Article:
Thompson, K. (2019) Mark Hagger. Norman rule in Normandy, 911–1144. The American Historical Review, 124 (2). pp. 720-721. ISSN: 0002-8762

https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhz163

DOI
10.1093/ahr/rhz163

Mark Hagger, *Norman rule in Normandy 911-1144*, Woodbridge, Suffolk, The Boydell Press, 2017. Pp. xviii, 798pp.

Normandy casts a long shadow in Anglophone historiography. From the researches of Palgrave and Stapleton to more recent historians, Haskins, Douglas, Chibnall and Bates, the history of the homeland of England's conquerors in 1066 has been the subject of intensive study. The latest in this long line is Mark Hagger, who bravely offers a synthesis of all that has gone before on a much broader timescale than David Bates' *Normandy before 1066* (1982). Deliberately avoiding theoretical concepts and questions in favour of the practicalities of his topics (p. xvii), Hagger brings to the study his deep knowledge of the primary sources and in particular the diplomas, writs and charters produced in Normandy and England in this period. It is this grasp of practicalities that is the work's strength.

The study is divided into two parts: the first is broadly an analytical narrative, the second a series of thematic explorations, with an introduction that reviews the main narrative and documentary sources. Part I has the collective subtitle "Building the duchy", with chapters 1 to 3 covering the periods 911-96; 996-1087; and 1087-1144 and chapters 4 and 5 reviewing respectively the duke's relationship with the church and the way he was portrayed within texts. It presents a nuanced account of the development of Normandy. Ducal power was extended "in fits and starts" (p. 184) from Rollo's settlement in Rouen c. 911 until King Henry I finally secured Verneuil-sur-Avre around 1120, illustrated in maps of the ducal demesne across the period. With an eye to practicalities Hagger points out that individual lords needed to see the benefit of accepting the duke's power as a means of protecting the lands they held. He also describes how the dukes' promotion of Christianity was essential to their success, first by bringing the Viking settlers into the existing community and then by rebuilding the institutions of the Norman church. On the question of the dukes' relationship with the kings of France, Hagger is able to deploy his expertise on documentary sources, examining the use of titles in Norman narratives and documents and describing how historians have been influenced by surviving English acts from 1066 onwards, described in a memorable phrase as the "roar of the royal writing office" (p. 253).

Chapters 6 to 11, under the collective title, The Minister of God, describe executive authority, the display and experience of power, justice, access to the duke and communications, finance and military matters. Hagger shows that the duke retained executive power at all times; as the personal petitioning revealed in surviving ducal acts demonstrates, the duke was the source of patronage and protection. A Carolingian style of palace government was in place in Normandy and, except when hunting or on campaign, the duke was to be found in Rouen, where buildings were important material expressions of ducal power and the court was the stage for political theatre. There is a particularly useful section on finance and revenue collection, which have received less attention in the past. The transport of money and produce to estate centres or depots under the control of ducal officials is described and Hagger identifies such a depot at Valognes, providing a glimpse of the monks of Marmoutier collecting their annual ducal gift of a whale's tongue (p. 595).

Boydell are to be congratulated on the production of what is at 696 pages of text a big book. While it is heavy, it is easy to handle and its binding is sturdy. Few misprints have been overlooked and only

figure 1 is poorly reproduced. Nonetheless, the sheer length of the work makes it hard to navigate and, since the sections are designed to stand alone (p. xvi) there are repetitions. Equally there are occasions when a point made in the second part would have been valuable in the analytical narrative, such as the role played by Duke Richard I's new palace complex and tower at Bayeux in underlining and promoting the westward extension of ducal power.

Now and again a name or concept appears without adequate introduction; Morris is mentioned as an earlier historian on page 556 and we learn from the index that he was W. A. Morris, but his work does not appear in the list of secondary sources. On occasion the work reads like a literature review and there are unnecessary critiques of other historians; page 582 for example "When remarking on this passage [named historian] suggested that the custom of pannage was actually a 'pasture tax'. While that is not right, there does seem to have been a custom amounting to a pasture tax…". Why not just start with "There does seem to have been something of a pasture tax…"? Historians are repeatedly mentioned in the text and so into the index, which has the effect of lengthening the work and giving the impression of ongoing conversations from which the reader is to some extent excluded. Hagger has useful and important things to say, but they could be said more directly.

In short, there is much to recommend in this volume and, at the risk of entering into another conversation from which readers might feel excluded, Henry I's adoption of the ducal title, as demonstrated on his fourth seal, may well date from 1114 as Haggar proposes. The confirmation to the monks of Tiron, which is crucial to the discussion of when Henry I ceased to use his third seal (p. 295), is indeed likely to have been given in 1114 or earlier, since its position in the manuscript of the Tiron cartulary (Chartres: Archives départementales de l'Eure-et-Loir H. 1374) implies that it predates an act given in 1115.

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