

FAMILY, COMMERCE, AND
RELIGION IN LONDON
AND COLOGNE

Anglo-German emigrants, c. 1000–c. 1300

JOSEPH P. HUFFMAN



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INTRODUCTION

Relations between the English and German realms have received very limited attention thus far among historians, in marked contrast with the traditional historiography of Anglo-French and German-Italian relations. Of course, these traditional constellations obviously exist with good reason. The Norman Conquest and the subsequent English involvement in French continental holdings on the one hand, or the preoccupation of the German emperors in Italy and their resultant conflicts with the papacy on the other, explain why the history of the Central and Later Middle Ages has been written along these two main geopolitical axes. Nevertheless, activity between England and Germany represented a vital and at times no less influential interregional relationship, which has not received its due attention under such a primarily geopolitical framework.

Previous research on Anglo-German relations has emphasized either political alliances or commercial exchange. These two spheres of research have been almost wholly the domain of German-speaking scholars, who have viewed England rather narrowly in the context of either its political involvement in papal-imperial conflicts and its cultivation of anti-French allies among the German princes, or its place in the development of the German Hansa. Since political history has been eclipsed by social history in the past thirty years, little new scholarship has appeared to revise older studies that present Anglo-German relations as a series of alliance schemes more akin to the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Europe than to political conditions of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the research in economic history concentrates on the Hanseatic era in the Later Middle Ages, so that little work has been devoted to Anglo-German relations during the *Vorhansezeit* – that is, from *c.* AD 1000 to 1300.¹ Of course, the dearth of

¹ A recent example of this trend is T. H. Lloyd's *England and the German Hanse, 1157–1611*.

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quantifiable evidence on trade in the earlier period accounts for the emphasis on the Later Middle Ages. The historiography on the pre-Hanseatic period, however, stands in the shadow of the *Hansezeit* and has not been considered in the broader context of exchange between the regions and without reference to later developments. The written history of the *Vorhansezeit*, like the political histories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is often characterized by later categories not belonging to its own era.

Aside from a few notable endeavors,² virtually nothing new on the Anglo-German connection has appeared in recent years. A conference held in 1987 at the German Historical Institute in London, entitled "Germany and England in the High Middle Ages: a comparative approach," was intended to create momentum among medievalists for the cultivation of this open field. Yet, except for Karl Leyser's impressive research the exhortation has received little response to date for the crucial period of the Central Middle Ages. It seems incredible that 1987 was the first time English and German medievalists met to consider the merits of such cooperative research, yet this was the case.³ It then took nine years for a volume to appear as a result of the conference.⁴ The articles therein are splendid summaries of the state of research on literacy, kingship and warfare, Jewish and crusading history, and the history of urban communities, manors, and social mobility. Yet

(Cambridge, 1991) which, although beginning its study in 1157, actually emphasizes almost exclusively the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. See also John D. Fudge, *Cargoes, Embargoes, and Emissaries: The Commercial and Political Interaction of England and the German Hanse, 1450-1510* (Toronto, 1995).

² Julia Barrow, "Cathedrals, provosts and prebends: a comparison of twelfth-century German and English practice," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 37:4 (October 1986), pp. 536-64 and "Education and the recruitment of cathedral canons in England and Germany 1100-1225," *Viator* 20 (1989), pp. 118-37; C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels. Cathedral Schools and Social Ideas in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia, 1994); and selected portions in Veronica Ortenberg's *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual, and Artistic Exchanges* (Oxford, 1992) are valuable recent contributions. A comparative effort in the area of urban historical geography is worthy of note as well: Dietrich Denecke and Gareth Shaw, eds., *Urban Historical Geography. Recent Progress in Britain and Germany*, Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography, 10 (Cambridge, 1988), though Brian Graham concludes: "Finally, there is an awareness of the insular parochialism of much previous [British] work and ideas and rather belatedly more attention is being paid to continental studies, both as comparisons and contrasts. Oddly, however, the revisions and reevaluations persist in their isolation of each other" (p. 38).

³ Alfred Haverkamp (Trier), Hanna Vollrath (Bochum) and Karl Leyser (Oxford) were the organizers of the symposium (July 1-4, 1987): "This conference seems to have been the first opportunity for British and German medieval historians to meet in order to discuss German and English history in this way." See the *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute of London* 10 no. 2 (May, 1988), pp. 23-6.

⁴ Alfred Haverkamp and Hanna Vollrath, eds., *England and Germany in the High Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1996).

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typically these articles review English and German historiographical issues in isolation from one another, and leave the reader to do the comparative work. In particular, there is not one study of any actual relations *between* the English and German realms. In fact, the English and German historiographical traditions have developed so independently of one another that they often employ two parallel systems of citation for primary sources, which further complicates any attempt to synthesize the body of secondary literature.⁵ This unfortunate situation, along with a much more unfortunate Anglo-German history in the twentieth century, may help to account for the lack of interest in such research but it does not reflect the actual status of the primary sources themselves, which are rich in material concerning the multifaceted relations between these regions.

Little needs to be said about the sizeable body of documents surviving from the English realm in the period from the eleventh to the early fourteenth century, as its value and usefulness has been demonstrated over and over again. Despite the lack of a highly developed royal administration in Germany a large amount of primary source material survives virtually untapped, if one knows where to look. A major source of available data can be found in the records of German cities, and most significantly in the municipal documents of the largest and most important of these cities – Cologne. Therefore, Cologne has been chosen as our case study, based on its vast archival holdings as well as on its close relationship with the English kingdom. While Cologne enjoyed relations with England unequalled by other German cities during this period, a study of its contacts will confirm the value of comparative, interregional research and serve as an exhortation to consider similar research elsewhere in Germany and England.

The city of Cologne serves as an excellent case study for applying the methodology described above. Its highly developed relationship with England rested on two firm foundations: the traditionally pro-English policies of its archbishops and the privileged legal and economic position held by Cologne merchants and citizens in the English realm. Cologne was a natural point of contact for the English, situated as it was along the Rhine-Thames trading route and on the eastern frontier of

⁵ This is best seen in the practice of German scholars citing English sources from the excerpts in *MGH SS* volumes 27 and 28 (entitled “Ex rerum Anglicarum scriptoribus”) rather than from the standard complete editions as found in the English Rolls Series. In addition the use of separate charter books and *Urkundenbücher* (e.g. Rymer’s *Foedera* and Böhmer’s *Regesta Imperii*) has created many problems in the consistent dating of documents. Most recently, Ferdinand Opll’s *Friedrich Barbarossa, Gestalten des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Darmstadt, 1990) makes no use of Karl Leyer’s extensive scholarship.

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France. The powerful position of the city's archbishops as regional princes made it all the more important.

The Cologne archbishops accumulated a number of honors and powers which led to their ultimate political dominance over the lower Rhine region. Many of these ecclesiastical lords were imperial chancellors, and they had exercised the right to crown the king-elect at Aachen since the pontificate of Archbishop Heribert (999–1021); thus they played a leading role in all royal elections. In addition to their superior ecclesiastical authority throughout northwest Germany they also exercised imperial regalian rights. Close ties had existed between the archbishopric and the German monarchs since the pontificate of Bruno I of Saxony (953–65), the brother of Emperor Otto I. The emperor not only appointed his brother to the Cologne see, but also made Bruno the duke of Lotharingia. From this time on, therefore, the Cologne archbishops were both secular and ecclesiastical princes. As *principes imperii* they were heavily involved in the emperors' Italian policies (several died there on imperial campaigns) and bore the title of archchancellor of Italy from 1031. A few even exercised royal authority in Germany as regents, such as Anno II (1056–75) during part of the minority of Henry IV, or Engelbert I (1215–25) during the almost permanent absence of Frederick II from Germany. Engelbert was also the guardian of Frederick's son Henry. Their regional political power as *Landherr* was ultimately solidified when, as a reward for military assistance to Emperor Frederick Barbarossa against Duke Henry the Lion in Saxony, Archbishop Philip I was given the ducal dignity and lands of Westphalia in 1180. Over time these powerful ecclesiastical princes developed close ties with the English royal house and therefore acted as diplomatic middlemen in virtually all political contacts between England and the empire during this period.⁶

The second foundation of the unique relationship between Cologne and England, one certainly in concert with the first, was the dominance of the Cologne merchants in Anglo-German commerce. Cologne merchants were a powerful economic force in Germany, and beneficiaries of a long tradition of royal privileges in England which exempted them from exactions and local legal authority. These grants were in turn reconfirmed by every English king during this period. They also possessed their own guildhall in London, from which all other German merchants had to operate if they wished to participate in English trade. The Cologne merchants thus held a virtual monopoly over German

⁶ For a study of Anglo-Cologne diplomacy see J. Huffman, *A Social History of Medieval Diplomacy: Anglo-German Relations (1066–1307)* (Ann Arbor, 1999).

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trade with England until the late thirteenth century, when Cologne was gradually replaced by Lübeck as the dominant power within the newly emerging Hanseatic League, and the London guildhall was subsumed into the larger Hanseatic “Steelyard” complex.

Economic historians have sketched this early commercial dominance of Cologne merchants. Yet a wealth of data survives which reveals the specific activities of Cologne citizens in England and, perhaps more surprisingly, of the English in Cologne. Hence the social history approach of this study adds considerably to the fleshing out of economic interaction between the regions.

Furthermore, there are hitherto unexploited sources which reveal interregional relations on levels other than the economic and political. Canterbury and Cologne were major pilgrimage sites that received visitors from both sides of the English Channel. Early monastic prayer brotherhoods and emigrant clergy further strengthened this cross-Channel religious and cultural network. Finally, although Cologne did not found a university until 1338, there is also evidence of intellectual relations between the regions. Such English scholars as the canon lawyer Gerard Pucelle and the great philosopher Duns Scotus spent time teaching in Cologne, and the latter was buried there in 1308. There is evidence of students from Cologne at Oxford and Cambridge, and still other expatriate Cologners who held prebends in England. All this we shall be exploring in the coming pages.

Relations between medieval England and Germany were surely rich and varied, and at times as influential as the Anglo-French and German-Italian axes; in fact all three axes were often deeply intertwined. In order to keep this particular study to an appropriate length, we shall focus primarily on the evidence of interactions between English and German emigrants from London and Cologne. This fascinating intersection of peoples will allow us to combine regional and interregional history in a manner that provides a more comprehensive view of the dynamics of medieval life, and at the same time integrates at least one region of Germany more fully into western European society. By doing this we have all the tools necessary to reevaluate earlier paradigms of medieval life in Germany as essentially localized and disconnected from the developmental patterns of western Europe.