

1 Introduction

Interactions between the inhabitants of early medieval England and their contemporaries in continental Europe were numerous, varied and influential. In recent decades several studies have explored different aspects of these relations, often challenging older approaches that had tended to convey a general sense of marked separation between England and the rest of the European continent.¹ Migrations, missionary activities, correspondence, diplomacy, travel, wars, conquests and other forms of direct contact have been investigated in order to understand their scope and significance. *Europe and the Anglo-Saxons* aims to provide a guide to these contacts, while paying special attention to issues of identities, perceptions and representations.² In other words, this Element will not just consider what the Anglo-Saxons and the inhabitants of continental Europe did with each other, but also what they thought of each other. As will become apparent below, this topic has traditionally been framed as one concerning ‘England and the continent’, whereas the order of the two elements has been deliberately inverted here and their connotations modified through the employment of different terminology. Both ‘Europe’ and ‘Anglo-Saxons’ are topical and, in some senses, problematic terms; both are attested – through corresponding Latin and/or vernacular words – in written sources from our period; and both are characterized in Modern English discourse by a range of semantic connotations, which become even more varied when one takes into account the meanings and nuances of corresponding terms in other modern languages (e.g. French *anglo-saxon*, Italian *anglosassone*, German *angelsächsisch*). For these reasons it is necessary to clarify at the outset the rationale behind these terminological choices.

The word *Europa* mostly occurs in early medieval Latin texts to indicate one of the three parts of the known world: Asia, Europe and Africa. Occasionally the same term is used to refer more specifically to the Christian territories north of the Mediterranean, as is the case in two letters which the Irish missionary Columbanus sent in the late sixth and early seventh centuries to Popes Gregory the Great and Boniface IV respectively.³ Later on, in the Carolingian period, the term was employed in connection with Charlemagne’s rule and military conquests; for instance, in *c.* 775, the Englishman Cathwulf, in a letter addressed to the king, wrote that God had raised him ‘in honorem glorie regni Europe’ (‘to the honour of the glory of the kingdom of Europe’), whereas

¹ See, on this point, Nelson, ‘England and the Continent in the Ninth Century’, 10–15.

² This publication will focus on mainland Europe, while relations between England and the rest of the insular world will be considered in another Element of this Cambridge series.

³ Gundlach, ed., *Columbae sive Columbani epistolae*, nos. 1, 5, pp. 156, 170.

Alcuin in a letter of 790 commented on the expansion of the church in Europe through reference to the conversion of the Saxons and the Frisians, which was achieved ‘*instante rege Karolo*’, that is, through Charlemagne’s urging.⁴ In recent decades, however, a number of scholars have observed that occurrences of the term in surviving sources are not particularly numerous and that in medieval writings it is not possible to appreciate a ‘tangible reality’ for Europe as more than a straightforwardly geographical concept.⁵ In these scholars’ view, Europe does not seem to have played a particularly meaningful role in the construction of its inhabitants’ identities, and historians should be wary of the dangers of back-projecting modern preoccupations onto early medieval sources.⁶ Interestingly, it has also been noted that in the early medieval period Europe was mentioned most frequently in texts written by insular, especially Anglo-Saxon scholars, such as those mentioned above.⁷ This has been tentatively explained as a possibly “eccentric” perspective onto the realms of the Continent’ due to an eagerness to convey ‘a generalizing notion of Europe’.⁸ Authors from the edges of Europe, that is, Britain and Ireland, would seem to have aspired to being integrated into a larger whole, which could no longer be achieved through ancient models, and the Carolingian emperor’s successes would appear to have provided the best approximation available in the West.⁹ Whether the insular perspective was really that ‘eccentric’ remains to be ascertained, but these observations highlight the need for further investigation into the ways in which Europe was perceived and described by learned Anglo-Saxons. As will emerge below in Section 3, the available evidence indicates that geographical descriptions of ‘Europe’ produced in early medieval England could differ in significant details, revealing evolving perceptions about Britain’s location and its relations with the European continent.¹⁰

⁴ Dümmler, ed., *Epistolae variorum Carolo Magno regnante scriptae*, no. 7, p. 503; Dümmler, ed., *Alcuini sive Albini epistolae*, no. 7, p. 32.

⁵ Oschema, ‘Medieval Europe’, 59.

⁶ This position, mostly held by German scholars, can be contrasted with the enthusiasm with which several French (and other) historians in the last decades of the twentieth century drew frequent parallels between Carolingian Europe and the nascent European Union: Isaïa, ‘L’empire carolingien’. On modern historians’ shifting perceptions of such parallels see also Nelson, ‘Charlemagne and Europe’, and West, ‘Plenty of Puff’.

⁷ Oschema, ‘Medieval Europe’, 60; Nelson, ‘Charlemagne and Europe’, 130.

⁸ Oschema, ‘Medieval Europe’, 60.

⁹ Schneidmüller, ‘Die mittelalterlichen Konstruktionen’, 10; Nelson, ‘Charlemagne and Europe’, 130.

¹⁰ Readers should bear in mind that while Britain, that is, the island as a geographical concept, was commonly referred to in early medieval sources, ‘England’ (or *Englaland* in Old English) only made its appearance fairly late in our period. Its employment in academic publications on the early Middle Ages must therefore be understood as a shorthand for the territories where the Anglo-Saxons lived rather than presumed to provide any sense of collective identification with a ‘nation’.

As has traditionally been done in historical and archaeological studies, ‘Anglo-Saxons’ is employed in this Element as a convenient label to refer to the people who inhabited the territory roughly corresponding to modern England in the early medieval period; that is, from the settlement, in the fifth and sixth centuries, of continental Germanic-speaking migrants from central and northern Europe until the Norman Conquest of 1066.¹¹ However, given the length of the period and the range of political, military, social and cultural developments which it witnessed, it is important to recognize that behind the unifying ethnonym ‘Anglo-Saxons’ there were in fact people who lived under notably diverse circumstances.

Other, more problematic issues concerning the employment of this term have emerged in recent years in connection with modern, racially charged uses of the adjective ‘Anglo-Saxon’. This has led to intense debate as to whether the ethnonym should be abandoned altogether in scholarly publications dealing with early medieval England.¹² Several participants in the debate have observed that the term (or, rather, Latin versions of it) was first employed in early medieval sources written in continental Europe. The earliest occurrence can be found in the late eighth-century *Historia Langobardorum* by Paul the Deacon, in a passage comparing the way in which early Lombards dressed with the garments worn by the *Anglisaxones* of Paul’s time. A few decades later, the author of the anonymous *Vita Alcuini*, most likely dating to the 820s, employed the word *Engelsaxo* to refer to an English priest named Aigulf, who had visited Alcuin at Tours.¹³ In the tenth century Widukind of Corvey explained the origin of the ethnonym *Anglisaxones* – which he explicitly says was used in his time – as relating to their inhabiting an island located in a corner (‘in angulo’) of the sea.¹⁴ Although the use of the term within modern scholarship owes more to its sixteenth-century resurrection than to any conscious reference to its much older continental origins,¹⁵ ‘Anglo-Saxons’ is employed

¹¹ Incidentally, it should be noted that neither of these two events, nor their immediate aftermath, will be treated in much detail in this Element; their inherent ‘European connections’ should in any case be self-evident.

¹² For a balanced résumé and discussion see Wood, ‘Is It Time’. For an older, but in many respects still pertinent, analysis of some of the issues raised by the employment of the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’, see Reynolds, ‘What Do We Mean’. See also, more recently, Rambaran-Olm, ‘Misnaming the Medieval’ and Wilton, ‘What Do We Mean’.

¹³ Bethmann and Waitz, eds., *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, IV.22, p. 124; Foulke, trans., *Paul the Deacon: History of the Lombards*, 166. Arndt, ed., *Vita Alcuini*, c. 18, p. 193. For further examples and for the suggestion that the label was created to distinguish the ‘Anglian’ Saxons from the continental Saxons, see Levison, *England and the Continent*, 92–3, n. 1.

¹⁴ Hirsch and Lohmann, eds., *Die Sächsengeschichte des Widukind von Korvei*, I.8, p. 10 (‘quia illa insula in angulo quodam maris sita est, Anglisaxones usque hodie vocitantur’).

¹⁵ On the creation of the notion of ‘Anglo-Saxon England’ in Tudor times, see Niles, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England*, 49–76.

in this Element on the relations between England and continental Europe to acknowledge the significance of those very origins and in light of the fundamental role played by ‘others’, that is those who are perceived as external to a specific group, in the creation of ethnic identities.¹⁶

Of course, ‘Anglo-Saxons’ is not the only ethnonym appearing in this Element to refer to the inhabitants of early medieval England, as either for stylistic reasons or in order to reflect more closely the specific terminology employed in different sources, other descriptors also occur. ‘English’ or ‘early English’ appear as well, but it should be borne in mind that the use of ‘English’ as an ethnic label is not without problems either, as it risks drawing direct, unwarranted connections with the modern English nation. In fact, in the UK ‘English’ and ‘England’ feature more prominently in extremist language than ‘Anglo-Saxon’ does, with the latter being associated in common parlance with England’s early medieval past.¹⁷ In other words, this is a complex, evolving and multifaceted matter, raising different issues in different countries. Readers should be aware of the ongoing debates and, more generally, of the limitations and inevitable shortcomings of several of the ethnyonyms employed in modern scholarship to refer to early medieval societies.

Europe and the Anglo-Saxons explores how the Anglo-Saxons perceived and described their relations with and location in Europe, and, conversely, the ways in which their contemporaries on the continent represented and referred to them. The discussion will focus on six main themes, starting with Anglo-Saxon geographical perceptions and representations of Europe (Section 3), followed by relations with Rome and the papacy (Section 4), then courts, diplomacy and dynasties (Section 5), religious missions and monasticism (Section 6), travel and trade (Section 7) and, finally, warfare and conquests (Section 8). A timeline is also provided to help readers locate the main events and people mentioned. Before moving on to the core themes, however, it is necessary to present a brief excursus on previous treatments of this topic (Section 2) so as to situate the present work within the historiographical tradition, and acknowledge the role played by contemporary political, cultural and economic preoccupations in shaping our approach to the study of the (early medieval) past.

2 Precedents

Modern studies of the relations between early medieval England and continental Europe are all at least in part indebted to the pioneering work of Wilhelm

¹⁶ Pohl, ‘Ethnic Names and Identities’, 10; Geary, ‘Ethnic Identity’. This is obviously not to say that the people living in early medieval England were invariably called ‘Anglo-Saxons’ by their contemporaries on the continent, as uses shifted with time and space.

¹⁷ See Naismith, *Early Medieval Britain*, 114–15.

Levison and, more specifically, his volume of 1946, which gathers the Ford Lectures he delivered at Oxford three years earlier. Levison's focus was on the eighth century, which he described as a period of major English 'contribution to the spiritual foundations and unity of Western civilization'.¹⁸ Behind a language that twenty-first-century readers will find outdated, there was the personal experience of a Jewish scholar who had fled Nazi Germany in 1939 and had been able to find a new home in England after taking up an invitation from the University of Durham.¹⁹ In Levison's book the comparison between the work of eighth-century Anglo-Saxon missionaries in pagan Germanic-speaking continental regions and the role played by England in the author's own time is explicit: both then and in his own times he could see 'a broad, deep, and lasting influence upon continental ways of thought and life'.²⁰ Among the many lessons that Levison's work offers us in exploring the relations between England and the continent in the early Middle Ages, one should include the role that every scholar's personal circumstances play in the shaping of their work. This is of course a truism, but one worth mentioning in a publication written in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, at a time when debates on the meaning and role of Europe as both a geographical and political entity – and the place of Britain and England in it – inevitably affect current perceptions of England in early medieval Europe.²¹

As Conrad Leyser has noted, it would take some time for the significance of Levison's work to be recognized in Britain; among the main reasons for this late reception, Leyser mentions the hesitant state of the relations between Britain and Germany in the aftermath of the Second World War and the dominating role that France played within the continental horizons of medieval research culture in Britain at that time.²² In his view, German scholars were quicker to acknowledge the importance of Levison's findings, especially with reference to the moral authority that the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon missionaries – above all, Boniface – provided for the Carolingians' political and military expansion.²³ It is important to remember, however, that an interest in all things Anglo-Saxon had been prominent in German scholarship from much earlier on, as is made evident by the development of philological studies in the context of rising German nationalism. The Germanic dialects of early English vernacular texts

¹⁸ Levison, *England and the Continent*, 1.

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis of the ways in which Levison's work was conditioned by his personal circumstances, see Leyser, 'Introduction', 2–3.

²⁰ Levison, *England and the Continent*, 1.

²¹ Several medieval historians have taken an active role in such debates, either to advocate Britain's differences and separation from Europe (e.g. Abulafia, 'Britain'), or to demonstrate pre-Conquest England's unambiguous involvement with the continent (e.g. West, 'England').

²² Leyser, 'Introduction', 5. ²³ As exemplified by Schieffer, *Winfred-Bonifatius*.

allowed late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century scholars to consider the Anglo-Saxons one of the ‘German’ peoples, thus providing the intellectual milieu and the institutional support for the production of works such as Felix Liebermann’s masterpiece edition of Anglo-Saxon law codes.²⁴

Back in Britain, renewed efforts towards early medieval research encompassing both England and the continent can be found in the work of the Oxford scholar Michael Wallace-Hadrill. Interestingly, his first publications on these topics were more about comparisons than contacts and, just as Conrad Leyser has observed, they leaned especially towards Francophone regions.²⁵ This would change later on, both thanks to the adoption of a wider geographical framework and through deliberate efforts to explore connections between England and the continent.²⁶ Work in these areas became more widespread and less dependent on specific individual initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s, also as a consequence of the United Kingdom joining the European Economic Community in 1973. The insularity which had characterized many of the earlier studies of Anglo-Saxon England thus began to be superseded in publications from that period.²⁷ Later on, wider collective initiatives, such as the Transformation of the Roman World programme, funded by the European Science Foundation in the 1990s, played a major role in making European early medievalists think beyond the traditional frameworks of their respective national histories, thus also placing early English history more firmly in a European context. Also dating from this time is a volume edited by Nigel Saul – entitled *England in Europe* – which focuses on the later Middle Ages but includes an initial chapter by Janet L. Nelson on the Anglo-Saxon period; here the author provides a brief but incisive overview on the many types of relations that linked England with continental Europe, paying special attention to the increasingly complex political, diplomatic and religious contacts of the tenth and first half of the eleventh centuries. Late Anglo-Saxon England is depicted as a profoundly European polity, whose history would be ‘incomprehensible without its continental context’.²⁸

²⁴ Liebermann, ed., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*. See Fruscione, ‘Liebermann’s Intellectual Milieu’, 20–1 and Rabin, ‘Felix Liebermann’, 4.

²⁵ See for example Wallace-Hadrill, ‘The Franks and the English’; Wallace-Hadrill, ‘Rome and the Early English Church’.

²⁶ For example, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede’s Europe*; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*. For a detailed discussion of Wallace-Hadrill’s life and work, see Wood, ‘John Michael Wallace-Hadrill’.

²⁷ See for instance Campbell, ed., *The Anglo-Saxons*, 61–7, 118–22, 170–1.

²⁸ Nelson, ‘England and the Continent in the Anglo-Saxon Period’, 35. A specific interest in the late Anglo-Saxon period also features in Ortenberg, *The English Church*, though the attention in this case focuses on artistic connections with the continent.

Similar standpoints can be observed in the production of major collaborative publications which appeared in the same period, such as the two volumes of the *New Cambridge Medieval History* which cover the early Middle Ages. In Volume 2, published in 1995 and dealing with the eighth and ninth centuries, the editor – Rosamond McKitterick – chose to open this collection of essays with an initial section on the British Isles, which ended with a chapter on ‘England and the Continent’ that she authored herself.²⁹ Perhaps even more interestingly, Volume 3, which appeared in the year 2000 and was edited by the late Timothy Reuter, includes England in a section on post-Carolingian Europe.³⁰ Such efforts became even more explicit in the four presidential addresses that Janet L. Nelson delivered between 2001 and 2004, during her tenure as the first female President of the Royal Historical Society. Her chosen topic – of explicit Levisonian inspiration – was ‘England and the Continent in the Ninth Century’. Although, as she declared in her first address, it is ‘less easy to write a story of Anglo-Continental connections in the ninth century than for the eighth century’,³¹ Nelson provided a magisterial example of how that can and should be done, offering insightful discussion of several instances of such contacts, as well as elegant comparative analysis of major themes in ninth-century English and continental history. Similarly, in a monograph published in 2003,³² Joanna Story took over from where Levison had left his account of the English contribution to continental history, that is, at the end of the eighth century, when – he noted – the direction of ‘the current . . . reversed’,³³ as the continent began to exert increasing influence on the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Story covered the period up to 870, not only showing the variety of cross-Channel relations in the late eighth and ninth centuries, but also providing several examples of the deep influence that Carolingian Francia had on contemporary England, not least in providing models for Anglo-Saxon kingship.

The nature and extent of Carolingian influence on the political, cultural and ecclesiastical history of early medieval England have been at the centre of numerous other publications. A number of authors have argued, for instance, that Carolingian texts were the main sources of inspiration for the late Anglo-Saxon church in general, and the tenth-century monastic reform in particular.³⁴ However, although late Anglo-Saxon England is often described as finally ‘catching up’ with the continent thanks to the arrival of texts and ideas associated with earlier reforming efforts in the Carolingian Empire, from other angles

²⁹ McKitterick, ‘England and the Continent’. ³⁰ Keynes, ‘England, c.900–1016’.

³¹ Nelson, ‘England and the Continent in the Ninth Century’, 3.

³² Story, *Carolingian Connections*. ³³ Levison, *England and the Continent*, 107.

³⁴ See, for example, Jones, ‘The Book of the Liturgy’ and bibliography cited there. See also below, Section 6.

the English church has been described as anticipating practices which were subsequently adopted elsewhere. One example is the translation of bishops, which was fairly common in the late Anglo-Saxon period, when kings translated to Canterbury bishops who already held West Saxon episcopal sees, but became more frequent across western Christendom in the twelfth century.³⁵ Ecclesiastical politics and, more specifically, the roles of bishops in the pre-Gregorian period have provided especially fertile ground for comparative analyses of late Anglo-Saxon England and Ottonian-Salian Germany,³⁶ building on the foundational work of scholars like Karl Leyser and Timothy Reuter.³⁷ Such recent initiatives stand out for bringing together British and German scholars, though it is certainly still the case that continental early medieval historians rarely ‘cross the Channel’ to include Britain in their investigations. Over the years, there have been, of course, several other exceptions, but it must be acknowledged that in spite of the efforts made in recent decades to overcome old separations, national historiographical traditions still loom large behind both scholars’ choices and research funding policies.

3 Geographical Perceptions and Representations

Britain, once called Albion, is an island of the ocean and lies to the north-west, being opposite Germany, Gaul, and Spain, which form the greater part of Europe, though at a considerable distance from them.³⁸

These are the words with which Bede chose to open the first chapter of his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, in a passage which is closely modelled on the description of Britain that Pliny made in his *Naturalis Historia*, with some detail also provided by Orosius’ early fifth-century *Historiae adversus paganos*. Bede’s adoption of ancient geographical perspectives, which oriented the earth from the position of Rome, is highly indicative of the way in which eighth-century learned Anglo-Saxons perceived their place in the world. Rome remained the centre while they were undoubtedly at the periphery, or even the edges of the known world. Yet, as has been demonstrated by Andy Merrills, Bede’s adoption of such ancient perspectives was not entirely passive, but served what the author probably perceived as higher, more important aims: by showing that Christianity had reached the edges of the world, he assigned

³⁵ Tinti, ‘The Archiepiscopal Pallium’, 313; Pennington, *Popes and Bishops*, 85–100.

³⁶ Körntgen and Waßenhoven, eds., *Patterns of Episcopal Power*; Körntgen and Waßenhoven, eds., *Religion and Politics in the Middle Ages*.

³⁷ Leyser, ‘The Ottonians and Wessex’; Reuter, ‘The Making of England and Germany’.

³⁸ Colgrave and Mynors, eds. and trans., *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, I.1, pp. 14–15 (‘Britannia Oceani insula, cui quondam Albion nomen fuit, inter septentrionem et occidentem locata est, Germaniae Galliae Hispaniae, maximis Europae partibus, multo interuallo aduersa’).

Britain a special place in divine history.³⁹ This opening geographical section of the first chapter of the *Historia ecclesiastica* draws on a number of different sources, including, as well as Pliny and Orosius, Gildas and Solinus. The passage quoted above is followed by a description of Britain's size, with details of its length and width (taken from Gildas) and the extent of the whole circuit of its coastline (derived from Solinus). Bede then looks south again, towards the continent and, following Orosius, states that *Gallia Belgica* lies to the south of Britain and that for those crossing the sea to reach the island from there, the closest port was *Rutubi portus*, as indeed Orosius had called this place, though Bede is also quick to add that it was now called *Reptacaestir* (i.e. modern Richborough) by the English. Then, borrowing again from Pliny, he says that fifty miles across from this port lay *Gessoriacum* (i.e. modern Boulogne), the closest crossing point on the continent. From there the focus, via Orosius, turns back to the north, the *Oceanus infinitus* and the Orkney Islands.⁴⁰

Several earlier commentators have noted the mosaic nature of this opening chapter, in which Bede borrowed heavily from earlier geographical descriptions of Britain, and although one could easily sympathize with Charles Plummer's wish that 'Bede had given us more of his own observation and less of ancient writers', the choices he made in this chapter remain significant for being the result of careful selection.⁴¹ Britain is first and foremost an island in the ocean, at a considerable distance from the European continent. Indications on where to cross the sea that separated the two, however, are promptly provided by combining the information given in Orosius (supplemented by the vernacular rendition of the Latin name for Richborough) with that found in Pliny.⁴² Bede's careful weaving of different sources indicates that he perceived the island as separated from the main lands in Europe, especially given his reliance on Orosius to describe Britain primarily as an island in the ocean. At the same

³⁹ Merrills, *History and Geography*, 235–60.

⁴⁰ Colgrave and Mynors, eds. and trans., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, I.1, pp. 14–15 ('Quae per milia passuum DCCC in boream longa, latitudinis habet milia CC, exceptis dumtaxat prolixioribus diuersorum promontiorum tractibus, quibus efficitur ut circuitus eius quadragies octies LXXV milia compleat. Habet a meridie Galliam Belgicam, cuius proximum litus transmeantibus aperit ciuitas quae dicitur Rutubi portus, a gente Anglorum nunc corrupte Reptacaestir uocata, interposito mari a Gessoriaco Morynorum gentis litore proximo, traiectu milium L siue, ut quidam scripsere, stadiorum CCCCL. A tergo autem, unde Oceano infinito patet, Orcadas insulas habet'). A detailed reconstruction of Bede's borrowings is provided by *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*, now available at <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/fontes/search>. I am grateful to Dr Christine Rauer for providing access to the data ahead of the launch of the new website.

⁴¹ Merrills, *History and Geography*, 249 n. 80.

⁴² That Bede should have kept Orosius' reference to Richborough is also revealing of how much he relied on past sources rather than contemporary experience, given that in the early eighth century Richborough was not among the main ports normally used to connect Britain to the continent; see Section 7 below.

time, however, the European continent provides the key reference point for locating Britain, and the mention of the shortest crossing route between the two mitigates the sense of separation created by the chapter's opening lines.

Orosius' work continued to be influential in Anglo-Saxon England, and at some point between the late ninth and early tenth centuries an anonymous West Saxon scholar produced an Old English translation and adaptation of the *Historiae adversus paganos*.⁴³ A comparison between Bede's reliance on Orosius' account of the geography of the world and the later vernacular adaptation shows an interesting shift in perspective: in the Old English *Orosius* the emphasis on the ocean has disappeared and Britain is described as just another one of the territories forming part of Europe, following immediately after Spain.⁴⁴ Moreover, in the introductory section on the boundaries of the three main parts of the world (i.e. Asia, Europe and Africa), the western boundary of Europe is said to be Ireland, in a sentence which does not have any corresponding passage in the original Latin text.⁴⁵ As a result, Britain is pushed more firmly within the territories that make up Europe. Interestingly, this shift accords with what Helen Appleton has recently observed about the features of the Anglo-Saxon *mappa mundi* preserved in the eleventh-century Cotton Tiberius B.v, which is probably a copy of a larger tenth-century Anglo-Saxon map (see Figure 1).⁴⁶ According to Appleton, the map's features suggest that by the end of King Alfred's reign, Britain was no longer as remote as it had appeared to be in earlier geographical descriptions, including that contained in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. Both the map and the Old English adaptation of Orosius' work incorporate new material on Scandinavia and reflect more recent West Saxon interests, as is made evident by the prominence given in the map to centres of power, trade and wealth in north-western Europe.⁴⁷ The Carolingian decline of the late ninth and early tenth centuries had created new opportunities, and the rise of Scandinavia as a centre of power resulted in north-

⁴³ Multiple authorship has also been suggested for this work; on this aspect and possible connections with the programme of translations promoted by King Alfred the Great, see Bately, 'The Old English *Orosius*'.

⁴⁴ Godden, ed. and trans., *The Old English History of the World*, I.1, pp. 50–1.

⁴⁵ Godden, ed. and trans., *The Old English History of the World*, I.1, pp. 26–7. See also Discenza, *Inhabited Spaces*, 64–5.

⁴⁶ Appleton, 'The Northern World'.

⁴⁷ Amid the new information included in the geographical section at the start of the Old English *Orosius*, there are the detailed accounts of the travels of two seafarers, Ohthere and Wulfstan (Godden, ed. and trans., *The Old English History of the World*, I.1, pp. 36–49); Appleton suggests that the former of the two, or something very much like it, was the source for the depiction of Scandinavia on the Cotton map (Appleton, 'The Northern World'). On Ohthere's account and the circumstances leading to its inclusion in the Old English *Orosius*, see also Allport, 'Home Thoughts of Abroad'.