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Advocating change: monasteries, territories and justice between East and West Francia, 11th-12th centuries

Reading what has been produced so far as part of the *Territorium* project, it quickly becomes apparent that the historians involved share three basic convictions.[1] The first, and most obvious, is that what is in English called the 'territorial principality' (in French *principauté territoriale*, in German *Landesherrschaft*, though it must be acknowledged that these terms have quite distinctive connotations), that is a specific form of relation between power and space, is an important subject that rewards study. The second is that the topic can best be studied comparatively, with reference to how things happened elsewhere, since comparison helps identify what is common and what particular, and can help focus on questions of cause and effect.[2] The third is that, although that the utility of a comparative approach to the medieval European principality has been recognised before and steps towards the goal taken (and there have been several recent publications on the topic), there remains a need for a project that, like *Territorium*, puts comparison at the heart of the investigation.[3]

This last point deserves some elaboration. In general, the history of principalities has been undertaken within national historiographical frameworks. That may seem at first glance rather paradoxical – after all, the whole point about principalities is that they are not nations

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[1] I should like to thank the organisers for their kind invitation to participate at the conference in Tübingen in November 2011. What follows is a lightly revised version of the paper delivered there.

[2] Cf. Chris Wickham, Problems in doing comparative history, in: Challenging the boundaries of medieval History: the legacy of Timothy Reuter, ed. Patricia Skinner, Turnhout 2009, p. 5-28.

[3] For example, Bernard Demotz (ed.), Les principautés dans l'Occident médiéval: à l'origine des régions, Turnhout 2008.

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– but like most paradoxes, it resolves itself on closer inspection. It is in part simply because the in-depth, detailed study that is required for this kind of history encourages a historiographical insularity, where the context sought is that which lies closest to hand: if, that is, context is sought at all, since there is a venerable strand of anti-comparative thought (particularly strong in German scholarship) that emphasises the intrinsic particularity of each territorial formation, each one the product of irreducibly peculiar circumstances. More profoundly, however, this insularity is because principalities play important roles in the master-narratives of national histories. Their absence in English historiography, broadly speaking, illustrates the consistent strength of English kingship except during rare moments of crisis, but also relates to the notorious fixation of English medieval history on those kings.[4] Their enduring importance in German history has long been considered to lie at the roots of the delayed emergence of a German nation in the modern age, with the various ramifications that entailed. In the traditions of French historiography, the eventual incorporation of the principalities into a French kingdom represents the triumph of Capetian and Valois kingship, which in spite of interruptions (The Hundred Years War, for instance), was moving steadily towards the France of the Sun-King.

It is easy to dismiss these traditions as the outdated legacies of teleological thinking: perhaps in fact too easy, since it seems to me that these stereotypes reflect issues that historians do have a duty to account for. Nevertheless, one unhealthy consequence has been to ensure that principalities are primarily discussed and conceived in national terms. Even developed and sustained attempts to compare principalities across Europe, such as that of Heinrich Mitteis, take as their subject 'types' of principality (in Mitteis's case, a French type and a

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[4] The reign of King Stephen (1135-1154) represents an exception in English historiography, in that much work has been done on regional networks beyond the court. On Stephen in general, see now Edmund King, King Stephen, Yale 2010; for an example of a regional study, see David Crouch, The Beaumont Twins: the roots and branches of power in the twelfth century, Cambridge 1986.

German type), a tactic that has been repeated in more recent work too.[5] I would suggest that this tendency has been unwittingly further intensified by the remarkable blossoming of work on western France, rooted in the region's rich archival sources, but fertilised by fruitful collaboration between French and English historians.[6] The realisation that the Anglo-Norman and later Plantagenet worlds are best understood through joint research programmes, following the grain of the evidence, as it were, has certainly enriched our understanding. Inadvertently, however, the mass and indeed sheer quality of this work skews the broader picture: Anjou, Normandy or Blois becomes the 'French' principality of choice, from which everywhere else deviates. These regions are better studied, their sources better edited than areas further to the east, creating thereby a western bias that artificially sharpens the contrast with German duchies and counties when comparison is undertaken.

In the face of this difficulty, one way to foster comparative enquiry is to concentrate on one particular element or aspect of power within the emergent principalities, investigating its prominence or function across a wide space. I cannot claim to be breaking new methodological ground here: Walther Kienast, for example, used the titles attributed to or claimed by dukes in France and Germany decades ago to make far-reaching claims about the role of ethnicity in the formation of duchies across the post-Frankish world.[7] In this paper, however, I want to think about ecclesiastical advocacy (*avouerie ecclésiastique*, or *Vogtei*): a topic which I consider has been regrettably under-researched both in general terms, and insofar as it relates to the emergence and differentiation of territorial principalities. To anticipate my argument, and to justify my title, I would like to argue not just that there was significant

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[5] Heinrich Mitteis, Der Staat des hohen Mittelalters: Grundlinien einer vergleichenden Verfassungsgeschichte des Lehnszeitalters, Weimar 1940.

[6] See for example the recent: Martin Aurell and Frédéric Boutoulle (ed.), Les seigneuries dans l'espace Plantagenêt (c. 1150-c. 1250): actes du colloque international organisé par l'Institut Ausonius et le Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, les 3, 4 et 5 mai 2007 à Bordeaux et Saint-Emilion, Pessac 2009.

[7] Walther Kienast, Der Herzogstitel in Frankreich und Deutschland, 9. bis 12. Jahrhundert. Mit Listen der ältesten deutschen Herzogsurkunden, München 1968.

change in how power was articulated territorially in this period, roughly from the tenth to the twelfth century, but that advocates (or their absence) had a great deal to do with how that happened.

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By ecclesiastical advocacy, I am referring to a particular, and particularly close relationship between a secular lord and one or several monasteries, in the post-Carolingian period, with an emphasis on the exercise of judicial authority exercised over the monastery's own lands, and generally expressed in Latin by the words *advocatus* or *advocatio* – this paper excludes consideration of Carolingian 'ecclesiastical advocacy', which I regard as for all intents and purposes a different institution altogether.[8] As far as I know, there has been relatively little sustained work on ecclesiastical advocacy itself, on a European-wide scale, in recent years. This is perhaps surprising, and certainly regrettable, because there is much to recommend it as a way of thinking comparatively about principalities.

A clear pattern is apparent when ecclesiastical advocacy is considered on a broad European canvas. It is widely accepted, and I think justifiably so, that it had an importance within the Empire not replicated elsewhere. Not every significant monastery was involved in ecclesiastical advocacy, so there are of course plenty of exceptions. Yet historians of German principalities (*Landesherrschaften* – I am not counting the so-called 'stem-duchies', which seem to have been rather looser bundles of authority) usually stress the importance of advocacy as a crucial ingredient in the accumulation of powers in a given area, that is to say in the process of territorialisation.[9] Emphasised by Theodor Mayer, more recently Michel

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[8] I have explored the Carolingian side of this question in The significance of the Carolingian advocate, in: Early Medieval Europe 17 (2009), p. 186-206.

[9] Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Dux' und 'ducatus': begriffs- und verfassungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des sogenannten 'jüngeren' Stammesherzogtums an der Wende vom neunten zum zehnten Jahrhundert, Bochum 1977.

Parisse has similarly insisted on the point, and it is prominent in countless other analyses of the Holy Roman Empire and its constituent parts.[10] By contrast, the absence of advocacy in much of France was one of the main findings of Félix Senn's early and still influential study of advocacy in France, and the observation was confirmed by Jean Yver in a famous study of advocacy in Normandy.[11] The contrast here between the Empire and France in particular has been recently reiterated by Martin Clauss and Timothy Reuter.[12] It is doubtless for this reason that virtually all the recent work on advocacy has been conducted in German, with the important exception of a volume on Lotharingia from the 1980s.[13]

However, what makes advocacy especially interesting is that, while a pattern is certainly discernable, with western France clearly to be distinguished from the Holy Roman Empire, the dividing line did not follow political boundaries. In his study of advocacy in France, Senn was able to draw an imaginary line stretching from Lyons to Normandy via the Loire valley. South and west of this line, there was no advocacy; but north and east of it, there was. My preliminary research suggests that there is indeed something in Senn's line: Compiègne, St-Germain-des-Prés, Marchiennes, St-Amand and Corbie are just some of the monasteries where advocacy was important (that is, where aristocrats claimed to exercise judicial rights on behalf of the monastery over its own lands, and developed their authority in large part on those judicial rights) but that lie outside the Empire. In other words, advocacy was not after

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[10] Theodor Mayer, Fürsten und Staat. Studien zur Verfassungsgeschichte des deutschen Mittelalters, Weimar 1950, p. 2-24, Michel Parisse, Allemagne et Empire au Moyen Age, Paris 2002, p. 90-1. Cf. also Odilo Engels, Grundlinien der rheinischen Verfassungsgeschichte im 12. Jahrhundert, in: Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter 39 (1975), p. 1-27.

[11] Félix Senn, L'institution d'avoueries ecclésiastiques en France, Paris 1903, Jean Yver, Autour de l'absence d'avouerie en Normandie, in: Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie 57 (1965), p. 196–7.

[12] Martin Clauss, Die Untervogtei: Studien zur Stellvertretung in der Kirchenvogtei im Rahmen der deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts, Siegburg 2002, Timothy Reuter, Forms of lordship in German Historiography, in: Pour une anthropologie du prélèvement seigneurial dans les campagnes médiévales (XIe-XIVe siècles). Réalités et représentations paysannes, Paris 2004, p. 51-61.

[13] L'avouerie en Lotharingie. Actes des 2e Journées Lotharingiennes, 22-23 octobre 1982, (Publications de la Section historique de l'Institut Grand-Ducal de Luxembourg 98), Luxembourg 1984.

all <u>entirely</u> restricted to the Holy Roman Empire, for it was important too in northern France, including Flanders, and also in much of the Île-de-France.[14]

This is to my mind significant, because it represents a problem that has not been properly addressed. We are faced with an axis of advocacy – a kind of gradient, in which advocacy becomes progressively more important in the development of principalities towards the east, and progressively less towards the west: not uniformly, but nevertheless perceptibly so. This suggests on the one hand that there is something determining this pattern, that it is not random; but on the other, that advocacy cannot be treated as a product of strong 'imperial' control. Because this pattern is not entirely shaped by political borders, we must be dealing with something lying deeper, something creating a continuum whose logic requires investigation.

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This discussion has thus far been predominantly abstract in nature, so let us turn to some more concrete examples to illustrate the point. I shall begin with the principality of Ponthieu, the region around Abbeville in the northwest tip of modern France.

Though the counts of Ponthieu are well known to later medieval historians, their early history would be irretrievably obscure, were it not for a chronicle written in the early twelfth century by Hariulf, at that time a monk of St-Riquier, a venerable and, thanks to the patronage of Angilbert, confidant of Charlemagne, very wealthy institution.[15] We would

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[14] On Flanders, see Harald Sellner, Les établissements religieux en Flandre (XIᵉ, XIIᵉ siècles) et la territorialisation, available at http://tobias-lib.uni-tuebingen.de/portal/territorium/.

[15] On Carolingian St-Riquier, see Susan Rabe, Faith, art, and politics at Saint-Riquier: the symbolic vision of Angilbert, Philadelphia 1995. More generally, Aline Magnien (ed.), Saint-Riquier: une grande abbaye bénédictine, Paris 2009. On later Ponthieu, see Sheila Storey-Challenger, Administration anglaise du Ponthieu après le traité de Brétigny: 1361-1369, tr. Raymond Petit, Abbeville 1975. I have not been able to read Raphaëlle Jaminon-Boinet's thesis, Le comté de Ponthieu, XIIIᵉ-début XVIᵉ, defended in 2008.

know that Ponthieu had been a Carolingian *pagus*, but we would have to guess about the origins of the family of counts who appear for the first time in the decades around the year 1000. Hariulf's chronicle of St-Riquier however fills out the details. Not only does he preserve a number of eleventh-century charters in his chronicle, but he brings to our attention the very close connection between St-Riquier's lands and the power of the counts of Ponthieu.[16] While the documents at his disposal presented Hariulf with something of a challenge – he was evidently puzzled by lay abbots, for instance, and was generally disposed to see royal organisation behind every development that concerned St-Riquier (kings take up a surprising amount of his narrative) – his stress on the link between St-Riquier and the emergent comital family, built out of a combination of archival records and institutional memory, is both clear and revealing.

Later historians of Ponthieu have taken their cue from Hariulf: Brunel, who edited the charters of the counts, concluded that "the counts of Ponthieu were descended from the advocates of St-Riquier", that this was a "dynasty of descendants from modest advocates".[17] That may be true, but the conclusion risks missing the point: we have no evidence to suggest that the Carolingian advocates of St-Riquier became the later counts, that this was biologically the same family; rather, what Hariulf really tells us is that the monastery's lands and networks provided the kernel around which the count's power was constructed and developed.[18] As the surviving charters tend to confirm, the growing principality of Ponthieu was built on a semi-formal relationship between count and monastery which enabled it to emerge as the driving force in the region around Abbeville and Montreuil in the early

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[16] On Hariulf's use of charters, see Laurent Morelle, Les chartes dans la gestion des conflits (France du nord, XIe-début XIIe siècle), in: Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes 155 (1997), p. 269-71.

[17] Recueil des actes des comtes de Pontieu, 1026-1279, ed. Clovis Brunel, Paris 1930.

[18] Hariulf, Chronique de l'abbaye de Saint-Riquier, Ve siècle-1104, ed. Ferdinand Lot, IV c.12, p. 206-7, and above all, IV c.21, p. 229-30 and IV c.22, p. 239-40.

eleventh century, in spite of efforts by the count of Flanders to intervene and disrupt.[19] From this point of view, Ponthieu seems rather 'German', and entirely comparable with a host of similar developments further to the east, such as the principality of Bar-le-Duc on the Meuse, essentially built upon the lands and networks of the monastery of St-Mihiel, as recorded in a charter written around the same time as Hariulf's chronicle.[20]

Ponthieu therefore serves as an unusually well-documented illustration that ecclesiastical advocacy could represent one of the main elements of a principality even far to the west. Its neighbour to the south, Normandy, however, is famous, as already mentioned, for not having known ecclesiastical advocacy. The word *advocatus* (and synonyms) is used very seldom in Norman charters; and judging from the secondary literature, none of the constituent parts of Normandy owed their origins to ecclesiastical advocacy. Most of them are ascribed to ducal power; even those that are not, such as the lordship of Bellême on the southern fringes of Normandy, were apparently based more around castles than monasteries, according to Gérard Louise's detailed study.[21]

However, there are some Norman texts that suggest some resonances with advocacy, which brings me onto my second example. This is a work written (again) in the 1130s, the so-called *De libertate Beccensis monasterii*. A short historical treatise compiled at the celebrated Norman monastery of Bec to the west of Rouen, it was intended to bolster efforts to fend off

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[19] For a charter from 1100 expressing the same point of view as Hariulf, though apparently transmitted independently, see Recueil, ed. Brunel, n. 13: *Ego Wido, permittente Deo comes Pontivorum, advocatus monasterii sancti Richarii gloriosi confessoris, cuius totum fuerat quod patres mei tenuerunt.*

[20] In general for St-Mihiel, see Anja Gillen, Saint-Mihiel im hohen und späten Mittelalter: Studien zu Abtei, Stadt und Landesherrschaft im Westen des Reiches, Trier 2003. For an illustration of the relation between count and monastery, see André Lesort, Chronique et chartes de l'abbaye de Saint-Mihiel, (Mettensia 6), Paris 1909, nos. 49 and 65.

[21] Gérard Louise, La seigneurie de Bellême, Xe-XIIe siècles. Dévolution des pouvoirs territoriaux et construction d'une seigneurie de frontière aux confins de la Normandie et du Maine à la charnière de l'an mil, Flers 1992. See also the study by Eric van Torhoudt, as part of this project, 'Historiographie de la territorialisation des pouvoirs en Normandie', http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:21-opus-59624.

episcopal intervention in the monastery's affairs, by stressing that the monastery had been from its inception removed from direct control by the archbishop of Rouen, and could appoint its own abbot without interference. In the single manuscript that survives, however, the treatise has had an interesting passage copied into it, by an approximately contemporary hand, concerning an attempt by the Norman baron Count Robert of Meulan, the son of Roger of Beaumont, to take over the monastery in the 1090s.[22] According to this interpolation, Robert, who had been awarded the castle of Brionne by the duke of Normandy (Robert Curthose), considered that this gave him a claim over the nearby monastery of Bec.[23]

There has been some discussion as to how exactly the phrase *voluit Beccense cenobium sub suo dominio possidere* should be interpreted, and whether Count Robert, with his 'French' connections, was attempting to establish ecclesiastical advocacy on Norman soil.[24] We might do better to treat the text as evidence for the 1130s rather than the 1090s, since there is good reason to think that Robert's son Waleran was attempting to draw the monastery into his patronage network at this time (and Waleran was one of the few Norman barons to use the word *advocatus*). The inserted text was surely written in response to that attempt. Whatever the case, the important point is that Robert's (and Waleran's) attempts failed. Robert was outsmarted by the abbot, and ended up being imprisoned by the duke, and his successors did little better. In other words, there were similar impulses towards control of

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[22] Julie Potter, Monastic Freedom vs. Episcopal and Aristocratic Power in the Twelfth Century: Context and Analysis of the De Libertate Beccensis, in: Negotiating secular and ecclesiastical power. Western Europe in the central Middle Ages, ed. Arnoud-Jan A. Bijsterveld, Henk Teunis and Andrew Wareham, Turnhout 1999, p. 73-85; cf. by the same author, The Benefactors of Bec and the Politics of Priories, in: Anglo-Norman Studies 21 (1998), p. 175-92.

[23] De Libertate Beccensis, ed. and tr. Giles Constable, Three treatises from Bec on the Nature of Monastic Life, Toronto 2008, p. 140-2.

[24] Sally Vaughn, Anselm of Bec and Robert of Meulan: the innocence of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent, Berkely 1987, p. 108.

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monasteries of the kind that can be documented elsewhere too in Normandy: it was simply that in Normandy, they came to less.

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Examples of this kind could be multiplied indefinitely, listing monasteries that were and were not caught up in relations of ecclesiastical advocacy, but I think the point should already be apparent: in some parts of western Europe, political power could be built upon monastic landholdings in a kind of symbiotic (and not necessarily antagonistic) relationship; in other parts, it could not. The pattern is clear, and is not merely an illusion produced by historiographical divergence. It is however one thing to identify a pattern, and another to explain it.

Senn argued that the absence of advocacy in certain areas was due to strong central authority and the absence in these areas of *la féodalité* (whatever that might mean!). Because public order was maintained, monasteries had no need of a protector, and so were less amenable to would-be advocates, who had really only protection to offer. This might perhaps work when one looks only at France (it certainly fits in neatly to Senn's wider argument that the rising power of kings made advocacy unnecessary everywhere in the kingdom), but is difficult to square with a broader perspective: it seems frankly unlikely that Norman monasteries were any less in need of protection than those of, say, Swabia or Lotharingia. Mayer conversely argued that the prominence in advocacy in the Empire was due to the greater vitality of autonomous aristocratic power (the argument here was partly about *Eigenkirchen*), itself the consequence of the lack of Roman ideas in the Germanic world: yet this explanation too does not quite work when we consider the axis of advocacy represented by Senn's line, which does not straightforwardly reflect a Roman legacy.

Jean Yver, having confirmed the validity of Senn's line, sidestepped the question of its rationale: "On voudra bien nous excuser de ne pouvoir y répondre pour l'instant"; and that is my position too for the moment. However, I would suggest that a comparative approach helps us eliminate a couple of possibilities. We can rule out the notion of 'public power' as a factor for the presence or absence of advocacy: as I have said, this might work when comparing Normandy with the warring Île-de-France, but works less well when the Empire is brought properly into the analysis. We can also rule out the notion of 'monastic reform', at least if that is understood simply as opposed to unreformed monasticism. This is something that has been argued for the west, but again, the Empire shows that self-consciously reforming monastic institutions could co-exist perfectly well with developed ecclesiastical advocacy (Hirsau is a case in point).[25] The same goes for reference to Gregorian reform, that miraculous solvent of historical change. Convenient as it may be for historians to use it to remove all kinds of stubborn problems, the numerous charters issued by Pope Leo IX for monasteries that explicitly refer to ecclesiastical advocates in neutral terms make this connection difficult to sustain without significant qualification.[26] General church councils paid little attention to ecclesiastical advocacy until well into the twelfth century, and there was no canon law on the issue to speak of.

If these are elements which I think do not help us resolve the problem, I want to pick up on a point made by Timothy Reuter in a characteristically provocative article to touch on something that might be more fruitful. Reuter suggested that the rights exercised by ecclesiastical advocates in the east were in their substance very similar to those exercised by bannal lordship in the west, it was just that they were differently expressed, or to put it

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[25] On Hirsau, still useful is Hermann Jakobs, Die Hirsauer. Ihre Ausbreitung und Rechtsstellung im Zeitalter des Investiturstreites, Köln 1961.

[26] See Raissa Bloch, Die Klosterpolitik Papst Leos IX. in Deutschland, Burgund und Italien, in: Archiv für Urkundenforschung 11 (1930), p. 176-257.

another way, differently arranged.[27] Reuter draws our attention, in other words, towards the power implicit in extensive monastic networks that had been building up for centuries, since the seventh and eighth centuries, and how that latent power was judicially activated in the post-Carolingian period. In the east, this process tended to work within the grain of these networks, in the west in spite of them. This is an issue that we need to consider if we are to solve the enigma of the pattern of ecclesiastical advocacy, with the further implications for the development of territorial principalities.

Part of the answer may lie with the way that the emperors and the imperial court provided a more resilient framework within which the shift to bannal lordship could take place, in place of something more like a free-for-all further west – though this can only be part of the solution, given that these developments were not in fact restricted entirely to the regions under imperial control, as we have seen. Another part of the answer – and this is a suggestion made in a throwaway line by Martin Clauss in his book on subadvocacy – is perhaps to do with different attitudes to the role of clerics in directly exercising judicial authority, *Gerichtsbarkeit*, and whether monks were *gerichtsfähig*, 'competent at law': those in the west had little reluctance to get their hands dirty, whereas there was more compunction about this issue as one moved east. Where monks were comfortable with the idea of executing criminals or holding duels, either convening in person or using their own officials, advocacy was not going to seem such an obvious mechanism; where that was a less readily thinkable solution, advocates were more likely to be turned to. Both attitudes are rooted in ideas and issues much discussed in the Carolingian period, and cannot be neatly aligned with pro- or anti-reform monasticism.

Finally, I wonder whether we need too to think about the role of monastic memory. If we return briefly to the Bec text, the dilemma posed by Robert's attempted take-over bid is

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[27] Reuter, Forms of lordship.

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presented as having a foregone conclusion. The institution's history taught that the monastery had been built on the grounds of Brionne castle, rather than the other way round as was believed at St-Riquier (or for that matter St-Mihiel near Verdun, or St-Maximin in Trier), leaving little conceptual room for symbiosis.[28] Where institutional memories reached back to a more distant past (well before the year 1000, for instance), where monks foregrounded their deeper history and were aware of how judicial power had emerged from within them, as it were, then other co-ordinations were possible. This might tie rather nicely to Patrick Geary's idea of differing patterns of monastic memory, which after all also varied according to an east/west axis, as cartularies gradually spread to the west.[29]

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These suggestions of three possible paths to follow (wider political frameworks, different practices of justice, divergent patterns of commemoration) in tracing the distribution of ecclesiastical advocacy, as part of the differentiation in forms of political authority within medieval Europe between the tenth and twelfth centuries are of course merely that, suggestions. There are plenty of obstacles in the way of such study: in fact, investigating the causes of this differentiation between east and west, and not quite one between Empire and kingdom, seems a task so intimidating in its slipperiness that it is perhaps worth reminding ourselves of the significance of the phenomenon itself.

Methodologically, I think it might be valuable to bring some of the material about ecclesiastical advocacy, and its different forms, into dialogue with Thomas Bisson's recent

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[28] On monastic memory in Normandy, see Felice Lifshitz, The Norman conquest of pious Neustria: historiographic discourse and saintly relics, 684-1090, Toronto 1995. More generally, see also Ian Wood, Entrusting Western Europe to the Church, 400-750, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, forthcoming, which suggests (inter alia) that there was indeed widespread monastic disruption around 900 (my thanks to Ian Wood for letting me have sight of this article before it went to press).

[29] Patrick Geary, Entre gestion et gesta. Aux origines des cartulaires, in: Les Cartulaires, ed. Olivier Guyotjeannin, Laurent Morelle and Michel Parisse, Paris 1993, p. 13-26.

work on power in the European Middle Ages.[30] I have a great deal of respect for Bisson's work in general, but I think the question of advocacy points out one weakness: Bisson's research, like many others following in his footsteps, concentrates a little too much on essence, and not enough on co-ordination: too much on the nature of power in the post-Carolingian world (characterised as unaccountable, arbitrary, and so on), and not enough on how it was organised and structured. If Reuter is right to suggest that ecclesiastical advocacy and bannal lordship were effectively equivalent to one another, that is important, but these were nevertheless different configurations of power: the architecture of power, so to speak, was different, even if the building blocks were the same. This had important implications.

Let me give you an illustration of this through a third, and final, case study: the counts of Brienne, a small country close to Troyes in Champagne, and their relationship with the monastery of Montiérender. Like Ponthieu, Brienne was a Carolingian *pagus*, and like Ponthieu, a comital family emerges first in late tenth-century documentation. Again like the counts of Ponthieu, those of Brienne claimed a special relationship with an old and well-established monastery, in this case Montiérender. By the early eleventh century, the counts were claiming that Montiérender was under their protection (*tuitio*), and that their predecessors had restored it.[31] By the middle of the eleventh century, things looked like they would develop into a symbiotic relationship of the kind familiar from countless examples further to the east. The count of Brienne acted as the monastery's major patron, and seemed to be increasingly well integrated into monastic networks. However, the Brienne project suffered a serious set-back in the 1080s, when the counts of Troyes made a decisive intervention, asserting their right to dictate the terms of the relationship between Brienne

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[30] Thomas Bisson, The crisis of the twelfth century: power, lordship, and the origins of European government, Princeton 2009.

[31] The Cartulary of Montier-en-Der, 666-1129, ed. Constance Bouchard, Toronto 2004, no. 41. Cf. Michel Bur, L'abbaye de Montier-en-Der face aux princes et aux évêques (XIe-XIIe siècles), in: Les moines du Der, 673-1790. Actes du colloque international d'histoire Joinville – Montier-en-Der, 1er-3 octobre 1998, ed. Patrick Corbet, Langres 2000, p. 531-49.

and Montiérender – an intervention which was repeated, this time explicitly using armed force, in the early twelfth century.[32] The counts of Brienne continued to seek burial in the monastery, but their attempts to make it into a family monastery had failed.

If we were looking for the causes of that stalling, we could point to the hesitation of the Brienne counts (or perhaps more importantly, Montiérender monks) to conceive of their relationship in the fully institutionalised form of advocacy; the programmatic assertion of their influence was phrased as one of 'defence', a notion without the same consistency as the idea of advocacy that was by this period emerging albeit tentatively further east. Underlying that, we could point to alternative memories within the monastery, preserved in tenth-century documents in the monks' cartulary, which pointed more to the counts of Troyes than to the counts of Brienne.[33] Yet whatever the underlying causes which enabled the intervention, it is the consequences with which I am more concerned here. From the 1080s onwards, the counts of Brienne were gradually uprooted from Montiérender, and they developed no alternative centre of power. They initiated relations with a range of new monastic foundations – Molesme, Beaulieu, Bassefontaine – but these Cistercian establishments, whose networks of patronage were still developing and were in any case highly fragmented, did not offer the same basis for judicial lordship, territorial lordship, that established Benedictine institutions could. The result was that the county of Brienne lost coherence and solidity. By the middle of the twelfth century, they had been drawn into the Champenois net, and by 1172 were listed as one of the vassals of the Champenois count; by the end of the century, they were looking for opportunities abroad in the Holy Land.[34]

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[32] Cartulary of Montier-en-Der, ed. Bouchard, nos. 68, 82 and 134.

[33] The monks of Montiérender seem to have deliberately left another rival, Rosnay, out of their collective memory altogether, choosing not to copy several charters into the first cartulary. This might repay further study.

[34] For the family's later history, see Gregory Fedorenko, The crusading career of John of Brienne, c. 1210-1237, in: Nottingham Medieval Studies 52 (2008), p. 43-79.

Bereft of an anchor in Montiérender, Brienne could be and was gradually absorbed by a larger neighbour. The absence of that anchoring in ecclesiastical advocacy permitted a tendency towards growing integration, an ease of consolidation, in ways that were simply not possible wherever advocacy existed as a buttress to power. I have argued elsewhere that it is this that helps explain the very different dynamics between Champagne, where a single count was able gradually to integrate other leaders into his network, and Upper Lotharingia, where the duke co-existed with effectively independent powers, such as the counts of Bar and Luxembourg – each one supported by a particular monastic community, such as St-Mihiel or St-Maximin and Echternach, and where it was extremely difficult, if not entirely impossible, to dislodge opponents.[35] In short, the presence or absence of advocacy made a big difference for the long-term fate of territorial principalities.

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I have presented some thoughts on a question that I regard as an important but unsolved puzzle, so to talk of conclusions would be premature. Nevertheless, there is one point which arises out of these considerations which has I think a wider validity and import. The central notion of ecclesiastical advocacy is that of a relation between on the one hand a monastic institution, a kind of focal point for local society endowed with lands full of potential for the exercise of power, but also serving as a centre of memory and as a centre of social networks; and on the other, secular attempts to consolidate and articulate new forms of territorial power. I have argued that when these monastic networks could be captured, or more neutrally, 'harnessed' by secular leaders, when the potential for new forms of domination they held could be activated in a co-ordinated way, the result was a more tightly structured

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[35] I permit myself to refer here to my 'Reframing the Feudal Revolution. Political and social transformation between Marne and Moselle, 800-1100', Cambridge, forthcoming. I have also touched on these issues in: Count Hugh of Troyes and the territorial principality in early twelfth-century France, in: English Historical Review 128 (2012), p. 523-48.

form of principality, more resistant to techniques of integration, than one expressed through castles alone.

This brings to mind Florian Mazel's recent article in *Médiévales*, a reflection on Duby's Feudal Revolution in which Mazel took the relatively unusual step of engaging in a critique rather than simply a criticism of the thesis.[36] Mazel argued that Duby essentially gave no role to the church in his imagination of how society changed; but he also suggested that Duby's many subsequent critics have in some ways simply inverted Duby's reading, which is not in itself much of an improvement. Whereas Duby read ecclesiastical sources straight, and looked through them to the secular lords, historians in Duby's wake have tended to concentrate upon them as ecclesiastical representations. Mazel suggested that what we need to do is to focus much more on the shifting and changing relational issues involved, that we need to think about the interaction between secular and ecclesiastical, about competing definitions of what these notions meant, within the paradigm of changing practices and conceptions of power. Precisely because it focuses our attention on this interaction, ecclesiastical advocacy could be an important means of evaluating it.

In summary then, I suspect that the answer to the problem of ecclesiastical advocacy, and the wider set of issues to which it is a point of entry (amongst which the question of principalities is prominent), is not going to be 'monastic reform' nor 'monastic memory', nor is it going to be simply 'seigneurie banale' or 'public power'. Rather, the key to understanding the way in which power was configured differently across Europe, and the undeniable difference in how territorial principalities worked and interacted, is going to be in large part a matter of working out the inter-relation between these two poles of activity.

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[36] Florian Mazel, Pouvoir aristocratique et Église aux XIe et XIIe siècles. Retour sur la «révolution féodale» dans l'œuvre de Georges Duby, in: Médiévales 54 (2008), p. 137-52.