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RODULFUS GLABER AND FRENCH POLITICS  
IN THE EARLY ELEVENTH CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

The ›Histories‹ of Rodulfus Glaber have always been seen as one of the most important sources for the study of the eleventh century, as a glance at almost any scholarly work which covers the period will reveal. Passages from his work have provided some of the most famous of historical quotations. Almost everybody who has read medieval history will have come across his lyrical comment on the building of new churches around the year 1000: »It was as if the whole world was shaking itself free, shrugging off the burden of the past and cladding itself everywhere in a white mantle of churches«<sup>2</sup>. Crusader historians have scanned his pages for evidence of the growing complex of ideas about war and Christian belief which produced the movement which Urban II launched in 1095. For them his account of the great wave of pilgrimages marking the Millennium of the Passion looks forward to the masses who participated in the First Crusade, while his praise of the Spanish monks who died in arms against the Moslems: »they had longed to fight for love of their brothers, not because of earthly glory«, breathes the very spirit of Clermont<sup>3</sup>. Yet at the same time Glaber's work has been widely criticised for its apparent disorganisation, and sharp comment has been passed on the inaccuracy and imprecision in the account of events<sup>4</sup>. Because of this dichotomy a very strong current of thought has always stressed Glaber's importance for our understanding of the psychology and religious outlook of his age. He has been seen as a writer whose work was peculiarly in tune with the ›spirit of the age‹, but is otherwise of only the most limited value. Sackur, who made a bold effort to understand the structure of the work, was so struck by this current of thought about Glaber that he was moved to mild irony: ›it was without plan or order and was very badly written, therefore it has been regarded

1 The present writer has recently completed a new Latin text and English translation of the Histories, together with an English translation of the latest text of the Life of St William, edited originally by Neithard BULST in: *Deutsches Archiv* 30 (1974) p. 450–487: this will be cited here as *Life*. All references to the Histories will be to the edition of Maurice PROU, *Raoul Glaber. Les cinq livres de ses Histoires*, Paris, 1886 (Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire 1).

2 3. IV. 13.

3 4. VI. 18–21, 2. IX. 18. On Glaber and the Crusade, and in particular on the importance of the passage cited here, see Carl ERDMANN, *The Origins of the Idea of the Crusade*, tr. by Marshall Withed BALDWIN and Walter GOFFART, Princeton 1977, p. 15 n. 28, 54 n. 79; Etienne DELARUELLE, *Essai sur la formation de l'idée de la croisade*, in: *Bulletin de la littérature ecclésiastique* 45 (1944) p. 45 n. 5; Paul ALPHANDÉRY, *La Chrétienté et l'idée de la Croisade*, Paris 1954, i. p. 12.

4 Anton MICHEL, *Die Weltreichs- und Kirchenteilung bei Rodulfus Glaber*, in: *Historisches Jahrbuch* 70 (1951) p. 53, describes him as a ›notoriously unreliable crank, confused in his narrative, worthless as a critical source‹ (Author's own translation).

as very valuable for the history of his time<sup>5</sup>. However this line of thought continued after Sackur's time, notably in the long study by Gebhart<sup>6</sup>. Perhaps the most important modern exponent of these ideas about Glaber's work has been Rousset, whose two articles have been very influential<sup>7</sup>. But there has always been another and much more specific reason for interest in the works of Rodulfus Glaber, and one which complemented very nicely the approach best exemplified by Rousset. The ›Histories‹ open with a dedication to Odilo, abbot of Cluny (994–1049), at whose command the author claims to be writing, and there are frequent references to the great abbey<sup>8</sup>. As a result Glaber and his works, the ›Histories‹ and the ›Life of St William‹, were seized upon because, as Sackur understood, many believed: ›he was a Cluniac who reflected in the clearest way the endeavours and ideas of his comrades in conviction, and he stood particularly close to Odilo to whom he actually dedicated his work‹<sup>9</sup>. No phenomenon of the eleventh century has impressed historians more than Cluny. So enormous was its success and so complex its ramifications that a writer who appeared to have lived there and to have been so closely identified with one of its greatest abbots was bound to be valued primarily as a ›Cluniac‹. Definition of this term has proved difficult, though recent writing has begun to give it a meaning and precision which will enable us to understand better the intellectual context in which Glaber worked<sup>10</sup>. However, it is important to recognise that this strand of thinking which emphasises the value of Glaber's work for its insight into the contemporary mentality can also distort our view of the writer. For Glaber set out to record events and his choice and presentation of them was influenced by other factors. Historians are in danger of overemphasizing Glaber's monkishness and his detachment from the prosaic events of the world outside the monastery which helped to shape the ›Histories‹ every bit as much as intellectual preoccupations. In fact too much has been made of the supposed disorganisation of the work, and it is evident that Glaber was an unusual monk whose existence was far from cloistered.

He entered the monastic life only reluctantly, and he tells us that he was ejected from the house of his original profession by his exasperated comrades, who were

5 Ernst SACKUR, *Studien über Rodulfus Glaber*, in: *Neues Archiv* 14 (1889) p. 377 was particularly referring to M. DE LA CARNE, St. Palais's comments in his *Mémoire concernant la vie et les ouvrages de Glaber, historien de Hugues Capet*, in: *Académie royale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* 8 (1733) p. 549–59 and to those of Gabriel MONOD, *Etude sur l'histoire de Hugues Capet*, in: *Revue Historique* 28 (1885), esp. p. 270–72.

6 Emile GEBHART, *L'État d'âme d'un moine de l'an mille*, in: *Revue des deux mondes* (1891) p. 600–28.

7 Paul ROUSSET, *Raoul Glaber, interprète de la pensée commune au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: *Revue de l'histoire de l'Église de France* 32 (1950) p. 6–24 and ID., *Conception de l'histoire à l'époque féodale*, in: *Mélanges Halphen*, Paris 1951, p. 623–35.

8 1. Préface. 1, and for references to the abbey see, for example, 1.IV.9; 1.V.23; 3.III.6; 3.III.12; 3.V.17–18; 4.VII.22; 5.I.8; 5.I.13.

9 SACKUR (see n. 5) p. 379.

10 The very valuable article by Edmond ORTIGUES and Dominique IOGNA-PRAT, *Raoul Glaber et l'Historiographie Clunienne*, in: *Studi Medievali* 26 (1985) p. 537–572, advances our knowledge of what is peculiarly ›Cluniac‹ far beyond the rather general conceptions found in, for example, Margarete VOGELSANG, *Der cluniazensische Chronist Rodulfus Glaber: ein Beitrag zur cluniazensischen Geschichtsschreibung*, in: *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige* 57 (1956) p. 25–38, 277–97; 61 (1960) p. 151–85.

certain, however, that he would find another home because of »my literary abilities«. And so he did, not once but in his own words, »many times«<sup>11</sup>. Glaber seems to have lived between the years 980 and 1047 and to have spent a wandering life which at one time or another took him to eight abbeys, all in Burgundy: Saint Germain d'Auxerre and its subordinate houses, Saint-Léger-de-Champceaux and La Réome (ca. 990 – post 1010); Saint Bénigne at Dijon (by 1016–1030); Cluny (1030–1035); Bèze (ca. 1033); Saint Germain d'Auxerre and its subordinate house of Moutiers Sainte Marie (ca. 1037–1047)<sup>12</sup>. In these circumstances it is not strange that the ›Histories‹ were written over a very long period of time. Glaber twice describes the ›Histories‹ in terms which suggest that it was first conceived of as an account of events in and about the millennium of the Nativity: in the Preface to Book 1 and in the ›Life of St William‹ where he informs us that he wrote them at the command of William himself<sup>13</sup>. Shortly before the death of the great abbot of Dijon in 1031 Glaber moved to a monastery not under his authority, which was almost certainly Cluny, and there he set aside the ›Histories‹ to write the life of his old master: at the time of his decision, he says that he had completed the ›greater part‹ of the them. We do not know when he restarted on the original work, but it was probably after 1037<sup>14</sup>. Thereafter, Glaber decided to extend the scope of the ›Histories‹ and about the same time he had a scribe copy much of Books 3 and 4 and a revised Book 1 into which he inserted a new dedication, to Odilo of Cluny. This work was undertaken at Saint Germain d'Auxerre where, late in his life he added a fifth book which appears to be the work of a depressed and disappointed old man. This last section shares something of the formlessness of Book 2, and ends so abruptly that it seems reasonable to assume that death intervened<sup>15</sup>.

This long gestation, interrupted by quarrels and enforced moves, goes some way to explaining the character of Glaber's ›Histories‹. In Book 2 he was writing about a period of his life spent in the relative obscurity of Auxerre in the late tenth century, at a time when he was learning his trade as a writer and was beginning to gain a wider knowledge of the world because he was resident at Saint Bénigne. We do not know

11 5.I.3.

12 This outline is the result of the author's recent researches and can be challenged on detail, but there can be little doubt that Glaber was at Saint Germain, Saint Bénigne and Cluny at roughly the dates indicated.

13 1. Preface. 1. Life, c. XIII.

14 Glaber clearly wrote much of the Histories after leaving Cluny because at 3. III. 12 he refers to a time past »when I was sharing the life of the brothers of the monastery of Cluny«, and at 5. I. 8 mentions the arrival of a monk from Cluny at Saint Germain who had evidently known him in the past.

15 SACKUR (see n. 5) was the first to suggest that Glaber revised his work and this has been considerably reinforced by the work of Monique-Cécile GARAND, *Un manuscrit d'auteur de Raoul Glaber; observations codicologiques et paléographiques sur le ms de Paris BN (lat.) 10912*, in: *Scriptorium* 37 (1983) p. 5–28, who has shown that BN (lat.) 10912 is in part an autograph, but that substantial sections were rewritten by a scribe, probably at Saint Germain d'Auxerre after 1037. Book 5 appears to be in the author's own hand, done at a time when he was ageing. Book 2 remains as the oldest part of the work, and the present writer believes it was written at Dijon. ORTIGUES and IOGNA-PRAT (see n. 10) p. 567, suggest that Glaber chose to add a fifth book in imitation of the Pentateuch for which he had a special admiration. However, as has been noted, the ›Histories‹ seem to have grown as time went on. Further it was later writers, and not Glaber himself who gave his work the title ›The Five Books of the Histories‹.

how he came to the attention of St William, but he had a good education and was later employed to rewrite inscriptions on the altars at Saint Germain<sup>16</sup>. It is not impossible, therefore, that he became a secretary to Saint William, comparable to that Girardus of whom we hear from the Saint Bénigne chronicle. This may explain why he accompanied St William to Italy in the late 1020s<sup>17</sup>. At Dijon, and later to an even greater extent at Cluny, Glaber was at the centre of a great communication network which stretched right across Europe. In the service of abbots William and Odilo Glaber would have been in a position to see a much wider world, and he would have had an insight into the affairs of the great, albeit from a junior level. Other houses would not have provided such advantageous viewpoints. The unevenness of the ›Histories‹ owes a very great deal to such mundane considerations. It was at Saint Bénigne, the core of a great network of monasteries, presided over by a man of high birth and great stature, that the idea of the ›Histories‹ was conceived. Glaber's technique was almost certainly refined by his residence at Cluny, but he had to rely on notes and memory by the time most of the work was committed to paper for by then he was back at Auxerre. We must think, therefore, how these circumstances must have affected the flow of information to him, for this was a world where the horizon was the limit of most men's knowledge and centres like Dijon and Cluny were exceptional. Glaber seems to have been rooted in Burgundy. There is no evidence, apart from the journey which he records making with St William to Italy, that he travelled or even had wide personal connections. The ›Histories‹ came into being over a period of some twenty years, the creation of a writer of uncertain temperament and a wandering life-style. There are inconsistencies and there could obviously never have been an overall plan. But it is wrong to suggest that it is totally formless and without plan, thereby dismissing much of the information offered. It was conceived as an account of events which happened in and about the millennium of the Nativity, but it was later extended and revised. In the process of making this revision Glaber stamped a pattern upon the work. In the prologue to Book 1 Glaber announces his intention of centering his work in the deeds of the kings of France and Germany: after a section on general matters we hear first of France, then of Germany and then the wider pagan world. The same pattern is discernible in Books 3 and 4 and even to a degree in 5. Only in Book 2, that remnant of his original effort, is there chaos. In short Glaber is not as unsystematic and erratic a writer as many have alleged. ›The Life of St William‹ has aroused much less interest than the ›Histories‹, but it is a tight and well-planned piece of writing. Chapters i-vi provide an outline of the saint's life up to the time when he took over Saint Bénigne where he established his reputation. In vii-viii we hear of the reforms for which William was best known, especially that of Fécamp. Chapters x and xi establish him as the confidant and adviser of kings, emperors and popes, while xii-xiii dwell on his personal qualities, notably his eloquence, and xiiii describes his death. It is a fine example of a saint's life, far above the general run of the genre and shows us Glaber at his best. It is also of special interest for it was through St William, at least in part, that Glaber was involved in French politics, a factor which modern writers have tended to miss.

16 5.I.8.

17 *Chronicon Sancti Benigni*, edited in: *Analecta Divionensia*, ed. Louis VICTOR, Emile BOUGAUD and Jean GARNIER, Dijon 1875, p. 162; 4. III. 6-8.

In chapter x of the ›Life of St William‹ Glaber tells us that St William was accused by his enemies of plotting against both the Emperor Henry II (1002–1024) and Robert II, king of France (996–1031). The unnamed enemies alleged that William had favoured the enemies of these rulers, and in both cases there was strong evidence upon which to base the allegations. It is interesting and revelatory of political conditions at the time that Glaber tells us about these accusations. This was not an age of strong governmental institutions, but of forceful and dominating personalities who created and changed political units whose importance and often very existence was a function of their vigour and ability. The county of Anjou was lifted from relative obscurity by Count Fulk Nerra (987–1040) and kept there by his forceful son Geoffrey Martel (1040–60), but in the next generation the county was shorn of many of its possessions and it took half a century to recover its earlier importance. Burgundy, where Glaber lived, had fluctuated considerably in extent during the tenth and early eleventh centuries, as had Aquitaine<sup>18</sup>. The great duchies and counties of France are best understood not as territorial units with fixed boundaries, but as the dominations of ascendant personalities which rose and fell according to who was ruling them. The disintegration of the county of Mâcon under Otto-William (982–1026) can be contrasted with the consolidation of Normandy under Duke Richard II (996–1026). They were contemporary political institutions upon which broadly similar forces were working, yet the one rode the tide and the other did not<sup>19</sup>. The fluidity of secular institutions must have enormously enhanced the sense of the world as a passing place of ephemeral events and forces, and this helps to explain the ascendancy of the monastery in men's minds. This collective institution manifestly had a life beyond that of any individual, a life which was perceived of as linked to the person of the saint or saints of whose relics the monks were the guardians. Thus the continuity of the monastery and the other-worldly preoccupations of its monks made it appear as an outpost of heaven upon earth, a perception sharpened by the splendour of the buildings and shrines and the glory of their decoration. Secular churchmen were far more obviously involved in the politics of the age, and conceived ambitions of their own for power. The principality which Bruno de Roucy (980–1016) created around his bishopric of Langres, did not outlast him<sup>20</sup>. But the diocese, like the monastery, enjoyed a strong institutional framework. Monks, despite their other-worldly focus, like the bishops and the secular magnates, were deeply involved in the politics of personality and dynasty which dominated France in the early eleventh century. Indeed their very prestige made them important players upon the board, not merely bystanders, and this helps to explain the charges made against St William.

St William was born in dramatic circumstances. His father, Robert, was defending Willa, wife of Berengar II of Italy (950–64) who in 962 was trapped in the fortress of San Giulio on Lake Orta by Otto I of Germany (936–73) when he was born. Robert surrendered the fortress on terms and Otto stood godfather for the new-born child

18 Jean DUNBABIN, *France in the Making*, Oxford 1985, p. 188–9, 63–6, 174–84, 58–63.

19 *Ibid.* p. 116, 180; on the county of Mâcon see Georges DUBY, *La société aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles dans la région mâconnaise*, Paris 1971, and on Normandy, David BATES, *Normandy before 1066*, London 1982.

20 DUNBABIN (see n. 18) p. 93–4.

who was soon dedicated by his parents to the service of the church and entered the abbey of Lucedio. At an early stage in his career he made an enemy of Bishop Peter of Vercelli (ca. 978–997) and went into exile on the Monte Pirichiano. In the late 880s he was brought to Cluny by its great abbot, St Mayol<sup>21</sup>. Although the action of St Mayol in bringing William from Italy is in the ›Life‹ presented as the result of a chance encounter, it is likely that it was a considered act arising from changing political circumstances. Mayol was familiar with events in northern Italy through his reform of Saint Salvator of Pavia, the city where William was educated. Further, William was a close relative of the new count of Mâcon, Otto-William, who was the son of Berengar II of Italy's son Adalbert and his wife Gerberga<sup>22</sup>. The precise nature of the relationship is not clear, but it does establish William as a relative of the royal house of Italy, the sworn enemies of the German emperors, and it is at least likely that it was because of this relationship that the young William was launched on his career in Burgundy<sup>23</sup>. Further, Otto-William married Ermentrude, the sister of Bruno de Roucy bishop of Langres who was a Carolingian<sup>24</sup>, and therefore no friend of the ruling Capetian dynasty of France. Thus St William was connected with two of the royal houses of Europe and these family connections played a very important role in his early career. It may well have been this connection which led Mayol to bring him to Cluny and to favour him highly. Within a very short time he had been chosen to help reform the small abbey of Saint Saturnin in what is now Pont-Saint-Esprit. Only a year later Bruno asked St Mayol to reform the ancient abbey of Saint Bénigne at Dijon and it can hardly have been by chance that Mayol asked William to undertake this task as its abbot. In the following two years the abbey of Saint Vivant de Vergy was conferred upon William by Duke Henry of Burgundy (965–1002) and Bèze by Bruno. In the chapter in which Glaber narrates this remarkable progress he also reports that Bruno asked Otto-William to caution his relative against pride, perhaps an indication of the secular motives which underlay the whole process<sup>25</sup>. It was on the basis of his work in Dijon and the other Burgundian houses, fostered by his own family, that St William was able to build a great reputation. This led to his call to Lorraine and ultimately and most importantly, to Fécamp, for, in the words of Glaber: ›the fame of his sanctity was now spread far and wide‹<sup>26</sup>. But if such political connections brought great advantages, they could also bring problems.

Otto-William's mother, Gerberga, had fled from Italy to Burgundy ahead of her son, and she had married Henry duke of Burgundy, the brother of Hugh Capet and uncle of King Robert II<sup>27</sup>. According to the Saint Bénigne chronicle the childless Duke Henry adopted Otto-William as his heir<sup>28</sup>. His claim was a direct challenge to

21 *Life*, c. I, III, V, VI.

22 On Peter of Vercelli see Charles William PREVITÉ-ORTON, *The early history of the house of Savoy*, Cambridge 1912, p. 107. The importance of St William's family to the making of his career and the connection between Mayol and Pavia is carefully examined by Neithard BULST, *Untersuchungen zu den Klosterreformen Wilhelms von Dijon*, Bonn 1973, p. 26.

23 *Ibid.* p. 23–36.

24 *Ibid.* p. 74–5; DUNBABIN (see n. 18) p. 93–4.

25 *Life*, c. VI.

26 *Life*, c. VII.

27 DUBY (see n. 19) p. 155–6.

28 *Analecta Divionensia* (see n. 17) p. 134.

the position, both dynastic and royal, of the Capetian house so that when Henry died in 1002 Robert went to war against Otto-William. The only Burgundian magnate to support the king was Hugh count of Châlons and bishop of Auxerre (999–1039) a relative of the king, while Otto-William of Mâcon enjoyed the aid of Bruno of Langres and his son-in-law Landry count of Nevers<sup>29</sup>. By 1005 Otto-William seems to have relinquished his claim, but Bruno was strong enough to prevent King Robert from gaining control of Burgundy until after his death in 1016 when the king created his younger son Henry duke of Burgundy<sup>30</sup>. Glaber's account of the Burgundian civil war is very interesting. He gives a vivid description of the royal siege of the abbey of Saint Germain d'Auxerre in 1005 which was held for the rebels by Landry of Nevers. This event shocked him into censoring King Robert. However, there is no mention of the role of Otto-William and Glaber merely says that most of the nobles of Burgundy resisted the king, except for Hugh of Châlons<sup>31</sup>. This passage on the Burgundian civil war is found in Book 2 which was written while Glaber was at Dijon under St William. In one of the early chapters of Book 3, which in its present form dates from the late 1030s, he tells us of the role of Otto-William and Bruno of Langres<sup>32</sup>. While he was under the authority of St William Glaber felt the need to be discreet about events in which his master was intimately involved. It was probably because of St William's supposed partisanship in the Burgundian civil war that in 1003 he was deprived of his abbey of La Réome by King Robert who in 1016 had to be dissuaded from attacking Saint Bénigne itself by Odo of Cluny<sup>33</sup>. So Glaber, who was intimate enough with St William to accompany him to Italy in 1026–8, was careful not to expand on a delicate matter. But his own feelings are fairly clear, for in the very passage of Book 3 in which he mentions the role of Otto-William he is clearly sympathizing with King Robert in his efforts to defeat this and other rebellions.

Glaber was deeply respectful of kingship. In the preface to Book 1 he announces his intention of charting his course in time by reference to the reigns of the two most Christian kings, Henry of Germany and Robert of France, and he repeats this statement at the start of Book 2. The need for order and stability prompted this respect and led him to approve even the savage severity with which Henry II and Conrad II put down Italian rebels<sup>34</sup>. But Glaber was much more involved in the politics of France and it is because of this that Robert II is the most often-mentioned person in the ›Histories‹. Glaber's life was passed within the sphere of influence of

29 On Hugh of Châlons, bishop of Auxerre, see the near-contemporary life in the *Gesta Pontificum Autissiodorensium*, in: Jean LEBEUF, *Mémoires concernant l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile d'Auxerre*, Paris 1743, II. p. 232–3. Glaber mentions the roles of Otto-William and Bruno de Roucy in 3.II.6 where he also details the relationship with Landry who is described defending Saint Germain at 2.VIII. 15–16.

30 DUBY (see n. 19) p. 155–6; DUNBABIN (see n. 18) p. 180.

31 2.VIII. 14–15.

32 3.II.6.

33 On Robert's threat to Saint Bénigne and his removal of La Réome from the authority of St William, *Analecta Divionensia* (see n. 17) p. 173. Michel Ernest PETIT, Raoul Glaber, in: *Revue Historique* 48 (1892) p. 286–90 argues that the deprivation dates from 1015, but BULST (see n. 22) p. 61–5, more convincingly suggests 1003.

34 1.V.12, 3. Preface, 4. Preface. 1.



the Capetian monarchy, in contrast to his near-contemporary, Adhémar of Chabannes, for whom the great figure is the duke of Aquitaine<sup>35</sup>. This instinctive respect for monarchy was sufficient in Glaber's mind to compensate for the Capetian's »obscure ancestry« which he felt would not bear examination<sup>36</sup>. It was undoubtedly reinforced by the personal qualities of King Robert. Like the king's biographer, Helgaud, Glaber avoids all mention of Robert's marital problems. He records that Robert appointed good men as bishops and describes him as »a pious and religious man« who wanted to raise Hervé of Tours to the episcopate<sup>37</sup>. However this was not merely a personal admiration, for as we have noted Glaber supported the German emperors against their enemies and he also sustained Robert's son Henry (1031–60) against his<sup>38</sup>. For Glaber, a partisan of the Capetians in the service of St William, a degree of discretion was necessary and it is notable how much more overt his support for the Capetians becomes in those books written or revised after the death of St William, but even then devotion to his patron seems to have affected his record of events. Glaber often mentions events in Italy but there is no real indication of the very close interest St William took in Italian affairs which is reflected in the frequency of his visits there<sup>39</sup>. In the ›Histories‹ he mentions the journey which he and his master undertook to Italy, though without mentioning its purpose and he also refers to the foundation of Fruttuaria on William's family lands<sup>40</sup>. In the ›Life‹, however, Glaber reports that Ardouin of Italy who claimed the throne of Italy against Henry II of Germany in the years 1003–1014, was present at the consecration of Fruttuaria where he and his family were later buried<sup>41</sup>. Once again Glaber was caught with divided loyalties, for as we have noted he admired Henry II and this forced discretion upon him. Glaber was caught in the web of high politics, and it was not solely because of his presence in the ›mouvance‹ of St William.

In the ›Histories‹ Glaber shows a considerable interest in the conflict between the two great princely houses of Blois and Anjou. He reports the victory of Fulk Nerra of Anjou at the battle of Conquereuil though without making it clear that this was an episode in the quarrel with Blois and mentions only in passing the campaign during which Fulk defeated Odo II (996–1037) at the battle of Pontlevoy in 1016. Late in the work he mentions the victory of Count Geoffrey Martel over the sons of Odo II at the battle of Nouy in 1044 which led to the fall of Tours<sup>42</sup>. The ›Histories‹ are useful as a source for the events of this long and bitter feud, but what is interesting here are the sharply different attitudes Glaber adopted to the protagonists. He can be critical of both, commenting sharply on the ›insolence and presumption‹ of Fulk in the matter of the foundation of Loches and he attacks both as ›swollen with pride and little disposed towards peace‹<sup>43</sup>. However his partiality is very evident in his tales of

35 Adhémar of Chabannes, *Chronique*, ed. Jules CHAVANON, Paris 1897.

36 1.II.6.

37 Helgaud of Fleury, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti Pii*, ed. and tr. Robert-Henri BAUTIER and Gillette LABORY, Paris 1965; 3.II. 7, 3.IV. 14–15.

38 3.IX. 37–9, 5.II.19.

39 BULST (see n. 22) p. 270–77, suggests that St William made 9 visits to Italy in the period 995–1032.

40 4.II.7, 3.V.16.

41 Life, c.IX.

42 2.II.4, 3.II.6; DUNBABIN (see n. 18) p. 186; 5.II.19.

43 2.IV.5–7, 3.II.5.

two assassinations. Glaber reports that Fulk Nerra murdered King Robert's favourite, Hugh of Beauvais, count of the Palace, because he had come between Robert and his Queen, Fulk's cousin Constance, but no real blame is attached to Fulk. By contrast Glaber blames Theobald the Deceiver, ancestor of the house of Blois, quite unjustly for the murder of William Longsword, duke of Normandy, in 942. He goes on to suggest that guilt for this act bore upon the whole house of Blois and that the death in battle of Odo II in 1037 was no less than the just vengeance of God for it<sup>44</sup>. The circumstances in which Fulk Nerra's son, Geoffrey, defeated the sons of Odo II at Nouy in 1044 were remarkable enough, but Glaber calls it a ›miraculous victory‹ and attributes it to the intervention of St Martin from whose church at Tours, he suggests, the Blésois brothers had stolen so much land<sup>45</sup>. There is a fine irony here, for it was on land stolen from the diocese of Tours that Fulk Nerra had constructed Loches, for which act, as noted, Glaber was moved only to mild censure. This obvious partisanship is very difficult to explain. It is unlikely that Glaber had any close connection with Anjou or its comital house. He speaks only of Fulk Nerra and Geoffrey Martel who were his contemporaries and makes no effort to describe their ancestry. It is hardly conceivable that anyone with a family connection with the Angevin lands would have mistaken the relationship between Fulk and Constance, the consort of King Robert II, as Glaber did<sup>46</sup>. Nor does he seem to have had any comparable connection with the house of Blois. He does tell an interesting story about the death of Herbert II of Vermandois, but this must be suspect in view of the fact that he falsely ascribes the murder of William Longsword to Herbert's son, Theobald the Deceiver<sup>47</sup>. The most important manuscript of the ›Histories‹ was later used by the compilers of the ›Gesta Consulum Andegavorum‹ and there is clear evidence that another, B.N. (lat.) 6190, was of West French origin and was at one time in the possession of Marmoutiers, but this does not establish any real connection between the author and this area. Indeed there is a much more obvious connection between Glaber and the house of Blois, for Theobald of Blois presented Saint Florentin to Saint Germain d'Auxerre towards the end of Glaber's life<sup>48</sup>. Glaber tells us that he was placed in a monastery, almost certainly Saint Germain d'Auxerre, by his uncle; this and the fact that he seems to have spent his life in the duchy suggest that his origins lay there. So Glaber's partisanship cannot be explained in terms of origin and family links. It

44 3.II.7, 3.IX.39. William Longsword was actually murdered by Arnulf count of Flanders. Theobald the Deceiver later married William's widow, Liégarde, but she was the daughter of Herbert II of Vermandois, not his sister as Glaber suggests. Herbert II was never count of Troyes, and it is possible that Glaber has confused him with his descendant, Herbert count of Troyes: Michel BUR, *La formation du comté de Champagne, 950–1150*, Nancy 1977, p. 96–7. In the second of these passages Glaber rejoices in the just vengeance of God upon the house of Blois. ORTIGUES and IOGNA-PRAT (see n. 10) p. 541, draw attention to the peculiarly Cluniac preoccupation with ideas of sin and its punishment embodied in the Pentateuch and displayed here.

45 5.I.16, II.19.

46 3.II.7. In the text of BN (lat.) 10912 Glaber's inaccurate statements about Constance have been corrected by reference to the *Gesta Consulum Andegavorum*, ed. Paul MARCHEGAY and André SALMON, in: *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou*, Paris 1856, p. 110–111.

47 1.III.7. Herbert II of Vermandois died in 943: BUR (see n. 44) p. 87–97.

48 5.I.18, and SACKUR (see n. 5) p. 411 and n. 2, on the gift which was probably made in the period 1037–40.

would seem better to consider his attitude in the light of the political events of the age.

In Book 3 Glaber discusses the aggression of Odo II of Blois towards Robert of France and his son Henry I. The sequence of events is by no means clear in the ›Histories‹, so an outline is needed. Robert II at first treated Odo II as a protégé because he attempted to marry his mother, Bertha, on the death of Odo I in 996. In that year he persuaded Fulk of Anjou to surrender Tours which he had just captured to the young Odo who he soon raised to the honour of ›Count of the Palace‹. Their relations continued to be good, and when Stephen count of Troyes and Meaux died in 1019 or 1021 Robert recognized Odo's family claim. However the king thought better of this grant and revoked it, perhaps because Odo II was trying to dominate the archbishopric of Rheims<sup>49</sup>. Glaber twice says that Odo seized Troyes and Meaux illegally<sup>50</sup>. Odo's far-reaching ambitions may also have had their effect on Robert, for through the marriage of his father Odo I to Bertha, the daughter of Conrad the Peaceful king Burgundy (937–93) he had a claim to that realm because Rudolf III (993–1032) was childless<sup>51</sup>. In 1023 Robert II met Henry II of Germany at Deville-sur-Meuse to discuss the problem<sup>52</sup>. During this period tension grew between the king and his former protégé and it has been suggested that this may in part account for the burning of the Orléans heretics in 1022<sup>53</sup>. The death of Henry II in 1024 and that of Robert's heir, Hugh, in 1025 with associated succession problems, may well have brought about the rapprochement with Odo which led to the tripartite alliance with William of Aquitaine in an effort to dismember the empire. This came to nothing because of the succession of Conrad II (1024–39) but by 1027 Robert had finally accepted Odo's claim to Troyes and Meaux<sup>54</sup>. In 1032 Odo II took advantage of a succession dispute at Sens to install his candidate Ménard as archbishop, as Glaber angrily reports<sup>55</sup>. The new French king, Henry I, and his ally Fulk of Anjou promptly attacked the town but were beaten off. Then in April of 1033 King Robert's relict, Constance, championed the claims of her younger son, Robert duke of Burgundy, to the throne and allied with Odo, confirming him in possession of half of Sens. In the widespread revolt which followed King Henry was sustained by a Norman alliance which enabled him to defeat his mother. On 6 September 1032 Rudolf III of Burgundy died and Odo's claims brought him into conflict with Conrad II who met with Henry to discuss the problem at Deville-sur-Meuse in 1033. Odo was driven to surrender Sens to Henry in 1034<sup>56</sup>. Odo II continued to press his claims to Burgundy and even extended his support to the Italian rebels against

49 BUR (see n. 44) p. 157–68. DUNBABIN (see n. 18) p. 191–3.

50 3.II.5, IX.37.

51 BUR (see n. 18) p. 115.

52 3.II.7, Frederick BEHREND'S (ed.), *The Letters and Poems of Fulbert of Chartres*, Oxford 1976, no. 81, p. 146–7.

53 Robert-Henri BAUTIER, *L'hérésie d'Orléans et le mouvement intellectuel au début du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: *Bulletin de philologie et d'histoire* (1975) p. 63–88.

54 BUR (see n. 44) p. 169–70, BEHREND'S (see n. 52) p. LXXXV–LXXXVII.

55 3.IX.37, and see *Chronicon Sancti Petri Vivi Senonensis*, ed. and tr. Robert-Henri BAUTIER and Monique GILLES, Paris 1979, p. 118–19.

56 Jan DHONDT, *Une crise de pouvoir capétien*, in: *Miscellanea Medievalia in memoriam J. F. Niermeyer*, Groningen 1967, p. 137–48.

Conrad II who offered him the imperial throne, until he was killed at the battle of Bar on 15 November 1037<sup>57</sup>. The violent hatred evident in Glaber's account of events, the false accusation against Theobald the Deceiver and the suggestion that Odo II's death was divine vengeance point to a violent partisanship which can only be explained because of Odo's role as the great rebel against royal authority. It is in this role that he first appears in Book 3 and it is this defiance which marks out the clan in Glaber's eyes. Judged by their deeds there is little between Fulk and Odo II, but in Glaber's eyes the great difference lay in their attitude to the royal power. Fulk Nerra was an active supporter of the monarchy which Glaber respected, while Odo II was a rebel and this fact damned his whole line. It is this spirit of violent partisanship which infects Glaber's work.

It is worth noting that Glaber mentions the Norman princes and their people quite frequently in the ›Histories‹. It has often been observed that one of his motives for praising the Normans was to portray them as transformed by conversion to Christianity from scourges of God to upholders of His peace<sup>58</sup>. Thereafter he tells us little about them, apart from the account of the Norman intervention in Italy<sup>59</sup>. This is very disappointing in view of his close relationship with St William, the great reformer of the Norman abbeys, of whose activity, especially at Fécamp, he appears well informed in the ›Life‹<sup>60</sup>. The explanation for this relative neglect would seem to be that the Normans were not heavily involved in the political rivalries which most interested and concerned him, and which, from his Burgundian perspective, were dominated by the rebellions of the house of Blois. Further, as Glaber stresses, the Norman dukes were good allies of the Capetians. After their conversion they do not attack France, except at royal request: Richard I loyally supports King Robert in the Burgundian civil war and plays an honourable role in the affair of the Orléans heresy<sup>61</sup>. Even the dubious morals of Robert the Magnificent (1027–35) are defended as Norman custom, and his successor, William the Bastard, is supported in his inheritance by King Henry<sup>62</sup>. The Normans, therefore, are only of marginal interest to Glaber once they have served their turn in Book 1 by providing glorious examples of the saving power of Christianity. The Norman dukes are respectable and loyal figures who Glaber consigned to the background in his account of events which are dominated by others whom he saw as more important.

Glaber was a monk and his works are dominated by religious considerations, thoughts and ideas. But he was not removed from the political conflict which disturbed society outside the abbey. He lived in a cloistered world, but not in an ivory tower. Monks and especially abbots were prestigious figures whose sanctity might smooth the way to heaven in the next world and whose blessing and friendship could certainly confer prestige in this. Robert I of France cultivated the monks and their friendship enhanced his reputation and that of his house. Helgaud's ›Life of

57 3.IX.39. On Odo's Italian venture see H.E.J. COWDREY, Archbishop Aribert II of Milan, in: *History* 51 (1966) p. 1–15.

58 1.V.18–19, 1.V.21, 2.II.3.

59 3.I.2–4.

60 *Life*, c. VII.

61 1.V.21, 2.VIII.15–16, 3.VIII.26.

62 4.VI.20.

King Robert gave him a monastic gloss and even suggested that he was a worker of miracles<sup>63</sup>. In an age of ignorance and illiteracy the friendship of this intelligensia had much to commend it. And great abbots had far more to offer. Abbeys disposed of vast lands and their loyalties could be crucial in critical times. During the Burgundian civil war St William was far more than a mere pawn on the political chess-board. Robert of Blois, abbot of Saint Florent and Micy, played a key role in the politics of the Loire at a time when the area was nicely balanced between the ambitions of Blois and Anjou<sup>64</sup>. Fulk's choice of Odo, abbot of Saint Genou de l'Estrée to head his new abbey of Loches was clearly influenced by political considerations<sup>65</sup>. The distinguished scholar, Odorannus of Sens, was deeply involved in the rivalry of Capetian and Blésois in that city<sup>66</sup>. Glaber was not as eminent as any of these figures, but they are incomprehensible except against a background of lesser men like him. He was clearly a protégé of St William and had some contact with St Odilo. There is in his writings a sense of that vertigo which is wont to overcome those who find themselves propelled into the political stratosphere. But he was much more than a mere reflection of the great men he followed, for Glaber had his own distinct political preferences and these influenced his choice of material and the way he wrote. By any standard he is a secondary figure in the monasticism of his age, but this is part of the interest of his works. From his relatively minor rank he provides us with an insight into the political realities of the early eleventh century.

63 DUNBABIN (see n. 18) comments on Helgaud, p. 134–5.

64 Bernard S. BACHRACH, Robert of Blois, abbot of Saint-Florent de Saumur and Saint-Mesmin de Micy (985–1011): a study in small power politics, in: *Revue bénédictine* 88 (1978) p. 123–46.

65 Dom Guy OURY, Origins and Foundation of the abbey of Beaulieu-lès-Loches, in: *Monastic Studies* 16 (1985) p. 169–78.

66 Odorannus de Sens: *Opera Omnia*, ed. Robert-Henri BAUTIER and Monique GILLES, Paris 1972, p. 7–28.