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Chapter 4

Jerusalem and the Christianization of Norway

The Christianization of Norway spanned over centuries and covered much of what is now known as the Viking Age (late eighth to early eleventh centuries). At the turn of the first millennium, this process was in the phase of institutionalization: churches were built, and church laws were introduced. People who failed to meet basic regulations concerning food and fasting, baptism of children, exogamous marriages, etc., were sanctioned with outlawry. This punishment was also found before Christianization, banishing those who violated the balance in the farming society based on notions of honour. In spatial terms, the new church legislation challenged the farm as the focal point in society and world view, but at the same time used established terminology and conceptions.

The opening of the Christian law section for the district Borgarting in Eastern Norway states that: “This is the foundation of our law; that we shall bow to the east and give ourselves to Christ, and venerate churches and clerics.”¹ This constructs an orientation and a physical posture of humility (*luta*) of Christians towards the “east,” i.e. to the Holy Land. The spatial orientation is moved from the traditional centres of the (chieftains’) households and the thing assemblies to churches and Jerusalem. In this passage, the community in the Norwegian kingdom appropriated the geographical orientation of European Christianity; seeing itself as part of the west that directs its devotion to east. In its most concrete form, this orientation was expressed through the attendance of mass in the Church, as well as the west-east orientation of burials. The altars became compasses of religious geography and bestow authority on the Church’s servant as they were positioned in the east, representing Jerusalem.

For the conversion kings, Olav Tryggvason (r. 995–1000) and Olav Haraldsson (r. 1015–1028), Christianity would imply potential new ways of legitimizing power, connecting themselves to a new centre of devotion and authority. On the other hand, Viking-Age Scandinavia may have shared – and in some cases integrated into – many aspects of the political culture with kingdoms elsewhere in Christian Europe, such as the importance of building network through gift-exchange, feasts, oaths, and using

¹ *De eldste østlandske kristenrettene*, ed. Eyvind Fjeld Halvorsen and Magnus Rindal, *Norrøne tekster*, 7, Oslo: Riksarkivet, 2008,122: *Þet er uphaf lagha uarra. at austr skulum luta oc gevaz Kristi røkia kirkiur oc kenne men.* (My translation.)

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rituals as displays of power. These traits of early medieval rulership crossed confessional borders and did not necessarily disappear with the conversion of society.

Here, I will discuss the importance of Jerusalem in spatial, ritual and ideological contexts in Norway during the conversion, especially during the reign of King Olav Haraldsson. Olav had spent much of his youth on the continent and in England, at a time when Europe was giving increased attention to Jerusalem as the pivotal centre. Three elements in contemporary European theology, rituals and politics can be interpreted as distinctly related to the new awareness of Jerusalem at this time. First, the *adventus* of a ruler was an important pre-crusade reference to Jerusalem modelled on the entry of Christ into the Holy City on Palm Sunday. Second, eschatological ideas on the second coming of Christ to the earthly Jerusalem, with central roles played by Charlemagne and St Michael, became widespread in Europe at the turn of the millennium. To what extent and in what contexts do such motives appear in Norway?

Contemporary sources that narrate the travels and the reign of Olav Haraldsson are few, scattered and often difficult to interpret. The point of departure is the skaldic poetry related to King Olav Haraldsson, and then comparing these to the use of the Jerusalem code among the rulers Olav visited and served during his travels in 1007–1015, mainly in England and Normandy. Thus, we may at least catch some glimpses of the impact contemporary European ideas of Jerusalem had on Olav's legitimization of authority in Norway.

The *Adventus* of Olav Haraldsson

In the late summer of 1015, Olav Haraldsson returned to Norway after spending eight years of his youth abroad.² The rulers of Norway were at this time the earls of Lade in Trøndelag, foremost among them Eirik and Svein, sons of Earl Haakon Sigurdsson (d. 995). At the arrival of Olav in Norway, Eirik had recently gone to England in the company of Knud the Great (d. 1035). Olav surprised Eirik's son

² Due to the lack of contemporary sources and the differences in later saga accounts, many aspects of Olav's journeys – concerning both place names and chronology – are much disputed. These details do not concern the analyses or conclusions in this study, but it is presumed that Olav took part in warfare and met rulers in the Baltic Sea area (probably including visits to Sigtuna, Gotland and Novgorod), Holland, Normandy, England, and Iberia before his return in 1015. A fundamental study of the itinerary of Olav Haraldsson before he became king is Oscar Albert Johnsen, *Olav Haraldssons ungdom indtil slaget ved Nesjar 25. mars 1016: En kritisk undersøkelse*, vol. 2, Videnskapsselskapets Skrifter. II. Hist.-Filos. Klasse (Kristiania: Videnskapsselskapet, 1916), but some aspects of his conclusions have been criticized and modified in for example Judith Jesch, "Viking on the European Continent," in *Scandinavia and Europe 800–1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, ed. Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) and Helio Pires, "Nem Tui, nem Gibraltar: Óláfr Haraldsson e a Península Ibérica," *En la España Medieval* 38 (2015) (see further below).

Fig. 4.1: Mølen, a portion of the coastline in Vestfold, South-Eastern Norway, identified with Old Norse Nesjar, site of the battle between King Olav Haraldsson and Svein Haakonson at Palm Sunday 1016. The beach of rolling stones has large cairns raised centuries before Olav Haraldsson was victorious here.

Haakon and sent him in exile to England. Olav then met Svein in a large sea battle outside Nesjar, probably close to Helgeroa and Mølen in Vestfold, at Palm Sunday (25 March) 1016 (Fig. 4.1). Olav won the battle and secured his rule of Norway for the next decade, while Svein fled to Sweden and died shortly after.

This battle of Nesjar was commemorated by the Icelander Sigvat Thordsson, who probably was an eyewitness, in his poem *Nesjavísur*. Sigvat had travelled from Iceland to Norway in 1015, and soon became the chief skald of Olav, as well as one of the king's closest advisors. Sigvat's father, Thord Sigvaldaskald, had accompanied Olav on his early travels from the Baltic Sea to England in 1009, and most likely provided his son with information from these travels.³

In the preserved stanzas of *Nesjavísur*, Sigvat did not depict the battle as a fight between Christians and heathens. On the contrary, Svein was portrayed as an able

³ On Sigvat's poetry and career, see Frederik Paasche, "Sigvat Tordsson: Et skaldeportræt," *Edda* 8 (1917); Lee M. Hollander, "Sigvat Thordson and his Poetry," *Scandinavian Studies* 16 (1940).

warrior and respected opponent. Still, there are some distinct traits of presenting the battle in Biblical and theological terms. The most obvious allusion springs from the day the battle was fought:

Olav's warband won a hard battle on Palm Sunday, and thus I had to await Easter; I put on a Poitou-made helmet.⁴

The emphasis on the special status of the day is hardly by chance. In fact, it is the earliest appearance of a weekday in any Old Norse text.⁵ The awareness that this was Easter is emphasised by Sigvat by his statement that the battle is a prelude to the celebration of *páska*. This might mean the Easter vigil, a rite that was particularly popular to baptise converts. Moreover, the repeated mentions of the sun throughout the poem might point to the importance of this Sunday.⁶ In a recent study on this poem, Russell Poole has pointed out another allusion to Palm Sunday in stanza 4 of *Nesjavísur*. It is imbedded in the complicated system of metaphors usual in Old Norse skaldic poetry known as *kenningar*, where there are poetic transliterations of for example battles, weapons and warriors:

There was no cause [*lit.* it was not] to reproach Svein {for the din of swords} [BATTLE], nor the battle-glad Olav {for the good storm {of the osprey {of the battle-moon}}}} [SHIELD > RAVEN/EAGLE > BATTLE], because both parties had to strive for the maiming of each other, where men attacked; the army never came into a worse place.⁷

Here, Sigvat used a usual skaldic kenning for men or warriors, namely trees. But his use of *kvisting* (lopping of a branch or twig) in relation to slaying warriors is unique, and Poole argues that this may have been motivated by the poem's Easter theme; when Christ entered Jerusalem at Palm Sunday, some cut boughs or branches of the trees. This would be reminiscent of those who attended the Palm Sunday liturgy. It would also be a meaningful image to warriors that cut down their opponents in honour of their ruler.

⁴ "Hirð Áleifs vann harða/ hríð, en svá varðk bíða/ (peitneskum feltk) páska,/ palmsunnudag (hjálmi)" Sigvatr Þórðarson (Sigvat Thordson), *Nesjavísur* 15, ed. and transl. Russell Poole, in Diana Whaley, ed. *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c.1035*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 578.

⁵ Lasse C.A. Sonne, "The Origin of the Seven-Day Week in Scandinavia (Part 1): The Theophoric Day-Names," *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 10 (2014).

⁶ Russell Poole, "Cyningas sigefæste þurh God: Contributions from Anglo-Saxon England to Early Advocacy for Óláfr Haraldsson," in *Old English Literature and the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Fox and Manish Sharma (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 270.

⁷ "Vasa sigmána Sveini/ sverða gnýs at frýja,/ gjóðs né góðrar hríðar/ gunnreifum Ôleifi,/ þvít kvistingar kosta/ – koma herr í stað verra – / ôttu sín, þars sóttusk/ seggir, hváirtveggja." Sigvatr Þórðarson (Sigvat Thordson), *Nesjavísur* 4, ed. and transl. Russell Poole, in Whaley 2012, *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1*: 578. In this new standard edition, there are extensive notes and comments to the stanzas and the kennings used in them.

In a stanza that may have been the climax in *Nesjavísur*, Poole points out another possible link between Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday and the establishment of a new law under the victorious ruler:

[Inhabitant {of the loft {of the draught-animals of the wave}}] [(lit. 'loft-inhabitant of the draught-animals of the wave') SHIPS > AFTER-DECK > SEAFARER], you are able to establish the law of the land which shall remain in force among the troop of all men.⁸

Sigvat's unique kenning for ship, and, in extension of this, Olav Haraldsson himself, includes *eykja* – draught-animals. This may have been a carefully chosen word to allude to Christ riding into Jerusalem on an ass. Furthermore, the 'law of the land' seems to refer to the new law under Christ, according to the Gospel of John during Easter (John 13:34–35). Poole points out that the wording of Sigvat in this stanza indicates that he may have been familiar with the *West Saxon Gospels*; his choice of *á miðli* ("among" or "between") seems closer to the Anglo-Saxon *betwynan* than the Latin *in-uicem* in the Vulgate.⁹ One might add that Sigvat's *unnar* further alludes to Christ's new commandment "that you love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

Sigvat's reference to the "law of the land" is vague, but may refer to an early, possibly oral, version of the Christian law code. The preserved written versions date only from the late twelfth century. The dating of the different sections within the law codes and which, if any, parts of the legislation can be dated to the rule of Olav Haraldsson is disputed. However, the orientation towards the east seems to be a principle from early on. In the regional law code for Gulating in Western Norway, this idea is linked to rulership as well as piety. Bowing towards the Holy Land showed friendship to the king and secured *ár ok frið* ("prosperity and peace") for all. This is a political ideology widespread in Europe in the early Middle Ages, and something Olav Haraldsson would have encountered during his stay in England.¹⁰

⁸ "Loptbyggvir, mátt leggja/ lands rétt, þanns skal standask,/ unnar, allra manna,/ eykja, liðs á miðli." Sigvatr Þórðarson (Sigvat Thordsson), *Óláfsdrápa* 1, ed. and transl. Judith Jesch, in Whaley 2012, *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1*: 614. This stanza is found only in Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* (c.1225), separated from *Nesjavísur*. In most editions of skaldic poetry, it is presented as the single preserved stanza from an otherwise lost poem by Sigvat, labelled *Óláfsdrápa* a century ago by Finnur Jónsson. However, there are strong indications that this stanza originally belonged to *Nesjavísur*, indeed making it the climax of the poem, see Russell Poole, "The *Nesjavísur* of Sigvatr Þórðarson," *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 15 (2005).

⁹ Poole, "Cýningas sigefæste þurh God," 272. On the meaning of *á miðli*, see also the note to Sigvat's *Víkingavísur* st. 4, line 6, in Whaley 2012, *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1*: 539.

¹⁰ *Den eldre Gulatingslova*, ed. Bjørn Eithun, et al., *Norrøne tekster*, 6, Oslo: Riksarkivet, 1994, 32: *Pat er upphaf laga varra at ver scolom luta austr oc biðia til hins helga crist ars oc friðar. oc þess at vér halldem lande varo bygðu. oc lánar drotne varom heilum. se han vinnr varr. en ver hans. en Guð se allra varra vinnr.* ("This is the foundation of our law; that we shall bow to the east and pray to Holy Christ for prosperity and peace, and venerate churches and clerics, to keep our land settled and give our ruler well-being. He will be our friend and we his, and God the friend of us all." My translation.) On the phrase *til árs ok friðar* and its relation to especially *De duodecim abusivis*,

Poole argues that the references to Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday in Sigvat's *Nesjavísur* derive from specifically Anglo-Saxon theological writings about war and legitimation of rulership. However, the liturgy and rituals of *adventus* was widespread in early medieval Europe. According to the biography of Bishop Ulrich of Augsburg (d. 973), written shortly after his death, the saintly bishop and the people of the city re-enacted the entry of Christ at Palm Sunday. Those who attended the procession carried banners, crosses, and palm branches, as well as an effigy of Christ riding on a donkey. They were met by the cathedral choir and others, who had strewn clothing on their path.¹¹ Palm Sunday processions were widespread in Western Europe from the Carolingian times, with blessings of the palms and a ceremonial entrance into the city.¹² *Regularis Concordia*, reflecting especially Winchester practice, gives antiphones for the procession and envisage St Martin's Church as a simulacrum of the Mount of Olives, from where Christ headed at the gate of Jerusalem.¹³ Lay people seems also to have been central in the procession (although only involved at the completion of the antiphon). In the illustration of Palm Sunday in the Benedictional of Æthelwold of Winchester (BL Add MS 49598, fol. 45v), the same Bishop Æthelwold who was the main contributor to the *Regularis Concordia*, the laity of Jerusalem is depicted as processing behind Christ in the Palm Sunday (Fig. 4.2). In the Anglo-Saxon homily of Ælfric of Eynesham (d. c.1010) on Palm Sunday, the congregation were supposed to carry palm twigs, or representations of these.

Sedulius Scotus and the Anglo-Saxon translation of this work by Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham (d. c.1010), see Bjørn Bandlien, "Coinage and Kingship in the Late Viking Age: The *Facing Bird* Pennies of King Olaf Haraldsson," in *Royal Ideology in the Viking Age*, ed. Jakub Morawiec and Rafał Borysławski (Katowice: University of Silesia Press, 2018).

¹¹ Henry Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*, second ed., 2 vols. (London: Harving-Miller, 1999), I, 119–25; David A. Warner, "Ritual and Memory in the Ottonian Reich: The Ceremony of Adventus," *Speculum* 76 (2001): 264–66. Gerhard of Augsburg, *Vita Oudalrici episcopi Augustani* MGH SS 4: 377–428 (391).

¹² See Craig Wright, "The Palm Sunday Procession in Medieval Chartres," in *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography*, ed. Margot E. Fassler and Rebecca A. Baltzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); James Forse, "Religious Drama and Ecclesiastical Reform in the Tenth Century," *Early Theatre* 5, no. 2 (2002); Colin Morris, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 108–11; "Memorials of the Holy Places and Blessing of the East: Devotion to Jerusalem before the First Crusade," in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History*, ed. R.N. Swanson, *Studies in Church History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 100–5. Chadd has noted several similarities between the liturgy in Norman houses influenced by the reforms of William of Volpiano, as well as in Rouen where Olav Haraldsson spent considerable time (and where he was either baptized or confirmed), with the Nidaros ordinal, David Chadd, "The Ritual of Palm Sunday: Reading Nidaros," in *The Medieval Cathedral of Trondheim: Architectural and Ritual Constructions in the European Context*, ed. Margarete Syrstad Andås, et al., *Ritus et artes* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007).

¹³ Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 124–34.

Fig. 4.2: Full-page miniature of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, preceding the benediction for Palm Sunday, in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester 963–984. British Library, Add MS 49598, f. 45v.

The Palm Sunday processions celebrated the majesty of Christ the king, with reverence for the cross. In a classic study, Ernst Kantorowicz argued that the ritual of the ruler's *adventus* in early medieval Europe used the processions of the triumphal Roman emperors and combined this with the idea of the prosperity of the ruler's realm. Moreover, Christ's entry into Jerusalem provided a Biblical model and a Christian meaning to this ritual, providing an archetype of the *adventus* ritual that conferred meanings to those participating in it. The ruler who entered a city or monastery would often be preceded with royal banners, being greeted with signs of submission or hymns praising his accomplishments, virtues and lineage.¹⁴ This ritual was not only preserved for emperors and kings, but also nobles, bishops and others who confirming or establishing a bond with a community. In a pre- or proto-state society, with few or weak institutions, visible signs of acceptance and royal reception would be even more important.¹⁵ David Warner has argued that many of the entries of rulers in Ottonian Germany, in addition to their importance in the ritualized context itself, interplayed with the narratives and memories of other performances of *adventus* – whether they were successful or failures. Chroniclers could use the communicative aspects of this ritual to either show the willingly subjection to a ruler, or how such events could act as an opportunity for communities to oppose the authority of a wicked king. Thus, the ritual of *adventus* would be important not only as a display of power, but also to negotiate the positions and status of those involved.¹⁶

At the Ottonian court, the celebration of Easter was not a day of war but an opportunity for the rulers to invite the most prominent men to show their loyalty and hosting foreign princes at their table. On Palm Sunday 1016, on the very same day as the Battle of Nesjar, Emperor Henry II attended mass at Merseburg, then moving on to his most important center Bamberg for the celebration of Easter (Thietmar of Merseburg VII.27). At the celebration of Easter in 986, the young Otto III had four dukes with him who ministered him at the table, as well as exchanging gifts with the dukes Boleslaw II of Bohemia and Mieszko I of Poland, the latter even offering a camel to the king (Thietmar of Merseburg IV.9).

Perhaps even more strikingly, Lent and the celebration of Easter in the year 1000 was intimately linked the Passion of Christ and Christian rulership. Otto III went to Gniezno during Lent this year for several purposes. He venerated Saint Adalbert of Prague (d. 997), negotiated peace with the Polish Duke Boleslaw Chrobry, elevated Gniezno to an archbishopric, as well as established new dioceses. Otto III gave a replica of the Holy Lance to Boleslaw, a relic associated to Good Friday, while the rotunda

¹⁴ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "The 'King's Advent': The Enigmatic Panels in the Doors of Santa Sabina," *The Art Bulletin* 26 (1944). See also Sabine MacCormack, "Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of Adventus," *Historia* 21 (1972).

¹⁵ This has been argued by for instance Karl Leyser and Gerd Althoff, see for instance Gerd Althoff, *Otto III* (University Park: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2003), 16–22.

¹⁶ Warner, "Ritual and Memory in the Ottonian Reich".

church at Wawel Hill in Cracow, modelled on the Holy Sepulchre as well as the rotunda in Aachen, was probably built shortly after to create a new palatial and sacral centre in the Slavic province of the Empire.¹⁷ After the Congress of Gniezno, Boleslaw accompanied Otto III to Germany, celebrated Easter with him, before going to Aachen where the famous discovery of the tomb of Charlemagne took place at Pentecost.¹⁸

Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim (993–1022), Otto III's tutor, seems to have been central in linking imperial rulership with the authority of Jerusalem as a sacred space. This is indicated by Bernward's construction of his diocese as a New Jerusalem. Among the many artworks he commissioned in Hildesheim was a column made for the Church of St Michael, containing scenes in a helix of the life of Jesus that culminated with the Entry of Jerusalem (a now lost cross or crucifix would originally have been placed on top of the column). Bernward's column was clearly inspired by the Trajan column in Rome, as well as by the twisted columns allegedly from the Temple of Solomon recovered by Helena in the fourth century.¹⁹

Considering the close dynastic, economic and political relations between the Polish realms, Germany and Scandinavia at the time, the events at Gniezno and Aachen in the year 1000 would most likely have been well known in Norway. Indeed, the kings' sagas placed King Olav Tryggvason in the Polish realm, before he lost the battle of Svolder on his way back to Norway.²⁰ Furthermore, there were strong

17 Zbigniew Pianowski, "Wawel Hill as a Place of Power in the Early Middle Ages: 10th–12th Centuries," in *Places of Power – Orte der Herrschaft – Lieux du Pouvoir*, ed. Caspar Ehlers, Deutsche Königspfalzen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

18 Among the many studies on Otto III's relations to and use of Aachen, see Ernst-Dieter Hehl, "Aachen an der ersten Jahrtausendwende: Ein Bistumsplan Ottos III. im Zeichen Karls des Großen und Adalberts von Prag," *Geschichte im Bistum Aachen* 6 (2001–2002); Ludwig Falkenstein, *Otto III. und Aachen*, Studien und Texte (Hannover: Hahn, 1998); Eliza Garrison, *Ottonian Imperial Art and Portraiture: The Artistic Patronage of Otto III and Henry II* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012). See further on Charlemagne's tomb below.

19 The literature on Bernward of Hildesheim and his artwork is extensive. Recent studies Adam S. Cohen and Anne Derbes, "Bernward and Eve at Hildesheim," *Gesta* 40 (2001); Bernard Gallistl, "Bernwards Stiftung St. Michael in Hildesheim: Liturgie und Legende," *Concilium medii aevi* 14 (2011); Jennifer P. Kingsley, *The Bernward Gospels: Art, Memory, and the Episcopate in Medieval Germany* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014); Bernard Gallistl, "Der Tanz im Hildesheimer Dom," *Concilium medii aevi* 19 (2016); Joanna Olchawa, "Die Trajanssäule als Vorbild für die Bernwardsäule: Ein Beitrag zur Antikenrezeption im 11. Jahrhundert," in *Columna Traiani – Traianssäule: Siegesmonument und Kriegsbericht in Bildern*, ed. Fritz Mitthof and Günther Schörner (Vienna: Holzhausen, 2017).

20 According to the kings' sagas, Olav Tryggvason was married to Tyre, the sister of Svend Forkbeard of Denmark. She had previously been married to the King Burisleifr, traditionally identified with Boleslaw I (albeit with semi-legendary traits). Olav went to Poland either in the year 999 or 1000 to settle the disputes over Tyre's property. He was killed on his way home at the battle of Svolder. It would of course be tempting to place Olav at Gniezno during the meeting of Boleslaw and Otto III in March, but there are no contemporary sources confirming this, see Jakub Morawiec, *Vikings among the Slavs: Jomsborg and the Jomsvikings*, Medievalia Septentrionalia (Vienna: Fassbaender, 2009).

connections between Hildesheim and the important church of Dalby, the predecessor of the archdiocese of Lund, in the early and mid-eleventh century.²¹ The most prominent missionary bishop of King Olav Haraldsson, Grimkell, was English (presumably with a background from Winchester and/or Canterbury). However, King Olav also sent Grimkell to submit to Archbishop Unwan of Bremen.²² This was probably shortly after 1022, the year Pope Benedict VIII supported Bremen's superiority over the bishops in Scandinavia.²³

In his panegyric poem for Olav Haraldsson after the Battle of Nesjar, Sigvat may have found the narrative scheme *adventus* especially useful for an audience of warriors since the significance of a ruler's entry seems already to have been important in Viking Age Scandinavia. Andreas Lundin has argued that the recurrent images of warriors on horseback on Gotlandic picture-stones are inspired by the continental motif of a ruler's *adventus* in Carolingian times. The dating of these picture-stones is disputed, but the stones depicting horsemen are usually dated to the late eighth or early ninth

21 Ralf M.W. Stammberger, "Paris, Hildesheim and Dalby: The Migrations of Christian Culture – Scania in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," in *Locus Celebris: Dalby kyrka, kloster och gård*, ed. Stephan Borgehammar and Jes Wienberg (Lund: Makadam, 2012). Other studies in the anthology *Locus Celebris* refer to the influence of Hildesheim on Dalby, and to bishop Egeno of Dalby (1059–1071/72) who probably had a background from Hildesheim. There should also be added the mention of bishop Thietmar, or Tymmo, of Hildesheim (1038–1044), who was born in Denmark, had been Knud the Great's chaplain, and probably had met Olav Haraldsson, see Hans Olrik, "Biskop Tymme (Thietmar) af Hildesheim," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 3rd ser., no. 6 (1891). As a bishop, Thietmar met King Magnus the Good, son and successor of Olav Haraldsson, at Schleswig, along with Archbishop Adalbrand of Bremen, Duke Bernard II of Saxony and his son Ordulf (Adam of Bremen II.75). Magnus' sister, Ulvhild, was married to Ordulf in 1042. In the chronicle of Thietmar of Merseburg, there is a mention of a certain Götrik, who came from the "Arctic" region. He was educated as a cleric in the monastery of Verden, attaining the rank of deacon, during the time of Bishop Erp (976–993). He turned out to only pretend to be Christian and left for his homeland and was raised to his hereditary honour, see Thietmar of Merseburg, *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. David A. Warner, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001. It has been suggested that this may have been the petty king Gudrød of Gudbrandsdalen, whom Olav Haraldsson later defeated, see Alexander Bugge, "Norges historie, 1:2: Tidsrummet ca. 800–1030," (Kristiania: Aschehoug, 1910), 359. The identification of Götrik with Gudrød is of course tenuous, but Thietmar's story suggests that some members of the leading families in Scandinavia would return with some learning from the continent – such as Earl Haakon of Lade (d. 995), who was baptized in Denmark, fought in the army of King Harald Bluetooth (d. c.986), but later became known for his heathen sacrifices.

22 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, ed. Bernard Schmeidler, MGH, Hannover & Leipzig: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1917.

23 See Henrik Janson, "Hamburg-Bremens kyrkorättsliga ställning i Norden från grundläggningen till upprättandet av Lunds kyrkoprovins," in *Kyrklig rätt och kyrklig orätt – Kyrkorättsliga perspektiv: Festskrift till professor Bertil Nilsson*, ed. Martin Berntson and Anna Minara Ciardi (Skellefteå: Artos, 2016), 292–94 on Unwan's claim for superiority over the dioceses in Scandinavia, and Torgeir Landro, *Kristenrett og kyrkjerett: Borgarkristenretten i eit komparativt perspektiv* (Bergen: Universitetet i Bergen, 2010) on the complexities of the existing versions of the early Christian law codes of Norway – including the possible influence of the *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms (d. 1025).

centuries. Lundin argues that the image of these horsemen was an adaptation of the idea of ruler who would will bring peace and fertility, while the meaning linked to Christ's entry into Jerusalem and the expectation of the Heavenly Jerusalem remained lost for the Gotlandic audience.²⁴

The *adventus* of the ruler in this sense is not restricted by to Gotland, as it is also a ritual found in Old Norse literature. Conventionally, a woman would greet the ruler with a cup of mead and lead him to a seat of prominence in the hall. By this act she acknowledged the status of the ruler and conferred authority to him.²⁵ This is also linked to the conceptions of the after-life, expressed in the memorial poem *Eiríksmál* composed for King Eirik Haraldsson (d. c.954), nicknamed "blood-axe." After his death, he is said to have been greeted to the hall of gods by a *valkyrie* with a cup of wine.²⁶ There are many differences between the Christian ritual of *adventus* and the Scandinavian link between war, bravery, commemorative poetry or images, and the greeting of the ruler. Still, the associations to the *adventus* of Christ made in Sigvat, would be meaningful both to an audience with knowledge to rituals of authority outside Scandinavia, and to the community of warriors who were accustomed to narratives such as found in *Eiríksmál*. Olav showed bravery in a traditional manner but was bestowed authority by Christ rather than a *valkyrie*, and he was a friend of God rather than part of a community of gods.

Still, the fact that Olaf Haraldson's battle was fought on Palm Sunday, a holy day, seems to be contradictory to the more peaceful performances of the *adventus* rituals elsewhere in Europe. In the early eleventh century, the peace of God-movement attempted to end bloodshed on holy days. This seems to have met some acceptance early on; for example, Emperor Henry II did not want to shed blood in the Holy Week on his Italian campaign in 1004.²⁷ Another example is the Battle of Clontarf outside Dublin on Good Friday 1014, where King Brian Boru fought a Norse-Irish army. The

24 Andreas Lundin, "The Advent of the Esteemed Horseman-Sovereign: A Study of Rider-Motifs on Gotlandic Picture-Stones," in *Old Norse Religion in Long-term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions*, ed. Anders Andrén, et al. (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006). Olaf Haraldsson had probably visited Gotland during his first year on his journey abroad, i.e. in 1007 or 1008, and again in 1030 on his way back to Norway from his exile in Russia.

25 See most recently Nanna Løkka, "Kvinner med drikkebeget," in *Dronningen i vikingtid og middelalder*, ed. Karoline Kjesrud and Nanna Løkka (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2017), with references. She also discusses the woman on the Gosforth Cross. This figure, a woman holding a drinking cup in a similar way as the *valkyrie* in *Eiríksmál* or the women on the Gotlandic picture stones, has been suggested to represent Ecclesia greeting Christians, or the converted Mary Magdalene.

26 Agneta Ney, "Välkomstmotivet på gotländska bildstenar i jämförelse med litterära källor från vikingtid och medeltid," in *Gotlands bildstenar: Järnålderns gåtfulla budbärare*, ed. Maria Herling Karnell, Gotländskt arkiv (Visby: Gotlands museum, 2012); *Eiríksmál* 1, ed. R.D. Fulk, in Whaley 2012, *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas* 1: 1006.

27 Adalbold II of Utrecht, *Vita Henrici II imperatoris*, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH, Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1841, 679–95.

Irish chronicler Marianus Scotus (d. 1082), who studied and worked at Cologne, Fulda and Mainz, stated that the pious Brian Boru preferred to pray instead of fight on this most holy of days. The author of the text *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, written at the turn of the twelfth century, expanded on this theme and said that he was slain by an apostate during prayer, and thus became a royal martyr.²⁸

In the many accounts of the Battle of Clontarf, the issue of fighting on Good Friday gained in significance later in the eleventh century when the opponents of the pious ruler were depicted as most vile and often as heathens and apostates. This might be connected to the growing impact of notions of holy war and the development of a theology of warfare associated to the first crusade. Still, there are found relevant ideas linking piety and the battlefield in the early eleventh century, especially in England. King Æthelred II of England, Ælfric of Eynsham and Archbishop Wulfstan of York linked the defence of the realm from Viking raids with liturgical prayers, rituals of humility and fasting closely together.²⁹ In the contemporary *Blickling Homily VI* on Palm Sunday humility is perhaps emphasized to a lesser degree, but clearly associated to Christ's victory over death. The Blickling homilist did not stress the contrast between humility and triumph, but stated that palm branches (which are, in Sigvat's poem, the slain warriors) are signs of victory.³⁰ Here, the discourse of war, battle and victory includes acts of piety rather than opposing them.

Poole argues that Sigvat's *Nesjavísur*, when including theological references, "marks an abrupt shift" from memorial poems of rulers composed a few years before, such as in Einarr skálaglamm's *Vellekla* for Earl Haakon Sigurdsson (d. 995) or Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld's memorial poem for Olav Tryggvason.³¹ Still, while Sigvat put more emphasis on the theological significance of a battle, he also played on themes and images from these same memorial poems of Einarr and Hallfreðr, especially concerning depictions of bravery, battle, corpses, cowards, and the king's generosity.³² Among the traditional values emphasised by Sigvat was the generosity of the king towards his followers, thus depicting his close bonds to his retinue. This was a community of warriors that even his opponent's warriors could be a part of, if they shifted their loyalty to the new ruler. The fact that Sigvat did not label the

²⁸ Seán Duffy, *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2013), 220–21, 65. The theme of the king refusing to fight on Good Friday is even more developed in the account of the battle in Icelandic *Njáls saga*. It is of some interest that, according to the main source for the battle, *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, Brian Boru's son, Donnchad, only returned to the battle scene two days later, at the hour of vesper on the night of Easter Sunday, appearing as a resurrected king.

²⁹ See for instance Simon Keynes, "An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006–7 and 1009–12," *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007). On Olav Haraldsson's possible use of liturgical discourse of authority, see Bandlien 2018, "Coinage and Kingship."

³⁰ Clare A. Lees, "The Blickling Palm Sunday Homily and its Revised Version," *Leeds Studies in English* 19 (1988).

³¹ Poole, "Cýningas sigefæste þurh God," 290.

³² Paasche, "Sigvat Tordsson: Et skaldeportræt."

victorious king's opponents as heathens, apostate, or enemies of God, but rather as brave warriors and worthy opponents of King Olav, confirm the poem's traditional perceptions of war.³³

In *Nesjavísur*, Sigvat seems to have balanced his poetry towards both the community of warriors, his own relation to the king, the survivors of the opposing army who would be tempted to shift side and be loyal to the generous ruler, as well as to the theology of the missionary bishops and the king himself. The new king, Olav Haraldsson, would have witnessed the Palm Sunday processions and encountered other rituals of war and religious notions of community before his return to Norway. The battlefield itself became a sacral place in Sigvat's poem, where the victorious entry into the realm of Norway was compared to Christ's entry into Jerusalem. After becoming a royal martyr at the Battle of Stiklestad in 1030, the analogy to Christ's entry to meet passion and death would be a more important part of the narrative. In 1016, however, Sigvat's version of the Battle of Nesjar served as a part of King Olav's royal ideology. At the same time, the theme of the advent of a ruler used by Sigvat clearly interplayed with a traditional discourse of rulership and the entry of the king, as shown in for example *Eiríksmál*.

Eschatology and the Legend of the Last Emperor

The period around the millennium has been connected to an increased eschatological awareness and apocalyptic ideas.³⁴ First, 25 March, the date of the battle of Nesjar, was widely held to be both the date of the Annunciation as well as the date of the Crucifixion of Christ.³⁵ There was a widespread belief that when Good Friday fell on this date, it signalled the Last Judgement. Such ideas tended to be contested by the learned, but still remained widespread.³⁶ The Annunciation was when the *fortitudo Dei*, the strength of God was made manifest. In the Old English

³³ Poole, "Cyningas sigefæste þurh God," 274.

³⁴ See for example the comprehensive study of Johannes Fried, "Endzeiterwartung um die Jahrtausendwende," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 45 (1989).

³⁵ Of nineteen liturgical calendars that survive from England in the tenth and eleventh centuries, sixteen include this tradition, see Éamonn Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the 'Dream of the Rood' Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 311.

³⁶ In the tenth century, 25 March fell on Good Friday in 908, 970, 981 and 992, but Abbo of Fleury (d. 1004) refuted the idea of an apocalypse on these dates, see Elizabeth Dachowski, *The Career of Abbo of Fleury* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2008), 53–5. The large pilgrimage of 1065 seems to have been inspired by the conjunction of Easter Sunday and the Annunciation, see Morris 2005, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West*: 140. The combination of Crucifixion and the Annunciation occurs also on the Ruthwell cross (in the runic inscription on the cross, as well as the cross itself, and on the scene on the shaft of the cross). See Ó Carragáin

poem *Dream of the Rood* this theme was linked to the idea of the Crucifixion as a war against the power of darkness; an act of triumph no less than humility. 25 March was also the eighth day of creation. As explained by Augustine and used for example by Byrthferth of Ramsey, a contemporary of Olav Haraldsson, 25 March was not only linked to the Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, but also the day the archangel announced Christ's entry to the world, and signaled the Second Coming of Christ.³⁷ A conjunction between Easter Sunday and the Annunciation did not occur in 1016, but such symbols and images could be paired in various combinations. The Battle of Nesjar thus may have been associated to apocalyptic traditions in a broader sense.

On the continent, eschatological ideas were linked more closely to Jerusalem through the millennialist ideas of the Last Emperor. The Last Emperor was first mentioned in the Syriac text of Pseudo-Methodius of the seventh century, a work translated into Greek a century later and then into Latin. The Latin version became popular in Western Europe. It prophesied that a Christian leader would lead the fight against the enemies of God, and, after defeating the ancient foes Gog and Magog, will go to Jerusalem and rule his kingdom in peace there, handing over his power to God. Then Antichrist appear, and the events described in the Book of Revelation begin.³⁸ In the version of the Tiburtine Sibyl (originally a Greek work from the late fourth century and translated into Latin shortly after) written in Northern Italy c.1000, it is the king of the Romans, with his imperial authority, that will convert or fight Jews and pagans, vanquish Gog and Magog and hand over the Christian kingdom to God in Jerusalem. The Tiburtine Sibyl thus had a particular relevance to the circle of Otto III (996–1002). Otto's personal library contained prophetic books (Bamberg Staatsbibliothek MSS 22 and 76), as well as the Bamberg Apocalypse (Bamberg Staatsbibliothek Msc. Bibl. 140) that had been produced, probably at the emperor's request, at Reichenau.³⁹

2005, *Ritual and the Rood* on the relations between the Ruthwell cross, the Anglo-Saxon poem *Dream of the Rood*, and the Annunciation in *The Old English Martyrology*.

37 Byrthferth of Ramsey, *Byrthferth's Enchiridion*, In *Supplementary Series*, ed. and trans. Peter S. Baker and Michael Lapidge, Early English Text Society, 15, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995: "The eight day then came after the seventh, and it arrived on the day that fell on 25 March. That day was singled out especially in God's providence. On that day the angels were created; on that day the archangel Gabriel was sent to St Mary; on that day Christ arose from death; on that day God's spirit came to mankind. It is holy Sunday; when all days fail, it will endure forever in its festiveness. It is the joy of angels and eternal benefit to all the saints." Byrthferth of Ramsey was a pupil of Abbo of Fleury, and composed *Enchiridion* in the years 1010–1012, at the time when Olav Haraldsson was in England.

38 Paul J. Alexander, "The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and its Messianic Origin," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978).

39 Mayr-Harting, *Ottonian Book Illumination*: II, 10–24, 215–28.

However, the Italian version of the Tiburtine Sibyl seems to have been directed against Otto III during his campaigns south of the Alps.⁴⁰ The Sibyl thus reflects the interest in and negotiations of such apocalyptic ideas beyond the Ottonian imperial court. Another writer, whose work became widespread in the late tenth century, linked the Last Emperor to the Franks. This was Adso of Montier-en-Der's *De ortu et tempore antichristo*, written in the early 950s as a response to the concerns of the West Frankish Queen Gerberga, wife of King Louis IV (936–954) and sister of Emperor Otto I (936–973). Adso explained to Gerberga that although the Roman imperial authority of their own times seemed to be in ruins, one of the kings of the Franks would be the greatest and last of kings. He will unite the world's kingdoms under the banner of Christ and go to Jerusalem to lay down his crown and sceptre on the Mount of Olives, handing his authority over to God.⁴¹

Shortly after Adso had written his response to the apocalyptic concerns of Queen Gerberga, Benedict of Monte Soracte included the story of Charlemagne's own voyage to Jerusalem and Constantinople in his *Chronicon*. According to Benedict, both the Greeks and the Saracens subjugated to Charlemagne, who thus managed to unite East and West under his rule, brought the Holy Land under his jurisdiction, and protected and bestowed gifts to the holy sites in Jerusalem. Benedict of Monte Soracte did not only depict Charlemagne as a ruler who had already defeated the Eastern empires, but also emphasised that did he brought back many relics from the East, especially from Constantinople, thus conferring authority to the many abbeys and cathedrals who owned such relics. However, Anne Latowsky has recently argued that Benedict was not identifying Charlemagne as the Last Emperor. The latter should not resign his regalia in Jerusalem, as Charlemagne intended to do. For the Last Emperor, his journey to Jerusalem was supposed to be the beginning of his rulership.⁴²

Still, Matthew Gabriele has argued that the idea of the Last Emperor was indeed linked to Charlemagne, even if they not were identified as the same character. This is partly based on the famous Otto III's opening of his tomb in Aachen at Pentecost in the year 1000. In Adémar of Chabannes' account from the early eleventh century,

⁴⁰ Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 109–10; Anke Holdenried, "Many Hands without Design: The Evolution of a medieval Prophetic Text," *The Medieval Journal* 4, no. 1 (2014).

⁴¹ Daniel Verhelst, "Adso of Montier-en-Der and the Fear of the Year 1000," in *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1000*, ed. Richard Landes, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Simon MacLean, "Reform, Queenship and the End of the World in Tenth-Century France: Adso's 'Letter on the Origin and Time of the Antichrist' Reconsidered," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 86 (2008); Brett Edward Whalen, *Dominion of God: Christendom and Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 13–15. One redaction of Adso's work was dedicated to Heribert of Cologne (d. 1021), the Chancellor of Otto III.

⁴² Anne A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800–1229* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 62–8.

Otto III found Charlemagne sitting on his throne, as sleeping, holding a sceptre and a sword of gold, “literally larger than life, untouched by death, ruling even beyond the grave, seemingly ready to spring back to life at a moment’s notice to battle the enemies of Christ.”⁴³ One year later, during Lent in 1001, Otto III promised to rectify his errors in the next three years before retiring to Jerusalem to live as a monk, a pledge that most likely alluded to Charlemagne’s role in the legend of the Last Emperor.⁴⁴ To some degree, this became a stock theme in depictions of pious rulers. In the saga tradition of twelfth and thirteenth centuries, also Olav Haraldsson considered to renounce his royal title to go to Jerusalem (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, *Óláfs saga helga*, ch. 187).

Of the apocalyptic texts flourishing on the continent in early eleventh century, the Tiburtine Sibyl was probably known in Scandinavia. It has been regarded as a possible source for the Old Norse visionary poetry, including the Eddic poem *Völuspá* [*Prophecy of the Seeress*]. In *Völuspá*, a *völva* or prophetess tells the story of the world from the creation of humans, towards chaos until the coming end, and finally the new world that rises after Ragnarök. Most scholars consider the Christian influence on the poem undisputable, but it is debated if it should be dated to a pagan milieu influenced by Christianity in late tenth or early eleventh centuries, or rather be the work of a literate “antiquarian” in the twelfth century (considering it being preserved in late medieval Icelandic manuscripts).⁴⁵ Several scholars have pointed at the circle of Haakon Sigurdsson, earl of Lade (d. 995), as a probable context for the poem. He had contact with Christian rulers and missionaries during his stay in Denmark and Germany. Although considered an apostate, he and his warriors knew basic theology that may have influenced traditional notions of the pagan pantheon, time and space, as well as traditional perceptions of the creation and the end of the world. In this case, the poem and its use of the Sibylline tradition around the year 1000 would also tell us about the ideas of the world and rulership prevalent in Norway at the time of Olav’s return in 1015.

The quite specific sources scholars have identified for *Völuspá* include the Book of Apocalypse, the Tiburtine Sibyl, some of the writings of Wulfstan of York (d. 1023), and the Vercelli homily 2 from the late tenth century. Moreover, there are allusions to Adso’s work as well as the Easter Vigil as reflected in the Missal of Robert of Jumièges, written before 1016 in a religious house in the English Danelaw, perhaps Ely or Peterborough.⁴⁶ This point towards a rather intimate knowledge of the apocalyptic

⁴³ Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory*, 121.

⁴⁴ Levi Roach, “Emperor Otto III and the End of Time,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (2013): 98–9.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 20 (Kristin B. Aavitsland), 449–52.

⁴⁶ Of the more recent contributions to this debate, with close comparisons of *Völuspá* with insular and continental texts, see Richard North, “End Time and the Date of *Völuspá*: Two Models of Conversion,” in *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Catherine E. Karkow and

discourse at the turn of the millennium, reflecting pressing issues in the early years of the eleventh century. Some of the images on contemporary rune-stones from this time may substantiate this claim. For example, the images on a group of runic stones made c.1000 in Hunnestad, Scania, have been interpreted as the wolf Fenrir who devours the sun at Ragnarök. The Vang runestone in Oppland, Norway may depict Fenrir during the Last Days, and thus allude to the narrative in *Völuspá* and thus probably also the Sibylline literature.⁴⁷ These images are designed in the Ringerike style, characteristic for early eleventh century and associated to the imagery of power during Olav Haraldsson's reign.⁴⁸

Levi Roach has argued that the most likely origin of the Italian redaction of the Tiburtine Sibyl from c.1000 was the abbey of Fruttuaria, north of Turin. This abbey was founded by William of Volpiano in the year 1000, or in 1001. William's reputation grew rapidly, and he was shortly after invited by Duke Richard II of Normandy (996–1026) to reform the abbeys in his duchy, among them the important houses of Fécamp and Mont-Saint-Michel. Indeed, one of the earliest preserved manuscripts containing the Sibyl was written at Fécamp in the second half of the eleventh century, along with Adso's tract on the Antichrist and Raoul Glaber's biography of William of Volpiano. At the time Olav Haraldsson stayed at the court of Duke Richard II and prepared to be baptised or undergoing a *confirmatio* under supervision of the duke's brother, Archbishop Robert of Rouen (989–1037), the Tiburtine Sibyl, as well as other eschatological and liturgical texts dealing with the end of time, would have been well known in Normandy.⁴⁹

Nicholas Howe (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006); John McKinnell, "Völuspá and the Feast of Easter," *Alvíssmál* 12 (2008); Karl G. Johansson, "Völuspá, the Tiburtine Sibyl, and the Apocalypse in the North," in *The Nordic Apocalypse. Approaches to Völuspá and Nordic Days of Judgement*, ed. Terry Gunnell and Annette Lassen, Acta Scandinavia (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013). For a balanced and updated discussion on such questions, see Terry Gunnell and Annette Lassen, eds., *The Nordic Apocalypse. Approaches to Völuspá and Nordic Days of Judgement*, Acta Scandinavia (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), with extensive references to previous studies and debates. Fragments of a missal now in the Norwegian National Archives (Mi 11) are closely related to the Missal of Robert of Jumièges, as well as showing affinities to the liturgy of Winchester. A scribe educated in Normandy or England added marginal comments to the missal in the late eleventh century. This has led scholars to believe that the missal must have been brought to Norway after c.1100, but Olav Haraldsson could have brought educated scribes who had learned professional script with him to Norway. On this missal, see K.D. Hartzell, "An Early Missal Fragment in Riksarkivet, Oslo," in *Latin Manuscripts of Medieval Norway: Studies in Memory of Lilli Gjerløw*, ed. Espen Karlsen, Nota bene (Oslo: Novus, 2013).

⁴⁷ See Magnus Källström, "Bär den norska Vangstenen ett Ragnaröksmotiv?," *Fornvännen* 111 (2016), who also include a few other examples and references.

⁴⁸ See the arguments and references in Bandlien, "Coinage and Kingship."

⁴⁹ Levi Roach, "The Legacy of a Late Antique Prophecy: The Tiburtine Sibyl and the Italian Opposition to Otto III," *The Medieval Journal* 5, no. 1 (2015). On the baptism or confirmation of Olav

The combination of apocalyptic discourse and rulership may be reflected in the naming of Olav Haraldsson's son, born c.1024. According to the saga writer Snorri Sturluson, writing in the early thirteenth century, it was Olav's skald Sigvat who presented the king's son for baptism and named him Magnus. Sigvat explained to Olav that he named the boy after "Karla-Magnus," or Charlemagne, which met the king's full approval (*Heimskringla, Óláfs saga helga*, ch. 122). Even if Snorri's account might be a bit fanciful for dramatic effect, Magnus was indeed an unprecedented name in Scandinavia at the time. A parallel to such symbolic naming of the son of a king is seen in 1052, when Queen Anne of Kiev gave birth to the first son of King Henry I of France. The boy was named Philip, a Greek name that was unprecedented for a king in Latin Europe. The name points to Anne's origins and knowledge of Greek, but also alluded to Roman Emperor Philip the Arabian (r. 244–249). Philip the Arabian was, according to several chroniclers, the first Christian Emperor. Moreover, he presided over the thousandth anniversary of Rome's foundation, signalling the end of the pagan Rome and the creation of a new era of Christian emperors. King Henry I was himself influenced by Adso's version of the legend of the Last Emperor and was convinced that the end of the world was near. The new-born prince was then fittingly named after Philip the Arabian as one who should rule in an age of transition into apocalyptic era.⁵⁰ The choice of Magnus as the name of Olav's son may in a similar fashion have had eschatological associations in Norway.

Of more immediate context was the connection of Charlemagne with the establishment of sacred places in Western Europe. In Poitou, for example, the cults of relics at the abbeys of Charraux and Saint-Maixent were linked to the legendary travels of Charlemagne, who brought precious items from the Holy Land back to Europe.⁵¹ Olav Haraldsson may also have spent time in Poitou during his service to Duke Richard II of Normandy, although admittedly as more of a warrior than a pilgrim. Still, the mention of the weaponry from Poitou in *Nesjavísur* st. 15 may point to a consciousness of weapons of a ruler supported by Christ and linked to the legend of the Last Emperor were potential relics.

in Rouen, see Egil Kraggerud, "Hellig-Olavs dåp i Theodoricus Monachus og i hans kilder," *Collegium Mediaevale. Interdisciplinary Journal of Medieval Research* 25 (2012). See also Elisabeth Van Houts, "Countess Gunnor of Normandy, c.950–1031," *Collegium Mediaevale. Interdisciplinary Journal of Medieval Research* 12 (1999) on the dynastic and cultural relations between Scandinavia and Normandy at this time.

⁵⁰ Jean Dunbabin, "What's in a Name? Philip, King of France," *Speculum* 68 (1993).

⁵¹ Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory*, 25–51; Gwenaëlle Augry, "Reliques et pouvoir ducal en Aquitaine (fin Xe s.–1030)," in *Reliques et sainteté dans l'espace médiéval*, ed. Jean-Luc Deuffic, *Resources en Médiévisique* (Saint-Denis: Pecia, 2006).

A Planned Pilgrimage to Jerusalem?

According to Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* (*Óláfs saga helga*, ch. 18), Olav Haraldsson travelled south from England and Normandy, heading for Jerusalem. Before reaching Gibraltar, he had a vision of a handsome, yet terrifying, man who told him to abandon his plans of going to distant lands. Instead he should return to his ancestral lands and become king over Norway for ever. Clearly, this story has all the marks of being a legend interpreted by Snorri's contemporaries in light of Olav being the patron saint of Norway.

Still, a journey of Olav into the Mediterranean and to the Holy Land in c.1013, while he was in the service of Duke Richard II, does not seem all that improbable. In his poem *Vikingavísur*, Sigvat enumerated the battles of Olav during his travels abroad. The poem mentions Olav's fight against the Bretons at Dol, close to Mont-Saint-Michel, as well as battles in Aquitaine, whose duke was a rival to the Normans. Furthermore, Olav is conventionally associated with an attack on Tui, close to Santiago de Compostela. Still, this is doubtful, as the chronology does not seem to fit the years Olav travelled along the Iberian Peninsula. The place names in the Norse skaldic verses and sagas do not really allow us to place him at specific places and events in Iberia.⁵² Local chronicles mention the raids of the *Normanni* in Iberia on several occasions in this period, but this is a term that could refer to both Normans and Scandinavians at the time.

It is thus possible that Olav's journey to Iberia was related to other Normans who travelled into the Mediterranean, perhaps as part of his service of Duke Richard II of Normandy. Other sources indicate that Normans were starting to gain a significant military and political role both in Southern Italy and further east. According to Amatus of Montecassino, Norman pilgrims travelling through the Mediterranean had assisted Salerno in their fight against the Saracens around the year 1000.⁵³

An important pilgrimage location for the Normans was Monte Gargano in Apulia, the most prominent sites for the cult of St Michael. The popularity of the archangel increased in the late tenth century, something that should be seen in relation to both the eschatology of the time and to the role of Charlemagne. The Archangel Michael was supposed, for instance in Adso's work, to have a vital role during the Last Days,

⁵² For a recent discussion of the source problems connected to the travels of Olav beyond the Pyrenees, but perhaps with a too stern rejection of his presence in Iberia, see Pires, "Nem Tui, nem Gibraltar: Óláfr Haraldsson e a Península Ibérica."

⁵³ Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, trans. Prescott N. Dunbar and Graham A. Loud, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004. See discussion in John France, "The Occasion of the Coming of the Normans to Southern Italy," *Journal of Medieval History* 17 (1991); Graham A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Northern Conquest* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 60–6.

announcing Christ's arrival and then slay the dragon, or Antichrist. According to Benedict of Monte Soracte, Charlemagne himself had stopped at Monte Gargano on his way Jerusalem, in order to receive the peace of St Michael. Otto III seems to imitate the route of the great emperor when he undertook a penitential pilgrimage to Monte Gargano during Lent 999, where he expressed his desire to travel to Jerusalem and lay down his imperial crown.⁵⁴

Among the prominent pilgrims visiting Monte Gargano in the late tenth century, Odo of Cluny, John of Gorze, and William of Volpiano. William reformed the Mont-Saint-Michel, along with other Norman Abbeys, and here the imagery of St Michael was transformed from that of a prince in a Byzantine manner to a warrior piercing a dragon with a spear or lance. In 1016, a group of Norman pilgrims visited Monte Gargano and met the Lombard Melus of Bari, who recruited them as warriors against the Byzantines in Apulia. Thus, Olav might also have been part of such a group of Normans who sought to combine pilgrimage with military engagement.

The cult and legend of the Archangel Michael in Norway is only recorded after Olav's death.⁵⁵ Still, it must have been known to him and his fellows both from his stay in Normandy and England. In a poem about the battle of his son Magnus the good against the Wends in 1043, the skald Oddr kikinaskáld associated the fight with Michaelmas. This feast day thus seems established at the time, and the link to just war is similar to how Æthelred II and Wulfstan of York initiated fasting, mass and prayers before Michaelmas in 1009, as a pious program against the Vikings.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Daniel F. Callahan, "The Cult of St Michael the Archangel and the 'Terrors of the Year 1000'," in *Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1000*, ed. Richard Landes, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 185. See also Althoff, *Otto III*, 93; Roach, "Emperor Otto III and the End of Time," 86–87. The centrality of Saint Michael in the Last Days is emphasized in the Bamberg Apocalypse, prepared c.1000, but later offered by Henry II to his new ecclesiastical centre at Bamberg.

⁵⁵ Frederik Paasche, "St. Michael og hans engle," *Edda* 1 (1914); Lilli Gjerløw, "Le Culte de Saint Michel en Norvège," in *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint Michel*, vol. 3: *Cult de Saint Michel et pèlerinages au mont*, ed. Marcel Baudot (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1971). St Michael is first mentioned by name in Old Norse sources in skaldic stanza by Arnórr jarlaskáld from the mid-eleventh century, where he weighs souls. Arnórr also seems to have known and used *Völuspá*. On the last judgement and Saint Michael in eleventh-century Norway, see Olav Tveito, *Ad fine orbis terrae – like til jordens ender: En studie i primær trosformidling i nordisk kristningskontekst* (Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo, Det historisk-filosofiske fakultet, 2005), 193–97, and for references in skaldic poetry, see Diana Edwards, "Christian and Pagan References in Eleventh-Century Norse Poetry: The Case of Arnórr jarlaskáld," *Saga-Book* 21 (1982): 40–1.

⁵⁶ Edwards, "Christian and Pagan References" 41; Callahan, "The Cult of St Michael the Archangel," 189–92, who points out how Michael and Beowulf are compared as dragon-slayers in the sermon in *Blickling Homilies*, treating the dedication of the Saint Michael's church at Monge Gargano. Callahan also points to the link between the depictions of King Knud's donation and Saint Michael at the Last

What distinguished the skalds' mention of the battle against the Wends in 1043, from Sigvat's treatment of the battle of Nesjar in 1016, is foremost the depictions of the opponents – the Wends are depicted as evil pagans, while Sigvat shows sympathy to the bravery of Olav's opponent. This is somewhat appropriate, as Sigvat acknowledged that all significant rivals of Olav for the rule of Norway, including the earls of Lade, indeed were Christians. In this way, the Entry into Jerusalem at Palm Sunday a more fitting parallel for the entry into an old, established kingdom that Olav had a right to enter, and the people were expected to open the gates for him. The Wends, on the other hand, were perceived as pirates, attackers and foes to the Christian society in a more fundamental way, and the legend of Saint Michael was thus more appropriate.

If we follow this argument even further – that Olav intended to follow the same route to Monte Gargano and southern Italy as contemporary Normans did, it is of some interest that the pilgrims defending Salerno in 999, had, according to Amatus, already been on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and were about to return home. There are also a number of other sources indicating that Jerusalem attracted an increasing number of pilgrims in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. According to Raoul Glaber, writing in the 1040s, the pilgrims to the Holy Land involved greater numbers and various kinds of people:

. . . an innumerable multitude of people from the whole world, greater than any man before could have hoped to see, began to travel to the Sepulchre of the Saviour at Jerusalem. First to go were the petty people, then those of middling estate, and next the powerful, kings, counts, marquesses, and bishops: finally, and this was something which had never happened before, numerous women, noble and poor, undertook the journey. Many wished to die there before they returned to their own lands.⁵⁷

Amongst the prominent men who went to Jerusalem shortly after the millennium, we find Count Guy of Limoges along with his brother bishop Hilduin. They brought a large party of pilgrims with them, although they were outnumbered by the massive flock of pilgrims who accompanied Count William of Angoulême in 1026. Fulk Nerra of Anjou (987–1040) travelled to Jerusalem at least three times, probably four.⁵⁸ Duke Robert of Normandy (1027–1035), accompanied by Count

Judgement in the *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster of Winchester – a book that was certainly to be expected to have a say when the archangel weighted souls at the Last Days.

57 Rodulfus Glaber then includes the accounts of a certain Lethbaud of Autun and of Bishop Ulric of Orléans (1021–1035) who both undertook journeys to Jerusalem, Rodulfus Glaber, *The Five Books of Histories*, trans. John France, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

58 According to Bernard Bachrach, Fulk Nerra undertook his first pilgrimage in 1003–1004, his second in 1009, his third in 1035, and his fourth in 1040, Bernard S. Bachrach, "The Pilgrimages of Fulk Nerra, Count of the Angevins, 987–1040," in *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, Medieval Institute Publications, 1987).

Drog of Vexin, left for Jerusalem in 1034 and died at Nicaea on his return in 1035. Robert's father, Duke Richard II, whom Olav served for several years, sponsored the cost of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Abbot Richard of Saint Vannes in 1026–1027, who is said to have been accompanied by 700 pilgrims.⁵⁹ In 1002, Emperor Henry II gave money to a hermit of Bamberg to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with instructions to wash a precious chalice in the river Jordan.⁶⁰ Presumably, the chalice was to be brought back to the Emperor and to be used in the recreation of Jerusalem at the religious centres of Hildesheim, Bamberg or elsewhere. A similar idea is found in Sigvat's memorial poem for King Olav, composed shortly after the king had been martyred in 1030. Here the holy river Jordan is linked to an angelic anointing of the king himself:

The prince of the Jordan [Christ] once sent four angels from the sky; a waterfall washed the holy hair of his *hersir*.⁶¹

The term *hersir* usually means “lord” or “(district) chieftain,” and this must be interpreted as Olav who is ruling Norway on behalf of Christ. The verse alludes to the baptism of Olav, but may also point at how some of his hair was put on fire after his death to prove his sanctity. Of importance here is the statement that Olav only submitted his rule over Norway to the overlord of the land of Jordan, or Jerusalem.

At the influential Fleury Abbey, which had close contact with the leading houses in England, Frederick, a former monk at Fleury, but later a schoolmaster of Marmoutier, led a revolt against the abbot but later undertook a penitential pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁶² In 995, Bernard of Beaulieu, son of a lord of Aquitaine and given to Fleury as oblate, decided to leave his monastery and live in Jerusalem as hermit. He was dissuaded by Abbo of Fleury, who advised him to make a shorter

⁵⁹ Jonathan Sumption, *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God* (Mahwah NJ: Hidden Spring, 2003 [1975]), 127–28, 66; Morris 2005, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West*: 138. For a more comprehensive list and discussion, see Françoise Micheau, “Les itinéraires maritimes et continentaux des pèlerinages vers Jérusalem,” in *Occident et Orient au Xe siècle: Actes du IXe congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l’enseignement supérieur public* (Dijon, 2–4 juin 1978) (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1978).

⁶⁰ Among other pilgrims to Jerusalem from the Holy Roman Empire north of the Alps were Poppo of Stavelot (1020–1048) in the year 1000, Archbishop Poppo of Trier (1016–1047) who accompanied the Symeon of Syracuse in 1028, and Abbot Eberwin from Trier who had met Symeon on a pilgrimage a few years earlier.

⁶¹ “Endr réð engla senda/ Jórðánar gramr fjóra/ fors þó hans á hersi/ heiglagt skopt – ór lópti.” Sigvatr Þórðarson (Sigvat Thordsson), *Erfríðrápa Óláfs Helga* 28, ed. Judith Jesch, in Whaley 2012, *Poetry from the Kings’ Sagas* 1.

⁶² Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 223.

pilgrimage to Monte Gargano instead.⁶³ However, the connections between abbeys in southern Italy and Jerusalem were close at the time, perhaps most so at the abbey of Monte Cassino.⁶⁴ A pilgrimage to Monte Gargano was shorter than to Jerusalem, but still linked with the Holy Land through eschatological expectations in the areas where Olav spent much time before he returned to Norway.

One of the issues raising awareness of Jerusalem at the time Olav was in Normandy, was the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre ordered by Caliph al-Hakim in September 1009. John France has shown that there are few references to the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in eleventh-century Europe, and it had been largely forgotten by the time of the First Crusade.⁶⁵ However, the chronicles of Northern and Western France show that the destruction was well known among some of the learned monks and scholars in these regions. The chronicler Adémar of Chabannes (d. 1034) and his younger contemporary Raoul Glaber (d. 1047) seem to have had received quite detailed information on the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre, and both interpreted the event as an apocalyptic sign. Adémar and Raoul claimed that the destruction was partly motivated by al-Hakim's wish to end the flow of pilgrims from Latin Europe (in this context, Raoul Glaber accused the Jews to encourage the Caliph to destroy the Holy Sepulchre), and partly to how al-Hakim, 'the ruler of Babylonia', had the traits of the Antichrist.⁶⁶ Adémar himself was so inspired by this that he went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and the knowledge of the destruction probably caused Duke Richard II of Normandy to send money to the Holy Land and to the monastery at Mount Sinai, including one hundred pounds of gold for the restoration of the Holy Sepulchre (Rodulfus Glaber, I.21).

According to Raoul Glaber, Duke Richard II had an intimate relation to Mount Sinai, unique among Western rulers. In his chronicle, Raoul claimed that "each year monks came to Rouen even from the famous Mount Sinai in the east and took back with them many presents of gold and silver for their communities." (I.21). It is difficult to maintain when this tradition started, but another witness to this is

63 On his pilgrimage, Bernard met some relatives who reproached him for leaving behind disorder during his travels, indicating that also these relatives were on pilgrimage, see Marco Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1987), 60–1. The *Chronicle of Saint-Maixent* mentions several pilgrimages to Jerusalem made by the abbots of Maillezais, in the Vendée region in Aquitaine, see *La Chronique de Saint-Maixent, 751–1140*, ed. and trans. Jean Verdon, Paris: Les belles lettres, 1979.

64 John France, "The Destruction of Jerusalem and the First Crusade," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47 (1996): 16–7.

65 France, "The Destruction of Jerusalem and the First Crusade," 14.

66 Daniel F. Callahan, "Al-Hakim, Charlemagne, and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem in the Writings of Ademar of Chabannes," in *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith, and Crusade*, ed. Matthew Gabriele and Jace Stuckey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Eberwin of Tholey's life of St Symeon. Symeon was born in Syracuse during Muslim rule, but as a young boy he was sent to Constantinople where he received education. Partly inspired by Westerners travelling through the Byzantine Empire on their way to the Holy Land, he set out on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem himself. He stayed there for seven years, making his living as a guide for pilgrims to the holy sites. When drawn to a more pious life, he first stayed some time as a recluse in a tower on the bank of the river Jordan, and then moved to the monastery of Virgin Mary in Bethlehem and later to St Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai. In 1026, the abbot of this monastery sent him and another monk to Normandy. After encountering many trials, Symeon met Eberwin of Tholey in Antioch. Eberwin was a pilgrim in the company of Abbot Richard of Saint Vannes, and Symeon accompanied him back to Trier. Later, probably in 1026, Symeon went on to Rouen only to learn that Duke Richard II had recently died. He then moved to Trier, where he died in 1035 as a recluse.⁶⁷

Before leaving Rouen, however, Symeon had probably met Adémar of Chabannes. He could thus have been Adémar's informant concerning the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre, as well as of some other episodes of Byzantine matters he included in his chronicle.⁶⁸ One of these episodes relates to the battles between Normans and 'Russian' troops fighting for the Greeks in southern Italy in 1017–1018. These Russians would most likely be Varangian troops of Emperor Basil II that also included Scandinavians.⁶⁹

From the evidence of contemporary sources, it appears likely that Olav Haraldsson, during his stay in Normandy, would have had intentions to visit Monte Gargano, and even Jerusalem, partly as a pilgrim and partly as part of Norman forces in Southern Italy. He must also have known about the Varangian guard in imperial service before he left Norway as a young man – Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea had for centuries been an important region in the communication and trade between Byzantium and Russian realms on the one hand and Western Europe on the other.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ See Elisabeth Van Houts, "Normandy and Byzantium in the Eleventh Century," *Byzantion* 55 (1985) on Symeon of Trier in the context of Norman-Byzantine relations. Eberwin's life of Symeon was written the same year he died, and soon spread to Normandy – one copy in Rouen was used by Hugh of Flavigny in the early twelfth century.

⁶⁸ Robert Lee Wolff, "How the News was brought from Byzantium to Angoulême; or, The Pursuit of a Hare in an Ox Cart," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1979).

⁶⁹ Sigfús Blöndal, *The Varangians of Byzantium: An Aspect of Byzantine Military History*, ed. Benedikt S. Benediktz, trans. Benedikt S. Benediktz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 40–41 on the Varangians in southern Italy fighting Melus of Bari and the Normans. Olav's half-brother Harald Hardruler (d. 1066) stayed in Constantinople and led the Varangian troops from 1032 to 1042, and certainly went to Jerusalem – possibly in connection to the rebuilding of the Holy Sepulchre.

⁷⁰ See for example Lucien Musset, "La Scandinavie, intermédiaire entre l'Occident et l'Orient au Xe siècle," in *Occident et Orient au Xe siècle: Actes du IXe congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes*

Had he continued on this, admittedly hypothetical journey, into the Mediterranean along with Normans, Olav may in fact have had the opportunity to encounter Scandinavians fighting in Byzantine Italy for the Greek emperor.

Olav kept his contact with Duke Richard II also after his return to Norway. In c.1024, Sigvat appeared in Rouen, mentioned in one of his own stanzas.⁷¹ The visit was said by Snorri Sturluson to be a trading voyage, but may well also have had a diplomatic mission.⁷² In any case, this was the time when Duke Richard II received regular visits from Mount Sinai, and Sigvat would have had the opportunity to meet these far-travelling monks and Normans arriving from, or on their way to, the Holy Land.

Conclusion

In the early eleventh century, the Norwegian kingdom had no Aachen or Hildesheim as a royal centre where Jerusalem was reconstructed in a manifest way. However, during his travels as a young warrior, Olav Haraldsson encountered ideas, narratives, symbols, and practices that connected rulership to Jerusalem. The influence of these discourses is observable in Sigvat Thordson's commemoration of the Battle of Nesjar on Palm Sunday 1016. Using the conventions of skaldic metre and metaphors in both a traditional and innovative way, Sigvat presented the battle as a royal *adventus* with allusions to Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Creating a link between the victory of Olav Haraldsson at Nesjar and the foundation of a Christian law, Sigvat assisted the new king to connect royal power to the most holy city, Jerusalem. Sigvat's poetry and images are innovative, but not isolated. There are indications that Olav Haraldsson associated his rule to the legend of the Last Emperor and Charlemagne, a story intimately connected to both the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem.

This is not to say that Olav Haraldsson's rulership of Norway did not depend on traditional political culture, such as alliances, gift-giving and martial skills. Still, as a king with ambitions outside the Norwegian realm, his kingship needed

de l'enseignement supérieur public (Dijon, 2–4 juin, 1978) (Paris: Les belles lettres, 1978) for an overview. More recent research on Viking Age Scandinavia has substantiated and extended this claim.

⁷¹ Sigvatr Þórðarson (Sigvat Thordsson), *Vestrfararvísur* 1, ed. Judith Jesch, in Whaley 2012, *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas* 1: 615.

⁷² Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, 3 vols, trans. Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, London: Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, 2016, vol. 2, *Óláfs saga helga*, ch. 146. See also Jesch 2004, "Viking on the European Continent," 264–6 for a discussion of the context of this stanza. Later in the poem, Sigvat came to England and the court of Knud the Great and was asked to come in his service. He has been seen as defecting from Olav, but his service and praise for Knud necessarily mean that Sigvat shifted side permanently.

other forms of legitimation. This must have been especially important in his Olav's relations to foreign rulers and rivals. During his travels in Europe, the young Olav had met ambitious kings and nobles who rivalled over the hegemony of Christian rulership. The imperial authority had largely been transferred from the Carolingian Franks to the Ottonians during the tenth century, and especially Otto III and his advisor Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim placed the idea of the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem at the heart of their ideology. Also, the Normans were identifying themselves as the most able defenders of Christianity and as supporters of the Holy Land. According to Dudo of Saint-Quentin, writing his chronicle on the Normans during the time Olav served the Norman duke, the Normans descended both from the Franks and the Norsemen. According to this foundation story, their ancestry brought the best from both peoples – as heirs of the Vikings they were fierce warriors, while also inheriting the zeal to protect Christianity from the Franks.⁷³ Connecting themselves to the defence of Christianity and the Holy Land was thus central also for Norman rulers, something that can be seen in the support to pilgrims going to Jerusalem, to Mount Sion, and the rebuilding of the Holy Sepulchre.

For the new reign established by King Olav, interpreting his victory 25 March 1016 in light of the narrative of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the analogy with Christ alluded to a religious image of authority among the kingdoms in Christian Europe. Situating himself within such a discourse may have been crucial when he sought support from rulers abroad. His most prominent rival, King Knud the Great, had established his rule in England at the same time as Olav ascended to power in Norway. Knud's large donations to churches after 1016 are well documented, as well as his attempts to build some similar structures and institutions in Denmark in the 1020s. Knud seems to have performed such a strategy with considerable success also on a European scene. Not only did he balance his relations to the powers in Germany, France, Spain, and Poland, he also went on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1027 and presumably had discussions on policies in northern Europe with Pope John XIX.⁷⁴

When Olav Haraldsson led an attack on Denmark, his royal rhetoric may have helped him receiving support from Danish noblemen as well as his Swedish brother-in-law, King Anund Jacob. After losing the Battle of Helgå in 1026, however, he lost supporters to Knud the Great, perhaps even (at least for a while) his chief advisor, envoy and skald Sigvat. However, Sigvat is the one who travels to Normandy and even to Rome, possibly as an envoy of King Olav who found himself in a desperate situation in the late 1020s. Whatever his ambitions for rulership beyond the kingdom

⁷³ Latowsky 2013, *Emperor of the World*: 72; Katherine Cross, *Heirs of the Vikings: History and Identity in Normandy and England, c.950–c.1015* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2018), 65–81.

⁷⁴ Timothy Bolton, *Cnut the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 158–71.

of Norway actually may have been, King Olav's construction of authority in relation to Jerusalem did not in itself secure his position and support during his lifetime. Still, the case of the impact of Jerusalem during his reign point at a more complex use of religious symbols, narratives, and rituals in the period of early Christian kingship in Norway than often assumed.