

Histories

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The King Wins Over Duke William Through the Agency of Count Roger

Following the advice of good men, the king sent Roger,⁶¹ a person of distinction, to speak to Duke William of the pirates on his behalf. After successfully carrying out this mission on behalf of the king at William's court, Roger departed from mortal affairs in that same place. Prior to this, however, he succeeded in persuading the duke. For not long afterward William sent some of his own men to summon the king in good faith, after which he received him at Rouen and heaped generous gifts upon him in a most worthy fashion. The result of this was that others grew fearful and hurried to do homage to the king in a more timely manner. Thus, when Duke William of Aquitaine⁶² and Alan of Brittany⁶³ learned that the pirates had taken up the king's cause, they hastened their approach, went before the king, and pledged fealty to him, swearing to serve him as his vassals. Taking these men with him, the king went to speak with the aforementioned tyrants Hugh and Heribert by the River Oise. Because the tyrants were suspicious of the king's knights, they came to the river in advance, destroyed the bridges, and took all the boats in the area over to the far side of the river. After this, they set up camp with their men on the

bank of the river opposite the king. The dispute between the two parties was negotiated by intermediaries, with just two small boats going back and forth from one side to the other. At last they parted from one another, with peace having been negotiated through the surety of hostages.⁶⁴

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King Louis and King Otto
Come Together in Friendship;
Otto Reconciles Hugh and the King

After sending the leading men away in peace, the king took a few men and went to Belgica to speak with Otto, whose sister he had taken to wife. Their deliberations were strengthened by the great harmony that prevailed between them, and they agreed to terms on a pact of friendship. When their business was complete, the king returned to Laon. Meanwhile, Otto strove to bring Hugh back into the king's favor. By rebuking him gently with many pointed words and mild anger because he continued to oppose his king and did not scruple to persecute his lord, he successfully persuaded him to return to the king. After delegations of wise men had been sent out in advance, he brought the duke before the king at a suitable time and reconciled them with one another.⁶⁵

A Meeting of the Leading Men Before the King, and the Disturbance Caused by William During Their Discussions

The duke was thus recalled to the favor that he had formerly enjoyed, and because he was foremost in power and military might, others followed his lead and went back to the king as well. Now that everyone had been reconciled to the king, he announced to the leading men that a council would be held at the royal palace of Attigny thirty days hence. On the appointed day Louis was present, along with the leading men of the realm: the dukes Hugh the Great, Arnulf of Flanders, and William of the Pirates, and the tyrant Heribert. Nor was King Otto of Saxony absent. When King Louis withdrew behind locked doors in the company of King Otto and the other magnates, Duke William alone was not admitted (it is not known whether this was intentional or not). As a result, he waited outside for a long time and began to grow irritated when he was not summoned. At last he became angry, and being as bold as he was strong, he applied force to the locked doors and flung them open, quivering with rage. When he entered, he saw a couch upon which Otto was reclining higher up near the pillow, while the king sat below him down at the end. Hugh and Arnulf were seated before them on two chairs, waiting for the meeting to proceed according to order. William could not

home with William. Otto, meanwhile, taking counsel with Hugh and Arnulf, complained at considerable length to them about the insult that he had suffered, declaring that he had been dishonored beyond what was fair or lawful and forced to give up his seat in the presence of his friends. As his friends, therefore, they ought to sympathize with him and treat the insult that had been done to him as though it had been directed at them. Moreover, they should make every effort to put a stop to heavy-handed behavior of this sort, since it could very easily end up affecting them; for a person who did not for himself pardon the king would pardon them even less. This speech aroused great animosity and stirred up hatred of William among Otto's friends, since they themselves secretly viewed him with considerable hostility. King Otto then returned home.

Hugh and Arnulf Deliberate Over the Murder of William

Hugh and Arnulf debated what they should do about William. If they put him to the sword, then they would have more freedom to act as they wished. Moreover, with the duke gone, they would have an easier time bending the king to their will, since as long as Louis had William to rely on, he

could never be coerced into doing anything. On the other hand, if they did not kill him, then disagreements and quarrels were sure to crop up, and a great many deaths would follow as soon as an opportunity arose for such behavior. Both of these options seemed dangerous to them. If they killed William, then they would incur the guilt for his murder, whereas if they spared him, then tyranny would arise in the future. In the end they agreed that he must die. Summoning men to carry out this crime, they explained to them the importance of their mission and made them swear an oath against William. Then they arranged the events of the murder with the conspirators. Arnulf would dispatch envoys to William to deliver the message that there was a pressing need for talks between them in the near future. They would ask him to set a time for a meeting, and they would request a location near the Somme, so that William would agree to leave his own territory and go in person to meet the people who were coming to speak with him. When William arrived and had been received by his friend, they would say a great deal about friendship and much also about loyalty. And because at this point he would be surrounded by his own men and would not be vulnerable to assault, the attack would have to be delayed until he returned to his ship (if he happened to have come by water). Then, as he was sailing down the river, the conspirators would raise a great shout to summon him back, under the pretext that they had forgotten to mention something important that he needed to hear. The duke would then be brought over to them in a little boat with a small escort, while the rest of his men waited for him on the river, and the conspirators could then draw their swords and fall upon him while he was unsuspecting. If, on

the other hand, he came on horseback, then after the meeting was over and Arnulf had left, the conspirators would call him back in the same way while he was leaving and pretend that they had something important to bring to him. When he arrived, they would keep him occupied with serious business of some sort until everyone else had gone ahead and he was just starting to follow after them. Then the conspirators would attack him and likewise run him through with their swords. They could escape revenge at the hands of the attacking pirates if they rode away on swift horses and made haste to flee to their lord, who would be waiting for them with his troops. At that point there would be nothing the pirates could do except speed them in their flight or else go back and attend to the body of their lord. In this way, because Arnulf was not there, it would be made to appear that the crime had been carried out without his knowledge.

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The Murder of Duke William

The envoys were thus dispatched, and they asked for and were granted a meeting. The time was set for thirty days hence, and it was agreed that it would take place in the county of Amiens on the Somme River, where the island of Picquigny is. When they had completed their mission, the

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envoys returned home. At the appointed time, therefore, Arnulf and William met at the location that they had agreed upon, the former coming by land, the latter by water. They made many protestations of friendship and mutual loyalty, and after talking for some time, they parted from one another. Arnulf pretended that he was leaving and went off for a little while, while William returned to his ships. He embarked on a little boat and was traveling down the river, when he was summoned by a great deal of shouting from the conspirators. At this he turned the boat around, and rowing back to the shore, he came back to ask them what they wanted. They immediately declared that they had something valuable to bring to him that their lord had forgotten. When his boat had been brought up to the shore, the duke welcomed them on board, whereupon they immediately drew their swords and slew him. After wounding in addition two unarmed boys and a sailor who were with him, the perpetrators of this crime leapt out of the boat and fled back to their lord and fellow conspirator. The men of the duke's party, who by now were sailing back down the river, turned around and headed back for the shore. There they found their lord slain and the two boys and sailor wounded.

Taking up the body of their lord, they carried him away for burial in a mournful funeral cortège.⁶⁶

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The King Grants Richard, the Son of William, the Lands of His Father

Not long after this they brought Richard,⁶⁷ William's son by a Breton concubine,⁶⁸ before the king and recounted the whole series of events to him. Taking note of the young man's dignified bearing, the king received him generously and granted him the province formerly held by his father. In addition, the magnates who had accompanied the boy became the king's men by giving him their hands and swearing oaths. Afterward they returned to Rouen, delighted by the king's generosity. Some of the other Northmen, however, were resentful of the fact that Richard had gone over to Louis, and they gave their allegiance to Duke Hugh instead.⁶⁹

The King Is Summoned to Rouen by His Subjects and Does Battle with the Pirates

Those who supported the king, however, sent envoys to summon him and gave him a fitting welcome at Rouen. While he was there, he was informed that the pirate king Sihtric⁷⁰ had entered the Seine with a large fleet, and that his captain Turmod had subsequently arrived with naval forces. Their intention was to take over the whole area without a grant from the king, to convert the son of Duke William to the worship of idols, and to bring back pagan rites. When he heard this, the king mustered his forces to meet them in battle. Trusting in God's favor, he went to meet the foreigners with eight hundred men. Because he had so few troops, he was unable to extend his lines widely enough to envelop the enemy. So he marched into battle surrounded by his men, with the standards raised and the army packed tightly together. The pagans likewise marched forward in a line of infantry. As they approached, they hurled their swords at the outset of the battle, in accordance with their native custom. Then, reckoning that the king's knights had been frightened and injured by the dense fire, they pressed the attack with shields and spears. But the king's troops held their shields in front of them for protection, and once the hail of swords had dissipated, they advanced toward the enemy foot soldiers. Crowding together, they charged forward

into their ranks, slaughtering and killing, and emerging in an unbroken formation. Then they turned around and drove through them once more, shattering their lines. The ferocity of the fighting drove King Sihtric to take flight, but he was discovered hiding in a thicket by some men ranging over the battlefield and run through with three spears. Turmod, for his part, was still in the thick of battle, fighting with all of his might, when he was struck head-on by Louis's charging horse and thrown down onto the ground. The king careened past him without recognizing who he was, whereupon he was set upon by his foes, but he stood his ground and fought them hand to hand. Turmod, surrounded by his men, came up from behind him, flanked him on the right side, and struck him with his spear through the armhole of his hauberk, delivering a blow that reached almost as far as his left lung. The king, whose attention had been briefly diverted from this attack by the slaughter around him, turned to look at the man who had just wounded him. Then he struck a blow crosswise to his right and cut off the head and left arm of his attacker. The pagans were put to rout with such tremendous bloodshed that nine thousand of them were said to have been killed there, although a very small number of survivors did manage to escape by ship. By God's hand the king had prevailed, although a few of his men had been struck down and some wounded. After attending to them, he made arrangements to return home, entrusting Rouen to Erluin, while he himself went back to Compiègne.⁷¹

THE ANNALS OF FLODOARD OF REIMS,

919-966

edited and translated by

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Heribert and gave them the oaths that they required, and they returned to him the abbeys of St-Basle and Avenay, with the *villa* of Vendress. After [Arch]bishop Artoldus made peace with [Arch]bishop Hugh [of Reims], he took up his residence at St-Basle. Hugh and Heribert abandoned the siege of Laon. A son [Lothair] was born to King Louis. The aforesaid counts spoke with William [Longsword]¹¹⁵ and wanted to resume the siege of Laon soon, having made an agreement that the *castrum* of Laon would be surrendered to them by treachery. But when this did not come about, they returned home. King Louis was received in Vienne by Charles Constantine [count of Vienne]. The Aquitainians came to him and acknowledged him [as king]. Hugh [the Great], Heribert [of Vermandois], William [Longsword] and Arnulf [of Flanders] met together, and Heribert then set out across the Rhine to go to King Otto.

24.

[24A] In the year 942, after the Aquitainians were allied to him, King Louis returned to Laon. However, he did not remain there for a long time, for there was no peace, and he went to Burgundy. Damasus, the legate of Pope Stephen [IX], was ordained bishop at Rome for the purpose of fulfilling this mission and came to Francia, carrying a letter of the apostolic see to the *principes* of the kingdom and to all the inhabitants of Francia and Burgundy so that they might receive Louis as their king. However, if they should fail to do this and should continue to attack him with a hostile sword, the pope would excommunicate them. Therefore the bishops of the province of Reims spoke with Count Heribert [of Vermandois] and begged him to intercede with the *principes* Hugh [the Great] to accept the king.

[24B] Some traitors were discovered at Reims and were killed. Others were deprived of the resources that they held from the church of Reims and were expelled from the *urbs*. The legates of the church of Reims returned from Rome, bringing back with them from Pope Stephen the *pallium* for [Arch]bishop Hugh. They also went to the *principes* of the kingdom, so that they might receive Louis as king and send their own legates to Rome. But if this were not done by the Nativity of the Lord [25 December], they understood that they would then be excommunicated.

[24C] Lord Abbot Odo [of Cluny] worked with Hugh, the king of Italy, and Alberic, the Roman patrician, to make peace between the two. King Hugh tried to drive out the Saracens from their *munitio* of Freinet. Count Roger [of Laon], who was serving in a legation from King Louis to William [Longsword], the *princeps* of the Northmen, died there. William received King Louis in a royal manner at Rouen. Likewise, [Count] William of Poitou¹¹⁶ and the Bretons, with their *principes*,¹¹⁷ came to the king. With these men the king came to the river Oise, while Hugh [the Great] and Heribert [of Vermandois]

encamped with Otho [of Verdun], duke of the Lotharingians.¹¹⁸ After the bridges were destroyed and ships had been seized, along with the ships that they were able to take from the other side of the river, dissension was stirred up among them by the negotiators on each side and a truce was arranged to last from the middle of September until the middle of November. Hostages were exchanged, including Heribert's younger son, who was given to the king. The king [Louis] himself, along with William [Longsword] and Hugh [the Great], sent hostages to King Otto [of Germany] through Duke Otho.

[24D] There was a great famine through all Francia and Burgundy, along with an epidemic that struck cattle, and few animals of this type survived in these lands.

[24E] King Louis set out to meet King Otto and the two men received each other amicably and strengthened their friendship with a pact. Otto labored intensely to make peace between King Louis and Hugh [the Great], so that Hugh at last returned [his allegiance] to the king. Likewise, even Heribert [of Vermandois] and his son, also named Heribert, became [the men] of King Louis. When the king returned, the bishops of the province of Reims came to him, and Louis received [Bishop] Raoul [II] of Laon and restored his see to him.

[24F] The venerable Lord Abbot Odo [of Cluny], who had restored many monasteries and who had repaired the holy rule [of Saint Benedict], died at Tours and was buried at [the monastery of] St-Julien [of Tours].

25.

[25A] In the year 943, Count Arnulf [of Flanders] arranged for the treacherous murder of William [Longsword], the *princeps* of the Northmen, at a conference to which he had been called. King Louis then gave the land of the Northmen to William's son [Richard], born of a Breton concubine [Sprota]. Some of the *principes* of the Northmen committed themselves to the king, while others committed themselves to Duke Hugh [the Great].¹¹⁹ Count Heribert [of Vermandois] died¹²⁰ and his sons buried him at St-Quentin. When they heard that Raoul, the son of Raoul of Gouy, had come into the lands of their father as if he were invading, they attacked and killed him. The news of this greatly saddened King Louis.¹²¹ [Arch]bishop Artoldus left his monastery of St-Basle and set out for the king, who promised Artoldus that he would be returned to the diocese of Reims. Artoldus gathered up his brothers and other men who had been exiled from the bishopric of Reims, and they took possession of the *castrum* of Omont. King Louis and some others then attacked Mouzon, but Louis was driven off by *fideles* of Bishop Hugh [of Reims], and some of his men were killed. However, Louis burned some houses in the suburbs of this *castrum*, whereby much of the harvest was destroyed.

[25B] Hugh [the Great], the duke of the Franks, fought frequently against the Northmen who had come as pagans or had returned to paganism. They had killed a great many Christian footsoldiers (*pedites*) of Hugh's, but, with the agreement of the Christian Northmen who were holding the place, Hugh was able to take the *castrum* of Évreux, killing many of the Northmen and putting the others to flight. King Louis set out again for Rouen and killed the Northman Turmoldus, who had returned to idolatry and to heathen rites. Turmoldus had forced [Richard] the son of William [Longsword] and others to join him in this and he plotted against the king. Turmoldus joined with the pagan king Setricus and King Louis killed them [in battle]. King Louis then committed Rouen to Erluinus [of Montreuil] and returned to Compiègne. There Duke Hugh [the Great] waited for him, along with his nephews, the sons of Heribert [of Vermandois],¹²² and this meeting was the cause of considerable tension.

[25C] With Duke Otho of the Lotharingians and Bishop Adalbero [of Metz] serving as mediators, with Duke Hugh [the Great] especially insistent, the king first received [Arch]bishop Hugh [of Reims], with the understanding that [St-Basle and Avenay] the abbeys that [Archbishop] Artoldus had renounced and turned over to the king would be restored to Artoldus, who would be provided with another bishopric. Moreover, the honors that the brothers and kinsmen of Artoldus had held from the diocese of Reims would be returned to them. After this was done, the other sons of Count Heribert were received by the king. Again King Louis set out for Rouen and he received Évreux from Duke Hugh [the Great]. However, the king fell ill at Paris and remained in bed for almost the entire summer.

[25D] [Arch]bishop Hugh captured the *castrum* of Ambly and burned it down. The brothers Robert and Raoul, who had been expelled from Reims, were holding Ambly and using it as a base for raids throughout the diocese of Reims. Erluinus [of Montreuil] engaged [Count] Arnulf [of Flanders] in battle and defeated him. He also killed the man who had killed William [Longsword], the *princeps* of the Northmen, and sent that man's amputated hands to Rouen. Likewise [Arch]bishop Hugh besieged the *munitio* of Omont, which was being held by Dodo, the brother of [Arch]bishop Artoldus. [Arch]bishop Hugh gave up the siege on the command of King Louis after taking Dodo's young son as a hostage.

[25E] Duke Hugh [the Great] took the daughter of the king from the baptismal font and the king delegated to him the *ducatus* of Francia.¹²³ The king [Louis] also subjected all Burgundy to his power (*dicio*). Likewise [Duke] Hugh [the Great] brought peace between the king and [Count] Arnulf, at whom Louis had been angry due to the murder of William [Longsword, *princeps* of the Northmen]. King Otto [of Germany] captured some of King Louis's *fideles* who had plotted against Otto, which led to ill will between the two kings.