu	27 F	27 M	27 W	27 Sa	27 M
28 W	28 Sa	28 Tu	28 Th	28 Su	28 Tu
29 Th	29 Su	29 W	29 F	29 M	29 W
30 F	30 M	30 Th	30 Sa	30 Tu	30 Th
31 Sa	31 Tu		31 Su		31 F

Table 1: The distribution of Sundays, feast days, fast days, and *gagnføstur* in one year. The calendar is applicable to years with dominical letter C and Easter Sunday on April 11.

Source: The four earliest Norwegian provincial laws.

begun. This can be illustrated by the ending of the Lenten fast, i.e. April 11 in table 1. When the celebration of the resurrection of Christ began, the fast should be broken. It cannot be established at exactly what point this took place. Therefore, April 11 has been marked as both a fast and a feast day.¹⁰

Even on the days that were not covered by any ‘restricted periods’, the population was still not absolutely free to lead their own lives. The other Christian practices that were included in the early Christian laws applied at all times.

These practices appear in legislation from all geographical areas of this study. King Wihtred of Kent legislated against illicit marriages, and the laws of King Ine of Wessex stated that all children should be baptised within thirty days of their birth. In the First Saxon Capitulary regulations regarding Christian marriage, churchyard burial, and baptism were included.¹¹ The Norwegian laws regulated the same practices as the Saxon legislation, although in greater detail. Each provincial law contained several chapters concerning marriage regulations. The seven forbidden degrees of consanguinity and the five degrees of affinity were explained in very simple and straightforward terms. These chapters also included rules of monogamy and dissolution of marriages. The prohibited periods for entering marriages were furthermore enumerated. It should be noted that for those who were already married, sexual abstinence was required during these periods.¹² The regulations regarding baptism stated that all children should be baptised, at the latest, twelve months after their birth.¹³ Finally, all the laws required that everyone, except certain individuals such as ‘evildoers, traitors...and men who take their own lives’, should be buried in a churchyard.¹⁴

The comparative study has thus demonstrated that there are five Christian practices that appear in early Christian legislation, i.e. the observance of fast and feast days, marriage regulations, burial, and baptism. It therefore seems clear that the introduction of these particular practices formed part of an established and conscious missionary strategy. A number of reasons as to why these elements were seen to be crucial at this stage of conversion can be put forward.

One reason could be that the observance of these practices did not require the existence of a tight network of churches and priests. In all, ten wooden churches have been excavated in Norway, none of which has been given a date before the second half of the eleventh century. These were all found underneath later churches, and are probably only a fraction of the churches that existed during the first phase of church building. The old churches were however all

rather small, and it is unlikely that a sufficient number of these existed in order to house everyone e.g. on a Sunday. The second, and more intense, phase of church building does not appear to have begun until the second half of the twelfth century.¹⁵

In order to fulfil the requirements regarding three of these practices, neither churches nor priests were needed. The laws of fasting regulated the day-to-day eating habits, the marriage laws aimed to control marital patterns, and the regulations regarding Sundays and feast days only stated that no work should be carried out on these days. At no time did these laws require the population to attend church.¹⁶ The system of sending information via cross tokens further demonstrates the methods used to inform the population without the use of churches.

Three of the provincial laws regarding baptism stated that children should be brought 'to church' to be baptised. It has however already been mentioned that one year could elapse after the birth of a child, before more serious punishments would be imposed.¹⁷ It is therefore clear that a nearby church was not necessary in order for the population to be able to comply with this requirement. It is interesting that the Borgarthing Law only stated that children should be brought 'to baptism' (*til hafnengiar*), and did not specify a location for this ceremony. The actual regulations in all the laws, moreover, make it clear that baptism could be performed in other places than in church. This applied for example to unbaptised children who 'were struck by sudden illness'.¹⁸ The descriptions in the primary sources of missionaries performing baptisms (see chapters 2 and 3) suggest that these were carried out in other places than in church. Likely locations for such ceremonies will be discussed below.

The transition from burial in traditional cemeteries to churchyard burial has been widely discussed. Early medieval legislation regarding Christian burial practices is scarce, and in order to study the change from non-Christian to Christian burial, we are therefore mostly reliant on archaeology. Due to the paucity of legislative material, it is a difficult task to determine the religion of a grave. This is particularly problematic for burials that are not located in either a traditional furnished cemetery, or a churchyard. Scholars have however identified a number of burial practices that are characteristic of Christian graves. Those most frequently mentioned are: east-west orientated graves, inhumation burials, and absence of grave-goods.¹⁹

The regulations regarding churchyard burial in the Norwegian provincial laws stated that all dead bodies should be brought to a churchyard within five

days.²⁰ Also here allowances were thus made for people who lived far away from a church. It is clear that some members of the population were buried in churchyards from the early stages of conversion. On Veøy on the north-west coast of Norway, excavations have revealed two churchyards that came into use between c. 900 and 1000. Another such example is provided by the churchyard in Gamlebyen (Oslo), which dates from c. 980-1030.²¹ It is however unlikely that there were sufficient churchyards for all members of the population, and this requirement may therefore have been difficult to fulfil.

In Anglo-Saxon England, it is clear that the elite were buried in churchyards, or inside churches, from the middle of the seventh century. This is demonstrated by written sources, archaeological excavations, as well as architectural and sculptural evidence. Examples of such sites are Repton (Derbyshire), Ripon, Whitby, Kirkdale (North Yorkshire), and Crowland (Lincolnshire). At this time, other groups in society seem to have buried their dead in different types of Christian burial grounds. Churchyard burial does not appear to have become the norm for all members of society until the tenth century, i.e. c. three hundred years after the arrival of Christianity.²²

There seems to have been at least two alternative ways of Christian burial. It has been argued that the most common solution was to use specific areas of the traditional burial grounds. This is suggested by finds of 'characteristically Christian' graves in the latest phases of pre-Christian cemeteries. Such areas have been identified in the Saxon burial grounds of Ketzendorf, Maschen, and Oldendorf.²³ Similar sections have been identified both in Norway and Sweden. At Stav and Hässelby (Uppland, Sweden), the possible Christian graves were often located in the outskirts of the cemeteries, and marked by rectangular stone-settings. It has been suggested that such areas may have been consecrated by the erection of stone crosses or rune stones decorated with crosses. Some of the pre-Christian burial grounds in Uppland seem to have been used for Christian burial even into the twelfth century. Valsta outside Sigtuna is one such example.²⁴

Another alternative to churchyard burial 'proper' seems to have been demarcated Christian cemeteries without churches. Indications of this practice have been found in Anglo-Saxon England. One such type of burial ground is the so-called 'Final phase cemetery'. These cemeteries consist of a number of well-furnished graves and also quite a few unfurnished graves. The latest well-furnished graves in these cemeteries have been dated to c. 720/30. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Final phase cemeteries were seen as forming the intermediate

stage between the traditional burial grounds and churchyards. This model has however been criticised on several accounts. Scholars have pointed out that, due to the scarcity of grave-goods, it is difficult to establish when these burial grounds were in use. The difficulties of determining the religion of a grave have also been highlighted. Furthermore, as was pointed out above, recent excavations have shown that the transition to churchyard burial was neither uniform, nor immediate. Today, scholars therefore doubt that the Final phase cemeteries belong to a 'distinctive, pre-churchyard phase of burial'.²⁵ It must also be kept in mind that the possibility that churches existed, on at least some of these sites, cannot be excluded. Archaeologists have, however, so far not found any such evidence.

Another possible example of Anglo-Saxon Christian burial grounds without churches are the so-called 'churchyard type' cemeteries. These are characterised by very few grave-goods (such as a single knife in one grave only), or none at all. Helen Geake has pointed out that some of these sites have been insufficiently excavated in order to establish whether a church was present or not. She did however also state that there are a few such cemeteries that never appear to have been associated with a church.²⁶

Anglo-Saxon cemeteries without churches may have been under the control of minster churches. This has been argued for those cemeteries dating from the seventh to the ninth centuries, where no remains of a church have been found, and where the graves are east-west orientated and contain very little grave-goods. A number of early minsters have been located using documentary sources. However, when the cemeteries of these churches have been excavated, finds of later burials tend to dominate. At some sites, moreover, 'disproportionate' numbers of high status burials have been found. It has thus been argued that the minster cemeteries provided for the interment of some of their parishioners only. The rest may have been buried in rural cemeteries controlled by the minster. John Blair has seen the burial ground of Chimney, located three miles from Bampton, as an 'unequivocal' example of this. According to charter evidence, the land of Chimney was granted to the minster church of Bampton in the 950s, and radiocarbon tests have shown that it was around this time that the cemetery came into use. It is estimated to comprise up to 2,000 burials, which indicates that it served not only Chimney township, but also the surrounding countryside.²⁷

There is both written and archaeological evidence to suggest that cemeteries without churches existed also in Scandinavia. Chapter 14 of the Older Gulathing

Law, suggests that churches were sometimes erected on ground that had already been consecrated. This chapter deals with the consecration of churches and stated that 'If in any case the site is hallowed but the church is not, [consecration] shall be bought from the bishop'. Two burial grounds at Birka and Sântorp (Västergötland) are possible such examples from Sweden. The graves in these cemeteries all bear Christian characteristics and were placed very close together. In pre-Christian cemeteries, graves were normally spread over larger areas. The closeness of the graves at Birka and Sântorp has been seen to suggest that burials needed to be kept within an area that had been consecrated for burial.²⁸ A similar burial ground without a church has been found at Grødby on the Danish island of Bornholm. This has been coin-dated to the reign of Sven Estridsen, i.e. 1047-76.²⁹

A second reason why the five Christian practices mentioned above were introduced may be that they were intended to transform traditional everyday life into a Christian one. Conversion by regulating life according to the Christian calendar appears to have been an established missionary strategy. R. A. Markus has demonstrated that clerics in fifth-century Rome attached great importance to the introduction of the Christian calendar. Pope Leo I (440-61) was one of the forerunners. In his preachings to the Romans there was an 'overriding concern to draw them into the rhythm of the Church's public worship'. Leo attached special importance to almsgiving on particular days, seasonal fasting, and daily worship.³⁰ The same strategy is found in a letter from Martin of Braga (c. 520-579), which contains instructions on how to fight non-Christian ideas and practices in Galicia. One of the two main elements in this letter was the importance of putting an end to the observance of 'pagan' feasts and traditions, such as 'the "days" of Vulcan', 'the first days of each month', and the holding of weddings on 'the "day" of Venus' (Fridays). Martin argued that such traditions should be extinguished by teaching the population 'to respect time as God's creation', and in particular by making them honour the Sunday. Similar instructions were put forward also by Bishop Eligius (588-660).³¹ Catherine Bell has, after thorough studies of rituals, stated that 'the appropriation of calendaric festivals already deeply engrained in the fabric of a community seems to be a very common and highly effective strategy in places where one set of religious practices encounters and tries to dominate another set'. She drew particular attention to the calendar introduced after the French revolution and the one by brought in by Joseph Stalin in the 1920s and 1930s. The French republican calendar consisted of ten-day weeks, which eliminated

Sundays and also all Catholic feast days. The first day of the year was also changed from January 1 to September 22. In the Soviet Union, a similar reform was attempted. Stalin introduced first a five and then a six day week in order to interfere with the population's church attendance.³²

This strategy of regulation is also found in the laws from all the geographical areas of this study. The practices that were included in the laws had the potential to impose an extremely strong discipline on daily life. The detailed Norwegian laws regulated work, free time, eating, choice of marriage partners, and sexual relations. That is thus almost all areas of life at the most basic level, from birth to death. It is through such regulation that the harshest breaks with the old society seem to have been intended. The Norwegian laws contain a lot more legislation of this kind than prohibitions against non-Christian cult practices.³³

Before a network of churches had been established, rulers and clerics must have used other places in order to preach and perform religious ceremonies. This is indicated by the medieval descriptions of baptisms, and the archaeological evidence of early Christian burial. Standing stone crosses and cross-marked stones were erected throughout the western parts of Norway, mainly during the tenth and eleventh centuries.³⁴ It has been argued that large wooden crosses may have been erected in other parts of Scandinavia, where no stone crosses have been found.³⁵ The biography of Bishop Jón (d. 1121) of Hólar (Iceland), suggests that still in the thirteenth century crosses were venerated where there was no church or chapel. According to this source, Jón exhorted the population to 'observe every day just as Christians should do, and that is late and early each day, to seek cross or church'.³⁶ It should also be noted that in The Old Norwegian Homily Book, dated to the late eleventh and the twelfth centuries, people are enjoined 'to have a cross in their house and to rise early and fall on their knees [sc. before the cross] and pray for themselves and all Christians as they would if they came to church'.³⁷

Small wooden crosses and crucifixes (c. 150-200 mm) have been found in the living quarters of excavated farms from early Christian Greenland. The crosses had pointed ends, which suggest that they may have been placed in the ground or in the peat walls of the houses.³⁸ The find of a similar cross in Scandinavia has to my knowledge only been made in Sigtuna.³⁹ The permafrost on Greenland means that organic material is much better preserved than in Scandinavia. It is therefore possible that Scandinavians had small wooden crosses in their homes, although most of these have now been lost. This is

further supported by the biography of Bishop Jón, where the population is encouraged to keep crosses and crucifixes in their homes.⁴⁰

The early Christian cult may thus to a large degree have been practised in homes, and in the open air. This is further supported by evidence from Anglo-Saxon England, where a large number of stone crosses were raised. According to the Life of Willibald, crosses had been erected on many English lordly estates instead of churches. It was here that the daily Christian services were held. Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury had moreover allowed priests to say mass 'in the field'.⁴¹

That clerics used other places than churches for Christian ceremonies is also suggested by several finds of portable altars. One such example is the seventh-century wooden altar that was found in Cuthbert's tomb. Another Anglo-Saxon example is the more elaborate altar dated to the second quarter of the eleventh century. This consists of a rectangular porphyry slab secured to an oak base, which is mounted in a silver frame. The use of portable altars is supported also by the written sources. According to Bede, The White and the Black Hewalds were praying by their portable altar before they were killed by the Saxons. That these were used in Scandinavia is made clear by several pieces of evidence. The will of the first known bishop of Uppsala mentioned 'portable altar-stones for mass in locations other than a consecrated church'. At Hedared stave-church in Västergötland, there is a portable altar consisting of a porphyry stone mounted into a rectangular pine board.⁴² (figure 13)

A number of porphyry slabs, which are likely to have been used as portable altars, have moreover been found in Scandinavia. Six of these were discovered in Sigtuna. These are particularly interesting since they were found, not in any of the churches, but in excavated town plots. One such stone appeared in a context dated to the eleventh century. There is no evidence of any churches at

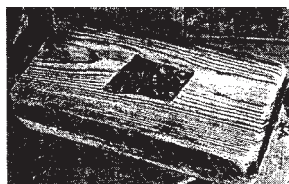


Figure 13. Portable altar from Hedared church (Västergötland, Sweden).

this time in Sigtuna. It has therefore been suggested that the Christian ceremonies were then held in the hall buildings, which seem to have existed on every town plot.⁴³ This supports previous suggestions that halls are likely to have housed the religious ceremonies in early Christian times. Traditional assembly sites are other likely locations. Baptisms may have been performed by rivers, wells, or lakes.⁴⁴

Altogether these pieces of evidence paint a picture of a very mobile clergy. It is important to point out that the porphyry slabs in Sigtuna not only suggest that clerics moved around within the town. Priests are also likely to have brought these altars on visits to the surrounding area. It can therefore be suggested that the information in the written sources of wandering missionaries in many parts of Scandinavia may have been partly based on real events.⁴⁵

Anne-Sofie Gräslund pointed out that lay participation in religion during the early stages of conversion, when priests are few, is a well-documented phenomenon from missionary history.⁴⁶ According to Rimbart, in the times when there was no priest at Birka, it was the *praefectus* Hergeir who preached to the people.⁴⁷ It has moreover been stressed that pastoral work requires more than just priests. Deacons are needed for preaching, as well as other men and women for work among the poor and the sick.⁴⁸ The Norwegian laws strongly suggest that the laity took part in the practice of Christianity. The Frostathing Law stated:

If a man is in need of unction and the shire priest is unable to come, let the patron of the parish anoint the sick man with the aid of the priest's assistant, if no other help is available, or even without assistance rather than have the man die without unction.⁴⁹

In the Older Gulathing Law it was stated that if a child became ill and no priest could be reached '...the men who are bringing the child shall give it a name and plunge it into water, speaking these words over it: I baptize thee...'.⁵⁰ The argument that Sigtuna must have played an exclusive role in the conversion of Sweden, since all Christian ceremonies needed to be led by a priest, has previously been criticised.⁵¹ The evidence presented here further supports this criticism.

The system for information and control that was used for want of sufficient churches needs to be further discussed, and another dimension needs to be added. Its structure is reminiscent of the detailed system of 'synodal courts' (*Sendgerichte*) that emerged in the Frankish Empire from the beginning of the ninth century. As was stated in chapter 4, these courts had the duty to visit every parish once a year in order to investigate the life and behaviour of both clerics and laity. The aim was to abolish all traces of the old religious custom, and to ensure that the population lived according to Christian regulations.

Over time, the courts employed three different methods in order to obtain their information. The first one gave all members of the population the 'right' and the 'duty' to provide reports about the activities of their fellow parishioners.

This was introduced by Gaerbald of Liège, and was termed *inter se prodere* in a contemporary Carolingian document. This method was however not seen as sufficient, since family ties held people back from informing on their relatives. A second method was therefore developed at the councils of Meaux (845) and Mainz (852). This meant that parishioners were forced to act as witnesses under oath against their own family members. In this way, people who failed to give the correct information could be made guilty of perjury. Between 860 and 890, when the *Sendgerichte* became regular ecclesiastical courts, a third method that replaced the other two was introduced. The bishops then chose lay members of the parishes as synod witnesses (*iuratores synodi*), who should provide reports on the activities of all parishioners to the courts. It should be pointed out that highly regarded members of the laity were encouraged to be members of the synodal courts.⁵²

This strictly formulated system was unique to the Carolingian Empire. In Anglo-Saxon England, traits of this system can be seen in the yearly episcopal visitations of each parish. There were however no equivalents to the synodal courts or the structured usage of lay informants. The sources nevertheless suggest that lay denunciation was encouraged at times. King Wihtréd's law stated that a person, who informed against a freeman who worked on a Sunday, would be entitled to half the freeman's fine as well as the profits from that day's labour. Another form of this can be seen in the provision in the Penitential of Theodore which legitimised Christians to exclude people who did not conform to their way of life.⁵³

Parallels can be drawn also with the conversion period in Norway, although the situation in this area clearly was different from that in the earlier Carolingian Empire. There were no ecclesiastical courts as yet, and the parochial system had not been fully developed. However, the bishops' annual investigations of the priests' activities, which took place at the things, are in some ways similar to the activities of the synodal courts. Throughout the year, it was also the duty of the bishop's bailiffs and priests to investigate if the population followed the Christian regulations and to summon offenders to the thing. Moreover, the Norwegian laws imply that something similar to the system of *inter se prodere* existed also here. One example can be seen in the regulation regarding a person who spotted someone eating meat on a Friday. This person was entitled to point out that meat was not allowed on Fridays, and the guilty party must immediately spit his food out. If they did not do so, they would be liable to pay a fine.⁵⁴ This suggests that a person who saw

someone breaking a fast had the duty to report such offenders to the thing, and to act as a witness, in order that offenders should be punished. That lay witnesses were used for such cases is further indicated by the Frostathing Law. In a chapter that dealt with people who worked during prohibited times, it was stated that:

...if neither priest nor bailiff has seen the man at work, witnesses to the fact of rumour shall be heard in such wise that one shall testify and two shall confirm his testimony.⁵⁵

Further indications that the laity was used to keep a close watch on each other are found in the Borgarthing Law. Here it was stated that when cattle were found dead on the moor, the owner should take his neighbour to look at the animal. Together they should establish the cause of death. If the animal had been killed by humans, it could be eaten by the owner. If not, the meat would be classified as forbidden food, and to consume it constituted an offence against the law.⁵⁶

The evidence from Norway suggests that the things functioned in a way similar to the *Sendgerichte*. At the thing meetings the activities of both clerics and laity were investigated, and fines were payable to the bishop. Moreover, as with other types of legal offence, witnesses were used to provide evidence under oath. These pieces of legislation further suggest that lay participation played an important part in early Christian times.

In this chapter, as well as in chapters 5 and 6, it has been demonstrated that the majority of the early Christian regulations had the potential to change everyday life. It has also been shown that a system for their implementation existed. The extent to which rulers and clerics were able to enforce these regulations is evidently the most difficult question to answer. Firstly, as was pointed out above, three of the Norwegian provincial laws required the population to pay the priests to perform religious services.⁵⁷ Therefore it must have been harder for the less wealthy in society to follow these regulations. The general enforcement of these laws must however be discussed. For this purpose, a number of different pieces of evidence will be considered.

The first one is the nature of the regulations themselves. As was pointed out in the introduction to this section, many of these regulations seem to mirror actual discourses at the thing. Some regulations, particularly those regarding the fasts, seem to include all the possible excuses or explanations that offenders might have used in their defence.

Further evidence is provided by archaeological excavations. Such investigations make it clear that burial practices actually began to change from the very early stages of conversion. The early churchyards demonstrate that Christian burial was enforced. The requirement of churchyard burial could be not however be fully met, because of the limited number of churches.⁵⁸ As was demonstrated above, there appear to have been other ways of Christian burial. Priests and legislators may not, at this time, have made clear distinctions between burial in churchyards ‘proper’ and burial in other consecrated areas. It has been suggested that the areas with possible Christian graves in the Saxon pre-Christian burial grounds may have served as the churchyards (*cemetery ecclesiae*) that were referred to in the First Saxon Capitulary.⁵⁹

Indirect evidence suggests that the regulations regarding marriage were the most difficult to enforce. It is known that even during the High Middle Ages, royalty in other parts of Europe, who had sufficient knowledge of their family trees to avoid illicit marriages, still chose to enter such unions.⁶⁰ Despite the detailed explanations in the Norwegian laws of which relatives were within the forbidden degrees, it must have been hard to establish who these people were. Moreover, within the relatively small communities, illicit marriages were presumably difficult to avoid.

There is no direct evidence to show whether the laws regarding the fasts, the feast days, and the *gagnfǫstur* were followed by the population. A letter from Pope Alexander III to Archbishop Eystein does however provide some interesting information. In this letter it is stated that the people who were enjoined to do penance on bread and water, and who did not have any bread, were allowed to eat other foods in moderation, such as fish and vegetables. This clearly suggests that the clergy tried to enforce fasting, at least as penance. It also seems to suggest that at least some of those who were enjoined to fast, tried to follow the clerics’ instructions. It should also be noted that a runic inscription from Tanberg (Norway) states: ‘Here rests Guþormr Sleikir. The lesser gang day is his mass-day (*ártíð hans*)’. According to *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer*, this inscription is unlikely to be earlier than the last third of the twelfth century. Terje Spurkland agreed with this, but added that it could also date from the thirteenth century. It thus appears that, at least by this time, the gang days had become an established feature in the Norwegian calendar.⁶¹

By taking the evidence discussed above into consideration, some further suggestions can be made. It has been pointed out that the nature of the laws

suggests that rulers and clerics actually tried to enforce these. We must also remember Sverre Bagge's argument that in legal cases involving peasants, the provincial laws are likely to have been less flexible and followed 'more directly' than for cases between powerful men.⁶² It seems clear that the laws regarding the fasts and feasts were not as difficult to follow as the laws regarding marriage. The same could be suggested for the regulations regarding Christian burial. We have seen that changes took place in this respect, although with adjustments to actual circumstances. Taking these arguments into consideration, it could be suggested that the regulations regarding fasts, feast days, and *gagnföstur* were also enforced among the population, even if we cannot expect that these were followed in every detail.

Some examples from Mexico can provide us with further information regarding the enforcement of such regulations during the early phases of stage 2 of conversion. The friars tried, from the very beginnings of stage 2, to enforce all the contemporary Catholic fasting regulations. They did however encounter difficulties in making the Indians observe all of these. In 1537, Pope Paul III therefore issued a bull in which he reduced the fasting requirement for the Indian population. They were still required to observe the vigil fasts at Christmas and Easter. The Lenten fast was however reduced to the Fridays during this season, and all other seasonal fasts were made voluntary. The pope allowed this on account of the Indians' 'recent conversion'. Jakob Baumgartner added that the widespread 'poverty and misery' must have been another reason behind the difficulties of enforcing the fasts. The contemporary chroniclers Motolinía and Mendieta, however, make it clear that the Indians were extremely keen to observe many Christian practices, including penitential fasting. These chroniclers stated that the Indians often walked for miles in order to find a priest to whom they could confess their sins. This was particularly common during Lent. The penances performed by the Indians included strict fasts and castigation. Mendieta also stated that the Indians performed manual labour and gave generous donations for the erection of churches and monasteries. Many of these houses came to be entirely supported by the Indian population.⁶³

Initially the friars also experienced difficulties in enforcing the regulations regarding Sundays and feast days. However, as Christianity spread, the Indians followed most of these regulations. Persistent difficulties concerned those days that were important in the Indian calendar, and which at times fell on Christian feast days. The market of Tianguetz is one such example. When this fell on a

Christian feast day, the Indians attended the market instead of church. The first Mexican council (1555) therefore prohibited the Indians from organising and taking part in Tianguetz on a Sunday or a feast day. The third Mexican council (1585) moreover decided that when this market fell on a Christian feast day, it should be moved to another day.⁶⁴

These examples demonstrate that the Indians began to change their traditional lifestyle according to the Christian regulations already during the first decades after Cortés' arrival in Mexico (1519). This does not mean that such quick changes took place also in Norway. However, it does indicate that it is not an impossible task for missionaries and rulers to attain a far-reaching enforcement of Christian regulations in a rather short space of time.

Dagfinn Skre concluded that the missionaries' aim 'after the conversion of the powerful' was to obtain 'inner acceptance of the Christian faith' among the masses.⁶⁵ All the regulations that aimed to enforce Christianity included in this study point in another direction. These laws were all exclusively concerned with outward behaviour. In no law are there any provisions that relate to the Christian beliefs of the people. There could be one possible exception. In the Borgarthing Law it is stated that the people should believe in God, and not in sorcery or beings that they sacrificed to (*blótskapr*). Here, the word *trúa* (to trust in, to rely on, or to have belief in something) is used in the same way for *blótskapr*, magic, and the Christian god.⁶⁶ This provision can therefore not be interpreted as a requirement of deeper religious conviction. The focus on Christian practices during this period can be clearly demonstrated by chapter II:I in the Frostathing Law. Here it is stated that:

This is the first command in our lawmaking that we shall be obedient to Christianity and the church of Christ and to the king and the bishop, and that we shall live according to law and right behavior and the correct rules of the church.⁶⁷

This quotation further demonstrates that rulers' and clerics' primary aim at this time was to make the population follow a Christian lifestyle. In this context it should be added that the same mindset is demonstrated by the penitentials. None of the sections of the penitential works included in this study contain any provisions that relate to people's Christian belief. Instead they all focus on people's conduct in relation to the Christian regulations of daily life.

Another recent scholar stated that rulers and clerics did not make significant demands on the life and behaviour of the population until later, when 'the

Church' had become firmly established.⁶⁸ The comparative study presented in chapters 5, 6, and 7 has demonstrated that a distinct and continuous missionary strategy existed. As we have seen, this consisted of five demands of Christian behaviour, which certainly must have affected everyday life. Despite the fact that the laws were decrees rather than prohibitions, they appear to have functioned as tools for 'depaganisation'. The population was firmly tied into in the web of detailed regulations throughout the year, and rulers and clerics may thus have been able to fight the various kinds of surviving pre-Christian practices more successfully than through outright prohibitions.

The difficulties of knowing the extent to which the Norwegian laws were enforced have already been discussed. What must however be emphasised is that these laws clearly represent a deliberate scheme to Christianize the traditional Norwegian society. In order to achieve this aim, rulers and clerics made use of the well-established strategies of conversion described above. The regulations (if not the punishments) in these laws mirror those from the beginnings of stage 2 of conversion both in England and on the Continent. Some further points need to be made. Part III has demonstrated that churches were not necessary in order for the population to follow a Christian lifestyle. Therefore the number of churches in an area may not be the best indicator of the spread of Christianity. Moreover, a lack of churches in an area cannot be used as evidence of opposition to Christianity. Finally, it should be pointed out that a person who fulfilled the requirements of outward conduct must have been regarded as a good Christian.

Notes to Chapter 7

1 GL 27; BL I:7; FL III:9. For the dating of GL 27 see chapter 6, footnote 34. For the dating of BL I:7 see chapter 6, footnote 35.

2 The *gagnfǫstur* covered three three-week periods and one two-week period, i.e. 77 days in total. Therefore, to avoid counting some days twice, the days that were part of the other seasonal fasts, and included in the previous diagram, have been deducted. Sundays and feast days, which will be shown in diagram 4, have also been deducted from the total number of days in the *gagnfǫstur*.

3 Wihtred, cc. 9-11, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 26-7; The First Saxon Capitulary, c. 18, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 206.

4 FL II:24-27, II:30 and II:34-7; EL I:9, I:12 and I:18-20; GL 16-18; BL I:14. The numbers of feast days that began on the preceding day vary between the laws. In the Gulathing Law this regulation applies to 14 feast days and in the Frostathing Law to 16. GL 18 and BL I:14 belong

to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80. For the dating of GL 16 see chapter 6, footnote 65. For the dating of GL 17 see chapter 6, footnote 38. Meissner has argued that the feast day of St. Magnus of Orkney, who was canonised in 1135, was a late addition to the list of feast days in EL I:9, since it is positioned 'outside' the row of feast days in the manuscript. *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, pp. xvi-xvii. 5 GL 16-18; FL II:24 -5; BL I:14; EL I:9. In the Gulathing Law the following days are enumerated: the thirteen days of 'Yuletide' (of these the first four days, the eighth day and the thirteenth day (January 6) should be kept 'as holy as Sundays'. In the remaining days the population were allowed to look after livestock, 'if there should be such need'), 'Brittifumass' (January 11, i.e. the day of Saint Brittifa or Brictiu. This saint has not been identified by scholars. It has merely been pointed out that the name could be of Anglo-Saxon origin. This feast day also appears in one of the oldest Icelandic calendars, dating from c. 1200. KLNLM vol. 2, col. 241), Saint Paul's Day (January 25), Candlemass (February 2), Saint Mathias' Day (February 24), Saint Mary's Day (March 25, the Annunciation), on the Monday and Tuesday of Easter week no labour was allowed except for looking after livestock, all Wednesday 'should be kept holy', on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Eve and Easter Day it was not allowed to bury the dead. Next was The Mass-day of the Two Apostles (May 1, Philip and James), The Mass-day of the Holy Cross (May 3, The Invention of the Holy Cross), on the gang days no one was allowed to work after midday, Ascension Day is sacred all day, Saint Halvard's Day (May 15, Saint Halvard was a native saint of the Oslo region), Saint Botholf's Day (June 17), Saint Swithun's Day (July 2), Saint Knut's Day (July 10), The Later Saint Olaf's Day (August 3), The Later Saint Mary's Day (September 8), The Later Mass-day of the Holy Cross (September 14), Martinmas (November 11), Saint Clement's Day (November 23), Saint Nicholas' Day (December 6), Saint John's Day (June 24), Saint Peter's Day (June 29), The Mass-day of the Holy Men of Selja (July 8), Saint James' Day (July 25), The Earlier Saint Olaf's Day (July 29), Saint Lawrence's Day (August 10), The Earlier Saint Mary's Day, i.e. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15), Saint Bartholomew's Day (August 24), Saint Matthew's Day (September 21), Michaelmas (September 29), The Mass-day of the Two Apostles Simon and Jude (October 28), All Saints' Day (November 1), Saint Andrew's Day (November 30), Saint Thomas' Day (December 21).

The Frostathing Law enumerated the following feast days: Saint Paul's Day (January 25), Saint Mathias' Day (February 24), Saint Gregory's Day (March 12), Saint Magnus' Day (April 16), The Mass-day of the Two Apostles (May 1 Philip and James), Monday of Whitsun Week, Saint Botholf's Day (June 17), Saint Swithun's Day (July 2), Saint Mar-garet's Day (July 20), Saint James' Day (July 25), Saint Bartholomew's Day (August 24), The Later Mass-day of the Holy Cross (September 14), Saint Matthew's Day (September 21), The Mass-day of the Two Apostles, Simon and Jude (October 28), Martinmas (November 11), Saint Clement's Day (November 23), Saint Thomas' Day (29 December), Candle-mass (February 2), Saint Mary's Day in Lent, i.e. Annunciation Day (March 25), Holy Cross Day, Saint Halvard's Day (May 15), Saint John's Day (June 24), Saint Peter's Day (June 29), The Mass-day of the Holy Men of Selja (July 8), Saint Olaf's Day (July 29), The Later Saint Olaf's Day (August 3), Saint Lawrence's Day (August 10), The Earlier Saint Mary's Day, i.e. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15), The Later Saint Mary's Day (September 8), Michaelmas (September 29), All Saints' Day (November 1), Saint Andrew's Day (November 30), Saint Nicholas' Day (December 6).

In the Borgarthing Law the following feast days were included: the thirteen days of the 'Yuletide' (the first four days, the eighth day and the thirteenth day (January 6) should be kept as holy as Sundays), Candlemass (February 2), the fourth day of Easter, The Mass-day of the Holy Cross, i.e. The Invention of the Holy Cross (May 3), Saint Halvard's Day (May 15), Ascension Day, Saint John's Day (June 24), The Day of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June), The Mass-day of the Holy Men of Selja (July 8), Saint Olaf's Day (July 29), Saint Lawrence's Day (August 10), The Earlier Saint Mary's Day, i.e. The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15), Michaelmas (September 29), The Mass-day of the Two Apostles Simon and Jude (October 28), All Saints' Day (November 1), Saint Andrew's Day (November 30).

The Eidsivathing Law named the following feast days: The First Day of Christmas, Saint Stefan's Day (December 26), The Day of Saint John the Apostle (December 27), The Day of the Innocent Children (December 28), Saints Thomas' Day (December 29), The Eighth Day of Christmas, The Thirteenth Day of Christmas, Candlemass (February 2), The Mass-day of the Holy Cross (May 3), Saint Halvard's Day, (May 15), Ascension Day, Saint John's Day (June 24), The Day of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June), The Mass-day of the Holy Men of Selja (July 8), The Earlier Saint Olaf's Day (July 29), Saint Lawrence's Day (August 10), The Earlier Saint Mary's Day (August 15), Michaelmas (September 29), All Saints' Day (November 1), Saint Nicholas' Day (December 6). It was moreover stated that if the Mass on Annunciation Day (March 25) was not held, this day should nonetheless be held as a Sunday, just as The Later Saint Mary's Day (September 8) and The Magnus Mass in spring (April 16).

It should also be noted that the number of fast days has been calculated using information from all four provincial laws. As was stated in connection to Diagram 2, the number of fast days included in the Gulathing Law is 103 days a year (i.e. 28% of the year). The number of unregulated days based only on this law would thus be 135 (i.e. 37% of the year). For the dating of GL 16 see chapter 6, footnote 65. For the dating of GL 17 see chapter 6, footnote 38. For the dating of GL 18 and BL I:14 see footnote 4 above.

6 There were 47 feast days in any year. In the years of the 'model calendar', 7 of these clashed with fast days. These 7 days thus appear as fast days in the diagrams. There were 52 Sundays. In the 'model calendar', 5 of these were also feast days. The number of Sundays in the diagram is thus 47. The total number of days affected by prohibitions against work is therefore 87.

7 FL II:24-27, II:30, and II:34-8. Cf. EL I:9, I:12 and I:18-20; GL 16 and 18; BL I:7 and I:14. For the dating of GL 16 see chapter 6, footnote 65. For the dating of GL 18 and BL I:14 see footnote 4 above. For the dating of GL 27 see chapter 6, footnote 34. For the dating of BL I:7 see chapter 6, footnote 35. The papal letter referred to in FL II:26 is dated to 1162-1171. It is important to note that in this letter, the pope gave dispensation for the fishing of herring on Sundays and certain feast days. It therefore seems clear that prohibitions regarding work on these days had been introduced in the area of the Frostathing before this time. *Regesta Norvegica*, vol. I, no. 143.

8 This prohibition applied to 'Holy Thursday', Good Friday, Easter Eve, and Easter Sunday. GL 18. For the dating of GL 18 see footnote 4 above.

9 Cheney, *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History*, table 21, pp. 124-5; A. Cappelli, *Cronologia, Cronografia e Calendario Perpetuo Dal principio dell' Era Christiana ai giorni nostri* (Milan 1930), pp. 76-77. As was pointed out above, the *imbrudagar* may not have been introduced in the area of the Gulathing until later times. These fasts are however included in the other provincial laws, and form part of the established medieval seasonal fasts.

- 10 In order to avoid counting the same days twice, the multiple markings in table 1 do not occur in the calculations for diagrams 1-4. I am grateful to Stephan Borgehammar at the Department of Theology at the University of Uppsala for sharing his knowledge of the Christian fasts and feasts with me.
- 11 Wihtred, cc. 3-6, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 24-7; Ine, c. 2, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 36-7; The First Saxon Capitulary, cc. 8, 19, 20 and 22, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, pp. 206-7.
- 12 GL 24-7; FL III:1 and III:3-13; BL I:15 and I:17; EL I:21-3, I:30, and I:52-3. For the dating of GL 27 see chapter 6, footnote 34. For the dating of BL I:15 and BL I:17 see chapter 5, footnote 64. GL 24 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80. GL 24 and 25 are moreover among the chapters identified by Iversen as dating from the beginning of the twelfth century. See chapter 5, footnote 26. It should also be noted that GL 24 is stated to have been originally introduced by Olav. FL III:1 is attributed to the regulations introduced by Olav and Grímkell at Moster. Meissner has pointed out that EL I:30 seems 'particularly old' since it is stated that the property of those who were outlawed should be divided between the bishop, the king, and the outlaws themselves. *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, pp. xxii-xxiii.
- 13 The laws required children to be baptised at certain points during the year, depending on the date of their birth. The punishment for not following these regulations varied between three öre and three marks. However, a person who did not baptise their child within a year could be outlawed. GL 21; FL II:1, II:3, and II:5; BL I:2 and I:4; EL I:1-2 and I:4. GL 21, BL I:2 and I:4 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle also pointed out that GL 21 stated that children should be baptised by being plunged into water. The practice of placing the baptismal water on the baby's head did not come into use until the thirteenth century. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80 and 190. FL II:3 is ascribed to Archbishop Jon Birgersson (1152-57).
- 14 BL I:9; GL 23; FL II:15-16; EL I:50-1. There were also descriptions of how baptisms should be performed. The translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 51. For the dating of GL 23 see chapter 5, footnote 26. BL I:9 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80.
- 15 Lidén, 'De tidlige kirkene', p. 136; Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 17; Dagfinn Skre, 'Kirken før sognet. Den tidligste kirkeordningen i Norge', *Møtet mellom hedendom og kristendom i Norge*, ed. Hans-Emil Lidén (Oslo 1995), pp. 170-233, esp. pp. 215-16.
- 16 Charlemagne's First Saxon Capitulary required the population to attend church on Sundays. It is however important to note that no punishment was stated for transgressions of this law. The First Saxon Capitulary, c. 18, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, p. 206. No such requirements appear in the early Christian legislation from Anglo-Saxon England. It should also be pointed out that it was not until 1215 that the papacy required that marriages should be held in church. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, p. 192.
- 17 Also according to the First Saxon Capitulary, children had to be baptised within one year. The First Saxon Capitulary, c. 19, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources*, pp. 206-7.

- 18 GL 21; FL II:3 and II:5; BL I:2 and I:4; EL I:1-2. For the dating of GL 21 and BL I:2, BL I:4, and FL II:3 see footnote 13 above.
- 19 Sam Lucy and Andrew Reynolds, 'Burial in early medieval England and Wales: past, present and future', *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales* (London 2002), pp. 1-23, esp. p. 13; D. Bullough, 'Burial, Community and Belief in the Early Medieval West', *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, eds, P. Wormald et al. (Oxford 1983), pp. 177-201, esp. pp. 185-6. A comprehensive discussion of the characteristics of Christian burials is found in: Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 43-55. See also: Guy Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries. An Introduction to Burial Archaeology in the Post-Roman West* (Skelmorlie 1995), pp. 61-3. The role of grave-goods in the transition from pre-Christian to Christian times in Anglo-Saxon England has been discussed by Helen Geake. See Helen Geake, *The Use of Grave-Goods in Conversion-Period England, c. 600-850*. British Archaeological Reports, British Series 261 (Oxford 1997). It must also be pointed out that changes in burial practices do not necessarily show that the dead were Christian, but may also signify cultural influences. See Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 8.
- 20 GL 23; FL II:15; EL I:51. Exceptions were made for poor weather conditions. For the dating of GL 23 see chapter 5, footnote 26.
- 21 Brit Solli, 'Narratives of Encountering Religions: On the Christianization of the Norse around AD 900-1000', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 29:2 (1996), pp. 89-114, esp. pp. 96-112; Bergljot Solberg, *Jernalderen i Norge. Ca. 500 f.Kr. - 1030 e.Kr.* (Oslo 2000), pp. 313-4; Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 9.
- 22 Dawn Hadley, 'Burial practices in Northern England in the later Anglo-Saxon period', *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales* (London 2002), pp. 209-228, esp. pp. 210-11; John Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire* (Oxford 1994), pp. 70-1.
- 23 Rotraud Apetz, 'Zetel, Ketzendorf, Maschen, Oldendorf. Gräberfelder an der Peripherie des Karolingischen Reiches. Grabformen und Bestattungssitten am Übergang zum Christentum', *Rom und Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Osteseeraum während des 8.-14. Jahrhunderts*, vol. I, ed, Michael Müller-Wille (Stuttgart 1997), pp. 125-200, esp. pp. 184-9; Ole Harck, 'Frühes Christentum zwischen Rhein und Elbe', *Rom und Byzanz im Norden. Mission und Glaubenswechsel im Osteseeraum während des 8.-14. Jahrhunderts*, vol. I, ed, Michael Müller-Wille (Stuttgart 1997), pp. 109-124, esp. p. 119.
- 24 Anne-Sofie Gräslund has suggested that such burial grounds, and also Christian areas of old burial grounds, were consecrated by the erection of cross-marked rune stones. According to Fridtjov Birkeli, forty of the cross-marked stones and standing crosses in Norway were originally placed on pre-Christian burial grounds. Forty-five other such stones have been connected to early churchyards. Fridtjov Birkeli, *Norske Steinkors i tidlig middelalder. Et bidrag til belysning av overgangen fra norrøn religion til kristendom* (Oslo 1973), pp. 28-9; Solberg, *Jernalderen i Norge*, p. 316; Andersson, 'A Struggle for Control', pp. 353-372; Broberg, 'Religionsskifte och sockenbildning i Norduppland', pp. 51-2; Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', pp. 8-11; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, 'Var begraves bygdens första kristna?', *Kyrka och socken i medeltidens Sverige*, ed, O. Ferm (Stockholm 1991), pp. 37-48, esp. pp. 37-41; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 52-5; Sten Tesch, 'Olof Palme, S:ta Gertrud och Sigtunas medeltida kyrkotopografi', *Biskopen i museets trädgård. En arkeologisk gåta*. eds, Sten Tesch and Rune Edberg, Sigtuna Museers Skriftserie 9 (Stockholm 2001), pp. 9-44, esp. pp. 28 and 40, n. 49. An interesting parallel to the cross-marked rune stones is provided by Ogham stones. There is at least one example of such a stone which has been 'Christianized' by an inscribed

cross, and re-used as a Christian tombstone. It should however be pointed out that most of the rune stones were of Christian, rather than pre-Christian, origin. *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum*, ed, R.A.S. Macallister (Dublin 1945), vol. I, no. 141, pp. 137-8. I am grateful to my supervisor Wendy Davies at the Department of History, University College London for drawing my attention to the Ogham stones.

- 25 Approximately 300 'Final phase' cemeteries have been identified in England. Helen Geake, 'Persistent problems in the study of Conversion-Period burials in England', *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales* (London 2002), pp. 144-55, esp. pp. 149-50; Hadley, 'Burial practices in Northern England in the later Anglo-Saxon period', pp. 209-10; A. Boddington, 'Models of burial, settlement and worship: the final phase reviewed', *Anglo-saxon Cemeteries: a Reappraisal*, ed, E. Southworth (Stroud 1990), pp. 177-199; Bullough, 'Burial, Community and Belief in the Early Medieval West', pp. 185-6.
- 26 Geake, 'Persistent problems in the study of Conversion-Period burials in England', pp. 150-1.
- 27 Dorchester (Bishop's Court Rectangle), Appleford, Beacon Hill, and Lewknor (Oxfordshire) have been seen as other examples of such cemeteries. Due to the lack of grave-goods these cemeteries are often difficult to date. Lewknor has however been given a date-range from the seventh century to the late ninth century. This result was derived from radiocarbon dating and two knife burials. Blair, *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*, pp. 72-3; Jeffery May, 'Romano-British and Saxon Sites near Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia* XLII (1977), pp. 42-79; Lucy and Reynolds, 'Burial in early medieval England and Wales', p. 13.
- 28 GL 14; Fridtjov Birkeli, *Norske Steinkors i tidlig middelalder*, pp. 27-8; Skre, 'Kirken før sognet', pp. 213 and 215; Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', pp. 7-11; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 50-2. There are also some examples from Sigtuna of demarcated burial grounds with possible Christian graves. See Tesch, 'Olof Palme', pp. 22 and 27. Skre has pointed out that 'several of the churches were built on Christian graveyards which were established in the first half of the 11th century, and, in some cases, even in the 10th century.' See Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 17. GL 14 belongs to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80.
- 29 Hanne Wagnkilde, 'Forsinket trosskifte', *Skalk*, no. 3 (1993), pp. 6-11. See also Leif Chr. Nielsen, 'Hedenskab og Kristendom', p. 260.
- 30 R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge 1990), pp. 125-31.
- 31 Martin of Braga's letter was dated c. 574, and addressed to a bishop named Polemius. *Christianity and Paganism, 350-750. The Conversion of Western Europe*, ed, Jocelyn Nigel Hillgarth (Philadelphia 1986), pp. 57-64, esp. pp. 62-3; Stephan Borgehammar, 'Inledning', *Ur kyrkofädernas brev, Svenskt patristiskt bibliotek*, vol. 3, ed, Stephan Borgehammar (Skellefteå 2001), pp. 281-4. A Swedish translation of Martin of Braga's letter is found on pp. 293-306 of the same volume. Borgehammar moreover pointed out that the importance of respecting the Sunday was stressed also by Gregory of Tours. Dado, 'Vita Eligii Episcopi Noviomangensis', *MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, vol. IV (Hanover and Leipzig 1902), pp. 635-761, esp. pp. 705-8. I am grateful to Svante Norr at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Uppsala for providing me with this reference. For other practical aspects connected with Christian feast days, see Albrecht Graf Finck von Finckelstein, 'Fest- und Feiertage im Frankenreich der Karolinger', *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Regnum Francorum*, ed, R. Schieffer (Sigmaringen 1990), pp. 121-9; Michael

- Sierck, *Festtag und Politik. Studien zur Tagewahl karolingischer Herrscher* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna 1995) and Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Kirchenfest und Alltagsleben im früheren Mittelalter', *Mediaevistik* 2 (1989), pp. 123-71.
- 32 Catherine Bell, *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford 1997), pp. 104-5.
- 33 Other areas of daily life, such as regular markets, also appear to have been affected by Christian regulations. One such example is the *Disting*. The time for this annual market seems to have been changed after the introduction of Christianity. According to Snorri Sturluson, pre-Christians held the *Disting* in the month of *gói*. *Gói* was the next to last of the winter months and fell after the lunation of Christmas. In Christian times the date of this gathering was determined by Candlemass. Göran Henrikson, 'Riksbloten och Uppsala högar', *Tor* 27:1 (1995), pp. 337-94, esp. pp. 342-3; KLM vol. 5, cols. 366-8, and vol. 3, cols. 112-16.
- 34 Fridtjov Birkeli, *Norske Steinkors i tidlig middelalder*, esp. pp. 26-31; Lesley Abrams has pointed out that these crosses are difficult to date, and that caution must therefore be exercised when using this material. Abrams, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia', pp. 219-20.
- 35 It must also be pointed out that archaeological evidence for the existence of standing wooden crosses would be difficult to find.
- 36 *Sækja hvern dag, síð ok snemma kross eða kirkju. Byskupa Sögur*, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík 1948), vol. II, p. 96. I am grateful to my supervisor Stefan Brink at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Uppsala for his help with the translation of this text. Some scholars argue that this exhortation was one of a number of exhortations that were issued at the Althing of 1107. Orri Vésteinsson takes a more critical view. He believes that these exhortations were instead compiled in the thirteenth century by Jón's biographer, Gunnlaugr Leifsson. Vésteinsson, *The Christianization of Iceland*, pp. 60-3. In 1916 Vratny did however point out that many of the injunctions attributed to Bishop Jón parallel those in a homily 'on daily conduct' in the Icelandic Homily Book, which is certainly of twelfth century origin. It says there 'Go soon to church or cross... and when there sing Pater noster and pray for mercy...'. Karel Vrátný, 'Enthält das Stockholmer Homilienbuch durchweg Übersetzungen', *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* 32 (1916), pp. 31-49, esp. pp. 37-8; *The Icelandic Homily Book*, fols. 49v-50v; *Homiliu-bók*, p. 109. I am grateful to Peter Foote for drawing my attention to Vratny's article.
- 37 *Gamal norsk homiliebok: Cod AM 691^o4*, p. 87. I am grateful to Peter Foote for drawing my attention to this homily, and for translating the text cited above.
- 38 Joel Berglund, 'The Farm Beneath the Sand', *Vikings: the North Atlantic Saga*, eds. William W. Fitzhugh and Elizabeth Ward (Washington DC 2000), pp. 295-303, esp. p. 301; Knud J. Krogh, *Erik den Rødes Grønland*, second edition (Herning 1971), p. 137.
- 39 Sten Tesch argued that this cross may have been mounted on a portable altar. Tesch, 'Olof Palme', pp. 28-9.
- 40 Vésteinsson, *The Christianization of Iceland*, p. 60.
- 41 Theodore II.ii.1; Huneberc of Heidenheim, 'The *Hodoeporicon* of St. Willibald', *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany. Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Sturm, Leoba, and Lebuin, together with the Hodoeporicon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface*, ed. and tr. C.H. Talbot (London 1954), pp. 153-77, esp. pp. 154-5; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 150.

- 42 Leslie Webster, 'Metalwork, bone, glass and textiles', *The Making of England. Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900*, eds. L. Webster and J. Backhouse (London 1991), pp. 132-47, no. 99; HE V.10; The will of Bishop Siwardus of Uppsala was dated to 1157. Sven Helander, *Den medeltida Uppsalaliturgin. Studier i helgonlängd, tidedgård och mäsä* (Lund 2001), pp. 56-7; Tesch, 'Olof Palme', p. 29; KLNLM vol. 14, cols. 77-8.
- 43 Tesch, 'Olof Palme', pp. 28-9.
- 44 Skre, 'Kirken før sognet', p. 213.
- 45 The notion of wandering missionaries has been supported by Anne-Sofie Gräslund and Dagfinn Skre. Gräslund suggested that the legends of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Sweden were supported by the Anglo-Saxon influences that can be seen in archaeological finds and on the rune stones. Gräslund also argued that Anglo-Saxon missionaries may have followed the Irish tradition of wandering monks. It must however be pointed out that there is an important difference between Irish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries. The Irish were not primarily concerned with evangelization. Their peregrinations were instead predominantly inspired by their ascetic ideal of voluntary exile. Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, p. 135; Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', pp. 5, 7-9, and 19; von Padberg, *Die Christianisierung Europas im Mittelalter*, pp. 67-9; C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism. Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, second edition (London and New York 1989), p. 43.
- 46 Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, p. 129.
- 47 VA 19.
- 48 Skre, 'Kirken før sognet', p. 208.
- 49 FL II:17. This translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 232.
- 50 GL 21. This translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 49. It should be pointed out that a diocesan synod held in England in 1262-5 also allowed lay people to carry out baptism in times of urgency. Lay baptism is thus not necessarily a distinguishing mark of newly introduced Christianity. However, the fact that the Norwegian laws explicitly state that lay baptism is allowed, and moreover give specific instructions on how to carry this out, suggests that this practice was essential at this time. It should moreover be pointed out that in the statutes regarding unction issued by the synod of 1262-5, no mention of lay involvement in the absence of a priest was mentioned. In this case, the statutes thus differ from the Norwegian laws. See *English Historical Documents*, vol. 3, ed. Harry Rothwell (London 1975), pp. 691-4. For the dating of GL 21 see footnote 13 above.
- 51 Zachrisson, *Gård, gräns, gravfält*, pp. 126-9; Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, p. 129.
- 52 Regino stated that seven synod witnesses was the norm for each parish. Koeniger, *Die Sendgerichte*, pp. 35, 49-54, and 202; Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', pp. 112-13.
- 53 Wihtried, c. 11, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, pp. 26-7; Theodore I.xi.3.
- 54 GL 20; BL I:6; EL I:27. For the dating of GL 20 see chapter 5, footnote 61. For the dating of BL I:6 see chapter 6, footnote 34.
- 55 FL II:29. This translation is found in *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 238.
- 56 BL I:5. For the dating of BL I:5 see chapter 5, footnote 61.
- 57 The laws of the Gulathing, Borgarthing and Eidsivathing.

58 It should be noted that the laws that demanded the population of each *fylki* to build a church for their district also stated that they were obliged to maintain those churches that already existed. GL 10-13; FL II:7-8 and II:13; BL I:8-9; EL I:34, I:36, and I:39. The *fylki* churches have been compared to the minster churches in Anglo-Saxon England. Skre, 'Kirken før sognet', pp. 213 and 215. GL 10-13 and BL I:8-9 belong to those chapters that according to Helle were part of the earliest version of the Gulathing Law, and thus transmitted to the earliest versions of the Borgarthing law. Helle has moreover pointed out that in the Gulathing Law it is presumed that all churches are built of wood. There is no reference to stone churches. Helle therefore argued that these chapters date, at the latest, from the first half of the twelfth century. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova*, pp. 179-80 and 201-2. It should moreover be noted that GL 10 is stated to have been introduced by King Olav and Bishop Grímkell at Moster. GL 11-12 are stated to have been originally introduced by Olav. BL I:8 is attributed to the lawman Bersi who lived during the reign of Olav Kyrre. Meissner has pointed out that EL I:39 seems 'particularly old' since it is stated that the property of those who were outlawed should be divided between the bishop, the king, and the outlaws themselves. Meissner also stated that BL I:8 must be 'very old' as it reminded him of the harsh methods of Olav Haraldson. *Bruchstücke der Rechtsbücher des Borgarthings und des Eidsivathings*, pp. xxii-xxiii and xxiv-xxv.

59 Apetz, 'Zetel, Ketzendorf, Maschen, Oldendorf', p. 191.

60 One such example is the marriage of King Philip Augustus of France to Agnès of Meran. John W. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1986). Jack Goody has moreover pointed out that conflicts between Christian and local marriage practices took place in both Anglo-Saxon England and medieval Ireland. See Jack Goody, *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge 1983), pp. 41-2.

61 *Regesta Norvegica*, vol. I, no. 143. This letter has been dated to 1162-1171. *Norges innskrifter med de yngre runer*, vol. 2, eds, Sophus Bugge *et al.* (Oslo 1951), no. 95; Terje Spurkland, *I begynnelsen var futhark. Norske runer og runeinnskrifter* (Oslo 2001), p. 204, and personal comment.

62 Bagge, 'Law and Justice in the Middle Ages', pp. 81-2.

63 Jakob Baumgartner, *Mission und Liturgie in Mexico*, vol. I, *Der Gottesdienst in der jungen Kirche Neuspaniens* (Schöneck/Beckenried 1971), pp. 265-6 and 377-8; Johann Specker, *Die Missionsmethode in Spanisch-Amerika im 16. Jahrhundert mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Konzilien und Synoden* (Schöneck/Beckenried 1953), pp. 219-21.

64 Specker, *Die Missionsmethode in Spanisch-Amerika*, pp. 196-7.

65 Skre, 'Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Norway', p. 6.

66 BL I:16; Jonsson, *Oldnordisk ordbog*; Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, vol. 3; Heggstad, *Gamalnorsk ordbok med nynorsk tyding*. For the dating of BL I:16 see chapter 4, footnote 66. Wolfert Van Egmond has pointed out that it can be risky to exaggerate the distinction between 'public' and 'inner' behaviour, since it may seem to suggest that the newly baptised were Christian in their actions only, 'while in their hearts and thoughts they were still praying to the old gods'. Van Egmond added that public behaviour influences thoughts and feelings, and that these in turn influence public behaviour. This is an important observation. What is important for this thesis, however, is the interesting fact that none of the early Christian laws included here is concerned with belief. Instead they are all exclusively concerned with outward behaviour. See Wolfert Van Egmond, 'Converting Monks: Missionary

Activity in Early Medieval Frisia and Saxony', *Christianizing Peoples and Individuals*, eds, Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood, *International Medieval Research*, vol. 7 (Turnhout 2000), pp. 37-45, esp. p. 39.

67 FL II:I. This is a slight modification of Larson's translation. Larson translated 'Christianity' as 'the faith'. *The Earliest Norwegian Laws*, p. 225; *Cf. Frostatingslova*, p. 16.

68 Anne-Sofie Gräslund, *Ideologi och mentalitet*, pp. 138-9.

Chapter 8

Final Conclusions

In chapter 1 it was stated that this thesis focuses on five different questions. These are: *what are the requirements for successful conversion? What strategies were pursued by secular rulers and clerics? How did conversion affect the life of the wider population? Both forceful and more peaceful methods were used in conversion. What were the differences in the methods and their effects? What elements of pre-Christian religious custom and Christianity led to continuity or change after conversion?* With these questions in mind, the results of this thesis will be now discussed.

This thesis has demonstrated that an overall pattern of conversion can be identified. The elements that are found in all the geographical areas included in this study will first be considered. Widespread acceptance of Christianity was achieved during the approximately 150 years that constituted stage 2 of conversion. During this time, Christianity spread from the secular rulers and the aristocracy and then downwards to the other groups in society. Rulers issued Christian legislation with the support of members of the aristocracy. These groups also provided protection, as well as important material support, to clerics and missionaries. They furthermore provided land and funds for the erection of churches and monasteries. In this process, missionaries were necessary, but subordinate to secular rulers.

It is clear that various kinds of pressure played a part in almost all such decisions. Completely voluntary baptisms must thus be seen as extremely rare. If these did take place, it was most likely during stage 1. The pressures that were coupled with strategies of conversion can be placed on a scale, ranging from mild inducement to brutal force. It must also be remembered that social, political, and material rewards were significant for widespread acceptance of Christianity. Within all these factors, there were variations connected to the degrees of force and violence. The conversion of Saxony appears to have been the most violent of the conversions studied in this thesis. It can thus be placed

on that part of the spectrum where force and violence dominated. The conversion of Norway may not have been as harsh, but should clearly be placed in the same part of the spectrum. Forceful conversions included, apart from military force, also the introduction of strict laws and rigorous control systems.

The aims of the Christian secular rulers and clerics will now be discussed. It has been shown that during the Middle Ages, adherents did not need a great deal of knowledge of the Christian teachings. Moreover, the concept of individual Christian faith in the modern sense of the word, had not yet emerged. Clerics and rulers required that adherents should, above all, receive baptism and show outward compliance with the Christian lifestyle. It is of the greatest importance to keep this in mind when discussing the scale of the changes that were achieved by conversion.

Rulers and clerics tried to achieve their aims through specific measures. Outright prohibitions and decrees that regulated the daily life of the population were the most important of these. All the prohibitions, and also many of the decrees, should be strictly enforced. In these cases, there were thus no specific circumstances when the punishments for transgressions could be waived. The prohibitions included bans on non-Christian cultic practices and the keeping of cultic objects. The decrees that carried the highest punishments were those that required observance of the seasonal fasts, Sundays and feast days. The life of the population would thus be regulated according to the Christian calendar. In this way, surviving pre-Christian traditions could presumably be gradually broken up. The Christian dietary restrictions were used for the same purposes. This is demonstrated by the fact that the prohibition against horse flesh was the dietary restriction that was most strictly enforced. It must however have been almost impossible to prohibit all non-Christian traditions. Some of the regulations of daily life appear to be the result of compromises. Certain traditional celebrations, such as midwinter and midsummer, were transformed into Christian feasts. Another alternative was to stipulate that priests should be present at popular gatherings. The law regarding the inheritance ale is one such example.

Rulers and clerics also tried to introduce Christian regulations regarding baptism, churchyard burial, and marriage. Baptism and churchyard burial must be seen as fundamental Christian practices. Their appearance in the early stages of conversion is thus not surprising. It is of interest, however, that some of these regulations allowed certain degrees of compromise. The Norwegian laws clearly demonstrate that the priority at this time was that all children should

be baptised. It was of secondary importance to make sure that baptisms were carried out in church, or even by priests.

The Christian marriage laws are more surprising. Apart from prohibiting close marriages, these laws also discouraged divorce, concubinage and remarriage. The regulations were extremely detailed and complicated, and must have been almost impossible to live by. Despite this, no exceptions were allowed. It thus appears that rulers and clerics were extremely concerned that all aspects of these regulations should be enforced. The reasons for this may at first seem difficult to discern.

One possible explanation could be that, by regulating marriage patterns, clerics tried to break up the extraordinary strong family and clan bonds of Germanic society. Pre-Christian religious custom seems to have been tied up in these bonds, and their existence may have made the introduction of Christianity more difficult. There is, however, no explicit evidence of such a clerical strategy.

The effects of conversion on the wider population will now be discussed. The early Christian regulations covered most areas of daily life, and may well have altered a considerable part of this. There are, however, no regulations that deal with the religious beliefs of the population. It has already been pointed out that adherents at this time did not need Christian 'faith'. These laws may therefore not have penetrated the minds of the people in any greater depth. In areas of more violent conversion, the enforcement of the Christian regulations was strict and sometimes brutal. For the wider population, the differences between harsher and milder conversions would thus have been very noticeable. In Saxony, the earliest form of the Inquisition was introduced through the synodal courts. In Norway, the things fulfilled essentially the same function. Extremely harsh punishments were brought in for non-compliance with the new regulations. The inhabitants were encouraged to keep a close watch on each other and sometimes act as informants. The similarities in this respect between Saxony and Norway are very striking. It could therefore be suggested that clerics who had thorough knowledge of the Frankish synodal courts were active in Norway. No explicit evidence in support of this is however available.

Pre-Christian religious custom must also be considered. In this thesis, this religious custom has been characterised as a 'nature religion'. The mythological gods seem to have been either essentially literary creations, or of little significance for the general population. When Christianity was introduced, the cults of gods petered out, while the other two strands of the religious custom

lived on for centuries. In this respect, there was thus a degree of continuity between pre-Christian and Christian times. The cult practices associated with the second, and presumably the most important, strand of pre-Christian religious custom seem to have been centred on certain objects. These had various functions; some were for the individual, some for the household, and some for the village community. Such objects could thus have been spread all over the countryside. This suggests that the pre-Christian cult was even more dispersed than previously believed.

The early Christian regulations did not require regular church attendance. Instead Christianity could be practised outdoors, e.g. by standing crosses. It is also possible that special areas for prayer were designated in or around the homes. This means that Christianity was not yet concentrated around a number of churches. There was thus some continuity in the location of cultic activities at local and possibly also at regional level. These activities could still be practised in homes, or outdoors, and often without priests. The often distantly located churches were presumably only visited at certain times of the year, and for special occasions. As was mentioned in section 4.2, many of the early churches seem to have been erected around pre-Christian cult sites. There may therefore have been a certain degree of continuity also at the highest levels of the cult.

Scholars have argued that there was one clear difference between the pre-Christian religious custom and Christianity. The old religious custom has been seen as communal. Christianity, on the other hand, has been regarded as focused on the individual. In this thesis, this view of medieval Christianity has not been substantiated. Christianity was accepted through communal decisions at all levels of society. Moreover, the teachings about personal salvation had not yet been firmly established. Thus also in this respect, there was some level of continuity between the old and the new.

We must now return to the questions posed in chapter 1 in order to determine how well these have been answered. The first two questions, i.e. those regarding the requirements for successful conversion and the strategies pursued by rulers and clerics have been given detailed answers. The same can be said for the question concerning what parts of pre-Christian religious custom and Christianity led to continuity or change after conversion. The question as to how conversion affected the life of the wider population is, due to the nature of the source material, more difficult to answer. In an attempt to do so, use has been made of normative sources. These have provided a great deal of

information about rulers' and clerics' regulation of daily life. The view of how well this question has been answered thus depends on the extent to which this type of material is seen to reflect the life of the population. The same applies to the question about the differences in the effects between the forceful and more peaceful conversions. The question concerning the variations in the methods used within the forceful and the more peaceful conversions, has on the other hand, been answered in depth. Finally, it must be pointed out that the comparative approach has proven to be rewarding, as it has shed new light on the overall process of conversion.

Let us again consider the issue of transformation and compromise in the work of missionaries. It is evident that missionaries simplified and adapted their teachings in order to convey the Christian message to the population. Fundamental concepts of Christianity were selected and presented to the early Scandinavians. Missionaries moreover avoided making a distinction between God and Christ. Adaptations to local traditions can be seen in the reinterpretations of Satan as the Serpent of *Miðgarðr*. It is clear that missionaries in all the geographical areas of this study employed these methods. What is thus particularly striking is that even the use of certain heretical teachings seems to have formed part of the established and accepted strategies of conversion.

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